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"CAN MONEY BUY HAPPINESS? ANALYSIS WITHIN THE LABOUR MARKET AND MILLENIAL'S MIND"

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SOMMARIO

L'Economia e la cosiddetta Economia del Benessere poggiano le loro fondamenta su delle leggi e su dei modelli che hanno ricevuto delle critiche a causa della loro accezione cinica e materialista. È infatti noto che il PIL presenta alcuni limiti strutturali, o che il cosiddetto *Homo Oeconomicus* ed alcune delle leggi su cui si basa la microeconomia tendono a mettere in secondo piano la psicologia del singolo individuo. Ciò ha contribuito alla creazione di un modello di crescita e sviluppo economico basato sulla credenza che miglioramenti nel benessere economico corrispondano a miglioramenti nel benessere sociale. Tuttavia, nella realtà, non è detto che questa equazione sia sempre verificata. Sorgono così alcuni interrogativi: fino a che punto è corretto impostare la società su queste basi? La corsa all'accumulazione di ricchezza e ai beni materiali rende effettivamente felici gli individui? In altre parole, i soldi fanno davvero la felicità? E, per concludere, qual è il legame fra queste tematiche ed il mondo del lavoro?

Il primo capitolo di questa dissertazione comincia dall'analisi di un articolo accademico di Easterlin (1974): egli, elaborando dati provenienti sia da uno stesso paese sia confrontando diversi paesi, notò che la felicità riportata non aumentava anche se le persone o i paesi si arricchivano. Questo risultato venne poi smentito da Wolfers e Stevenson (2008) i quali avevano a disposizione un set di dati molto maggiore rispetto a Easterlin. In ogni caso, il risultato più importante di questo primo capitolo proviene da uno studio di Kahneman e Deaton (2010) i quali considerarono due importanti sfumature di significato nella parola felicità. Il capitolo si conclude con un'analisi di alcuni beni che sembrano giocare un ruolo primario nel determinare la felicità degli individui.

L'intento della seconda parte della dissertazione è quello di eseguire un'applicazione concreta delle nozioni esaminate nel capitolo precedente attraverso l'analisi di un particolare campione di giovani studenti; la discussione viene approfondita con alcuni temi legati al mondo del lavoro. Si vuole, in altre parole, provare a comprendere se nel campione di studenti analizzato c'è una certa consapevolezza ed attenzione riguardo alcune tematiche (ambiente, sicurezza, ecc.) ma anche e soprattutto cercare di capire quali sono quei valori a cui danno priorità assoluta hic et nunc e nel futuro, sia in generale nella vita che nel loro lavoro ideale. Il denaro rappresenta uno di questi fattori? Questa analisi è stata eseguita tramite la somministrazione di un questionario - molte domande richiamano gli studi trattati nel primo capitolo - al quale hanno risposto più di cento studenti provenienti da più di venti Paesi del mondo. Si può affermare che il risultato più importante al quale si è pervenuti è l'assenza di correlazione fra ricchezza e felicità, in entrambe le sue sfumature di significato. Ciò è probabilmente dovuto alle

caratteristiche del campione stesso. Le risposte raccolte permettono inoltre di identificare alcuni trend riguardanti gli obiettivi nella vita di questi studenti e di caratterizzare le aziende nelle quali essi vorrebbero lavorare.

Queste conclusioni possono essere viste come un'opportunità per delle indagini successive che coinvolgano un numero maggiore di giovani: l'assenza di correlazione è dovuta alle caratteristiche del campione o è piuttosto una regola generale? Nell'ottenimento dei risultati non possono comunque essere trascurati i limiti della dissertazione stessa: il metodo utilizzato, il numero di intervistati ecc. In ogni caso, le aziende dovrebbero sempre prestare attenzione a cosa "cercano" i giovani in modo di modificare la loro offerta per risultare attrattive. Infine, alcuni degli elementi evidenziati possono dare alcuni spunti per riflettere sul modo in cui i governi ed i policymaker operano.

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INTRODUCTION

Economics and the Welfare Economics in particular have been defined, up to now, from a set of laws that qualifies an economic growth model that favours a "materialistic" and "cynic" development of our society. For instance, in this modern era, some of the pillars on which we have based our economic and resource allocation decisions have been accused of having an approach both too object-oriented and too abstract, far from the truth. The reference is made apropos of the GDP as a macroeconomic indicator and also, shifting attention to microeconomics, to the concept of *Homo Economicus* and the axiom of *non-satiety*.

This criticism is useful to help us identify the crux of the matter. Over time, policy-makers have worked to improve the economic welfare – whose most important indicator is indeed the GDP – of their respective countries or economic areas neglecting about distinguishing the concepts of social welfare, or welfare at large, and the narrower concept of economic welfare. Bearing in mind this difference is of the utmost importance.

The objective of this dissertation is two-fold and matches with the two chapters in which it is organised. The first one is to understand to what extent is true the Pigou's dictum (Abramovitz, 1959 p. 3) that states: "changes in economics welfare indicate changes in social welfare in the same direction". This will be done through the analysis of a literature that has been somehow overlooked by the majority. Actually, this whole thing has much to do with the long-standing question *Does the money buy happiness?*. This will be thus examined given that it is strictly linked with the two concepts of welfare already mentioned. The second one is performing a practical application - through a questionnaire - of the notions examined in the first chapter focusing on a peculiar sample and enriching the discussion with some themes related to the labour market.

Therefore, the first chapter seeks to present the relative literature trying to respect both a chronological order of works and a "funnel" organization. We will go from the general analysing populations at first (is it true, in the world, that the richer is the happier?), to the particular, analysing individuals (how can a single person spend effectively money in order to be happy?).

The second chapter sets out how the questionnaire was conceived, with its results and its implications. The questionnaire represent the link with the issues covered in the first chapter and has the modest ambition of trying to identify some relevant trends given the specificity of the sample.

CHAPTER 1 - MONEY AND HAPPINESS

1.1 PREMISE

The link between economic well-being and happiness is of paramount importance in our society and in the modern capitalistic economy. The indicator *par excellence* to assess the economic wealth of a country is the GDP. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines it as "an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident institutional units engaged in production ...." (OECD - Glossary of statistical terms). A growth in the GDP is welcomed as one of the best things that can happen to an economy whereas, vice-versa, a downward revision thereof makes the economists quake. All this attention to this monetary measure is largely attributable to the modern approach towards the economy: the Homo Economicus that bosses around the theories on which the decisions made by governments are based is an amoral individual, interested only in maximizing the concept of economic efficiency. In other words, the contemporary society starts from the principle that an increase in the overall economic welfare or GDP entails an improvement of the living standards of a population. Unfortunately, this equation is not always verified because, as suggested, economic welfare does not always corresponds to the social well-being.

In particular, GDP has been contested during the years. It presents significant structural limits indeed. The GDP is in fact not capable of detecting many factors that are important for a human well-being. More than 40 years ago, Bob Kennedy (1968) has heavily challenged it with the following speech: "... Gross National Product counts air pollution, cigarette advertising and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. ... It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. ... Yet the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education. ... It measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans". Other leading public figures have expressed the same concept. Clark (2012), former Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), commented as follows: "... The chief architect of the GDP measure, economist S. Kuznets, himself recognized from the outset that the welfare of a nation and the well-being of its citizens could not be inferred from a measurement of national income. ... GDP has always had limitations as a proxy for assessing human progress. Equity, dignity, happiness, sustainability – these are all fundamental to our lives, but absent in the GDP measure. ...". If

the equation richness (i.e., high GDP) - happiness is not always verified, why then policy-makers are still focused so much on the GDP? Should governments update their main goals or this indicator is, after all, the best proxy available to measure the "health" of a country?

Much ink has been spilled about the fact that money buys happiness and yet the final verdict can be contradictory depending on which psychologist or economist we listen to. However, nowadays there is a growing awareness about the fact that more emphasis should be placed on other aspects that have been disregarded till now. The concept of happiness is today mentioned when we talk about economics. In any case, we all know that the ultimate and noble aim of politics should always be the improvement of the welfare and the people living conditions.

In the economic sphere, GDP is not the only factor on which we have built this modern economy that tramples every value attributed to the psychological aspect of the individual. A striking example comes from one of the basic concepts of microeconomics. In terms of consumer preferences, the axiom of non-satiety is indeed fundamental. Concisely, we know that, even if the marginal utility is decreasing, a rational consumer will always choose a basket where there are more goods since these guarantee a higher utility to the consumer. An Italian psychiatric claimed that "... till now, the economy has seemed to be naïve science. ... It appeared as a science without an emotional literacy, a consciousness of oneself and the other and an awareness of the human condition. The Homo Economicus is a limitless utilitarian monstrosity that is scourging, with its own totalitarian and self-destructive rationality – and therefore absolutely irrational -, the entire planet" (D'Elia, 2013[1]). The only interest of the Homo Economicus is then to spend all his budget to "enlarge" his basket. Consume more goods is the only thing that matters for him. Nonetheless, we know that the reality does not work in this way. The consumption of more goods is not the only thing that makes people happier. There are other factors related to people's happiness: there are some goods ("relational goods"), which escape to the decreasing marginal utility rule, that have a separate story. If more wealth does not make us happier, should these theories on which a good part of microeconomics is built on have their importance reduced? And, assuming that wealth contributes to the happiness of an individual, is it possible to assess to what extent? Which are the goods that makes us truly "happy"?

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[1] Article available at: http://www.psychiatryonline.it/node/4438

1.2 THE EASTERLIN'S PARADOX

In 1974 Robert Easterlin published a paper named "Does Economic Growth Improve The Human Lot?". The elaboration of the "Easterlin's Paradox", named so after this paper, has given rise to an academic debate on the relationship between happiness and wealth and the inadequacy of the GDP to measure individual and social well-being. Before looking closely at it, we should emphasize a crucial point.

It might appear trivial but the concept of marginal utility is recalled countless times in regard to this subject. It seems in fact obvious to think that the wealthier we are, the more extra money we need to further raise our level of happiness. If your yearly salary is € 12.000 and you get a pay rise of € 500 per month, this will probably have a strong positive impact on your lifestyle and on your life's quality. Ergo it will make a great difference on your happiness. On the other hand, if you are already earning € 240.000 annually, you would hardly notice an extra € 500. If we draw a graph where on the X-axis there is the income and in the other one the happiness, we expect to spot a diminishing relationship between the two.
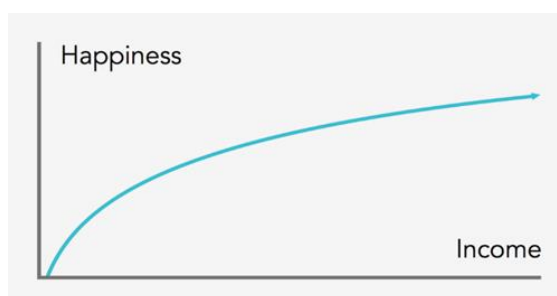

Figure 1

Settled the background, we can now analyse Easterlin's paper. He starts doing a premise relying on Abramovitz (1959) that still insists on the Pigou's dictum (Pigou is regarded as the father of the Welfare Economics). Easterlin expresses his scepticism about the dictum and emphasises that his paper represents the first attempt, up to that time, to understand if there is a proper empiric evidence of the fact that economic growth is positively associated with social welfare, i.e. human happiness.

Easterlin's paper is divided into three sections. The first one clarifies how the term happiness is used in the paper and explains where the showed data come from. The second one deals with the presentation of the results of the empirical analysis. The last section displays an interpretation of the main findings.

In "The Concept and Measurement of Happiness" section, Easterlin points out that for this paper he makes use of two types of data. The first set come from a procedure called "Self-Anchoring Striving Scale" developed by the social psychologist Cantril. Thanks to this method,

each person can define the "worst" and the "best" scenario for themselves; it is the most used when it comes about assessing the well-being of an individual and it is given below:

Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. Suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. If the top step is 10 and the bottom step is 0, on which step of the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?

The second set of data comes from the Gallup poll. Gallup is a company founded in 1935 that deals with, inter alia, conducting opinion polls worldwide. The question that the company asked to the interviewees was: "How happy would you say that you are: very happy, fairly happy or not very happy?".

The second section consists of the presentation of the results of three different analysis: international comparison, within-country comparisons and national time series.

