

Positive Psychology
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Lecture – 8
Happiness & Well-Being: Part-2

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Culture & Happiness

- ▶ Lu and Gilmour (2004) analyzed essays written by research participants on **"What is Happiness?"**
– (Psychological testing vs. open-ended questions/ semi-structured interview)
- ▶ Suh & Koo, (2008) reported that Chinese students **emphasized on spiritual cultivation and transcendence of the present** and U.S students **emphasized the enjoyment of present life.**
- ▶ Other researchers (Uchida et al. 2004) have found similar differences between natives of Western and Eastern countries regarding their predictors of happiness:
e.g. West : independence, autonomy, and agency
East: interconnectedness of self and closeness to others



In this series, our next topic is culture and happiness. Do you think culture is very important when we are studying happiness? Yes, it is. Before that we should know how we can study impact or association of culture with happiness.

I think you know about psychological testing and in the last classes I discussed about psychological testing. In psychological testing, we have series of questions or items, and then we have four choice answers, like strongly disagree to strongly agree. Say, for example, a particular statement and then their response in terms of strongly disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, and all the choices are denoted with numbers. So, in this case, at very initial stage, we convert a person's behaviour or a participant's behaviour in numbers, and there are least chances to study cultural impact in such kind of methodologies.

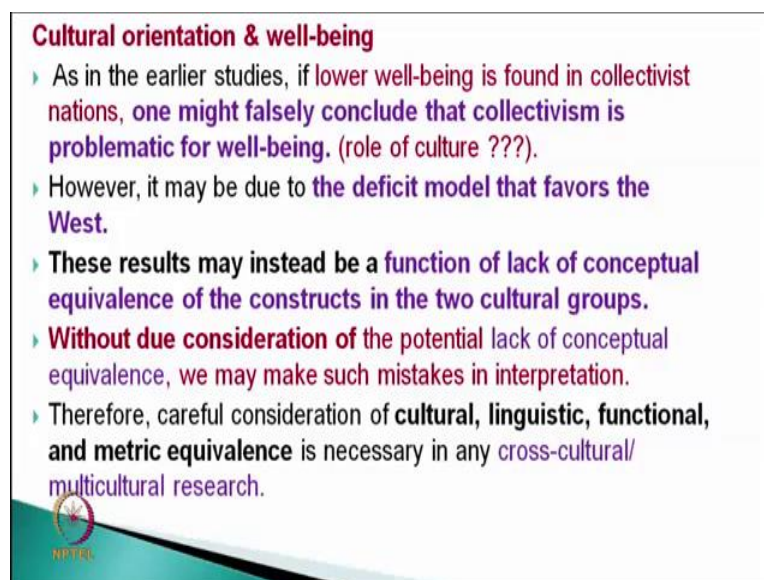
On the other hand, if we have open-ended questions or semi-structured interviews in which we are asking some questions in which they are elaborating their responses. So, during this elaboration, we get culture-specific responses. So, that is the way of studying the impact of culture in terms of happiness studies. For example, in this study, they said what is happiness?

So, when you are defining happiness, then you are using certain words or certain terms or certain ways of defining happiness which you think are highly connected with your culture.

And in such kinds of studies we observed that culture has significant impact on happiness. For example, in this study, when they compare Chinese students with U.S. students, they observed that in this essay or the questions in which we are saying 'how do you define happiness or what is happiness', they observed that Chinese students emphasized on spiritual cultivation and transcendence of the present. On the other hand, US students emphasised the enjoyment of present life. So, we can easily compare culture wise different responses for happiness. Similarly, in another study, they observed that Western and Eastern countries' students predict different factors for happiness and they said Western participants focused more on independence, autonomy, and agency as predictors of happiness. On the other hand, Eastern participants focused more on interconnectedness of self and closeness to others.

I think you can easily connect when we are saying Western cultures and Eastern cultures, you can easily connect it with collectivistic versus individualistic culture. And in collectivist cultures we give more importance to others as compared to individualistic cultures. In individualistic cultures we have I-oriented responses. On the other hand, mainly in Eastern cultures or in collectivistic cultures, we have more we-oriented responses.

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Cultural orientation & well-being

- ▶ As in the earlier studies, if lower well-being is found in collectivist nations, one might falsely conclude that collectivism is problematic for well-being. (role of culture ???).
- ▶ However, it may be due to the deficit model that favors the West.
- ▶ These results may instead be a function of lack of conceptual equivalence of the constructs in the two cultural groups.
- ▶ Without due consideration of the potential lack of conceptual equivalence, we may make such mistakes in interpretation.
- ▶ Therefore, careful consideration of **cultural, linguistic, functional, and metric equivalence** is necessary in any cross-cultural/multicultural research.

Culture orientation and well-being - let us understand a little bit more about it. There are some studies saying that lower well-being is found in collectivistic nations. However, later

on, researchers identified that there may be some other reasons. One might falsely conclude that collectivism is problematic for well-being and there may be role of culture.

So, if we do not have conceptual equivalents of happiness or any other construct which we are studying, if we do not have this equivalence in both the cultures or in multi cultures, if we are doing multicultural study, then we may get misguided results. And we may have some conclusions which may be misguided.

Take example of happiness, and this happiness model is deficit model that favours the west. So, this particular model which we have selected for our study, it more favours the west or Western cultures. So, in this case, if the results of Western cultures is better than Eastern cultures or collectivist cultures, it may indicate lack of conceptual equivalence.

And that is why before doing such kind of researches like cross cultural researches or multicultural research our first objective should be to have conceptual equivalence of the construct which we are using in that study. So, they are saying that sometimes this lack of conceptual equivalence may be cause of problem or cause of having lower well-being due to which we may have misguided results.

So, without due consideration of the potential lack of conceptual equivalence we may make such mistakes in the interpretations. Therefore, careful consideration of cultural, linguistic, functional, and metric equivalence is necessary in any cross cultural and multicultural resources. And that is very important to understand such kind of phenomena for the cross-cultural psychologist.

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Culture oriented responses:

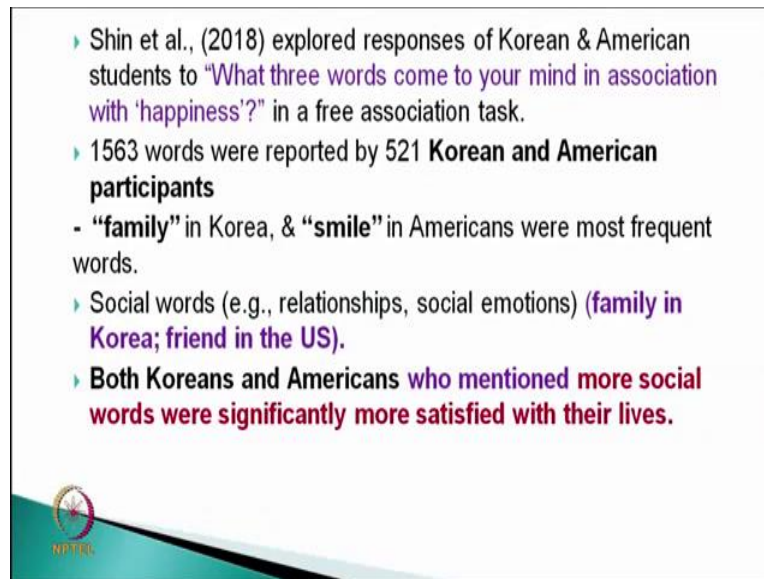
- ▶ An Indian doctoral student saw the back cover of Myers's (1993) book, which read, "We all want to be happy", and the student remarked simply, "I don't."
- ▶ A young Singaporean man, remarked in a conversation that he was going to marry his fiancée because it was socially expected of him, not because he thought he would be happy in the marriage.
- ▶ Similarly, Myers gave an example of a Korean student who was very explicit about choosing a career to be rich, not to be happy, so that he could bring face to his parents by buying them a new Mercedes.

Let us understand this concept a little bit more - that cultural oriented responses we can get if we are taking into account culture. Various Western scholars have given example of Eastern students who gave some specific responses different from Western students and they quoted how culture can have important role in studying or in understanding happiness.

In this example, first example is often of an Indian doctoral student. An Indian doctoral student saw the book cover of Myers' 1993 book "We All Want to be Happy" and the student remarked simply, "I do not." So, it means he may have another priority, not happiness. Another example is a young Singaporean man who remarked in a conversation that he was going to marry his fiancée because it was socially expected of him, not because he thought he would be happy in the marriage. So, it means social expectations are more important than getting happiness. Third example is given by Myers. Myers interacted with a Korean student who was very explicit about choosing a career to be rich, not to be happy, so that he could bring face to his parents by buying them a new costly car. So, in all these cases, they are saying that happiness is not very important for them, but may be social expectations.

Even in my classes, I have observed that along with happiness, some students give importance to money. So, there could be various other factors, rather than only happiness which is topmost rated phenomena. So, social expectations maybe there, money, or some other factors also. So, when we say all other factors, may be along with happiness, then it means culture is very important and sometimes in different cultures we get different results.

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- ▶ Shin et al., (2018) explored responses of Korean & American students to “What three words come to your mind in association with ‘happiness?’” in a free association task.
- ▶ 1563 words were reported by 521 **Korean and American participants**
- “**family**” in Korea, & “**smile**” in Americans were most frequent words.
- ▶ Social words (e.g., relationships, social emotions) (**family in Korea; friend in the US**).
- ▶ **Both Koreans and Americans who mentioned more social words were significantly more satisfied with their lives.**

Shin et al in 2018 explored responses of Korean and American students and they used free association method – ‘what three words come to your mind in association with happiness’. They got 1563 words which were reported by 521 Korean and American students, and they observed that for Korean participants family was of topmost importance. On the other hand, for Americans, ‘smile’ was most frequent word. And in social words, in terms of, say, relationship and social emotions, ‘family’ in Korea and ‘friend’ in the USA was highly rated.

