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SELLING HAPPINESS

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RESUMO

por

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Esta é uma tese que explora as condições associadas à necessidade de *procura de felicidade*.

Começa com uma triagem científica e no âmbito das características e condições intrinsicas á felicidade humana. É definida a necessidade de "procura de felicidade" e são formuladas as evidências que apoiam a existencia do mercado procura do felicidade.

A partir daqui, ferramentas de pesquisa exploratória são manipuladas, com o objectivo de entender o Português que procura a felicidade (*happiness seeker*), as suas características. As potencialidades do mercado e as melhores estratégias a ter em consideração no recurso ao mercado formal para a busca de felicidade serão também apresentadas.

Palavras-chave: Auto-Ajuda, Bem-Estar Subjetivo, Procura de Felicidade, Psicologia Positiva, A23.

ABSTRACT

by

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A thesis uncovering the conditions associated to the happiness seeking need.

It starts with a scientific screening and characterization of happiness as a human condition, happiness as a need and formulates the evidences supporting the happiness seeking market.

From here after, exploratory research tools are manipulated, to understand the Portuguese Happiness Seeker, its characteristics and potential, and best strategies are presented to be considered in the pursuit of happiness.

Keywords: Happiness Seeker, Subjective Well-Being, Positive Psychology, Self-Improvement, A23

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

HS: Happiness Seeker
M: sample mean
PA: Positive Activities
SD: sample standard deviation
SWL: Satisfaction with life
SWB: Subjective Well-Being

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Consumerism. A social and economic order that is based on the systematic creation and fostering of a desire to purchase goods and services in ever greater amounts.

Gross National Happiness (GNH). A set of combined indicators that attempt to measure and classify the quality of life or social progress within a specific county. GNH idea was shaped by Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Bhutan's fourth Dragon King, representing a commitment to build an economy that would serve the nation according to its singular culture and spiritual values.

Happiness Economics. The quantitative study of happiness, positive and negative affect, well-being, quality of life, life satisfaction and related concepts, typically combining economics with other fields such as psychology and sociology. It typically treats such happiness-related measures, rather than wealth, income or profit, as something to be maximized. The field has grown substantially since the late 20th century, for example by the development of methods, surveys and indices to measure happiness and related concepts.

Humanistic Psychology. A psychological perspective which was widely recognized in the mid-20th century, drawing on the work of early pioneers like Carl Rogers and the philosophies of existentialism and phenomenology. It adopts a holistic approach to human existence through investigations of meaning, values, freedom, tragedy, personal responsibility, human potential, spirituality, and self-actualization.

Positive Psychology. Positive psychology is a recent branch of psychology whose purpose was summed up in 1998 by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: "We believe that a psychology of positive human functioning will arise that achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving in individuals, families, and communities." Positive psychologists seek "to find and nurture genius and talent", and "to make normal life more fulfilling", not simply to treat mental illness. The field is intended to complement, not to replace traditional psychology.

Poverty Threshold. The minimum level of income deemed necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living in a given country. In practice, like the definition of poverty, the official or common understanding of the poverty line is significantly higher in developed countries than in developing countries.

Yuppies. Yuppies are known for their high materialistic consumption and obsession over social status among their peers. Yuppie (short for "young urban professional" or "young upwardly mobile professional") is a term that refers to a member of the upper middle class or upper class in their 20s or 30s.

SUMÁRIO EXECUTIVO

A felicidade é uma das preocupaçoes centrais do ser humano. É em torno desta necessidade de ser feliz que cada um de nós controi os seus propósitos de vida, toma as suas decisões e desenha o seu próprio caminho.

Esta tese é uma tentativa pioneira na área do Marketing para tentar desmenbrar uma necessidade básica: a procura da felicidade.

Este estudo começa por apresentar as condições para a felicidade e as diferentes dimensões do ser humano que influenciam ou são influencidas pelo nível de felicidade em que nos encontramos – condições genéticas, condições de vida e actividades positivas.

Depois de provar, de acordo com a literatura revista, que as actividades positivas são a forma mias eficiente que o ser humano tem de atingir níveis mais elevados de felicidade, é proposto um modelo de utilização e potencialização destas actividades positivas.

Numa terceira fase e revisão da literatura são apresentados de forma organizadda todas as evidencias que validam a existencia de *happiness seekers*, aqueles individuos que fazem da procura da felicidade um objectivo em si mesmo. Serão tambem apresentadas as evidencias que comprovam que o mercaod de auto-ajuda é o mercado primário destes consumidores.Á medida que todas estas assumções são apresentadas serão tambem identificadas todas as hipoteses a ser testadas no mercado de *happiness seeking* português.

Apartir deste ponto é elaborada uma ferramenta de pesquisa (um questionario) que é posteriormente aplicada ao mercado. As hipoteses são validadas e é proposto um conjunto de condições e caracteristicas intrinsecas ao *happiness seeker* português.

Estte estudo comprova a existência de um mercado de procura de felicidade (*happiness seeking market*) e baliza o perfil do seu consumidor alvo.

INTRODUCTION

The need for happiness always walked side by side with human beings (Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener, Suh, Smith, & Shao, 1995; Triandis, Bontempo, Leung, & Hui, 1990).

This need crossed our evolutionary stages: shared the industrial revolution thrill with the Western World and gently impregnated long afternoons of a Buddhist monk, somewhere in the Far East. Happiness was there in every steps and reinventions of the market economy, suffered with the human beings the *Wall Street Crash* in 1929 and rose again to keep up with its fellow human partner. When suddenly the U.S. consumers were chasing the Henry Ford's *T Model*, guess what else was there besides convenience? Happiness, the willingness to attain higher levels of Subjective Well-Being (SWB).

What is happiness but the biggest, boundless and most global *need* on planet earth?

Directly or indirectly happiness is a driver for every human decision. Don't we all want to feel good? Be satisfied? Find *the happiness within*?

Happiness represents a purchase pattern boundary that shapes every human behavior – virtually thinking, this truly represents a huge potential market.

But which factors are proved to enhance human happiness? Is *happiness seeking* an actual need? Can it be marketed?

The next pages attempt to understand what lies within human happiness, trying to recreate the *pursuit of happiness* in the light of marketing conditions and identifying current trends, within the Portuguese society.

Chapter 1
PAPER APPROACH
Selling Happiness

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

<div align="right">- Mother Teresa (part 1 of 5)</div>

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Happiness is a lifelong goal, universally accepted and pursuit by the human race (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999).

All around the world, across different cultures, people classify the pursuit of happiness as one of their most import goals in life (Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener, Suh, Smith & Shao, 1995, Triandis, Bontempo, Leung & Huy, 1990; Freidman, 1978; Lyubomirsky, 2000). Furthermore, the pursuit of happiness is becoming global, as people seek to fulfill the promises of capitalism and of political freedom (Myers et al., 1995; Freedman, 1978; Triandis et al., 1990).

It seems that nearly everyone believes, or would like to believe, that they can move in an "upward spiral" (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001) towards ever-greater personal well-being.

Whether someone is buying a car or just steeling it, they do it because they got to the conclusion that their levels of satisfaction will increase somewhere in the future. In an intentional way or unconsciously every single human being seeks to feel good at any given moment of his live.

Happiness can represent more than a positive mind framing. Due to its intrinsic favorable outcome in human life it can be a really attractive goal to pursuit (Parks et al., 2012).

Is the intentional pursuit of happiness merely a bourgeois concern, a symptom of Western comfort and self-centeredness, a factor that has no real impact on psychological adjustment and adaptation?

Happiness is not only a goal on life but also a mean to achieve many other objectives in life, both externally and internally. Happy people tend to be successful in most of their life dimensions. Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) clearly linked this success, at least partially, to people's high happiness levels. Happiness is present in the

most social, healthy, active, altruistic people. These people live longer, care more for themselves and others around them, are more creative, have better conflict resolution skills and are better leaders. (Larsen, 2008).

The capacity to be happy and contended with life has been suggested as the basis of adaptation and positive health (e.g., Diener, 1984; Jahoda, 1958; Taylor & Brown, 1988). A batch of good outcomes often follows happiness. Thus, there are many reasons to suggest that high subjective well-being is extremely desirable at both individual and societal levels (Larsen, 2008).

Can "the pursuit of happiness" be actually marketed?

Today, happiness stands more close to us than ever, now that most of the contemporary societies developed the conditions to truly seek happiness – high life quality standards and plenty of leisure time (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). But, *do consumers know what to do to become happier?* As the psychological community realizes so far, there's no need for a new car or a second house as excuses to sustainably improve happiness, it follows different rules. Happiness is a psychological state of mind that is little dependent on our daily life conditions (Lyubomirsky, 2005). Evidence as shown that the most productive way to increase well-being is not by changing life circumstances (e.g., marital status, career, location, and income) but by introducing simple cognitive and behavioral activities into daily life (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009) and positive emotions (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991). Multiple scientific interventions proved that indeed, that are certain activities that can produce an effective and sustainable impact on human happiness, especially after their basic physical and security needs are met (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). And consumers seem to have noticed that and got committed to look for happiness in its purest state, or at least, in the purest state it can be pursued. *Happiness seekers* need to resort to available sources of information when figuring out how to enhance their happiness. They need to find the proper self-help tools to learn to change their behavior in order to fell happier. The reality proves and the scientific findings corroborate the same assumption: these *happiness seekers* resort to the self-improvement market when seeking to increase their happiness (Lyubomirsky et a., 2012). They also underline that, as *"Happiness seekers purchase self-help materials"*, it should be relevant even to the scientific community to study the market behavior linked to this idea of *"pay to become happier"* (Lyubomirsky et a., 2012).

In reality, an increasing amount of people is resorting to the self-improvement market. And this happiness seeking incentivized behavior among the western countries has placed happiness-oriented self-help as a potentially lucrative market (Parks et al., 2012).

The "Self-Improvement Market" as Robert Isset explained, *"comprise those motivational "self-improvement" programs, products or services that seek to improve humans physically, mentally, financially or spiritually. This market focuses on developing the necessary means to reach a fulfilling happiness state, or so it preaches. It promotes the excellence within the personal development and self-motivation fields providing the necessary grounds to keep a potential happiness state and emotional well-being, promoting a very promising and life-changing journey."* (Isset, 2009).

Research over this market was first published in 2006 by an independent market research publisher - Marketdata Enterprises[1], Inc. – when they release their paper "The US Market For Self-Improvement Products & Services". New editions followed this initiative and by 2012, Marketdata report[2], covering the US self-improvement industry detected the following self-help industry segments: (1) Books (2) Audiobook, (3) Motivational Speaker Seminars, (4) Personal Coaching, (5) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies, (6) Online Educational Courses, (7) Website Information, (8) Infomercials[3] and (9) Mail Order Catalogues.

At the start of the 21st century, "the self-improvement industry, inclusive of books, seminars, audio and video products, and personal coaching, was said to constitute a 2.48-billion dollars-a-year industry" in the United States (McGee, 2005). In 2011, the U.S self-improvement market value was estimated in $11.17 billion and an average of 5.5% yearly gains is predicted from 2010 to 2014 (Marketdata, 2012).

Nonetheless, the scientific community also denotes that this industry is somehow missing the point: the self-help genre is flooded with "pop psychology" that lack scientific grounding (Parks et al., 2012). Being this a very subjective concept, dependent on distinct factors and contexts, society has tried to feed it mostly in a questionable

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[1] Marketdata Enterprises Inc.: A U.S. market research publisher specialized in analyzing niche service sectors not covered elsewhere. Their research includes primary and secondary research techniques, including custom, proprietary surveys. Their last report regarding the Self-improvement market was published in 2012.
Founded in 1979, Marketdata specializes in analyzing It is the only U.S. market research publisher to focus solely on service businesses. Our reports are quoted by all major national media.
[2] The Market For Self-Improvement Products and Services, December 2012 - 9th Edition
[3] Infomercials are television commercials which generally include a phone number or website.

manner and adopting questionable strategies, not directly addressing the problem neither consciously exploiting nor managing its key success factors.

Moreover it seems that the self-improvement industry is actually underperforming due to this mismatch: According to Research Director, John LaRosa: "*Lackluster performance by companies like Nightingale-Conant, and more recently, OWN, demonstrate that many don't yet understand the self-improvement consumer, or don't embrace new technology*" (2012).

Also market data later research proves that the market persists leaderless and unregulated (Marketdata, 2012). There seems to be a mismatch between the industry and the consumers.

How can happiness seeking need be properly exploited?

Findings suggest that there is a missing link to be explored - the one that connects happiness drivers to the market conditions: What do people really seek when they seek for happiness? What do they really need? How can the market respond to this primary life driver?

Positive psychology may hold the correct answer. While manipulating this determinant, Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, and colleagues (2011) found that participants who initially self-selected into practicing positive activities exhibited more gains than those who self-selected to "test cognitive exercises" (Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Stating so, happiness seekers have a chance to at least understand what they have to do to become happier, and using this scientific information the industry can start to provide the right incentives.

Note that this paper is not attempting to address the self-improvement market, this study dives deeper: it attempts to understand the conditions to properly exploit the happiness seeking need.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As explained in the last section, the general population is willing to learn effective ways to increase their happiness levels.

But since the self-help market is somewhat missing its primary target: happiness enhancing, how can we address the *happiness seeking* need?

Blending together academic knowledge and evidences on different disciplinary dimensions, this paper attempts to understand the main behavioral drivers in the search for happiness, within the Portuguese market.

Different findings within Positive psychology, Science of Happiness, Happiness Economics and Consumer Behavior subjects are organized together to shape the need assumptions, set the conditions to isolate the actual *happiness seekers* and extract the best conclusions to take into account when exploiting this market.

The study will start by pointing an accurate definition on human happiness - taking into account its long-term dimension and academic findings' throughout time. To develop such a concept, a systematic study on the main stream and most quoted authors will be conducted to depict and understand the core drivers of a sustained happiness.

Next, insights and evidences already taken about *happiness seekers* will be tracked – in an attempt to define the happiness market, its main conditions and key success factors, so a proper research tool can be created.

At this point research will deepen into the Portuguese reality: its main dimensions, players and overall market characteristics. The main goal will be to find consumer profiles and the key success factors linked to the market using exploratory tools.

It is important to understand that this paper explores a subjective realm – *happiness* or *subjective well-being* - and**, as to preserve its reliability and objectivity**, I've focused the research on *the tangible* paths to happiness. This means that **the conducted research will focus relevant circumstantial factors, activities and practices in the pursuit of happiness, according to the assumptions and associations provided in the literature reviewed.**

1.3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Happiness has been under the spot light around the world for the last decades among the psychological scholars (Diener et al., 1999). This subject is mainly addressed under the Positive Psychology subjects and it represents a drop in the ocean, in comparison to the rest of the psychological studies available (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Nonetheless, during the 1980's, the number of psychological abstract quotations reporting to happiness ("well-being", "happiness" and "life satisfaction") quintupled, to 780 articles annually (Myers & Diener, 1995).

