

Psychology of Emotion: Theory and Applications
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Module 5, Lecture 11: Happiness and Subjective Well-being 1

I welcome you all to lecture number 11 of the course titled, Psychology of Emotions, Theory and Applications. This is module number 5 and this is the second lecture of module 5. Module 5 is about positive emotions and happiness. In this module, we are talking more about positive emotions and the associated concept of happiness. In lecture 10, under this module, we have already discussed the concept of positive emotions and we have discussed diverse aspects associated with it. In today's lecture, we will be talking about, happiness and subjective well-being. We will have one more lecture on this concept of happiness, which is lecture number 12 under this module.

So, in the last lecture, we talked about positive emotions and we discussed the difference between positive and negative emotions. The basic difference lies in the subjective experiences. So, under positive emotion, there is a sense of positive experiences. Thus, in terms of experiences, emotions are very different and we have discussed how they are different and we try to define what are positive emotions. We have also discussed 10 common positive emotions which were proposed by Barbara Fredrickson and we have discussed each of them. In the end, we have discussed the different functions of positive emotions. What are the purposes they serve? Through a particular theory which is called as broaden and build theory. So, the name of this theory is broaden and build theory which typically says that positive emotion broadens our thoughts and actions.

So one of the distinguishing characteristics between positive and negative emotion is that whenever we experience positive emotions there is a sense of broadness, openness, there is a sense of expansion in our thought processes as well as in our actions. On the other hand, negative emotions typically narrow our perspectives or narrow down our perceptions. So this is one of the basic differences that we have discussed. Another important thing is that positive emotions also build resources. It includes physical resources, psychological resources, social resources and so on.

Positive emotions also facilitate or do positive functions in terms of promoting health. As negative emotions are associated with a lot of illnesses, so positive emotions undo the negative impact or the lingering impact of negative emotions, and in this context, they also promote health, both physical as well as mental health. We have discussed different functions of positive emotions and how, why they are so important in terms of cultivating them. So these are some of the important concepts that we have discussed in the last class.

Today we will be talking about the concept of happiness and it is the first lecture on happiness. We will have one more lecture on the concept of happiness. So, we will be talking about the psychology of happiness, we will talk about one theoretical model to discuss the concept of happiness. We will also talk about what makes us happy. In that context, we will be talking about one concept called Affective Forecasting.

We will try to understand how happiness is influenced by our forecasting of future events. So let's start today's lecture. So the concept of happiness is as old as humanity and it's a universal goal, which means this concept is pursued by people in every culture, in every human being. The core of all human motivation is to seek happiness.

Whatever we do, the ultimate foundation of it is that people want to be happy. It is one of the most fundamental aspects that unites all humanity. And it can be understood from this one statement given by Blaise Pascal. He captured this essence of the concept of happiness very beautifully and explained why it is so universal. He said *“All men seek happiness, it is without exception, whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desires in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves”*.

So it's a kind of ultimate statement he has given. Even people who kill themselves or commit suicide, probably they are thinking that it will give them some kind of happiness or relief. Therefore, this is one of the most fundamental or universal aspects of human beings that we all are seeking happiness and it is something that unites all of us, irrespective of culture, country, geographical location and so on. Happiness is highly valued in society, at the individual level as well as at the collective level. Not only do people aim for happiness in their own lives but also care for the happiness of other people and governments should aim at creating greater happiness for a greater number of citizens.

So individually also we all seek happiness, ideally, we all aim at collective happiness in terms of society or government. The main purpose of all governance is to give, and maximize happiness among the citizens. Therefore, it is the most valued concept. Whatever people are doing ultimately it is to maximize the happiness on individual and the collective level.

There is a plethora of books available which talk about happiness, and how to increase happiness. Some of these books are from the layman's perspective, and some of these books are related to or written by subject matter experts or researchers. If you look at Amazon or any other bookstore, there will be a plethora of books on happiness which

shows that this concept is important, so many books are available and many of these books are best sellers which shows that people are craving to understand happiness and it plays a very important role in all our life because ultimately we all are seeking happiness.

For most of its history, if you see psychology as a discipline has been concerned with disorders. I think I have mentioned in some of the earlier lectures also that historically psychology was majorly focused on disorders and states of mind such as anxiety, depression, neurosis, obsession, paranoia, delusions and so on.