Both Korean and Americans who mentioned more social words were significantly more satisfied with their lives. So, lessons from such kind of researches are, first, we have different responses in different cultures. On the other hand, social words and social emotions or interpersonal relations are highly rated in individualistic as well as in collectivistic cultures.


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Our recent study on Older Indian Rural women, Singh et al., (2019) :

Q1. (i) Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are? Please mark a 10 on the scale if you are very happy and 0 if you are very unhappy.

10	Extremely happy
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	Extremely unhappy

(ii) Please give us the reason why you chose the response:



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Let us take one local example from our research and with this example I would like to share with you how in a particular group on the basis of age, gender, and locality we may have quite unique responses. Let us understand this concept with our study which was conducted on older Indian rural women. In this study, we collected data through psychological test which was quantitative as well as qualitative.

In this data, we asked the question, “Taking all things together how happy would you say you are, please mark 10 on the scale if you are very happy and 0 if you are very unhappy.” I think you can easily connect with the previous, you know, messages. It is actually Cantril ladder, through this we study overall level of happiness. Along with this quantitative data we also elaborated this question, and the second part of this question was, “Please give us the reason why you chose the response.” So, in this case, we could get unique responses and let us first understand what were their responses and then we will talk about cultural aspects of this study.

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We divided all the responses in three categories - languishing or suffering if responses are 0 to 4 category; moderate and struggling if responses were in the series of 5 to 7; and flourishing level 8 to 10.

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0-4 responses (Suffering) (40.74%)	5-7 (41.22%) Struggling	8-10 (18.4 %) Flourishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Health issues faced either by themselves or a family member ✓ Death of spouse or male member (son or grandson) ✓ Poor financial/ economic household conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ They experienced mixed feelings of happiness and sadness. ✓ Happiness experienced was attributed to their family flourishing, a sense that their current circumstances are "good". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Their responses were more positive and satisfactory such as children's employment and financial stability, children respect elders ✓ There was presence of cordial relationships amongst family members as well as with neighbours

In these responses, we observed that 0 to 4 responses are suffering. It means what are the factors which are hampering their well-being? We observed that the factors were very unique and in most of the factors they gave importance to family.

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0-4 responses (Suffering) (40.74%)	5-7 (41.22%) Struggling	8-10 (18.4 %) Flourishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ lack of earning of family member/ unemployment, ✓ Daughter becoming a widow at an early age, ✓ Alcohol consumption - habits of son and spouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Being blessed by the almighty, ✓ loving family and satisfied life, ✓ good health, responsible and obedient children, ✓ occasional attempts to find happiness in self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Joyful family circumstances, settled family, ✓ good economic conditions, ✓ residing in joint family, ✓ Sense of belongingness

For example, health issues faced either by themselves or a family member, death of spouse or male member or son or grandson was the cause of suffering, poor financial economic household conditions were cause of suffering, lack of earning of family member or unemployment was cause of suffering, daughter becoming a widow at an early age, alcohol consumption habits of son or spouse was quoted by them, worried about one's own deteriorating health, inability to attend religious activities, and uncertain future as causes of low level of well-being.

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0-4 responses (Suffering) (40.74%)	5-7 (41.22%) Struggling	8-10 (18.4 %) Flourishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Worried about one's own deteriorating health, ✓ Inability to attend religious activities, ✓ An uncertain future as cause of low level of well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Religious groups that made life meaningful, religious bonding that improved life and peace. ✓ However, some of them shared some past mishappenings in the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ faith in God and it helped them face problems. ✓ Some women were highly contended.

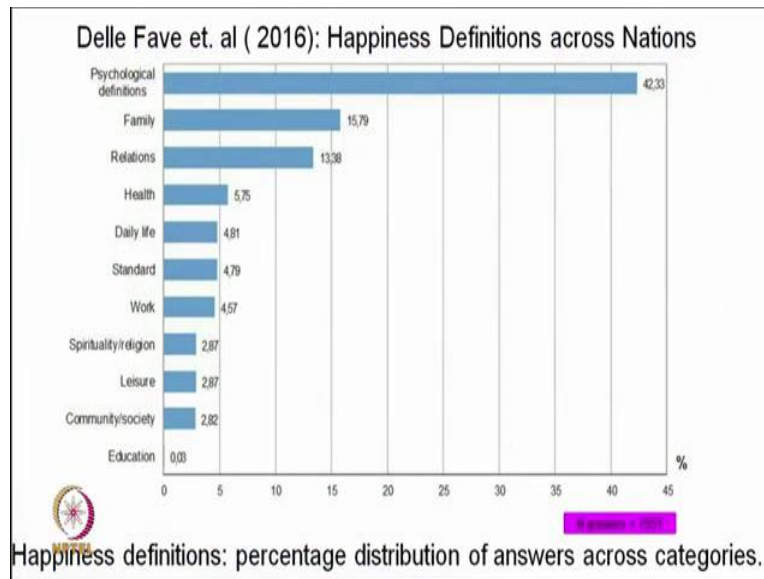
On the other hand, for higher scores, say 5 to 7, they experienced mixed feeling of happiness and sadness. However, more results were towards positivity, but still in between they had some mishappenings in the family or some other reasons which made them sad. And the group members happiness experience was attributed to their family's flourishing, the sense

that their current circumstances are good, being blessed by the almighty, loving family and satisfied life, good health, responsible and obedient children if they perceive they had, occasional attempts to find happiness in self, religious groups that made life meaningful, religious bonding that improved life and peace. However, some of them shared some past mishappenings in the family and that is why they were happy, but still they were struggling on, you know, higher level of happiness. So, similarly, in the next one, 8 to 10 – ‘flourishing.’ So, through these responses, we can understand which factors they have identified or they perceived as flourishing factors. The responses were more positive and satisfactory, such as children’s employment and financial stability, children respecting elders, - they perceived that. There was presence of cordial relationship among family members as well as with neighbours, joyful family circumstances, settled family, good economic conditions, residing in joint family, sense of belongingness they had, faith in God and it helped them during facing problems. Some women were highly contented in this group. So, through this research, we can understand that suppose we have study on adolescents, on adult, on, say, college students, do you think we would be having similar kind of responses?

So, it means a particular age is important where we had almost all responses which were family oriented. Second point here is if we take data from male members, do you think we would be having similar kind of responses? Third, if we just change the locality, say urban locality, I think definitely we would be having different kinds of responses. So, that is why age, gender, locality, and may be, you know, collectivist culture, these all factors are very, very important.

And when we are doing such kind of studies, we should understand which group we are taking in our research, and that is why as per nature of this group we may get such kind of responses. So, that is why, especially when we are doing studies by using qualitative techniques, then we get some new unique responses which are highlighted by a particular age, particular gender, particular locality, as well as culture.

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So, culture is very important phenomena for us. Similarly, if we take another research conducted by our group, and in this group, we had 12 countries and 13 data sets. And again, there was an open-ended question in which broadly we asked ‘how would you define happiness?’ And we observed that, because it is cross-nation study, so that is why through this study we can identify role of culture and how different nations’ people or different cultures’ people are responding differently.

So, in this study, we observed that when we give open-ended question what do we mean by happiness, then, there are various definitions. Some definitions are psychological, but others are family-oriented, relations-oriented, health-oriented, etc. So, in this study, we got a total of 7551 responses, as I mentioned from 12 countries and 13 data sets that we had.

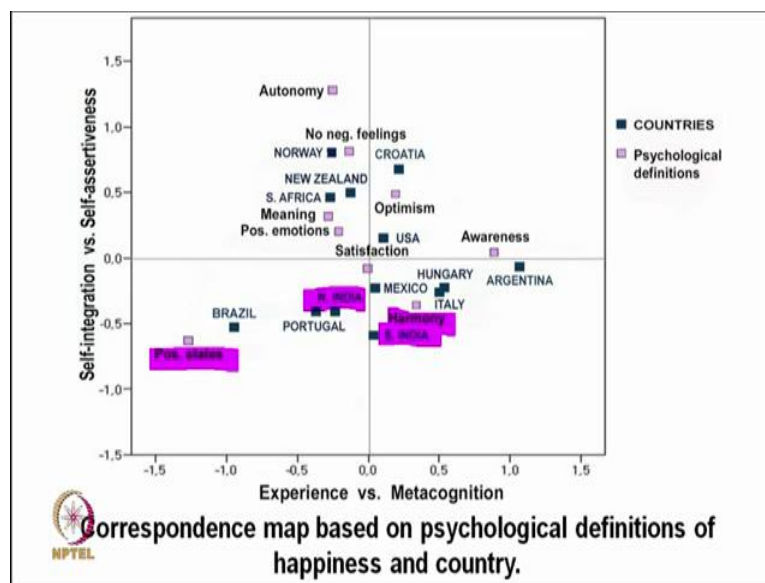
From India we had two data sets; one is from North India and another was from South India. So, in this study, we observed a variety of responses and psychological definitions 42.33% were in this category, family 15.79%, relations 13.38%, health 5.75%, daily life 4.81%, standard 4.79%, work-oriented definitions were 4.57%, spirituality/religion-oriented definitions were 2.87%, leisure 2.87%, community/society-oriented definition 2.83%, and education-oriented 0.23%.

So, it means different people are defining happiness differently and there could be various classifications of all those definitions and role of culture is very important in all these things. Then, specifically, I have borrowed from this research paper what were psychological

definitions and in psychological definitions we observe that harmony/balance-oriented definitions were 29.13% and total responses were 3196.

