

2017

# Exploring Lay Conceptions of Well-Being and Their Relationship to Experienced Well-Being in Chinese Undergraduate Students

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# Walden University

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2017

Abstract

Exploring Lay Conceptions of Well-Being and Their Relationship to Experienced  
Well-Being in Chinese Undergraduate Students

by

ADA JEN

MS, Hunter College of the City University of New York, 1980

BS, Chinese Cultural University, 1969

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Clinical Psychology

Walden University

August 2017

## Abstract

In 2012, the Chinese 18th Party Congress identified individual well-being and well-being of the nation as 2 of the most important goals for China. Well-being, the maintenance of a happy and meaningful life, is one of the major psychological health benchmarks in an individual's life. Empirical research on lay conceptions and experiences of well-being has been almost exclusively conducted in Western cultures. Understanding Chinese lay people's conceptions of well-being and the relationship of those conceptions to experienced well-being is important for optimizing individual and social well-being, and for providing a basis for positive social change in China. The primary objective of this correlational study was to investigate the potential relationship among 4 dimensions of well-being and 5 indicators of experienced well-being. A secondary objective was to explore whether the relationship between eudaimonic (meaning in life) aspects of well-being was statistically stronger than the hedonic (happiness) conceptions of well-being. Data were collected from a sample of 548 participants from a medium-sized university in China using a paper-and-pencil survey. The analysis included descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The overall results indicated that eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of well-being are highly associated with experience of well-being, but the relationship between eudaimonic aspects of well-being was not statistically stronger than the hedonic aspects. Policymakers can use the findings of this study to help focus policy development and improvement at the organizational level for Chinese society.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Well-being is not easily defined. Researchers in the field of psychopathology regularly frame well-being in terms of “health,” and the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined it as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2014). The WHO further refined its definition of well-being to include individuals understanding their abilities, coping with life stresses, working fruitfully, and contributing to their communities (WHO, 2014).

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Well-being is a multidimensional construct that requires an understanding of the individual’s physical well-being, valued aspects and personal meaning in life, emotional well-being, social well-being, and functional abilities. For the purposes of this study, I treat well-being as the major psychological health benchmark in a person’s life; it is associated with numerous benefits including decreased risk of disease, better immune functioning, and even longevity (De Neve, Diener, Tay, & Xuereb, 2013; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015; Friedman & Kern, 2014).

To understand the well-being of individuals, one must understand both their conceptions and experiences of well-being. The conception of well-being is a cognitive aspect, and the experience of well-being is an affect reaction. They are related to each other; people form their conceptions from their experiences, while their experiences are informed by their conceptions.

It is important for researchers to quantify and qualify people's conceptions of well-being to understand what constitutes well-being. People's conceptions are relevant to how they actually experience their lives, and understanding whether they are satisfied with their lives is critical to having a full picture of well-being. Unfortunately, there is little empirical research on lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). Further, this type of research has primarily been conducted within Western cultures. Findings generated from studies conducted in Western cultures do not easily and accurately generalize to Eastern cultural contexts. Culture shapes human values and behavior, and thus impacts the interpretation and use of the term *well-being* (Ford & Mauss, 2015).

China, the largest country in Asia, was once one of the poorest countries in the world, but now has the second-largest economy in the world as a result of the government's economic reforms. People's economic living standard has improved; however, the end goal of improved living standards should be an improvement in citizens' conceptions and experiences of well-being. In this study, I sought to understand lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students.

### **Conceptions of Well-Being**

Conceptions of well-being may be universal, but their meaning remains complex and culture bound (Aknin et al., 2013). Furthermore, different individuals' conceptions of well-being are often different, even within the same culture. Conceptions of well-being include both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions (Kokko, Korkalainen, Lyyra, & Feldt, 2013). Hedonic well-being emphasizes happiness, while eudaimonic well-being

emphasizes personal growth and meaning in life (Henderson & Knight, 2012). I used hedonic and eudaimonic approaches as the theoretical base for this study.

### **Experiences of Well-Being**

Psychological experiences are bound together with an individual's psychological conceptions at a particular moment in time (Sylvester et al., 2014). The information from the external world translates into people's internal affective code (Sylvester et al., 2014). Experiencing allows people to feel whether they are happy, satisfied with their lives, self-fulfilled, and contributing to others. The experience of positive emotions encourages individuals to broaden their way of thinking (Louis & Lovatt, 2013). It also helps individuals build up personal resources for coping with stressful situations in their lives. Again, culture influences how well-being is experienced and conceptualized by individuals (Schmidt, Piontkowski, Raque-Bogdan, & Ziemer, 2014).

### **Relationships Between Conceptions of Well-Being and Experienced Well-Being**

Conception and experience are different kinds of psychological phenomena (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). McMahan and Estes (2011b) stated that conceptions of well-being are associated with the experience of well-being. In their study of potential associations between conceptions and measures of experienced well-being, they found a significant positive correlation with at least one of the indicators of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). For example, the *self-development* and *contribution to others* dimensions correlated positively with measure of well-being ( $r = .35$  and  $.33$  respectively,  $p < .05$ ; McMahan & Estes, 2011b). Other researchers have made similar findings in regard to constructs related to conceptions of well-being that correlate with multiple aspects of experienced well-being (Anić & Tončić, 2013). Kim, Schimmack,



and Oishi (2012) indicated that conceptions of well-being are critical factors in the experience of well-being.

Since the Chinese population comprises one fifth of the world's population, it should be critical to understand and promote well-being in China. The increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) without improving people's well-being is not enough for this country's development. In this study, I examined "well-being" by first exploring each dimension of conceptions of well-being and their relationship with multiple indicators of experienced well-being. Previous research into the relationship between the dimensions of the conceptions of well-being and the indicators of experienced well-being provided initial evidence demonstrating that the relationship between eudaimonic conceptions with experienced well-being was stronger compared to the hedonic conceptions (McMahan & Estes, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; McMahan, Dixon, & King, 2013; McMahan, Ryu, & Choi, 2014). My second research goal was to explore whether the relationship between eudaimonic conceptions of well-being was stronger compared to the hedonic conceptions of well-being in Chinese undergraduate students.

Understanding lay people's conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being is likely to be an active tool in optimizing health and well-being. In this study, I provide a descriptive and correlative assessment of lay conceptions of well-being in undergraduate student samples from China. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the background of this research, research questions, hypotheses, and theoretical framework for this research.

## **Background**

Well-being is currently a central topic of positive psychology (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2015). Positive psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing and an applied approach to optimal functioning. Martin Seligman officially presented positive psychology at the APA President's Address in 1998 (Jayawickreme, Forgeard, & Seligman, 2012). This new field led to a fresh point of view regarding people's life fulfillment, strengths, and weaknesses (Jayawickreme et al., 2012). Seligman claimed that positive psychology is focused on understanding, building, and promoting human character, strength, and well-being (Jayawickreme et al., 2012). There are almost 40% more publications in empirical studies addressing well-being than the combination of other key topics, such as hope, resilience, growth, and gratitude (Donaldson et al., 2015). Previous research indicated that there was a relationship between conceptualization of well-being and positive psychology (Magyar-Moe, Owens, & Conoley, 2015; McMahan & Estes, 2011b; McMahan et al., 2014).

Culture influences people's conceptions of well-being and the meanings they associate with it (Joshnloo, 2014a). For example, Western culture focuses on individual interests and rewards personal success (Hupper & So, 2013). In contrast, the East Asian view of individuality is one that is bound to others. Hupper and So (2013) indicated that social norms impact individuals' personality manifestations, behaviors, achievements, and maintenance of their well-being. It is important to researchers to know what well-being is and whether cultural factors influence it in order to attain an understanding of this important goal of people.

Well-being, subjective well-being, and happiness are often used as synonyms, which can generate ambiguities in efforts to define these terms (Delle Fave et al., 2016). Recently research has primarily been focused on aspects of subjective well-being (SWB), such as happiness and life satisfaction. Happiness is the satisfaction of one's needs and desires, and is a fundamental of human needs (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013). It is focused on feeling good in the present, but this is not all that people seek. Indeed, sometimes a meaningful but unhappy life is more admirable than a happy but meaningless life (Baumeister et al., 2013). Subjective well-being involves frequent pleasant emotions, infrequent unpleasant emotions, and life satisfaction. The first two components are affective, while the last is a cognitive evaluation (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

These do not capture all aspects of well-being (Benjamin, Heffetz, Kimball, & Szembrot, 2014). Allen, Rivkin, and Lopez (2014) claimed that aspects of well-being are broader than subjective well-being—that well-being is more complex and multidimensional. Despite the individual nature of subjective well-being, it can be broadly divided into two facets: hedonic and eudaimonic (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). There are key differences between happiness in hedonism and meaningfulness in eudaimonism (Baumeister et al., 2013). It seems, more simply, that happiness is rooted in satisfying one's needs and desires free from unpleasant situations (Baumeister et al., 2013). Meaningfulness is a more complex subject than happiness; it involves interpretive construction of circumstances across time and is based on the individual's way of thinking and culturally influenced ideas (Baumeister et al., 2013). Baumeister et al. (2013) has found a direct relationship between meaningfulness and happiness. Even

though meaningfulness and happiness are interrelated and are important features of a desirable life, they have different implications and roots (Baumeister et al., 2013).

Well-being is experienced in different ways by different individuals within their cultural contexts (Schmidt et al., 2014). Different societies have distinctly different culturally shaped visions of well-being that impact the experienced well-being of individuals. Although there is no direct evidence of relationships between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being, there are similar constructs in conceptions of well-being that have shown relationships to multiple aspects of experienced well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). McMahan and Estes (2011a) indicated that conceptions of well-being involved value, and value had been found to have relations with some indices of well-being. Orientation to happiness also showed an association with life satisfaction (Anić & Tončić, 2013).

McMahan and Estes (2011b) demonstrated not only that there are associations between eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of experienced well-being, but also that there is a stronger association between eudaimonic aspects with experienced well-being than hedonic aspects. Most of this research has been conducted with Western populations; there is currently no study relating to conceptions of well-being and their relationship with experienced well-being for the Chinese population. In this research, I thus sought to provide a descriptive and correlative assessment to explore conceptions of well-being and their relationship with experienced well-being in undergraduate students from China.

### **Statement of the Problem**

With China's rapid economic growth, exceptional performance has been demonstrated in a wide range of areas such as poverty education, school enrollment, and

life expectancy (Li & Raine, 2014). According to a report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2015), human development index value in China has risen from 0.47 in 1980 to 0.727 in 2014. These numbers show that China's mean of basic human development achievements has been improved in the areas of life expectancy, expected and mean years of schooling, and Gross National Income per capita. Although this represents a remarkable improvement in quality of life, there remain various disturbing social problems along with the rapid economic growth (Li & Raine, 2014). The problems include environment deterioration, an expanding wealth gap, and greater social conflict (Li & Raine, 2014). Unfortunately, GDP has been the driving goal of economic development without consideration of individual or social well-being. The findings from the happiness index conducted by the Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan, show that China ranked 54th in the world. More and more people have begun to pay attention to the relationship between economic development and quality of life and well-being.

Kim et al. (2012) indicated that conceptions of well-being are critical factors in the study and experience of well-being, while McMahan and Estes (2011b) stated that conceptions of well-being might have the connotation of the experience of well-being. Understanding lay people's conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being is a first step in optimizing Chinese health and well-being.

### **Purpose of the Study**

I designed this descriptive and correlational quantitative study to provide descriptive and correlative assessments of lay conceptions of well-being in undergraduate students from China. Prior to my study, conceptions of well-being have been studied

primarily within Western countries. Since the Chinese population comprises one fifth of the world's population, it is important to understand and promote well-being in China. The purpose of this study was to address the limitations of previous research lacking in Asian populations by investigating the potential associations between the four dimensions of lay conceptions of well-being (experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, contribution to others, and self development) and the five indicators of experienced well-being (satisfaction with life, subjective vitality, meaning in life, positive and negative affect, and subjective happiness) in the Chinese population. This study allowed us to have an initial understanding of lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being in Chinese undergraduate students.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Research Question1: Do lay conceptions of well-being dimensions associate with any of the indicators of experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students?

$H_01$ : There is no association between the lay conceptions of well-being dimensions and any of the indicators of experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students.

$H_a1$ : There is an association between the lay conceptions of well-being dimensions and at least one of the indicators of experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students.

Research Question2: In Chinese undergraduate students, which aspect of well-being, eudaimonic or hedonic, has a stronger relationship with experienced well-being?

*H<sub>0</sub>2*: Eudaimonic aspects of lay conceptions of well-being do not have a stronger relationship with experienced well-being compared to hedonic aspects of well-being in Chinese undergraduate students.

*H<sub>a</sub>2*: Eudaimonic aspects of well-being have a stronger relationship with experienced well-being compared to the hedonic aspects of well-being in Chinese undergraduate students.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Hedonic Model**

In general, life satisfaction, avoidance of negative experiences, and pleasure are the vital elements in the conception of well-being in a hedonic model (Diener, Fujita, Tay, & Biswas-Diener, 2012; McMahan & Estes, 2011b). Henriques, Kleinman, and Asselin (2014) further indicated that levels of positive affect and negative affect were emotional constructs, while global life satisfaction and satisfaction with specific domains were cognitive constructs.

Well-being can be analyzed through subjective or objective perspectives. Hedonic philosophers take the subjective position (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Theoretically, individuals are in the best position to make claims about their own well-being. Although subjective well-being is one of the mechanisms to articulate the quality of life, it does not necessarily form the complete picture. The objective perspective of well-being focuses on the premise that a person's life is satisfying if it contains prudent moral goodness and satisfies the requirement of intersubjectivity (Varelius, 2013).

## **The Eudaimonic Model**

Kokkoris (2016) suggested eudaimonic well-being is based on an individual's best potential and how that potential is applied to his/her self-concordant goals and personal expressions. The process is one of fulfilling one's potential to gain meaning in one's life. There are many important points of divergence between hedonia and eudaimonia, such as autonomy, meaningfulness, competence, and social contribution (Huta & Waterman, 2014).

## **Nature of the Study**

Over 500 college students from a medium-sized university in China participated in this study. I collected data using a pencil-and-paper survey, and there was no compensation to participants. With the surveys, I administered self-reporting instruments measuring conceptions of well-being and multiple facets of experienced well-being. Those surveys included brief demographic information, the Beliefs about Well-Being Scale (BWBS), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the Subjective Vitality Scale (SVS), the Meaning in Life Questionnaire—Present (MLQ-P) subscale, the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), and the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS). BWBS is used for the conceptions of well-being. SWLS, SVS, MLQ-P, PANAS, and SHS measure an individual's life satisfaction, vitality, meaning in life, positive and negative affect, and happiness for the experienced well-being. I first measured descriptive statistics for all variables, and then used the BWBS to evaluate the four lay dimensions of the conceptions of well-being among the sample. Multiple regression analysis was used for statistic analysis.



### **Assumptions**

I assumed that the BWBS was suitable for use with the Chinese population, since it had been tested using samples from the United States and Korean (McMahan & Estes, 2011b; McMahan et al., 2013). My use of samples from one medium-sized university was suitable for the initial research purpose. I assumed that lack of compensation to the subjects would not impact the results. I also assumed that the cause and effect aspect would not be considered in this study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this research was limited to studying what it meant to be well and its relationship to experienced well-being among a small set of Chinese undergraduate students. One delimitation of the scope of this study was that the responses were limited to those participants who were willing to respond. Only fully completed surveys were used in the study.

### **Limitations**

The data I gathered in this study was limited to self-reported surveys of convenience samples only, and thus might be biased. The results of this study were generalized from a sample of undergraduate students at a medium-sized Chinese university. The results might not be representative of entire geographic regions of China. Another limitation was that the study did not include several other individual and cultural factors that might influence well-being such as differences in age, gender, and income level (Rao & Donaldson, 2015). Examinations of age, gender, and income level could be future topics of investigation in understanding the conceptions of well-being and their relationships to experienced well-being in China.

### **Significance of the Study**

Well-being has been demonstrated to be associated with many positive outcomes such as good relationships, pro-social behavior, productive good health, life expectancy, and many others (Huppert & So, 2013). This study drew its significance from the fact that the conceptions of well-being were the most important factors for understanding well-being (Kim et al., 2012). Many cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental studies have indicated that well-being status is good not only for the individual, but for society as well (Huppert & So, 2013).

China was considered one of the world's poorest countries 30 years ago and has undergone dramatic economic growth since then. The GDP was one fortieth of that of the United States 30 years ago and now is almost one fifth of the U.S. level (Zhu, 2012). It has become the second-largest economy in the world. However, the rapid and sustained improvement in people's average living does not equate with happiness. Those responsible for managing economic groups should also take health into account. Kahneman and Deaton's (2014) study indicated that money increases life satisfaction only up to meeting basic needs. Their research showed that happiness did not increase in people in the United States after surpassing the \$75,000 annual income level. Kottke, Stiefel, and Pronk (2016) emphasized that the end goal of healthy country should be citizens' well-being.

One of the major topics of the Chinese 18th Party Congress was "Individual Well-Being of the Nation" (Hu, 2012). To support that new national priority, it is important to have a better understanding of what well-being really is for the Chinese population and how well-being could be measured and nurtured. With this study, I hope to raise public

awareness regarding the need to focus on social issues as key indicators of individual and societal of well-being. The preliminary findings of this study about the conceptions of well-being and their relationships with experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students helped me determine the some of the specific Chinese characteristics of well-being. My intention for this study was to help professionals and policy makers better understand what well-being really is for the Chinese public, how well-being could be measured, and how it could be nurtured. Those contributions may benefit China by helping decision-makers understand and guide ongoing social change, molding a new generation of citizens, and setting out a rational basis for harmonious social development and individual well-being.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this first chapter I have, provided an overview of the study. In Chapter 2, I review current literature on conceptions of well-being and their relationships to experienced well-being.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

While optimal psychological wellness is fundamental to human life, over the past 50 years, psychological research has been focused almost exclusively on psychopathology (Donaldson et al., 2015). The WHO was the first to define *health* as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2014). Psychologists, sociologists, and medical professionals have used this definition as the premise for their conceptualization of well-being (La Placa, McNaught, & Knight, 2013). Recently, the WHO further refined the meaning of well-being to include individuals understanding their abilities, coping with life stresses, working fruitfully, and contributing to their communities (WHO, 2014).

In order to understand well-being and its causal factors, it is important to review information regarding conceptions of well-being. According to McMahan and Estes (2011b), the conception of well-being is a system of beliefs of *the good life* that forms an individual’s worldview. In addition, it is important to note that the concepts of *well* and *being* are defined and practiced differently in different cultural contexts.

### Literature Search Strategy

In this literature review, I focus on conceptions of well-being, experienced well-being, and cultural differences in conceptions of well-being. I obtained peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2000 to 2016, primarily through Walden University, Google scholar, and ESCBO databases. I conducted searches on Academic Search Premier, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO databases using the following key terms: *happiness, well-being, conception, hedonic, eudaimonic, meaning, psychological well-*

*being, flourishing, measurement, measurement of conceptions of well-being, subjective well-being, objective well-being, conceptions of well-being, experiences of well-being, conceptions of well-being and cultural, and experiences of well-being and cultural.* Those searches led to a tremendous number of articles. Thus, I reviewed the abstracts of related articles first and decided if they should be further evaluated.

### **Definition of Well-Being**

Researchers from a variety of disciplines have evaluated aspects of well-being including physical well-being, economic well-being, psychological well-being, life satisfaction, work situation, and contribution to the community (Cooke, Melchert, & Connor, 2016). There is no general agreement regarding a single definition of well-being (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012). At the simplest level, well-being can be described as judging life positively and feeling good (Hupper, 2014). However, while well-being may seem to be a simple concept, its definition proves difficult. When we anyone hear people talk about well-being, they are surprised by how different each individual's perspective is. To understand the conceptions of well-being and the relationships between these factors and individuals' experiences of well-being, the definition of well-being must first be examined.

