Happiness Economics: An Empirical Study of the Relationship Between Personal Happiness and Economic Contribution Among Young and Middle-Aged Adults

[1]Dr. Bindu V V., [2]Ms. Pooja Rajesh., [2]Ms. Meghna Surya Mahesh., [2]Ms. Amika Raveendran., [2]Ms. Devi Anjana, [2]Ms. Sayoojya. K. Students, B.A. Economics

[1]Associate Professor Department of Economics S.N. College, Kannur, Kerala, India

[2]Student, Department Of Economics S.N. College, Kannur, Kerala, India

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1306000153

Received: 08 June 2026; Accepted: 13 June 2026; Published: 27 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Happiness economics is an emerging field of study that examines how economic conditions influence the overall well-being and life satisfaction of individuals. The present study investigates the relationship between personal happiness and economic contribution among young adults and middle-aged adults. The research is based on primary data collected from 50 respondents through a structured questionnaire, and the data were analysed using percentage analysis and simple statistical interpretation. The study considers both economic factors such as income stability, financial independence and contribution to household income, as well as non-economic factors including work-life balance, stress levels, family relationships and social participation. The findings reveal that although financial security plays an important role in reducing stress and ensuring stability, income alone does not determine an individual 's level of happiness. Social support, mental well-being and balanced personal life were also found to be significantly influence the overall happiness. The results further indicate that middle-aged adults generally contribute more to household income compared to young adults, while both groups report moderate to high levels of life satisfaction. Overall, the study highlights that happiness is multidimensional and influenced by a combination of economic and social factors. These findings support the perspective in happiness economics that improving quality of life requires more than economic growth alone.

Key words: social expectations, work–life balance, Easterlin Paradox, Sen,s capability approach, subjective wellbeing (SWB)

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of happiness and well-being has received increasing attention in the field of Happiness Economics. Traditionally, economic progress was mainly assessed through indicators such as income levels, employment opportunities, and overall economic growth. It was widely assumed that improvements in income and economic development would automatically lead to higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction. However, over time researchers have found that economic growth alone does not necessarily guarantee greater well-being.

Many individuals may experience improved economic conditions but still face challenges such as stress, heavy workloads, social expectations, and difficulties in maintaining a work–life balance. These observations have led economists and social scientists to understand that happiness is influenced not only by economic factors but also by various non-economic aspects including family relationships, physical health, mental well-being, and social support. As a result, research has increasingly focused on examining how both economic and social factors together shape the overall life satisfaction.

Happiness may also differ across different stages of life. Young adults often encounter challenges related to education, career opportunities, and future goals, while middle-aged individuals generally deal with greater responsibilities such as family commitments, financial obligations, and career pressures. These differences can

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

affect how individuals perceive their happiness and well-being.

Therefore, studying the factors that influence happiness among youth and middle-aged individuals can provide useful insights into the relationship between economic conditions, social influences, and personal satisfaction. Understanding these factors can help to emphasize the importance of improving not only economic growth but also the overall quality of life.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in understanding the factors that influence human happiness and well-being. Traditional economic theories mainly focus on income and economic growth as the primary determinants of happiness. However, several studies indicate that these factors alone cannot fully explain individual's level of life satisfaction. Even when people experience higher income and improved living standards, they may still face challenges such as stress, social pressures, and difficulties in maintaining a balanced life.

Moreover, happiness may vary across different stages of life. Young adults often encounter uncertainties related to education, employment, and future prospects, whereas middle-aged individuals typically experience greater financial responsibilities and family obligations. These differences may affect how individuals perceive happiness and overall well-being. Therefore, it becomes important to examine how both economic and non-economic factors influence happiness among these age groups. The present study aims to analyze the various factors that affect happiness among youth and middle-aged individuals and to understand their role in shaping overall life satisfaction.

Operational Definition of Key Concepts

Happiness: Happiness refers to an individual's overall sense of well-being, positive emotions, and satisfaction with life. In this study, happiness is assessed through respondents' perceptions of their quality of life, level of life satisfaction, emotional well-being, and optimism regarding the future.

Life Satisfaction: Life satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals evaluate their lives positively based on their personal goals, expectations, and achievements. It represents the cognitive component of subjective well-being and is measured through respondents' self-assessment of their overall quality of life.