So, harmony/balance-oriented definitions were 29.13%, satisfaction 16.55%, positive emotions-oriented definitions were 13.92%, positive states were 7.13%, optimism-oriented definitions were 5.44%, meaning 5.04%, no negative feelings 5.04%, awareness 4.69%, autonomy 3.85%, engagement and growth 2.78%, mastery 2.63%, purpose 2.41%, and self-actualization 1.38%.

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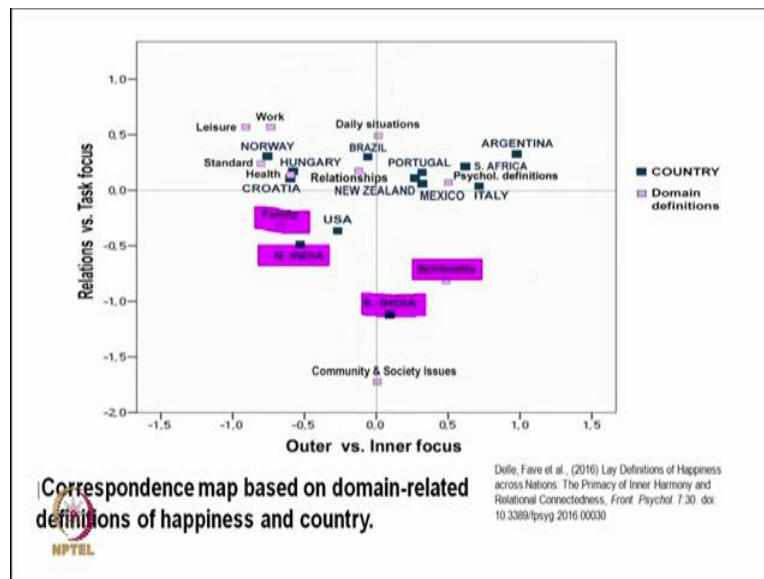
So, it means when we are saying psychological definition, then, different aspects of psychological definition have been addressed by different scholars. Let us compare different countries and especially our interest is in North India versus South India. So, then, the total data was divided on the basis of self-integration versus self-assertiveness responses, and experience versus metacognition.

Metacognition means thinking about thinking or cognition about cognition. So, broadly, we can say internal processes, when we give more importance to internal processes rather than on external processes. And we observed that South n definitions were more metacognitive or harmony which is within us or, you know, within our world to some extent we can say.

On the other hand, North India focused more on positive states, which is, you know, similar to Brazil and Portugal. On the other hand, South India is matching with Italy, Hungary,

Mexico, and Argentina – these countries. So, I think easily we can understand North India and South India also showing cultural differences on happiness.

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Then, in the next one, relations versus task focus definitions versus outer or inner focus definitions. And in this case, again, it has been observed that North India more family-oriented definitions or we can say matching even here you can easily say with USA. On the other end, South India focused more on spiritually-oriented definitions, and again, inner focus on the other hand this side that is outer focus. So, I think the point which we have raised here, culture is an important factor for understanding happiness. That is true and it is approved by certain researches.

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- Thus, we must consider **which types of processes and activities** are valued and considered positive by a particular cultural group before deciding what may have a desired impact on their well-being.
- Lyubomirsky and Layous (2013) suggest a model for determining whether certain activities will provide the desired increases in well-being.
- Their parameters include looking closely at the types of activities and their “dosage”, the effort and agency of the participant toward the activity, and the fit between person and activity.
- This criterion can be attained by devising interventions and activities that have cultural relevance for the group that one is studying.

If you want to study this research paper in detail, so reference is here, you can study even further aspects which we have raised in this study. So, that is very important for us because which types of processes and activities are valued and considered positive by a particular cultural group that is very important to understand because then only we can understand which factors are important here which have impact on well-being, and which factors are hampering our well-being, which factors are facilitating our well-being.

Researchers suggest a model for determining whether certain activities will provide the desired increases in wellbeing. Such kind of studies I will discuss in next classes in which I will give some studies from rural India and how through specific or culture-oriented activities we have observed how happiness can be increased by specific activities which are existing in particular cultures.

So, their parameters include looking closely at the type of activities and their dosage, the effort and agency of participants toward the activity, and the fit between person and activity. So, having all such kind of understandings it is important for us to know which activities are important in the given culture and how these could be connected with happiness.

This criterion can be attained by devising interventions and activities that have cultural relevance for the group that one is studying. So, knowing cultural factors is very important for us for understanding happiness in this given culture as well as in this particular culture what kind of intervention programs or activities we could introduce to increase their happiness.

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Factors Affecting Happiness/ Well-being



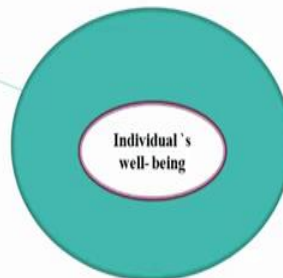
In this series, the next topic here is factors affecting happiness and well-being.

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Improving Psychological Well-being

$$B = P \times E$$

- ▶ Surroundings (Socio-Cultural environment) that facilitate an individual's well-being
- ▶ **Positive Institution**
- ▶ Country- trust & safety vs. corruption

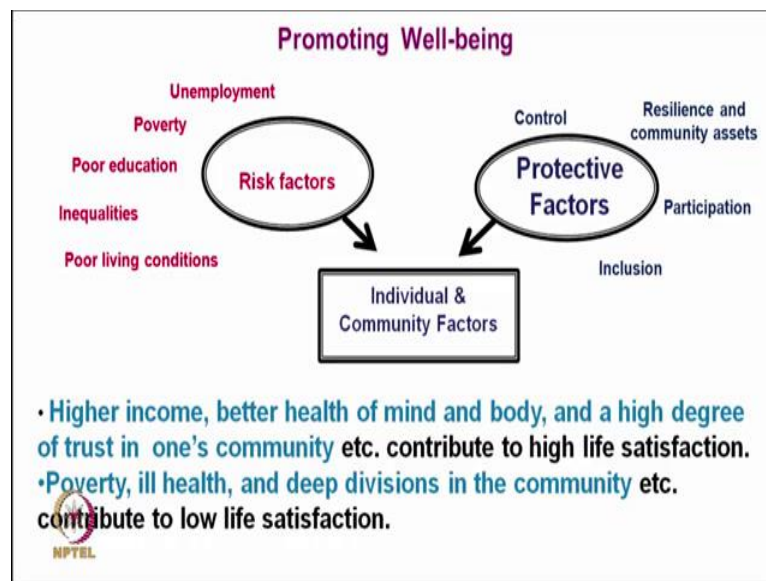


There are various factors. Let us take first environmental factors. You know our behaviour is interaction between our traits or our stable patterns, and environmental factors. So, behaviour is person and environment interactions, so our characteristics or our traits or our stable patterns to behave in particular environment as well as environmental conditions.

So, when we are saying environmental conditions it means socio-cultural factors are very important for our happiness or for our particular behaviour. That is why psychologists focus on positive institution. Then, in a country we have trust and safety or corruption. This factor (environmental) will be discussed a little bit more in the next classes because, you know, that is why we are talking about positive schooling, positive institution, positive nations, positive

communities, because we are trying to provide a particular type of environment and this particular type of environment is facilitating our well-being. On the other hand, we would like to delete or would like to reduce all those factors which may hamper our well-being, in school setting, in college setting, in institutions, in communities, and we try to identify all those factors and just help to reduce intensity of those factors so that we can maintain our happiness level.

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So, individual's well-being is surrounded by or affected by environmental factors. And when we say environmental factors and identify particular factors, then we may divide some unique or strong impact factors in two categories - whether this impact is in positive sense or this impact is in negative sense. When we say in negative sense, then, we count risk factors. On the other hand, if you are saying facilitating our well-being, then protective factors.

Some factors have been identified as risk factors like unemployment, poverty, poor education, inequality, poor living conditions. So, these factors are risk factors and these factors actually hamper our well-being. On the other hand, other factors which can protect our well-being are control, resilience and community assets, participation, and social inclusion, you feel you are part of your community or society. So, these factors are actually facilitating our well-being.


It has been observed that higher income, better health of mind and body, and a high degree of trust in one's community - these contribute to high level of life satisfaction or happiness. On

the other hand, poverty, ill health, and deep divisions in the community - such kind of factors contribute to low life satisfaction. WHO has identified some factors as risk factors as well as protective factors for mental health, and in this association they highlighted individual attributes also. Individual attributes mean our characteristics which are facilitating or hampering our mental health.

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Risk factors and protective factors for mental health (WHO (2004), WHO (2012). See also Cruwys et al. (2013):

Level of Determinant	Risk factors	Protective factors
Individual attributes	Low self-esteem, Emotional immaturity, Difficulties in communicating, Medical illness, substance abuse	Self-esteem, confidence Ability to manage stress and adversity, Communication skills, Physical health, fitness



So, in this case, they observed that risk factors are low self esteem, emotional immaturity, difficulty in communications, medical illness, substance abuse, etc. So, these are the factors which are risk factors for our mental health. On the other hand, for protection, there are some positive personality traits like self esteem, confidence, ability to manage stress and adversity, communication skills, physical health, fitness, etc.

If you could recall with the starting point of happiness studies, we divided all theories into three groups and one of them was personality-oriented theories. So, it denotes personality-oriented theories in which we are saying that happiness is a stable pattern or happiness is a trait and it is correlated with some of the factors positively but with others negatively. So then, we identify happiness versus rest of your traits in your personality and how these traits are contributing to your happiness or mental health or how these factors are disturbing your happiness or well-being.