One of the main reasons was that it needed immediate attention from the researchers because they were creating problems for individuals as well as for society. These were becoming a burden, a disease burden on the society. Fixing them needs a better understanding of these negative emotions. Thus, more and more research and funding were going in that direction. So that is why a lot of research was available in the direction of negative emotions because the need was there.

Funding was going in those directions. The applied aspect was much more in the negative emotions. These are some of the reasons why more research is available. Even today, if you look at the literature, more and more research will be available in the context of negative emotions as compared to positive emotions. I think in the last lecture we talked about it. The goal of the practitioner was to bring patients from a negative ailing state to a normal state. So that was kind of focus from the very negative dysfunctional state to how to make them normal kind of human beings by bringing them back to normalcy. So that was the idea.

Over the decades, particularly from 2000 onwards there was a rise of positive psychology. A few psychologists started looking at positive emotions, particularly happiness and well-being. So at least some researchers are published in that direction nowadays.

The study of happiness has long been under the preview of philosophical speculations. A lot of the subject of happiness was discussed in the realm of philosophy and theology. It was more like speculations and theorizing and most of it was talking in terms of theoretical perspective and philosophical speculations. There was not much empirical data or actual collected data from real people in the world, based on which conclusions were made. This was because the discipline of philosophy mostly focused on speculations, logical analysis and so on.

Psychology is a discipline with a very different approach and methodology. It is more empirical and data-oriented and that is why with the rise of positive psychology, more and more data-oriented research came into the picture. And now we have much more

information and data available regarding the concept of happiness. During the last decade, many reliable and valid measures have been developed including questionnaires and some other ways of measuring or detecting data. This led to the development of empirical literature in the field of happiness which kind of helped in evolving of the literature and at least we have a lot of data. We will be discussing some of these things in today's lecture as well as the next lecture.

So, what is the meaning of happiness? Particularly when we talk about it in the literature of psychology.

When this concept is asked to people what is happiness everybody has their own definition. We will see some of this for example even great thinkers had their own definition of happiness because it is a very subjective concept and people can define it in their own ways.

For example, Rousseau said happiness means a good bank account, a good cook and a good digestion. It was his sarcastic way or kind of humorous way of defining happiness. It is more talking in terms of having money, good food and a good ability to digest.

Albert Schutzer said happiness is nothing more than health and poor memory. So that was his way of defining happiness. You are happy if you have good health and poor memory. Basically, in the context of too much of remembering things can create a lot of issues. If you can forget a lot of things, it will increase happiness in your life.

Mark Twain said happiness consists of good friends, good books and a sleepy conscience. It is another way of looking at it.

Aristotle said happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence. Aristotle's idea is very significant. Many perspectives in psychological literature also take Aristotle's idea. For him, happiness is about finding meaning and purpose in life. It is a very important concept. We will be looking at it. Some of these ideas are included in the literature of psychology also. So according to him finding meaning and purpose gives happiness in human life.

Let us see, in psychology how the concept of happiness is dealt with, and how it is defined. One of the most prominent researchers in the field of happiness is Ed Diener. He defined subjective well-being. It is a technical term for happiness. It means happiness. It is a more technical way of defining happiness because the term happiness is generally avoided in the technical literature. People use the term, but somehow more technical aspects of literature talk about subjective well-being, because as I said, people have many ideas about happiness, because it is mostly associated with layman's idea, as everybody can define it in many ways. But when we talk about research, we cannot talk about different definitions.

Everybody has to agree on something. Then only we can talk, and conduct research. If everybody has their own definition of happiness then there is no meaning, there is no way of comparing the literature or comparing the studies and results. So subjective well-being is a technical term that was used for happiness. And it is defined in very specific terms. In psychological literature, when happiness or subjective well-being is measured, it is measured in the same way as it is the same for everybody. Therefore, now results of the different studies can be compared because everybody is measuring the same thing. So that is why the word happiness is generally avoided and the more technical term subjective well-being is used.

So how is subjective well-being measured and defined? It is defined in terms of the formula,

Subjective Well-Being = Satisfaction with Life + Affect.

The affect here basically means emotions. If you break down this formula, we can write it in another way.

Subjective well-being = high positive emotion + low negative emotion + high life satisfaction.

The affect part corresponds to high positive emotion, plus low negative emotion means higher positive emotion one experiences, and proportionately lesser negative emotion, then this affect, then the score of subjective well-being higher. So happiness score is measured in terms of higher positive emotions plus higher life satisfaction. So as the scores of these two things will increase, happiness is also going to increase.

