Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2004, pp. 359-376

PREDICTORS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN AN EASTERN MUSLIM CULTURE

KAUSAR SUHAIL
G.C. University, Lahore, Pakistan

HAROON RASHID CHAUDHRY
Fatima Jinn Medical College and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan

The majority of the studies addressing human happiness have been conducted with Western Judeo-Christian cultures; other countries with different sociocultural milieus are underrepresented in research investigating this issue. The present work was undertaken to determine the prevalence and predictors of personal well-being in an Eastern Muslim culture, Pakistan. The study also aimed to compare the current ratings of subjective well-being with those obtained from other areas of the world. To make this survey representative of the vast majority of Pakistani people, a total of 1,000 people, with an age range of 16-80, living in diverse areas of Lahore (the provincial capital) were contacted. Ten localities ranging from upper-class areas to congested inner-city locations and to *Kacchi Abadies* (temporary houses built in caravan) were visited. Apart from demographic information, responses of the survey subjects were collected on multiple dimensions: personality traits, self-esteem, work satisfaction, marital satisfaction, religiosity, and social support. General well-being was assessed using Faces Scale and Ladder Scale of Life Satisfaction. The current findings, consistent with previous worldwide reports, showed that the number of happy people exceeds those who are unhappy, and also that Eastern people are as happy and satisfied as people from many Western countries. Work satisfaction, social support, religious affiliation, social class, income level, and marital status and satisfaction were found to be the better predictors of subjective well-being.

Professor Kausar Suhail, Chairperson, Department of Psychology, G.C. University Lahore, Pakistan; E-mail: kausarsuhail@hotmail.com.

After a long period of the superiority of the disease model in mental health, psychologists are now turning toward studying positive functioning in human beings. The past 20 years of research on this previously unexplored area has generally taken two directions as the indicator of positive functioning: (a) happiness, and (b) life satisfaction. The new scientific pursuit of happiness and life satisfaction, according to Myers (2000), begins with two questions: (a) How happy are people? and (b) Who are happy people—what characteristics, traits, and circumstances make lives happy?

The literature regarding the degree of happiness in people indicates that happiness is more abundant than is generally believed and also that most people report being above neutral in mood the majority of the time (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991). Across the world, people are similar in their satisfaction with life. In Western Europe and North America, 8 in 10 people describe themselves as more satisfied than dissatisfied (Inglehart, 1990; Myers, 2000). The literature aimed at assessing the cross-cultural differences in degree of satisfaction with life indicates that most nations average above 5.5 on a 1 to 10 scale, with a range of 5.03 to 8.36 (Diener, 2000). Myers and Diener (1996) concluded, after aggregating data from 916 surveys of 1.1 million people in 45 countries, that the average response was 6.75 on a well-being scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 is the low extreme, 5 is neutral, and 10 is high extreme).

Self-reports of being happy are reasonably consistent over time. For example, in the periodic National Opinion Research Centre Survey, 3 in 10 Americans say they are very happy. On the contrary, only 1 in 10 say that they are "not too happy." The remaining 6 in 10 rate themselves as "pretty happy" (Myers, 2000). Moreover, people who report they are happy also seem so to their friends and relatives (Sandvik, Diener, & Seidlitz, 1993).

Although there is a general consensus regarding the degree of happiness in people the world over, it is rather difficult to determine which among the many predictors should be regarded as the essential components of positive psychological functioning because the criteria of well-being are diverse and extensive. The reports regarding positive functioning characterize all ages, both sexes, and all races (Myers, 2000). Repeated surveys across the industrialized countries reveal that no time of life is notably happiest (Myers & Diener, 1995). Similarly, surveys of 170,000 adults in 16 countries did not show significant gender differences in experiencing happiness (Inglehart, 1990). Although most people are similarly upbeat about their reported happiness, researchers keep on investigating who are the relatively happy people. Diener (2000) indicated that affluent cultures marked by political freedom are generally conducive to increased satisfaction with life. However, in-

crease in affluence matters more in poor countries than in affluent countries, where most people can afford life's necessities and where evaluative standards rise in the same proportion as income increases. Inglehart (1990) disclosed that in the USA, Canada, and Europe, the correlation between income and personal happiness is surprisingly weak. However, in poor countries like India, where low income threatens basic human needs more often, being relatively well-off predicts greater satisfaction with life (Argyle, 1999).

