THE EFFECTS OF GENDER AND PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY SAFETY ON HAPPINESS

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University Seattle
Seattle, WA

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Psychology

By
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May 2017
THE EFFECTS OF GENDER AND PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY SAFETY ON HAPPINESS

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER AND PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY SAFETY ON HAPPINESS

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Income-based indicators of happiness have been shown to be limited in their ability to predict happiness. Alternative measures of happiness have been gaining prominence in happiness research, and two predictors of happiness were investigated in the current study. The extent to which happiness (measured by affect, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being) could be predicted by gender and perception of community safety was investigated with 19,644 participant responses to The Happiness Alliance Survey. Multiple linear regression models indicated that gender and community safety are significant predictors of affect, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being. The effect of the predictor variables was similar for all three of those happiness measures. B-values indicated that both predictor variables had the greatest impact on psychological well-being and the least impact on life satisfaction. While all three models were statistically significant, they did not similarly predict the satisfaction with affect, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being scores. The results suggest that while gender and perceptions of community safety should be considered as part of the whole picture that supports a full life, there are likely other variables and life domains that have stronger influences on happiness. The electronic version of this dissertation is at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLINK ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu.

Keywords: happiness, positive psychology, community safety, gender
Dedications

A big thank you to my friends and family for all their patience, understanding, and tolerance as I completed this process.
Acknowledgments

I’d like to thank Laura Musikanski for her generous access to The Happiness Alliance data and resources, without which this study would not have been possible. To my committee members, Suzanne Engelberg (chair), Laura Musikanski (member), Alex Suarez (member), thank you for your guidance and support throughout this journey.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Traditionally, quality of life has been conceptually based upon a society’s standard of living, income, employment, health, social belonging, education, and/or recreation (Panagiotakos & Yfantopoulous, 2011) and has been used to determine a society’s level of success and happiness (Hornung, 2006). However, the extent to which these elements are true representations of the most effective way to describe a society’s level of success is unclear. In a review of the well-being and progress of countries, D’Acci (2011) differentiated between subjective well-being and objective well-being. He described objective well-being as observable factors that include elements such as health, tangible goods, and wealth. How effectively these factors truly measure well-being is controversial.

Most measures of subjective well-being have focused on the relationship between material conditions and happiness, with income as the primary focus (Easterlin, 1995; Frey, 2008d; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2013). The OECD (2013) guidelines for measuring subjective well-being suggests thinking of subjective well-being measures and income as "complements rather than substitutes" (p. 148). Using data collected on happiness and income can allow one to explore its relative importance to quality of life, a factor that is important to consider when measuring happiness (OECD, 2013). The OECD guidelines go on to suggest that quality of life encompasses aspects of happiness beyond material conditions. Exploring factors beyond income is important because research has established a significant correlation between happiness and quality of life even after controlling for the effects of income and demographic factors (Boarini, Comola, Smith, Manchin, & Femke de Keulenaer, 2012; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Dolan, Peasgood, & White, 2008; OECD, 2013). Indeed, quality of life is correlated with income (Easterlin, 1976; OECD, 2013), but that
correlation does not explain all of the observable changes in happiness (Diener, Tay, & Oishi, 2013; Easterlin, 1976, 2001; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006). Including measurements for social connections and personal security can capture additional features of quality of life and happiness that can be missed when relying heavily on income as a marker of happiness (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2013; OECD, 2013; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006).

There is ample research supporting the argument that as a person’s material wealth increases, his or her expressed happiness does not always follow (Csikszentmihaly, 2009; D’Acci, 2011; Diener et al., 2013, Easterlin, 1976, 1995, 2001; Frey, 2008b; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Layard, 2007, 2010; Layard, Mayraz, & Nickell, 2010). In fact, research has indicated that the effect of income on happiness appears to reach a plateau and then no longer has an observable impact on happiness (Diener et al., 2013; Easterlin, 2001, Frey, 2008b; Layard, 2007; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006). Income is just one factor that impacts happiness (Diener et al., 2013; Frey, 2008a, 2008d) and several other factors are also important to consider in terms of their effect on happiness, such as health, education, marital status, age (Ovaska & Takashima, 2006), and individual freedoms (Frey, 2002). Interestingly, regardless of the version of the survey, or the country in which it is administered, several sociodemographic variables appear to be consistently identified as principal concerns when evaluating one’s happiness: physical health, family status, employment, income, and age (Easterlin, 1976; Frey, 2002, 2008d; Layard, 2010; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006). D’Acci (2011) cited Joaquin Alumnia, the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Policy, from a 2007 conference where Alumnia spoke about the erroneousness of using gross domestic product (GDP) as the sole measure of a country’s quality of life. The commissioner pointed out that “GDP cannot distinguish between activities that have a negative or a positive impact on
well-being. Also, GDP does not take into account the non-economic factors that add to well-being” (Alumnia, 2007, as cited in D’Acci, 2011). Diener et al. (2013) suggested exploring the mediating factors to the happiness-income relationship, arguing that GDP is weakly associated with happiness than with income. Easterlin (1995) also supported the idea of focusing on alternative measures of happiness, stating that the idea “when incomes generally increase people, on the average, feel better off” (p. 44) is an outdated conclusion. The relationship between income and happiness is bidirectional (Frey, 2007, 2008a) and careful attention should be paid to both parts. Layard (2007) cautioned against the continual cycle of income attainment, arguing that adaptation makes it more difficult to obtain ongoing increases in happiness through income. The author further stipulated, “There is no evidence that people become habituated to good personal relationships, but there is less time for these when people work more” (Layard, 2007, p. 160).

Happiness is often thought of as a multifaceted construct and based upon one's experience; therefore, the most effective way to measure happiness is through the use of self-report measures (Diener et al., 1999; Diener et al., 2013; Frey, 2008b; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Subjective measures of happiness have demonstrated good reliability and have been strongly associated with other factors such as smiling and sleep quality (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006), peer reports, and biological markers such as cortisol levels and brain activity (Layard, 2010; Myers & Diener, 1995), and physical health (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). Subjective measures of happiness have also shown temporal reliability and are resistant to effects of current mood and desirability (Myers & Diener, 1995).

As previously stated, happiness is affected by a wide range of different factors. The challenge lies in identifying which factors are the most relevant to measures of happiness (Diener
et al., 2013; OECD, 2013; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006). Satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being are considered core measures of happiness (OECD, 2013). The OECD guidelines suggest including the following information (in addition to demographic data) when measuring happiness: material conditions, quality of life, and psychological variables. By exploring the above-mentioned factors, one is able to capture the essential characteristics of quality of life and happiness.

The overall assessment of one’s quality of life can be conceived as one’s sense of happiness, which includes one’s assessment of his or her overall well-being (Hornung, 2006). The author described happiness as involving "acceptance and peace with oneself as well as with the conditions of one's existence" (p. 325). The degree to which one can accept his or her current life circumstances (or quality of life) can be indicative of his or her level of well-being (or happiness). The OECD (2013) described subjective well-being as the individual's evaluation of his or her life as a whole, which includes both positive and negative experiences, and the emotional responses to those experiences. Reflecting back on one's lived experiences and holding an overall positive evaluation of one's life despite negative or difficult times, is a sign of positive subjective well-being. The OECD argued that subjective well-being should be used in concert with measures of affect and life evaluations to create a complete picture of one's overall level of psychological well-being. In fact, the OECD stated, “good mental functioning should be considered as including concepts such as interest, engagement and meaning, as well as satisfaction and affective states” (p. 29). Thus, it can be conceived that happiness is one’s overall sense of positive functioning in multiple life domains both historically and presently.

Subjective well-being goes beyond the surface experience of an individual and depends on additional factors such as one’s history, goals, and past and present socioeconomic conditions
(D’Acci, 2011). In addition, intangible factors such as love, health, relationships, environment, and one’s hopes/aspirations are all believed to impact subjective well-being (D’Acci, 2011). An awareness of the importance of these factors and how they contribute to one’s experience of happiness is growing in the field of psychology research, shifting focus from the observable sense of happiness to the conditions of well-being that promote it. Frey (2008a) argued that although economics has been used as an indicator of happiness, subjective well-being is a superior measure because it includes “an individual’s evaluation of the extent to which he or she experiences positive and negative affect, happiness, or satisfaction with life” (p. 3). Frey described happiness as a product of “the good life” (p. 5) which consists of affect, life satisfaction, and the extent to which one is fulfilling his or her potential (or living a life led by eudaimonia). Studying happiness and what contributes to it serves the purpose of not only identifying the determinants of happiness, but also the nature of happiness.

**Purpose of This Study**

The current study aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge base by exploring two of these noneconomic factors that may potentially impact one's experience of well-being and thus happiness; however, these factors are not consistently recognized as contributors of happiness and overall well-being by the general public. Identifying quality predictors of happiness and bringing awareness to them can have lasting implications, possibly leading to systemic change in a society that is largely reliant on the constantly shifting value of the dollar to bring one a sense of happiness. The goal of the current study was to explore alternative variables of happiness, particularly the potential relationship between gender and community safety scores with psychological well-being scores, affect scores, and satisfaction with life scores on the Happiness Alliance Survey (The Happiness Alliance, 2012).
**Theoretical Perspective**

This study falls under the philosophical worldview of postpositivism. The methodological stance of this perspective is that causes determine outcomes (Creswell, 2009). A researcher utilizing this approach first identifies and assesses the causes that influence outcomes, which then directs how the study will be carried out. The researcher is primarily concerned with the objective reality of the study, meaning that he or she is interested in investigating how the data either support or contradict theory which is developed out of rational considerations, evidence, and data (Creswell, 2009).

This approach is appropriate to use when addressing a social research problem, specifically one that aims to understand the best predictors for an outcome (Creswell, 2009). The current study employed a nonexperimental design, using quantitative methods such as statistical analyses and interpretation to evaluate attitude data. It explored the extent to which gender and community safety scores predict scores on satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being using survey data from the Happiness Alliance Project.

**Discussion of Terms Used in This Study**

**Happiness.** It is largely recognized that well-being is one of the components of happiness (D’Acci, 2011; Hicks, Tinkler, & Allin, 2013; Hornung, 2006; Papavlassopulos & Keppler, 2011), and the terms well-being and happiness are often used interchangeably. In this study, happiness was conceptualized as the combination of one’s emotional state (affect) and overall sense of well-being (psychological well-being), and satisfaction with life. This is consistent with how previous research in this area has operationalized the concept of happiness and was therefore adhered to in the current study.
Affect. Affect is defined as an individual’s self-reported emotional state (at the time the survey was taken). It was measured by Question 3 of the Satisfaction with Life Scale from the Gross National Happiness Survey (Howell, Musikanski, de Graaf, Godzikoskava, & Goldenberg, 2011). The question assessed the individual’s overall assessment of his or her level of positive affect at the time he or she completed the survey.

Psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is defined as the reflection of good mental health functioning (OECD, 2013). It encompasses an individual’s overall assessment (both reflective and experiential) of emotional states, functioning, and the extent to which one believes he or she is living up to his or her full potential (OECD, 2013). This was measured using Questions 1–5 of the Psychological Well-Being Scale from the Gross National Happiness Survey (Howell et al., 2011). The questions asked the individual to rate his or her sense of purpose in life, engagement in life activities, optimism, and sense of accomplishment.

Satisfaction with life. Satisfaction with life is defined as the individual’s global judgment of life as a whole (OECD, 2013). This is a reflection of how an individual remembers his or her life experiences rather than a measurement of his or her emotional state at the time of the remembered experience. This was measured using a single-item life evaluation question, the Cantril Ladder Question, from the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Question 1) of the Gross National Happiness Survey (Howell et al., 2011). The question asked the individual to rate his or her current level of Satisfaction with life on a scale of 1–10 (10 being the highest [most positive] rating).

Community. Community is defined as the immediate area that an individual resides in; this includes his or her neighborhood and the institutions that occupy the same area.
Community safety. Community safety is defined as the level of trust for others and sense of personal safety in the community. These constructs are commonly included in the appraisal of one’s satisfaction with their community (Balestra & Sultan, 2013; Boarini et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2008; OECD, 2013). Community safety was measured by Questions 1–5 of the community vitality section from the Gross National Happiness Survey (Howell et al., 2011). Questions 1–3 asked the individual to assess his or her level of trust for neighbors, strangers, and businesses in his or her area of residence; Question 4 assessed the level of trust that someone in the community would return lost property; and Question 5 assessed one’s level of personal safety in the community. Questions 6 and 7 targeted information specific to activity participation, and were therefore omitted from inclusion because it was determined that these questions did not have the appropriate face value of assessing one’s sense of safety in his or her community.

Household income. Household income is defined as the self-reported amount of income earned for a household within the past year. This was measured by the single-item income question from Section 16 of the Gross National Happiness Survey (Howell et al., 2011).

Research Questions

The following research questions helped guide the review of the literature and data analyses:

1. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income?

2. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict affect scores while controlling for household income?

3. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income?
4. Do gender and the community safety scores similarly predict scores for satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being?

Household income was controlled for based on previous research indicating that up to a certain income level, it no longer has an impact on one’s level of happiness (Csikszentmihaly, 2009). If significant results were obtained while removing household income as a contributing factor, findings could be more firmly attributed to the relationship among the predictor variables and satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being.

Gender was included as an additional predictor variable, contributing to the accuracy of predicting whether the level of satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being would be strong or weak. Zweig (2014) indicated that females are more susceptible to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. It is possible that females may experience lower levels of happiness when compared to males.

Chapter Organization

The remainder of the current study is organized into chapters, a reference section, and appendices. Chapter II presents a review of the relevant literature to the definition and study of happiness. A description of the development of the main instrument used in the study is also included. Chapter III delineates the research design and methodology of the study. The specific sections of the instrument used, the determination of the sample, and study procedures are described. Results of the data analysis are covered in Chapter IV. Chapter V contains the discussion of the results, conclusions, and any recommendations of the study.
Happiness is an elusive, subjective state of being that many individuals try to attain; while some believe they have achieved it, others cannot tell either way. One way the literature describes happiness is the positive assessment of the culmination of experiences between an individual and his or her environment (Hornung, 2006; Myers & Diener, 1995; Tepperman & Laasen, 1990), or what has also been referred to as quality of life (Hornung, 2006). The meaning of happiness is in a constant state of flux because one's environment rarely stays the same as time goes on (Tepperman & Laasen, 1990). Indeed, happiness is not a static state, but one that is sensitive to the fluctuations in life (Frey, 2008a). Thus, to maintain a state of happiness, it seems one would require a fair amount of flexibility and adaptability. The effects of significant life events can certainly have an immediate influence on happiness; however, these effects eventually fade and one can return to a certain happiness homeostasis (Diener, 2000; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Myers & Diener, 1995). The reality that happiness is multifaceted and means different things based on one's culture makes a single dominating definition of happiness both unreasonable and impractical (Diener, 2000; Tepperman & Laasen, 1990). Societal factors such as the country’s ability to meet basic needs (food, water, health needs) greatly impact happiness and can promote productivity within that society (Diener, 2000). The extent to which individuals experience the freedom to pursue goals, optimism, and social support are also important contributors to happiness (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2013; Frey, 2008c; Layard, 2007). Perhaps part of the challenge in obtaining that eagerly sought after sense of happiness is that there are multiple ways to define it and it is challenging to determine what definition one should model his or her life after. Regardless of how one defines happiness, it is nonetheless something
that ranks high on the list of what contributes to a good life (Diener, 2000). This review of the
literature will explore some of the various definitions of happiness and the underlying constructs
that provide the scaffolding for the concept.

**Sociopolitical definition of happiness.** An individual's subjective experience of
happiness requires him or her to have realistic expectations when it comes to the opportunities
and limitations present in his or her life circumstances. Adjusting one's expectations to meet the
realistic parameters of his or her life is an essential component in achieving happiness (Diener et
al., 2013; Easterlin, 2001; Frey, 2008a; Tepperman & Laasen, 1990). Understanding what is
attainable and reaching for the highest echelon offers a more satisfactory life experience than
striving for that which is not a part of one's reality. There is some suggestion that achieving a
goal is not the primary objective, but having the opportunity to pursue one’s goals and
aspirations is what contributes to happiness (Diener et al., 1999). But how does one determine
what is a realistic versus improbable expectation of happiness?

