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Gender Emancipation and its Impact on Happiness: An Examination of the Happy Wife, Happy Life Formula

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Abstract: The adage "happy wife, happy life" implies that women's gender emancipation could contribute to the overall societal quality of life. However, it raises at least two questions: Does advancing women's rights lead to increased happiness for women? Is it possible that advancing women's rights occurs at the expense of men? The study examines the relationship between gender emancipation and happiness, aiming to determine whether gender emancipation genuinely enhances the happiness of both women and men, and whether the focus on women's well-being might negatively impact men. Data from the World Values Survey were used to conduct cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. The cross-sectional analysis focused on the relationship between emancipation and happiness, while the longitudinal analysis explored trends in gender emancipation and happiness from the 3rd cohort (1995-1998) to the 7th cohort (2017-2022). Women had higher gender emancipation scores, but the genders did not differ significantly in happiness scores. Surprisingly, there was no significant correlation between gender emancipation and happiness, whether analysing the entire sample or each gender separately. Longitudinal data revealed increasing gender emancipation and happiness over time. This similarity in trends was interpreted as a spurious relationship. It was hypothesised that happiness could stem from gender emancipation. However, despite longitudinal data revealing growing gender emancipation and happiness for both sexes, the cross-sectional analysis showed no such correlations. Gender emancipation and happiness, as measured by the World Values Survey, were not related. Emancipation does not necessarily equate to a happy life.

Keywords: Gender emancipation, happiness, World Values Survey, longitudinal data.

1. Introduction

The concept embodied by the adage "Happy wife, happy life" suggests a correlation between the well-being of women and the overall quality of life, representing a commonly encountered yet simplified cliché. This expression may imply that the advancement of gender emancipation and women's rights contributes to the happiness of women, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for all members of society. However, the ramifications of this equation provoke an intriguing question: Does the pursuit of gender emancipation, while potentially augmenting the well-being of women, result in a concomitant reduction in happiness for men? Does the empowerment of women come at a perceived cost to men? This paper aims to delve into the intricate dynamics underpinning this phrase, examining whether greater gender emancipation genuinely leads to increased happiness for women, increased happiness for men, and, conversely, whether it might be accompanied by reduced happiness for men.

Gender emancipation, encompassing women's rights and equality, has historically been linked to women's improved quality of life (Gilligan, 1982). Increased access to education (Guvenen & Rendall, 2015), employment opportunities (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018), and participation in decision-making processes (Cook & Loomis, 2012) are suggested to enhance women's well-being and overall life satisfaction.

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Several empirical studies indicate a positive correlation between women's rights and happiness among women. These studies demonstrate that as women gain more autonomy and rights, their overall life satisfaction tends to increase. Inglehart et al. (2002) conducted an extensive global analysis examining the relationship between gender equality and societal values. Their findings indicate that an increase in gender equality correlates positively with enhanced levels of subjective well-being among women. Similarly, Benería et al. (2016) provide a thorough analysis and empirical evidence illustrating the impact of globalisation and economic policies on women's rights, demonstrating their positive effect on women's well-being. Additionally, Tesch-Römer et al. (2008) investigated the influence of gender equality on gender differences in subjective well-being across various societies. Their research concludes that societies with greater gender equality exhibit smaller disparities in well-being between genders, along with generally higher levels of life satisfaction among women.

As gender emancipation progresses, traditional gender roles undergo significant shifts. Men who previously held privileged positions may experience changes in their roles and responsibilities. Patriarchal decision-making is increasingly frowned upon, and it is generally accepted in contemporary society that decision-making should be shared. These shifts in gender roles may have implications for men's sense of identity and self-worth, potentially affecting their happiness. Feelings of insecurity or a perceived loss of status may lead to decreased well-being (Ashe, 2007; Lemon, 1992).

It is important to challenge the notion that gender emancipation is a "zero-sum game", where gains for women inevitably translate to losses for men. Society can be reshaped in ways that benefit all genders simultaneously, thus ensuring happiness for both men and women (Salia et al., 2018; Barstad, 2014). A "happy wife, happy life" scenario should be considered a viable approach.

Happiness is a complex matter, as it is a subjective experience influenced by a multitude of factors, including cultural, social, economic, and individual variables (Diener et al., 2003; Helliwell et al., 2019; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005):

- Cultural norms dictate the values, expectations, and social behaviours deemed acceptable within a given society, shaping the individual's sense of purpose, self-worth, and identity. These elements, when aligned with personal aspirations, can influence happiness.
- On a social level, a network of emotional support and companionship creates a sense of belonging, where fulfilling relationships, shared experiences, and empathy foster happiness.
- Economic stability is another critical factor, as it provides the means to meet basic needs, access healthcare, and pursue leisure activities. Financial security can reduce stress and anxiety, positively impacting an individual's overall well-being.
- Individual characteristics encompass personality traits, coping mechanisms, and emotional resilience. Optimism, gratitude, and a sense of purpose are traits that contribute to increased happiness. Personal skills for managing adversity and stress, along with genetic predispositions, also shape one's capacity to experience and sustain happiness.

