

Formation and Determination of Psychometric Features Pertaining to Happiness Inventory

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Abstract

There have been a lot of arguments about the way happiness can be measured. Multiple questionnaires and inventories are used for this purpose. The present study seeks to formulate and determine psychometric features (stability and reliability) and a confirmative factor-based structure is proposed. B.A. and M.A. students of Ahvaz Azad University in year 94–95 participate in this study. 350 students were randomly selected and data was collected using happiness inventory. Data analysis revealed the intended inventory consists of 5 factors and 43 elements. This inventory enjoys relatively high reliability and validity. The confirmative factor – based structure also showed the inventory has a five element model.

Keywords: psychometric features, happiness

1. Introduction

Happiness is regarded as one of our mental needs since it has a great effect on every aspect of our lives. Men have been looking for ways to live a better life and the things giving him the most pleasure since the very beginning (Dickey, 1999). Long ago people felt the chance and happiness amount to the same thing and believed there were otherworldly forces affecting them and making them do thing. Nowadays people have different views (Mc Mahon, 2000). Psychologists have shifted their attention to positive thinking in late 20th. There was a plethora of happiness studies in 1960 and different organizations worked on this (Argyle, 2001).

Argyle (1995) defines happiness as a combination of positive affection, absence of negative emotions, and satisfaction in life. Winhoven (1988) expresses the most comprehensive and practical definition; happiness is one's judgment of his whole life quality. He adds that it shows how one loves his life. Matlin, Garoun (1979), Argyle, and Martin Lou (1995) defines happiness as positive motivation, satisfaction, and absence of negative feelings like depression. They see positive interpersonal relations, leading a purposeful life, personality growth, and love as parts of happiness. They believe who have a positive attitude towards the events are actually happier. In general and as far as psychological texts are concerned, there are several assumptions regarding happiness (Ferooh, 2009). Following gave some explanations about three classic theories in the book "Rudiments of Positive Psychology":

1. The first theory is hedonism which is rooted in ancient Greece. The word is derived from a Greek term "hedone" meaning pleasure. Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, believed men pleasure and happiness can be traced back to his refraining from pain and enjoying the most. This view is adopted by other European philosophers till 19th when Jeremy Bentham introduced "Utilitarianism" based on the same grounds and John Stuart Mill elaborated upon it. Following this view, a happy life is a kind of life in which good feelings (pleasure) are experienced the most and negative thoughts (pain and sorrow) are very rare. In other words, happiness is a combination of all the existing feelings throughout the life.
2. The second theory is the desire (need). Following this view, happiness means getting what you want whether you enjoy it or not (Griffin, 1986).
3. The third theory or a list of goals. In this view there are really valuable things in life and happiness means achieving these valued goals like job, friendship, education, knowledge, comfort, welfare, health and generally all the goals for which you are highly motivated. These individual goals are realistic and freely chosen. They can help us have a happy existence and improve our mental health. These are the goals that mean something to us in

contrary to those imposed on us. They give us a sense of satisfaction (Compton & Hoffman, 2012).

Most of the related studies are conducted in eastern countries. All the similar studies in the eastern world (Kim et al., 2007; Inoguchi & Fujii, 2009; Ingersoll-Dayton et al., 2004; Eryilmaz, 2010; Suhail & Chaudhry, 2004; Kjell, et al., 2013) indicate there is a specific feature common to the happiness found in eastern people (Nakamura, 1985). Eastern people have a sense of belonging to a collective life. Such values have a great impact on their lives. In other words, there is a great difference in how happiness is defined in western and eastern cultures. Westerners place too much importance on individuality which is at odds with collectivism which accentuates a harmonious relationship with other society members. Islam places a great importance on both individual happiness and social aspects. Muslims are demanded to meet their needs following the social standards. The evil deeds are strongly condemned (Smither & Khordandi, 2009).

Is happiness which is actually conceptualized in western culture can be seen in Muslim world? Or does it have other distinctive features in such countries? These are the questions which need much work to be done. Much of the limited studies conducted refer to Japan and China. There is a lack of a solid and comprehensive study shedding light on the definition of happiness in eastern countries (Jaafar et al., 2012).

