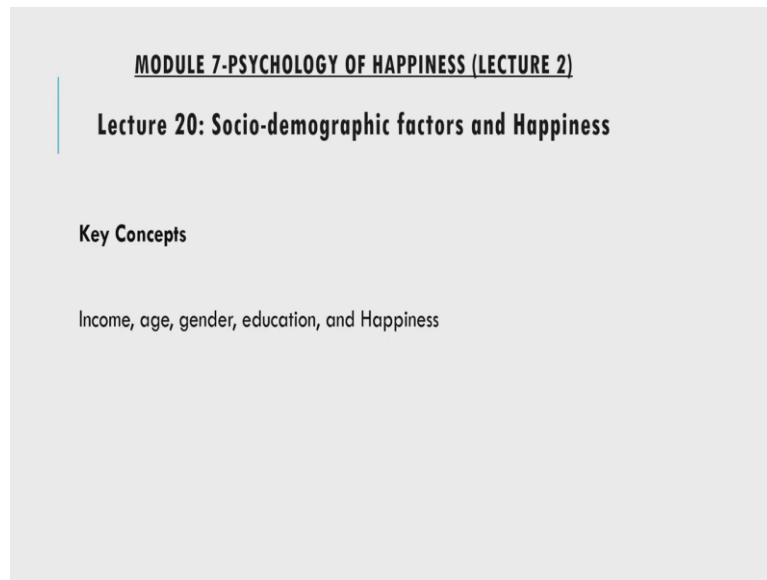


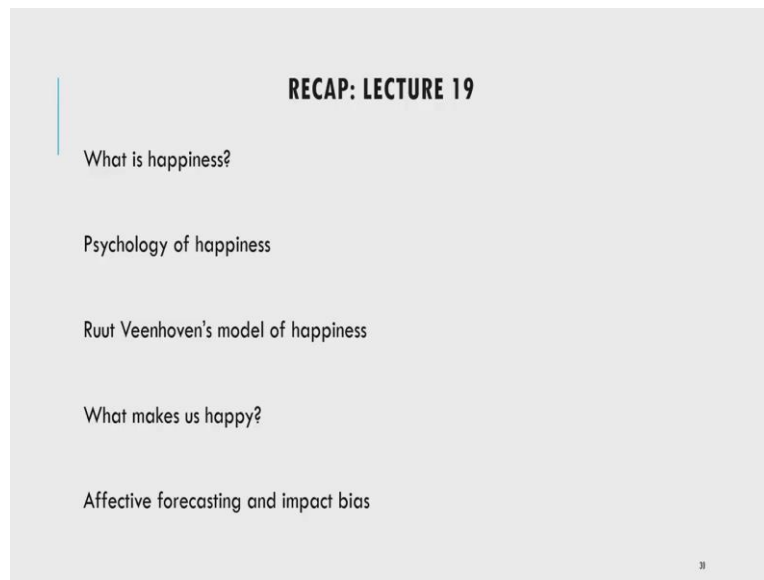
Psychology of Stress, Health and Well-Being
Associate Professor Dr. Dilwar Hussain
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati
Lecture - 20
Socio Demographic Factors and Happiness

(Refer Slide Time: 00:31)



Hello friends. Today, I will discuss lecture number 20 of the course titled psychology of stress health and well-being. So, today's lecture is titled as socio-demographic factors and happiness. So, before we talk about today's lecture let me have a brief recap of the last lecture that is lecture number 19.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:01)



So, in the previous lecture, we discussed the concept of happiness. And we essentially addressed two questions: what is happiness, and do we know what makes us happy. So, in the previous class, we addressed these two questions. So we've addressed the concept of happiness, and how happiness is a universal goal that everyone strives for in different ways and along different paths.

And individuals define happiness in a variety of ways; everyone has their own unique definition. Then, from the standpoint of psychological literature, we explored how we define or conceptualize happiness in terms of subjective well-being. We used this term because we strive to avoid using the word happiness because it has so many connotations. So, in psychology, we often measure subjective well-being or happiness in terms of feelings, emotional experiences, and life satisfaction.

So, the greater your positive emotions, the lower your negative emotions, and the better your life satisfaction, the higher your happiness or subjective well-being would be. As a result, positive emotion, negative emotion, and life satisfaction are commonly used to assess subjective well-being or happiness. So, from a psychological standpoint, this is what we talked about in the last class. So, in particular, the growth of positive psychology as a field of research in psychology, which we mentioned. Happiness and well-being research has exploded in the recent few decades, owing to a greater emphasis on this positive aspect of human experiences and functioning.

And, more particularly, a number of reliable and valid measures and instruments have been established in order to reach reliable and accurate judgments about these issues. We now have measures and data, and we can discuss such topics based on evidence based data.

Then we talked about a model of happiness provided by Ruut Veenhoven, a sociologist who has done much research and scientific study on happiness. He attempted to define happiness in terms of quality of life and life satisfactions in particular. As a result, he postulated four aspects of life: environmental livability, utility of life, life ability, and life satisfaction. And he connected happiness with the concept of life satisfaction in particular. Then we talked about the various forms of life satisfactions. In the final half of the lecture, we tackled the subject of whether we truly understand what makes us happy. We've talked about the concept of affective forecasting and impact bias in that context. So, affective forecasting is when we predict the emotional consequences of a future event, such as when we predict or try to think about what will happen to me emotionally if some x event occurs in the future. As a result, affective forecasting discusses this.

And study reveals that when it comes to anticipating the emotional effects of future occurrences, we frequently make mistakes. We overestimate the severity and duration of the emotional impact of a future event in particular. And it could influence our decision-making process; we've considered all of these factors. We've also talked about the reasons behind this overestimation, which is known as impact bias, in which we exaggerate the intensity and duration of emotional effects of a future event.

And we've spoken about focalism before, which basically means that when we make predictions about the future, we just focus on that event and its consequences. But, whether it's a positive or negative event, there are a slew of additional factors that influence our emotional reactions. As a result, we tend to overestimate either pleasant feelings, positive consequences, or negative consequences in terms of happiness or sorrow when making predictions.

