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ARTICLE

Development and validation of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale

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Abstract: The present study reports the development and validation of a 31-item measure that examines strategies employed by people to increase their happiness levels. The items of this new 'Pursuit of Happiness Scale' (an English and a Hindi version) were developed by integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches. The scale development was based on a pilot study (N=401) and a main study (N=1795). Five happiness increasing strategies were derived through exploratory factor analysis, viz., (a) Pursuing a Positive Outlook, (b) Pursuing Goals, (c) Pursuing Faith, (d) Pursuing Emotional Stability, and (e) Pursuing a Healthy Life. The results of confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good model fit for the five-factor structure, and the new measure also showed good reliability and validity. The Pursuit of Happiness Scale can help scholars and policymakers gain meaningful insights into the wellbeing landscape of the country. Such knowledge can inform the development of policies, interventions, and theoretical models to address and promote the happiness of Indians. Besides, at a more micro-level, such an understanding can help individuals engage more proactively in practices that may enhance their mood and overall wellbeing.

Keywords: happiness, scale development, happiness increasing strategies, wellbeing, psychometric measure

1. Introduction

Happiness has been the subject of many systematic investigations and is a focal point of most people's daily thoughts (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). It is generally characterized by the subjective experience of having more pleasant affective states than unpleasant ones (Bieda et al., 2017) and the overall perception that one is making some progress in achieving the significant goals of one's life (Diener et al., 1999; Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006a). Notably, happiness is considered a critical component of a fulfilling life (King & Napa, 1998) and plays a protective role against negative feelings and adverse mental health conditions (e.g., depression; Seo et al., 2018). Besides, it has been indicated that happier people have stronger immune systems, earn higher incomes, have more creative ideas and greater marital stability compared to their less happy counterparts (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Within the happiness literature, the Sustainable Happiness Model highlights the role of three factors that influence happiness and wellbeing: genetic influences, circumstantial factors/current life influences, and engagement in intentional activities and behaviours (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). The third factor is particularly significant, as it suggests that, to some extent, people can positively influence their happiness levels by engaging in intentional positive practices, thus stressing the role of human agency (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2021). While the Sustainable

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Happiness Model stresses the role of simple, intentional, and regular practices in influencing happiness, the Positive Activity Model throws light on the optimal conditions under which positive activities might enhance happiness, including the dosage and variety of the activities, motivational level and effort of the individual, and the person-activity fit. It also emphasizes the mechanisms by which these effects work, viz., by stimulating increases in positive emotions, thoughts, positive behaviours, and satisfaction of basic psychological needs (such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence), which, in turn, increases happiness (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

Notably, existing literature shows that people use self-regulatory strategies to manage their mood states (Erber, 1996; Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006a). For example, some people report that they exercise, seek support from friends, or engage in hobbies to uplift themselves from a negative mood state (Thayer et al., 1994). However, much of the research on self-regulatory behaviours has focused on specific behaviours rather than examining the full range of intentional activities that people use to regulate their mood states. Furthermore, most of these studies have focused on understanding the strategies that people use to alleviate negative moods rather than the strategies they use to promote positive moods. These studies do, however, provide empirical evidence of the relationship between intentional behaviours and changes in mood. Overall, compared to research on activities that people use to regulate negative moods, there has been relatively less research on activities that people use to promote long-term happiness (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006).

Thus, a key question of interest for happiness scholars is the strategies that people use to increase their happiness levels. The 'Happiness-Enhancing Activities and Positive Practices Inventory' by Henricksen and Stephens (2013) measures people's involvement in four dimensions as an indicator of happiness, namely, self-concordant work, personal recreation and people, spiritual and thought-related, and goal-focused activities. The 'Happiness Increasing Strategies Scale' (H-ISS, Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006) identified 66 happiness strategies that collectively accounted for 52% variation in happiness levels. These strategies were obtained from participants' responses to an open-ended survey requiring them to list the things they do to maintain or increase their happiness levels. Subsequently, through exploratory factor analysis, eight broad happiness-increasing strategies were derived from their responses: social affiliation, partying and clubbing, mental control, instrumental goal pursuit, passive leisure, active leisure, religion, and direct attempts, each linked to corresponding intentional activities. The 66 items of the H-ISS encompass strategies belonging to these eight broad categories.

A study that attempted to validate the H-ISS among Swedish adolescents found an additional category of happiness increasing activity, named as 'prevented activities', that was not part of the original H-ISS. Prevented activities encompass those (such as studying) that adolescents avoid or practice less when trying to increase their happiness levels. In other words, preventing or not engaging in these activities helps adolescents avoid unpleasant emotions. Cultural and age-related differences between the American and Swedish samples may account for the differences in the findings between the two studies (Nima et al., 2013).

Likewise, in an Indian validation study comprising 18–65-year-olds, the original factor solution proposed by Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) and the findings from the Swedish validation study by Nima et al. (2013) resulted in a poor fit. Instead of the 66-item version of the H-ISS, a condensed 36-item version with an eight-factor solution comprising social interaction, instrumental goal pursuit, going out, prevented activities, active leisure, religion and mental control, self-directed strategies, and passive leisure demonstrated a better fit in the Indian context (Singh et. al, 2025). Similarly, compared with the original 66-item version of the H-ISS, a brief 46-

item version was found to be more appropriate for Croatian students (Žganec et al., 2017). Additionally, the factors 'Mental Control' and 'Direct Attempts' were combined to form a new factor that was labelled as 'Cognitive Behavioral Interventions.' Furthermore, the factor labelled 'Active Leisure' in the original H-ISS was renamed 'Sports and Hobby' in the Croatian validation of the H-ISS.

Besides the differences in factor solutions of happiness measures across cultures, studies have also shown that there are cross-cultural differences in the conceptualization of happiness (Delle Fave & Bassi, 2009). For example, Lu and Shih (1997) attempted to understand the diverse sources of happiness in Chinese and Western cultures. While interpersonal or external evaluations and satisfaction emerged more prominently among Chinese respondents, the Western view focused more on intrapersonal or internal evaluations and satisfaction. Some studies have also pointed to cultural differences in the correlates of happiness and wellbeing (Diener, 1984). Moreover, some predictors of wellbeing have been found to play a stronger role in some cultures than in others. For instance, self-esteem better predicts subjective wellbeing in countries with individualist than collectivist cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995).

Overall, in Western individualistic cultures, people prioritize individual independence and place high emphasis on hedonic happiness and positive affect (Joshanloo et al., 2021). Compared to people from collectivist cultures, they appear to seek happiness for themselves, and hence, work towards maximizing their experience of positive affect (Uchida & Oishi, 2016). Individuals from predominantly collectivist cultures such as India, on the other hand, typically pursue happiness in a more socially engaged manner. Moreover, while people in individualist cultures may value self-enhancement, those in collectivist cultures may prioritize self-transcendence (Joshanloo et al., 2021).

