Happiness in the Context of European Human Values

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When we think about our values, we think about what is important in our lives (security, independence, wisdom, success, goodness, pleasure). This article has as its starting point the assumption that happiness is the result of manifestation of human values. The first part deals with the concept of human values, and the second part is focused on the analysis of secondary sources (data obtained from the investigation conducted by the European Social Survey). Data was retrieved and processed by me in Excel, and SPSS. In order to test research hypotheses correlation was used. To support the argument we used a series of tables and representative images.

Keywords: human values, happiness, security

1. **Theoretical Approach**

Each of us holds many values with varying degrees of importance. Human values are the qualities of a human being, which are desired, and aspiring (respect, dignity, esteem, dominance) and that are sanctioned by a given society. They are universal and are the essential foundation for a good individual. These include the moral intuitions of the world (http://unhabitat.org/wpdm)

Values are not books in a library, but they are linked. The values cherished by the individual are not always in harmony with those of the institution or society, on the other hand, they differ from one individual to another (Abigail S, et al, 2009). Values operate at the level of individuals, institutions and societies, and in this respect should study their origin. Personality traits are dimensions of individual differences to show consistent patterns of thought, feeling and action. Socialization –values origins in needs, which are manifestations related to survival. Culture viewed in terms of value refers to abstract rules of conduct (Koivula N, 2008).

Human values are evolving due to the following factors:
1. Impact of company rules on individual needs or wishes.
2. Choice and judgment in fulfilling needs.
3. Teachings and practice.

Basic values can be characterized by describing the motivational purpose (Schwartz & Bardi, 1997): Self driven-(thought and independent action) Stimulation (new things) Hedonism (pleasure and satisfaction) Achievement (personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards), Power (social status and prestige), security (safety, harmony and stability of society, relations), Compliance and Tradition.The theory provides a framework for linking the value system. A behavior involves compromise between competing values. Almost any behavior has positive and negative implications for expression, supporting or achieving values. (Schwartz, 2006)

2. Europeans happiness in the context of human values
2.1. Research methodology

The purpose of the research - lack of information on how happiness is influenced by human values of individuals. This paper is a research focused on the analysis of secondary sources, information obtained from the European Social Survey (ESS), an academic study conducted in over 30 countries and Romania is not part of the research.

The investigation in Europe targets: to monitor and interpret the changing attitudes and values. Among the countries participating in the research are: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Slovenia. The sample consists of 28 221 people by education, age and sex. The period of application of the questionnaire was during 2014.

Research objectives:
- Knowing the level of happiness of Europeans
- Identify the importance of the material side in the lives of individuals,
- Observation of Europeans care towards the environment,
- Knowing the security's place in the lives of individuals.
Research hypotheses:
H1: A small percentage of respondents declare themselves as very happy,
H2: The majority of Europeans show an attitude of environmental protection,
H3: The status of happiness of Europeans is determined by the material side,
H4: Financial security gives an individual altogether security.

2.2. Research results

Out of the questions of the questionnaire applied by the European Social Survey site I chose those relevant to support my argument. Data was taken from the site and processed by me in Excel. The hypotheses were tested in SPSS as application of Pearson's correlation coefficient, but also on absolute and relative frequencies. Results are presented on several levels.

A. happiness in the lives of Europeans
The table below shows the absolute and relative frequency of this first level of analysis.

Table 1. Happiness in the life Europeans

	Frequency	% of all	% of valid
Extremely unhappy	113	0.4	0.4
1	97	0.3	0.3
2	246	0.9	0.9
3	526	1.9	1.9
4	687	2.4	2.4
5	2266	8.0	8.1
6	2111	7.5	7.5
7	5094	18.1	18.1
8	8652	30.7	30.7
9	5347	18.9	19.0
Extremely happy	2998	10.6	10.7
Refusal	5	0.0	-
Don't know	63	0.2	-
No answer	16	0.1	-
Total	28 221	100	100

Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/

The answers of European respondents indicated that they mostly feel unhappy, and of these only 10% are say that they are very happy.
For the next levels of analysis there was presented a situation of some example people and were asked to report their situation to the cases identified.

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B. The importance of the material side
        Level number two role is to present individual perceptions about the first human value: wealth. Table 2 and Figure 1 show the perception of Europeans on this level.