So, these are some of the topics we covered in the previous class.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:13)

MODULE 7-PSYCHOLOGY OF HAPPINESS (LECTURE 2)

Lecture 20: Socio-demographic factors and Happiness

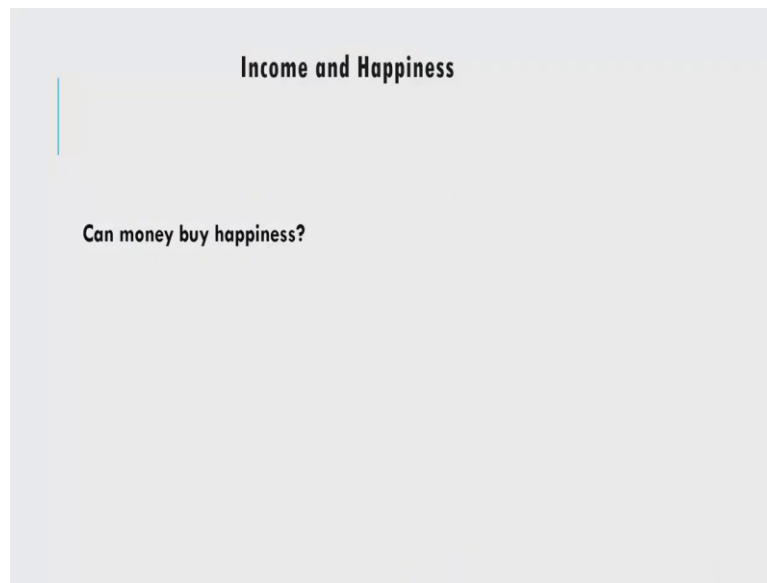
Key Concepts

Income, age, gender, education, and Happiness

So, today we will talk about socio demography factors and happiness. So, this is lecture number two of module 7 and overall it is lecture number 20. So, today we will talk about how certain objective aspects of our life or objective realities or life circumstances of our life how they influence happiness, which is primarily subjective experience.

So, how objective parameters, particularly socio-demographic factors influences our sense of happiness or our feelings of happiness. So, in this context we will discuss four socio-demographic factors, four factors specifically. One is income, age, gender and education, so how they influence our happiness. So, let us see one by one.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:09)



As a result, there is a link between income and happiness. This is to say that this relationship has piqued people's interest. And you've probably come across the question, "Can money buy happiness?" This is a common topic that we all encounter during our school days in debate competitions.

So, can money buy happiness, or how significant is money in terms of our happiness? Let's examine what the science has to say about this. We all have our own opinions, but let's look at some research findings in this area.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:50)

There is extensive literature on the relationship between income and well-being/happiness ([Howell & Howell, 2008](#)).

The relationship is very complex and far from clear.

Economists generally view that income is a sufficient indicator of human well-being and increasing the level of income will upsurge human well-being, life satisfaction or happiness ([Lakshmanasamy, 2010](#)).

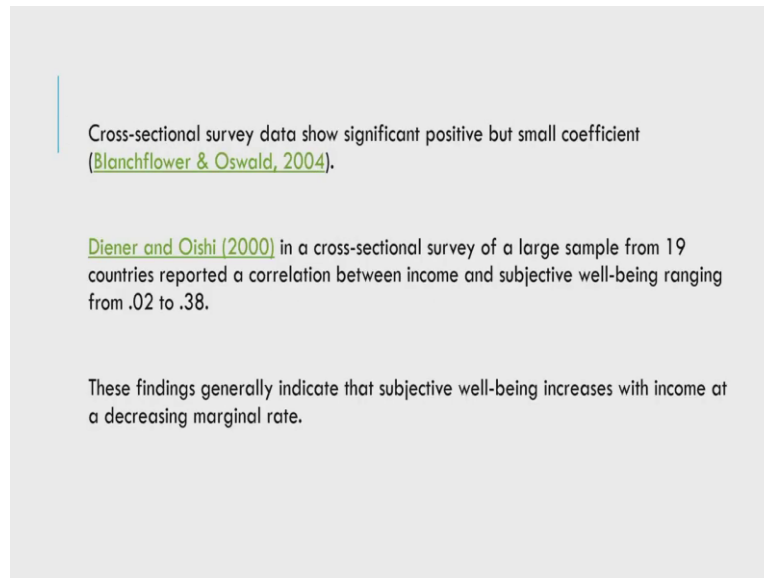
Empirical studies show that the relationship between subjective (such as life satisfaction and emotions) and the traditional objective well-being indicators (such as income, consumption) is weak.

As a result, there is a large body of literature or actual research on the relationship between income and happiness. When we talk about happiness, we're referring to subjective well-being, which we discussed in the previous lesson. So, while there is a wealth of study material, we still don't have a very clear picture of the relationship between income and happiness.

As a result, the relationship is highly complex and remains unclear. Economists are particularly interested in this topic since they are concerned with money and income. As a result, most economists believe that income is an adequate predictor of human well-being, and that increasing income will raise human well-being and life satisfaction. When a result, one of the core ideas of economics is that as people's income improves, their well-being rises as well, because their purchasing power increases in terms of objective criteria.

However, many empirical research demonstrate that the association between subjective indicators like life satisfaction or happiness and traditional objective metrics like income consumption is not very strong. So, the relationship is actually weak.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:31)



