

## **JOURNAL OF HAPPINESS STUDIES**

Ruut Veenhoven

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### **1 SYNONYMS**

Abbreviated as: JOHS

### **2 DEFINITION**

An interdisciplinary scientific journal on subjective well-being.

### **3 DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1 History**

The Journal of Happiness Studies (JOHS) is an interdisciplinary forum on subjective wellbeing. The first issue appeared in 2000. Founding editors were Ed Diener, Alex Michalos, and Ruut Veenhoven. All three were members of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) as were most of the members of the editorial board.

The journal has roots in the social indicator movement and emerged as a split-off from the successful journal of “Social Indicators Research” that got ever more submissions on happiness. Alex Michalos was at that time the editor in chief of “Social Indicators Research,” which he established in 1973. The journal rooted also in the positive psychology movement that emerged at that time and in which Ed Diener was a key person. Ruut Veenhoven was founder of the World Database of Happiness and as such central in the field.

The publishing house was Kluwer Academic in the Netherlands, the same publisher of Social Indicators Research. Kluwer Academic became part of Springer Publishers, which now hosts several more scientific journals on well-being, such as “Quality of life Research” since 1997, “Applied Research in Quality of Life” since 2003, and “Psychology of Well-Being” since 2011.

The first editor in chief was Ruut Veenhoven (2000-2004), followed by Ed Diener (2005), Bob Cummins (2005-2009), and Antonella della Fave (since 2009).

### 3.2 Scope

The journal does *not* cover everything ever associated with the word happiness. The focus is on subjective well-being, both cognitive evaluations of life (like life satisfaction) and affective enjoyment of life (such as mood level). In addition to contribution on appraisal of life as a whole, the journal accepts contributions on life domains (such as job satisfaction) and life aspects (such as perceived meaning of life).

The journal provides a forum for two main traditions in happiness research: (1) speculative reflection on the good life and (2) empirical investigation of subjective well-being. Contributions from all sciences are welcomed: alpha sciences (in particular philosophy), beta sciences (especially health-related quality of life research), and gamma sciences (not only psychology and sociology but also economy).

### 3.3 Leading Questions

The journal accepts contributions conceptualization, measurement, prevalence, explanation, evaluation, imagination, and study of happiness.

#### *Conceptualization:*

What meanings are denoted by terms like happiness and subjective well-being?  
How do these fit in with broader conceptions of the good life?

#### *Measurement:*

In what ways can we assess how people feel about life?  
What are the best measures for what purposes? Can scores be compared between individuals and across time and culture?

#### *Prevalence:*

How do people feel about life?  
Are there systematic differences across social categories, culture, and time?

#### *Explanation:*

What goes on in people when they appraise their life? Which mental and neural processes are involved?  
What conditions foster a positive appreciation of life?  
How are these effects mediated?  
Why do we feel good or bad? What is the use of going through life appraisals?

#### *Evaluation:*

What are the consequences of enjoying life or not?  
Is happiness a worthwhile goal for therapy and social policy?

*Imagination'*

How is happiness portrayed in arts and fiction? What does the public think of it?

Do beliefs fit reality?

How do policy makers think of happiness? Do their beliefs matter?

Does imagination affect appraisals of life?

*Study:*

How has the study of happiness developed? **Availability**

The journal is available on paper (ISSN 1389-4978) and in electronic version (ISSN 1573-7780). The journal homepage is

[www.springeronline.com/social+sciences/wellbeing/journal/10902](http://www.springeronline.com/social+sciences/wellbeing/journal/10902).

### **3.4 Impact**

From start, the journal was quite successful in terms of submissions and citations. It received ISI recognition already in 2008. The 2011 impact factor was 1,875.

## References

*Applied Research In Quality of Life*

*Psychology of Wellbeing*

*Journal of Happiness Studies*

*Quality of Life Research*

*Social Indicators Research*

*World Database of Happiness.*

Veenhoven, R., Diener, E., & Michalos, A. (2000)  
Editorial: *What this journal is about.*  
*Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1, v-viii.