

## Measures of Well-Being

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### Measures of Well-Being

The concept of happiness in its numerous forms has become an obsession in the United States, where the path to happiness is continually sought after. According to author Willard Spiegelman (2009), “Americans have had an obsession with “the pursuit of happiness” ever since the Founding Fathers enshrined it—along with life and liberty—as our national birthright” (Book jacket). If Spiegelman can be believed, then the discovery of a roadmap to happiness would be a matter of national pride. American psychologists have been working to find the roadmap to happiness for many years, dating back to William James in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (James, 2000). In more recent work, psychologists have taken three distinct routes to discovering happiness: happiness as the accumulation of daily positive feelings, satisfaction with life at large, and the construction of meaning in our lives through the stories we tell. The intention of this study is to differentiate and integrate these three concepts of happiness in order to come to a fuller understanding of the term in its multiple facets, and how those facets interact with each other.

The word happiness evokes a variety of definitions, but the primary distinction that will be made in this paper is the difference between hedonistic well-being and eudaimonic well-being. Bauer, McAdams, and Pals (2008) argue that there is a, “...historical tendency of research on well-being to focus on hedonic forms of happiness” (p. 84). Hedonistic well-being is primarily associated with pleasure and an individual assessment of feelings of well-being (Bauer et al., 2008, p. 82). The term subjective well-being will be utilized as a term representative of hedonistic well-being for the purpose of this study (Kesebir & Diener, 2008). Subjective well-

being (SWB) is a multifaceted term that includes: global judgments of one's life as satisfying or dissatisfying, satisfaction with important life domains such as work or marriage, frequent positive emotions and moods, and a low prevalence of negative emotions and moods (Kesebir et al., 2008). Using SWB as a measure of happiness has the advantage of including both positive affect as well as global assessments of life satisfaction. Stated differently, SWB includes a personal interpretation of whether one's life is satisfying, as well as daily positive feelings. It is important for the definition to include both facets, because daily happiness measures and satisfaction with life at large measures have historically been seen as conflicting.

However, SWB fails to capture the idea of the "good life" and eudaimonic well-being. Eudaimonic well-being refers to living a life that is enjoyable but also considered virtuous and meaningful (King, 2001). King (2001) argues that the focus on SWB detracts from the more important fact that good lives contain pain as well as happiness, and that a life of meaning and virtue should be sought after, instead of simply chasing pleasure. Bauer et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of meaningfulness and a persons' effect on others in their definition of eudaimonic well-being, "We think that a more comprehensive appraisal of a human's being well...should extend beyond just how *good one feels* about the self in a world of others to incorporate how *integratively one thinks* about the self and others" (Italics in original, p. 84). This definition includes the idea of living a life of virtue in relation to others in order to have achieved well-being rather than a measure of well-being that is purely subjective.

Kesebir and Diener (2008) refute the idea that the concepts are distinct, "...we believe, and many contemporary philosophers (Haybron, 2005; Sumner, 1999) agree, that subjective

well-being and eudaimonic well-being are sufficiently close. It is reasonable to use subjective well-being as a proxy for well-being, even if it is not a perfect match” (p.119). It is difficult to reconcile the difference between eudaimonic well-being and SWB when using the definition proposed by Bauer et al. (2008) which includes the assessment of the good life outside of the subjective lens of the individual. That being the case, for the purpose of this study, the concepts of eudaimonic well-being and SWB will be considered related but distinctive from one another.

### **How does happiness operate? Daily Positive Feelings Approach**

Psychologists differ in their conceptions of how happiness functions, and thus how to measure it effectively. Brickman and Campbell (1971) proposed the idea of a hedonic treadmill, a system in which people react to good and bad events briefly and then return to their original neutral set point. This early theory proposes that daily interactions and events define happiness, and that everyone starts on equal ground. It also implies that efforts to increase happiness are doomed to fail in the long term, as people will always return to their neutral set point. New research has argued against this model, suggesting that people have set points that do not start in the neutral position, with some individuals starting from a more positive base or more negative because of genetic factors (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon 2006). Diener et al. (2006) also argue through longitudinal findings that happiness set points can and do change throughout life.