Tabel 2. Important to be rich, have money and expensive things

	Frequency	% of all	% of valid
Very much like me	700	2.5	2.5
Like me	2289	8.1	8.3
Somewhat like me	4869	17.3	17.6
A little like me	6216	22.0	22.5
Not like me	9406	33.3	34.1
Not like me at all	4140	14.7	15.0
Refusal	50	0.2	-
Don't know	417	1.5	-
No answer	114	0.4	-
SYSMIS	20	0.1	

Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/
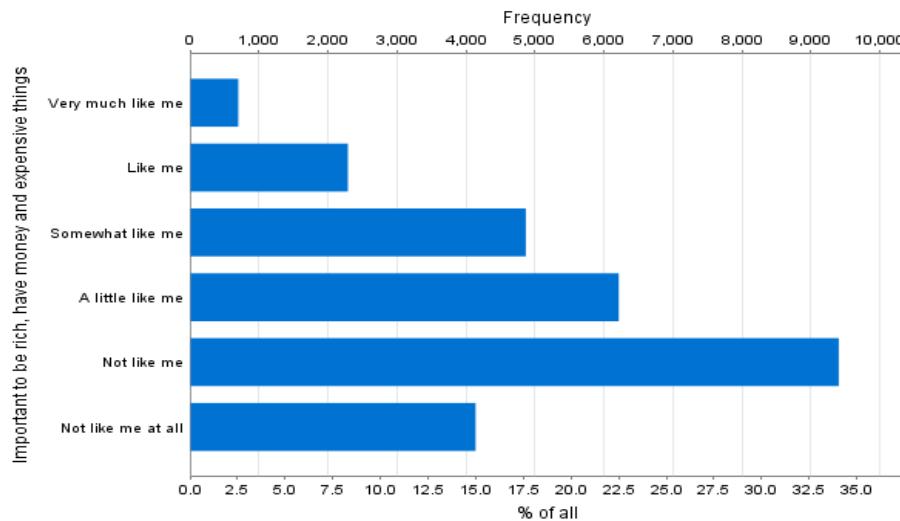
Figure 1. Important to be rich, have money and expensive things
Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/

        According to the answers of Europeans, their situation as a result of comparing the cases presented with their own situation, they consider that there is similarity of the importance of materials side.

C. Caring for the environment
        Level number three shows the attitude towards environmental protection. The figure and table below show the absolute and relative frequencies.

Tabel 3. Important to care for nature and environment

	Frequency	% of all	% of valid
Very much like me	8788	31.1	31.8
Like me	11303	40.1	40.9

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Somewhat like me	4991	17.7	18.1
A little like me	1818	6.4	6.6
Not like me	581	2.1	2.1
Not like me at all	146	0.5	0.5
Refusal	53	0.2	-
Don't know	405	1.4	-
No answer	116	0.4	-
SYSMIS	20	0.1	-
Total	28221	100.0	100.0

Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/
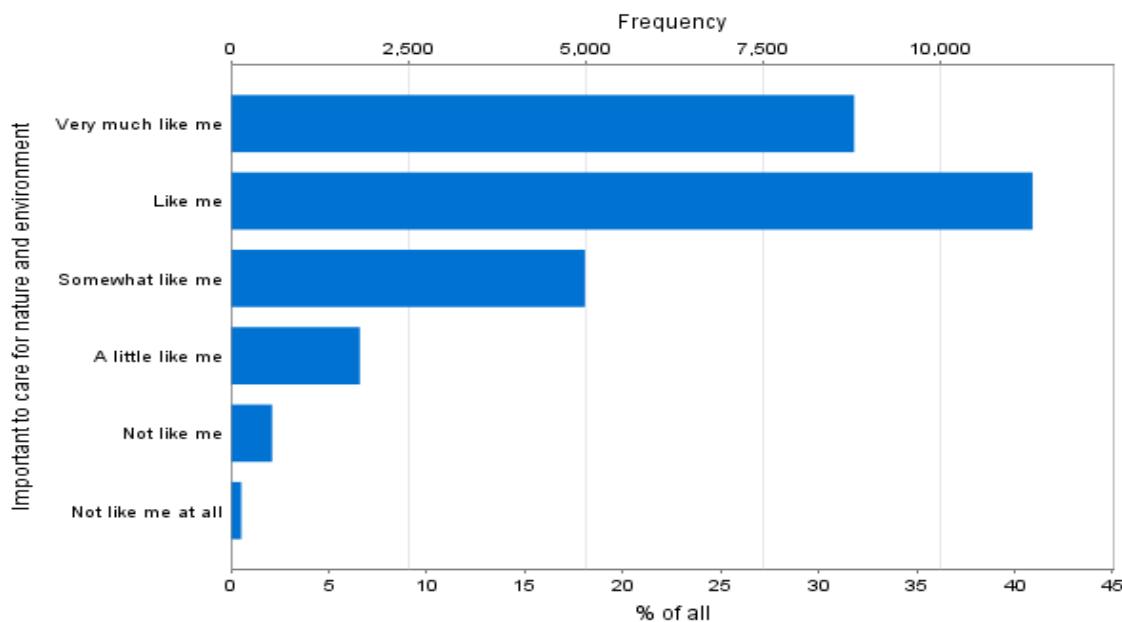
Figure 2. Caring for the environment
Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/

88.9% of respondents identify with the attitude of cases reported regarding the importance of environmental friendliness.

