

# Has cumulated research on happiness been associated with an increase in happiness?

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## Abstract

The founding fathers of positive psychology promised to build a cumulative evidence base that would enable us to decide what kind of action would lead to flourishing individuals, communities, and societies. Leading scholars in the field have estimated that it would take a century of research to reach this point. This paper focuses on the question of whether happiness interventions for individuals and societies have improved due to fifty years of empirical happiness research. The existing meta-analyses do not indicate that this is the case. Interventions to improve happiness do help people to feel better, but the proliferation of the evidence base has not increased the effect sizes of interventions aimed at raising happiness. The cumulation of the evidence base for positive psychology does not yet meet the promise made by the leading scholars. This sobering conclusion does not imply that positive psychology should abandon its efforts to find out what works for whom, but it does call for some modesty about its knowledge base.

**Keywords:** positive psychology, happiness training, evidence-base, effect sizes

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## Introduction

*Great expectations* is a novel by Charles Dickens (2016) that seems to start as a fairytale. Pip, a lower-class orphan, receives money and begins to hope he belongs to a higher status. He later discovers that his rise in society was financed by criminal money and then he is forced to return to his lowly origins. The history of positive psychology has some characteristics of this story. Early psychologists such as William James (Froh 2004) and the Dutch Gerard Heymans (1909) suggested that psychologists can help people to develop their full potential and to increase their well-being. Humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers (1977) took up this idea. Abraham Maslow (1981) used the title ‘Towards a Positive Psychology’ for the last chapter in his book *Motivation and Personality*. These pioneers were not lacking in ambition.

According to founding fathers of positive psychology, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, positive psychology could rise to a higher standing if it would attract a cumulative empirical base. They highlight the importance of this effort, by noticing that the legacy of humanistic psychology in the 1960s is visible in any bookstore: ‘The “psychology” section contains at least 10 shelves of crystal healing, aromatherapy, and reaching the inner child for every shelf of books that tries to uphold some scholarly standard.’ (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 7).

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi hoped that a sound new science of positive psychology would unveil what actions will lead to flourishing individuals, communities, and societies, such as in the United

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States. In 2000 the US was at the pinnacle of economic and political leadership, according to the authors, but it could no longer afford to increase material wealth "while ignoring the humans needs of its people and those of the rest of the planet. Such a course would lead to increasing selfishness, to alienation between the more and less fortunate, and eventually to chaos and despair." (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 5).

In this paper we explore whether the great expectations of a cumulative evidence base for positive psychology did materialize. There are two reasons why it is difficult to answer this question directly. First of all, the evaluation may be premature. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) estimated that it would take a century for positive psychology to reach its full potential. A second problem in assessing whether the expectations of the founding fathers are correct is that positive psychology has changed shape. The second wave of positive psychology broadened the field towards complexity and focused on finding meaning instead of happiness (Wong 2017; Lomas 2016). The third wave of positive psychology concentrates less on the individual and more on interdisciplinary and multi-cultural studies (Lomas et al 2021). Wissing (2022) argues positive psychology should go beyond the third wave and adopt ecological perspectives. Positive psychology is changing. The goalposts are not in the same place anymore and this makes it difficult to assess the influence of the cumulative evidence base.

One solution is to focus on subjective well-being or happiness, because happiness studies were already gaining traction in empirical research well before the start of positive psychology. Diener et al (1999) wrote a seminal paper about three decades of progress in empirical research on subjective well-being. Research on individual happiness is at least half a century old. After half of century of progress, it is not too early to assess how far we have come towards realizing one of the main goals of positive psychology -- the promotion of happiness (Bergsma, Buijt, & Veenhoven 2020).

We start our evaluation at the macro level. Has happiness increased in American society? If we are to believe the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, the answer is affirmative. The journal editors wrote in an obituary for Ed Diener that he 'has immeasurably contributed to making our world a happier place. Through his influential studies linking personal well-being to objective living conditions, he provided policymakers, researchers, and practitioners with the insights, tools, and inspiration to care for a greater collective good.' (Editors Journal of Happiness Studies, 2021, p. 1979). At the macro level, it is impossible to isolate the effects of increased scientific knowledge about the conditions of happiness from major developments such as climate change, economic and political developments, the shift in power balances, civil unrest, revolts and war or technological developments. We focus on the natural habitat of psychologists, the individual. Have the interventions to increase happiness become more effective due to the expansion of the evidence base? At the micro level, we will examine the trend over time in effect sizes of individual interventions (Bergsma, Buijt, & Veenhoven 2020). Before that, we attempt some definitions of happiness and related concepts.

