
Goals as Cornerstones of Subjective Well-being: Linking Individuals and Cultures

Shigehiro Oishi

What is “the good life”? American TV commercials constantly send an implicit message that life is good to the degree that one works hard, plays hard, and has a lot of fun. Gatorade had Michael Jordan say “Life is sport.” Reebok had Roger Clemens say “Life is short. Play hard.” Miller Lite had twenty something men say “Life is good” (as long as they are drinking beer with attractive women?). Do these prescriptions outline the universal form of a “good life”? Or is this set of norms specific to American culture? In this chapter I will attempt to explore cultural variation in descriptors of well-being and analyze the role of culture. I will first review two universalist models of psychological well-being, followed by a discussion of a relativist approach, or the goal as a moderator model. These three models of well-being will be tested in the data collected from 39 nations.

Self-determination Theory of Psychological Well-being

Based on the literature on intrinsic motivation, Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, and Deci (1996) proposed a self-determination model of well-being. This model postulates that there are three universal psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that the gratification of these needs is a key predictor of psychological well-being (see also Ryan 1995). More specifically, this model predicts that the pursuit of intrinsic goals (e.g., personal growth, autonomy, enhancement of others and communities) will provide people with a deep sense of satisfaction, whereas the pursuit of extrinsic goals (e.g., financial success, physical attractiveness, and social reputation) would not provide people with such satisfaction (see Ryan 1995; Sheldon and Kasser 1995; Sheldon et al. 1997 for elaboration on psychological authenticity, integrity, consistency, and coherence).

Consistent with the self-determination model of well-being, Kasser and Ryan (1993) found that the importance of self-acceptance, community feeling, and affiliation was positively associated with self-actualization and vitality, whereas it was negatively associated with behavioral problems. In addition they found that the importance of financial success was negatively correlated with self-actualization and vitality, whereas it was positively associated with behavioral problems. Furthermore, in a community sample, Kasser and Ryan (1996) extended the previous findings to depression, anxiety, and physical symptoms. That is, they found that importance placed on financial success, fame, and physical attractiveness was positively associated with depression, anxiety, and more physical symptoms, whereas importance placed on community feeling, self-acceptance, and affiliation was negatively associated with these psychological ill-being indexes. More recently Kasser and Ryan (in press) found that the relative importance of extrinsic goals was associated with lower self-esteem, more television consumption, greater drug use, and a lower quality of relationships with friends and romantic partners.

In addition to the content of goals, research based on the self-determination model showed that the types of activities in which individuals engaged (e.g., Sheldon et al. 1996), the reasons for the engagement (e.g., Elliot and Sheldon 1997; Elliot, Sheldon, and Church 1997), and progress toward goals (e.g., Sheldon and Kasser 1998) have a profound impact on individuals' well-being. For example, Sheldon et al. (1996) found that college students tended to be happier on days when they engaged in activities for intrinsic reasons. Furthermore Sheldon and Kasser (1998) found that progress toward intrinsic goals was positively associated with increase in life satisfaction, whereas progress toward extrinsic goals (e.g., making good grades) was not associated with positive changes in life satisfaction. Summarizing these findings, Ryan et al. (1996) argued that the only way in which individuals enhance their well-being is to value personal growth, autonomy, meaningful relationships, and community service, and to make progress toward these so-called intrinsic goals. In other words, according to the self-determination theory, the "good life" is the life in which an individual strives for personal growth, independence, meaningful relationships with others, and community service.

Ryff's Multidimensional Model of Psychological Well-being

Ryff (1989a, 1989b; Ryff and Keyes 1995; Schmutte and Ryff 1997) proposed another universalist model of well-being based on the literature on human devel-

opment. She criticized that traditional well-being research was exclusively focused on emotional well-being, and that the assessment of affect would not provide a clear answer to what it means to be psychologically well; people can experience positive emotions, and yet consider their lives to be meaningless. Ryff insists that psychological functioning should be assessed in terms of self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy. Ryff and Keyes (1995) showed that the six-factor structure of well-being fit the data, and that although the overall score did not differ across age groups, specific scale scores did differ across age groups. For example, purpose in life and personal growth declined over time, whereas environmental mastery and autonomy increased over time. The developmental shift in the mean level of respective well-being indexes suggests that salient aspects of well-being could vary across life span. More specifically, the above finding suggests that active pursuit of goals and self-improvement characterize young adulthood, whereas a sense of control over one's life characterizes later life. Ryff (1989b) also found via interviews that middle-aged and older adults, both men and women, mentioned having good relationships with others as one of the most important aspect of being well.

Although empirical findings indicate a qualitative shift in the definition of "good life" across life span, Ryff seems to emphasize a universal significance of purpose in life and quality relationships with others. In fact Ryff and Singer (1998) note that they targeted purpose in life and quality relations with others as primary features of positive human health "partly because of their pervasiveness—indeed *universality*—across philosophical, ethical, and social scientific formulations, but in addition, because of their capacity to engage the mind and body" (p. 9, *italic added by the author*).

The Goal Approach to Well-being

Whereas the previous two models focus on the universality of positive self-regard, community service, purpose in life, and positive relationships with others, goal researchers take into account individual differences and developmental shifts in markers of well-being (e.g., Brunstein 1993; Cantor et al. 1991; Diener and Fujita 1995; Emmons 1986, 1991; Harlow and Cantor 1996; Palys and Litte 1983; Sanderson and Cantor 1997). In this chapter I broadly define goals as desired states internalized by individuals (see Austin and Vancouver 1996 for a review on goal constructs). Values, which are defined as guiding principles in life (Schwartz and

Sagiv 1995), can be considered as higher-order goals, whereas personal strivings, which are defined as what individuals are characteristically trying to do in daily life (Emmons 1986), can be conceptualized as lower-order goals. Basically the goal as a moderator model of well-being (Oishi et al. 1999) assumes that markers of well-being vary across individuals, depending on their goals and values. For instance, this model posits that an individual whose goal is getting into medical school (and therefore getting A's) is satisfied with his or her life to the extent that this individual does well in school. On the other hand, an individual whose goal is having a rewarding romantic relationship is satisfied with his or her life to the extent that this individual has such a relationship. The premise of the goal as a moderator model is that people gain and maintain their well-being mostly from the area on which they place special importance, and that to the extent that individuals differ in their goals and values, they differ in their sources of satisfaction.