Recent changes in methodology include research strategies such as using daily activities and pleasures as a measure of happiness. Of note is the work of Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwartz, and Stone (2004), who are responsible for the creation of the day reconstruction

method. This method asks participants to break down their day into episodes, comparable to scenes in a movie. Then participants write down what they are doing during each episode, who they are doing things with, and how it makes them feel along positive and negative affect scales. The day reconstruction method has enabled researchers to identify what activities and social interactions lead to feelings of happiness in daily life, with a sample of female participants rating sex, socializing, relaxing, praying or meditating, and eating as the activities that bring them the most happiness.

Combining this method of measuring happiness with the revised hedonic treadmill proposed by Diener et al. (2006) has surprising implications. People can move their happiness set points upward simply by increasing the frequency of the most pleasurable activities in their daily life. If the results found with the all female sample in the study by Kahneman et al. (2004) generalize to the population at large, then simply making more of an effort to socialize, pray or meditate, relax, eat, and have sex more often would lead to an increase in happiness.

### **Global Well-Being Approach to Happiness**

The importance of global well-being stated through self report is often compared to the importance of happiness reported in daily activities, with researchers arguing for the primacy of both (Seligman, 2002). A strong argument against the daily pleasures method of measuring happiness comes from the proponents of global measures of happiness and life satisfaction. Seligman (2002) argues that focusing on daily experiences of happiness puts too much emphasis on one aspect of well-being, transient pleasure. Global well-being measures of happiness focus on a subjective interpretation of the life as a whole, whether one's life is

satisfying or unsatisfying (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Global well-being, measured by Diener et al. (1985) in the satisfaction with life scale, has become a classic tool in the assessment of self reported satisfaction with life conditions. This simple five question inventory poses items such as, "In most ways my life is close to ideal," and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing" (Diener et al., 1985). The satisfaction with life scales direct approach to global well-being has shown strong correlations with numerous other methods of measuring happiness, demonstrating its validity (Diener et al., 1985).

Global well-being as measured by the satisfaction with life scale results in one satisfaction with life rating that defines happiness (Diener et al., 1985). In contrast, Seligman (2002) defines three factors for happiness that combine to measure life satisfaction. The first factor of happiness is engagement, which is the depth of involvement in family, romance, work, and hobbies. The second factor is pleasure, which is transient and resembles daily expression of positive affect. The final factor in Seligman's (2002) model of happiness is meaning, and meaning measures how people use their personal strengths to serve a larger end. Seligman (2002) asserts that pleasure is the least important factor of the three, and that the focus of other researchers and citizens on this aspect of happiness is misguided.

Rather than using engagement, meaningfulness, and pleasure as factors leading to a good life, the work of King and Napa (1998) measures how levels of meaningfulness, happiness, and wealth factor into the creation of a satisfying life. King and Napa (1998) did not use direct questions of life satisfaction as in the satisfaction with life scale, but instead created sample life profiles which varied in their levels of wealth, meaning, and happiness. A sample life profile

includes statements such as, “My work is very rewarding and I find it personally meaningful,” and “I truly enjoy going to work every day” (King et al. 1998, Appendix). These profiles were looked at by participants in a between-subjects design, who rated each sample on how “good” each life was, based on desirability and moral goodness. Desirability was defined as, “...desirability of a life as its perceived quality, whether one would like to have the life, and how much the life reflected the good life” (King et al. 1998, 156). Moral goodness was measured by asking participants to rate how good and moral they found a life to be, and also whether or not the person in the life profile was destined for a final reward i.e. heaven.

King and Napa (1998) found that wealth was not an important factor in overall life desirability or moral goodness. Participants evaluated life profiles high in meaningfulness and happiness as significantly more desirable than those high in wealth but lacking dimensions of either meaningfulness or happiness. This method of happiness research connects to the theory of Seligman (2002) and his three factor theory of happiness. The life profiles measure both the pleasure and meaningfulness factors of happiness in Seligman’s (2002) theory, and find them to be important in participants’ description of the good life.

It is interesting to note, however, that profiles that described a life as high in happiness, meaningfulness, and wealth were rated as some of the most desirable profiles overall. This suggests that people desire all three qualities of life, and the poor but happy conception does not fit people’s true attitudes towards life. King et al. (1998) argue that this occurs because of the prevalence of Judeo-Christian values in the sample of residents of Dallas, Texas. Specifically, King et al. (1998) assert that the notion of a Protestant work ethic is the cause of the findings

on wealth. The Protestant work ethic conception suggests that economic success is a sign that, "...God looked upon one favorably" (King et al. 1998, p. 158).