So this is how every researcher looks at subjective well-being or happiness.

In the research realm, you cannot have a number of definitions, everybody has to agree on something. This is an agreed definition of happiness or technically it is called as subjective well-being. Mostly it is measured using self-rating questionnaires. The only way to measure this kind of concept is by using rating scales.

Because we have to ask a person about his life satisfaction, you cannot measure it in any other way. It is the person who will be able to tell whether that person is satisfied with his life or not, whether he is experiencing more positive emotions or less negative emotions. Thus, rating scale questionnaires are used, and people are asked questions and they rate it on a scale of 5 points or 7 points, etc. They indicate the level of satisfaction with their life and, the level of positive emotions they are experiencing. People can corroborate a lot of other evidence but the direct evidence only comes from the individual himself. One has to ask the person about his subjective experiences of life. In this kind of case, mostly self-

rating questionnaires are used. Now this is something we need to understand that happiness means this specific thing in the literature of psychology when we are talking about happiness, not anything else. Life satisfaction plus emotions particularly the higher the positive emotion, the more happiness is experienced.

Now life satisfaction represents one's assessment of one's own life. When we talk about life satisfaction it is more about how you assess your life. There can be many ways of assessing life. Sometimes people assess certain domains of their lives, like workplace or personal life and so on. Sometimes people can assess their life as a whole, they are taking every aspect of life together. So that is how people cognitively judge, given everything in the present condition of their life how satisfied they are with their life. So that is called life satisfaction.

Affect represents, as I have already said, the emotional part of it, and emotion has both positive emotion and negative emotions. When we talk about happiness the idea is there will be more positive emotion and less negative emotion.

Now let us look into the concept of happiness through a model of happiness proposed by Ruut Veenhoven. Ruut Veenhoven is not a psychologist but most of his research takes a lot of ideas from the positive psychology literature. He is a Dutch sociologist, not a psychologist, but most of his research is related to positive psychology and happiness. He is one of the pioneer researchers in the field of happiness. He explained happiness using the concept of quality of life and life satisfaction.

Let us see his model, and how he looked at happiness and quality of life. He said quality of life can be defined. Everybody has a different level of quality of life. He used certain parameters to measure that quality of life. He stated that two broad parameters that interact with each other, act as indicators for quality of life.

He said one dimension is chances versus outcomes. In life what are the chances? Life chances are the opportunities that we get in life. Everybody gets a lot of opportunities in their life. So those are called the different chances that we get in life. We will see in detail some of these examples.

Outcomes means what are the outcomes of these opportunities that we get in life. How do we use them and make things happen? Outcomes are the actualization of those potentials and opportunities. How do you actualize the different opportunities that we get in life and bring out certain outcomes? This is one important dimension to look at quality of life. What are the life chances you have? What are the outcomes you create out of them? So, this is one dimension.

Another dimension is outer versus inner quality of life. What is the outer quality of life?

Outer quality refers to the aspects of the environment. Everybody lives in an environment; we don't live just anywhere in isolation. We are surrounded by different things in our lives, including a lot of environmental aspects. What kind of environment you are put in? What kind of physical environment? Whether you are having a good clean environment, healthy environment, less pollution and so on. These are different things that constitute environments in our lives. These are about the outer aspects of your life in terms of the physical environment that you have.

Inner qualities of life talk about at the mental level, and emotional level, how do you experience life? Inner qualities refer to the qualities of the person particularly at the thought processes, at the emotional level, and how do you experience life? So that defines your inner quality of life.

So these are the two major parameters and by these parameters, there can be different outcomes in terms of different qualities of life. So, we found four qualities of life based on these two probable important factors, such as outer qualities, inner qualities, life chances, and life results or life outcomes.

When they interact together we get four qualities of life or four important aspects that determine the quality of your life. All these four dimensions. When outer qualities of life interact with life chances or life opportunities, it leads to something called the livability of the environment. So what kind of environment you are in, kind of find yourself, let's say you are born in a certain country or certain societies, it has its own structure and environment. It's a kind of life chance that you get. It is the outer aspects we are talking about. It gives something called the livability of the environment. What is the livability of the environment that you find yourself in? We'll discuss more about them. The interaction of the outer qualities and life results or outcomes gives to the utility of life. Something called what is the utility aspect of your life. We'll discuss each of them more detail.

