

A Review of Western and Eastern Traditional Views of Well-Being*

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This paper reviews traditional understanding of well-being from both Western and Eastern cultural perspectives. First, two distinct Western traditions in defining well-being are compared, namely hedonic and eudaemonic approaches. The hedonic approach defines happiness as the maximization of pleasure, while the eudaemonic approach regards happiness as the fulfillment of a person's natural needs and overall flourishing. Second, the views of well-being in lens of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in the East are reviewed. The common and different understandings of well-being between Western and Eastern traditions are discussed as followed. Finally, two well-known operationalized definitions of well-being, that is subjective well-being and psychological well-being, proposed in the roots of Western traditions are elucidated.

Keywords: well-being, hedonism, eudaemonism, subjective well-being, psychological well-being

The origin of well-being thoughts traces back to people's philosophical thinking about happiness and "the good life" in ancient Greece (Diener, 2009; Eid & Larsen, 2008). The existence of two distinct Western traditions in defining well-being, namely the hedonic and eudaemonic approaches, has been widely acknowledged (Phillips, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Moreover, two prevalent operationalized definitions of well-being: subjective well-being and psychological well-being, have been proposed in the roots of Western traditions (Rees, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2001). This paper aims to elucidate the traditional perspectives on well-being in both Western and Eastern cultures, while expounding two common operationalized definitions of well-being.

Western Traditional Views of Well-being

Eudaemonic Views of Well-being

Eudaimonism can be traced back to ancient Greece. Aristotle (384-322 BC) initially employed the term "eudaimonia" as a substitute for "the good" (happiness). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle points out that "being happy" means "*living well*" and "*doing well*" (1999, p. 5). He also claims that different people hold different views on the significance of "*the good*" (Aristotle, 1999, p. 5). To be more specific, some individuals associate the concept of "good" with wealth, honor, and pleasure, whilst others prioritize good health. Aristotle

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contends that “the good” is “final”, “self-sufficient”, and “the end of action” (p. 10). In this sense, a man pursues wealth, pleasure, friendship or wisdom for the sake of happiness, but he does not seek happiness for the sake of something else. He further categorizes happiness into three types: outward, spiritual, and physical bliss, believing that only soul happiness is the most properly good.

Furthermore, Aristotle deems that so as to gain happiness, it is necessary for a man to live well and do well, which require “virtue” or “excellence”. From Aristotle’s view, happiness is the “activity of the soul in accordance with virtue” or the “activity in accordance with excellence” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 11). “Perfect happiness is a contemplative activity”, which emphasizes meaning and rationality (1999, p. 176). Life is inherently unpredictable, and misfortunes can cause people to feel unpleasant. Despite facing adversity, an individual who can maintain his noble, virtuous, and excellent behaviours can still attain happiness. In other words, the highest good results from excellent and virtuous activities. As Aristotle said, “the happy life is thought to be virtuous; now a virtuous life requires exertion, and does not consist in amusement” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 173). Hence, Aristotle’s perspective on happiness is essentially different from that of hedonism. Eudaemonic views highlight that well-being is gained by an individual’s outstanding activities or by flourishing (Diener, 2009). Many scholars maintain that Aristotle’s views follow Plato’s thinking about happiness (Eid & Larsen, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2001; White, 2008) who believes that only the virtuous are happy since unvirtuous men must suffer from spiritual disharmony (Eid & Larsen, 2008).

Hedonic Views of Well-being

Hedonism highlights “pleasure” and the fulfillment of desires, which also originated in ancient Greece. In response to Socrates’ question “How we ought to live?”, Aristippus of Cyrene (435-356 BC), a student of Socrates and the founder of Cyrenaics, advocates that the objective of life is pursuing pleasure and averting pain (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to him, pleasure refers to the enjoyment of the moment. The pleasure of the body is superior to that of the spirit, while the pain of the body is worse than that of the spirit (Thilly, 1993). Another ancient Greek philosopher, Epicurus (341-270 BC), who founded Epicureanism, also claims that “pleasure” is human’s “first and native good” (Epicurus, 2020). Natural and necessary desires support a person’s life, with some of them (i.e., food, water) being essential for a happy life, and the absence of these indispensable desires leads to pain (Buckingham, 2012). Nevertheless, in contrast to Aristippus’ opinion, Epicurus’ theory prefers “ataraxia”, “tranquility of mind” or “freedom from disturbance” (Epicurus, 2020) rather than the pleasure of sensuality (Buckingham, 2012; Eid & Larsen, 2008). Epicurus emphasizes the significance of wisdom and virtues since wisdom can guide people to choose and act. As he said, “misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool” (Epicurus, 2020). Sometimes, wise people also choose pains because some pains can generate “a greater pleasure” (Epicurus, 2020). For instance, to pursue happiness, intelligent people usually endure hard work, which could contribute to achievements and wealth. From Epicurus’ view, as not all pains should be evaded, not all pleasures are worth pursuing. Wise people ought to act morally and seek moral desires (Eid & Larsen, 2008). Following Epicurus’ thinking, Cicero (106-43 BC) emphasizes: “the quiet pleasures” and the “principle of selection” (White, 2008, pp. 51-53). He asserts that a wise man “pursues pleasure rationally” (Cicero, 1981, I. 32) by rejecting some pleasures to “secure other greater pleasures and endures pains in order to avoid worse ones” (I. 32). Moreover, Cicero believes that a man with virtue can be happy despite being in misery (Diener, 2009). Thus, Aristippus’ hedonism stresses living at the present and bodily pleasures. In contrast, Epicurean hedonism is “rational