Although gender, age, and money provide few clues to happiness, Myers (2000) concludes in an excellent review of the literature on happiness that people's traits, religious faith, marriage, and social support seem to be the better predictors of happiness. While various theorists have tested different models of subjective well-being, Ryff (1989) indicates that the preceding perspectives can be integrated into similar features of positive psychological functioning, such as self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

Researchers have extensively studied and compared subjective well-being across nations; non-Western cultures, however, are underrepresented in such comparisons. So far no attempt has been made in Pakistan to document the issue of personal happiness; the only existing data from the subcontinent are from India. The premise of the present study, in fact, was to determine the degree and prevalence of happiness in an Eastern Muslim culture as well as to learn how certain macrolevel social and psychological factors affected the life situations of individual citizens and, in turn, their sense of psychological well-being. Apart from demographic groups (in terms of gender, social class, marriage, education, etc.), the following theory-guided predictors of positive functioning were included for testing: self-esteem, marital satisfaction, religious faith and practice, personality, and social support. The study was formulated to investigate the degree of subjective well-being as well the better predictors of positive functioning in people living in a culture different from the Judeo-Christian countries most commonly represented in the relevant literature. It was hypothesized that for the Pakistani people, religion will serve as a dominant, and maybe the best predictor, of subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Although women are generally reported to show a greater frequency of depressive affect (Mumford, Saeed, Ahmad, Latif, & Mubbashar, 1997), the majority of studies conducted in the Western context have not found a gender difference in experiencing positive affect. The current study aimed to find out whether men in a male-dominant society are more happy owing to their positive life experiences.

METHOD

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

To make this survey representative of Pakistani people, a large number of people living in diverse areas of Lahore, capital of the province of Punjab, were contacted. Lahore is a historic city, and a rich mix of people ranging from very poor to very affluent live there. A total of 10 different localities of Lahore, ranging from upper-class areas to congested inner-city locations and to kacchi abadies (temporary houses built in caravan), were visited to obtain data on different dimensions of happiness.

PROCEDURE

The survey subjects were requested to fill out the questionnaires at the time of the contact. However, if they declined to do so, the questionnaires were left with them and were collected later. Those who could not read or write were interviewed. From every area, men and women ranging in age from 16 to 80 were requested to participate. Although the sampling was not random, to reduce personal bias, every 10th house in a street was approached, and anyone available at that time in a house was requested to participate. The researcher would start from any street in an area (picked nonrandomly), contact the first house on that street (if the residents refused to participate, the researcher would contact the next house), then the 10th house, and so on. When the researcher finished the target number of households (approximately 100), he or she would stop data collection from that area. Only one person from each household, present and willing to participate, was included in the study. If no one was present at home, the next house was approached.

The target sample for the current study was 1,000; because residents were not present in 58 houses at the time of the contact, a total of 1,058 households were approached. Out of 1,000 available households, only 20 refused to participate. Interestingly, all refusals were from the upper-class areas. Because it is quite unusual to have 100% participation from any area (from the middle- and lower-class areas, in this case), it may be speculated that some of those who were not present at the time of contact (41 out of 58 were from lower- or middle-class areas) would have refused to participate if they had been present. Seven out of the 980 collected questionnaires had many missing data points; hence, they were excluded. The statistical analysis was conducted on a total of 973 questionnaires.

TOOLS EMPLOYED

1. Demographic data about gender, marital status, profession, total income of the family, education, and birth order were obtained on a separate sheet. Social class of the respondents was determined following the Standard Occupational Classification using occupation and education as the basic indicators (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1995). If the person was not working at the time of the study, his or her former profession was noted. In the case of married female patients, the husband's occupation was taken; the ex-husband's occupation was considered in case of divorce or separation. If the father or husband had retired or died, his occupation before retirement or death was noted. Those belonging to social class I were rated as "High class," social class II and III were considered "Middle class," and social class IV and V were rated as "Lower class."

2. To determine how personality affects positive psychological functioning, an Extraversion/ Introversion Scale (EIS) was adapted from the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1953). To keep the scale shorter, three professionals were requested to select only 10 items from the original scale, considering the conceptual definitions of the constructs. These items were translated into Urdu and then re-translated into English by two bilingual translators. The EIS was scored on a yes/no scale, with a higher score indicating more extraverted behavior. In a pilot study, the adopted scale was administered to 50 people from different fields of life and Cronbach's α was computed on their responses. The computed α showed that the scale was reasonably reliable ($r = .69$) to use with the current sample.