As a multidimensional construct, the well-being research base is often confusing and contradictory (Dodge et al., 2012). Historically, there have been two main approaches to well-being (Henderson & Knight, 2012). One is the hedonic tradition that emphasizes happiness, a status reflecting low negative affect, high positive affect, and satisfaction with life (Henriques et al., 2014). Henderson and Knight (2012) stated that the hedonic tradition offers a bottom-up approach to well-being. In the hedonic

framework, pleasure is understood as leading to each specified state or relation of well-being (e.g., work or marriage). Once each specific need is achieved, the process of hedonic well-being expands to cover other specified needs, which ultimately leads to global evaluation of life satisfaction. Henderson and Knight (2012) indicated that positive emotional results accompany the satisfaction of desire, and the pathway to happiness is to maximize individuals' pleasurable moments.

The eudaimonic tradition, on the other hand, emphasizes positive psychological functioning and human development (Heniques et al., 2014). The hedonic approach and eudaimonic approach are based on different views of human nature (Grinde, 2012). The dichotomy of views is characterized by a difference between a focus on happiness (hedonic well-being) and a focus on fulfillment (eudaimonic well-being). Henderson and Knight (2012) stated that realizing one's inherent potentials is the pathway to well-being, and that living a life of moral excellence is the core of well-being. Eudaimonic well-being emphasizes personal growth and meaning in life (Garcia-Alandete, 2015). Lambert, Passmore, and Holder (2015) further indicated that eudaimonic well-being is tied to overall subjective and objective satisfaction, whereas hedonic well-being is a subjective interpretation of satisfaction in events that result from obtaining basic psychological needs. Objective well-being is covered by universally required observable factors such as richness, employment, and tangible goods. Objective well-being impacts an individual's subjective well-being. People should have met those universally required observable factors in order to lead a holistic satisfied life (Jongbloed & Andres, 2015).

Social relations are fundamental to well-being (Lewis, Di Giacomo, Luckett, Davidson, & Currow, 2013). People need social belonging, and positive and supportive

relationships to sustain well-being (Cramm & Nieboer, 2015). Ryff (2014) argued that it is important, in life, for individuals to imagine particular factors in relation to life satisfaction (e. g., purpose in life, self-acceptance, and personal growth). Other scholars have contended that personal and global perspectives are more important (Dodge et al., 2012). That is, individuals' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations lead to the acquisition of well-being (Grossmann, Na, Varnum, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2013).

As these various perspectives indicate, even a construct such as well-being can have many operational definitions. However, up to now, researchers have primarily focused on dimensions of well-being, rather than their definitions (Dodge et al., 2012). As a result, there is no common agreement about the definition of the term *well-being*; it tends to be conceptualized in slightly different ways in different disciplines. Sociological approaches to a definition tend to be structural and objective, while psychological approaches are more often based on subjective reports of personal feelings and emotions (Hupper & So, 2013; La Placa et al., 2013).

Bradburn was an early researcher who attempted to define well-being based on a psychological approach (Dodge et al., 2012). He concentrated on ordinary people's psychological reactions in their daily lives, and claimed that

An individual will be high in psychological well-being in the degree to which he has an excess of positive over negative affect and will be low in well-being in the degree to which negative affect predominates over positive. (Bradburn, 1969, p. 9)

Ryff (1989) criticized Bradburn for not defining the basic structure of psychological well-being, while emphasizing Diener and Suh's work in positive and negative affect. Ryff

demonstrated that autonomy, purpose in life, positive relationships with others, realization of potential, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery together constitute well-being (Ryff, 2014).

Other definitions of well-being have come from Shin and Johnson (1978), who defined well-being as “a global assessment of a person’s quality of life according to his own chosen criteria” (p. 478), and the WHO QOL group (1994), which defined quality of life as

A person’s perception of his/her position in life within the context of the culture and value systems in which he/she lives and in relation to his/her goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad-ranging concept incorporating, in a complex way, the person’s physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and relationship to salient features of the environment. (p. 28)

Well-being seems to be defined best as a dynamic process allowing people to gauge how their lives are going. This sense of well-being represents an interaction among their circumstances, activities, and psychological resources (Dodge et al., 2012).

Objective factors such as income, housing, education, and social networks, and subjective and psychological factors such as health, optimism, self-esteem, and many others influence how people feel and function. Sonnentag (2015) agreed with many other researchers in defining well-being as a dynamic process in which people have a sense of how their lives are progressing and the relation between their activities and psychological resources. Positive feelings broaden people’s potential responses to challenging situations, build their personal resources and capabilities, and lead to well-being (Gander,



Proyer, Ruch, & Wyss, 2013). Although sometimes they are not always accompanied with happiness, eudaimonic well-being is striving for the feeling that represents an individual's true potential (Straume & Vittersø, 2012).

Elsewhere, Headey and Wearing (1992) defined well-being “as depending on prior equilibrium levels of well-being and of life events, and also on recent events” (p. 95). Headey and Wearing further claimed that well-being, ill-being, personality, and life events were linked together (Pavot, 2013). Many researchers have conducted empirical studies to support that dynamic equilibrium theory (Cramer et al., 2012; Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). For instance, Suh et al. (1996) tracked 222 psychology students during their college graduation time and evaluated the impact of that transitional period of life on their SWB and how long it took those students to return to the stage of equilibrium. The findings were that only recent life events influenced SWB, and the impact disappeared quickly afterward.

Recently, Dodge et al. (2012) further defined well-being as the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced. They used the term *seesaw* to describe an individual's need to return to a set-point for well-being and the individual's need for equilibrium (Dodge et al., 2012). The researchers argued that when an individual has the psychological, social, and physical resources he/she needs in order to meet a particular psychological, social, or physical challenge, the individual has then reached stable well-being. However, there is an argument that the lack of challenge will cause stagnation and will impact the balance of the seesaw (Dodge et al., 2012).

Both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are highly related, but they are distinguished in many ways. Some activities are experienced as exclusively hedonic, and

some other are experienced as exclusively eudaimonic. Henderson and Knight (2012) found that the end results of well-being for eudaimonic actions are the individual's happiness and satisfaction status. It is hedonic pleasure. Armenta, Bao, Lyubmirsky, and Sheldon (2014) also demonstrated that even after experiencing major life events, an individual tends to go back to his/her baseline of happiness. Henderson and Knight (2012) indicated that the greatest degree of well-being is in pursuance of a life that is rich in both hedonic and eudaimonic results. In addition, Anderson, Angus, Hildreth, and Howland (2015) contended that well-being originates in the individual's perceptions of his/her current situation and desires.

### **Lay People's Conceptions of Well-Being**

Well-being is conceptualized in different ways by researchers from different disciplines, as well as policymakers, compared to lay people. Many conceptualizations have highlighted different aspects of what constitutes adequate psychological functioning.

Well-being is a state of functioning that applies to all humans. Researchers have developed different definitions and models related to well-being, but the nature of all those definitions indicates that there is a personal component. If that is a valid observation, then how individuals perceive well-being may be a factor that impacts their well-being.

Contemporary psychological research has begun to examine how lay people think about the nature of well-being and how they conceptualize well-being in hedonic and eudaimonic terms (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). Results of research indicated that lay people's conceptions of well-being are similar to those of philosophical and

psychological professionals (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). In essence, the findings suggested that lay people, like philosophers and psychologists, incorporate both hedonic and eudaimonic terms into their conceptions of well-being. Lay people also differ in terms of the degree of advocacy toward hedonic or eudaimonic terms (McMahan & Estes, 2011a).

Although, they are often complex, these lay conceptions of well-being seem to fall into the distinct categories of hedonism and eudaimonism (Anić, & Tončić, 2013). These elements of well-being could provide a foundation for understanding lay people's conceptions of well-being. Well-being is best described as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects (Kokko et al., 2013).

McMahan and Estes (2011b) developed a scale of four factors that measures an individual's conceptions of well-being based on and identified by two hedonic dimensions and two eudaimonic dimensions. The experience of pleasure and avoidance of negative experience dimensions denote vital facets of hedonic dimensions in conceptions of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). Self-development and contribution to others are vital facets of eudaimonic dimensions in conceptions of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). The findings of their study suggested that both hedonic and eudaimonic are major dimensions of lay conceptions of well-being mentioned by previous philosophers and psychologists. That scale enabled them to categorize lay people's responses. In addition, they also found that there is an association between lay conceptions of well-being and self-reported experienced well-being. Individuals' actual experiences of well-being are influenced by people's perspectives of well-being. In addition, McMahan and Estes (2011b) suggested correlation evidences

showing the relationship between individuals' conceptions of well-being and their experienced well-being.

Lay people's well-being has a relational core with family and social relations, and well-being is the most prominent (Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodick, & Wissing, 2011). Delle Fave et al. (2011) evaluated whether the traditional conceptions of hedonia and eudaimonia are consistent with the concepts of lay people. The authors used a mixed method approach across an age group between 30 and 51 years. That demographic was selected due to members' experiences in passing through major life stages, such as education, career, marriage, and childrearing. The samples were from seven different countries. Based on both qualitative and quantitative findings, Delle Fave et al. suggested that the hedonic and eudaimonic traditions were relatively consistent with lay people's perspectives of happiness and well-being. Their study showed that family association with both happiness and meaningfulness ranks highest and is followed by health and interpersonal relations. Those findings are not surprising as conceptualizations of well-being often emphasize the importance of family and social connectedness (Delle Fave et al., 2011; Seligman, 2011).

Most of the domains of lay people's conceptions of well-being are associated with meaningfulness and happiness (Henderson & Knight 2012). However, some incongruities are still observed. For example, the work domain is associated with happiness (Henderson & Knight, 2012). In contrast, Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, and Jarden (2016) found that while people perceive and pursue meaning, the individuals' hedonic approach is not necessary for their well-being. That conclusion was shared by

Vittersø and Søholt (2011), who argued that eudaimonia is not always accompanied by hedonia.

Furthermore, harmony/balance is a very important domain of lay people's conceptions of well-being (Delle Fave et al., 2016). Delle Fave et al. (2016) indicated that the most frequently cited contents of happiness are harmony and balance. In their study, 25% of the participants' answers referred to those two elements. Harmony and balance included inner peace, self-acceptance, security, and a feeling of balance and evenness. The assumption of *more is better* is misleading in terms of well-being. To achieve a balance between different needs is an essential concern for individuals (Delle Fave et al., 2011).

Positive psychology has included research into areas of happiness and well-being in recent years. Winefield, Gill, Taylor, and Pilkington (2012) indicated that well-being refers to the best and most effective functioning and experiences. It is a dynamic equilibrium of mind, body, and environment of each individual (Galderisi, Heinz, Kastrup, Beezhold, & Sartorius, 2015). Although the precise nature of well-being is not clear, many professionals have contributed different conceptions of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). McMahan and Estes (2011a) further suggested that the conceptions of well-being are cognitive aspects of individuals in their experience of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). Dodge first indicated in the 1930s that ancient Greek philosophers led the theories of happiness (Angner, 2011).

In conclusion, the research done by Henderson and Knight (2012) and Dodge et al. (2012) provided strong agreement that personal concepts of well being separate hedonia and eudaimonia. The theories of well-being are discussed in the next section.

## Theories of Well-Being

### Hedonic Approach

The hedonic viewpoint is normally defined as pleasure attainment, pain avoidance, and life satisfaction. Diener and Tov (2012) mentioned that experiences of pleasure and enjoyment are powerful indicators that reflect well-being. There is a long history in defining well-being as hedonic pleasure or happiness. The ancient Greek philosophers Aristippus and Epicurus, as well as the more modern Bentham, Locke, and Hobbes, were early contributors to the hedonic tradition (Yonezawa, 2012).

A Greek philosopher from the fourth century BC, Aristippus, indicated that to experience the maximum amount of pleasure is the goal of life. He supposed that happiness is the sole element for a good life, and as such, he provided a hedonic perspective of well-being (Yonezawa, 2012). Many others have followed this early philosophical position on hedonism. Socrates and Protagoras indicated that view as early as the Platonic dialogue (Yonezawa, 2012).

Binder (2014) mentioned that Bentham claimed that mankind has been controlled by two major sovereign factors: pain and pleasure. Bentham's view represented the simplest form of hedonism through a definition that encompasses pleasure and pain into sensation and includes their duration and intensity (Binder, 2014).

Mill added a third property, quality of pleasure, into Bentham's form of hedonism (Dorsey, 2013). That definition has the premise that some pleasures are more valuable than others.

Analysis of well-being can be viewed through either a subjective or an objective perspective. The hedonic philosophers take the subjective position (Henderson & Knight,

2012). Hedonic approaches are subjective evaluations of individuals' quality of life (Henderson & Knight, 2012). The assumption is that individuals are in the best position to determine their own well-being. SWB was the first to receive extensive attention and systematic empirical processes.

SWB is determined by evaluating satisfaction with work, marriage, family relations, and other domains that contribute to a result of feeling a positive affect and lacking a negative affect. Banavathy and Choudry (2014) presented a view of SWB research, stating that immediate satisfaction of need brings happiness; however, unhappiness is caused by persistently unfulfilled needs. Wilson further indicated the human capability of adaptation and the level of aspiration influence the degree of fulfillment required to obtain satisfaction (Banarathy & Choudry, 2014). Based upon their experiences, values, comparison with others, and other factors, individuals adapt and adjust aspirations, thus making their personal well-being parameters different over time.

Edward F. Diener is a well-known leader in well-being research who has provided an influential conception of well-being consisting of cognitive and emotional elements. One of the persistent themes in Diener's research is the need to understand different types of subjective well-being and how to validate measures of each.

Diener, Inglehart, and Tay (2013) defined SWB as the overall satisfaction level of an individual's life. That definition links quality of life with emotional presence and the frequency of positive and negative experiences. SWB requires a high level of positive experiences, a low level of negative experiences, and satisfaction with one's life "as a whole" (Stone & Mackie, 2014).

Research into subjective well-being seeks to measure individuals' overall levels of happiness. It includes successful functioning, such as positive relationships, and effective decision-making, as well as negative effects, such as depression and anxiety (Hupper & So, 2013). SWB is a complement to objective indicators, because people's choices are in part dependent on their feelings or well-being and their predictions about what will enhance their SWB (Burchardt, 2013).

SWB is one mechanism to articulate quality of life, but it is not necessarily the complete picture. It is possible to consider a person's life to be *happy* even if that person is not free or is missing other basic qualities that could be considered necessary for dignity. SWB may not be the only measure of well-being (Stone & Mackie, 2014).

### **Eudaimonic Approach**

Baumeister et al. (2013) suggested that the eudaimonic perspective of well-being consists of considering more than just happiness as an expression of well-being. Eudaimonic well-being refers to the quality of life derived from the development of a person's best potential and his/her application in the fulfillment of personally expressive, self-concordant goals (Vittersø, 2013). Raibley (2012) indicated that being happily or positively affective does not mean an individual is psychologically in a state of well-being. That conceptualization means that well-being is not simply an outcome and an end state, but an ongoing process. It is a process of fulfilling one's potentials to gain a meaningful life. SWB as a measure of *happiness* would become integrated into a eudaimonic perspective.

The eudaimonic view can be traced back to Aristotle (Mao, Roberts, Pagliaro, Csikszentmihalyi, & Bonaiuto, 2016). Aristotle, Plato, Marcus Aurelias, and Zeno of



Citium, ancient philosophers, contributed to the eudaimonic approach (Grinde, 2012). It is also aligned with many intellectual traditions of the twentieth century.

Aristotle was the first philosopher to examine the topic of well-being and introduced the concept of eudaimonia (Mao et al., 2016). Aristotle indicated justice, kindness, courage, and honesty as virtues associated with eudaimonia. Those virtues have to become part of the individuals' behavior in a worthwhile manner in order to meet their needs (Henderson & Knight, 2012). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle famously distinguished hedonism and eudaimonism and indicated a distinction between pleasure and the good life (Henderson & Knight, 2012). The hedonic approach is seen as pure pleasure, therefore, human beings look like the slaves of desire (Hofman, Kotabe, & Luhmann, 2013). Aristotle acknowledged that the final product of eudaimonic behavior is hedonic pleasure, but the conception of the good life to Aristotle is not simply as a positive emotional experience (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Jonas (2016) described Aristotle as believing that the hallmark of the good life is to develop an individual's potential to reach meaningful goals for both the individual and society.

Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia is mainly an objective approach. It aims to identify whether an individual's life is excellent, fulfilled, and virtuous (Runyan & Steinke, 2015). Henderson and Knight (2012) indicated that they do not consider positive subjective reports as good indicator to reflect whether the individual's life is well lived. They concluded that the eudaimonic approach focuses on why a person is happy, and not if the person is happy (Henderson & Knight, 2012).

Ryff's psychological well-being approach is one of the most well-known theories of eudaimonic well-being (Dodge et al., 2012). Ryff indicated that the eudaimonic

approach arises as a complementary approach to the SWB perspective. He further argued that SWB only focuses on emotional happiness and life satisfaction, but neglects important aspects of positive psychological functioning (Benjamin et al., 2014). Self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, positive relations with others, personal growth, and environmental mastery are the six dimensions in Ryff's psychological well-being approach.

Eudaimonic pursuits are mainly linked to meaningfulness (Baumeister et al., 2013). Meaningfulness is measured by a cognitive and emotional assessments of the purpose and value in individuals' lives. If these factors of meaningfulness are consistently rewarded, people will feel that their life is meaningful. Sometimes, people cannot even articulate what it means to have a meaningful life. High levels of meaningful life are presented by longer time frames (Baumeister et al., 2013). Likewise, work by Lewis, Kimiecik, Horn, Zulling, and Ward (2014) found that the hedonic pursuit produces short-term benefits, while long-term benefits depend on eudaimonic activities to cultivate fulfillment and the good life. Previous research has suggested *who one is* to be a strong determinant of a good and meaningful life (Al-Ghabeesh, 2014). A recent series of studies demonstrated a relationship between the real self and the meaning in life (Schlegel, Vess, & Arndt, 2012). The studies indicated that meaning in life depends on true self and will increase when an individual knows who he/she is. Knowing who one is guides people through their important decisions. Schlegel et al. (2012) mentioned that if an individual's goals and behaviors are consistent with the aspects of who one is, the individual will be more satisfied. The authors also suggested that knowing who one is contributes to psychological well-being (Schlegel et al., 2012). McAdams and McLean

(2013) mentioned that the initiation of the understanding of who one is enhances meaning in life.

### **Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic**

The hedonic-eudaimonic distinction continues to be discussed among psychologists today. From the hedonic perspective, Henderson and Knight (2012) supported the concept of pleasantness of one's moments. In contrast, Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, and Jarden (2016) and others supported eudaimonic well-being as representing the development of oneself to the fullest.

The position of Huta and Waterman (2014) was that hedonia and eudaimonia are highly correlated, but not all hedonic enjoyments come from eudaimonic living. There are many important points of divergence between hedonia and eudaimonia (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Anić & Tončić (2013) suggested that the hedonic perspective believes the pathway to happiness is to maximize an individual's pleasurable moments. Conversely, eudaimonism advocates a belief that living to an individual's full potential is the path to well-being.

There are arguments that eudaimonic behaviors can lead to hedonic enjoyment, and hedonic enjoyment is the one that leads to eudaimonic outcomes. Huta and Waterman (2014) mentioned that many research reports indicate eudaimonic affects are accompanied by hedonic affects. Despite some research reports suggesting that eudaimonic well-being can be experienced without hedonic well-being (Vittersø & Søholt, 2011), Huta and Waterman (2014) acknowledged that hedonia and eudaimonia are not mutually exclusive. They believed that there are mutual benefits between hedonia and eudaimonia.