hedonism” (White, 2008), highlighting the roles of individual wisdom and virtue in the pursuit of pleasure, holding that the pleasures of tranquility or ataraxia are greater than that of sensuality.

During the Enlightenment period, there was a heated discussion about the notion of happiness from the “more secular” lens among sociologists and political philosophers (Diener, 2009). Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) insists that people are self-interested and have desires for a material and comfortable life. “Felicity”, referring to well-being or happiness in his *Leviathan*, is “continual success in obtaining desires” (Hobbes, 1980, ch. 6). According to another philosopher in the Enlightenment, John Locke (1632-1704), “happiness..... is made by several instances of delight and joy.....” while “misery...is made by torment and sorrow” (Locke, 1847, p. 238). In his perspective, happiness means pleasure, while unhappiness means pain. Similar to Epicurus, Locke also stresses the role of morality in the process of pursuing happiness. Locke holds that the good brings pleasure while the evil causes pain (Locke, 1847, pp. 169-170). However, Locke still commits the same mistake as Aristippus by focusing on the present pleasure rather than the future one. He is convinced that the right judgement can only be made to account of the present. For example, it is suitable for a person to choose laziness for the pleasure of the moment (Locke, 1847, p. 170).

In the nineteenth century, hedonism was developed into utilitarian hedonism. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) proposes the utilitarian “fundamental axiom”, that is, “it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong” (Bentham, 1996, p. 6). Following previous hedonic views, Bentham equates happiness with “pleasure” and “the absence of pain” (White, 2008). However, Bentham’s theory highlights the happiness of the greatest number of people rather than individuals or some persons’ happiness. Specifically, he maintains that legislation is unfair as it only serves as a tool for a few people to realize their desires (Bentham, 1996). In his opinion, maximizing the happiness of the majority is the right action. As a social reformer and the leading figure of utilitarian ethics, Bentham had devoted himself to various social activities, advocating the construction of a legal system which is able to produce the greatest happiness (White, 2008). Bentham puts forward *Hedonic Calculus* to measure pleasures and pains called quantitative hedonism as well (White, 2008). Based on his methodology, “intensity”, “duration”, “certainty or uncertainty”, and “propinquity or remoteness” are used to calculate the amount of pleasure and pain of a person; “fecundity” and “purity” are additional indicators to assess the pleasure of a number of persons (Bentham, 1996, pp. 88-90). The indifference to the quality of pleasures and the over-emphasis of sensory pleasure have made many philosophers abandon hedonism and denounce it as “philosophy of swine” (Eid & Larsen, 2008, p. 23). John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), the student of Bentham, remedies utilitarian hedonism by opposing simply calculating the amount of pleasure, redefining well-being as happiness instead of pleasure, distinguishing pleasures of lower-quality from those of higher-quality and highlighting the role of morality (Eid & Larsen, 2008; Mill, 1924).

Furthermore, the desire-satisfaction theory, which is also known as “the desire theory”, “the desire-fulfillment theory” (Moore, 2019, p. 81), or “the theory of preference” (White, 2008, p. 8) has been discussed among some scholars. Eid and Larsen (2008) contended that the desire-satisfaction theory is raised to refute hedonism, while others, such as Sumner (1996) and White (2008), deem that this theory remains hedonic views regarded as the modification of hedonism. The desire-satisfaction theory defines well-being or welfare as the fulfillment and satisfaction of desires or preferences (Eid & Larsen, 2008; Heathwood, 2006). The essence of the theory is that what makes people happy is “attaining what one wants” (Griffin, 1986) rather than “experiencing pleasure” (Heathwood, 2006). Accordingly, desire theorists cannot reach an agreement on defining happiness as maximal pleasure and minimal pain (Sumner, 1996). Pigou (1877-1959), a well-known

economist who has made remarkable achievements in welfare economics, states that the “intensity of the desire” (how much one wants something) is an index of the “degree of satisfaction” (Heathwood, 2005; Sumner, 1996), which is criticized as “a crude indicator” by Sumner (1996). Besides, “the intensity of the desire” is measured according to the present judgement. Heathwood (2005) pointed out that if a man yearns for fame today but he does not want it tomorrow, he will not be happy when he obtains fame tomorrow (pp. 19-20). In other words, desire theory believes that people’s desires are not invariable. Only the attainment of the present desire means happiness. Desire-satisfaction theory has been repudiated since it views all desires as acceptable even if some desires are deleterious to well-being (Eid & Larsen, 2008).