The moderating role of personal strivings in types of daily events and emotional experiences was first tested by Emmons (1991) in a 21-day daily diary study among college students. Intra-individual analyses revealed that individuals who were striving for achievement reported more intense positive emotions when they experienced positive events related to achievement than when they experienced positive events unrelated to achievement. Likewise individuals who were striving for affiliation and intimacy reported experiencing more intense positive emotions when they experienced positive events relevant to interpersonal relationships than when they experienced positive events aside from interpersonal issues. In a similar daily diary study, Oishi, Diener, Suh et al. (1999) replicated Emmons's findings in daily life satisfaction. That is, the degree to which daily achievement satisfaction predicted daily life satisfaction was significantly stronger among those who valued Achievement than those who did not. Likewise the degree to which daily social life satisfaction predicted daily life satisfaction was significantly stronger among those who valued Benevolence than among those who did not. Furthermore these researchers found that global life satisfaction was predicted from value-congruent domain satisfactions. Namely general satisfaction with their achievements predicted global life satisfaction of Achievement-oriented individuals, whereas general satisfaction with social relationships predicted global life satisfaction of individuals who valued Benevolence.

In line with the above conceptualization, Brunstein, Schultheiss, and Grassmann (1998) tested the moderating role of needs in the link between personal goals and emotional well-being. Similar to Sheldon and Kasser (1998), Brunstein et al. assessed progress toward goals and changes in emotional well-being over time. Unlike Shel-

don and Kasser, however, Brunstein et al. also measured participants' needs using a picture-story method similar to the Thematic Apperception Test. These researchers found in two studies that progress toward need-congruent goals predicted positive changes in emotional well-being over time. That is, for those who had a high need for Power and Achievement, progress toward Power- and Achievement-related goals was conducive to enhancement of their emotional well-being, whereas progress toward relationships was not as conducive to enhancement of emotional well-being for these individuals.

Furthermore several researchers found evidence that the processes through which people experience and recall emotional experiences differs across individuals, depending on their personality (e.g., Bolger and Schilling 1991; Bolger and Zuckerman 1995; Cote and Moskowitz 1998; Feldman Barrett 1997; Feldmann Barrett and Pietromonaco 1997; Moskowitz and Cote 1995; Schimmack and Hartmann 1997; Suls, Green, and Hillis 1998; Suls, Martin, and David 1998). Moskowitz and Cote (1995), for instance, examined whether the trait "agreeableness" would moderate the link between behavior and affect. Using the event-contingent recording method for 20 days, Moskowitz and Cote found that agreeableness was positively associated with the degree to which participants experienced positive emotions while engaging in agreeable behaviors. Likewise, in a 8-day daily diary study, Suls, Martin, and David (1998) found that the trait "agreeableness" predicted the extent to which interpersonal conflicts generated emotional distress. That is, the more agreeable individuals were, the more psychological distress they experienced from interpersonal conflicts in daily lives. Given that agreeableness is positively related to needs such as nurturance and abasement, and negatively related to needs such as dominance and aggression (Costa and McCrae 1988), it is possible to view the results of Moskowitz and Cote (1995) and Suls, Martin, and David (1998) as evidence for the idea that needs determine the types of behaviors and events that generate emotional reactions.

In addition to the various determinants of life satisfaction and emotional well-being investigated above, Oishi, Schimmack, and Diener (1999) explored specific types of positive emotions that made individuals feel good about their lives in general. Based on the goal as a moderator model, these authors postulated that specific emotional experiences that make people feel positive about their lives would differ, depending on their needs and values. Specifically, they assumed that highly arousing emotional experience would be a marker of "good life" for sensation seekers. As expected, two daily diary studies revealed that the degree of correlation between

highly arousing physical pleasure and daily satisfaction was significantly stronger among high sensation seekers than among low sensation seekers. These results indicate that the link between emotions and perceptions of life is not uniform across individuals. Rather, the “if ... then ...” patterns of relations (Mischel and Shoda 1995) of emotions and life satisfaction differ, depending on individuals’ needs and values: *if* high sensation seekers experienced highly arousing emotions, *then* they would feel good about their lives.

The Goal Approach to Cultural Variation in SWB

The three individual-level models of well-being summarized above give rise to two interesting hypotheses about the determinants of SWB across cultures. The self-determination model (Ryan et al. 1996) and the multidimensional model of psychological well-being (Ryff and Keyes 1995) posit that well-being should be universally predicted from the degree of positive self-regard, quality relationships, and purpose in life. On the other hand, the goal approach posits that predictors should differ across cultures, depending on salient needs and values. Before testing these hypotheses, I review relevant cross-cultural studies.

Positive Self-regard and Well-being

Ample evidence indicates that positive self-regard is positively associated with life satisfaction across cultures (e.g., Diener and Diener 1995; Grob et al. 1996; Kwan, Bond, and Singelis 1997; Leelakulthanit and Day 1993; Majumdar and Dasgupta 1997; Oishi et al. 1999). However, the centrality of positive self-regard to well-being appears to vary across cultures, notably between individualist and collectivist countries. Based on data collected from 49 universities in 31 countries, Diener and Diener (1995) examined the relations between domain satisfactions and global life satisfaction. Consistent with Triandis’s (1995) individualism-collectivism theory and Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) cultural theory of the self, self-esteem was a stronger predictor of global life satisfaction in individualist nations than in collectivist nations. For instance, the correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction in India was 0.08 among Indian women, whereas it was 0.60 among American women. Similarly, in a large international study, Oishi, Diener, Lucas et al. (1999, study 2) tested the role of individualism-collectivism in the relations between domain and global life satisfaction, controlling for the effect of economy. Based on college student samples from 39 nations, these researchers found that satisfaction with self was a stronger

predictor of life satisfaction in individualist nations than in collectivist nations, even after controlling for national income.