Economic Contribution: Economic contribution refers to the degree to which an individual contributes financially to household income through employment, self-employment, business activities, or other income-generating sources. In this study, economic contribution is measured based on the respondents' reported level of contribution to household income.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of literature examines key empirical and theoretical studies relating to happiness economics, subjective well-being, and the relationship between economic factors and personal happiness — with particular focus on young and middle-aged adults. These studies form the conceptual foundation of the present research.

Clark and Oswald (1994) conducted a foundational study on the impact of employment status on psychological well-being, using data from the British Household Panel Survey. They found that unemployment is one of the strongest negative predictors of subjective well-being, with effects that extend beyond financial loss to include losses in identity, social connection, purpose, and daily structure. Their findings indicated that the non-pecuniary costs of unemployment — those unrelated to income — are substantial and often underestimated in economic analyses. The study also found that the psychological damage caused by unemployment is not fully offset even when income is held constant, suggesting that the act of work itself contributes meaningfully to well-being. This is particularly relevant to the present study's objective of analysing the relationship between economic contribution — measured through employment, income, and productive activity — and personal happiness among young and middle-aged adults.

Easterlin (2001) explores the paradoxical relationship between income and happiness, noting that while

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

individuals with higher income report greater happiness at a given point in time, long-term happiness within cohorts remains constant despite substantial income growth. He argues that this contradiction arises from the dynamic nature of material aspirations, which increase alongside income and diminish the expected gains in subjective well-being. Using survey data, Easterlin demonstrates that although income is positively correlated with happiness cross-sectionally, the long-term trajectory of happiness over the life cycle remains flat, leading to systematic discrepancies between projected and experienced happiness. The study underscores the importance of considering aspiration adjustments in theories of economic well-being.

Gardner and Oswald (2001) investigate the causal relationship between money and happiness through the lens of natural experiments provided by windfalls such as lottery winnings and inheritances. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey, they demonstrate that individuals who receive significant windfalls experience measurable improvements in psychological well-being in the subsequent year. For example, a £50,000 windfall is associated with a 0.1 to 0.3 standard deviation increase in well-being. While the study confirms that money can enhance happiness in the short term, it leaves open the question of whether these gains persist in the long run. Their findings provide rare longitudinal evidence supporting the economic assumption that income increases utility.

Richard A. Easterlin (2004) challenges both psychological set point theory and classical economic theory by arguing that life circumstances do have lasting effects on happiness, contrary to the idea that individuals fully adapt over time. Drawing from decades of survey data, he demonstrates that health, family relationships, and income stability significantly influence well-being across the life course. His findings contradict set point theory‘s claim that people return to a fixed happiness level, and also oppose the economic belief that more income always increases happiness. Easterlin shows that people‘s happiness levels reflect real, enduring impacts of major life events, such as marriage, unemployment, or poor health, making a case for policies that improve these specific conditions to enhance long-term well-being.

Headey, Muffels, and Wooden (2004) challenge the prevailing belief that income has only a weak effect on subjective well-being by considering the combined impact of wealth, income, and consumption. Drawing on longitudinal household panel data from five countries—Australia, Britain, Germany, Hungary, and the Netherlands—the authors find that wealth exerts a stronger influence on life satisfaction than income, while consumption plays an equally important role where measured. Their fixed-effects regression models reveal that changes in wealth, income, and consumption each produce statistically significant shifts in life satisfaction, although adaptation effects remain relevant. This research broadens the traditional income-happiness discussion, highlighting the necessity of incorporating multiple dimensions of economic well-being.

Blanchflower and Oswald (2008) examined the relationship between age and happiness using large-scale survey data from the United States and Europe. Their research identified a U-shaped pattern in well-being across the life course: happiness tends to be relatively high in youth, declines through middle age — reaching its lowest point typically in the mid-40s — and then rises again in later life. This pattern was found to be robust across different countries and demographic groups. The study attributed this dip in middle-age happiness to a combination of factors including unfulfilled aspirations, career and financial pressures, and caregiving responsibilities. Crucially for the present study, the findings suggest that young adults and middle-aged adults occupy different positions on the happiness curve, meaning age itself is a significant moderating variable in the relationship between economic contribution and personal happiness. This article directly supports the present study’s objective of comparing happiness levels between young adults and middle-aged adults.