What is happiness? Islamic studies reveal it contains two components: first joy and then satisfaction. Happiness definition should be in line with the concepts of bliss and also life facts. Following this definition, bliss has three basic constituent, each containing a specific aspect as follows:

From its nature perspective: There is no evil or pain associated with it. It is also motivating. There is no man seeking bliss through evil and wrong doing. Following different schools, events cannot be determined by personal interpretations. The state of being good or evil is solely based on God unitary. The only thing a man can do is to discover them and lead his life regarding them.

From its time perspective: It is stable and durable. It is not something momentary. If one pursues a brief positive deed, it is not regarded as bliss. Bliss is eternal and worth seeking. One can be either happy or unhappy in a specific course of his life. This is not actually what we mean by this definition. Momentary bliss is not the point and has no place in this definition.

From its emotional perspective: It brings joy and happiness to life, but not sadness or regret. Since bliss is associated with eternal happiness, it brings lasting joy. If something makes one momentarily happy, but brings much sorrow and regret in future, it can't be considered bliss. Man is not to be fooled by such short lived pleasures which always end disastrously (Pasandide, 2013).

Satisfaction is defined based on God's singleness which is known as "giving into destiny". Satisfaction is one of the elements of bliss and plays a role in happiness. It contains one fundamental element as God's good will throughout one's life. Destiny is an external factor to which satisfaction/dissatisfaction relates. As imam Ali said, A real believer is satisfied even in unfavorable conditions (Ghorar Hakam, p. 3723) Faith brings sheer satisfaction and makes one tolerant in case of problems (Pasandide, 2013). Tarmazi quotes from Muhammad in his book "The Traditions":

Adam was blissfully happy since he gave into Gods will and was miserable since he was disobedient towards God's will.

According to religious texts, faith in God leads to one's bliss and joy. This is how he feels happy since he believes in God. A blissfully happy man is one who has a purpose in life. Loneliness is painful for him and he likes to be with others.

Scholars have looked at happiness from different perspectives and enumerated multiple definitions for it. It is a different concept in the eye of both western and eastern researchers. In Islam there are several concepts for it and many ways are known to reach it. However, there are many factors ignored here (since it is first conceptualized by secular philosophers who had a nihilist approach towards it) and the existing measurement tools can't be much dependable.

Following the same grounds, a reliable questionnaire is formed based on Islamic culture. The rest of this study seeks to find out whether such questionnaire enjoys high reliability/validity.

2. Methodology

A combination of two phased sequential methods is employed here. Both descriptive / inferential statistics are also used and a deductive approach is adopted. The researcher scrutinized people ideas about happiness from a specific age group (20-30). A purposeful sampling is also conducted. At first, there was an interview describing their ideas. There were both general and elaborative questions to encourage the participants to respond openly. More questions

were posed just in case. Similar questions were asked following each interview. Each interview lasts 20 or 30 minutes.

Zigzag shapes were used for the purposed of data collection. The researcher listed the specific categories following the analysis of the interview questions. It was done in a recursive mode. The gathered data was actually a repetition of former questions following an interview with 24 people and a theoretical agreement was made. Likert scale containing 52 items was used. The terms “totally agree”, “agree”, “agree to some extent”, “totally disagree”, “disagree” and “disagree to some extent” were numbered from 1 to 6 in both positive and negative attributions. Five psychologists, counselors, and theologians gathered to judge the test reliability/validity. Following their assessment, some modifications took place. Finally the happiness questionnaire was conducted on a specific group to determine its psychometric features.

2.1 Participants, Samples, and Sampling Procedure

B.A. and M.A. students of Ahvaz Islamic Azad University in the year 94–95 were included in this study. The size of this group has a key role here and affects the results significantly. Fifteen cases were regarded for each predictive variable found in a multiple regression analysis model which employs a normal method of the minimum square roots. This gives a well rounded rule (as cited in Human, 2005). Considering the above mentioned materials, 350 B.A. and M.A. students of Ahvaz Azad Islamic University participated in this study. There were incomplete data from 32 people which reduced the number of participants to 318. They were all randomly selected.

Happiness inventory: A researcher formed questionnaire was used to measure the happiness variable. This questionnaire was based on the related texts regarding Islamic-Iranian culture and some elements from western counterparts. A close study of happiness and bliss in Islamic culture helped to form 52 questions about self, others, work, God, and the whole world. This questionnaire was based on Likert scale and there were many directions on how to answer the items. To assess its validity, all 52 questions were scrutinized by five counselors and psychologists and subsequent changes were made. Later on the students were required to answer it.