In essence, the multifaceted nature of happiness reveals that it emerges from the intricate interplay of cultural, social, economic, and individual factors, making it a deeply nuanced and individualised experience.

Numerous theories of happiness may be relevant to this research. According to the Hedonic Theory (Bentham, 1789; Mill, 1863), emancipated women may experience greater happiness as they enjoy increased access to pleasure and are less subjected to pain stemming from chauvinism. Conversely, men might experience diminished happiness due to reduced pleasure and the potential endurance of pain. In alignment with the Eudaimonic Theory, which is often associated with Aristotle (Crisp, 2014), genuine happiness emanates from leading a life characterised by virtue, purpose, and meaning. This may generate happiness for men who endorse emancipation by promoting virtues,

yet simultaneously diminish it, as the absence of predefined purpose and meaning could pose challenges.

In the context of the Subjective Well-Being (SWB) Model (Diener, 1984), happiness centres on life satisfaction and emotional affect. Emancipated women may derive greater benefits from this model compared to disempowered men. Likewise, the PERMA Model introduced by Seligman (Seligman, 2011) highlights accomplishment as a pivotal component of happiness. It is plausible that emancipated women may achieve more, thus potentially experiencing greater happiness than disempowered men.

The well-established Hierarchy of Needs theory by Maslow (Maslow, 1943) is also relevant in this context. When women were primarily concerned with fulfilling their basic physiological and safety needs at the base of the hierarchy, they might have had limited access to self-actualisation needs at the pinnacle, potentially leading to deprivation in terms of happiness and fulfilment.

Furthermore, a compelling argument for the emancipation of women and happiness can be found in Cultural and Societal Perspectives (Oishi & Gilbert, 2016), where different cultures and societies possess distinctive definitions of happiness and incorporate various contributing factors. Here, specific cultural norms and values play a determining role in shaping the perception of happiness. Given the cultural and societal perspective, the emancipation of women can lead to greater happiness for both men and women, transitioning away from a zero-sum scenario where one gender's gain comes at the expense of the other. Instead, it fosters a situation where both parties can move closer to happiness.

Given that empirical evidence suggests that the emancipation of women contributes to women's well-being and that theories support both the zero-sum (e.g. Hedonic Theory, SWB, and PERMA Models) and the non-zero-sum (e.g. Eudaimonic Theory and Cultural and Societal Perspectives) scenarios, several hypotheses were set to gain empirical insights into the effects of emancipation:

- **H01:** Men and women perceive the levels of gender emancipation equally (MeanMen (gender emancipation) = MeanWomen (gender emancipation)); HA1: MeanMen (gender emancipation) > MeanWomen (gender emancipation).
- **H02:** Men and women perceive personal happiness equally (MeanMen (happiness) = MeanWomen (happiness)); HA2: MeanMen (happiness) > MeanWomen (happiness).
- **H03:** Gender emancipation is not occurring (Gender emancipation time 1 = Gender emancipation time 2); HA3: Gender emancipation time 1 < Gender emancipation time 2.
- **H04:** Women are not experiencing changes in their happiness (Happiness of Women time 1 = Happiness of Women time 2); HA4: Happiness of Women time 1 < Happiness of Women time 2.
- **H05:** Men are not experiencing changes in their happiness (Happiness of Men time 1 = Happiness of Men time 2); HA5: Happiness of Men time 1 > Happiness of Men time 2.
- **H06:** Gender emancipation and happiness (for all groups) have a zero correlation; HA6: r(Gender emancipation and happiness (for all groups)) > 0.
- **H07**: Gender emancipation does not influence the relationship between gender and happiness; HA07: β (Gender emancipation) is significant ($p < .001$).

Testing these hypotheses would bring us closer to understanding the impact of emancipation on both men and women. At a theoretical level, it will also provide support for either zero-sum or non-zero-sum perceptions regarding emancipation.

2. Methodology

The World Values Survey (WVS) was the sole source of data for this study (Inglehart et al, 2014). The WVS project team began collecting data on a variety of values and attitudes in 1995 (3rd wave) and

has continued to collect data regularly, with the most recent dataset dating from 2022 (7th wave). Such datasets introduce issues related to cross-national comparability due to cultural differences, translation issues, and varying data collection methods across countries, which need to be assessed (Byrne & van de Vijver, 2017). The issue of cross-national compatibility within the WVS has been highlighted in recent studies (Ndofirepi & Steyn, 2023; Steyn & Ndofirepi, 2022).