"Five years have passed since the American Psychologist devoted its millennial issue to the emerging science of positive psychology: the study of positive emotion, positive character, and positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Drawing on methods effectively used to advance the science of mental disorders, positive psychologists have been studying mental health and well-being. "

- Seligman (2005)

This study is one of the first steps to bring the positive psychology practical findings into the realms of marketing. It represents a pioneer attempt to understand the happiness seeking patterns among the Portuguese population; the need to seek happiness for its own sake; the need to pursuit the so called subjective well-being. It represents scientific evidence regarding the existence of this market, its potential and key drivers. Ultimately, it provides an opportunity for business and marketing researchers to gain deeper insight into this area.

Hopefully the assumptions and conclusions resulting from this study will contribute to best practices, strong enough to be overlapped and adopted into reality, producing better marketing decisions and more efficient products management.

1.4. HYPOTHESIS WITHIN THE STUDY

To successfully validate this study's findings, some hypothesis must be constructed.

Due to the lack of insights on the Portuguese market reality, it is important to validate first the existence of conscious happiness seekers, or identify if this need isn't yet being directly sought

First I'll try to screen the tendency within the market towards the search for happiness. To support it, the following hypotheses must be validated:

H_1: There is evidence proving the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population.

Literature review findings on *happiness seeking* will provide some assumptions regarding the happiness seekers characteristics, which I'll attempt to overlap to the Portuguese reality.

Then I'll attempt to draw the market readiness and motivations. I'll track preferences associated to *happiness seeking.*

H_2: There's evidence that the Portuguese happiness seekers are willing to learn happiness enhancing activities.

Literature review findings on *happiness seeking* will provide some assumptions regarding the happiness seekers preferences, which I'll attempt to overlap to the Portuguese reality.

This paper will also uncover the best distribution channels to provide the Portuguese *happiness seekers* the proper *self-help* material. By distribution channels I mean the available learning tools existing that can be exploited. Do the Happiness Seekers report certain preferences regarding the self-help delivery format? For example, do they prefer self-books over personal coaching? As there are no available assumptions on this matter I will not resort to any hypothesis, instead I'll simply analyze the data collected on the individual preferences regarding the available self-help tools.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW
Happiness Definition

If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.

- Mother Teresa (part 2 of 5)

2.1. HAPPINESS STUDY

To be happy is one of the major goals, if not the ultimate goal, of the human race (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

To be happy is a quality itself, and a lot of research has been devoted to identify the conditions for, and the causes of, happiness (Larsen, 2008). Happiness, as most of the people name it, takes many designations: life satisfaction, self-betterment or positive affection for example – being *subjective well-being* the most commonly accepted terminology among the scientific community due to its intrinsic subjective physiology.

Academic efforts on Happiness and Self-Improvement are as old as time. After all, Aristotle wrote centuries ago an entire treatise – The *Nicomachean Ethics*—on happiness and the "good" life (300 a.C.; Bartlett, 2011).

However, in most of the 20th century the psychology community was extremely focused on what makes human beings unhappy (e.g., studies on schizophrenia, obsession, neurosis, etc). Shopenhauer, Freud[4] or even Sartre all adopted a reversed approach on happiness, more committed on fighting mental diseases than preventing them. Huppert (2005) reports that a detailed look at the reasons behind this neglect of the well-being and the focus on dysfunction is related to the fact that most of psychology have been affected by the Western medical model of health which is the absence of disease and the definition that good functioning is the absence of dysfunction.

Nonetheless, latter on some scholar efforts were calling for a change: Abraham Maslow's "self-actualization" and Carl Rogers' "full functioning" were concepts that turned attention to qualities of optimal experience, what human beings can become if they reached their full potential.

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[4] The very idea of psychotherapy, first formalized by Freud, rests on a view of human beings as troubled creatures in need of repair.

Maslow, one of the most important of this "humanistic psychologists[5]", developed a human behavior model called "The Hierarchy of Needs" (Maslow, 1968): a ranking of human needs - from basic needs for safety to higher needs such as belongingness, love, respect and self-esteem to the highest level of needs, self-actualization[6]. This theory implies that life satisfaction and quality of life are interconnected.

Maslow stated that all healthy human beings, once they have gratified their basic needs (biological and psychological needs like: air, food, drink, shelter, warmth or sex), inevitably move towards the highest ranking of needs, if the environmental conditions necessary for them to do so were established. The ultimate stage was represented by Maslow as the "Self Actualization" or personal growth and fulfillment (see Figure 1).
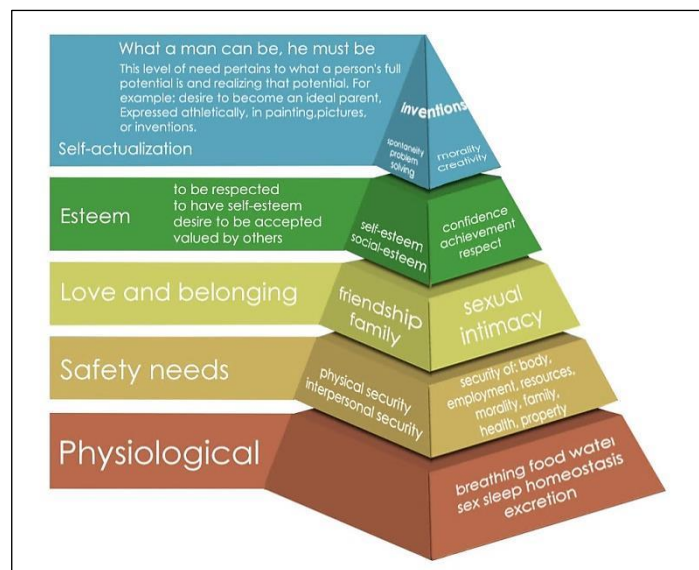
Figure 1 - Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Although being one of the first successful developments among the modern happiness theories, it had little empirical data grounding it.

However, as the director of the Psychiatric Consultation Service for Yale New Haven Hospital claims «*this has all changed in the past thirty years, largely due to the tireless efforts of psychologists like Martin Seligman, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, and Ed Diener. The peak of this new movement was reached in 1998 when Seligman delivered his presidential address to the American Psychological Association. Seligman called for his colleagues to free themselves from their problem-based focus and "go back to the roots"*

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[5] See glossary for further information.
[6] In Toward a Psychology of Being, Maslow defined self-actualization as the "ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation)." It was, he continued, "a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy within the person."

of psychology, which is not primarily about curing human illness, but identifying and realizing what makes for an excellent human life»[7].

2.1.1. HAPPINESS SCIENTIFIC FIELD – POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

A scientific systematic approach is crucial in theories validity across different disciplines. Its intrinsic rules allow the accurate conception of new ideas and solutions.

First the scientific method is self-correcting (Larsen, 2008). Scientists are always putting into question their own and each other's achievements and methodologies – leaving small margin for erroneous conclusions. Scientific community reinforces this behavior, awarding higher credibility to findings that were most replicated. Moreover, the scientific method is incremental – individual scientists build on the work of others, adding pieces to the knowledge foundations as a field progresses (Larsen, 2008).

The successful application of the scientific method on distinct fields – such as medicine, chemistry, and physics –made it possible to provide accurate answers to questions that have formerly been approached through such pre-scientific methods as introspection, narrative or qualitative strategies. The same happened with human happiness that entered the scientific realms through the so called: Positive Psychology.

Positive Psychology, a new branch of psychology, is an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions (Seligman, Park and Peterson, 2005). It represents a complement but not a substitute to the past psychology focus. It does not supplement, or replaces, what is known from human suffering, weakness and disorder (Seligman, Park and Peterson, 2005). The main purpose of Positive Psychology is to make normal life more fulfilling (Compton, William C. 2005).

As it is commonly accepted, happiness is one of the central elements of psychological health. As proposed by Diener (2008), one of the founding father of Positive Psychology, there are eight recognized elements of true psychological wealth:

- *Happiness (Subjective Well-Being)*

- *Affirmative mind set and emotions,*

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[7] Paul Desan, MD, PhD, is Director of the Psychiatric Consultation Service for Yale New Haven Hospital, quoted on the nonprofit organization *Teaching Happiness Inc.* website - Pursuit-of-Happiness.org.

- Physical and mental health,

- Spirituality and having a meaningful life,

- Loving social relationships,

- Taking on fulfilling activities and work,

- Moral values and principals and having life goals to attain them,

- And material satisfaction to meet the needs above.

Each one of these elements is somehow linked to the others, in a web of connections that is most of the times difficult to trace. Nonetheless, it is irrefutable that, isolating the happiness factor, all of the other elements hold some degree of correlation to it (Diener & Myers, 1995). This is natural, as happiness requires a subjective judgment on life, whether emotionally, materially, intellectually or spiritually.

For example, happy people recall more positive events and fewer negative events (Seidlitz & Diener, 1993), are less vulnerable to disease (Sandvik et al., 1993), are more loving and sociable (Myers, 1993; Veenhoven, 1988), are less likely to get divorced, tend to live slightly longer, perform better at work (e.g., Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994; Veenhoven, 1988), and earn higher incomes (Diener, Nickerson, Lucas, & Sandvik, 2002).

2.1.2. HAPPINESS ECONOMICS

Pure economics evaluates human life quality according to the quantity of goods delivered at given moment of time, on a specific community. It attempts to allocate the limited resources to the unlimited wants of human kind (Samuelson, 1947). Classical economy main focus is *scarcity* and *efficiency* which are translated into *utility*. Human wants are drawn into utility function, which represent optimal allocations of available goods and services according to individual preferences (Samuelson, 1946).

As the concept evolved, scientists contributed to this objective approach with some social assumptions such as: criminality, life expectancy, respect for the human rights and a fair distribution of resources (Giacomoni, 2004). It was all going in the right direction – human satisfaction. That's when the *subjective well-being* approach was absorbed into the economics dimension and *happiness* economics started to be shaped.

The conventional view of utility is based on tangible goods and services, chosen through individual observation and judgment (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 1996; Varian, 2002).

Economists assume that the consumers act rationally and want to maximize their consumption according to the limited resources available to them (Becker, 1962). A change in relative prices or real income would change their preferences and thus their final decision (Becker, 1962). The exclusive reliance on an objective approach by the standard economic theory – the *decision* utility - proved to be insufficient, over time (Powdthavee, 2007).

Most critics believe that individuals not always act rationally when making decisions about consumption nor are always able to maximize their utility for themselves (Becker, 1962). How come?

Well first it is generally accepted among scholars that individuals are not well informed about their present conditions or tend to consider the future in an inconsistent mold (Powdthavee, 2007). Also, individual consumers are victims of so called *contextual influences*: for example the comparison of one's income with its peers can affect individual's utility in a great way (e.g., Duesenberry, 1949; Hirsch, 1976; Clark & Oswald, 1998). Furthermore, people have shown to behave irrationally in different situations. Irrational behaviors include: inertia and impulsiveness. Inertia means that, wherever possible, individuals consume the same they did in the past (Becker, 1962); Impulsiveness reports to the situations when no preference system is consulted prior to a decision, it is assumed that any good or service has an equal chance of being selected (Becker, 1962).

Real-life observations and laboratory inference lead to the conclusion that individual choices are mainly driven by non-objective factors. They incorporate elements like:

- individual's emotional state (Hermalin & Isen, 1999),
- mastery and meaning (Loewenstein, 1999),
- self-confidence (Benabou & Tirole, 1999),
- altruism (Altonji et al., 1997),
- and fairness (Rabin, 1996).

It is understood that individual decisions cannot be acknowledge without in part, listening to what human beings have to say (Powdthavee, 2007). Listening to what they have to say about what makes them happy leads to the comprehension of what truly drives their choices.

As a matter of a fact, happiness is the most important indicator on the life quality, individually and broadly speaking. Diener and Seligman (2004) in their article "Beyond Money: Toward an Economy of Well-Being" discuss the shortcomings of economic measures and outline the profits society can gain from enhancing the well-being of its citizens.

Citizens with reported high levels of well-being might facilitate governance, they can increase the wealth of a nation by earning more money and creating more opportunities for others, they are potentially more productive and creative; they have the chance to live longer and healthier and develop more satisfying social relationships (Larsen, 2008).

Happiness Economics is no more than a quantitative approach to happiness. It includes more than the classical *decision* utility: it also covers *experience* utility, which is based on individuals' consumption experience or life events, and *procedural* utility, based on the engagement on preferred activities (Powdthavee, 2007).

2.1.3. BEYOND ECONOMICS

Facing these fascinating impacts on the overall society, positive psychology was incorporated into the fields of social policy.

Diener has shown that the nations with a higher mean of subjective well-being are more sustainable economically, socially and politically: individuals have longer life expectancy, more job security, more political stability, lower divorce rates, better records of civil liberty, and more gender equality.

Ultimately, experts came up with a new metric to measure socio economics development: the *Gross National Happiness* (GNH), that as shown to act as a sustainable substitute for the Gross National Product (Larsen 2008).

The GNH evaluated nation's quality of life and social progress (quote)

Obviously, due to the subjective weight associated to happiness, it is a difficult metric to quantify. It is much easier to define GNH than to compute I and so there's no exact formula for GNH (McDonald, 2005). Nonetheless, the indicators framing GNH are subjective to quantitative measurements, for examples it has been proven that social relations correlate positively with subjective well-being[8].

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[8] For more information on these indicators please report to the *Happiness Conditions* section of this paper (*2.2.3 Happiness Conditions*).

Later on, GNH was recognized as a reliable socioeconomic measurement tool. An attempt to compute this approach was Med Jones's[9] formula. Jones as stated that national policies had to be reviewed and new perspectives had to take into account happiness national outcomes and not just economic and businesses results (Jones, 2006).

In his paper "*The American Pursuit of Unhappiness: Gross National Happiness (GNH) - A New Economic Metric*", GNH is proposed to be an index function of the total average per capita of the following measures:

i. Economic Wellness: covering economic indicators such as consumer debt, average income to consumer price index ratio and income distribution (Jones, 2006).

ii. Environmental Wellness: covering environmental indicators such as pollution, noise and traffic (Jones, 2006).

iii. Physical Wellness: covering physical health indicators such as severe illnesses or overweight (Jones, 2006).

iv. Mental Wellness: covering mental health indicators such as usage of antidepressants and rise or decline of psychotherapy patients (Jones, 2006).

v. Workplace Wellness: covering labor indicators such as jobless claims, job change, workplace complaints and lawsuits (Jones, 2006).

vi. Social Wellness: covering social indicators such as discrimination, safety, divorce rates, complaints of domestic conflicts and family lawsuits, public lawsuits or crime rates (Jones, 2006).

vii. Political Wellness: covering political indicators such as the quality of local democracy, individual freedom, and foreign conflicts (Jones, 2006).

All those indicators being computed via direct survey and statistical measurements (Jones, 2006). These indicators were also incorporated in the first Global GNH Survey (Jones, 2006).

2.2. HAPPINESS CONCEPTUALIZATION

To explain Happiness, what it means and what its main driver are is not an easy task due to the subjective load intrinsic to its meaning. Stating so, I'll start with a Diener's approach to this subject, one of the great experts on this area. As he stated,

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[9] President of International Institute of Management.

happiness is one of the different shapes of *psychological well-being.* According to Diener's findings, s*ubjective well-being* is an expression that translates individuals' cognitive and affective evaluation of their lives (Diener, 2000). Representing humans' moods, emotions and judgments, it is commonly referred as *subjective well-being*.