In addition to influencing the conceptualizations of happiness, culture can also shape the activities that people choose to engage in for happiness promotion. For instance, within the Indian context, Singh et al. (2014) examined culture-specific indigenous practices such as *satsang* (group singing of religious/spiritual folk songs) that significantly enhanced wellbeing, pro-social behavior, and spiritual growth, while reducing stress and conflicts among practitioners. Another study focusing on older rural women documented a positive effect of spiritual practices across several parameters, including happiness as well as overall physical and mental health (Singh et al., 2020). Other studies from India show that factors such as leading a meaningful life and achieving one's goals (Jaiswal & Arun, 2022; Sharma & Patra, 2014), engaging in physical activities (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019), leisure engagement, proper sleep, healthy eating, and positive thinking (Dar & Wani, 2017) are also associated with increased levels of subjective happiness.

Today, happiness has become a substantial topic of interest not only in academia but also in the policy realms. It is widely acknowledged that happiness and wellbeing must be considered vital parameters when assessing the overall development of a country (De Neve & Sachs, 2020). Presently, global studies and indices of wellbeing such as the World Happiness Report and World Happiness Index have become very popular. They provide insights to scholars and policy makers about the social indicators of human development as well as the macro-level variables impacting wellbeing. However, the findings from the World Happiness Report are also used to make "tenuous psychological claims about national levels of happiness" (Kaufman et al., 2022, p.28), an aspect that is being viewed critically today. As Krys et al. (2022) emphasize "How can one reasonably conclude that country A is happier than country B, when happiness is being measured according to the way people in country A think about happiness?" (p.607).

Indeed, existing research demonstrates that cultural context gives rise to considerable differences in the way in which happiness and wellbeing are viewed and valued across cultures (Fave et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2001). Hence, if we recognize happiness as being influenced by both global standards and local socio-cultural contexts, then global assessments alone are insufficient (Kaufman et al., 2022). In particular, a context-sensitive understanding of the happiness strategies used by people in a given culture is critical, especially for designing interventions and informing policies to improve wellbeing (Selin & Davey, 2012).

In this context, India's multifaceted and diverse cultural position grounded in philosophical and spiritual traditions such as yoga and meditation, offers a distinct lens through which happiness can be understood (Jaiswal & Arun, 2022). Moreover, India is currently home to nearly 143 crore people, and there are increasing concerns about their mental wellbeing (e.g., Sagar et al., 2020). Under such circumstances, a psychometric measure designed to capture intentional happiness-enhancing strategies can have significant implications, particularly for policymakers, who can focus their efforts and resources more effectively.

1.1 Present study

This study aimed to develop and validate a scale (an English and a Hindi version) that examines the strategies adopted by Indians to enhance their happiness levels. Unlike most existing tools that tend to measure happiness as an outcome or a trait, this scale focuses on the intentional activities that people engage in to cultivate happiness. Moreover, our scale development involved the integration of top-down (literature review and reference to existing happiness measures) and bottom-up (in-depth, data-driven analysis of qualitative data) approaches. This not only strengthened methodological rigor but also provided a more comprehensive understanding of happiness that is grounded in people's experiences.

Empirical findings (e.g., Gardiner et al., 2020) indicate that measures of wellbeing usually perform better when they are used within the cultural context in which they were developed. In our review of Indian happiness measures, we found that very few tools exist that were developed in the country or adapted rigorously. Among these are the happiness at work scale (S. Singh & Aggarwal, 2018), the validated versions of the assessment of happiness questionnaire (R. B. Singh et al., 2020), short version of happiness at workplace scale (S-HAW) (Rastogi, 2020), and Bengali (Pyne et al., 2020), Hindi (R. Singh & Husain, 2021) and Malayalam (Cotton et al., 2025) translation of the subjective happiness scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). However, these measures either focus on workplace wellbeing or assess overall happiness levels. They do not examine the strategies used by people to increase their happiness in everyday life.

To the best of our knowledge the only available Indian measure that assesses happiness-enhancing strategies is the Hindi and English adaptation of the Happiness-Increasing Strategies Scale (H-ISS) (Singh et. al, 2025). While valuable, the H-ISS was originally developed in a Western context and was subsequently translated and validated for use in India. By contrast the Pursuit of Happiness Scale is an original and culturally grounded measure.

Importantly, this tool does not assess the happiness level of a person, instead it focuses on the strategies employed by people to enhance happiness. The development of this measure is grounded in the Sustainable Happiness Model (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005, 2006) and the Positive Activity Model (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013) which emphasize the role of human agency and consistent behavioural strategies for fostering happiness. Accordingly, the present research conceptualizes happiness not merely as an end-state, but as a process that unfolds through intentional engagement. This perspective informs the scale's title, the 'Pursuit of Happiness'

which highlights the ongoing nature of happiness promotion activities/efforts rather than viewing happiness as a fixed outcome.

Beyond its practical significance, the present research adds to the growing body of happiness literature from the Global South. Several studies have highlighted that an overwhelming majority of research in psychology has been conducted on participants from WEIRD (Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic) contexts (Adams et al., 2017; Krys et al., 2023). For instance, an analysis of leading journals across six sub-disciplines of Psychology revealed that 68% of the participants were Americans and 96% were from Western industrialized countries (Arnett, 2008).

In the context of happiness research, while most existing measures and findings originate from Western contexts, they may not be fully applicable to Asian countries such as India. Asian cultures are more influenced by collectivism than purely individualist traditions. Accordingly, by developing a measure of happiness increasing strategies that are adopted by people living in India, the present research addresses both an empirical and a theoretical gap. As the Indian cultural context aligns closely with those of other South Asian countries, this newly developed measure may also be applicable in those contexts, after rigorous local adaptation and validation.

2. Scale development

Each item on the Pursuit of Happiness scale corresponds to a strategy for increasing happiness, with participants indicating the frequency of their involvement in these strategies on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = always). The items, all positively phrased, were derived from three main sources: a) existing scales (e.g., Happiness-Increasing Strategies Scale by Nima and Garcia (2013); Happiness-Enhancing Activities and Positive Practices Inventory by Henricksen and Stephens (2013)), b) research on happiness determinants (e.g., Black & Kern, 2020; Jaiswal & Arun, 2022; Layous et al., 2014), and c) data from our qualitative studies (Singh, Bandyopadhyay, et al., 2023; Singh, Saxena et al., 2023). For deriving scale items from our qualitative studies, we re-visited our findings to capture some unique happiness promoting strategies that were not captured by other items and that previous research suggests could be generalizable to the Indian population.

All the scale items were first developed in English and then translated to Hindi. After the translation, each scale item was reviewed by the first and second author, who are both bi-lingual native Hindi speakers and have experience in developing psychometric scales in both languages. They reviewed all items and made necessary changes to ensure that the meaning of these statements remained consistent in both the English and Hindi versions of the scale.

The content validity of each item was tested (with bilingual experts), and their psychometric properties assessed in a pilot and a main study (presented later). For assessing the content validity, our initial pool of 93 items was examined by a panel of 10 experts (with expertise in positive and clinical psychology and psychological testing). They evaluated whether each statement represented a happiness strategy (“Do you consider the above statement to be a Happiness strategy?") and its relevance ("To what extent is this statement relevant?”).