Easterlin (1976) purported that happiness was not just about economic well-being. The
study challenged the assumption that changes in economic welfare (measured by GDP) also
resulted in comparable changes in social welfare. Easterlin used data from surveys asking
questions about participants’ feelings and identified a positive correlation between happiness and
income. However, comparisons among countries and across time revealed a weaker correlation
between happiness and income (Easterlin, 1976). Results from the December 1970 American
Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) Survey \((N = 1,517)\) where participants were asked, “In
general, how happy would you say that you are—very happy, fairly happy, or not very happy?”
(p. 91) indicated that participants in the \$15,000+ range were very happy (56%) compared to
only 29% responding in the same manner whose income was under \$3,000. Using the same
survey from 1946–1970, a similar trend was found where participants in the highest income groups were consistently happier than those in the lower income groups (Easterlin, 1976).

Results were similar for countries surveyed in 1965 (Great Britain, West Germany, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, France, and Italy; Easterlin, 1976). Easterlin’s (1976) second data set used a variation of the Cantril ladder question whereby the participant indicated on a scale of 0–10 how satisfied with life he or she is:

Here is a picture of a ladder. Suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. Where on the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time? (p. 92)

Results from 13 countries surveyed in 1960 ($N = 15,840$; United States, Cuba, Israel, West Germany, Japan, Yugoslavia, Philippines, Panama, Nigeria, Brazil, Poland, India, and the Dominican Republic) indicated a positive association between income groups and happiness within countries.

Results from international comparisons were more ambiguous. The top five wealthiest countries at the time of the survey (Great Britain, United States, West Germany, France, and Italy) were not necessarily the happiest. Great Britain, the United States, and West Germany were the happiest countries, while France and Italy were the least happy. Interestingly, Thailand, which had the lowest GNP, ranked as the fourth happiest country. Easterlin (1976) argued that the concept of relative income could explain this anomaly: “Despite peer group influences, there is a ‘consumption norm’ which exists in a given society at a given time, and which enters into the reference standard of virtually everyone” (p. 112). Easterlin pointed out that individuals compare their situations to the reference norm, and while there may be some variety amongst individuals in a society, there are similar sociodemographic features that they share due to the
common experiences people share as members of the same society and culture. If the status quo within a country is considered below average or unsatisfactory, a richer country would not necessarily be a happier country because the norm reference is a negative or undesirable one (Easterlin, 1976).

In a later study, Easterlin (2001) expanded on the concept of material aspirations and its effects on the income-happiness relationship. While material aspirations are similar within income groups, aspirations change over the life cycle, minimizing the positive effect of income on happiness (Easterlin, 2001). In 1994, the author studied four different cohort groups over a span of 24 years ($N = 2,627$) and found that while significant changes in life circumstances (e.g., birth, loss, retirement) affected happiness, the overall trend in happiness did not change. It appears there is a difference in experienced and projected happiness, with individuals tending to overestimate the latter—at any point in the life cycle, individuals think they will be happier in the future than they were in the past (Easterlin, 2001). This is based on the fact that growth of income drives a growth in material aspirations. Higher income can lead to higher levels of happiness to a certain degree (Diener et al., 2013; Easterlin, 1976, 2001; Ovaska & Takashima, 2006), and if with higher income one can more easily fulfill aspirations (provided the aspirations are reasonable given level of income), he or she can experience more happiness than an individual at a lower income level. Conversely, if income remains constant and aspirations increase, experienced happiness will also decrease (Easterlin, 2001). The author proposed that lower income groups experience smaller jumps in material aspirations which make them inherently more easily attainable, resulting in higher levels of reported happiness than higher income groups. In sum, the material aspirations of an individual can greatly impact the stability of happiness over the lifespan: “Increasing skill is thus matched by increasing aspirations, in
much the same way that increasing ability to get goods is matched by increasing material aspirations” (Easterlin, 2001, p. 479). Thus, it is conceivable that the culture of a society, the material norms, can promote or inhibit opportunities for happiness.

According to Tepperman and Laasen (1990), the prevailing beliefs of a society play a large part in directing how one interprets his or her life experience. Specifically, the authors noted:

An ideology which drastically fails to reflect the real experience of the majority leaves behind a wide trail of unhappiness... where the dominant ideology comes close to describing the way people actually live, people are likely to experience less conflict and (therefore) more happiness. (Tepperman & Laasen, 1990, p. 1061)

The authors evaluated whether happiness trends cross-nationally served as an effective indicator of societal development. The researchers analyzed data gathered from multiple surveys measuring happiness. They noted the overrepresentation of Western views of happiness—specifically, an individualistic focus of happiness. An awareness of how the political/social climate of the environment can have an impact on levels of happiness seems to have been overlooked.

Results indicated that happiness levels tended to mimic political and economic trends. For example, they reported that India, Asia (excluding Japan), and Africa (described as South of the Sahara) scored low on both GNP per capita and happiness, whereas Scandinavia, Canada, and the United States of America (USA) scored high on both indicators. Similarly, the level of experienced government coercion also impacted levels of happiness. Scandinavia, Canada, and the USA scored low on government coercion and high on happiness, whereas Africa scored high on government coercion and low on happiness (Tepperman & Laasen, 1990). The results of this
data analysis highlight the importance of considering the sociopolitical context in which
happiness and well-being are evaluated.

The Constructs of Happiness

Frey (2008a) argued that happiness is a product of living “the good life” (p. 5) and
identified the three facets of happiness as affect, life satisfaction, and eudaimonia, or the extent
to which an individual is fulfilling his or her potential. Individuals leading a life according to
these characteristics tend to be more optimistic, more sociable, more enterprising, and more
successful in their private, economic, and social activities (Diener, 2000; Frey, 2008a). But how
does one decide if he or she is living the good life? Necessary components to happiness are
cognition and affect (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1999; Myers & Diener, 1995). Individuals with
high levels of happiness reflect positively upon their life (life satisfaction) and consequently
experience generally positive emotions because of the rolling positive evaluations of life events
(Myers & Diener, 1995). Using subjective measures of happiness has been shown to provide
accurate measures of happiness (Diener et al., 2013; Frey, 2008a; Pavot & Diener, 1993), but as
Diener et al. (2013) pointed out, there have been limitations in the methodology of measuring
happiness due to changes in wording and/or the ordering of questions used in the surveys. One
such limitation is the erroneous thought that positive and negative emotions are mutually
exclusive; however, positive affect is not merely the absence of negative affect (Diener, 2000;
Myers & Diener, 1995). Myers and Diener (1995) suggested that positive and negative moods
are inversely related and individuals who experience intense highs also experience intense lows.
A discussion of the terms that have been largely agreed upon in the field of happiness research to
describe happiness will be reviewed here.
While moods and emotions reflect an individual’s immediate reactions to life events, broader, more general judgments are made about one’s life as a whole (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1999). Happiness is not simply reflected by one’s daily moods. Rather, satisfaction with life as a whole, satisfaction with primary life domains, and affect are essential components to understanding happiness (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1999). Hicks et al. (2013) discussed how definitions of happiness and measures of subjective well-being have evolved in the United Kingdom. They provided results from survey data that included measures of subjective well-being that were developed by the Office for National Statistics. Through that office, the Measuring National Well-Being program was able to use existing survey data, and supplemented it with subjective well-being estimates, although what these estimates were based on was not outlined by the authors. The Measuring National Well-Being program was developed by Jil Matheson, a United Kingdom National Statistician. Hicks et al. (2013) reported that the inclusion of subjective well-being measures was a departure from how the Office for National Statistics had measured quality of life in the past. The Measuring National Well-Being program embodies the shift from focusing on GDP as the primary measure of quality of life. Instead, this program includes evaluative, experiential, and eudaimonic perspectives (Hicks et al., 2013).

Quality of life and social progress are typically examined using objective-list or preference satisfaction accounts, which rely heavily on GDP as an indicator for happiness (Hicks et al., 2013). The preference satisfaction accounts approach is driven by the idea that individual happiness is positively correlated with the degree to which individuals can satisfy their preferences, in other words, happiness increases as individuals can satisfy needs (Hicks et al., 2013). This approach is clearly tied to consumerism and limits the determinants of happiness to material items. The ability to satisfy one's material needs/wants is certainly a part of how one
evaluates his or her life satisfaction; however, as this review of the literature demonstrates, it is not the only construct to consider, nor does it build a comprehensive definition of happiness. The data reflecting the preference satisfaction account are fairly limited because although they include households as an entity of analysis, information regarding distribution of income, wealth, and consumption are reflected to give an idea of the material living standards of the nation, not necessarily a reflection of happiness or life satisfaction (Hicks et al., 2013). Responding to a 2009 report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (also referred to as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report) which stated, "The time was right to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being" (Hicks et al., 2013, p. 74), in addition to other international initiatives, the Office for National Statistics opted to find additional methods of measuring quality of life and progress.

The Office for National Statistics identified subjective well-being as one's own assessment of his or her well-being which encompasses three approaches for measurement: evaluative, affective, and eudaimonic. They incorporated these approaches in the questions included in the Annual Population Survey from April 2011 (Hicks et al., 2013). The evaluative approach asked respondents to give an overall appraisal of their life or specific life domains, the affective approach measured the emotional quality of an individual’s experience and asked questions such as "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?" (p. 77), and the eudaimonic approach explored the psychological aspects of well-being, asking questions related to the sense of meaning and/or purpose one has in his or her life. All questions used a 0–10 scale, 10 indicating an answer of completely (Hicks et al., 2013). The Office for National Statistics completed an analysis of six months of data from the Annual Population Survey in 2011 that included the addition of the subjective well-being questions (N = 165,000 respondents). They
reported the average rating and percentage of adults reporting very low, low, medium, high, and very high ratings for each of the questions. The authors reported a response rate of 99%, demonstrating that the respondents found the subjective well-being questions easy to answer and the "general acceptance of the subjective well-being questions by respondents" (Hicks et al., 2013, p. 80). This is important to note given that including subjective well-being questions is a shift from the traditional approach. The high response rate can be indicative of the relevance that individuals feel questions about evaluative, affective, and eudaimonic approaches have in regards to measuring well-being. Correlation coefficients between the subjective well-being questions indicate that the three approaches (evaluative, affective, eudaimonic) are highly correlated yet are measuring distinct constructs. Specifically, the strongest correlations were between the life satisfaction and worthwhile questions \( (r(3,998) = 0.6, p < .01) \), and the life satisfaction and happy yesterday questions \( (r(3,998) = 0.5, p < .01; \text{Hicks et al., 2013}) \).

Although a clear limitation of the study is the relatively short time frame reflected in the data (six months), it does appear to offer a valid alternative to the traditional method of using gross domestic product to measure the happiness of a nation. The article described national well-being as a summation of multiple life domains that are independently important and impactful in their own right, but are influential at the individual level as well (Hicks et al., 2013).

The specific life domains considered to be important in the measurement of well-being, although the specific terms vary, have been consistently identified within the literature as satisfaction with: job, finances, house, health, leisure, and environment (Linley, Maltby, Wood, Osborne, & Hurling, 2009; OECD, 2013; Ryff, 1989). Hicks et al. (2013) offered a compromise for the opposing camps as to the proper way to measure the progress of a nation; they suggested that subjective measures of well-being be used to supplement information about objective
measures of well-being, supporting the concept of a multidimensional conceptualization of happiness. This review of the literature now shifts to discussing the overarching concepts that researchers in this field tend to agree upon as the core components of the conceptual framework for happiness.

Measuring happiness requires a certain definition of terms. Defining the components that create the paradigm of happiness has been a prominent piece of positive psychology (Linley et al., 2009). A thorough exploration of the philosophical argument amongst researchers about the hedonia versus eudaimonia linkages to happiness (Linley et al., 2009) is beyond the scope of this study; however, the subject is limitedly reviewed here in terms of how these two concepts play a role in the operationalization of happiness. One of the earlier pieces of literature describing hedonia and eudaimonia as a contributor to happiness is Carol Ryff’s 1989 article in which she reviewed previous measures of psychological well-being. The author mentioned that while eudaimonia and happiness were almost intuitively seen as interchangeable terms in the literature, there is a more precise definition of eudaimonia that appears to have gone unnoticed or, rather, been ignored by the research. First noting that hedonia captures both the evaluation of negative and positive emotions, she explained it is not equivalent to the term eudaimonia. It is worth nothing here that hedonia is often described as a primary indicator for happiness as well, but again only focuses on one dimension of a person's being, the exact error in previous attempts to define happiness that Ryff is arguing against. According to Ryff, eudaimonia is more correctly identified as the extent to which a person is living a life that demonstrates his or her true potential. This definition closely resembles the concept that happiness is a reflection of positive functioning, and captures the original description of the Greek word, “the gratification of right desires and wrong desires” (Ryff, 1989, p. 1070). Positive functioning suggests a certain degree
of mastery in one's life domains, and it makes sense to assume that the more an individual feels he or she is living up to his or her full potential, the more satisfaction he or she is likely to derive from life. The moment to moment evaluation of the degree to which one believes he or she is accomplishing this goal will likely elicit either positive or negative affect as a reflection of his or her judgment. This premise demonstrates how hedonia, eudaimnoia, and life satisfaction are closely linked and related to the perception of happiness. Ryff argued that happiness is not the only indicator of positive psychological functioning, but that life satisfaction is also an important aspect to consider when evaluating one's psychological well-being.

Ryff's (1989) goals were to create an interest in exploring what positive psychological functioning looks like and identifying the best scales that encompass the multiple dimensions of happiness. Ryff argued that without firm theoretical underpinnings, most of the literature at the time tended to neglect crucial factors of positive functioning, and therefore fell short of creating/supporting a well-rounded definition of happiness. Criticizing that most studies at the time (1989) focused on the distinction between positive/negative affect (hedonia) and life satisfaction as the main constructs of happiness, the author sought to develop a new measure of psychological well-being that incorporated features from various theoretical orientations such as life-span development theory, psychosocial stage theory, and Rogerian theory. Using the recurring themes from these theories, Ryff delineated the factors contributing to psychological well-being as: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. To create theoretical and empirically supported evidence for this new means of defining well-being, Ryff used correlational analyses to determine if the aforementioned constructs were significantly different from the popularly used constructs measuring happiness (affect and life satisfaction).
Three hundred and twenty-one participants were contacted through school (young adults, mean age = 19.53) and civic organizations (middle-older adults, mean age = 49.85; older adults, mean age = 74.96). The author took the definitions of the new constructs and determined scale definitions for high and low scorers. Sixteen positive and 16 negative items for each construct were administered to the sample. Respondents were asked to answer the items by rating themselves on a 6-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Item to scale correlations revealed significant results indicating alpha coefficients (α) of .93 for self-acceptance; .91 for positive relations with others, .86 for autonomy; .90 for environmental mastery; .90 for purpose in life; and .87 for personal growth. This revealed that each scale did indeed appear to measure its intended construct. Test-retest reliability also indicated significant results for a subsample of 117 respondents [r(115) = .85, p < .001 for self-acceptance; r(115) = .83, p < .001 for positive relations with others; r(115) = .88, p < .001 for autonomy; r(115) = .81, p < .001 for environmental mastery; r(115) = .82, p < .001 for purpose in life; and r(115) = .81, p < .001 for personal growth].

In addition to Ryff’s scale, she also administered the Affect Balance Scale (1969), the Life Satisfaction Index (1961), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), the Revised Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale (1975), Levenson's Locus of Control subscales (1974), and the Self-Rating Depression Scale (1965).