3. The Religiosity Scale (RS) was especially designed to measure the strength of religious affiliation in Muslims. The scale consists of 18 items measuring the intensity of Islamic beliefs and practice. The items for this scale have been generated from the *Holy Quran* (the religious book of Muslims) and teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, called *Hadith*. The items, indicative of a good Muslim, have been carefully picked from both sources. The items measuring strong Muslim beliefs are belief in one God, life hereafter, hell and heaven, the Prophet Mohammed, etc., whereas the items measuring the strength of Islamic practice include saying prayers, religious fasting, reciting the *Holy Quran*, pilgrimage, charity, honesty, and following the rule of Islam in everyday life activities. The scale is scored on a 4-point Likert scale with a score range of 18-72, and has been used successfully in Pakistan (Suhail & Akram, 2002).

4. The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) developed by Rosenberg (1965) was employed to assess the relationship between positive self-perception and well-being. Rosenberg defined self-esteem as self-acceptance, a basic feeling of self-worth. The instrument consists of 10 items reported along a 4-point continuum from *strongly agree* (3) to *strongly disagree* (0). As far as scale validity is concerned, Rosenberg reported significant inverse correlations between self-esteem and clinical ratings of depression. He also reported a reproducibility coefficient of .92 and a coefficient of .72. The scale was translated into Urdu using the same procedure mentioned above. To check its validity for the Pakistani population, the scale was administered to 50 people from different walks of life. The respondents did not report difficulty in understanding any of the items. To ascertain the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's α was computed, which appeared to be satisfactory ($r = .64$)

5. Work satisfaction (WS) was elicited by three questions on a Likert scale of 1 to 4, ranging from *not at* all to very much. The three items were: (a) I am a successful person in my job; (b) My work is source of satisfaction for me; and (c) I am satisfied with my work environment. The total score on all three scales indicated a person's satisfaction or otherwise with his or her work. Among the female respondents (485), 34% were housewives; 13% of all the respondents were students. The students were told to consider their study and institutional environment, whereas housewives were requested to keep in mind their domestic tasks while responding to work-related questions.

6. A marital satisfaction (MS) score was elicited by the aggregate score on two questions: (a) My life partner is my best friend, and (b) If reborn, I will marry the same person. Both questions were also scored on a 4-point continuum from *not at all* to *to a large extent*.

7. Social support (SS): The degree of social support was assessed by two indicators: (a) amount of help provided by close relatives, scored on a 4-point Likert scale; and (b) number of close friends.

8. Subjective well-being was assessed by two indicators: (a) personal happiness (PH) and (b) life satisfaction (LS). Personal happiness was elicited by the Faces Scale following Andrews and Withey (1976). The subjects were shown a card of seven faces with varying moods and asked, "*Which of the faces comes closest to expressing how you feel about your life as a whole*". Satisfaction with life was assessed

TABLE 1. Degree of Life Satisfaction in Pakistani People

Scale		Frequency	Percent
Very Dissatisfied	1.00	7	0.7
	2.00	4	0.4
	3.00	36	3.7
	4.00	48	4.9
	5.00	136	14.0
	6.00	169	17.4
	7.00	145	14.9
	8.00	149	15.3
	9.00	122	12.5
Very Satisfied	10.00	156	16.0
	Total	972	99.9

by the Ladder Scale of General Well-Being (LSWB). The LSWB (Cantril, 1967) measures life satisfaction on a single-item (*All things considered, where do you think you stand at present*) 10-point scale where 1 designates complete dissatisfaction with life and 10 indicates complete satisfaction with life.

RESULTS

Table 1 and Figure 1, showing percentages of people on two indices of well-being, clearly indicate that the number of satisfied and happy people exceed those unsatisfied and unhappy. Table 2 and Figure 1 also present a comparison of Pakistani people with those from the other nations on measures of satisfaction and happiness. The comparison between Pakistani and American people (see Figure 1) shows that although the American people are comparatively happier, both nations are positively skewed toward the experience of happiness. Table 2 also shows similar findings in the mean life satisfaction scores across nations in response to the same question asked (Diener, 2000); the data for Pakistan have been derived from the findings of the current study. Table 2 shows that Pakistan and Spain acquired the median position in life satisfaction, with Bulgaria being at the lowest level of satisfaction and Switzerland having the most satisfied people. The people of the United States and the Scandinavian countries also appeared high on the continuum of life satisfaction.

