Hedonic and Eudaimonic Happiness:
Their Associations with Well-Being and the Influence of Age and Culture

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Introduction

➤ There are two different views of happiness called hedonic and eudaimonic happiness--the prior emphasizes pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, whereas the latter focuses on meaningful life experiences--and both of them may enhance well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). People in different age groups and cultures have somewhat distinct perspectives on well-being (e.g., Oishi et al., 2013), and how each view is perceived may vary due to such differences as well (e.g., Kryza-Lacombe, 2016; Lin & Chan, 2020).

Methods

➤ Participants: 300 participants (150 American and 150 Indian participants recruited through Prolific).
➤ Gender
  ✓ 75 male participants, 73 female participants (M_{age}= 34.08, SD= 13.185; American)
  ✓ 84 male participants, 64 female participants (M_{age}= 28.71, SD= 6.96; Indian)
➤ Ethnicity (participants were allowed to select multiple choices)
  • American participants
    ✓ White: 68.7%
    ✓ Black: 10%
    ✓ East Asian: 10%
  • Indian participants
    ✓ Indian/British Indian: 83.3%
    ✓ South Asian: 20%
➤ Measures
  ✓ The Beliefs About Well-Being Scale (McMahan & Estes, 2011; HV α= .85, EV α= .89 for American; HV α= .78, EV α= .84 for Indian)
    • 16 items (e.g., the identification and cultivation of one's strength).
  ✓ The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al.,1998; PA α= .92, NA α= .92 for American; PA α= 93, NA α= .88 for Indian)
    • 20 items (e.g., Interested, Distressed).
  ✓ The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985; α=.92 for American; α= .88 for Indian)
    • 5 items (e.g., In most ways my life is close to my ideal).
  ✓ The Singelis Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994; Interdependence α= .83, independence α= .81 for American; Interdependence α= 83, independence α= .75 for Indian)
    • 30 items (e.g., I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects).
➤ For more details, please refer to the QR code (pre-registration)

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of age and culture on the perceived necessity of hedonic (e.g., pleasurable experiences) and eudaimonic (e.g., meaningful life experiences) views of happiness and their associations with well-being. 150 American and Indian participants completed self-report measures assessing the perceived necessity of hedonic and eudaimonic views and well-being. Although Indian people reported the higher necessity of eudaimonic views to experience well-being, age and culture were not related to the relationships between each view and well-being. In contrast, the necessity of eudaimonic views predicted one's well-being no matter what culture they belongs to. Exploratory analyses also revealed that older people in both countries reported higher well-being than younger people, whereas that well-being did not differ by culture.

Correlation Tables and Moderation Models

Table 1

Correlations of Age and the Necessity of Hedonic and Eudaimonic Views for Happiness

Variable	M	SD	1	2
1. Age	31.40	10.864	-	
2. Hedonic views	4.76	.93	.065	.135*
3. Eudaimonic views	5.57	.79	-.083	-

Note. Number of participants= 296. * indicates *p*< .05 (2-tailed).

Table 2

The Necessity of Eudaimonic and Hedonic Views Between Different Cultures

	American		Indian		
	M	SD	M	SD	d
Eudaimonic views	5.43	.813	5.70	.739	.34**
Hedonic views	4.75	.980	4.80	.878	.06

Note. For eudaimonic views, number of American participants = 147, number of Indian participants = 150. For hedonic views, number of American participants = 148, number of Indian participants = 150. ** indicates *p*<.01

Table 3

Correlation of Age and Well-Being

	American participants				Indian participants			
Variable	M	SD	1	2	M	SD	1	2
1. Age	31.40	10.864	-		28.71	6.96	-	
2. Well-Being	-.15	2.32	.219**	-	.15	2.17	.172*	-

Note. Number of participants= 296. **indicates *p*<.01 (2-tailed). *indicates *p*< .05 (2-tailed).

Table 4

Well-Being Between American and Indian Participants

	American		Indian		
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	d
Well-Being	-.15	2.32	.15	2.17	.130

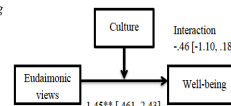*Note.* Number of participants= 300.

Figure 1

The Moderating Effect of Age in the Association Between the Necessity of Hedonic Views and Well-Being

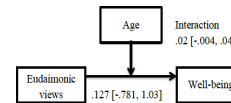*Note.* Bootstrapped samples = 5,000.

Figure 2

The Moderating Effect of Age in the Association Between the Necessity of Eudaimonic Views and Well-Being
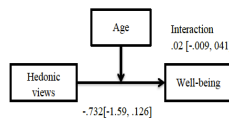
Note. Bootstrapped samples = 5,000.

Figure 3

The Moderating Effect of Culture in the Association Between the Necessity of Eudaimonic Views and Well-Being

Note. ** indicates *p*<.01. Bootstrapped samples = 5,000.

Hypotheses

➤ Hypothesis 1: Older people would perceive eudaimonic values as more necessary to experience well-being than younger people, whereas younger people would perceive hedonic views as more necessary to experience well-being than older people.
➤ Hypothesis 2: Eudaimonic views would be perceived as more necessary to experience well-being for Indian people than American people.
➤ Hypothesis 3: The relationship between hedonic views and well-being would be stronger for younger people, whereas the relationship between eudaimonic views and well-being would be stronger for older people.
➤ Hypothesis 4: The relationship between eudaimonic views and well-being would be stronger in collectivistic cultures than individualistic cultures.

Results

➤ Age was not associated with the perceived necessity of hedonic views nor with the necessity of eudaimonic views to experience well-being (Table 1).
➤ Indian participants rated the necessity of eudaimonic views to experience well-being significantly higher than American participants did (Table 2).
➤ Older people in both countries reported higher well-being than younger people (Table 3)
➤ The levels of well-being did not differ by culture (Table 4)
➤ Age did not moderate the relationship between hedonic views and well-being or between eudaimonic views and well-being (Figure 1 and 2).
➤ Culture did not moderate the relationship between eudaimonic views and well-being (Figure 3).
➤ The necessity of eudaimonic views to experience well-being significantly predicted well-being (Figure 3).

Limitations

➤ Participants tended to be young
➤ Participants tended to have had higher education levels
  ✓ May have affected one's well-being
  ✓ May not have reflected cultural differences accurately

Implications

➤ Age may not be related to each view
➤ People in collectivistic cultures may perceive the necessity of eudaimonic views as higher than those who are in individualistic cultures
➤ Regardless of the culture one belongs to, the necessity of eudaimonic views may be beneficial for their well-being

Pre-registration   References