Correlation analyses between the old measures and the new measures in terms of positive functioning indicated positive results ranging from .25 to .73, and all correlations were significant at p < .001. Also, intercorrelation analyses between the old measures and the new measures in terms of negative functioning were also all significant at p < .001, with results ranging from -.30 to -.60. These results indicate validity for the new measures against already
established measures of psychological functioning. Ryff's (1989) new theoretically oriented measures target themes similar to those targeted by the earlier measures; in particular, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life are strongly correlated with the old measures of life satisfaction, affect balance, self-esteem, depression, and morale. All correlations were significant at $p < .001$. There was potential overlap amongst the constructs used in the new measures demonstrated by the intercorrelations amongst the new measures themselves. Positive coefficients ranging from .32 to .76 indicated that some of the measures may have been tapping into the same (or at the very least, very similar) constructs. Particularly, self-acceptance and environmental mastery were correlated at $r(115) = .76, p < .001$; self-acceptance and purpose in life were correlated at $r(115) = .72, p < .001$ (Ryff, 1989). The author recognized this potential problem and offered that there is substantial evidence in the literature suggesting that although these constructs are highly correlated, they do in fact measure different things. She followed up her conjecture with additional multivariate and mean-level analyses which indicated that these constructs had different positive loadings on different factors of well-being and had different age patterns (Ryff, 1989), providing the empirical support that self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life are indeed separate constructs.

In sum, it is clear that there are multiple constructs that contribute to the definition of happiness. One's theoretical orientation, goals in research, and general preference of terms certainly influences how one defines each of the constructs; however, despite the multiple approaches one can use to evaluate and measure these constructs, there appears to be a certain level of agreement in the literature about the core underpinnings of happiness (psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and affect; Helliwell, 2003; OECD, 2013; Ryff, 1989). Diener (2000) proposed the development of a national index of happiness that includes indicators for
affect, life satisfaction, fulfillment (or what can be conceived as psychological well-being), and indicators for stress, affection, trust, and joy. How these constructs were represented in the study will be discussed here.

**Psychological well-being.** Both hedonia and eudaimonia complement each other and contribute to one's sense of happiness. Stemming from Greek terminology, both terms have been attributed to measuring specific aspects of happiness (Linley et al., 2009; Ryff, 1989). Hedonia encompasses the emotionality of happiness, specifically the balance between positive and negative emotional states. This speaks to the previously discussed notion that one's level of happiness is the encapsulation of one's life experiences, including both negative and positive ones, and the individual's assessment of those life experiences; therefore, hedonia can be understood as a reflection of one's subjective well-being (Linley et al., 2009). Eudaimonia goes beyond one's experiences of positive and negative emotions, and refers to the indicators of positive psychological functioning, or psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). It is arguable that because emotional states are inherent to every experience, eudaimonia cannot exist without hedonia, demonstrating that subjective well-being may very well be a precursor or prerequisite to psychological well-being and, thusly, happiness. Linley et al. (2009) noted that previous studies using factor analyses have found that although subjective well-being and psychological well-being are related, they are in fact different concepts. The OECD (2013) also argued that eudaimonic well-being (psychological well-being) is conceptually different from one's life evaluation, and positive and negative affect evaluations, and when combined or thought of as a whole, these three factors are able to embody the completeness of the happiness construct. It encompasses the functioning, evaluative, and affective aspects of one's sense of being. Frey (2008a) also described eudaimonia as a vital part of living the “good life” (p. 5) which acts as a
complement to the concepts of life satisfaction and affect. Myers and Diener (1995) shared a similar philosophy encouraging measures of psychological well-being to be used in concert with measures of physical and material well-being. Enduring happiness is more likely when eudaimonic goals are fulfilled in multiple life domains such as working toward goals, engaging in close relationships, and experiencing both physical and mental pleasures rather than pursuing experiences that result in briefer, hedonic based experiences of happiness such as economic goals (Diener, 2000).

**Satisfaction with life.** One criticism of previous research studies of happiness has been that the variables involved were focused on short-term affective responses (Ryff, 1989), whereas using life satisfaction as a measure of happiness gives a longer-term evaluation of one's psychological well-being because it requires the individual to reflect back on the summation of his or her life experiences. Both self-acceptance ($r(115) = .73, p < .001$) and environmental mastery ($r(115) = .61, p < .001$) were strongly associated with life satisfaction (Ryff, 1989).

According to Ryff (1989), having a positive assessment of self and the ability to choose/create/navigate an environment that compliments one's "psychic condition" (p. 1071) is integral to one's psychological well-being. In addition, having a sense of purpose in life also positively contributes to happiness. Life satisfaction includes one's appraisal of the goals, whether or not they were accomplished, and therefore reinforces the sense that "one who functions positively has goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, all of which contribute to the feeling that life is meaningful" (Ryff, 1989, p. 1071). The overall evaluation of one's life can have a meaningful impact on the degree to which that individual feels he or she is leading a life that is comparable to his or her expectations and to those around him or her (OECD, 2013).

Layard (2010) noted that responses to questions about satisfaction with life can be used to
explain certain interpersonal behaviors (e.g., quitting a job or divorce) and inform the quality of life differences within a community. In summary, good psychological well-being arises from positive levels of life satisfaction, influencing one's level of happiness.

**Affect.** The relationships amongst affect, life evaluation, and psychological well-being have been well documented (OECD, 2013). The feelings expressed by an individual give a current evaluation of how one is experiencing his or her life in that moment. These expressions are typically reflective of a specific moment in time and therefore are potentially influenced by any number of extraneous variables such as the time of day, whether or not that person has eaten, how well he or she slept the night before, and so forth. This is why affective state is not the only determinant of one's overall sense of happiness, but rather, is included as part of the overall model. The OECD cautioned that a challenge to using affective measurements is that they are susceptible to recall biases, specifically to the peak/end rule where memories are based off of the most intense (peak) and most recent (end) emotion(s) experienced. Using a single life evaluation question in addition to an affective question can help account for this effect because it is asking for an average of affective states that are reflective of both negative and positive experiences (OECD, 2013).

**Gender Differences in Satisfaction With Life**

Using the Cantril Ladder question, Helliwell and Putnam (2004) found that data from the World Values Survey and European Values Survey, both administered in three waves: 1980, 1991–1992, and 1995, indicated that on a global scale, life satisfaction scores are higher for men (6.84) than women (6.73), where 10 indicates the highest rating. (Scores were calculated by averaging the answers from both surveys, and then averaging them across the three waves.)
Helliwell and Putnam did not indicate whether the difference in scores was statistically significant.

In a more robust study, Fortin, Helliwell, and Wang (2015) reported on the differences in satisfaction with life between males and females using international data gathered by the Gallup World Poll from 2005–2014. Using responses from the Cantril Ladder question to measure satisfaction with life, approximately 1,000 respondents per country were interviewed. The authors grouped the world population into nine global regions, and females had slightly higher satisfaction with life scores when compared to males by 0.09 points on a 10-point scale ($p < .05$; Fortin et al., 2015). Although there were significant differences among the world regions, females in five of the eight regions consistently appeared to have higher satisfaction with life scores based on their response to the Cantril Ladder question. All differences in scores for the five regions were significant at $p < .05$: NANZ (United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), .17; Southeast Asia, .09; South Asia, .05; East Asia, .09; and the Middle East/North Africa, .28. In the regions noted as Russia and Central/Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan African, women had lower satisfaction with life scores when compared to men (-.07 and -.03 respectively; Fortin et al., 2015). Results indicated small and insignificant differences between genders in Western Europe and Latin America. The authors offered explanations for the gender differences such as age, living circumstances, and the presence of gender stereotypes. They argued that gender stereotypes may affect feelings/reactions to external triggers:

First, the stereotype may lead people to perceive situations in ways that match the stereotype. Second, the stereotypes may lead people to act in a stereotypical fashion. Third, the existence of stereotypes provides the basis for what is taught to children about appropriate behavior. (Fortin et al., 2005, p. 47)
The culture in which one is raised undoubtedly has a significant impact on satisfaction with life and how one interprets his or her life.

There has been additional research indicating that females are more susceptible to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Stone, Schwartz, Broderick, & Deaton, 2010). Therefore, it is reasonable to wonder if due to females having an increased risk for mental health issues, whether it be internally or externally triggered, they have lower levels of happiness when compared to males. However, research in this area has produced mixed results and warrants further exploration. One such study by Stone et al. (2010) explored gender differences in psychological well-being using data from a 2008 Gallup Organization phone survey, with a representative sample of the United States. Of the 355,334 respondents whose data were collected, only data from participants between the ages of 18 and 85 years old were analyzed in order to ensure sufficient data points for each age group. This resulted in a final sample of 340,847 respondents. Although the focus of the study was on age patterns and distribution of happiness, gender differences were also reported. The researchers defined psychological well-being as a combination of one's self-assessment of both global well-being and hedonic well-being. Global well-being referred to one's overall appraisal of his or her life, while hedonic well-being encapsulates the specific affective states of well-being (e.g., the emotional experience of happiness or stress, etc.; Stone et al., 2010). The term global well-being depicted the previously mentioned notions of eudaimonia or psychological well-being in that it encompasses an overall judgment of one’s life which includes aspirations, achievements, and one’s current circumstances (Stone et al., 2010). This is an example of how varied the terms in happiness studies can be, yet the overarching concepts remain the same.
The study by Stone et al. (2010) evaluated global well-being (overall life evaluation) by having participants answer a single life appraisal question using the Cantril Ladder question:

Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom of the ladder represents the worse possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time? (p. 9989)

Affect (hedonic well-being) was assessed with questions about emotions experienced the day before the participants completed the survey. The findings for hedonic well-being are discussed in the next section (Gender Differences in Affect) because the results were largely discussed in relation to how they differed by gender.

A critique of this study is that although there were multiple statistically significant interactions in terms of age and gender for aspects of both global and hedonic well-being, the associations between them were weak: The responses to the Cantril Ladder question resulted in \( F(16; 338,545) = 4.46, p < .001; \) Enjoyment \( F(16; 339,708) = 2.08, p < .001; \) Stress \( F(33; 340,309) = 4.24, p < .001; \) Worry \( F(33; 340,364) = 4.69, p < .001; \) Anger \( F(33; 340,509) = 3.97, p < .001; \) and Sadness \( F(33, 340,391) = 3.72, p < .001 \) (Stone et al., 2010). The low \( F \) values indicated that the error variance was higher than the effect variance; the results depicted a consistent pattern that the observed changes in the abovementioned emotions cannot solely be attributed to the differences in life evaluations. Life evaluations were higher for women than men \([F(1, 338,545) = 160.8, p < .001]\) but there was not a significant difference in the scores for happiness levels \([F(1; 338,545) = .05]\) (Stone et al., 2010). (The authors did not report the exact \( p \) values beyond noting they were not significant.) This may indicate that women hold an overall more positive assessment of their life when taking all things into consideration than men do, but
do not differ in their perception of day-to-day positive experiences. What is important to note, however, is that while the age patterns for global and hedonic well-being were very similar, when looked at based on gender, there were clear differences between men and women across the age distribution (Stone et al., 2010). Stress, worry, and sadness were higher for women than men. In sum, although age patterns were not significant when it came to global and hedonic well-being, gender differences were evident (Stone, 2010). Women reported higher levels of global well-being than men, despite experiencing higher levels of stress, worry, and sadness. Therefore, gender appears to be a valid and important factor to consider in conducting happiness studies.

**Gender Differences in Psychological Well-Being**

Findings contrary to the Stone et al. (2010) study were found in a study by Meisenberg and Woodley (2014). Meisenberg and Woodley wrote that cultural attitudes are likely the reason for observed well-being discrepancies between the genders and used a cross-sectional approach to investigate the conditions (by country) impacting subjective well-being. The World Values Survey was administered to 96 countries and territories between 1981 and 2008, resulting in 355,298 participants (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). The sample sizes varied between countries from 986 in Zimbabwe to 11,203 in Spain. Unlike the Stone et al. study, where multiple questions were used to assess well-being, this study included two questions to measure that construct: (a) Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy—quite happy—not very happy—not at all happy? and (b) All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days (10-step scale included)? (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). Based on the phrasing of the first question, it can be determined that it targets hedonic well-being (affective question), while the second question takes a more eudaimoniac perspective, again demonstrating
consistency in the core constructs researched in happiness studies. The authors used a regression model to predict happiness with gender, age, and survey year as the predictor variables. Similar to Stone et al., gender differences were small, but results indicated that women reported slightly higher subjective well-being than men in some countries and lower subjective well-being than men in others. There was a significant correlation between happiness and satisfaction scores \( r = .768, p < .001 \) indicating that in instances where females rated themselves higher on the subjective well-being question than males did, they also rated themselves higher on satisfaction than males did (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). This result indicated a strong relationship between subjective well-being and life satisfaction in this study. Women were happier than men in 50 countries, and more satisfied than men in 49 countries (within the areas of Protestant European, English, Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, and Africa), although the gender trends were small (average size of score differences between men and women was .178 for happiness and .159 for satisfaction). There was a significant correlation between gender differences for happiness and life satisfaction \( r = .772, p < .05 \). This suggests a strong relationship between the variables of interest. The country-level conditions that the authors believed fostered higher levels of happiness in females included a large population of Muslims, low proportions of Catholics, an absence of communist history, and low female nonagricultural employment (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). The authors aptly noted that small sample sizes (based on the number of countries included in the model) may have played a role in the gender differences. Some of the regression models included as few as 80 countries while others included up to 93 countries. The variation in sample sizes may have skewed the results due to there being a smaller sample to base the model, and therefore increasing the risk for measurement error (or observational error), decreasing the reliability of the model.
Meisenberg and Woodley hypothesized that gender-specific social trends, decreased social cohesion, and greater household risk are among the causes for the observed gender differences in well-being in their study. They noted that women in Western countries on average had lower self-reported levels of ambition, competitiveness, risk taking, and materialism than men. Women reported less happiness and satisfaction than men in areas that the authors categorized as Catholic European, Ex-Communist, and Latin America. Meisenberg and Woodley noted that their results were consistent with their report that as recently as the 1990s, women in the United States have reported lower life satisfaction than men; the authors emphasized this decline appears to have been continuous since the late 1980s. The authors made a controversial suggestion that forcing women outside of typical gender roles (i.e., societal expectations of female employment) may lower female subjective well-being (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). The authors’ statement assumes that women prefer to stay at home and fulfill the traditional gender role of homemaker/caretaker; however, the authors did not provide any specific evidence supporting this claim. The following question arises: What has been contributing to Meisenberg and Woodley’s reported slow decline of psychological well-being for females in this country regardless of the societal movement toward greater gender equality? Meisenberg and Woodley urged us to consider that the differences in happiness cannot simply be explained by observable factors, but by the way individuals interact with their environment. The individual experience of a person can be hindered or exacerbated by the community in which he or she lives.

**Gender Differences in Affect**

A second area of focus in the previously mentioned study by Stone et al. (2010) was the gender differences in self-reported levels of affect, or hedonic well-being. Hedonic well-being was assessed by asking participants to answer yes or no to questions such as: “Did you
experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday?” (Stone et al., 2010, p. 9990). The participants answered similarly worded questions for both positive affect and negative affect words included in the study.

Interestingly, women scored similarly to men on the hedonic measure of happiness \([F(1, 339,665) = .05, p = \text{not significant}]\), but lower than men on the hedonic measure of enjoyment \([F(1, 339,708) = 209.4, p < .001]\) (Stone et al., 2010). It should be noted that the authors did not report the exact \(p\) value for the first correlation, they simply stated that it was not significant. A possibility for the gender differences in enjoyment may be due to the way hedonic well-being was reported. Participants were asked to report on the affect they experienced yesterday. Due to the short recall of the survey, it is likely that the responses did not reflect the overall experience of the individual, but based on how the participant was feeling at the time he or she took the survey. This finding may indicate differences in how men versus women interpret and integrate experiences of enjoyment into their appraisal of happiness. Perhaps women are less negatively impacted by their day-to-day experiences than men and are therefore able to hold on to an overall positive evaluation of life (demonstrated by the higher reported levels of global well-being from the women participants; Stone et al., 2010).