							
Pakistani (%)	11	28	27	21	9	3	1
American (%)	20	46	27	4	2	1	0

FIGURE 1. Comparison between Pakistani and American people in self-reports of happiness.

Table 3 presents analysis on well-being separately for happiness and life satisfaction by demographic data (the effect of age on well-being is not demonstrated here; as a continuous variable, it is included instead in regression analyses shown in Tables 5 and 6). The total number of cases is unequal in different categories due to missing data in the relevant variables. Table 3 shows that men and women were surprisingly similar on both indicators of well-being. Similarly, order of birth did not appear to be a significant factor in well-being. However, marital status and social class were found to be significantly associated with happiness and satisfaction. To compare the relative effects of these significant demographic variables, social class and marital status, effect sizes were calculated following J. Cohen (1988). This analysis showed moderate effect sizes for both marital status (.39 and .41 for happiness and life satisfaction, respectively) and social class (.51 for happiness and .45 for life satisfaction); social class had the stronger impact on both indices of well-being.

To ascertain the real difference between pairs of groups, post-hoc tests (Tukey's honestly significant differences) were computed. People belonging to high social class appeared to be more satisfied and happy than the other two groups. Divorced people showed the lowest levels of life satisfaction and happiness. On life satisfaction, married and unmarried people scored higher than divorced people ($p < .001$); widowed people also reported significantly greater satisfaction than divorced individuals. The difference between married/ unmarried and widowed was not significant. On the index of happiness, however, both married and unmarried scored higher than the other two groups.

It is important to point out here that among unmarried people, 56% were less than 30 years of age and hence were not "confirmed" bachelors and could be married later. In Pakistan, less than 30 is usually considered a suitable marrying age (for women it is even less than that), and if someone does not marry by that age, parents start getting anxious and society also becomes curious. To investigate the difference between older married and unmarried respondents (>30), *t*-tests were computed

TABLE 2. Mean Life Satisfaction Across Nations

Nation	Life Satisfaction
Bulgaria	5.03
Russia	5.37
Belarus	5.52
Latvia	5.70
Romania	5.88
Estonia	6.00
Lithuania	6.01
Hungary	6.03
Turkey	6.41
Japan	6.53
Nigeria	6.59
Korea (South)	6.69
India	6.70
Portugal	7.07
Pakistan	**7.07***
Spain	7.15
Germany	7.22
Argentina	7.25
China	7.29
Italy	7.30
Brazil	7.38
Chile	7.55
Norway	7.68
Finland	7.68
United States	7.73
Netherlands	7.77
Ireland	7.88
Canada	7.89
Denmark	8.16
Switzerland	8.36

*Figure derived from the current study.

on the two indicators of well-being. Although the results of two *t*-tests showed higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness among married people, they did not reach statistical significance, showing a nonsignificant effect of marriage. Divorced and widowed individuals were not included in this analysis because 98% from both groups were over 30 years of age.

A correlation matrix of other theory-guided correlates of well-being was obtained (Table 4). The highest correlation was between life satis-

TABLE 3. Subjective Well–Being by Demographic Variables

Variable	Face Happiness Mean (*SD*)	*t*/*F*	Life Satisfaction Mean (*SD*)	*t*/*F*
Gender				
Men (477)	4.93 (1.33)	.10	7.14 (2.08)	.91
Women (485)	4.95 (1.32)		7.02 (2.05)	
Marital Status				
Married (509)	5.03 (1.26)		7.24 (1.99)	
Unmarried (317)	5.04 (1.36)	8.47*	7.09 (2.05)	10.72*
Divorced (39)	4.26 (1.37)		5.41 (2.35)	
Widow (85)	4.48 (1.33)		6.74 (1.90)	
Social Class				
High (183)	5.69 (1.03)		8.14 (1.68)	
Middle (370)	5.14 (1.18)	67.23*	7.21 (1.97)	50.12*
Low (347)	4.44 (1.37)		6.37 (2.10)	
Order of Birth				
Eldest (244)	4.91 (1.44)		6.89 (2.15)	
Middle (567)	4.95 (1.27)	0.48	7.13 (2.01)	1.20
Youngest (100)	5.06 (1.35)		7.16 (2.14)	

*$p < .001$.

faction and happiness, showing an obvious association between these two indicators of subjective well-being. Both indicators, however, had the highest positive correlation with job satisfaction, indicating the significance of work for positive state of mind. Positive correlations also were obtained between well-being and income level, social support, marital satisfaction, and religiosity. Both indicators of personal well-being, however, did not show significant relationships with age, personality type, and self-esteem.

