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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAPPINESS, THE MEANING OF LIFE AND SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

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Abstract. The study aimed to examine happiness, life satisfaction and the meaning of life among a causal and convenience sample of population in Albania. The main purpose of this study was to determine the levels of the above variables, and moreover to understand if there is a relationship between them in the grouping in the study, starting with the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between them. 322 individuals took part in this study, with a good geographical distribution all over Albania. Finding of the study showed that there is a strong positive correlation between satisfaction of life and happiness among the participants of the study. The higher satisfaction with life, the higher the happiness among the participants. Moreover, the study also found that there was also a strong correlation between meaning of life and satisfaction of life. The higher the satisfaction of life between the participants the higher the change that the participants had found their meaning of life. The results also show a correlation between the meaning of life and happiness but this relationship is weaker than the other among our sample group of study.

Key words: happiness, meaning of life, satisfaction of life, Albania, positive psychology

I. Introduction

Seeking and finding happiness is gaining great importance in recent decades within the modern human worldview. Happiness becomes the subject of numerous researches as neuroscientific and above all in the field of psychology. The connection between happiness and other very important dimensions such as gratitude, life satisfaction, or the very meaning of life, is receiving more and more attention as it can basically help us understand how we can renew the quality of life of people. In essence, happiness and quality of life increase among people becomes a criterion for economic and social development.

In recent years, with the advent of positive psychology, the variables mentioned above are being studied more than ever. This is because happiness is a multidimensional concept which consists of several basic parts: as the emotional part for example, as the

happy individual has a tendency to be happier and an attribute in society; secondly from the social aspect, this is because the happy individual has good social relations with others and can receive social support from them; and finally, from a cognitive point of view, this is because the happy person processes and interprets the information with a special method, so that in the end there is a sense of happiness and optimism in his life. Therefore, when they are happier, people's appreciation for themselves as well as for their life as a whole, increases. Increasing happiness therefore leads us to think that it is related to the satisfaction of life as a whole as well as to the meaning of life (Valois et al., 2004).

Life satisfaction is a dimension that is related to both judgmental and cognitive connotations (Diene, Emmons, & Larsan, 1985), a process in which people evaluate the quality of their lives based on a set of criteria that may be social. or self. Life satisfaction is the individual perspective, the overall assessment of the whole of one's life or some aspects of life, such as family life, academic experience (Diener, Emmons, Larsen dhe Griffin, 1985). So, life satisfaction is the reflection of the balance between individual desires and the current state of the individual, and the larger the gap between the level of individual desires and the current state of the person, the lower is the satisfaction with life. Several studies have shown that satisfaction with living standards is a key factor in achieving happiness. In addition, there is an important link between a person's self-esteem and the happiness he or she feels. Overall satisfaction with life is one of the best elements and predictors of an individual's happiness. (Prince-Embury, Saklofske, & Vesely, 2014).

The meaning of life, on the other hand, is not an immediate phenomenon which can happen at a certain time or place. The meaning of life is a notion that is defined as a set of awareness and experiences gained in a certain process of an individual, and moreover it requires the individual to seek the meaning of life over time (Zika and Chamberlain, 1992). Although people may and may never realize this, the meaning of life can be found at every stage of their lives and in different forms. However, we must understand that to grasp the meaning of life, an individual must have mental clarity, this is because the meaning of life is the sum of the answers given to various questions that an individual asks himself perhaps and throughout life (Veenhoven, 1996).

This study aims to examine the positive psychology orientations of the individual by studying some important variables in this context, specifically: happiness, life satisfaction and the meaning of life among the population in Albania. Therefore, we can state that the main purpose of this study is to determine the levels of the above variables, and moreover to understand if there is a relationship between them in the grouping in the study, starting with the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between them.

2. Method

2.1 Statistical Population and Sampling

322 took in this study, whereas most of respondents in the study were females, with only 14% of the sample being male. The sample comprised of 40.7% of the sample aged from 21-40 years old, followed by 34.2% being from 20-30 years old. 24.7% on the other hand were between 41-60 years old. Most of the sample had a higher education diploma, or at least were getting a higher education degree, whereas 29.5% of the sample had a doctorate degree. The sample had a high education profile. The results show that

most of the participants (30%) in this study were from the capital of Albania, Tirana, followed by the region of Lezha and Fieri. The region distribution sample showed that the study had a good geographical dispersion in every region of Albania.

