

# Exploring the Paradoxical Effects of Valuing Happiness With the Role of Performance-Goal Orientation as the Moderator

*Wanting to be happy doesn't necessarily makes you happy*

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## Background

This study propose that valuing happiness could possibly result in a paradoxical decrease of happiness, due to disappointment in unable to achieve the expected standard of happiness. This study too suggest that performance-goal orientation will moderate all these relationships by strengthening it. Being the first study in Asia country seeking to validate the paradoxical effects of valuing happiness in examining the relationship between valuing happiness and hedonic balance, subjective happiness and life-satisfaction, provided that Western and Asian countries define happiness differently, the results suggested that valuing happiness could be self-defeating regardless individuals' performance-goal orientation with further discussion on the obtained results.

## Method

Sample: 380 undergraduate students from a Malaysian private university.

Method: Surveys comprising of 5 sets of questionnaires

Valuing happiness - 7-item valuing happiness scale

Hedonic balance – PANAS scale

Subjective happiness – Subjective Happiness scale

Life-satisfaction – Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Performance-goal orientation – Performance-goal Orientation Items

## Discussion

### Summary of Key Findings

- 1) The extent of one valuing happiness found to be correlated negatively with one's hedonic balance and life-satisfaction, but not subjective happiness.
- 2) Performance-goal orientation does not exhibit any moderating effect over the relationship between valuing happiness and level of happiness.

Variables	$\beta$	F
Hedonic Balance	-.18***	12.33
Subjective Happiness	.03	.44
Life-Satisfaction	-.13**	6.68

Figure 2. Summary of results of Linear Regression: Valuing Happiness as Predictor Variable

### Theoretical Implications

Evidence for "happiness paradox" was found in Asian country although partially supported. This suggests that the phenomenon of happiness paradox could occur across cultures despite differences in definition for happiness.

### Practical Implications

#### Public

It seems to be probable that valuing happiness to a certain degree could lead to a decrease in one's happiness, and such paradoxical effect is not limited to a particular cultural context. Public should be made known of the detrimental effects that may result from placing utmost importance in chasing happiness.

### Future Directions

- a) Since no causal attributions could be derived from this non-experimental correlational research, future experimental research can be done on exploring what specifically caused the paradoxical effect in different culture: similarities and differences.
- b) Investigation on the possible role of performance-goal orientation in moderating the "happiness paradox" relationship could be further explored in Western culture.

## Results

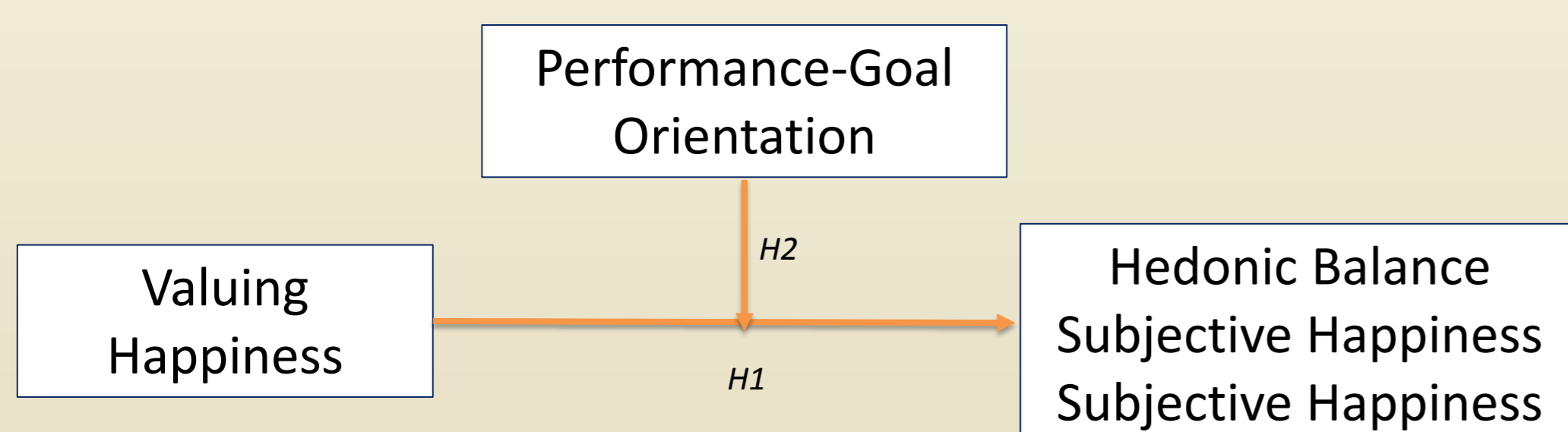


Figure 1. The moderation model illustrating the role of performance-goal orientation as the moderator of the relationship (Hypothesis 2) between valuing happiness and hedonic balance, subjective happiness, and life-satisfaction (Hypothesis 1).

In line with hypotheses, the extent of one valuing happiness predicted a decrease in one's hedonic balance ( $\beta = -.18, p < .001$ ) and life-satisfaction, ( $\beta = -.13, p < .01$ ), but not for subjective happiness ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ). Performance-goal orientation has no significant moderating effect for all three predictor variables.

Results show that valuing happiness suggesting that valuing happiness could be self-defeating regardless individuals' performance-goal orientation.

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