Because the Religiosity Scale consisted of both beliefs and practice elements and a possibility of both having differing relationships with subjective well-being (SWB) could not be ignored (e.g., practice could entail social support not available to an inactive believer), separate correlations were obtained between beliefs and practice scores and both indicators of SWB. Because both elements of religiosity were very similar in their correlations with happiness (beliefs = .12; practice = .13) and life satisfaction (beliefs = .11; practice = .10), the next analyses (multiple regression) were conducted with combined scores on the Religiosity Scale.

TABLE 4. Correlation Matrix of all Variables Included in Regression Analysis

	Age	RS	EIS	SE	MS	SS	Income	WS	PH	LS
Age	1.00									
Religiosity scale		1.00	.004	.02	.08*	–.01	.03	.09**	.12***	.10**
Extraversion Introversion scale			1.00	–.009	–.001	.03	.002	–.06	.001	.003
Self–Esteem				1.00	–.005	.05	–.006	.01	.014	.012
Marital Satisfaction					1.00	.13***	.04	.23***	.18***	.24***
Social support						1.00	.16***	.22***	.29***	.21***
Income							1.00	.11***	.23***	.24***
Work satisfaction								1.00	.31***	.39***
Personal happiness									1.00	.56***
Life satisfaction										1.00

*$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$.

TABLE 5. Step–Wise Regression Analysis for Predictors of Happiness

Variables	B	Standard Error	*t*	*p*
Work satisfaction	.22	.016	7.14	.001
Social support	.20	.024	6.82	.001
Income	.17	.001	5.80	.001
Religion	.10	.003	3.37	.001
Marital satisfaction	.09	.025	2.93	.01

Note. $R = .44$; $R^2 = .19$; $F = 32.68$ ($df = 7, 965$; $p < .001$)

To find out the better predictors of happiness and life satisfaction, two sets of multiple regression were conducted. Both analyses with all variables entered in the equation indicated that 19% and 23% variations in happiness and life satisfaction, respectively, could be caused by the joint interplay of all variables included in the equations; the same variables (job satisfaction, social support, marital satisfaction, income, religiosity) were found to be the significant predictors of both indices of well-being. Two sets of step-wise regression, however, indicated that job satisfaction was the best predictor of both—happiness (Table 5) and life satisfaction (Table 6)—and could alone account for 10% and 15% of variance in scores of both indicators of well-being. The remaining 9% of variation in happiness and 8% of change in life satisfaction scores could be attributed to social support, income, marital satisfaction, and religious affiliation. The factors of age, self-esteem, and personality type did not contribute significantly to scores of both measures.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current work need to be interpreted cautiously due to the following methodological limitations: (a) The data only represents the residents of urban Lahore, the provincial capital. However, Lahore contains a rich mix of people and many of them have come from various parts of Pakistan, both urban and rural. Moreover, the sample was collected from diverse areas of Lahore, ranging from upper class to poor and modern to congested. Also, the sample consisted of respondents from *Kacchi Abadies*, the majority of whom have come from neighboring villages of Lahore in search of employment. (b) Measurement of happiness and life satisfaction was based entirely on self-reports and was not supplemented or validated by some other source of information. (c) The validity of some assessment tools might also be questioned; for example, work, marital satisfaction, and social support were derived from only a

TABLE 6. Step–Wise Regression Analysis for Predictors of Life Satisfaction

Variables	B	Standard Error	*t*	*p*
Work satisfaction	.31	.024	10.48	.001
Income	.19	.000	6.54	.001
Marital satisfaction	.15	.038	4.99	.001
Social support	.09	.037	3.11	.001
Religiosity	.07	.005	2.31	.05

Note. $R = .39$; $R^2 = .15$; $F = 39.03$ ($df = 7, 965$; $p < .001$).

few questions and the evaluation again was based on self-reports. Moreover, the self-esteem questionnaire was originally devised and validated with Western populations, and may not be measuring the self-worth of Asian people.