Three pieces of data were extracted from respondents. The first was a demographic variable, Q260 in the 7th wave questionnaire, where the interviewer coded the sex of the respondent as (1) male or (2) female. The next piece of data stemmed from Q46, where the respondent was asked the following question: "Taking all things together, would you say you are … (1) Very happy, (2) Rather happy, (3) Not very happy, or (4) Not happy at all?" These scores were reversed to transform the content from a not-happy to a happy index. The third piece of data is "EQUALITY", which is a Welzel sub-index derived from questions in the questionnaire regarding gender equality in terms of jobs, politics, and education. This index, referred to as the emancipation score, ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating gender emancipation. This index was only introduced in the 3rd wave; therefore, the longitudinal study was conducted from the 3rd wave onwards. The cross-sectional part of the study focuses solely on the 7th wave but uses the same pieces of data. Data on the reliability and validity of the WVS are embedded in the history and quality of the study's designers and the research emanating from it (see https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp).

2.1 Sample

Cross-sectional data from the 7th wave (2017-2022), involving 90 countries, were used to obtain mean scores across countries on gender emancipation and happiness. The same data were employed to calculate the relationship between gender emancipation and happiness, using correlation analyses as well as regression analyses, with control variables introduced.

For the longitudinal part of the study, data from the 3rd cohort (1995-1998), which included eleven countries, were used to determine trends regarding these attitudes. The final measure was taken from the 7th wave (2017-2022). Therefore, hypothetically, five data points were possible per country.

2.2 Data analyses

Demographic statistics for the respondents of the 7th wave were calculated, which included sex (Q260), age (Q262), education (Q275R), and marital status (Q273). Descriptive statistics were computed for both emancipation and happiness. These statistics reveal the normality levels in the distributions, a critical aspect as the assumptions for correlation analyses rely on this normality. The mean scores for happiness and emancipation were compared using ANOVA, and the results were interpreted based on calculated eta-square values, where eta-squared (η^2) ≈ .01 reflects a small effect, η^2 ≈ .06 a medium effect, and η^2 ≈ .14 a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Eta-squared indicates what proportion of the variance in the dependent variable can be attributed to the factor being studied, in this case, gender.

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to assess the magnitude of the overlap between emancipation and happiness. This analysis was conducted for the whole group, as well as for men and women separately. Where correlations were statistically significant, their practical significance was interpreted, again following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, where correlations between .1 and .3 were interpreted as a small effect, between .3 and .5 as a medium effect, and higher than .5 as a large effect. To test whether the correlation for men differs from that for women, a Fisher z-score was calculated using the following formula: $Z = (Z_1 - Z_2) / \sqrt{(SE_1^2 + SE_2^2)}$, with $Z_1 = 0.5 [(1 + r_1) / (1 - r_1)]$, $Z_2 = 0.5 [(1 + r^2) / (1 - r^2)]$, $SE_1 = 1 / \sqrt{(n_1 - 3)}$, and $SE_2 = 1 / \sqrt{(n_2 - 3)}$.

Regression analyses were then performed, with happiness as the dependent variable and emancipation as the independent variable. This analysis was conducted for the group as a whole, as

well as for men and women separately. The demographic variables mentioned above were used as control variables. R^2 was interpreted as the coefficient of determination, thus serving as a measure of the proportion of variability in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in the regression model.

The longitudinal data, involving the mean scores from the third cohort (1995-1998) to the seventh cohort (2017-2022), were presented graphically to observe possible changes in the trajectory of the variables. The primary focus was on the total mean scores (i.e. the mean score across all countries), rather than on individual countries, as the emphasis was on the general rather than the specific, and also because the datasets were incomplete. To determine the trend, the mean score from the 3rd wave (1995-1998) was compared to that of the 7th wave (2017-2022). This comparison was conducted using a "summative data independent sample t-test" and by manually calculating Cohen's d using the following formula: (Mean (wave 3) – Mean (wave 7)) / Average standard deviation (wave 3 and wave 7). This expression reflects the difference in standard deviation terms and was also interpreted using Cohen's guidelines (1988).

2.3 Ethical consideration

The WVS data are open to all interested parties, provided that the database is properly referenced, as detailed in the reference list (see Inglehart et al., 2014). No data were collected specifically for this research. At the university level, the use of this secondary data was approved by the local ethics committee: 2022_SBL_AC_001_SD.