The Item-Content Validity Index (I-CVI) was calculated using Microsoft Excel and Lynn’s (1986) criteria was used to include 58 items with I-CVI scores of 0.78 or higher. Nineteen items with scores between 0.70 and 0.78 were retained following Dalawi et al., (2023), and eight items were revised based on expert feedback for pilot testing. These items were included because we suspected that their poor I-CVI score were because of issues in their wording; although the I-CVI was low, they were considered as happiness-increasing strategies by most experts (i.e., at least 75% of experts answered yes to the question, "Do you consider the above statement to be a happiness strategy?"). Therefore, we revised them and decided to ask the participants of the pilot

study once again if they believed all the items represented a happiness-increasing strategy. Items not meeting these criteria were excluded, leaving us with 85 items for the pilot study.

Our studies (pilot and main) received ethical clearance from the Institutional Ethics Committee of Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. This study is part of a larger project that aims to understand the multi-dimensional aspects of happiness among Indians and develop culturally relevant measures of happiness.

3. Pilot study

The aim of the pilot study was to develop and examine the initial version of the scale.

3.1 Methods

3.1.1 Participants

A total of 203 (female = 126, male = 75, not reported = 2; Age M (SD) = 24.81 (10.21)) participants completed our online survey in English and 198 participants (female = 129, male = 68, not reported = 1; Age M(SD) = 24.05(9.25)) completed the survey in Hindi. No other demographic data were obtained.

3.1.2 Procedure

For data collection, an online survey form was prepared. It included the informed consent form, research ethics (confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw at any stage, voluntary research participation), socio-demographic schedule, and items of the PHS. The data collection forms were circulated across multiple social media platforms.

People interested in participating in the study provided informed consent to complete the survey either in Hindi or in English, based on their preference and linguistic proficiency. In addition to selecting how frequently they engaged in each strategy, participants indicated whether they perceived them as a happiness-increasing strategy. We concluded the data collection phase after approximately 200 responses were recorded for each language.

3.1.3 Data analysis

Data was analysed using SPSS Version 27. Item analysis and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were conducted separately for the data of the English and Hindi sample. To meet our objective of developing a bilingual scale (English and Hindi languages), only those items that commonly loaded onto a factor and met the inclusion criteria for item analysis in both English and Hindi samples were tested in the main study.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Item analysis

Our item analysis included two stages. In the first stage, we retained only those items that at least 60% of the participants had endorsed as a happiness increasing strategy. All 85 items fulfilled this criteria and we proceeded to the next stage where each item was analyzed for their mean value (2-4; in line with Jang & Roussos, 2007), skewness (<2; following Finney & DiStefano, 2013), kurtosis (<7; as per Curran et al., 1996), and item-total correlation (>0.25; in accordance with Field, 2009). Based on these criteria, 4 items were excluded from the English sample and 7 items were excluded from the Hindi sample. We proceeded with the remaining items for further analysis.

3.2.2 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

The remaining items (81 for English and 78 for Hindi) parallelly underwent a series of EFA with varimax rotation, suppressing items with eigenvalues <1 and factor loadings <0.4, repeated separately for English and Hindi samples. The Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded significant results for each EFA round ($p<.001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values indicated a good fit (all KMO >0.8).

For arriving at our final pilot scale, we excluded a total of 43 items for one of the following reasons: (a) they did not load onto any factor in either of the two samples, (b) they did not meet the norms for item analysis, or (c) they were theoretically incoherent. Finally, 42 items were deemed satisfactory against all EFA and item analysis criteria for both samples and were tested for their psychometric properties in the main study.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values and the Bartlett's test of sphericity confirmed sample adequacy (Field, 2009) (for English sample: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .88 and Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ (861) = 4119.08, $p < .001$; for Hindi sample: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .91 and Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ (861) = 4637.52, $p < .001$). In the English sample, the scale explained 63.96% of the variance, and the mean (range: 3.15 to 4.01), SD (range: 0.92 to 1.36), skewness (range: -0.95 to 0.12), kurtosis (range: -1.25 to 0.52) and corrected item-total correlation values (range: 0.33 to 0.65) met the normative criteria for item analysis. Likewise, in the Hindi sample, the scale accounted for 62.15% of the variance, and the mean (range: 3.51 to 4.01), SD (range: 0.84 to 1.11), skewness (range: -1.08 to -0.36), kurtosis (range: -0.40 to 1.39) and corrected item-total correlation values (range: 0.38 to 0.69) met the criteria for item analysis.

4. Main study

In the main study, we aimed to develop and validate the factor structure of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale.

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Participants

The main study comprised 1795 participants who provided informed consent and completed an online survey either in Hindi (n=809), or in English (n=986). The average age of the English respondents was 24.5 years (SD=10.8) and 53.6% of the participants were female. In terms of educational background, 62.1% held (or were pursuing) an undergraduate degree, 19.3% had (or were pursuing) a postgraduate degree and 18.6% had other educational levels (including up to high school). Financially, 59.5% participants reported having sufficient family income, 31.8% reported partially sufficient family income, and 8.7% reported insufficient family income. Most of the respondents practiced Hinduism (86.1%) and were single (81.4%).

The average age of the Hindi respondents was 27.9 years (SD=10.78) and 51.4% of the participants were female. About 47.7% participants held (or were pursuing) undergraduate degree, 31.9% had (or were pursuing) a postgraduate degree, and 21.4% had other qualifications. 55.2% participants believed their income was sufficient, 30% reported their income to be partially sufficient, and 14.7% reported their income to be insufficient. 93.4% participants practiced Hinduism and 64.1% were single.

4.1.2 Measures

The following measures were used to validate our scale in the main study:

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). This scale aims to examine an individual's life satisfaction. The scale comprises 5 items and respondents use a 7-point Likert scale (1: "Strongly Disagree", 7: "Strongly Agree") to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement. A high total score is suggestive of higher life satisfaction. In our study, the scale was found to have good reliability (English α = .90, Hindi α = .89).

Well-Being Scale (WeBS; Lui & Fernando, 2018). This scale uses 29 items to measure well-being across five domains: financial, physical, social, eudaimonic, and hedonic. Respondents use a 6-point Likert scale (1: "Strongly Disagree", 6: "Strongly Agree") to indicate their level of agreement with the statement. The overall WeBS score is calculated by averaging all item scores, while sub-scale scores are calculated from the average of each item within each sub-scale. In our study, WeBS and its sub-scales were found to have good reliability (Total WeBS α: English = .97, Hindi α = .97, financial α: English = .88, Hindi α = .86, physical α: English = .91, Hindi α = .90, social α: English = .87, Hindi α = .87, eudaimonic α: English = .94, Hindi α = .94, and hedonic α: English = .88, Hindi α = .86).

Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE; Diener et al., 2009). SPANE is a 12-item tool measuring different mental states. Participants indicate how frequently they experience various positive and negative feelings using a scale from 1 ("Very Rarely or Never") to 5 ("Very Often or Always"). The SPANE produces three scores: SPANE-P (sum of positive feelings), SPANE-N (sum of negative feelings), and SPANE-B (overall affect balance, calculated by subtracting SPANE-N from SPANE-P). The scale was found to have a good reliability value in this study (SPANE-P α: English = .88, Hindi = .86; SPANE-N α: English = .85, Hindi = .88).