Relationship Satisfaction and Well-being

Another axis of psychological well-being in the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 1996) and the multidimensional model of well-being (Ryff and Singer 1998) is positive relationships with others. Previous evidence on the relative importance of relationship satisfaction in predicting overall life satisfaction is mixed. Studies using a single-item scale (e.g., Diener and Diener 1995; Leelakulthanit and Day 1993) found equally significant correlations between family satisfaction and life satisfaction in individualist and collectivist countries. On the other hand, Kwan et al. (1997) found that relationship harmony, or the degree to which individuals have harmonious relationships with others, had a significant predictive power, above and beyond self-esteem in Hong Kong, but not in the United States.

Norms, Parental Expectations, and Well-being

The aforementioned studies on relationship satisfaction essentially assessed the degree of association between the evaluation of family as an external entity and the evaluation of one's own life. The question "how satisfied are you with your family?" is vastly different from "When you evaluate your life, how much do you consider expectations from your parents and family as criteria?" Thus the findings above do not exclude the possibility that quality relationships with others, particularly an internalized form of relationships (e.g., fulfilling expectations), plays a more central role in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. In fact, using the goal construct as a framework, Radhakrishnan and Chan (1997) found support for this view. Participants (54 Indian and 55 American college students) in this study listed 10 goals they had in their life (self-set goals) and 10 goals they perceived their parents as having for them (parental goals). For each goal, participants rated importance from their perspective and their parents' perspective, and discrepancy score was computed by taking the difference between self-rated importance and parent-rated importance. A regression analysis revealed that the degree of discrepancy between importance given by the self and parents on the self-set goals was a significant predictor only for Americans, whereas the degree of discrepancy from parental goals was a significant predictor only for Indians. In other words, self-set goals play a central role in the evaluation of life among Americans, whereas parental goals play a primary role in the evaluation of life among Indians. As suggested by Markus and

Kitayama (1991), people in collectivist cultures internalize family's and friends' expectations, whereas people in individualist cultures set up their own expectations for themselves. Therefore, although the degree to which satisfaction with family is related to global life satisfaction is similar across cultures, parental expectations seem to play a more critical role as a standard for life satisfaction judgments among people in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures.

Additional evidence for the importance of external standards in collectivist cultures is provided by the two large international studies conducted by Suh, Diener, Oishi, and Triandis (1998). These researchers investigated the relative importance of internal versus external standards in life satisfaction judgments across cultures. Suh et al. (1998, study 2) assessed the frequency of emotional experiences and norms for life satisfaction (i.e., how much one should be satisfied with his or her life) among college students from 39 countries. Suh et al. expected that emotions would be a reliable indicator of life satisfaction for people in individualist nations, whereas they would not be a reliable standard for life satisfaction for people in collectivist nations. Instead, the researchers postulated that norms would be a predictor of life satisfaction in collectivist nations. Consistent with their predictions and results from Radhakrishnan and Chan (1997), life satisfaction of people in individualist nations was primarily predicted from emotional experiences, whereas that of people in collectivist nations was equally predicted from emotional experiences and norms for life satisfaction. These findings suggest that the degree to which one is living a life close to external standards is a better indicator of life satisfaction in collectivist nations. Such external standards present a sharp contrast with the self-determination model of psychological well-being (Ryan et al. 1996) which posits that individuals are "well" to the extent that they live a life congruent with their internal standards. In sum, cultural variation in the correlates of SWB reviewed above highlights the fact that the way in which individuals attain and maintain their well-being might differ across cultures. At the same time it highlights the importance of re-examining extant SWB models from the perspective of cultural constructionism (e.g., Markus, Kitayama, and Heiman 1996).

The Present Study

Although previous cross-cultural studies (e.g., Diener and Diener 1995; Kwan et al. 1997; Radhakrishnan and Chan 1997; Suh et al. 1998) as a whole provide a rough picture of "who is happy" and "who is satisfied" in different cultures, the picture is

far from complete. Moreover previous research did not examine systematic variation in descriptions of psychologically well-functioning individuals across cultures. The present study was conducted to identify lawful variation in the personhood of psychologically well-functioning individuals in diverse cultures, as well as to test the universality of the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 1996). More specifically, I tested the following questions: Are individuals who pursue goals related to financial success and social reputation lower in psychological well-being across cultures? Are people who pursue goals related to community services and relationships healthier psychologically across cultures? Do autonomous individuals perceive their lives as better than dependent individuals in all culture? The universalist models of well-being predict that autonomy and quality relationships will be indexes of well-being across cultures. On the other hand, the goal as a moderator model predicts that autonomy will be a stronger predictor of well-being in individualist cultures, whereas quality relationships with others will be a stronger predictor in collectivist cultures.

To examine the aforementioned questions, I assessed the importance of intrinsic goals (i.e., self-acceptance and relationship-orientation) and extrinsic goals (i.e., power-orientation and conformity) by Triandis's (1995) individualism-collectivism scale in the data collected from 39 nations. This scale consists of four subscales: vertical individualism (VI; emphasis on competition and power), horizontal individualism (HI; emphasis on autonomy of individuals), vertical collectivism (VC; emphasis on duty and sacrifice of individual's desires), and horizontal collectivism (HC; emphasis on amicable relationships with others). According to Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1995) and Ryff (1989a; Ryff and Singer 1998), vertical individualism and vertical collectivism should be associated with negative well-being, whereas horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism should be associated with positive well-being.

Method

Participants

Participants were 6,782 college students from 39 countries (2,625 males and 4,118 females). These nations represent a diverse selection: 2 nations from North America, 4 nations from South America, 14 nations from Asia, 13 from Europe, and 5 from Africa. Eighty-four percent of the participants were between 18 and 25 years of age, and 10 percent of the participants were between 26 and 35 years old. Because of missing items, the number of participants differed slightly across analyses.

