

## Will State of Happiness Assure Global Peace?

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### *Abstract*

Happiness has gone from being an abstract concept at the individual level to becoming one of the standards considered for quality of life and one of the ultimate goals of peacebuilding. While Global Peace Index (GPI) measures how peaceful nations are and World Happiness Index (WHI) measures how happy their citizens are, these two indices do not necessarily coincide in their results. This research sought to determine the commonalities between countries with high levels of happiness but are low in global state of peace. The values used were from published indices, namely, the World Happiness Report and the Global Peace Index. These were analyzed using nominal logistic regression in order to find the relationship between these variables. Findings suggest that there is a significant correlation between levels of peace and happiness. However, it also found that there were 10 countries that diverged from this trend. Upon further analysis of indicators of each index, results indicated that citizens in these countries have strong social support that enabled them to consider themselves happy despite the low state of peace in their respective nations, the factors of which vary from region to region and country to country.

*Keywords:* World Happiness Index, Global Peace Index, World Happiness Report, peace, happiness

### *Introduction*

Happiness is generally defined as a state of well-being and contentment, while peace is defined as a state of tranquility or quiet, or freedom from disturbance. According to Hanh (1991), peace is every step; it turns the endless path to happiness. Although attempting

to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of every individual is difficult, it is the only way. Happiness, in the field of psychology, is a stable feeling in positive emotions, understanding the reality of life and is meaningful. Happiness and mental

health include positive emotions such as joy, peace, and the sense of flowing and the fascination in life (Shayan & AhmadiGatab, 2012).

Happiness and peace and their definition and desirability have been the topic of many philosophers and researchers. At present, there are international publications dedicated to quantifying these concepts by defining factors and indicators for them. There are also many studies dedicated to defining, understanding, and applying the knowledge gained from these concepts in the pursuit of a better quality of life for individuals and society as a whole. Happiness is recognized by the United Nations as an important contributing factor to policy making in countries as can be inferred from Helliwell, Layard and Sachs (2012) in their World Happiness Report, which was the first publication of its kind. Violence, on the other hand, is recognized as detrimental to the economic growth and development of a country with the costs and implications compiled in the annual publication

Existing studies have already looked at links between individual happiness and a peaceful society. According to Frey (2011), there are few scholarly literature which study the effect of war and peace on happiness, but these have a large number of direct and indirect effects on happiness and are hard to capture due mainly to issues of causality and attribution. His paper concentrates on three basic claims regarding the effect of war and

peace on happiness: ‘The happiness of the dead is irrelevant’; ‘People adjust to wars’; and ‘War brings happiness.’ Deiner and Tov (2009) noted that at the individual level, social well-being (SWB) may foster peace attitudes by influencing the way people perceive and relate to others. Therefore, it can be stated that countries with happy people are peaceful countries.

There are two significant indices considered in this paper – the World Happiness State published in the World Happiness Report, and the Global Peace Index published by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). These were analyzed using the nominal regression model, and it was found that there was indeed a significant correlation between these two states; thus, the outcome supports existing research. However, this paper focused on the 10 countries that lay outside this trend in order to identify commonalities that enabled its citizens to consider themselves happy despite their peace situations, considering that one of them is the Philippines. Once these factors are identified, they can be harnessed and strengthened in terms of policy-making, development, and support systems in critical, conflict-besieged areas of the country. The results can also benefit countries that follow the norm, that is, their ranking is low in peace as well as low in happiness; the identified factors may also be considered to peacebuilding efforts.

An analysis of the indicators used in the indices for countries with high

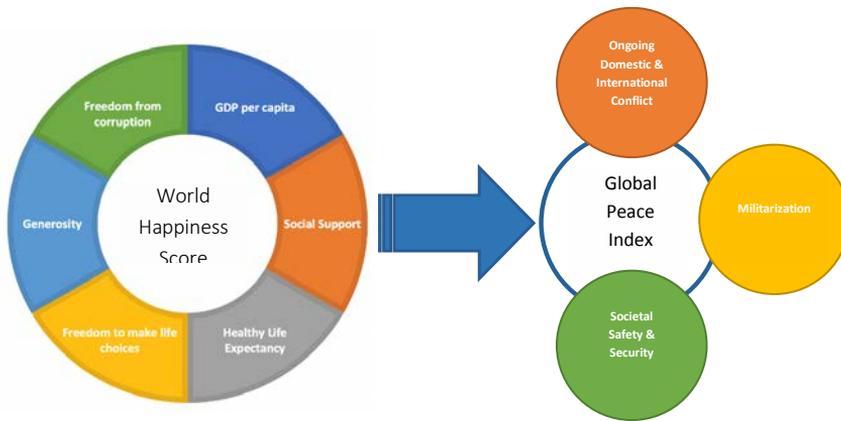


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the present study.

