

AM I HAPPY?

“A project about the stated happiness or subjective well-being of young people in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain): Are boys happier than girls?.”



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1. INTRODUCTION.

Happiness and how to find it have been essential topics of human existence. “Am I happy?” is an essay whose aim is to measure and analyze the scale of stated happiness or subjective well-being of the young people in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain) studying 4º of ESO and Baccalaureate.

Giving a definition of happiness is a complicated task. In the documents consulted to write this research, we found some synonyms of happiness, such as “subjective well-being”, “satisfaction with life” and “stated or noticed happiness” (DIENER, 1984, 1999, 2000; DIENER *et al*, 2003; MYERS & DIENER, 1995; IGLESIAS VÁZQUEZ *et al*, 2013), which can be measured and interpreted.

Subjective well-being can be defined as “*the result of the global evaluation whereby, through attention to elements of affective and cognitive nature, the individual notices both their present mood and the congruence between their achievements and their expectations in some fields or vital areas as well as, globally, in the satisfaction with their life*” (GARCÍA, 2002).

We have used this concept of happiness, subjective well-being, stated happiness or satisfaction with life, to carry out this investigation.

In the next part of this research, we will present the project background or previous research about this topic.

The goals of this research and the initial hypothesis to begin this work are specified in chapter number three

The materials and methodology, as well as the questionnaire used to collect the information and the statistical program employed to analyze the results are explained in chapter 4.

Chapter five is the main part of the research. The results about the level of stated happiness (subjective well-being) in teenagers (young people) are presented in it.

Finally chapter six contains the conclusions reached with this research. In addition, we verify the initial hypothesis and we include the bibliography, charts and graphics we refer to throughout the present work.

2. BACKGROUND.

The study of happiness is the object of analysis from many points of view. There are lots of articles, research and books about it. There are even academic magazines, such as the Journal of Happiness Studies, where we find studies about happiness and there is a database, The World Database of Happiness, which gathers information about happiness Worldwide and, of course, the international happiness day, on the 20th March. About happiness analysis and its measure, there is considerable research, nothing the following one, which has helped us in our work:

- “*El Bienestar y Felicidad de la juventud española*” in 2006 by INJUVE coordinated by Federico Javaloy (Barcelona University) with a team of investigators from Barcelona University (UB) and from País Vasco University (UPV), In it, two questions were considered: Are Spanish young people happy? and which characteristics differentiate happy young people from unhappy ones? With this aim, a survey was done to 1300 young people including different scales to measure happiness and questions related to both personal facts and social relations, free time and young people’s values.

- *El Informe Coca Cola sobre la Felicidad de 2013* by Jesús Gallardo, Eduardo Punset, María Dolores Merino and Carmelo Vázquez. The happiness level of spaniards compared to the rest of europeans is analyzed in it. Among the conclusions, noteworthy is the fact that, in spite of having been done in a period of a hard economic crisis in our country (Spain), we are very optimistic and our happiness level is above the european average.

3. OBJECTIVES.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the level of stated happiness or subjective well-being of young students (Secondary education and Baccalaureate) in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain)¹ and to establish whether there are or not any differences in the level of stated happiness according to their sex (between boys and girls).

Is it possible to measure happiness?, Are young people happy?, Are boys happier than girls? We will try to answer these questions in this work.

The initial hypotheses we have formulated for the beginning of this research and that will be verified through it are:

- H1 (Hypothesis 1): “Happiness is measurable”. And if it is measurable, How?.
- H2 (Hypothesis 2): “Happiness (subjective well-being level) is independent of sex so there should not be significant differences between boys and girls”.
- H3 (Hypothesis 3): There could be differences in happiness or subjective well-being level of young people depending on their family relationships, their relations with friends or couple, their economic situation, their health, their academic performance, and the daily of free-time they do, etc.

Other objectives we have set with this research are:

- To analyze the differences in the happiness level (subjective well-being or satisfaction with life) according to the students’ personal appearance and daily life
- To know the different habits of young people in their free time and what they spend it on.
- To analyze what young people’s relationships with their family and friends are like.
- To know which activities, from those that Young people do in their free time, give them higher satisfaction.

4. MATERIAL AND METHODS.

To get the objective in this work we have made a transversal descriptive observational study with a non probabilistic sample of 286 young people. The technique used to get the information was the survey and the instrument used was the questionnaire.

The questionnaire used to measure the level of stated happiness or subjective well-being of young people were prepared from Diener’s Scale of Satisfaction with Life (SWLS) (DIENER et al., 1985. Escala’s Diener, Copyright © Ed Diener. Sited in public domain by Ed Diener.

¹Molina de Segura is a town in the Región de Murcia, located in the area of Vega Media, with a population of 70.449 people (In 03/11/2014). www.molinadesegura.es

Translated and designed in Spanish by José A. Reyes -Torres, PsyD.), o the Scale of Subjective Happiness Lyubomirsky & Lepper and the happiness scale Life as a Whole Index.

The questionnaire was anonymous but it included a series of personal data such as sex, age, school year and school and 23 questions to know what their family relationships and friendships were like, their economic situation, health, and importance of studies and what their academic results and the activities they do every day were and which of them gave them more satisfaction.

Before passing the questionnaire we asked permission to the headmaster and the teachers involved. At the beginning of the class, we asked the student to fill in the questionnaire. Previously, we had explained them what that questionnaire consisted of and how they had to fill it in.

The collection of information was made between 28th of March and 11th of April 2014 in the following secondary and Baccalaureate schools in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain): IES “Francisco de Goya”, IES “Vega del Táder” and the Charter School “El Taller”. Finally, 287 questionnaires of 4^o of ESO (Secondary), 1^o and 2^o Baccalaureate students were collected, from which, 286 were valid, which is 99.65 % of the questionnaires.

The Information from the questionnaires was copied on an Excel spreadsheet, designed to include all the variables and answers given by the young people. The data was analyzed with descriptive statistics with the program SPSS 15.

This program allowed us to calculate the percentages of answers in each question as well as the mean and the standard deviation of the happiness level or subjective well-being (Total Punctuation Diener’s Scale) and to study the differences according to sex and other personal aspects related to family, friends, health, economic situation, academic performance, material possessions, free time etc.

We have also calculated Cronbach’s Alfa Coefficient to verify the validity and reliability of the scale used, and we have done test T for two independent samples getting Levene’s statistic to analyze if there are or not significant differences in stated happiness depending on sex.

STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

BLOCK 1	Personal variables: sex, age, school year and school.
BLOCK 2	Diener’s satisfaction with life Scale (SWLS)
BLOCK 3	Life as a Whole Index happiness Scale (Andrews and Withey, 1976)
BLOCK 4	Second item (question) from Lyubomirsky scale of Stated Happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Compared happiness.
BLOCK 5	23 questions about family, friendship, couple, free time, hobbies, health, physical appearance, economic situation, school performance, etc.

THE SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS, DIENER et al., 1985)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale by the American psychologist E. Diener is the most used scale to measure the subjective well-being or stated happiness and it has been used in many researches. It measures stated or sensed happiness regarding 5 items.

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal. (It is as I want it to be).
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have achieved the important things I want in life.
5. If I had to live my life again, I would change almost nothing.

To answer, an Scale type Likert from 1 to 7 points is used where 1 is Totally Disagree and 7 is Totally Agree. To get the total score, the answers to the 5 items are added, getting a score which varies between 5 and 35 points.

The higher score, the higher stated happiness or subjective well-being. The scores are grouped in intervals which give us the happiness level according to the next scale.

- EXTREMELY SATISFIED (VERY HAPPY): between 30 and 35 points.
- SATISFIED (QUITE HAPPY): between 25 and 29.
- SLIGHTLY SATISFIED (A LITTLE HAPPY): between 20 and 24.
- SLIGHTLY DISSATISFIED: between 15 and 19.
- DISSATISFIED (ALMOST UNHAPPY): between 10 and 14.
- EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED (UNHAPPY): between 5 and 9 points.

TECHNICAL FACT SHEET OF THE RESEARCH.

POPULATION OBJECT OF STUDY	Young people studying secondary education and Baccalaureate (Murcia, Spain).
AREA OF APPLICATION	Schools: IES “Francisco de Goya”, IES “Vega del Táder” y The Charter School “El Taller.
KIND OF SURVEY	Questionnaire. Approximatif duration: 10- 15 minuts.
SAMPLE SIZE	286 young students of 4º ESO, 1º Baccalaureate and 2º Baccalaureate.
SAMPLING ERROR	5%
CONFIDENCE LEVEL	CL= 95 %
COMPILLATION OF INFORMATION	From 28th March to 11st April 2014
PROGRAMME TO ANALYZE DATA	SPSS 15 for Windows in Spanish.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS².

5.1. ANALYSIS OF THE POPULATION OBJECT OF STUDY.

The Young population object of study classified by sex, age, school year and school is the following:

- 53.85 % of young people are girls.
- By age, 49.30% are 15 or 16 years old, 43.71% 17 or 18 years and 6.99% older than 18.
- By school year 48.95% are studing 1º of Baccalaureate, 30.77% 4º E.S.O. and 20'28% 2º of Baccalaureate.