### **Defining happiness**

The word happiness can be used to describe quite different ideas of a 'good life' (Veenhoven 2000; Lomas et al 2021). Joan Collins, the Dalai Lama and over a hundred others have explained what happiness is and how to reach it since the beginning of positive psychology (Pietro, Silvia & Giuseppe 2014). Happiness denotes desirable states of pleasure, and an affective quality that is not exclusively governed by pleasure (Kneer & Haybron 2019). The meaning of happiness as doing good for others prevails in moral philosophy where it serves as a starting point for speculations about what qualities make the best life, such as the importance of wisdom (McMahon 2006). In contemporary social sciences, the term is increasingly used for one particular quality of life, i.e., how satisfying one's life is. Since this is a measurable phenomenon, its determinants can be identified inductively using empirical research. Some scholars prefer to speak of subjective well-being (Diener et al 1999; Veenhoven 2010; Voukelatou et al 2011)

In this paper, happiness is defined as the degree to which individuals judge the overall quality of their life favorably. This concept is central in the World Database of Happiness from which we draw data for this article (Veenhoven 2004, 2010, 2025).

### **Difference with other Notions of Quality of Life and Satisfaction**

We realize that some readers will associate ‘happiness’ with other notions of wellbeing. Therefore, we introduce Veenhoven’s (2000) classification of four qualities of life. This classification is based on two distinctions: vertically there is a difference between opportunities and actual outcomes of life. This distinction is important, because people can fail to use the life chances offered to them. The horizontal distinction refers to external qualities of the environment and internal qualities of the individual. Together, these two dichotomies produce four qualities of life, all of which have been denoted by the word ‘happiness’.

**Table 1**

Four qualities of life

	<i>External Life Qualities</i>	<i>Internal Life Qualities</i>
<i>Life Chances</i>	<b>Livability of environment</b>	<b>Life skills of the person</b>
<i>Life Results</i>	<b>Utility of life</b>	<b>Satisfaction with life</b>

Source: Veenhoven 2000

In Table 1, our concept of happiness is positioned in the right bottom quadrant, as an inner outcome of life. Positive mental health (eudaemonic happiness) predominantly belongs in the top-right quadrant, that is, as a precondition for happiness in the sense of life-satisfaction.

Satisfaction with life as a whole implies an individual judgement about the sums of pleasures and pains in one’s life (Veenhoven 2010). The individual’s own life is considered in terms of all its passing moments of elation, quiet satisfaction, mild boredom, excruciating pain and so on. Alexandrova explains this as follows: “The main assumption of the subjective approach – that when judging happiness, the authority of how to weigh different aspects of our lives and experiences belongs to the subject.” (2005, p.302).

### **Happiness research has blossomed**

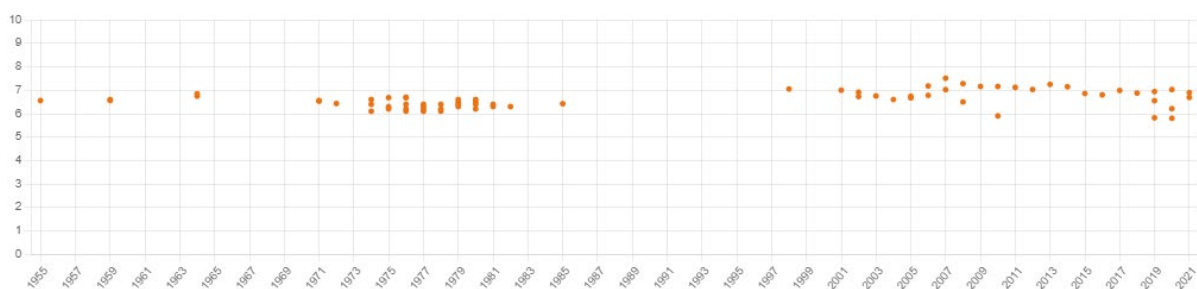
Before we start our evaluation, we first describe the size of the research effort in happiness studies. In 2025, we can safely conclude that the nascent science of positive psychology has blossomed. Today there is an increasing number of journals devoted to various aspects of the field. See for example: the Journal of Positive Psychology, the Journal of Happiness Studies, the Journal of Well-Being Assessment, the Journal of Wellness, Applied Research in Quality of Life, and the European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology.