levels of happiness and low levels of peace was therefore conducted and were broken down to factors shared across all countries. The results and its implications were then discussed and conclusions were drawn.

### *Conceptual Framework*

The concepts of happiness and peace are defined in such a way as to enable the statistical analysis of their expression as well as identification of factors that affect or influence them. In this regard, there are two indices that describe countries' state of happiness and peace, published in the World Happiness Report and the Global Peace Index. Happiness is represented by the World Happiness Score, and peace by the Global Peace Index.

### *Conceptual Framework*

The World Happiness Score is extracted from the World Happiness Report, which is an annual publication by the United Nations Sustainable

Development Solutions Network which ranks countries according to national happiness and identifies key variables that explain these life evaluations. It was first published in 2012 where it first discussed the concept of happiness and quantify it in recognition of its impact on macroeconomic-policy making and service delivery. The United Nations recognizes its implications in policy formulation and national and international efforts to improve well-being.

In this publication, it ranks countries according to the national average answer to the Cantril ladder question based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale (a type of well-being assessment) that asks people to evaluate the quality of their current lives on a scale of 0 to 10 for each country, averaged over the years 2015-2017. This is what is referred to as the World Happiness Score. The publication identifies six key variables that explain variation of this score across countries: *GDP per capita*,

*social support, healthy life expectancy, social freedom, generosity, and absence of corruption.* The result is a bar for each country, each divided into seven segments. The first six segments show how much each of the six key variables is calculated to contribute to that country's ladder score, relative to that in a hypothetical country called Dystopia, so named because it has values equal to the world's lowest national averages for 2015-2017 for each of the six key variables. Dystopia is used as a benchmark to compare each country's performance in terms of each of the six factors. The final sub-bar is the sum of two components: the calculated average 2015-2017 life evaluation in Dystopia and each country's own prediction error, which measures the extent to which life evaluations are higher or lower than predicted by the model described in the publication. The lengths of the different sub-bars show, country-by-country, how much each of the six variables is estimated to contribute to explaining the international ladder differences. These sub-bars are used as basis for further analysis of factors that contribute to perceptions of happiness of the citizens of each country.

The Global Peace Index is the result of an annual report that ranks countries according to identified metrics, which is produced by IEP, a think tank dedicated to developing metrics to analyze peace and to quantify its economic value. This institute was established by IT entrepreneur and philanthropist Steve Killelea in 2007. Their research is used

extensively by governments, academic institutions, other think tanks, non-governmental organizations and by intergovernmental institutions such as the OECD, The Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank, and the United Nations.

The publication defines a concept called *negative peace* wherein peace is defined as the harmony achieved in the absence of violence or fear of violence. Thus, the *Global Peace Index* measures a country's level of negative peace using three domains of peacefulness. The first domain is *ongoing domestic and international conflict*, which is the extent to which countries are involved in internal and external conflicts as well as their role and duration of involvement in conflicts. The second domain assesses *societal safety and security*, which evaluates the level of harmony or discord within the nation with the idea that low crime rates, minimal terrorist activity and violent demonstrations, harmonious relations with neighboring countries, a stable political scene, and a small proportion of the population being internally displaced or made refugees can be equated with peacefulness. The last domain is *militarization*, which portrays the link between a country's level of military build-up and access to weapons and its level of peacefulness both domestically and internationally. Military expenditure as a percentage of GDP and the number of armed service officers per head are gauged as well as financial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions. There are

23 indicators all told that are grouped into these three major domains. Each indicator is weighted according to the relative importance of each indicator and combined into one overall score which is summarized as values from 1 to 5, each number representing Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low, respectively. Thus, each country's Global Peace Index can be analyzed according to the three major domains and can be further broken down into specific indicators as necessary.