2.2 Research Instruments

Subjective Happiness Scale – (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), is a scale with 4 main questions, measuring with Likert scale units of measurement from 1 -Not a very happy person to 7 – A very happy person, where the 4th question has a reverse scale. Two of the questions ask respondents to characterize themselves by an absolute appreciation of themselves and others (mostly peers), while the other two questions provide brief descriptions of individuals themselves. This instrument through its widespread use has shown high internal durability, throughout the samples.

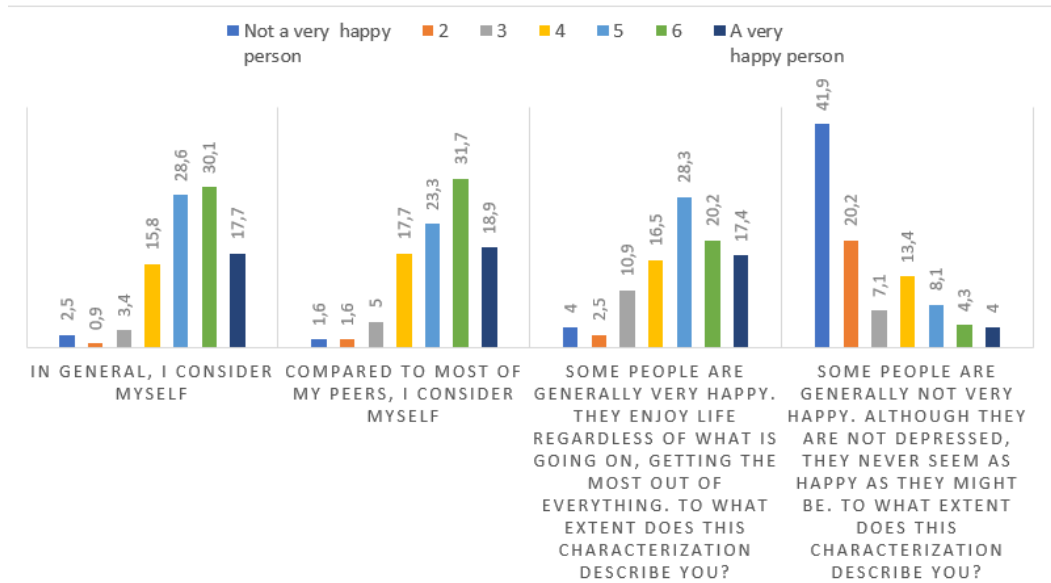
The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS)- The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by the authors to assess satisfaction with people's lives as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with specific life domains, such as health or finances, but allows subjects to integrate and weigh these domains in whatever way they choose. This scale had 5 main questions with a Likert scale from 1 - Strongly Disagree to 7 - Strongly Agree (Diener et al., 1985).

Meaning of Life (MLQ) - The Meaning in Life Questionnaire assesses two dimensions of meaning in life using 10 items rated on a seven-point scale from 1 - Absolutely True to 7 - Absolutely Untrue. The Presence of Meaning subscale measures how full respondents feel their lives are of meaning. The Search for Meaning subscale measures how engaged and motivated respondents are in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives. The MLQ has good reliability, test-retest stability, stable factor structure, and convergence among informants. Presence is positively related to well-being, intrinsic religiosity, extraversion and agreeableness, and negatively related to anxiety and depression. Search is positively related to religious quest, rumination, past-negative and present-fatalistic time perspectives, negative affect, depression, and neuroticism, and negatively related to future time perspective, close-mindedness (dogmatism), and well-being. Presence relates as expected with personal growth self-appraisals, and altruistic and spiritual behaviors as assessed through daily diaries (Steger et al., n/a).

Regarding the reliability of the distributed questionnaire, *Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.770*, which tells us that the questionnaire has a scale within the reliability limit.