2.1 Data Analysis

The factorial structure of happiness questionnaire was checked using both explorative and confirmative factor analysis. In explorative analysis, first the appropriateness of sampling indexes and Bartlett coefficient were calculated. Then, the whole analysis process was performed. The explorative analysis procedure was done in form of analyzing the main constituents and Varimax rotation. Lisrel software was used to perform confirmative factor analysis. Here first the model was determined and the appropriacy of indexes was checked. Chi square in proportion to the freedom degree, GFI (or goodness of fit index), AGFI (or adjusted goodness of fit index), RMR (or root mean residuals), and RMSEA (or root mean square errors) were among the most important indexes obtained. Chi square is absolute model fitness index indicating the conformity degree of co-variances (that factorial structure implies) between the observed ones. The more Chi square is larger than zero, the less fitness in factorial model is seen. A meaningful Chi square indicates a significant difference can be noticed between assumed and observed co – variances. However, Chi square represents the size of sample and has a larger amount in bigger cases. This is how it becomes statistically meaningful. This is why researchers attribute it to its degree of freedom and the amount of 2 is regarded as a well round figure of goodness index.

Incremental fitness index (IFI) and conformity fitness index (CFI) are two fitness indexes comparing the fitness of a specific model with its basic counterpart regardless of any co variance found in variables. The more it equals 1, more fitness is obtained. The amount of 0.90 is a well round figure of fitness index. Another index is the root mean square of errors (or RMSEA). Although the amount of zero indicates full fitness, amounts less than 0.5 indicate a better fitness (Human, 1384).

3. Results

To check the questionnaire validity, first explorative factorial analysis was conducted in form of basic constituents using Varimax rotation. The purpose of this process was to see what constituent(s) formed the questionnaire. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 1. The amount of KOM and Bartlett test

Test	Amount
KOM	0.922
Bartlett	6945.71
Degree of Freedom	90.
Statistical Significance	0.000

Two issues should be considered before performing factorial analysis; first the appropriateness of sampling (ensuring the correlation matrix underlying factorial analysis would never equal zero) should be more than 0.6 so that factorial analysis can be performed.

Secondly, testing the hypothesis saying the observed correlation matrixes refer to a sample with independent variables. For this reason, Bartlett test was conducted. Variables should be correlated so that a factorial analysis model can be applied. The test was proven meaningful since $P=0/000$. This indicates that performing factorial analysis based on correlation matrixes is statistically meaningful.

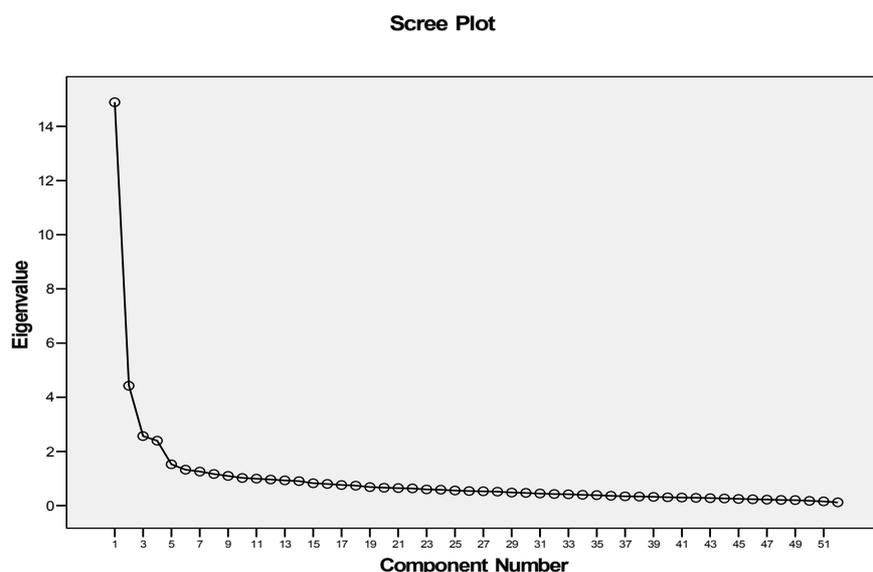


Diagram 1. Rotation of particular values

Regarding particular values and the above diagram, main constituents were analyzed based on 5 components (for particular values equal and more than 1.5) 50 times and the components larger than 0.40 were rearranged. 9 questions out of 52 were eliminated since their factor loading was less than 0.40.