Measures and Ratings

Global Life Satisfaction Global life satisfaction, or cognitive assessment of life as a whole, was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al. 1985). The SWLS consists of five statements, to which respondents are asked to indicate their degree of agreement, using a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The total SWLS score ranges from 7 to 35. The SWLS has adequate psychometric properties (see Pavot and Diener 1993), and it has demonstrated validity among Korean (Suh 1994), mainland Chinese (Shao 1993), and Russian samples (Balatsky and Diener 1993). Cronbach's alpha of the SWLS ranged from 0.41 to 0.94 with the mean of 0.78 (SD = 0.09).

Individualism-Collectivism Scale (ICS) We assessed 4 facets of the individualism-collectivism construct by the individualism-collectivism scale (Triandis 1995), which consists of 8 items per facet and 32 in total. Vertical individualism (VI) is defined as self-interest and competition. VI includes items such as "Winning is everything," and "It is important for me that I do my job better than others." Cronbach's alpha for the VI subscale ranged from 0.36 to 0.86 with the mean of 0.70 (SD = 0.11). Horizontal individualism (HI) is characterized by independence and autonomy. Representative items include "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways," "I prefer to be direct and forthright when discussing with people," and "What happens to me is my own doing." Cronbach's alpha for the HI subscale ranged from 0.44 to 0.75 with the mean of 0.63 (SD = 0.08). Vertical collectivism (VC) is defined as the priority of group goals over individual's goal and respect for elders and persons in authority. Sample items include "I would do what would please my family, even if I detested that activity," and "Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure." Cronbach's alpha for the VC ranged from 0.24 to 0.80 with the mean of 0.57 (SD = 0.13). Horizontal collectivism (HC) is characterized by relationship-orientation and harmony. Items include "It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group," and "I feel good when I cooperate with others." Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.49 to 0.86 with the mean of 0.70 (SD = 0.10). The participants answered how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*).

Individualism-Collectivism (IC) Ratings We obtained the IC rating for each nation, when possible, by averaging Hofstede's (1980) individualism-collectivism

scores, which were based on the data provided by individuals working for a multinational organization and Harry Triandis's personal ratings (personal communication, February 1996). Triandis rated the degree of individualism-collectivism of the 39 nations on a scale ranging from 1 (*most collectivist*) to 10 (*most individualist*). Hofstede's individualism-collectivism scores were converted to a 10-point scale compatible with Triandis's ratings.

Procedure The original questionnaire was constructed in English by Ed Diener. This questionnaire was then translated into Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese by bilingual individuals. Bilingual individuals other than those who engaged in the initial translation subsequently translated the non-English versions of the questionnaire back to English. Ratings made of the back translations indicated that they showed an excellent fit to the original English version (Shao 1997). In other nations, local collaborators translated the English version to the local language. The data were collected in university classrooms by local collaborators.

Results

First, we computed zero-order correlation coefficients between each of the four facets of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale for each nation, which are shown in the parentheses in table 5.1. Replicating the findings of Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996), horizontal individualism, or autonomy, was significantly positively related to life satisfaction in many of the highly individualistic nations such as the United States, Australia, Germany, and Finland. Inconsistent with the findings of Kasser and Ryan, however, horizontal individualism was not associated with life satisfaction in most of the collectivist nations, including China, Columbia, Pakistan, Korea, Peru, Ghana, Tanzania, Bahrain, Singapore, Turkey, Taiwan, and Japan. Horizontal collectivism, or relationship-orientation, was not related to overall life satisfaction in most of the highly individualist nations. On the other hand, the degree of horizontal collectivism was positively associated with life satisfaction in some of the collectivist nations such as China, Columbia, Portugal, and Taiwan. Though mostly nonsignificant, vertical individualism, or competitiveness, was negatively related to life satisfaction in most countries. Vertical collectivism, or conformity, was positively related to life satisfaction in Columbia, Spain, and Hungary, whereas it was negatively related to life satisfaction in Indonesia, Taiwan, South Africa, Puerto Rico, and Denmark.

To examine the relation between each facet of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale and life satisfaction, controlling for the other facets, we performed simultaneous regression analyses within each nation, predicting life satisfaction from four facets of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale. Unstandardized regression coefficients for each facet of the ICS for each nation are shown in table 5.1. On average, the unstandardized regression coefficients for horizontal individualism ($M = 0.75$, $SD = 0.24$) and horizontal collectivism ($M = 0.17$, $SD = 0.53$) were positive, whereas those for vertical individualism ($M = -0.18$, $SD = 0.27$) and vertical collectivism ($M = -0.37$, $SD = 0.34$) were negative. That is, horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism were, on average, positively associated with life satisfaction, whereas vertical individualism and vertical collectivism were negatively related to life satisfaction. The patterns of association were mostly consistent with those of correlations described in the parentheses. In other words, horizontal individualism, or autonomy, was again positively associated with life satisfaction in most of the highly individualist nations such as the United States, Australia, and Germany, whereas it was not related to life satisfaction in most of the collectivist nations such as China, Columbia, and Taiwan. Consistent with the previous correlational analyses, horizontal collectivism, or relationship-orientation, was positively associated with life satisfaction in some of the collectivist nations such as China, Pakistan, and Taiwan, whereas it was mostly irrelevant to life satisfaction in highly individualist nations such as Australia, Denmark, and Finland. Vertical individualism was almost uniformly negatively associated with life satisfaction across nations. Consistent with the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 1996), vertical collectivism, or conformity, was negatively associated with life satisfaction in the United States and Denmark. However, the negative relation between conformity and life satisfaction was not replicated in highly hierarchical societies such as China, Korea, and Japan.