### **Eudaimonic Well-Being Approach to Happiness**

The work of King and Napa (1998) also connects with measures of eudaimonic well-being with its inclusion of a meaningfulness condition. Meaningfulness in life is emphasized in Gordon Allports's theory of well-being (King, 2001). Interpreted by King (2001), Allport links well-being to the concept of maturity. The concept of a mature person defined by King (2001) is one who has a more complex definition of self, and who possesses a view of the world that allows for the discrimination and assimilation of diverse concepts. Stated differently, the mature person doesn't see the world in black and white, but instead has some understanding of the subtleties present in the world.

King (2001) writes, "...one of the key challenges of maturity is to invest daily life with meaning-to find or create opportunities to make our lives matter. Cantor and Sanderson (2000) suggest that engagement in life throughout the life span is a crucial aspect of well-being" (p. 55). This suggests that maturity and SWB are connected, and the emphasis put on finding happiness may ignore efforts for reaching maturity. Allport's theory does not suggest that maturity and well-being grow together, however, as people can be mature without being happy and vice versa (King, 2001). The connection between maturity and happiness made by Allport is that the good life involves striving for both (King, 2001).

King (2001) argues that there is a strong connection between SWB and the pursuit of subjectively meaningful goals, but that the investment of self in goals includes an element of



risk if the goal is not achieved. This suggests that goal-setting and its outcomes can lead to increases in SWB, but includes a risk of loss that imbues the goal with personal meaning. Having noted that meaningfulness is crucial in Allport's theory of the good life, the willingness to take on goals and their incumbent risks becomes an important part of the maturation process. King (2001) writes, "Even a very positive life transition involves loss. A life without loss is a life without meaningful investment" (p. 64). Allport's theory of well-being goes beyond daily happiness, adding the importance of maturity to his definition of the good life. Allport's theory thus aligns itself with the definition of eudaimonic well-being defined previously, and lends its own perspective on what the good life entails, namely elements of suffering and growth.

King (2001) explores the co-occurrence of maturity and happiness through the analysis of narratives that participants tell about their lives. The narrative identity analysis described in the King (2001) study involves asking participants to write detailed accounts of various periods in their lives, such as transition periods, and then these narratives are content analyzed on dimensions of happiness and maturity. The use of foreshadowing and happy endings was examined as the happiness dimension, and maturity was assessed through the development of a coding scheme to determine how changes resulting from a life transition have been accommodated into the self (King 2001). These dimensions are correlated to life satisfaction on the satisfaction with life scale created by Diener et al. (1985), and the Sentence Completion Test created by Hy and Loevinger (1996) as a measure of maturity. King (2001) finds that happiness and maturity occur separately, but the narratives of those who are both happy and mature write about change that allows them to more clearly see themselves and the world around them, and also to be able to look back on their naïve self with a sense of humor.

The use of narratives in the analysis of human experience has received recent attention from a variety of personality and social psychology perspectives (King, 2001). The power of stories is being recognized through their function as a way to create meaning out of life events. King (2001) argues that the creation of meaning in life is an intrinsic human need, and that stories are an avenue for the condensation of meaning in life events. The importance of stories to global human experience and functioning thus lends support to their use as a measure of eudaimonic well-being. King (2001) argues, "Stories allow us to examine the content dimensions that are most likely to be associated with aspects of the good life, including happiness and meaning" (p. 58).

The role of stories in well-being is expanded into the idea of a narrative identity by Bauer et al. (2008). Narrative identity is the term Bauer et al. (2008) use for the internalized life story that develops in adolescence. Evidence that the life story does not develop until adolescence is provided by Habermas and Bluck (2000). Habermas et al. (2000) propose that narrative identity cannot develop without the use of specific cognitive tools that develop during adolescence. The first cognitive tool noted is temporal sequencing, and this tool involves being able to order distant events and repeating events on a temporal timeline (Habermas et al., 2000). The second tool is a cultural concept of biography, which entails understanding the typical events that make up a life narrative within a culture. Causal coherence is the third cognitive tool described, and involves incorporating past events and change into the current understanding of oneself by connecting later selves to earlier selves. The final cognitive tool is thematic coherence, and Habermas et al. (2000) define this tool as the ability to interpret stories through multiple perspectives, and also to combine multiple sources of information into

one coherent story. Habermas et al. (2000) conclude that an individual will be unable to create a narrative identity without these cognitive tools, and that these tools typically develop in adolescence.

