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Leisure satisfaction and happiness: the moderating role of religion

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of leisure satisfaction on happiness and explores how religion, as a moderator, influences this effect in the Asian context. The statistical analyses were conducted using the Asia Barometer Survey 2006 and 2007 databases. The regression analysis results indicate that: (a) leisure satisfaction is positively associated with happiness in the investigated Asian countries; (b) all the religions tested are significantly positively associated with happiness except Buddhism (Theravada); and (c) religions negatively moderate the relationship between leisure satisfaction and happiness. The study serves as a new exploration to test the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness in the Asian context, and raises the importance of a more comprehensive examination of contextual differences in related research. Implications of the study are analysed and limitations and future directions are provided.

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Leisure satisfaction; happiness; religion

Introduction

Happiness has been pursued in both the East and the West for thousands of years, and has been discussed by great philosophers such as Aristotle and Confucius. One could claim that the utmost goal of human beings is to achieve happiness, although different people from different cultures might have different ideas about what happiness means. How to be happy and what generates happiness have been widely explored by researchers, policy-makers, and other stakeholders, with the foundation of the *Journal of Happiness Studies* and the rise of positive psychology being salient examples.

Among a number of factors, leisure has been recognised as one important domain in overall happiness (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Liu & Da, 2019; Newman et al., 2014). Further, leisure satisfaction is supposed to be more related to happiness or subjective well-being (SWB) than leisure per se (Furnham, 1991; Liang et al., 2013; Matsumoto et al., 2018; Spiers & Walker, 2008). Meanwhile, it was estimated that there were 6.21 billion religiously affiliated people in 2015, representing 83.8% of the world population of 7.41 billion at that time (Hackett & Mcclendon, 2017). Growing attention has been given to questions like 'are religious people happier?' (Ellis, 1962; Lim & Putnam, 2010; Sander, 2017; Stark & Maier, 2008; Witter et al., 1985) and 'what role does religion play in people's leisure participation?' (Delisle, 2003; Kelly et al., 1987; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006).

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Although research on leisure and happiness has thrived, investigating their association still involves challenges. Connecting happiness simply with leisure alone seems to add uncertainty to the results of related studies, since leisure is defined and influenced by various factors. Meanwhile, with its close association with happiness, religion has also widely been recognised as dominant in guiding believers' daily lives, including their leisure activities (cf., Creighton-Smith et al., 2017). Its special position allows a closer examination of its influence on the effect of leisure on happiness. This will provide a richer context to explore leisure and happiness, with the possibility of probing into these three interrelated elements.

Considering the huge population of religious people and the clash between beliefs and cultures in a world with high mobility, it is of significance to look at the 'religion' component and examine its power to coordinate leisure and happiness which are vital to a better life. A review of the literature has found few related studies in non-Western contexts, and no studies that have investigated the interrelationship among these factors. Therefore, the purpose of this study is, on the one hand, to test the significance of leisure satisfaction to happiness, and on the other hand, to inquire about the moderating effect of religion on the influence of leisure satisfaction on happiness – and to look at both questions in an Asian context.

In this study, self-reported happiness, leisure satisfaction, and religious beliefs are measured using a large-scale questionnaire survey. The study contributes to this area in providing further exploration of religion as a moderator between leisure satisfaction and happiness, and also in conveying information about this relationship in an Asian context. The research aims to present a picture of 'what' religion, leisure satisfaction, and happiness are like in Asian countries, and furthermore, the discussion of the findings will offer an explanation of 'why' relationships exist among them in an Asian context.

Literature review

Leisure satisfaction and happiness

Happiness is often defined as experiencing more frequent positive affective states (Bradburn, 1969; Lyubomirsky, 2008), or as perceiving progress towards significant life goals (Diener et al., 1999). Further, it is acknowledged in happiness theory that judgementsof happiness are inherently subjective and inevitably affect ratings, and all-around affective self-appraisals are involved (Myers & Diener, 1995), since 'an individual's own perception of their happiness is, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to their happiness' (Ito et al., 2019, p. 31).

