

A MIXED METHOD APPROACH FOR SCALE DEVELOPMENT TO EXPLORE THE LAY CONCEPTS OF HAPPINESS IN THE CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CONTEXT

Abstract

Academic theories on happiness have extensively explored and empirically validated its antecedents and consequences and standardized assessments of happiness across cultures based on self-reported emotions and moods. However, hardly any study has indicated the importance of tacit and implicit beliefs, lived experiences, or perceptions (lay theories) in conceptualizing and validating the assessments of happiness. In addition to the above, the research on happiness in the Indian cultural setting indicated that happiness is an inclusive affair but did not consider the pluralistic values of Indian culture while conceptualizing and validating it. Owing to this gap, the present study sought to explore the Lay understanding of happiness in the contemporary context of India. The current research has adopted a mixed-method research strategy. In the qualitative method, specifically to conceptualize happiness, fifty-two participants were interviewed using an in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interview, and thematic analysis was adopted to analyze and interpret the data. Data analysis revealed three significant aspects of happiness: (i) the meaning of happiness, (ii) the causes of happiness, and (ii) interventions to maintain happiness. Quantitative methods like factor analysis and regression analysis were adopted to develop the Contemporary Happiness scale. The scale items were developed and validated based on the themes of happiness derived from the qualitative inquiry. The construct validity has been established through factor analysis, and it indicated happiness has a 3-factor structure with 20 items across the sample in the contemporary context of India. Convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity were established for both individual items and overall scales. The test-retest reliability (0.94) of the contemporary happiness scale was measured to ensure the authenticity of the scale over the period. The current study has implications for the literature on positive psychology, welfare economics, clinical psychology, and organizational psychology.

Keywords: *Lay theories of Happiness, Indian Psychology, Western Psychology, Contemporary Context, Scale development*