It is interesting to note that without the ability to create a life story, the concept of eudaimonic well-being fails to function in the Bauer et al. (2008) model. This finding implies that pre-adolescent children are unable to experience eudaimonic well-being because of their lack of cognitive abilities dealing with social situations. Further, this leaves children with hedonistic well-being as their sole measure of happiness in life. The importance of narrative identity and its effect on one's life is elaborated on by Bauer et al. (2008), "Narrative identity provides life with unity, purpose, and meaning. To the degree that happiness – especially eudaimonic happiness – depends on a sense of meaningfulness in life, narrative identity should play a key role in personal interpretations of whether one is happy" (p. 82). The tool used by Bauer et al. (2008) to measure eudaimonic well-being is the Psychological Well-Being (PWB) measure (Ryff & Keyes 1995). The PWB functions as a measure of eudaimonic well-being by including categories of well-being such as having a purpose in life, individual growth, and meaningful interpersonal relationships (Bauer et al., 2008). The authors use this scale when comparing the types of narratives that participants have written.

Bauer et al. (2008) found that four types of growth narratives correlate to well-being, both in measures of SWB and PWB. The first type of growth story discussed are intrinsic growth stories, which were defined as stories containing themes that emphasized the importance of societal contributions, personally significant relationships, and personal growth. This was

contrasted with non-intrinsic themes of garnering social approval, economic status, and physical appearance (Bauer et al., 2008). The authors then compared the levels of PWB and hedonic well-being measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWL) to the frequency of intrinsic themes in the memories of the growth stories. Bauer et al. (2008) found that participants who had a higher frequency of intrinsic themes in their stories had higher levels of both hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being as measured by the PWB. The important caveat to this finding is that the correlation between eudaimonic well-being and intrinsic memories was significant when controlling for SWB, but the correlation between SWB and intrinsic themes was insignificant when controlling for eudaimonic well-being.

The second and third types of growth narratives associated with well-being were life transition stories that contained themes of agency and communion. Bauer and McAdams (2004) found that those participants who emphasized their own self-efficacy (agency) and who valued the role of others (communion) in their stories had higher levels of eudaimonic well-being as measured by the PWB scale (Ryff et al., 1995), but not hedonic well-being as measured by the satisfaction with life scale (Diener et al., 1985). The final type of story is one of integrative growth, and integrative growth can be seen through narratives that focus on themes of exploring, integration, learning, and new insights (Bauer et al., 2008). Integrative stories were found to correlate strongly with ego development, similar to Allport's maturity levels, and some had correlations to PWB as well. The stories that emphasized both integrative and intrinsic themes, "...had high levels of both ego development and well-being, suggesting that the good life involves a rich and complex narrative identity" (Bauer et al., 2008, p. 92).

The combination of the four types of growth stories and their effect on well-being lead to insightful observations on the role of narrative in well-being. Bauer et al. (2008) conclude that people who are high in eudaimonic well-being as measured by the PWB (Ryff et al. 1995) write narratives that contain common themes. These themes include personal growth, redemption, and transformation. The underlying similarities in the narratives of people who are both happy and mature is the ability to frame negative life experiences as learning experiences. Negative life experiences become necessary to enable growth and transformation of the self (Bauer et al., 2008). Using personal growth and lessons learned in the expression of life narratives, particularly difficult ones, enables people to actually increase their levels of well-being after undergoing hardship. These results leave the potential for future research to explore the concept of teaching participants techniques that shape one's subjective view of the world by inducing participants to write about themes of redemption and transformation in the stories they create.