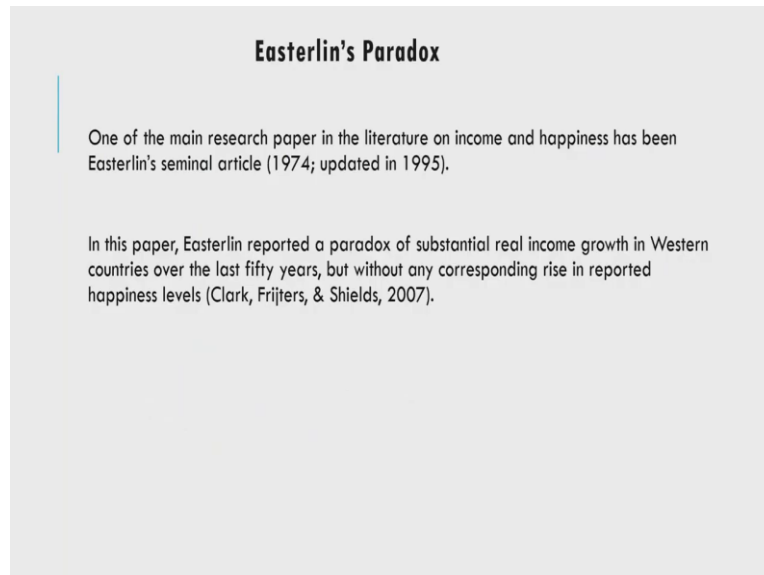
A considerable positive link exists between income and happiness, according to many cross-sectional survey data. However, the coefficient is usually small. So, there is a link between one's income and one's level of happiness in life, and it is a positive link. However, the correlation coefficient, or coefficient of correlation, is not very strong.

Diener and Oishi, for example, conducted a cross-sectional study of a large sample of people from around 19 nations in 2000. They discovered a link between income and subjective well-being, or happiness. It was in the range of 0.02 to 0.38. As a result, the correlation coefficient isn't very strong; it's either very small or moderate. So, the correlation isn't very high, and the result is based on a wide dataset from 19 countries, so it's not just about one sample from a specific place, region, or country.

As a result, this data suggests that while subjective well-being rises with income, it does so at a diminishing marginal rate. What this means is that there is clearly a positive correlation between money and happiness. However, the association is strong up to a point, but it may not have much influence beyond that. So, that is the meaning of diminishing marginal rate. It plays an essential role up to a degree, but beyond that, it becomes less important. So, as we all know from our own experiences, money plays a critical role in people's lives, especially if their fundamental needs aren't met. For those whose basic needs aren't met by their income, money clearly plays a critical role. If all you care about is how to pay for your fundamental needs, such as food, clothing, and a home, money will undoubtedly have a significant impact.

However, if one's income is sufficient to meet one's basic needs, the importance of income will be reduced. So, based on the literature, it is the overall consensus. And the majority of the evidence points in that direction.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:06)



Now, in the context of the relationship between income and happiness, one particular economist, whose research is one of the most widely recognized and one of the first economists to discuss the subject, is Easterlin. So, Easterlin's Seminal Article, which he wrote in 1974, is one of the most important publications that spurred a lot of research in the area of the relationship between money and happiness.

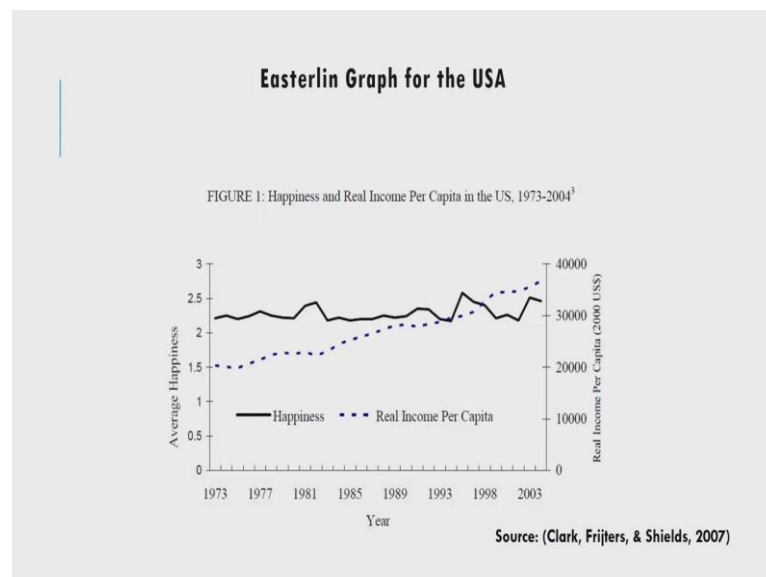
And, because he is an economist, people began to look at subjective measures such as happiness from an economic standpoint. He has published numerous articles and updated his findings over time. So, there's a concept known as Easterlin's paradox, which he discovered using large-scale data. So, what Easterlin discovered or documented in this work, as well as many other papers later on, is that there is a paradox of substantial real income rise in western countries during the last 50 years.

As a result, there has been a significant increase in per capita income during the last 50 years, notably in western, developed countries. He discovered, however, that there was no corresponding increase in reported happiness levels. So, while per capita income has risen in

Western countries in recent decades, he discovered that there has been no comparable gain in happiness among the people of those countries.

As a result, he regarded it as a paradox. So, according to economic theory, when per capita wealth rises, happiness should rise as well. However, based on time series data, he discovered that while per capita wealth increases over time, happiness levels do not, and are nearly unchanged. So that's what Easterlin's paradox is all about. So he discovered quite a number additional things, which we will also describe.

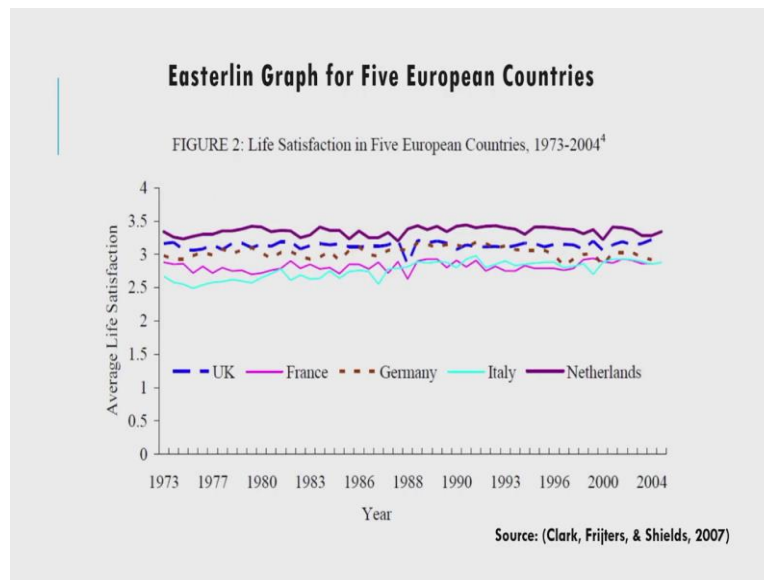
(Refer Slide Time: 14:25)



So, here are some of the graphs that we can observe. For example, take a look at the data for the United States from 1973 to 2003. And that is the graph of per capita income, per capita income growth, and happiness levels in the United Nations population. As you can see in the graph, the dotted line represents per capita income, whereas the black line represents happiness level.