4.1.3 Procedure

In the main study, we followed a similar procedure as our pilot study. In addition to the informed consent form, research ethics, socio-demographic information, the online data collection booklet included the modified version of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale (based on findings from pilot study) and the validation measures.

4.1.4 Data analysis

All statistical analyses in the main study were conducted using SPSS Version 27 and LISREL 8.80. Item analysis and EFA were initially conducted by using a randomly selected one-third of the English sample (using random function of Excel). The resulting factor structure was then confirmed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the remaining two-thirds of the English sample and the full Hindi sample. Additionally, correlation analyses were carried out to evaluate the criterion and discriminant validity of the newly developed scales by exploring their relationship with established scales. We also calculated the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values to examine the validity of the newly developed measure.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Item analysis and EFA (using one-third English sample)

Following the previously mentioned criteria, no items were excluded based on item analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO=0.95) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2$ (465) = 6363.73, $p < .001$) indicated the suitability of our dataset for factor analysis. The 42-item scale was subjected to a series of EFA with varimax rotation, suppressing items with eigenvalues <1 and factor loadings <0.5 until all items loaded onto distinct factors. After two rounds of EFA iterations, we arrived at the final version of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale consisting of 31 items loaded in five factors

which collectively explained 62.22% of the variance. Factor 1 comprised 10 items, factor 2 included eight items, factor 3 consisted of five items, factor 4 contained four items and factor 5 contained four items. The factor structure of the scale is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Factor loadings for the Pursuit of Happiness Scale*

New* No.	Item		1	2	3	4	5
10	14	I express gratitude towards others.	0.68				
2	13	I get myself into a happy mood.	0.64				
13	24	I frame things in a positive light.	0.64				
31	22	I spend quality time alone doing my own things.	0.63				
15	23	I treat myself.	0.62				
8	17	I engage in hobbies that brings me pleasure.	0.62				
6	40	I affirm to my most important values.	0.61				
29	6	In my life, I look at the positives.	0.57				
20	9	I spend time to explore and understand myself better.	0.56				
17	16	I count on my blessings.	0.54				
9	37	I persist towards achieving my goals.		0.74			
22	27	I make efforts towards my work goals.		0.71			
24	41	I explore and pursue my life goals.		0.69			
7	39	I am grateful for everything that I achieved in my life.		0.66			
19	36	I work on developing my knowledge or skills.		0.64			
28	35	I am motivated to acquire new levels of knowledge.		0.64			
14	42	I feel absorbed in whatever I do.		0.6			
12	38	I take full responsibility for my thoughts.		0.6			
18	12	I perform spiritual activities.			0.83		
23	5	I engage in spiritual activities.			0.79		
16	11	I perform religious activities.			0.78		
4	31	I practice spiritual teachings to lead a good life.			0.78		
27	10	I seek support from my faith.			0.57		
30	29	I forgive others who hurt me.				0.68	
25	34	When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance.				0.67	
21	30	I maintain my calm during bad situations.				0.66	
11	32	During tough times, I am kind to myself.				0.65	
3	7	I exercise regularly.					0.75
1	3	I enjoy playing sports.					0.68
26	21	I travel to new places.					0.55
5	2	I take a healthy and well-balanced diet.					0.52
		Eigenvalues	13.32	2.29	1.37	1.2	1.08
		Percentage of Variance	42.96	7.40	4.44	3.89	3.51
		Cronbach's Alpha	.909	.925	.874	.796	.687

4.2.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

To confirm the factor structure of newly developed measure, CFA was conducted twice: first using the remaining two-thirds of the English sample and second using the full Hindi sample. The overall fit of our scale, using both the data sets, was found to be good. The goodness-of-fit measures for the scale, along with their corresponding benchmarks, are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Confirmatory factor analysis results for the Pursuit of Happiness Scale*

Fit Index	English	Hindi	Norms
$\chi^{2/df}$	3.26	3.18	< 5 (Garver & Mentzer, 1999)
RMSEA	0.06	0.052	< 0.08 (Cole, 1987)
SRMR	0.05	0.042	< .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
GFI	0.88	0.90	> 0.80 (Doll et al., 1994)
NNFI	0.98	0.98	> 0.90 (Garver & Mentzer, 1999)
CFI	0.98	0.98	> 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)

Note. RMSEA: root-mean-squared error of approximation, SRMR: standardized root-mean-square residual, NNFI: non-normed fit index, GFI: goodness-of-fit index, CFI: comparative fit index; $\chi^{2/df}$: ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom.

4.2.3 Scale description

In addition to our theoretical underpinning and conceptualization of happiness, a thorough examination of the five factors and their corresponding items revealed that the strategies identified in this study underscore the pursuit of different life domains that individuals consider important for happiness. Thus, further justifying the name 'Pursuit of Happiness Scale.' Each factor on the scale represents strategies aligned with an aspect of life where good performance is considered important for happiness. The five factors of the scale are named as follows: (a) Pursuing a Positive Outlook, (b) Pursuing Goals, (c) Pursuing Faith, (d) Pursuing Emotional Stability, and (e) Pursuing a Healthy Life. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale (1: Never to 5: Always) and scores for each factor can be calculated by adding the scores of all items within that factor. The total score of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale can be calculated either by adding the scores of all items or by adding the scores of the five factors. We randomly shuffled the items to create a new order for the scale (as presented in the first column of Table 1). The scale items (English version) can be seen in Table 1, and the scale (in both languages) is provided in the appendix.

Factor 1: Pursuing a Positive Outlook. The 10 items in this factor represent activities that help an individual shape their mindset in a positive direction. This can be achieved by involving oneself in enjoyable activities ("I engage in hobbies that brings me pleasure"), working on oneself ("I spend time to explore and understand myself better") or by adopting a positive perspective ("In my life, I look at the positives"). This factor includes (newly allotted) items 2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 29 and 31.

Factor 2: Pursuing Goals. The eight items within this factor represent actions that are directed towards setting and achieving professional goals ("I make efforts towards my work goals") and fostering personal growth ("I work on developing my knowledge or skills"). This factor encompasses (newly allotted) items 7, 9, 12, 14, 19, 22, 24 and 28.

Factor 3: Pursuing Faith. The five items in this factor signify a sense of deep commitment or dedication towards faith. This commitment to faith could be through engagement in one's

religion ("I perform religious activities") or spirituality ("I practice spiritual teachings to lead a good life"). This factor includes (newly allotted) items 4, 16, 18, 23 and 27.

Factor 4: Pursuing Emotional Stability. The four items in this factor relates to an intention of adopting behaviours that facilitate a well-balanced and stable state of mind ("When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance"). The items included in this factor (with newly allotted numbers) are 11, 21, 25 and 30.

Factor 5: Pursuing a Healthy Life. The items in this factor reflect actions and behaviours crucial for physical and mental wellbeing. These involve self-care and leisure ("I travel to new places"), regular physical activity ("I exercise regularly"), and mindful nutrition ("I take a healthy and well-balanced diet"). The four items in this factor (with newly allotted numbers) are 1, 3, 5 and 26.