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Level of Determinant	Risk factors	Protective factors
Social circumstances	Loneliness, Grief, Neglect, family conflict, Exposure to violence/abuse, Low income and poverty, Difficulties or failure at school, Work stress, unemployment	Social support of family and friends, Good parenting/ family interaction, Physical security and safety, Economic security, Scholastic achievement, Satisfaction and success at work
Environmental factors	Poor access to basic services, Injustice and discrimination, Social justice, Exposure to war or disaster	Equality of access to basic services, tolerance, integration, Physical security and safety

Second factors are social circumstances, social circumstances as risk factors as well as protective factors. So, let us know what are the risk factors. Risk factors are loneliness, grief, neglect, family conflict, exposure to violence, or abuse, low income and poverty, difficulties of failure at school, work, stress, unemployment. So, if you are struggling in your social circumstances, then you have risk factors.

On the other hand, protective factors are social support of family and friends, good parenting, family interaction, physical security and safety, economic security, scholastic achievements, satisfaction and success at work. So, I think you can easily understand that is low level on certain parameters, on the other hand, protective factors is when you have high level on positive factors.

Environmental factors: Poor access to basic services, injustice and discrimination, social justice, exposure to war or disaster. On the other hand, protective factors as environmental factors: equality of access to basic services, tolerance, integration, physical security, and safety, etc. So, these are the different factors.

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I think you must have heard about World Happiness Reports. There are various reports, 2012 onwards every year we have one report. And we are showing how different nations have different levels of happiness and they are able to create a list of or a ranking of different countries on happiness. First of all, which important factors they consider in the report to test someone's happiness? So, what are those factors?

In these reports, mainly these factors are they count GDP per capita, healthy years of life expectancy they count in this report when they assess happiness level. Next factor is social support and it is measured by having someone to count on in time of trouble. So, if you count someone in time of trouble, then you have social support, and that is, you know, positive indication.

Next factor is trust or how do you perceive corruption in your country as measured by a perceived absence of corruption in government and business. So, if you perceive there is no corruption, then trust; and if you perceive corruption is there that is a negative factor contributing to your happiness.

Perceived freedom to make life decisions. So, do you have freedom? I think you can easily connect it with autonomy. So, perceived freedom to make life decision, do you perceive autonomy, do you perceive you have freedom to have different decisions in your life?

Another factor is generosity. It is measured by recent donations. Have you recently donated? So, that is the question and you respond in terms of this question. Next is they have used life

ladder or Cantril ladder which I have been talking about again and again, and positive affect and negative affect questions, and they observed that social support, income, healthy life expectancies, these are topmost factors.

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Ranking of Happiness 2013-2015 (Total 157 countries)	
1. Denmark (7.526)	75. Hong Kong (5.458)
2. Switzerland (7.509)	76. Somalia (5.440)
6. Canada (7.404)	83. China (5.245)
9. Australia (7.313)	84. Bhutan (5.196)
13. United States (7.104)	92. Pakistan (5.132)
50. Italy (5.977)	107. Nepal (4.793)
56. Russia (5.856)	117. Sri Lanka (4.415)
58. South Korea (5.835)	118. India (4.404)*

***122 (4.03 in 2017) ; 133 (4.19 in 2018) 140 (4.015 in 2019)**



And in these cases, I think you can easily understand, to some extent, environmental factors are very important to address like corruption, to address autonomy, and various other factors. So, that is why they count happiness nation wise. In this report, I think you must be knowing about some reports. Denmark is the happiest country and it is in the top list in almost all the reports.

So, what policies actually they have, what kind of environmental factors they have, that is our interest, and that is why I have selected some of these countries to show how this happiness list is showing, what is the level of different countries on happiness. And India's result is not good. And here the worst thing is every year this level is deteriorating. As it is reflected here, its number is 118 and our score was 4.40 out of 10. And in 2017, it is deteriorated more and our number was 122 and score was 4.03.

On the other hand, in 2018, this rank was 133 and score was 4.19. And in the latest research or latest report, our number is 420 and our score is 4.015. So, it means there are some factors. Even recently I came to know a study in which they are saying that India has topmost depression level or it is highest depression in India. So, I think we should know what are the reasons why we Indians are showing low level of happiness as well as high score on depression, anxiety, etc.

I think we should take into account some factors which are important or hampering our well-being. This is the way to show country wise data. And when I am talking about country wise data and nation wise results and all, then our objective is to know what are the environmental factors which are facilitating our well-being.

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So, I think with this study, which is from, you know, Denmark's data, and how environmental factors are contributing to their well-being. So, through this we can understand and compare with Indian settings how these people have higher level and what are the facilities they get from the nation from the policy decisions, which are facilitating their well-being.

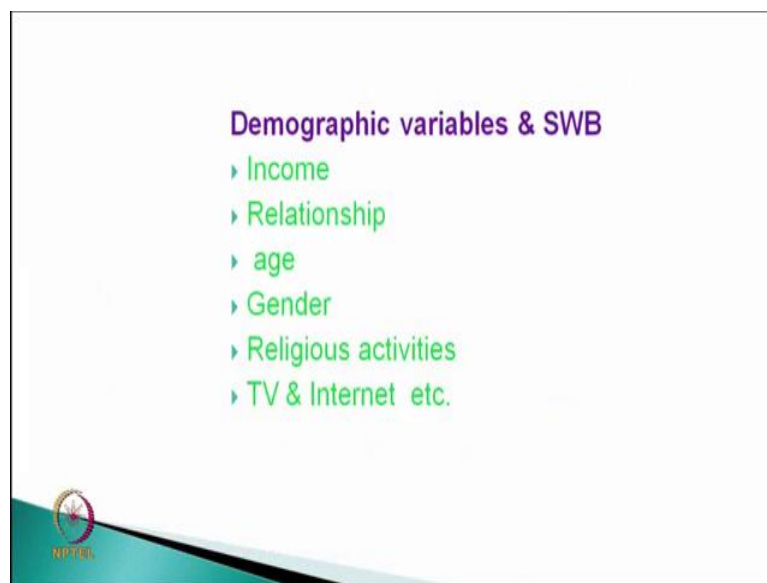
They observed from the last 30 years' research that Denmark people tend to be the happiest and they are saying that they pay high tax rates, people pay tax between 50 to 70%, and that is why to some extent they can maintain level of economy and equally distributed to some extent. This state is called welfare state and social equality and security they have.

Here it provides universal tax-funded and they provide people with childcare, parental leave, healthcare, education including the universities, retirement pensions, and sick leave, and it has been observed that if someone lost their job, then 90% of the salary they usually get for four years. So, get paid to go to college between \$400 to \$500.

It means, to some extent, they are in safe and secure environment and they do not have insecurity. These people are environmentally conscious and one-third rides cycle. So, I think these all facilitators help them to have higher level of happiness. It is also reported that democratic countries generally report higher level of happiness.

So, I think it is very important to understand for us that there are some environmental factors and these environmental factors are highly connected with happiness. So, the countries which are facilitating such kind of factors they have higher level of well-being as compared to other countries. And that is why environmental factors are very important for us.

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Let us understand happiness in terms of demographic variables, in terms of income, relationship, age, gender, religious activities, and TV and internet, etc. Let us take one by one.

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Factors Affecting Happiness

Income & Happiness:

- Does **money** make us happy? YES...well a little bit.
- Individuals who live in countries **with high GDP**, on average score higher on wellbeing measures **than those living in countries with low GDP**, (Deaton, 2008)
- ▶ Kahneman et al. (2006) emphasised that **moderate increase** in individual income **could lead to more happiness** but when it reached a **certain high income level**, those **positive relationships would disappear**.
- ▶ Other psychologists pointed out that there was **no significant relationship between income and happiness**. Hence, they support the conventional wisdom of **"money cannot buy happiness"**.

What do you think about income? Do you think money is positively correlated with happiness? Let us see what psychologists speak about it. Does money make us happy? Some people could say yes, others could say no. If we just take overall data, then individual who live in countries with high GDP on average score higher on well-being measures than those living in countries with low GDP.

So, I think overall view we can say that people who are living in the countries where they have high GDP they have higher level of well-being as compared to the people who are living in the countries where they have low level of GDP. So, to some extent, role of money is reflecting in such kind of studies.

On the other hand, other studies say that moderate increase in individual income could lead to more happiness, but when it reaches at a certain high income level those positive relationships would disappear. So, it means up to a particular level it has its role, but after that that disappeared. Other psychologists pointed out that there was no significant relationship between income and happiness. Hence, they support the conventional wisdom of money cannot buy happiness.

I think if you just take into account different researches, if we are struggling on our primary needs to fulfil, then money matters, but if all those needs are fulfilled, then there is no role of money. So, up to a certain level when we are struggling to fulfil our needs, then money matters, and money is very important factor for us, but once we cross that limit, then extra

money we are getting, then it does not have any important role. So, that is why in some studies it showed significant connection with happiness, but not in all studies.

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Relationship :

- Spending time in social settings enhances levels of wellbeing among **both introverts and extroverts** (Froh et al., 2007).
- **Marriage & Children :**
- Happier people are more likely to get married, while reporting a happy marriage as they stay together.
- The relationship between children and **marital satisfaction shows high levels of life satisfaction at marriage, and then drops at the birth of the first child.**
- The levels of life satisfaction also continue to drop throughout childhood and adolescence, then returns to high levels when the children leave the home. Therefore, having children may decrease levels of SWB for **some individuals** (Heffernon & Boniwell, 2011).

Next factor is relationship. Spending time in social settings enhances level of well-being among both introverts and extroverts it has been studied. And if you could revisit the theories of happiness, almost in all theories they focused on positive relationships. And in previous studies also they focused on how if we are using more social words we are happier and relationships are very important for us.