In *Politics* Aristotle proclaimed that happiness belonged to those people who owned leisure (as cited in De Grazia, 1962). Studies have provided increasing support that leisure contributes to the acquisition of happiness (e.g. Furnham, 1991; Hills & Argyle, 1998; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2004; Stebbins & Liu, 2012). Dahl (1972, p. 73) stated that '[w]hen people experience leisure, their spirits soar and their humanity finds larger expression.' As to how and why leisure might facilitate happiness, a number of mechanisms, especially psychological ones, have been proposed. For example, five core mechanisms have been proposed by Newman et al. (2014) to promote happiness. They are detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation (DRAMMA). More recently, using a graphic elicitation method Liu and Da (2019) found that relaxation, tranquillity, achievement, autonomy, relatedness, and interest were significant mechanisms that brought happiness to students in a key university in eastern China.

However, it is imperative to note that the association between leisure and happiness is not that simple. 'Leisure' is inclusive and can be defined from different perspectives, varying from 'activities' to 'time' to 'a condition of the soul' (cf., Chick, 1998; Liu & Da, 2019). Although some studies have suggested a positive association between leisure participation and happiness, more factors should be taken into consideration. The concept of leisure encompasses leisure time, types of activities, affective and cognitive leisure involvement, etc., with different understanding from and varying

effects on the participants. For example, different types of leisure activities produce different impacts on happiness: listening to music, meeting with friends, travellingetc. are generally highly associated with happiness for some people, but other activities such as spending time on the internet are associated with a decreased level of happiness (Schmiedeberg & Schröder, 2017; Schulz et al., 2017; Wang & Wong, 2014). However, from a cross-cultural perspective the same type of leisure activity might generate inconsistent findings: contrary to the above, sedentary activities like watching TV and surfing the internet have also been reported to have a positive association with happiness (Wei et al., 2015). Therefore, Spiers and Walker (Spiers & Walker, 2008, p. 87) have asserted that 'leisure satisfaction is most likely the best predictor of happiness and QOL', a conclusion which could find resonance in other studies (e.g. Hills & Argyle, 1998; Liang et al., 2013; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Ngai, 2005). The results of a study by Shin and You (2013) also confirmed that leisure satisfaction was a mediator between leisure participation and well-being, which suggests that leisure satisfaction is a closer and more direct factor than leisure participation, and may be more important. Based on the above analysis this study raises its first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Leisure satisfaction is positively associated with self-reported happiness in an Asian context.

Religion and happiness

The connection between religion and happiness has attracted sustained academic interest during the past two decades (Cotton et al., 2006; Ellison & Levin, 1998; Green & Elliott, 2010). Positive and statistically significant findings have been presented in over 70% of the most recent related studies published in the last ten years (cf., Pöhls et al., 2019). However, some research also indicates that there is little connection between religion and happiness. For instance, a study by Edling et al. (2014) showed that religion and religiosity per se had little influence on happiness.

Meanwhile, researchers began to attach great importance to different aspects such as societal context, and question the variety of different measures. For the latter, Lewis et al. (2000) and Lewis & Cruise (2006) questioned the studies of Francis (1993), Francis & Lester (1997) and Francis & Robbins (2000) that found a significant positive correlation between attitude towards Christianity and happiness, pointing out that adopting different measurements would generate different results. As to the inclusion of contexts, recently scholars have invested their interest in considering a country's overall level of religiosity. Mookerjee and Beron's cross-country analysis showed that levels of happiness have a negative correlation with levels of religious factionalism (Mookerjee & Beron, 2005). Meanwhile, Eichhorn (2012) stated that the possibility for conformity to the norm in one's country, rather than religiosity per se, weighs more in influencing happiness, and might be a reason why religion and happiness positively correlate at the individual level only in countries with high aggregate levels of religiosity.

Lim and Putnam (2010) summarised two underlying findings to explain the mechanisms between religion and happiness: one is the private and subjective dimensions of religion, where feelings like a sense of belonging and inner peace are be generated and promote happiness; and the other is religion's role in providing social networks and support. The second cause could find support from Devine et al. (2019), who analysed primary data from both Muslim and Hindu respondents in Bangladesh and argued that religion per se was not the factor connecting religiosity to happiness; rather, the fact of belonging to a dominant or subordinate group was the key. This study is meaningful considering the relatively scant attention in the literature towards religion and happiness to non-Western contexts. Therefore, the following hypothesis is raised:

Hypothesis 2: In the Asian context, different religions are associated with happiness in varying ways.