² Tables and graphics in the Annex Figures.

- By SCHOOLS, 55.59% attend IES “Francisco de Goya”, 28.32 % IES Vega del Táder and 16.08% School “El Taller”.

5.2. STATED HAPPINESS LEVEL ACCORDING TO DIENER’S SCALE (SWLS).

Most of the young people (76’58%) declare themselves happy to one degree or another, while 15.38% are slightly under the vital satisfaction average and just 8.04% of young people confirm they feel a little happy or not happy at all (Figure 1).

The stated happiness (subjective well-being) of young students of Secondary and Baccalaureate in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain) is **23.44** in Satisfaction with Life Scale, scoring in the range **a little happy (Slightly satisfied)** (Figure 2).

The stated happiness for boys is 24’30, lightly above girls, which is 22.7. Although both groups are in the range of a little happy, boys are close to the level of quite happy (Between 25 and 29 points) (Figure 3). The percentage of boys that consider themselves very happy is above that of girls, (19.70 % of boys as opposed to 10.40% of girls) (Figure 4).

5.3. MEAN (5 ITEMS) OF STATE HAPPINES IN DIENER’S SCALE.

The mean of “Stated happiness or subjective well-being” got by young people is 4.6874 (Mean of all 5 items). Young people, in general, declare themselves as a little happy (Figure 5). By sex, the mean for boys is above the media for girls in all 5 items of Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Boys consider themselves quite happy in “My life conditions are excellent” and in “I’m satisfied with my life” and a little happy in the others. However, girls claim themselves a little happy in all items (Figure 6).

5.4. HAPPINESS LEVEL ACCORDING TO THE HAPPINESS SCALE LIFE AS A WHOLE INDEX.

Life as a Whole Index happiness Scale (Andrews and Withey, 1976), measures happiness with the answer to a unique question (*In relation to your life in general how happy do you feel?*) that the subject will answer valuing his happiness from 0 to 10. If we analyze the level of happiness according to this scale, the happiness got by young people is 6.95 out of 10.

Generally, 80.63 % of young people have got a happiness level above 5, so we could affirm that in general terms, they feel happy, but in a different level (Figure 7).

Boys have got a higher mean (7.23 OUT OF 10) than girls (6.70) the same as in Diener’s Scale (Figure 8).

5.5. HAPPINESS LEVEL IN RELATION TO THEIR EQUALS (FRIENDS, CLASSMATES, ETC.) (2º ITEM OF SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS SCALE LYUBOMIRSKY & LEPPER).

In general 75.43% of young people consider themselves happy in a different level compared to their equals, getting a mean score of 5.32 (a little happy compared to others, where 1= non happy and 7= Very Happy)

For boys, the mean is 5.53 while for girls it is 5.14. **Both boys and girls consider themselves a little happy in comparison to their friends, classmates and relatives.**

However, there is a bigger percentage of boys than of girls that, compared to their equals, feel happier than the rest (Figure 9).

5.6. LEVEL OF STATED HAPPINESS OR SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN DIENER'S SCALE ACCORDING TO PERSONAL ASPECTS AND DAILY ACTIVITIES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE DO.

We also analyzed the happiness level of young people according to familiar relationships, health, couple (love), physical aspect, economic situation, material possessions (mobile, clothes...) academic performance and daily activities they do every day.

Some of the results we got were the next:

- There weren't any significant differences in the happiness level depending on age, school year or school.
- Young people with good or very good relationships have a bigger stated happiness and this drops just as their familiar relationships worsen (Figure 10).
- Young people with good or very good friendships are happier than the rest.
- Those young people with a good or a very good health feel happier. The Stated happiness of young people drops just as their health gets worse (Figure 11).
- The Stated happiness of young people who have a couple is slightly above the stated happiness of those who don't have one (Figure 12).
- Young people who are satisfied with their physical appearance and accept themselves physically have bigger happiness. Moreover, young people who wouldn't change their physical aspect (even if they could) have a higher happiness level (they consider themselves as quite happy) (Figures 13 and 14).
- Young people with a very good economic situation declare themselves as quite happy while those who have a very bad economic situation find themselves as almost unhappy. The Stated happiness drops when the economic situation decreases (Figure 15).
- We can observe that the stated happiness drops when the academic results are worse. Young people with very good academic results are the happiest, and they consider themselves as quite happy with a punctuation of 27.43 on Diener's Scale. (Figure 16).
- Young people who are very satisfied with their material possessions consider themselves as quite happy. As they feel less satisfied with their material possessions the stated happiness drops. (Figure 17).
- Young people who don't smoke have a slightly higher stated happiness, above all in comparison to those who smoke every day (Figure 18).
- Those young people who usually spend most of their time out and with friends, studying and doing homework, doing sport or physical activity, have bigger happiness, and they almost reach quite happy.
- The Stated happiness grows when young people do sport or physical activity more frequently (Figure 19).

5.7. CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENT.

To confirm the validity and reliability of the scale used to measure the stated happiness, we have calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it has given us a value of 0.801, which means that that scale is valid and reliable (it makes stable and consistent measures).

6. CONCLUSIONS.

From the analysis of the results we can affirm that young students of secondary and Baccalaureate of Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain) get an **stated happiness index of 23.44** on Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener's Scale), so they feel **a little happy (slightly satisfied)**. Generally, most young people announce themselves happy in one or another level.

The Stated happiness of boys is 24.30, slightly above the girls' one, which is 22.70. Although both would be in the level of a little happy, the boys' level nearly reaches the level of quite happy (between 25 and 29 points). The Percentage of boys who announce themselves as very happy is superior to that of girls.

The mean for boys is above the one for girls in all 5 items which form Diener's Scale. Boys announce themselves as quite happy in "My life conditions are excellent" and in "I'm satisfied with life", and they are a little happy in the rest. However, girls announce themselves a little happy in all items of Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

Generally, 75.43% of young people consider themselves happy in a different level in comparison to their equals. Both boys and girls announce themselves a little happy in comparison with friends, classmates and relatives.

However, there is a bigger percentage of boys than of girls who, comparing themselves with their equals, feel better than them.

CONFIRMATION OR REJECTION OF HYPOTHESIS.

Regarding **HYPOTHESIS 1** (H1 "Happiness is measurable") **we accept it. happiness is measurable in one or another way.** The problem that we must consider is how to define the concept of happiness. In our research we have considered the concept of stated happiness or subjective well-being, **measured with Diener's Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS).**

The **SECOND HYPOTHESIS** (H2: "Happiness (subjective well-being level) is independent of sex so there should not be significant differences between boys and girls", after doing Test T for two independent variables (Levene's Test), **we reject it so we conclude that there are significant differences in stated happiness level of young people in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain) depending on sex.** The populations defined by variable "sex" haven't got the same average level of stated happiness according to Diener's Scale. **The happiness stated by boys is higher than the girls' one.**

Finally, **HYPOTHESIS 3** (H3: There could be differences in the happiness or subjective well-being level of young people depending on their family relationships, their relations with friends or couple, their economic situations, their health, their academic performance, daily activities and spare time, etc.), **we accept it as there are differences in the happiness or subjective well-being level of young people depending on their family relationships, their relations with friends or couple, their economic situations, their health, their academic performance, daily activities and spare time, etc.**

Generally speaking, we have observed that the stated happiness or subjective well-being level is higher in those young people that:

- Have good family relationships and feel loved very usually.
- Have good friend relationships and go out with friends frequently.
- Feel good with their physical aspect and even if they could change it, they wouldn't do it.

- Don't smoke and have general good health, and apart from that, they don't drink alcohol or they do it very few times.
- Have a good economic situation and they feel satisfied with their material possessions (mobile, clothes, computer, etc.).
- Give importance or a lot of importance to studies and they also get good or very good academic results.
- They have a couple and besides they are satisfied with their relation.
- They usually spend part of their time with friends, studying or doing some sport or physical activity.
- They are satisfied with their hobbies, with the activities they do on their free time and with their outings at weekends.

With regard to the other objectives we pursued with this research, the results and conclusions are the following ones:

- Family and friend relationships of young people are usually good or very good, and most of them feel loved by their parents.
- Generally speaking, the health of young people is good or very good, and 66.43% of young people feel good with their physical appearance, but 74.04% would change something if they could.
- 59.65% of young people consider themselves believers, but religion is little or not important for 60.84% of young people.
- Generally, young people have a good economic situation (for 60.35% is good or very good) and 83.73% of young people are satisfied with their material belongings (computer, mobile, clothes and others).
- Studies are quite important to most young people (95.45%), however, just 47.37% affirm that their academic results are good or very good.
- Young people dedicate a big part of their time, in this order, to doing activities related to studies, listening to music, practicing some sport, using mobile phones or computers, social media or using Line o WhatsApp, watching TV and being with friends.
- 71.13% of the interviewed young people are quite or very satisfied with their hobbies and activities they do on their free time.
- 46.85% of young people don't practice sport or any other physical activity, or they do it rarely.
- More than half the young people (50.53%) usually watch TV or audiovisual contents on PC'S or tablets.
- In general, almost 90% of young people listen to music frequently and most (66.9%) young people USE social media very frequently. 87.42 % of young people use Whatsapp, Line or others message applications too much.
- 69.23% of young people say they seldom go to the cinema or to concerts, and 17.83% never do it. 52.13% of young people never go to the theatre, museums or other cultural events.
- Generally, they travel just a little and just 33.22% read quite a bit or a lot.
- The activities that give higher satisfaction to young people are, in this order: Going out and meeting with friends, practicing some sport or physical activity (football, basketball, gymnastics, dancing, etc.), listening to music and reading books. On the contrary, playing computer or video games only give satisfaction to 4.63% of young people, using Whatsapp or Line to send messages, just gives satisfaction to 3.20% watching TV or audiovisual contents on computers, to 2.49%, drinking alcohol to 2.49% and using social media to 0.36% of young people.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

This essay wouldn't have been possible without the help of the next people, whom we are truly grateful to:

To our teacher, Juan Carlos Parra Romero, for all the help he has given us and the patient he has had with us.