Inner qualities when interacts with life chances or opportunities, give life-ability of the person. It tells about internally how, what are the abilities this person has to deal with different aspects of life, because it is inner aspects not the outer aspect of life. And when the inner qualities interact with life results or outcomes, it forms satisfaction with life. This is very important. We have discussed this in the definition of subjective well-being. Thus, satisfaction with life is an outcome. Whatever has happened in life, how do you see it or are you satisfied with that outcome of your life, all these are included under satisfaction with life.

This is inner because you judge from the inside. Two people can be in the same situation but one can feel satisfied, and another person may feel dissatisfied. Why? Because this

inner aspect is different. How a person is looking at that life situation is very different for these two persons. One may be happy, and one may not be happy or satisfied. So that is why it is an inner quality of life. Let us see all these four, and define each of them.

The livability of the environment is the first one that we have seen here. Outer qualities when interacts with life chances or life opportunities give the livability of the environment. The livability of the environment refers to the physical environment that you find yourself in, meaning whatever circumstances you are put in, or life puts you in like pollution level, the society or the country you are in, global warming, degradation of nature. It is more about the physical environment. They are talking about ecological aspects. It is rather a precondition for happiness and not all environmental conditions are equally conducive to happiness.

This will also impact your happiness or quality of life because if your outer environment is not good or conducive then the livability will be much less and people may not be happy. For somebody who lives in a very highly polluted area compared to someone who lives in a very clean area their happiness level will probably be different in terms of livability. The livability index will be different. A lot of people in the field of politicians and social reformers typically stress this aspect of quality of life. Most of the political agendas, social reformers, or professional groups focus on this aspect of quality of life much more. They try to improve this aspect much more.

Then comes the life ability of the person. Inner qualities and life chances interact to give life ability. Now life ability means it denotes inner life chances in terms of ability. So whatever life situation you are in how you can cope with that environment and the problems of life? Are you able to deal with them? Are you able to cope with them or you are not able to cope with them? That will determine the inner quality of your life. This quality of life is central to the thinking of therapists and educators. A lot of counselors and therapists focus on this aspect to enhance the life ability of the person, because many time we cannot change the outer aspect of life because it is not in our control. You cannot suddenly change the pollution level because it is not possible to change it immediately, It needs a collective effort, but we can at least deal with the problems, and cope with the problems by changing our thinking about it at least to deal with the problems of life, whatever other problems that environment creates or outer circumstances creates. Many times, we don't have many choices to change the outer aspect of life or the outer circumstances of life. We can take the example of poverty. One may not be immediately able to change his poverty level, but one can adapt or adjust to his life situation. A lot of professional groups like therapists, and educators focus on enhancing this quality of life.

Then comes the utility of life. It is the interaction between outer qualities and life results. It represents using life for something more than itself. So how are we able to utilize your life, it talks more in terms of the outer aspect of life. It is about higher values and

meanings such as ecological preservations, and cultural development. So how you are using your life to do something more than just your own life, in terms of contributing to the outer life. It could be preserving the environment, doing something for the environment, for society and so on. These are called the utility of life. People in the professional group like moral advisors such as pastors emphasize this quality of life. Many moral advisors are focusing on this aspect of life.

The last one is the satisfaction of life. Interaction between inner qualities and life results leads to satisfaction of life. This satisfaction of life, as we have already defined, is about inner outcomes of life in terms of subjective judgment of life, commonly referred to the term such as subjective well-being. I think we have just discussed this. One of the major aspects of subjective well-being is satisfaction with life. It is also called happiness. This is very important in the conceptualization of Ruut Veenhoven's model of quality of life. No specific professional group focuses on this part. All the other aspects are given focus by many people. But this is the most significant part, but not really focused on by a lot of people. According to Ruut, life satisfaction is the most appropriate concept to understand happiness as it reflects the degree to which external living conditions 'fit' with your inner life-abilities. It's a very important combination of how outer life and inner life interact to give something called as satisfaction of life. It is more reliable to look at it in order to understand the happiness of human beings.

Now Ruut unpacked this idea of life satisfaction in terms of adding more dimensions, looking at the dimensions in more detail. They said life satisfaction can have different meanings. These meanings can also be charted by using another fourfold matrix, where we can talk about life satisfaction in terms of life aspects or certain parts of life versus life as a whole. The first one refers to the satisfaction with one certain aspect of your life and the second one refers to the satisfaction with life as a whole. We can look at life satisfaction using these two concepts.