If we focus on the number of scientific publications on happiness that are entered in the *World Database of Happiness*, we see a steep rise since the start of this century (Veenhoven 2025). Politicians, policy makers, public administrators, coaches, psychologists, therapists and trainers who want to use the evidence base to increase happiness have a rich pool of studies to draw from. Fordyce (1977, 1983) a happiness training pioneer had 788 empirical publications about happiness at his disposal when he started his work. By the beginning of September 2024, the number of studies included in the World Database of Happiness had increased to 16.851, that is more than 21 times as much. The evidence base has grown substantially.

## Happiness in the United States as a case study

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) predicted that positive psychology would lead to significant improvements for the happiness of US citizens. A quarter of a century later, it turns out citizens of United States score higher on happiness than the worldwide average and that happiness is relatively unevenly distributed (Veenhoven 2025). A recent scientific paper speaks of ‘the sad state of happiness in the United States’ (Twenge 2019), but Figure 1 shows that there has been improvement since the sixties, and no increase since the start of positive psychology. It seems fair to conclude that the predicted (strong) upward trend in the happiness of US citizens is missing in the last decades. The increased scientific knowledge of the conditions of happiness may have had a modest positive impact on higher average happiness.

**Figure 1: Trend of average happiness in the United States of America (US)**



Source World Database of Happiness (Veenhoven, 2026).

There are several reasons not to use these data to conclude that positive psychology lacks the potential to improve the lot of citizens of the United States. For example, it is not unreasonable to think that the use of positive psychology theories and practices diminished polarization, selfishness and despair, but that this positive influence was balanced by other changes, such as the rise of digital media and tech modernization (Twenge 2019).

### Are happiness trainings effective?

We will focus now on the effectiveness of individual happiness training. Did the effect sizes of the interventions increase? Before getting to the possible improvement, we deal with the question of whether raising happiness is possible at all, and not a self-defeating quest.

### Qualms about the possibility of greater happiness

There are doubts that individual happiness can be raised, among other things because happiness is believed to depend on social comparison. In this view, people are happier if they think themselves to be better off than others, making happiness a zero-sum game (Brickman & Campbell 1971; Diener, Lucas & Scolon 2006; Klausen et al 2022). Others claim that happiness is part of a fixed genetic disposition and therefore determined by personality traits that remain constant (e.g. Omerod 2012). A third reason is that the conscious pursuit of happiness may be self-defeating, because higher expectations of happiness will ultimately lead to frustration, if not realized (e.g. Ford & Mauss, 2014), which implies that use of a happiness training technique could decrease one's happiness. A fourth reason is that the pursuit of happiness stimulates people in individualistic societies to focus on individual goals, whereas more socially engaged ways to seek happiness are deemed more effective (Ford et al 2015). Looking for happiness may even increase loneliness (Mauss et al 2012) and valuing happiness may give rise to depression (Ford et al 2014). Chasing happiness may also be self-defeating if people seek more positive affect directly, whereas fulfilling basic psychological needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence may yield better results (Soroka & McAdams, 2015). Pursuing happiness may also be counterproductive because it could add to capitalist or neoliberal ills, such as individualism and consumerism (Van Zyl et al 2024).

### **Training increases subjective well-being**

The qualms we just mentioned can be addressed using existing meta-analyses of the effects of positive psychology interventions. Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) report a modest effect (mean  $r = +0.29$ , median  $r = +0.24$ ) of interventions for 'well-being'. These numbers are difficult to interpret, because the studies included covered different notions of wellbeing, some of which belong in the life-ability quadrant of Table 1. Bolier et al. (2013) report a smaller effect ( $d = +0.34$ ) of interventions on subjective well-being, that partly waned at follow-up ( $d = +0.22$ ) and after the removal of outliers ( $d = +0.17$ ). A recent re-analysis of the studies included in the first two meta-analyses mentioned above used an improved correction for small sample sizes and found an effect of 0.1 for interventions to promote well-being (White, Uttl & Holder 2019).

Other reviews yield comparable results. Multi-component interventions have a small to moderate effect on subjective well-being (Hedges'  $g = +0.34$ ), but it is again unclear what subjective well-being measures were included (Hendriks et al 2019). The removal of outliers or low-quality studies lowered the effect on well-being,  $g = +0.24$  without outliers,  $g = +0.26$  for high quality studies) (Hendriks et al 2019). Koydemir, Sökmez and Schütz (2020) analyzed the effects of positive psychology interventions and obtained an overall effect size of 0.22 (Cohen's  $d$ ) for subjective well-being.