The moderating effect of religion

The justification for religion to act as a moderator between leisure and happiness starts with the rich interaction between religion and leisure. Plato suggested that living the 'good life' was best done through play and dedicating one's life to God (Shiver & deLisle, 1997). Pieper (1998) argued that 'leisure would derive its innermost possibility and justification from the very source whence festival and celebration derive theirs. And this is worship' (p. 69). Prebish (1993) noted that ancient games, medieval festivals, and modern day sports were linked to religious beliefs and practices (cf. Delisle, 2003). More recently, Liu and Fu (2019) further acknowledged their correlations when discussing the religious leisure of Tibetan college students.

Although there are claims that religion and spirituality are two separate concepts (cf., Creighton-Smith et al., 2017), there is also general acceptance that spirituality is 'an integral component of any religion' (Sponsel, 2007, p. 340). Heintzman (2016, p. 67) wrote: 'The main goal of religion is the facilitation of spirituality as defined above (from a search for the sacred)'. Leisure is also regarded as being able to bring possible spiritual outcomes such as finding meaning in life, belongingness with community and connectedness with nature, and a sense of wholeness and spiritual well-being (cf., Creighton-Smith et al., 2017). While not all spiritual outcomes are confined to religion, most of them can find an interpretation in a religious sense. Heintzman made comprehensive observations of the role of leisure within the main religions worldwide, and described leisure as a chance for spiritual growth in religious context. Dodson (1996) examined the peak experience in leisure, and pointed out that self-renewal and sense of meaning and purpose in life were its defining characteristics. These effects echo the features of dogmas in most denominations. In the review by Delisle (2003), studies on religion and leisure in Western societies were grouped into historical, sociological, and recreational focuses (e.g. Cross, 1990; Goodale & Godbey, 1988; De Grazia, 1962; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Pieper, 1998). His summary and Heintzman's description of leisure and spirituality in religious contexts could find support from Kelly et al. (1987) proposition of three distinct ways to relate leisure to religion: religion may be considered as a form of leisure activity (use of free time), as being in conflict with leisure (religious institutions), and as a type of leisure in the form of contemplation or spiritual pursuits. Religion is regarded as both a facilitator of leisure participation, because of religious organisations' provision of recreational services, and a constraint, by binding and controlling people's behaviour and preventing them from participating in certain leisure activities (Delisle, 2003).

Religion as a moderator could then be further called upon because of the complex picture of leisure and happiness and the importance of religion in a believer's life. This means that examining the moderating role of religion may enable us to better understand the connection between leisure and happiness. As stated earlier, factors like contextual differences can exert influence on leisure participation's association with happiness, and leisure satisfaction is a better predictor than leisure participation. What makes one feel satisfied about leisure participation is also largely formed by contextual factors. As explained above, religion's influence upon leisure applies to aspects of the activities involved, the time allocated, and the satisfaction and meaning sought.

Finally, the interrelationship between these three elements makes it a compelling issue to bring them together. Leisure and religion have overlapping effects in leading to happiness – one could find meaning and affiliation from both – but there are also conflicts between the two, as religion can sometimes dictate the terms of leisure to believers. The intricate picture of the interactions between them will lead to a new area of interdisciplinary study, and also will allow us to examine context-related issues in a more comprehensive way when adequate variables are taken into account.

Based on the above analysis, the study thus proposes:

Hypothesis 3: Religion moderates the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness in terms of specific religious, societal contexts.

Method

Sample and data

We conducted a series of analyses to answer the questions above, based on the AsiaBarometer Surveys carried out in 2006 and 2007. Initiated in 2003, the AsiaBarometer survey series was collected for six years in succession until 2008. They were designed as the largest comparative survey in Asia, focusing on ordinary people's daily lives and their perceptions of factors such as happiness and health (Inoguchi & Fujii., 2008). In 2006 the survey was conducted in China including Taiwan and Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam, and in 2007 it was carried out in Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Laos.

The survey enables the current research to examine the relationships among religion, leisure satisfaction, and happiness by incorporating a wide range of topics including leisure satisfaction, different aspects of life satisfaction, happiness, religion, identity, globalisation, and democratic consolidation. The survey questions were originally designed in English. When the survey was conducted in different countries, local organisations translated, carefully checked, and back-translated the questionnaires to ensure their accuracy. In terms of the sampling method, multi-stage-stratified random sampling together with quota sampling was adopted through the age group 20–59 in 2006 and the age bracket 20–69 in 2007. In each country, there were approximately 1000 people sampled. Finally, the survey further included onsite interviews to improve the quality of the data and the overall efficiency of collecting questionnaire data. There were a total of 15,082 valid cases for our study, with 8070 in 2006 and 7012 in 2007.