1. In the within-country comparison, Easterlin deepens the study of 20 countries. Easterlin found that "in every single country, those in the highest status group were happier, on average, than those in the lowest status group" (p. 100). This is not a surprising result. It seems indeed logic that within the same country, higher revenues correspond to greater possibilities. Within the same country, who is richer can have access to a series of privileged services and does not suffer from the stress of having to pay rent, food, bills, education etc. Wealthier are also more likely to have access to the best medical services, a crucial aspect to improve the state of health and consequently the standard of living.

2. In the second analysis (international comparison) Easterlin wondered if, comparing profoundly different (cultures, habits, lifestyles etc.) countries, the wealthier were also those in which there was a higher percentage of happy people. The scatter plot showed here should be self-explanatory to describe the findings:
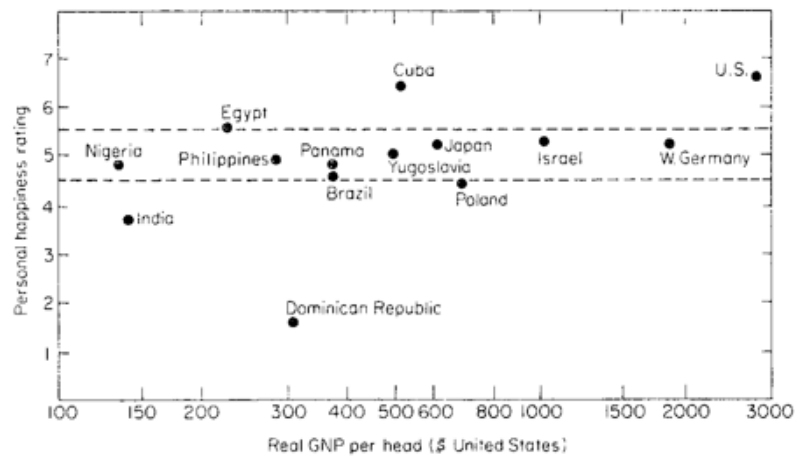
As shown in *figure 2*, 10 countries' happiness out of 14 lies in the range of 5. The difference for those 10 countries is not significant. Furthermore, two of the four outliers can be explained: Cuba was experiencing a happy period after a political revolution whereas the Dominican Republic a tough one for a series of tumults. In general, one would tend to say that if there is a correlation between happiness and richness, it is vague and imperceptible.

3. In the last section left to be treated, Easterlin analyses a national time series. It is from this analysis that Easterlin got the most important and staggering result, that is the so-called Easterlin's paradox. He put together the data of the US citizens for 34 years (1946-1970). During this period, the USA's GDP has multiplied almost fivefold. He observed that, in spite of the huge GDP growth, the general happiness of the population did not increase. There have been some periods (1957 - 1963 and 1966 - 1970) in which it has actually declined. Shortly, even if the GDP has risen considerably, this did not rhyme with an increase in the US citizens' happiness.

What comes out from the last two analysis (national time series and international comparison) is that wealthier countries are not happier than the less developed ones and even if a country experience a strong economic development, this not necessarily entails a rise in the happiness of the citizens thereof.

In other words, the paradox lies in the fact a higher GDP per capita, i.e. a higher richness level, does not correspond to greater self-reported levels of happiness.

We will not take into account the third section of Easterlin's paper since it is not relevant for the purposes of this work.

To conclude, Easterlin (1996) tried to explain the result obtained in the national time series analysis by "blaming" the relativity of the income and the interpersonal comparisons. He argued that the subjective well-being, or happiness, is inversely proportional to the income of the others. At a given time, income are fixed and on average, in the same country, who is richer is happier. Nevertheless, raising everybody's income does not increase everybody's happiness because the positive boost that one might experience is offset from the negative effect of a higher level of average life resulting from the general growth of the wages (p. 140). This opinion was supported also from Clark et al. (2007), who demonstrated that the relative income plays instead an important role in determining happiness.

1.3 J. WOLFERS AND B. STEVENSON'S PAPERS

Some years later, Wolfers and Stevenson (2008) disproved Easterlin through their paper "Economic Growth and Subjective Well-Being".

The authors have reworked a flood of data gathered in almost every country around the world and came to the conclusion that the Easterlin's paradox simply does not exist. They proved wrong the result deducted from the "national time series" analysis since they, in the phases of economic growth of nations, observed a systematic rise in the level of subjective happiness of individuals. Moreover, they have denied also the findings coming from the "international comparison" analysis: they found a clear evidence of the fact that people that live in rich countries are happier than those that live in poor ones.

One might wonder why their data support a theory that is the exact opposite of the Easterlin's one. Wolfers and Stevenson claimed that this reported difference is attributable to the dataset they used. It is indeed true that they employed data much more thorough: in their research more than 150 countries were taken into account thanks to the progress that has been achieved by the Gallup World Poll[2], covering a high percentage of the world's population. By contrast, Easterlin used, if we put it in this way, just around one-tenth of the data Stevenson and Wolfers used.

Nonetheless, Wolfers and Stevenson's paper has been as well debated, especially for the fact that the authors "find no evidence of a satiation point beyond which wealthier countries have no further increases in subjective well-being" though other studies have done (Kahneman and Deaton, 2010).

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[2] More information about the Gallup World Poll are available on the official website:
https://www.gallup.com/analytics/232838/world-poll.aspx

The decreasing marginal returns are important also in this case. The bottom line is always the same: the more the nations and the individuals get richer, the greater amount of money is required to grow their overall happiness. Simply put, in order to get a 10% increase in happiness, a wealthy man needs much more money than a pauper. This kind of relationship is nothing but a logarithmic relationship. When plotted logarithmically, life satisfaction does indeed rise proportionally with income. And this is also the reason why the duo has estimated a linear-log model to determine the regression line. This is proved in the following chart (*figure 3*) that Stevenson and Wolfers have published when they issued another paper in 2013.

Figure 3

Image source: Wolfers and Stevenson, 2013 (p. 600).

On the bottom of the X-axis, each increment indicates a doubling of income. The variables (satisfaction and GDP per capita) are highly correlated (0.79) and this is the most important outcome of the paper. In any case, as Wolfers and Stevenson (2013) claim, "the solid line shows the results from a simple OLS regression, estimated for the full sample:

$$(1) \quad \text{Well–being}_c = \alpha + \beta \log (\text{GDP}_c) + \epsilon_c.$$

The estimated well-being–income gradient (β) is 0.335 (se = 0.018)" (Wolfers and Stevenson, 2013 p. 599).

Summarizing, the gist of their contribution is therefore that wealthier countries are happier than poor countries and wealthier people are happier than poor people not only in the within-country analysis.

In spite of the fact that some countries have the same GDP per capita, they have different average level of happiness. It was indeed argued that the correlation between the variables is "remarkably high" (Wolfers and Stevenson, 2013, p.599) but, as we know, correlation does not

imply causality: this makes us conclude that other factors define a person's happiness even though money is probably one of these.

The World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2018) of the United Nations endorses their findings since the ranking of the wealthiest countries is very similar to the one of the happiest countries that Wolfers and Stevenson published. The golden medal is in fact up to Finland, which came in 1st place overtaking Norway (1st in 2017). 3rd place for Denmark, followed by other rich countries (Switzerland, Iceland, The Netherlands etc.). On the contrary, the saddest country is also one of the poorest: Burundi. Bad placements were registered also for countries like Rwanda, Tanzania, Yemen, and countries ravaged by various disasters (earthquake in Haiti, war in Syria).

1.4 A NUANCE OF THE WORD *HAPPINESS*

Moving on, it is time now to introduce a decisive nuance of the word happiness. A branch of the literature has indeed start to consider the existence of two kinds of happiness. This dichotomy allows facing the subject from a new and different point of view.

- The first one is more "evaluative", more general: it talks about your life assessment as a broader concept. It is called "life satisfaction" or "life evaluation" and it would answer to the question *Are you satisfied with your life as a whole?*
- The second one is more interested in sentiments understood as positive (tranquillity, joy, love etc.) and negative (anger, sadness etc.) emotions. It is called emotional well-being.

One would indeed expect to receive different answers if we ask to somebody: "How much are you satisfied with your life on a scale from 1 to 10?" (life evaluation) and "How much were you happy yesterday on same scale?" (emotional well-being).

In a major study of 2010, D. Kahneman and A. Deaton – both awarded the Nobel respectively in 2002 and in 2015 - tried to highlight this difference linking the two concept always with the money: is the wealth capable of buying both of these two kinds of happiness?

They "reported an analysis of more than 450.000 responses … [to] a daily survey of 1.000 US residents conducted by the Gallup Organization". They came to this conclusion: "We find that emotional well-being (measured by questions about emotional experiences yesterday) and life evaluation (measured through the Cantril's Self Anchoring Scale) have different correlations. … When plotted against log income, life evaluation rises steadily [without a limit]. Emotional

well-being also rises with log income, but there is no further progress beyond an annual income of ~$ 75,000…" (Kahneman and Deaton, 2010, p. 1)

Hence, the most important thing to remember from their work is that life satisfaction and emotional well-being are therefore directly proportional to the income but the latter reaches saturation at a certain point. The detection of the two kinds of happiness has turned out to be crucial to be able to spot this phenomenon. This is also the key point of the first chapter.

This result is not surprising and the following passages will clarify why.

1. If you ask for an assessment of happiness to an individual at a specific moment in everyday life, for example, "How happy, stressed, angry, or sad were you yesterday?" the results are unrelated with the interviewee's financial status when the saturation level - $ 75,000, according to what they have observed - is reached. This is reasonable because the quantity of goods that an individual can consume is physiologically limited. This is a fundamental concept because it contributes to justify why a human's happiness cannot be explained exclusively from the good consumption. Obviously, the figure $ 75,000 is debatable and it might change over the years, in the country where you live, if you live in a big city or in a small town; for instance, even if what matters here is the principle itself, Frey and Stutzer (2002) and Layard (2003), before Kahneman and Deaton, found other threshold levels.

2. Elseways, money makes us happier when we think about our lives rationally and in general: "Am I happy? Well, I have a lot of money, so I should be so."[3]. This is probably due to the fact that when we are asked this question, we tend to think about our general life satisfaction and we keep into account different aspects of our life and the possibilities we have access to. For *the law of large numbers*, this should be more or less the baseline. Once again, this is intuitive: having money gives us the opportunity to acquire comfort and luxuries, offers us a better social status, access to higher quality health care, better nutrition, security, etc. All in all, this is what also Easterlin in his within-country comparison and the duo Wolfers–Stevenson have found; by the way, taking into consideration the questions they used to gauge people's happiness, it seems clear that they were assessing the life satisfaction rather than the emotional well-being.

Kahneman and Deaton (2010) point out also that "low income exacerbates the emotional pain associated with misfortunes" and they "conclude that high income buys life satisfaction but not

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[3] From the website "Happily", see references.

happiness, and that low income is associated both with low life evaluation and low emotional well-being" (p.1).

Research made among countries that are deeply different in various aspects (culture, wealth, habits, traditions) have found that financial independence has a more important role in life satisfaction in poor countries compared to wealthier nations (Lu et al., 2001, Lu and Gilmour 2004). In the latter, people, in most of the cases, take for granted the fulfilment of basic needs since they have reached a financial security. This allows them to have a "shift of values" and they can thus place more weight on such things as internal growth and personal fulfilment. On the contrary, in poor nations, people are more focused on the contentment of basic needs and, thus, the income is the key to resolve a big chunk of their problems.

It is vital to focus on the bottom line: when you do not have much money, an extra would not go amiss because through them you can have access to a set of material goods that help you satisfy the more essential needs. But as you amass more wealth, it becomes increasingly arduous to buy more happiness through the purchase of other material goods.

1.5 OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

So far the relationship money - happiness has been addressed observing dealing with what happens in the large numbers, namely populations and countries. Yet, we still have not defined which are the *categories of goods* that contribute more to determine a person's happiness and how the money is linked with this matter. This issue represents a vital step to understand which is the *set of actions*[4] that a single person can put into practice to have a positive impact on his condition of joy. And it is easy to figure out that this has something to do with the labour market because, until proven otherwise, the job has a direct consequence on each person's happiness.

To move forward we need to reconnect to the last four lines of the previous paragraph as the last consideration set the perfect backdrop to introduce the concept of *hedonic treadmill*. In particular, a study of the psychologist Brickman (1978) is appropriate; he studied people that had won a high amount of money at a lottery. How would you feel if you would win a large sum? Probably, at least for some months, very glad. But, after the first phase of euphoria, everybody eventually get used to the new living standards. At this point, it was seen that the level of happiness of these lucky players gradually returned as it was before the fortunate event.

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[4] The expression *set of actions* is intended as the economic decisions and the allocation of financial resources done by the single individual or the households.

