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| **Reviewer A** |  |
| **Comment** | **Response** |
| There has been a significant amount of work conduced on happiness in South Africa, not all of which is cited in the article. See for example: Ebrahim, S., Botha, F. and Snowball, J. (2013) Determinants of life satisfaction among race groups in South Africa. Development Southern Africa 30,2: 168-185; Botha, F. and Booysen, F. (2013) The Gold of One’s Ring is Not Far More Precious than the Gold of One’s Heart: Reported Life Satisfaction Among Married and Cohabitating South African Adults. Journal of Happiness Studies; as well as a number of other articles by V. Moller (only one listed in the references list). | We have incorporated ALL recent works and publications of the SA researchers on happiness, as well as some of the international ones. We are indeed grateful to the SA authors for giving us these pointers & an acknowledgement is also made in the paper (last page). All the additions to the paper are highlighted in yellow for ease of demarcation.  |
| In some places, in-text references need attention (what is the date for the Kahneman reference cited on page 3?) | Done  |
| Is the journal policy to use first person? (“we”)? If not, this needs to be changed. | Changed the style. |
| What was the actual question asked about happiness? Did it relate to quality of work life or to overall quality of life? Why was the particular form of the question chosen? | It was on quality of work life to examine the work influence on happiness. |
| In reporting the sample make-up, it would be more useful to show percentages than actual numbers (page 7). | Corrected. Both the frequency and the percentages are shown in the sample make up, but in the description only percentages are used.  |
| Given that Table 1 only has 2 columns, with only one figure in column two, is it necessary, or can it just be reported in the text? | Previous Table 1 is removed and the results are just reported. |
| When reporting summary statistics in table 2, it would be useful to know when the mean values were statistically significantly different from each other. | ANOVA was carried out along with multiple comparisons to check for statistically significant differences and the results are now added into the paper |
| For the regression, I am unconvinced that reducing the happiness variable to a binary specification is the best way to go. Why not use an ordered probit or logit model? One could even argue that happiness on the 1 to 5 scale is a continuous variable and use an OLS model. The binary specification leads to odd results, such as that “the probability of a higher income earner being far happier than a low income earner is not found to be significant in the logistic model” (p18). |  The original logistic regression is removed and the analysis is now carried out using an Ordinal logistic (logit) regression model by keeping the original scale of the happiness variable. The results have also been re-interpreted. The OLS approach was not found suitable due to lack of convergence and it was not giving us adequate significant results. |
| In reporting the results, the author/s need to be very careful about unsupported speculation. For example, on page 16, the results showing differences in happiness between race groups are very similar to those found in other studies (which are not cited). The author/s speculate that “a culture of ethical hard work” make people happier than “a culture of dependency and entitlements”. This seems to imply that happier people (whites) are more ethical and hardworking than less happy people (blacks) who are “dependent”. This is not supported by their findings, and could thus be interpreted by some as a racist statement. The reiteration of this argument in the discussion (p18), and the unsupported hope that “as they become more empowered their happiness level may increase” (who are “they”?) has the same tone. |  The results have now changed using the new ordered logit model and have been interpreted accordingly. Everything is highlighted in yellow.We removed the issue of entitlements and highlighted our findings of variations in subjective well-being based on employment and race groups, which support other studies.  |
| Similarly, in discussing the interaction between gender and perceived fairness of treatment at work, they say “women are more likely to be prone to their emotions in relation to their treatment at work, perhaps the negative ones, more strongly and frequently, than men are”. Firstly, the question does not relate to actual fairness of treatment, but to perceived fairness of treatment at work, and should be reported as such. Secondly, they do not present any evidence to support their speculation as to the reasons for their finding. There is a vast body of research on gender and work place satisfaction (also relating to remuneration, perceptions, gender inequality etc.). Their labelling of women as “likely to be prone to their emotions” is thus flagrant sexism. It comes through again in the discussion (p18). The policy suggestion, that the “atmosphere” in firms “especially those affecting women” should be “enhanced”, is simplistic and trite. How would one go about implementing such a policy? | No interaction terms were significant in the new ordered logit model so this statement is now removed. The question of gender was not developed further as it could be interpreted as a ‘sexist’ emotive issue. Instead, based on the additional findings of our study, we highlighted the fact that having many children can detract from happiness. There is support for this in the literature.The “atmosphere” aspect has been removed.  |