Many leading researchers have different points of view in regard to distinguishing between hedonia and eudaimonia. Henderson and Knight (2012) claimed that trying to distinguish between hedonia and eudaimonia is unhelpful and potentially harmful. They believed that hedonic and eudaimonic approaches are not distinct, and it is dangerous to accept that conceptual distinction as a proven fact. The primary argument is that the eudaimonic approach lacks the rigor of scientific proof. There is no doubt that the hedonic approach has a large amount of scientific research to justify its existence (Oishi, Kesebir, Eggleston & Miao, 2014). The scientific investigation of the hedonic approach started decades before researchers paid attention to the eudaimonic approach. Henderson and Knight (2012) further stated that it is an erroneous assumption to treat eudaimonic well-being as objective, comprehensive, and more morally valid than hedonic well-being approaches. Moreover, Ng and Fisher (2013) suggested that we should stop using dichotomy in categorizing hedonic and eudaimonic approaches. Huta and Waterman (2014) expressed the idea that although hedonic enjoyment is highly associated with eudaimonic activities, an individual could have hedonic enjoyment without any connection to eudaimonia. That is why they claimed that hedonia and eudaimonia are distinct. Many researchers believed it is a positive approach and is a generative tension in looking into the diversity within well-being (Guillaume, Dawson, Woods, Sacramento, & West, 2013).

To respond to Henderson and Knight's concern about Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia may require adopting an objective approach. Kokkoris (2016) proposed that subjective experiences are part of the constructs in investigating eudaimonic well-being. Henderson and Knight (2012) agreed that SWB is an indicator of wellness, but they

believed that it needs to be in conjunction with eudaimonia. They emphasized that including values and functions into the concept of well-being is important. Many researchers questioned whether or not SWB is the only indicator of well-being and claimed eudaimonic approaches should be part of well-being indicators (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Sometimes individuals could function well but might not have good feelings. Moor and de Graaf (2015) provided an example of how a decrease in SWB occurs when an individual is grieving over the loss of a loved one. That would be part of a health process. In addition, uncertainty and adjustment are often part of an individual's personal growth. Henderson and Knight (2012) suggested that uncertainty and adjustment could be associated with decreasing SWB.

Raibley (2012) also expressed a concern about potential elitism in eudaimonic approaches. Henderson and Knight (2012) responded that contemporary approaches emphasize the need for the individual's unique potential, instead of striving for the individual's particular excellence outcome. The belief stemming from that is that everybody has the capacity to experience eudaimonia once he/she is developing in accordance with his/her own potential.

Moreover, Keyes' complete mental health model supported the idea that flourishing includes both hedonia and eudaimonia (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. (2015) argued their point of hedonic approaches and eudaimonic approaches as being distinct at the well-being level. The comparison was done between two groups and found they are different in meaningful ways. One group is in a high degree of SWB and of eudaimonic well-being. In the study, 18% of the sample is considered as *flourishing*. The other group members are in a high degree of SWB. They

are 48.50% of the sample and are considered being moderately mentally healthy. The group with flourishing individuals present as less of a burden on society. They display increased work productivity and superior psycho-social functioning, and decreased disability and healthcare utilization.

Henderson and Knight (2012) concluded that feeling good individuals are not all functioning well. That supports the notion that there is a strong rationale for the distinction between hedonia and eudaimonia. It also supports the development of empirical studies in eudaimonia. In addition, Henderson, Knight, and Richardson (2013) claimed that the evidence cited by their study supports positive mental states that directly influence individuals' health outcomes in physiological and immune functions. That also supports by a famous longitudinal research project, "the nun study" (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001).

The nun study asked aging nuns to write brief autobiographies when they entered the convent. Most of them were generally around age 20 at that time. The number of positive statements contained in their autobiographies was counted. The finding was that nuns who were less positive in their statements, on average, died 9 years sooner than those had more positive statement in the autobiographies. That finding supports the benefits of positive emotions for health and survival. There are longitudinal studies confirming that statement (De Neve et al., 2013). Findings from other research also indicate that positive emotions lead to positive cognitions, and in turn, promote further positive emotions (Barajas, 2015). West, Perner, Laz, Murdick, and Gartin (2015) further suggested that a focus on what makes people flourish instead of deficits would be a promising area of research.

Contemporary psychological research focused on the nature of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). McMahan and Estes (2011b) assessed individual conceptions of well-being and their relation to positive psychological function. They aimed at the individuals defining their degree of well-being in terms of the experience of pleasure as hedonia and experience of meaning as eudaimonia (e.g., the experience of meaning).

The findings from the correlational analyses of the research done by McMahan and Estes (2011a) indicated that well-being is associated with both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions. Their study was replicated in both undergraduate and nonstudent adult samples. They further reported that the eudaimonic dimension presents a more robust association and that only the eudaimonic dimensions predict well-being significantly from the regression analyses. McMahan and Estes (2011a) claimed that, potentially, there is a greater impact on positive psychological functioning by eudaimonic approaches than hedonic approaches (McMahan & Estes, 2011b; Henderson & Knight, 2012).

Waterman was the first researcher who did an investigation of hedonia and eudaimonia simultaneously (Henderson & Knight, 2012). He developed a scale, Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire, to identify whether hedonia and eudaimonia are distinct experiences, particularly as they relate to the concept of intrinsic motivation. The results found that correlations range from 0.71 to 0.86. It indicates that experiences of eudaimonia and hedonia are highly related (Henderson & Knight, 2012).

In 2008, Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti replicated their previous study with some adjustments. They added interest, characteristics of flow, self-determination, the

balance of challenges and skills, self-realization values, and the level of effort invested in the performance of the activity into that research.

Although Vittersø and Sørholt (2011) agreed with Waterman et al. (2008) that hedonia and eudaimonia are often highly correlated, they challenged Waterman's opinion that eudaimonia is always accompanied by hedonia (Vittersø & Sørholt, 2011). Vittersø and Sørholt (2011) claimed that very often personal growth is associated with a pleasant feeling, and overall life satisfaction is negative. In addition, the claim indicated that personal growth is the outcome variable of eudaimonia and links with the emotion of interest. In contrast, life satisfaction is the outcome variable of hedonia, and it links with the emotion of pleasure (Vittersø & Sørholt, 2011). A modest correlation is found between life satisfaction and personal growth ( $r = .28; p < .001$ ). The study also identified a high correlation between personal growth and interest as trait emotions, and between life satisfaction and pleasure as trait emotions in both surveys.

Vittersø and Sørholt (2011) concluded that there are distinctions between hedonia and eudaimonia at both activity and well-being levels. Henderson and Knight (2012) challenged both the Vittersø and Sørholt (2011) and the Waterman et al. (2008) studies on the basis of there being the inherent risk of recall error. In addition, Henderson and Knight criticized the use of highly unique types of samples (both samples were high school students at a school specializing in outdoor education) in Vittersø and Sørholt's study that would influence the generalizability of the findings.

Recently, empirical evidence suggests that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being overlap, and their psychological mechanisms seem to operate together (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Adler and Seligman (2016) named their theory as the authentic happiness



theory to explain the concept of an integrated well-being theory. The authentic happiness theory indicates that well-being consists of positive emotion, meaning, and engagement dimensions. Adler and Seligman (2016) further added achievement and relationship dimensions into an integrated well-being theory and named it *flourishing*. That integrated well-being theory reconciles the different perspectives in the conceptualization and measurement of well-being. Henderson and Knight (2012) indicated that Seligman was working on finding measures to investigate the validity of the flourishing theory. Huppert and So (2013) mentioned that flourishing indicates both hedonic and eudaimonic components being simultaneously present within an individual. Seligman's hypothesis that being high in both eudaimonia and hedonia provides greater life satisfaction than pursuing one or neither in an individual's life (Adler & Seligman, 2016). Huta and Waterman (2014) demonstrated that orientations to happiness scale to assess hedonic and eudaimonic in parallel terms and as independent variables are not being mutually exclusive. The result is that both eudaimonia and hedonia outcomes relate to life satisfaction (Huta & Waterman, 2014). A combination of both of them is associated with a great life satisfaction and the most diverse well-being.

### **Other Psychological Theories of Well-Being**

The constructs used in the term *well-being* are vague both in the definition and use of different terms and components. There are other theories of well-being having different core concepts and biases.

#### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow's basic needs were physiological, safety, love/belonging, and esteem (Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen, 2012). The tip of the pyramid is self-actualization.

It is the moments of extraordinary experience, once the basic needs are fulfilled. It includes peak experiences and profound moments of love, understanding, and rapture. At those moments, a person feels alive, whole, self-sufficient, and yet a part of the world. That theory is similar to the flow concept of Csikszentmihalyi.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory started in Deci and Ryan's study on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). The belief is that the purpose of any activity is to pursue its own needs, interest, and rewards. Deci and Ryan (2012) claimed that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important psychological factors for human beings. Fulfilling those needs cultivates the relationship between intrinsic goal attainment and well-being. The research of Molix and Nichols (2013) showed that the levels of well-being for individuals who have strong intrinsic motivation are in the relationship of growth and community. Nishimura and Suzuki (2016) further found that life goals could be differentiated among those relating to intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Self-determination theorists have emphasized that it is extremely important to understand the reason why individuals pursue their goals (Mann, De Ridder, & Fujita, 2013). Vansteenkiste and Ryan (2013) claimed that the ability to fulfill basic psychological needs is the key difference between intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Fulfilling basic psychological needs is essential for the development of psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2012). The results of a study done by Church et al. (2013) indicated those needs demonstrated cross-cultural values.

### **Organismic Integration Theory**

This is a subtheory of the self-determination theory. It proposes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are basic psychological needs. These needs are important for

the nurturing of internalization and integration (Reeve, 2012). Organismic integration theory describes the difference between intrinsic motivation, amotivation, and different forms of extrinsic motivations. Reeve (2012) indicated that intrinsic motivation is the most autonomous form of regulation; amotivation is the state of lacking the intention to act.

Further indications showed that extrinsic motivation could differ in the extent to which regulation is autonomous. Ünlü (2016) explained that there are external regulation, introjected regulation (accepting a motivation but not completely seeing it as one's own), identified motivation (similar to self-determined form of extrinsic motivation), and integrated motivation (autonomous form of extrinsic motivation). The authors believed that this organismic integration subtheory emphasizes the importance of the psychological needs of relatedness and autonomy competence for the nurturing of internalization and integration. Aunola, Vijařanta, Lehtinen, and Nurmi (2013) did research in regard to the role of relatedness and found that children who present capability in internalizing the regulation for positive school-related behaviors are connected and well-cared for by their parents. It can be psychologically harmful not to fulfill these important needs (Aunola et al., 2013).

### **Seligman's Well-Being Theory**

Seligman's well-being theory indicated that happiness is not solely derived from external, momentary pleasure. Seligman's theory originally contained positive emotion, engagement, and meaning for happiness (Seligman, 2011). It is known as the authentic happiness theory. The dimensions of pleasure and of meaning in this model have been equated with hedonia and eudaimonia respectively. Seligman recently added positive

relationship and facets of achievement into the original theory (Seligman, 2011). The theory now emphasizes *well-being* instead of *happiness* in order to reflect the multifaceted nature of human flourishing. Seligman (2011) further indicated that the positive emotion element is wholly subjective, and that meaning, accomplishment, and relationships have objective and subjective components. Seligman claimed he is still in the process of developing measures to investigate the validity of his flourishing theory of well-being.

### **Ryff's Theory of Well-Being**

Ryff (2014) also reviewed the work of theorists dating back to Aristotle. That is the base for development of Ryff's formulation, consisting of self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations with others, autonomy, relationships, environmental mastery, and purpose in life as six characteristics of psychological well-being. In his recent study, he indicated that increasing evidence supports psychological well-being in reducing risk for disease and promoting length of life (Ryff, 2014).

Well-being is the status of being satisfied with the need for competence, autonomy, and feeling connected to others (Raibley, 2012). In many of Diener's works, hedonic well-being is used to represent subjective well-being (Vanhoutte, 2014). The hedonic approach has been the most extensively studied up to now (Chen, Jing, Hayes, & Lee, 2013). In contrast, Mann et al. (2013) supported well-being as pursuing decisive goals and striving to function fully. Although they have distinct constructs, the overall constructs of hedonia and eudaimonia are deeply related to each other (Chen et al., 2013). Hedonia and eudaimonia both capture the common ground shared by each other and are conceptually related to each other. They are not mutually exclusive (Henderson et al., 2013).

## Cultural Influences

When people discuss happiness and well-being, divergence of meaning becomes apparent. Some experiences of well-being are universal, such as fulfilling general basic needs, but beyond that, there are individual differences in interpretation and culture influences that can add to the broad interpretation of the term well-being (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). One of the principal elements that shape human values and behavior is culture, and this can have a significant impact on the interpretation and use of the term *well-being* (McMahan et al., 2014).

Agarwala et al. (2014) claimed culture impacts individuals' conceptions and meaning of well-being. It is important to explore people's conceptions of well-being in general, but account has to be taken of the influences of individuals' culture. Chebotareva (2015) indicated that *self* is the hyphen connecting SWB and culture. Chebotareva (2015) further indicated that different culture systems influence the meaning of happiness by the construction of self, daily life, and the social environment.

Keller (2012) claimed that people's conceptions are different according to the different cultures to which they belong. Kottke et al. (2016) suggested that well-being seems to be a collaborative project. Culture impacts what it means to be well or to experience well-being (Russell et al., 2013). Tay and Diener (2011) did a study on different cultures and human needs and concluded that social norms influence both people's behavioral and personality manifestations. Various research confirmed that other than cultural variations impact the meaning of SWB; they also influence individuals' achievement and maintenance of well-being (Cruwys, Haslam, Dingle, Haslam, & Jetten, 2014).

Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, and Tsui (2015) suggested that East Asian and Western conceptions of well-being are different. They viewed the individual-oriented SWB as the dominant view for Euro-Americans. In contrast, they termed the view of SWB for East Asians as the socially oriented conceptions of SWB, since East Asians focus on their moral duties to pursue happiness for the society.

### **The East Asian View of Happiness**

The East Asian view of individuality is bound to others. Uchida and Ogihara (2012) termed it as interdependent self, and Brindley (2011) termed it as socially oriented self. One appropriate way to describe the East Asian cultural conceptions of happiness is a self-cultivated person who diligently pursues happiness with the cooperation of others.

East Asian cultures lean toward interdependent self-construal and socially oriented approaches. They develop the self through interaction with others. These definitions help us to understand how the interactions between self and others impact human beings in their conceptions of well-being and in reactions to their daily activities. East Asians emphasize their relationships with others. The means of fulfilling obligations to the social group are very important to them (Lee, Leung, & Kim, 2014). Uchida and Ogihara (2012) affirmed that East Asian self is based on the relational construct. Interdependent self-construal is the sense of self in East Asian cultures. East Asian cultures believe that individuals' needs are met by interacting through social situations (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012).

In East Asia, self-representation is within one's social relationship, not specific individual attributes. Collective welfare over personal interests is the dominant

framework for many Asian cultures. Self-control, self-cultivation, and industrious performance are the keys to individual self-worth and happiness (Joshani, 2014b).

Cheon et al. (2013) suggested that one of the major characteristics for East Asian cultures conceptions is the role of obligation. East Asian cultures require that happiness be based on individuals' self-cultivation and fulfillment of their social obligations. They believe that social norms and group welfare must be enshrined as prime societal goals.

Instead of striving for personally mandated performance, socially desirable and culturally mandated achievements are primary characteristics of East Asian people (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). Consequently, even at a cost of an individual's core issues and personal welfare, the socially oriented cultural conceptions of SWB in East Asia, presented by the obligations of interdependent social relationships, promote the preeminent success of the collective and maintenance of social harmony as driving models for individual self-fulfillment. In contrast to Westerners, O'Mara, Gaertner, Sedikides, Zhou, and Liu (2012) found that Japanese people demonstrate self-criticism and a tendency of self-effacement. Qi (2015) claimed that that role obligation characteristic is concordant with Chinese Confucian's obligation-based moral discourse.

East Asian culture seems to search a dialectical balance between happiness and unhappiness (Joshani & Weijers, 2014). Ningchuan and Chen (2014) claimed that dialectical balance is the ancient yin-yang cosmological philosophy. Mauss, Tamir, Anderson, and Savino (2011) also indicated that happiness and unhappiness are dependent on each other.

Moon and Blackman (2014) mentioned that different cultural value constructions interpret outcomes of participation differently. Rudy et al. (2015) did a study of

Caucasian and Asian American children. They found cultural difference impacts children's enjoyment of activities by the choice to participate in the activity. Asian American children demonstrate positive in the group choice compared with individual choice. It is indicated by the attempts toward an activity, amount of time spent on an activity, liking of the activity, engagement in difficult activities, and success on the activity. In contrast, Caucasian children exhibit positive when the choice is personal. That finding further supports the notion that cultural factors moderate psychological needs (Hupper & So, 2013).

Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, and Galinha (2013) found similar responses from both the Chinese and American university students from the participants' answers to the question of *what is happiness*. Although both Chinese and American university students agree that happiness is a positive desire and inner state of mind, their interpretation is not the same. Chinese students are introspective and emphasize spiritual cultivation. They look for a life that has their sense of well-being and is balanced with social expectations. American students demonstrate that to be happy at the present time and in the physical sense are the keys. They emphasize that the most important value of life is happiness, and that they are against social restrictions.

Many researchers indicated that East Asian cultural conceptions of SWB are socially oriented, and Western cultural conceptions of SWB are individual-oriented (Hommerich & Klein, 2012). Yang, Stamatogiannakis, and Chattopadhyay (2015) argued that both socially oriented and individual-oriented culture elements could exist within the same individual. There are many cross-cultural analyses that find coexistence of the independent and interdependent (Lee, Kim, Golden, Kim, & Park, 2016). Han, Kim, and



Yoshiyuki (2016) claimed that there is a new composite self-evolving within Chinese culture. It is a Chinese construct of self-in-relation and correlated with the Western construct of the independent self. Steel and Lynch (2013) confirmed that the main cultural conceptions of SWB among the Chinese are socially oriented, but individual-oriented self recently integrates as part of self. Kolstad and Gjesvik (2014) claimed that both traditional Chinese culture and Western thought co-exist as bicultural-self. In view of today's social change in China, a well-educated younger generation of Chinese people may be leaning toward individual-oriented cultural conceptions of SWB in the same way as Western people (Tong, 2015). This contemporary Chinese culture contains a mix of traditional cultural impact, communist ideology, and westernized individualism (Steel & Lynch, 2013). At the same time, Western people seem to integrate some socially oriented views of SWB into their cultural conceptions of SWB.

This *bicultural self* of the younger generation of Chinese can explain that both independence and interdependence are the fundamental human needs. It seems that the conceptions of bicultural self contain both individual-oriented and socially oriented conceptions (Kolstad & Gjesvik, 2014). Kolstad and Gjesvik (2014) further suggested that researchers should look into the individual-oriented self in the modern Chinese culture.

### **The Western View of Happiness**

In contrast, Western cultures are more related to independent self-construal and are individual-oriented. This is characterized by a sense of the self based on self-actualization. The concept in Western theories of SWB is highly individualistic (Joshnloo, 2014b). De Leersnyder, Boiger, and Mesquita (2013) declared that North

American culture is based on the concept that emphasizes the importance of self-determination and individual rights. Independent self-construal is the sense of self in North America. It comes from the notion of believing in individuality. The study of Jeon, Shin, and Lee (2014) indicated that North Americans believe that they are independent, competent, and connect to others only through the shared separate existence of others. Jeon et al. (2014) named it as individual-oriented self, because those people view themselves each as a bonded, stable, coherent, and independent entity.

The key characteristic of conceptions of SWB is individual accountability in Western culture, believing that happiness is human nature and an in-dissociable feeling, and that happiness is everyone's own responsibility. Individual self-representations are the crucial point of North American characterization of SWB. Active and explicit are also distinct well-being characteristics of Western cultural conceptions. They mean that people should strive for happiness actively; the best ways of managing the external environment are through identifying the individual's potential and achieving goals. It should not jeopardize well-being in any way (Joshnloo, 2014b).