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To our parents for their support and affection.

To our classmates.

And to all the students who have participated in this research and have made this work possible.

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- Oficial web of United Nation Organization for *Happiness International day*. <http://www.un.org/es/events/happinessday/>

- Web of Local government of Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain), www.molinadesegura.es

FIGURES

AM I HAPPY?

“A project about the stated happiness or subjective well-being of young people in Molina de Segura (Murcia, Spain): Are boys happier than girls?”



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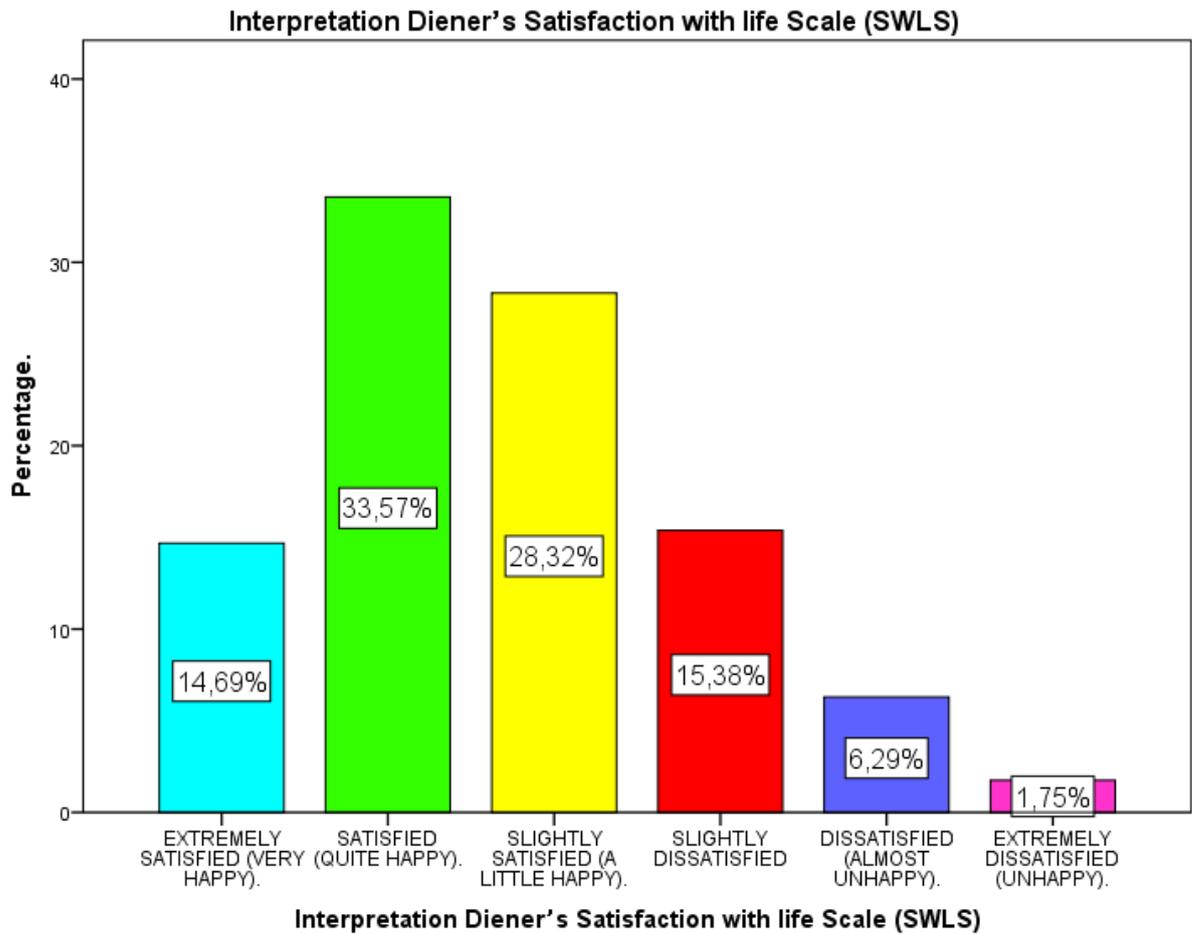
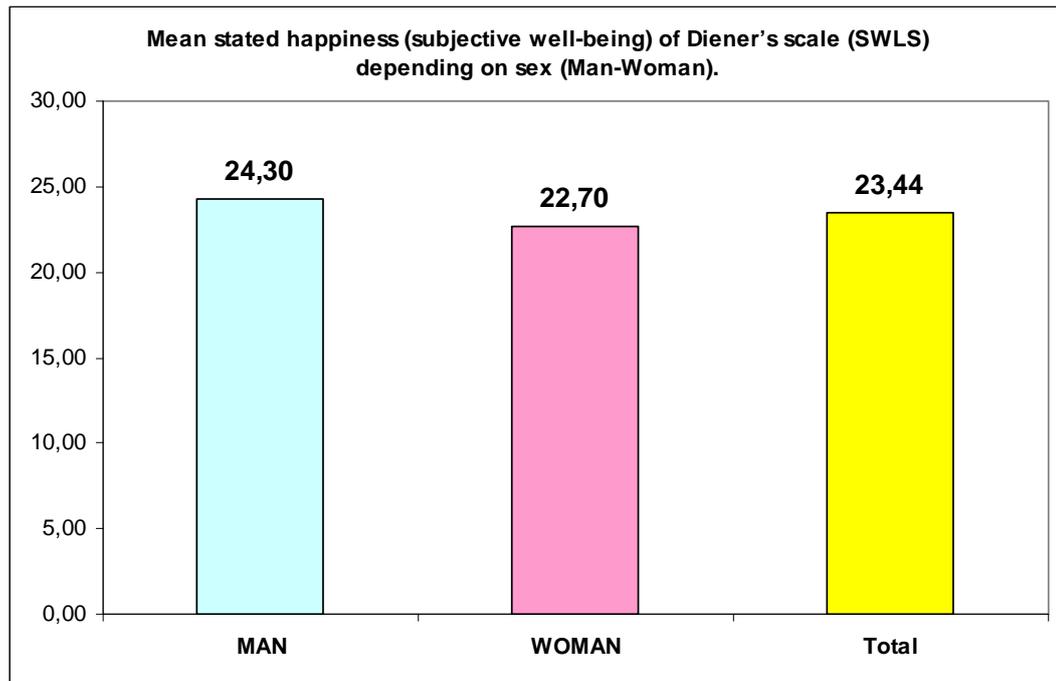


Figure 1: Interpretation Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener's Scale).

N	Acceptable	286
	Lost	0
MEAN		23,44
Standard deviation		5,876
Variance		34,528

Figure 2: Mean stated happiness (*subjective well-being*) of Diener's scale (SWLS).



SEX	MEAN	N	STANDARD DESVIATION	VARIANCE	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM
MAN	24,3	132	5,841	34,118	34	6
WOMAN	22,7	154	5,824	33,923	32	5
TOTAL	23,44	286	5,876	34,528	34	5

Figure 3: Mean stated happiness (*subjective well-being*) of Diener's scale (SWLS) depending on sex (Man-Woman).