Hypothesis Testing Although the correlation and regression analyses described above revealed general trends in the size of association between each facet of individualism-collectivism and life satisfaction, they did not yield a formal test of the multi-level interaction between the size of within-nation association and nation level characteristics. To test our hypothesis that being autonomous will be associated with higher well-being in countries where autonomy is highly valued, we performed hierarchical linear modelings (HLM; Bryk and Raudenbush 1992). The present HLM involves two levels of regression analysis. As in the within-nation regression

analyses, at level 1, participant's life satisfaction was predicted from the subscale scores of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale for each nation. Level 1 analysis yielded 39 regression analyses. At level 2, regression slopes obtained from level 1 analyses were predicted from the expert ratings of individualism-collectivism. As seen in table 5.2, the HLM analysis revealed that the degree to which horizontal individualism, or being independent, is related to positive life satisfaction varied across countries, depending on the level of individualism. Specifically, being autonomous was more strongly associated with positive life satisfaction in individualist nations than in collectivist nations. The proportion of variance explained by the IC ratings at level 2 can be computed by comparing error variance of the slope for horizontal individualism in the model without the IC as a level 2 predictor with error variance in the full model (see Bryk and Raudenbush 1992, ch. 4). Error variance of the slopes in the simple model was 0.087, whereas it was reduced to 0.058 in the full model: $(0.087 - 0.058)/0.087 = 0.33$. Thus 33 percent of the variance in the slopes for horizontal individualism (i.e., 33 percent of the cross-national difference in the slope for HI) was explained by the IC ratings. On the other hand, the degree to which horizontal collectivism (relationship-orientation), vertical individualism (competitiveness), and vertical collectivism (dutifulness) are related to life satisfaction did not differ across countries along the level of the IC ratings.

Discussion

The present investigation was undertaken with two goals in mind: (1) to identify the descriptors of psychologically well-functioning individuals in different cultures and (2) to examine the universality of the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 1996) and the multidimensional model of well-being (Ryff 1989a). Several interesting findings emerged from the present analysis. First, replicating previous findings (e.g., Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996), the present study revealed that autonomous individuals were more satisfied with their lives than those who were less autonomous in highly individualist nations such as the United States, Australia, Germany, and Finland. Also consistent with previous findings (Kasser and Ryan 1993; 1996), power-orientation was negatively associated with life satisfaction in individualist nations such as Norway and Finland. Also, consistent with previous findings (Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996; Ryff and Keyes 1995), relationship-orientation was marginally significantly related to life satisfaction in the United States. Nevertheless,

Table 5.1
Unstandardized regression coefficients of within-nation regression analyses

Nation	N	IC	HI		HC		VI		VC	
			B	r	B	r	B	r	B	r
China	558	2.00	-0.02	(0.02)	0.52*	(0.09*)	-0.23	(-0.01)	0.02	(0.05)
Columbia	100	2.15	0.31	(0.07)	0.86	(0.25**)	-0.34	(-0.05)	0.62	(0.19+)
Indonesia	90	2.20	1.03*	(0.15)	0.65	(-0.05)	0.44	(0.07)	-1.65**	(-0.22*)
Pakistan	155	2.20	0.21	(0.11)	1.37**	(0.23**)	0.15	(0.04)	-0.84*	(-0.04)
Korea	277	2.40	0.01	(-0.01)	-0.13	(-0.01)	-0.31	(-0.04)	0.21	(0.02)
Peru	129	2.80	0.50	(0.09)	0.17	(0.10)	-0.65+	(-0.10)	0.38	(0.08)
Ghana	118	3.00	0.77	(0.05)	-0.81+	(-0.19*)	-0.61	(-0.11)	0.06	(-0.11)
Nepal	99	3.00	0.56	(0.23*)	0.33	(0.19+)	0.28	(0.18+)	-0.04	(0.13)
Nigeria	244	3.00	0.58+	(0.15*)	0.27	(0.07)	0.21	(0.09)	-0.31	(0.03)
Tanzania	96	3.00	1.10	(0.03)	-0.11	(-0.14)	-1.01	(-0.10)	-0.62	(-0.19+)
Zimbabwe	109	3.00	0.95*	(0.14)	0.11	(0.00)	-1.05*	(-0.17+)	-0.10	(-0.00)
Bahrain	124	3.00	0.04	(0.03)	-0.02	(-0.03)	0.26	(0.04)	-0.35	(-0.07)
Singapore	131	3.50	0.31	(-0.01)	0.15	(-0.00)	-1.20**	(-0.25**)	-0.28	(-0.06)
Turkey	100	3.85	0.31	(0.09)	-0.34	(-0.14)	0.34	(0.13)	-0.39	(-0.14)
Portugal	139	3.85	0.53	(0.11)	0.74	(0.18*)	0.03	(0.02)	0.48	(0.13)
Taiwan	533	3.85	0.37	(-0.07)	1.81**	(0.29**)	-1.14**	(-0.33**)	-0.66	(-0.13**)
Brazil	112	3.90	-0.17	(-0.09)	-0.26	(-0.11)	-0.32	(-0.07)	-0.25	(-0.10)
Lithuania	101	4.00	0.96	(0.14)	1.06*	(0.15)	-0.45	(-0.08)	-1.36**	(-0.16)
Estonia	119	4.00	-0.07	(-0.02)	0.35	(0.06)	-0.19	(-0.05)	-0.69	(-0.09)
India	93	4.00	1.01	(0.11)	-0.61	(-0.05)	-0.19	(0.01)	0.25	(-0.01)
Japan	200	4.30	0.47	(0.08)	0.33	(0.10)	-0.37	(-0.06)	0.05	(0.07)
Egypt	120	4.40	3.28**	(0.28**)	-2.13**	(-0.31**)	-2.43**	(-0.08)	1.14+	(-0.10)
Hong Kong	142	4.75	0.41	(0.03)	-0.21	(0.01)	-0.80+	(-0.13)	0.38	(0.06)
Argentina	90	4.80	0.37	(0.12)	0.70	(0.18+)	-0.03	(-0.08)	-0.45	(-0.06)
Guam	186	5.00	1.15**	(0.23**)	-0.24	(-0.02)	0.46	(0.16*)	-0.04	(0.01)