As you can see, the per capita increment has been steadily increasing from 1973 to 2003, according to the data they have analyzed. However, if you look at the happiness line, you'll notice that it's practically constant; there hasn't been much of a climb; there have been a few years where there was a rise, but it's largely flat. So, similar results were found for other countries.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:35)



Other European countries such as UK, France, Germany, Italy and Netherlands. Almost similar, the happiness level seems to remain constant or stagnant in the last few decades, although there was a substantial rise in real per capita income.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:57)

More specifically, Easterlin paradox states that “at a point in time both among and within nations, happiness varies directly with income, but over time (in the long term such as 10 years), happiness does not increase when a country’s income increases” (Easterlin et al., 2010, p. 22463).

In cross sectional data, happiness seems to increase with income (though at a decreasing rate), within and across nations. However, in a time series data (such as 10 years) happiness does not increase when a country’s income increases.

However, some recent research indicates that the Easterlin Paradox does not hold under all circumstances (Slag and Veenhoven [2018](#)).

So, more specifically, Easterlin's paradox states that happiness changes directly with income at any given period, both among and within nations. So, generally, cross-sectional data or data collected at a specific period in time is referred to as cross-sectional data, and those data

generally show a positive association between income and happiness. So, as income rises, so does happiness, but only up to a point, after which it isn't as strong.

However, happiness does not improve when a country's income rises over time, as measured by time series data such as for the past ten years. So, in general, when he looked at time series data to see how a phenomenon evolves over time, he discovered that happiness does not increase as a country's overall per capita income rises, at least not at that proportion. However, cross-sectional data suggests that happiness and income have a positive association, both within and across nations. So, the paradox he's referring to is known as Easterlin's paradox.

As a result, happiness appears to rise with income in cross-sectional data, though at a decreasing rate within and between nations. However, in a time series data happiness does not increase when a country's income increases. As a result, it is not rising with the passage of time. According to some study, Easterlin's paradox may not hold true in all cases.

So, while there are some counter-evidences, the Easterlin paradox has a lot of evidence behind it, and it suggests that there is a significant link between money and happiness. However, there is evidence that it may not apply to all people in all situations. So I won't go into that, but the notion is that in large scale data, particularly time series data, there is a not a strong association between income and happiness.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:16)

Possible Explanation of Easterlin's Paradox

Two theories are put forth to explain this paradox-

- Social comparison
- Adaptation

Together these theories are called as “relative income theory” and they nullify the effect of income gains (Slag, Burger, & Veenhoven, 2019).

So, what could be the cause for the fact that in cross-sectional data, there is generally a positive link, but one that is not particularly strong? However, in time series data, there is no significant increase in happiness in the population of countries, notably in the western industrialized countries, as income rises.

So, there are two plausible reasons for this phenomenon: one is termed social comparison theory, and the other is called adaption theory. So, these two are generally called as relative income theory which may explain that why the rise in income, especially with the passage of time, is not really impacting very strongly to the rise in happiness level. So, let us see one by one what these theories talk about.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:26)

Social comparison theory

The theory of social comparison suggests that people do not assess their life in isolation from all others. Rather they compare their income and achievements with those around them, called the peer group (or reference group).

Our happiness is influenced by this comparison. We are happy if we have more than the others and unhappy if we have less than others (Angeles, 2010).

Therefore, a proportional increase of all incomes in an economy or country would leave average happiness unaffected, in line with the Easterlin Paradox (Angeles, 2010).

Thus, according to social comparison theory, it is one's relative income rather than one's absolute income which determines life satisfaction or happiness.

So, according to social comparison theory, the premise of social comparison is that we continually compare ourselves to others. And we don't just compare ourselves to random individuals; we compare ourselves to our reference group, our peer group, and those who are similar to us. As a result, we frequently make comparisons with persons in our peer group or reference group.

So, this is something that we all do on a regular basis; we constantly compare ourselves to other people, whether consciously or unconsciously. And this social comparison has a significant impact on our happiness. So, according to the theory of social comparison, people do not evaluate their lives in isolation, nor do they evaluate their lives solely from their own perspective; rather, we evaluate our lives in comparison to others, and this comparison, particularly in the context of income, may play a significant role.

Compare their earnings and accomplishments to those in their peer group or reference group. As a result, we compare, and our happiness is generated from those comparing processes. So, in one of our next lectures, we'll take a closer look at social comparison and examine how it affects our happiness levels. Here will specifically focus on income and comparison of income.

As a result, social comparison, or comparison with other people, has a significant impact on our happiness. We are happy if we have more than others, and we are unhappy if we have

less than others. It is a very general understanding, so when we compare and find ourselves in a better condition than others, whether it is in terms of income or anything else, people generally feel happier. And it goes without saying that when they are in a disadvantageous situation in comparison to others, they are less happy. So, therefore, what happens in the context of Easterlin data is that there is a proportional growth in all incomes in an economy or a country would leave average happiness untouched in line with the Easterlin's paradox. So, what is happening is that the average per capita income in Western countries is rising for all people, not just a few. As a result, as a country's per capita income rises, most people believe that their income would climb as well.

So, if you notice that average or relative income is not increasing as there is an increase in income for everyone. So, if my income rises, so does the income of those in my peer group or reference group, so there isn't much of a difference in terms of relative difference. So, according to the social comparison theory, one's relative income impacts one's life satisfaction or pleasure more than one's absolute income.