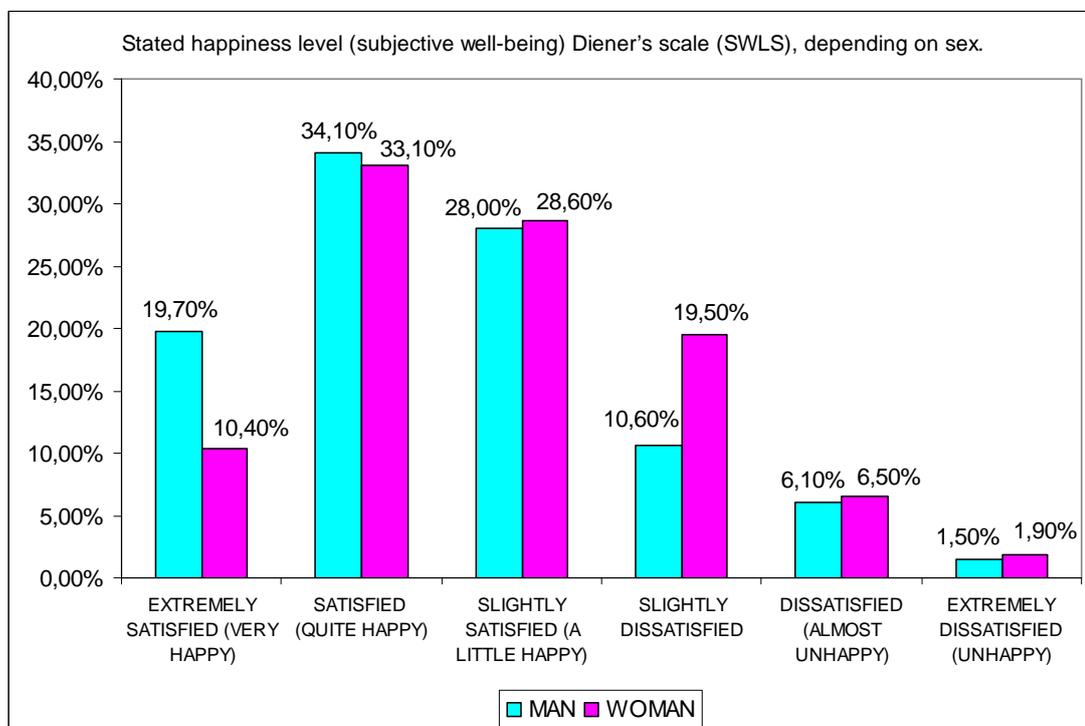


Figure 4: Stated happiness level (*subjective well-being*) Diener's scale (SWLS), depending on sex.

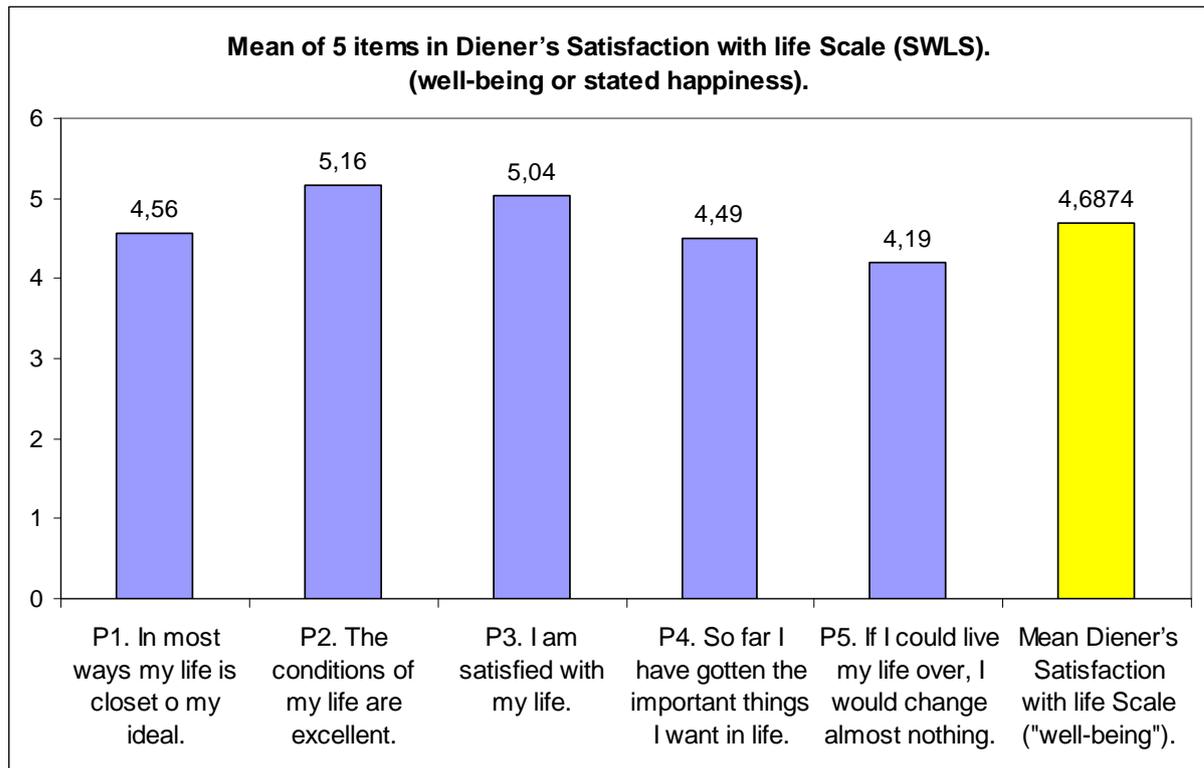


Figure 5: Mean of 5 items in Diener's Satisfaction with life Scale ("well-being") (SWLS).

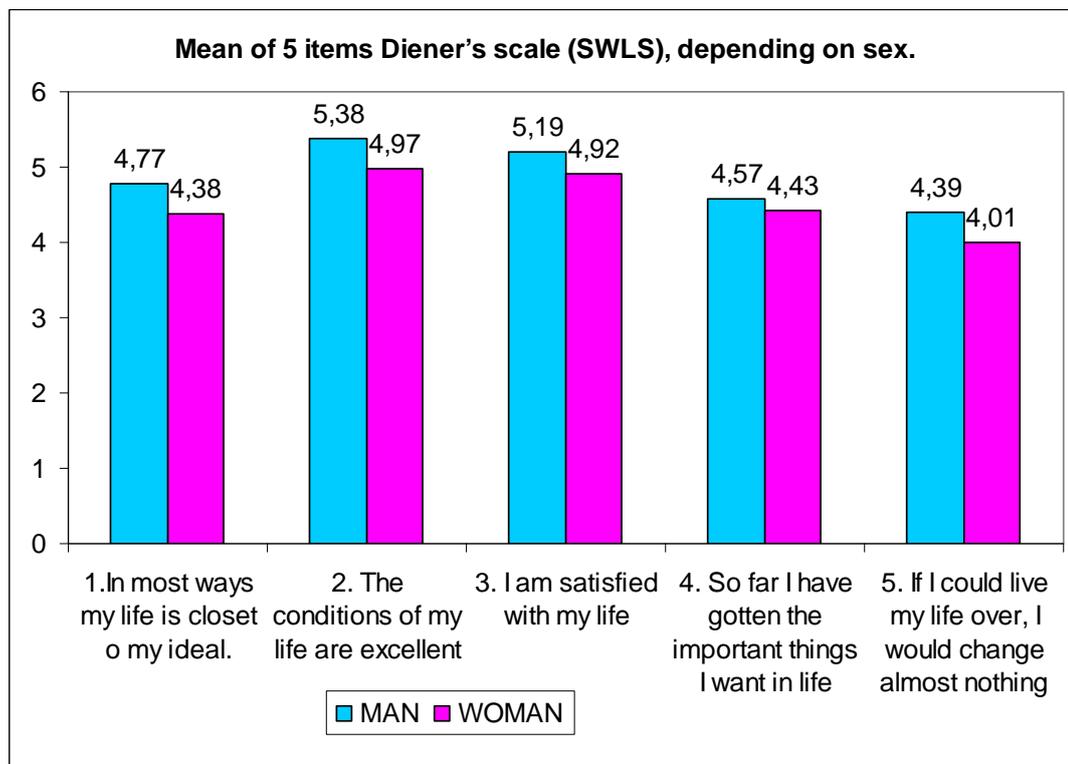


Figure 6: Mean of 5 items Diener's scale (SWLS), depending on sex.