## **Conclusion**

Eudaimonic well-being as a form of happiness that combines pleasure and virtue, has been measured in the stories people tell about themselves, and has also been measured with the PWB scale (Ryff et al. 1995). Eudaimonic well-being has been described as the presence of both happiness and maturity in the creation of a meaningful life (King, 2001). Stories focused on personal growth and redemption are correlated with the greatest feelings of well-being, as well as those narratives that demonstrate the writer as able to look back on a previous naïve self with a sense of humor (Bauer et al. 2008; King, 2001). The limitations of this method of

happiness research primarily lie in the samples used in this type of research. By focusing on transition periods in peoples' narratives, the participants are restricted to people who have undergone a major life transition. For example, one sample consisted of homosexual individuals who were transitioning into a public acceptance of their homosexuality (King, 2001). Future research could explore the life transition stories of samples that have less extreme transitions in order to determine if the results generalize to the population at large.

The eudaimonic well-being approach has been contrasted with two forms of hedonic well-being, global measures and measures of daily positive affect. Global subjective well-being theories suggest that engagement, pleasure, and meaningfulness contribute to feelings of well-being (Seligman 2002). King et al. (1998) found that life profiles that were desirable contained high levels of happiness and meaning, but wealth was also desirable if the if happiness and meaning levels remained high.

### **Current Study**

A limitation of the King et al. (1998) work is that the life profiles consisted of simple sentences that are face valid, but may be too obvious in cueing participants to the manipulated the levels of happiness, meaningfulness, and wealth. This research attempts to test the use of narrative life profiles, which would require more introspective thought on the part of the participants. The narrative life profiles took the form of autobiographies written in the first person that vary in levels of wealth, meaningfulness, and interpersonal relationship strength. Wealth and meaningfulness mirror the work of King et al. (1998), and interpersonal relationship

strength was used as a measure of eudaimonic well-being by Bauer et al.'s (2008) definition of living a life that is virtuous in relation to others.

A repeated measures design was used, with participants reading five autobiographies that were presented in random order using a 5x5 Latin Square randomization. All variables were manipulated to be either high or low within the autobiographies. Participants were presented with one autobiography low on three variables, one high on wealth, one high on meaningfulness, and one high on interpersonal relationship strength, and one autobiography high on all three variables. Participants were then asked to rate the desirability, morality, and happiness of the autobiographical others. This manipulation allowed the determination of the importance of eudaimonic factors when rating the lives of hypothetical others. The primary hypothesis of this study is that eudaimonic factors of interpersonal relationships and meaningfulness will be rated as significantly more desirable and be rated as significantly happier than those high on wealth.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

Seventy-three undergraduate students at Gustavus Adolphus College participated in this study between the months of February and April 2011. Participants were given course credit or extra credit for their participation. Participants included fifty-three women and twenty men, with thirty-seven freshmen, nineteen sophomores, nine juniors, and eight seniors.

### *Materials*

Each participant filled out a questionnaire with initial demographic questions including gender, grade, number of siblings, major, and a checklist of various extracurricular activities. The following section was five autobiographies with the gender of the stories matched to the participants gender to enable more direct connections to one's own life and questions assessing the desirability of the life (e.g. "How desirable is this life?"), the morality (e.g. "How morally good do you perceive this life to be?"), the happiness (e.g. "How happy do you believe this is?"), and three manipulation check questions to assess the participants' interpretation of the high or low variables. All question were assessed with a five point Likert-type scale (1=Not at all; 5=extremely). The next section contained questions about living in a one or two parent household and ratings of both parents' daily and global happiness on a seven point Likert-type scale (1= "extremely unhappy"; 7= "extremely happy"). Participants were also asked about their own daily and global happiness levels on the same scale. Finally, participants were asked to fill out the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985). An example questionnaire is reproduced in the Appendix.

### *Procedure*

Participants arrived and received an informed consent form. Upon completion they were given a questionnaire matching their gender. All participants completed the questionnaire and all participants finished the questionnaire within thirty minutes.