This process takes place when we are dealing with material goods both the most common - a new t-shirt - and the most expensive ones - a piece of jewellery or a car. We get used to having them in our daily life and they do not give us pleasure anymore. And at some stage we want to buy more new, more advanced, more fashionable objects.

This happens for a specific reason: the phenomenon at hand is called *hedonistic adaptation* and it is defined as a phenomenon in which people quickly become used to changes, great or terrible, in order to maintain a stable level of happiness (Rosenbloom, 2010).

This is also a reason why we never manage to be completely happy for long periods. The gratifying effect of a stimulus diminishes if this stimulus is repeated for many times and constantly. The process of adaptation leads thereby people to increase their aspirations.

The risk is to remain trapped in the "hamster wheel": running to get more money to buy items that make us feel good in a certain moment, but then set them aside to want more. Quoting Lily Tomlin[5], the trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat.

Even though without money life seems difficult, Kasser (2002) explains that an exaggerated materialistic and consumeristic culture undermines our quality of life: if we focus too much on possessions, we would lose the opportunity to engage ourselves in other activities (e.g. enjoy each others' companionship) that could really contribute to increase our life satisfaction.

This bring us to a crucial point, to a dilemma. We all agree that it is not the money itself or having a great deal of it that makes us joyful. Only Scrooge McDuck could feel pleasure in literally diving and swimming in his ocean of coins. What makes the difference is how we spend them.

With money, however, you can do much more than just buying material things. In fact there are other two things that could have significant repercussions on our level of satisfaction and joy that we can buy with money.

The first thing to whom we are referring is time. Time has a high specific weight when it comes about our happiness. We cannot pay to have days formed of 30 hours but we can buy some services and/or goods that allow us to have more time. Everybody can delegate part of his work or save time in household running thanks to money. With this new availability of time we can enjoy a higher "quantity" of the *relational goods[6]* and, in general, focus on other activities e.g. stay with friends or dedicate time to your passions. This will raise our level of happiness as

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[5] From the official Forbes website: https://www.forbes.com/quotes/5989/
[6] They will be addressed in the next paragraph.

argued in several studies (Dunn et al., 2008; Dunn and Norton 2013; Whillans et al., 2017). On the contrary, a waste of time leads to nervousness and tension. Two studies confirm it:

- Frey and Stutzer (2008) talks about commuting time stress. In this case, for example, the point is that "the burden of commuting is chosen when compensated either on the labour or on the housing market so that individuals' utility is equalized. However, in a direct test of this strong notion of equilibrium, we find that people with longer commuting time report systematically lower subjective well-being".
- Another study, always about commuting, remarks which effects it has in a sample of Canadian adults citizens: researchers found that "time spent commuting is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction and an increased sense of time pressure" (Hilbrecht et al., 2014).

The second element we can buy with money are "experiences". Recent investigations have shown that life experiences give us a more lasting pleasure than material goods. Howell et al. (2011) claim that "life experiences become part of who we are. They are woven into our memories, shape our identity" (p. 68). Experiences satisfy many of ours psychological and connection needs because they are often shared with other people (Caprariello and Ries 2013). Objects and the pleasure they give tend to wane with time. On the other hand, experiences create long-lasting memories because they involve, in most cases, shared moments and social bonds. Experiences are just easier to appreciate and we recall them more easily (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Howell and Pchelina (2014) tried to explain why people usually have a predilection for the purchase of material assets. People, according to him, buy them because they are tangible and, deceptively, last longer, while travel and holidays give the impression of ending up earlier. Kumar et al. (2014) agree with this vision. He argues that people often think in a way that is logical only at first sight, which is as follows: I have limited financial resources; I can take a trip or buy a new car. The trip will not last long and once is finished I will end up empty-handed. The same applies to concerts, plays, sport events etc. In contrast, if I buy an object (a smartphone, a fancy car), this will last for a long time. Well, this reasoning makes perfect sense from a tangible and material point of view. It does not so from a psychological one. Kumar et al. (2014) say that the hedonic treadmill manifests itself much faster on material purchases than on life experiences because the latter satisfies a larger part of our psychological needs. They also claim that experiential purchases are evaluated more on their own terms and evoke fewer social comparisons because is less likely that you are able to liken them: it is much easier to compare my smartphone to yours (my IPhone against your Nokia 3310) than our respective last

trips (my vacation in the Bahamas against your safari in Africa). If we look at the matter from another point of view, we have further confirmation of the thesis that money spent on *doing* tend to provide more happiness than money spent on *having* (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003): how do we feel in the anticipatory period for experiential purchases? And how do we feel in the one for material purchases? We only need to consider the state of mind that the average person has the day before leaving for a trip (excitement, positivity) and the day before Black Friday (stress). As Kumar et al. (2014) found, the anticipatory period for experiential purchases provides more benefits because is less tinged with impatience and anxiety: "waiting for an experience tends to be more pleasurable and exciting than waiting to receive a material good" (p. 1925).

This paragraph came in handy to understand how each of us can allocate in a more efficient way his financial resources and how this can have a significant impact on our condition of happiness.

At the same time, it is necessary to contextualize the question. If it is possible to talk about these social issues, is because we are working under the assumption that we are dealing with advanced economies where it makes sense face this kind of problem. It could be naïve raising this matter in the Third World countries where the population is struggling even to satisfy the primary needs.

1.6 RELATIONAL GOODS

It has been mentioned the fact that buying experiences is often linked with shared moments and social connections. This allows to shift the focus on a peculiar category of goods for which the rule of the decreasing marginal utility does not seem to apply: the *relational goods*.

The economist Gui (1987 p.37) defined them as «"biens" non matériels, qui ne sont cependant pas de services qui se consomment individuellement, mais sont lies aux relations interpersonnelles… Il est clair que le marché, basé sur une logique individualiste, n'est pas en mesure de fournir avec efficience ces biens que nous pourrions définir "relationnelles"». Uhlaner (1989) agrees with him but adds an important piece to the puzzle, specifying that "the relational goods can only be "possessed" by mutual agreement that they exist after appropriate joint actions have been taken by a person and non-arbitrary others. Moreover, the others must either be specific individuals or drawn from some specific set. The identity of the "other" in the relationship matters. [For example,] money is not a relational good …

since a payment of five dollars retains the same monetary value no matter who provides it." (p. 254). Another element to consider is that the production and the consumption of the relational goods cannot be broken down or be viewed separately (Donati, 2011)

This category of goods represents the most efficient remedy to prevent falling into the hedonic treadmill trap (Bruni, 2005): the phenomenon itself occurs much more slowly than with a private good (car, house) or actually it never takes place.

To conclude, it is possible define them (Donati, 2015) as immaterial entities that consist of social relations that emerge from actors who are oriented towards producing and enjoying together a good that they could not otherwise obtain (p. 213). D'Elia (2013[7]) sums up what was said and brings into focus the crux of the discussion: the relational goods are goods "that are not subject to the laws of marketing and classical economics. … In general, these goods are free … in a commercial sense: goods such as love, friendship, kindness, harmony, good company, gratitude, the pleasure of observing growing children, etc. These are common goods but untraceable on the market". As can be seen, the condition of sharing them with somebody else is predominant when it comes about this kind of goods. In addition, most importantly, they turn out to be the elements that count the most in the happiness perceived by people[8]. Someone could well argue that they are the most important assets of a lifetime.

In general, all these mentioned studies of economists, psychologists and philosophers should lead us to a reflection. If the final aim is to build a society whose primary objective is to improve the social welfare of the community in general, and of every single individual in particular, it would be reasonable to direct politics' work towards this direction. It seems clear now that, in the light of the analysis performed, the happiness of individuals cannot be evaluated only from the point of view of economic wealth.

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[7] Article available at: http://www.psychiatryonline.it/node/4438
[8] This is confirmed from Robert Waldinger, the Director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one of the most comprehensive longitudinal studies in history. See references (Waldinger R.)

CHAPTER 2 - THE LABOUR MARKET

2.1 PREMISE

The intent of this second chapter is to perform, through a questionnaire, a "practical application[9]" of the concepts considered in the first part of this work. The questionnaire has been developed on the basis of the sources presented in the first chapter, except for one that will be introduced in the next paragraph.

One of the objectives of this chapter is to analyse the relationship money - happiness under the light of the aspects of the work as a whole. This can make the dissertation interesting also from a company's point of view because, at the end of the day, it cannot be denied that the money issue is linked with the labour market.

We will summarize now the most important conclusions of the first chapter and we will thus highlight which are the main goals of this chapter.

- We have seen that Wolfers and Stevenson (2008, 2013) have denied Easterlin (1974) observing that in richer countries people are happier (international comparison) and that in the phases of economic growth there is a rise in the level of subjective happiness of individuals (national time series). Among Easterlin's findings it was nonetheless confirmed that in "every single country, those in the highest status group were happier, on average, than those in the lowest status group" (1974, p.100). However, our main conclusion was found once we have started to consider the existence of two kinds of happiness: a more general one (life evaluation) and a "sentimental" one (emotional well-being). Kahneman and Deaton (2010) osberved that "when plotted against log income, life evaluation rises steadily [without a limit]. Emotional well-being also rises with log income, but there is no further progress beyond an annual income of ∼$ 75,000…" (p.1).

  In this second chapter, we have tried to understand if also in our sample the income was positively correlated with the two kinds of happiness.

- We have discussed also about the fact that the income is relative (Easterlin 1996)[10] and we have tried to figure out which are the *categories of goods* that contribute more to determine a person's happiness: buy "time" and experiences and enjoy as much as possible those goods classified as *relational* is the keystone. In the questionnaire, we attempted to

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[9] With the expression "practical application" we refer to the process of conducting a survey by making the most from the resources and the sample available, considering this dissertation's scope.
[10] See also Clark et al., 2007, Boyce et al. 2009, Kazak et al. 2015 about this topic.

understand which is the importance that the respondents attribute to money in their life choices and in their daily life. In particular, some of the questions were tailor-made for the particular characteristics of the sample.

- The topics covered in the first chapter provide numerous inputs for an empirical analysis: it could be interesting getting an idea about how and how much everything that has been said has an impact in the career choice of an individual. "Do the young adults who are entering in the workforce consider these factors when they think about their ideal job?" "What are people looking for nowadays when they apply for a job position?" "Do they prefer to get a higher salary or rather they give a high value to other elements such as the respect of the company towards the environment, the job itself, the reputation of the company, etc.?" "What are the trends for the future?". Given the significance of these issues, some questions related to them have been inserted in the questionnaire.

Before we continue it is of the utmost importance underline that the sample considered is made up exclusively of young adults. The strength of the research is that they come from more than 20 countries all over the world.

The original belief that prompted to conduct this study is that interesting trends and phenomena can be identified. And, as a matter of fact, having an awareness about these elements is crucial for each company of any size, especially when it comes about motivating the employees in the proper way or when a recruiting campaign is launched.

To conclude this paragraph, we can summarize it saying that the intention of this second chapter is to try to understand if in the sample of international young people analysed there is a growing awareness about some issues (e. g. environment, safety). But above all, the most important objective is to figure out which are the things that really matter for them in the present and in the future, both in their free time and in their ideal work life: is money one of these?

The chapter is therefore structured as follows:

- Paragraph 2.2 presents a study from which were borrowed some questions part of the questionnaire.
- Paragraph 2.3 explains the method used and describes the sample's characteristics.
- Paragraph 2.4 presents the result of the questionnaire. The questions and their comment have been grouped in three sub-paragraphs
- Paragraph 2.5 gives an interpretation of the answers gathered. It emphasizes the theoretical and managerial aspects obtained.

2.2 THE HELDRICH CENTER FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT'S SURVEY

The survey conducted from the "Heldrich Center for Workforce Development" (Szeltner et al., 2012) deals with the topic of our interest. It partially answers to the questions previously raised but more importantly, gives useful cues in order to structure the questionnaire used for the data gathering.

The survey is interesting because the sample considered is divided into four different categories of age and it makes a comparison between them. It tries to spot differences into generations of the active population and between the active population and a group of university students. The categories are:

1. Baby Boomers (N = 258), defined as those between 49 and 65 years old at the time of the survey.
2. Generation X, or Xers (N = 230), comprises those between 33 and 48.
3. Millennials or Generation Y (N = 807), defined as those between 21 and 32 in this study.
4. The fourth category is not yet part of the workforce: they are current junior, senior or graduate students (N = 431). This last group considered, as well as some questions asked, is particularly interesting for our purposes. The section devoted to college students appraise their life goals, expectations of coming onto the job market, attributes they find desirable in jobs and talks about the employment sectors they would like to work in.