3. Presentation of Results

The results comprise explaining the demographics of the respondents, descriptive statistics regarding the constructs used in the analyses, inferential statistics focusing on the differences between men and women, and lastly, the longitudinal data reflecting changes over time.

3.1 Demographics

The cross-sectional data (7th wave) were collected from 153,950 respondents, representing 90 countries, with the largest sample from the Netherlands (N=4,554), the smallest from Northern Ireland (N=447), and an average sample size of 1,710 per country. In terms of gender, 48.2% of respondents were men and 51.7% were women. The average age was 44.88 years (standard deviation = 17.26). In terms of education, 31.7% were in the lower group, 34.2% in the middle group, and 33.0% in the higher group (1.1% of cases were missing). The marital status of the group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Marital status*

Status	Count	Count %	Valid %	Cumulative %
Married	52 028	55.2	55.5	55.5
Living together as married	7 489	7.9	8.0	63.5
Divorced	4 256	4.5	4.5	68.1
Separated	2 082	2.2	2.2	70.3
Widowed	5 427	5.8	5.8	76.1
Single	22 419	23.8	23.9	100.0
Total	93 701	99.4	100.0	-
Other missing	183	.2	-	-
No answer	375	.4	-	-
Don't know	19	.0	-	-
Total	577	.6	-	-
Grand total	94 278	100.0	-	-

The cross-sectional data's demographics indicate a slight overrepresentation of women within the sample, a common trend in studies of this nature. The average age appears relatively high, but the standard deviation signifies considerable age diversity within the sample. It is crucial to consider this information in the context of the World Value Survey team's deliberate focus on adult respondents. For further analysis, the three distinct education levels captured in Q275R prove advantageous, as they yield three nearly equally sized groups. In terms of marital status, the results reveal a substantial majority of individuals in relationships (76.1%), with the remaining 23.9% classified as single.

The longitudinal data encompass all countries from the 3rd wave through to the 7th wave of the study. Notably, some countries, like the United States of America, were included in all five waves, while others, such as Northern Ireland, were introduced only in the 7th wave. Providing a detailed breakdown of demographic changes across the various waves falls outside this research's scope. Suffice it to say that for each wave, all responses from the countries participating in the survey were included.

3.2 Descriptive statistics

Presented below are the descriptive statistics on happiness and gender emancipation.

Table 2: *Descriptive statistics on happiness and gender emancipation: Total, men, women*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	S-SE	Kurtosis	K-SE
Happiness – Total	93 654	3.140	.706	-.581	.008	.370	.016
Emancipation – Total	93 449	.580	.256	-.238	.008	-.552	.016
Valid N (listwise)	92 909	-	-	-	-	-	-
Happiness – Men	44 118	3.126	.709	-.571	.012	.354	.023
Emancipation – Men	44 006	.541	.254	-.159	.012	-.552	.023
Valid N (listwise)	43 761	-	-	-	-	-	-
Happiness – Women	49 449	3.153	.703	-.590	.011	.385	.022
Emancipation – Women	49 355	.615	.252	-.317	.011	-.511	.022
Valid N (listwise)	49 063	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: The minimum scores on happiness were 1 and the maximum 4. In the case of gender emancipation, the minimum score was 0 and the maximum score 1. S-SE = Skewness Standard Error; K-SE = Kurtosis Standard error.

3.3 Inferential statistics

An ANOVA analysis was performed to test if the mean scores regarding men and women differ. These results are presented in the table below.

Table 3: *ANOVA: Mean differences regarding happiness and gender emancipation*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta-square
Emancipation	Between Groups	126.656	1	126.656	1972.472	<.0001	.021
	Within Groups	5994.737	93359	.064	-	-	-
	Total	6121.393	93360	-	-	-	-
Happiness	Between Groups	17.440	1	17.440	34.969	<.001	<.001
	Within Groups	46663.256	93565	.499	-	-	-
	Total	46680.696	93566	-	-	-	-

Note: Eta-squared = Epsilon-squared = Omega-squared Fixed-effect = Omega-squared Random-effect; 95%CI for eta-squared happiness was .000 to .001, and for emancipation .019 to .023.

The means in the case of emancipation differ statistically, with the eta-squared value (.021) indicating a small effect. This relates to Hypothesis 1:

H01: Men and women perceive the levels of gender emancipation equally (MeanMen (gender emancipation) = MeanWomen (gender emancipation)); HA1: MeanMen (gender emancipation) > MeanWomen (gender emancipation).

The null hypothesis needs to be rejected, as a small practical difference was found. The alternative hypothesis was set in a directional form (MeanMen > MeanWomen), proposing that men would have higher scores on emancipation and women lower scores, based on confirmation bias theory (Nickerson, 1998). However, contrary to the alternative hypothesis and our expectation, the scores of women were higher.