## **Results**

The autobiographies were analyzed using a repeated measures general linear model. The autobiographies varied significantly from each other in terms of desirability



( $F(4,280)=138.4$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that the desirability of each autobiography increased significantly from one to the next in the following order: all variables low, high wealth, high meaningfulness, high interpersonal relationships, and all variables high. The autobiographies varied significantly in terms of morality, however Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was violated ( $\chi^2=32.3$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Degrees of freedom estimates were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates ( $\epsilon=.781$ ), with results remaining significant ( $F(3.1,218.8)=44.2$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Post hoc tests reveal that autobiographies high in wealth are not rated as significantly more moral than those low on all variables ( $p=.055$ ), and high meaningfulness and high interpersonal relationship strength are seen as equal in morality ( $p=.386$ ). Additionally, stories high on all three variables are rated as significantly more moral than every other story ( $p<.005$ ).

Autobiographies varied significantly in perception of happiness ( $F(4,280)=141.1$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Post hoc tests revealed that wealth did not significantly increase the perception of happiness ( $p=.337$ ), and revealed that happiness increased significantly in the following order: high meaningfulness, high interpersonal relationships, and all three variables high ( $p=.000$ ). Manipulation checks were successful in determining that autobiographies differed in the high or low manipulation of all three variables ( $p<.001$ ). A test of between subjects effects revealed that female participants rated the autobiographies as marginally significantly more financially stable than male participants ( $F(1)=3.7$ ,  $p=.057$ ).

The data was separated out by gender to run correlations, and males from two-parent households daily happiness measure correlates with three of the five SWL measures, and males

global happiness measure (e.g. “How happy are you with your life as a whole?”) correlates with four of the five SWL measures ( $r(19)$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This result is mirrored in female participants from two-parent households, as daily ratings correlated with three of the five SWL measures ( $r(41)$ ,  $p < .03$ ), and all five SWL measures correlated with global happiness ratings ( $r(41)$ ,  $p < .02$ ). There were no significant correlations with males and parental happiness ( $r(19)$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Female participants from a two-parent household have daily happiness and global happiness measures that correlate with the perception of their mother’s daily and global happiness measures ( $r(41)$ ,  $p < .03$ ). Female participants daily and global happiness measures also correlate with the perception of the father’s global happiness ( $r(41) = .319$ ,  $p = .042$ ) ( $r(41) = .361$ ,  $p = .020$ ). For females from one-parent households, daily happiness measures are correlated with the parent you live with and their daily happiness ( $r(8) = .791$ ,  $p = .019$ ), while global measures are correlated with the parent you don’t live with and their daily happiness measure ( $r(5) = .943$ ,  $p = .016$ ). A final correlation of note is the relationship for females between the number of siblings and SWL ideal (e.g. “In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.”) ( $r(51) = -.506$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This relationship did not appear for male participants ( $r(19) = -.050$ ,  $p = .839$ ).

### Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis of correlations yield a few nuggets of interest. The first is the correlation of the number of siblings increasing correlating to a lower rating of an ideal life for female participants. Future research should consider expanding on the role of siblings relating to global life satisfaction, and could utilize a similar autobiography design but manipulate the number of siblings as a variable in the stories. Another implication of the

correlations is the use of a one question measure as a adequate substitute for the SWL scale. The question, "How happy are you with your life as a whole?" correlates strongly with the SWL measures for both males and females. The small sample size (n=20) for males affected the outcome of parental happiness measures for this sub-group, but females show stronger happiness correlations with their mother's, and future research could explore this idea more thoroughly.

The primary goal of this study was to assess the dimensions that lead to a happy and desirable life through a narrative format, with the hypothesis being that autobiographies high on eudaimonic factors would be rated more highly than those in the wealth condition. The hypothesis was verified, with lives significantly increasing in desirability in the following order: all low, high wealth, high meaningfulness, high interpersonal relationship strength, and all high. This finding implies that strong interpersonal relationships are the most important factor in a desirable life, but having all three is even better. This is similar to the findings by King et al. (1998), and could also be explained by the Protestant Work Ethic notion used by the King et al. (1998) study suggesting that economic success was representative of God's favor.

In terms of a moral life, wealth was not seen as increasing morality, but meaningfulness and interpersonal relationships were. Interestingly, having an autobiography high in all three variables was seen as significantly more moral. This result perhaps once again connecting to the idea of the Protestant Work Ethic at a college based in the Lutheran tradition. The perception of a happy life was strongly influenced by the eudaimonic factors of meaningfulness and strong interpersonal relations. Wealth was not seen as bringing happiness, but meaningfulness

significantly increased happiness and interpersonal relationships strength significantly increased happiness even compared to high meaningfulness. This finding suggests that both meaningfulness and strong interpersonal relationships may be a strong factor in the happiness of a life, with relationships being more influential.