As a result, in the context of Easterlin's paradox, there has been little change in relative income despite rising per capita income in many Western countries. As a result, everyone's income is rising. So, in terms of societal comparisons, it doesn't seem to have much of an impact on your average happiness. In terms of comparison, if your income rises, so does the income of others. As a result, there isn't much of a social advantage in that regard, and your average happiness remains unaltered even as your absolute income rises.

As a result, relative income is the more essential factor. And, in the context of Western countries, that relative income hasn't increased all that much, therefore our average happiness hasn't improved either. So, this is one of the reasons offered; it's probable that the social comparison theory can explain why, despite a growth in per capita wealth in many countries in time series data, happiness levels remain unchanged.

One possibility is that while relative income has not changed, absolute income has changed. As a result, there isn't much of a difference in our average pleasure or enjoyment that we gain from comparing ourselves to others when it comes to social comparison.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:26)

Theory of adaptation

Adaptation involves comparison of current situation with a past situation.

The adaptation theory says that an increase in income will temporarily increase people's happiness, but over time they will adjust to their higher income such that their happiness reverts back towards its original level.

Adaptation neutralizes the effect of income rise when aspirations rise at the same rate (Slag, Burger, & Veenhoven, 2019).

The theory of adaptation is the next theory that provides a credible explanation for Easterlin's paradox. Adaptation is comparing one's current condition to one's previous situation, thus there is a comparison here as well, but it is primarily between your current and previous situations.

And when we say adaptation, we're implying that as our life circumstances change, so do our emotional experiences. However, that change is only temporary; as we adapt to the new life condition, our emotional consequences or emotional experiences return to their previous level, which is adaptation. As a result, we adapt to changes in our lives by making adjustments to the new environment. So there you have it: the definition of adaptation.

So, according to adaption theory, a rise in money will boost people's happiness for a short period of time. Obviously, when your money rises, your level of happiness rises as well. However, that rise is only temporary, as we will acclimatize to the larger income over time. As a result, a person's life condition changes, and he or she adjusts to the new situation, restoring happiness to previous levels. So, after a while, there isn't much excitement about it anymore, and we become accustomed to it. And with the rise of our income our aspiration raises with it. As a result, we adapt to the increased income, but that increased income may also raise our aspiration levels, reverting back to our increased happiness level, or returning to our original baseline level.

As a result, when aspiration rises at the same rate as income, this adaptation cancels out the effect of rising income. So, if you're no longer satisfied with your rising income as a result of your rising aspiration, you might set a new goal. As a result, we adjust to changes in our life circumstances, such as changes in income. As a result, we experience a brief increase in happiness before reverting to our previous level. So, after a while, it's no longer as thrilling. Our aspiration rises as well, which may dampen our enthusiasm and satisfaction as a result of our increased income.

So, in the context of income and happiness, we can clearly see that there is a positive relationship. Income plays a critical impact in our happiness, especially until we reach a level of income that meets our fundamental necessities. Nowadays, it is difficult to identify what is a basic need, and what is a basic need is always shifting.

So, while there is a positive relationship, it is not very strong, and it is clear that the effect of income on our happiness level may not be very direct, and it may be mediated by many other psychological factors such as social comparisons, goals, and aspirations, all of which may influence how income rise may influence our happiness. So, it is not just external object situation of life that influences but how other psychological factors come into play in terms of aspiration, in terms of goals, in terms of how we compare ourselves with others, all this may also influence how income influences our happiness level. So, there may be many mediators to it.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:40)

Age And Happiness

There seems to be no clear cut consensus on the relationship between age and happiness due to differences in data and method applied.

Some early psychological studies suggested no age-happiness relationship (Cantril, 1965).

Some studies reported that life satisfaction increases with age (Argyle, 1999; Diener, 1999).

A growing body of evidence suggests that the relationship between age and happiness seems to be U-shaped curve.

Let's look at the link between age and happiness now. Again, numerous studies have been conducted in this area, with researchers attempting to determine the association between age and happiness. However, there does not appear to be a clear consensus on the direction of the relationship between age and happiness; what exactly is the relationship?

Still, there is no clear cut consensus on whether happiness increases or decreases as people become older. There are a variety of research findings. As a result, there is no conclusive proof that we can discuss. Some early psychological studies claimed that there is no relationship, that there is no age happiness relationship, and that there is no association at all.

According to several studies, life satisfaction rises with age. According to certain studies, our happiness level really rises as we become older. According to a growing amount of evidence, the relationship between age and happiness is U-shaped. So some demonstrated that there is no association, while others demonstrated that there is a positive relationship. And a rising body, as well as a large body of information, suggests that age and happiness may have a U-shaped relationship.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:10)

Age And Happiness: Happiness U Curve

Many large scale surveys on age and happiness has reported U-shaped curve in the relationship between age and happiness. This is also referred to as the *happiness U curve*.

U-shaped curve basically reflects that the average happiness or life satisfaction is lowest in middle age (between 40-50 years of age) and then begins to recover and move up after that.

One of the most comprehensive study in this direction was conducted by Blanchflower and Oswald (2008), who combined cross-sectional data over 60 countries and reported a U-shaped relationship between happiness and age.

What does this U-shaped relationship imply? As a result, this is also known as the happiness U curve. This article discusses the relationship between age and happiness. And, well, let's see what this U curve signifies. As a result, numerous large-scale studies on happiness and age have reported a U-shaped curve in the link between the two.

The happiness U curve is another name for this U-shaped curve. This U-shaped curve represents or implies that average happiness or life satisfaction is lowest in middle age, which might range from 40 to 50 or 55 or whatever we believe middle age to be. After that, it starts to recover and move up again. So, the U-shape represents the happiness level of those who, on average, report the lowest level of happiness over the course of their lives or over the course of their life span from childhood to old age. People's happiness levels tend to drop throughout their forties and fifties, around the ages of 40 to 50 or 55. Then, as we get older, our happiness level rises again, and it is considerably higher in our younger years as well. As a result, it is at its lowest in middle age, which is the meaning of the U-shaped curve. In 2008, these two scholars Blanchflower and Oswald did one of the most extensive studies in this area. They found a U-shaped link between happiness and age after combining cross-sectional data from 60 nations. As a result, one of the very large scale data suggests that age and happiness may have a U-shaped relationship.

