

The Paradox of How Striving For Happiness Can Make You Less Happy

Rebecca Lee, Jamie Gruman, Doug Bors

+ OUTLINE

- Well-Being
- “Need” for Happiness
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion



+ WELL-BEING

- Synonymous with happiness
- Large body of research, but no unanimously agreed upon definition
- Defined by Diener (1984) as:
 - Life Satisfaction
 - Positive Affect

(Diener, 1984; Costa & McCrae, 1980; Scheier & Carver, 1985; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976)

+ OUTCOME MEASURES FOR WELL-BEING



Life Satisfaction (LS) ↑	Positive Affect (PA) ↑
Depression ↓	Negative Affect (NA) ↓

+ “NEED” FOR HAPPINESS

1. How happy I am at any given moment says a lot about how worthwhile my life is.
2. If I don't feel happy, maybe there is something wrong with me.
3. I value things in life only to the extent that they influence my personal happiness.
4. I would like to be happier than I generally am.
5. Feeling happy is extremely important to me.
6. I am concerned about my happiness even when I feel happy.
7. To have a meaningful life, I need to feel happy most of the time.

+ GOAL & HYPOTHESIS

The proposed study aimed to:

- 1) Refine and improve upon an existing scale of NFH
- 2) Examine how an individual's "need" for happiness might relate to individual differences and well-being
- 3) Examine the moderating relationship between individual differences and outcome measures of well-being



+ METHODOLOGY

- 359 total participants
 - 155 recruited through email or in-class solicitation
 - 204 recruited through the online participant pool system
- Online questionnaire that assesses various factors that are associated with well-being
- Questionnaire...
 - Includes: 7 “predictors of well-being” scales, 3 “outcome measures of well-being” scales



+ QUESTIONNAIRE (Predictor Scales)



- Religiosity
- Core Self-Evaluations (CSE)
- Resilience
- The “Big Five” (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism)
- Social Support
- Optimism
- “Need for Happiness” (NFH)

+ QUESTIONNAIRE (Measures of Well-Being Scales)



- Depression
- Positive Affect (PA)
- Negative Affect (NA)
- Life Satisfaction (LS)

+ QUESTIONNAIRE: (NFH SCALE)

Items retained for the final “Need” for Happiness Scale

Item	Description
MAUSS4	I would like to be happier than I generally am.
MAUSS6	I am concerned about my happiness even when I feel happy.
NEW2	Compared to other people, I am more concerned about being happy.
NEW4	If I’m not happy I work to try to make myself happier.
NEW6	I feel like I’m doing something wrong if I’m not experiencing happiness.
NEW9	If I’m not experiencing happiness I consider myself unsuccessful.
NEW10	It doesn’t bother me when I’m not particularly happy.
NEW11	I tend to think about ways to increase my happiness.
NEW12	I devote a significant amount of my time to making myself happy.

+ OVERALL RESULTS



+ RESULTS (Scale Refinement)

- Factor Analysis revealed a three-factor solution
 - Factor 1: Thinking About Happiness
 - *Negatively* correlated with PA and LS
 - *Positively* correlated with NA and Depression
 - Had items from both scales
 - Factor 2: Actions Toward Happiness
 - *Positively* correlated with PA and LS
 - *Negatively* correlated with NA and Depression
 - All items from the present study's scale
 - Factor 3: Evaluations About Being Happy
 - *Not* correlated with any outcome measure
 - All items from Mauss et al. (2011) scale
 - Eliminated ALL NFH scale items that loaded on this factor

PA = Positive
Affect

NA = Negative
Affect

LS = Life
Satisfaction

+ RESULTS (Main Analyses)