Table 2. A summary of factor analysis (through the method of main components and Varimax rotation)

After Varimax rotation			Before rotation			Factor
Accumulative variance percentage	Variance percentage	Particular values	Accumulative variance percentage	Variance percentage	Particular value	
14.1	14.1	6.06	29.54	29.54	12.70	1
25.17	11.07	4.76	38.46	8.92	3.83	2
35.14	9.96	4.28	43.75	5.28	2.27	3
44.23	9.09	3.91	48.89	5.14	2.21	4
52.26	8.02	3.45	52.26	3.36	1.45	5

As obvious in above table, the particular value of the first factor (12.70) shows a drastic change compared to other factors. These 5 factors justify about 52 percent of the total variance found between 43 cases in the questionnaire. If 5 factors are to be extracted from the whole questionnaire, about 30 percent of the common variance can be attributed to the first factor.

Table 3. The results of the explorative analysis of happiness questionnaire

Factors found in the research					Questions
5	4	3	2	1	
				0.811	I am optimistic that God will always help me
				0.806	I feel happy in my prayers
				0.802	God is my best protector
				0.770	I feel happy when I think of God
				0.740	I believe in destiny and feel happy
				0.738	I love God
				0.726	I feel life is full of gifts bestowed on me by God
				.693	I feel God is the most important of my life
				0.550	I believe universe is beautiful
			0.665		I feel energetic and active
			00.650		I feel happy and resolute
			0.579		I am an early riser
			0.576		I have purpose in my life
			0.558		I do recreational activities everyday
			0.545		I feel ready for everything in my life
			0.524		I enjoy doing things and never feel tired
			0.518		I believe I can lead a happy life on my own
			0.512		I am fully committed to my job and enjoy doing it
			0.482		I am happy with the way the things are in my life
			0.469		I have a good sense of humor
		0.680			I feel happy solving problems of others
		0.621			I am very supportive
		0.602			I enjoy being with decent people
		0.575			I like others
		0.574			I am always honest
		0.573			People think I am cheerful
		0.517			I can't forgive others
		0.486			I am optimistic towards others
		0.464			I have a good impact on others
		0.449			I am not on intimate terms with others
	0.721				I don't fulfill my duties
	0687				I feel unable to do my job
	0.681				I don't think I am strong enough to do my job
	0.651				I always feel tired doing my job
	0.650				I don't think I can take any responsibility

0.511	It is hard for me to start anything
0.632	I believe there are dead ends in life
0.591	I think world is an evil place
0.572	I believe I am unfortunate
0.545	I don't feel happy in my life
0.543	I don't think I can control my life
0.525	I am not happy what I am now
0.524	God always seeks revenge on us

As seen in Table 3:

First factor correlates with the questions concerned with God.

Second factor deals with the questions concerned with our self image.

Third factor correlates with the questions concerned with the ways we develop relationships with others.

Fourth factor correlates with the questions concerned with our occupation.

Fifth factor correlates with the questions concerned with the feeling of self – satisfaction.

Table 4. The sum of validity results and statistics pertaining to the questionnaire

Index	The whole questionnaire	Connection with satisfaction	Connection with career	Connection with others	Self connection	Connection With God
Alpha coefficient of the whole questionnaire	950	.79	.82	820	.86	.93
The mean of internal correlation coefficient of the questionnaire	.26	.36	440	330	370	.60
The mean of questions	4.7	4.6	4.48	4.48	4.49	5.15
The variance of questions	26.	1.8	1.69	1.33	1.57	1.16
The number of questions	43	7	6	10	11	9

The results from the above table show the highest alpha coefficient belongs to the first factor and the least goes to the fifth one. The validity coefficient of the whole questionnaire equals 0.95 in the whole sample. The correlation between all of the questions and the whole score was positive and statistically significant.

Confirmative factor analysis: to validate the factorial structure of the questionnaire, confirmative factor analysis was performed using Lisrel software. The results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. The statistical indexes of fitness appropriateness in a five component – structure of the happiness questionnaire

Statistical index	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	PGFI	AGFI	GFI	p	df	χ^2
Amount	0.000	1	1.5	800	.83	850	1.000	850	309

The results from the table above indicate that the five component model of happiness questionnaire enjoys appropriate fitness. The results from diagram two confirm the five component analysis model.