Kahneman and Deaton (2010) conducted a landmark study analysing over 450,000 responses from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index in the United States to examine how income influences different dimensions of happiness. Their findings established a critical distinction between two aspects of well-being: emotional well-being, which refers to the quality of everyday emotional experiences such as joy, stress, and sadness; and life evaluation, which refers to an individual‘s cognitive judgment of their life. The study found that emotional well-being plateaus at an annual income of approximately $75,000, beyond which additional earnings do not significantly improve daily emotional experience. However, life evaluation continues to rise with income without apparent saturation. The research further demonstrated that poverty significantly amplifies emotional suffering in the face of adversities such as illness, divorce, and social isolation. These findings provide strong

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

empirical support for the view that the relationship between money and happiness is nuanced, and that economic policy must consider both experiential and evaluative dimensions of well-being. This study is directly relevant to the present research as it provides the foundational understanding of how income — a core measure of economic contribution — relates to personal happiness.

Van Praag and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2010) provide a comprehensive overview of happiness economics, situating it as a growing empirical field within microeconomics. They discuss methods of measuring happiness, including survey-based life satisfaction questions, and examine determinants such as job, financial, and health satisfaction. The authors emphasize the role of reference groups, adaptation, and inequality in shaping subjective well-being, and they argue that happiness economics has significant implications for normative economics and policy design. Their work synthesizes insights from both economics and psychology, underscoring the interdisciplinary nature of happiness research and its growing legitimacy within mainstream economic analysis.

Stutzer and Frey (2012) offered a comprehensive empirical overview of the economics of happiness, surveying a broad range of research on the determinants of subjective well-being. They identified income, employment status, social capital, and health as the four major drivers of happiness. While cross-sectional data consistently show a positive association between income and happiness, the authors highlight that sustained long-term income growth does not produce lasting gains in well-being — an observation consistent with the Easterlin Paradox.A particularly important finding of the study is that relative income — how one‘s earnings compare to those of peers and neighbours — matters significantly for wellbeing, often more than absolute income levels. Aspirations, social comparisons, and adaptation effects all play a role in moderating the income-happiness relationship. For the present study, this insight is valuable as it suggests that among young and middle-aged adults, economic satisfaction may be shaped as much by perceived social standing as by actual earnings.

Binder & Broekel (2012) identifies key factors such as income, health, education, employment, and social relationships as major influences on happiness (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Dolan et al., 2008). While income has a limited effect beyond a point, health and strong social ties consistently enhance well-being. Binder and Broekel (2012) extend this understanding by introducing the concept of *happiness efficiency*—how effectively individuals convert their resources into happiness. Using nonparametric efficiency analysis and drawing on Sen‘s capability approach, they argue that factors like unemployment reduce efficiency, while stable relationships improve it. This perspective complements traditional happiness studies by focusing not just on increasing happiness levels, but also on how efficiently those levels are achieved, offering valuable insights for more effective policymaking.

Ada Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2012) critically reviews the use of self-reported life satisfaction as a valid and useful proxy for utility in economic research. Her article highlights how happiness surveys reveal that income has a limited effect on wellbeing compared to factors like health, employment, and personal relationships. She discusses the role of relative income, adaptation, and personality traits, emphasizing that people care more about how their income compares to others than its absolute value. The paper also points out that unemployment has a strong, lasting negative impact on happiness, even after re-employment. With advances in panel data and econometric techniques, Ferrer-i-Carbonell supports the growing use of subjective well-being measures to inform policy evaluation, poverty analysis, and social welfare research.

Layard and colleagues at the London School of Economics (2014) shift the focus of happiness research toward public policy, advocating for the explicit inclusion of well-being as a policy goal. Through the Wellbeing Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance, they identify key measures of subjective well-being—including life satisfaction, sense of worth, happiness, and anxiety—and demonstrate that mental health is a stronger determinant of happiness than income. Their policy impact is tangible. The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) program now treats hundreds of thousands annually in the UK, with significant recovery rates. Internationally, their influence extends to the OECD and United Nations, both of which adopted well-being metrics inspired by their work. This research illustrates the practical application of happiness economics in shaping governmental priorities.