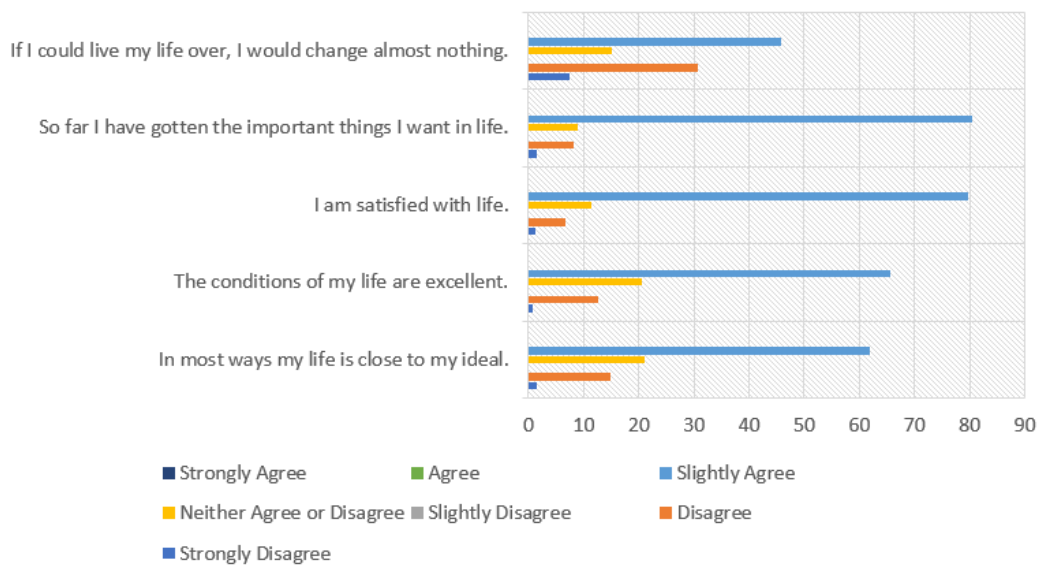
3. Results

Graph 1. Level of happiness among respondents



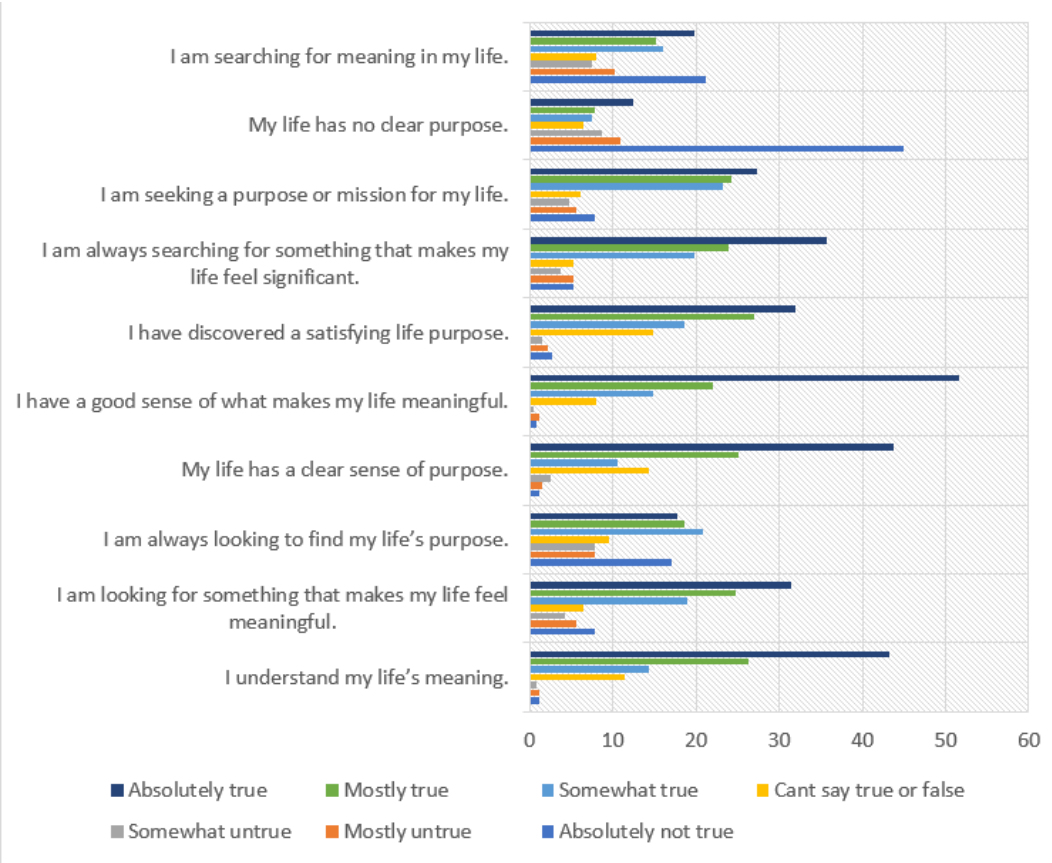
Results on the level of happiness from the respondents shows us that most of the participants in the study consider themselves a happy person, especially where they compare themselves with other peers. Moreover, they generally felt that they were able to enjoy life in advance of what might be happening, and that they were able to get the best out of every situation. On the other hand, on the graph below we can see results from the satisfaction with life survey.