The current work also has its positive points, the main one being that it is the first-ever large-scale survey of Pakistani people on indices of well-being. Moreover, the survey subjects were from different walks of life and represented major parts of Lahore. Although the survey sample was not random, in order to reduce personal bias, a systematic procedure was adopted for the selection of survey households; that is, the researcher would start from the first street in an area, approach the first house on the street, and then contact every tenth house. Consistent with previous investigations, the data of the present study showed that the number of happy people exceeds those who are unhappy. The mean scores on happiness and life satisfaction (4.96 and 7.07 respectively) were considerably higher than the scale median points (4.00 and 5.50, respectively). Diener and Diener (1996) found in a number of studies that most people report being above neutral in mood the majority of the time. In the periodic National Opinion Research Centre survey, 9 in 10 Americans say they are happy; only 1 in 10 state they are not happy (Lykken, 1999). The present study showed that 7 in 10 rated themselves as being happy rather than unhappy. In Western Europe and North America, 8 in 10 describe themselves as being more satisfied than dissatisfied (Inglehart, 1990); these figures are similar to those found with the current sample. It may seem surprising that despite all economic hardships, a weak economy, social and political turmoil, and unrest in Pakistan, these people resemble the majority of people of other nations on the continuum of life satisfaction and happiness. To support this perspective, researchers have accumulated evidence that life circumstances correlate with subjective well-being only at moderate levels due to the process of adaptation. It has been proposed that all people labor on a "hedonic treadmill" (Brickman & Camp-

bell, 1971). This view has been supported by later studies conducted with lottery winners (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978) and people with spinal cord injuries (Silver, 1982) by showing that people exposed to high accomplishments and severe negative events all are destined to hedonic neutrality in the long run. The current investigation found that all predictors together produced 19% and 23% variance in happiness and life satisfaction, respectively. In a previous study, Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) found that 10 resources, including income, number of friends, religious faith, intelligence, and education, together predicted only 15% of the variance in happiness.

Diener (2000) refined the theory of adaptation by suggesting that instead of adapting back to neutrality, people may return to a positive set-point. This notion obtained evidence from the studies showing that most people report above average well-being (Diener & Diener, 1996; Meyer, 2000). The World Value Survey (cited in Diener, 2000) shows that on the life satisfaction scale, most nations score above 5.5, the midpoint of the scale (see Table 1). In comparison with people from other nations, Pakistani people lie more or less at the median point (7.11) on the scale of life satisfaction. Pakistani people are less happy than the majority of those in European and North American countries, and are happier than those in the former Soviet Union and some Eastern European and Asian countries. It can be inferred from the ratings shown in Table 2 that affluent nations with economic and political stability are conducive to increased satisfaction with life. Diener et al. (1995) suggested that one reason wealthy nations are happier is that they are more likely to fulfill basic human needs for food, shelter, and health. Also, they have better human rights records. Japan appears as an exception, with high income but a relatively low level of well-being. Diener (2000) suggested that this unexpected finding might be due to strong conformity pressures and very high expectations.

The relationship between wealth and positive affect was also confirmed by the present findings, as the level of income was significantly positively correlated with both personal happiness and life satisfaction. Moreover, people in the high social class scored highest on the gamut of happiness and life satisfaction followed by middle and then lower classes. Although profession and education were adopted as the indicator of social class, income can also be taken as a reliable determinant of social class. Moreover, level of income and years of education were also positively correlated. The positive associations between all these interlinked variables demonstrate the importance of wealth in a developing country. Diener (2000) suggested that in poor countries wealth is more important for individuals, because people in countries such as India, Nigeria, and China, want cars, refrigerators, VCRs, and other possessions that people in the West possess. He added, however, that changes in in-

come in the wealthiest nations, produce no increase in happiness because evaluative standards increase with rising income.

Studies conducted in affluent countries have shown a surprisingly weak correlation between income and happiness (Inglehart, 1990), whereas Diener and Diener (cited in Myers & Diener, 1995) have reported a moderate correlation between the two in poor countries such as Bangladesh and India. It is interesting to note that the current sample had a wide range of income level, from $30 to $5,000 per month. Obviously, people at the lowest end of the continuum will not have even the very basic necessities of life, and these are the people for whom money matters a lot.