Another meta-analysis assessed the effect of 393 randomized controlled trials from clinical and non-clinical populations ( $n = 53,288$ ) on mental wellbeing (including both subjective and psychological well-being) and found several modest effect sizes for different intervention. This is in line with the other meta-analysis (Van Agteren 2021). This meta-analysis did not report an overall, average effect size.

Carr et al (2021) extracted data from 347 studies involving over 72,000 participants from clinical and non-clinical child and adult populations in 41 countries. The positive psychology interventions had a duration of ten sessions over six weeks on average. At post-test, the interventions had a significant small to medium effect on wellbeing ( $g = 0.39$ ). The authors conclude that the interventions have 'an extensive evidence base supporting their effectiveness' and the gains were maintained at three months follow-up.

The last study in this section is the research synthesis provided by Bergsma, Buijt and Veenhoven (2022). This synthesis did not aim to calculate an average standardized effect size. It does have two advantages however. The first is that it did not focus on interventions specific for positive psychology, but on happiness training in general, i.e., training techniques that help an individual to gain insight into the sources of their happiness and to learn skills that are functional for living a happy life. The focus of these training techniques was not on a specific life-domain, such as work or marriage but on one's life-as-a-whole. This fits the definition of happiness used in this paper. The second advantage is that the synthesis used an effect size that is easy to grasp for a lay audience. The effect of happiness trainings was assessed by using the change in the 'raw' percentage in the happiness scale used to study the effectiveness of the intervention. The average effect of the various interventions was estimated to be five percent of the scale range (Bergsma, Buijt & Veenhoven 2022).

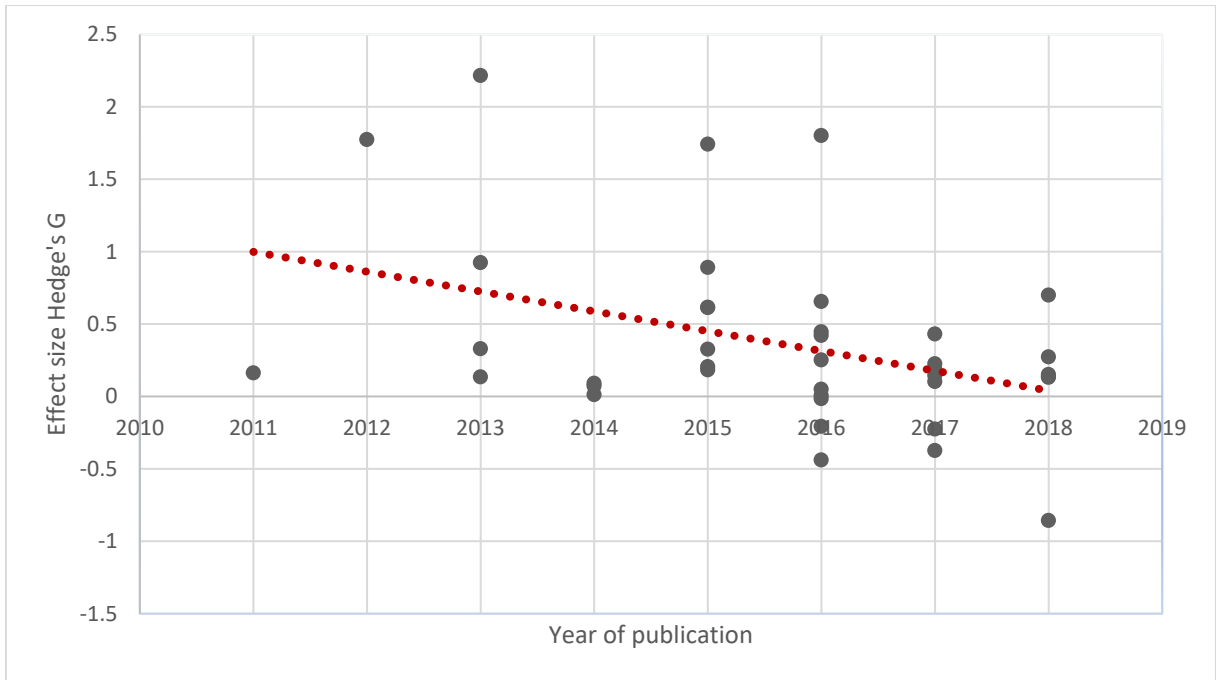
The effect of happiness training can be compared with the effects of household income using data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP). Using this dataset over the years 2003-2008, Pfeifer (2013) reported that household income increases life satisfaction on average by about 0.039 points per 1,000 euros additional monthly net income in the fixed effects regressions. Departing from estimate of a 0.04-point rise on the 0-10 happiness scale per 1000 Euro additional monthly income, the 5% (0.05) gain in happiness following a happiness training course equals a gain in monthly income of about € 1.250, which was about one third of the average household income in Germany at that time. So, happiness training can be effective and therefore we can test Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) hypothesis that it will grow better over time when the evidence base of positive psychology accumulates.