Reliability and validity. The Cronbach's alpha scores suggest acceptable internal consistency reliability for our scale (see Table 1). We also found significant positive correlations between the Pursuit of Happiness Scale and its factors with other happiness-related scales, including SWLS (r = 0.51 to 0.71 for English and 0.47 to 0.59 for Hindi), SPANE-P (r = 0.49 to 0.76 for English and 0.57 to 0.71 for Hindi), SPANE-B (r = 0.31 to 0.55 for English and 0.37 to 0.54 for Hindi), and WeBS (r = 0.47 to 0.76 for English and 0.49 to 0.62 for Hindi), as well as their respective factors (r = 0.33 to 0.76 for English and 0.37 to 0.60 for Hindi). These findings support the criterion validity of the Pursuit of Happiness scale.

We further examined the convergent validity by considering the AVE and CR values of our scale. As per suggested norms (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019), an AVE greater than or equal to 0.50, lower than the CR and the CR greater than 0.70 gives evidence of convergent validity. In line with these norms, CR was greater than 0.70 for all factors (Pursuing a Positive Outlook = 0.86, Pursuing Goals = 0.86, Pursuing Faith = 0.87, Pursing Emotional Stability = 0.76, and Pursing a Healthy Life = 0.72). All AVE values were lower than CR and except for one, were greater than 0.50 (Pursuing a Positive Outlook = 0.63, Pursuing Goals = 0.56, Pursuing Faith = 0.43, Pursing Emotional Stability = 0.56, and Pursing a Healthy Life = 0.60). Overall, these findings supported the convergent validity of our scale.

The correlations of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale and its factors with SPANE-N were mostly very small and non-significant (see Table 3). However, some correlation values were higher for the Hindi sample. Additionally, the square root of AVE was generally not greater than the correlations among the factors of our scale (per Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Overall, we found only limited support for the discriminant validity of our scale and recommend further examination.

Table 3. *Correlation among the Pursuit of Happiness Scale and the validating scales*

	PO	PG	PF	PE	PH	PHS	SWLS	SPANE-B	SPANE-P	SPANE-N	WeBS	FW-WeBS	PW-WeBS	SW-WeBS	EW-WeBS	HW-WeBS
PO	--	.82**	.74**	.75**	.70**	.95**	.56**	.52**	.69**	-.14**	.59**	.46**	.55**	.54**	.57**	.55**
PG	.85**	--	.63**	.74**	.58**	.90**	.50**	.54**	.65**	-.19**	.57**	.40**	.54**	.52**	.57**	.52**
PF	.59**	.51**	--	.59**	.64**	.82**	.47**	.37**	.57**	-0.03	.49**	.39**	.46**	.42**	.46**	.42**
PE	.70**	.69**	.52**	--	.57**	.84**	.49**	.44**	.57**	-.12**	.49**	.37**	.46**	.44**	.48**	.44**
PH	.63**	.57**	.54**	.54**	--	.77**	.52**	.37**	.58**	-0.02	.50**	.46**	.51**	.44**	.45**	.41**
PHS	.94**	.90**	.75**	.80**	.74**	--	.59**	.53**	.71**	-.13**	.62**	.48**	.58**	.56**	.60**	.55**
SWLS	.67**	.63**	.51**	.57**	.58**	.71**	--	.35**	.59**	0.02	.75**	.71**	.70**	.67**	.69**	.66**
SPANE-B	.55**	.50**	.31**	.45**	.36**	.54**	.49**	--	.69**	-.79**	.40**	.28**	.35**	.38**	.39**	.42**
SPANE-P	.76**	.68**	.49**	.63**	.57**	.76**	.70**	.74**	--	-.10**	.63**	.54**	.58**	.58**	.59**	.58**
SPANE-N	-.06*	-0.06	0.03	-0.04	0.03	-0.04	-0.02	-.74**	-.097**	--	-0.02	.07*	0	-0.04	-0.04	-.08*
WeBS	.75**	.72**	.47**	.58**	.58**	.76**	.72**	.51**	.69**	-0.06	--	.83**	.92**	.92**	.96**	.89**
FW-WeBS	.56**	.52**	.36**	.45**	.46**	.57**	.65**	.35**	.55**	0.03	.81**	--	.75**	.71**	.70**	.67**
PW-WeBS	.60**	.56**	.46**	.51**	.62**	.65**	.59**	.45**	.59**	-.08*	.84**	.66**	--	.80**	.84**	.76**
SW-WeBS	.62**	.60**	.33**	.46**	.41**	.61**	.59**	.43**	.58**	-0.05	.87**	.66**	.62**	--	.86**	.79**
EW-WeBS	.74**	.73**	.45**	.55**	.52**	.74**	.65**	.46**	.64**	-0.04	.95**	.68**	.71**	.80**	--	.86**
HW-WeBS	.76**	.67**	.40**	.54**	.48**	.70**	.68**	.56**	.67**	-.16**	.88**	.65**	.66**	.74**	.85**	--

Note. Values in the lower half are from English data and values in the upper half are from Hindi data. PO: Pursuing a Positive Outlook, PG: Pursuing Goals, PF: Pursuing Faith, PE: Pursuing Emotional Stability, PH: Pursuing a Healthy Life, PHS: Pursuit of Happiness Scale, SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale, SPANE-B = SPANE Balance, SPANE-P = SPANE Positive, SPANE-N = SPANE Negative, WeBS: Total Well-being Scale, FW-WeBS: Financial Well-being subscale, PW-WeBS: Physical Well-being subscale, SW-WeBS: Social Well-being subscale, EW-WeBS: Eudaimonic Well-being subscale, HW-WeBS: Hedonic Well-being subscale. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

4.3 Discussion

This study advances the understanding of happiness in contemporary India by developing a 31-item Pursuit of Happiness Scale, which examines the strategies that people adopt to enhance their happiness levels. This scale was inspired by the assertion that engaging in positive activities can positively influence happiness (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Although a few scales assessing the same exist, there is a dearth of those developed to center the Indian cultural experience. Therefore, scale items were developed by integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches. We began scale development with item analysis, and following the guidelines for item analysis (see Singh et al., 2016), we retained items with mean values between 2 and 4, skewness values of less than 2, kurtosis values of less than 7, and corrected item-total correlations exceeding 0.25.

Through EFA, we empirically derived a five-factor solution representing five distinct categories of happiness-increasing strategies, viz. pursuing a positive outlook (10 items), pursuing goals (eight items), pursuing faith (five items), pursuing emotional stability (four items), and pursuing a healthy life (four items). All 31 items met the established criteria for item analysis, and together, they accounted for 62.22% of the variance.

The factor 'pursuing a positive outlook' consists of strategies to increase happiness by expressing and nurturing gratitude, actively engaging in positive thinking and reflection, spending time with oneself, and self-care. In the psychology literature, gratitude has been conceptualized as a trait as well as a positive emotional state in response to some form of help, gift, or benefit provided by someone (Sansone & Sansone, 2010), and it has been found to be positively related to happiness (Kharbanda & Mohan, 2021). In addition, meta-analytical studies have indicated a greater experience of positive emotions and moods among individuals who participated in gratitude interventions (Diniz et al., 2023).