Richard Easterlin (2015) revisited and reinforced his seminal Easterlin Paradox,‘ which posits that long-term economic growth does not lead to sustained increases in happiness at the national level. Drawing on comparative

data from European welfare states and case studies from China and East Germany, Easterlin demonstrated that subjective well-being is more strongly associated with full employment and comprehensive social safety nets than with rising GDP per capita. His findings revealed that despite rapid income growth following economic liberalisation, happiness levels in China stagnated or declined — largely due to the erosion of job security and the dismantling of social welfare systems. In contrast, European countries with robust welfare provisions exhibited higher life satisfaction even at comparable income levels. These findings underscore the importance of non-income economic factors — particularly employment security — in determining well-being. This directly informs the present study's objective of examining the relationship between economic contribution and personal happiness, especially among working-age adults.

Carol Graham (2017) paper explores how subjective well-being (SWB) surveys have become a valuable complement to traditional economic analysis, particularly in understanding welfare beyond income measures. Drawing from behavioral economics, she argues that SWB data can address policy-relevant questions that revealed preferences cannot, such as the effects of inequality, addiction, and lack of agency. The literature consistently shows that happiness is influenced by factors like income, health, relationships, and expectations, though adaptation and social norms play complex roles. Graham also emphasizes the policy potential of happiness metrics, particularly in areas like health, employment, and poverty. For example, she highlights how unpleasant uncertainty (e.g., chronic illness or job insecurity) has a greater negative impact on well-being than more stable adversity. Her work, grounded in robust empirical studies, supports integrating well-being measures into policy decisions, while cautioning against treating ―happiness‖ itself as a simplistic policy.

Nikolova and Graham (2020) provided a comprehensive analysis of subjective wellbeing (SWB) as a critical complement to traditional economic metrics such as GDP. The authors identified three dimensions of SWB: hedonic well-being (day-to-day emotional experiences), evaluative well-being (overall life satisfaction), and eudemonic well-being (sense of purpose and meaning). Their review of global evidence found that while income positively influences life satisfaction, its effect on emotional well-being diminishes beyond a threshold of $75,000 annually — consistent with Kahneman and Deaton (2010). The study also found that unemployment and economic inequality are persistent and powerful reducers of subjective well-being, with individuals showing limited adaptation to these stressors over time. The authors caution against authoritarian misuse of happiness metrics, as seen in so-called -happiness ministries' that may manipulate data for political purposes. Methodologically, the study employs vignettes to address cross-cultural measurement biases. The multi-dimensional framework offered by this study enriches the present research's approach to understanding happiness beyond income alone.

Singh, Bandyopadhyay, and Saxena (2022) conducted a qualitative study exploring subjective perceptions of happiness among 60 Indian participants using reflexive thematic analysis. The study identified nine key themes contributing to happiness, including family bonds, material satisfaction, health, work-life balance, and spirituality. The findings highlight the collectivist and multidimensional nature of happiness in the Indian context; wherein family and social ties emerged as the most central determinants of well-being. Importantly, the study found that financial stability and health were especially critical for lower-income groups, while the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected happiness by disrupting social connections. The research aligns with prior cross-cultural studies (Joshanloo, 2014; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009) that highlight differences between Western individualistic and Eastern collectivist orientations toward happiness — with the latter placing greater emphasis on low-arousal emotions such as contentment and harmony. This study is among the most directly relevant to the present research, as it is set in the Indian context and examines happiness across social and economic dimensions closely mirroring the variables in the current study.

Susanti and Fitri (2024) explored the evolving and interdisciplinary field of happiness economics, synthesising evidence from psychology, sociology, and economics. Their review reaffirmed the Easterlin Paradox, confirming that while income correlates positively with happiness at a given point in time, long-term increases in national income do not reliably produce greater individual happiness. The study found that happiness is influenced more by relative income, life expectations, and individual circumstances than by absolute material wealth. The authors also highlighted the role of cultural and social factors in shaping happiness, emphasising that subjective well-being cannot be reduced to economic variables alone. Their interdisciplinary framework aligns well with the present study, which seeks to understand happiness not merely as a function of income or

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

employment but as a product of multiple social and economic dimensions experienced by young and middle-aged adults in the Indian context.

Tenhunen (2025) explored the relationship between economic factors and happiness with an emphasis on the distinction between absolute and relative measures of income. The study found that subjective well-being is shaped more strongly by relative income, job security, and social equity than by the absolute level of wealth an individual possesses. The research supports the Easterlin Paradox by showing that beyond a certain income threshold, continued economic growth yields diminishing returns in terms of happiness, largely due to adaptation effects and upward social comparisons.Tenhunen also recommended moving beyond GDP as the primary measure of economic progress, advocating instead for multidimensional well-being indicators that capture health, social relationships, and meaningful work alongside material prosperity. This study adds methodological and conceptual support to the present research's approach of using subjective happiness measures alongside economic variables.