Measures

The dependent variable *happiness* was defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as a psychological state wherein individuals review their life experience and believe they are living a good life. Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) conducted a series of studies on happiness and concluded that it is valid to ask a single question in the measurement of happiness, namely to ask subjects to judge whether they are happy or not. Therefore, the dependent variable was measured with the item 'would you say that you are happy these days?' (1 = very happy to 5 = very unhappy). This item is widely used for measuring happiness empirically (e.g. Wang & Wong, 2014; Chrostek, 2016; Matsumoto et al., 2018). It is stable irrespective of conditions, and reflects happiness well under diverse objective conditions.

The independent variable *leisure satisfaction* was measured with the item 'Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the following aspects of your life: Leisure' (1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied). Previous studies have also used one item (with a similar question) to measure leisure satisfaction, since satisfaction is largely subjective (e.g. Shin & You, 2013).

The moderator variable *religion* was used to compare people with religious faith with those without, and to compare between different religious groups. Respondents were asked 'Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? If yes, which?', and were given a choice among the 12 most common religions in Asia, including Catholicism, Muslim (Sunnah), Muslim (Shiah), Christianity other than Catholic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist (Theravada), Buddhist (Mahayana), Confucian, Taoism, Sikh, and Shintoism. If none of these applied, they were asked to specify any other religion they belonged to. There was also the option to choose 'none', for people who have no particular religious preference. Frequency analysis shows that people professing the religions of Taoism and Hindu were 539 and 188 respectively, only accounting for 3.6% and 1.2% of the entire sample, with the numbers of people self-identifying as Muslim (Shiah), Hindu, Confucian, Jewish, Sikh, Shinto or other religions numbering no more than 20 in each category. Therefore, these religions were excluded in our further analysis.

For people belonging to the leading religions in Asia – Catholicism, Christianity other than Catholic, Muslim (Sunnah), Buddhist (Mahayana), and Buddhist (Theravada) – their responses

were respectively re-coded into dummy variables. For instance, for the dummy variable 'Catholic', cases belonging to Catholic were coded 1, and others were coded 0. To compare people with religious faith with those without, a dummy variable 'no religion' was created, and cases with no religion were coded 1, while others were coded 0.

To highlight the effect of the independent variable and the moderator, we controlled a number of variables that were likely to influence the dependent variable of happiness, including gender (dummy variable, female coded as 0, male as 1), age, marriage (dummy variable, married coded as 1, others 0), education (1, 2, and 3 respectively for low, middle, and high education level), employment (dummy variable, employed coded as 1, unemployed 0), as well as the number of family members with an income. Previous studies have shown that these factors substantially influence happiness (e.g. Pawlowski et al., 2011; Rodriguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2014).

Analytical strategy

We used IBM SPSS 22.0 and Stata 13.0 to conduct statistical analyses. We mean-centred the selected variables to get rid of the interference from multicollinearity before testing the hypothesisedrelationships. We first conducted descriptive and correlation analysis of all the variables, and then employed linear multiple regression analysis to investigate the hypothesised leisure-happiness relationship as well as the moderating effect of religion, paying special attention to such large groups as Catholics, Christians other than Catholics, Muslims (Sunnah), Buddhists (Mahayana), Buddhists (Theravada), and those with no religious identity.

Findings

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic features of the respondents. The 15,082 respondents were evenly recruited in 14 investigated countries and regions (about 1000 in each, and 2000 for Mainland China); 47.9% of the respondents were male, and 52.1% were female; 27.3% were in

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 15082).

Characteristic	Value	N	%	Characteristic	Value	N	%
Country	China	2000	13.3	Education	Low	6547	43.4
	HK China	1000	6.6		Mid	4846	32.1
	Japan	1003	6.7		High	3675	24.3
	Korean	1023	6.8	Number of family that	None	278	1.8
	Singapore	1038	6.9	work and earn an income	1 person	4798	31.8
	TW China	1006	6.7		2 persons	6397	42.4
	Vietnam	1000	6.6		3 persons	2213	14.7
	Malaysia	1000	6.6		4 persons	982	6.5
	Indonesia	1000	6.6		5 persons	261	1.7
	Philippines	1000	6.6		6 persons	104	0.7
	Thailand	1000	6.6		≧7 persons	41	0.3
	Myanmar	1000	6.6	Religion	Catholic	1171	7.8
	Cambodia	1012	6.7		Christian other than Catholic	838	5.6
	Laos	1000	6.6		Muslim (Sunnah)	1837	12.2
Age	20–29	3919	26.0		Muslim (Shiah)	17	0.1
	30–39	4120	27.3		Hindu	188	1.2
	40–49	3395	22.5		Buddhist (Mahayana)	3100	20.6
	50–59	2308	15.3		Buddhist (Theravada)	3121	20.7
	60–69	1340	8.9		Taoism	539	3.6
Employment	Self-employed	3053	20.2		Other religion	169	1.1
	Employed	6982	46.2		No religion	4066	27
	Unemployed	5035	33.4		Don't know	36	0.2
Marriage	Other	4361	28.9	Gender	Female	7862	52.1
	Married	10721	71.1		Male	7220	47.9