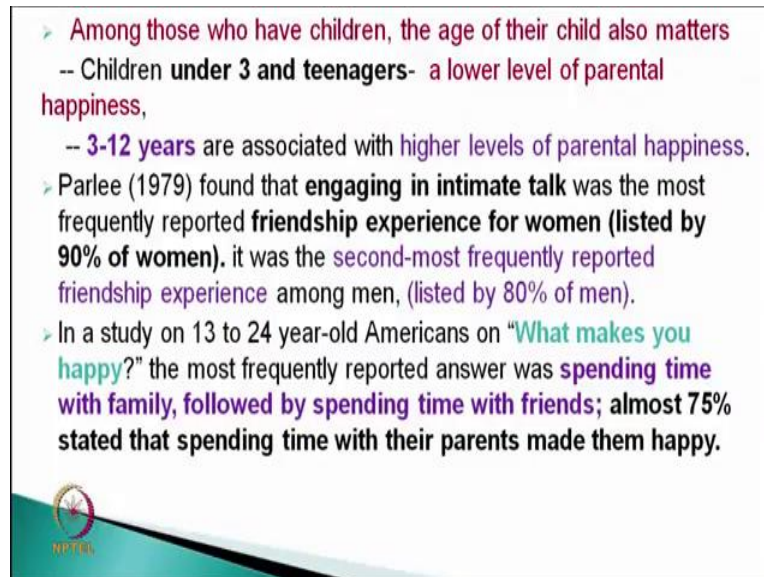
In terms of marriage and children, it has been observed that married people are happier than unmarried people and they stay together more compared to other people. So, the relationship between children and marital satisfaction shows high level of life satisfaction at marriage, and then drops at the birth of the first child. They are saying that after birth of first child this happiness usually drops.

And in terms of children, some more studies - the level of life satisfaction also continues to drop throughout childhood and adolescence then returns to high levels when the children leave the home. Therefore, having children may decrease level of subjective well-being for some individuals.

However, these studies are from Europe, and from Western countries. I think if we just consider cultural factors, we may get different results here and we are not sure whether we

will be getting such kind of results in which they are saying that happiness level decreases when you have children in your home.

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- Among those who have children, the age of their child also matters
 - Children under 3 and teenagers- a lower level of parental happiness,
 - 3-12 years are associated with higher levels of parental happiness.
- Parlee (1979) found that engaging in intimate talk was the most frequently reported friendship experience for women (listed by 90% of women). it was the second-most frequently reported friendship experience among men, (listed by 80% of men).
- In a study on 13 to 24 year-old Americans on "What makes you happy?" the most frequently reported answer was spending time with family, followed by spending time with friends; almost 75% stated that spending time with their parents made them happy.

So, similarly, there are some other studies in which they are saying among those who have children the age of their children also matters. And they are saying that children under three and teenagers' lower level of parental happiness. On the other hand, when children are between 3 to 12 years that is associated with higher level of parental happiness.

So, broadly, they are saying that up to 3, and then when your children are teenagers, then you have lower level of happiness. On the other hand, 3 to 12 years age of your children you enjoy more as per these studies. Similarly, they are saying that engaging in intimate talks, that is friendship experiences for women, and they listed it 90%, 90% of women listed having friendship experiences and intimate talks are actually important for them for happiness.

And for men, it was the second most frequently reported friendship experiences, and it was listed by about 80% men. So, that is why, you know, friendship experiences and intimate talks are very important for us for happiness. In a study on 13 to 24 years old Americans on what makes you happy, the most frequently reported answer was spending time with family, followed by spending time with friends. Almost 75% stated that spending time with their parents made them happy.

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Age : (Contradictory Results)

- ▶ Diener et al. (1993) pointed out that age was not significant in determining happiness because **individuals adjust their aims and goals as they grew older.**
- ▶ On the other hand, Gredtham and Johannesson (2001) claimed that the relationship between age and happiness was U-shaped - individuals tended to feel happier in their **young adulthood years (18-34 years) and during old age (≥ 60 years) as compared to when they were in their mid age (35 -64 years).**
- ▶ Similarly, many studies have found that **older persons tend to be more satisfied with life than their younger counterparts** (Diener & Suh, 2000; Yang, 2008).

So, that is why adolescence and early adulthood period participants also give importance to interpersonal relationship in terms of their family as well as friends. Age, again, contradictory results we have. Some studies are saying that young people are happier, others are saying that old middle group and all. So, let us know how the studies are connecting age with happiness. Diener et al, 1993, pointed out that age was not significant in determining happiness because individuals adjust their aims and goals as they grew older.

So, as per their age, they plan their aims as well as way of living their goals and that is why it is not a very significant variable. On the other, other scholars claimed that the relationship between age and happiness was U-shaped. U-shaped means individuals tended to feel happier in their young adulthood, the years 18 to 34 years, and during old age 60 and above, as compared to when they were in their mid age 35 to 64 years. So, that is why it is in U shape. Similarly, many studies have found that older persons tend to be more satisfied with life than their young counterparts.

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› In contrast to the U shaped relationship, Tokuda and Inoguchi (2008) found that age and happiness has a negative relationship, implying that **older individuals were more likely to be unhappy compared to their younger counterparts.**

(--- Due to different mediating variables in different data set)

› Indian Studies on early adolescence (13-15 yrs.) vs. late adolescence 16-18 yrs.), (Singh 2014)

Gender:

• Before 1985 women were **happier than men.**

• **Around 1989**, their happiness levels were equal to men.

• But now they **report lower levels of happiness than men** (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009).

• Additional data taken from around the world indicated **similar trends in 125 of 147 countries.**

And various researchers in this direction have been conducted, but most of them contradict to each other because there are various mediating variables and without counting those variables, we may get contradiction in results, and some studies are saying that a particular group is happier as compared to another group in contrast to the U-shaped relationships.

Some scholars found that age and happiness have negative relationship implying that older individuals were more likely to be unhappy compared to their younger counterparts. So, that is why various studies are showing different results because there are various factors which are mediating and we do not take into account those factors.

In our Indian study, we observed that we had various mental health indicators like subjective well-being, personal well-being, mental health, quality of life. Almost in all research papers we documented that early adolescence that is 13 to 15 years was happier as compared to late 16 to 18 years. And we also reported that they have higher level of depression, anxiety, stress. What is your response in terms of gender? What do you think? Who are happier, males or females? Let us know how psychologists explore this particular factor in terms of happiness.

Before 1985 women were happier than men, around 1989 their happiness level were equal to men, but now they reported lower levels of happiness than men. And there are various other studies like additional data taken from around the world indicated similar trends in 125 countries out of 147 countries. So, in this case, they are saying that now the latest data showed us females are lesser happy as compared to their male partners.


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- It has also reported that life satisfaction **scores have decreased in recent years for both men and women.**
- However, the **declining well-being ratings for women were dramatic and significant.**
- Further, depression rates were found to be **higher among Asian-Americans, especially among young women, than among Euro-Americans** (Oishi, 2001).
- A Gallup poll found that **39% of African-Americans were “very satisfied” with their personal lives, in contrast to 58% of whites** (Carroll, 2007).
- Similarly, **44% of African-Americans said they are “very happy,” compared to 52% of whites.**
- However, **African-American men aged 70 or older reported being happier than older white men did (Yang, 2008), and African-American children reported higher self-esteem than white children** (Argyle, 1999).

It has also reported that life satisfaction scores have decreased in recent years for both men and women. However, that declining well-being rating for women were dramatically low and significant, this decline is more dramatic and significant in females. Further, depression rates were found to be higher among Asian-Americans, especially among young women, than among Euro-Americans. So, all these further studies are taking into account gender, as well as cultures.

So, let us see how different cultures as well as gender showing different results. A Gallup poll found that 39% of African-Americans were very satisfied with their personal lives in contrast to 58% of whites. Similarly, 44% of African-Americans said they are very happy compared to 52% of whites. However, African-American men aged 70 or older reported being happier than older white men did and African-Americans’ children reported higher self-esteem than white children. So, it means age, gender, and cultural factors all are very important to understand happiness.

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- ▶ **Religious** people have reported having slightly higher levels of SWB than those who do not.
 - ▶ -- e.g. Belief in something higher, spirituality, perception of life events (Healthy Defenses -- ???)
 - ▶ Many studies have shown that watching **TV is associated with lower happiness.**
 - ▶ It has been associated with a **relative decline in social life and increased aggression.**
 - ▶ **Internet : use or misuse – Digital nutrition** (Digital Nutrition explores a range of social, emotional and cognitive impacts of our technology use (and overuse!) and provides solutions to help maximize the benefits of devices and avoid the pitfalls.
- 

When we say religious activities, religious people have reported having slightly higher level of subjective well-being than those who do not and there could be various factors in-between like belief in something higher, spirituality, perception of life events. I have observed that religious people use some healthy defense mechanisms and that is why, to some extent, they could have lower level of well-being.

Let us also know a little bit how TV and internet is connected with happiness. Many studies have shown that watching TV is associated with lower happiness. It has been associated with a relative decline in social life and increased aggression. So, if you are watching aggressive programs, then there may be aggressive behaviour in your personality and social life is also hampered when you spend more time with TV. Similarly, with Internet, what you are doing, using internet or misusing internet.

So, sometimes, if we are spending more screen time, then it is hampering of our well-being. So, that is why in recent literature various new phenomena have been observed where they are giving even training to use internet, like digital mindfulness and digital nutrition. Digital nutrition means it explores a range of social, emotional, and cognitive impacts of our technology use and provides solution to help maximize the benefits of device and avoid the pitfalls.