This study attempted to combine the narrative identity research on eudaimonic happiness with the life profile work of King and Napa (1998). To that end, the eudaimonic factors of meaningfulness and interpersonal relationships significantly increased the desirability, morality, and happiness ratings of sample autobiographies. Future research could take this idea more in-depth and attempt to determine additional factors affecting the perceptions of what makes a life good. One possibility is to include factors shown to create daily happiness, in an attempt to integrate global and daily assessments of happiness.

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## Appendix

### *Example Questionnaire*

Instructions: Please fill out each section to the best of your ability. Open and honest answers are crucial to the functioning of this study. Participants are free to withdraw at any time from the study and will still receive course credit. Thank you.

#### **Demographic Questions**

1. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. Grade \_\_\_\_\_
3. Major \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many siblings are in your family? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which categories of activities are you involved in? (Check all that apply)
  - a. Varsity sports \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Club sports/Intramurals \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Fine arts \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Social Issues (i.e. Queers and Allies, Building Bridges, College Republicans) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Student Government \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Other(please list) \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Autobiographies**

On the pages that follow you will read 5 short autobiographies. Read each of them carefully and answer the questions that follow.

My name is George, and I am a 24 year old man who has recently gotten engaged. I live with my affectionate fiancé in a small apartment in east St. Paul in a nice neighborhood. Our apartment is certainly nothing to brag about, it is little more than a bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen with some thin walls thrown in for good measure. It is our home though, and we make the most of it. I am currently employed as a barista at a locally owned coffee shop, and it can be a struggle sometimes to stay on top of credit card bills and car payments. If my car breaks down again, it's going to be a real struggle to not dip further into debt. I don't enjoy working as a barista as much as I used to, it has started to get boring. I don't plan to make a career out of being a barista, but I'm not sure what I really want to do with my life yet, so I plan to just keep working until I figure it out.

I take a great deal of pleasure from spending ample free time with my fiancé, and also have a strong relationship with my parents and brother. My brother is an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota now, so we are able to see each other often. My parents still live in the same house I grew up in, up north in St. Cloud. They still host Christmas there every year, and I always look forward to spending time reminiscing and catching up with my extended family.

Using the scale below, circle the number that best fits your ideas about George's autobiography.

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A Great Deal	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 2 3 4 5 How desirable is this life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How morally good to you believe this life is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How happy do you believe this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How meaningful is this person's life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How close is this person with significant others in their life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How stable is this person financially?



My name is James, and I am a 24 year old man who lives with my long term girlfriend in a townhouse in the suburbs west of Minneapolis. The townhouse I share with my girlfriend is nicely furnished and spacious for the two of us, and would be big enough to raise a child if we decide to have kids in the future. I love my girlfriend and my family, and keep in frequent contact with them over the phone and in person. My family likes to take trips up to the cabin on weekends, and my girlfriend and I join whenever we have the chance. Thanks to the new hot tub I bought and had installed, the cabin is still a fun getaway even in the winter.

I am also grateful to have become good friends with some co-workers at the non-profit agency where I work. The agency I work for specializes in providing housing arrangements for battered women who come in for help. I manage the donations that come into the agency and plan fundraising events, and I often work directly with our clients to get their help at fundraising events. My plan is to one day start my own non-profit agency that helps human trafficking survivors develop work skills and also provides temporary housing placement.

Using the scale below, circle the number that best fits your ideas about James's autobiography.

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A Great Deal	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 2 3 4 5 How desirable is this life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How morally good to you believe this life is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How happy do you believe this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How meaningful is this person's life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How close is this person with significant others in their life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How stable is this person financially?

My name is Andrew, and I am a 24 year old man living at home with my parents. I am not that close with my parents, but I am grateful that they are generous enough to not make me pay rent. It helps me to save a lot of money while I study for the MCAT. I plan to take the MCAT and finish my medical school applications by December, and get one step closer to pursuing my goal of becoming a doctor. Currently I work at a hospital as an ER scribe, so I follow doctors in to see patients and record the patients' responses to questions into a computer. Then after leaving the patient's room, doctors sometimes ask me about different patient responses to help them make a decision about a diagnosis. My hourly wage is pretty close to the minimum, but I like being a part of the medical world.