Myers (2000) concluded, however, that once people are able to afford the necessities of life, increasing level of affluence matters surprisingly little. It is generally agreed that enduring personal happiness generally does not rise with personal affluence. Even lottery winners achieve only a jolt of pleasure (Argyle, 1986). It has been pointed out that wealth is like health: Its absence can breed misery, but having it is no guarantee of happiness (Myers & Diener, 1995). In the current study, work satisfaction appeared to be the best predictor of life satisfaction and personal happiness. The famous Russian writer Maxim Gorky anticipated recent research on work satisfaction by suggesting that "when work is pleasure life is a joy and when work is duty life is slavery" (cited in Myers & Diener, 1995, p. 15). This satisfaction seems to be driven less by external monetary rewards than by the intrinsic rewards of creating the work and finding personal identity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Congruent with this notion, one cobbler in the present study reported high satisfaction with life as he claimed that his work was appreciated in the whole area. Social support proved to be another strong predictor of general well-being. Previous studies have reported that being attached to friends and partners with whom we can share intimate thoughts promotes positive feelings (Pavot, Diener, & Fujita, 1990) and also outweighs stress and strain (S. Cohen, 1988).

Consistent with previous reports, married people were found to be happier and more satisfied than either widowed or divorced individuals, and among the married those with high marital satisfaction also reported increased levels of well-being. The married scored higher than the unmarried on well-being, although the difference was nonsignificant. Repeated surveys in Europe and America have shown married people being happier and more satisfied with life (Inglehart, 1990; Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan,1989). Mastekaasa (1995) concluded that the marriage-happiness correlation is mainly due to the beneficial effects of marriage. It has been pointed out that marriage offers people new roles, additional rewards, and sources of identity and self-esteem (Crosby, 1987). In close-knit East-

ern societies like Pakistan, a supportive and intimate marital relationship is especially important because couples have to depend on each other for dealing with many family affairs. For women, especially, marriage is like a secure bond, and marital integrity can guarantee them respect from society. On the contrary, divorce or separation can bring about significant suffering for them. The current findings showed the lowest levels of life satisfaction and happiness among those who were separated or divorced, whereas the unmarried were not significantly lower in reported subjective well-being than the married. This suggests that being unmarried is less stressful than having broken relationships. Although reports from European and North American countries have showed similar findings, this seems truer in a traditional society where divorce is strongly condemned by the public, a reaction largely determined by cultural factors rather than by religious ones.

The positive association between religiosity and both indicators of well-being has also been demonstrated earlier. Surveys conducted in the USA and 14 European nations have found that reported happiness and life satisfaction rise with strength of religious affiliation and frequency of attendance at worship services (Inglehart, 1990; Witter, Stock, Okun, & Haring, 1985). The sense of meaning and purpose that many people derive from this support may act as a buffer against negative emotions. Religion, although a strong predictor, did not turn out to be the best predictor as speculated.

The current study failed to show significant relationship of well-being with gender, age, personality type (extravert/introvert), and self-esteem. Despite the reported gender differences in depressive affect (Mumford et al., 1997), men and women in the current study were equally likely to declare themselves as happy. Like gender, age gave little clue to happiness, a finding consistently reported in previous work (Inglehart, 1990; Meyers & Diener, 1995). In a meta-analysis, Lucas and Gohm (2000) examined data from the World Values Survey II, which included approximately 57,000 respondents from 41 nations, and the International College Student Data Study, which included responses from over 6,000 college students from 39 nations around the world. Their results indicated that women and older people had a tendency to experience greater unpleasant affect than their respective counterparts. However, age had no effect on life satisfaction.

The previous associations between personality type, self-esteem, and well-being (Headey & Wearing, 1992) were not established in the current study. As far as personality type is concerned, it may be hypothesized that people who are introverted may feel contented in their own world of solitude, and also that being outgoing and social is not the only way to guarantee happiness. Linking positive well-being and self-es-

teem, Myers and Diener (1996) described those who are happy as having high self-esteem. Moreover, they usually believe themselves to be more ethical, more intelligent, less prejudiced, better able to get along with others, and healthier than the average person. These researchers believed, however, that the strong association between well-being and self-esteem usually found in individualistic societies is often weaker in collectivist cultures where the group is given priority over the self.