So, learn to use Internet in positive direction rather than in a negative direction or negative impact on our well-being. In this series, our next topic is lessons from research, barriers to well-being. What are the factors which are hampering our well-being, which are obstacles in

the path of getting well-being? So, there are various factors which have been highlighted in different researches.

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Lessons from Research: Barriers to well-being

Barrier 1: Negativity Bias refers : Our tendency is to pay more attention and give more weight to negative rather than positive emotions, experiences and information.

Hence, we are more likely to remember **an insult, a criticism or a piece of negative information or feedback than a compliment or a piece of positive information or feedback.**

- ▶ Fredrickson and Marcial Losada (2005) found that when the **mean ratio of positive to negative emotions was at or above 2.9**, then people tended to flourish in life.
- ▶ The ratio of positive to negative emotions required for flourishing is **3:1**. This means for every negative emotion there must be three positive emotions.
- ▶ Research has shown that **negative emotions reduce our level of well-being more than positive emotions increase it.**

Let us discuss all those barriers, what these are and how these are actually hampering our well-being. First barrier is negativity bias. It refers to our tendency is to pay more attention and give more weight to negative rather than positive emotions, experiences, and information. Hence, we are more likely to remember an insult or criticism, or a piece of negative information or feedback than compliments or a piece of positive information or feedback.

Studies are showing that mean ratio of positive to negative emotion was at or about 2.9, then people tend to flourish in life. So, it means if we have 3:1 positive versus negative emotions, then only we would be flourishing in our life. This means for every negative emotion there must be three positive emotions. So, research has shown that negative emotions reduce our level of well-being more than positive emotions increase it.

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Barrier 2: duration neglect:

- ▶ When we evaluate our positive and negative experiences, **their duration hardly matters**, this is what psychologists call the **duration neglect**.
- ▶ Factors which are more important include **1) the intensity of the peak positive or negative emotion, and 2) how the experience ends.**

Barrier 3: Social comparison:

- ▶ we make comparison with our friends and neighbours to determine how well we're doing in life.
- ▶ **Famous Easterlin Paradox:** Between 1946 and 1970, the U.S. witnessed remarkable economic expansion. And yet **surveys failed to show any increase in happiness** throughout this period of post-war

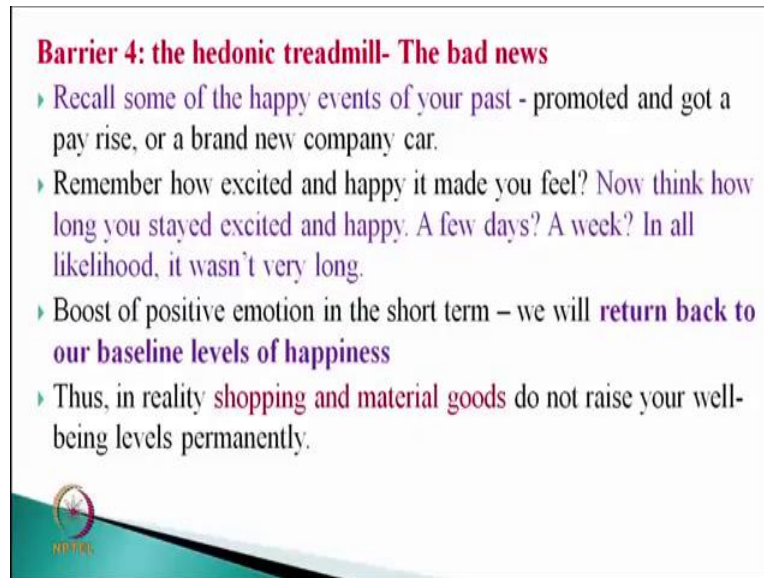
So, that is why if we talk about ratio of positive and negative emotions, for flourishing in our life we should have three times more positive emotions as compared to negative emotions. Second barrier is duration neglect. When we evaluate our positive and negative experiences, their duration hardly matters. This is what psychologists call the duration neglect. It means particular experiences, whichever length you have, that does not matter when we count it for our happiness, say, whether it is two weeks or two months or six months.

Factors which are more important include here, the intensity of the peak positive or negative emotions. So, what was the intensity of that experience, how much peak level it had in positive as well as in negative emotion. And second was how the experience ends. For example, length of this event was heavy loaded with negative emotion. But at the end, we had happy ending. On the other hand, some positive emotions we had, but end was with the negative emotions. So, this experience ends, what matters to us is in which direction we would have that experience as well as connection of this experience with our happiness.

Third barrier is social comparison. We make comparison with our friends and neighbours to determine how well we are doing in our life. And there is famous paradox, Easterlin paradox, and as per this message, between 1946 and 1970 the US witnessed remarkable economic expansion and yet surveys failed to show any increasing happiness throughout this period of post-war boom, and they observed that actually when we observe our status or when we perceive our status we compare ourselves with the surrounding people.

For example, when you get an increment and this increment is for you only in your group, then you would be happier as compared to if all group members have received equal level of increment. So, in equal level of increment, as per comparison, all of you received that level and that is why you do not have any change. On the other hand, if you alone get that increment, then as per social comparison or group comparison, you feel higher as compared to others.

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Barrier 4: the hedonic treadmill- The bad news

- ▶ Recall some of the happy events of your past - promoted and got a pay rise, or a brand new company car.
- ▶ Remember how excited and happy it made you feel? Now think how long you stayed excited and happy. A few days? A week? In all likelihood, it wasn't very long.
- ▶ Boost of positive emotion in the short term – we will **return back to our baseline levels of happiness**
- ▶ Thus, in reality **shopping and material goods** do not raise your well-being levels permanently.

Fourth barrier is the hedonic treadmill. Recall some of the happy events of your past - got promoted and got a pay rise or a brand new company car you purchased. So, remember how excited and happy it made you feel, now think how long you stayed excited and happy, a few days, a few weeks. In all likelihood it was not very long.


So, after that, you get back to your baseline once again. So, these changes in your behaviour or some new exciting events of your life, these exciting events change your happiness for a short period, but in the long run you have baseline level of happiness. So, that is your stable pattern of behaviour. And again, you get your baseline which is your natural level of happiness.

So, that is why shopping and material goods do not raise your well-being levels permanently. And these are temporary changes, whether these are in terms of ups or in terms of low, but most of the time after certain period, after short period I should say, we have baseline level of happiness.

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The fifth barrier : lack of self-control

- › Self-control (often called self-regulation) refers to our ability to control our impulses and channel our effort in a way that will allow us to reach particular goals.
- › Psychology studies show that higher self-control is actually linked to higher well-being.
- › Self-control is a bit like a muscle, the more you practice it, the stronger it gets.
- › So developing self-control in one life domain can help to strengthen your self-control in other areas.



Fifth barrier is lack of self control. Self control, often called self-regulation, refers to our ability to control our impulse and channel our effort in a way that will allow us to reach particular goals. So, if we have higher level of self-control, then we are achieving more things in our life, more achievements in our life we have, which are highly correlated with well-being.

So, psychologists study show that higher self-control is actually linked to higher well-being, because then you have higher level of achievements, better purpose in life, meaningfully you are serving your life, and all those things are connected with well-being.

Self-control is a bit like a muscle, the more you practice it, the stronger it gets. So, developing self-control in one's life domain can help to strengthen your self-control in other areas. So, self control is very important and once we start to practice, we expand its areas and in different domains of our life we use self-control and get better level of well-being.

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Happiness Affecting Factors:

Relationship :

Psychologist John Gottman suggests that the positivity ratio in your relationships needs to be at least **5:1**.

This means that there must be **five times more positive emotions going on in the relationship than negative emotions**.

Diener and Seligman (2002) studied the **happiest 10% of college students** -- **such students enjoyed a highly fulfilling social life**.



Let us discuss about some happiness affecting factors also. First, which is very important is relationship. Here, this relationship has been addressed in a different way. Psychologists suggest that the positivity ratio in your relationship needs to be at least 5:1. This means that there must be five times more positive emotions going on in the relationship than negative emotions.

So, it means in your life five positive relationship to one negative relationship is required for flourishing in your life. Diener and Seligman in 2002 studied the happiest 10% of college students. Such students enjoyed highly fulfilling social life. So, social life is very important for us, and in terms of ratio, five times more positive interpersonal relationship we should have compared to negative emotions.

Second, very important factor here is how do you use your time, do you use it in a constructive way or you are spending your time in unconstructive way. Study is showing that when you are doing creative activities, participating in youth programmes or religious communities or some other important programmes for you, then due to constructive use of your time you are happier.

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Constructive Use of Time:

- **Creative activities** : Young person spends **three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.**
- **Youth programs:** Young person spends **three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.**
- **Religious community:** Young person spends **one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.**



Creative activities - study is saying that a young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practices in music, theatre, or other arts. So, if you are spending your time in creative activities, then you are happier. Youth programmes, some students may spend some time, say three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school or community organizations.


So, during this period, again, you experience a higher level of well-being. Religious community, a young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution, they are happier. So, as part of these studies, when you are spending three or more hours per week for creative activities, three or more hours per week for youth programs as well as you know some time for religious activities, then you are happier.

Here I think, this is very important point to share with you, there are some intervention programs in which we just ask them to spend time accordingly. These activities are like entertainment of the day. At least one activity you enjoy per day. So, such kind of activity focused processes may help us to have higher level of well-being.

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Physical Exercise:
"Not exercising is like taking depressants" - Tal Ben Shahar
Apart from helping create new brain cells, physical exercise also

- Enhances body image, self-esteem and self-perceptions
- Improves sleep patterns
- Reduces emotional distress and increased well-being
- Reduces depression
- Reduces stress
- Improves general health



Physical exercise very important for us as Shahar has mentioned, "Not exercising is like taking depressants." Apart from helping create new brain cells you must be knowing that when we do physical exercise, we create new brain cells. Physical exercise also helps us in positive direction. For example, enhances body image, self esteem, and self perception, improves sleep patterns, reduces emotional distress and increasing well-eing, reduces depression, reduces stress, and improves general health.