Interestingly, Fortin et al. (2015) also explored gender differences in affect, but found contradictory results to those of Stone et al. (2010). Respondents were asked the following questions on a Likert Scale ranging from 0–1 points:

1. Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?
2. Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about enjoyment?
3. How about happiness?
4. How about worry?
5. How about sadness?
6. How about anger?

Additional questions related to feeling safe at night, experiencing smiling/laughter, interests, feeling well-rested, and experiencing pain were also included. Globally, women scored .05% higher than men in happiness, 2% higher than men in laughter, and higher than men in enjoyment, although no specific values were provided in the article. All the reported differences in scores were significant at p < .05. Regionally, women scored slightly higher than men on all questions related to positive experiences, again with all results significant at p < .05.

Additionally, women scored higher than men on worry by 5% (p < .05), women scored 7% higher than men on sadness (p < .05), and 20% higher than men on depression (p < .05). Women below the age of 30 and over the age of 50 reported higher levels of stress than men in NANZ designated regions, though, no specific scores were reported. It may be that age is a mediating factor for negative experiences. The authors noted that although the general trend for anger, worry, depression, and stress indicated a higher prevalence for women, there was a tendency for men under the age of 30 to report higher incidences of anger, and higher incidences of stress between the ages of 20 and 50. Fortin et al. (2015) suggested that the cause of the gender differences could be due to socialization, gender differences in emotionality, and differences in willingness to discuss emotional problems.

**The Influence of Community Safety on Psychological Well-Being**

Eriksson, Hochwalder, & Sellstrom (2011) suggested that one of the important features of evaluating one's happiness comes from the sense of trust and safety one experiences in his or her community. The authors further suggested that one’s perception of the social climate in his or
her neighborhood can have a direct impact on his or her perceived ratings of well-being.

Eriksson et al. evaluated children’s subjective well-being using the children’s perceptions of trust and safety in the community. Using data gathered from the 2001–2002 Swedish Health Behavior in School-Aged Children Survey, the self-reported ratings of children between the ages of 11–15 years were examined. A total of 3,926 responses were included in the study. The study took into account that children living in rural versus urban communities have different experiences and included participants from both types of communities.

Eriksson et al. (2011) were able to obtain significant results using bivariate chi-square analyses to explore the impact of community trust and safety on children’s levels of subjective well-being. The researchers included six independent variables and one dependent outcome variable. Results indicated that there are long-term implications of the effects of one’s sense of trust and safety in the community. In particular, they found that low levels of trust and safety in the community were associated with socially undesirable behaviors such as smoking, emotional and conduct disorders, and low levels of health, in addition to low levels of subjective well-being (Eriksson et al., 2011). These results indicate that there is a relationship between well-being and children’s perception of trust and safety in one’s community. The lower the sense of trust and safety one experiences in his or her community, the lower his or her sense of well-being. Specifically, children who experienced low community and trust and safety were two times as likely to report low well-being in comparison to children who experienced high trust and safety ($\chi^2 = 118.419, p < 0.001$; Eriksson et al., 2011). Results also indicated that children in urban areas reported lower community trust and safety than children in rural areas ($\chi^2 = 22.660, p < 0.001$).
This phenomenon is not exclusive to children. Trickett (2009) also found similar results in a review of the literature from community psychology, noting that social and environmental stressors in the community have an effect on the mental health of adults. The author argued that it is important to consider the context of the individual, and to do this, one must understand the community in which the individual live. The review utilized an ecological perspective as the framework for understanding individuals within their community. According to this perspective, individuals are seen as active participants in their community, and this viewpoint considers the dynamic relationship between a community and its members; moreover, the members help shape and define the community. Clearly, if the members of a community do in fact help shape the community, and are partly responsible for whether it thrives or deteriorates, positive psychological functioning would be key. One cannot expect a community to flourish if its members are not adequately functioning in all life domains, or what Pederson et al. (as cited in Trickett, 2009) defined as contexts of competence. The general consensus of the article indicated that when comparing levels of environmental stress and quality of mental health, average levels of stress and high levels of citizen participation are associated with better mental health (Trickett, 2009).

In addition, Dupere and Perkins (2007) discussed the impact of environmental stress on mental health and reported that “the daily experience of living in an area where environmental stressors are concentrated and where collective resources are lacking may explain the negative impact of living in a disadvantaged environment on mental health” (p. 108). Conversely, strong neighborhood connections can act as a protective factor for adult mental health and thusly their level of happiness. In communities where residents experienced high levels of stress, but had both informal ties to neighbors and formal ties to organizations, the negative effects of the
stressors appeared to diminish (Dupere & Perkins, 2007). The authors sought to explore how different combinations of community factors and resources provide protection against different combinations of stressors. Cluster analysis was used to explore the impact of co-varying predictors and identify groups (in the case of this study, community blocks) of interrelated variables.

The authors hypothesized that residents living on blocks associated with more disorder, fear of crime, and a lack of social ties would experience more mental health issues, whereas residents living on blocks associated with little disorder, little fear of crime, and sufficient social ties would have better mental health (Dupere & Perkins, 2007). Data was collected during the winter of 1987 from 50 neighborhoods (out of a possible 249) in a city located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The authors reported using geographic ordering and a systematic sampling interval to ensure a representative neighborhood sampling of the city. One street block was selected from each of the 50 neighborhoods and 12 households on each block were selected using random starting addresses and sampling intervals. The average number of households included in the study from each of the 50 blocks was 42.5 (average range was seven to 98, $SD = 29.8$ households.) The number of households where contact was made resulted in a response rate of 82% ($N = 492$); 80 households were not included due to break-offs and language problems. Respondents were heads of households (or their spouses); half of the interviews were conducted through phone calls and half were completed in person. The mean household size was 2.9; 52.4% of the total sample identified as Black, 46.3% identified as White, 65.5% of the sample identified as female, and approximately half of the sample reported an income of $20,000 or more.
Mental health was depicted by three different indicators. Depression was assessed using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (1977). Participants were asked to what extent they experienced emotional states consistent with depression over the past week using a 3-point scale (0 = rarely; 1 = sometimes; 2 = often). Anxiety was measured using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (developed by Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983), and participants were asked to reflect over the past week and indicate to what extent they felt tense or nervous (using a 3-point scale). Well-being was evaluated using the General Well-Being Schedule (developed by Dupuy, 1977), which asked questions targeting health, energy, and spirit. These were indicated using a 4-point scale where 0 = poor and 3 = excellent. The study included the following covariates: demographics (sex, age, race, household income, education, unemployment, single parenthood, and residential stability), personal stress (a combination of 20 items asking about negative life events, daily hassles, and negative interpersonal experiences), and social support (measured by a 20-item Rand Corporation Survey developed in 1991). The presence of stressors and resources was measured using the following indicators: disorder (12 items asking about physical and social disorder), fear of crime (12-item questionnaire), informal ties with neighbors over the last 12 months (11 yes/no questions), and formal participation (three-item questionnaire).

Results from a cluster analysis indicated significant associations between stressors (disorder and fear of crime) and resources (formal participation and informal ties with neighbors). Six different block types were designated: generally advantaged, organized, Middletown, anonymous, moderately disadvantaged, and very disadvantaged. An Analysis of Variance at the block level indicated that the generally advantaged blocks had the lowest levels of disorder (score = -1.57, SD = .66, p < .05) and fear of crime (score = -1.86, SD = .79, p < .05).
These blocks also had high levels of participation (score = .53, \( SD = .75, p < .05 \)) and ties with neighbors (score = 1.71, \( SD = .91, p < .05 \)). Residents here indicated better mental health outcomes than other blocks. Dupere and Perkins (2007) noted that the demographics of this block were not racially diverse (88% White) and reported the highest income level. It is likely that residents in this block are not only privy to different resources than less advantaged blocks, but may have easier access to resources. In terms of increased social ties, it seems logical that in neighborhoods where safety is not a concern and there is more trust, residents are more likely to reach out to one another. In contrast, the very disadvantaged blocks had the highest levels of disorder (score = 4.15, \( SD = 1.04, p < .05 \)) and fear of crime (score = 2.31, \( SD = .49, p < .05 \)).

Case in point, this block type also scored low for social resources such as organized participation (score = -0.72, \( SD = 0.94, p < .05 \)) and social ties (score = -1.36, \( SD = .59, p < .05 \)).

Taking advantage of community opportunities, actively participating in, and feeling as though one is a part of his or her community are all critical aspects of what Ryff (1989) defined as \textit{environmental mastery}. Citing both lifespan development theory and Allport’s notion of maturity, Ryff emphasized the extent to which one’s evaluation of his or her community and the role one plays in it is crucial to the sense of happiness. This opinion is echoed in a more recent article by Kavcic and Avsec (2014), where the authors highlighted the importance of positive evaluations of one’s community in relation to happiness. Leading a meaningful life entails one’s community and the extent to which one can engage with his or her community. This is dependent upon the degree of perceived safety; without it, one would be hesitant to explore or seek out activities in the community (Eriksson et al., 2011). Without feeling safe in his or her community, one’s level of happiness is likely to be negatively impacted because of the hesitation or refusal to interact in it.
Alois and Frey (2007) further stressed the importance of community and interpersonal relationships in highlighting that the future utility of material goods is often overestimated while the utility of social interactions is often underestimated. This frame of mind results in individuals dedicating more time to working and spending less time on interpersonal relationships, negatively impacting well-being. “According to their own evaluation, they [people] reach a lower level of well-being than they could if they were not subject to such systemic misprediction” (Alois & Frey, 2007, p. 11).

The Influence of Community Safety on Satisfaction With Life

Happiness is culturally determined (Layard, 2007) and the community in which one lives acts as a reference point for those cultural norms. The extent to which an individual believes he or she can safely interact with his or her community impacts happiness. “Others affect our norms, our aspirations, our feelings of what is important, and our experience of whether the world is friendly or threatening” (Layard, 2007, p. 160). How one’s involvement or lack thereof in one’s community impacts satisfaction with life will be discussed here.

Helliwell (2003) and Helliwell and Wang (2011) emphasized the correlation between the level of trust in one’s community and one’s sense of happiness. Recognizing that happiness is multifaceted, Helliwell (2003) and Helliwell and Wang (2011) sought to review previous empirical studies and identify direct and in-direct links between subjective well-being, social capital, and education. What these two studies found was that the average assessment of subjective well-being at both the individual and societal levels was positively impacted by interpersonal trust (Helliwell, 2003; Helliwell & Wang, 2011). Using data from three separate administrations of the World Values Survey from 1980–1982, 1990–1991, and 1995–1997 (Helliwell, 2003), the Gallup World Poll, and the Canadian General Social Survey (Helliwell &
Wang, 2011), the authors highlighted that in communities where suspicion and fear in their neighborhoods are not part of the dominant culture, subjective well-being is high.

The three waves of the Gallup World Poll resulted in the participation of 46 countries (87,806 respondents). To account for the variance in the number of countries included in each survey wave, the researchers divided the countries into six groups: the Former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Developing Countries, and Scandinavia (Helliwell, 2003). Respondents were asked, “In general, do you think people can be trusted, or alternatively, that you can’t be too careful when dealing with people?” (Helliwell, 2003, p. 346). A value of 1.0 was given for “yes” while 0.0 was given for “no” responses. The mean score at the individual level was 0.3444, with a standard deviation of .4752; the mean score at the national level was the same, but the standard deviation was smaller ($SD = 0.1415$). This indicates that when comparing nation to nation, there was slightly less deviation among responses, whereas within a nation, there was more deviation likely due to individual personality differences and personal beliefs.

When looking at the effects of life satisfaction (life satisfaction was measured on a 10-point scale, 10 indicating highest satisfaction) on well-being, results indicated that at the national level, for every 1-unit increase in trust, there was a corresponding increase in life satisfaction scores ($SD = 0.112, B = 0.319, p < .05$), and $R^2$ indicated that 26% of the variance observed in life satisfaction scores was accounted for by the predictor variable (trust score). These results indicate there was a significant relationship between the perception of trust within one’s community and life satisfaction. The authors did suggest that the “radius of trust” people are referring to when answering the trust question would provide rich information in regards to what exactly comprises a community (Helliwell, 2003, p. 346). Due to the numerous countries included in the survey, cross-cultural definitions certainly should be considered.
In the 2011 Helliwell and Wang study, life satisfaction and trust were measured by the Cantril Ladder question, questions about level of trust in various social relationships, and a question regarding the likelihood that a lost wallet would be returned to them:

In the city or area where you live, imagine that you lost your wallet or something holding your identification or address and it was found by someone else. Do you think your wallet (or your valuables) would be returned to you if it were found by neighbors/the police/strangers?

According to data collected from 79 countries (resulting in 79,000 responses), the OECD countries (there are a total of 35 member countries) indicated higher trust in their neighbors (91%) than in police (89%); the remaining countries (44 countries) also indicated higher rates of trust in their neighbors (61%) than in police (51%).

The authors used a regression equation to explore the individual level response to the wallet question (neighbor would return the wallet) and life satisfaction for both the Gallup World Poll (2006) and the 2003 Canadian General Social Survey – Cycle 17. Significant results from the Gallup World Poll indicated that if it was thought the wallet would be returned, there was a 0.179 increase in individual life satisfaction scores \( (N = 5,7042, B = 0.0179, p < .01) \). The \( R^2 \) value indicated that 26% of the variance observed in life satisfaction could be accounted for by the response to the wallet question. Significant results were found from the Canadian General Social Survey – Cycle 17 indicating a 0.285 increase in the individual life satisfaction scores \( (N = 15,505, B = 0.285, p < .001) \), however, for these participants only 13% of the variance could be accounted for by the responses to the wallet question.

In addition, individuals who believed their wallet would be returned had a life satisfaction score which was 7% higher than those who did not believe their wallet would be returned.
(Helliwell & Wang, 2011). According to the data from the Canadian General Survey (17 responses), Life Satisfaction was 5% higher for those who trusted their neighbors and 2.5% higher for those who believed their wallet would be returned by a stranger (Helliwell & Wang, 2011). Overall, individuals had an 18% increase in Life Satisfaction when trust was demonstrated across all life domains (i.e., trust in coworkers, neighbors, strangers, police, general trust; Helliwell & Wang, 2011). The authors did note that a distinction between actual and expected trustworthiness should also be explored in future studies. This is a valid point in that believing in the general concept of trust is different from believing people will do what they say (Helliwell & Wang, 2011). The degree to which an individual is able to meet and interact with his or her neighbors, in addition to how long he or she has lived in the neighborhood, are additional factors that contribute to fostering trust and a sense of safety. This further supports the idea that feeling a connection in one’s community is important to one’s sense of happiness and acts as a buttress for overall positive functioning.

The positive effects of what Helliwell and Putnam (2004) called “social capital” are not limited to the active participants in the community, but apply to other residents as well. The authors posited that social networks are inherently comprised of reciprocity and trust, and are important to happiness: “Indeed, a common finding from research on the correlates of life satisfaction is that subjective well-being is best predicted by the breadth and depth of one’s social connections” (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1437). The authors further explored the lasting effects of social capital versus material affluence on happiness and found that social capital was a more significant contributor to happiness. Study participants that reported high ratings of trust in the community also reported higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness. The authors investigated the effects of social capital (social trust and community participation)
on life satisfaction and happiness. Data from the World Values Survey/European Values Survey (WVS/ESC; 1980, 1991–1992, and 1995–1997), the Social Capital Benchmark Survey (United States; 2000), and the Equality, Security, and Community (ESC) Survey from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada indicated that trust and life satisfaction had positive predictive value. General trust was measured by the question, “Do you think that people can generally be trusted, or (alternatively) that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?” (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1441), and life satisfaction was measured by the Cantril Ladder question. There were significant positive relationships between trust in neighbors and life satisfaction for the ESC Survey ($p < .01, B = 0.33$). Results for general trust and life satisfaction were significant for both the WVS ($p < .01, B = 0.22$) and the ESC Survey ($p < 0.01, B = 0.14$). The authors concluded that the study stressed the importance of feeling connected to one’s community and the benefits all community members stand to gain from increased trust: “If everyone in a community becomes more connected, the average level of subjective well-being would increase” (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1443). In addition, the study highlighted that raising the income of everyone in a community (which is a question that has been raised by many economists) may be a less effective strategy for improving happiness because relative income rather than absolute income greatly impacts happiness: “The impact of society-wide increases in affluence on subjective well-being is uncertain and modest at best, whereas the impact of society-wide increases in social capital on well-being would be unambiguously and strongly positive” (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1444).