In particular, the American culture is a leading proponent of individual interests and rewards personal success (Steele & Lynch, 2013). In addition to social norms that encourage individual striving for and rewarding of achievement, the infrastructure of democracy and social equality in Western cultures and the constitution that upholds individual rights build the individual's personal accountability and actively strive for explicit pursuit of happiness as characteristics in North American society.

The best way of living out an independent existence is to adopt an active and explicit approach to happiness. This approach can be used to master and control the

external environment, to identify potentials, and to allow people to reach their goals. The elements of North American culture include taking risks, accepting the costs, and striving for happiness actively (Joshani, 2014b). Many studies indicated that physical health, self-esteem, and life satisfaction are closely related to happiness (Corey & Keyes, 2014; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Sabatini, 2014).

### **Conceptions of Well-Being in Different Societies**

Since people's conceptions are different based on the culture to which they belong, and cultural impacts what it means to be well, I further reviewed the articles done for the conceptions of well-being in different countries. Conceptions of well-being may not be the same among different societies. Different cultures may have different norms and different ideas about what is important to their society. Different cultural members have different ideas about the beliefs, desirability, behaviors, and outcomes of happiness. Cultures develop effectively to fulfill human needs; each culture's norms, values, practices, and cultural ideologies, however, are configured by ecological opportunities and restrictions (Haider, 2015).

There are very few empirical studies addressing conceptions of well-being in different populations (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). In 1995, Diener and Diener did a study to examine different cultures' structures and causes of SWB. The findings of their study indicate that self-esteem correlates with life satisfaction stronger in individualist than in collectivist cultures. Steele and Lynch (2013) also confirmed the same results and supported that finding. Individualistic cultures favor loose social networks in which individuals tend to themselves and their immediate families. Individualistic cultures

emphasize the importance of the individual and the individual's beliefs, emotions, feelings, and choices.

Collectivistic cultures place emphasis on the group's norms. Individuals need support from the group in society in exchange for loyalty. Uchida and Ogihara (2012) claimed harmony relationships relate to life satisfaction more strongly in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures. Individuals are willing to sacrifice their desires to the norms of the group. Furthermore, they found that there are tremendous differences when people judge their life satisfaction based on their feelings (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). People in individualistic countries consult their own effect when they evaluate how satisfied they are. Having frequent pleasant emotions is a predictor of life satisfaction in the individualistic societies. In contrast, cultural norms and family and friends' acceptance are the guidelines for evaluating life satisfaction in collectivist societies, where it seems that duty is more important than their personal desires. They follow their extended families and friends' bliss in collectivist societies. Even though the extended families and friends interfere with their life, they also provide social support when needed.

Research results supported the notion that relatedness has a significant impact on an individual's professional goals and the path to pursue them (Layous, Nelson, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Hui and Tsang (2012) indicated that they find differences in the mean levels of autonomy and competence in individualistic cultures. Jansen, Otten, Zee, and Jans' (2014) study showed autonomy and competence are strongly associated with subjective well-being when individuals feel connected to others.

Ishii, Kitayama, and Uchida (2014) reported that there is a close association between interpersonally engaging emotions and happiness in Japan. On the other hand, interpersonally disengaging emotions are strongly associated with happiness in the North American subject samples. Uchida and Ogihara (2012) also did research on American and Japanese college students. They asked participants to report how their self-esteem was influenced by different culturally and socially constructed conditions. That research found that the values of American college students are individualistic. The students are confident, determined, competent, tolerant, and adaptable; it showed they are independent and unique. Hofstede's (2013) prior study supported that finding; Americans have on average high scores in individualism. Uchida and Ogihara (2012) also found that American college students have low power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Those values allow Americans to approach cultural and social situations by conveying their successes and attempting to put themselves in positions of power and high status.

In contrast, Uchida and Ogihara (2012) found that the values of Japanese college students are dependable, persevering, self-motivated, and focused on shame. The students also show a tendency toward uncertainty avoidance in examining social and institutional structures. Japanese college students work to both fulfill their social obligations and to understand their role in the social context (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). Many researchers also found that there are differences between Japanese and North American cultural values in self-evaluation, emotion, well-being, and social practices (Elliot et al., 2012; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012).

The Japanese's sense of self relates to their responsibility and interactions with their collective society. On the other hand, North Americans view themselves as unique,

with their sense of self relating to their individuality and success. The finding of Elliot et al.'s (2012) research further showed that there are significant differences in the degree of pleasantness from a task depending on whether it is connected with a friend or a stranger in Korea.

It seems that the social element is the major factor in East Asia cultures. Uchida and Ogihara (2012) claimed that one of the major predictors of happiness in the East is based upon the connection between significant others and self. However, there are many different opinions among the cross-cultural researchers in terms of the concept of individualistic cultures being happier than collectivistic cultures (Ogihara & Uchida, 2014; Ye, Ng, & Lian, 2015). The results of the research done by Uchida and Ogihara (2012) presented the notion that there is substantial cultural variation in meanings of happiness. Mulligan and Scherer (2012) further indicated that there are cultural differences between East Asians and North Americans in the affectionate level of emotion.

One of the critical factors for the cultural differences in well-being is an economic factor. Stevenson and Wolfers (2013) found that even after control at the national income level, money predicts life satisfaction in poor countries more strongly than in rich countries. The degree of collectivism-individualism is the major indicator in SWB. The study of Kahneman and Deaton (2014) confirmed that statement. An analysis of a daily survey of 1,000 U.S. residents and more than 450,000 responses to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index in 2008 and 2009 indicated that education and income are highly related with life satisfaction, and low income impacts low emotional well-being and life satisfaction (Kahneman & Deaton, 2014). In addition, the Amish, Inughuit, and

Maasai reports indicated the same life satisfaction as the richest Americans (Kamberi, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2015). It seems that individual financial and economic growth are both not sufficient as adequate indicators of well-being. Statistics indicate that there is no change in life satisfaction even as the GDP has tripled over the past 50 years in the United States (Van der Merme, 2015). In contrast, there is a dramatic increase in the rate of depression and anxiety (Hidaka, 2012). Tov and Diener (2013) stated that although social relationships might be a critical factor, material and money are not necessary for well-being for the above-mentioned groups (Kahneman & Deaton, 2014).

Riley (2016) postulated that many features of well-being, such as sense of mastery, self-regard, relationship, and purpose of life, are universal. It seems that the causes of well-being are the same for all people. The self-determination theory also supported the idea that well-being depends on the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, relationships, and relatedness to human innate psychological needs (Riley, 2016). This provides the basis for people to compare the impact of culture among different societies. It can indicate the different status of meaning, life purpose, autonomy, and relationship that appear in different cultures (Russell et al., 2013). Tov and Deiner (2013) further indicated that although it is universal to maintain biological emotions, culture could impact them and alter their development.

Although the broad dimensions of well-being may be universal if framed at a sufficiently abstract level, their detail and the way the different aspects, components, or dimensions fit together and interact reflect cultural particulars. Well-being has both inner experiential aspects and outer social enactments. Both of which are mediated and interpreted by culturally shaped values. Cultural conceptions of well-being are often

linked to the socio-moral order of society. There is promising evidence suggesting potential cultural impact on lay conceptions (McMahan et al., 2013). Mathews (2012) stated that an individual's cultural beliefs and social contexts influence the nature of well-being beliefs. Conceptions of well-being are likely to differ among cultures. Chinese economic reform has already brought a dramatic economic increase for its people. Apparently, it even seems that due to the insecurities and uncertainties caused by economic reform and marketization, there is a negative impact on their well-being (Nella, Panagopoulou, Galanis, Montgomery, & Benos, 2015). It is time to look into how can researchers, society's leaders and policy makers help Chinese citizens to realize the importance and conceptions of well-being after this economic growth. This study provided a better understanding of the role of culture values' impact on the conceptions and experiences of well-being.

### **Conceptions of Well-Being and Experienced Well-Being**

Conceptions are beliefs and perceptions. Conceptions of well-being provide a framework of well-being. This well-being needs to convert to being well, such as actual experience (Tamir & Ford, 2012). The research question addressed the association between the dimensions of conceptions of well-being and the indicators of well-being.

An individual's psychological functioning and experienced well-being may well be influenced by the conceptions of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). In addition, research indicated that world benevolence beliefs affect beliefs about justice and religious beliefs associated with well-being (Chernev & Blair, 2015; Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner, & Prashar, 2013; Stroebe, Postmes, Tauber, Stegeman, & John, 2015). McMahan and Estes



(2011b) stated that conceptions of well-being might have connotations of the experience of well-being.

Currently, there is not much direct evidence of associations between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being. There are, however, findings of similar constructs in conceptions of well-being associated with multiple aspects of experienced well-being (Hupper & So, 2013). Similar to value, conceptions of well-being evaluate beliefs, and constructs of value associate with well-being reliably (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). In addition, Anić & Tončić (2013) reported that orientation to happiness is associated with life satisfaction. This research looked into the relationship between each dimension of conceptions of well-being and the actual experiences of well-being.

### **Summary**

The aim of this study was to convey the complexity of the field of well-being research and to offer a better understanding of what was meant by well-being. This review of literature provided the framework for investigating the professional definitions and lay conceptions of well-being. The section primarily explored the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to defining well-being, which have been the most fundamental of meanings and components of happiness, and later, well-being. The review also indicated, however, that though there is quite a bit of research available, there is no common agreement about the definition of the term, *well-being*. Well-being is conceptualized in varying ways depending on the discipline. This necessitates delving into the many definitions and models of well-being to ensure that there is more than fundamental understanding of the basis of the study.

The review indicated that more recent theories of well-being resonate earlier research on how conceptions of well-being have personal components that focus on happiness and fulfillment. There is also qualitative and quantitative data from previous research that suggests relative consistency between the different definitions and models of well-being.

The literature section included the many published psychological theories of well-being. Those are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the self determination theory, the organismic integration theory, Seligman's well-being theory, and Ryff's theory of well-being. These theories mostly affirm the hedonic and eudaimonic components of well-being. In addition, further findings reviewed were on well-being in relation to sense of achievement, community, and culture.

Hommerich and Klien's (2012) claim on how culture impacts an individual's conceptions and meanings of well-being necessitates the need to account for the influences of an individual's culture. The review revealed that though there is enough information on the various definitions of well-being, there is not much evidence on associations between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being. A better understanding on the meaning and views of well-being demands more qualitative and quantitative research on even more specific cultural and social domains. Hence, this study focused not only on empirical validation of previous studies on well-being, but also addressed the gap in research on conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being, specifically in the cultural and social context of China and the United States.

The following chapter outlines the research design and the method appropriate in comparatively examining the conceptions of well-being among the sample populations in

China and the United States. Chapter 3 also presents the descriptions of the target population, sample size, instrumentation, data collection, and analyses that were conducted to garner an understanding of well-being among Chinese and American college students.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the Chinese population's conception of well-being and potential relationships among the four dimensions and indicators of experienced well-being. I addressed two research questions in this study: (a) Do lay conceptions of well-being dimensions associate with any of the indicators of experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students? And (b) In Chinese undergraduate students, which aspect of well-being, eudaimonic or hedonic, has a stronger relationship with experienced well-being? In this chapter, I detail the research design, study sample, data collection, instrumentation, and analysis of the research conducted. I also discuss the rights of research participants.

### **Study Sample and Design**

Undergraduate students from different majors at a medium-sized university in China participated in this study after signing a cooperation agreement. This university is located in central-south China. The announcement of, and information regarding, this research was provided via postings of promotional material on school bulletin boards, at school seminars, and through the university's well-being club. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and participants were only required to be currently enrolled at university to be eligible to participate.

### **Sample Size Calculation**

To determine sample size, I used an a-prior sample calculator. Based on an anticipated effect size = .05, power = .80, and probability level = .05, I determined that 128 participants were the required sample size for the two-tailed hypothesis. Since there

were no published BWBS studies in China, I used an estimated effect size. The necessary sample size calculation for the predictor variables were  $\alpha = .05$ , a medium effect size of  $f^2 = .15$ , and power = .80 for multiple regression analysis. There were four independent variables. Ninety-seven participants were the required sample size for multiple regression. The medium-sized university had 12,000 currently enrolled students.

### **Participant Recruitment**

I recruited participants from throughout the university. They represented various disciplines, such as MBA, finance, economics, sociology, the arts, media, and computer sciences. Promotional materials for the project and information on the research were posted in various departments and on the campus bulletin boards. Students who were interested in participating were encouraged to contact me via telephone and/or e-mail. Participation was a strictly voluntary decision, and all participants completed a paper-and-pencil survey.

### **Data Collecting Procedures**

My goal in this study was to deploy a minimum of 400 questionnaires to the university participants. Promotional materials, posters, and outreach to the college well-being club were supplemented by three promotional seminars I gave to explain the details of the study, to answer any questions potential participants might have had beforehand, and to encourage the greatest survey response rate possible. Time, stress management, and people relations were the themes for the promotional seminars designed to attract students' interest to participate. Participants were encouraged to respond voluntarily to the survey. The first page of the survey was a consent form with a sentence at the end that

read: “To protect your privacy, no consent signature is required. Your completion of the survey will indicate your consent.”

### **Method**

Using the questionnaire, I sought simple descriptive demographic information and self-reporting measures of individual conceptions of well-being and indices of experienced well-being. I used the Chinese version of BWBS and multiple indices of experienced well-being for this study. I was responsible for clarifying the survey questions and collecting the completed questionnaires. My contact information was listed on the promotional material and the survey form. The survey responses were entered and coded immediately upon completion. Duplicate copies of the password protected computer data file were maintained, and a hard copy of the data was kept in a separate secure location. I used regression imputation to filter the records for missing data.

### **Instrumentation**

I used a demographic questionnaire and six instruments to collect data from participants. The BWBS measured conceptions of well-being. The SWLS, MLQ-P, PANAS, SVS, and SHS measured experienced well-being.

### **Conceptions of Well-Being**

I used the BWBS to understand conceptions of well-being by lay people. The BWBS developed by McMahan and Estes (2011a) measures people’s conceptions of well-being. The authors used exploratory factor analytical methods and identified four dimensions. At the start, they drafted 50 items as an initial item pool for potential use and refinement. Thirty (30) items were selected and further refined by administering them to a group of university students for factor analyses with varimax rotation (McMahan &

Estes, 2011a). The principal components analysis suggested that four dominant factors are required aspects of the experience of well-being. They are Beliefs about Well-Being Scale experience of pleasure (BWBS-EP), Beliefs about Well-Being Scale avoidance of negative experience (BWBS-AN), Beliefs about Well-Being Scale self-development (BWBS-SD), and Beliefs about Well-Being Scale contribution to others (BWBS-CO). The former two dimensions represent hedonic components of well-being, while the latter two dimensions represent eudaimonic components of well-being. Averaging the pleasure experience and avoidance of negative experience subscales demonstrates a high level hedonic (BWBS-HED) subscale (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). Averaging the contribution and self-development subscales indicates a higher-order eudaimonic subscale (BWBS-EUD). McMahan and Estes further polished the BWBS to improve the stability. The 16-item BWBS was the final version, with four items in each subscale instrument (see Appendix A).

McMahan and Estes used confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the items on the BWBS formed a single common factor, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81 was calculated as an indicator of internal consistency. McMahan and Estes (2011a) demonstrated that the validity of convergent, discriminant, and test-retest reliability of the BWBS are supported. Model fit indices included root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), and the normed fit index (NFI). The value of RMSEA was less than .08, and the values of CFI, GFI, and NFI were greater than .90. Bivariate correlations were used for convergent and discriminant validity. Test-retest correlation for BWBS subscales was from .54 to .65 ( $p < .05$ ).

I had this scale translated into Chinese as a reference for the Chinese sample population (see Appendix B). The Brislin translation and back-translation procedure is perhaps the best known translation method, which I followed (see Squires et al., 2013). Three Chinese translators proficient in English translated the complete English version of BWBS into Mandarin, and then back-translated them independently. Their translations included item content, response options, and instructions. The first translator was a psychologist and researcher; the second translator had no psychology training or background. Their joint work covered reliable equivalence from a measurement perspective, and resolved ambiguous meanings in the original questionnaire. The third translator conducted the back-translation. Any discrepancies found were reviewed together as a group by all three translators, who then reached a consensus. I sent McMahan a copy of the Chinese version of BWBS, and he approved it for use (see Appendix C) in this current study. A Likert-type response format was used as McMahan (McMahan & Estes, 2011a) designed, where 1 was *strongly disagree*, and 7 was *strongly agree*. Participants identified the degree to which they selected in the four subscales of BWBS.

### **Experienced Well-Being**

To measure experienced well-being, I used several instruments to measure various aspects of that construct. Experienced well-being is a multifaceted construct, and a single instrument cannot capture the full range of experiences of well-being (Sears et al., 2014). Different cultural contexts may impact the well-being experience for various individuals (Jahoda, 2012). A single instrument cannot capture enough positive psychological functions to evaluate experienced well-being (Sears et al., 2014). A single



instrument may provide incomplete information or misleading research results in the experience of well-being if the study is only measuring a few aspects of well-being. Correspondingly, I used five scales to investigate experienced well-being: the SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985), the MLQ-P (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), the SVS (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), and the SHS (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Various Chinese researchers had previously provided the translated Chinese versions of those scales. The Brislin translation and back-translation procedure was followed for all Chinese version scales (Squires et al., 2013). I either adopted or adapted those Chinese versions of the instruments. Each instrument is discussed in detail below.

### **Life Satisfaction**

The SWLS (see Appendix D) was one of the scales I used to measure participants' experienced well-being (Diener, Emmons et al., 1985). It is designed to address global judgments of individuals' quality of life and to measure participants' overall satisfaction with their life. It measures individuals' integrated judgment of life satisfaction as a whole. It does not involve constructs such as positive affect or loneliness (Diener, Emmons et al., 1985). The SWLS uses a five-item and 7-point Likert-type response format measuring participants' cognitive assessments of overall satisfaction with life (1 = *strongly disagree* through 7 = *strongly agree*). A total score ranges from 5 to 35. Scores from 5 to 9 indicate extreme dissatisfaction with life, from 10 to 14 indicate dissatisfaction with life, and from 15 to 19 indicate slight dissatisfaction with life. A score of 20 is neutral. Scores from 21 to 25 indicate slight satisfaction with life, from 26 to 30 indicate satisfaction with life, and from 31 to 35 indicate extreme satisfaction with

life. Since there were no specific domains named in the scale, the participants were free to evaluate based on their own conceptions to feel what made the most significant contributions to their satisfied life (see Diener, Emmons et al., 1985). Hundreds of researchers have used this scale in their research studies. Excellent psychometric properties have been demonstrated previously (Pavot & Diener, 2008). The Cronbach's coefficient alphas were from 0.79 to 0.89 (Pavot & Diener, 2008), and test-retest reliabilities were 0.82 over 2 months (Diener, Howritz, & Emmons, 1985). There was evidence for the convergence of SWLS with Delighted-Terrible scale and Fordyce Global Scale from 0.60 to 0.82. The scale was free to use with credit attribution given to its authors, which allowed translations to other languages. The Chinese version of SWLS that I used for this study was provided by Bai Xinwen (Bai, Wu, Zheng, & Ren, 2011) (see Appendix E). Their study evaluated the psychometric properties of the SWLS in mainland of China. It has been validated with a nationally representative Chinese sample of 4,795 (Bai et al., 2011). The Cronbach's coefficient alphas for all items ranged from 0.84 to 0.87 (Bai et al., 2011).

### **Vitality**

Subjective vitality is a dynamic and phenomenological state. It is the positive feeling of an individual having energy to him/herself. Rouse et al. (2015) indicated vitality is an aspect of eudaimonic well-being. They also considered that being vital is one of the major factors of psychological well-being.