Hills and Argyle (2001), refine that definition explaining that happiness is a multidimensional entity consisting of emotional and cognitive parts – moods emotions and judgments. The affective[10] component is how well one typically feels. The cognitive component is the perceived difference between what one has and what one wants in life. Following the same track, Tatarkiewicz (1976) defines happiness as a sense of overall satisfaction with one's whole life.

2.2.1. MEASURING HAPPINESS

Happiness emotional and cognitive dimensions are often measured as a sum positive affect, negative affect and a global sense of satisfaction in life (Myer & Diener, 1995).

Positive affect report to the frequency of positive emotions, negative affect report to the frequency of negative emotions and the global sense of satisfaction in life reports to subjective can be perceived asking people how they feel about their life (Diener, 2000).

There are single self-report assessments like the Single Item Happiness Scale (Abdel-Khalek, 2006) where the respondents are asked to answer the question "Do you feel happy in general?" over a 10-point scale. And there are multiple self-report assessments like: (1) PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Scale; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) measuring both positive and negative affect, each with 10 affect items, or the (2) Satisfaction With Life Scale assessing life satisfaction with items such as "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life" (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

There are also other measuring techniques like the (1) Experience-Sampling Method (ESM): where respondents are asked to report their feelings at random moments of their daily life.

As all these techniques require a subjective report, scientific research suggests, that SWB measures can biased (Diener, 2000). Schwarz and Strack (1999) replicated a

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[10] Also referred as the *hedonic level of affect.*

series of studies demonstrating that global measures of life satisfaction can be dependent on the moods rof the individuals at the moment of responding to the scale. Another potential problem is that people may respond to SWB scales in socially desirable ways (Diener, 2000).

Nonetheless, these life-satisfaction reports have proved to be reliable, for example, Moum (1996) found that low life-satisfaction reports predicted suicide over the following five years. Also, as Abdel-Khalek studies (2006) report: the Single Item Happiness Scale has a strong temporal stability (0,86) and a strong correlation with the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI; Argyle, Martin, & Lu, 1995; Hills & Argyle, 1998) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993).

2.2.2.   HAPPINESS CHARACTERISTICS

Happiness covers a series of features intrinsic to its nature.

Happiness is a basic emotion. Ekman (1992) explains that basic emotions[11] include distinctive universal facial expressions, despite cultural and individual implications, and are related to physiologic changes and a specific behavior. In this perspective, happiness can be shaped by culture and learning, but all humans possess the ability to experience it (Lindquist, 2011). But it is broaden that that. According to Diener (1984) happiness is bound to 3 specific characteristics: it is subjective – well-being is an individual experience –,it is not merely the opposite of negative feelings but also the presence of positive ones and finally it is boundless, being attached to different aspects of life.

Life satisfaction levels are reported to be relatively stable over time (Giacomony, 2002), which implies that it is little dependent on external impacts. In fact, when people are subjected to high emotional situations they tend to return to their former levels of happiness. This happens because humans have natural adaptation abilities when exposed to a continuous stimulus.

Happiness intensity is not related to happiness levels but rather to the quality of happiness (Diener, 1985). In fact, what turns to be the best predictor of overall happiness is the frequency of which people feel positive feelings compared to negative ones (Diener, 1985)

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[11] According to Oatley (1989) there are 5 basic emotions: happiness, fear, sadness, anger and disgust.

Finally, Diener also acknowledges that subjective well-being is not determined solely by one condition – some conditions are necessary to achieve happiness but none of those is sufficient to cause it.

What are then, the conditions known to be associated with high happiness levels?

2.2.3.   HAPPINESS CORRELATIONS

There's a wide variety of factors with an association to subjective well-being. Scientific studies have uncover subjective well-being correlations with domains like demographic and life status (e.g., Argyle, 1999; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Myers, 2000), personality traits and attitudes (e.g., Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), goals (e.g., McGregor & Little, 1998), and positive attitudes (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

As proposed by Lyubomirsky (2001) and accepted by the majority of the scientific community these conditions can be organized into three distinct dimensions: *Genetics, Life Circumstances* and *Intentional Activities.*

2.2.3.1.   Genetics

Genetics regulate the mental traits that are inherent to any human being and quite stable over time (Costa and McCrae, 1990; Roberts, Walton and Viechtbauer, 2006). It includes the *personality* and the genetic predisposition natural to each individuals (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999) and inherit from their family.

Genetics shape a pre-disposition to a certain state of happiness. Sheldon, Lyubomirsky and Schkade (2005) underline that *"The set point likely reflects immutable interpersonal, temperamental and affective personality traits, such as extraversion, arousability and negative affectivity, that are rooted in neurobiology, ...are highly heritable... and change little over the lifespan".* Many researches have shown that the so called "happy gene" is clearly correlated with traits like extraversion, neuroticism, and also "openness to experience" (Headey and Wearing, 1989). Extraversion was shown to be positively correlated to life satisfaction and happiness, across multiple personal records (diaries) and questionnaire studies. This has been consistently validated among several nations, using sample populations ranging from students to older people (e.g., Diener & Seligman, 2002; Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh, & Shao, 2000; Lyubomirsky et al., in press).

However, there's a personality characteristic with a stronger connection to happiness, it is called neuroticism[12]. Multiple studies and regression analysis uncover the fact that neuroticism holds a strong negative connection to happiness (McCrae and Costa, 1990)

Stating so, it has long been known that individuals with low levels of neuroticism and high extraversion hold the best chances to be chronically happier than the rest of the population (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener, 1984; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996).

Also, Costa and McCrae (1986) validated that "openness to experience" personality trait was an indicators of efficient coping and discovered that positive affectivity was connected to strong coping efforts.

However that it is not truthful to link happiness solely with genetics. Such assumption does not account for the correlations of cultural influences and human behaviors on overall happiness performance (Giacomoni, 2002).

2.2.3.2.   Life Circumstances

Life Circumstances include factors such socioeconomic status, educational levels, physical health and demographic variables such as age, gender, and race (Lyubomirsky, 2010).

Many social studies were conducted in order to understand the links between life circumstances and SWB (Diener, 1999). This quest started with a study of 23,875 people covering 11 countries performed by Cantril (1965), it was also addressed by Bradburn (1969) and latter, in 1990 with Ingleheart's analysis over the Eurobarometer surveys conducted over more than 160,000 respondents from 16 countries, from 1980 to 1986.

There are lots of evidence that happier people are more likely to register a better health, more fulfilling social relationships and higher professional success (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005).

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[12] Neuroticism is a negative cognitive-affective expression of personality; it is connected to long-term negative emotional states such as anxiety, anger and guilt, plus, individuals with neurotic tendencies tend to have more frequent and intense depressed symptoms (Digman, 1990).
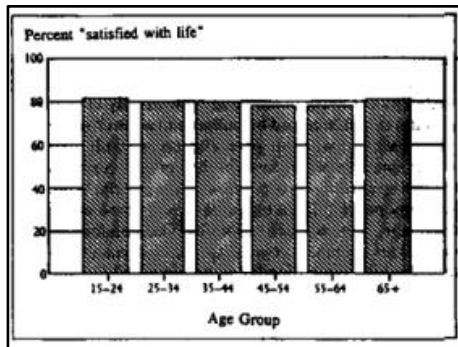
Figure 2 - Age and Wellbeing Correlations in 16 nations. Data from 167,776 people, representative sample from 1989 to 1986 and reported by Inglehart (1990)

Age: Although there are some common beliefs that may make it appear that happiness is somehow correlated to age, like the well-known and accepted ''middle life crisis''[13], studies have not shown significant evidence of this demographic trait's impact on life satisfaction, as shown in Figure 2 (Inglehart, 1990).

Moreover, some of these apparent effects of age are reduced and disappear when controls are applied, for example, on health or education (Nickerson, Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 2003).

Gender: Rousseau (2009) devoted an entire paper to explore how male and female happiness differ. According to his findings, female and male happiness differ along the lifespan. As it can be seen in Figure 3 that Rousseau's findings on happiness by gender life-cycle over Germany, women tend to be happier than men at younger age but their happiness
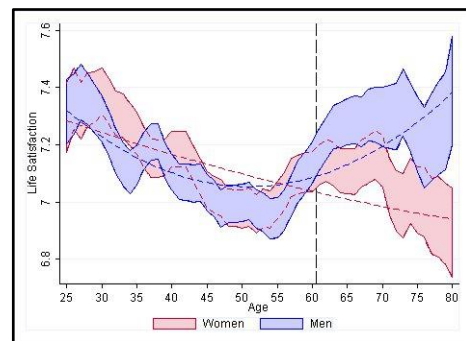

Figure 3 - Rousseau's findings on happiness by gender life-cycle over Germany

declines over time; in the other hand, men happiness follows an upward direction, especially after retirement (Rousseau, 2009). Moreover this behavior was replicated over the US and Western Europe, including Portugal. However this reversal happiness shift s probably explained by broader social and cultural conditions such as work status and social acceptance(Stevenson & Wolfers, 2008).
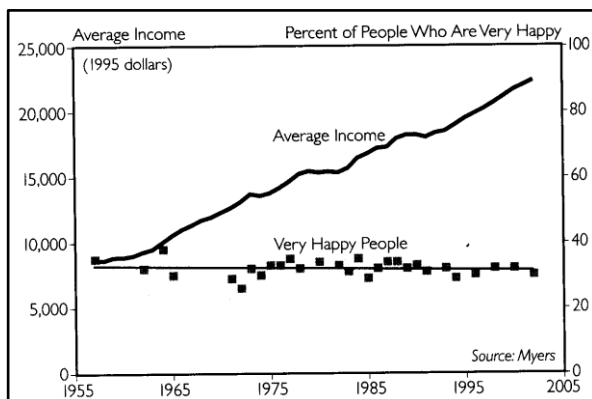
Figure 4 - Average Income and Happiness in the United States, from 1957 to 2002, reported by Myers

Income: Income has a complex but weak correlation to happiness (Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz, 2003). Within western countries, income is weakly linked happiness as it can be inferred through the figure 4, representing weak correlation between

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[13] Research evidences that there is a very small happiness variation on this life stage (Watson, 2000)

average income and SWB in US, from 1856 to 2002 (Myers, 2002).

However, Wealthy nations usually report higher satisfaction levels compared to the poorest nations (Ingleman e Klingemann, 2000). According to Diener and Biswas (2002), most surveys report correlations between income and happiness ranging from .13 to .24. Plus, in a meta-analysis of 286 empirical investigations on older adults, income was correlated with happiness and life satisfaction (Pinquart et al., 2000). However, that doesn´t explain why many Latin American countries have happiness levels that equal Japan's results (Veenhoven, 1991)[14]. The literature review shows that, after achieving a decent quality life and overcoming the poverty threshold[15] (which includes safe drinking water supplies, food and basic sanitation conditions) the increase of purchasing power is not significantly correlated with high happiness levels (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Veenhoven, 1991). Furthermore, *Yuppie*[16] values – as giving more importance to money and professional success rather than having strong friendships and marital relations – are noticeably related to lower life satisfaction (Satterfield, 2001).

Dunn and her colleges subordinate this ambiguous impact of money on happiness to the fact that "*people often spend money in ways that fail to maximize their happiness*" (Dunn et al., 2011) and they propose 8 principles meant to "*remedy that*" among their findings they realize that, in order to increase happiness one must (1) buy experiences instead of things, (2) buy many small pleasures instead of few big ones and (3) Pay now and consume later. Thus, suggesting that goods and services have different impacts on happiness outcomes.

Employment: Investigations repeatedly conclude that, compared to people with steady employment, people unemployed are unhappier (Diener, Nickerson, Lucas, & Sandvik, 2002; Lucas,Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004).

Moreover, success and job satisfaction are positively associated with happiness (Weiss et al., 1999).For instance, life insurance agents selling more insurances are most optimistic (Seligman & Schulman, 1986) and CEOs with higher performance ratings were found to be the happiest amon their peers too (Pritzker, 2002).

Education: The correlation between education and well-being is based on the positive impact it has over income and professional status. During the last years, several

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[14] The World Values Survey (WVS), the biggest social research performed, states in its latest report that highest happiness levels where found, in descending order: in Porto Rico, Mexico, Denmark and Colombia. (WVS, 2006)
[15] See glossary.
[16] See glossary.

studies were performed, using the attained qualifications or the number of years of acquired education, demonstrating that education has an evident correlation to well-being.

In countries like: South Chorea, Mexico, Yugoslavia, the Philippines and Nigeria its coorelation is reported to be notorious (Veenhoven et al. 1994), which suggests that education has a greater impact in poorest countries (Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz, 2003). Moreover, even before getting a job, people with higher SWB are more likely to finish their studies (Frisch et al., 2004).

Relationships: Human inter-relationships have proven to be positively correlated with reported higher happiness levels — for example, having close social relationships is strongly linked to higher states of reported happiness (Diener, 1995).

This was revealed to be one of the clearest discoveries up to now, as Lyubomirsky discovered, using meta-data analysis over more than two hundred studies on approximately 275,000 individuals (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005).

Through cross-sectional studies, chronic happiness has shown to be associated with global social support (Baldassare et al., 1984; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2000) and the number of friends or companions people refer they can lean on (Baldassare, Rosenfield, & Rook, 1984; Lee & Ishii-Kuntz, 1987; Mishra, 1992; Phillips, 1967; Requena, 1995).

Concluding, happier people have closer and better interpersonal relationships.

In respect to marriage, several studies with participants from diverse cultures (e.g., Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi, 2000; Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Graham et al., in press; Kozma & Stones, 1983; Lee, Seccombe, & Shehan, 1991; Marks & Fleming, 1999; Stack & Eshleman, 1998), support that married people are happier than those with no marital status.

However, *having* children seems to have a negative impact on couples' dynamic making them less happy than the rest, with higher levels of happiness being restored again only after the children get out of the parents' house (Myers and Diener, 1995).

Culture: Cultural variables explain difference means of happiness across different cultures (Diener et al., 2003). This impact is assumed to be associated with objective factors such as: wealth, social norms on appropriate feelings and the value attributed to within each country. Also, culture can moderate the way in which other variables influence SWB (Diener et al., 2003).

Physical and Mental Health: Healthy people state they are happier than sick people, and this increased with age (e.g., Okun et al., 1984).

Higher happiness states are reported by people who are mentally more healthy (Chang & Farrehi, 2001; Lu & Shih, 1997; Phillips, 1967). In a study, Diener and Seligman (2002) reported that their happiest group of individuals showed lower levels of psychopathologies, like depression, hypochondriasis, or schizophrenia. Furthermore, better quality of life in cancer patients (Collins, Hanson, Mulhern, & Padberg, 1992) and smaller allergic reactions among healthy students (Laidlaw, Booth, & Large, 1996) were positively related to positive moods.