We can also talk about life satisfaction with the concept of passing satisfaction or temporary satisfaction versus enduring satisfaction. So, with the interaction of these two broad dimensions, four dimensions can lead to four concepts in satisfaction of life. The four concepts are-

So whenever something is part of life means not the whole life, it is some aspect of your life, and you are satisfied with the passing aspect means for temporary time, then it is called 'pleasure'. Experiencing satisfaction in certain aspects of your life but it is temporary, is called pleasure.

The interaction of the temporary aspect of life with life as a whole is called 'top experiences'. When sometimes people experience some very ecstatic state at certain times of life, meaning it may not be permanent. For example, sometimes some scientists

find something very innovative, or some poet finds some lines that give an ecstatic feeling at that time, which are called top experiences. We will be talking about that.

Enduring means more long-term. Satisfaction with a certain part of life or with a certain aspect of life is called part satisfaction. The long-term satisfaction with the whole life is called life satisfaction.

So, this is the concept of life satisfaction according to Ruut's model. Proper life satisfaction is long-term satisfaction with life as a whole. Pleasures, as we have already looked at it, is about passing satisfaction. It is a very short-term satisfaction with certain aspects of your life. It can be a sensory satisfaction such as good food, or mental satisfaction after reading an interesting book. Sometimes eating good food can give you a lot of pleasure. These are the examples of pleasure. It is a sensory, short-term satisfaction with a very small aspect of life like food, or sometimes it could be mental satisfaction like reading a good book. But it is temporary because it is limited to that reading of the book itself.

Part satisfaction is about more long-term satisfaction with certain aspects of your life, not the whole life. It is mostly concerned with some domains of life such as work life. One may be satisfied with work life and may not be satisfied with other domains such as family life. Satisfaction with a certain part of life, but dissatisfaction with some other part of life, is called part satisfaction. For example, some people who are satisfied with their personal life may not be satisfied with their work life or vice versa.

The top experience is about temporary satisfaction in whole life. It may include intense oceanic experiences referred to by poets and mystics. People in the spiritual field or some poet or creative field experience peak experiences, sometimes when things come together and they find something, it gives satisfaction to their whole life, not about one aspect of life. They feel fulfilled in certain sense.

Life satisfaction, as we said, is the true concept in terms of long-term satisfaction with your whole life, then it is called true life satisfaction. You are satisfied with your whole life, every aspect of your life, and it should not be temporary like today I am satisfied and tomorrow I am not satisfied. True life satisfaction should be relatively enduring in the long term and commonly referred to as happiness. We have already discussed that.

In this model, happiness is more about life satisfaction. Life satisfaction according to the Ruut model, is the most appropriate concept to look for policy making by different agencies, governments or NGOs and so on. Why? Because it is a long-term concept, it impacts your life in the long term and it is much more valuable than the passing or short-term satisfaction and it is about your whole life. Your judgment about whole life or enduring satisfaction is the most important indicator for your quality of life or the

happiness of life or subjective well-being of your life. Thus, policy should look into this aspect more than other aspects of life because this is more consequential to human life. It will have a much deeper impact on life. So, policy should look into this aspect according to his model. So, these are some of the takeaways of the model of Ruut-Veenhoven.

Now let us see if we know what makes us happy or what gives us happiness. If we ask people what makes you happy? Some people may say a good relationship will make them happy. People may have different answers for this, for some may be a new job or a better family, more money, losing weight, or looking better, for some it may be having a child or baby might give them a lot of happiness.

So people may have different concepts or different things which according to them make them happy. We constantly judge or kind of make forecasts that if I get this I will be happy. So constantly we are projecting things in the future and trying to achieve them so that we feel or experience happiness. But the more fundamental question is will we or do we become happier when we get those things? When we achieve them do we become that happy or happier person as we have forecasted earlier? Can we predict what makes us happy in the future? This is a very important question and a lot of research has tried to address this because we are constantly predicting that if we get this, then we will be happy and then we are making goals and trying to achieve them. But do we really become happier when we achieve them? This is an important question that is connected to the concept of affective forecasting.