It can be noted that neither of these indices have an indicator that is based on the other; i.e., the World Happiness Score does not have an indicator for peace and vice-versa. Tov, Deiner, Kesebir, and Harter (2009) argue that one important element of a peaceful society is that citizens are happy and satisfied with their lives. State generalized trust and confidence in their government are important subjective components of peace and that individual well-being is associated with greater trust and confidence in government. This statement is one that they analyzed in detail in their paper, and they concluded that this relationship was dependent on objective societal conditions such stability, wealth, and equality.

The use of these two indices, specifically the World Happiness Score and the Global Peace Index, therefore provides a wider scope on which to base the analysis of possible correlation between these two concepts specifically if the World Happiness Score of a

country is indicative of its Global Peace Index.

### *Objectives of the Study*

This study aimed to:

1. identify the level of happiness of the countries and their corresponding global peace index;
2. determine if countries with happy people are also peaceful countries, and;
3. examine countries that deviate from the trend and identify their similarities.

### *Methodology*

Data mining techniques were utilized, and two particular indices were identified for use in this study namely, the World Happiness Report (WHR) and Global Peace Index (GPI).

The World Happiness Score (WHS) was extracted from WHR produced by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network in partnership with the Ernesto Illy Foundation, which reflects a new worldwide demand for more attention to happiness and absence of misery as criteria for government policy. It reviews the state of happiness in the world today and shows how the new science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness.

In the 2018 edition, the first consideration was the population-weighted global and regional distributions of individual life

evaluations based on how respondents rate their lives. These data were based on the Gallup World Poll. Six key variables were identified based on existing research to explain national average life evaluations: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and freedom from corruption. The final ranking was based on statistical analysis that was conducted on the data, and the countries were ranked from happiest to least happy.

The GPI was extracted from the report of Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) which ranked 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness and evaluated the level of harmony or discord within a nation specifically on safety and security.

GPI ranked 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness through the use of the concept of Negative Peace, which is defined as the absence of fear and violence. There were 23 GPI indicators divided into three domains of peacefulness: ongoing domestic and international conflict, societal safety and security, and militarization.

The first domain investigated the extent to which countries were involved in internal and external conflicts as well as their role and duration of involvement in conflicts. The second domain evaluated the level of harmony

or discord within a nation. The third domain reflected the link between a country's level of military build-up and access to weapons and its level of peacefulness (IEP, 2018). The countries were ranked into five (5) states of peace from Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low with individual rankings within each state according each country's GPI.

The relationship between the two indices was analyzed using nominal logistic regression. Based on the results, countries that ranked low in peace despite being high in happiness were noted and investigated according to the indicators used by the World Happiness Report and Global Peace Index in order to identify their commonalities.

### *Results and Discussion*

#### *Countries' Level of Happiness and Their Corresponding Global Peace Index*

#### Nominal Logistic Regression: Global Peace Index versus World Happiness Ranking

Table 1 shows that out of the 149 countries that have both World Happiness Score and Global Peace Index, there are 13 countries with very high GPI equivalent to 5; 59 countries with high GPI of 4; 37 countries with median GPI equivalent of 3; 25 countries including the Philippines having a low GPI of 2; and 15 countries with very low GPI equivalent to 1.

**Table 1**  
*Response Information*

Variable	Value	Count	
Global Peace Index	5	13	(Reference Event)
	4	59	
	3	37	
	2	25	
	1	15	
Total		149	

In Table 2, the reference outcome is 5, the highest value, which represents the highest level of peacefulness that a country can be rated. The coefficients and the p-value indicate that as the independent variable, or the World Happiness Score rises, the value of the dependent variable, or the Global Peace Index, also rises and this is consistent through the five possible values of the Global Peace Index. The odds ratios are all positive, which indicate that as World Happiness Score rises the odds that the Global Peace Index also rises from 1 to 5.