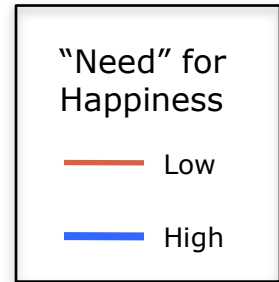
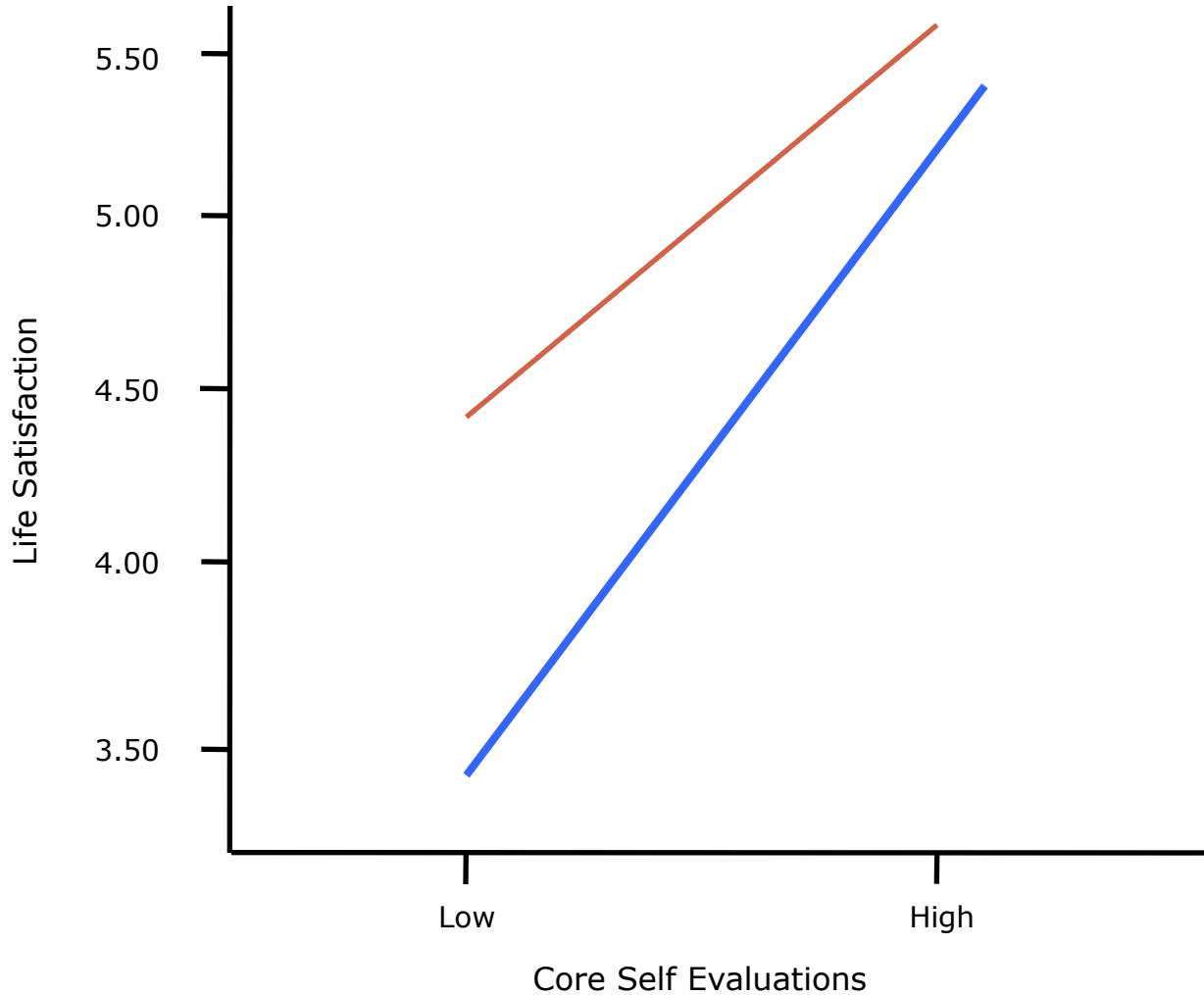