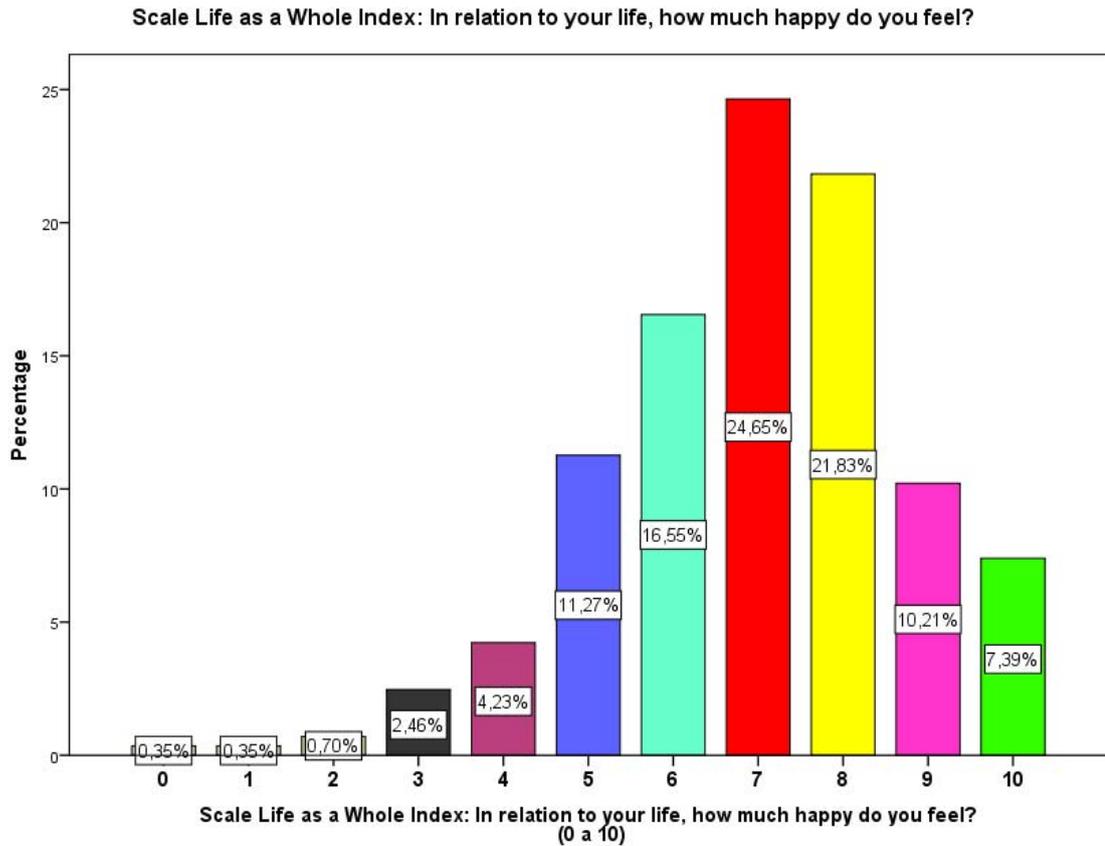


Figure 7: Percentage of answer, *In relation to your life, How much happy do you feel?* (Andrews and Withey, 1976).

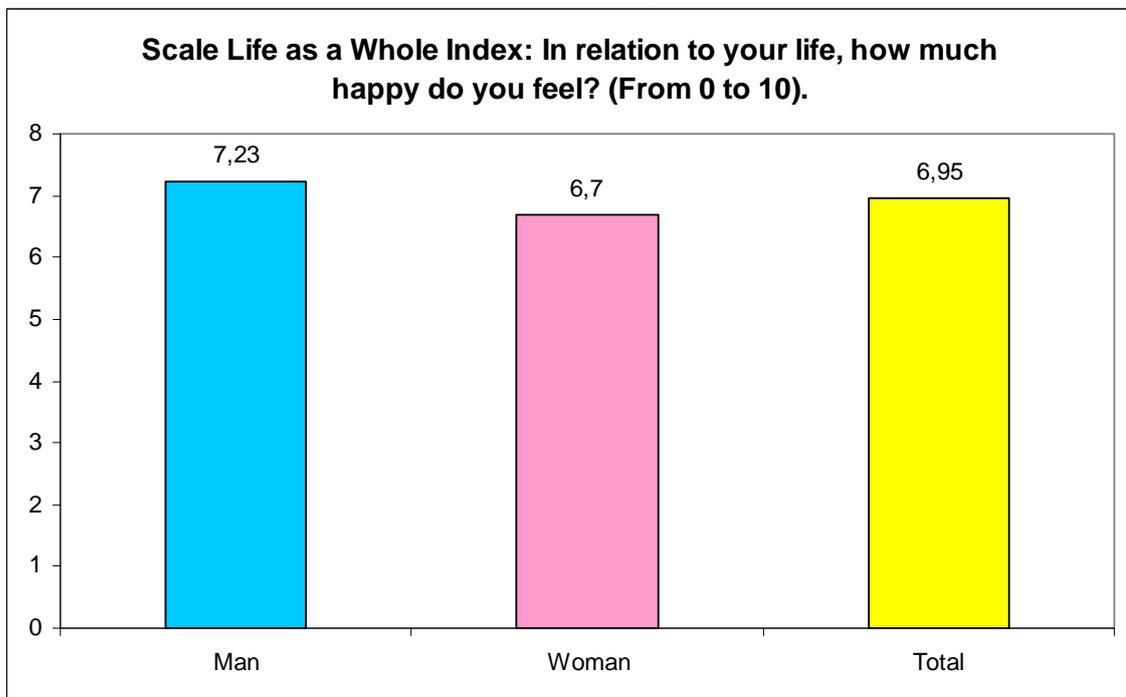


Figure 8: Scale Life as a Whole Index: *In relation to your life, how much happy do you feel?*, by sex (From 0 to 10).

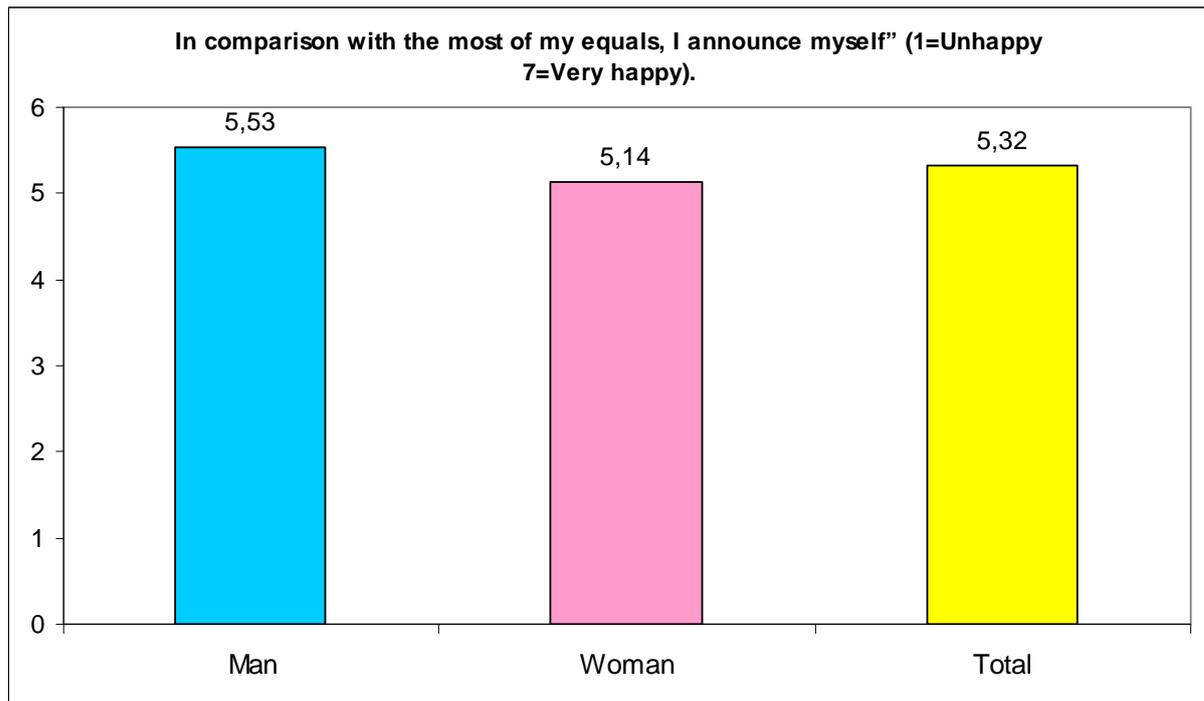


Figure 9: Happiness media by sex, "In comparison with the most of my equals, I announce myself" (1=Unhappy 7=Very happy).

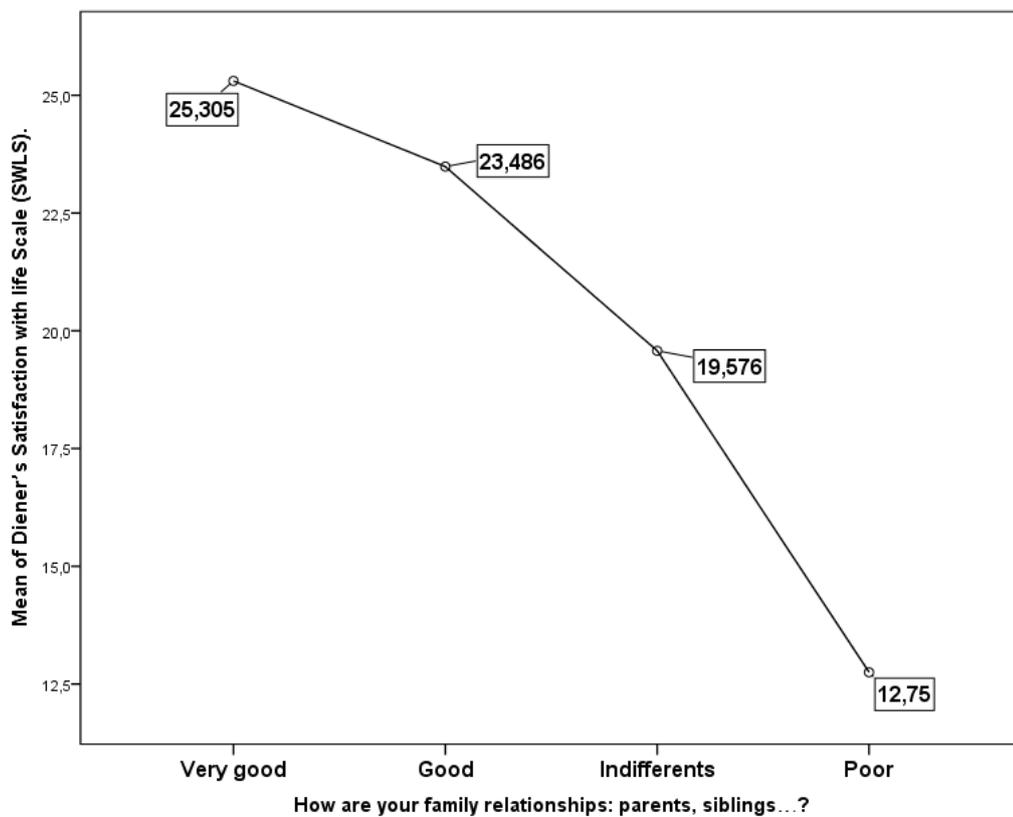


Figure 10: Stated happiness (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS), depending on the familiar relationships.