Likewise, positive thinking has been found to be positively associated with markers of psychological wellbeing, including happiness and life satisfaction, and negatively associated with markers of psychopathology, including anxiety, stress, depression, and anger (Wong, 2012). Traditionally, the absence of negative thinking rather than the presence of positive thinking has been considered more critical in determining psychological (mal)adjustment (e.g., the vulnerability hypothesis). Presently, with the rise of the positive psychology movement, there has been greater emphasis on the role of positive thinking in overall wellbeing (Wong, 2012; see Lightsey, 1994 for the buffer hypothesis).

Apart from gratitude and positive thinking, self-care is another happiness-promoting strategy frequently listed in the literature. It involves being mindful of one's physical and psychological needs and consciously seeking healthy resources and activities to refill and refuel oneself to foster holistic wellness. Given the current work demands and rising levels of workplace stress, self-care is particularly relevant in preventing burnout (Butler et al., 2019).

The next factor of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale is 'pursuing goals.' This factor encapsulates happiness promotion strategies related to exploration and pursuit of life goals, making persistent efforts towards reaching those goals, working on knowledge and skill development, and feeling absorbed while working on one's goals. Personal goals are self-generated initiatives that focus on bringing about positive changes in life (Sheldon, 2004). They have been found to play a crucial role in enhancing wellbeing. For instance, pursuing and achieving goals was found to be linked to elevated levels of happiness in a six-month longitudinal study (Sheldon et al., 2010). Goal achievement generally leads to increased wellbeing when goals are self-concordant, intrinsically motivating, and focus on personal growth and connection rather than external rewards such as money and status (Sheldon & Kasser, 1998). Similarly, self-concordance was positively linked to wellbeing among Indian working professionals (Jaiswal & Arun, 2022).

In addition, clear and challenging goals are essential for experiencing a state of flow in which individuals become fully immersed in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Some studies have found that, apart from improved performance, engaging in flow-promoting activities is also connected to an increased experience of positive affect (Asakawa, 2004; Rogatko, 2009). Broadly, during the state of flow, people feel at one with the activity, often lose their sense of time, and feel a heightened sense of control over their environment, as there is a perceived match between their skills and the task at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Moving to the third factor of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale – 'pursuing faith' – it comprises strategies of happiness promotion derived through performing and engaging in spiritual and religious activities, practicing spiritual teachings, and seeking support from faith. Happiness has been linked to belief in God (Rosmarin et al., 2009) and religious practices, such as prayers (Francis & Fisher, 2014). Generally, religiousness and spirituality are believed to help people overcome stress, sadness, fear, anger, anguish, and other challenging situations. In other words, a belief in a higher power and engaging in religious and spiritual activities may help develop internal and external mechanisms to navigate life adversities. Thus, individuals who score higher on religiousness and spirituality usually experience better mental health and quality of life (Vitorino et al., 2018).

India, in particular, is characterized by a wide diversity of religious and spiritual traditions that add to its rich and vibrant spiritual landscape. Apart from quantitative studies highlighting the positive association between religiosity, spirituality, and happiness (Singh et al., 2019), qualitative studies from India also show that these serve as avenues for seeking mental strength and peace (K. Singh et al., 2022).

The next factor of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale - 'pursuing emotional stability' - includes strategies focused on emotional regulation and balance, self-compassion, and forgiveness. In general, emotion regulation during situations of adversity is not only viewed as critical for one's happiness levels (Cunha et al., 2022), but also for managing academic, work, and other life-related challenges (Kornienko & Rudnova, 2023). However, while there is a positive link between healthy emotion regulation strategies, such as cognitive reassessment, and subjective levels of happiness (Cunha et al., 2022), maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as emotional suppression, may have an adverse effect on one's level of happiness (Kornienko & Rudnova, 2023).

Similar to healthy emotion regulation, existing research indicates a positive correlation between happiness and forgiveness (Dahiya, 2021). Besides, meta-analytic studies have found a positive effect of forgiveness interventions on several positive mental health outcomes including happiness, satisfaction, hope, confidence, and compassion among others (Akhtar & Barlow, 2018). Self-compassion, another happiness-increasing strategy listed in the Pursuit of Happiness Scale, has also been found to be positively related to happiness. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness during times of suffering or setbacks, recognizing that one's struggles are a part of the larger human experience, and maintaining a balanced awareness of painful thoughts and feelings (Neff et al., 2006), and it is important for long-term happiness and overall wellbeing.

The last factor of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale, titled 'pursuing a healthy life', encompasses aspects such as balanced and healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and mobility-focused leisure pursuits, such as sports and travelling, for happiness promotion. A substantial body of literature points to a link between good physical health and happiness (Steptoe, 2019). Health-promoting lifestyles, particularly regular physical activity and a healthy diet, are not only related to physical wellbeing, but also happiness levels (Motl et al., 2000; Veenhoven, 2021). The increased levels of happiness observed in regular exercisers may stem from elevated levels of endorphins in the body, which stimulate positive emotions (Dsouza et al., 2020).

Similarly, as a nutritious diet adds to good health, and good health contributes to happiness, it is likely that there is a link between one's diet and happiness. While research on the connection between food consumption and happiness is sparse, strong indications of a link between the two were noted in a synthesis of 20 empirical studies on healthy diet and happiness (Veenhoven 2021).

Two other related items in the 'pursuing a healthy life' sub-scale, namely sports and travel, have also been found to be related to happiness (Downward & Rasciute, 2011; Nawijn & Veenhoven, 2013). Mobility-focused leisure pursuits, such as sports participation and travelling, are usually considered active leisure engagement compared to more passive activities, such as watching television (Nawijn & Veenhoven, 2013).

In terms of happiness, leisure travel usually brings about small temporary boosts, especially during the experience itself (Nawijn & Veenhoven, 2013). However, travel-related memories may evoke positive feelings and enhance overall happiness even upon return (Nawijn, 2011). Apart from the increasing emphasis on the tourism industry, sports participation has also become an important part of public policy discussion. This is because policymakers are increasingly recognizing the benefits of sports participation, both for individual wellness (such as boosts in health and happiness) and for its societal benefits, such as reduced healthcare costs (Downward & Rasciute, 2011).

Surprisingly, in the present research, social affiliation did not emerge as a happiness promotion strategy despite the strong link between the two. For instance, studies indicate that people are happier when they are with others (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003) and that social affiliation also helps in coping with stress (S. Cohen & Wills, 1985). In addition, experimental studies involving the manipulation of social activity have shown an increase in happiness levels (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Furthermore, the importance of social connections was also reflected in our qualitative findings (Singh, Bandyopadhyay, et al., 2023; Singh, Saxena et al., 2023). Even in the present research, we had items related to social connections in both the pilot and main study (e.g., I meet with likeminded people, I spend time with friends); however, they could not be incorporated into the final Pursuit of Happiness Scale considering their poor psychometric properties.

The absence of such items may partly reflect the demographic profile of our respondents, who were predominantly young adults with an average age of less than 30 years. They may be more attuned to self-focused strategies, such as personal growth, emotional regulation, and goal achievement, than relational strategies. This trend was also evident in the final structure of the scale, which was primarily composed of self-focused items. However, this does not necessarily imply that social connections are unimportant. It is possible that in cultural contexts where social relationships are an ingrained, normative, or implicit part of daily life, people may not view or conceptualize relational bonds as a deliberate means of pursuing happiness. Perhaps, social connectedness functions more as a foundational condition for wellbeing than as an explicitly enacted strategy for pursuing happiness.