### **Has happiness training actually improved outcomes over time?**

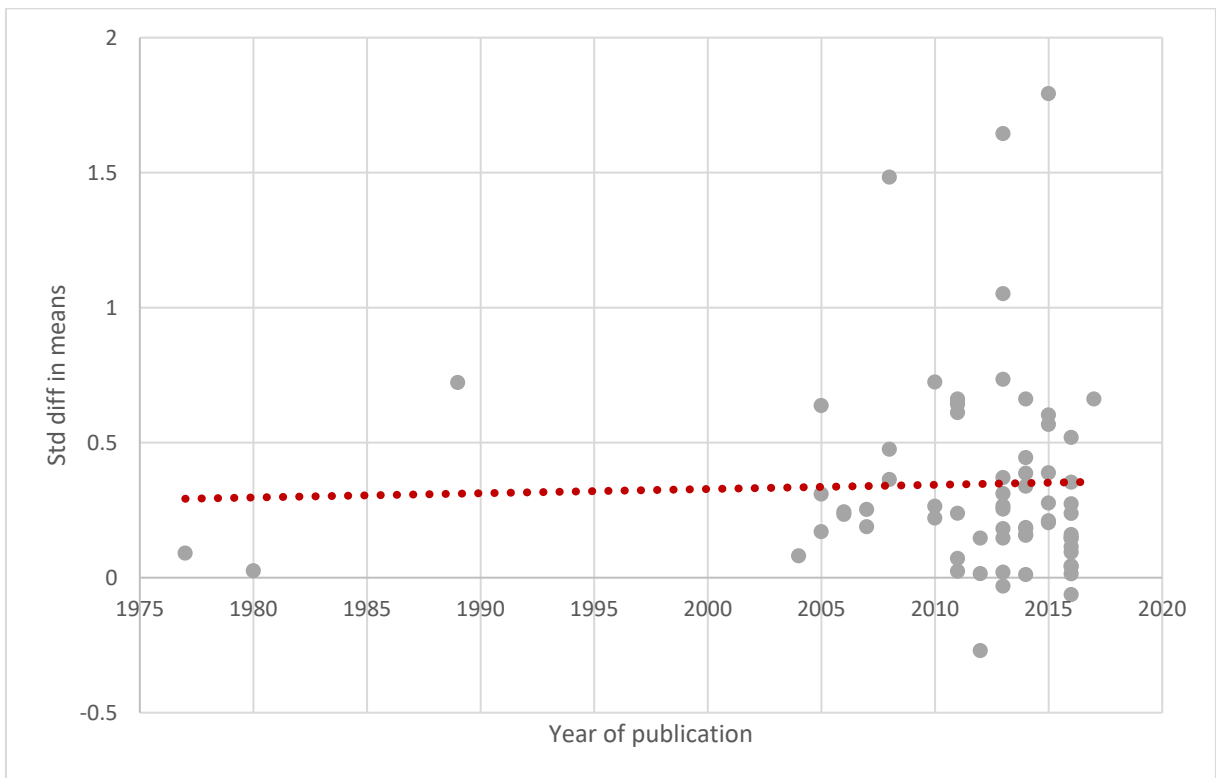
To assess if interventions designed to increase happiness had improved outcomes over time, we entered all effect sizes of existing meta-analysis and the years in which they were published into an Excel data sheet and calculated a trend line. We present the data of four meta-analyses in the figures below. Note: for the studies of Sin & Lyubomirsky (2009) and Bolier et al (2013), we used the recalculated effect sizes by White, Uttl & Holder (2019), because of some inconsistencies found in the



**Figure 4: Subjective well-being effect sizes of positive psychology intervention by year for meta-analysis by Hendriks et al (2019)**