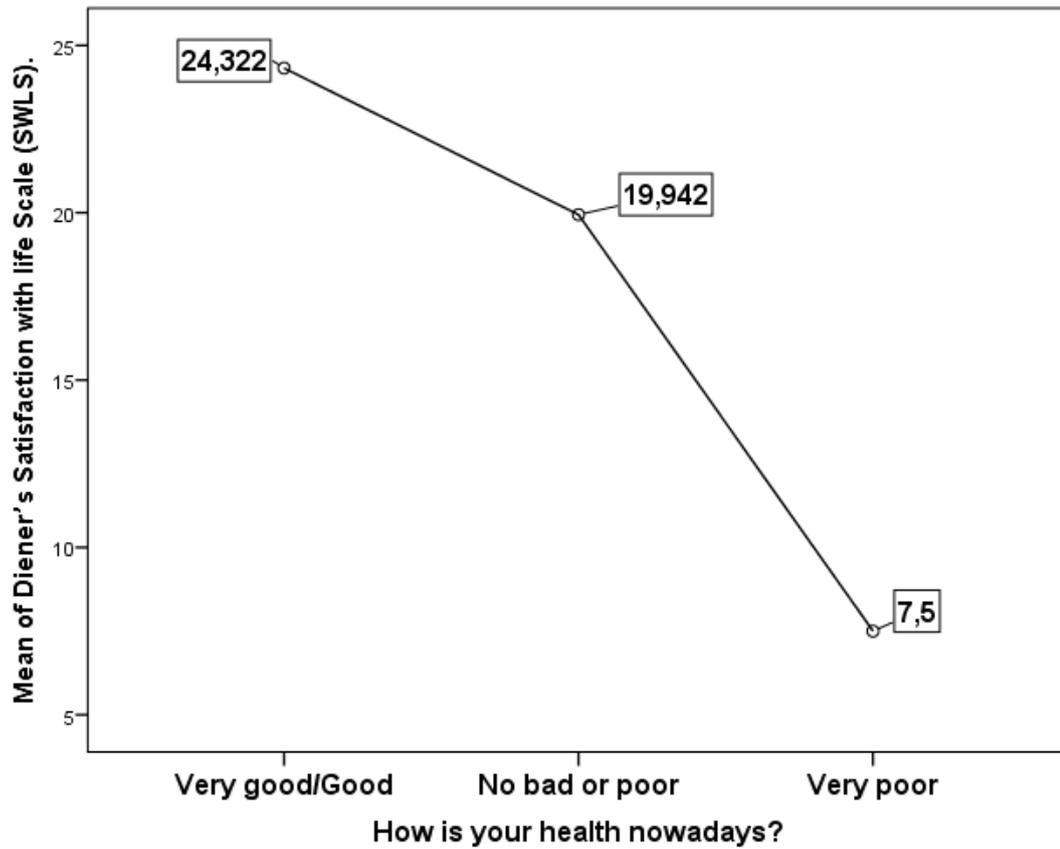


Figure 11. Stated happiness and health (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

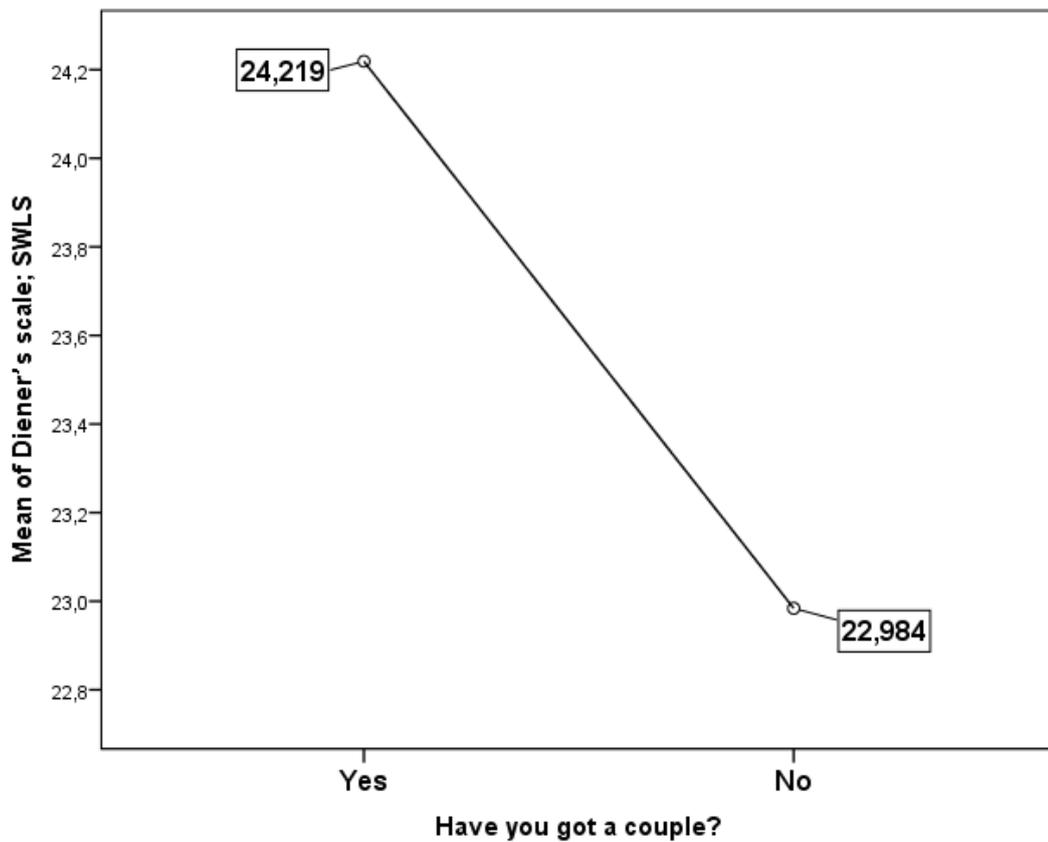


Figure 12. Stated happiness and couple ("love") (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

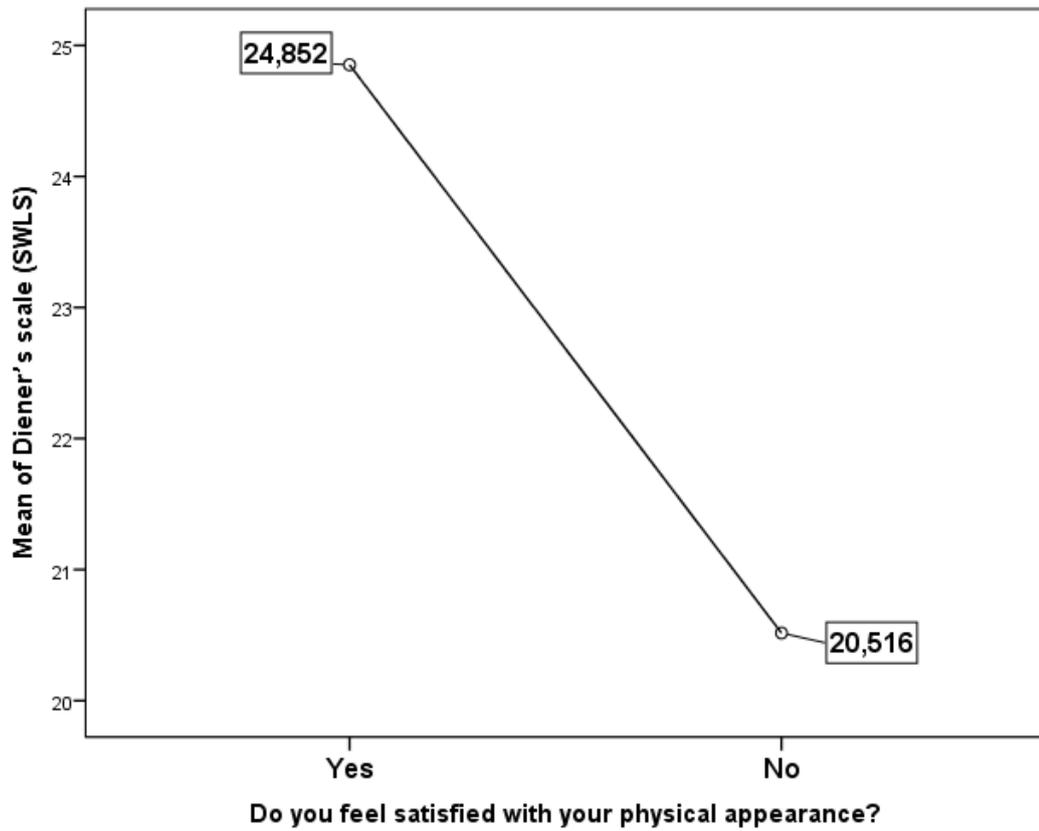


Figure 13. Stated happiness and physical aspect, (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