The differences between men and women in the happiness score are statistically significant, as could be expected given the large sample size. However, relying on the eta-squared has little practical significance. This relates to Hypothesis 2:

H02: Men and women perceive personal happiness equally (MeanMen (happiness) = MeanWomen (happiness)); HA2: MeanMen (happiness) > MeanWomen (happiness).

The null hypothesis could not be rejected. Men and women do not appear to differ concerning their happiness levels. This is contrary to our expectation that men would be happier than women; the gender role theory posits that traditional gender roles and an unequal division of labour can impact happiness (Hochschild, 1989).

Next, the correlation between emancipation and happiness was calculated.

Table 4: *Correlation between happiness and gender emancipation: Total, men, women*

Sex			**Happiness**	**Emancipation**
Both men and women	Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.001
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.806
		N	93 654	92 909
	Emancipation	Pearson Correlation	.001	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	
		N	92 909	93 449
Men	Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.005
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.333
		N	44 118	43 761
	Emancipation	Pearson Correlation	.005	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	
		N	43 761	44 006
Women	Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.008
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.085
		N	49 449	49 063
	Emancipation	Pearson Correlation	-.008	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	
		N	49063	49355

From Table 4, it can be seen that the correlation between happiness and gender emancipation is insignificant for the total group, for the male group, as well as for the female group. This refers to Hypothesis 3:

H06: Gender emancipation and happiness (for all groups) has a zero correlation; HA6: r(Gender emancipation and happiness (for all groups)) > 0

The null hypotheses could not be rejected. There was no correlation between gender emancipation and happiness.

Despite the non-significant results from the correlation analyses, and in accordance with our predefined hypotheses, regression analyses were conducted to predict happiness. This prediction considered several control variables alongside gender emancipation, including gender.

Table 5: *Regression analyses with happiness as dependent variable: Model summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.100	.010	.010	.70257
2	.100	.010	.010	.70257

Note: In Model 1 the predictors were gender, age, educational level and marital status. In Model 2 predictors were gender, age, educational level, marital status AND gender emancipation.

From Table 5, it is clear that the explanatory value of the model is low, with the independent variables only explaining around 1% of the variance in happiness (R Square = .010). Despite the low predictive validity, the model fit was good, as reflected in Table 6.

Table 6: *Regression analysis with happiness as dependent variable: Model fit*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	456.915	4	114.229	231.421	<.001
	Residual	45048.741	91266	0.494		
	Total	45505.657	91270			
2	Regression	456.949	5	91.390	185.148	<.001
	Residual	45048.707	91265	0.494		
	Total	45505.657	91270			

Note: In Model 1 the predictors were gender, age, educational level and marital status. In Model 2 predictors were gender, age, educational level, marital status AND gender emancipation.

Lastly, the coefficients are presented, in Table 7.

Table 7: *Regression analysis with happiness as dependent variable: Coefficients*

Model		Un-standardised Beta Coefficients	Std. Error of Beta	Standardised Beta Coefficients	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.238	0.013	-	254.922	>.001
	Sex	0.027	0.005	0.019	5.876	>.001
	Age	-0.003	0.000	-0.067	-19.342	>.001
	Educational level	0.030	0.003	0.034	10.315	>.001
	Marital status	-0.028	0.001	-0.085	-24.713	>.001
2	(Constant)	3.237	0.013	-	251.988	>.001
	Sex	0.027	0.005	0.019	5.763	>.001
	Age	-0.003	0.000	-0.067	-19.265	>.001
	Educational level	0.030	0.003	0.034	9.934	>.001
	Marital status	-0.028	0.001	-0.085	-24.605	>.001
	Emancipation	0.003	0.010	0.001	0.263	0.793

Note: In Model 1 the predictors were gender, age, educational level and marital status. In Model 2 predictors were gender, age, educational level, marital status AND gender emancipation.

In Model 1, all the independent variables (gender, age, educational level, and marital status) independently predicted happiness. This must be seen against the backdrop of the model summary (Table 5), where it was reported that only 1 per cent of the variance is predicted by the model.

Significant from Table 7, and Model 2, is that emancipation is not a predictor of happiness. This relates to Hypothesis 7:

H07: Gender emancipation does not influence the relationship between gender and happiness; HA47 β(Gender) is significant ($p < .001$).

From Models 1 and 2, it is clear that gender influences happiness (β(Gender) is significant at $p < .001$), but in Model 2, it is also clear that gender emancipation does not influence happiness—as seen in the case of Hypothesis 6. As there is a null relationship, it should be concluded that gender cannot influence a relationship that does not exist. The null hypothesis is, therefore, retained.