Agrawal et al. (2025) propose a *triple-helix framework* involving government, international organizations, and academia to guide economies toward a happiness-centered development model. Drawing on examples such as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness, Scotland's National Performance Framework, and New Zealand's Well-Being Budget, the paper emphasizes shifting policy focus from GDP growth to wellbeing, sustainability, and equity. It highlights the institutional and societal enablers required for implementing such a framework and presents strategies to embed subjective well-being metrics into economic decision-making. This article offers a forward-looking perspective on operationalizing happiness economics at the policy level and supports global efforts to redefine progress through a human-centered lens.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the level of personal happiness among young adults and middle-aged adults.
- To analyse the relationship between personal happiness and economic contribution among adult and middle-aged groups.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic framework used for collecting, organising and analysing data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The present study is empirical in nature and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The data were classified, tabulated and analysed using simple statistical tools such as percentage analysis and graphical presentation. The present study adopts the convenience sampling method for selecting respondents. Under this method, samples are chosen based on ease of access and availability of respondents within the study area. This technique was used due to time constraints and practical limitations in reaching a wider population. The sampling size is 50 respondents. The present study is primarily based on primary data collected directly from the respondents. The required information was gathered through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms. This method enabled the researcher to obtain first-hand information on the personal happiness and economic contribution of young and middle-aged adults. In addition to primary data, relevant secondary data were collected from books, journals, reports and authentic online sources to support the conceptual framework and review of literature. The combination of primary and secondary data helped in conducting a more comprehensive and reliable analysis. The collected data were classified and tabulated for analysis. The study mainly used percentage analysis to examine the distribution of responses across age, gender and occupation groups. Tables and simple charts were used to present the findings clearly and to interpret the relationship between personal happiness and economic contribution. Mean score analysis was used to compare the responses of youth and middle-aged respondents on different factors affecting happiness. An independent sample t-test was also applied to check whether the differences in their mean scores were statistically significant. The results were presented using tables and simple charts to make the findings clear and easy to understand.

Sampling Procedure: The study employed a convenience sampling technique for selecting respondents. A total of 50 respondents were chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the survey. The

sample consisted of 25 youth aged 18–35 years and 25 middle-aged adults aged 36–55 years. Equal representation of both age groups was maintained to facilitate meaningful comparison regarding happiness and the factors influencing it. The respondents were selected from different educational, occupational, and family backgrounds to obtain diverse perspectives on economic and non-economic determinants of happiness.

This study is significant because it examines the relationship between personal happiness and economic contribution among young and middle-aged adults. In the modern context, income alone does not fully reflect well-being; therefore, analysing happiness provides a more realistic picture of quality of life. The study helps identify how different age groups experience happiness under varying economic conditions. Its findings may assist policymakers and researchers in designing more people-centred development strategies and also contribute to the growing literature on happiness economics in India.

LIMITATION

The study was carried out using a sample of 50 respondents, which may not completely represent the opinions and experiences of the larger population. The research was primarily based on primary data collected through questionnaires, and therefore the reliability of the results depends on the respondents' honesty, understanding, and personal perceptions while answering. The study considered only young adults and middle-aged individuals, so the results may not accurately reflect the happiness levels of other age groups. Due to limited time available for the research, only a restricted number of economic and non-economic factors influencing happiness were included in the study. As the study used convenience sampling, the findings may not be fully generalizable to the broader population.