I find it difficult to stay in touch with my college and high school friends and don't see them very frequently. If I do manage to get together with a friend sometimes it can be hard to relate to their current situation in life, since they are all in career jobs already. I spend most of my time studying for the MCAT and working, and it would be great to be able to go on a vacation. Although, I think it will be well worth it when I get into medical school and can accomplish my dream of becoming a doctor.

Using the scale below, circle the number that best fits your ideas about Andrew's autobiography.

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A Great Deal	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 2 3 4 5 How desirable is this life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How morally good to you believe this life is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How happy do you believe this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How meaningful is this person's life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How close is this person with significant others in their life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How stable is this person financially?

My name is Derrick, and I am a 24 year old man who works as a custodian at a local school in St. Paul. I make enough money to afford rent for my own apartment, which is great since my relationship with my parents had really gotten strained last year when I was still living with them. My parents and I haven't talked much lately, which is ok with me. It always seems to lead to an argument when we talk anyway. I am happy to have gotten the job I have now, but I don't know if I really want to keep cleaning up messes for the long haul.

I've thought about going into truck driving, but it sounds kind of hard to bounce around so much. So I haven't really figured out what I want for a career, but I know that my main goal at this point is to save up enough money to get a new motorcycle I've been eyeing. I think the new motorcycle would really do the trick in the summer to keep me entertained. Keeping up with my rent and other bills eats up most of my money though, so it might be awhile before I can get the bike I really want. I watch a lot of TV, but I get bored after awhile and don't really know what to do with my free time. I meet up with a few friends occasionally for drinks, but I'm not that close with any of them. If I got married tomorrow I'm not sure who I would ask to be my groomsmen actually.

Using the scale below, circle the number that best fits your ideas about Derrick's autobiography.

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A Great Deal	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 2 3 4 5 How desirable is this life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How morally good to you believe this life is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How happy do you believe this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How meaningful is this person's life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How close is this person with significant others in their life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How stable is this person financially?

My name is Mike, and I just moved in to a new apartment with my fiancé. So far living together is not going well, and my family keeps reminding me that they told me this would happen. I used to get to see my sister often, but recently things have become strained because of my relationship with my fiancé. I call home about once a month to see how my parents are doing, and we usually just talk about sports and the local gossip. I have been working hard at my new job as a math teacher at Edina High School. I finally landed a full time position so my career is progressing and my new salary allows me to afford the new kitchen appliances I'd been eyeing.

In a few more years I'm not sure if I'll still be working as a teacher, it doesn't seem to be my calling. I could try going into business, but I'm unsure if that's my thing either, so for now I'll just keep teaching and see if it grows on me. I haven't made many friends in the area, and my fiancé and I are looking for other couples to spend time with. Things have been so strained between my fiancé and I since the move that the other couples we have met don't seem to want to get together after the initial try.

Using the scale below, circle the number that best fits your ideas about Mike's autobiography.

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A Great Deal	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 2 3 4 5 How desirable is this life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How morally good to you believe this life is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How happy do you believe this person is?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How meaningful is this person's life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How close is this person with significant others in their life?
- 1 2 3 4 5 How stable is this person financially?

**Parental Happiness**

- I. How many times are you in contact with your parents during the week? \_\_\_\_
- II. Do you live with both your father and mother? (If yes, please proceed to the next question. If no, please proceed to question III.) \_\_\_\_

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.

Extremely unhappy

Neutral

Extremely Happy

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive you mother to be on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive you father to be on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive you mother to be with their life as a whole?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive you father to be with their life as a whole?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy are you on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy are you with your life as a whole? (Please proceed to the next page after answering.)

III. Which parent you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive this person to be on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive this person to be with their life as a whole?

IV. Which parent you do not live with? \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive this person to be on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy do you perceive this person to be with their life as a whole?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy are you on a daily basis?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 How happy are you with your life as a whole?

**Satisfaction with Life**

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.

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Slightly disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Slightly agree   Agree   Strongly agree

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   The conditions of my life are excellent.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   I am satisfied with my life.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.