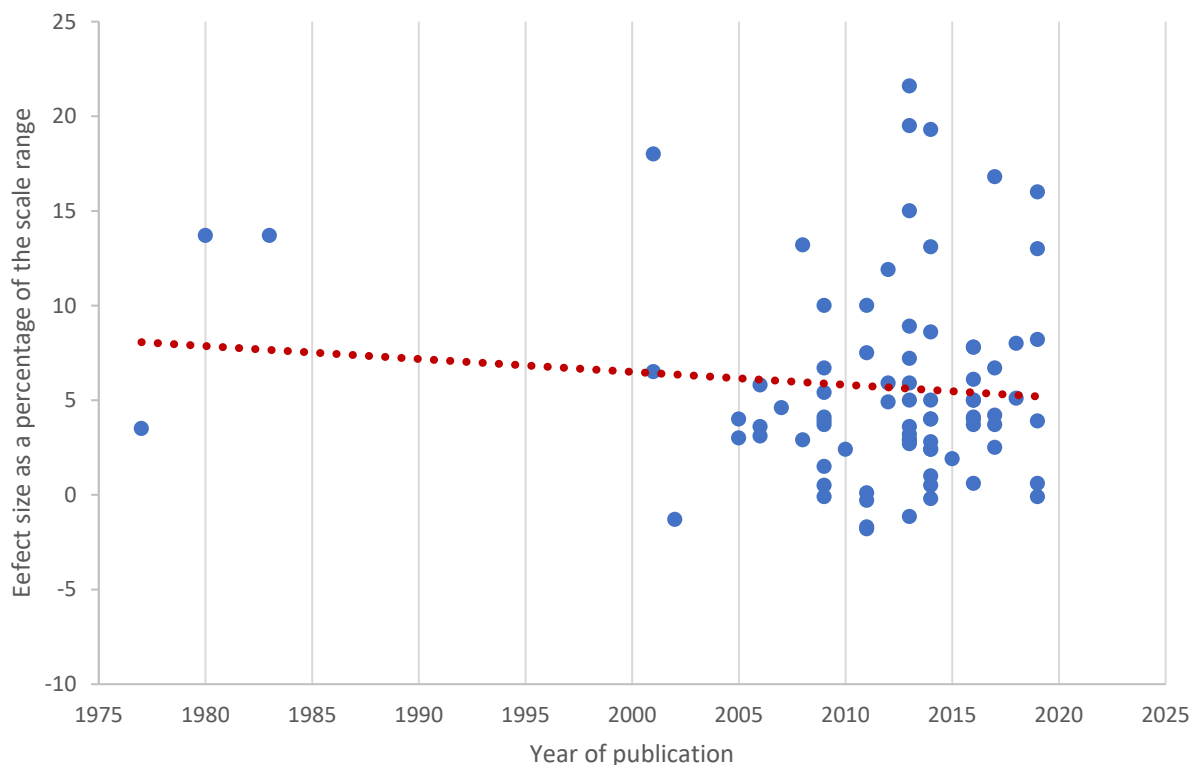


**Figure 5: Subjective well-being effect sizes of positive psychology intervention by year for meta-analysis by Koydemir et al, (2020)**



The same lack of a positive trendline shown in figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 occurred when we used the research synthesis by Bergsma, Buijt and Veenhoven (2022) that used the exact definition of happiness as described in this article. The trendline is neutral over time if we remove the outliers, as shown in Figure 6. If we include all studies, a slightly negative trend emerges. Please note again that this is not an independent replication of the trend described with the help of other meta-analyses in positive psychology.

**Figure 6: Effect size of happiness training on happiness by year for Research synthesis by Bergsma, Buijt & Veenhoven (2022)**



It should be noted that we cannot automatically infer that the trend in the effectiveness of happiness training is robust. It also could be an artefact of the lack of quality of the studies, the use of insensitive measures or the use of samples or delivery methods that are related to the effect sizes of PP interventions (Chakhssi et al 2018). For example, interventions based on traditional methods were found to be more effective than those that used technology-assisted methods and perhaps the latter are used more often recently (Koydemir, Sökmez & Schütz 2020). We therefore do not infer a negative trend. However, we do challenge the idea that the latest positive psychology interventions (PPI's) should be sold to the public as superior due to accumulated evidence. The PPI's may not be better than the suggestion that come from philosophers or other thinkers. Lyubomisky (2008) even mentions that her science-based happiness counsel closely resembles the advice her grandmother used to give her.