**Table 2**  
*Logistic Regression Table*

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	Z	P	Odds Ratio	95% CI	
						Lower	Upper
Logit 1: (4/5)							
Constant	11.8753	3.19663	3.71	0.000			
World Happiness Ranking	-1.64386	0.478381	-3.44	0.001	0.19	0.08	0.49
Logit 2: (3/5)							
Constant	14.3418	3.32460	4.31	0.000			
World Happiness Ranking	-2.19165	0.509198	-4.30	0.000	0.11	0.04	0.30
Logit 3: (2/5)							
Constant	14.9220	3.39801	4.39	0.000			
World Happiness Ranking	-2.38652	0.529369	-4.51	0.000	0.09	0.03	0.26
Logit 4: (1/5)							
Constant	17.0032	3.55989	4.78	0.000			
World Happiness Ranking	-2.94438	0.584606	-5.04	0.000	0.05	0.02	0.17

Log-Likelihood = -191.207

**Table 3**  
*Test of All Slopes Equal to Zero*

DF	G	P-Value
4	51.530	0.000

Table 3 shows the result of the test for association between the World Happiness Score and the Global Peace Index. The p-value indicates that this association is statistically significant.

**Table 4.**  
*Goodness-of-Fit Tests*

Method	Chi-Square	DF	P
Pearson	521.777	584	0.969
Deviance	379.642	584	1.000

Table 4 indicates results of the goodness-of-fit tests. The high p-value of the Pearson Test indicates that the nominal logistic regression model is valid for the data being analyzed in this study.

*Peaceful Countries with Happy People*

Table 5 shows the 149 countries ranked according to their WHS and

their corresponding GPI. It suggests that there are exceptions to the relationship identified in the nominal regression analysis, specifically, Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Bahrain, Russia, Libya, Philippines, Turkey, and Pakistan. These countries were above the median happiness level but with low or very low level of peace.

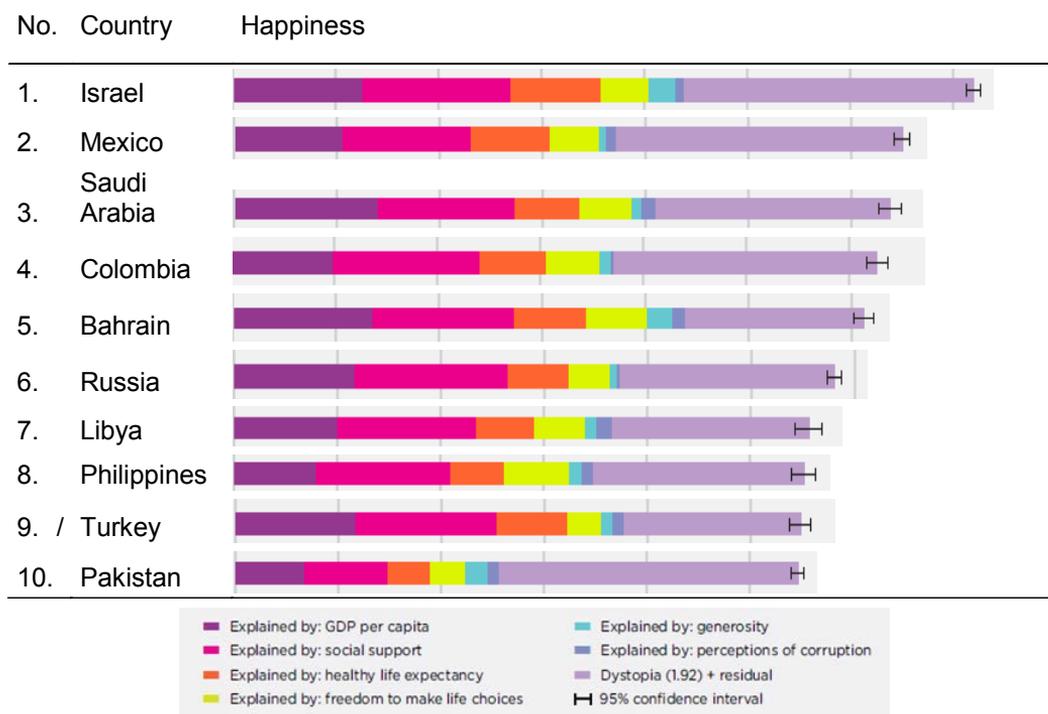
Table 5  
*World Happiness Score and Global Peace Index Arranged according to Happiness Rank*

