

# Association between Happiness and Frequency of Prayer

Isabella Caro, Data Analysis, Wesleyan University

## Introduction

- While the majority of research suggests that religion does positively influence life satisfaction, there is a lack of clarity in existing studies in relation to which factors of religion influence happiness (Sholihin et al., 2022; Yenziaras, & Akarsu, 2017).
- There are multiple studies that link higher levels of religious belief with increased life satisfaction (Ellison, 1991; Desmond et al., 2018)
- While there is some evidence that religion influences happiness, it is difficult to compare between pre-existing studies that focus on different aspects of religion.

## Research Questions

- Is there any association between self reported happiness and frequency of prayer?
- Does this relationship differ between different religious groups?
- Do other demographic factors affect this relationship?

## Methods

### Sample

- Data were drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS) 2021, representing the non-institutionalized adult population of the United States
- 4,032 adults completed the survey, which was sent to 27,591 persons.

### Measures

- Happiness was measured with the question "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?". Possible responses ranged from very happy to not too happy
- Frequency of prayer was measured with the question "About how often do you pray?". Possible responses ranged from never to several times a day.

## Discussion

- Individuals who pray frequently are more likely to self report as happy
- Race is a moderator in the relationship between self reported happiness and frequency of prayer, with self reported happiness being significantly affected by frequency of prayer for Black individuals
- More research is needed to investigate the causes behind this relationship

## Results

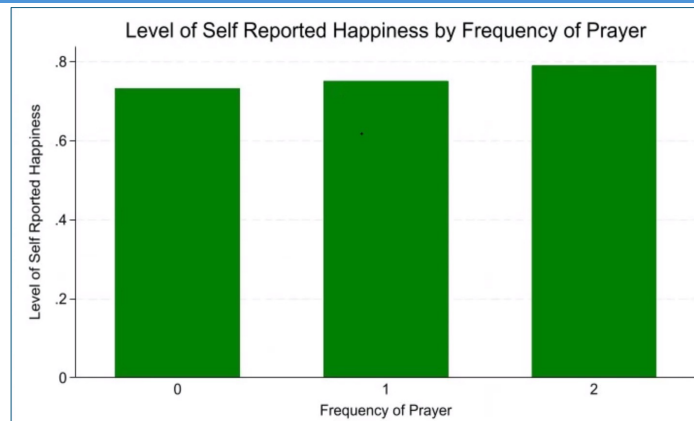


Figure 1

### Bivariate

- A Chi Square test of independence revealed that among US adults, frequency of prayer and reported happiness were significantly and positively associated.
- Post hoc comparisons revealed that statistically significant higher rates of reported happiness were seen among those who prayed frequently compared to those who prayed infrequently,  $X^2=4.8$ ,  $p=.03$ .
- Statistically significant higher rates of reported happiness were also seen among those who never prayed compared to those who prayed frequently,  $X^2=12.3$ ,  $p=.00$ .
- In comparison, reported happiness was statistically similar between those who prayed infrequently compared to those who never prayed.

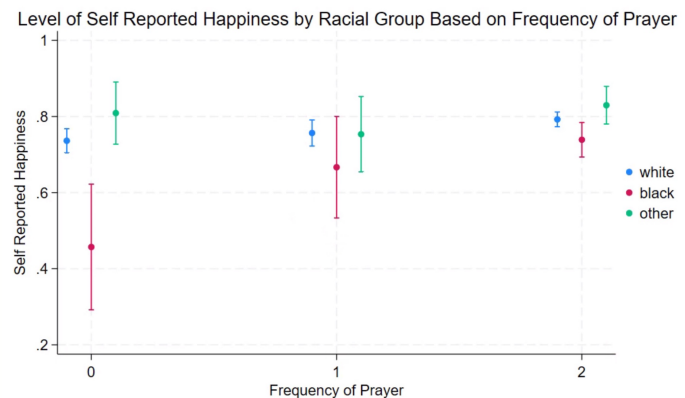


Figure 2

### Multivariate

- Logistic regression analysis showed there is no significant difference between Christians and non-Christians ( $p>.05$ ).
- Logistic regression analysis with race as a covariate shows that race is a moderator.
- For the Black population, self reported happiness is significantly affected by frequency of prayer (O.R. 2.46, CI 1.18, 5.12,  $p<.05$ ).

## References

- Bergan, A., & McConatha, J. T. (2001). Religiosity and Life Satisfaction. *Activities, Adaptation, & Aging*, 24(3), 23–34. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J016v24n03\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1300/J016v24n03_02)
- Desmond, S. A., Kraus, R., & Dugan, B. J. L. (2018). "Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice": religion and life satisfaction among emerging adults in the United States. *Mental health, religion & culture*, 21(3), 304–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2018.1478397>
- Abdel-Khalek, A. M., & Lester, D. (2017). The association between religiosity, generalized self-efficacy, mental health, and happiness in Arab college students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 109, 12–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.12.010>
- Ellison, C. G. Religious Involvement and Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of health & social behavior*, 32(1), 80–99. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>
- Kortt, M. (2014). Religion and life satisfaction down under. *Journal of happiness studies*, 16(2), 277–293. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>
- Lewis, C. (2006). Religion and happiness: Consensus, contradictions, comments and concerns. *Mental health, religion & culture*, 9(3), 213–225. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>
- Lim, C., & Putnam, R. D. (2010b). Religion, Social Networks, and Life Satisfaction. *American sociological review*, 75(6), 914–933. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410386686>
- Sholihin, M., Hardivizon, H., Wanto, D., & Saputra, H. (2022). The effect of religiosity on life satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Hervormde teologiese studies*, 78(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7172>
- Sinnewe, E. (2015). Religion and Life Satisfaction: Evidence from Germany. *Social indicators research*, 123(3), 837–855. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>
- Yenziaras, V., & Akarsu, T. N. (2017). Religiosity and Life Satisfaction: A Multi-dimensional Approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 18(6), 1815–1840. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9803-4>