

Happiness is an Abstract Concept

Wu Donglin

Happiness is often pursued and can be imagined as success, either materially or spiritually. The term “abstract concept” can be defined as something that is not physical or concrete. Happiness is often difficult to be defined, as it may seem elusive at times. This is caused by many factors such as its subjectivity and influences due to external factors.

Happiness can be caused by many things, and it means differently to different people. For example, someone could define happiness as material success, while others could think happiness as spiritual fulfillment. Due to many differences in the human DNA between people, emotions and mental states could vary significantly, rendering happiness as subjective. Many philosophical studies also show differing interpretations of happiness. Happiness, Aristotle suggested, could be achieved through the golden mean, which involves finding a balance between deficiency and excess.^[1]

Happiness could also be influenced by things like different cultures and societies. Most western cultures think of happiness as individual success, while those who believe in Buddhism may link happiness with inner peace.

Happiness, however, can exist independently from external conditions. While these external factors may influence it, the internal mental states may be stronger. A person may feel happy even in difficult circumstances due to their mindset, while another may not feel happy in the same situation. Austrian neurologist and psychologist Viktor Frankl stated that, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."^[2] This quote shows how happiness could depend on the personal mindset rather than external conditions.

Happiness is not just a simple emotion. It is a concept that varies from person to person and may change with time. It is subjective and influenced by many factors, and thus in conclusion, happiness is an abstract concept.

1 - https://academic.oup.com/innovateage/article/4/Supplement_1/614/6036458

2 - Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*