RESULTS

Data analysis is considered the basis of research. It is the most important step in research from which result can be inferred. In fact, the tabulated data as such, has no meaning unless it is analysed and interpreted by statistical techniques to arrive at significant and meaning full result. This chapter covered analysis of data with a brief description of sample characteristics, presentation of result and their interpretation. The data collected includes 50 respondents with equal representation, where 50% (25 individuals) belong to the youth category aged 18-35 years and 50% (25 individuals) belong to the middle-aged category aged 36-55 years, ensuring balanced comparison between age groups. The survey results show that 50% of respondents (25 individuals) identify as male, while 50% (25 individuals) identify as female, indicating balanced gender distribution that reduces bias and ensures diverse perspectives in the study. 46% (23 students) have undergraduate education, making it the most common educational level, followed by 26% (13 individuals) with school-level education, 18% (9 individuals) with postgraduate qualifications, and 10% (5 individuals) with professional courses. A significant majority of 76% (38 individuals) belong to the APL (Above Poverty Line) category, indicating economically stable backgrounds with better access to financial resources, while 24% (12 individuals) fall under the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category, providing economic diversity to the study. 54% (27 individuals) reported being single, 44% (22 individuals) are married, and 2% (1 individual) is unmarried, indicating a relatively balanced representation of marital status that allows examination of how family responsibilities influence happiness. The largest occupational group consists of 34% (17 individuals) who are students, followed by 30% (15 individuals) employed full-time, 18% (9 individuals) unemployed, 12% (6 individuals) self-employed, and 6% (3 individuals) working part-time. From the total 50 respondents included in the study, a considerable number belong to nuclear families, while the remaining respondents live in joint family systems.

Table 1 Contribution of household income by age group

Contribution Level	Young aged adults (18-35 years)	Middle aged adults (30-55 years)	Total	Percentage (%)
Not contributing	6	1	7	14
Minor	8	3	11	22

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

contribution				
Moderate contribution	6	7	13	26
Major contribution	4	9	13	26
Sole earning member	1	5	6	12
Total	25	25	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 explains the extent to which different age groups contribute to household income, particularly comparing youth and middle-aged respondents. The findings indicate that middle-aged respondents contribute a larger proportion of the household income compared to younger respondents. This trend is understandable because individuals in the middle-aged group are usually more settled in their careers and have higher earning capacity. In contrast, youth respondents contribute a smaller share to household income, as many of them may still be pursuing education, entering the job market, or working in early career positions with comparatively lower earnings. Consequently, their financial contribution to family income tends to be lower than that of middle-aged individuals. This pattern reflects the normal economic life-cycle, where income and earning potential gradually increase with age, work experience, and career development. The results therefore suggest that middle-aged individuals generally bear greater financial responsibility within the household, while younger individuals are still progressing towards economic independence.

Table 2 Personal Happiness

Statement	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neutral	Happy	Very happy	Total
I am satisfied with my life as a whole	0	6	12	18	14	50
I have achieved important life goals	0	5	13	17	15	50
The overall quality of my life is good	0	4	11	20	15	50
My life is close to ideal	0	7	15	16	12	50
I am content with my living conditions	0	5	10	20	15	50
I feel optimistic about my future	0	7	9	18	16	50
I feel fulfilment in daily life	0	6	11	19	14	50
My efforts feel worthwhile	0	7	10	18	15	50
Compared to others, I am happy	0	7	12	18	13	50
Overall satisfaction with life	0	8	11	19	12	50

Source: Primary data

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

Mean score analysis for personal happiness (Based on Table 2)

Statement	Mean score -out of 5	Interpretation
I am satisfied with my life as a whole	3.80	High Happiness
I have achieved important life goals	3.84	High Happiness
The overall quality of my life is good	3.92	High Happiness
My life is close to ideal	3.66	High Happiness
I am content with my living conditions	3.90	High Happiness
I feel optimistic about my future	3.86	High Happiness
I feel fulfilment in daily life	3.82	High Happiness
My efforts feel worthwhile	3.82	High Happiness
Compared to others, I am happy	3.74	High Happiness
Overall satisfaction with life	3.70	High Happiness
Overall mean happiness score	3.81	High Happiness

Source Primary data

Interpretation scale; 1.00-1.80 = Very low happiness,1.81-2.60=Low happiness, 2.61-3.40= Moderate happiness, 3.41-4.20=High happiness, 4.21-5.00= Very high happiness.

Table 2 presents the personal happiness levels of respondents using a five-point Likert scale. The analysis reveals an overall mean score of 3.81 out of 5.00, indicating high happiness levels among participants. Life satisfaction received the highest rating with a mean of 3.92, where 70% of respondents expressed happiness with their overall quality of life. Contentment with living conditions scored 3.90, followed by future optimism at 3.86 and achievement of life goals at 3.84. The lowest mean was 3.66 for life closeness to ideal, suggesting moderate satisfaction in this dimension. Overall, the majority of responses fell within the happy categories, indicating positive well-being among respondents.

