

East – West Happiness Divide

Gallup International Report on Happiness 2025



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The East Smiles Brighter: Asian Nations Lead in Reported Happiness

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28th April 2025,

According to a global survey conducted by Gallup International among 44 nations across all continents, Euro–America fares poorly compared to Asian countries when it comes to reported happiness of its citizens. Net happiness reported in Europe and United States ranges from 39% to 46% . While in Asian countries it ranges from 52% to 68% showing how generally Asian country’s citizen were happier than those living in Europe and United States . India was a major exception to East vs West divide on happiness as India topped the world in being most unhappy in the world. The global survey was conducted in between October 2024 and February 2025 among 44,823 scientifically selected men and women, on average a sample of 1000 in each polled nation.

According to survey findings the top five nations on the Gallup International Happiness Index 2025 are the following, **China** 86%, **Indonesia** 85%, **Mexico** 83%, **Saudi Arabia** 81% and **Denmark** 78%. The five least happy nations are **India** 31%, **Ukraine** 33%, **Serbia** 37%, **Italy** 41% and **Japan** 43%.

FOUR KEY FINDINGS

The four key findings from the survey data are the following:

1. **Gender differences on happiness.** Both men and women were found to be equally happy according to this survey. Net happiness among men and women was found to be 46% each.
2. **Education & Age differences are significant:** Higher education levels correlated with greater happiness (Low: 38%, Medium: 47%, High: 50%). Similarly younger respondents (under 34) reported slightly higher net happiness (51%) than older cohorts (respondents aged over 55 had net happiness of 43%).
3. **Does Religion matter when it comes to happiness?** Generally, respondents whose claimed faith was Islam were found to be most happy (net happiness of 54%) and those whose faith was Hinduism were least happy (net happiness at 2%).
4. **Can money buy happiness? Yes & No** . Learnings from this survey point to a nuanced relationship between happiness and income levels. As personal household income

level rises, happiness increases. For respondents who belonged to lowest income quintile net happiness was only 33%, the figure continues to rise to 42%, 48%, and 56% as we climb up the income quintiles. Reported net happiness is highest for top income quintile (62% net happiness).

However, when analyzing happiness at the **national level**, the relationship becomes more nuanced. Countries classified as **low-income** (according to World Bank criteria) generally report **lower happiness levels** (36% net happiness). Interestingly, it is the **middle-income countries** that report the **highest levels of happiness** (51% net happiness), while **high-income countries** show a **decline** (47% net happiness), although they still maintain higher happiness levels than low-income nations.

This pattern suggests a **U-shaped relationship** between national income and happiness. In essence, **happiness tends to rise as countries escape poverty**, peaks in the middle-income range, and then **plateaus or slightly declines** as income continues to rise—highlighting that **beyond a certain threshold, more wealth does not necessarily translate into greater happiness**.

Commentary on poll findings by

Michael Nitsche, President Gallup International Association in Vienna, Johny Heald, Board Member GIA in London and Bilal Gilani, Board Member GIA in Islamabad:

“According to the interpretation of our research team, the overall happiness of an individual is a complex mixture or hybrid of emotions emerging from the individual’s personal and group identity. This is how members of the research team explain why the group of richest nations (Euro- America), whose group status is losing out to an emerging group of the new rich nations (Asian countries in general), is under emotional stress. This phenomenon depresses their happiness”. The interpretation of the poll findings by our research team is part of a process to comprehend, discuss and engage in discourse with other researchers and scholars in the important field of happiness studies.

Note to Editors:

Sample Size and Mode of Field Work:

A total of 44,823 persons were interviewed globally in 44 countries. In each country a representative sample of around 1000 men and women was interviewed during October 2024-February 2025 either face to face, via telephone or online. The margin of error for most country level surveys is between ± 3 -5% at 95% confidence level. For more details regarding methodology please contact: Bilal I Gilani, Board Member Gallup International on email: bilal.gilani@gallup.com.pk

About Gallup International

Gallup International Association (GIA) is the leading global independent association in market research and opinion polling.

For over 75 years Gallup International members have demonstrated their expert ability to conduct multi-country surveys on a comparable basis and deliver the highest quality. Our more than 100 members and partners are leading national institutes with a profound local knowledge of research methods and techniques, statistical sources, customs, and culture differences of its own country and carefully selected by the Association Board. With only one member agency per country, members work together on a daily basis to share knowledge, new research techniques and tools, as well as to provide the most appropriate solutions to international research projects and service our clients to the best of our abilities.

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