D. The importance of security

The last level of analysis is security. The table and figure below show respondents' answers.

Tabel 4. Important to live in secure and safe surroundings

	Frequency	% of all	% of valid
Very much like me	7096	25.1	25.7
Like me	9876	35.0	35.8
Somewhat like me	5387	19.1	19.5
A little like me	2922	10.4	10.6
Not like me	1,922	6.8	7.0
Not like me at all	405	1.4	1.5
Refusal	54	0.2	-
Don't know	429	1.5	-

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	Frequency	% of all	% of valid
No answer	110	0.4	-
SYSMIS	20	0.1	-
Total	28221	100.0	100.0

Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/
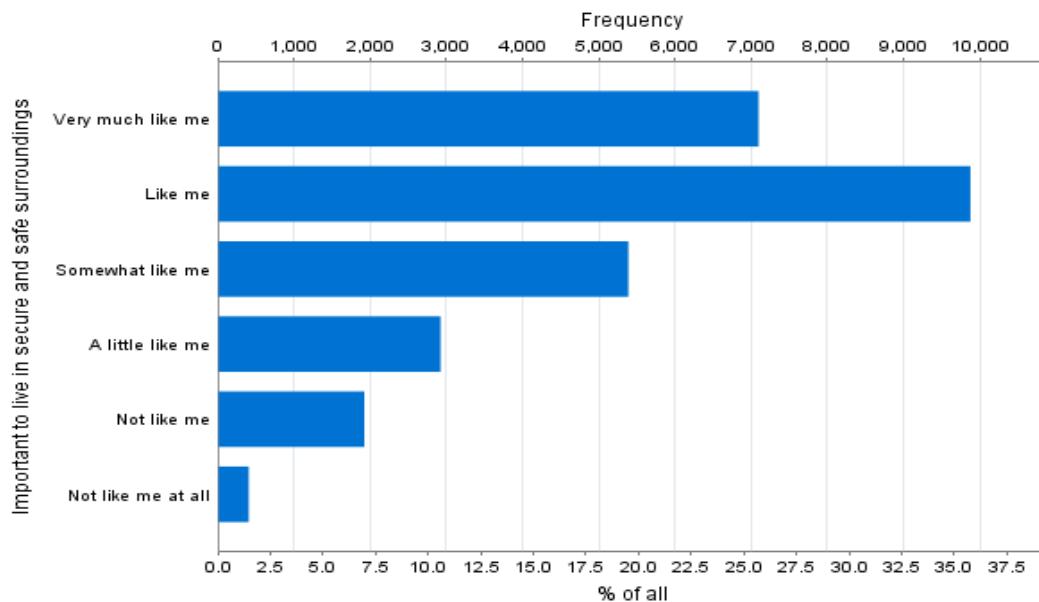
Figure 3. *Important to live in secure and safe surroundings*
Source: http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview/

Most respondents (over 70%) consider security as very important in their lives, almost as important as in the model statements presented.

2. 3. Testing hypotheses
In order to test the first two hypotheses using absolute and relative frequency and see if the last two hypotheses check or not we used as a test the correlation. Demonstration of verifying or refuting the hypothesis number three can be seen in the table below.

Tabelul 5. Testarea ipotezei cu numărul trei prin intermediul corelație

How happy are you		
Important to be rich, have money and expensive things	Correlation	0.037 **
	Significance	0.0000
	Count	27548

After testing the association we see that it is statistically significant because the value of Sig is below the minimum allowed.
Testing the hypothesis number four is shown in the table below.

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Table 5. Testing the hypothesis number four through correlation

Important to live in secure and safe surroundings		
Important to be rich, have money and expensive things	Correlation	0.100 **
	Significance	0.0000
	Count	27533

The test of association shows that there is statistically significant association.

3. Research findings

All assumptions made in the methodology part of the research are checked. The first hypothesis stating that a small percentage of respondents declare themselves as very happy is checked, and this is verified as a result of calculating the rate. The majority of Europeans show an attitude of caring for the environmental and relative frequency shows that the hypothesis number two is checked. Hypothesis number three stating that state of happiness of Europeans is determined by the material side is checked. The last hypothesis is checked because it gives the individual financial security.The most relevant conclusions drawn as a result of the study conducted reveal that human values are reflected in the happiness of Europeans in the current century.

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