(Refer Slide Time: 32:13)

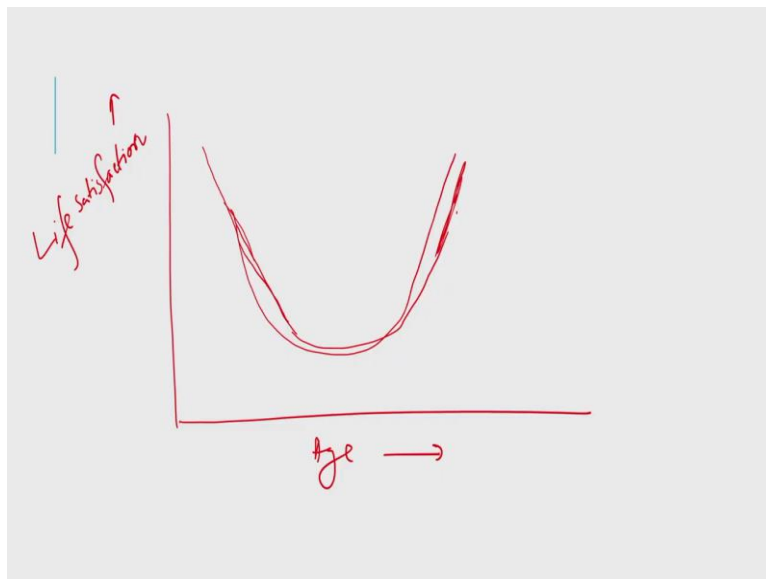
Many other studies also supported this result (Clark and Oswald, 1994; Gerdtham and Johannesson, 2001)

All these studies controlled for potentially confounding factors such as income, health, employment, and gender.

11

After that, plenty of other research corroborated this finding, with the U-shaped pattern appearing in a number of them. And it's clear that all of these research took into account confounding factors including income, health, job, and gender. So, while there may be other elements that influence our happiness, their influence was cancelled out, and it was precisely demonstrated how age and age relate to happiness. As a result, these linkages are always examined after other factors have been taken into account because they may have an impact.

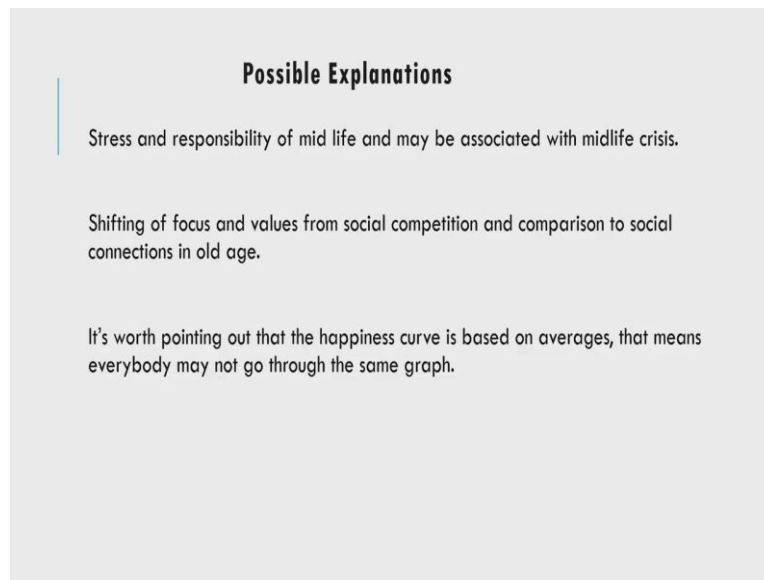
(Refer Slide Time: 32:51)



As a result, the graph resembles a U-shape curve. The majority of the evidence indicates that this is the case, therefore if we show I know life satisfaction or happiness on this side. As a

result, the graph looks something like this. So, that's the gist of it. As one gets older, life satisfaction naturally rises. So, as we become older, it gradually decreases and reaches its lowest point around middle age, before gradually increasing again. So, in general, a lot of research suggests that the association is something along these lines.

(Refer Slide Time: 34:02)



Possible Explanations

- Stress and responsibility of mid life and may be associated with midlife crisis.
- Shifting of focus and values from social competition and comparison to social connections in old age.
- It's worth pointing out that the happiness curve is based on averages, that means everybody may not go through the same graph.

So, while there isn't a lot of consensus on this, a lot of studies suggests that there is a possible U-shaped association. So, what could be some plausible reasons in such scenario, as evidenced by a large amount of data? Although not everyone exhibits this relationship, statistics indicates that many people do have a U-shaped relationship in their lives. So, what are some of the more reasonable explanations?

So, one thing that people often talk about is a mid-life crisis in the sense that you have a lot of stress and responsibilities are at their highest in mid-life. In general, several researchers claim that some persons suffer from mid life crisis. So, in terms of psychological effects, you may experience a crisis in which you no longer feel youthful and nearly half of your life has passed you by, so there may be some psychological consequences in terms of concerns and other issues.

Also, in terms of duties, mid-life is arguably the time when you have the most responsibilities and stress in your life. So, perhaps these are some of the reasons why, in their mid-life, people may experience a drop in happiness that is associated with the concept of mid-life

crisis. Again, we should remember, not everybody goes through a mid-life crisis and this U-shaped curve may not be true for everybody. So, we should kind of keep that in mind.

Even if there is a physical decline in terms of your physical health as you become older. According to several studies, people's perception of happiness and well-being rises as they become older, especially after the 60s and 70s, partly because their focus of life transforms. They are no longer in the office, where there is competition for promotions and all of the tensions and burdens of life that we encounter, which peaks in our mid-life.

When we retire or get older, the focus of our lives transforms in the sense that we place a higher value on social connections. And we are no longer as invested in social competitiveness and comparison as we once were, and we place a greater emphasis on social bonds as we grow older. So, even if we only have a few people in our lives, we value loving relationships with those who are. And who knows, maybe it's your husband, your grandchildren, or something else else. As a result, our values change away from excessive competitiveness and comparison and toward more social connection.