Overall, the happiness increasing strategies derived in the present study were mostly 'self-focused' – where the primary aim is to increase happiness by satisfying ones needs and wants as opposed to 'other-focused' strategies where the focus is on increasing happiness through social relationships and interactions (Xu et al., 2023). Existing evidence indicates that both self- and other-focused strategies can positively influence happiness levels (Sääksjärvi et al., 2017). In the context of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale, most items reflect personal strategies related to self-care, goal pursuit, emotional regulation, and self-development. Some items, particularly those related to spiritual and religious practices, were more of a mixed nature, reflecting both the

personal and communal dimension. This is not surprising, especially in collectivist settings such as India. Although social connectedness related strategies did not emerge as an independent factor, a few of our scale items were 'other-focused' (e.g., I express gratitude to others) in nature, having underlying elements of reciprocity (Lambert et al., 2013).

Based on the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic orientations, both the items identified as other-focused can be categorized under the eudaimonic dimension. This reflects the role of prosocial virtues in fostering sustainable forms of wellbeing. Few items reflect both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions, suggesting that some strategies (such as exercising or spending quality time alone) may serve a dual function. Not only can they provide immediate pleasure but also contribute to personal growth or self-regulation. However, majority of the happiness promotion strategies were eudaimonic in nature, emphasizing long-term wellbeing through purpose, growth, and alignment with values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In contrast, hedonic strategies focusing on the pursuit of pleasure and positive affect were relatively few and largely self-focused in the present study. Prior research also contends that culturally embedded conceptions of wellbeing may favour eudaimonic pursuits, particularly in Eastern and collectivist societies where purposeful living, meaning-making, and spiritual engagement are valued alongside emotional satisfaction (Joshanloo, 2014).

Broadly speaking, a closer look at the five empirically derived factors offers insight into how hedonic and eudaimonic orientations play out in the Indian context. *Pursuing Goals*, for instance, is strongly aligned with an eudaimonic orientation that emphasizes intrinsic motivation, personal growth, and long-term self-development. Similarly, *Pursuing Emotional Stability* encompasses self-regulatory strategies, such as emotion regulation, self-compassion, and forgiveness, which are also typically linked to long-term rather than short-term gains in wellbeing. *Pursuing a Positive Outlook*, though self-focused, reflects a more blended orientation. While certain items (e.g., engaging in hobbies and spending time with oneself) may yield hedonic pleasure, others (e.g., practicing gratitude and positive thinking) promote resilience and meaning.

Pursuing Faith represents the eudaimonic orientation, and religious and spiritual practices were not only seen as vehicles for personal meaning but were also embedded in communal life. Finally, *Pursuing a Healthy Life*, includes elements of hedonic enjoyment (e.g., travel, leisure). However, it can be seen as representing long-term wellbeing through physical self-care, thus indicating a pragmatic blend of hedonic means toward eudaimonic ends. Together, this five-factor structure suggests that some happiness promotion strategies may simultaneously serve hedonic and eudaimonic functions. Besides, it challenges rigid dichotomies and highlights that in collectivist contexts such as India, eudaimonic pursuits can be achieved through self-focused behaviours. These findings call for a more flexible and culturally inclusive approach that accommodates blended pathways for happiness. Additionally, a more holistic exploration of self-focused versus other-focused happiness strategies and eudaimonic versus hedonic strategies is warranted to understand their relative impact on the happiness levels of Indians.

Moving on to the psychometric properties of the newly developed Pursuit of Happiness Scale, the results of CFA indicated a good model fit for the five-factor structure (for both the English and Hindi versions), with the indices meeting the recommended norms (see Table 2). Besides, the α values of the new scale and its sub-scales ranged from 0.68 to 0.91, thus, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency reliability according to recommended norms (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2013).

Additionally, the new scale and its sub-scales had significant positive correlations (ranging from medium to strong effect size; Cohen, 1988) with other measures related to happiness, including SWLS, SPANE-P, SPANE-B, and WeBS, thus providing evidence of the criterion

validity of the newly developed measure (for details see Table 3). Based on the guidelines in the extant literature (e.g., Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2020), the computed values for average variance extracted and composite reliability were also within the recommended range, providing further evidence of convergent validity. However, based on its correlation with the SPANE-N, we found limited evidence for the discriminant validity of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale, thus warranting further investigation. This finding may be because, while our new scale assesses individuals' engagement in happiness-increasing strategies, the SPANE-N measures the experience of negative emotions. It is possible that some participants engaged in these strategies specifically in response to negative emotional experiences during the study period. In turn, this may have influenced the association between the two scales.

This highlights the need for rigorous future research and validation studies of the Pursuit of Happiness Scale not only in India but also in other similar cultural contexts, such as in South Asian countries, to understand its applicability and potential utility in other cultures.

4.3.1 Limitations

Finally, one must take cognizance of the limitations of the present study. Notably, the online mode of data collection limited research participation to technologically adept individuals and to those with access to technology. Additionally, the scale items were developed in two languages, English and Hindi. A bilingual medium of instruction (English and the language most spoken in the state/region) is widespread in educational institutions in our country. Some of the higher-level competitive examinations in India are also conducted in a bilingual medium (Chandra, 2003; Sridhar, 1991). For the present psychometric measure, we opted for Hindi, as 44.3% of Indians understand the language (Census, 2011). However, given the linguistic diversity of our country, this may impact the applicability of this measure as it may not adequately capture the perspectives of non-English and non-Hindi speakers in India.

Furthermore, regional and subcultural differences may influence the salience and interpretation of certain strategies; thus, some happiness strategies that resonate more strongly in one region, may be less relevant in another. However, considering the pluralistic and multilingual nature of Indian society, it is not feasible for a single study to address all regional languages. Hence, future research could consider translating and validating the scale in other Indian languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Bengali, Odia, Assamese, and Manipuri. This will not only extend its applicability but also help evaluate its relevance across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Moreover, we acknowledge that self-report measures cannot fully capture the range, depth, and contextual nuances of strategies employed by people in their pursuit of happiness. We also recognize that such measures are subject to social desirability bias, recall errors, and the risk of common method variance. To address these concerns, future research must consider adopting a mixed-method approach or incorporating behavioural or physiological measures for data triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity of the study findings.

5. Conclusion

This study reports the development and psychometric properties of the 31-item Pursuit of Happiness Scale. Drawing from frameworks that stress the process-oriented nature of happiness, this scale captures the ongoing and intentional pursuits of happiness in everyday life. Interestingly, while most of the strategies identified were self-focused rather than relational or interpersonal, they predominantly reflected a eudaimonic rather than a hedonic orientation. This suggests that, in the Indian context, happiness is often pursued through personal development

and self-regulation, even when the route is not overtly communal. Thus, by offering a lens to understand happiness in the Indian sociocultural milieu, the present study adds to the growing body of wellbeing frameworks from Asian cultures. This is in line with the growing call for decolonizing psychology.