Slovenia	50	5.00	1.69+	(0.32*)	0.54	(0.26+)	-0.49	(-0.14)	0.51	(0.26+)
Greece	129	5.25	1.80**	(0.29**)	-0.09	(0.08)	-0.12	(0.04)	-0.04	(0.07)
Spain	327	5.55	-0.01	(0.02)	-0.24	(-0.03)	0.39	(0.10+)	0.78*	(0.12*)
South Africa	373	5.75	0.75*	(0.08)	-0.37+	(-0.12*)	-0.32	(-0.06)	-0.37	(-0.10*)
Hungary	74	6.00	0.40	(0.05)	0.13	(0.17)	-0.71	(-0.16)	1.36	(0.25*)
Austria	164	6.75	0.64	(0.09)	0.77*	(0.16*)	-0.87	(-0.04)	-0.87+	(-0.05)
Italy	289	6.80	0.62	(0.12*)	1.17**	(0.24**)	0.08	(0.03)	0.24	(0.13*)
Norway	99	6.95	0.46	(0.03)	-0.38	(-0.09)	-0.88+	(-0.14)	-0.41	(-0.06)
Puerto Rico	87	7.00	1.27+	(0.18+)	0.21	(0.24*)	-1.16*	(-0.21+)	0.56	(-0.25*)
Finland	91	7.15	1.40*	(0.21*)	0.03	(0.03)	-0.95+	(-0.15)	-0.97	(-0.04)
Germany	108	7.35	2.51**	(0.31**)	-0.20	(-0.01)	-0.54	(-0.08)	-0.59	(-0.00)
Denmark	91	7.70	0.63	(0.11)	-0.05	(-0.06)	-0.13	(-0.05)	-1.66*	(-0.26**)
Australia	292	9.00	1.04*	(0.15*)	0.26	(0.05)	-0.16	(-0.01)	-0.42	(-0.02)
United States	443	9.55	1.09**	(0.16**)	0.39+	(0.07)	0.06	(0.05)	-0.69*	(-0.01)
Mean			0.75		0.17		-0.18		-0.37	

Note: Zero-order correlation coefficients in parenthesis. Predicting life satisfaction from horizontal individualism (HI), horizontal collectivism (HC), vertical individualism (VI), and vertical collectivism (VC). Levels of significance indicated as $+p < 0.10$, $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$.

Table 5.2
 Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM): Predicting within-nation slopes from individualism-collectivism (IC) ratings

	Coefficient (G)	SE	T ratio
Model for Intercept (B0)			
Intercept	21.49	0.27	79.14**
IC	0.48	0.14	3.41**
Model for HI slope (B1)			
Intercept	0.70	0.08	8.38**
IC	0.11	0.04	2.69**
Model for HC slope (B2)			
Intercept	0.20	0.10	1.89
IC	-0.01	0.05	-0.28
Model for VI slope (B3)			
Intercept	-0.19	0.09	-2.32*
IC	-0.03	0.04	-0.82
Model for VC slope (B4)			
Intercept	-0.35	0.09	-4.07**
IC	0.02	0.04	0.39

Notes: Levels of significance indicated as * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Model specification was as follows:

Level 1 model

$$\text{SWLS} = B0 + B1*(\text{HI}) + B2*(\text{HC}) + B3*(\text{VI}) + B4*(\text{VC}) + \text{Error}$$

Level 2 model

$$B0 = G00 + G01*(\text{IC}) + U0$$

$$B1 = G10 + G11*(\text{IC}) + U1$$

$$B2 = G20 + G21*(\text{IC}) + U2$$

$$B3 = G30 + G31*(\text{IC}) + U3$$

$$B4 = G40 + G41*(\text{IC}) + U4$$

it was not related to life satisfaction in many of the other individualist nations (see table 5.1). Overall, it appears that the present results provide general support for the two universalist models of well-being in Western nations. That is, the gratification of psychological needs such as autonomy and relatedness seems to be an important indicator of life satisfaction in Western nations.

In many of the non-Western nations, however, autonomous individuals were no more satisfied with their lives than those who were less autonomous. This point deserves serious attention in light of the fact that out of the 39 nations, only five

(the United States, Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Finland) nations were given the IC ratings greater than 7 in a 10-point scale, and showed clearly individualistic patterns of results (see table 5.1). In other words, individualist nations are rather a minority in the world. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Triandis (1995), most psychological models are generated based on research conducted in individualist nations. Cultural differences in descriptors of well-being found in this study suggest that future psychological models of well-being should account for not only Western individuals but also non-Western people.

In addition to cultural differences observed from visual inspection of table 5.1, the HLM analyses identified systematic patterns of cultural differences in descriptors of well-being. As predicted from the goal as a moderator model of SWB, the degree to which autonomy was related to well-being differed across cultures, depending on the salient values in cultures. Specifically, the degree of association between autonomy and life satisfaction was significantly stronger in individualist nations than in collectivist nations. The degree of association between relationship-orientation and life satisfaction was not, however, stronger in collectivist nations than in individualist nations based on the expert ratings (see Diener and Diener 1995 for similar findings concerning satisfaction with family and friends).