SVS (The Subjective Vitality Scale) (see Appendix F) was used to measure vigor and aliveness (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). It also measures mental and physical vitality. The SVS contains seven items and is a 7-point Likert-type response format, measuring

from 1 = *not at all* through 7 = *very true*. Greater feelings of vitality are indicated by higher scores. Ryan and Frederick (1997) demonstrated that good psychometric properties of SVS have been identified. Bostic, Rubio, and Hood (2000) used a large sample (two groups) and SEM to assess construct validity to test the model proposed by Ryan and Frederick and to validate it on second data set. The results did indicate the SVS measures on construct and vitality. It has been proved to show good psychometric properties (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). It also demonstrated internal consistency  $\alpha = 0.85$  (McMahan & Estes, 2011b). The researcher adapted the Chinese version of the scale from Wong, Li, Sun, and Xu (2014) (see Appendix G).

### **Meaning in Life**

The MLQ-P subscale (The Meaning in Life Questionnaire–Presence) (see Appendix H) was used to measure the presence of meaning and life purposes for this study (Steger et al., 2006). MLQ contains two five-item subscales: (1) the MLQ-P measures presence of meaning in life, and (2) the MLQ-S measures the search for meaning in life. The MLQ-P subscale measures an individual's subjective sense that his/her life is meaningful through personal growth self-appraisals, and altruistic and spiritual behaviors. Items are answered on a 7-point Likert-type response format, where 1 equals *absolutely untrue* through 7 equals *absolutely true*. The larger number of the scores demonstrates a better presence of meaning in life. This instrument has been shown to have a good psychometric property. Steger et al. (2006) indicated both subscales are reliable. The Cronbach's alpha values for the MLQ-P subscale ranged from 0.82 to 0.86; the MLQ-S subscale was from 0.86 to 0.87 (Steger et al., 2006). Steger et al. (2006) also indicated the validity of the construct, convergent, and discriminant of the instrument.

They used confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to assess the validity. The high convergent correlations ranged from 0.61 to 0.74, indicating MLQ-P focused on the same constructs with life satisfaction, positive affect, extraversion, and agreeableness (Steger et al., 2006). The Chinese version of MLQ-P was provided by Wang (Wang & Dai, 2008) (see Appendix I) and had been validated with 370 Chinese university students and proven to be an excellent measure of meaning in life in general Chinese populations (Wang & Dai, 2008). The overall internal consistence of the MLQ-P is  $\alpha = 0.85$  (Wang & Dai, 2008).

### **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule**

The PANAS was used to measure participants' emotions during the past week, measuring the impact of positive and negative effects on a person (Watson et al., 1988) (see Appendix J). It demonstrates excellent validity and is the scale used most widely for measuring positive and negative affect (McMahan & Estes, 2011a; Tanay, Lotan, & Bernstein, 2012). This 20-item scale is a 5-point Likert-type response format, where 1 equals *very slightly or not at all* through 5 equals *extremely*. It requests participants to report the degree of their experiencing of both positive and negative emotions. The higher scores reflect strong emotional experience. During the various time reference periods, the Cronbach's alpha value for the negative affect scale ranged from 0.84 to 0.87; the positive affect scale ranged from 0.86 to 0.90 (Watson et al., 1988). From an 8-week period, test-retest correlations for negative affect were from 0.39 to 0.71 and for positive affect were from 0.47 to 0.80. The stability of positive affect and negative affect for the general time period was 0.68 and 0.71 accordingly. Watson et al. (1988) also reported that there were higher positive correlations with the negative affect scale than the negative correlations with positive affect scale in the measurement of general distress and

dysfunction, depression, and anxiety. The Chinese version was provided with permission by Wong (Wong et al., 2014) (see Appendix K).

### **Happiness**

The SHS (see Appendix L) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) measures global subjective levels of happiness. There are four items in this scale. It is a subjective measurement to evaluate individuals on whether or not they are happy people and is used globally. The first two items require participants using absolute rating to rate themselves as happy or not happy people. The other two items ask participants to identify to what extent they are or are not happy individuals. It is also a 7-point Likert-type response format, where 1 equals *strongly disagree* and 7 equals *strongly agree*. Higher numbers reflect greater subjective ratings of happiness. Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) reported that scale has good psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha was 0.86, and test-retest reliability was 0.72. The correlations were from 0.52 to 0.72 among the subjective happiness scale and other scales for convergent validity. The discriminant validity was demonstrated by very low correlations with academic success and other stressful events (Lyubomirsky, 2001). The four items in the SHS are the Affect Balance Scale, the Delighted-Terrible Scale, the Global Happiness Item, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The Chinese version of SHS has been validated with a pilot test done by Zhang, Wu, and Pan (2013) (see Appendix M). For the participants, 205 undergraduates (99 males and 106 females) were included in the pilot test and completed the four-item SHS. The results showed that there were high correlations ( $r = .58, p < .01$ ) between SHS and the Delighted-Terrible Scale. The results indicated that the Chinese version of the SHS had concurrent validity and could be used to measure the happiness of Chinese

undergraduates. Per Lyubomirsky's Internet web page, permission is granted for all noncommercial uses.

### **Demographics Questionnaire**

The demographic data requested on the Chinese questionnaire included gender, age, ethnicity, and if he/she was a single child status.

### **Statistical Analysis**

SPSS for Windows (version 23.0) and AMOS (version 23.0) were used for data analysis. All tests were two-tailed, and a  $p$ -value of  $\leq .05$  was considered statistically significant.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics for all variables were reported in the current research. The demographics, the means, and *SDs* for each of the four factors of well-being and the means and *SDs* for each facet of experienced well-being for Chinese samples were tabulated.

### **Psychometric Evaluations of the Chinese Version of BWBS**

First, the study tested the internal consistency levels for the subscales of BWBS. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to estimate the internal consistency levels. Secondly, the principal component analysis was used to examine the factor structure of BWBS. Thirdly, convergent validity of BWBS was examined by computing the correlation coefficients between subscale BWBS scores and measures of well-being (SWLS, SVS, MLQ-P, PANA, and SHS).

### Associations Between Lay Conceptions and Experienced Well-Being

Five different scales were used to capture many different aspects of experienced well-being. That step was used to evaluate the relationships between the conceptions of well-being dimensions and multiple indicators of experienced well-being. According to McMahan and Estes (2011b), well-being is a multifaceted construct, and a single instrument is not likely to capture enough of the various aspects of positive psychological functioning in order to evaluate experienced well-being. In addition, Mathews (2012) indicated the different cultural contexts impact experienced well-being. Therefore, measuring a number of aspects of well-being is required to provide a complete examination of the relationship between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being among individuals from Chinese undergraduate students.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to evaluate whether each subscale of the lay conceptions of well-being dimensions had a relationship with indicators of self-reported well-being experiences (see Figure 1).

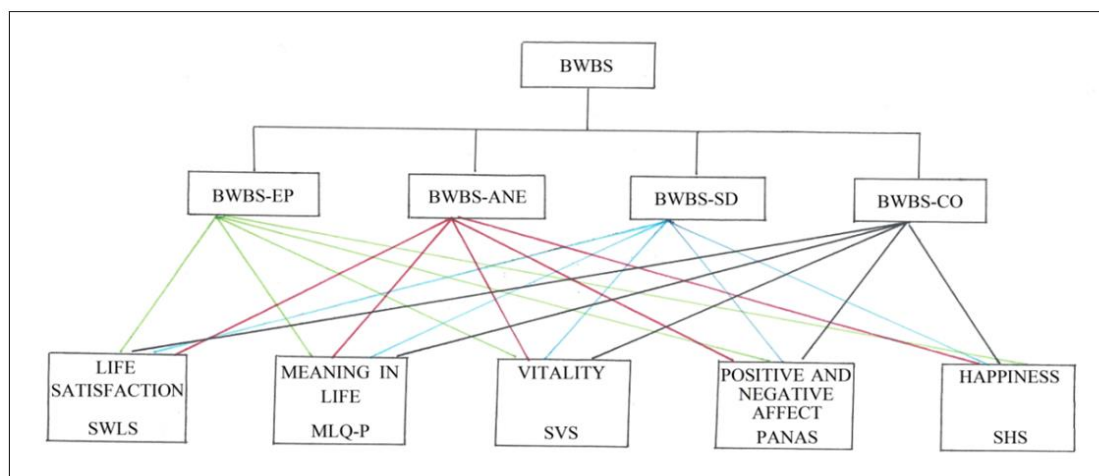


Figure 1. The relationship between lay conceptions of well-being dimensions and indications of self-reported well-being experience.

The regression analysis assessment also evaluated which aspect of well-being, eudaimonic or hedonic, had a stronger relationship with experienced well-being. The indicators of well-being experiences were life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, happiness, and meaning. They were dependent variables. The score of BWBS subscale was the predictor variables of interest.

### **Protection of Participants' Rights**

This study's protocol was approved by the IRB of Walden University (IRB approval #04-13-16-0047191) before data collection began. At the time of participant recruitment, the research background and the professional and public roles were outlined in the recruiting document. The data collection and consent procedures were designed to be anonymous. The participants' identities were completely protected. The study did not collect information regarding or based on educational or medical records. In addition, the researcher was the only one who accessed the raw data. The raw data was password protected and shall be kept in a secure location for 7 years. After that time, hard copies will be shredded, and USB drives will be destroyed. The researcher had no existing or expected relationship with any of the voluntary participants. The right to withdraw was allowed at any time during the process.

To protect participants' privacy, no consent signature was required. The completion of the survey indicated participants' consent.

### **Summary**

This chapter details the research design and methodology of the study sample, data collection, instrumentation, and analyses used to address the objectives of this study. The design was used to investigate the conceptions of well-being and their association



with various indicators of experienced well-being among samples from China. The participants' rights were protected.

In addition to demographic questionnaires, BWBS was used to investigate lay conceptions of well-being. Life satisfaction, vitality, positive and negative affect schedule, meaning in life, and happiness scales were used to examine the relationship between experienced well-being and conceptions of well-being among Chinese undergraduate students' samples. Measurement invariance analysis, *t* test, and correlative analysis were also used for this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the indicators of well-being experiences (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, happiness, and meaning) and lay conceptions of well-being. This chapter begins with a description of how the data were prepared, how constructs were operationalized, and the reliability of the measures of those constructs. I then offer a description of the participant sample, followed by an overview of the findings and a detailed description of the data analyses and results. This chapter ends with a brief summary and transition to the discussion.

### **Data Preparation**

Prior to conducting the analyses, I assessed the data set for missing data. Missing data points were replaced using the Linear Trend at Point function in SPSS, which uses a regression analysis to predict the most likely possible response. I then reviewed the data for accuracy and outliers. To test for the presence of outliers, I examined standardized values. Standardized values represent the number of standard deviations the value is from the mean. Values greater than 3.29 and less than -3.29 were considered to be outliers and were removed from the data set (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Overall, seven participants had standardized values greater than 3.29 or less than -3.29 on one or more of the study variables and were considered outliers on those scores. I removed those participants from the data set, leaving a total of 548 participants for all of the following data analyses. Cases with missing data were also examined for nonrandom patterns.

In order to use the data for the analyses, I created composite scores by taking the average of the items that made up each construct to create a single variable to represent

each of the constructs. Items B1 through B16 made up the scales of the BWBS (see Appendix B). Specifically, items B1, B2, B9, and B12 made up the experience of pleasure (BWBS-EP) construct. Items B4, B7, B14, and B16 made up the avoidance of negative experience (BWBS-AN) construct. Items B6, B8, B11, and B15 made up the self-development (BWBS-SD) construct. Items B3, B5, B10, and 13 made up the contribution to others (BWBS-CO) construct. The means of items C1 through C5 were computed to create a single score for the SWSL. The mean of items D1 through D6 made up the SVS. The mean of E1 through E5 made up the MLQ-P. I calculated the mean of items F1 through F20 to create a single score for the PANAS. The PANAS scale requested participants to indicate the degree of their experiences of any emotions, including both positive and negative emotions. Higher scores reflected a strong emotional experience. Finally, I used the mean of items G1 through G4 to create a single score for the SHS.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The data came from 548 participants. Descriptive statistics of means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) were conducted on the overall sample. Frequencies and percentages were conducted for categorical variables. Over half of the participants were female ( $n = 358, 65.3\%$ ). The majority of participants were between 18 to 25 years of age ( $n = 530, 96.7\%$ ). Most of the participants were evenly spread throughout their years at university: freshman ( $n = 186, 33.9\%$ ), sophomores ( $n = 182, 33.2\%$ ), and juniors ( $n = 139, 25.4\%$ ). There were slightly fewer participants from single child homes ( $n = 242, 44.2\%$ ) than those not coming from single child homes ( $n = 306, 55.8\%$ ). Frequencies and percentages for all categorical variables are outlined in Table 1. Means and standard

deviations were calculated for continuous variables (the composite scores). All means and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages for Demographic Variables (N = 548)*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	190	34.7
Female	358	65.3
Age		
18–25 years	530	96.7
25+ years	18	3.3
Grade		
Freshman	186	33.9
Sophomore	182	33.2
Junior	139	25.4
Senior	41	7.5
Single Child in Family		
Yes	242	44.2
No	306	55.8

*Note.* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for Composite Scores (N = 548)*

Variable	<i>M</i>	Possible Scores	<i>SD</i>
Experience of pleasure	5.21	1-7	1.18
Avoidance of negative experience	3.46	1-7	1.47
Self-development	5.11	1-7	1.20
Contribution to others	4.95	1-7	1.15
Satisfaction with life	3.70	1-7	1.11
Meaning in life	4.57	1-7	1.18
Positive and negative affect	2.91	1-5	0.49
Subjective vitality	4.65	1-7	1.00
Subjective happiness	3.69	1-7	0.70

I calculated Cronbach's alpha values for the items in each construct. The coefficients were evaluated using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2006), where values 0.9 or greater indicate excellent reliability, values ranging from 0.80 to 0.89 indicate good reliability, values ranging from 0.70 to 0.79 indicate acceptable reliability, values ranging from 0.60 to 0.69 indicate questionable reliability, values ranging from 0.50 to 0.59 indicate poor reliability, and values less than 0.50 indicate unacceptable reliability. Reliability was good for experience of pleasure ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), avoidance of negative experience ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), self-development ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), contribution to others ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ), satisfaction with life ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), and positive and negative affect ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ). Reliability was acceptable for subjective vitality ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ); however, reliability could be improved ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ) by removing item #2 from the scale. Reliability was questionable for meaning in life ( $\alpha = 0.69$ ) and unacceptable for happiness ( $\alpha = 0.47$ ). The items with the weakest items total correlation were removed and re-examined for the meaning in life and subjective happiness. I removed item #5 of meaning in life and item #4 of subjective happiness, and then reassessed reliability for those constructs. Reliability improved up to good for the meaning in life ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ) and subjective happiness ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ). Table 3 lists the final reliability for each of the constructs.

Table 3

*Reliability of Each Latent Construct*

Construct	No. of Items	$\alpha$
Experience of pleasure	4	0.83
Avoidance of negative experience	4	0.88
Self-development	4	0.83
Contribution to others	4	0.80
Satisfaction with life	5	0.81
Meaning in life	4	0.88
Positive and negative affect	20	0.87
Subjective vitality	6	0.82
Subjective happiness	3	0.75

**Psychometric Analyses****Exploratory Factor Analysis**

I conducted an exploratory analysis (EFA) with a principal component extraction and a varimax rotation to examine the factor structure for the Chinese BWBS. To determine the optimal number of factors, the eigenvalues were calculated for the correlation matrix of all constructs. The first four eigenvalues were 6.52, 2.80, 1.02, and 0.84. The Kaiser criterion states that the optimal number of factors is given by the number of eigenvalues above 1. However, the Kaiser rule is not absolute and frequently does not produce the most optimal result (Van der Eijk & Rose, 2015). For this dataset, I used eigenvalues above 0.80, because the four-factors model best fit the BWBS model and accounted for the most significant portion of the variance. The EFA showed that four factors could be drawn from each set of questions, suggesting that the optimal number of factors was four for that particular scale. The four-factors solution accounted for 69.9% of the total variance in the constructs. Table 4 shows the cumulative variance for each of

the factor variance up to four factors. Table 5 shows the rotated factor loadings for a four-factors solution.

Table 4

*Cumulative Variance for a Four-Factors Solution (Experience of Pleasure, Avoidance of Negative Experience, Self-Development, and Contribution to Others)*

Source	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
SS loadings	6.52	2.80	1.02	0.84
Proportion of variance	40.77	17.52	6.39	5.23
Cumulative variance	40.77	58.29	64.67	69.90

### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to see if the observed and latent variables for the overall model would be a good fit. Although there is argument among researchers as to whether or not an EFA and CFA should be in the same sample, the same sample was used for this study to meet the purpose of testing the validity of the BWBS ( see Gunnell, Brune, Wing, & Belanger, 2015; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2013). The items B1, B2, B9, and B12 were entered under the latent variable for BWBS-Experience of Pleasure. The items for B4, B7, B14, and B16 were entered under the latent variable for BWBS-Avoidance of Negative Experience. The items for B6, B8, B11, and B15 were entered under the latent variable for BWBS-Self-Development. The items for B3, B5, B10, and B13 were entered under the latent variable for BWBS-Contribution to Others.

Table 5

*Rotated Factor Loadings for a Four-Factors Solution (Experience of Pleasure, Avoidance of Negative Experience, Self-Development, and Contribution to Others)*

BWBS item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
<b>Experience of Pleasure</b>				
01 A great amount of pleasure	.76	-.01	.41	.10
02 Experiencing a great deal of sensual pleasure	.84	.11	.18	.17
09 Experiencing euphoria and pleasure	.49	.06	.53	.20
12 Pleasurable experiences	.46	-.05	.62	.25
<b>Avoidance of Negative Experience</b>				
04 Not experiencing hassles	.18	.84	.03	.07
07 Not experiencing negative emotions	.04	.82	.09	.06
14 A lack of unpleasant experiences	-.01	.87	.09	.07
16 A lack of painful experiences	-.03	.87	.07	.07
<b>Self-Development</b>				
06 Working to achieve one's true potential	.19	.17	.75	.13
08 The identification and cultivation of one's strengths	.27	.12	.83	-.03
11 The exertion of effort to meet life's challenges	.16	-.04	.69	.44
15 A high degree of self-knowledge	.08	.13	.71	.16
<b>Contribution to Others</b>				
03 Living in ways what benefit others	.54	.13	.23	.52
05 Making the world a better place	.24	.23	.18	.78
10 Being a positive influence within the community	.33	-.01	.66	.38
13 Contribution to society	.11	.04	.54	.65

*Note.* The items have been reordered to group them with their postulated factor. Rotation was made with Varimax rotation. The numbers under the BWBM item are the number of each question.



The initial results of the CFA did not show good model fit [ $\chi^2(98) = 568.96, p < .001, CFI = .90, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .09$ ]. A significant  $p$ -value for the Chi-square test indicates that the observed covariance matrix is significantly different from the implied model covariance matrix. In order to improve model fit, modification indices were examined to determine which parameter constraints were significantly limiting the model fit of the observed covariance structure. Modification indices are indicators of how the model can be improved. The modification indices showed that certain error terms of the observed variables for all five latent variables could covary. The results of the CFA with the covariations showed improved fit, [ $\chi^2(90) = 377.84, p < .001, CFI = .94, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .08$ ]. A good model fit is defined as having CFI and TLI values greater than .9 (Kline, 2015) and an RMSEA value less or equal to .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The chi-square test showed that the model did not fit the data, but the chi-square test was based upon sample size. The larger the sample size, the more likely the chi-square test will be significant (Bergh, 2015). However, one of the assumptions of CFA is that a study has a large enough sample size, so it is more likely that the chi-square test will be significant. This indicates that the model with modification indices is a better fit. The fit statistics showed that the CFA was reasonably specified, even though the RMSEA was right at the cutoff point, which indicated that the model with the modification indices had good overall fit. A summary of the model iterations is given in Table 6.

Table 6

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices*

CFA	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
No MI	568.96	98	< .001	.90	.88	.09
MI	377.84	90	< .001	.94	.91	.08

*Note.* MI = Modification Indices.

