

## **Popular science description**

What makes people happy? Are some people naturally inclined to feel happy, while others are rather unhappy? Do some values held by people, facilitate happiness, while others damage it? Can we teach people to be more happy? I will aim to answer these questions in my research.

For some time now, psychologists have known that for some people it is easier to feel happy. If a person is rather sociable and emotionally stable, not very sensitive, but active and enduring - he or she will probably be a rather happy person. The set of traits facilitating happiness has already been discovered. This, however, does not mean that other areas, such as attitudes towards life or value hierarchies do not impact happiness.

In my research, I will aim to investigate links between value systems and individual happiness. Studies have shown, that for example strong conservatism values are rather damaging for happiness, while values such as achievement, seeking new experiences or valuing independence are linked to higher happiness. The problem is, that people sometimes declare that they value something, but do not do much to fulfil their needs connected to their values. For example, you can value new experiences, but if you do not seek them, then the relationship with the value and your happiness will be weak or nonexistent. Additionally, if a person aims to seek new experiences but feels that he or she fails in these pursuits, then it probably makes him or her unhappy. Generally, the assumption that I aim to investigate in this project is that people are more likely to be happy if they choose values that facilitate happiness, they engage actively in realizing their values and they feel successful in these endeavours. I will also control for individual predispositions for happiness, because they determine the baseline of happiness, that is independent of values and value-related behaviours.

In other words, I would like to see how the dimensions of values are linked to sense of happiness. Each person probably intuitively knows what happiness is. Psychologists, however, have to be very specific in their definitions, so they coined numerous conceptualizations of happiness. In my research I include two of these - happiness as a pleasant life (hedonistic conception) and happiness as a good life, where a person realizes his or her true self and potential (eudaimonic conception). I am curious to see, if traits and values impact the hedonic and the eudaimonic dimensions in different ways.

The completion of this research will take three years and include three studies. The first study will include 1000 people from a nationally representative sample. These people will report on their happiness, values, behaviours and traits. In the second study we will conduct an experiment with 150 people. One third of them will participate in a training aimed to teach them to be active and successful in realizing their values. The second group will participate in another training, aimed to enhance well-being but not connected to values. The third group will be the control group. In this study we will verify if there is a causal relationship - if becoming more active and successful in value-related endeavours brings forth higher happiness. In the third study we will test if the link between values and happiness is mediated by behaviour. In this study we will measure values, behaviour, self-efficacy and happiness three times with 2 month intervals. We will then analyze these relationship using sophisticated statistical methods.

To sum up, this project concentrates on the area of values. It seems important to research this in contemporary Poland, especially with the current socio-political situation. There is currently a heated debate about national values in the public discourse, and as a researcher I would like to verify if some of the values are more worth promoting - because some of them may actually make people happier.