So, physical exercises help us to reduce depression, anxiety, stress, etc. and promote our general health, self-esteem, self-perception, create new brain cells, and that is why having physical exercise is very important for us to have high level of well-being. Some scholars are talking about optimal well-being and for maintaining this optimal well-being we have to have our best connection with our true selves.

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Optimal Well-Being

- ▶ If you deliberately plan on being less than you are capable of being, then I warn you that you'll be unhappy for the rest of your life - Abraham Maslow
- ▶ Various researchers working from a positive psychology perspective have investigated topics such as how to nurture "your best self" (Sheldon, & Lyubomirsky, 2006) and how to foster your "true self" (Schlegel et al., 2009).



As Abraham Maslow mentioned, if you deliberately plan on being less than you are capable of being, then I warn you that you will be unhappy for the rest of your life. It means if you are not growing positively, not at your fullest potential, not self-actualised, not growing as per your requirements or as per your potential, then you would not be happy in your life.

Various researchers working from positive psychology perspective have investigated topics such as how to nurture your best self, and how to foster your true self. So, that is why having true self, having best self, these are very important to maintain our well-being and enhance our well-being.

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Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation:

- ▶ **Intrinsic motivation** is when we are compelled to engage in some activity for its own sake, regardless of any external reward.
- ▶ **Extrinsic motivation** is when we act to obtain some external reward, be it status, praise, money, or another incentive that comes from outside ourselves.
- ▶ Ryan and Deci (2008) :
 - **Autonomous motivation** - intrinsic motivation (self-chosen and is congruent with one's true self)
 - **Controlled motivation** - extrinsic motivation (external rewards or guilt and is not congruent with a person's core values).



Next concept is intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. I think it is good opportunity to learn this concept in detail because I also discussed in previous slides as well as this concept will

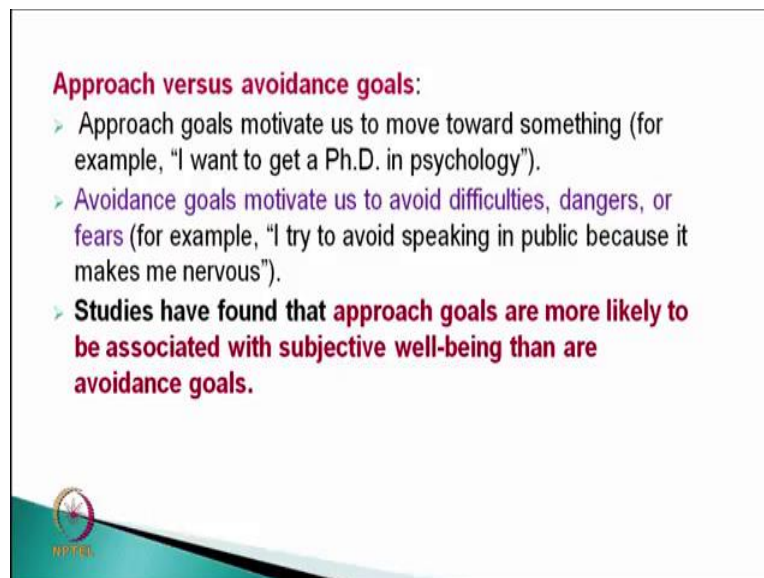
be revisited again and again. Intrinsic motivation is when we are compelled to engage in some activities for its own sake, regardless of any external reward.

So, during this period, because we want to do that work, we love to do that work, we have our internal interest to do those activities and that is why we are participating in that particular type of work. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is when we act to obtain some external reward.

For example, status, praise, money, or another incentive that comes from outside ourselves. For example, a student studying for getting good marks or attending classes for attendance, a person doing job for money as well as for promotion. So, in all these cases, your reasons or your causes of motivations are external. So, that is the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.


Ryan and Deci in 2008 they gave two parallel terms autonomous motivation or intrinsic motivation. It means self-chosen and is congruent with one's true self, so, "I want to do and that is why I am doing." On the other hand, controlled motivation or extrinsic motivation, external rewards or guilt, and is not congruent with a person's core values.

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Approach versus avoidance goals:

- Approach goals motivate us to move toward something (for example, "I want to get a Ph.D. in psychology").
- Avoidance goals motivate us to avoid difficulties, dangers, or fears (for example, "I try to avoid speaking in public because it makes me nervous").
- **Studies have found that approach goals are more likely to be associated with subjective well-being than are avoidance goals.**



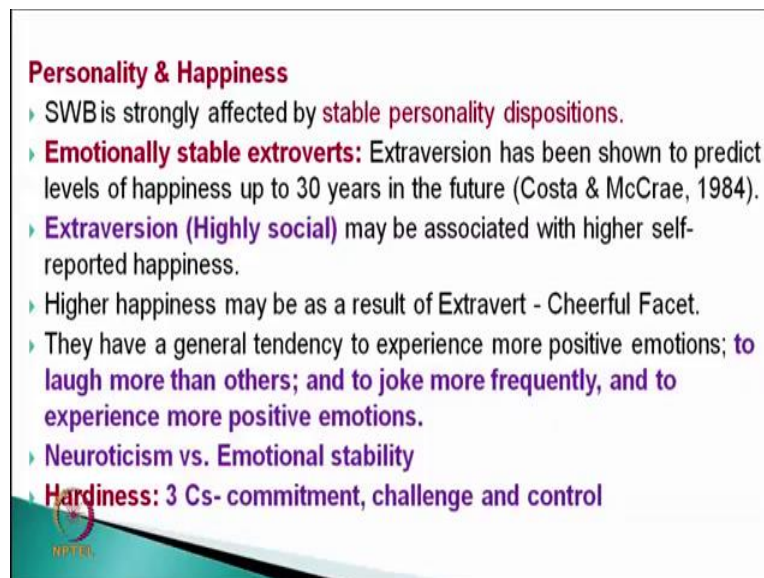
So, in this case actually, we are giving key of our happiness in other's hand. If you reward my activities, then I am happy. If you are not rewarding my activities, then I am not that much happy. So, it means in this process, I am giving key of my happiness in other's hand.

Another phenomenon to understand happiness is based on the goals and these goals may be divided into approach versus avoidance goals.

Approach goals motivate us to move towards something. For example, I want to get a Ph.D. in psychology. On the other hand, avoidance goals motivate us to avoid difficulties, dangers, and fear. For example, I try to avoid speaking in public because it makes me nervous. And studies have found that approach goals are more likely to be associated with subjective well-being than our avoidance goals. So, we should have more approach goals in our life, rather than avoidance goals to get higher level of well-being.

Another important factor is to know what is correlation between personality and happiness. It has been observed that there are stable personality patterns and these stable personality patterns are correlated with happiness. If you could recall the third division of theories which we had at initial stage in which I said happiness and its related traits, so in this relation we are saying that there is composition of various traits.

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Personality & Happiness

- ▶ SWB is strongly affected by **stable personality dispositions**.
- ▶ **Emotionally stable extroverts**: Extraversion has been shown to predict levels of happiness up to 30 years in the future (Costa & McCrae, 1984).
- ▶ **Extraversion (Highly social)** may be associated with higher self-reported happiness.
- ▶ Higher happiness may be as a result of **Extravert - Cheerful Facet**.
- ▶ They have a general tendency to experience more positive emotions; **to laugh more than others; and to joke more frequently, and to experience more positive emotions.**
- ▶ **Neuroticism vs. Emotional stability**
- ▶ **Happiness: 3 Cs- commitment, challenge and control**

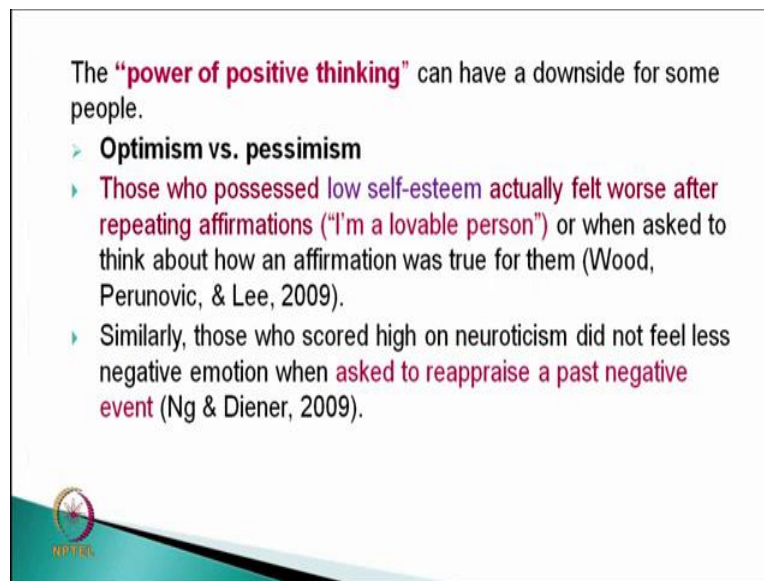
Some of these are positively correlated with happiness, but others are negatively correlated with happiness. In this series, if we talk about personality-specific traits and happiness, then it has been observed that emotionally stable extroverts are happiest people. Extraversion has been shown to predict level of happiness up to 30 years in the future. Extraversion is positively correlated with happiness because of its certain facets and it is positively correlated with happiness, higher happiness may be as a result of extraversion cheerful facet.