the age group from 30 to 39, 26.0% from 20 to 29, and only 8.9% from the 60 to 69 age range. As for employment, 46.2% of them were employed, 33.4% unemployed, and 20.2% self-employed. In terms of family income structure, 42.4% had 2 family members who earned income, 31.8% had only 1, 14.7% had 3, 9.2% had 4 or more, and 1.8% had no family members with income or job. Religion is a key variable in the current research; in this respect, 20.6% of the respondents were Buddhists (Mahayana), 12.2% Muslims (Sunnah), 20.7% Buddhists (Theravada), 7.8% Catholics, 5.6% Christians other than Catholic, and 27.0% belonged to no religion. This distribution well reflects the profiles of the investigated Asian populations, and for further statistical analyses the collected data are reliable and valid.

Table 2 reports the means, maximums, minimums, reliability estimates, standard deviations, and correlations for all measures. These results indicate that all the variables except for employment were substantially associated with the dependent variable of happiness, which shows that leisure satisfaction does significantly influence happiness. Using linear multiple regression analyses we regressed leisure satisfaction as well as its interaction with religion dummies on happiness, to further examine the proposed hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 3.

Model 1 (M1) assesses the relationships between control variables and the dependent variable. As expected, gender, age, education, marriage, the number of family members with an income, and employment are significantly associated with happiness (respectively $\beta = 0.068$, 0.004, −0.136, −0.215, −0.053, and 0.04, $p = 0.02$ for employment, and $p = 0.000$ for other controls), partly responding to previous studies (e.g. Pawlowski et al., 2011; Rodriguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2014).

Model 2 (M2) assesses the impact of leisure satisfaction on happiness (H1). As predicted, leisure satisfaction is positively correlated with happiness ($\beta = 0.325$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Model 3 (M3) assesses the direct effect of religion dummies on happiness. As shown in Table 3, Catholic ($\beta = -0.374$, $p = 0.000$), Christian other than Catholic ($\beta = -0.182$, $p = 0.000$), Muslim (Sunnah) ($\beta = -0.155$, $p = 0.000$), and Buddhist (Mahayana) ($\beta = -0.129$, $p = 0.000$) are all positively associated with happiness. The results correspond to findings from previous studies (e.g. Abdel-Khalek, 2006; Myers, 2002; Reed, 1991). Different from the above religions, Buddhist (Theravada) was negatively associated with happiness ($\beta = 0.103$, $p = 0.008$). It is worth noting that the coefficient of no religion was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.036$, $p = 0.289$). The results support Hypothesis 2.

Model 4 (M4) assesses the moderating effect of religion dummies on happiness. As shown in Table 3, the interaction of leisure satisfaction and the Catholic variable is negatively associated with happiness ($\beta = -0.121$, $p = 0.007$); the interaction of leisure satisfaction and Christian other than Catholic is negatively correlated with happiness ($\beta = -0.087$, $p = 0.065$); the interaction of leisure satisfaction and Muslim (Sunnah) is negatively related with happiness ($\beta = -0.091$, $p = 0.035$); and the interaction of leisure satisfaction and Buddhist (Mahayana) is negatively associated with happiness ($\beta = -0.095$, $p = 0.013$). Finally, the interaction of leisure satisfaction and Buddhist (Theravada) is negatively associated with happiness ($\beta = -0.173$, $p = 0.000$). It must be noted that the interaction of leisure satisfaction and no religion is also negatively associated with happiness ($\beta = -0.128$, $p = 0.001$). These results support Hypothesis 3; further explanation of the moderating effects of religion on the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness will be provided in the Discussion section below.