As a result, even while people's health is deteriorating in other ways, they still experience more enjoyment and well-being as they get older. As a result, this could be another reason why it starts to rise again around middle age. So, these are some of the possible explanations; we don't know for sure, and these reasons may differ from one person to the next. However, there are a few general patterns that can be utilized to explain the U-shaped happiness curve.

As a result, it's important to note that the happiness curve is based on the average. As a result, this curve was primarily based on a data-based average. As a result, it's possible that no two people will look at the same graph. As a result, it's based on an average of large-scale data.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:16)

Gender and Happiness

Some research indicates (mostly in the western context) a possible gender difference in ill-being and misery. For example, Women are twice more vulnerable and likely to be diagnosed with depression and anxiety as compared to men, and men are much more (five times) vulnerable to alcoholism and antisocial personality disorder as compared to women (Robins & Regier, 1991).

It is still not very clear why gender difference exists in depression and anxiety. Some experts believe that there may not be any actual gender difference. But, women are more likely to be diagnosed as they talk about their feelings and seek more help as compared to men.

Let's look at the link between gender and happiness now. Now we're talking about gender in terms of males and females in the context of gender. Some study suggests, and a lot of research really suggests, that there may be a gender difference in terms of psychological disorders, in terms of their prevalence or diagnosis. According to some studies, women are twice as prone to depression and anxiety as males and are twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression and anxiety. As a result, several psychological disorders, such as depression and anxiety, are more common in women than in men. Men, on the other hand, are far more vulnerable to alcoholism and antisocial personality disorders, according to research. Some studies suggest that men are up to five times as vulnerable.

As a result, males are far more likely than females to develop problems like alcoholism and antisocial personality disorder. As a result, there may be a gender difference in psychological disorders. And the reasons for why these differences exist in population are yet unclear. Some researchers suggest inherited biological factors, but many others claim that there is no real difference between male and female reports of psychological disorders including sadness and anxiety.

It's possible that women report more, express their feelings more, and seek more help than men, making them more likely to be diagnosed with mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. So, these discrepancies may not exist in reality, but they do exist in terms of how these problems are reported. So, there are still no clear reasons; there could be biological hormonal reasons, but there could also be no genuine reason. As a result, it is still unclear.

(Refer Slide Time: 40:33)

However, there is not much evidence of gender difference in reports of happiness and well-being. Most of the large scale studies and meta-analysis showed a little or no gender difference in happiness and well-being.

In a meta-analysis of 146 studies, gender accounted for less than 1% of people's global well-being (Haring, Stock, & Okun, 1984). The finding seems to be generalize worldwide (reported in Myers & Diener, 1995).

In another study on samples of 16 nations indicated equal number of male and female i.e. 80% of men and 80% of women said that they were at least "fairly satisfied" with life (Inglehart, 1990). A similar findings were reported in a study on university students from 39 countries (N=18032) (Michalos, 1991)

11

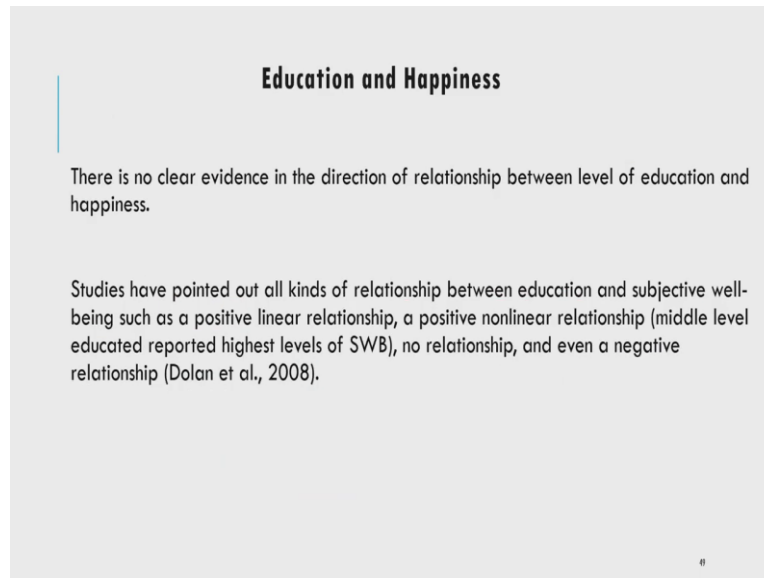
So, in terms of happiness there is not much difference. Research did not uncover any specific difference in terms of gender in terms of experience of well-being and happiness. As a result, there is little evidence of gender differences in happiness and well-being reports. The majority of large-scale research and meta-analyses found little or no difference in happiness and well-being between men and women. So, in terms of happiness and well-being, there isn't much of a difference between males and females. However, there existed a distinction in terms of psychological disorders.

Gender, for example, accounted for less than one percent of people's overall well-being in a meta-analysis of 146 research, which is quite small. As a result, gender did not account for any differences in well-being. And this discovery appears to be universal, so it isn't simply a phenomenon of a single country; it appears to be true for the majority of countries.

Another survey, conducted in a sample of 16 countries and involving an equal number of males and females, found that 80% of men and 80% of women are at least fairly content with their lives. So, once again, the percentages are nearly identical in terms of happiness and life satisfaction. The similar findings were reported in other studies also among university students from 39 countries also. So, many large scale surveys show there is no gender difference as such in terms of report of happiness and well-being. But there seems to be some

gender difference in terms of reports of psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety.

(Refer Slide Time: 42:18)



Education and Happiness

There is no clear evidence in the direction of relationship between level of education and happiness.