They have a general tendency to experience more positive emotions, to laugh more than others, to joke more frequently, and to experience more positive emotions. So, there are some sub factors of extroversion which are highly correlated with happiness and that is why totality of this facet or this super factor 'extroversion' is correlated with happiness.

On the other hand, when we say neuroticism and emotional stability I think there is no argument when we are saying that emotionally stable people are happier as compared to the people who have high score on neuroticism. There are some other factors also like hardiness which is with three Cs - commitment, challenge and control.

And this type of personality has been counted as stress proof personality, and definitely such kind of people are the people who have these traits or these characteristics, they are happier than other people.

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The **"power of positive thinking"** can have a downside for some people.

- **Optimism vs. pessimism**
- Those who possessed low self-esteem actually felt worse after repeating affirmations ("I'm a lovable person") or when asked to think about how an affirmation was true for them (Wood, Perunovic, & Lee, 2009).
- Similarly, those who scored high on neuroticism did not feel less negative emotion when asked to reappraise a past negative event (Ng & Diener, 2009).

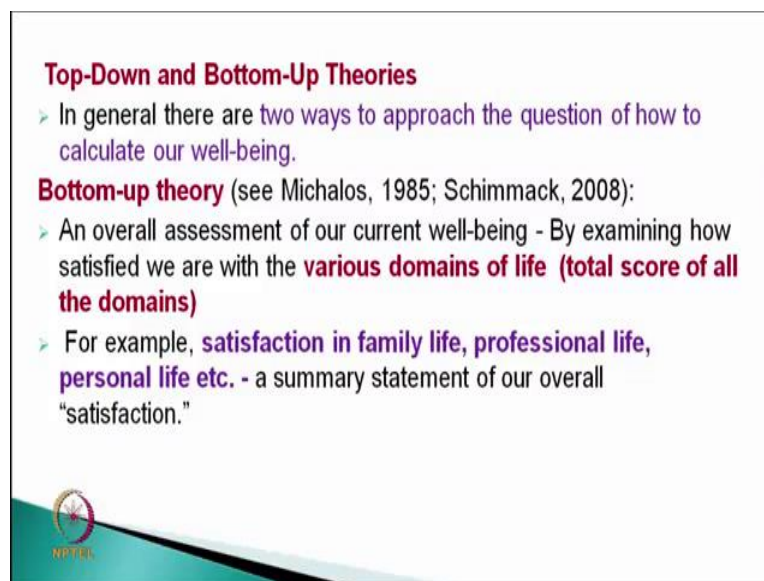
Power of positive thinking is also important. However, we need to understand with whom this power is. If we just take simple difference between optimism and pessimism, or optimist people and pessimist people, then broadly we can say optimistic people are happier compared to pessimistic people. But it has been observed that sometimes positive styles are not useful if they have some low level of self-esteem or having some neuroticism level in their personality.

There are two examples here. Those who possess low self-esteem actually felt worse after repeating affirmations, "I am a lovable person," or when asked to think about how an

affirmation was true for them. So, in this case, a normal person would have changes in positive direction. Because of low self-esteem they did not have similar kind of results. Similarly, those who scored high on neuroticism did not feel less negative emotion, when asked to reappraise a past negative event.

So, that is why if a person is with negative aspects or negative emotions, then may be power or positive thinking does not work in that direction. So, that is why we should understand in depth in which direction they have their emotions, in positive direction or in negative direction, and as put this direction, what kind of strategies could be useful for them.

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Top-Down and Bottom-Up Theories

- In general there are two ways to approach the question of how to calculate our well-being.

Bottom-up theory (see Michalos, 1985; Schimmack, 2008):

- An overall assessment of our current well-being - By examining how satisfied we are with the **various domains of life (total score of all the domains)**
- For example, **satisfaction in family life, professional life, personal life etc.** - a summary statement of our overall "satisfaction."


One another very important phenomenon here is top-down and bottom-up theories. In top-down and bottom-up theories we found different ways to define happiness and different factors which are contributing to happiness. Let us know both of them. In general, there are two ways to approach the question of how to calculate our well-being. Number one, that is bottom-up theory, and overall assessment of our current well-being by examining how satisfied we are with the various domains of our life and total score of all the domains.

So, in this case, we are actually studying the level of your satisfaction or happiness in different domains of your life, say, satisfaction in your family life, satisfaction in your professional life, satisfaction in your personal life, satisfaction in your academic life, satisfaction in your other lives, and a summary statement of overall well-being. So, that is one way of, so if you are satisfied or happy in your different domains of life, then you should be happy overall and that is the way of assessing someone's happiness level.

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Top-down approach:

- › **Top-down model** : Our **subjective well-being evaluations reflect how we evaluate and interpret our experiences (our stable patterns to evaluate the situations or events of our life).**
- › This approach has been measured by looking **at personality traits, attitudes, and cognitions**—that is, what goes on “inside” a person.
- › **If a bottom-up perspective is correct**, then interventions (strategies to improve WB) should focus on changing the environment and situations that one experiences— **such as obtaining a better job, safer neighborhood, and higher after-tax income, to count a few options.**
- › **But if a top-down model is correct**, then interventions to increase happiness should focus on **changing people's attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or personality traits.**



On the other hand, another level is top-down approach. In top-down model, our subjective well-being evaluations reflect how we evaluate and interpret our experiences, our stable patterns to evaluate the situations or events of our life. You must have observed that there are some, I think we have been talking about all these factors, there are some factors and as per these factors we have different tendency to define different events differently, and these patterns are contributed by personality traits, attitudes, and cognitions.

So, all of us have different ways of defining the same situation because of our different internal processes. And I think it is not difficult to understand when I am saying this is very important. You must have observed that one particular event is defined differently by different people, one particular situation addressed or perceived differently by different people.

When I am saying differently perceived by different people, then it means they had unique type of personality traits, unique attitudes, and unique cognition they had and that is why they define particular situation in different ways. So, that is what goes on inside a person. So, what is happening within us or within our own world that is reflecting in our ideas or in our responses?

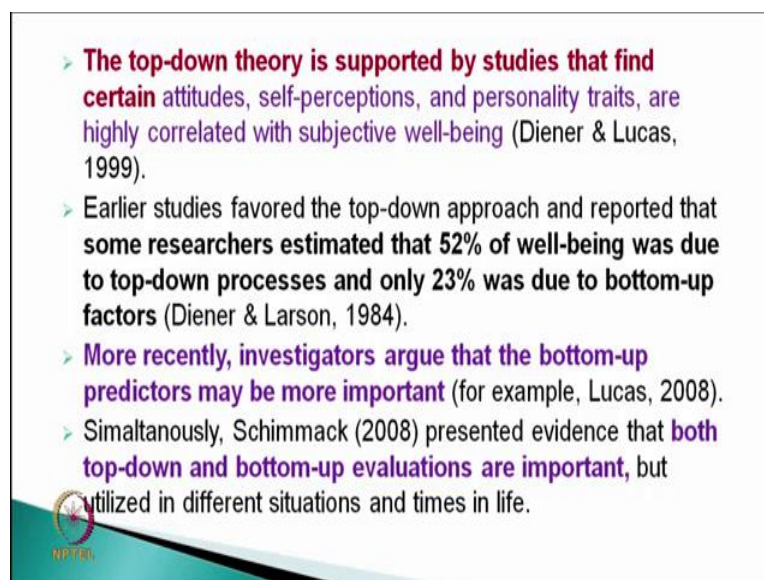
So, it means personality traits, attitudes, cognitions, and various other factors are helping us to have particular patterns to define certain situations. And that is called top-down model. If a bottom-up perspective is correct, then in interventions or when we are understanding human

behaviour on happiness or on other constructs, then we will focus more on the situations, for example, a better job, safer neighbourhood, and higher after-tax income, to count a few options. So, then, we should try to change your surrounding factors to make you happy.

On the other hand, if we take into account that top-down model is correct, then interventions to increase happiness should focus on changing people's attitudes, beliefs, perception, or personality traits. So, then, we try to change your way of perceiving this world. That is more important. I think that is very important phenomenon that is why we should understand it a little bit more. When we are saying bottom-up perspective, then there are various domains of our life and all those domains should be satisfied to have higher level of well-being.

On the other hand, when we are saying top-down model, then we have certain patterns to define or evaluate or perceive certain situations and during this process our attitudes, beliefs, perception, personality traits mediate in between, and that is why we have individual differences, and then that is why we should focus more on those processes which help us to have positive perception. So, in this case, for example, then one must learn optimism, one must learn to perceive things positively. So, I think these two models are clear now.

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- **The top-down theory is supported by studies that find certain attitudes, self-perceptions, and personality traits, are highly correlated with subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999).**
- Earlier studies favored the top-down approach and reported that some researchers estimated that **52% of well-being was due to top-down processes and only 23% was due to bottom-up factors (Diener & Larson, 1984).**
- **More recently, investigators argue that the bottom-up predictors may be more important (for example, Lucas, 2008).**
- Simultaneously, Schimmack (2008) presented evidence that **both top-down and bottom-up evaluations are important, but utilized in different situations and times in life.**

So, the top-down theory is supported by studies that find certain attitudes, self-perception, and personality traits are highly correlated with subjective well-being. Some studies (are saying that role of these models) for example, earlier studies favoured the top-down process and reported that some researchers estimated that 52% of well-being was due to top-down processes and only 23% was due to bottom-up factors.

So, they are saying that this, you know, estimates are different or role of these two models are different in terms of factors of happiness. More recently investigators argued that the bottom-up predictors may be more important. So, simultaneously, other scholars are saying that both of them are important but utilised in different situations and times in life and we should give due respect to both the models as per the requirement of our study. I will keep this topic continued in the next class. Thank you.