3.4 Longitudinal data

Presented below are the gender emancipation and happiness data from Wave 3 to Wave 7.

Table 7: *Gender emancipation from Wave 3 (1995-1998) to Wave 7 (2017-2022)*

Sex	Statistic	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7
Men	Mean	0.50	0.46	0.53	0.49	0.58
	Std. Div.	0.26	0.28	0.27	0.28	0.26
	N	33 895	28 825	40 358	42 991	73 266
Women	Mean	0.58	0.57	0.62	0.59	0.66
	Std. Div.	0.26	0.28	0.27	0.27	0.25
	N	36 619	28 545	41 700	44 073	78 808
Total	Mean	0.54	0.52	0.58	0.54	0.62
	Std. Div.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.28	0.25
	N	70 654	57 397	82 149	87 780	152 158

Source: Compiled from WVS online data.

A "summative data independent sample t-test" was performed to determine if a mean difference in emancipation exists between Wave 3 and 7 for men. The difference was .08. As the Hartley test for equal variance was not significant ($F = 1.00$, $p = .4995$), equal variance was assumed. The results show a $t = 46.840$ ($df = 107, 159.000$) and $p < .001$. The scores thus differed significantly for men. The same test was conducted to test mean differences in emancipation between Wave 3 and 7 for women. The mean difference in the total scores between Wave 3 and 7 was .08. The Hartley test for equal variance was significant ($F = 1.082$, $p < .001$). Equal variance was not assumed, leading to $t = 49.245$ ($df = 68, 927.775$) and $p < .001$. The scores for women also differed significantly. The mean difference in the total scores between Wave 3 and 7 was perhaps not surprising, resulting in .08. Again, the "summative data independent sample t-test" was performed. As the Hartley test for equal variance was significant ($F = 1.166$, $p < .001$), equal variance was not assumed, leading to $t = 68.480$ ($df = 128, 405.345$) and $p < .001$. The total score also differed significantly. This trend is presented in Figure 1.

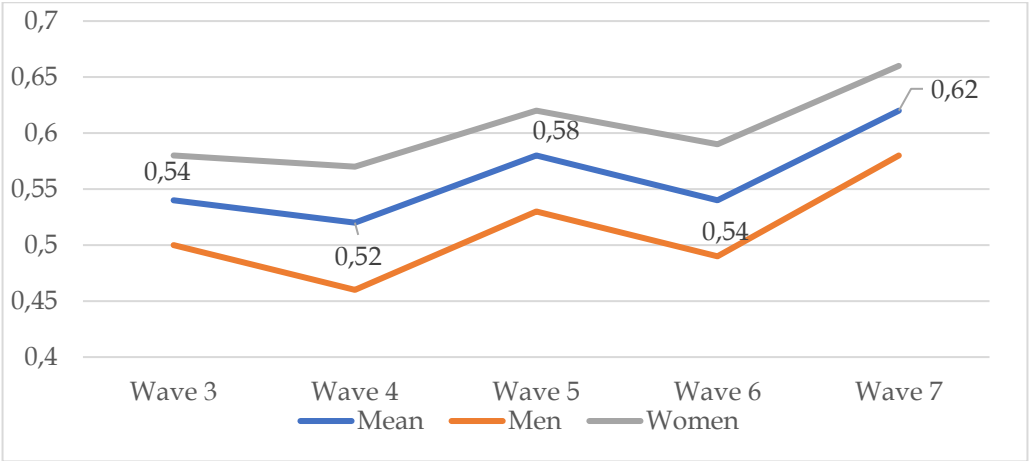

***Figure 1**: Change in emancipation values from Wave 3 to Wave 7*

In all the cases (men, women, total) the change was .08. These results are related to Hypothesis 3:

H03: Gender emancipation is not occurring (Gender emancipation time 1 = Gender emancipation GEtime 2); HA3: Gender emancipation time 1 < Gender emancipation time 2.

The null hypothesis could be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis should be accepted. Emancipation occurred over time.

The results relevant to happiness are provided in Table 8. In this table, the top two response options (very happy and rather happy), as well as the two bottom responses (not very happy and not happy at all), were combined to make interpretation easier.