Social connection in one’s community was the focus a systematic review by Dolan, Peasgood, and White in 2008. A strength of this review was its attempt to include information from across disciplines. The authors included articles from economic journals from 1990–2006,
psychology journals from 2000–2008, and information from grey literature (e.g. unpublished materials), resulting in an inclusion of 153 papers in the study (Dolan et al., 2008). Seven categories were identified as contributing to subjective well-being: income, personal characteristics, socially developed characteristics, how we spend our time, attitudes and beliefs towards self/others/life, relationships, and the wider economic, social and political environment (Dolan et al., 2008). Subjective well-being was defined as the summation of social, economic, and environmental factors.

Dolan et al.’s (2008) review of previous research identified a relationship between subjective well-being and the sense of connection one feels in his or her community. It appears that connection to one’s community can be manifested in multiple ways; consistent themes in the literature are participation in one’s community by way of formal organizations, having some reported level of social trust in the community members, and having social ties to others. Relevant points included: as community participation (i.e., participation in community organizations) increases, life satisfaction also increases; general social trust is associated with higher ratings of life satisfaction and happiness; and neighborhood trust increases life satisfaction. In addition, social connection was also associated with increases in subjective well-being, and living in an unsafe area negatively impacted life satisfaction (Dolan et al., 2008). This is consistent with findings from Dupere and Perkins (2007) who noted that low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness may result from consistent exposure to social problems in one’s community. Heightened levels of distress in one’s community without any positive resources to counter the effects are likely to exhaust any emotional vitality an individual has. This warrants an exploration of what factors can contribute to an increase in life satisfaction.
The review of the literature also indicated some contradictory results in terms of community participation and life satisfaction (Dolan et al., 2008). The authors cited two studies (Bjornskov, 2003; Li, Pickles, & Savage, 2005) which indicated that a negative relationship exists between life satisfaction and community participation. The authors duly noted that a limitation to their review is that subjective well-being models differ greatly in terms of control variables and reference categories. Although the results from the review should be interpreted with discretion, the dominating themes are worth noting to inform future research. The reason for the inconsistencies may very well be due to the fact that like happiness, community connection is also composed of multiple factors that can be evaluated and interpreted in a variety of ways. Also similar to happiness, despite the differences in labeling, there does seem to be an agreement as to what those fundamental aspects of community connection are.

The Influence of Community Safety on Affect

As the above section demonstrates, where one lives is a factor that can have either a negative or positive influence on one’s level of subjective well-being. Balestra and Sultan (2013) offered this definition of community that is consistent with the definitions used in much community safety research: “A distinct territorial group. Distinct by virtue of the specific physical characteristics of the area and the specific social characteristics of the inhabitants” (p. 11). Previous research has explored individuals’ perceptions of specific aspects of their community by asking questions focused on social connections and sense of personal security within the community (Boarini et al., 2012). An overview of specific studies addressing the relationship between the sense of safety in one’s community and happiness will be reviewed here. The studies mentioned here explore social connection, personal security, and level of trust in others as characteristics included in the evaluation of one’s community.
Boarini et al. (2012) conducted a study using multiple regression analyses with data gathered from the 2009 and 2010 Gallup World Poll. The goal of the study was to identify what life circumstances determined respondents’ sense of well-being. The study included cross-sectional survey data from 150 countries; each country had approximately 1,000 respondents. The survey included both evaluative and affective questions that were asked either via phone interviews or in-person interviews. Boarini et al. used data from the 2009 and 2010 survey waves based on the research questions of interest. Similar to the current study, Life Satisfaction was measured using the Cantril Ladder question. The questions specific to personal safety asked about money/property being stolen and walking alone at night in the neighborhood (Boarini et al., 2012). Regression analyses indicated that as one’s sense of Safety increased, Life Satisfaction ratings also increased (Boarini et al., 2012). There was a positive relationship between Life Satisfaction and the question “feeling safe walking at night in the local neighborhood,” (p. 21) indicating that for every 1-unit increase in this question, there was a 0.25 increase in Life Satisfaction ($N = 47,452; p < .01$). The model also indicated that a lack of trust or sense of safety negatively impacts one’s perception of Life Satisfaction. A significant relationship was indicated between the question, “having money or property stolen during the year,” (p. 21) and Life Satisfaction ($N = 47,452, B = -0.12, p < .10$). Responses to the questions accounted for 24% of the change in the perception of Life Satisfaction. Significant results were also found when evaluating one’s level of Social Trust (trust in others) and Life Satisfaction. Questions used in this section assessed the degree to which an individual believes he or she can count on help, and opportunities to make friends (Gallup, 2014). Again, similar to the direction between Safety and Life Satisfaction, individuals who endorsed higher levels of Social Trust also indicated higher levels of Life Satisfaction ($N = 12,701, B = 0.45, p < .01$). Thirty-five percent
of the change in Life Satisfaction levels could be accounted for by the effects of the predictor variables.

The researchers (Gallup, 2014) evaluated the same variables in relation to Affect, and similar significant results were achieved. There was a 0.26 increase in Affect scores when respondents felt safe walking alone at night \((N = 47,794; p < .01)\) and a 0.21 decrease in affect when respondents had money or property stolen within the past year \((N = 47,794; p < .01)\). In fact, the effect sizes were larger for Affect than they were for Life Satisfaction, although the authors cautioned that this result may be skewed due to there being a difference in the scales for Affect (7-point scale) and Life Satisfaction (11-point scale). The differences in significance may be indicative that Affect is more sensitive to the daily changes in one’s life than Life Satisfaction because one’s report of Affect requires him or her to evaluate his or her current state of being at the time the question is asked, rather than making a global assessment considering both recent and historical experiences. Answers to the Affect question are reflective of the individual’s mood at the moment of the survey rather than a summation of his or her emotional states; therefore, these answers may be more emotionally laden because the participant is experiencing the emotion in the present rather than relying on his or her recall of previous emotional states.

A weakness of the Boarini et al. (2012) study is that not all the same survey questions were used in all waves of the survey. The OECD (2013) stated in their guidelines that survey formatting can have an effect on how individuals respond to the questions. As of 2012, there have been six separate waves of the survey (Boarini et al., 2012) and it is unknown if different questions or a different survey layout would have impacted the results of the study.

Balestra and Sultan (2013) conducted probit analyses to explore the relationship between household satisfaction and various individual and sociodemographic characteristics. The study
focused predominantly on the effect of what the researchers called *residential well-being* on individual well-being. The physical conditions within the homes, the conditions of the neighborhood, and housing affordability were included in the conceptualization of residential well-being; the focus of the current study is related to the identified variable: individuals’ perceptions of their neighborhoods. This variable included aspects of neighborhood conditions which addressed questions exploring the social relationships and sense of safety in the neighborhood (Balestra & Sultan, 2012). Using data from the 2007 European Project on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions poll, 174,186 respondents were obtained, and 15,713 respondents were obtained from the 2005–2007 Gallup World Polls. The authors hypothesized that neighborhoods high in connectedness would be more likely to work together collaboratively, exchange information, and encourage more prosocial behaviors within the community which could affect well-being (Balestra & Sultan, 2013). Results from the probit (2005-2007 Gallup World Polls) and ordered probit models (2007 European Project on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) supported this claim.

Higher levels of Housing Satisfaction were found amongst respondents that identified fewer community problems such as crime and noise (Balestra & Sultan, 2013). The neighborhood characteristics from the European Project on Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (respondents’ perceived level of crime in neighborhood) were significant for both Western European countries ($N = 118.22, B = -0.15, p < .01$) and Eastern European countries ($N = 55.96, B = -0.14, p < .01$). Results indicated that housing satisfaction decreased when respondents perceived there to be a problem with crime in the community. Respondents that reported a high sense of safety when walking around the neighborhood at night (Gallup World Poll question) were more likely to be satisfied than those who did not in both the Organization
for Economic Cooperation and Development countries \( (N = 11.06, B = 0.06, p < .01) \) and the other countries polled \( (N = 4.65, B = 0.08, p < .10) \).

Trust in neighbors was also demonstrated to have a positive effect on happiness in the aforementioned Helliwell and Putnam (2004) study. Results indicated a positive, significant relationship on the United States Benchmark Survey \( (B = 0.43, p < .01; \text{Helliwell \\& Putnam, 2004}) \). General trust \( (B = 0.21, p < .01) \) and Average trust \( (B = 0.84, p < .01) \) were also significant predictors for happiness from the same data set.

In summary, one can argue that there is a strong relationship between these evaluated constructs (trust and safety) and one’s level of happiness because of the evidence supporting the relationship between one’s sense of connection, security, and trust in his or her community (which will be referred to as community safety from here on) and the previously mentioned constructs of happiness: life satisfaction and affect. These results demonstrated consistency across cultures in the value of safety when it comes to one’s immediate community; both the European survey and the Gallup World Poll lend evidence to the stance that one’s community, specifically the level of social connection and sense of safety, can have an impact on one’s perceived satisfaction with life and happiness.

**Sustainable Seattle**

Sustainable Seattle was created in 1991 with the long-term goals of ensuring the healthy development of the Seattle and Puget Sound areas. Creating systemic social change was a primary objective of the Sustainable Seattle team (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). Using community education as a means to engage the communities, Sustainable Seattle was able to bring together organizations and businesses to work on various community projects (Sustainable Seattle, n.d.). Maintaining the balance among social concerns, ecological health, and economic
vitality to create positive living environments are the foundational ideas behind sustainability (Sustainable Seattle, n.d.). Sustainable Seattle was credited with creating the world's first community quality of life indicators project that focused primarily on sustainability (Holden, 2006). Sustainable Seattle's indicator projects demonstrated that nature, relationships, and quality of life can be indicative of how much a city/community is worth rather than relying on more traditional indicators of wealth such as GDP or the consumer price index (Holden, 2006).

Sustainable Seattle took a grassroots approach rather than an expert-focused approach in developing the social indicators of progress (Sustainable Seattle, n.d.). Sustainable Seattle began the development of social indicators at the neighborhood level in 2003, and using community panels and consultation groups, compiled an updated list of indicators in 2006 (Sustainable Seattle, n.d.). Holden (2006) outlined 10 benefits to conducting such projects: revealing core concerns of urban problems, understanding both the integrated and regional nature of urban problems, measuring both outcomes and changes in process/policy, measuring progress specific to particular neighborhoods and communities, allowing communities to set their own priorities, implementing flexibility, focusing on both positive and negative changes, addressing questions of maintenance, addressing issues of equity, and including both qualitative and quantitative data.

The overall objective of community indicator projects is to empower the community and its members.

Sustainable Seattle acted as a place for resources and initiatives for positive change in the Seattle/Puget Sound communities. They offered multiple tools and trainings that extended the opportunities for involvement beyond the organization and into the control of the individual community members, allowing the communities to take matters into their own hands. Their Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods Initiative program used concrete interventions as a means to
build and identify protective factors within communities. Sustainable Seattle's team was comprised of members representing various aspects of the change cycle. Team members included an Executive Director, Neighborhood Programs Manager, and a Communications Manager, in addition to multiple board members. In 1996, the organization was recognized by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements with the *Excellence in Indicators Best Performance Award* (Sustainable Seattle, n.d.). They have also acted as the prototype for over 90 sustainability projects around the country in their 20 years of operation, taking on the role of both consultant and model (Holden, 2006).

The organization’s goals were to help foster growth and positive change while ensuring sustainability (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). By creating connections between organizations, businesses, and residents, Sustainable Seattle acted as both a catalyst for change and advocacy. Creating social change is a challenge due largely to the fact that it will likely disrupt the current power dynamics at play (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2012). Including community organizations such as Sustainable Seattle may help to level the playing field and allow the public to have a stronger, louder voice, which can aide in improving community life and creating community-minded interventions (Trickett, 2009). Although Sustainable Seattle is no longer primarily focused on regional sustainability projects, its work continues with The Happiness Alliance (2012). Organizations such as Sustainable Seattle benefit the communities they are in by engaging in projects that seek to understand and promote the elements in a neighborhood that foster psychological well-being and, correspondingly, happiness. The Happiness Alliance separated from Sustainable Seattle as its own entity in 2012 (Sustainable Seattle, n. d.).
The Happiness Alliance

The Happiness Alliance aims to explore how one’s perceived level of life satisfaction can be impacted by his or her relationship with the surrounding political/social conditions in his or her immediate environment. The Happiness Alliance identifies strengths and explores the relationship between various life domains and one’s self-reported level of overall happiness. The Happiness Alliance offers practical suggestions individuals can apply in their daily life to increase happiness, such as meditation, practicing gratitude, and an online tool-kit, further displaying the organization’s commitment to providing accessible interventions (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). Their goal is to develop a new social contract where our knowledge of psychology can increase our understanding of quality of life and how to implement proactive changes, thereby decreasing the emphasis on material wealth as the representation of one’s value (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). The Happiness Alliance identifies multiple qualities of a community and how they interact with one another to create a sense of life satisfaction. The Seattle area Happiness Initiative was its first project (The Happiness Alliance, 2012).

The Happiness Alliance Project. The Happiness Alliance Project is based on the Gross National Happiness Index first developed in Bhutan (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). Scores from a random sample of participants in 2011 were used to modify and develop the current form of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey. The initiative explores happiness outside of affect alone and includes the perception of satisfaction with life using domains such as material well-being, good governance, healthy environment, health, psychological well-being, time balance, work experience, community, culture, and education/learning, as well as measures for satisfaction with life and affect (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). The Happiness Alliance Project identified 11 life domains. The various life domains included in the survey show the influential
relationship between both interpersonal and institutional factors, creating a cultural system of action that is representative of whole communities (Holden, 2006). Examining the various life domains helps to create a more thorough picture of one’s life experience (Trickett, 2009).

**Survey development.** The Personality and Well-Being Lab on the San Francisco State University campus first developed and validated the Gross National Happiness Index Survey that the Seattle Area Happiness Alliance is modeled after (Howell et al., 2011). Sustainable Seattle developed its current version of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey in five phases, utilizing the approach for measuring progress and happiness developed by the Happy Planet Index and Gross National Happiness Commission (Howell et al., 2011). The Happiness Alliance’s approach to evaluating one’s overall level of happiness is similar to what has been done in previous research studies (D’Acci, 2011; Hornung, 2006; Panagiotakos & Yfantopoulous, 2011). In particular, the focus of the survey is not simply on objective well-being, exploring satisfaction with material possessions, but also includes questions evaluating one’s satisfaction with subjective well-being (asking questions that refer to one’s psychological experiences).

In the first phase, items from the original opt-in survey were chosen based on correlations with the intended measured constructs. The survey was sent to both the Sustainable Seattle and Take Back Your Time email lists. A total of 10,000 people received the email, and 515 individuals participated. During the second phase, additional items from published surveys (The Gross National Happiness Abridged Survey, Detroit Survey 2001, General Social Survey 2002, The World Health Organization Quality of Life Survey, Centre for Economic Performance Recommendations for Measuring Subjective Well-Being, The European Social Survey, and The Confidence Survey) were added based on their face validity of measuring subjective well-being
and quality of life (Howell et al., 2011). This version of the survey included 440 items and took approximately one hour to complete. At the end of this phase, 11 life domains were identified: psychological well-being, physical health, time balance, community vitality, social connectedness, education, cultural vitality, environmental quality/access to nature, democratic governance, material well-being, and work experience (Howell et al., 2011).