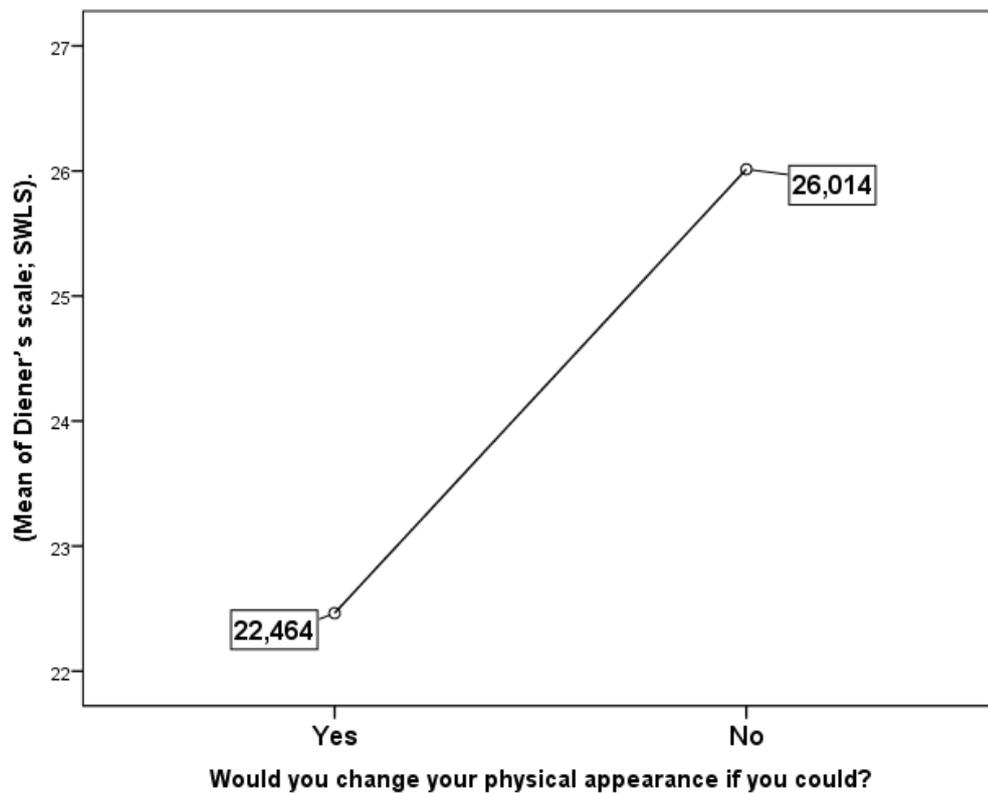


Figure 14. Stated happiness and changes in physical aspect (acceptation), (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

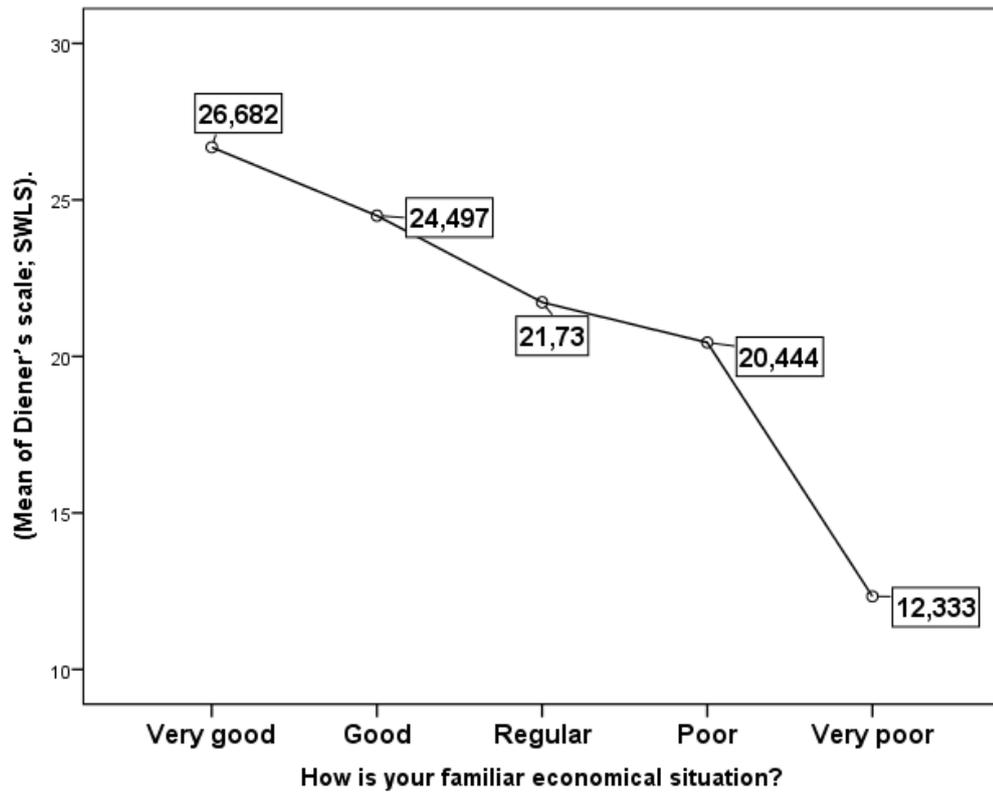


Figure 15. Stated happiness and familiar economical situation, (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

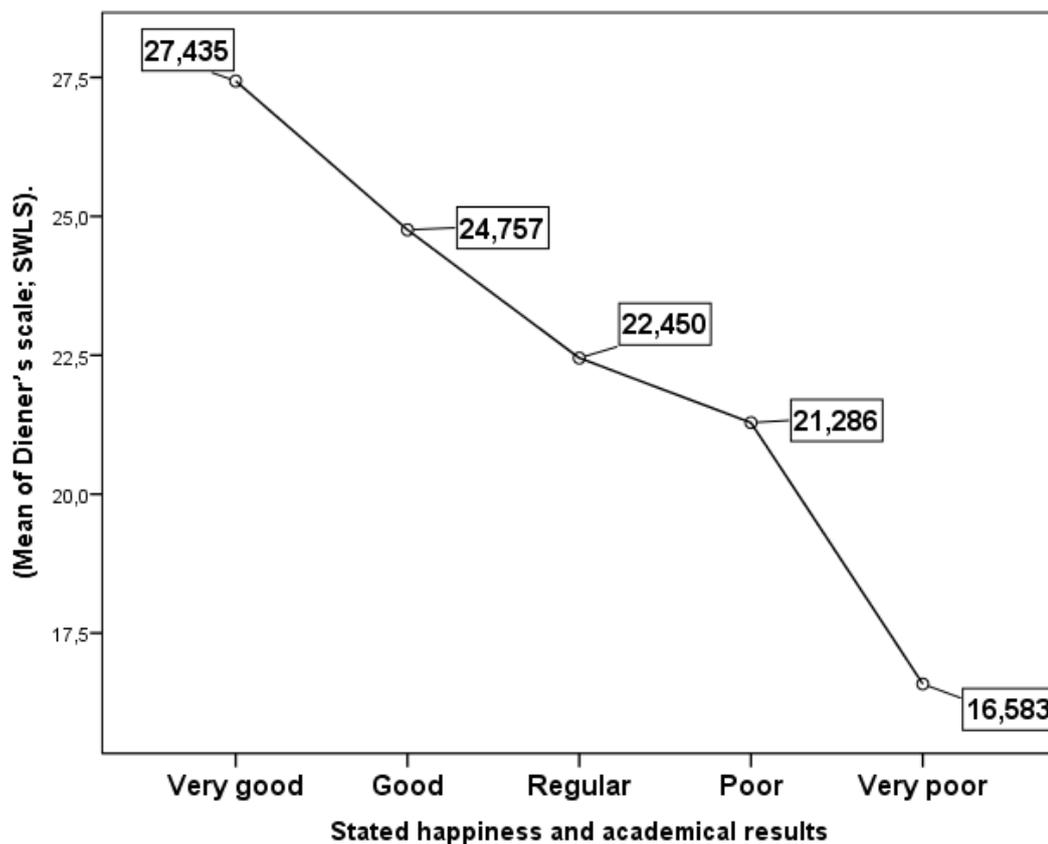


Figure 16. Stated happiness and academics results, (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