Even if the questionnaire of our work was addressed just to the fourth category - that is a sample of students - it is stimulating to understand which are the needs, desires and expectations of the people currently in the workforce because it is worth making comparisons between the life priorities, for instance.

Those in the workforce have similar life goals, regardless of which generation (Baby Boomers, Xers, Millennials) they belong to. In any case, also among college students having a job that can assure them a financial security is the first aim and the most important goal. The second one, according to their priorities, is "having a partner/being married".

What is really worth to check out is *Figure 4*: it presents the answers of each of the four generational groups to seven life-goal items.

In the graph (*Figure 4*), each line is grey when the answer was that that goal was "*very important*"; it is yellow or black when the answer was "*essential*".
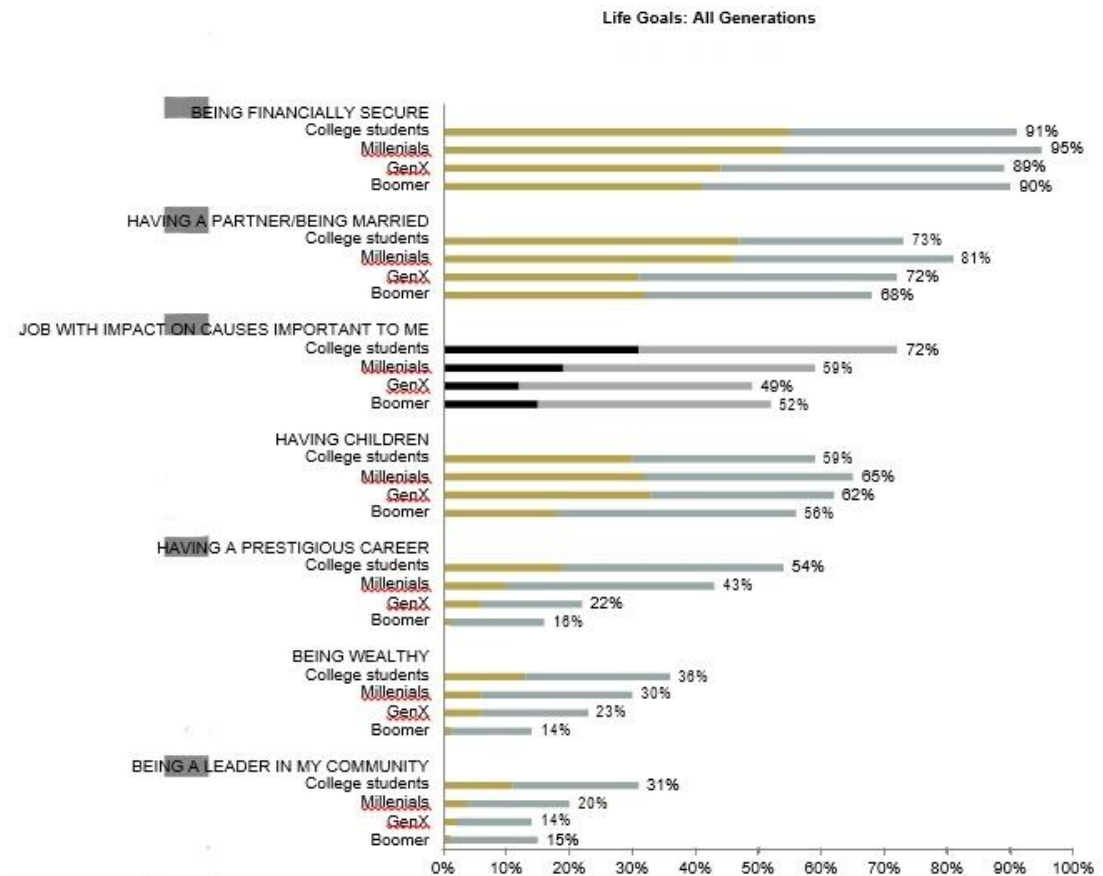
Figure 4. Source: Szeltner M. et al., 2012 (p. 16).

There are plenty of comments that can be made by looking at this array of data. We will simply confine ourselves to only mention the ones made by Szeltner et al. (2012).

- Generations are quite similar in three of these life values: *financial security*, *having a partner*, and *having children*.
- There is a substantial difference between Millennials and college students on one hand, and Xers and Baby Boomers on the other hand in the remaining four: *having a prestigious career*, *being wealthy*, *having a job they can make an impact*, and *being a community leader*. In each of these cases, the younger cohorts are more likely to say it is something very important to them.

One thing that should be underlined is the answer that was given to the question "Having a job where you can make an impact on causes or issues that are important to you is for you essential, very important or either somewhat important or not important at all?". The result is that the percentage of college students who aspire to have a job with this characteristic is higher than for those currently in the workforce, no matter which generation they belong to.

The survey asked to the students to rate the importance of 16 job attributes and also whether they would be willing to sacrifice part of their salary they would otherwise get/deserve in order to get a particular value.

The study is made up of more than 60 questions but some of these questions will be analysed in the upcoming paragraphs or, if not interesting for our aims, will be skipped.

2.3 THE SAMPLE AND THE METHOD

Our initial idea was using already existing data, such as those gathered from Gallup. However, instead of using secondary data, we decided to draw up a new questionnaire and collect new answers.

In order to choose the target sample, one must have a clear idea of the resources available and understand how much they are accessible. The context turned out to be decisive in this phase. This dissertation has indeed been developed when I was in Montpellier studying at the Montpellier Business School (MBS). A MBS' strength is its International Openness - the School has a high rank in the national context in this criterion. It was therefore decided to take advantage of the diversity of nationalities of the students. In the Bachelor course we are considering, out of approximately 160 students, only about 15 were French. In the Master's one there was a higher percentage of French students (about 60%).

In particular, what characterises our sample is that the students under scrutiny arrived in France in September 2017 and, on schedule, they were supposed to spend in MBS one (students in exchange both in Bachelor and Master program) or maximum two years (international students enrolled in the Master program). This feature is at the same time a strong and weak point of the sample itself. The strong point, a part from the diversity in nationalities, cultures, habits etc. already mentioned, is that we expect a vast majority of these students having a similar social background, also because they all study business and go to the same university for at least this year. Thanks to this feature, it was indeed possible to ask them some specific questions. The sample must then be viewed in its entirety. Conversely, from a statistical point of view, this is a disadvantage because we cannot state that we have at hand a random sample since we are not dealing with a sequence of independent and identically distributed (IID) random variables.

The questionnaire was developed using a specialised website - www.sondaggio-online.com - suited for creating surveys and inquiries online. When it was ready, our fellows were contacted

one by one. We gathered 123 observations - the minimum threshold pre-determined was 100. The data were gathered in the week from April 10th till April 16th 2018.

It must be said that only 109 answers were processed and therefore only the relative results will be presented. This is due to the fact that was detected the presence of outliers in the age, in the income and there were some polls not finished or meaningless answers. In order to be sure to work with proper data, 14 observations were indeed discarded for these reasons. Furthermore, it must be reported the fact that 8 of the 109 respondents were French students that spent a year studying abroad.

An expedient that can be used to emphasize some trends is to filter the answers on the basis of a particular criterion (for example, provenance: South America). However, this technique has to be used carefully because we need, to reach relevant conclusions, to use filters where there is a number of observations that exceed a pertinent threshold. For instance, the filter "come from Europe" would be appropriate because there were 49 observations concerning Europeans; conversely, draw conclusion on the Asian would be silly given that only 12 students were from this continent.

The questionnaire in its entirety can be found in the version as it was presented to the interviewed in the Appendix, after the final remarks.

2.4 PRESENTATION OF RESULT

We will now present, one by one, all the questions submitted to the interviewees. In this regard, it is noted that, naturally, the process necessary to create a questionnaire is insidious. One may face a long list of problems, encounter bias and wording problems as well as problems related to the statistical methods utilised. We also know that the order in which the questions are asked can influence the answer obtained (Schuman and Presser, 1981; Israel and Taylor, 1990, Schwarz and Hippler, 1995).

The crucial point was to figure out which were the questions worth to ask to the interviewed and perform the necessary adjustments. In order to be sure that the questions asked were effective, they were either borrowed from the studies we have already dealt with[11] or tailor-made for the sample described.

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[11] Thanks to this system, we can compare the method used and the results obtained with others studies.

The questionnaire was anonymous by the mere fact that some "private" questions were asked e.g. the parents' income.

The creation of sub-paragraphs allows to group together the questions of the same area. The questions are thus gathered by topic and not in the order in which they were presented to the sample. However, the first set of questions aimed at characterising the interviewed; it was asked about the individual's gender, age and provenance (continent, country and, if French, the city). Given their purpose, they were not inserted in the sub-paragraphs.

Here there is a graphic representation of the provenance of the students. Since the number of the participants is close to 100, it is easy to picture the absolute value for each slice of the cake.
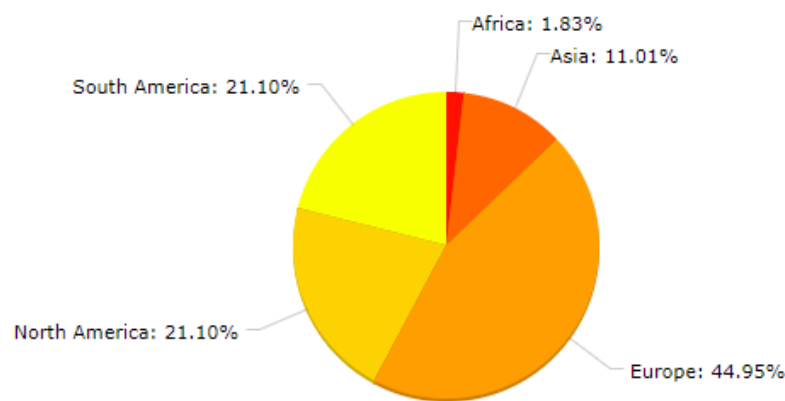

Figure 5

Among the 109 students, 67 were females (61,5 %). The average age of sample is almost 22.

In any case, the most remarkable result obtained is that, in contrast to what found by Kahneman and Deaton (2010), in the sample of students considered there is an absence of correlation between richness and happiness, even though this outcome is probably due to the characteristics of the sample. In fact, some elements suggest that, over the years, money will acquire a growing importance for them. Furthermore, the answers collected allow to identify trends regarding their life goals and enable us to characterize the companies in which these young people wish to work. Anyway, as you can imagine, even if wealth is not everything in life, it is of great importance especially for some classes of individuals under certain conditions.

2.4.1 MONEY, LIFE SATISFACTION AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Question 9 was inserted to get information about the wage bracket and the financial situations of the individuals considered. It was indeed asked to "indicate in which annual wage range your family income belongs". This question is useful to become aware about a series of elements: how does the fact that I come from a rich/ poor family influence my goals in life and my

happiness? Is there a remarkable difference between the two kinds of happiness we have introduced before (life satisfaction and emotional well-being)?

The average income found amounts to € 50.129. Considering the fact that we are dealing with university students that have had the possibility to go to study abroad in a quite expensive country such as France, this is not a surprising result. Nonetheless, an average income that exceeds the € 50.000 threshold is relatively high, especially if compared to the world population.

Question 14 and question 15 tried to assess the life satisfaction and the emotional well-being in the sample of students considered.

Question 14 is the typical one asked in the surveys in order to appraise the life satisfaction level. It is called "Cantril Ladder[12]", or "Cantril's Ladder of Life Scale[13]" and is adopted also in the Gallup World Poll. The wording of the question is exactly the one used in other famous studies such as Kahneman and Deaton's (2010) one.

14. Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you.
On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time? / How satisfied are you with your life overall?•

Number of partecipants: 109

0 = Worst possible life
100 = Best possible life

Arithmetic mean: 72,75

Standard deviation: 17,26
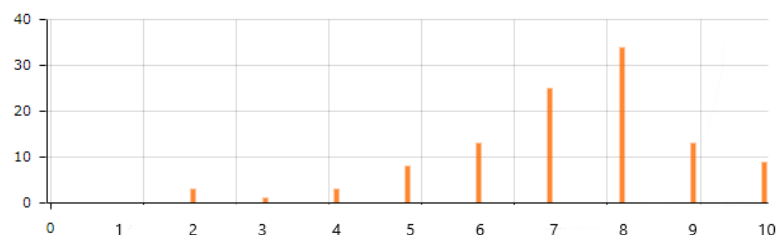
Bar chart 1

On the X-axis there are the "steps of the ladder". On the Y-axis there is the absolute number of respondents. For example, more than 30 persons answered that their life satisfaction is 8; nobody said is 1. On average, the life satisfaction reported was 7,275 (72,75 given that the scale was in tens).

