

# Happiness & Sustainability Around the Earth

## HAPPINESS IN NIGERIA: A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

*Insights from previous research on happiness as  
perceived by Nigerians*



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## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has once been rated as one of the happiest nations on earth

Limited studies on happiness in Nigeria

Data from World Values Survey in 1990, 1995 and 2000

In the light of prevailing circumstances in Nigeria, do rankings actually represent the wellbeing of the people?

Do conditions in Nigeria corroborate findings in the literature?



# Predictors of happiness in the Nigerian context

- Current conception of happiness as a hedonic and cognitive property of emotion is limited in capturing what happiness is
- Income; Democracy and freedom; Culture and values predicted happiness in Nigeria
- E.g, Democratic governance ushered in freedom and its expression through opportunities for tourism, social development and income generation from carnivals
- Values such as family, work, and religion, ranked higher than friendship and leisure time



**Table 1: Ranking (%) of how important values are for Nigerians**

**Note:** Calculated from the World Value Survey Website

Value	Year		
	1990	1995	2000
Family	93.4	97.6	98.9
Work	94.0	87.3	88.6
Religion	85.3	91.8	92.9
Leisure Time	68.0	51.0	51.8
Friends	52.8	53.2	63.6
Politics	20.5	22.0	28.0



## CONCLUSION

Despite harsh economic and social conditions, Nigerians have developed the feeling of happiness as an adaptive mechanism to these negative conditions

Religion may have aided this adaptive phenomenon

Happiness does not connote actual life satisfaction but a psychological therapeutic intervention against negative feelings which Nigerians encounter every day

Culture is a key factor in happiness in Nigeria and can support or inspire societal transition to more sustainable living.



## **FURTHER READING**

Agbo, A.A., Nzeadibe, T.C & Ajaero, C.K. (2012).  
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