### **Explaining the lack of progress**

This leaves us with a mixed conclusion. Happiness training is effective, but Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's great expectations of the improvements that would come with more empirical studies did not materialize after fifty years of progress. In the last part of this paragraph, we will try to offer some tentative explanations for the lack of a positive trend in the effect sizes of happiness trainings.

### **The spread of psychoeducation**

An explanation for the lack of a positive trend in the effectiveness of happiness training may not be the failure of positive psychology, but its success. The ideas of positive psychologists to increase happiness have found their way into the mass media. For example, Lyubomirsky, Haidt, Neff, Gilbert, Garcia, Edmonson, Duckworth, Diener, Ben-Shahar, Achor and Gawdt have reached audiences far beyond the reach of scientific journals (Christensen, Simonsen & Folker 2020; Norcross et al 2013; Bergsma 2008). If this is correct, then a psychologist such as Fordyce (1977, 1983) may have had higher increases in happiness with his interventions, because it was easier to come up with helpful ideas for a public that was less knowledgeable about positive psychology. If a current author would write an excellent self-help book on gratitude with the latest insights, it could be that his or her readers will not be helped a lot, because they already practiced gratitude due to articles in magazines or self-help apps.

The clients of positive psychologists, and psychotherapists, have changed over the course of time, because they incorporate ideas of professionals and become 'pseudo-professionals' (Shaw 2002; De Swaan 1990) Professional happiness advice may have improved, but the knowledge of the professionals may have similar additional value for the more knowledgeable clients.

A possible illustration of this explanation is provided by the classic study of Lichter, Haye and Kammann (1980). They succeeded in increasing happiness of students with the help of erroneous zones concept described by self-help guru Wayne Dyer (1976). Dyer stimulated readers to increase positive self-beliefs. Group discussions of self-beliefs using Dyers work improved happiness in a sample from New Zealand in the seventies, but the same might not be true in 2020, due to changing circumstances. These days everybody seems to get a fair dose of inspirational quotes from Facebook and almost any young person has practiced the art of positive self-presentation on social media. Dyer's erroneous zones may have nothing new to offer for new generations. The opinion of Dyer's work also seems to have changed over the years. Lichter, Haye and Kammann (1980) describe the erroneous zones as 'entirely compatible with the cognitive therapy literature', but at the end of the nineties the work was no longer recommended by psychologists. An exaggerated belief in your ability to control yourself and the world, as propagated by Dyer, has been replaced by an emphasis on the acceptance of life's inevitable travails (Norcross et al 2000). For this paper, the implication is that the trendline we inferred from the existing meta-analyses might be confounded by studies that should be considered pseudo-professional in retrospect.

### **It may not be the technique that makes the intervention work**

A second line of thought is that the effect of happiness trainings may not only be due to the characteristics of the intervention, but to the effort, resilience, and emotional intelligence of person using the intervention (Bergsma 2020). This reasoning is analogous to that used in psychotherapy research which discovered that a very limited percentage of the effect of psychotherapy can be explained by the specific technical aspects of the treatment. Common factors seem to be very important, such as the therapeutic alliance, the characteristics of clients (Finsrud et al 2022; Elkins 2022; Laska, Gurman & Wampold 2014), the frequency of contact, feedback to participants and matching the needs of trainees with the specific kind of intervention (Cuijpers 2024).

### **Spurious factors**

A final possibility is that the lack of a positive trend in the effectiveness of happiness training is due to spurious factors. If the characteristics of the trainee are more important for the success of happiness training than the expert knowledge of the person making the training, then the lack of improvement of effect sizes could also be due to differences in the subjects in training. Perhaps the early adopters, were more intrinsically motivated than current day users who stumble upon suggestions on how to be happy in almost every magazine they open. Positive psychology may have made an important contribution to improve happiness trainings, but the effect remains invisible because we may be treating a population for which it is harder to pursue happiness.

Another possibility is that people have started to believe that the increased attention for happiness has led them to believe that it is easy to achieve. The paradoxical effect of this could be that the actual increases in happy moods are not reflected in self-reports because trainees expected bigger gains. Another paradoxical effect could be that people in training will become too dependent on the opinion of experts, thus undermining their ability to navigate life's difficulties based on how they are feeling.

It is also conceivable that the people offering the trainings do not always make optimal use of the existing evidence base. The empirical foundations to improve happiness training might be there but the professionals may not make optimal use of this.