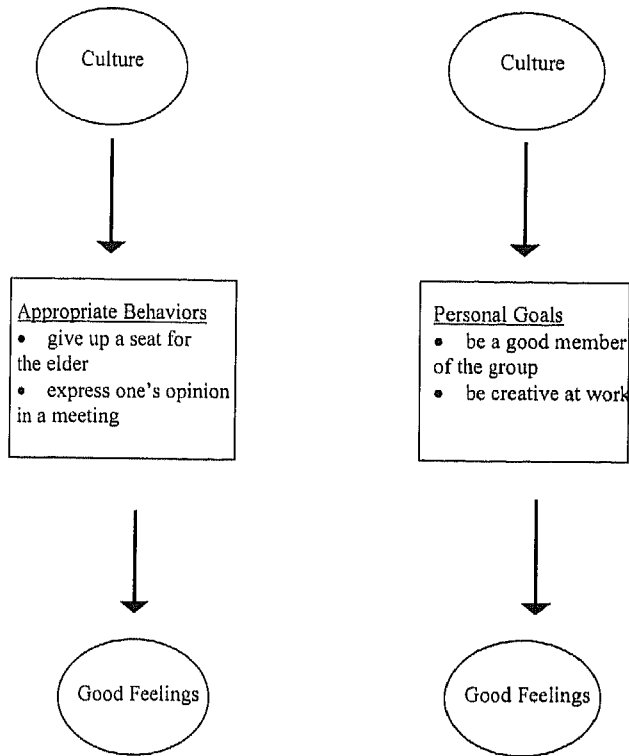
Finally, cultural differences in the attributes of well-being found in the present study raise some caution to the universality of two psychological well-being models (Ryan et al. 1996; Ryff and Singer 1998). Systematic cultural variation in descriptors of well-functioning individuals indicates that different cultures and social environments have different modes of behaviors, values, and attitudes that are suited for adjustment in particular societies. Furthermore these findings call for new ways of conceptualizing well-being that account for social contexts in which people live. To form social contextual theories of well-being, however, first the role of culture in individuals' well-being should be clearly understood. In this regard, key questions that have emerged from the present study are the following: Are individuals satisfied with their lives to the extent that they behave in accordance with cultural norms? Or, are they satisfied with their lives to the extent that they are moving toward personal goals that are consistent with cultural norms? Although the present study does not directly answer these questions, these issues are critical in understanding the interplay between culture and individuals' well-being in the future. Thus I will next analyze the possible ways in which the future research can investigate the role of cultures in well-being, by comparing Markus and Kitayama's (1994) cultural norm model of well-being with our goal as a moderator model.

Congruence with Social Norms or Personal Goals?

From the perspective of cultural psychology, Markus and Kitayama (1994) maintain that the very nature of “good feelings” is different from culture to culture, depending on the construction of the self. Kitayama, Markus, Kurokawa, and Negishi (1993, cited in Markus and Kitayama 1994) found that good feelings typically involved friendliness and fulfillment of obligations and expectations in Japan, whereas they typically involved pride and attainment of personal goals in the United States. Accordingly, they concluded that “Normative behavior typically feels ‘good’ or ‘right’ (Markus and Kitayama 1994, p. 91). In the present context this suggests that the degree to which individuals engage in normative behaviors determines their life satisfaction (see figure 5.1).

Alternatively, however, the present findings can be explained from another perspective. Individuals’ goals are often influenced by cultural norms. Children living in individualist cultures learn that being independent is good, and being dependent is bad. Adults in the individualist cultures therefore tend to strive for independence. Similarly children in collectivist cultures learn that being cooperative with others and being responsible for their roles are crucial. Consequently people in collectivist cultures tend to strive for being responsible and cooperative with group members. To the extent that societal goals and individuals’ goals are congruent, striving for individuals’ goals manifest itself as normative behavior. As long as personal goals are congruent with cultural norms, Markus and Kitayama’s (1994) model and our goal model both predict the same if–then pattern of relations between behavior (goal attainment) and satisfaction. However, the specific role of culture in the process is different. Markus and Kitayama’s model posits that culture determines what appropriate behaviors are, and that individuals feel good about themselves when they are engaging in these behaviors and following cultural norms. On the other hand, we posit that culture influences the types of goals individuals pursue, and that they feel good when they are moving toward their personal goals (e.g., Brunstein et al. 1998; Oishi et al. 1999). For instance, suppose that Toru, a Japanese college student, feels good about his life when he does a good job at work as an assistant to his senior editor. According to Markus and Kitayama (1994), Toru feels good in this situation because he is fulfilling his role. If Toru’s personal goal is to help the senior editor as much as possible, however, it could be said that he feels good in this situation because it meets his personal goal.

The difference in the two models is perhaps clearer when an individual’s goal is incongruent with cultural norms. Suppose that Aki, a Japanese consultant, does not



a. Markus and Kitayama (1994) model

b. Goal as a moderator model

Figure 5.1

Role of culture in Markus and Kitayama's (1994) model and the goal as a moderator model. Both models assume cultural variations in the sources of well-being, so both models assume a moderating role of culture. The specific role of culture in this process, however, is different. In Markus and Kitayama's model (a) cultural influences lead to appropriate behavior, and engagement in such behavior leads to good feelings. In the goal as the moderator model (b) culture affects the selection of goals, and the pursuit of that goal and its attainment lead to good feelings.

value helping others at all. The only thing she cares about is getting her job done. As a Japanese, however, she is well aware that helping colleagues is highly regarded in her company. Does she feel good about herself when she helps her colleagues? Or does she feel better when she gets things done? Put another way, is it following social norms that provides a sense of “good feelings” or is it following personal standards? According to Markus and Kitayama (1994), Aki should experience “good feelings” when she helps her colleagues rather than when she gets things done. On the other hand, the goal as a moderator model predicts that Aki should experience “good feelings” when she gets things done at work rather than when she helps others. Although both Markus and Kitayama’s social norm theory and our goal as a moderator model of well-being predict cultural variations in the determinants of SWB, there are important differences in the role of culture. Markus and Kitayama conceptualize that culture prescribes acceptable behaviors, and that to the extent individuals follow this behavioral prescription, they feel satisfied. Because cultural norms are by definition shared by members of a particular culture, this model does not posit much individual difference within the same culture in the way in which they feel well. On the other hand, the goal as a moderator model posits that culture influences the types of goals individuals pursue, and that they are satisfied with their lives to the extent they are moving toward their goals. Although people in the same culture tend to pursue similar goals, the goal as a moderator allows for individual differences in the sources of well-being within a culture.

