



## Experiencing Happiness and Self-Efficacy among Behavioral Therapists

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**Abstract:** Self-efficacy is a positive belief, not a necessary skill to achieve the desired result (Bandura, 1994, 1997; Pajares, 2002). This is the belief that a performed action will lead to an intended outcome (Maddux, 1999b). Happiness at job is associated with the best results of the performed work (Diener et al., 2018). The goal of the present research was to study the relationship between these two constructs, self-efficacy and happiness, among behavioral therapists (N = 51). The findings showed statistically significant positive correlation between the variables ( $r(49) = .39, p < .01$ ). Additionally, happiness emerged as a significant predictor of perceived self-efficacy ( $\beta = .39, t = 2.937, p < .01$ ).

**Keywords:** Happiness, self-efficacy, subjective wellbeing, behavioral therapist.

### Introduction

Person is happy when they experience positive emotions such as joy, happiness or satisfaction (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008).

When discussing happiness, authors use the term "subjective wellbeing" (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Walsh et al., 2018). Subjective wellbeing consists of three components: Life satisfaction, presence of positive mindset, and absence of negative mindset. Those components are summed together as happiness (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Along with positive emotions, subjective wellbeing involves also negative emotions. Nevertheless, moderate and frequent experience of positive emotions is regarded as a sign of happiness (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991).

Diener argued that happiness could be achieved through attaining goals or valuable outcomes in different fields (Diener et al., 1998).

Happiness is a necessary precondition and a determining factor for success (Walsh et al., 2018). Positive emotions at work foster cognitive functioning and help creating social resources, which is imperative for "flourishing" in team and provide professional satisfaction and creativity (Roberts & Creary, 2013).

An experimental study (Oswald, Proto, & SgROI, 2009) showed that people with positive mindset were able to perform high quality work about 11% more than those who had negative mindset. The latter are less productive when dealing with an illness or a severe loss (Diener et al., 2018).

A person's belief in their abilities to handle stress and depression during difficult times has an impact on the level of their motivation (Bandura, 1994).

Belief in self-efficacy determines a person's life events and influences the environment where they act or which they choose. People tend to avoid the situations and actions that, in their opinion, exceed their abilities (Bandura, 1994). Cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective processes are major psychological processes that impact a person's belief in self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006a).

Choosing profession and career development are one of the illustrations of how a person's self-efficacy can influence life events. The higher the belief in self-efficacy, the wider the career range (Scheier & Carver, 1992). Cherniss (1993) introduced a term "professional self-efficacy" as a belief in one's ability to properly perform one's professional role, operationalizing it with Maslach's burnout inventory ([MBIGS] Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996).

A creative person, who believes in their abilities and strives towards success, should be sure that they are able to successfully perform a particular job before achieving their goal (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). People with low self-efficacy scores, have a weaker aspiration to attain their goals, which often leads to frustration (Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

There has been a growing research demonstrating that achievements and wellbeing require an optimistic outlook on one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994), while happiness leads to success (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Walsh et al., 2018). Based on these research findings, the present study sought to explore the relationship between happiness and self-efficacy and whether perception of happiness could predict belief in self-efficacy among behavioral therapists.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedures*

The study was carried out among behavioral therapists employed at a rehabilitation center. A total of 51 respondents participated in the study with only five men. Their age ranged from 20 through 54. 29 of them were single and 22 were married or in a relationship.

The questionnaire was administered online, via Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and instructions on how to fill it out, research goals, and information on study's confidential nature were provided in the beginning of the survey. The time required for filling out the questionnaire was 10-15 minutes on average.

Prior to administering the questionnaire, participants read the informed consent. IP addresses have been deleted after completing the survey and no emails or names of participants were recorded. Data safety and privacy protection was ensured.

### *Instruments*

*Socio-demographic Information* included questions on participants' gender, age, and relationship status.

*Self-efficacy* was measured with General Self-efficacy Scale ([GSE] Schwartzer & Jerusalem, 1995). The instrument includes 10 items assessing general level of perceived self-efficacy to predict adaptive behavior and how people deal with everyday difficulties. Answers are provided on 4-points Likert scale with 1 = *not at all true*, 2 = *barely true*, 3 = *moderately true*, and 4 = *exactly true*. The questionnaire was translated in Georgian language for the present study. Consistency and reliability of the translated scale was tested through Cronbach's alpha with  $\alpha = .91$ .