Wrapping up, there are some life circumstances that are clearly related to higher levels of happiness. Take, for example, Lyubomirsky's meta-analysis of SWB research that gathered the results of over 200 scientific studies on almost 275,000 individuals: her review of the cross-sectional correlational literature indicated that higher happiness states are strongly related to positive results in the three primary life domains: work, relationships and health (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005).

Apart from genetics and life circumstances, there is also a set of specific activities happy people claim they choose to perform. (Lyubomirsky, 2011).

2.2.3.3.   Intentional Activities

Intentional activities *are* the amount of actions taken daily by people and which are related to higher happiness states (Lyubomirsky, 2005). It covers acts like kindness towards others, regular exercise, participating in cultural life, adopting a positive attitude, and striving for meaningful goals (Lyubomirsky, 2005).

This dimension is divided into 3 distinct areas: behavioral, cognitive and volitional activities – that cannot be entirely separated even though they are distinct (Lyubomirsky, 2005).

Behavioral Activity

Evidences indicate that greater involvement in behavioral activities increase positive mood. The results of diary studies of 2-to 13 week long show an association between high levels of positive affect and reports of more time spent socializing with close friends, family or companions (Lucas, 2001; Watson et al., 1992) as well as a more frequent engagement to different activities (e.g., going to a party, a museum, or out for a meal; going shopping or on a week-end trip; Cameron, 1975; Watson et al., 1992)

People who are committed to religion are more likely to classify themselves as "very happy" (Gallup, 1984). People exercising regularly report a relatively higher well-being than those not exercising (e.g., Keltner & Bonanno, 1997; Magen & Aharoni, 1991). Generally, happy and satisfied people report being engaged in frequent activities (Burger & Caldwell, 2000; Matikka & Ojanen, in press; Mishra, 1992; Veenhoven, 1994; Watson, Clark, McIntyre, & Hamaker, 1992), in social interactions (Gladow & Ray, 1986; Lucas, 2001; Watson, 1988), and group leisure activities, particularly (Mishra, 1992), as revealed in cross-sectional investigations.

After meta-analyzing 556 sources, Okun and colleagues determined a relation between SWB and the frequency of social activities, either formal or informal (Okun, Stock, Haring, & Witter, 1984). They found a positive meaningful association that was independent from the type of activity (e.g., having to do with voluntary organizations vs. friends) or the partner (e.g., friends vs. neighbors. Happy people also report having greater social support (Matikka & Ojanen, in press), more frequent attendance to club meetings (Bahr & Harvey, 1980; Lebo, 1953), and maintaining more organizational affiliations (Bahr & Harvey, 1980; Mishra, 1992), when comparing to their less happier peers.

Moreover, happy people volunteer for charity and community service groups, involving organizations related to religion, politics, education, and health (Krueger, Hicks, & McGue, 2001; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001) and invest more hours in volunteer service (Thoits & Hewitt,2001), than the unhappy ones.

Reports of having performed altruistic acts in the recent past are also more frequent in happy people (e.g., shopping for a sick friend or stopping to help a stranger; Krueger et al., 2001).

Cognitive Activity*:* Human's cognitive response to both extraordinary and ordinary life events as been linked to different levels of happiness (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Sheier & Carver, 1993).

Some types of positive cognitive activity include reframing situations in a more positive light or pausing to count one's blessings (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; King, 2001; Seligman, 1991), practicing gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), hope (Snyder, Ilardi, Michael, & Cheavens, 2000), and forgiveness (McCullough et al., 2000) increase well-being.

People that frequently (a) reframe their negative life circumstances into a positive perspective (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; McCrae &Costa, 1986), (b) look into future

through a positive point of view (Scheier & Carver, 1993; Seligman, 1991) and (c) perceive they're in control over their life outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Grob et al., 1999; Seligman, 1991) report higher levels of happiness, more frequently and for longer periods of time than the rest of the population.

As a matter of a fact, cognitive activities offer many excellent possibilities for happiness interventions (Fordyce, 1983).

<u>Volitional Activity</u>: When measuring volitional activity impacts on happiness, individuals are, for example asked to pursue personal goals during a 6 month period. Consistently, high levels of goal progress or achievement predict positive contribution to well-being through the whole period of time, while low levels of progress predict the contrary (Brunstein, 1993; Sheldon, 2002).
Moreover, volitional activities like fighting for personal goals (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001), or devoting effort to significant causes (Snyder & Omoto, 2001) have shown the same positive results. Specifically, Sheldon´s longitudinal research (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995, 1998), reports that well-being is more likely to increase when people choose and achieve a personal goal. To support this finding, Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2004) re-surveyed the participants three years after the original study and found that individuals with initial high-performance had maintained their increases in emotional well-being along all their college life.

Evidence suggest that SWB is higher when goal striving is: (a) intrinsic, meaning, concerned with contributions to community, emotional intimacy and personal goals (kayser & Ryan, 1993; 1996; Snyder & Omoto, 2001), (b) consistent with individual motives and needs (Brunstein, Schultheiss and Grassman, 1998; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995), (c) feasible and realistic (Diener & Fujita, 1995; Kasser, 1996), (d) accepted and valued by one's culture (Cantor & Sanderson, 1990; Suh, 2000) ad (e) not conflicting (Emmons, 1986).

Positive Psychologists report, so far, that happy people have higher rates of self-control and coping abilities (Aspinwall, 1998; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Keltner & Bonanno, 1997), a stronger immune system (Dillon, Minchoff, & Baker, 1985; Stone, 1994) and even live longer lives (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Ostir, Markides, Black & Goodwin, 2000). The literature also suggests that these people tend to be more altruistic – they are more cooperative, charitable, and other-centered (Isen, 1970; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Williams & Shiaw, 1999).

Therefore, it is accepted among scholars that improving peoples levels of happiness might really be a dignified goal, especially after primary physical and security needs are met (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

But, can it be sustainably attained? How much of these three dimensions account for happiness and how far can we use them to attain higher happiness states? It will all be reveals in the next pages.

2.2.4.   HAPPINESS DIMENSIONS

It has been consistently concluded that each of the dimensions affecting subjective well-being have different impacts on happiness.

Lykken (2000) reports on twin studies suggest that genes may account for as much as 50%[17] of the variation in happiness levels, which proves that at some degree happiness cannot be controlled.

Life circumstances, ranging from demographics factors to life status), when accounted together have shown to explain from 7% to 15% of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984). This small impact on happiness levels, Lyubomirsky (2005) explains, is closely related to the adaptation ability that is inherent to human beings, in fact it has been proven that people adapt rapidly to new circumstances and life events, in response to stimuli that are constant or repeated.

As it was proposed by Lyubomirsky (2005), happiness can be explained by the three different dimensions exposed before: Genetics, Life Circumstances and Intentional Activities (voluntary control), as represented in Figure 5.
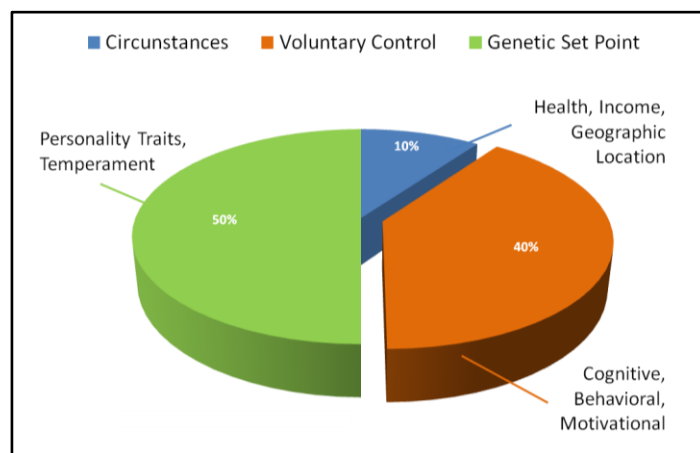
Figure 5 - Determinants of Happiness, adapted from Lyubomirsky et al. (2005)

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[17] This is criticized tough due to the argument that twins experience the same family environment to underestimating the effect of children's behavior on the parent's.

2.2.4.1.   Genetics

Genetics represent about 50% of overall happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Nonetheless some scholars claim that the heritability of happiness may be as high as 80%, although a 50% coefficient is much widely accepted (Braungart, Plomin, DeFries, & Fulker, 1992; Tellegen et al., 1988; Diener et al., 1999).

Genetics determinants define the individual happiness set point, which can differ among the population. Some individuals have a *set point* higher than others (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). These heritage traits are considered to be stable over time, incapable to be influenced or controlled (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

2.2.4.2.   Life Circumstances

Although these conditions are usually associated to happiness, the correlation between its variables (for example: money or marriage) and SWB is visibly small, representing around 10% in peoples happiness (Sheldon et al, 2004, 2006;Lyubomirsky et al, 2005).

As a matter of fact, thanks to hedonic adaptation (or habituation), increasing happiness by changing life circumstances leads only to a temporary progress.

Hedonic adaptation occurs when we get used to new circumstances and our nervous system no longer recognizes the experience as new or relevant (Seligman, 2002). Stating so, has gains in happiness become the norm, hedonic adaptation severely limits our ability to improve long-term happiness by changing our life circumstances. For example, Schkade and Kahneman (1998) study showed that for as much as "living in California" seemed really tempting for many Americans , it didn´t really increase long term happiness. Individuals living in California were as happier as other Americans in general. Changing life circumstances seems to lead to only temporary improvement in people's happiness.

Summing up these findings, scientific research gets stuck into a pessimist deadlock.

Some researchers believe that each individual has indeed a chronicle level of happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2005).Headey and Wearing (1989) showed in a 4-wave panel study that participants revealed a tendency to return to their set point over time (see also Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). In the long-term, individuals may be constraint to return

to their set point, although short-term variations may occur: "What goes up must come down"(Lyubomirsky, 2005). Explanation may rely in the fact that throughout lifetime, traits remain consistent, so they may in part contribute for the set point stability. McCrae and Costa (1990), have supported this supposition by showing impressive long-term stability for the "Big Five" traits, which include neuroticism and extraversion – the two traits more nearly related to happiness. Because of this correlation between psychological well-being and these personality traits, individuals tend to maintain their happiness state over time (Costa, McCrae, & Zonderman, 1987; Diener & Lucas, 1999).

Despite that, Fujita (2005) found that, within a sample of 17 years old students, 24% of respondents suffered significant changes in their life satisfaction from the first 5 years to the last 5 years and that stability declined as the period between measurements increased (Fujita, F. & Diener, 2005). Even though height, weight, body mass index, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and personality traits were all more stable than life satisfaction. Reinforcing that, recent findings demonstrate that older people tend to be happier than younger people. (Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Diener & Suh, 1998; Roberts & Chapman, 2000; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). In fact, older people report higher life satisfaction in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.

How could this happen? Many researchers believe this to be related to the practice of specific positive activities. Those particular happiness-enhancing interventions have demonstrated high levels of efficiency in happiness increasing over time (e.g., Fava, 1999; Fordyce, 1977, 1983; Lichter, Haye, & Kammann, 1980; Sheldon, Kasser, Smith, & Share, 2002).

Happiness-enhancing activities such as successfully pursuing intrinsicly consistent life goals (e.g., Emmons & King, 1988; Kasser & Ryan, 1996), according to personal interests, motives, and values (Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grassman, 1998; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995), have been associated to well-being. Also, potentially controllable attitudinal factors such as taking optimistic perspectives on one´s life situations (e.g., DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; McCrae & Costa, 1986), avoid comparing to others and making self-evaluations (e.g., Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1997), and the inclination to feel in control of one´s life (Bandura, 1997; Scheier & Carver, 1993; Seligman, 1991; Taylor & Brown, 1988), have been consistently associated to well-being.

Also, compatible with the idea that people can learn to increase their happiness, socio-emotional selectivity theory indicates that older people learn to structure their

lives and pursue particular goals that increase positive emotions (Carstensen, 1995), and have the ability to choose more pleasant and self-suitable goals (Sheldon and Kasser's, 2001).

2.2.4.3. Intentional Positive Activities

Major findings suggest that the *intentional activity* category offers the best chances for sustainably increasing happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). In other words, changing one's intentional activities has proven to increase happiness over time.

By "intentional," researcher report to actions or activities that the individual freely tries to perform – it does not happen by itself (Lyubomirsky, 2005). Intentional positive activities cover a large amount of things that people think and do in their daily lives.

"*Positive activity interventions (PA) involve simple, self-administered cognitive or behavioral strategies designed to mirror the thoughts and behaviors of naturally happy people and, in turn, improve the happiness of the person performing them.*" (Lyubomirsky, 2012)

By analyzing the motivational and attitudinal factors of happy people, researchers have been able to organize the positive interventions that may increase people´s well-being (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Sin & Lyubomirsky´s (2009) study, which combined results from 51 randomized controlled interventions, showed that individuals, who were asked to practice positive intentional activities like grateful, optimistic or mindful thinking, reported consistent happiness enhancements.

 Although hedonic adaptation limits the happiness-inducing effects of intentional activities, just as it does for life circumstances, the recent data shows that the adaptation effect seems to be clearly weaker in the case of activities.

First, positive activities are episodic. This suggests that people may adapt less easily to new activities, in comparison to new circumstances. Secondly, positive activities can be varied. In fact, hedonic adaptation does not happen to variable or changeable stimuli (cf. Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999), which might help reducing habituation to the activity, allowing it to maintain its potential effect (McAlister, 1982). Thirdly, positive activities can directly counteract adaptation. For example, grateful thinking can directly counteract the effects of hedonic adaptation to one´s constant situations, by attracting attention to the elements that produced the initial happiness increase, and helping to prevent them from being taken for granted. Furthermore, people

who practice meditation often report renewed appreciation of the ordinary, thanks to their intentional re-encounters with the world (Lyubomirsky, 2005).

For all of these reasons, intentional positive activity offers the right solution to increase and sustain happiness over time.

Future research should focus on exploring the following questions:

"First, what types of positive activities are most successful and for whom? Second, how can person-activity fit be detected to provide the best match between a person and a positive activity? Third, what are the circumstances under which pursuing happiness might be detrimental to the seeker? Although research has shown that positive activities are, on average, effective in increasing well-being, certain people (e.g., those who are severely depressed) might feel discouraged or culpable if a so-called "simple" positive activity does not work for them and might suffer decreases in well-being as a result." (Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). As a matter of a fact, multiple researches have been addressing this issues over the last decade and a growing number of positive results have been unveiling the efficacy of techniques that target well-being (Parks & Diener (in press); Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), leading to increases in happiness and small to moderate decreases in depressive symptoms (average effect size rs .29 and .31, respectively).

2.3. INCREASING HAPPINESS: POSITIVE ACTIVITIES MODEL

Scientific investigation has recently begun to reveal the ideal conditions under which positive activities increase well-being and its internal mechanisms (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

Lyubomirsky has designed practical framework to properly explore the intentional activities outcomes on happiness (Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Based on this model (Figure 6), it is assumed that positive activities can generate "upward spirals" of positive emotions, thoughts and behaviors in people.