Discussion

This study is a new exploration of the relationships among leisure satisfaction, religion, and happiness in Asian contexts. Leisure satisfaction, religion, and the happiness of residents from countries and areas including China, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Cambodia are examined. Their beliefs in Catholic, Christian other than Catholic,

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations of all study variables (N = 15082).

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Happiness	1	5	2.24	0.864	1													
Leisure satisfaction	1	5	2.34	0.921	.303***	1												
Catholic	0	1	0.0776	0.26762	−.113***	−.067***	1											
Other Christian	0	1	0.0556	0.22908	−.025**	0.015	−.070***	1										
Muslim S	0	1	0.1218	0.32707	−.071***	−.182***	−.108***	−.090***	1									
Buddhist M	0	1	0.2055	0.40411	−.030***	−0.005	−.148***	−.123***	−.189***	1								
Buddhist T	0	1	0.2069	0.40512	.076***	−.062***	−.148***	−.124***	−.190***	−.260***	1							
No religion	0	1	0.2696	0.44376	.079***	.227***	−.176***	−.147***	−.226***	−.309***	−.310***	1						
Gender	0	1	0.48	0.5	.030***	0.002	0	−.024**	−0.012	−0.011	−.038***	.055***	1					
Age	20	69	39.65	12.838	.054***	.071***	0.003	−0.001	−.104***	.084***	−.048***	.028***	.022**	1				
Education	1	3	1.81	0.801	−.100***	−.039***	.049***	.063***	−.121***	−.028***	−.083***	.144***	.088***	−.288***	1			
Marital status	0	1	0.71	0.453	−.054***	.036***	.032***	−0.015*	0.001	.017**	−.036***	−0.005	−.028**	.350***	−.210***	1		
NFWI	1	8	3.02	1.065	−.056***	−.026**	−.042***	−.044***	−.082***	.050***	.066***	−.016**	.033***	−.112***	.060***	−.087***	1	
Employment	0	1	0.4629	0.49864	−0.001	0.004	−.046**	−.028***	−.022**	−0.002	−0.015*	.059***	.223***	−.147***	.172***	−.067***	.150***	1

NFWI: Number of family members with an income; *** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Linear multiple regression analyses on happiness.

	Happiness			
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Control Variables				
Gender	0.068(0.017)***	0.067(0.016)***	0.069(0.016)***	0.070(0.016)***
Age	0.004(0.001)***	0.003(0.001)***	0.003(0.001)***	0.003(0.001)***
Education	−0.136(0.011)***	−0.127(0.01)***	−0.117(0.01)***	−0.119(0.01)***
Marital status	−0.215(0.019)***	−0.219(0.018)***	−0.207(0.018)***	−0.206(0.018)***
NFWI	−0.053(0.008)***	−0.047(0.007)***	−0.057(0.007)***	−0.057(0.007)***
Employment	0.04(0.017)**	0.027(0.016)*	0.017(0.016)	0.019(0.016)
Independent Variable				
Leisure satisfaction		0.325(0.008)***	0.315(0.009)***	0.442(0.037)***
Moderators				
Catholic			−0.374(0.041)***	−0.373(0.042)***
Other Christian			−0.182(0.045)***	−0.182(0.045)***
Muslim S			−0.155(0.038)***	−0.140(0.04)***
Buddhist M			−0.129(0.035)***	−0.127(0.035)***
Buddhist T			0.103(0.035)**	0.098(0.035)**
No religion			−0.036(0.034)	−0.030(0.034)
Interactions				
Leisure * Catholic				−0.121(0.045)**
Leisure* Other Christian				−0.087(0.047)*
Leisure* MuslimS				−0.091(0.043)**
Leisure * BuddM				−0.095(0.038)**
Leisure * BuddT				−0.173(0.038)***
Leisure* No Religion				−0.128(0.038)**
Constant	0.346(0.046)***	−0.38(0.048)***	−0.281(0.058)***	−0.576(0.103)***
(Adjusted) R2	0.023	0.112	0.127	0.128
F-value	59.243(0.000)***	270.009(0.000)***	169.181(0.000)***	117.318(0.000)***
N	15045	14998	14998	14998

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Muslim (Sunnah), Buddhist (Mahayana), and Buddhist (Theravada) religions are identified and explored as a moderator between leisure satisfaction and happiness.

The study confirms that leisure satisfaction is positively correlated with happiness for these participants. This result finds abundant support from previous studies, as leisure satisfaction has been proved to have a positive association with the acquisition of happiness (e.g. Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Sato et al., 2014; Shin & You, 2013). This finding indicates that the positive relationship between these variables is also true in the Asian context.