Affective forecasting refers to how you forecast certain emotional aspects of your life. It includes predictions we make about emotional reactions to future events. So, in the future when something happens, how and what will be our emotional experiences? We keep predicting it all the time like If I get this in my life or if I get a car or if I get a bike etc, I will be the happiest person in life. So, we are constantly predicting the emotional consequences of getting something in life in the future. So that is called affective forecasting. Forecasting in the future about the emotional consequences of future events. Now the research on affective forecasting has shown that people generally mispredict how much pleasure or displeasure a future event will bring (Wilson and Gilbert, 2005). Wilson and Gilbert are the two prominent researchers who did most of the significant research in this area of affective forecasting. They found that people generally mispredict how much happiness a particular thing will give them or how much displeasure or sadness they will get if something negative thing happens in life. So, prediction is generally not right. Most of the predictions that we do are generally not correct most of the time. We make a lot of erroneous decisions or erroneous predictions about future emotional consequences of events in life. We will see some of these things.

Generally, people are good at predicting if they get this or that, they will be happy or not. That prediction is generally okay. However, people are not good at predicting the

intensity and duration of future emotional reactions. What will be the intensity of the emotional experience and what is the duration for which we will be experiencing that emotion if we get something in the future? This is generally mispredicted. You may think if you get something a dream object or a dream car for example you may say I will be very happy and this happiness will last for a long time. This is how we generally predict. But this is where we mispredict the intensity and duration for how intense our emotional experiences will be or how long the emotional experiences will last. So, research found that it is generally mispredicted.

Occasionally, people underestimate the intensity and duration, and more commonly overestimate. People overestimate the intensity of emotion. If they get something good they overestimate how happy they will be. They estimate they will be very happy. If something bad they predict that their life will be highly miserable or very sad. So, they overestimate things both positive and negative.

Generally, people overestimate sometimes they can underestimate also. So that is why it is a misprediction as they overestimate the intensity and duration of their emotional reaction to future events. This is something research found. This particular phenomenon is called impact bias. Impact bias is the error that people make by overestimating the intensity and duration of their emotional reaction to future events. It is a part of affective forecasting. In impact bias, people overestimate the intensity and duration of the emotional reactions. So how happy will you become if you get let's say a dream object that you are desiring, people generally overestimate that. They think they will be much happier than actually when they get it, or they will think they will be happier for a very long time. But in actuality, it happens for a very short time. So, this is the meaning of impact bias. This happens for both positive and negative emotions. For example, we may overestimate how happy or unhappy we will become if we get desirable or undesirable things respectively in the future. This overestimation happens for both positive as well as negative events.

This is an example of Wilson and Gilbert's study. It is a very small study. A lot of other studies are there. In this study, they asked college students to predict the actual level of happiness after dormitory assignments. So, participants predicted what their overall level of happiness would be a year later. The participants were randomly assigned to desirable and undesirable dormitories. So basically, when the college student joined, they were asked to predict what their actual level of happiness would be a year later if they were randomly assigned to a desirable or undesirable dormitory. Some participants were asked to make predictions about desirable dormitories, while some participants were asked about undesirable dormitories with certain characteristics. Those details are not here. They are asked to make future predictions about how it will the assignment of desirable or undesirable dormitory impact their happiness after a year. Initially, student predicted

that their dormitory assignment would have a large positive or a large negative impact. One year after their initial prediction, their actual happiness was measured in both conditions, when they got desirable or undesirable dormitories.

You can in this graph that when a student in a desirable dormitory was asked what will be their happiness after a year, they predicted they would be very happy, and their happiness level score was much higher. After a year the actual happiness score for the students living in desirable dormitories was measured, there was some mismatch between the initial predicted score and the actual happiness score. Their prediction was much higher. Their predicted level of happiness was less when after a year it was measured, in terms of intensity. The measurement was done using a 7-point scale.

In case of students with undesirable dormitories, they predicted that they would be much less happy, than their actual measured happiness score after a year.

Students who predicted for desirable dormitories, their happiness was almost double than those who predicted for undesirable dormitories. But when actually after a year actual happiness scores were measured, for those in undesirable dormitories, it was found to be much higher than their predicted score of happiness.

So, if you see, the actual happiness measured after a year for both in desirable and undesirable dormitories was almost same. But the prediction was much different. In the desirable dormitory, the prediction was much higher, and in the undesirable dormitory, the happiness level prediction was much lower.