**Convergent Validity**

To assess convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were calculated for the constructs in the model. The AVE value indicates the amount of variance in the indicator variables that is explained by the linear combination of each latent construct. The AVE values for each construct were calculated using Equation 1 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

$$AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2}{n}$$

That equation showed AVE values of 0.52 for BWBS-EP, 0.64 for BWBS-AN, 0.55 for BWBS-SD, and 0.49 for BWBS-CO. Table 7 outlines the AVE values for all constructs in the model specifications. Using the AVE cutoff value of .5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), those results indicated acceptable convergent validity for BWBS-EP, BWBS-AN, and BWBS-SD, but did not show convergent validity for the BWBS-CO construct. However, because that construct was so close to the cutoff point, it was still used in the analyses.

Table 7

*Average Variance Extracted for Each Construct*

	EP	AN	SD	CO
Model	0.52	0.64	0.55	0.49

*Note:* EP – BWBS-Experience of Pleasure; AN – BWBS-Avoidance of Negative Experience; SD – BWBS-Self-Development; CO – BWBS-Contribution to Others.

**Correlations**

The correlations between all of the constructs, as well as the items of the BWBS and the constructs of that scale, were examined. Table 8 shows the results of the inter-correlations of conceptions of well-being, Table 9 shows the results of inter-correlations of experienced well-being, and Table 10 shows the results of correlations between conceptions and experienced well-being. Table 11 shows the results of the correlations between the BWBS items and constructs.

Table 8

*Intercorrelations of Conceptions of Well-Being*

	EP	AN	SD	CO
EP	–	.15	.68	.72
AN	.15	–	.20	.24
SD	.68	.20	–	.71
CO	.72	.24	.71	–

*Note:* EP - Experience of Pleasure; AN – Avoidance of Negative Experience; SD – Self-Development; CO – Contribution to Others. All are significant at  $p < .01$ .

Table 9

*Intercorrelations of Experienced Well-Being*

	SWSL	MLQ	PANA	SVS	SHS
SWLS	–	.45	.28	.44	.44
MLQ-P	.45	–	.22	.47	.33
PANAS	.28	.22	–	.24	.15
SVS	.44	.47	.24	–	.43
SHS	.44	.33	.15	.43	–

*Note:* SWSL – Satisfaction with Life Scale; MLQ-P – Meaning in Life Questionnaire – Present Subscale; PANAS – Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; SVS – Subjective Vitality Scale; SHS – Subjective Happiness Scale. All are significant at  $p < .01$ .

Table 10

*Correlations Between Conceptions (Columns) and Experienced Well-Being (Rows)*

	EP	AN	SD	CO
SWLS	.19	.41	.19	.29
MLQ-P	.36	.17	.46	.44
PANAS	.03	.28	.08	.09*
SVS	.41	.19	.43	.48
SHS	.28	.21	.23	.27

*Note:* EP – Experience of Pleasure; AN – Avoidance of Negative Experience; SD – Self-Development; CO – Contribution to Others; SWSL – Satisfaction with Life Scale; MLQ – Meaning in Life Questionnaire–Present Subscale; PANAS – Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; SVS – Subjective Vitality Scale; SHS – Subjective Happiness Scale. All are significant at  $p < .01$  except \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 11

*Correlations Between Beliefs About Well-Being Scale Items and Constructs*

BWBS item	BWBS-EP	BWBS-AN	BWBS-SD	BWBS-CO
B1	.85			
B2	.79			
B9	.79			
B12	.82			
B4		.85		
B7		.84		
B14		.87		
B16		.87		
B6			.85	
B8			.84	
B11			.78	
B15			.77	
B3				.78
B5				.77
B10				.80
B13				.81

*Note:* BWSB-EP – Experience of Pleasure; BWBS-AN – Avoidance of Negative Experience; BWBS-SD – Self-Development; BWBS-CO – Contribution to Others. Blank cells indicate where parameters have been constrained to zero in this model. All are significant at  $p < .01$ .

### Multiple Regressions

In order to assess the predictive value of the subscales of the BWBS on the indicators of well-being experiences (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, happiness, and meaning), five multiple regressions were utilized. The assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were assessed. The assumption of normality and linearity was assessed through the use of Q-Q plots. For the assumption of normality and linearity to be met, the quantiles of the residuals must not strongly deviate from the theoretical quantiles. Strong deviations could indicate that the parameter estimates are unreliable. The Q-Q plots for each dependent variable are

presented in Appendix N. The assumption of homoscedasticity was assessed by plotting the model residuals against the predicted model values. The assumption is met if the points appear randomly distributed with a mean of zero and no apparent curvature. Figures 6 through 10 present a scatterplot of predicted values and model residuals (see Appendix O). Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. High VIFs indicate increased effects of multicollinearity in the model. VIFs greater than 6 are cause for concern, whereas VIFs of 10 should be considered the maximum upper limit. All predictors in the regression model had (VIF) less than 10. Table 12 presents the VIF for each predictor for each model.

Table 12

*Variance Inflation Factors for the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors (EP, AN, SD, and CO)*

Variable	VIF
Experience of pleasure	2.34
Avoidance of negative experience	1.07
Self-development	2.28
Contribution to others	2.58

The results of the linear regression model with life satisfaction were significant,  $F(4, 543) = 36.09, p < .001, R^2 = 0.21$ , indicating that approximately 21% of the variance in life satisfaction was explainable by experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others. Based on that sample, a 1-unit increase of avoidance of negative experience significantly predicted life satisfaction,  $B = 0.28, t(543) = 9.31, p < .001$  (see Table 13). That indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of avoidance of negative experience would result in a 0.28-unit change in life

satisfaction. Contribution to others significantly predicted life satisfaction,  $B = 0.23$ ,  $t(543) = 3.98$ ,  $p < .001$ . That indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of contribution to others would result in a 0.23-unit change in life satisfaction.

The results of the linear regression model with meaning in life were significant,  $F(4, 543) = 43.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.24$ , indicating that approximately 24% of the variance in meaning in life was explainable by experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others. Self-development significantly predicted meaning in life,  $B = 0.28$ ,  $t(543) = 5.06$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Table 14). The results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of self-development would result in a 0.28-unit change in meaning in life. Contribution to others significantly predicted meaning in life,  $B = 0.24$ ,  $t(543) = 3.93$ ,  $p < .001$ . Those results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of contribution to others would result in a 0.24-unit change in meaning in life.

Table 13

*Multiple Linear Regression With the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors Predicting Satisfaction with Life (SWLS)*

Variable	$B$	$SE$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Experience of pleasure	-0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.13	.900
Avoidance of negative experience	0.28	0.03	0.37	9.31	< .001*
Self-development	-0.05	0.05	-0.05	-0.91	.365
Contribution to others	0.23	0.06	0.24	3.98	< .001*

*Note.*  $F(4, 543) = 36.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.21$ . \* $p < .05$ .

Table 14

*Multiple Linear Regression With the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors  
Predicting Meaning in Life (MLQ-P)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experience of pleasure	-0.01	0.06	-0.01	-0.15	.882
Avoidance of negative experience	0.04	0.03	0.05	1.35	.177
Self-development	0.28	0.06	0.29	5.06	< .001*
Contribution to others	0.24	0.06	0.24	3.93	< .001*

*Note:*  $F(4, 543) = 43.12, p < .001, R^2 = 0.24. *p < .05.$

The results of the linear regression model with positive and negative affect were significant,  $F(4, 543) = 12.02, p < .001, R^2 = .08$ , indicating that approximately 8% of the variance in positive and negative affect was explainable by experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others.

Avoidance of negative experience significantly predicted positive and negative affect,  $B = 0.09, t(543) = 6.45, p < .001$  (see Table 15). Those results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of avoidance of negative experience would result in a 0.09-unit change in positive and negative affect.

Table 15

*Multiple Linear Regression With the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors  
Predicting Positive and Negative Affect (PANAS)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experience of pleasure	-0.03	0.03	-0.06	-0.98	.330
Avoidance of negative experience	0.09	0.01	0.27	6.45	< .001*
Self-development	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.52	.602
Contribution to others	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.63	.527

*Note:*  $F(4, 543) = 12.02, p < .001, R^2 = 0.08. *p < .05.$



The results of the linear regression model with subjective vitality were significant,  $F(4, 543) = 46.06, p < .001, R^2 = 0.25$ , indicating that approximately 25% of the variance in subjective vitality was explainable by experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others. Avoidance of negative experience significantly predicted Subjective Vitality,  $B = 0.05, t(543) = 2.11, p = .035$ . The results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of avoidance of negative experience would result in a 0.05-unit change in subjective vitality. Self-development significantly predicted subjective vitality,  $B = 0.12, t(543) = 2.56, p = .011$  (see Table 16). Those results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of self-development would result in a 0.12-unit change in subjective vitality. Contribution to others significantly predicted subjective vitality,  $B = 0.25, t(543) = 4.78, p < .001$ . The findings indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of contribution to others would result in a 0.25-unit change in subjective vitality.

Table 16

*Multiple Linear Regression With the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors Predicting Vitality (SVS)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experience of pleasure	0.08	0.05	0.10	1.75	.080
Avoidance of negative experience	0.05	0.03	0.08	2.11	.035*
Self-development	0.12	0.05	0.14	2.56	.011*
Contribution to others	0.25	0.05	0.28	4.78	< .001*

*Note:*  $F(4, 543) = 46.06, p < .001, R^2 = 0.25$ . \* $p < .05$ .

The results of the linear regression model with subjective happiness were significant,  $F(4, 543) = 16.76, p < .001, R^2 = 0.11$ , indicating that approximately 11% of the variance in subjective happiness is explainable by experience of pleasure, avoidance

of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others. Experience of pleasure significantly predicted subjective happiness,  $B = 0.10$ ,  $t(543) = 2.76$ ,  $p = .006$  (see Table 17). The results indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of experience of pleasure would result in a 0.10-unit change in subjective happiness. Avoidance of negative experience significantly predicted subjective happiness,  $B = 0.07$ ,  $t(543) = 3.66$ ,  $p < .001$ . Those findings indicated that on average, every 1-unit increase of avoidance of negative experience would result in a 0.07-unit change in subjective happiness.

Table 17

*Multiple Linear Regression With the Four Conceptions of Well-Being Factors Predicting Happiness*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Experience of pleasure	0.10	0.04	0.17	2.76	.006*
Avoidance of negative experience	0.07	0.02	0.15	3.66	< .001*
Self-development	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.21	.834
Contribution to others	0.06	0.04	0.10	1.61	.109

*Note:*  $F(4, 543) = 16.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.11$ . \* $p < .05$ .

### Research Question One

In order to assess the first research question, the five regressions used to measure the relationship of the lay conceptions of well-being and the indicators of experienced well-being were examined. The results of the first regression showed that there was a significant association of avoidance of negative experience and contribution to others with life satisfaction. The results of the second regression showed that there was a significant association of self-development and contribution to others with meaning in life. The results of the third regression showed that there was a significant association of avoidance of negative experience with positive and negative affect. The results of the

fourth regression showed that there was a significant association of avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others with subjective vitality. Finally, the results of the fifth regression showed that there was a significant association of experience of pleasure and avoidance of negative experience with subjective happiness. Those results suggest that the first research question was partially supported, as there were significant relationships between some of the lay conceptions of well-being and the experience of well-being.

### **Research Question Two**

In order to assess the second research question, the five regressions used to measure the relationship of the lay conceptions of well-being and the indicators of the experience of well-being were examined once more. The regressions were analyzed to see if the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, or the eudaimonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization, was strongly associated with the indicators of the experience of well-being. The results of the first regression showed that only one hedonic (avoidance of negative experience) and one eudaimonic (contribution to others) aspects were significantly associated with life satisfaction. The results of the second regression showed that the eudaimonic aspects (self-development and contribution to others) were significantly associated with meaning in life. The results of the third regression showed that one hedonic aspect (avoidance of negative experience) was significantly associated with positive and negative affect. The results of the fourth regression showed that one hedonic (avoidance of negative experience) and two eudaimonic (self-development and contribution to others) aspects were significantly associated with subjective vitality. The

results of the fifth regression showed that two hedonic (experience of pleasure and avoidance of negative experience) aspects were significantly associated with subjective happiness. The overall results suggested that eudaimonic and hedonic aspects were similarly associated with the experience of well-being, as there were five significant eudaimonic aspects and five significant hedonic aspects overall (see Table 18). However, each experience of well-being was associated differently with eudaimonic and hedonic aspects.

Table 18

*Which Eudaimonic and Hedonic Aspects Are Strongly Associated With the Experience of Well-Being*

	Hedonic		Eudaimonic	
	Experience of Pleasure	Avoidance of negative experience	Contribution to others	Self-Development
Life satisfaction		+	+	
Meaning in life			+	+
Positive & negative affect		+		
Subjective Vitality		+	+	+
Subject happiness	+	+		

In order to further assess Research Question 2, the participants' responses were recoded into aspects of eudaimonia and hedonia. First, participants' scores were summed into separate eudaimonic (sum of CO and SD items) and hedonic (sum of EP and AN items) variables. Second, a median split was computed for each variable to dichotomize the variables into high (1) or low (0). Third, the two variables for eudiamonic and

hedonic aspects were combined to create one variable with four categories of low and high combinations.

To further explore the aspects of hedonic and eudaimonic, the means were compared using a one-way ANOVA on each experience of well-being. Each of the ANOVAs was statistically significant (all  $ps < .05$ ). The High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group scored significantly higher on the SWLS and the SHS. On the MLQ-P and the SVS, the High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group scored significantly higher than the Low Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic and High Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic groups, but not significantly higher than the Low Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group. For the PANAS, the High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group scored significantly higher than the Low Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic and Low Hedonic/High Eudaimonic groups, but not higher than the High Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic group. Overall, the High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group had significantly higher experiences of well-being compared to most of the other groups. Means and the results of the ANOVAs are presented in Table 19.

### **Summary**

This chapter began with a description of how the data were cleaned. The data were checked for outliers, and the results found that seven participants needed to be removed from the data set for having non-normal patterns. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then done to see how many factors would be optimal to represent the scale of the BWBS. It was determined that four factors best fit the model. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then run to see if the variables and the constructs would be a good fit for the model. After applying the modification indices, acceptable fit was achieved.

Convergent validity was found for all factors except contribution to others, but the value was close enough to the cutoff score to be used for the analyses.

Table 19

*Means and ANOVA Results for Eudaimonic and Hedonic Categories by Experience of Well-Being*

Variable	Low Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic	Low Hedonic/High Eudaimonic	High Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic	High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic	<i>F</i>
Satisfaction with Life	3.31	3.39	3.77	4.16	25.00*
Meaning in Life	4.05	4.99	4.25	5.04	33.79*
Positive & Negative Affect	2.81	2.83	2.96	3.02	7.43*
Subjective Vitality	4.16	4.83	4.47	5.13	39.57*
Subjective Happiness	3.48	3.64	3.68	3.92	14.98*

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ .

Multiple linear regressions were used to see if the subscales of the BWBS significantly predicted the indicators of well-being experiences (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, happiness, and meaning in life). After all of the assumptions were tested and met, the significant predictors were different for each of the well-being experiences. Avoidance of negative experience and contribution to others were significant predictors of life satisfaction. Self-development and contribution to others were significant predictors of meaning in life. Avoidance of negative experience was a significant predictor of positive and negative affect. Contribution to others was a significant predictor of subjective vitality, and avoidance of negative experience was a significant predictor of subjective happiness. In Chapter Five, those results will be related

back to previous literature and related to the theoretical framework of this study.

Suggestions for future research and a synthesis of the findings will also be provided in that chapter.

## Chapter 5: Summary

### Introduction

In 2012, the Chinese 18th Party Congress identified individual well-being and the well-being of the nation as two of the most important goals for China (Hu, 2012).

However, before these grand-national goals can be fulfilled, it is necessary to understand what well-being means for the Chinese population, and how this understanding relates to experienced well-being. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among the indicators of lay conceptions of well-being (experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, contribution to others, and self development) and experienced well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, happiness, vitality and meaning in life) among Chinese citizens. I selected an undergraduate student sample to obtain foundational base data.

The research questions on which this study was based are as follows: Do lay conceptions of well-being dimensions associate with any of the indicators of experienced well-being among Chinese undergraduate students? Among Chinese undergraduate students, which aspect of well-being, eudaimonic or hedonic, has a stronger relationship with experienced well-being?

The study results indicated that lay conceptions of well-being were associated with the indicators of experienced well-being. All of the dimensions of conceptions of well-being were strongly associated with one to four indicators of experienced of well-being. For example, avoidance of negative experience was strongly associated with four indicators of experienced well-being, and experience of pleasure was strongly associated with only one indicator of experienced well-being. The results also indicated that



eudaimonic and hedonic aspects played a similar role in relation to experienced well-being. These findings differed from the findings of previous researchers (McMahan & Estes, 2011a, 2011b; McMahan et al., 2013). Findings from those studies indicated that eudaimonic aspects of conceptions of well-being were associated with experienced well-being more highly for both U.S. and South Korean research participants (McMahan & Estes, 2011a, 2011b; McMahan et al., 2014). The results of my study of college undergraduates provides the foundation for an initial understanding of conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being for future study of other population groups in China.

### **Interpretation of the Findings and Discussion**

The current study reflects the content and measurement of lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being within a Chinese undergraduate sample. The results showed that conceptions of well-being are associated with experienced well-being in the Chinese population. They also showed the eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of lay conceptions of well-being had similar strength of association with experienced well-being. The findings were qualified by reliability considerations. The observed correlations might also be socially determinative. I discuss those results and influences further below.

#### **Reliability**

The Beliefs about Well-Being Scale (BWBS) has been used with U.S. and South Korean samples to assess conceptions of well-being. Mine was the first study to use BWBS with Chinese participants. Four factors, two representing hedonic and two representing eudaimonic approaches, were confirmed in this study. The results

demonstrated that all four dimensions of the BWBS scale appeared to have good internal reliability. Their Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.80 to 0.88.

Nevertheless, reliability was borderline questionable for two of the measures of experienced well-being: meaning in life and subjective vitality. Item number 5 of MLQ-P ("my life has no clear purpose") and item number 2 of SVS ("I don't feel very energetic") were in question because the reliability for subjective vitality was 0.75 and meaning in life was 0.69. After I deleted the questionable items from the MLQ-P and SVS scales, the reliability was improved to  $\alpha = 0.88$  and  $\alpha = 0.82$  respectively. The Chinese version of meaning in life I used for this study was based on the study done by Wang and Dai (2008), and the reliability was  $\alpha = 0.85$  in their study. Wang and Dai's study was done almost 10 years ago; college students might think much differently today because of the rapid social change in China. The item "my life has no clear purpose" needs to be explored further to see if it remains a variant among the college students.

Regarding subjective vitality, although the study of Chinese vitality was carried out recently (Wong et al., 2014) and the reliability was  $\alpha = 0.84$ , there were 189 respondents comprised entirely of Chinese secondary school teachers (Wong et al., 2014). The question of whether young Chinese college students view the concept of vitality differently than adults is a possible influencer, particularly relative to the item "I don't feel energetic." The question of whether this situation is very common among the Chinese college population needs further study.

Reliability was unacceptable for measuring subjective happiness with  $\alpha = 0.47$ . However, the Cronbach  $\alpha$  was 0.79 for the study of the Chinese version of the SHS, which I used for this study (see Zhang et al., 2013). An item in question in the Chinese

version of the SHS was, “Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” Deleting that item, reliability improved to  $\alpha = 0.75$ . Since the samples for the Chinese version study by Zhang et al. (2013) were undergraduate students and the study was conducted recently, it might indicate that this question needs to be checked further regarding its significance and reliability.