| Under limitations of the study, the authors state that “the study is not modelled with logistic regression”, yet they refer to “the logistic model” frequently. | This is now changed since the paper no longer uses the logistic model. |
| Policy suggestions are mostly vague and unsupported by citations of other articles. In any case, making policy suggestions based on such a small sample is not really feasible. | We have included references from other studies as a backup, and indicated these policy suggestions as ‘tentative’, given sample size limitation.  |
| **Reviewer C** |  |
| **Comment** | **Response** |
| The introduction refers to South African trends in happiness limited to the period between 2006 and 2008 based on Veenhoven’s database. South Africa may be one of the few African countries that has tracked happiness and life satisfaction in nationally representative surveys over a longer period. The authors might like to cite longer trendlines for happiness or life satisfaction that are available in a 2013 Social Indicators Research article and the life satisfaction trendline in the 2014 Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research. P. 16 The authors wonder why black South Africans express lesser happiness twenty years into apartheid (The South African literature on happiness has dwelt on this point since 1994!) This statement is followed by an observation, almost a truism, on the link between hard work and industriousness with happiness and dependency and entitlement detracting from life satisfaction in the longer term. I thought this last statement should be presented as a proposition rather than a statement of fact. I do not know if the South African happiness literature has concrete evidence on this count! | We used Veenhoven’s data and recent ones from SA researchers and the 2013 World happiness Report. Updated our ideas by citing other SA researchers and international ones. Owing to resource and library constraints we could not have access to the 2014 Encyclopedia and the 2013 Social Indicators Research. Free preview was not available. However, we have got sufficient local support from eminent SA researchers on the issue of variations in happiness among different ethnic groups, and we have included all of the recent ones in the paper. The point of entitlement is removed. We tweaked it to the self-employed and salaried income earners, as the entrepreneurs were found to be happier on average than labour; also there is some support for this in the literature.  |
| I wondered why the authors wanted to calculate the internal consistency of items on the work environment. Cronbach’s alpha is usually used to see whether items are suitable to form an index so they can analyse results more efficiently, but further analysis examines the individual items. | Cronbach’s alpha is also used for validity that comes from internal consistency and is retained in the paper. |
| Interestingly, this case study found that 1-3 children boosted happiness. There is literature on the presence of children detracting from happiness which is not mentioned here. | The results have now changed since the introduction of the new model. Incorporated literature, especially Frey and Stutzer, with regard to the influence of children on happiness.  |
| The abstract and conclusions suggest to the reader that your case study findings can be generalised to the global situation. I think you should be a bit more modest. The second sentence of the abstract should make it quite clear that you are reporting findings from a small case study. Similarly, the conclusion states that, on average, happier people tend to be married, educated, have children, etcetera. This statement is followed by an enumeration of factors that may enhance happiness. The recommendations may apply generally, but you should make it clear that, in the first instance, they are based on findings from your case study. Simply inserting mention of the case study (e.g., on average, the case study found that …) in the second sentence would likely suffice. | We have reworked the abstract in the light of the valuable suggestions made and the new findings of the logistic regression. Minor adjustments are also made in the conclusion accordingly. We acknowledge the guidance received from the reviewers and we are very grateful for their assistance. Thank you so much! |
| Should the title be a bit more specific? The main focus of the study seems to be in key words. Even though you have submitted to a South African journal, KZN should probably be spelt out in full. | We have revisited and expanded the title to give it a better focus. All additions, changes & revisions are highlighted in yellow for ease of differentiation. Thank you all for your guidance and assistance. Much appreciated! |