### **A tentative conclusion**

To summarize, the basic tenet that positive psychology can help fostering happiness is sufficiently substantiated. We can explain about 75% of the differences in average happiness with measurable macro-social conditions. We know what we can do to improve average happiness, and societies worldwide have made progress in this direction (Veenhoven 2015). The results in the USA have been modest so far. For individuals, several meta-analysis reviews have shown there is a strong evidence base that happiness can be raised, although the effect sizes are modest.

Uncertainty remains regarding the idea that building an evidence base in happiness studies will improve interventions for societies or individuals. We postulate that there is a law of diminishing returns. Compared to half a century ago, there is an incredible wealth of data available today but the expanding knowledge on the social conditions of happiness has not fundamentally changed the options to improve live for average citizens.

For interventions that aim to increase happiness of individuals, we did not see an upward trend in effectiveness. We think we cannot downplay this sobering conclusion as the growing pains of a young discipline because a similar phenomenon is visible in other fields where psychologists are active. We can take psychotherapy, probably the best researched form of psychological advice, as an example. Weisz et al (2019) and Cuijpers (2024) found no trend for increasing effectiveness of psychotherapy, although there is strong empirical support for treatment.

We can tentatively conclude that the great expectations of accumulation of positive psychology evidence for happiness interventions were not met. Some authors argue that this a problem of psychology in general and that the pursuit of a cumulative psychological science may turn out to be quixotic, although not all are pessimistic (Curran 2009). Others are more hopeful, but it is worthwhile to notice that a younger Csikszentmihalyi (1990 p. 1) placed himself firmly in the quixotic camp when he opened his classic book *Flow* as follows: ‘We do not understand what happiness is any better than Aristotle did, and as for learning how to attain that blessed condition, we could argue that we have made little progress.’

We conclude that happiness studies have built a knowledge base that can contribute to the utilitarian ideal of the ‘greatest happiness for the greatest numbers’ Veenhoven (2010), but that the current state of knowledge has not improved as much as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) aimed for when they started positive psychology. Their suggestion that fifty-year-old insights from humanistic psychologists should be dumped in the crystal healing section of bookstores did not turn out to be correct. Building the evidence base did not result in radically better interventions. And the start of positive psychology contains elements of scientific populism in the sense that Narayanan (2022, para 9) describes: The founding fathers of positive psychology ‘are gifted storytellers who weave sensationalist yarns around scientific “facts” in simple, emotionally persuasive language. Their narratives are largely scrubbed clean of nuance or doubt, giving them a false air of authority.’

The best way forward than for positive psychologists could be along the lines described by a younger Csikszentmihalyi’s in his book *Flow*, when he pleads for maximum effort to improve individual lives and societies and work on a knowledge base to achieve that. He suggests coupling this ambition with modesty about our efforts and the superiority of our knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) The emotion researcher Nico Frijda once put it like this in a personal conversation. ‘You should be aware that the truth does not exist, but that doesn’t mean you can stop looking for it’. (N. Frijda, personal communication, 1990)

#### **8.1 Future research**

We close with some suggestions for the development of the field. The first is to overcome the heterogeneity that is inherent in an evaluation that is presented here. The trend in effect sizes of happiness interventions has a staggering level of abstraction. Future researchers might want to study which elements of positive interventions were dropped, added, or changed due to the accumulation of positive psychology evidence. This might show that empirical studies have improved interventions, although this is not visible in the current study.

A second, related idea is to focus on the trend in effect sizes for other positive psychology goals. This paper worked with a strict definition of happiness as satisfaction with life as a whole. There are many other definitions of happiness and it is uncertain if lack of a positive trend in effect sizes, also exists for other definitions of happiness. Also, the described trend holds for other goals of positive psychology, such as PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) (Seligman 2018).

Perhaps positive psychologists can further tap into the trend in psychotherapy research (Cuijpers 2024). This paper focuses on the effectiveness of interventions in general, but the million-dollar question is what works for whom in what circumstances and in what frequency the interventions should be delivered by what means (Talić, Winter & Renner 2023) and also identify in what circumstances interventions may be counterproductive, so they won't be used for people who will not benefit (Fritz & Lyubomirsky 2018). In health research there is a trend towards 'personalized medicine' and the need for tailoring treatments to characteristics of the client seems even more appropriate in (positive) psychology (Hayes et al 2022; Abdullahi et al 2020).

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