No.	Country	World Happiness Score (WHS)	Global Peace Index* (GPI)
1	Finland	7.632	4
2	Norway	7.594	4
3	Denmark	7.555	5
4	Iceland	7.495	5
5	Switzerland	7.487	5
6	Netherlands	7.441	4
7	Canada	7.328	5
8	New Zealand	7.324	5
9	Sweden	7.314	4
10	Australia	7.272	5
11	Israel	7.19	2
12	Austria	7.139	5
13	Costa Rica	7.072	4
14	Ireland	6.977	5
15	Germany	6.965	4
16	Belgium	6.927	4
17	United States	6.886	3
18	United Kingdom	6.814	4
19	United Arab Emirates	6.774	4
20	Czech Republic	6.711	5
21	France	6.489	4
22	Mexico	6.488	2
23	Chile	6.476	4
24	Taiwan	6.441	4
25	Panama	6.43	4
26	Brazil	6.419	3
27	Argentina	6.388	4
28	Guatemala	6.382	3
29	Uruguay	6.379	4
30	Qatar	6.374	4
31	Saudi Arabia	6.371	2
32	Singapore	6.343	5
33	Malaysia	6.322	4
34	Spain	6.31	4

35	Colombia	6.26	2
36	Trinidad & Tobago	6.192	3
37	Slovakia	6.173	4
38	El Salvador	6.167	3
39	Nicaragua	6.141	4
40	Poland	6.123	4
41	Bahrain	6.105	2
42	Uzbekistan	6.096	3
43	Kuwait	6.083	4
44	Thailand	6.072	3
45	Italy	6	4
46	Ecuador	5.973	4
47	Lithuania	5.952	4
48	Slovenia	5.948	5
49	Romania	5.945	4
50	Latvia	5.933	4
51	Japan	5.915	5
52	Mauritius	5.891	4
53	Jamaica	5.89	3
54	South Korea	5.875	4
55	Russia	5.81	1
56	Kazakhstan	5.79	4
57	Bolivia	5.752	3
58	Estonia	5.739	4
59	Paraguay	5.681	4
60	Peru	5.663	4
61	Kosovo	5.662	3
62	Moldova	5.64	4
63	Turkmenistan	5.636	3
64	Hungary	5.62	4
65	Libya	5.566	1
66	Philippines	5.524	2
67	Honduras	5.504	3
68	Belarus	5.483	3
69	Turkey	5.483	1
70	Pakistan	5.472	1
71	Portugal	5.41	5
72	Serbia	5.398	4
73	Greece	5.358	3
74	Tajikistan	5.352	3
75	Montenegro	5.347	4
76	Croatia	5.321	4
77	Dominican Republic	5.302	3
78	Algeria	5.295	3
79	Morocco	5.254	4
80	China	5.246	3
81	Azerbaijan	5.201	2
82	Lebanon	5.199	2
83	Macedonia	5.185	3
84	Jordan	5.161	3
85	Nigeria	5.155	1
86	Kyrgyzstan	5.131	3
87	Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.129	3
88	Mongolia	5.125	4
89	Vietnam	5.103	4
90	Indonesia	5.093	4
91	Bhutan	5.082	4
92	Somalia	4.982	1
93	Cameroon	4.975	2
94	Bulgaria	4.933	4

95	Nepal	4.88	3	120	Ethiopia	4.35	2
96	Venezuela	4.806	2	121	Georgia	4.34	3
97	Gabon	4.758	3	122	Armenia	4.321	3
98	Palestinian Territories	4.743	2	123	Myanmar	4.308	2
99	South Africa	4.724	2	124	Chad	4.301	2
100	Iran	4.707	2	125	Congo (Kinshasa)	4.245	1
101	Ghana	4.657	4	126	India	4.19	2
102	Senegal	4.631	4	127	Niger	4.166	2
103	Laos	4.623	4	128	Uganda	4.161	3
104	Tunisia	4.592	4	129	Benin	4.141	4
105	Albania	4.586	4	130	Sudan	4.139	1
106	Sierra Leone	4.571	4	131	Ukraine	4.103	1
107	Congo (Brazzaville)	4.559	2	132	Togo	3.999	3
108	Bangladesh	4.5	3	133	Guinea	3.964	3
109	Sri Lanka	4.471	4	134	Lesotho	3.808	3
110	Iraq	4.456	1	135	Angola	3.795	3
111	Mali	4.447	2	136	Madagascar	3.774	4
112	Namibia	4.441	4	137	Zimbabwe	3.692	2
113	Cambodia	4.433	3	138	Afghanistan	3.632	1
114	Burkina Faso	4.424	3	139	Botswana	3.59	4
115	Egypt	4.419	2	140	Malawi	3.587	4
116	Mozambique	4.417	3	141	Haiti	3.582	3
117	Kenya	4.41	2	142	Liberia	3.495	4
118	Zambia	4.377	4	143	Syria	3.462	1
119	Mauritania	4.356	2	144	Rwanda	3.408	3
				145	Yemen	3.355	1