■ Regression Analyses

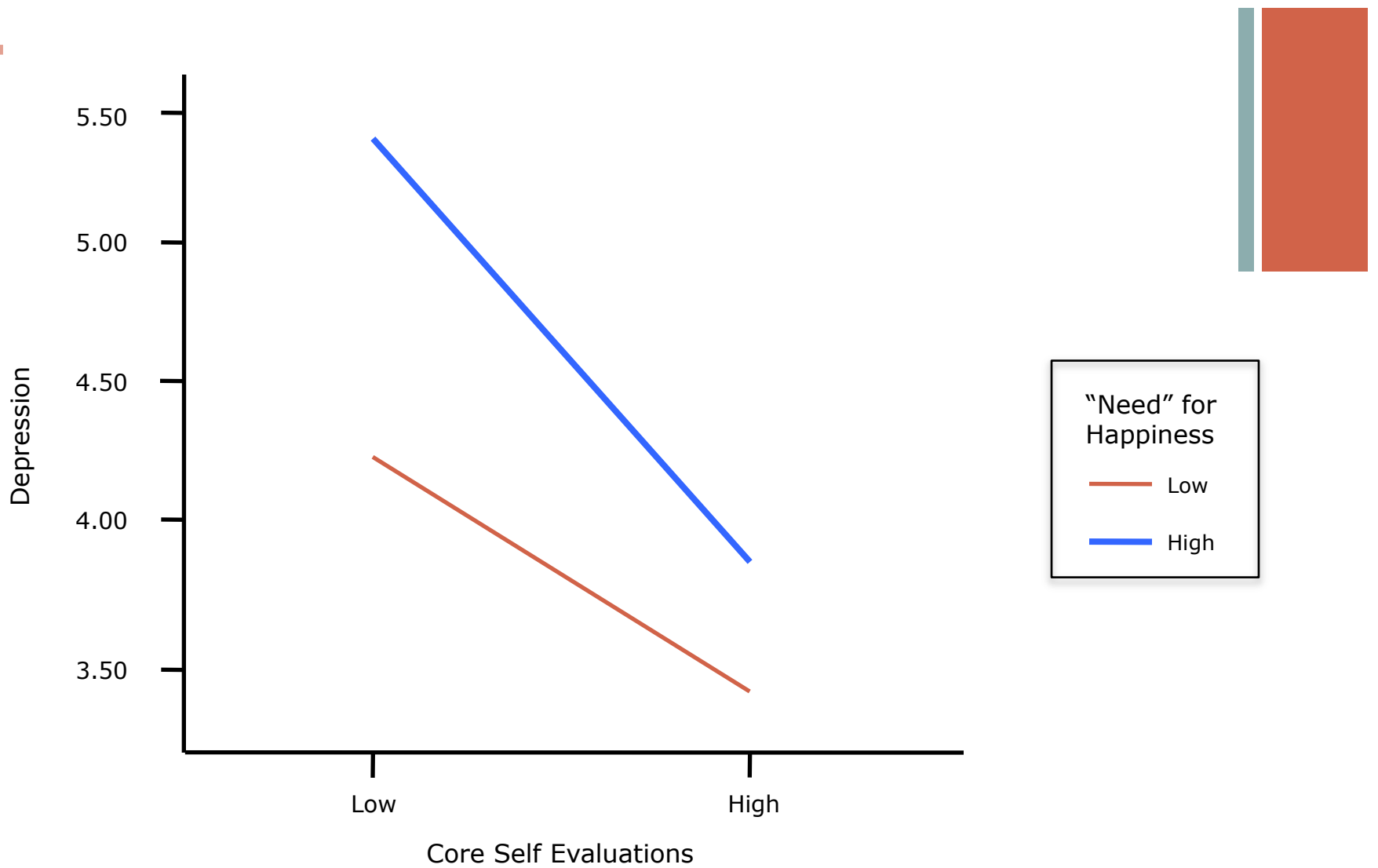
- Almost all the predictors of well-being demonstrated significant correlations with the outcome measures of well-being
- Only 4 of 7 were significantly correlated with the NFH scale (neuroticism, core self-evaluations, optimism, resilience)
- Only these 4 predictor variables were used to test if NFH will moderate the relationship between predictors and happiness outcomes