The empirical evidence supports Hypothesis 2 in that different religions do have varying associations with happiness. Most of the religions tested have a significant positive association with happiness, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (e.g. Ellison et al., 1989; Witter et al., 1985) showing that people with religious faith tend to feel happier in general. This study provides evidence for this phenomenon from the Asian context. Religious affiliation could have an impact on happiness in multiple ways, varying from promises of spiritual or material rewards to the benefits of community (Sander, 2017), all of which are important incentives in the acquisition of happiness. Compared with Buddhism and Islam, religions like Catholicism and Christianity other than Catholic are not dominant in most Asian countries or regions, and some Asian countries, like China, do not have an overall high level of religiosity. However, these religions also show positively significant associations with happiness in the Asian context, which contrasts with the conclusions of previous studies showing that belonging to the dominant group or conformity to one's country's norms are key for religion to positively associate with happiness. (cf., Devine et al., 2019; Eichhorn, 2012; Mookerjee & Beron, 2005).

Nevertheless, this positive association does not apply to all religions, since the results suggest that Buddhism (Theravada) is negatively associated with happiness. This result is of special importance in the particular research context since Buddhism (Theravada) is mainly practiced in Asian

countries such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and Burma (Myanmar). It illustrates the unique feature of religions in Asia, and further reinforces the importance of context-specific examination between religion and happiness as discussed in the Literature Review section above. This different association for Buddhism (Theravada) could be explained by its dogma, which is seen as clergy-centred, inward-looking, and world-denying. Theravada aims to realise enlightenment and free oneself from the cycle of birth and death by emphasising individual enlightenment; different from Mahayana, the nature of the self is the centre to realise enlightenment, and one's self-power, such as disciplined self-observation of body and thoughts (meditation), is viewed as the primary and most important means to enlightenment (O'Brien, 2020).

Excessive religiosity might also trigger depression and mental disorders, as suggested by Ellis (1962). Religious precepts elicited by the Theravada dogma and the self-power it encourages might contribute to the disconnection of believers from community or society, thereby weakening the social support and affiliation in religious contexts which are important to the acquisition of happiness. One reason why religions are associated with happiness might be that this kind of network is more impactful for believers' life satisfaction than other ties, because social exchanges become more meaningful when they are conducted with people sharing a core set of values (Lim & Putnam, 2010). However, for a religion whose dogma upholds self-power, a sense of social affiliation or solidarity could be reduced or even negated. From the other side, the negative correlation between Theravada and happiness underscores the importance of social affiliation to happiness, and the necessity of considering the diversity and complexity of the concept of religion.

The current study also shows that religions negatively moderate the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness, even among non-religious people. Considering the varying impacts of different religions on happiness, this seemingly parallel effect needs further and differentiated investigation. For religious people except Buddhists (Theravada), the negative moderating effects of religions could possibly derive from the fact that the positive effect of leisure satisfaction on happiness is partly offset by the positive effect of religion. As the analysis in the literature review showed, there are overlapping effects when one probes into the mechanisms between leisure and happiness, religion and happiness, and leisure and religion. To be more specific, in the DRAMMA model of leisure and happiness (Newman et al., 2014), the effect of religion may be highly connected with the categories of Meaning and Affiliation. Taking 'Meaning' as an example, Iwasaki (2008) stated that meaningful leisure activities could facilitate individuals to acquire something valuable in life. Leisure activities with a religious meaning will generate a sense of meaning to the believers. Religious leisure (activities) may bring spiritual outcomes such as inner peace and a sense of belonging, and function as a cause of unity and shared identification in society (cf., Creighton-Smith et al., 2017; Lim & Putnam, 2010). Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) tried to identify the strategies adopted by people to maintain or enhance their lasting happiness, concluding that social affiliation, religion, and active leisure are all recognisedas strong predictors of happiness. It is reasonable to claim that the positive effect of leisure satisfaction on happiness may be partly offset by the positive effect of religion.