One thing in common was that the three removed items were all related to negatively worded patterns. That finding showed Chinese participants responded to the negatively worded items differently than in previous research. Concerning the response toward the negatively worded item, Zhang and Savalei (2016) indicated that although negatively worded items could be good for acquiescence bias, they are also problematic. Negatively worded items can confuse participants and make it difficult to judge whether the content is consistent with their beliefs (Zhang, Noor, & Savalei, 2016). Also, this may represent certain behavioral traits, such as self-consciousness, avoidance behavior tendencies, and fear of negative evaluation (Zhang & Savalei, 2016). There are also chances to provide an incorrect answer (Zhang et al., 2016). These problems can be compounded when using a scale translated from another language (Wong, Rindfleisch, & Burroughs, 2003). Salazar (2015) mentioned that response to negative items on the scale would not be in the same fashion in different countries. He further indicated that the participants recognized the negative items were more common in the United States than in Asian countries (Salazar, 2015).

### **Correlations Between Conceptions of Well-Being and Experienced Well-Being**

The results showed that conceptions of well-being of Chinese undergraduate students were significantly associated with their experienced well-being. This finding demonstrated that each of the dimensions of conception was associated with at least one indicator of experienced well-being, suggesting how different facets of conceptions of well-being may be experienced in the Chinese population. Experiences of psychological feelings are bound together with their conceptions at a particular moment in time (Sylvester et al., 2014). It seems that the information from the external world translates into people's internal affective code (Sylvester et al., 2014). Also, Bueno (2013) indicated that in the point of view of rationalism, the concept is human's innate abilities and it is the base for the experience to occur. Concepts organize the data received in experience (Bueno, 2013). Sylvester et al.'s findings suggested that conceptions of well-being could provide a framework for studying well-being, and that individuals' experienced well-being might well be influenced by the conceptions of well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011b).

The eudaimonic aspect of lay conceptions of well-being did not have a stronger relationship with experienced well-being compared to the hedonic aspect of well-being in Chinese undergraduate students. One finding that needs to be noted is the two components of hedonic well-being (experience of pleasure and avoidance of negative affect) had a low correlation (.15) between each other. Experience of pleasure is a state of emotion, and avoidance is a coping skill in responding to the state of a high level of negative affect (Kuo & Kwantes, 2014). In addition, the experience of pleasure was associated with only one aspect of experienced well-being, and avoidance of negative

experiences was associated with four aspects of experienced well-being. Weijers (2012) indicated that hedonistic utilitarians had argued that avoidance of pain was more important than the experience of pleasure. That finding might suggest that avoidance of negative experience was more important than experiences of pleasure.

Henderson and Knight (2012) concluded that just feeling good would not support functioning well. Eudaimonic activities cultivated fulfillment and the good life that led to long-term benefits for every individual (Lewis et al., 2014). Contribution to others was found strongly associated with three indicators (life satisfaction, meaning in life, and subjective vitality) of experienced well-being. According to Gruenewald, Liao, and Seeman (2012), contribution to others provides personal satisfaction and experiences of greater affective well-being. That finding suggests that contribution to others is one of the most vital aspects of well-being in this population. Joshanloo (2015) remarked that social contribution loaded strongly on psychological well-being in his study. Self-development was also found strongly associated with meaning in life and vitality. Ehsan and Cranney (2015) stated that Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia focuses on personal growth.

Hupper and So (2013) also supported that well-being indicated both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects simultaneously present within an individual and that they operate together. Although both hedonic and eudaimonic models are significant overall, each experience of well-being is associated differently with eudaimonic and hedonic aspects.

The conclusions of McMahan and Estes' studies of U. S. and Korean college undergraduates indicate that eudaimonic aspects of lay conceptions of well-being were more strongly related to the experience of well-being than hedonic aspects (McMahan & Estes, 2011a, 2011b; McMahan et al., 2014). Although I used the same scales and

recruitment methods as the McMahan et al. study (2014), the Chinese collectivist cultural background might influence the findings. Russell et al. (2013) supported that culture impacted what it means to be well and to experience well-being. Various studies confirmed that there was a cultural difference between East Asians and North Americans (Cruwys et al., 2014; Delle Fave et al., 2016; Mulligan & Scherer, 2012; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). There were studies that indicated East Asian cultural conceptions of well-being were socially oriented and Western cultural conceptions of well-being were individual-oriented (Hommerich & Klein, 2012). Oishi et al. (2013) supported the notion and found similar responses from both Chinese and American undergraduate students when they answered the question: “What is happiness?” Chinese participants were introspective and emphasized spiritual cultivation. In contrast, American participants demonstrated that to be happy at present and in the physical sense were the keys (Oishi et al., 2013).

There are two major issues that may contribute to the cultural differences from those studies (McMahan & Estes 2011a; McMahan et al., 2014). One is the population-planning policy (one-child policy), introduced in 1978. The main purpose of that policy was to control an exploding population in China, and to help reduce poverty and strains on scarce resources. The one-child policy implementation influenced the style and character of the traditional Chinese family structure, its population and gender, and the social relationships surrounding the family structure to this day (Zalewska & Zalewaski, 2014). Without siblings, the relationship between a child and his/her parents and others is different from the child with siblings (Cameron, Erkal, Gangadharan, & Meng, 2013). The expectations by the parents of an only child that they are allowed to have is much

different than in past times when parents could have as many children as they wished (Cameron et al., 2013). For example, on one side, parents of an only child may be more responsive to the child's needs, which may produce a greater sense of security, confidence, and intellectual competence. On another side, that attention from parents can bring higher expectations and pressure to succeed in life. Furthermore, the parents of only one child demonstrated great anxiety in the only child's academic performance based on current college entry examinations. The data from Cameron, and his colleague's study, showed that being an only child as a result of the one-child policy was associated with taking less risk in school and the labor market (Cameron et al., 2013). Many of the only children feel that their parents place extra pressure and expectations on the only children under this type of different family environment (Cameron et al., 2013). They might weigh high in how their parent/child relationship is considered when they think about what is well-being. This circumstance may contribute to the conceptions and experience of well-being.

Another major issue is internal migration within China. There are populations left behind in the countryside that include a disproportionate share of the elderly, women, and children. Loneliness, insecurity, anxiety, and depression are frequently reported (Ye, Wang, Wu, He, & Liu, 2013). Both the migrant children and the children who stay home without their parents are facing social disadvantages reflected in poor academic performance, lack of parental supervision of social relationships, and discrimination (Sun, Chen, & Chan 2016). A significant percentage of China's young generation covers both migrant children and the children who stay home without their parents (Lu, Lin, Vikse, & Huang, 2016). These children are generally concentrated in economically

underdeveloped areas in central and southwest China. They are a vulnerable group in today's colleges. The medium-sized university for this study is located in central-south China, and it is not like Beijing, Shanghai, and other first-line cities. The students' college entry examination scores were lower compared to other so call "better" school. Some of the students were the children whose parents migrated to cities and left them at home with other relatives. The results of the current study might have been influenced by different conceptions of well-being in students from that type of background. China is a big country, and regional development is uneven. Internal migration is the unique circumstance in China. Future studies are needed to understand further the impact of these cultural issues relative to well-being in the Chinese population.

Finally, when comparing means across groups, the Low Hedonic/Low Eudaimonic group had the lowest and the High Hedonic/High Eudaimonic group the highest experienced well-being compared to the other groups. Adler and Seligman (2016) also indicated that being high in both eudaimonic and hedonic aspects provides greater life satisfaction than pursuing one or neither in their lives.

The results of the current study identified that conceptions of well-being among Chinese undergraduate students also included both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being, consistent with previous studies of U.S. and Korean undergraduate students (McMahan & Estes, 2011a, 2011b; McMahan et al, 2013). That study supported correlations discovered in previous studies on well-being that included both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Raibley, 2012; Ryff, 2014; Seligman, 2011).

### **Limitations of the Study**



There are a few limitations of the present study that might have affected the results, and findings should be interpreted with those limitations in mind. It is critical to have a broader understanding of Chinese conceptions of well-being by addressing these limitations in future studies.

First, the sample used in this current study was taken entirely from a single university's undergraduate students. Based on that limitation, the discoveries were highly homogenous and limited due to a lack of wide variance among factors such as age, gender, and income level. Those and other factors have been observed to influence both the perception and the experience of well-being under a range of conditions in both North America and Asian countries (McMahan & Estes 2012; McMahan et al., 2014; Stevenson & Rao, 2014; Western & Tomaszewski, 2016). Different age groups, such as children, adolescents, young adults, and older adults, define well-being differently (Rao & Donaldson, 2015). China has one fifth of the world's population with approximately 55 different minorities living within its national boundaries. Different regions and different minorities' cultures may also influence the conceptions of experienced well-being. Future research is needed to determine what well-being means to other segments of the Chinese population. Further, the four-factors structure of the BWBS needs to be evaluated and re-tested with other age groups and ethnicities to identify whether the structure factor of BWBS is valid in different populations in China.

Second, the self-reported survey used in this study was the only measurement tool used. Future researchers may add behavioral observation, peer ratings, and qualitative methodologies to overcome this limitation. Third, what it means to be well or experience well-being may be culturally determined. Culture can be a very important predictor of

well-being (Joshnloo, 2013). Examining cultural variations in conceptions of well-being may help to understand the specific factors that impact experienced well-being (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2016). Future research is needed to develop a deeper understanding about the variability in well-being across cultures, not only in China but also in other cultures. For example, doing the studies in different regions and with various groups in China, and even expanding to other Asian and European countries, would be helpful.

Fourth, conceptions of well-being may involve other dimensions among the Chinese population, such as being accepted by parents. Those dimensions could be demonstrated by adding items such as “My parents trust me” and “My parents love me just because I am their child” into the questionnaire. Although the results of this study demonstrated correlational evidence indicating a relationship between lay conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being, further research is needed to address whether the findings of this study were overly simplistic characterizations of conceptions of well-being in the Chinese community. Well-being is complicated and may involve other dimensions yet to be identified.

Parental acceptance plays a major role in individuals’ personality dispositions and well-being (Kahleque, 2013). Kahleque (2013) indicated that parental acceptance correlates significantly with children’s psychological adjustment and self-esteem, emotional stability, and positive world view. Zou, Anderson, and Tsey (2013) suggested that Chinese parents tend to be more authoritarian than Western parents. Children who receive high levels of parental warmth and have less rejecting parents have higher self-esteem, more social competence, and healthier mentality for both Western and Asian

individuals (Putnick et al., 2013). The results of the study indicated that the ratings were low in acceptance and warmth by Chinese parents (Putnick et al., 2013). Especially in recent decades, high expectations for their children's future and workplace competition were the parents' main worries. Achieving academic excellence and being better than others became the primary ways to honor their families (Zou et al., 2013). Parental acceptance is likely to lead to the development of their children's positive personality dispositions and individuals' well-being. Being accepted by parents might be an additional dimension for conceptions of well-being.

Regarding the one-child families, the resources and attention that used to be spread among several children previously are now placed on one child. Preschool children are parented in an indulgent manner by the families. In contrast, the school-aged children receive relatively lower parental warmth and are burdened by meeting their parents' high expectations. To be accepted into so-called "best universities" is entirely their childhood life. The parents feel that they only have one shot. On one hand, they are drowning their children with love, and on the other hand, rejecting the children by their high academic expectations (Ren & Edwards, 2015). Recent research based on the results mainly driven by rural male children demonstrated that being a child under the one-child policy significantly decreases subjective well-being (Wu, 2014). Accordingly, future researchers should use a diverse range of methodological approaches to measure the conceptions of well-being in order to cover additional dimensions.

Lastly, the outcomes of this study demonstrated correlational evidence of the relationship between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being but cannot determine cause and effect. An important task for future researchers is to assess further

what is the cause of these conceptions of well-being associated with the experience of well-being. To know how it happened is very important. This would further support a broader understanding of a human's well-being.

### **Recommendations**

Despite the limitations of this study, it is the first study of conceptions of well-being in China, and therefore, the conclusions represent an important step in the understanding of lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being for the Chinese population. There are multiple avenues for potential fruitful future research. Below are some recommendations for future studies.

1. Further exploration into more diverse samples, including different ages, regions, and ethnic groups that are appropriately representative, may provide greater insight into how they conceive their well-being and serve to support this study's outcomes.
2. Further exploration is also needed to identify other contributing factors to the conceptions of well-being and how these factors are linked to experienced well-being. Examining these additional factors could help in better understanding what conceptual and experienced well-being means to Chinese people.
3. Exploratory research into the psychological and social research of well-being is needed. Open-ended qualitative studies and mixed methods approaches should be used to supplement quantitative data (Delle Fave, Brdar, Wissing & Vella-Brodrick, 2013). Exploratory qualitative approaches to identify the impact of well-being on other factors, both individual as well as social, should be

undertaken. Future research might seek to better describe the conception of a well-being construct specifically, refine the measurement of this construct.

4. It is also recommended that action be taken to produce programs about well-being that would be promoted via all media channels as pilot projects and follow up by generating policies to support the national well-being activities. This would aid people to understand what well-being is and enable them to increase control over and flourish in their lives.

The circumstances of the one-child policy and internal migration create two opposite results. One is overprotecting their child with extremely high expectations; the other seems to neglect their child while the child is growing up. Over-involved parents of single children write the script for their child's success. Other than sending money back home, internal migrant parents seem that they have nothing to do with their child's life. Also, Chinese parents focus on the negative approach, because they believe that this is the only way to push their children to work harder. This type of the parenting could lead to the negative affect feeling to their child that might contribute to the strong association between the avoidance of negative experience and the indicators of experience of well-being in this study. Providing parent training programs in schools and communities to support parents to learn how to ease back and protect their child's well-being would be a positive approach.

### **Implications**

Although Chinese economic reform brought a dramatic economic increase for the nation, it seemed that there was an adverse impact on Chinese citizens' well-being due to the insecurities and uncertainties caused by that economic reform and marketization.

Findings from Oishi and Kesebir (2015) demonstrated that economic growth does not associate with increases in happiness. The present study serves only as an initial exploration, though one that could ultimately lead to advantages in understanding, promoting, and implementing the policy for enhancing individual and social well-being in China. There are many potential implications for Chinese society from this study.

First, this current investigation improved our understanding of the conceptions of well-being and their relationships with experienced well-being that will inform future measurement, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Second, the study provided common metrics that can be utilized by educators, health-promoting professionals, and government policy makers. Third, efforts to promote well-being among undergraduate students might bring benefit for society insofar as individuals show more self-care, concern for others, and responsibility for their actions.

### **Conclusions**

This study focused on a sample ( $N = 548$ ) of undergraduate students from a medium-sized university in central-south China. The research design called for the exploration of lay conceptions of well-being and their relationship to experienced well-being. Results of multiple regression analyses revealed there were significant correlations between conceptions of well-being and experienced well-being. It is hoped that this research will encourage further investigation into the factors contributing to the conceptions of well-being and the use of standardized instruments in assessing the conceptions of well-being. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research will encourage future research in how individuals experience well-being among the Chinese population.

Research on conceptions of well-being is in its beginning stages, particularly in China, and many questions remain concerning how conceptions promote the actual experience of well-being. Future research should attempt to address these questions by examining more specifically the impact of the associative factors between conceptions of well-being and positive psychological functioning.

A stated goal of the present research was to encourage investigation into the sociocultural change that drives well-being and to evaluate the standardized instruments that are used to assess it. Currently, the defined basis for well-being in China is driven by accelerated economic development (Hu, 2012). As the hyperactive Chinese economy slows, policy development at the organizational level may require further understanding of how citizens individually perceive and experience physical, mental, and social well-being for the policymakers to create effective social policies. The present study, therefore, lays the groundwork for such study of sociocultural change that drives well-being in China.

The present investigation promotes positive social change by providing initial research data regarding conceptions and experience of well-being by Chinese participants. Building on the present study may help focus the resulting effort to develop any helpful policies and to correct any discovered deficiencies in current national policy objectives and/or processes.

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### Appendix A: Beliefs About Well-Being Scale (BWBS)

Instructions: Different people have different beliefs about what factors are involved in the experience of high well-being and “the good life.” Please indicate the degree to which you believe that each of the items is a necessary and required aspect of the experience of high well-being and living the good life by circling the appropriate number. The Beliefs about Well-Being Scale

The experience of well-being and the good life necessarily involves:

1. A great amount of pleasure
  2. Experiencing a great deal of sensual pleasure
  3. Living in ways that benefit others
  4. Not experiencing hassles
  5. Making the world a better place
  6. Working to achieve one’s true potential
  7. Not experiencing negative emotions
  8. The identification and cultivation of one’s strengths
  9. Experiencing euphoria and pleasure
  10. Being a positive influence within the community
  11. The exertion of effort to meet life’s challenges
  12. Pleasurable experiences
  13. Contribution to society
  14. A lack of unpleasant experiences
  15. A high degree of self-knowledge
  16. A lack of painful experiences
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7  
 Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

Source: McMahan, E. A., and Estes, D. (2011b). Measuring lay conceptions of well-being: The belief about well-being scale. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12(2), 267.

## Appendix B: Chinese Translation of the Beliefs About Well-Being Scale (BWBS)

### 幸福生活信念量表 (BWBS)

指导语：体验幸福生活以及美好人生的因素有很多，对此人们的观点也不尽相同。请根据您的实际情况，针对下列体验幸福生活和美好人生的因素，按照它们的必要程度在相应数字上面打勾。

幸福生活以及美好人生必须包括：

1. 有许多的愉悦体验
2. 体验到大量的感官快乐
3. 过着一种有益他人的生活方式
4. 没有遇到烦恼
5. 让世界因我变得更美好
6. 个人的最大潜力得以发挥
7. 没有负面的情绪体验
8. 发现并培养自己的长处
9. 体验到兴高采烈
10. 在集体中有积极正面的影响力
11. 尽力战胜生活中的挑战
12. 心情舒畅的体验
13. 为社会做出贡献
14. 没有不愉快的生活体验
15. 较强的自我觉察能力
16. 缺乏经历痛苦的生活体验

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
非常不同意		不是非常不同意			非常同意	
		也不是非常同意				

Source: McMahan, E. A., and Estes, D. (2011b). Measuring lay conceptions of well-being: The belief about well-being scale. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12(2), 267.



## Appendix C: Approval of Chinese Version of BWBS



Western Oregon  
UNIVERSITY

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014

RE: Use of Beliefs about Well-Being Scale (BWBS)

Dear Ada Jen (and whomever else this may concern),

I hereby give you permission to use and translate the Beliefs about Well-Being Scale for your research. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ethan A. McMahan'.

Ethan A. McMahan, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences  
Coordinator, Program for Undergraduate Research Experiences  
Email: [mcmahane@wou.edu](mailto:mcmahane@wou.edu)  
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## Appendix D: The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

**Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.**

**C1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal**

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Slightly agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Slightly disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

**C2. The conditions of my life are excellent.**

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Slightly agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Slightly disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

**C3. I am satisfied with my life.**

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Slightly agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Slightly disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

**C4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.**

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Slightly agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Slightly disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

**C5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.**

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Slightly agree
- (4) Neither agree nor disagree
- (5) Slightly disagree
- (6) Disagree
- (7) Strongly disagree

Diener, E., Emmons, P. A., Larson, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-45.

## Appendix E: Chinese Translation of the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

## 生活满意度量表 (SWLS)

请细阅下列五个陈述，您可能同意，也可能不同意，根据在 1 至 7 的指标，圈上适当的数字，表达你对各项陈述的同意程度。请以开明和诚实的态度作答。

1. 在多方面，我的生活接近我的理想。
2. 我的生活状况非常好。
3. 我对我的生活感到满意。
4. 到目前为止，我已经拥有了我一生中想要拥有的重要东西。
5. 如果生命可以再来一次，我不会改变生活中的任何事情。

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

非常不同意    不同意    有点不同意    很难说    有点同意    同意    非常同意

Source:

Diener, E., Emmons, P. A., Larson, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71–45.

Chinese Satisfaction with Life Scale Research Edition was translated by Bai, X. W., Zhang, C. H., & Ren, X. P. (2011). The psychometric evaluation of the satisfaction with life scale using a nationally representative sample of China. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12(2), 183–197.