+ NFH Moderating Relationship Between Core Self-Evaluations and Well-Being

- CSE was significantly associated with LS, NA, and Depression
- NFH was significantly associated with PA and NA
- Interactions between CSE and NFH were significant for LS and Depression



Interaction Effect Between “Need” for Happiness and Core Self-Evaluations with Life Satisfaction



Interaction Effect Between "Need" for Happiness and Core Self-Evaluations with Depression

+ NFH Moderating Relationship Between Resilience and Well-Being

- Resilience was significantly associated with LS, NA, and Depression
- NFH was significantly associated with LS and Depression
- Interactions between resilience and NFH were significant for LS



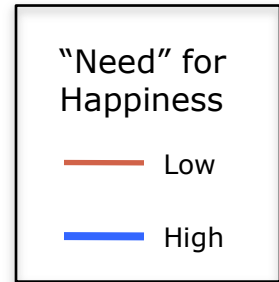
Life Satisfaction

5.50
5.00
4.50
4.00
3.50

Low

High

Resilience



Interaction Effect Between "Need" for Happiness and Resilience with Life Satisfaction

+ DISCUSSION

Scale Refinement



- The present study successfully achieved its Scale Refinement goals:
 - 1. To refine Mauss et al's (2011) scale due to low internal consistency found in the present study
 - 2. To introduce new items to Mauss et al's (2011) scale to more adequately and accurately assess NFH
- The final NFH scale retained 2 items from the Mauss et al. (2011) scale and 7 items from the present study's scale
- Our findings suggest that the newly updated scale holds a better promise of accurate results for future researchers who wish to study NFH

+ DISCUSSION

NFH is Multi-Dimensional

- Our results suggest a brand new finding: that “need” for happiness is multidimensional
 - NFH involves both *THINKING* about being happy (or one’s lack of happiness) as well as *ACTING* in ways to increase one’s happiness
- *Thinking* about happiness can decrease well-being
- Performing *actions* directed towards increasing one’s happiness can increase well-being

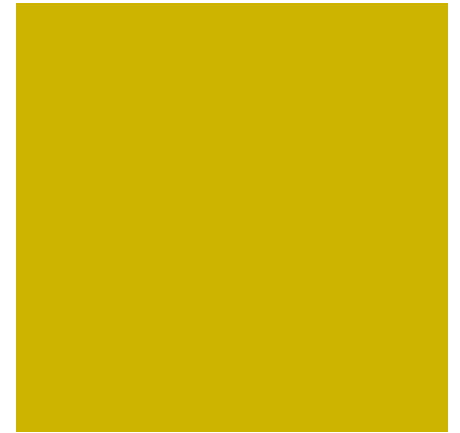
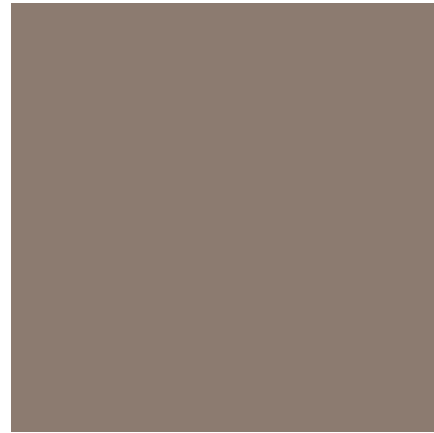


+ DISCUSSION

Implications



- People who want to be happy, but merely think about it or dwell on it, will not achieve their goal.
 - In fact, it might make them less happy – counterproductive
- Individuals who want to be happy and actually act on it? Our study suggests that these people are most likely to be the ones to reap the happy benefits of their actions
- The present study's findings are important in a society, such as ours in the West, to understand more about what can actually work to make oneself happy
- Forward motion counts (so long as it is related to something you like or wish to personally achieve)



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