The same applies to question 15. This one is made in order to distinguish the two kind of happiness (life satisfaction and emotional well-being) that were considered by Kahneman and Deaton (2010). This question's aim is to measure the emotional well-being.

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[12] See paragraph 1.2
[13] Various official methods used in different studies to assess Life Satisfaction and the like can be find in the book "OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being" published on March 20, 2013.
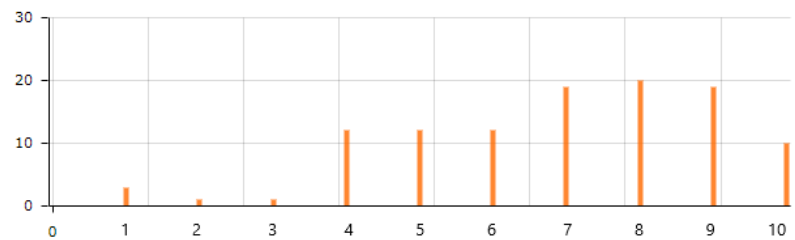
15. Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. *How much were you happy yesterday?*

Number of partecipants: 109

0 = Not at all happy
100 = Very happy

Arithmetic mean: **68,99**

Standard deviation: **21,56**

Bar chart 2

On the X-axis there are again the steps of the ladder. This, on average, is slightly lower than the life satisfaction (6,90). As was only to be expected, the standard deviation of this kind of happiness is higher than the previous one: it is presumed that the first one is much more stable whereas everybody can have a bad day.

The first result that will be displayed is then the one concerning this trio of questions (income, life satisfaction and emotional well-being). As in Wolfers and Stevenson's work[14] (2013), we performed a regression to verify if also in sample considered there was evidence of a correlation between money-happiness. As in their paper, on the X-axis the annual income is plotted logarithmically. This statistical analysis was performed through the software "R".

```
call:
lm(formula = x38 ~ lx23)

Residuals:
    Min      1Q   Median      3Q      Max
-53.493  -12.200   6.748    7.574   27.967

Coefficients:
            Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)  79.4973   29.8794    2.661   0.009 **
lx23         -0.6339    2.8036   -0.226   0.822
---

Residual standard error: 17.34 on 107 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.0004775,     Adjusted R-squared:  -0.008864
F-statistic: 0.05112 on 1 and 107 DF,   p-value: 0.8216
```
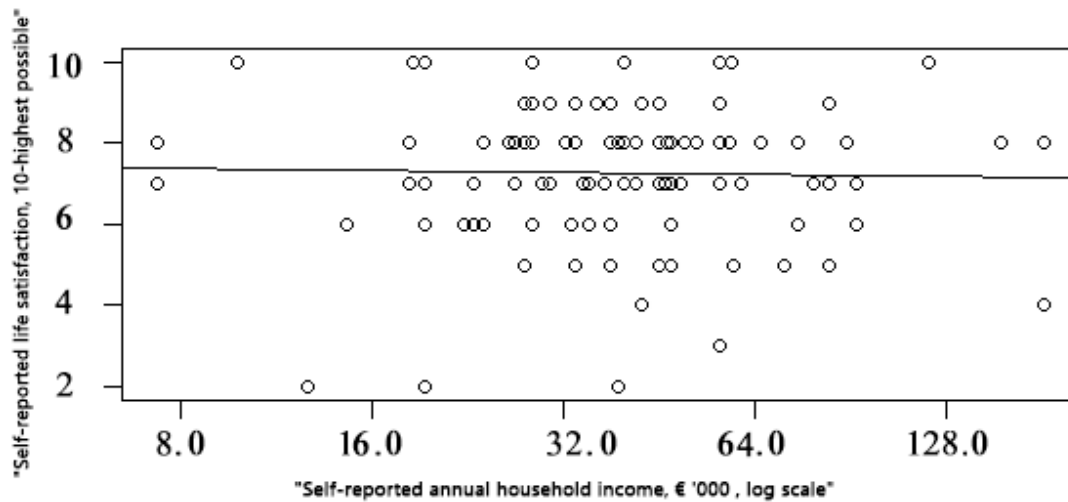
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[14] Paragraph 1.3, Figure 3

Regression 1

This is the most important result of the dissertation: as we can see, among the young adults of the sample, being richer – or maybe we should say "having richer parents" - does not correspond with being happier. The regression points out in fact the absence of a positive correlation between these two measures; the analytical values shown by the software are not statistically significant and this is evidenced from the regression line as well.

The reason why the dots of the graph – each dot represents a student and thus an income and a level of life satisfaction – are lined up horizontally is due to the fact that the students were allowed to attribute to the *life satisfaction* only a whole number (i.e. from 1 to 10). It is possible observe this by looking at the Y-axis. If it was possible attribute to the *life satisfaction* also the value of a decimal number, we would have seen not aligned dots.

Having seen this result, one can wonder if instead it was possible noting a correlation between money and the second kind of happiness that was considered: the emotional well-being. As we recall from Kahneman and Deaton (2010), in their work there was a logarithmic relation between money and life satisfaction but it was not found a "point of satiation" that is a point when, even if the income continues to rise, the life satisfaction does not. That satiation point was instead established, more or less, at the threshold of $ 75.000 for the emotional well-being: after that figure, even if the income continues to grow, the emotional well-being remains steady.

Anyhow, in this dissertation, since a correlation between money and life satisfaction was not reported at all, before performing the same regression we might expect that neither the emotional well-being and the money are correlated. Here is the result of the regression:

```
Call:
lm(formula = x39 ~ lx23)

Residuals:
    Min      1Q  Median      3Q     Max
-58.916 -17.277   1.358  19.925  31.307

Coefficients:
            Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   51.204     37.287   1.373    0.173
lx23           1.672      3.499   0.478    0.634

Residual standard error: 21.63 on 107 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.002129, Adjusted R-squared:  -0.007197
F-statistic: 0.2283 on 1 and 107 DF,  p-value: 0.6338
```
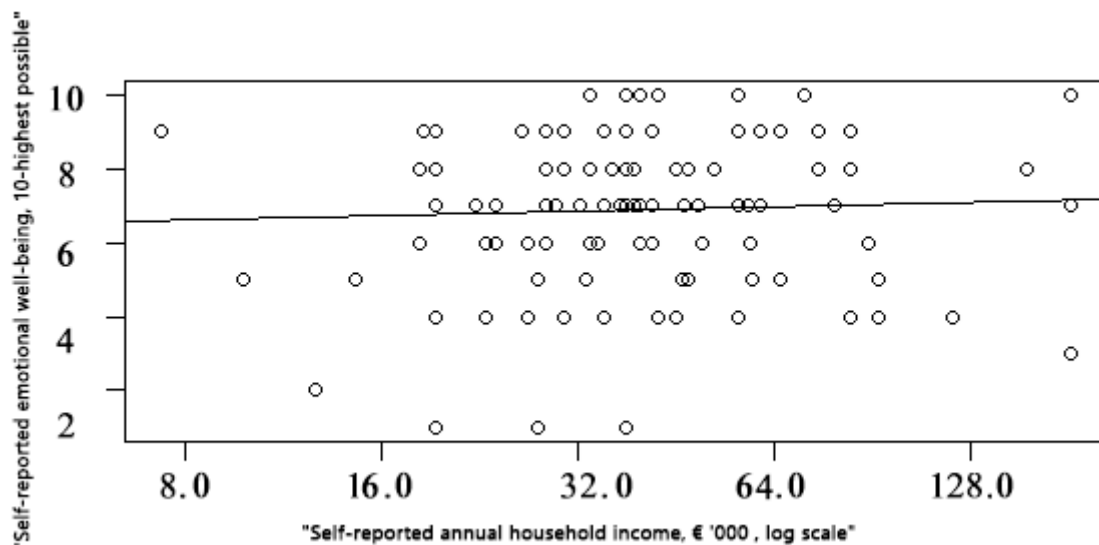

Regression 2

The scatter plot and the regression line confirm what expected: there is no correlation between the household income and the emotional well-being.

Then, apparently, our results seems to support the idea that there is no a close link between money and the two kinds of happiness considered (life satisfaction and emotional well-being) among students.

We will conclude this sub-paragraph with a note about Question 10 ("How many members are there in your family?"). For the purposes of this dissertation, this question will not be considered because, even if it is an interesting element that should be considered when it comes about the income, if one keeps into account also this element, this would make the analysis too complicated to perform. Moreover, in the works analysed, for what it was seen, this aspect was neglected.

2.4.2 QUESTIONS ABOUT MONEY AND/OR LIFE INTERPRETATION

Question 16[15] was a general one that could come in handy to perform some cross-questions analysis.

16. In general, do you consider yourself a person that gives a high value to money? Choose a value from **1** (I don't care at all about money) and **10** (money has a really high value for me) *

Number of partecipants: 109

1 (1)		2 (2)		3 (3)		4 (4)		5 (5)		6 (6)		7 (7)		8 (8)		9 (9)		10 (10)		Ø	±
Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
1x	0,92	-	-	4x	3,67	5x	4,59	12x	11,01	16x	14,68	30x	27,52	21x	19,27	17x	15,60	3x	2,75	6,88	1,73

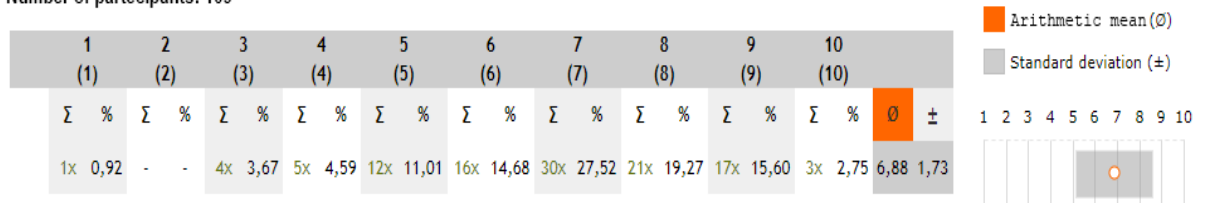Legend: Arithmetic mean (Ø) — orange; Standard deviation (±) — grey. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Figure 6

These young economists, even if there is a high standard deviation, attribute a value to money that, on average, does not reach 7. If this is a lot or a little it is a personal judgement but for sure it is not an extremely high value. In any case, it would be interesting ask the same question to a group of student of other faculties or to this same sample in a few years.

Question 6 asked about the importance that these students attribute to some major life goals. This was borrowed from Szeltner et al. (2012)[16]. In general, it is interesting to understand if people who study business have a greater predilection towards some particular goals. The 7 goals to be evaluated were: 1. *Having a partner/being married*, 2. *Being wealthy*, 3. *Having children*, 4. *Have a prestigious career*, 5. *Being financially secure*, 6. *Being a leader in my community*, 7. *Having a job where I can make an impact on causes or issues that are important to me.*

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[15] It was autonomously drawn up and then put in writing.
[16] The range of answers allowed was the same as in Szeltner et al. (2012). This applies also to questions 7, 8 and 17 that were borrowed as well from Szeltner et al (2012). Exceptions will be explicitly mentioned.

6. Different people have different goals in life. Please indicate how important each of the following is to your overall happiness.