So this shows that we generally overestimate both positive and negative emotional states when we predict some future consequences. When these future events actually occur, things are not that high either in terms of negativity or in terms of positivity.

Now why this impact bias happen?

The researcher found that one of the reasons why this happens is called Focalism. What is Focalism? Focalism means it is a tendency to overestimate how much we will think about the event in the future and underestimate the extent to which other events will influence our thoughts and feelings. It means when we are predicting the emotional consequences of a future event, we are only thinking about that event in the future. For example, let's say you think that if you get a job, a dream job, how much happiness it will give you. So, you are only thinking about the positive aspect of that job like you will be settled, get lots of money, you can fulfill a lot of desires, you are only thinking about that job, what this job will give in terms of whatever you are expecting. But what happens when you actually get this job, a lot of these things will be there no doubt, but the new life situation, the new job will also give a lot of other problems in life. You may have to work hard, you have to adjust with a

lot of other people, so many other things may come with the package which we don't consider at the time of prediction. All these other things will also influence your happiness. While predicting you are not looking into all these things, you are only looking at the job, and what are the things the job will give you. But when you actually get that job, so many other problems will also come along with it. You have to work hard, so many other issues, adjustments with the boss and other colleagues and so on. All these things will influence your emotions or let's say in this case happiness will be reduced because of so many other problems associated with the job. So, when you actually get the job, the happiness level will be much less as compared to when you predicted, because when you predicted you are only looking at the positive aspect of the job. You are not aware of so many other things. All these things or other events will influence our thoughts and feelings. So that is called focalism. While predicting we only focus on one aspect, either positive or negative. So, that is why it is called focalism. This is one of the reasons why people mispredict.

Another reason is called making sense of novel and unexpected events. People adapt very quickly. We think if we get something in the future, we will be very happy, but when we get that thing, we adapt to it very quickly, then after sometimes it no longer gives you that kick or that happiness that was when you got it initially. This happens simply because you get adapted to it and it is no longer a novel thing. So, the novelty gets lost. So, whenever we see something for the first time the novelty aspects give us a lot of happiness. But then next time when you see the same thing again, it no longer gives you that happiness, simply because it is no longer a new thing.

When actual things happen, we adapt to them very soon and our emotional intensity reduces. When we predict we think that the emotional reaction to the things will sustain for a long time, But, actually when it happens, we get adapted very quickly because novelty is lost. We make sense of new things very rapidly, and it becomes an old thing, it is no longer a new thing. So, these are two major reasons why this misprediction happens.

Now this impact bias can impact a lot of our decisions in life because we mostly decide on emotional influences.

If we overestimate the emotional consequences, we will make decisions accordingly, but in reality, things may be very different. So many times, it can lead to wrong judgment, and wrong decision-making in life. So, this affective forecast and impact bias may influence decisions ranging from small things like which route you should take while going to some place, for example, selecting a route with and without scenic beauty. Emotion will influence your decision of which route you should take. Affective forecast and impact bias may also influence profound decisions in your life like whom should you marry. A lot of emotions are involved in how you should choose your life partner. Many

times, while predicting, we can overestimate the emotional part of it. When things happen in reality the whole emotional aspect could be very different. So that is why sometimes we may make wrong decisions based on impact biases. So, people generally make decisions by projecting their emotional reaction to future events most of the time.

This impact bias can lead to mistaken projections and irrational unbiased decisions in their life. People make a lot of wrong decisions because of this factor.

People sometimes also show retrospective impact bias, which means whatever has happened in the past, people overestimate their emotional reaction to past events. When that event took place in the past, their emotional reactions might not be that high.

When you look back, probably many times we overestimate the impact of a past event, explaining why people don't learn from past experiences, because they again kind of overestimate a lot of things in the present context.

So, retrospective impact can also happen sometimes in our lives. It may not be so easy to correct a lot of this impact bias because emotion functions unconsciously and automatically. But we can reduce such biases by becoming more conscious and thinking more rationally, analyzing things more, and looking at different aspects and consequences. By involving more rational thought processes, we can reduce a lot of this impact bias.

So, with this, I stop here. We talked about some of the concepts of happiness. In the next lecture, we'll be talking more about the concept of happiness and particularly the applied aspects. How to understand happiness and how can it be enhanced in our life, to increase the quality of life? So these aspects will be looked in the next lecture. With this, I will stop here. Thank you.