They also suggest that a "will" as well as a "proper way" are essential for happiness-increasing activities to be effective (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, et al., 2011).
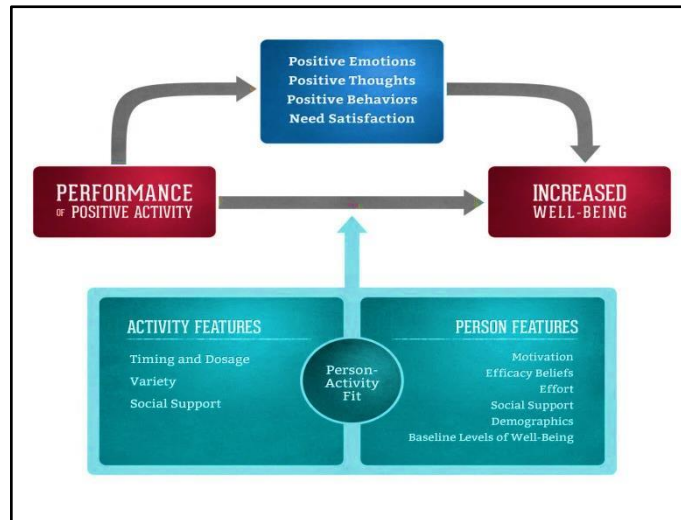
Figure 6 – Positive Activity Framework: Model of Psychological Mediators and Moderators Underlying the Efficacy of Positive activity Interventions. Adapted from "How Do Simple Positive Activities Increase Well-Being", Lyubomirsky et al. (2012)

This framework accounts for tree distinct dimension to take into account when using intentional and positive activities to sustainably increase happiness: (1) *activity features,* (2) *person features and* (3) *person-activity fit* .

2.3.1. ACTIVITY FEATURES

The types of activity have proven its success within random and controlled interventions (Parks & Diener (in press); Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). They ask individuals to do things like: write gratitude letters, savor happy memories, and do acts of kindness on a regular basis.

As Lyubomirsky (2012) explains, positive activities (PA) are all "*relatively brief, self-administered and non-stigmatizing exercises that promote positive feelings, positive thoughts, and/or positive behaviors, rather than directly aiming to fix negative or pathological feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. (…) These strategies do not involve making major shifts to people's current life situations and can be used by anyone, regardless of their genetic makeup."*

Recently, Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) conducted a meta-analysis which robustly demonstrated that such techniques increase happiness (r=.29) and moderately decrease depressive symptoms (r=.31).

The most effective activities, has proven by multiple research results, are accounted in Fordyce's "14 Fundamentals" of happiness (1983). Fordyce´s pioneering studies supply evidence that individuals have the ability to increase their short-term well-being with

"training" programs. The happy enhancing activities suggested by the author and supported by Lyubomirsky (2012) are:

1. Practicing acts of kindness towards others

2. Pursuing goals that are important to me

3. Expressing gratitude

4. Being optimistic

5. Doing physical exercise or sports

6. Nurturing my social relationships

7. Savoring life's joys

8. Acting like a happy person

9. Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment"

10. Forgiving others

11. Practicing religion and/or spirituality

12. Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity

13. Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others

14. Practicing meditation

The question remaining is: how can these activities be properly attained in order to maximize its outcomes on happiness? Lyubomirsky suggests that *timing*, *dosage* and *variety* are directly linked to positive activities effectiveness (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

The <u>frequency</u> of times a positive activity is performed seems to have a negative effect on happiness. If the same positive activity is performed without any variation its benefits on happiness may be reduced, as individuals get used to a single positive activity, they experience less increases in positive emotions. A 6 week study demonstrated that participants who counted their blessings once per week, experienced more gains in well-being in comparison with participants who performed that activity 3 times per week (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al., 2005).

The <u>length</u> of an intervention may also reinforce the gains accumulated from performing a particular activity: the longer the intervention, the greater the increase to well-being (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Moreover, researchers claim that happiness-increasing activities require a sustained practice, so that the effects last longer. Over three different studies, participants who perform positive activities even after the prescribed study period continue to demonstrate gains in well-being compared to the control group (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010; Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Seligman et al., 2005).

Varying the routine of a positive activity could also extend its positive effects. To test this evidence, Sheldon and colleagues (2012), found that individuals requested to perform different acts of kindness each week (e.g., do a new household chore one week, surprise their pet with a treat another week) revealed greater gains in well-being in comparison to those requested to perform the same act of kindness every week (e.g., do new household chores each week). In another study (Sheldon and colleagues, 2012; Study 1), participants were asked to make a positive life change (e.g., walking to work each day). Those who performed their life change in varied ways over time (e.g., they varied their daily route to work) revealed sustained increases in well-being at a sequent evaluation relative to those who did not. Moreover, individuals take more time to accommodate to positive stimuli that are varied than to stable ones (Leventhal, Martin, Seals, Tapia, & Rehm, 2007).

2.3.2. PERSON FEATURES

Self-selection, or the fact that the individual is a happiness seeker, is a crucial booster to the positive activity success. Individuals volunteering into a positive intervention have larger and longer gains in happiness and strongest decreases in depressive symptoms than those than those who do not self-select (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

Proving so, Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, and their colleagues (2011), introduced a set of positive interventions in two different ways: as a happiness boosting intervention and as a cognitive exercise. Participants were all voluntary. Participants who initially self-selected into the intervention perceived to make them happier reported greater happiness increases than those who self-selected to "test cognitive exercises" (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011). This relies on the fact that happiness seekers will put more effort into a positive activity (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012) and thus as Lyubomirsky's research predicts: as effort increases, happiness increases too (see figure 7).
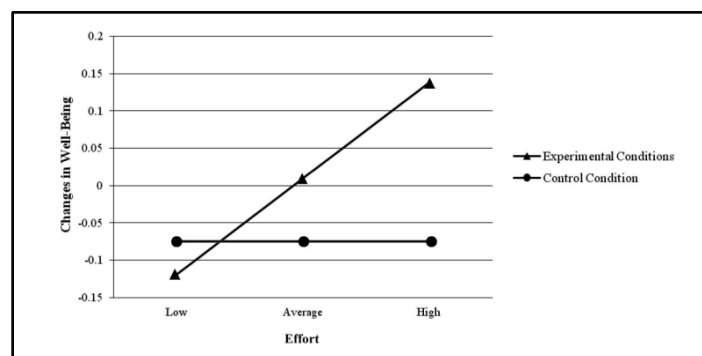
Figure 7 - Effect of experimental vs. control conditions on changes in wellbeing based on degree of effort. Adapted from Lyubomirsky, Dikerhoof, Boehm & Sheldon, (2011)

This idea is corroborated by many other studies. For example, a 6-week study conducted by Layous found out that self-reported participant effort predicted linear increases in SWB (Layous, Lee, et al., 2012), and, "*in a 6-week workplace intervention, the number of characters written (an indicator of effort) during a gratitude-focused activity also predicted increases in well-being*" (Chancellor & Lyubomirsky, 2012).

Also, being around other happiness seekers or within a social environment that encourages happiness seeking behaviors seems to potentiate positive activities success (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012). Social support was found to perpetuate this positive impact around the world. According to the Gallup World Poll, the four of the happiest-ranking countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and the Netherlands), 95% of respondents felt they had relatives or friends they could rely on if they needed to (Diener, Helliwell, & Kahneman, 2009). In contrast, only 55% of respondents in the four lowest-ranking countries (Togo, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe) reported having such a robust social support.

For example, in one experiment, people recruited into a weight loss intervention with friends lost more weight at a 4- and 10-month follow-up than people recruited individually). Further more evidence proves that, individuals with a strong social support are more likely to be more success full to lose weight (Wing & Jeffrey, 1999), adhere to medical treatment (DiMatteo, 2004) and stick to their New Year's (Norcross & Vangarelli, 1989).

Recent findings go deeper: they suggested that perceived access to social support is more strongly related to well-being than actual received support, and that received support can sometimes have negative outcomes (Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000). For example, received voluntary non-asked-for support during a happiness-increasing activity could be perceived as intrusive and therefore have counterproductive consequences (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

Culture is also a great predictor of PA effectiveness:
- Western cultures strongly value personal achievement and goal pursuit when weighting their own happiness (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004), whereas

- Eastern cultures focus their happiness conditions more on collective harmony and relationships than in their individual needs (Diener & Suh, 1999; Uchida et al., 2004).

The Western happiness dependency on *intrapersonal* factors and the Eastern link to more *interpersonal* factors may shape the categories of positive activities that are more effective in each situation (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012). Boehm and colleagues (2011) discovered that Asian Americans experienced greater increases in well-being from positive activities (writing letters of gratitude) that differ from the self-oriented category (writing about your best possible self), however but this effect did not reach significance (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

There are other factors to take into consideration. For example the individual *set-point* is also crucial to PA impact on happiness. It is conceivable that individuals may need to be in a certain level of well-being to profit from positive activities (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012). Specifically, there may be *a minimum* amount of individual happiness that, if not met, compromises the PA impact on happiness, as it seems too emotionally demanding for these individuals to execute. Supporting this evidence, Cohn & Fredrickson (2010) found that individuals who initially reported more positive emotion in a loving-kindness meditation study, revealed faster developments in positive emotions in response to meditation and were more likely to pursue with meditational activities at the 15-month follow-up than individuals who reported less positive emotion at begging. As a matter of fact, these results could be misinterpreted as suggesting that only people who are already relatively happy can increase their happiness from executing PA (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012). Nonetheless, is was shown in the loving-kindness meditation study that, even though individuals with higher set points showed faster developments, over the 8-week intervention meditation increased positive emotions in all participants, strengthening their set of personal resources, which, in turn, led to higher happiness levels (Fredrickson et al., 2008).

2.3.3.   PERSON-ACTIVITY FIT

Lyubomirsky (2012) states that *person-activity fit* report to the matching patterns between the individual (e.g., his or her personality or culture) and the activity feature. It determines how much any activity feature affects a PA´s success (e.g., dosage or social support; represented in Figure 7 as person-activity fit).

Researchers need to consider that certain positive activities might work better for certain types of people (Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Up until now, average or overall effects of PA on happiness were corroborated in nearly all studies (e.g., finding that varying the practice of a positive activity or limiting that practice to once per week yields the largest mean improvements in well-being). However, different persons probably have different preferences for positive activities, so, each individual might have his own optimal program to increase his well-being. For instance, people who are extraverted may profit more from positive activities that encourage them to communicate with others, and religious people may profit more from spiritually composed activities (Layous, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). People indicating a specific happiness-increasing activity as more natural and enjoyable to them, were more likely to integrate those behaviors and to show greater increases in well-being (Dickerhoof, 2007; Schueller, 2010).

It is very likely that the greatest gains in well-being from practicing positive activities will emerge when the specific intervention format matches the individual intrinsic characteristics: their psychological traits, their motivation, their learning processes and specific preferences (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

Concluding "…good-fit will foster greater adherence, effort, and engagement" culminating in greater results (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2012).

2.4. HAPPINESS SEEKING MARKET

So far, the scientific literature reviews *"a number of cognitive, judgmental, and behavioral strategies that happy people use to maintain their high levels of well-being and have suggested that less happy people can strive successfully to be happier by learning a variety of effortful, happiness enhancing strategies and implementing them with determination and commitment"* (Lyubomirsky, 2012).

However these studies focus on solutions for the "average person" and therefor miss all those indicators on the existence of different subtypes of happiness-seeking individuals, each with distinct goals and motivations (Parks et al., 2012).

Happiness seekers are, indeed, the target market of the positive interventions (Parks et al., 2012) explained before. The question is: who is a potential *happiness seeker*?

It seems that nearly everyone believes, or would like to believe, that they can move in an "upward spiral" (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001) towards ever-greater personal well-being. But not everyone is a potential happiness seeker. In fact the literature evidence advise that people who already are very happy have no incentives to

learn no positive activities – since they are most probably already embracing the behaviors and thought patterns that these activities are meant to invoke (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Each person should is naturally able to perceive if there's a need to become happier and

"…giving the PA self-administered nature, each individual can choose for himself which, if any, positive activity he would like to practice, how much, how often, and in what way." (Lyubomirsky, 2012).

Not many studies have been tailored specifically towards happiness seekers; however there's a study that specifically isolates this population in the light of the assumptions discovered to promote sustainable happiness (Parks et al., 2012). These study's findings can be divided into divided into (1) the happiness seekers characteristics, (2) their happiness seeking preferences and usage behaviors.

2.4.1. HAPPINESS SEEKERS CHARACTERISTICS

Happiness Seekers characteristics report to those features proved to be consistently inherent to those people willing to intentionally become happier. Lyubomirsky, Parks and their colleges created a paper focused entirely on *happiness seekers* (Parks , Della Porta , Pierce , Zilca & Lyubomirsky, 2012). They define the happiness seeking market as being "*composed by those people that are highly motivated to become happier. They report increases in mood when they perceived they are about to perform a positive activity in order to become happier"* (2012).

Lyubomirsky and Parks findings provide a preliminary painting of happiness seekers' characteristics and their natural inclinations (Parks et al., 2012). They have selected a sample of "individuals with an explicit interest in engaging in happiness-increasing behaviors" (Parks et al., 2012). This study was conducted online, the samples was composed by 912 self-help seeking adults ranging in age from 21 to 83 (M 45.51, SD 12.43). Their findings reported that:

(1) *The happiness seeking market is primarily female;*
   In Parks study over 66% of his sample was female.
(2) *The happiness seeking market has access to high education;*
   In Parks sample 91.3% of the participants had completed at least some college, and 69.9% had a bachelor's degree or more (Parks et al., 2012)

(3) Happiness Seekers Life Satisfaction is below the average of the general population.

Perks used the *Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS)* to assess the participants' satisfaction with life; his findings reported a mean satisfaction with life below the average of the population. The average SWLS score is between 23 to 28 points, between the "slightly satisfied" and "satisfied" (Pavot & Diener, 1993) ranges. Perks sample registered a mean life satisfaction (M=20.56; SD=8.2) that fell into the "neutral" range .

Also, he found out he could divide his sample into two different segments, according to the participants' depression symptoms:

a. "individuals characterized by average depressive symptom scores, but who are not suffering from clinical depression"

b. "distress individuals, characterized by depressive symptoms well/above average, possibly even suffering from a mental health condition"

Summing up all these characteristics proved to be linked to the happiness seekers we should be able to detect how they can be translated to the Portuguese reality. Consistent with this study purpose, to uncover the *happiness seeking need within the Portuguese population,* I'll start by analyzing the evidences proving that this market exists.

H_1: There is evidence proving the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population.

Then I'll try test if the scientific findings on the happiness seekers characteristics apply in the Portuguese reality.

$H_{1.1}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly females.

$H_{1.2}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly people with an education equal or superior to college.

$H_{1.3}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers SWL is smaller than the average Portuguese population.

2.4.2.   HAPPINESS SEEKERS PREFERENCES

Happiness seeking preferences report to those activity's categories happiness seekers are willing to pursuit in order to attain higher levels of happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2012).