How can we test these two competing models of well-being across cultures? To answer this question, it is instructive to first ponder why the current data, as well as previous cross-cultural studies, do not provide a direct test of this question. The statement cited earlier “Normative behavior typically feels “good” or “right” (Markus and Kitayama 1994, p. 91) mostly concerns the intra-individual level. That is, this statement can be elaborated as follows: individuals should feel “good” or “right” when they engage in normative behaviors more than when engaging in nonnormative behaviors. Similarly the goal as a moderator model concerns the intra-individual level. For instance, one of the central postulates of this model is that individuals should feel good about their lives when they are moving toward their goals more than when they are not. In short, it is essential to assess individuals’ behaviors and well-being repeatedly over time to test the models described above. Unfortunately, the current data set as well as most previous cross-cultural data, assessed participants’ well-being only once. Once the repeatedly measured data are collected, however, a three-level analysis is available: within-individual data points

as level 1 (e.g., specific behavior and emotion that followed the behavior), inter-individual data as level 2 (e.g., personal goals, attitudes, and values), and inter-cultural level data as level 3 (e.g., the level of individualism-collectivism, national means of certain values and attitudes). As shown by Mischel and Shoda (1995; Shoda, Mischel, and Wright 1994), this type of data provides if-then patterns of relations between antecedent events or behaviors and consequent feeling and sense of satisfaction for each individual. Then individuals' profiles can be predicted either from culture level variables (e.g., norms) or from person level variables (e.g., personal goals, attitudes, and values). The cultural norm model (Markus and Kitayama 1994) predicts that inter-individual differences in the if-then patterns will be explained from culture level variables, whereas the goal model predicts that they will be explained from person level variables. The test of these competing models in the future should bring a clearer understanding of the role of culture in sources and processes of SWB.

Theoretical Implications for the Distinction of Emotional Well-being and Meaning in Life

Markus and Kitayama's (1994) contention about normative behaviors and "good feelings" poses another intriguing question about the distinction between emotional well-being and meaning of life. Although Markus and Kitayama's argument is exclusive to the realm of emotional well-being, normative behaviors seem to be closely related to a sense of meaning in life. When individuals achieve their personal goals, they typically feel good (McGregor and Little 1998). However, the attainment of personal goals may not necessarily evoke a deep sense of meaning in life if the goal is strictly meeting one's selfish desires (e.g., getting out of a boring meeting; see Sheldon and Kasser 1998). On the other hand, fulfilling social norms and parental expectations (e.g., recycling, writing to parents) may not always elicit "good feelings." However, it may be these normative behaviors that are most likely to elicit a sense of meaning in life, for they tend to cast light on one's place in the world and relationship with larger entities (e.g., family, community, and society). In the case of Aki whose personal goals are inconsistent with cultural norms, when she gets a lot of things done, she may feel "happy." However, when she achieves her personal goals, she may not necessarily feel a deep sense of satisfaction. When she helps her colleagues, on the other hand, she may feel meaning in her life but may not necessarily feel happy. In a sense, I believe that the contention of the self-determination theory (Ryan et al. 1996) and the multidimensional well-being theory (Ryff 1989a;

Ryff and Singer 1998) bears on these prosocial and moral components of normative behaviors discussed here. That is, prosocial and moral behaviors may not necessarily elicit “joy,” but they are more likely to endow individuals with a sense of meaning in life.

Alternatively, however, the experience of or the lack of meaning in life can be conceptualized as a function of congruence between personal goals and cultural norms. To the extent that personal goals are congruent with social norms, individuals may experience both a sense of happiness and meaning in life. Conversely, to the degree that personal goals are incongruent with cultural norms, individuals may feel either lack of happiness or meaning in life. In Japan, where a cultural norm is to be cooperative with other group members, Aki may not feel a sense of meaning in life because she may not feel like a valuable member of the society. On the other hand, in the United States, where a cultural norm is to take care of oneself, Aki might feel a sense of meaning more easily because she could feel that she is a good independent member of the society. To recapitulate, the above analysis yields two different hypotheses regarding “joy” and meaning in life: (1) personal goals will be linked with emotional well-being, whereas normative behavior will be linked with a sense of meaning, or alternatively (2) congruence between personal goals and cultural norms will generate both happiness and meaning, whereas the discrepancy will result in the lack of meaning in life. To increase our understanding of short-term emotional well-being and a long-term sense of fulfillment, more research is needed concerning the link of personal and societal goals to happiness and meaning of life.

Conclusion

Recent cross-cultural research on SWB (e.g., Diener and Diener 1995; Kwan et al. 1997; Oishi et al. 1999; Radhakrishnan and Chan 1997; Suh et al. 1998) has revealed large cultural differences in the correlates of well-being. These studies, including the present one, delineated “who is happy?” in various nations, and explored how the descriptions of satisfied persons differed across cultures. They did not, however, provide insight into other fundamental questions in SWB research: namely, “what makes people happy?” and “what is the role of culture in individuals’ well-being?” As the SWB research expands its scope, answers to the latter questions are needed not only to grasp the processes influencing well-being in general, but also to advance our understanding of the precise role of culture in happiness and meaning in life. Future cross-cultural research should move from the investigation on descrip-

tive aspects of SWB to functions and processes of SWB. To this end, the goal as a moderator model in combination with the existing models provides a promising framework.

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The Pursuit of Happiness and the Realization of Sympathy: Cultural Patterns of Self, Social Relations, and Well-being

Shinobu Kitayama and Hazel Rose Markus

The brutish pursuit of individual ends is harmful to the ends and the peace of all, to the rhythm of their work and joys—and rebounds on the individual himself.

(Mauss 1925, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by W. D. Halls, p. 77)

Introduction

A review of research on well-being conducted in 1967 by Wilson concluded that the happy person is a “young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence” (p. 294). Recent approaches (Cantor and Sanderson 1998) have added a few other qualities such as personal goals to the list, but still the picture of the happy person remains largely unchanged (Diener et al. 1999). Can we now be reasonably satisfied with the conclusion that optimism, self-esteem, and positive affectivity are requirements for human happiness and well-being?

Recent work from a cultural perspective suggests that the answer may be yes as long as the humans are engaged in social worlds that are arranged and practiced like those of middle-class North America. Should these worlds be otherwise arranged and engaged, however, the answer may well be no. The purpose of this chapter is to examine two distinct models of the self and well-being. We will argue that as exemplified in many American cultural contexts, the personal pursuit of happiness and the recognition of this pursuit by the self and others are defining of the happiness itself (Myers 1992). However, as exemplified in many East Asian cultures, happiness assumes a different subjective form—it is a state that emerges when taking a critical and disciplined stance to the personal self and thus engaging

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