From a more practical perspective, the development of this scale is also timely, as governments increasingly focus on enhancing the happiness levels of their citizens. The Pursuit of Happiness Scale can help scholars and policymakers gain meaningful insights into the wellbeing landscape of the country. Such knowledge can inform the development of policies and interventions to address and promote the happiness levels of Indians and help develop theoretical models that are grounded in data from India. In addition, at a more micro level, such an understanding can help individuals engage more proactively in happiness-increasing strategies for better mood regulation.

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Kamlesh Singh: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, funding acquisition, investigation, methodology, project administration, visualization, writing – original draft preparation, writing – review & editing. Gaurav Saxena: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, visualization, writing – original draft preparation, writing – review & editing. Shilpa Bandyopadhyay: Formal analysis, visualization, writing – original draft preparation, writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

Ethical clearance for this study was provided by the Institute Ethics Committee of Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants who were a part of the present study and the study was performed in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments and comparable ethical standards.

AI statement

AI was not used in the conduct of this research.

Data availability statement

Study data may be shared upon reasonable request from researchers who provide a methodologically sound proposal and obtain approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Pursuit of Happiness Scale (in Hindi)

पर्सूइट ऑफ हैपिनेस स्केल

Kamlesh Singh, Gaurav Saxena, & Shilpa Bandyopadhyay

निर्देश

नीचे कुछ खुशी से संबंधित कथन दिए गए हैं। आप अपने दैनिक जीवन में इसका किस हद तक अभ्यास (प्रैक्टिस) करते हैं?

स्केल

1 कभी नहीं
2 शायद ही कभी
3 कभी-कभी
4 अक्सर
5 हमेशा

Sr No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	मुझे खेल खेलना अच्छा लगता है।					
2	मैं खुद को खुश मूड में पाता/ पाती हूँ।					
3	मैं नियमित रूप से व्यायाम करता/करती हूँ।					
4	मैं एक अच्छा जीवन जीने के लिए आध्यात्मिक शिक्षाओं का अभ्यास करता/करती हूँ।					
5	मैं एक स्वस्थ और संतुलित डाईट (खाना) लेता/लेती हूँ।					
6	मैं अपने महत्वपूर्ण मूल्यों पर दृढ़ रहता/रहती हूँ।					
7	मैं जीवन में हासिल हुई चीजों के लिए आभारी हूँ।					
8	मैं ऐसे शौक (हॉबी) में व्यस्त रहता/ रहती हूँ जो मुझे खुशी देते हैं।					
9	मैं अपने लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने की दिशा में कायम हूँ।					
10	मैं दूसरों के प्रति आभार व्यक्त करता/करती हूँ।					
11	मुश्किल समय में, मैं खुद के साथ दयालु (आत्म-दयालू) रहता /रहती हूँ।					
12	मैं अपने विचारों की पूरी जिम्मेदारी लेता/लेती हूँ।					
13	मैं चीजों को सकारात्मक तरीके से फ्रेम करता/करती हूँ।					
14	मैं जो कुछ भी करता/करती हूँ, उसमें खुद को लीन महसूस करता/करती हूँ।					
15	मैं खुद को ट्रीट देता /देती हूँ।					
16	मैं धार्मिक कार्य करता/करती हूँ।					
17	मैं अपने आशीर्वाद (कृपा) को मानता/मानती हूँ।					
18	मैं आध्यात्मिक कार्य करता/करती हूँ।					

19	मैं अपने ज्ञान या कौशल को विकसित करने पर काम करता/करती हूँ।					
20	मैं खुद को बेहतर तरीके से जानने और समझने के लिए समय बिताता/बिताती हूँ।					
21	मैं बुरी परिस्थितियों में शांत बना रहता/बनी रहती हूँ।					
22	मैं अपने काम के लक्ष्यों के लिए प्रयास करता/करती हूँ।					
23	मैं आध्यात्मिक गतिविधियों में व्यस्त रहता/रहती हूँ।					
24	मैं अपने जीवन के लक्ष्यों का पता लगाता/लगाती हूँ और उनका अनुकरण करता /करती हूँ।					
25	जब कोई चीज मुझे परेशान करती है, तो मैं अपनी भावनाओं को संतुलित रखने की कोशिश करता/करती हूँ।					
26	मैं नई जगहों की यात्रा करता/करती हूँ।					
27	मैं अपनी आस्था का सहारा लेता/ लेती हूँ।					
28	मैं ज्ञान के नए स्तरों को प्राप्त करने के लिए प्रेरित रहता/ रहती हूँ।					
29	मैं अपने जीवन में सकारात्मकता को देखता/ देखती हूँ।					
30	जिन्होंने मुझे चोट पहुंचाई है, मैं उन्हें क्षमा कर देता/ देती हूँ।					
31	मैं एकाकी में अपना काम करते हुए क्वालिटी टाइम बिताता/ बिताती हूँ।					

Appendix 2. Pursuit of Happiness Scale (in English)

Pursuit of Happiness Scale

Kamlesh Singh, Gaurav Saxena, & Shilpa Bandyopadhyay

Directions
Below are some statements related to Happiness. Please respond how frequently do you practice them using the scale.

Scale
1 Never
2 Rarely
3 Sometimes
4 Often
5 Always

Sr No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I enjoy playing sports.					
2	I get myself into a happy mood.					
3	I exercise regularly.					
4	I practice spiritual teachings to lead a good life.					
5	I take a healthy and well-balanced diet.					
6	I affirm to my most important values.					
7	I am grateful for everything that I achieved in my life.					
8	I engage in hobbies that brings me pleasure.					
9	I persist towards achieving my goals.					
10	I express gratitude towards others.					
11	During tough times, I am kind to myself.					
12	I take full responsibility for my thoughts.					
13	I frame things in a positive light.					
14	I feel absorbed in whatever I do.					
15	I treat myself.					
16	I perform religious activities.					
17	I count on my blessings.					
18	I perform spiritual activities.					
19	I work on developing my knowledge or skills.					
20	I spend time to explore and understand myself better.					
21	I maintain my calm during bad situations.					
22	I make efforts towards my work goals.					
23	I engage in spiritual activities.					

24	I explore and pursue my life goals.					
25	When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance.					
26	I travel to new places.					
27	I seek support from my faith.					
28	I am motivated to acquire new levels of knowledge.					
29	In my life, I look at the positives.					
30	I forgive others who hurt me.					
31	I spend quality time alone doing my own things.					

Scoring

The Pursuit of Happiness Scale comprises 31 items categorized into five factors. Scores for each factor can be calculated by summing the scores of the items corresponding to that factor.

- **Pursuing a Positive Outlook:** This factor comprises 10 items, specifically item no. 2, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 29, and 31.
- **Pursuing Goals:** This factor consists of 8 items, namely item no. 7, 9, 12, 14, 19, 22, 24, and 28.
- **Pursuing Devotion:** This factor includes 5 items, which are item no. 4, 16, 18, 23, and 27.
- **Pursuing Emotional Stability:** This factor encompasses 4 items, specifically item no. 11, 21, 25, and 30.
- **Pursuing a Healthy Life:** This factor contains 4 items, namely item no. 1, 3, 5, and 26.