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DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF FEAR OF HAPPINESS SCALE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to develop and validate the fear of happiness Scale in Urdu language. Purposive sampling technique and Cross-sectional survey research design were used. The study was conducted in Central Punjab Pakistan from April 2023 to December 2024. Beck Cognitive Theory was used to develop the scale, scale based on three main factors including cognitive, behavioral and physiological symptoms. Comprehensive process, involving the DSM-5, literature review, and focus groups, led to an initial pool of 55 items. Expert evaluation resulted in the retention of 45 items post-pilot study. Data collection, executed through a self-reported questionnaire administered to (N=920) participants, preceded a thorough reliability analysis using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The scale's construction, refinement, and validation underscore its suitability for assessing cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms in the community. Results indicated 0.879 the acceptable value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Pallant, 2020). Confirmatory Factor Analysis revealed a CFI value of 0.905, and a GFI of 0.899, both considered good. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.938 indicates strong reliability and internal consistency of the scale. The fear of happiness scale is a valid and reliable instrument. Moreover, the Fear of happiness scale can be used in future research and clinical applications.

Keywords: *Fear of Happiness, Cognitive, Behavioral, Physiological, Development, Beck Cognitive Theory.*

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is considered a blessing from the Almighty Creator of the Universe, but it has been observed that people are avoiding or dislike being happy, a phenomenon known as Fear of happiness (Chakraborty & Pandey, 2023). To comprehend the concept of fear of happiness, one must understand the definitions of happiness, fear, and phobia. The term "happiness" itself encompasses vast perspectives that cannot be succinctly explained (Ionescu-Feleagă et al., 2022). The expression and representation of happiness vary from culture to culture, encompassing different reasoning for happiness (Peng et al., 2023). Individuals facing fear of happiness may develop distinct thought patterns and reasoning, contributing to the development of this phobia (Thorpe & Salkovskis, 1995).

Cognition involves thoughts and distortions, which refer to disrupted thought patterns. Cognitive distortions are characterized as internal mental filters or biases that contribute to heightened unhappiness, increased individual anxiety, and negative self-perception (Sripada, 2022). As the brain consistently processes a substantial amount of information, issues may

arise if the processed information is overwhelmingly negative (Koelsch et al., 2022).

The avoidance of behavior is another aspect of fear of happiness. Research on college students indicates a correlation between phobia and avoidance behavior (Bryant et al., 2023). Psychological wellbeing is directly related to the fear and externality of happiness, implying that fear of happiness may involve avoidance behavior (Arslan, 2023).

METHOD

In the present study cross sectional survey research design was applied. For the data collection, a purposive sampling technique was used in the study. After the approval of the Board of Advance Studies and Research the study was conducted in Central Punjab Pakistan from April 2023 to December 2024. Data were collected using a self-reported questionnaire from Central Punjab, and the samples (N=920) with ages ranging from 13 to 70 years were included in the study.

Inclusion Criteria: Participants from the age range 13 to 70 years were included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria: Individuals less than 13 years and above 70 years were excluded from the study. Moreover, individuals having mental disabilities also excluded from the study.

Initially 55 items were developed with the help of DSM-5, four focus groups and a literature review. For the factor analysis sample size should be large, according to Stevens (2009) a sample of (N=200) should be collected (Stevens, 2002). A pilot study was conducted with a sample size of (N=300), and the final study included a sample of (N=920). The scale was based on 55 items, with 42 items selected after expert evaluation for the pilot study.

After participants had given written informed consent, the author provided a simple explanation of the response format and the background, emphasizing the need for and importance of the study. Participants then filled out the questionnaire, and at the end of data collection, they were thanked for their participation.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-22) and the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS-22, Windows version) were employed to analyze data in this study. Data was tested via reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and exploratory factor analysis. Twenty-three items underwent Confirmatory-fact analysis (CFA).

RESULT

Data adequacy was evaluated through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO was 0.879 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was 0.000, concluding that the data are acceptable and can be included in additional EFA.

Table-I: Factor loading of Fear of Happiness Scale (N=400)

Sr. No	Physiological	Behavioral	Cognitive
1	.667		
2	.677		
3	.674		
4	.676		
5	.787		
6	.772		
7	.859		
8	.787		
9	.667		
10	.753		
11	.770		
12	.764		
13		.552	
14		.592	
15		.745	
16		.788	
17		.780	
18		.774	
19		.656	
20			.760
21			.835
22			.869
23			.673

According to Table-I, 23 out of 45 items exhibited loadings on 3 factors. Subsequently, the factors were stabilized with a 0.50 absolute value of suppression. The factor loading values ranged from 0.552 to 0.869.

Table-II: Model Fit Summary of Fear of Happiness scale (N=520)

P-Value	CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	RMSR
.000	0.55	0.899	0.905	0.052	0.041

Table-III: Cronbach Alpha for the Fear of Happiness Scale and its Subscales (N = 520)

Subscales	Total Items	Cohanbach Alpha r
Cognitive Symptoms	4	0.879
Behavioral Symptoms	5	0.880
Physical Symptoms	5	0.925
Total	14	0.947

The result shows the full-scale Cronbach alpha reliability is r=.947, that indicates high reliability.

DISCUSSION

The principal objective of the current study was to develop and validate the fear of happiness scale in the native language Urdu. Initially, 55 statements were generated and presented to 4 expert panels, Twenty out of 55 items were discarded, and 15 items were modified according to the construct (Parveen & Bano, 2023). Item statements and response formats were selected for the scale. After the pilot study, 42 items were retained, and the pilot study involved (N=200) participants. After exploratory factor analysis, 23 items were retained. The data is suitable for further exploratory factor analysis.

A preliminary analysis such as KMO & Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was applied to test the sample adequacy. As per the present study result, KMO value is 0.879, which is accepted as it satisfies more than sufficient threshold of 0.6 (Pallant, 2020). The Sphericity test also generated a significant value greater than 0.001, which means the data had not identical matrix (Bartlett, 1954). Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in order to support the results from our exploratory factor analysis.

CFA was performed on the 23 items using a three-factor model. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was acceptable with 0.905 which confirms the effectiveness of the scale (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The other parameter, CMIN/DF ratio ≤ 5, was also acceptable (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). The GFI value equal or higher to 0.899 is acceptable and even closer to the standard benchmarks in present study (Hooper et al., 2008). Literature has confirmed the very substantiated model of data as being RMSEA = 0.052 reported (Rigdon 1996). The RMSR value was reported as 0.041, which is below the acceptable cut-off of 0.05 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). In addition, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient is greater than 0.70 which is statistically significant and acceptable (Mendi & Mendi, 2015). After all analysis the final scale contains 14 items holding three subscales.

CONCLUSION

The fear of happiness scale has been fully developed in the Urdu language, comprising 14 items distributed across 3 subscales. The scale is suitable for utilization in both future research endeavors and clinical applications.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors in the present study have no conflict of interest.

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