Number of partecipants: 109

	Essential (1)		Very important (2)		Somewhat important (3)		Not important at all / Not relevant (4)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
1. Having a partner/ being marri...	24x	22,02	33x	30,28	44x	40,37	8x	7,34	2,33	0,90
2. Being wealthy	25x	23,15	39x	36,11	39x	36,11	5x	4,63	2,22	0,86
3. Having children	21x	19,27	37x	33,94	33x	30,28	18x	16,51	2,44	0,99
4. Have a prestigious career	22x	20,18	50x	45,87	32x	29,36	5x	4,59	2,18	0,81
5. Being financially secure	59x	54,13	43x	39,45	6x	5,50	1x	0,92	1,53	0,65
6. Being a leader in my communi...	9x	8,26	27x	24,77	50x	45,87	23x	21,10	2,80	0,87
7. Having a job where I can mak...	34x	31,19	52x	47,71	19x	17,43	4x	3,67	1,94	0,80

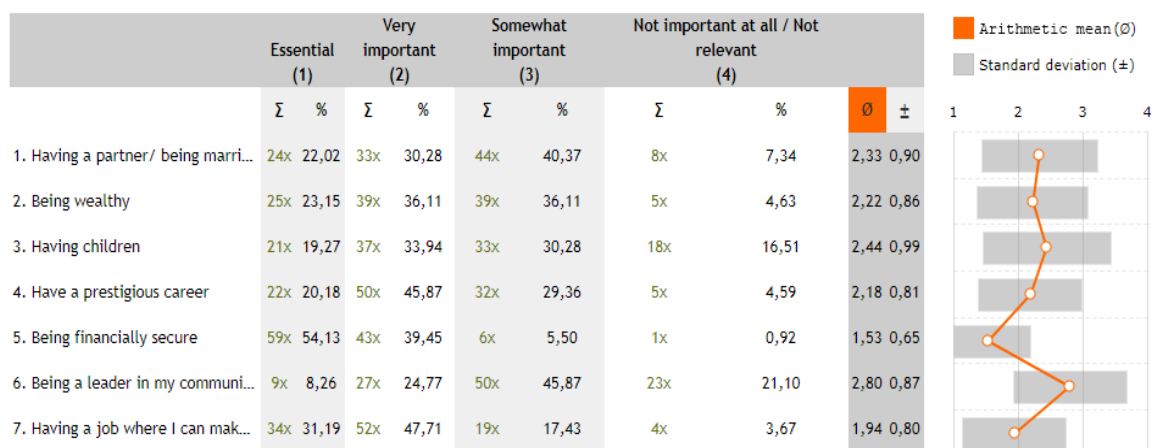Legend: ■ Arithmetic mean (Ø) ▯ Standard deviation (±)

Figure 7

Without going too far, there is a shortage of "leadership". The goal of being financially secure is significantly the first, while the second is having an impactful job (this tendency was present also in the survey of reference, see *figure 4*). The other goals had similar importance among the students.

Those (59) that valued as "Essential" the goal of "Being financially secure" gave, on average, an importance of 7.20 when they answered to question 16 ("how much importance you give to money" on a scale from 1 to 10). Finally, if we analyse the answers given by Europeans, it seems that they are more interested in *Having a job where I can make an impact on causes or issues that are important to me*.

To take stock of the situation, until now we have said that there was not correlation between money and the two types of happiness. We have also noticed, according to our interpretation, that the students of the sample do not give much value to money (question 16). We have thus discussed about two elements that represent the current state of affairs. Nevertheless, we can notice that in question 6 – which has a future-oriented vision since it talks about goals in life – they actually gave to money a bigger importance.

Question 12[17] is: "How does the fact that you spent a year abroad influence your perception of the money?". It is possible that, after a year spent abroad, people now give more value to it because they realised that without it they could not have done this experience and enjoyed all the things that they have done. Alternatively, people may give them less value because they appreciated more people and the shared moments with them regardless of their money. Or

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[17] It was autonomously drawn up and then put in writing

again, their perception might not be changed at all. What is certain is that this question made them reflect about their overall experience.

Not everybody answered to this question because it was not a compulsory one (somebody forgot to answer for this reason).
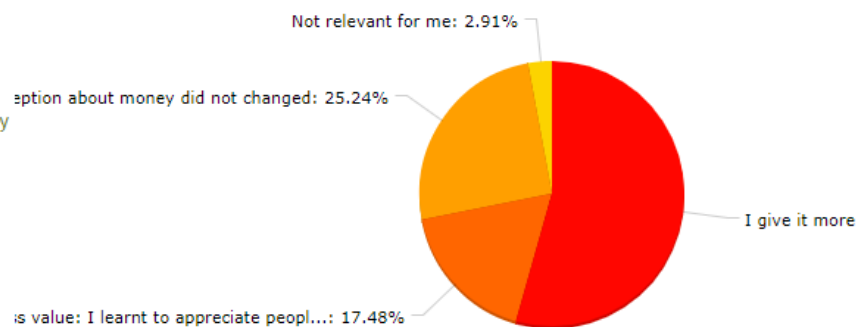
Even though 25% did not change its perception about money, the number of respondents that answered they give more value to money (56) after spending a year abroad is more than the triple of those that give less value to them (18)!

This might be interpreted as a further confirmation of what we have said in the previous question. As time goes by, these students will give more and more importance to money; even now they have realized that without it maybe their experience abroad in France would not have been so memorable: the answer states clearly "without it I could not have … done all the things that I have done".

Question 11[18] was "Assuming that money is capable of raising your happiness, how do you think it has contributed to it?". In this case we better focus more on the 4 possible answers that were allowed to understand the why of this questions.

- The first one is strictly related to the fact that experiences make us happier, as we saw in the first chapter[19] (Caprariello and Ries, 2013).

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[18] It was autonomously drawn up and then put in writing
[19] See paragraph 1.5

- The second is based on the fact that some people give a higher value to money. For them making money is also a way to attain self-realization in life. This specific category believe that money can be an important element to evaluate their life satisfaction.

- The third points out that some studies (Easterlin, 1996; Clark et al., 2007, Boyce et al. 2009, Kazak et al. 2015.) underscore the fact that money and income are relative. A raise in the paycheck does not lead to an increased happiness if the "reference group" you compare yourself with also have a similar increase in income. This example sums the idea up: if I annually earn € 100.000 in a company where everybody is making € 200.000 per year, I could be sadder than if I make € 50.000 and my colleagues € 25.000. The reference group to whom you compare yourself and your situation is often crucial to define your level of happiness.

- The last stresses the fact that some people can be better off helping others and giving money to charity. If your monthly salary is € 2.000 and every month you give to charity € 500 you are probably happier than one that is making € 1.500 because donating those € 500 is a choice that make you feel better, gives you utility.

11. Different people have different perceptions about how much money matters in their lives. Assuming that money is capable of raising your happiness, how do you think it has contributed to it? Please choose only one option. *

Number of partecipants: 109

74 (67.9%): It allowed /would allow me to have experiences (travel, come to France for 1 year etc.)

18 (16.5%): If I earn a considerable amount of money I will be happier because money is a top priority for my career and my life in general

8 (7.3%): I am/ would be happier because money are relative: in my country / in my community I am part of the wealthy class.

7 (6.4%): Having money allows/ would allow me to donate more to charity and to spend more for the people I love and this would make me happier

2 (1.8%): Don't know / not relevant for me

Don't know / not relevant for me: 1.83%

money allows/ would allow me to donate more...: 6.42%

e happier because money are relative:...: 7.34%

ıble amount of money I will be...: 16.51%

It allowe
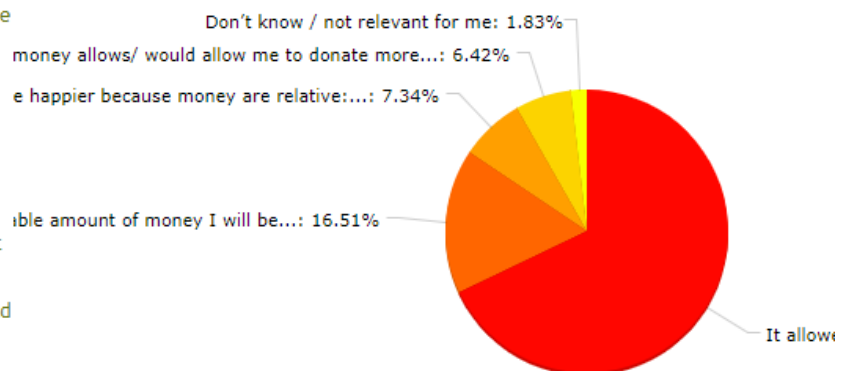
Figure 9

The overwhelming majority connect the fact of having more money with the possibility of having more experiences. This was by far the most popular answer and it is theoretically aligned with what suggested from Caprariello and Ries (2013). One could contest the validity of this question as a whole because, if you read all the possible answer options, the one about experiences was the most "attractive". Talking about the second most popular answer (16.5%) "… money is a top priority for my career and my life in general", it would be interesting to ask

this question to another sample of students that do not study business to see if there are significant differences.

Question 13 takes a cue from an index developed in 2011 by the OECD. It is the so-called "OECD Better Life Index". According to the definition present in the official website[20], it is an "index designed to let you visualise and compare key factors – like education, housing, environment, and so on – that contribute to well-being in OECD countries. It is an interactive tool that allows to see how countries perform according to the importance you give to each of the 11 topics that make for a better life". The 11 topics considered are Housing, Income, Jobs, Community, Education, Environment, Civic Engagement, Health, Sentimental life[21], Safety and Work-Life Balance. Those elements would allow each respondent to describe his own "recipe for a better life". On the website there is a summary of the answers gathered worldwide divided per country and per age groups.

Summarizing, the "Better Life Index" developed by the OECD tries to understand what defines a "good life" from the evaluation of 11 topics on a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (vital importance).

13. Rate the topics according to their importance to you: *

Number of partecipants: 109

	1 (not important at all) (1)		2 (2)		3 (3)		4 (4)		5 (vital importance) (5)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
Housing: the value of your house...	1x	0,92	2x	1,83	18x	16,51	55x	50,46	33x	30,28	4,07	0,79
Income: household income and fi...	-	-	2x	1,83	27x	24,77	46x	42,20	34x	31,19	4,03	0,80
Job: earning, job security	-	-	1x	0,92	15x	13,76	65x	59,63	28x	25,69	4,10	0,65
Community: quality of your socia...	3x	2,75	5x	4,59	41x	37,61	39x	35,78	21x	19,27	3,64	0,94
Education: you education and wh...	-	-	3x	2,78	9x	8,33	43x	39,81	53x	49,07	4,35	0,75
Environment: its quality	-	-	4x	3,67	29x	26,61	48x	44,04	28x	25,69	3,92	0,82
Civil engagement: your involvem...	2x	1,83	27x	24,77	43x	39,45	27x	24,77	10x	9,17	3,15	0,96
Health	-	-	4x	3,67	2x	1,83	21x	19,27	82x	75,23	4,66	0,70
Sentimental life: how happy wou...	1x	0,92	1x	0,92	14x	12,84	17x	15,60	76x	69,72	4,52	0,82
Safety	1x	0,92	1x	0,92	13x	11,93	38x	34,86	56x	51,38	4,35	0,80
Work life balance: how much you...	1x	0,92	5x	4,59	23x	21,10	41x	37,61	39x	35,78	4,03	0,92

Arithmetic mean (Ø)
Standard deviation (±)

Figure 10

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[20] See references: "OECD Better Life Index".
[21] Only for this topic, what was asked was the current sentimental life satisfaction and not the "absolute" importance as for the other topics.

Only 3 factors, on average, do not reach the target figure of 4: civil engagement – lowest score by far -, community and environment; in the middle we find income, housing, work life balance and job; on the medal stand safety, education (both on 3rd place), sentimental life and health.

It is positive to note how the education is put on an equal footing as pillar elements such as safety and sentimental life. This shows the consciousness that these students have about this theme, probably also because of their social background. Beyond that, it makes an impression that among the 56 students that valued as "Essential" the element "Safety", the tune of 42 are female. The health - 1st position as a guarantor factor of a good life – it is undoubtedly fundamental in everyone's life. Moreover, observing the world OECD's index on the official website, you can notice that in the countries economically developed the elements that occupy the first positions get along with those expressed from our sample. This marks a convergence of values and aims between people that answered to our questionnaire and people living in France, Canada, Spain and Norway: they attach the highest value to *health*; in Japan to *safety*; in U.S, U.K., Finland, Sweden to *sentimental life*. Immediately after security, education, life satisfaction and health, in a scale of the importance, we can say that the interviewed have grouped together values such as income, housing, work life balance and the job. Except for housing – maybe for a problem of wording – it seems logic that these elements are very important but not as much as the firsts four (health, safety, sentimental life and security). It seems anyway that these young adults are conscious of the fact that a better life, in the long term, is given also by *money*. Among the elements valued as less important we find the environment's quality, civil engagement and community (e. g. quality of your social relations). As a matter of fact, we can state that these factors are of secondary importance. The average person would start take them into consideration only after that other more urgent needs are satisfied (Maslow, 1954).

2.4.3 JOB RELATED QUESTIONS

Moving onto the job-related section, we underline that the questions of this sub-paragraph were all borrowed from Szeltner et al. (2012).

