

Psychometrics of the Pursuit of Happiness

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The pursuit of happiness is firmly established in American culture with explicit mention in historical documents (i.e. Declaration of Independence). Therefore, it is of little surprise that thousands of self-help books and pieces of personal wisdom offer routes to happiness. However, psychological research over the past three decades on the effectiveness of controlling emotions suggests pursuing happiness and other positive hedonic states may have a downside. More fully investigating this possibility has been limited in part by the lack of a scale to assess individual differences in the pursuit of and overattachment to happiness. The purpose of this project was to develop a psychometrically sound scale to measure people's attempts to pursue and prolong positive affective states as a means of conducting further research in this area.