*Happiness* was assessed with Subjective Happiness Scale ([HNS], Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), which consists of four items measuring subjective happiness in general, as well as how one views oneself against one's own peers. Answers are given on a Likert scale with 1 = *never happy at all* and 7 = *very happy* for the first item, 1 = *less happy* and 7 = *more happy* for the second item, and 1 = *not at all* and 7 = *great deal* for the third and fourth items. The questionnaire was translated in Georgian language for the present study. Consistency and reliability of the translated scale was tested through Cronbach's alpha with  $\alpha = .74$ .

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Mean score for the perceived happiness scale was 20.29 ( $SD = 4.62$ ) with a maximum score of 28. Mean score for the self-efficacy scale was 33.25 ( $SD = 4.83$ ) with a maximum score of 40. Respondents' ( $N = 51$ ) scores were normally distributed across two scales, which both had satisfactory/good indices of internal reliability.

### Correlation

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the association between self-efficacy and happiness (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Correlation between Self-efficacy and Happiness**

Correlations			
		Self-efficacy	Happiness
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	51	51
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	.387**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	51	51

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

As the Table 1 shows, statistically significant moderate positive correlation emerged between self-efficacy and happiness,  $r(49) = .387, p < .01$ .

### Regression

Linear regression was used to further test the association between happiness and self-efficacy. Specifically, the model included happiness as a predictor variable with self-efficacy as an outcome variable.

**Table 2. Regression on Self-efficacy: ANOVA**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	174.492	1	174.492	8.626	.005 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	991.194	49	20.228		
Total	1165.686	50			

a. Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy  
 b. Predictors: (Constant) Happiness

As the Table 2 shows, the model was statistically significant,  $F(1, 49) = 8.626, p < .01$ .

**Table 3. Regression on Self-efficacy: Beta Coefficients**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	23.176	3.489		6.642	.000
1 Happiness	.519	.177	.387	2.937	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy

As shown in the Table 3, happiness significantly predicted self-efficacy,  $\beta = .387, t = 2.937, p < .01$ .

Given the findings, regression equation can be produced:  $\text{Self-efficacy} = 23.176 + \text{Happiness} * 0.519$ .

**Table 4. Regression on Self-efficacy: R-squared**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.387 <sup>a</sup>	.150	.132	4.498
a. Predictors: (Constant) Happiness				

As the Table 4 shows, happiness can be accounted for 15% of variability of self-efficacy scores ( $R^2 = .15$ ), that is, 15% of variability in self-efficacy scores can be explained by variability in happiness scores.

### Discussion

The goal of the present paper was to understand the relationship between happiness and perceived self-efficacy in the sample of behavioral therapists. Although the small size of the sample does not allow for generalizations, it is still possible to make certain steps in terms of discussing and increasing self-efficacy and happiness among personnel employed at rehabilitation centers as well as other organizations.

Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and goal (Locke & Lathan, 2002) are two of the constructs in organizational psychology that have high motivational potential. High scores of perceived self-efficacy of an employee determines the success of an organization (Staple, Hulland, & Higgins, 199). Personnel’s belief in their self-efficacy is crucial both at individual and organizational level (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003).

Perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006a) allows an individual to have control over their functioning, to influence their life events (Bandura, 1994), motivation, goals, and have ability to deal with difficulties in case of failure (Pajares, 1997). All these lead to dedication and commitment to one’s job (Rothmann & Cooper, 2008).

Self-efficacy, emerged in the framework of social cognitive theory, can be seen as a manifestation of human’s will and is an idea on how individuals can have certain influence on their work (Bandura, 2006a).

Those who score high on happiness work better (Walsh et al., 2018), strive towards positive interactions (George, 1991), have lower rates of emotional burnout, have better self-control and self-regulation, deal with difficulties better, and have high level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006a; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Chida & Steptoe, 2008; Seligman et al., 1990). Those research findings were the reason why the present study hypothesized positive association between happiness and self-efficacy among behavioral therapists. Correlational analysis supported this assumption, while regression analysis further demonstrated that happiness positively predicted self-efficacy.

At both individual and organizational level, positive mindset and safe, comfortable environment is indeed important, allowing a person to enhance their intellectual, social and physical resources (Fredrickson, 2001). With experiencing subjective wellbeing, belief in one’s self-efficacy is increased (Bandura, 1994), and people tend to set new goals (Carver, 2003), new situations are seen challenges, leading altogether to more positive outcomes for a person as well as for an environment where they act.

### Limitations

The present research has certain limitations. The instruments used in the study were translated in Georgian impromptu for the research without being validated and adapted to Georgian context. Another limitation is the small size of sample not allowing for generalizations to other organizations or larger population in general.

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