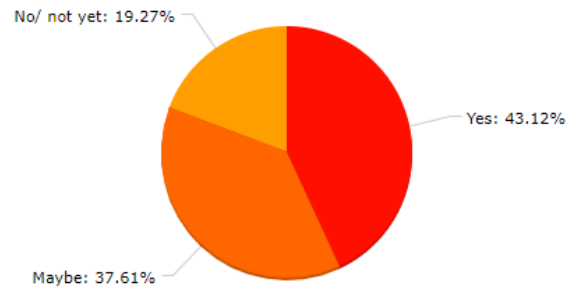Question 7 was: "Do you know what you want to do when you are finished with university?"

Figure 11

This question will not be taken into account because it did not allow us to draw interesting conclusions: it was asked in order to spot interesting elements when it was used as a filter. Unfortunately, even if some cross-analysis were performed, these did not help to identify relevant elements and thus to use it as a filter is pointless; for example, even if you know what you want to do in the future, this does not rhyme with you wanting to have a more impactful job.

Question 8 asked students to rate the importance of 9 job attributes - and not 16 as in Szeltner et al. (2012) (some irrelevant attributes were omitted). They could choose among 4 options about how they appraise that attribute: Essential, Very important, Somewhat important, Not important at all/Not relevant. These were: 1. *Good compensation (salary, benefits)* 2. *Opportunities for rapid advancement or promotion in the next few years*, 3. *Having a positive work environment/ culture*, 4. *The potential to contribute to society*, 5. *The ability to grow, learn new skills*, 6. *Flexibility in work hours*, 7. *Working for a prestigious company or organization*, 8. *Working for a company that prioritizes social and environmental responsibility*, 9. *Job Security.*

8. We'd like to get a sense of your ideal job: please rate each of the factors below in terms of how important they are to you in your ideal job. *

Number of partecipants: 109

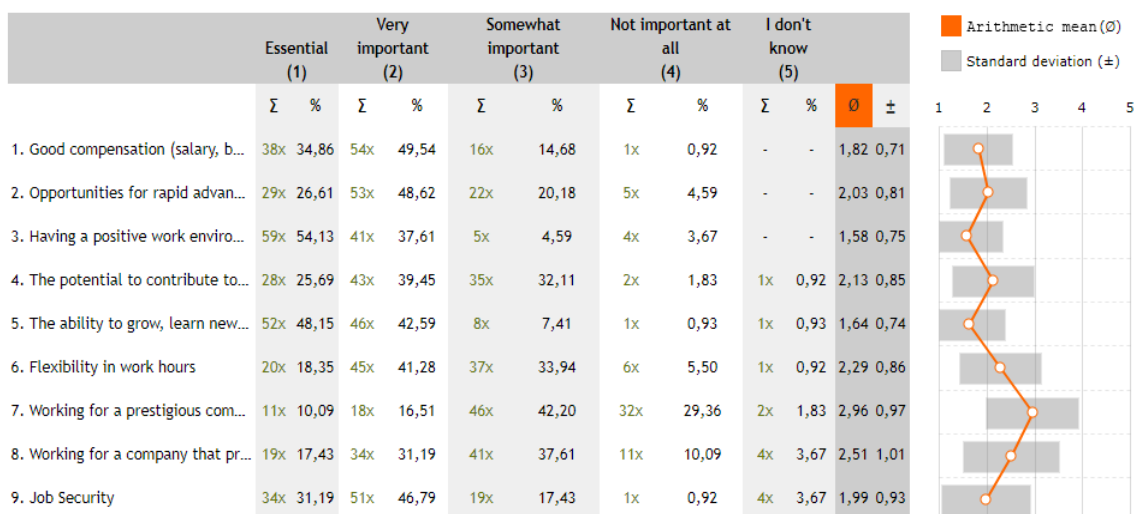|	Essential (1)		Very important (2)		Somewhat important (3)		Not important at all (4)		I don't know (5)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
1. Good compensation (salary, b...	38x	34,86	54x	49,54	16x	14,68	1x	0,92	-	-	1,82	0,71
2. Opportunities for rapid advan...	29x	26,61	53x	48,62	22x	20,18	5x	4,59	-	-	2,03	0,81
3. Having a positive work enviro...	59x	54,13	41x	37,61	5x	4,59	4x	3,67	-	-	1,58	0,75
4. The potential to contribute to...	28x	25,69	43x	39,45	35x	32,11	2x	1,83	1x	0,92	2,13	0,85
5. The ability to grow, learn new...	52x	48,15	46x	42,59	8x	7,41	1x	0,93	1x	0,93	1,64	0,74
6. Flexibility in work hours	20x	18,35	45x	41,28	37x	33,94	6x	5,50	1x	0,92	2,29	0,86
7. Working for a prestigious com...	11x	10,09	18x	16,51	46x	42,20	32x	29,36	2x	1,83	2,96	0,97
8. Working for a company that pr...	19x	17,43	34x	31,19	41x	37,61	11x	10,09	4x	3,67	2,51	1,01
9. Job Security	34x	31,19	51x	46,79	19x	17,43	1x	0,92	4x	3,67	1,99	0,93

Figure 12

The answers gathered here should help to put more confidence in this questionnaire. It seems indeed rational that young people want to grow and learn new skills; moreover, there is consistency between the answers to question 6 where the most popular was "being financially secure" and this one about having a good compensation. Both these questions (6 and 8) have a future-oriented vision and in both a bigger importance was given to money. One could be surprised for the answer given to the attribute 8: for young adults, working for a company that is also a "good global citizen" is not a priority.

The result of Question 8 can be summed up saying that the students of the sample want to learn something new in an environment where they feel comfortable. Companies that are investing financial resources and energies in creating a positive culture in the workplace are hence going in the right direction if they want to attract young talents. About the factor *Job Security*, ranked on average "very important", we confine ourselves to make the same comment that was done in Szeltner et al. (2012): even if there is not the availability - for my knowledge - of an existing database of data "to test the notion, it seems unusual for those in their early 20s to so highly value job security given how self-confident and entrepreneurial the [previous] generation has seemed to be" (p. 10). It is possible that the "climate of economic insecurity" that characterises these years has had a specific weight on this evaluation.

Question 17 was the last one of the questionnaire. Since it would be too easy to pay lip service to endorse a particular value without an offsetting cost, students were asked about 6 values in the form of a trade-off. They were asked whether they would be willing to earn a lower salary by 15% from what they would otherwise get and deserve in order to get any of the values proposed.

The possible trade-offs with part of the salary were: *Having a job that allows you to have a strong impact on the society* (ex. social or environmental), *Working for an organization whose values are like your own*, *Having a better balance between work and other areas of life, Having a job with an innovative company, Having a job that starts with less responsibilities, Having a job in a company committed to corporate and environmental responsibility.*

17. Last question: Would you be willing to earn a lower salary — say 15% — than what you deserve in order to get any of the following? *
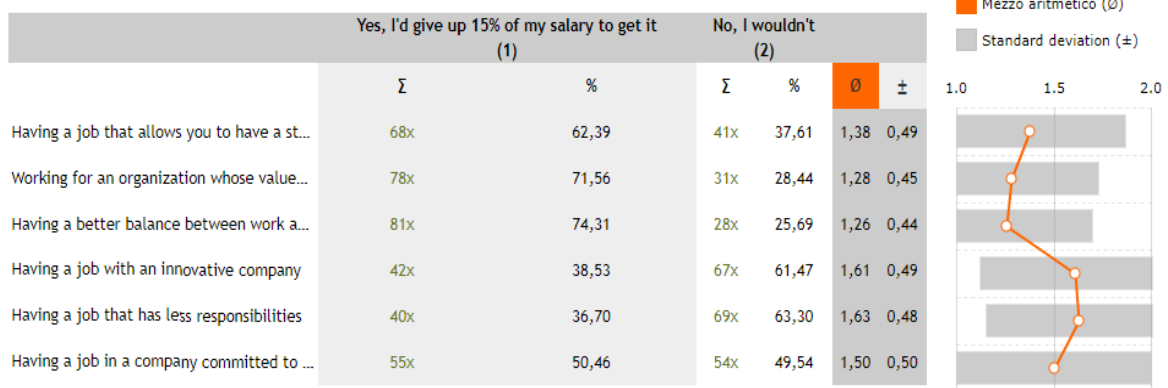
Number of partecipants : 109

	Yes, I'd give up 15% of my salary to get it (1)		No, I wouldn't (2)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%		
Having a job that allows you to have a st...	68x	62,39	41x	37,61	1,38	0,49
Working for an organization whose value...	78x	71,56	31x	28,44	1,28	0,45
Having a better balance between work a...	81x	74,31	28x	25,69	1,26	0,44
Having a job with an innovative company	42x	38,53	67x	61,47	1,61	0,49
Having a job that has less responsibilities	40x	36,70	69x	63,30	1,63	0,48
Having a job in a company committed to ...	55x	50,46	54x	49,54	1,50	0,50

Mezzo aritmetico (Ø)
Standard deviation (±)

Figure 13

Young adults included in our sample would be willing to sacrifice the 15% of their salary for *Having a job that allows you to have a strong impact on the society* (ex. social or environmental), *Working for an organization whose values are like your own* and *Having a better balance between work and other areas of life*. They would not sacrifice part of their salary for *Having a job with an innovative company* or *Having a job that has less responsibilities*.

It thus appears that they would be willing to sacrifice part of their salary in order to have an impact on the society. It remains to be seen in which way the students of the sample intend to put into practice this will: would they like to start their own company or be employed in a company that is engaged in a business that is interesting to them? It might also be possible that this thing of having a "strong impact" on the society is linked with the young age of the sample considered and it will fade as time goes by as Szeltner et al. (2012) suggest in *figure 4*. Beyond that, in Question 17 students gave high importance to work *for an organization whose values are like your own* and *Having a better balance between work and leisure time*; in particular, this last phenomenon - wanting to have enough spare time - is growing steadily (Moulds, 2014; Simpson, 2015), especially among young people (Schwartz, 2004; Schulte, 2015). Conversely, *Having a job with an innovative company* and in particular *Having a job that has less responsibilities* are factors not important to them: this can be seen as consistent with the Question 8 and 6, where they valued as the less important factors respectively "working for a prestigious company" and "being a leader in my community". Lastly, we report a data note from Szeltner et al. (2012): overall, "workers are less likely to give up [their] salary for all of the six trade-offs posed than are those currently in college. This may be because the question is more hypothetical to many students, not yet in the workforce" (p. 24).

2.5 IMPLICATIONS / INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The discussion of the results observed has necessarily to begin with the most important result, i.e., the absence of a clear-cut correlation between income and the two kinds of happiness. Before anything else, one should pay attention to the fact that the income considered was the one of the students' parents: this is the best proxy available in order to get a rough idea of the monthly budget that the parents give to their children. This budget, anyway, is subject to large variations. In any case, this is a notable result. In our opinion, the answer to the question 16 (*figure 7*) is quite startling as well: on average, the importance gave to money was under 7 and honestly we expected to observe an arithmetic mean that would have at least exceeded this threshold. Clearly, these two results – no relationship money-happiness and relatively low concern about money – are debatable. It is indeed rationally possible try to explain why they came up.

The non-appearance of the correlation is a fact but this runs counter some other answers gathered. In particular, referring to *figures 6* (OECD index), *9* (a year abroad) and *11* (goals in life), here it was attributed high importance to money. So, if in those three questions it was attributed a certain value to money, how is it possible that the regressions gave that result? And why the average value given to money was relatively low? A possible explanation is that in this very moment of life, or in general for students, money is not a decisive factor when it comes to determining their happiness. Students are not really interested in money, it is not their first thought (some observations were deleted because some respondents had no idea about their parents income!) and they are not (excessively) worried about it. Probably other factors are decisive given their status. We can therefore argue that the heterogeneity that was guaranteed from the provenance of the students – they come from more than 20 different countries – has proved to be a factor of secondary importance compared to the average sample's age.

Anyway, even if this explanation might seem reasonable, it is possible that the statistical method used to perform the regressions has played a crucial part when it comes about the results obtained. It is indeed necessary to underline that this result (absence of correlation money-happiness) was obtained by performing a simple OLS regression. The OLS regression can actually be significant if our efforts are intended to achieve a first approximation of the results.

Models such as ordered probit and ordered logit would suit better to analyse the data at our disposal. Nonetheless, these models go beyond the scope of this dissertation.[22]

Therefore, it is necessary to underline that, in the light of the above, there are other elements that determine the students' happiness. These can be the family unit, the friendship, the academic achievements etc. We acknowledge that omitting these relevant variables from the regression can cause other statistic problems.