***Table 8:** Happiness from Wave 3 (1995-1998) to Wave 7 (2017-2022)*

Sex	Response	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7
Men	Very happy	23.2	27.7	26.9	32.2	29.1
	Rather happy	53.3	50.9	54.1	51.4	56.6
	Top two	76.5	78.6	81.0	83.6	85.7
	Not very happy	19.4	16.7	15.1	12.6	12.3
	Not at all happy	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.1
	Bottom two	22.4	20.2	18.1	15.6	14.4
	N	35 857	29 971	41 128	43 782	74 185
Women	Very happy	24.1	30.3	28.0	32.9	29.3
	Rather happy	50.0	51.0	53.0	50.9	56.0
	Top two	74.1	81.3	81.0	83.8	85.3
	Not very happy	20.9	14.8	15.0	12.7	11.9
	Not at all happy	1.2	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.0
	Bottom two	22.1	17.6	17.8	15.4	13.9
	N	38 870	30 038	42 750	45 691	79 644
Total	Very happy	23.7	29.0	27.5	32.5	28.7
	Rather happy	51.6	51.0	53.5	51.1	56.3
	Top two	75.3	80.0	81.0	83.6	85.0
	Not very happy	20.2	15.8	15.0	12.7	12.1
	Not at all happy	3.3	3.2	2.9	2.9	2.0

Bottom two	23.5	19	17.9	15.6	14.1
N	74 789	60 041	83 925	89 565	153 950

In Figure 2, the data from Table 8 are presented graphically.

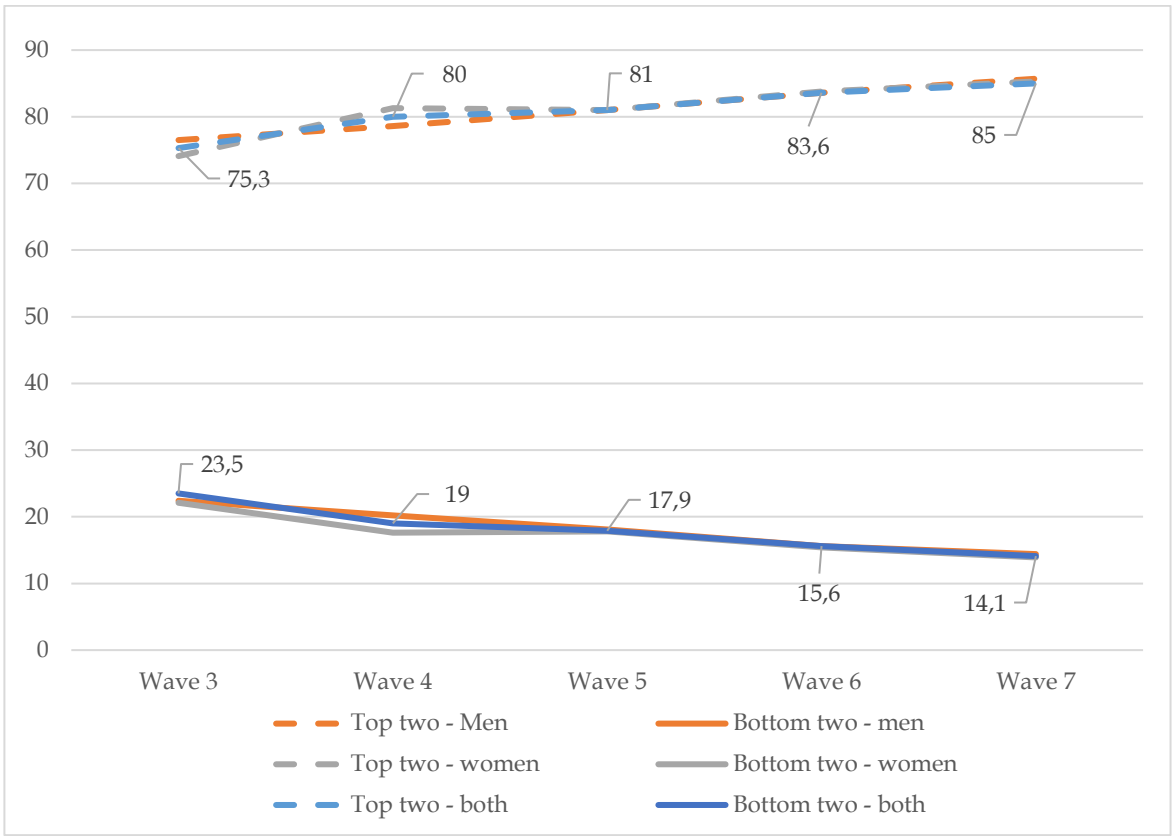

Figure 2: *Change in happiness from Wave 3 to Wave 7*

Figure 2 reveals that happiness seems to have increased from the first to the seventh wave by about 10 percentage points. This increase in happiness is, given the nature of the question, at the expense of not being happy.

H04: Women are not experiencing changes in their happiness (Happiness of Women time 1 = Happiness of Women time 2); HA4: Happiness of Women time 1 < Happiness of Women time 2

The null hypothesis could be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis should be accepted. Women's happiness increases over time.