CONCLUSIONS

The current work on psychological well-being is a welcome complement to long-standing work on mental distress. The findings of the current investigation suggest that a number of variables are important in making people happy and satisfied, although some of them contribute more than the others. The results indicate that happiness is not restricted to affluent people and suggest a need to understand the significance of a desirable balance of work, relationships, and wealth. The findings also suggest that, with a few exceptions, similar predictors are linked with subjective well-being in both Eastern and Western societies. By conducting further research on positive affect, we can help people redetermine their priorities and better understand how to construct a world that adds to human happiness.

REFERENCES

Andrews, F. M., & Withey, S.B. (1976). *Social indicators of well-being: Americans' perceptions of life quality*. New York: Plenum.

Argyle, M. (1986). *The psychology of happiness*. London: Methuen.

Argyle, M. (1999). Causes and correlates of happiness. In D. Kahneman, E. Doemer. & N. Schwartz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 353-375). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Brickman, P., & Campbell, D.T. (1971). Hedonic relativism and planning the good society. In M. H. Appley (Ed.), *Adaptation-level theory* (pp. 287-305). New York: Academic Press.

Brickman, P., Coates, D., & Janoff-Bulman, R.J. (1978). Lottery winners and accident victims: Is happiness relative? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36,* 917-927.

Campbell, A., Converse, P.E., & Rodgers, W.L. (1976). *The quality of American life: Perceptions, evaluations, and satisfactions*. New York: Sage.

Cantril, H. (1967). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Chicago: Aldine.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cohen, S. (1988). Psychosocial models of the role of social support in the aetiology of physical disease. *Health Psychology, 7,* 269-297.

Crohan, S.E., Antonucci, T.C., Adelmann, P.K., & Coleman, L.M. (1989). Job characteristics and well-being at midlife. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 13,* 223-235.

Crosby, F.J. (Ed.). (1987). *Spouse, parent, worker: On gender and multiple roles*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist, 55*, 34-43.

Diener, E., & Diener, C. (1996). Most people are happy. *Psychological Science,7,* 181-185.

Diener, E., Diener, M., & Diener, C. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 851-864.

Diener, E., Sandvik, E., & Pavot, W. (1991). Happiness is the frequency, not the intensity, of positive versus negative affect. In F. Strack, M. Argyle, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Subjective well-being: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 119-139). New York: Pergamon.

Eysenck, H.J. (1953). *The structure of human personality*. New York: Wiley.

Headey, B., & Wearing, A. (1992). *Understanding happiness:A theory of well-being*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

Inglegart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lucas, R.E., & Gohm, C.L. (2000). Age and sex differences in subjective well-being across cultures. In Ed. Diener, & E. M. Suh (Eds.), *Culture and subjective well-being* (pp. 291-317). Champaign, IL: MIT Press.

Lykken, D. (1999). *Happiness*. New York: Golden Books.

Mastekaasa, A. (1995). Age variations in the suicide rates and self-reported subjective well-being of married and never married persons. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 5*, 21-39.

Mumford, D.B., Saeed, K., Ahmad, I., Latif, S., & Mubbashar, M.H. (1997). Stress and psychiatric disorders in rural Punjab. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 170*, 473-478.

Myers, D.G. (2000). The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist, 55,* 56-67.

Myers, D. G., & Diener, E. (1995). Who is happy? *Psychological Science, 6*, 10-19.

Myers, D.G., & Diener, E. (1996). The pursuit of happiness. *Scientific American, 274*(5), 54-56.

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. (1995). *Standard Occupational Classification, 2,* 338-343.

Pavot, W., Diener, E., & Fujita, F. (1990). Extraversion and happiness. *Personality and Individual Differences, 11,* 1299-1306.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ryff, C.D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Exploration on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 1069-1081.

Sandvik, E., Diener, E., & Seidlitz, L. (1993). Subjective well-being: The convergence and stability of self-report and non-self-report measures. *Journal of Personality, 61*, 317-342.

Silver, R. L. (1982). *Coping with an undesirable life event: A study of early reactions to physical disability*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Suhail, K., & Akram, S. (2002). Correlates of death anxiety in Pakistan. *Death Studies, 26*(1), 39-50.

Witter, R.A., Stock, W.A., Okun, M.A., & Haring. M.J. (1985). Religion and subjective well-being in adulthood: A quantitative synthesis. *Review of Religious Research, 26,* 332-342.

Wood, W., Rhodes, N., & Whelan, M. (1989). Sex differences in positive well-being: A consideration of emotional style and marital status. *Psychological Bulletin, 106*, 249-264.