As it is obvious in diagram two, all the questionnaire items have a meaningful factorial value more than 0.30; the first element, connection with God, with a factorial value 0.42–0.64 in 9 items, the second factor, self connection, was valued 0.30–0.54 in ten items. The third element, satisfaction resulting from interpersonal relations, with a factorial value 0.30–0.54 in ten items. The fourth element (career satisfaction) had a factorial value 0.38–0.55 regarding six items. The fifth element (happiness in relation with satisfaction) was valued 0.38–0.54 regarding seven items. Number 20 (I don't think I am a person with a sense of humor) was the only item with a factorial value less than 0.30 and was therefore eliminated.

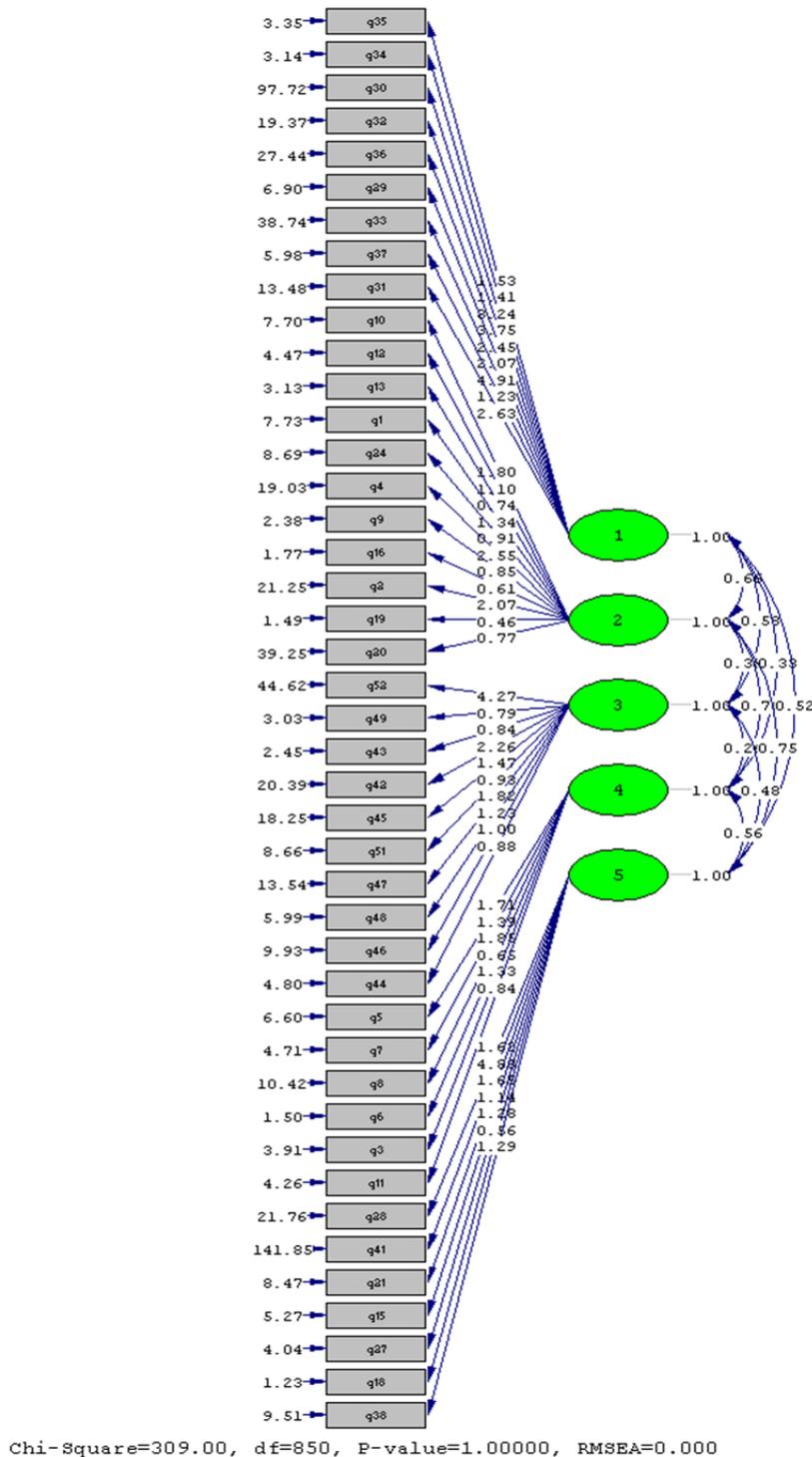


Diagram 2. The five - component model of happiness questionnaire

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Happiness or subjective well being (or SWB) is a positive internal experience and ultimate stimulus for all the human behaviors arousing the researchers' interest in the last two decades (Argyle, 1987; Diener, 1984; Veenhoven, 1993). Although there is a lack of intercultural studies in the field, there is a paucity of replaceable works (Luo, Lu, et al., 2001). There is a plethora of studies pertaining to culture – mental well being interrelation in the last three decades. Much of these studies are conducted in western countries and other nations are almost ignored. Very little is known about the psychologists' evaluation of Islamic subjective well being (Joshanloo, 2013). Islam is a very highly influential religion in the world. Nowadays one fifth of the world's population is Muslim (Newby, 2002). Since happiness is measured using foreign assessment tools in national studies, the present study seeks to design similar means based on Islamic grounds. As mentioned earlier, a happiness questionnaire was designed and its psychometric features (reliability and validity) and its confirmative factor model were all investigated. The explorative factor analysis revealed that the questionnaire is composed of 5 micro scales.

The results of the study regarding factorial structure and the multi - dimensioned model of happiness are in line with similar studies emphasizing that happiness is multi dimensional (Abedi, 2003; Hadinejad & Zareii, 2009, Human, 2012; Najafi & Dehshiri, 2012). Factorial matrices show that the first element had the most factorial value beyond the rest. The strongest correlation is seen in the first element (i.e. connection with God and giving into his will). This was actually overlooked in previous studies regarding happiness.