In Parks' study participants were presented a checklist of happy enhancing activities. This list was composed by those "14 Fundamentals" of happiness proposed by Fordyce's (1983) and integrated in Lyubomirsky' Positive Activities Model (2012). First, the feasibility of this 4-items list was tested: *"Only 3.5% of participants reported that their most valued activity was not represented by the list we gave them, suggesting that the list provides a reasonable representation of the activities that matter to happiness seekers."* (Parks et al., 2012). Then, according to the addressed questions and the data collected, Park validated the following premises:

(1) *Happiness seekers most preferred activities to be performed are "practicing acts of kindness" and "pursuing personal goals"*;

In Parks intervention (2012), where more than one activity could be selected, 77.2% of the sample chose the activity "practicing acts of kindness" and 73.7% choose also "pursuing personal goals" as their preferences. His research results also reported four activities as being "*endorsed somewhat less frequently than the others*" (Parks et al., 2012): "practicing religion and/or spirituality" (41.2%), using "strategies to cope with stress or adversity" (40.4%), avoiding "overthinking and social comparison" (37.7%) and "practicing meditation" (20.2%).

(2) *Happiness seekers most meaningful activity is* "nurturing social relationships".

When Parks and his colleges asked the participants to identify the activity category that was the most important or most meaningful to them, about half of participants (52.6%) chose "nurturing my social relationships." (Parks et al., 2012)

It is interesting to realize that, within Parks study, the happiness seekers preferences regarding the adoption of certain activities did not match the activity they perceived to be more important to them. Further studies should be conducted to understand the conditions underneath this relationship. But for now, summing up all these evidences drawn from the happiness seekers preference patterns we should be able to detect how they can be translated to the Portuguese reality.

First, to understand which of the happiness seekers are willing to pursuit the right incentives on the path to happiness, I'll analyze who, among the happiness seekers, is willing to learn specific activities that will enhance their happiness.

H_2: There's evidence that the Portuguese happiness seekers are willing to learn happiness enhancing activities.

I'm conducting this hypothesis, because there may be people that want to be happier but do not believe that it will be attained by adopting certain behaviors. These happiness seekers will never resort to happiness enhancing activities and so are irrelevant to this part of the study. If H_2 is accepted, I'll test the scientific evidences on the happiness seekers incentives towards the positive activities by analyzing if these findings can be overlapped to the Portuguese reality. I'll starts by testing the evidence regarding the preference to perform practicing acts of kindness and pursuing goals within the set of 14 activity' categories suggested by Parks *et al.* (2012).

> $H_{2.1}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Practicing acts of kindness towards others,* over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others* and *Practicing meditation.*
>
> $H_{2.2}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Pursuing goals that are important to me,* over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others* and *Practicing meditation.*

Also, to be consistent with Parks *et al.* findings, when they suggest that the activity the happiness seekers think is most valuable is "nurturing my relationships" I'll test the following hypothesis.

H$_{2.3}$ More than 50% of the Portuguese happiness seekers values "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity.

At this point and as we are analyzing the market behavior, it is important to underline the following missing link: there is no scientific evidence what so ever on the happiness seeker preferences over the different self-help materials available for this *quest for happiness.*

Consistent with Lyubomirsky (2012) suggestion, different people likely have distinct preferences when resorting to self-help tools and the right match will potentiate the need satisfaction effectiveness. For example, in a study conducted by Sheldon *et al.* (2010) students committed to engage in self-suited goals felt higher well-being increases than students only focused on changing something about their life circumstances. As there are no scientific studies connecting the relatedness between the different self-help learning tools that can be adopted to satisfy happiness seeking and the happiness seeker preferences (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001) I will not resort to any hypothesis regarding the consumer preferences.

The studies addressing this dimension only report that when resorting to the market to satisfy the pursuit of higher happiness states the best strategy is to spend on experiences rather than spending on products (Dunn et al, 2011). As shown in happiness correlations section of this chapter, Dunn and her colleges propose that, in order to increase happiness "one must buy experiences instead of things" (Dunn et al, 2011). This implies that goods and services have different impacts on happiness outcomes.

So, as stated in chapter 1, I'll analyze the individual preferences over the different self-help tools organizing them into goods and services.

According to accepted standardizations a good is physical product "*that can be offered to satisfy a need or want*" (Kotler, 1987). In the other hand, "*A service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product."* (Kotler,1987). He also adds that services are (1) intangible, (2) inseparable, (3) heterogeneous, (4) perishable and (5) lack of ownership.

In the light of these definitions I'll assume that (1) Books, (2) Audiobook, (3) Online Educational Courses, (4) Website Information, (5) Infomercials[18] and (6) Mail

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[18] Infomercials are television commercials which generally include a phone number or website.

Order Catalogues are *products.* And that (1) Motivational Speaker Seminars, (2) Personal Coaching, (3) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies are *services.* Later on, with the help of this assumption I'll analyze if happiness seekers are pursuing the self-help tools that are more likely to satisfy their needs.

Chapter 3
RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT
Portuguese Market Research

If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

- Mother Teresa (part 3 of 5)

3.1. RESEARCH OBJECTS AND OBJECTIVES

The research object will be the Portuguese happiness seeker. The objective of this research is to screen happiness seeking trends among the Portuguese population. The literature review conclusions on the paths to happiness will also be tested and motivation to be happier will be screened. This research process will also allow overlapping extra conclusions on happiness seeking usage behavior regarding the available self-help materials.

As this research hypotheses' are constructed on assumptions mostly extracted from a study conducted over internet users (Parks et al., 2012), and to assure an overlapping consistency all the participants in this study will also have to be internet users.

As so, the dimension of the population at study matches the number of Portuguese internet users, reported to be equal to 5,950,449 users by June, 2012 (ITU[19], 2010), which in turn represents 55,2% of the total Portuguese population.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A systematic and organized research tool will be drawn in order to understand the overall market condition in Portugal.

How? Through a questionnaire development efficiently spread through the population at study. The answers will be mainly categorical and nominal, in order to ease the process of concluding and cross relating data. The questionnaire will be almost exclusively composed by closed-type questions: Rank-orders and Likert Scales will be used to screen happiness-related characteristics. This will be conducted this way in order to maximize the reliability[20] and validity[21] of the answers. The questionnaire will

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[19] International Telecommunication Union: the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies.
[20] Test-retest, inter-rate reliability and internal consistency.
[21] Face, content, criterion and construct processes.

be delivered in Portuguese and will be available online, in order to have a more efficient coverage, to guarantee a rich and random sample able to represent the target population.

Geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral evidences on happiness seeking will be explored. The questionnaire will uncover four distinct dimensions:

3.2.1. COLLECTION OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The data collected must include respondents' characteristics in order to find consistent patterns. A collection of key demographic and geographic questions will be presented to secure a healthy market analysis.

3.2.2. ANALYSIS OF HAPPINESS SEEKING POTENTIAL

First the overall happiness will be assessed. A scientifically validated happiness screening tool will be included, to enrich the results and screen actual realities. Stating so, happiness will be measured using a single-item question "Do you feel happy in general?", answered on an 11-point scale (0-10). The correlation between the single-item and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was highly significant and positive, reinforcing its *concurrent validity*[22] (Abdel-Khalek, 2006). The single item had also a good *convergent validity* because it was significant and positively correlated with optimism, hope, self-esteem, positive affect, extraversion, and self-ratings of both physical and mental health (Abdel-Khalek, 2006). Moreover, its *divergent validity* was validated due to its significant and negative correlations with anxiety, pessimism, negative affect, and insomnia (Abdel-Khalek, 2006). Thus, it is safe to state that this measure of happiness is reliable, valid, and viable (Abdel-Khalek, 2006). Also, consumers will be asked on their personal intent to be happier to screen the incentives and intensity related to their happiness need.

At this dimension questions will be developed around literature review findings to validate the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is evidence proving the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population, and they have the following characteristics:

$H_{1.1}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly females.

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[22] Concurrent validity is demonstrated when a test positively relates with a measure that has previously been validated.

$H_{1.2}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly people with an education equal or superior to college.

$H_{1.3}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers SWL is smaller than the average Portuguese population.

3.2.3. HAPPINESS SEEKING PREFERENCES

According to the PA Model findings there is a set of HS activity categories *happiness seekers* can learn to practice in order to increase their happiness levels (Lyubomirsky, 2012). These will be the activities beings subjected to their preferences. This checklist was based on the framework of happiness-increasing activities, suggested in the PA Model, presented by Lyubomirsky (2008) among the following happiness-increasing activity: (1) Practicing acts of kindness towards others, (2) Pursuing goals that are important to me, (3) Expressing gratitude, (4) Being optimistic, (5) Doing physical exercise or sports, (6) Nurturing my social relationships, (7) Savoring life's joys, (8) Acting like a happy person, (9) Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", (10) Forgiving others, (11) Practicing religion and/or spirituality, (12) Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, (13) Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others, (14) Practicing meditation or (15) None of the categories fit. Moreover, more than one category could be selected.

At this dimension questions will be developed around literature review findings to validate the hypothesis 2:

H_2: There's evidence that the Portuguese happiness seekers are willing to learn happiness enhancing activities.

$H_{2.1}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Practicing acts of kindness*

towards others, over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others* and *Practicing meditation.*

$H_{2.2}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Pursuing goals that are important to me,* over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's*

joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others and *Practicing meditation.*

$H_{2.3}$ More than 50% of the Portuguese happiness seekers values "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity.

Participants were asked to select all the activities that they prefer and also, what was their most valued category activity.

3.2.4. HAPPINESS SEEKING SELF-HELP RESOURCES

The questionnaire will also screen the behavior towards the different types of self-help tools, according to their preferences.

In order to depict different patterns I'll deliver a question asking respondents to organize the presented self-help tools according to their preferences.

As there are no literature review on the optimal self-help delivery formats, and to proper address it I'll resort to the self-help segments already being adopted within the self-improvement industry. These were presented earlier in this paper and report to the US self-improvement industry, the only self-improvement industry subjected to market reports.

According to US self-improvement market reports the self-help tools available are (1) Books (2) Audiobooks, (3) Motivational Speaker Seminars, (4) Personal Coaching, (5) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies, (6) Online Educational Courses, (7) Website Information, (8) Infomercials and (9) Mail Order Catalogues.

Before conducting this research we have to test the recognition of these different learning tools within the Portuguese population so the learning styles can be properly translated into the Portuguese reality.

I've interviewed 29 people within Lisbon, to screen acceptance and recognition over the 8 segments that are present in the American self-improvement market and I've come to realize that, from those 29 people, 27 accepted and recognized the segments: (1) Books (2) Audiobook, (3) Motivational Speaker Seminars, (4) Personal Coaching, (5) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies, (6) Online Educational Courses and (7) Website Information. However, only 1 person recalled "Infomercials" and 2 recalled

"Mail Order Catalogues" as tools available or recognized within the Portuguese Self Improvement market.

So, for the purpose of this study I'll take "Infomercials" and the "Mail order catalogues" out of the equation.

For more information, go to Appendix 1, where you can find the full questionnaire has it was delivered[23].

3.3. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The data used in this study was collected on a rolling basis[24] during the month of April, 2013. The study invited participants to complete an online questionnaire that proved the existence of simple, doable, happiness enhancing activities proposing the study of the Portuguese population opinion on this subject; it is safe to assume that most of the participants were Internet users interested in happiness subjects.

Each potential participant would arrive at the questionnaire form (https://qtrial.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9MtQKjzAa4y9OSw) via one of two ways: (1) a link on Facebook or (2) an email invitation.

It is important to note that Facebook is the most used social network within Portugal, virtually representing the entire Portuguese population that uses the internet. By December, 2012 the number of Portuguese Facebook subscribers was 4,663,060[25], representing 78% of the Portuguese internet users and 43.3% of the entire Portuguese population (ITU, 2010).

The results were analyzed with the help of *Qualtrics* online survey tools (www.qualtrics.com) and *SPSS*, predictive analysis software.

3.4. RESEARCH ANALYSIS

3.4.1. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Participants were 376 internet users, ranging from 15 to 70 years old (Figure 8), having the bulk of the respondents from 25 to 35 years (M=33.05; SD= 10.1) . The sample was mainly female (84.84%; Figure 9) and was living in Lisbon (51.6%; Figure 10).

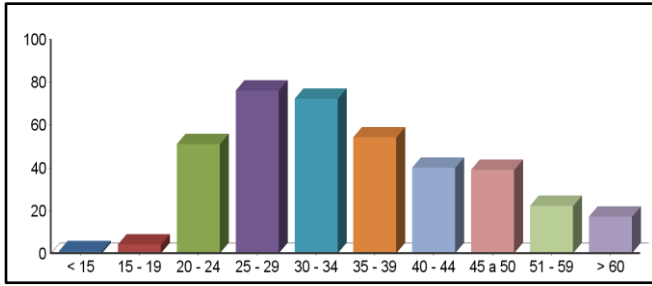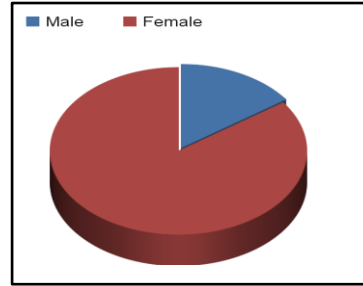[23] Appendix 3 – Round One Questionnaire *Design*
[24] Participants could enter the questionnaire any time during this month period.
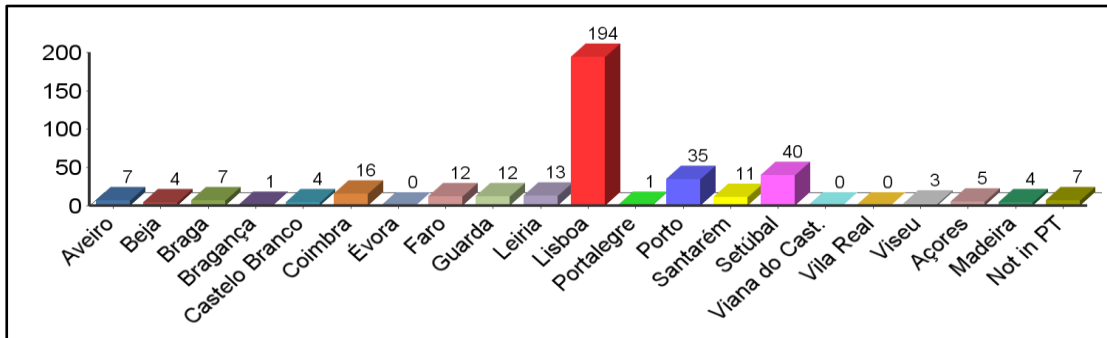[25] Internet World Stats - http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa.htm#pt
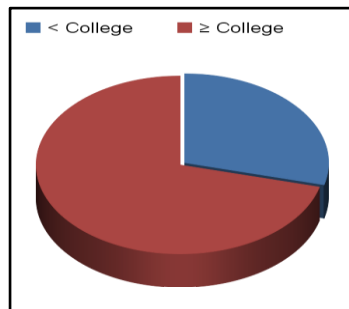
Figure 8 - Sample population age
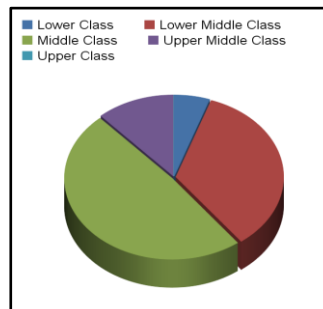

Figure 9 - Sample population gender

Figure 10 - Sample population residence

It represents an educated sample (71.01% completed at least some college; Figure 12), but almost 20% was unemployed and the majority of the participants reported belonging to the middle class (48.67% positioned themselves in the middle class; Figure 11) .