Table 3 Support from workplace/educational institution in maintaining work-Life balance

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not supportive	5	10
Slightly Supportive	9	18
Moderately Supportive	16	32
Supportive	13	26
Highly Supportive	7	14
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

Table 3 presents respondents' opinions regarding the level of support they receive from their workplace or educational institution in maintaining work-life balance. Among the 50 respondents, the highest proportion 16 respondents (32%) reported receiving moderate support. This is followed by 13 respondents (26%) who stated that they receive supportive assistance. Additionally, 9 respondents (18%) reported receiving slight support, while 7 respondents (14%) indicated that their workplace or institution is highly supportive. On the other hand, 5 respondents (10%) stated that they receive no support. Overall, the results indicate that most respondents receive at least a moderate level of support from their workplace or educational institution, although a smaller proportion perceive limited or no support in maintaining work-life balance.

Table 4 Frequency Distribution of Responses on Non-Economic Factors Influencing Happiness Among Respondents (n = 50)

Statement	**Youth Mean(n=25)**	**Middle-Aged Mean(n=25)**	**Overall Mean(n=50)**
Family Relationship	4.12	4.36	4.24
Social Relationship	4.08	4.2	4.14
Physical Health	4.16	4.04	4.1
Mental Health	4.24	4.28	4.26
Money	3.84	4.12	3.98
Financial Security	4	4.32	4.16
Religion	3.6	3.96	3.78
Good Health	4.2	4.44	4.32

Source: Primary data

Table 4 presents the mean scores of various non-economic factors influencing happiness among youth (n=25) and middle-aged respondents (n=25). Good health emerged as the most important factor with the highest overall mean of 4.32 (youth: 4.20, middle-aged: 4.44). Mental health also showed high importance with an overall mean of 4.26 (youth: 4.24, middle-aged: 4.28). Family relationships scored an overall mean of 4.24 (youth: 4.12, middle-aged: 4.36), while financial security recorded 4.16 (youth: 4.00, middle-aged: 4.32). In contrast, religion showed the lowest overall mean of 3.78 (youth: 3.60, middle-aged: 3.96), and money scored 3.98 (youth: 3.84, middle-aged: 4.12). The findings indicate that health-related factors and interpersonal relationships are the primary determinants of happiness, while economic factors have relatively lower influence among respondents.

Table 5 Mean Score Comparison of Non-Economic Factors Affecting Happiness Between Youth and Middle-Aged Respondents

Statement	Youth mean	Middle-aged mean	t-value	p-value	Result
Family relationships	4.12	4.36	-1.45	0.153	Not Significant
Social relationships	4.08	4.2	-0.82	0.416	Not Significant
Physical health	4.16	4.04	0.74	0.463	Not Significant
Mental health	4.24	4.28	-0.25	0.804	Not Significant

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

Money	3.84	4.12	-1.89	0.064	Not Significant
Financial security	4	4.32	-2.1	0.041	Significant
Religion	3.6	3.96	-2.02	0.048	Significant
Good health	4.2	4.44	-1.58	0.12	Not Significant

Source: Primary source

Table 5 presents the t-test results comparing non-economic factors between youth and middle-aged respondents. The analysis reveals that most factors show no significant difference between the two age groups. Family relationship ($t = -1.45$, $p = 0.153$), social relationship ($t = -0.82$, $p = 0.416$), physical health ($t = 0.74$, $p = 0.463$), mental health ($t = -0.25$, $p = 0.804$), money ($t = -1.89$, $p = 0.064$), and good health ($t = -1.58$, $p = 0.12$) all recorded p-values above 0.05, indicating non-significant differences. However, two factors showed statistical significance: financial security ($t = -2.10$, $p = 0.041$) and religion ($t = -2.02$, $p = 0.048$), with middle-aged respondents scoring higher in both. These findings suggest that while most happiness factors remain consistent across age groups, financial security and religious values differ significantly between youth and middle-aged individuals.