The moderating effects of religions further show that religion can bring happiness, but this does not hold true all the time. The dogmas of specific religions, the attitude a religion takes to leisure, and the activities approved or disapproved of by a religion will certainly have weight in its negative moderation of the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness. Besides the possibility for the religion to act as a constraint to leisure by forbidding or discouraging some leisure activities (cf., Delisle, 2003; Kelly et al., 1987), sometimes leisure activities in religious contexts might also decrease happiness, or even cause unhappiness due to varied factors. According to the account of a Laotian student known to the first author (personal communications, 20 September 2019 and 4 January 2020), for some religious events, such as inviting monks to the house to give blessings, highly religious believers consider the event an honour and a blessing, while weak religious believers might find it tiring and burdensome, and thus it might reduce happiness, which supports the arguments of Pöhls et al. (2019).

Not surprisingly, for Buddhism (Theravada), religion also negatively moderates the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness. This result, combined with the partial result from Model 3 showing that Buddhism (Theravada) is negatively associated with happiness, suggests that for believers in Buddhism (Theravada) religion may lower their sense of happiness deriving from leisure. Social support and social identification can be attained from an individual's social network, thereby facilitating the maintenance of psychological well-being (e.g. Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll et al., 1990). Stark and Maier (2008) also concluded that a religion's influence on happiness is a function of the religious community. However, if believers are seeking to rely on self-power, their religious beliefs will certainly not help them to reap these socially-derived benefits.

As for the results for non-religious people, comparatively speaking, people with religious faith obtain more happiness from leisure than non-religious people do, which confirms the strong effect of religion on leisure (e.g. Creighton-Smith et al., 2017; Heintzman & Mannell, 2003). In most cases, religion endows leisure with meaning, belongingness, value, etc., which promote happiness in contrast with a non-religious context.

In summary, our three hypotheses are verified, and this study concludes that leisure satisfaction and religion (except Theravada) are positively correlated with happiness in Asian contexts. Religions negatively moderate the relationship between leisure satisfaction and happiness, which illustrates the close relationships and interactions among the three factors. It is important not to assume that religion has a consistently positive association with happiness, as societal contexts, religious dogmas, and individual contexts are all significant variables impacting the effects of religious faith on obtaining happiness.

Conclusion

There is increasing academic interest in societal and individual contexts in terms of the study of happiness, with scholars bringing more factors and moderators into the picture. This study adds to this body of literature, presenting a picture of what leisure satisfaction and happiness are like in a number of Asian countries and regions. It also brings in religion to examine its moderating effect on the association between leisure satisfaction and happiness.

The findings raise the importance of a more comprehensive understanding and examination of contextual differences in the study of religion, leisure, and happiness. Research on the interaction between these three factors has opened a window to a richer understanding of the correlations concerning leisure and happiness, giving due attention to religious people who constitute a high percentage of the world's population. Leisure satisfaction is a powerful predictor of happiness, but its effect is moderated by religion. Therefore, we should consider the dual impact of these factors when making policies and designing leisure programmes for people, particularly for those from diverse religious backgrounds. Furthermore, in the global context of increasing mobility and migration, in a multi-cultural environment when local governments and communities plan to achieve better integration by developing leisure facilities and programmes for schools and communities, it is important to take the critical factor of religion into consideration and provide corresponding activities. What is more, religion should never be viewed as a singular concept in comparison with non-religious groups. Huge differences exist among different denominations, and religiosity varies among believers. As leisure satisfaction is believed to be a powerful predicator of happiness, education and adequate supportive policies and facilities are needed to promote leisure satisfaction by recognising differences among beliefs and cultures.

One limitation in this investigation is the possibility of missing factors that might serve to explain more clearly the relationships inspected. The breadth of the investigation constrains the detailed examination of any specific factor involved. However, such a broad investigation is necessary, especially since previous studies have mostly been conducted in Western contexts. Another limitation is that a study using subjective ratings is under the risk of personal interpretation by the participants. It may be helpful for future researchers to both quantitatively and

qualitatively investigate how religiosity influences the choice of leisure behaviour and the acquisition of leisure satisfaction in the Asian context.

Moreover, there are other factors that influence happiness. It will be interesting to examine these other factors among Asian religious people, or Asian people in general. Finally, future studies will benefit if comparisons among different religions or different regions/countries are addressed with regard to the relationships between religion and happiness and between religion and leisure. Researchers need to understand the different viewpoints of varied religions on the meaning of leisure, since they bring inconsistencies in facets of leisure satisfaction and thereby happiness attainment.

In spite of these limitations, the study is an important preliminary exploration of the relationships among leisure satisfaction, religion, and happiness in Asian contexts. It is hoped that religious beliefs will be incorporated into future examinations of leisure involvement, and research on happiness will consider differences between religious denominations.

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