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Does Education Make You Happy?

By [CATHERINE RAMPELL](#)

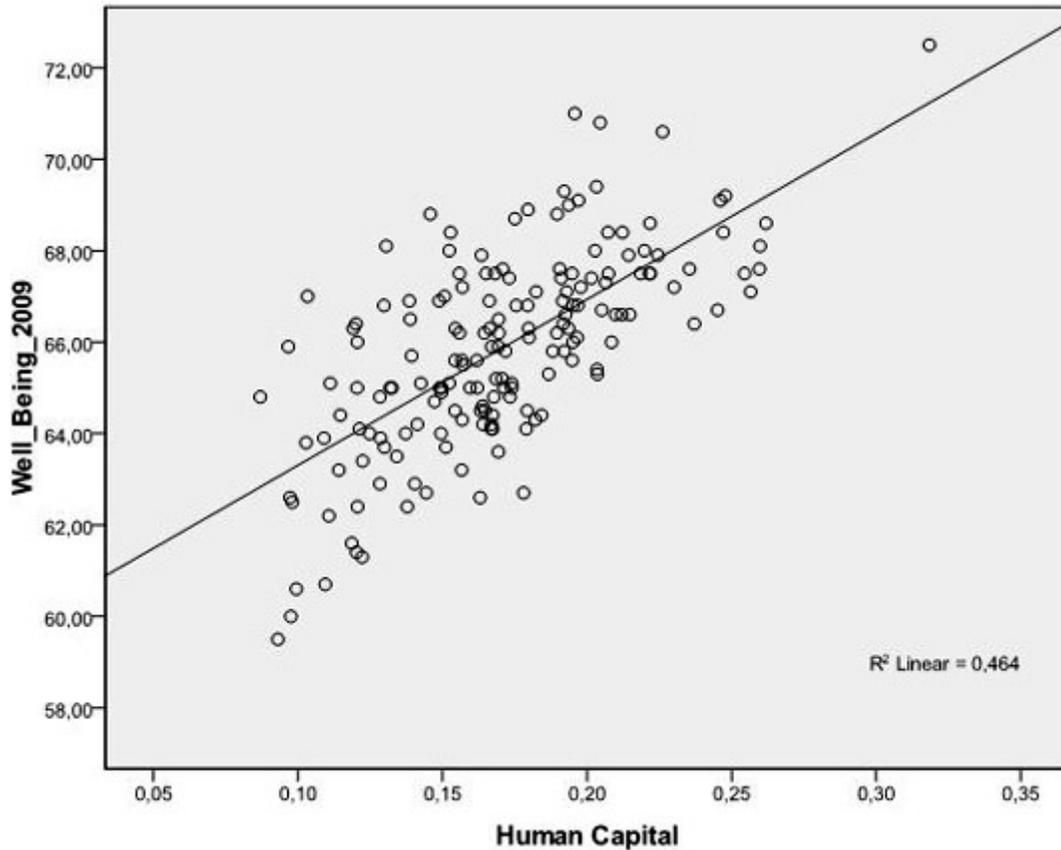
Ignorance isn't bliss. Rather, education is.

At least, that's what trends in education and [well-being](#) levels across American cities seem to show.

On Tuesday, we wrote about the [happiest states and cities in America](#) (Hawaii and Boulder, Colo., took top honors). In response, lots of readers have [speculated](#) about what made some states report higher levels of well-being than others.

Now [Richard Florida](#), director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, and his colleague Charlotta Mellander have taken a [closer look](#) at the metropolitan well-being numbers. They found moderate correlations between happiness and other factors, like [wages](#), [unemployment](#) and [output per capita](#).

But the variable they looked at that showed the strongest relationship with happiness was "human capital," measured as the share of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher:



Richard Florida

See how close those dots are to the line of best fit? That means that educational attainment can help explain a lot of the variation in well-being levels across American cities. (The correlation between happiness at the city or metro level and human capital is 0.68, Mr. Florida writes.)

Now of course, correlation is not [causation](#). Maybe the factors that lead to higher levels of human capital also lead to higher levels of general well-being. Still, colleges might want to start sending the chart above to high school seniors who are thinking about skipping out on higher education.