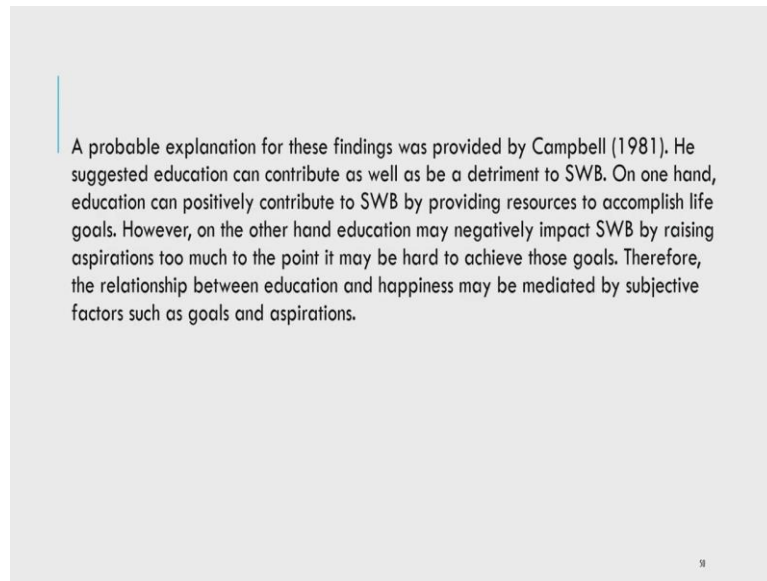
Studies have pointed out all kinds of relationship between education and subjective well-being such as a positive linear relationship, a positive nonlinear relationship (middle level educated reported highest levels of SWB), no relationship, and even a negative relationship (Dolan et al., 2008).

Finally, consider the link between education and happiness. So, once again, there isn't much definite evidence in this regard, in this case, the association between education and happiness. Various types of relationships have been discovered through research.

For example, studies have found a variety of links between education and subjective well-being, which implies we're essentially talking about happiness here. As a result, some research has suggested that there is a positive linear association. Which basically suggests that as your knowledge level rises, so does your happiness. That conclusion was backed up by some research. Some research have found a positive non-linear association, meaning there is a positive relationship but it is not linearly increasing, implying that persons with a moderate level of education report the highest level of happiness. Furthermore, some studies found no association, while others found a negative relationship.

As a result, as your educational level rises, your happiness level decreases. So, depending on what kind of sample and what kind of cultural background was used, the research findings revealed a wide range of possible associations. As a result, there is no definite association as the research suggests.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:50)



So, what are some of the possible explanations for why, while education can boost happiness in some situations, it can also diminish happiness in others?

So, in this setting, one particular researcher, Campbell, came up with a probable answer that is still valid. He proposed that education can both add to and detract from subjective well-being. On the one hand, education can improve subjective well-being or happiness by offering resources to help people achieve their life goals. So education boosts your life satisfaction or happiness in a variety of ways, principally because it improves your abilities and resources, allowing you to obtain or achieve a variety of life goals. There is no doubt that it provides you with several benefits. As a result of the advancement of education, your skills and many resources are more readily available, and you are more likely to attain a variety of goals at a higher level in your life. As a result, it will improve your subjective well-being.


It can sometimes have a negative impact on our subjective well-being, mostly by raising our aspiration level to the point where achieving those goals becomes difficult. As your educational level rises, so do your aspirations. As a result, some people's ambitions soar excessively high, to the point where they establish goals that they find difficult to achieve. And they are no longer able to work on lower-level goals since their desire level has risen to a point where they are unable to achieve those goals. As a result, in that environment, it may also lower your happiness.

As a result, various subjective factors such as objectives and aspirations may influence the association between education and happiness. So, all of these objective measures and socio-demographic characteristics that we've discussed clearly influence, without a doubt, our degree of happiness. But, while its influence may not be direct in that sense, it is mediated by a variety of psychological processes.

So, in the case of education, it is not education that directly influences your degree of pleasure, but rather the psychological elements that play a role in it. So, what exactly is your aspiration? What is your life objective in terms of what you want to do with your education, what is your aim with your education, and what is the goal that you want to achieve with your education level?

As a result, such factors are far more essential than educational attainment. So, all of the disparities in research outcomes we see in all of these demographic indicators are mostly due to the fact that they are not directly impacting and are mediated by various internal psychological subjective aspects.

(Refer Slide Time: 47:15)



Concluding thoughts

Therefore, it is evident that objective indicators of life such as income and sociodemographic factors may influence happiness to some extent. However, their influence are not very strong.

The relationship between objective indicators (such as sociodemographic factors), and subjective indicators (such as happiness) is not very strong.

Our happiness ultimately largely depends on how we think and deal with those life circumstances. Remember ABC model of Albert Ellis? So, all these factors are outside stimulus. Emotional consequence will depend on how you think and make use of them.

We will discuss these aspects in more details while talking about sustainable happiness model

31

So, here are some final thoughts. So it is clear that many objective parameters of our lives or objective realities of life for life circumstances such as your income, socio-demographic factors, other social demographic factors such as your age, education, and a slew of other factors play a role in our happiness and well-being; there is no doubt that they do, but their impact may be limited.

As a result, there isn't much of a link between objective indicators like social demographic variables and subjective ones like happiness. As a result, happiness is mostly subjective and the result of a variety of factors. So there is a relationship, but it isn't particularly strong. So, in the end, it's apparent that our happiness is primarily determined by how we think about and respond to those objective life situations.

So, in the end, it comes down to the reality that neither your age nor your gender, education level, or wealth can have a direct impact on your happiness. All of this has an impact on us, but it is mostly mediated by our cognitive processes. How we think, our aspirations, and our life objectives all influence how these elements affect our happiness level. So, you may recall the ABC model from the mental ways of coping section, where we stated that emotional consequences are not caused by external conditions. As a result, an activating event A never leads to consequences C. So, if you're familiar with the ABC model. So, A is for activating

events, C stands for emotional consequences, and B stands for your belief systems or thought processes.

So, as we've seen, it's not the event that produces C; rather, it's the event that never causes consequences. It's the way this incident affects our cognitive processes and beliefs. They eventually result in emotional outcomes such as happiness, despair, or whatever else. As a result, this is also true in this situation. So, in the next few lectures, starting with lecture 24 or 25, we'll talk about a model called the sustainable happiness model, which will discuss how some of these mediators or subjective factors may influence our happiness. As a result, we'll go over some of these key points in greater depth. So, with this I stopped today's lecture. Thank you.