Table 6 Independent Sample t-Test Showing the Difference in Mean Scores of Non-Economic Factors Between Youth and Middle-Aged Respondents

Statement	**Youth Mean(n=25)**	**Middle-Aged Mean(n=25)**	**Overall Mean(n=50)**
Family Relationship	4.12	4.36	4.24
Social Relationship	4.08	4.2	4.14
Physical Health	4.16	4.04	4.1
Mental Health	4.24	4.28	4.26
Money	3.84	4.12	3.98
Financial Security	4	4.32	4.16
Religion	3.6	3.96	3.78
Good Health	4.2	4.44	4.32

Source: Primary data

Table 6 Independent Sample t-Test Showing the Difference in Mean Scores of Non-Economic Factors Between Youth and Middle-Aged Respondents

Table 6 displays the mean scores of non-economic factors for youth and middle-aged respondents along with overall means. Good health recorded the highest overall mean of 4.32 (youth: 4.20, middle-aged: 4.44), followed by mental health at 4.26 (youth: 4.24, middle-aged: 4.28) and family relationships at 4.24 (youth: 4.12, middle-aged: 4.36). Financial security showed an overall mean of 4.16 (youth: 4.00, middle-aged: 4.32), while social relationships scored 4.14 (youth: 4.08, middle-aged: 4.20) and physical health recorded 4.10 (youth: 4.16, middle-aged: 4.04). Money and religion had the lowest scores at 3.98 and 3.78 respectively. Middle-aged respondents consistently rated most factors higher than youth, particularly in health-related dimensions and financial security. The results emphasize that non-economic factors, especially health and relationships, play crucial roles in determining happiness across both age groups.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VI June 2026

CONCLUSION

This study examined how both economic and non-economic factors influence happiness among young and middle-aged individuals. The findings suggest that although economic aspects such as income contribution and financial security affect well-being, they do not solely determine an individual's level of happiness. The results indicate that middle-aged respondents generally take on greater financial responsibilities and contribute more to household income than younger respondents. They also tend to place higher importance on financial security. However, the study shows that increased economic contribution does not necessarily lead to higher happiness levels. This implies that the responsibilities and pressures associated with greater financial obligations may reduce the positive impact of higher income. At the same time, non-economic factors—including family relationships, good health, mental well-being, and social interactions—play a significant role in shaping overall life satisfaction. In addition, social expectations and work-related stress influence individuals' happiness to some extent, highlighting the importance of the social environment in determining well-being. From a happiness economics perspective, these findings suggest that economic growth alone cannot fully explain human happiness. While financial stability provides a sense of security, social and emotional aspects of life are equally important. Therefore, improving overall well-being requires not only economic progress but also efforts to enhance quality of life, strengthen social relationships, and maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

REFERENCES

1. Agrawal, A., et al. (2025). A triple-helix framework for happiness-centered development Sustainability and Development Journal.
2. Binder, M., & Broekel, T. (2012). On the relationship between happiness and efficiency: An analysis of happiness efficiency. Journal of Socio-Economics, 41(6), 677–688.
3. Blanchflower, D. G., & Oswald, A. J. (2008). Is well-being U-shaped over the life cycle? Social Science & Medicine, 66(8), 1733–1749.
4. Clark, A. E., & Oswald, A. J. (1994). Unhappiness and unemployment. Economic Journal, 104(424), 648–659.
5. Easterlin, R. A. (2001). Income and happiness: Towards a unified theory. Economic Journal, 111(473), 465–484.
6. Easterlin, R. A. (2004). The economics of happiness. Daedalus, 133(2), 26–33.
7. Easterlin, R. A. (2015). Happiness and economic growth: The evidence. In World Happiness Report.
8. Ferrer-i-Carbonell, A. (2012). Subjective well-being and public policy: The use of self-reported life satisfaction data in economics. CESifo Economic Studies, 58(4), 571–594.
9. Gardner, J., & Oswald, A. J. (2001). Does money buy happiness? A longitudinal study using data on windfalls. Warwick Economic Research Papers.
10. Graham, C. (2017). Happiness economics. In The Oxford Handbook of Well-Being and Public Policy.
11. Headey, B., Muffels, R., & Wooden, M. (2004). Money does not buy happiness… or does it? A reconsideration based on panel data. Kyklos, 57(1), 3–29.
12. Kahneman, D., & Deaton, A. (2010). High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 107(38), 16489–16493.
13. Layard, R. (2014). Happiness: Lessons from a new science (2nd ed.). Penguin Books.
14. Nikolova, M., & Graham, C. (2020). The economics of happiness. Journal of Economic Literature, 58(4), 1–60.
15. Singh, P., Bandyopadhyay, S., & Saxena, S. (2022). Understanding happiness in India: A qualitative study. Journal of Happiness Studies.
16. Stutzer, A., & Frey, B. S. (2012). Recent developments in the economics of happiness: A selective overview. IZA Discussion Paper.