Dr. Bai can be contacted at Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. E-mail: baixw@psych.ac.cn

## Appendix F: Subjective Vitality Scale (SVS)

Please rate the follow items in regard to how they “apply to you and your life at the present time”.

**D1. I feel alive and vital.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D2. I don't feel very energetic.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D3. Sometimes I feel so alive I just want to burst.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D4. I have energy and spirit.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D5. I look forward to each new day.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D6. I nearly always feel alert and awake.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true			Somewhat true		Very true	

**D7. I feel energized.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true		Somewhat true			Very true	

Ryan, R. M., & Fredrick, C. M. (1997). On energy, Personality and health: Subjective vitality as a dynamic reflection of well-being. *Journal of Personality*, 65(3), 529–565.

## Appendix G: Chinese Translation of the Subjective Vitality Scale (SVS)

## 生命力评分量表 (SVS)

他们是否能描述您目前的生活状态。请在适当的数字上划勾，以表达您同意或不同意的程度。

	1.	我有精力和精神。						
	2.	我有点无精打采。						
	3.	我有时后会觉得需要去释放自己旺盛的活力。						
	4.	我感到有生气、有活力。						
	5.	我期待新的每一天。						
	6.	我总是处于机敏和清醒的状态。						
	7.	我感到精力充沛。						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
非常不同意			有点同意				非常同意	

## Source:

Ryan, R. M., & Fredrick, C. M. (1997). On energy, Personality and health: Subjective vitality as a dynamic reflection of well-being. *Journal of Personality*, 65(3), 529–565.

Chinese Subjective Vitality Scale Research Edith was translated by Wong, W., Li, Y., Sun, X., & Xu, H. (2014). The control process and subjective well-being of Chinese teachers: Evidence of convergence with and divergence from the key propositions of the motivational theory of life – span development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5,467.

Dr. Wong can be contacted at the department of Educational Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China. E-mail: wanchiwong@cuhk.edu.hk

## Appendix H: The Meaning in Life Questionnaire-Present (MLQ-P)

**Please take a moment to think about what makes your life and existence feel important and significant to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:**

**E1. I understand my life's meaning.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

**E2. My life has a clear sense of purpose.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

**E3. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

**E4. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

**E5. My life has no clear purpose.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Absolutely Untrue	Mostly Untrue	Somewhat Untrue	Can't Say True or False	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Absolutely True

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire" Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 53*, 80–93.



Appendix I: Chinese Translation of the Meaning in Life  
Questionnaire—Presence (MLQ-P)

生命意义感量表 (MLQ-P)

请仔细思考一下，是什么让您感到您的生命和存在是重要并有意义的，下列问题是非常主观的，没有对与错，请您真实和正确的填写下列量表：

1. 我明白自己生命的意义
2. 我的生活有一个明确的目的。
3. 我心中有数是什么让我的生活有意义。
4. 我已经发现一个令人满意的生活目的。
5. 我的生活没有明确的目的。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
完全不正确	大部分不正确	少许不正确	不好说对与错	少许正确	大部分正确	完全正确

Source:

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 53*, 80–93.

Chinese translation: Wang, M., & Dai, X. (2008). Chinese meaning in life questionnaire revised in college students and its reliability and validity test, *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology, 5*, 459–461.

## Appendix J: The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

**This scale consists of number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way over the past week (circle the instructions you followed when taking this measure)**

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly or	A little	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely
_____	1. Interested		_____	11. Irritable
_____	2. Distressed		_____	12. Alert
_____	3. Excited		_____	13. Ashamed
_____	4. Upset		_____	14. Inspired
_____	5. Strong		_____	15. Nervous
_____	6. Guilty		_____	16. Determined
_____	7. Scared		_____	17. Attentive
_____	8. Hostile		_____	18. Jittery
_____	9. Enthusiastic		_____	19. Active
_____	10. Proud		_____	20. Afraid

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegan, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measure of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063–1070.

## Appendix K: Chinese Translation of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)

### 积极情感消极情感量表 (PANAS)

以下是一组用于描述不同感觉的词语。请仔细阅读，并参照以下指标来描述您过去一周日常生活的感觉。请选择您认为最能放映那种感觉程度的数字：

1	2	3	4	5
几乎体验不到	很少体验到	一般	较多体验到	经常体验到

有兴致	易被惹恼
痛苦	机警
兴奋	羞愧
难过	受到激发
坚强	紧张
内疚	坚定
惊恐	专注
心怀敌意	心神不安
满怀热情	活跃
自豪	害怕

#### Source:

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegan, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measure of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063–1070.

Chinese Positive and Negative Affect Scale Research Edith was translated by Wong, W., Li, Y., Sun, X., & Xu, H. (2014). The control process and subjective well-being of Chinese teachers: Evidence of convergence with and divergence from the key propositions of the motivational theory of life – span development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 467.

Dr. Wong can be contacted at the department of Educational Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China. E-mail: wanchiwong@cuhk.edu.hk

## Appendix L: The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

**For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you.**

**G1. In general, I consider myself:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person					A very happy person	

**G2. Compared with most of my peers, I consider myself:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Less happy					More happy	

**G3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all					A great deal	

**G4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all					A great deal	

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S., (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation, *Social Indicators Research*, 46, 137–155.

## Appendix M: Chinese Translation of the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

## 主观幸福感量表 (SHS)

对下面四个陈述，请在您以为最合适的情况的数字选项上打勾。

- |  |       |   |   |      |   |   |   |
|--|-------|---|---|------|---|---|---|
| 1. 总的来说，我觉得自己  | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|  | 不幸福   |   |   | 幸福   |   |   |   |
|  |       |   |   |      |   |   |   |
| 2. 与周围的人相比，我觉得自己   | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|  | 不幸福   |   |   | 幸福   |   |   |   |
|  |       |   |   |      |   |   |   |
| 3. 有些人总是感觉很快乐，无论发生什么事情他们都能尽情地享受生活，并且都从每件事情中获得最大地满足。者易特征在多大程度上与你相似？ | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|  | 完全不相似 |   |   | 完全相似 |   |   |   |
|  |       |   |   |      |   |   |   |
| 4. 有些人总是觉得很快乐，尽管他们也不抑郁，但他们很少像他们应有的那样快乐，这一特征在多大程度上与你相似？             | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|  | 完全不相似 |   |   | 完全相似 |   |   |   |

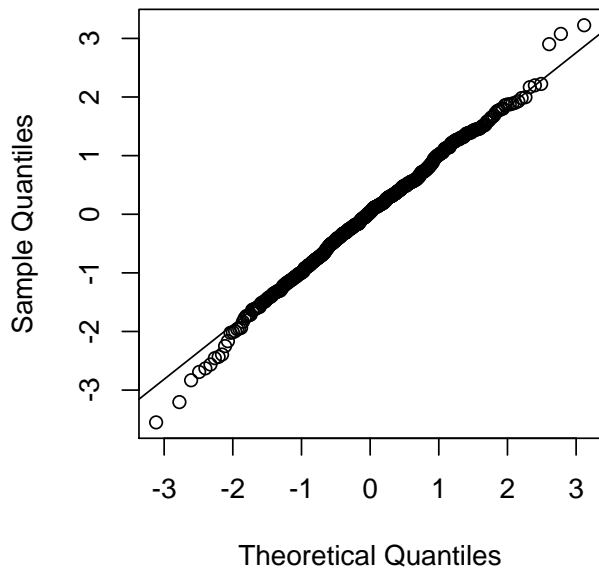
## Source:

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation, *Social Indicators Research*, 46, 137–155.

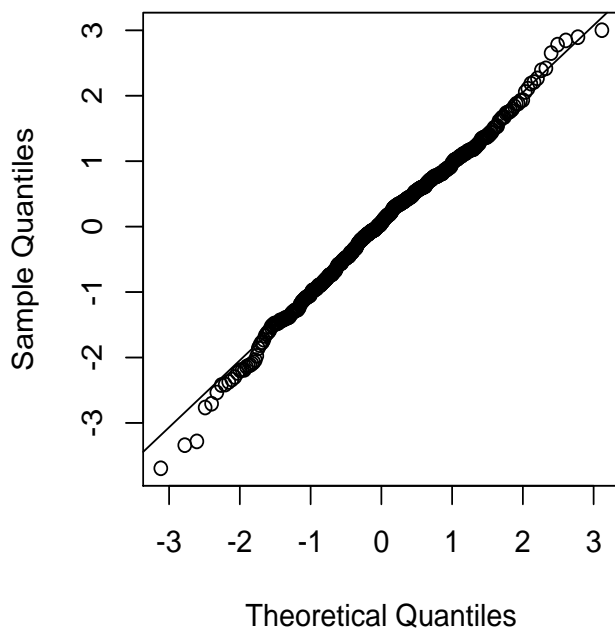
Chinese Subjective Happiness Scale research edition was translated by Zhang, D. H., Wu, Y. J., & Pan, X. (2013). Personality traits and mental health: Mediating effect of coping styles. *Frontiers in Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 2(2), 68–72.

Dr. Zhang can be contacted at Department of Psychology, Renmin University of China.  
E-mail: Zhangdenghap@126.com

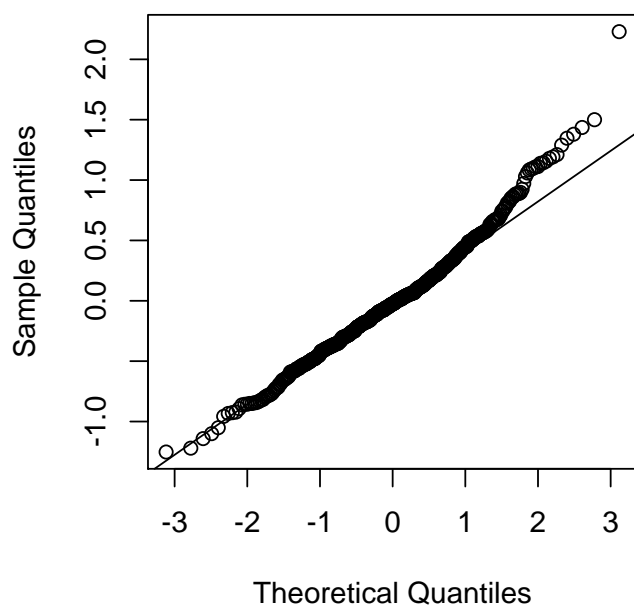
## Appendix N: Q-Q Scatterplots



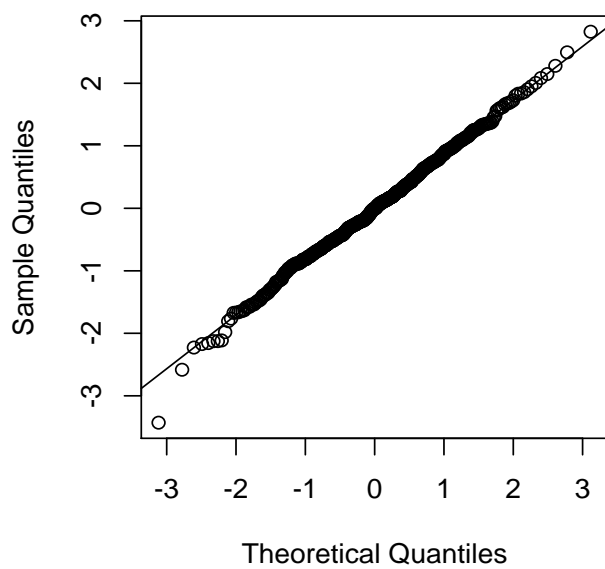
Q-Q scatterplot for normality for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SWLS.



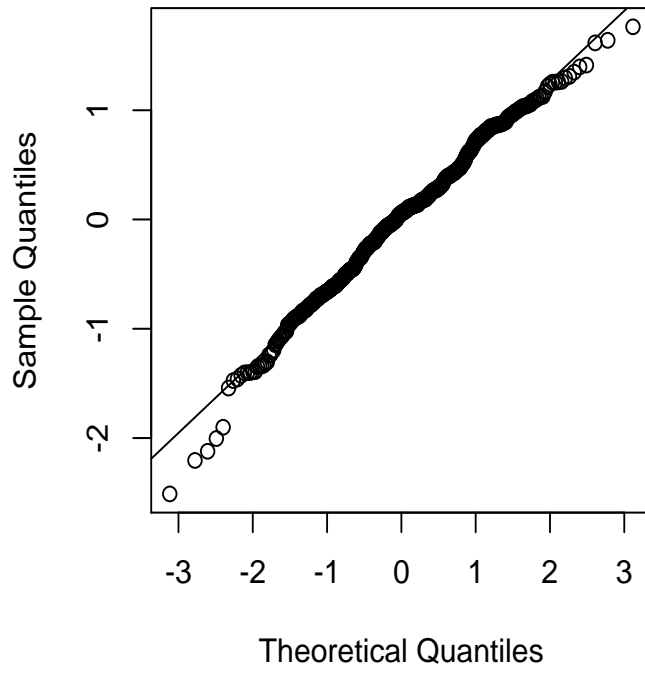
Q-Q scatterplot for normality for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting MLQ.



Q-Q scatterplot for normality for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting PANAS.



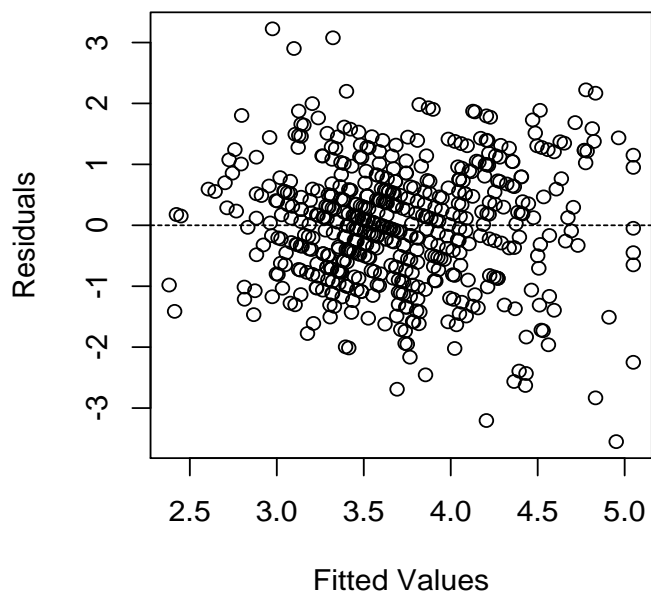
Q-Q scatterplot for normality for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SVS.



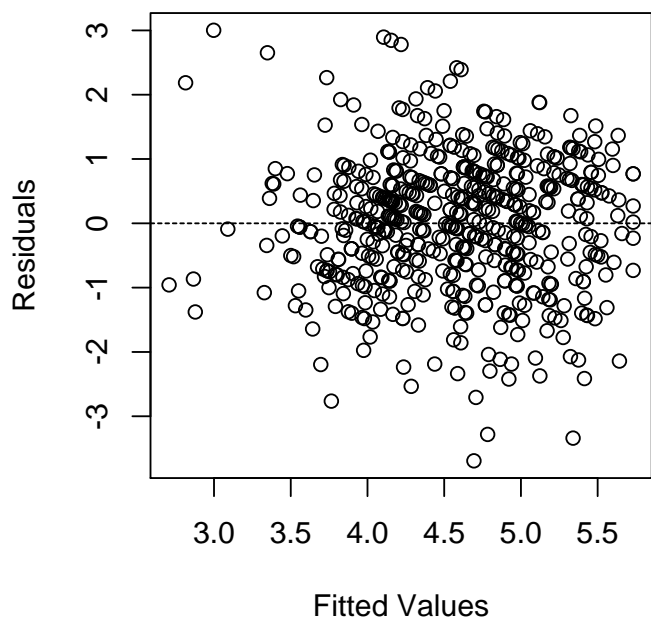
Q-Q scatterplot for normality for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SHS.



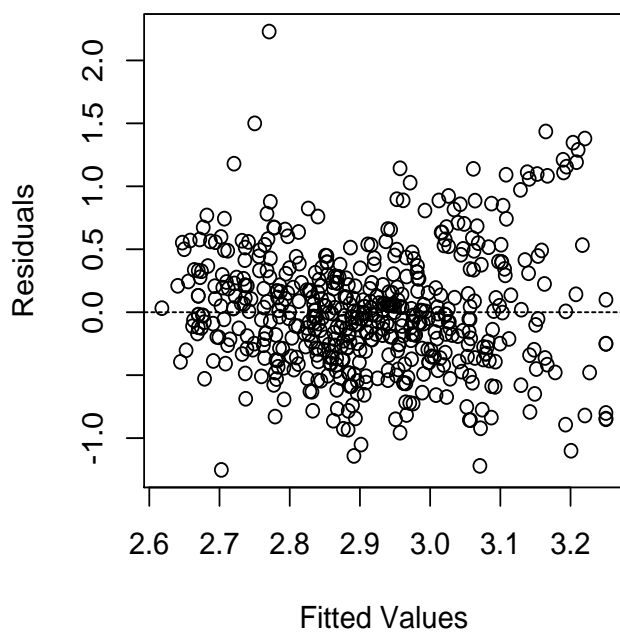
## Appendix O: Residuals Scatterplots



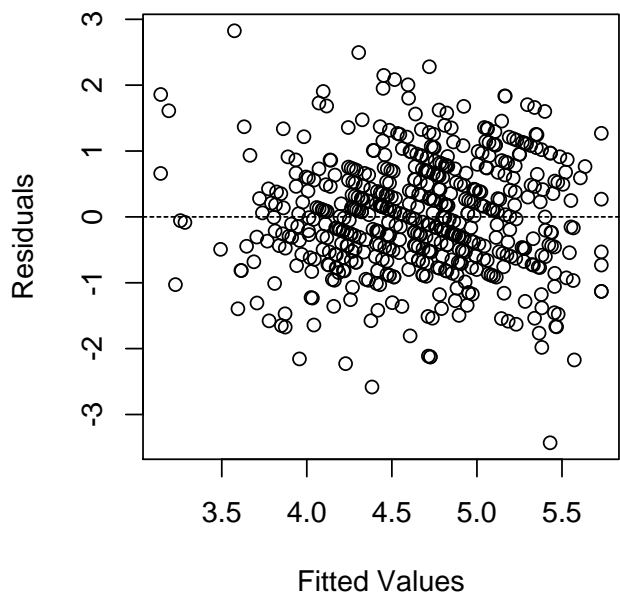
Residuals scatterplot for homoscedasticity for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SWLS.



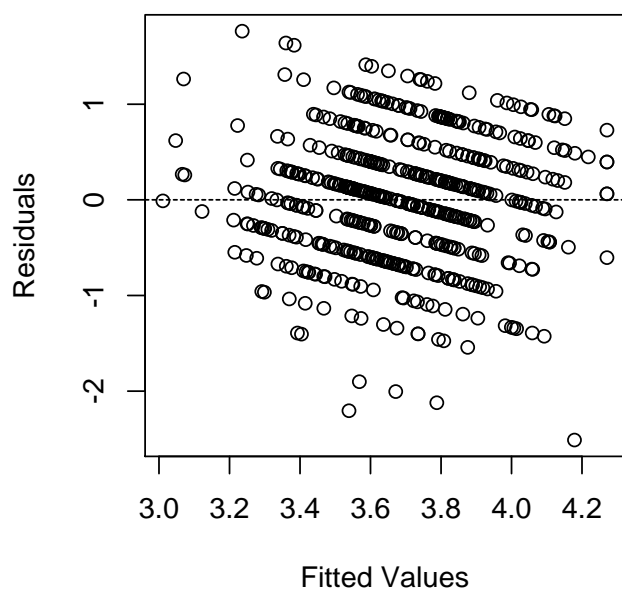
Residuals scatterplot for homoscedasticity for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting MLQ.



Residuals scatterplot for homoscedasticity for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting PANAS.



Residuals scatterplot for homoscedasticity for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SVS.



Residuals scatterplot for homoscedasticity for EP, AN, SD, and CO predicting SHS.