Figure 12 - Sample population education

**Figure 11** - Sample population social class

The gender and education results may be explained by the evidence that the individuals interested in the subject of happiness are mainly female and educated (Parks et al., 2012)

3.4.2. HYPOTHESES TESTING

3.4.2.1. Test Results of the First Hypothesis - There is evidence proving the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population.

According to the literature the happiness seeking market is composed by those people that are highly motivated to become happier (Lyubomirsky, 2012).

To find out the happiness seekers we have to filter all the findings into the following constraint: *"Do you want to be happier?"∋"yes"*[26]
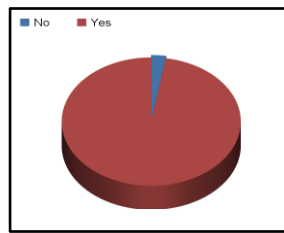

Figure 13 - Sample population willingness to "Be happier"

As shown in Figure 13, from the overall population sample that completed the survey (N=376), 366 participants (97.34%) answered "yes" to the question "Do you want to be happier?", representing nearly the entire sample.

Result: We cannot reject the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population. Stating so, we accept H_1.

Happiness Seeker sample age is concentrated around the 25-35 years range (M=33, SD=2.2; Figure 14). More than half of the HS sample lives in Lisbon (51.64%) and roughly 9% lives in Oporto. In terms of life conditions, 73 respondents (19.95%) reported they were unemployed (Figure 15) and 49% of the sample reported belonging to the middle class (Figure 16).
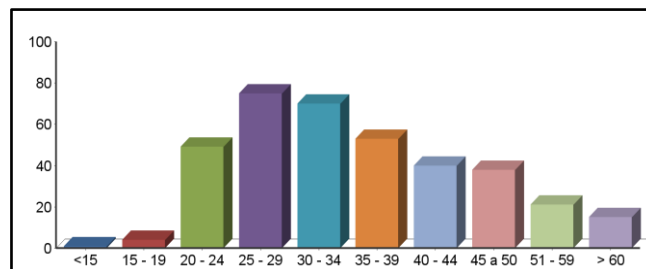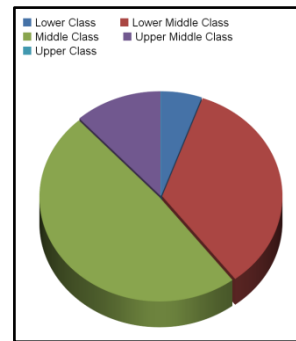

Figure 14 - Happiness Seekers age

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[26] Para eu saber que o "∋" = "contains": http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mathematical_symbols
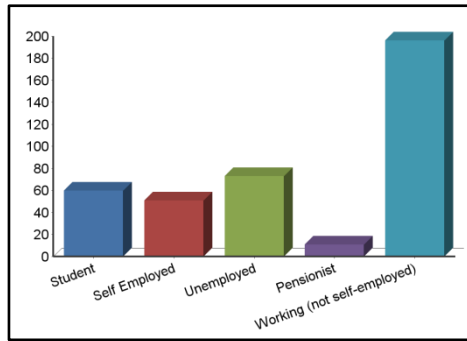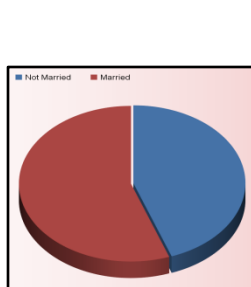
Figure 16 - Happiness Seekers employment

Figure 15 - Happiness Seekers social class

Regarding their relationship dynamics: 240 respondents (65.75%) stated they were in a relationship (Figure 17) and from those 240 persons, 130 were married (Figure 18). Also out of the total 367 respondents, 150 have children (41%; Figure 19).

Figure 198 - Happiness Seekers marriage status
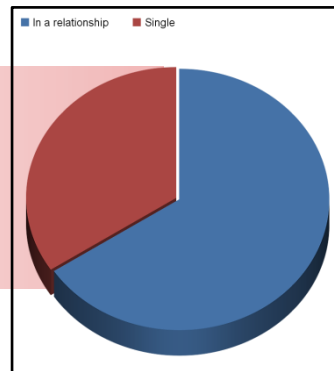
Figure 187 - Happiness Seekers relationship status
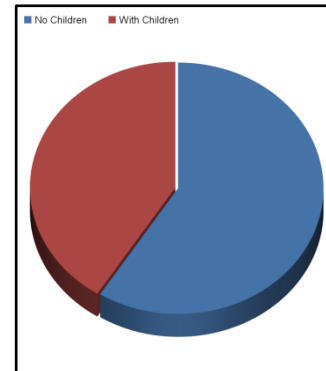
Figure 179 - Happiness Seekers children status

3.4.2.2.Test Results of the First Sub-Hypotheses

$H_{1.1}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly females.

Figure 20 - Happiness Seekers gender

Actually, the happiness seeking sample has more than 80% of female respondents (N_{female}=313=85.5%; Figure 20)

Result: We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly females. Stating so, we accept $H_{1.1}$.

$H_{1.2}$ Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly people with an education equal or superior to college.
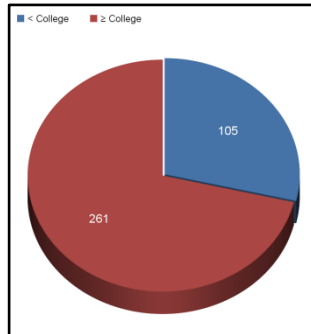
Figure 21 - Happiness Seekers education

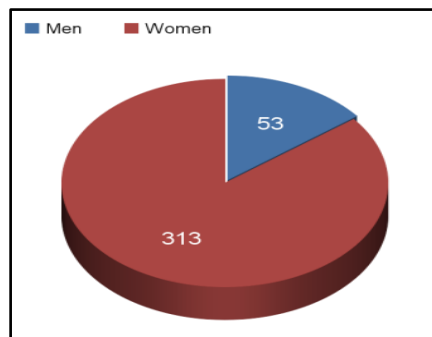The gathered information concludes that the happiness seeking sample is mainly composed respondents with an education equal or superior than college ($N_{college}=261=71,12\%$). (Figure 20).

Result: We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly people with an education equal or superior to college. Stating so, we accept $H_{1.2}$.

$H_{1.3}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers SWL is smaller than the average Portuguese population.
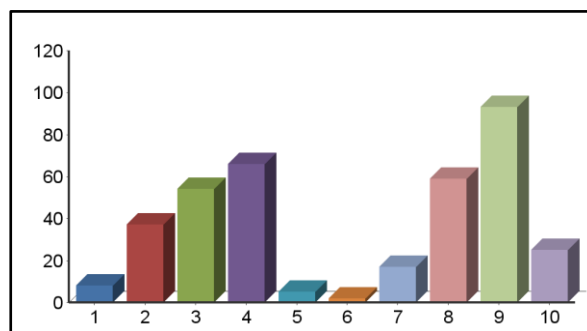
Figure 22 - Happiness Seekers Subjective Well Being

According to the World Values Survey (2005) the Portuguese life satisfaction mean (on a scale from 1 to 10) is equal to 6,7. This sample mean is 6,07 (SD=2,88) (Figure 22). On a two-tailed T-Test, for the equality of two means, with a significance

level of 5%, the p-value is 0,0 (T-score = -4.12413) and so we can reject the null hypothesis (n=μ) and thus we cannot reject our $H_{1.3}$.

Result: We cannot reject that the Portuguese Happiness Seekers SWL is smaller than the average Portuguese population. Stating so, we accept $H_{1.3}$.

3.4.2.3.   Test Results of the Second Hypothesis - There's evidence that the Portuguese happiness seekers are willing to learn happiness enhancing activities

To validate the second hypothesis - H_2: There's evidence that the Portuguese happiness seekers are willing to learn happiness enhancing activities, respondents belonging to the happiness seeking sample (N=366), were asked if they were "willing to learn happiness enhancing activities".

Figure 23 - Happiness Seekers interest in learning techniques to increase happiness

From those, 353 said "yes", representing roughly 97% of the happiness seeking sample (Figure 23).

Result: We cannot reject that there is evidence the happiness seeking market is willing to learn happiness enhancing activities. Stating so, we accept H_2.

3.4.2.4.   Test Results of the Second Sub-Hypotheses

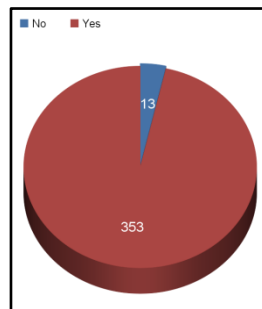$H_{2.1}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Practicing acts of kindness towards others*, over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others* and *Practicing meditation.*
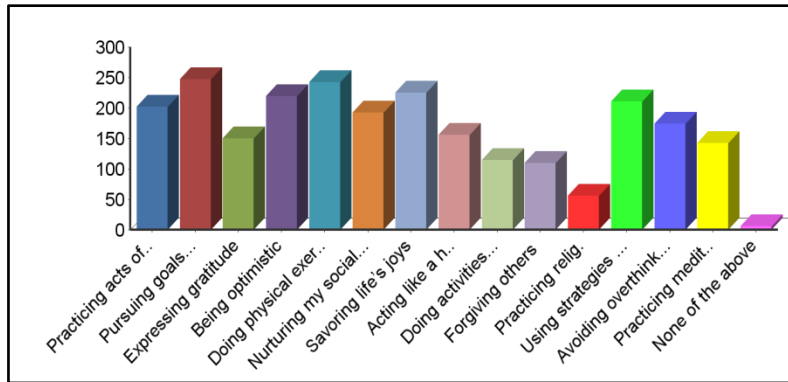
Figure 24 - Happiness seekers preferences regarding positive activities

Although almost 60% of the population included it "Practicing act of kindness" in their preferences (57,22%), however this represents the 6th preferred activity (see Figure 24).

Result: We can reject that Portuguese happiness seekers would prefer to perform practicing acts of kindness over all other activities. Stating so, we reject $H_{2.1}$.

$H_{2.2}$ Portuguese Happiness Seekers would prefer to perform *Pursuing goals that are important to me,* over: *Expressing gratitude, Being optimistic, Doing physical exercise or sports, Nurturing my social relationships, Savoring life's joys, Acting like a happy person, Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment", Forgiving others, Practicing religion and/or spirituality, Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity, Avoiding overthinking and comparing myself to others* and *Practicing meditation.*

The most popular choice was "Pursuing goals that are important to me", with a 69.97% of acceptance among participants which is closely followed by "Doing physical exercise or sports" and "Savoring life's joys" (see Figure 24).

Result: We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers would prefer to "pursuing goals over all other activities". Stating so, we accept $H_{2.2}$.

H$_{2.3}$ More than 50% of the Portuguese happiness seekers values "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity.
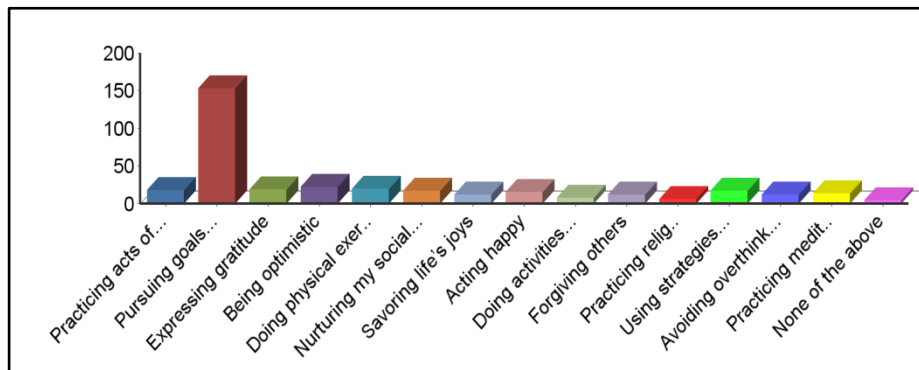
Figure 25 - Happiness seekers most valued activities

The activity "nurturing my social relationships" was chosen only by 16 participants (N=349), which represent 4.87% of the sample (see Figure 25). It is placed as the 6th best choice among the 14 available, being clearly far from the results associated to the first best choice "Pursuing goals that are important to me".

Result: We can reject that more than 50% of the Portuguese happiness seekers values "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity. Stating so, we reject H$_{2.2}$.

3.4.2.5.   Overall Hypothesis Results

Looking and the hypotheses validation results one can now picture, a set of characteristics associated to the Portuguese happiness seeking market:

H$_1$: We cannot reject the existence of happiness seekers among the Portuguese population. Stating so, we accept H$_1$.

H$_{1.1}$*:* We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly females. Stating so, we accept H$_{1.1}$.

H$_{1.2}$: We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers are predominantly people with an education equal or superior to college. Stating so, we accept H$_{1.2}$.

H$_{1.3}$*:* We cannot reject that the Portuguese Happiness Seekers SWL is smaller than the average Portuguese population. Stating so, we accept H$_{1.3}$.

H$_2$: We cannot reject that there is evidence the happiness seeking market is willing to learn happiness enhancing activities. Stating so, we accept H$_2$.

H$_{2.1}$: We can reject that Portuguese happiness seekers would prefer to perform practicing acts of kindness over all other activities. Stating so, we reject H$_{2.1}$.

$H_{2.2}$: We cannot reject that Portuguese happiness seekers would prefer to "pursue goals over all other activities". Stating so, we accept $H_{2.2}$.

$H_{2.3}$: We can reject that more than 50% of the Portuguese happiness seekers values "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity. Stating so, we reject $H_{2.2}$.