To strengthen the ability of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey to assess these life domains, 250 items from additional nationally representative surveys (The Gross National Happiness Abridged Survey, Detroit Area Survey 2001, General Social Survey 2002, The World Health Organization Quality of Life Survey, Centre for European Performance Recommendations for Measuring Subjective Well-Being, The European Social Survey, and the University of Michigan and ABC News/Money Magazine Consumer Confidence Scale; Gross National Happiness Index, 2011) were incorporated. In addition, respondents were asked to complete the Diener's Flourishing Scale, Kasser's Time/Material Balance Scale, and Dolan, Layard, and Metcalfe's Domain Satisfaction Suggestion Scales. Identifying items that best represented each of the life domains was the main goal of the second phase of development. After statistical analyses and participant feedback, 15 items were included in each life domain (Howell et al., 2011).

The Gross National Happiness Index Survey was formatted to its current version in the third phase by respondent feedback on the Mechanical Turk website, where 404 participants were provided compensation for completing the survey and providing suggestions about any improvements that could be made (Howell et al., 2011). The goal of this revision was to evaluate the internal consistency of the 10 life domains and to reduce the number of items to five per domain. The shorter survey was reposted on the Mechanical Turk website. A total of 133
participants took the modified Likert-style survey in the fourth phase. The final form of the survey was posted on SurveyMonkey.com in the fifth phase, with 578 participants taking the survey. The survey demonstrated internal consistency and predictive validity utilizing three separate samples (Howell et al., 2011).
Chapter III: Methods

Design

This study used quantitative, exploratory research in a cross-sectional design. Archival data from an international sample were used to explore the degree to which gender and scores on the domain of Community Safety from the Gross National Happiness Index Survey can predict scores on the Gross National Happiness Index Survey domains of psychological well-being, affect, and satisfaction with life. Permission was granted by Laura Musikanski, Executive Director of The Happiness Alliance, to use the full data set that included participant responses from January 2011 to March 2014. See Appendix A for the Happiness Data Privacy and Protection Agreement which outlines the expectations for using the data for research purposes. Appendix B contains the portions of the survey used in the current study.

Preanalysis Data Screening

Responses were collected from 36,162 subjects; however, according to the survey consent form, responses from participants under the age of 19 would not be used for research purposes. Therefore, 1,374 (3.8%) responses were removed due to the participants not meeting the age requirement. A remaining sample of 34,788 participants was considered for the current study. The data were entered into SPSS version 22.0 for Windows. Using filter options in SPSS, the remaining data from the survey were cleaned up to eliminate the surveys that did not respond to the target sections, duplicate surveys by the same participants, and additional unusable surveys. Nonnumeric data for gender and ethnicity were converted into numeric form. There were 14,950 (43%) subjects removed from the study due to null responses and nonsensical responses. The reasons for their removal are described in more detail below.
Null responses. For the domain of Life Satisfaction, 5,295 (15%) participants were removed for null responses to at least one question in this section. For the domain of Psychological Well-Being, 3,606 (10%) participants were removed for null responses to at least one question in this section. For the domain of Community Vitality, 1,767 (5%) participants were removed for at least one null response in this section. For gender, 86 (.2%) participants were removed for null responses. There were 3,799 (11%) participants removed for null responses from socioeconomic status. With the overlaps across the three scales, plus gender and socioeconomic status, a total of 14,553 (41%) participants were removed from the analyses due to null responses to at least one key demographic datum or survey question.

The null cases for age and ethnicity were included in the dataset because these variables were not used to answer the research questions. There were 6,522 (19%) null responses for age and 171 (.5%) null responses for ethnicity. Table 1 indicates the distribution of null cases for each of the demographic variables included in the present study, and the distribution of null cases for each of the survey domains used in the present study.

Nonsensical responses. Nonsensical responses occurred for gender and age (e.g., selecting F, M for Gender or selecting 1,000 for Age). There were 185 (.5%) participants deleted due to nonsensical responses for gender. There were 212 (.6%) participants deleted due to nonsensical responses for age. A total of 397 (1.1%) nonsensical responses were removed from the dataset due to nonsensical responses in gender and age.

Outliers. Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were conducted to determine that responses were within the possible range of values and the data were not distorted by univariate outliers on the continuous research variables of Psychological Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Community Safety, and Happiness. The presence of univariate outliers was tested
by examining the z-scores which were created for Life Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being, Community Vitality, and Affect. Values that fell above 3.29 and those that fell below -3.29 indicated response outliers according to the criteria set by Tabachnick and Fidell (2012). A z-score of ±3.29 is a typical cutoff used, indicating that data that fall outside that range are beyond 99.9% of the distribution. A total of 194 (.9%) subjects were removed due to outlying scores. Pallant (2010) indicated that removal is an acceptable way to handle outliers. See Table 2 for the distribution of outliers removed.

**Participants**

A final N of 19,644 participants was included in the present study; final analyses were conducted with these participants. The majority of participants were female (13,038; 66%), with 6,606 (34%) participants identifying as male (see Figure 1). Most participants identified as White (15,084; 77%), followed by 1,347 (7%) as Asian/Pacific Islander (see Figure 2). Ages ranged from 19 to 99 years old, with mean (M) = 37.61 and standard deviation (SD) = 15.70. Household income ranges are depicted in Figure 3. Frequencies and percentages for the participants’ demographics are presented in Table 3.
Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages for Null Responses Removed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>3799</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>5295</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological well-being</td>
<td>3606</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Frequencies and Percentages for Outlier Responses Removed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological well-being</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages for Sample Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6606</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13038</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>1629</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>3987</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>2375</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresponses</td>
<td>6508</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15084</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1005</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Other</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresponses</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $10,000</td>
<td>3142</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $19,999</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 – $49,999</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>2954</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $94,999</td>
<td>2353</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $124,999</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$125,000 +</td>
<td>2891</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Due to rounding, not all percentages may sum to 100.
Figure 1. Bar chart for gender.
Figure 2. Bar chart for ethnicity.
Figure 3. Bar chart for household income.
**Instrument**

The Gross National Happiness Index Survey consists of 69 questions across 12 life domains (satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, physical health, time balance, community, social support, education/arts/culture, neighborhood, environment, government, material well-being, and work experience). To protect anonymity, participants taking the survey were given ID numbers that allowed them to reaccess their survey should more time be needed to complete it, or if they chose not to complete it in one sitting. Based on the time it took Happiness Alliance staff the complete the survey, it was estimated that the survey takes approximately 15 min to complete (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). The following is a description of the sections used from the survey to represent the variables employed in the current study.

**Happiness.** Level of happiness was assessed using the Psychological Well-Being domain of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey. Psychological Well-Being consists of five questions, each arranged along a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey software assigns each response a value starting from 0 (strongly disagree) and increasing by .25 for each additional step up the scale (strongly agree equals 1.0) to create decimal values for calculation purposes. See Table 5 for the survey response values. For the sample of participants used in the current study, Psychological Well-Being scores (maximum possible score of 1) ranged from 0.05 to 1.00, with $M = 0.70$ and $SD = 0.20$.

**Life satisfaction.** Life satisfaction was assessed using Hadley Cantril’s (1965) Self-Anchoring Striving Scale question from the satisfaction with life domain of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). The wording of the question appears in Table 5. Each value on the Likert Scale (starting from 0, worst possible life for you) was
divided by 10 (maximum score of 10, best possible life for you) to create decimal values for calculation. See Table 5 for survey response values. For the sample of participants used in the current study, Life Satisfaction scores ranged from 0.00 to 1.00, with $M = 0.68$ and $SD = 0.16$.

**Affect.** Affect was assessed using the third question from the Life Satisfaction domain of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey. The survey software divides each value on the Likert Scale by 10 to create decimal values for calculation, which results in a maximum possible score of 1. The affect question and assigned response values are listed in Table 5. Affect scores for the sample of participants used in the current study ranged from 0.00 to 1.00, with $M = 0.69$ and $SD = 0.18$.

**Community safety.** Participants’ level of trust and safety in their community was assessed using five of the questions from the Community Vitality domain of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey. The questions ask participants to rate the level of trust they have for the people in their community, satisfaction with sense of safety in their neighborhood, and level of community involvement. The wording of the questions is displayed in Table 5. The current study utilized Questions 1–5 of the Community Vitality domain. The last two questions were not included due to these questions not appearing to address issues of safety; the excluded questions asked how much money one had donated to charity and the amount of time one had spent volunteering for an organization. Similar to the questions assessing happiness, the questions were arranged along a 5-point Likert Scale and each response was assigned a value starting from 0 (strongly disagree) and increasing by .25 for each additional step up the scale (strongly agree equals 1.0) to create decimal values for calculation purposes. See Table 5 for the survey response values. Community safety scores for the research sample (maximum possible score of
1) ranged from 0.00 to 1.00, with $M = 0.53$ and $SD = 0.19$. Mean and standard deviation scores for community safety can also be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4

*Mean and Standard Deviations for Continuous Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>99.00</td>
<td>37.61</td>
<td>15.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-Being</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Survey Questions and Response Values*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Likert Scale responses</th>
<th>Assigned response values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with life</td>
<td>1. Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. Suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible. If the top step is 10 and the bottom step is 0, on which step of the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am optimistic about my future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In general, I feel very positive about myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please tell us how many of the following people you trust…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Your neighbors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strangers that you encounter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Businesses in your community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust none of them</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust a few of them</td>
<td></td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust some of them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust most of them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust all of them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Imagine that you lost a wallet or purse that contained two hundred dollars. Please indicate how likely you think it would be to have all of your money returned to you if it was found by someone who lives close by.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all likely</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat likely</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Likely</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How satisfied are you with your personal safety in your city or town?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

The survey responses represent an international sample. The survey was administered online via the happycounts.org website, as well as in paper format within the Oromo, Somali, and Filipino communities in South Seattle. Participants were recruited through word of mouth and The Happiness Alliance minority community events (e.g., elder’s meetings, community meetings). Data collection included using paper versions in minority communities that did not have access to computers and/or the Internet, in order to increase the diversity of the sample and therefore potentially give a more accurate representation of the community inhabitants of the city of Seattle.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided data analyses using participant responses from June 2011–March 2014 on The Happiness Alliance Survey (The Happiness Alliance, 2012):

1. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income?
   a. $H_01$: Gender and the community safety scores do not predict satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income.
   b. $H_{A1}$: Gender and the community safety scores do predict satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income.

2. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict affect scores while controlling for household income?
   a. $H_02$: Gender and the community safety scores do not predict affect scores while controlling for household income.
   b. $H_{A2}$: Gender and the community safety scores do predict affect scores while controlling for household income.

3. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income?
   a. $H_03$: Gender and the community safety scores do not predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income.
   b. $H_{A3}$: Gender and the community safety scores do predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income.

4. Do gender and the community safety scores similarly predict the satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores?
a. \( H_04: \) Gender and the community safety scores do not similarly predict satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores.

b. \( H_A4: \) Gender and the community safety scores do similarly predict satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores.

It was expected that gender and sense of community safety would have an impact on satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and affect, specifically that high ratings of community safety would indicate higher levels of satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and affect.

**Data Analyses**

Multiple linear regression is used to evaluate the relationship among variables; more specifically, this method can be used to investigate how well a dependent variable can be predicted by a set of independent variables. To address the above research questions, multiple linear regression models were conducted to assess the extent to which gender and the community safety scores predicted scores for the outcome variables (satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores) while controlling for household income. This type of analysis was appropriate to use in the current study because I was interested in evaluating the relationship amongst a set of dichotomous (gender) and interval variables (community safety) and an interval variable (satisfaction with life score, affect score, and psychological well-being score). Data were entered into SPSS version 22.0 for Windows.

There are multiple stages to completing a multiple regression analysis. Each step of the analysis examined the fit and relationship between the variables. The first step analyzed the correlation and direction of the data, the second step estimated the best fit of the line, and the third step evaluated the validity of the model (Statistics Solutions, n.d.).
Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

**Variables.** Variables were evaluated based on what each significantly added to the prediction of the dependent variables.

**Normality and homoscedasticity.** Normality assumes that the residuals (the difference between predicted and observed values) are normally distributed, while homoscedasticity assumes that scores are fairly equally distributed about the regression line. A wide distribution indicates a large amount of variability; therefore, it would be more difficult to properly fit a line that minimizes unexplained residual points. Violation of homoscedasticity could give the impression that the model is a better fit than it actually is. Normality and homoscedasticity were assessed by examination of scatterplots. Homoscedasticity was interpreted through the standardized prediction versus standardized residual regression scatterplot. The presence of a rectangular distribution, one with no recognizable pattern, indicates whether or not homoscedasticity is present (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). If not present, the results should be interpreted with caution. A normal probability-probability plot was used to assess the normality of residuals among the predictor variables (household income, gender, and community safety) and the dependent variables (happiness, affect, and satisfaction with life). A probability-probability plot is used to assess how closely two data sets agree, examining if the data set follows a specific distribution.

**Multicollinearity.** The absence of multicollinearity assumes that predictor variables are not intercorrelated, or in other words, are not measuring the same construct. Multicollinearity was assessed using variance inflation factors (VIF). Variance inflation factor values over 10 will suggest the presence of multicollinearity and a violation of the assumption whereas a value of 1 indicates no multicollinearity (Stevens, 2009). Multicollinearity inflates standard errors,
possibly making some variables appear insignificant when they are, in fact, significant. If multicollinearity was present, one of the highly correlated predictor variables would need to be removed from the model.

**Reliability**

Cronbach’s alpha tests of reliability and internal consistency were conducted on the two subscales: Psychological Well-Being and Community Vitality. Cronbach’s alpha provides mean correlations between each pair of items in a scale (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2012). It measures the consistency of responses across a scale; these values correspond to the strength in the relationship between items within the specified scale, therefore illustrating the degree to which the items measure a single construct. The alpha values (α) in the current study were interpreted using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2010), where α > .9 Excellent, >.8 Good, >.7 Acceptable, >.6 Questionable, >.5 Poor, and ≤ .5 Unacceptable.

**Probability**

*F* test. The *F* test was used to assess whether the set of independent variables (gender and community safety score) collectively predicted the dependent variables (satisfaction with life score, affect score, and psychological well-being score), identifying if the set of independent variables was significant to the prediction of the model (Statistics Solutions, n.d.).

*R*². *R*², the multiple coefficient of determination, was used to measure the amount of variance in the dependent variable that could be explained by the set of predictor variables. This determined what proportion of change in the dependent variables (satisfaction with life score, affect score, and psychological well-being score) could be accounted for by the set of independent variables (gender and community safety score).
Chapter IV: Results

Responses were collected from 36,162 subjects. A total of 1,374 subjects were removed due to being underage (18 years or younger), leaving a remaining sample of 34,788. In addition, 14,950 subjects were removed from the study due to nonresponses and nonsensical responses. Examples of nonresponses occurred in the Satisfaction With Life, Psychological Well-Being, Community Safety Scales (i.e., selecting F, M for gender or selecting 1,000 for age). For life satisfaction, 5,295 participants were removed for nonresponses. For psychological well-being, 3,606 participants were removed for nonresponses. For community safety, 1,767 participants were removed for nonresponses. For the gender response, 86 participants were removed for nonresponses. For household income, 3,799 participants were removed for nonresponses. With the overlaps across the three scales, gender, and socioeconomic status, a total of 14,553 participants were removed from the analyses due to nonresponses. Data were assessed for univariate outliers on the continuous research variables: psychological well-being scores, satisfaction with life scores, community safety scores, and affect scores. Outliers were examined via standardized values, or z scores, where values below -3.29 or above 3.29 are considered outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012); a total of 194 subjects were removed due to outlying scores. This left 19,644 subjects remaining in the study; final analyses were conducted on these subjects.

Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha tests of reliability and internal consistency were conducted on the two composite scores for psychological well-being and community safety. The psychological well-being scores were the average of the five psychological well-being Likert-scaled survey items. Community safety scores were the average of the five community safety Likert-scaled survey
items. The Cronbach’s alpha test provides a mean correlation between each pair of items and the number of items in a scale (Brace et al., 2012). The alpha values (α) were interpreted using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2010) where α > .9 excellent, > .8 good, > .7 acceptable, > .6 questionable, > .5 poor, and ≤ .5 unacceptable. Results for psychological well-being (.88) indicated good reliability. Results for community safety (.78) indicated acceptable reliability. Reliability statistics for the two composite scores are presented in Table 6. The variables satisfaction with life and affect are single items on the questionnaire, and therefore the reliability coefficient for these two variables cannot be calculated.

Preliminary Analyses

To address Research Question 1, a multiple linear regression was conducted to determine whether gender and the community safety scores predicted the perception of satisfaction with life scores. Household income was used as a control variable in the model. Statistical significance was determined using an alpha value of .05. Gender was a categorical dichotomous variable, with the reference category being females. As household income was treated as an ordinal variable, it was dummy coded for analysis; the reference variable for each category of household income was < $10,000. Community safety and satisfaction with life were treated as continuous variables.

Prior to conducting the analysis, the assumptions of the multiple linear regression—normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity—were assessed. A normal P-P plot was used to assess normality of residuals among the predictor variables (household income, gender, and community safety scores) and the dependent variable (satisfaction with life scores); little to no deviation was found and thus normality of residuals was met. The normal P-P plot can be found in Figure 4. Homoscedasticity was interpreted through the standardized prediction versus the standardized residual regression scatterplot. The
presence of a rectangular distribution, one with no recognizable pattern, indicated
homoscedasticity was present; thus, the assumption was met. The scatterplot for interpreting
homoscedasticity can be found in Figure 5. The absence of multicollinearity assumes that
predictor variables are not too closely related and were assessed using Variance Inflation Factors
(VIFs). VIF values over 10 will suggest the presence of multicollinearity (Stevens, 2009). None
of the predictor variables showed any signs of multicollinearity, with the highest VIF being
1.706; thus, the assumption was met.

**Research Question 1.** To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict
satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income?

To address Research Question 1, a multiple linear regression was conducted to determine
whether gender and community safety scores predict satisfaction with life scores. Statistical
significance was determined using an alpha value of .05. Gender was a categorical dichotomous
variable, with the reference category being females. As household income was treated as an
ordinal variable, it was dummy coded for analysis; the reference variable for each category of
household income was < $10,000. Community safety and satisfaction with life were treated as
continuous variables. Results of the regression indicated that the independent variables (gender
and community safety) significantly predict the satisfaction with life scores while controlling for
household income, $F(10, 19633) = 308.34, p < .001, R^2 = .136$; thus, the regression model was
statistically significant. The $R^2$—coefficient of determination—value indicated that 14% of the
variability in satisfaction with life scores can be explained by gender and the community safety
scores while controlling for household income. Results of the multiple linear regression are
presented in Table 7.
Figure 4. Normality P-P Plot for observed cumulative probability and expected cumulative probability for gender and community safety predicting satisfaction with life.

Table 6

*Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Statistics for the Two Composite Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-Being</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Safety</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Results for Multiple Linear Regression of Gender and Community Safety on Satisfaction With Life While Controlling for Household Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (reference: female)</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-2.74</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>48.13</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $F(10, 19633) = 308.34, p < .001, R^2 = .136$

Figure 5. Scatterplot between predictive values and residual values for prediction of satisfaction with life.
**Research Question 2.** To what extent do Gender and the Community Safety scores predict Affect scores while controlling for household income?

To address Research Question 2, a multiple linear regression was conducted to determine whether gender and community safety scores predict level of affect. Statistical significance was determined using an alpha value of .05. Gender was a categorical dichotomous variable, with the reference category being females. As household income was treated as an ordinal variable, it was dummy coded for analysis; the reference variable for each category of household income was < $10,000. Community safety and affect were treated as continuous variables.

Prior to conducting the analysis, the assumptions of the multiple linear regression—normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity—were assessed. A normal P-P plot was used to assess normality of residuals among the predictor variables (household income, gender, and community safety scores) and the dependent variable (affect scores); little to no deviation was found and thus normality of residuals was met. The normal P-P plot can be found in Figure 6. The scatterplot for interpreting homoscedasticity can be found in Figure 7.

Results of the regression indicated the independent variables (gender and community safety scores) significantly predict level of affect while controlling for household income, $F(10, 19633) = 261.11, p < .001, R^2 = .117$; the regression model was statistically significant. The $R^2$—coefficient of determination—value suggested that 12% of the variability in one's level of affect can be explained by gender and community safety scores while controlling for household income. Results for the multiple linear regression are presented in Table 8.
Table 8

*Results for Multiple Linear Regression of Gender and Community Safety on Affect While Controlling for Household Income*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (reference: female)</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-4.12</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>47.89</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. F(10, 19633) = 261.11, p < .001, R² = .117*

![Figure 6. Normality P-P Plot for observed cumulative probability and expected cumulative probability for gender and community safety predicting affect.](image-url)
Research Question 3. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income?

To address Research Question 3, a multiple linear regression was conducted to determine whether gender and community safety scores predict level of psychological well-being. Statistical significance was determined using an alpha value of .05. Gender was a categorical dichotomous variable, with the reference category being females. As household income was treated as an ordinal variable, it was dummy coded for analysis; the reference variable for each
category of household income was < $10,000. Community safety and psychological well-being were treated as continuous variables.

Prior to conducting the analysis, the assumptions of the multiple linear regression—normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity—were assessed. A normal P-P plot was used to assess normality of residuals among the predictor variables (household income, gender, and community safety scores) and the dependent variable (psychological well-being scores); little to no deviation was found and thus normality of residuals was met. The normal P-P plot can be found in Figure 8. The scatterplot for interpreting homoscedasticity can be found in Figure 9. None of the predictor variables showed any signs of multicollinearity with the highest VIF being 1.706; thus, the assumption was met.

Results of the regression indicated the independent variables (gender and community safety scores) significantly predict level of psychological well-being while controlling for household income, $F(10, 19633) = 292.08, p < .001, R^2 = .130$; thus, the regression model was statistically significant. The $R^2$—coefficient of determination—value suggested that 13% of the variability in one’s level of psychological well-being can be explained by gender and community safety score while controlling for household income. Results for the multiple linear regression are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

*Results for Multiple Linear Regression of Gender and Community Safety on Psychological Well-Being While Controlling for Household Income*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (reference: female)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-5.60</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>51.86</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $F(10, 19633) = 292.08, p < .001, R^2 = .130$*
Figure 8. Normality P-P Plot for observed cumulative probability and expected cumulative probability for gender and community safety predicting psychological well-being.
Research Question 4. Do Gender and the Community Safety scores similarly predict the satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores?

To address Research Question 4, the $R^2$ values were evaluated. Gender and the community safety scores similarly predicted each of the targeted outcome variables. The differences in $R^2$ values were within .01-.02 of each other. Upon further examination of the B-values for each of the regression models, the model for psychological well-being resulted in the highest B-values. This model indicated that psychological well-being scores for males decreased by ($B$) 0.02 units when compared to females, and as community safety scores
increased by one unit, psychological well-being scores increased by \( B \) 0.36 units. This is the greatest amount of change in the outcome variable in comparison to the other models. These results indicate that although the amount of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the set of predictor variables is similar, the unique contribution of the specific predictor variable to the outcome variable is not. Gender and the community safety scores have a stronger influence on psychological well-being scores than the other outcome variables.
Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions drawn from the results presented in the previous chapter. It provides a discussion of the implications for future research as well as a review of the limitations of the study.

Study Summary

This study evaluated variables of happiness, specifically, the relationship between gender and community safety scores and psychological well-being scores, affect scores, and satisfaction with life scores.

Analyses were conducted using archival data from the Gross National Happiness Index Survey from a sample of 19,644 participants (Howell et al., 2011). Separate multiple linear regression models were conducted to assess the extent to which gender and community safety scores could predict affect scores, psychological well-being scores, and satisfaction with life scores. $R^2$—the multiple coefficient of determination—was used to determine the degree to which variance in the dependent variable could be accounted for by the set of independent variables.

Findings According to the Research Questions

Research Question 1. To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict satisfaction with life scores while controlling for household income?

The combination of gender and the community safety scores accounted for approximately 14% of the variability in satisfaction with life scores. While the model was statistically significant ($p < .001$), gender and the community safety scores were not strong predictors of the satisfaction with life score. For all practical purposes, these two predictor variables did not account for the majority of the correlation within the model, indicating that other variables not
measured may have a stronger influence. In addition, there was a statistically significant correlation among all of the variables.

Upon completing a literature review of 153 studies published from 1990–2000, Dolan et al. (2008) reported that having trust in others was associated with higher life satisfaction and happiness ratings. In addition, having trust in one’s neighborhood was also associated with increased life satisfaction. The findings of this study supported the research done by Dolan et al. indicating that having a positive evaluation of one’s life contributes to happiness; results from the current study indicated that satisfaction with life scores increased by .28 units with every 1-unit increase in community safety scores ($B = .28$).

The results of this study indicate that the level of trust one had in his or her community account for less of the variance observed in satisfaction with life scores ($R^2 = .14$) in comparison to Helliwell’s (2003) study in which 26% of the variance was accounted for. This difference in $R^2$ values may be due to Helliwell’s study using data from 46 different countries and exploring effects of the variables at the country and individual level, whereas the current study used only individual data from a predominantly U.S.-based sample. Helliwell also looked at differences in trust over time, whereas the current study used data from a single point in time. Another possible reason for the difference in results is that satisfaction with life is more accurately assessed by asking questions that measure trust rather than safety. Helliwell’s study used the question, “In general, do you think that people can be trusted, or alternatively, that you can’t be too careful when dealing with people?” (p. 346), while the current study used the question, “How satisfied are you with your personal safety in your city or town?” On the other hand, the beta values in this study ($B = .28$) were similar to those found in the study for individual variables ($B = .24, p = 0$; Helliwell, 2003), which may indicate that while the models provided different
predictability, the influence of the specified independent variable on the dependent variable was similar.

One of the questions included in the current study (lost wallet question) was also used in a study by Helliwell and Wang (2011). The researchers gave their participants two different surveys: the 2006 Gallup World Poll Survey and the 2003 Canadian General Social Survey—Cycle 17. Results from the Gallup World Poll Survey indicated that well-being scores (measured by the Cantril Ladder question) were associated with a .18-point increase when respondents expected their wallet to be returned by neighbors \( (p < .01) \). The regression equation indicated that 27% of the variance in well-being was accounted for by trust in neighbors. Similar results were found when respondents were asked the same question about strangers \( (B = .16; R^2 = .26) \). The amount of variance accounted for in these models is significantly higher than the amount of variance accounted for in the present study. This may be due to the current study not identifying a specific returner of the wallet, but rather using the phrase “someone who lives close by” (The Happiness Alliance, 2012). Another difference in the structure of the question is that the current study included a dollar amount contained in the wallet ($200) while the Gallup World Poll version did not. It is possible that adding specific monetary value to the item impacted responses.

In terms of Helliwell and Wang’s 2011 survey, the amount of variance in well-being (measured by the life satisfaction question in the Canadian General Social Survey question) accounted for by the predictor variable of trust (which was asked using questions related to general interpersonal and neighborhood trust, including a question about the level of trust among workplace colleagues; Helliwell & Wang, 2011) was similar to the current study at 13% \( (p < .01) \). Helliwell and Wang’s (2011) life satisfaction question asked respondents: “Please rate your
feelings about certain areas of your life using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means ‘very
dissatisfied’ and 10 means ‘very satisfied.’ How do you feel about your life as a whole right
now?’ (p. 45). Life satisfaction scores increased by .29 points ($p < .01$) when respondents
expected their wallets to be returned by neighbors, and increased by .27 ($p < .001$) points when
respondents expected their wallets to be returned by strangers. The Helliwell and Wang survey
used the same language as the wallet question used in the current study, altering it slightly to fit
the stranger scenario. Knowing that these factors play an active role in an individual’s sense of
happiness, it would behoove policymakers and local governments to provide opportunities or
programs that can foster community safety. This requires a shift from the traditional position
that income and economic progress are adequate representations of well-being, and insists that
distinct communities take inventory of, and advocate for, the components that promote a healthy,
happy lifestyle specific to their ethos.

Meisenberg and Woodley (2014) were able to establish that gender accounted for 77%
($R^2 = .77, p < .05$) of the variance in their study regarding happiness and life satisfaction. In all
three models of the current study, men consistently scored lower in comparison to females. Beta
values were as follows: Life Satisfaction = -0.01, Affect = -0.01, Psychological
Well-Being = -0.02. These results are consistent with studies indicating that women have higher
levels of life satisfaction and happiness (Dolan et al., 2008; Fortin et al., 2015; Stone et al., 2010;
Zweig, 2014).

**Research Question 2.** To what extent do gender and the community safety scores
predict affect scores while controlling for household income?

The combination of gender and the community safety scores accounted for approximately
12% of the variability in affect scores. Again, gender and the community safety scores were not
the strongest predictors of affect. A majority of the influence on the affect scores is not accounted for by the model, indicating that other variables may be better at predicting affect than gender and community safety. Although gender and community safety scores are contributing elements to affect scores, they are weak predictors.

The findings from the current study support the findings from the Boarini et al. (2012) study. Boarini et al. found a positive relationship between affect scores and the first question (feeling safe walking alone) \((B = .26, p < 0.01)\), and a negative relationship between affect scores and the second question (stolen money/property) \((B = -.21, p < 0.01)\). Although the model in the current study accounted for 12% of the variance, it should not be considered an inadequate model in that the current model included fewer predictors than the Boarini et al. study. The current model considered only gender and community safety scores while Boarini et al. included the following: income, jobs, health, education, social connections, environmental quality, and personal security. This raises the question of how many of the additional outcome domains included in the Boarini et al. study are unique significant contributors to the overall model given that similar \(R^2\) values were obtained. Another observable difference between their study and the current model is that Boarini et al. measured well-being with a single item, the Cantril Ladder question, while the current model included three questions (the Cantril Ladder question, a question asking how happy the respondent is, and a question asking how satisfied with life the respondent is). Boarini et al. stated that including multiple questions in a measure is better than using a single item. Including multiple questions to evaluate life satisfaction may be one reason why the current model accounts for nearly the same amount of variance with fewer outcome domains.
**Research Question 3.** To what extent do gender and the community safety scores predict psychological well-being scores while controlling for household income?

The combination of gender and the community safety scores accounted for approximately 13% of the variability in psychological well-being scores. The combination of gender and the community safety scores was a weak predictor of the psychological well-being scores.

According to the beta value, psychological well-being scores increased by .36 units for every 1-unit increase in community safety scores, indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. This is supportive of the literature stating that individuals who experience lower community trust and safety experience negative effects on general mental health. For example, the results of a study by Dupere and Perkins (2007) are consistent with those of the current study in that neighborhood blocks that indicated lower levels of psychological distress had higher levels of community participation and ties with neighbors than did other blocks. Community participation and ties with neighbors are not identical to perceptions of community safety, which likely contributed to the differences in results between the current study and Dupere and Perkins’ study. In addition, the amount of variance accounted for by the current model ($R^2 = .13$) may be due to the types of questions used to measure the construct of psychological well-being.

Helliwell and Putnam (2004) identified that social networks have value and are important to happiness. Participating in community-lead activities such as barbecues or local associations has a positive rippling effect that increases the sense of trust in the community not just for the participants, but for the nonparticipating residents as well (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). The authors argued that community participation and community trust are reciprocal and therefore it is difficult to have one without the other. Dupere and Perkins used screening measures specific to depression and anxiety in addition to a well-being measure to gauge psychological distress,
whereas the current study used the psychological well-being measure from the survey, but did not assess depression or anxiety. That difference may explain the discrepancy between Dupere and Perkins’ results and the results of the current study.