The second strongest correlation was noticed in item two manifesting people dynamic life and activities. Happy people assess their skills more often and try to forget bad memories. They make decisions for a better life. They follow efficient strategies to assure their well being (Car., 2011). In another similar study conducted by Najafi, Dehshiri, et al. (2012) , Abedi, et al. (2003), and Hadinejad, Zareii (2009), efficiency was seen playing an important role in happiness. Question 57 or the third element enjoys the third highest correlation. It indicates that people feel satisfied solving others' problems. Social relations play a pivotal role in one's happiness. It creates a positive mood and well being in people (Argabil, translated by Kalantari, et al., 2007). Similar findings were confirmed by Hooman, et al. (2012), Najafi, Dehshiri, et al., (2012).

The fourth item (question 7) enjoys the highest correlation since it regards the relationship between occupational satisfaction and one's self control. It was previously by Human et al. (2012). The fifth item or question 28 shows a high correlation indicating one's optimism towards his life. An optimist person always thinks of good events in life. These are the ones who process life much more comprehensively. They do this in a way that pleases them (Grousu et al., 2006). Happiness is also based on one's perception of life. It refers to one's general understanding of his satisfaction in life (Rid Melvin, 2002, as quoted by Niko, 2008). Happiness is best reflected through satisfaction and this is what Silgman (2002) regards as the most reliable and authentic sense of happiness. Conjugal satisfaction and optimism are also two main factors contributing to one's happiness (Hadinejad & Zareii, 2009; Homan et al., 2012; Najafi & Dehshiri, 2012).

Since the proportion of chi square (with freedom degree equal 0.36) and RMSEA equal zero, the five component model enjoys an appropriate fitness. The results of questionnaire reliability obtained through Cronbach's alpha revealed that the Cronbach's alpha was 0.95 for the whole questionnaire and in range of 0.79–.93 for micro scales. In other words, happiness questionnaire enjoys high reliability and validity and the confirmative factor model had an appropriate fitness too.

The results of the present study revealed that the happiness questionnaire is a multi dimensional tool based on happiness theoretical definition in Islamic culture. Since the happiness questionnaire is based on Islamic view and is composed of 5 components, researchers and psychologists can use it to shed light on this feature among people in their research projects. Unlike its predecessors, it enjoys an outstanding feature as being multi dimensional. Like any other study, there were some limitations including sampling procedures. Only Ahvaz Azad University students participated in the study.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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