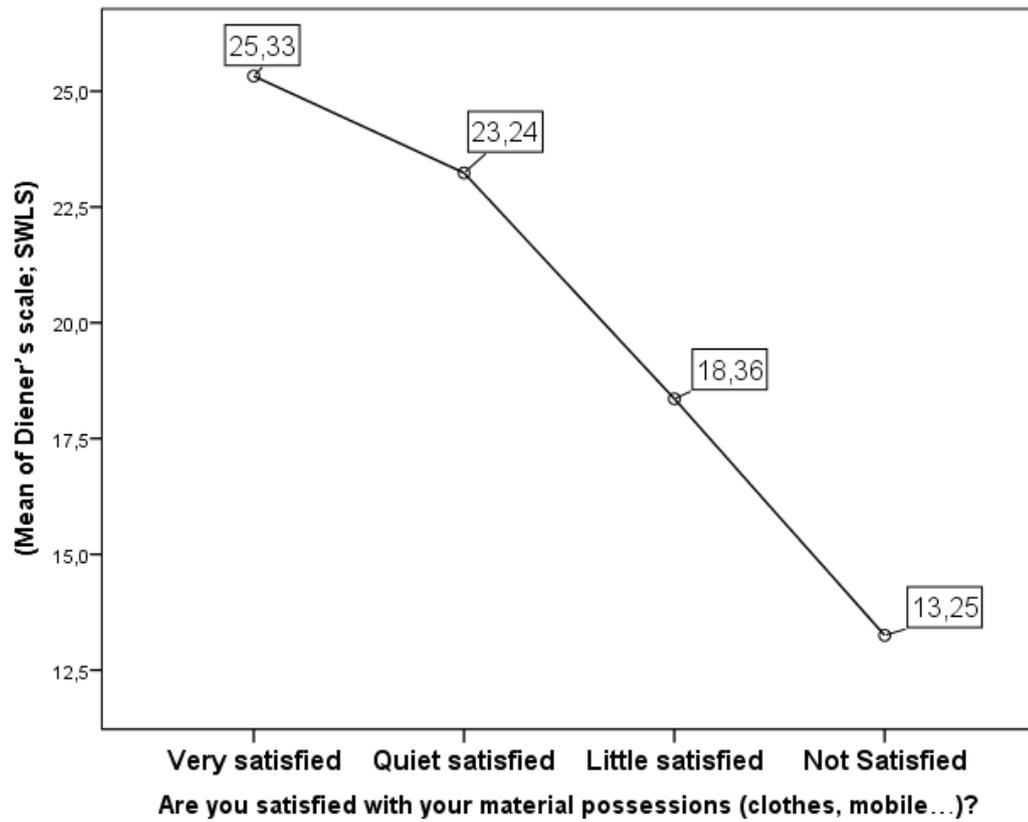


Figure 17. Stated happiness and material possessions (clothes, mobile...), (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

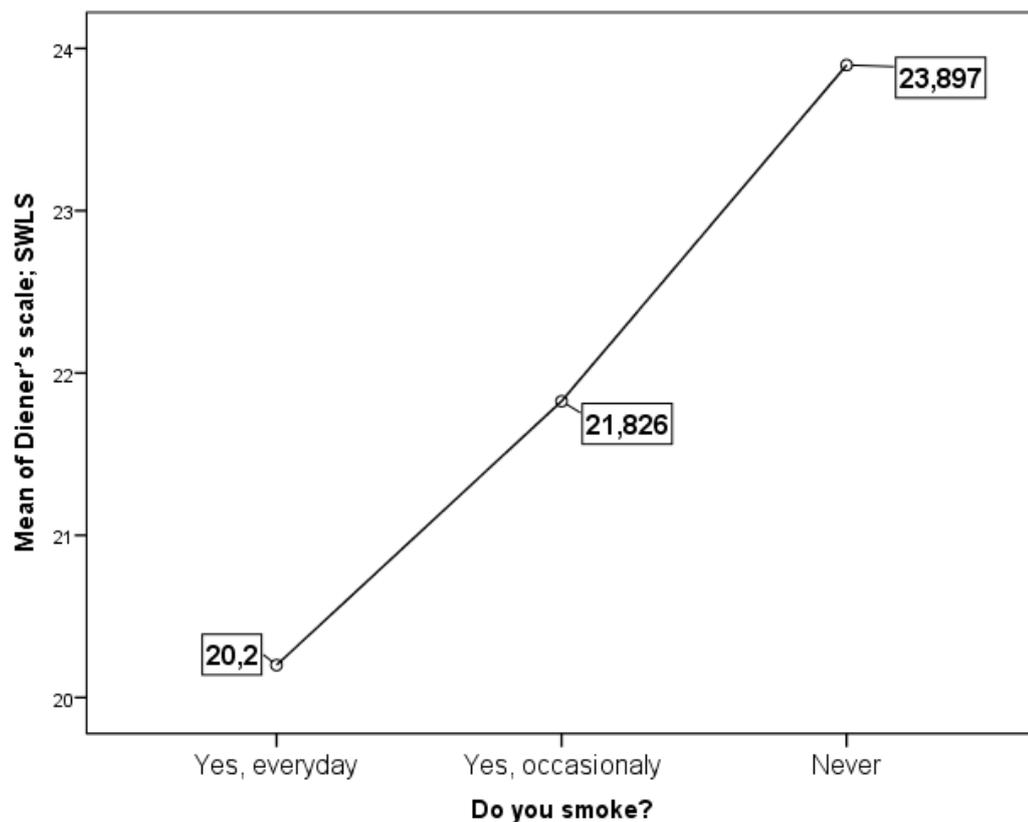


Figure 18. Stated happiness tobacco consume (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

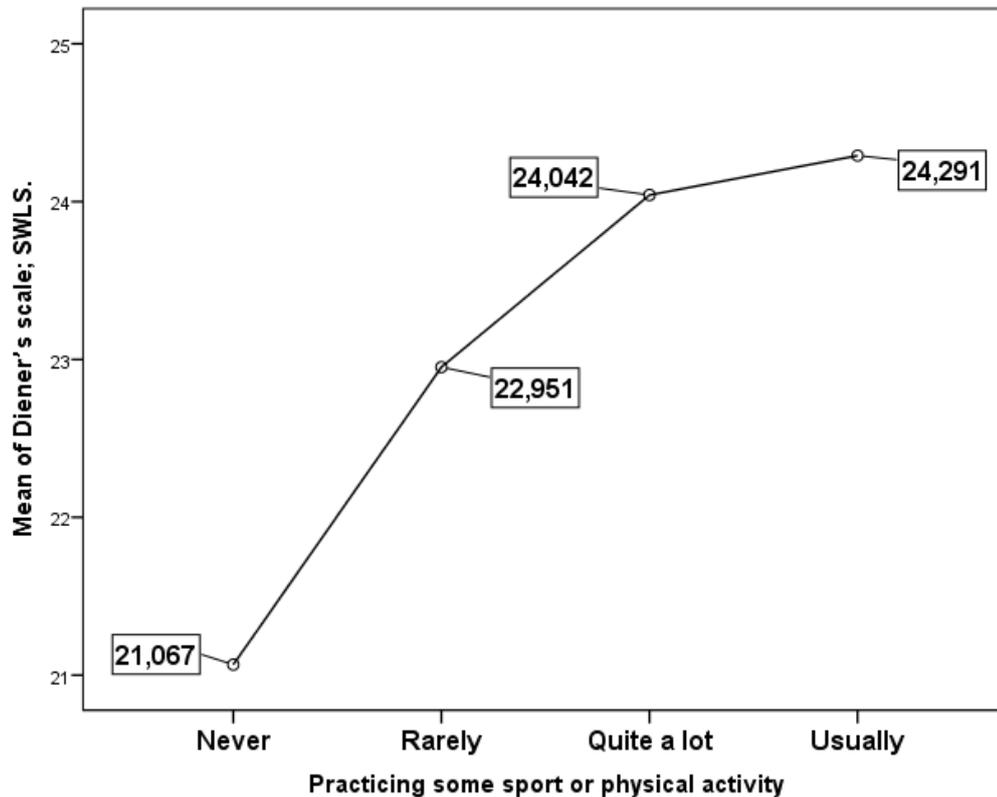


Figure 19. Stated happiness and physical activity, (Mean of Diener's scale; SWLS).

	Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Error tip. mean
Diener's Scale (SWLS) (Well-being or stated happiness level)	Man	132	24,3	5,841	0,508
	Woman	154	22,7	5,824	0,469

The Two-Independent-Samples T Test	Levene's test for equality of means								
	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (two-tailed significance)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	95% Confidence interval for mean	
Diener's scale; SWLS.								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0,029	0,864	2,304	284	0,022	1,594	0,692	0,233	2,956
Equal variances not assumed			2,304	277,108	0,022	1,594	0,692	0,232	2,956

Figure 20: Prove T for independent samples Levene's prove³. Mean of total punctuation in Diener's Scale. Analysis of bilateral signification, assuming equal variances, Levene's level of two-tailed signification of 0.022, which is minor than 0.05, so we decide to reject Hypothesis of equality of means.

³ Statistics interpretation of Levene: If Levene's prove gives a Sig. (two-tailed significance) major or equal than 0.05 we can accept the hypothesis of equality of means between two different population (differences can be explained by fate). However, if bilateral signification is minor than 0.05, we can't consider like equal the means, so we reject hypothesis of equality of means in two independent populations.