3.4.3.   HAPPINESS SEEKING SELF-HELP RESOURCES

To understand happiness seekers preferences regarding the available self-help resources one needs to narrow the sample to those respondents willing to "learn how to be happier (i.e Ill focus not on people wanting to be happier but on people willing to learn to be happier) otherwise the sample at study might have no incentives to resort to the self-improvement industry. Therefore for the purpose of this section I'll consider only the respondents that validated H_2, the participants answering "yes" to the question "Are you willing to learn strategies to be happier".
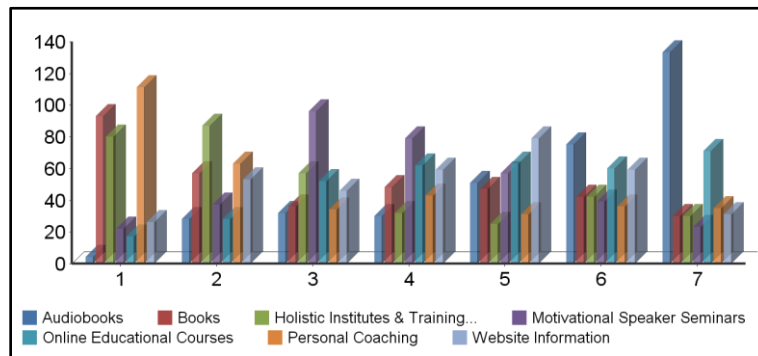
Figure 26 - Happiness seekers self-help tools ranking according to preferences (1=first choice, 7=last choice)

Statistics (Most Important=1; Less Important=7)	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation
Written Books	3.41	4.16	2.04
Audiobooks	5.42	2.9	1.7
Website Info	4.17	3.06	1.75
Motivational Speeker Seminars	3.91	2.44	1.56
Personal Coaching	3.19	4.39	2.09
Online Educational Course	4.67	3.12	1.77
Holistic Institutes & Trainning Companies	3.23	3.92	1.98

Figure 27 - Happiness seekers self-help tools preferences: statistics

Respondents preferences, ranked according to mean scores, are organized the following way: (1st) Personal Coach, (2nd) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies, (3rd) Books, (4th) Motivational Speaker Seminars, (5th) Website Information, (6th)

Online Educational Course and (7th) Audiobook (see Figure 26 for self-help tools overall scores and Figure 26 for the self-help tools mean scores).

It is quite visible the (1st) Personal Coach, (2nd) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies and (3rd) Books relevance and popularity among all the resources available.

3.5. DISCUSSION

According to this research's findings, it is safe to say that the average Portuguese happiness seeker is a female, most probably with an age between 20 to 39 years (67.5% of the happiness seekers – see Figure 14 and Figure 20).

There are also some conclusions that can be retained regarding the Portuguese happiness seeker preferences. Portuguese Happiness seekers preferred activity, among the ones proved to be effective happiness enhancers, is as $H_{2.2}$ suggests "Pursuing self-concordant goals" (69.97%). Nonetheless this preference was closely matched by "Doing physical exercise or sports" (68.56%) and "Savoring life's joys" (63.74%) – see Figure 24 – which in turn questions the strength of the assumption. There are other irregularities regarding Portuguese preference and the study conducted by Parks and his colleges over the U.S happiness seeking preferences (2012). Has shown in $H_{2.3}$ validation, the activity "nurturing my social relationships" was chosen only by 16 participants (N=349; Figure 25). This goes against Parks *et al.* findings (2012) on the fact that more than 50% of the happiness seekers value "nurturing my social relationships" above any other positive activity. The most valued activity was by far "Pursuing goals that are important to me", being selected as the most important activity by exactly 43.84% of these respondents (n=153), with the second best choice "being optimistic" only with 22 respondents.

Also, corroborating Parks and his colleges' findings (2012) the less preferred/popular activities are "Practicing religion and/or spirituality" (15.86%) and it clearly stands out from the rest of the preferences (see Figure 24). However, his research results also reported four activities as being "*endorsed somewhat less frequently than the others*" (Parks et al., 2012): using "strategies to cope with stress or adversity" (40.4%), avoiding "overthinking and social comparison" (37.7%) and "practicing meditation" (20.2%) and this is not replicated into this study findings (see Figure 24). For the Portuguese happiness seekers, the second less popular activity is "Forgiving others" (31.16%), then "Doing activities that make me feel "in the moment"" (32.29%) and then "Practicing meditation" (40.23%). For example, the

activity "Using strategies that help me cope with stress or adversity" was somewhat popular, being ranked as the 5th preferred activity (59.77%). Moreover the activity "Avoiding overthinking and social comparison", which was referred by the literature review on happiness seekers preferences as one of the most unpopular activities (Parks et al., 2012), was placed in the middle of the ranking (chosen by 49.29% of the respondents), not being popular nor unpopular (ranked as the 8th).

This mismatch between the earlier findings on the happiness seekers preferences over the US market (Parks et al., 2012) and these results may arise from the fact that culture has an impact on individual preferences. I.e. Portuguese culture may have a specific influence over the Portuguese happiness seekers preferences and American culture may have a specific influence over the American happiness seekers preferences. Moreover, this assumption is corroborated by scientific evidences regarding the impact of culture on happiness seeking preferences (Diener et al., 2003).

Also this study brought up new assumptions that can be partially translated in the light of the literature review. Scientific findings corroborate the idea that the best way to spend money to increase happiness is by engaging in experiences rather than spending it on products (Dunn, 2011).

The top-3 Portuguese happiness seekers preferences regarding the self-help distribution channels are: (1st) Personal Coach, (2nd) Holistic Institutes & Training Companies, (3rd) Books (see Figure 27).

As defined earlier, Personal Coaching and Holistic Institutes & Training Companies are services. Therefore, these results suggest that the Portuguese happiness seekers preferences regarding the self-help tools available are more likely enhance their happiness, increasing their chances of getting their need satisfied.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS

Limitations, Contributions and Conclusions

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

- Mother Teresa (part 4 of 5)

4.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, despite the huge potential it holds is dependent on some limitations. Recall that our conceptual model rests on the assumption that happiness can be enhanced using certain positive activities, which are still yearly findings among the community of positive psychology. Also, happiness itself is prompted to casualty related misconceptions. I.e. could healthier people be healthier simple because they are naturally happier, being happiness the cause for health? Considering so, do the positive activities adoption lead to happiness or is it required a minimum level of happiness to benefit from these positive activities?

Furthermore the research tailored to the happiness seekers and their particular characteristics is very limited. Most of the assumptions along these pages are based in a study conducted over the U.S. market which can be missing some issues intrinsic to the Portuguese culture; as has been proved, culture hold a significant impact on happiness conceptualizations and societal incentives. Also the happiness seeker profile from where most of the hypotheses were drawn was overlapped from an educated and female sample which in turn may have led to happiness enhancing patterns that might be more attractive to women and more educated people.

But, dwelling deeper into the question: Can we be certain of the validity of the happiness measures used in the literature reviewed here? Asking people about emotion have been proven to burst into more tricky results, as it has been proven SWB measures can be contaminated by biases (Diener, 2000). A good portion of the evidence presented in the literature review and in this study research involves self-reports, which are prone to the biasing effects of mood. And when studying happiness seeking related subjects, such potential reporting biases may render some of the reviewed findings to some extent ambiguous (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Another critical question is the degree to which the findings presented in this article can be generalized to the Portuguese population. It is uncertain to which extent this paper results can be overlapped for the Portuguese population. Internet users represent roughly 50% of the overall population but: is this assumption sufficient to generalize the research findings? Or should we just assume the patterns found are biased by the fact that these are internet users?

Also, due to the fact that there's a scarcity of studies regarding the marketing approach to the happiness seeking need it is difficult to understand if this paper's conclusions alone can accurately represent the Portuguese population and market realities.

4.2. CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper purpose was to conduct a deep investigation into the *happiness seeking need* and provide scientific supported insights about the happiness market – both globally and locally. This market is very complex, due to happiness subjective nature and it has to be carefully studied so that sustainable and reliable assumptions can be drawn and optimal strategic scenarios can be proposed and supported.

For now, it is safe to say that the *Happiness seeking* need is real: *There is a Portuguese happiness seeker market*. Additionally results overlapped from the happiness sample at study profile the average happiness seeker as an educated woman, most probably with an age between 20 to 39 years.

Providing the way through which the literature has proven being legit to increase happiness, and given the, one can state that Portuguese happiness seekers hold the adoption of positive activities to increase happiness as relevant and interesting, preferring category activities like "Pursuing self-concordant goals", "Doing physical exercise or sports" and "Savoring life's joys". Also the most valuable activity for them is "Pursuing self-concordant goals".

In the other hand, assuming the self-help market as the primary industry responding to the happiness seeking need, among the different products and services it provides, the most attractive to the happiness seeking market is Personal Coaching, being closely followed by Holistic Institutes & Training Companies and finally books. This also proves that happiness seekers are, unconsciously or not, given preference to experiences rather than physical products which in turn, as explained in the literature review, represents the most efficient way to sustainably increase happiness.

Stating so, in future attempts to exploit this market, this study findings should be taken into account either regarding happiness seeking content (positive activities to focus) or the content delivery formats (experience vs. physical goods). I expect it to be a doorway to future strategies developed in this market – whether theoretical or practical.

Although being a very interesting subject, this is a market with a huge gap unknown information. Joint efforts among positive psychology and marketing researchers may come in handy to overlap stronger conclusions on this still young market. Future studies should attempt to analyses the market homogeneity and detect possible distinct segments.

One should not describe the findings contained within this paper as absolute rules or assumptions; it identifies more as a mindset structuring the groundings for stronger and more robust findings, through future investigation and deeper research.

Happiness seeking is indeed a latent need within the Portuguese population. The market is there, it is huge and waiting to be properly exploited, giving the right incentives.

"Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway."

- Mother Teresa (part 5 of 5)

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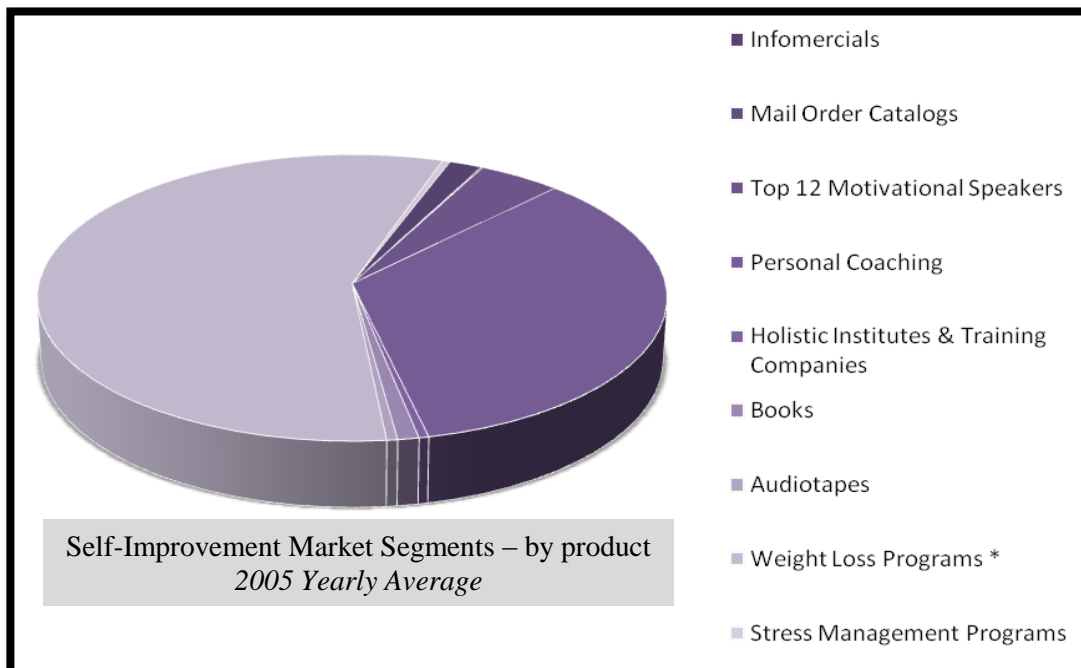
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APPENDIX 1 – THE U.S. MARKET FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT PRODUCTS & SERVICES
Marketdata Report[27], 2005

"Now more than ever, Americans are turning to gurus for help in a variety of areas. They want to be more in control of their emotional and financial lives. An elite handful of multi-millionaire celebrities like Tony Robbins, Deepak Chopra and Suze Orman have leveraged their names to build multi-media empires consisting of: websites, books, tapes, CDs/DVDs, public or corporate seminars, workshops, catalogs, infomercials, TV or radio shows and consulting."

- Marketdata's Research Director, John LaRosa.

Market Value: The total self-improvement market (incl. revenues of weight loss programs) was estimated to be worth $9.59 billion in 2005. The market grew more than 24% between 2003 and 2005. Marketdata expects 11.4% yearly growth through 2010, to a value of $13.9 billion.

Self-Improvement Market Segments – by product
2005 Yearly Average

Legend:
- Infomercials
- Mail Order Catalogs
- Top 12 Motivational Speakers
- Personal Coaching
- Holistic Institutes & Training Companies
- Books
- Audiotapes
- Weight Loss Programs *
- Stress Management Programs

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[27] Developed by *Marketdata Enterprises, Inc* (an independent market research publisher), it represents the only publicly available national market study about this business. The study traces the market's value from 1996 to 2010, examining these markets: Infomercials, Mail Order Catalogs, Holistic Institutes, Self Help Books & Audiobooks, Motivational Speakers, Seminars, Personal Coaching, Weight Loss and Stress Management Programs.

MAJOR FINDINGS

I –SEGMENTS PERFORMANCE

Infomercials: All infomercials sales grew strongly in 2005, up 10% to $2.69 billion. Self-improvement shows represented 48% of the total, or $1.29 billion. Financial/business opportunity shows grew the fastest.

Audiobooks: Audiobook sales have been growing about 4.5% per year. Total audiobook sales were estimated at $2.08 billion last year, with self-improvement titles representing $354 million of this.

Books: We estimate that $693 million worth of self-improvement books were sold last year. Fueled by continued strong sales of diet books, the market is forecast to grow 8.3%/year—better than overall publishing.

Personal coaching: This is becoming more popular. Marketdata estimates that 40,000 people in the U.S. work as life or work coaches and this $2.4 billion market is growing 18% per year. It's becoming a status symbol to have a personal coach. Most charge $200-500 per month for a weekly phone call, but corporate coaches charge more. Many of the top motivational speakers perform coaching or have "certified" coaches to work under the company name. There are even fitness-by-phone coaches and love/dating/relationship coaches (John Gray – Ask Mars Venus). No license is required and the field is largely unregulated.

Motivational Speakers: This segment's sales are estimated at $328 million for last year, for the top 12 speakers only, including operations of Franklin Covey Co. All 5,000 speakers take in $1+ billion per year.

II – PLAYERS PERFORMANCE

Gaiam Inc: This firm is emerging as a major force in the market, especially in catalogs. The company is expected to grow from $142 million in 2005 to $200 million in 2006. No new major self-help "gurus" have emerged on a large national scale since 2004, although the media can create one within months. The big names are still big, and are changing their distribution channels to adapt to the market. More of them are now offering life coaching. Formats include DVDs, not just CDs.

III – CONSUMERS PROFILE

Target Market: Self-improvement customers are most likely female, middle-aged, affluent, and live on the two U.S. coasts. 70% of SI books buyers and seminar participants are women.

Data Report, 2005 Averages

Infomercials[28]	12909,7
Mail Order Catalogs	700
Top 12 Motivational Speakers	32812,6
Personal Coaching	240017,5
Holistic Institutes & Training Companies	3209,8
Books	6938,3
Audiotapes	3544,5
Weight Loss Programs[29]	397010
Stress Management Programs	3106
Others	259063
Total U.S. Self-Improvement Market	959311,4

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[28] Infomercials are long-format television commercials, typically five minutes or longer. Infomercials are also known as paid programming (or teleshopping in Europe).
[29] Commercial chains & medical programs only, not incl. diet foods, drinks, books or surgeries.