Another possible explanation for the low percentage of variance accounted for in the results of the current study is that according to McMahan and Estes (2011), eudaimonia may contribute more to happiness than hedonia. Using a survey that included more questions related to one becoming the best version of him- or herself and finding meaning in experiences (eudaimonia) rather than experiencing pleasure (hedonia) could possibly provide an alternative perspective of happiness that is more predictive of psychological well-being than that explored by the survey used in the current study. The current study used eudaimonic questions in the psychological well-being section. While both eudaimonia and hedonia are considered important components of happiness, McMahan and Estes found that factors reflective of eudaimonic conceptions have stronger associations with other aspects of happiness (life satisfaction and affect) than do factors reflective of hedonic conceptions.

There is also some evidence suggesting that when individuals evaluate their overall sense of happiness, eudaimonic features demonstrate more lasting power than hedonic features of happiness (Steger, Kashda, & Oishi, 2008). In their study, eudaimonia activity impacted the next day’s meaning in life and life satisfaction ratings whereas hedonia did not. Steger et al. (2008) explained that eudaimonia activities can have a longer lasting effect on an individual than hedonic activity. This suggests that a survey focused on eudaimonic features of happiness may predict life satisfaction more so than hedonia-targeted questions. The sections included in the current study had a combination of experiential (satisfaction with life) and evaluative questions (community safety); however, only one section (psychological well-being) contained
eudaimonic-focused questions. In the psychological well-being section, participants were asked to what extent they believed they were leading a purposeful life and whether they felt they were accomplished. Including additional questions that examined eudaimonic features could have strengthened the results in that respondents would have had more points of reference to thoroughly evaluate satisfaction with life. For example, including Section 14 (Work) of the Gross National Happiness Index Survey might tap into whether participants felt they were accomplished or whether they perceived themselves as living a meaningful life. Sample questions of Section 14 include: “The conditions of my job allow me to be about a productive as I could be,” and “How satisfied are you with the balance between the time you spend on your job and the time you spend on other aspects of your life?”

**Research Question 4.** Do gender and the community safety scores similarly predict the satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores?

Gender and the community safety scores do not similarly predict satisfaction with life scores, affect scores, and psychological well-being scores. Because they were not equally effective, there is support for the rationale to use different models for each outcome variable. Specifically, while the $R^2$ values indicated that the collective effect of the predictor variables was similar for each of the outcome variables (life satisfaction $R^2 = .14$; affect $R^2 = .12$; psychological well-being $R^2 = .13$), the differences in B-values indicated that the predictor variables had the greatest impact on the psychological well-being score ($B = 0.36$), followed by affect ($B = 0.31$) and life satisfaction ($B = 0.28$). These differences in B-values indicate that the predictor variables had a greater impact on the psychological well-being score than the affect and life satisfaction scores.
Implications for Future Research

The current study should be replicated with several changes. Future studies should incorporate additional variables and should utilize a hierarchal regression model rather than the standard method used in the current study. Exploring the changes in $R^2$ and beta values as each variable is entered into the model could help to distinguish which variables are most noteworthy to consider. The results from the current study indicate that gender and the perception of community safety are not sufficient to predict meaningful amounts of the different qualities of happiness (satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being). Including variables such as education (Boarini et al., 2012; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Helliwell & Wang, 2011) might strengthen the predictability of these three components of happiness. In addition, as previously mentioned, assessing trust rather than safety and using questions targeting eudaimonic properties may provide more predictive power.

Clearly, more research is needed to better identify the key features of happiness. If these can be identified, specific programs or interventions can be put into place to encourage and develop those elements that will increase people’s happiness. Entering the different variables from the questionnaire into the model individually rather than all at once will help differentiate which combination of variables are the most impactful toward satisfaction with life, affect, and psychological well-being scores by showing a change in the variance accounted for by each variable as it is inputted. While gender and the community safety scores in this study did not account for a majority of the variability in the outcome variables, exploring what other variables may significantly contribute to the model can help direct and inform the most effective types of programs to enhance and sustain happiness.
Limitations

The elimination of a significant portion of the total sample due to missing, unacceptable and illogical responses is a considerable limitation of this study. First, approximately 4% of the sample was eliminated because they were younger than 19 years old. In addition, another 43% of the sample was eliminated due to null and nonsensical responses to one or more of the survey items used in the current research. These eliminations significantly reduced the responses available for analysis. It is unclear how the loss of those participants impacted the results of this study.

Whenever an international sample is used, the impact of culture needs to be considered. Given that the survey was accessible via the Internet, participants from other countries could have experienced language barriers and/or cultural differences in terms of word meaning, which could have impacted responses. Due to the nature of how the data were collected and archived, identifying which responses came from which countries was unrealistic.

In addition, caution should also be considered when self-report data are used. Results are highly reliant on the participants’ level of insight and honesty—both of which can impact the way one answers a question.

Concluding Remarks

While the results of this study were different in terms of how much variability was accounted for by gender and the community safety scores, they nonetheless contribute to the body of literature by highlighting that happiness cannot be explained by just two variables. The results of the current study should not be considered inadequate given that, unlike the previously reviewed studies, it examined the effects of the predictor variables on all three paradigms of happiness (affect, life satisfaction, psychological well-being), and indicated increases in all three.
Regardless, the following questions remain: What variables best predict happiness? And how does a community best channel its resources to support and enhance those factors? For example, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2012) suggested that implementing strategies to increase the perception of community safety, such as the development of regularly scheduled community-centered gatherings, may increase the sense of connection to the neighborhood and increase overall levels of happiness. Layard (2010) posited that the data garnered from happiness research can allow for a deeper understanding of the trends of happiness, the identification of problem groups, and the distinction of why some people are happy while others are not.

Without substantiated evidence demonstrating the importance of trust in one’s community and happiness, it is highly unlikely that state funds and community resources will be funneled into campaigns that could support such changes. A full life, as described by Frey (2008d) and Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005), entails seeking pleasure, engagement, and meaning in one’s existence. Peterson et al. noted that while any one predictor may not account for happiness, the variables certainly contribute to enrichment value. Although the current study indicated that the community safety score accounted for only minimal changes in happiness, it should not be discounted all together, but should be considered as part of the overall picture of what supports a full life. Using indices of happiness can serve multiple purposes beyond just education, and can shift the focus to specific factors that immediately affect happiness. In addition, policymakers are not likely going to consider alternative measures of happiness so long as the focus is the production of goods and economic gains (Diener, 2000; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). It is arguable that if happier people are indeed greater contributors to society (Diener, 2000), it would behoove policymakers to consider alternative indicators of happiness.
The results of the current study add to the diverse results in regard to the relationship between gender and happiness. One suggested theory for the inconsistent results is that changes in social trends have had a more negative impact on females than men (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). Other possible explanations involve socially imposed gender roles (Diener et al., 1999) and the fact that women in general experience more stress and negative moods than men (Diener et al., 1999; Nolen-Hoekesema & Rusting, 1999). Diener et al. (1999) reported that women tend to experience their emotions both more intensely and frequently than men, possibly skewed or hiding the extent to which men experience their moods. One thing is clear: More information is needed to explore the relationship between gender and happiness and what mediating factors might be contributing to the perplexing results.
References


Appendix A

Happiness Data Privacy and Protection Agreement
On Thu, Oct 25, 2012 at 1:18 PM, Jennifer Daffon <jdaffon@antioch.edu>
to Laura

"Collateral Agreement Between Parties Happiness Initiative, Seattle WA and Jennifer Daffon. By evidence of my signature or my identity via E-mail communication, I represent that I am authorized to enter into this agreement on behalf of myself. I hereby agree that information provided to me by the other parties to this agreement will be treated as valuable, confidential and proprietary and that in the course of use of the materials I will hold such information in strict confidence during and after completion of this agreement unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the other parties. I will dispose of the data when it is not longer needed for the purposes of my research. With requisite permission granted, use of the work product of one or both of the other parties shall be acknowledged or credited in any release or communication consistent with basic standards of academic practice.

Jennifer Daffon.
On Thu, Oct 25, 2012 at 10:15 AM, Laura Musikanski <laura@happycounts.org> wrote:
Hi Jennifer
Can you just put your name in and sign this.
Thanks!
Laura

"Collateral Agreement Between Parties Happiness Initiative, Seattle WA and (Name) By evidence of my signature or my identity via E-mail communication, I represent that I am authorized to enter into this agreement on behalf of myself. I hereby agree that information provided to me by the other parties to this agreement will be treated as valuable, confidential and proprietary and that in the course of use of the materials I will hold such information in strict confidence during and after completion of this agreement unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the other parties. I will dispose of the data when it is not longer needed for the purposes of my research. With requisite permission granted, use of the work product of one or both of the other parties shall be acknowledged or credited in any release or communication consistent with basic standards of academic practice.
Appendix B

The Happiness Initiative Survey
This document was written for The Happiness Initiative. It may be used for non-commercial purposes and with the understanding that you will share the data you collect. The Happiness Initiative issues unique codes to communities, cities, campuses, companies and others to gather aggregate data for groups in a grassroots effort to contribute to the happiness movement. We also work with pollsters to conduct random samples. Please contact info@happycounts.org for more information.

The Happiness Initiative requests that you use the following form of words to cite this document:


Consent Form

A. INTRODUCTION

This survey is a project of The Happiness Initiative with consultation from the Personality and Well-Being Laboratory at San Francisco State University.

The purpose of the survey is to study how happiness and well-being are influenced by the conditions of our lives and communities. Your data will not be used for research purposes if you are under the age of 18.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, the following will occur:

You will fill out an online questionnaire. It takes most people 12-14 minutes to complete the questionnaire. At the end you will be given your personal results and guidance on how to interpret them, as well as median scores for the United States as a whole. You will also be given the opportunity, if you wish, to more fully understand aspects of your life by participating in a menu of optional surveys.

C. RISKS

We follow the European Union’s Protection of Personal Data Directive 95/46/EU, the strongest code we know of for protecting personal data. You can read the full code and an executive
summary online:

In simple language: all of your responses will be anonymous; no one except those who use the data for the purpose of the Happiness Initiative and SF State University research study will have access to the personal data; data is only kept for as long as it is useful; and personal information will never be sold, traded or given away.

D. QUESTIONS

If you have other questions about this survey, you may contact the researchers at happy@sustainableseattle.org.

Thank you for your participation. We greatly appreciate it.
Section 1: Satisfaction With Life

1.1 Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. Suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible. If the top step is 10 and the bottom step is 0, on which step of the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?

| 0 - Worst possible life for you | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 - Best possible life for you |

1.2 All things considered, how satisfied are you with life as a whole nowadays?

| Not at all satisfied | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Extremely satisfied |

1.3 Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?

| Extremely unhappy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Extremely happy |
**Section 4: Psychological Well-Being**

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?*

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1</strong> I lead a purposeful and meaningful life</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2</strong> I am engaged and interested in my daily activities</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3</strong> I am optimistic about my future</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.4</strong> Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.5</strong> In general, I feel very positive about myself</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section 7: Community Vitality**

*Please tell us how many of the following people you trust:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.1 Your neighbors</th>
<th>Trust none of them</th>
<th>Trust a few of them</th>
<th>Trust some of them</th>
<th>Trust most of them</th>
<th>Trust all of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Strangers that you encounter</td>
<td>Trust none of them</td>
<td>Trust a few of them</td>
<td>Trust some of them</td>
<td>Trust most of them</td>
<td>Trust all of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Businesses in your community</td>
<td>Trust none of them</td>
<td>Trust a few of them</td>
<td>Trust some of them</td>
<td>Trust most of them</td>
<td>Trust all of them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**7.4** Imagine that you lost a wallet or purse that contained two hundred dollars. Please indicate how likely you think it would be to have all of your money returned to you if it was found by someone who lives close by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Fairly likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**7.5** How satisfied are you with your personal safety in your city or town?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Demographics

What is your current age (please enter a whole number of years, e.g., 35)?

Which gender do you identify as? (multiple selections are allowed)

- Male
- Female
- Neither
- Other (If “other”, please specify)

What race[s] or ethnicity[s] do you identify as? (categories are taken from the 2010 U.S. Census, and multiple selections are allowed)

- White non-Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Black, African American, or Negro
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian Indian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Other Asian — Specify race, e.g. Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, etc.
- Other Pacific Islander — Specify race, e.g., Fijian, Tongan, etc.
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Native Hawaiian
- Vietnamese
- Some other race — Specify race.

What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Never married and/or never in a domestic partnership
- Separated
- Domestic partnership
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other:
What is your current housing situation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single person living alone</th>
<th>Living with spouse or partner (no children at home)</th>
<th>Living in child’s home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single person living with others</td>
<td>Living with spouse or partner and children at home</td>
<td>Homeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person with children at home</td>
<td>Living in parents’ home</td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many people currently reside in your household, including you? __________

Do you have any children under 18?  

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

Where do you live? (we just want a postal code and country – not your exact address)

Which of these categories comes closest to the type of place you are living in today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In open country but not on a farm</th>
<th>On a farm</th>
<th>In a small city or town (under 50,000)</th>
<th>In a medium-size city (50,000 – 250,000)</th>
<th>In a suburb of a large city</th>
<th>In a large city (over 250,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The next two questions assess your current spirituality:

**How spiritual do you consider yourself to be?**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**How important are your spiritual beliefs to the way you live your life?**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you live in the United States, please answer the following 3 questions to the best of your ability:
About fiscal and monetary policy, where would you put yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely conservative</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Slightly conservative</th>
<th>Moderate, middle of the road</th>
<th>Slightly liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Extremely liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

About social policy, such as gay marriage or a woman’s choice of abortion, where would you put yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely conservative</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Slightly conservative</th>
<th>Moderate, middle of the road</th>
<th>Slightly liberal</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Extremely liberal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Thinking about political orientations, what affiliation do you identify with most?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Libertarian</th>
<th>Tea Party</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than grade 9</th>
<th>More than grade 9 but less than grade 12</th>
<th>Grade 12 / High school diploma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills training and/or apprenticeship</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Undergraduate university degree (e.g. a BA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate university degree (e.g. a Master’s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What was your total household income from all sources last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than $10,000</th>
<th>$10,000 - $19,999</th>
<th>$20,000 - $29,999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>$40,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>$100,000 - $124,999</td>
<td>$125,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wealth is defined as the total value of everything someone owns minus any debt that he or she owes. A person's net wealth includes his or her bank account or cash savings plus the value of other things such as stocks, bonds, retirement accounts, the value of your primary residence and vacation property, art, collections, etc., minus the value of things like home-equity loans, student...
loans, credit card debt, and mortgages. **What would you estimate your household's total net wealth is at this time?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than $10,000</th>
<th>$10,000 - $24,999</th>
<th>$25,000 - $49,999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>$100,000 - $149,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 - $249,999</td>
<td>$250,000 - $499,999</td>
<td>$500,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In the last six months, how often have you made late payments to your creditors?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never (you have made 0 late payments)</th>
<th>Rarely (you have made 1 late payment)</th>
<th>Sometimes (you have made 2-3 late payments)</th>
<th>Most of the time (you have made 4-6 late payments)</th>
<th>Frequently (you have made more than 6 late payments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**If you needed $1,000 for an unplanned expense, what would you do to obtain the money?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would take the money out of my bank account</th>
<th>I would get a cash advance on my credit card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would borrow the money from friends or family</td>
<td>I would sell or pawn some assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would take out a loan</td>
<td>I would disregard some other expense (i.e. not pay something else that month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please write in):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do you have any comments or questions about any of the items used in this survey?**

________________________________________________________________________________________

**May we contact you in future for follow-up research? If so, please enter your email address here.** _____________________________
The End

THANK YOU for taking our survey!

The data we are gathering with this survey allows public policymakers, communities and individuals to measure progress and make decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of our needs, what we care about and where we are thriving or hurting. We hope it will be a starting point for a conversation about using wider measures of happiness, well-being and sustainability instead of just Gross Domestic Product or money.

To learn more about this project and how to get involved, see www.happycounts.org