In any case, in accordance with the answers gathered, these students have proved that inside them there is the "wise" awareness that in their future the income will be a major factor in order to have a good life. In other words, mom and dad will not give them money for their entire life and, in the future, they know that money will be much more important than now. This give a rational explanation also to the other answers gathered where they give a higher importance to money: the wording of these questions embed in fact a forward-looking projection. It would be interesting doing the same survey with a sample of young adults that did not go to university and are already part of the workforce or doing this same survey to the same sample in a few years to check if this theory is confirmed.

Moreover, to explain the answer to question 16 (value to money from 1 to 10), one should also take into account the bias called Social Desirability Responding (SDR). Edwards (1957) first introduced this type of bias. Among all other types of bias existing, this is maybe the most important source of bias we should consider more closely. The gist of the concept is that people involved in a survey have the proneness to answer questions in a manner that will be seen positively by the community. Thus, assuming that the social norm is that giving high value to money is something one should be ashamed - or at least not proud – of, there might be a certain reluctance to admit it. Anyhow, even if the chance of a distortion of the collected data cannot be forsaken also in the other questions, the proper importance should be placed on the managerial implications of the work.

In any case, even if it is possible to state that for the sample analysed money and happiness are unrelated, we cannot say that the same applies for the majority of the world's population as Wolfers and Stevenson proved (2008).

Money makes a difference in this world, especially if you live in a Third World country or if you are poor. The facts provide evidence that there are growing differences in the distribution

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[22] This note proves that we cannot rule out the possibility that other elements contributed to obtain this result. For example, another element that we should not overlook is that the average income reported is relatively high.

of wealth in the world. And in the last decades the phenomenon of wealth concentration – not income – has increased vertiginously (Stone et al., 2018). For example, "82% of the wealth generated last year went to the richest one percent of the global population, while the 3.7 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world saw no increase in their wealth" [23]. The report also highlights that we are very far from bridging inequalities and indeed the trend is worsening.

It seems logical that a more equal wealth distribution would ensure better living conditions everywhere in the world, giving a decisive contribute to the improvement of the life quality and the life satisfaction of billions of people because, as we saw, when you are poor, money helps you to satisfy your primary needs. And this gives a boost to your happiness. This reflection comes full circle with what was said in the first chapter and the criticism made against the GDP as measure of the well-being of a country.

The case of Bhutan says a lot about this (Kelly, 2012). Bhutan is a small and poor country but it was the one that introduced the "Gross National Happiness" (GNH) as a measure of prosperity of a country in the long run. The index considers three factors besides GDP: fair government, cultural conservation and environmental quality protection. This initiative was successful and other indicators alternative to the GDP were developed, such as the Genuine Progress Indicator GPI. Nonetheless, the Buthanese government knows that the economic development is an important objective in order to boost the country's economy and general well-being. This would also contribute to improve health, advance education and reduce poverty (Kelly, 2012).

We conclude this part about life satisfaction trying to wipe out every doubt that can question the relevance of the method used to assess the level of happiness[24] with a critical analysis. We will take a page from Easterlin (1974). When we use the Cantril's Ladder we know that this method can imply some bias risk. Even if not all of them can be ruled out, we agree with Easterlin when he argues that "happiness is an idea that transcends individual cultures (p.5)" - as we know, people from numerous nationalities were involved in my questionnaire - so to avoid interpretation problems. The Professor claims also that personal happiness is rather stable viz. not subject to major swings in periods of time that can be considered short (e.g. 2 weeks). Moreover, "reliance [should] be placed on the subjective evaluation of the respondent (p.4)" because it would not be neither credible nor possible trying to assess a person's happiness with another approach without incurring into supplementary bias observer-related (imagine if another person is asked to assess your level of happiness) or indicators-related. We should not

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[23] Deta reported from the annual OXFAM report (2018).
[24] "Cantril Ladder", or "Cantril's Ladder of Life Scale", see paragraph 1.2

forget that happiness is a state of mind and, as such, it is difficult to measure. It is indeed assumed that everyone is the best "adjudicator" of their own feelings since each individual, on paper, is deemed to be the one that that has full awareness of himself.

Obviously, in making these statements, we must always bear in mind that we are dealing with a sample of people that economically, on average, are wealthy since the average annual income reported exceeds the threshold of € 50.000. For instance, as argued by Piff and Moskowitz (2017), apparently wealthier individuals find greater joy in their personal accomplishments and achievements. On the contrary, less well-off people find their happiness in their connection and in the community (in the Question 13, people that valued of vital importance their social support network, have a lower average income than € 50.000).

FINAL REMARKS

This thesis was intended to explore the link between money and happiness, a topic that affects each of us in our daily decisions but also in the choices that have a long-term impact. The will to deepen the study of this particular branch of the economic literature comes from a genuine concern about the subject. Moreover, shifting the attention towards the labour market, makes the dissertation interesting also under a managerial point of view: thanks to this approach, we had the chance to better understand what a young person that is approaching the labour market wants. The idea of developing a questionnaire to interview a sample of university students has the objective to understand how money is capable of influencing young's future choices but also put into practice the concepts studied and test the ability to mix a set of skills developed after the study of different subjects (statistics, international economics, public economics, etc.).

Even if the most respected and authoritative works about the topic highlight the fact that there is a logarithmically correlation between money and happiness, this one was not found in the sample considered. This was probably due to its characteristics. What these young adults seem to care more about in their life is health, safety and having an equilibrium between the time spent working and leisure time. Talking about their ideal job, they give a high value to the formation they will receive in a few years because they want to acquire new skills; they think that the work environment is a precious element. On the other hand, they are not really into working for an innovative or very prestigious company because they prefer to realize their potential in other manners.

Furthermore, our aim was not completely to revamp or reverse the findings of works that are much more professional than this one. This, given our skills and the size of the sample and its features, it was just not possible. However, it would be interesting to understand if for young people money are actually unrelated with happiness. To the best of our knowledge, there are no attempts done in this regard to figure out this correlation.

We have already pointed out a technical limit of this dissertation[25] about the statistical method used. Other limits of our work are mostly the other side of the coin of the reasons why one should put its confidence and consider valuable the thesis itself. First, with such a small sample, it is impossible to perform statistical inference analysis and draw conclusions for single countries. Secondly, the questionnaire was sent through an online application and the interviewed were aware that their answers would have been used for this thesis. For these two

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[25] See paragraph 2.5

simply reasons, people could be not motivated to take it seriously and give fit answers. Maybe some of them gave wrong answers or have done it in haste. This could have caused problems and bias to the conclusions. We know that, in fact, some observations were deleted. Next, such a particular and specific sample – students from the same university, same field of study, similar walks of life – allows to make assumptions that are valid and useful just for a limited range of people. Anyway, we know that the phenomenon of globalization and the number of the students in exchange are experiencing a positive trend that continues unabated (Alinei, 2017). Last but not least, the inexperience with this kind of activity is an element that should not be underestimated because even if the sample was not too numerous, it was not easy to manage and operate with this quantity of data.

To conclude, even if some possible experimentation that can be done were already mentioned (is there a connection between money and happiness among young people? If no, why?), future research should start from improving the questionnaire so as to avoid/reduce bias problems. New questions could be added. Also, this type of inquiry can have as target samples that are not only exchange students and students of the same university, but it can involve a broader range of the same coming from different learning areas (law, medicine, psychology etc.). It would be interesting if particular trends and features statistically relevant can be indeed observed for a particular group of students, even among different countries. These studies could be done over the years in order to create a complete time-series that would allow detecting a possible shift in the values and in the future perspectives.

APPENDIX

Bitte wählen Sie eine Sprache aus. / Veuillez s'il vous plaît choisir une langue. / Please choose a language. / Selezionare una lingua. / Lütfen bir dil seçin. / Por favor, seleccione un idioma. / Por favor escolha um idioma. / Kies een taal. / Välj ett språk. / Vennligst velg et språk. / Vælg sprog. / Valitse kieli. / الرجاء اختيار لغتك.

✔ English

Here you can find the questionnaire in its entirety in the version presented to the respondents. Page 1

This questionnaire has been formulated so as to enable the respondent think about some relevant topics about his/her life.

The questionnaire is anonymous.

1) From which continent are you from? *

◯ Africa   ◯ Asia   ◯ Europe   ◯ North America   ◯ Oceania   ◯ South America

2) In particular, from which country are you from? *

[   ]

3) If you are French, from which city are you from?

[   ]

4) Which is your gender? *

◯ Male

◯ Female

5) How old are you? *

[   ]

6) Different people have different goals in life. Please indicate how important each of the following is to your overall happiness. *

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important at all / Not relevant
1. Having a partner/ being married	◯	◯	◯	◯
2. Being wealthy	◯	◯	◯	◯
3. Having children	◯	◯	◯	◯
4. Have a prestigious career	◯	◯	◯	◯
5. Being financially secure	◯	◯	◯	◯
6. Being a leader in my community	◯	◯	◯	◯
7. Having a job where I can make an impact on issues that are important to me	◯	◯	◯	◯

7) Do you know what you want to do when you are finished with university? *

◯ Yes

◯ Maybe

◯ No/ not yet

8) We'd like to get a sense of your ideal job: please rate each of the factors below in terms of how important they are to you in your ideal job. *

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important at all	I don't know
1. Good compensation (salary, benefits)	○	○	○	○	○
2. Opportunities for rapid advancement / promotion in the next few years	○	○	○	○	○
3. Having a positive work environment / culture	○	○	○	○	○
4. The potential to contribute to society	○	○	○	○	○
5. The ability to grow, learn new skills	○	○	○	○	○
6. Flexibility in work hours	○	○	○	○	○
7. Working for a prestigious company / organization	○	○	○	○	○
8. Working for a company that prioritizes social and environmental responsibility	○	○	○	○	○
9. Job Security	○	○	○	○	○

Page 3

9) Please indicate in which ANNUAL wage range your family income belongs. Values are in euros. If, for example, your mother and father aggregated income is 32000€, you should write 32000€. If you are not sure, also an approximation is fine. I remind you that the questionnaire is anonymous. *

[   ]

10) How many members are there in your family (immediate family, including yourself)?

[   ]

11) Different people have different perceptions about how much money matters in their lives. Assuming that money is capable of raising your happiness, how do you think it has contributed to it? Please choose only one option. *

○ It allowed /would allow me to have experiences (travel, come to France for 1 year etc.)

○ If I earn a considerable amount of money I will be happier because money is a top priority for my career and my life in general

○ I am/ would be happier because money are relative: in my country / in my community I am part of the wealthy class.

○ Having money allows/ would allow me to donate more to charity and to spend more for the people I love and this would make me happier

○ Don't know / not relevant for me

12) How does the fact that you spent a year abroad influence your perception of the money? Choose just one.

If you are French, answer only if you have spent a studying year abroad.

○ I give it more value: without it I could not have spent this year abroad and done all the things that I have done

○ I give it less value: I learnt to appreciate people and sharing moments regardless of money

○ My perception about money did not changed

○ Not relevant for me

13) Rate the topics according to their importance to you: *

	1 (not important at all)	2	3	4	5 (vital importance)
Housing: the value of your house based on condition, safety and location	○	○	○	○	○
Income: household income and financial wealth	○	○	○	○	○
Job: earning, job security	○	○	○	○	○
Community: quality of your social support network	○	○	○	○	○
Education: you education and what you are getting out of it	○	○	○	○	○
Environment: its quality	○	○	○	○	○
Civil engagement: your involvement in the political issue of your country	○	○	○	○	○
Health	○	○	○	○	○
Sentimental life: how happy would you say you are now	○	○	○	○	○
Safety	○	○	○	○	○
Work life balance: how much you dedicate to work, how much time is leisure time	○	○	○	○	○

14) Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time? / How satisfied are you with your life overall? *

Worst possible life [_____] Best possible life

15) Please imagine a ladder, with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. How much were you happy yesterday? *

Not at all happy [_____] Very happy

16) In general, do you consider yourself a person that gives a high value to money? Choose a value from 1 (I don't care at all about money) and 10 (money has a really high value for me) *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

17) Last question: Would you be willing to earn a lower salary — say 15% — than what you deserve in order to get any of the following? *

	Yes, I'd give up 15% of my salary to get it	No, I wouldn't
Having a job that allows you to have a strong impact on the society (ex. social or environmental)	◯	◯
Working for an organization whose values are like your own	◯	◯
Having a better balance between work and leisure time	◯	◯
Having a job with an innovative company	◯	◯
Having a job that has less responsibilities	◯	◯
Having a job in a company committed to corporate and environmental responsibility	◯	◯

You have completed the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

You can now close the window.

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