Table 6  
*The Breakdown of the World Happiness Ranking for the Ten Outlier Countries*



Note. Extracted from the World Happiness Report

146	Tanzania	3.303	4
147	South Sudan	3.254	1
148	Central African Republic	3.083	1
149	Burundi	2.905	2

Note. \*5 – Very High, 4 – High, 3 – Medium, 2 – Low, 1 –

Very Low

*Countries that Deviate from the Trend and Their Similarities*

Table 6 is derived from Figure 2.2 in pages 21-23 of the World Happiness Report 2018. It shows the breakdown of the World Happiness Ranking of the 10 countries. The World Happiness Ranking is referred to as a Cantril Ladder, and the seven segments were the result of the efforts of the researchers to explain the countries’ rankings. A factor in the countries mentioned is that the segment for social support was nearly equal in all of them. Social support, as described in this report, refers to the Gallup World Poll (GWP) question “If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them or not?”

In the case of Pakistan, the final and seventh segment made up the majority of the ladder. This final segment consisted of a fixed variable that the researchers used to represent Dystopia, or the average life evaluation for a hypothetical country which had values equal to the world’s lowest national averages for each of the six variables, plus residual, or the score in the ladder for that country which their model could not account for. Pakistan could have some unidentified factor contributing to their happiness that

was not adequately described by the WHR.

Table 7 shows the regions in which the 10 countries that do not fit the trend can be found. Most of them are found in the Middle East and North African Region, two are from Central and South America, and the rest are from South and Southeast Asia, with Russia spanning across Europe and Asia and Turkey in Europe.

Table 7  
*Countries That Have High World Happiness Ranking and Low or Very Low Global Peace Index*

No.	Country	Region
	Israel	Middle East and North Africa
	Mexico	Central America and the Caribbean
	Saudi Arabia	Middle East and North Africa
	Colombia	South America
	Bahrain	Middle East and North Africa
	Russia	Eurasia
	Libya	Middle East and North Africa
	Philippines	Asia Pacific
	Turkey	Europe
	Pakistan	South Asia

According to the data gathered by the Global Peace Index, the Middle East, and North Africa remained the least peaceful region in 2018. Despite the lessening influence of rebel groups, the Arabian Peninsula saw increased hostility due to the conflict between the Sunni and the Shia groups and nations. The Central American Region still has the worst scores in homicide rate, violent crime, and perceptions of criminality, as could be seen in Mexico’s problem with organized crime. South

American countries scored high on perceptions of criminality with the highest homicide rate except in Central America. Colombia saw improvements in their political climate but scored high on perceptions of criminality, access to small arms and violent crime, homicide rate and refugees, and Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Russia saw its scores increase with regards to terrorism impact, violent crime and political terror, and external conflict. The Asia Pacific Region remained the third most peaceful in the world; however, violent crime, terrorism impact, political instability, and political terror scores have risen across the region. In the Philippines, the war on drugs and the Marawi siege greatly affected its scores. Europe, on the other hand, saw deteriorations in the region's scores for political terror, perceptions of criminality, relations with neighboring countries, and intensity of the internal conflict. For Turkey, while political stability increased, political terror also increased, and it was also affected by the conflict in Syria. While other regions were generally unified in their scores in the Global Peace Index, South Asian nations varied widely. For Pakistan, its political climate contributed to its score with the rise in military expenditure, the incarceration rate, and violent demonstrations.

### Conclusion

Findings suggest that there is a very high correlation between a country's peacefulness and overall happiness in that countries with high happiness

scores also tend to have high peace rankings. However, 10 countries were found to deviate from this trend. These countries that scored high in happiness while scoring low in the peacefulness were found to have similar scores on their Social Support indicator for the happiness rating, while causes for conflict vary from the political climate, internal conflict, to terrorism. These indicate that a strong social support system contributes greatly to an individual's perception of happiness, which helps offset the negative impacts other external factors would otherwise have.

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