Graph 2. Satisfaction with Life



Participants mostly disagreed with the statement that their life is going close to their ideal, and that their life conditions were somehow excellent. They also disagreed with the statement that they were satisfied with their life. Most of them did not get the things they wanted in life, but controversy, even if they had a chance to start over, not many of them would change anything. Generally, life satisfaction within the study group was low.

Graph 3. Meaning of life



Moreover, in the graphs above we can see results regarding the meaning of life from participants. Results show that most of them understood even somehow the meaning of their life. But they were still searching or looking for something that would make their life meaningful. On the other, they felt that their life had a clear purpose, and have a good sense on what makes their life meaningful. Most of participants, had discovered through their life a satisfying purpose, but nonetheless they were still searching for something that would make their life feel even more significant. Finally, participants were divided on the statement about whether they were still searching for the meaning of their lives, more than half still searching and the other part not.

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Happiness	321	4.00	28.00	18.0405	3.82037
Satisfaction of Life	320	8.00	25.00	21.4750	4.00853
Meaning of Life	320	22.00	70.00	50.5500	8.84439
Valid N (listwise)	320				

The table above presents descriptive analyzes according to the main variables obtained in the study. The results show that they partially show above average results related to happiness, similarity and the variable of the meaning of life. Where it seems that even in this case the figures show that they are above average and that the participants in the study have managed to be somewhat clear about the meaning of life for them. On the other hand, life satisfaction for the participants shows a level below average, which shows that the life satisfaction of the respondents is low. Below is shown the results table regarding correlations between the main variables of the study.

Table 2. **Correlations**

		Happiness	Satisfaction of Life	Meaning of Life
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	321		
Satisfaction of Life	Pearson Correlation	.466**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	320	320	
Meaning of Life	Pearson Correlation	.131*	.155**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.005	
	N	320	320	320

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the results we can see that there is a strong positive correlation between satisfaction of life and happiness among the participants of the study. The correlation is positive in the value or $r=0.466$, meaning that the higher satisfaction with life, the higher the happiness among the participants. Moreover, there is also a strong correlation between meaning of life and satisfaction of life. Whereas the correlation is positive in the value or $r=0.155$, meaning that the higher the satisfaction of life between the participants the higher the change that the participants had found their meaning of life. The results also show a correlation between the meaning of life and happiness but this relationship is weaker than the other among our sample group of study.

4. Conclusions

The study aimed to examine happiness, life satisfaction and the meaning of life among a causal and convenience sample of population in Albania. The main purpose of this study was to determine the levels of the above variables, and moreover to understand if there is a relationship between them in the grouping in the study, starting with the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between them. The study was quantitative, with a survey distributed online. 322 individuals took part in this study, with a good geographical distribution all over Albania. Participants were mostly female, and the education level was high among the group sample. The questionnaire was composed of three main instruments, the subjective happiness scale (SHS); the satisfaction with life scale (SLS) and the meaning of life questionnaire (MLQ). Finding of the study showed that there is a strong positive correlation between satisfaction of life and happiness among the participants of the study. The higher satisfaction with life, the higher the happiness among the participants. Moreover, the study also found that there was also a strong correlation between meaning of life and satisfaction of life. The higher the satisfaction of life between the participants the higher the change that the participants had found their meaning of life. The results also show a correlation between the meaning of life and happiness but this relationship is weaker than the other among our sample group of study. More studies should study more in depth the relationship between variables, taking also in consideration demographic variables.

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