H05: Men are not experiencing changes in their happiness (Happiness of Men time 1 = Happiness of Men time 2); HA5: Happiness of Men time 1 > Happiness of Men time 2

The null hypothesis could be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis should be accepted. Men's happiness increases over time.

The longitudinal data suggest that both emancipation values and happiness showed an increase from Wave 3 to 7. While there may be a hypothetical relationship between the two variables, and they do appear to be associated, given Figures 1 and 2, it would be premature to conclude a causal link, as the results in the cross-sectional part of the study showed no such relationship. The association

displayed in the longitudinal data is more likely coincidental and could be seen as a spurious relationship.

4. Discussion

While empirical evidence suggests that women's emancipation relates to their happiness, zero-sum theories suggest that this happiness may be at the expense of men. Several hypotheses were tested to make an informed decision on empirical support for the contradictory theories. H01 did not directly relate to the final answer on this matter, but "surprisingly," given the confirmation bias theory (Nickerson, 1998), women reported their own emancipation as being higher than when men reported it. Thus, women felt the emancipation went further than what men thought.

It was expected that men would be happier than women, given the gender role theory, particularly traditional gender roles and the impact of unequal division of labour on happiness (Hochschild, 1989). With H02, the differences between men and women on the happiness score were statistically significant, but given the large sample size, practical significance and eta squared were considered. It was found that at a practical level, men and women perceive personal happiness equally. The "It is a man's world" proverb, within this context, was not supported.

The longitudinal data provided interesting answers to the emancipation-happiness debate: the rejection of H03 provided evidence that gender emancipation is occurring. The longitudinal data also showed that women are not experiencing positive changes in their happiness (H04) and that men do so as well (H05). Considering the results in Figure 2, where the lines closely mimic each other, there is strong evidence that the trend is nearly identical for both men and women.

Though H01 to H05 provided interesting results that create a nice background to the study, H06 and H07 are central to answering the research question. H06 asks if gender emancipation and happiness (for all groups) have a zero correlation. The Pearson correlation was .001 ($p = .806$). This is statistically insignificant and at a practical level negligible. H07 asked the same question, using regression analyses. In this case, gender emancipation also did not contribute to happiness.

The phrase "Happy wife, happy life" can be elevated to encompass the idea that empowering women through gender emancipation (the 'happy wife' part) ultimately results in enhanced overall happiness throughout society ('happy life'), including a happy life for men. This is well aligned with the non-zero-sum (e.g., Eudaimonic Theory and Cultural and Societal Perspectives) scenarios. However, this research did not demonstrate any significant link between emancipation and happiness. Thus,no evidence to support the zero-sum (e.g., Hedonic Theory, SWB and PERMA Models) scenarios was generated. Increases in gender emancipation, which the results reveal, are not a direct predictor of men's happiness.

These results could be in line with the literature review, which unveiled that happiness is a subjective phenomenon, shaped by a myriad of factors encompassing cultural, social, economic, and individual variables (Diener et al., 2003; Helliwell et al., 2019; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Merely associating emancipation with happiness oversimplifies the complex interplay between these elements and demonstrates nominal regard for the intricate dynamics that underlie the relationship between emancipation and happiness. A more nuanced approach to the research may have been useful.

Despite the absence of data supporting the effects of emancipation on happiness in this research, it is crucial to consider previous studies where indicators of gender emancipation—such as increased access to education (Guvenen & Rendall, 2015), employment opportunities (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018), and participation in decision-making processes (Cook & Loomis, 2012)—have been shown to contribute to well-being. Additionally, the moral imperative for emancipation, as embodied in Eudaimonic Theory, suggests that true happiness arises from embracing virtue, purpose, and meaning (Crisp, 2014), which should guide efforts to enhance emancipation. By challenging

traditional gender roles and fostering equitable and harmonious relationships, society can move closer to a scenario where the happiness of both women and men is valued and promoted.

5. Conclusions

The adage "Happy wife, happy life" is a simplified expression of the potential effects of gender emancipation. There is very little empirical evidence produced in this research to support this assumption. The zero-sum solution for men is also not reinforced. Ultimately, striving for gender equality should not involve pitting one gender against another but rather aim to create a more harmonious and equitable society where everyone's happiness is valued and promoted.

In future research, it may be important to consider the multifaceted nature of happiness and the impact of other intersecting factors, such as race, class, and sexual orientation. Additionally, exploring the role of partner matching, such as husbands and wives, in the context of gender emancipation and happiness may provide further insights. Future research may also benefit from more complex models of happiness, including the RELATIVISM and AUTONOMY indexes from the World Values Survey.

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