Eastern Traditional Views of Well-being

Buddhists’ “Dukkha” and “Sukha”

The central theme of Buddhist happiness is to tide over “dukkha” (Buckingham, 2012). Dukkha has been translated as “suffering” in English, containing pain, resentment, dissatisfaction, hopelessness, etc. (Buckingham, 2012, p. 118). Another word opposite to “dukkha” is “sukha”, which can be interpreted as “well-being”. Siddhartha Gautama (480-400 BC), the founder of Buddhism, was awakened to find that humans have been suffering from interminable pains and unpleasure (Buckingham, 2012; Lee, 2020). Siddhartha holds that only through tiding over suffering can an individual be happy. The concept of well-being does not include avoiding suffering because the environment is out of control, but about learning to face and get rid of it (Gyatso, 1992). In *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, Siddhartha teaches that people should avoid two unprofitable extremes, namely “sensual pleasure” and “self-affliction”. The former extreme is vulgar, while the latter is painful. The doctrine is to follow “the Middle Way” between these two extremes to obtain calm and self-awakening (Bhikkhu, 1993). Additionally, Buddhism believes that human’s sufferings result from desires and craving (Buckingham, 2012; Webster, 2005). Hence, one person must control one’s desire and reach the state of no desire and no ego in order to obtain spiritual happiness. In response to this, Buddhism provides practical methods, “meditation” and “mindfulness” (Buckingham, 2012; Wynne, 2007). The Buddhist view of well-being was later introduced to the West since the 20th century (Lee, 2020). Previous studies suggested that meditation and mindfulness decline work stress, mitigating mental health problems and improving subjective well-being.

Confucian Views of Virtue and Harmony

The Confucian thoughts on happiness can be traced back to *The Book of History* of the Zhou Dynasty. In *The Book of History*, there are five conditions of happiness: “longevity”, “wealth”, “health and peace”, “morality”, “enjoying the best of life” (Gu, 2016). Confucius (551-479 BC) recognizes the role of secular happiness in well-being centered on parents’ longevity, safe and healthy, family harmony, joy and ease, and fame and wealth (Su & Zhao, 2019). Happiness related to family embodies the core elements of Confucianism, “benevolence” and “filial piety” (Yang, 2018). The joy and ease mean “a proper state of harmony” (Buckingham, 2012, p. 153). Confucius deems that the act of listening to music helps achieve the state of harmony. As for fame and wealth, in the *Analecets*, Confucius says, “getting rich and promotion are what everyone wants to pursue” (Yang, 2018, p. 50), and “if wealth is available, I would like to be a bazaar regulator” (Yang, 2018, p. 85). But he highlights that the man who is pursuing secular happiness must follow the virtuous principles. That is to say, virtue plays a vital role in transforming the instinct desire of humans into happiness.

Virtue here is a broad concept encompassing “benevolence”, “righteousness”, and “propriety” (Yang, 2018). Mencius (372-298 BC) and Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BC) further include “wisdom” and “trust” (Feng, 1998) when discussing virtue. Confucianism mentions that a virtuous man should “be filial to parents and respect brothers”, next to “be strict with oneself”, “be trustworthy”, “be kind for others”, and ultimately “learn diligently” (Yang, 2018, p. 18). Filial respect refers to listening to parents’ teachings, following parents’ will, and fulfilling parents’ expectations (Leng, 2005). Confucius says that it is filial piety that a man has followed his father’s will and principles for many years even if his father passes away (Yang, 2018, p. 20). “Being strict with oneself” illustrates that a virtuous person should be strict with himself and be modest, and not keen on showing off or boasting themselves (Qian, 2011).

“Learning diligently” emphasizes that the process of acquiring virtue is a lifelong learning process: concentrating on learning from a young age (at fifteen), standing on one’s own at thirty, having no doubts at forty, understanding the fundamental laws of heaven at fifty, knowing everything at sixty, and doing as one wishes without going beyond the rules at seventy (Yang, 2018, p. 28). Feng Youlan (1998) asserted that “learning” in Confucianism means attaining the “virtue” instead of merely acquiring knowledge. Simply obtaining the “virtue” is the final goal of life. As Confucius said, “if a man in the morning knows the virtue, he may die in the evening without regret” (Yang, 2018, p. 52). Besides, Confucius maintains that “it is a pleasure to review frequently while learning” (Yang, 2018, p. 16). In this sense, learning or self-cultivation itself is enjoyable. Apart from that, typically, average persons often feel depressed when they are indigent. However, a morally upright gentleman who consistently pursues knowledge diligently might still be happy despite the poverty. For example, Confucius says, “a moral gentleman does not need to be full to eat and comfortable to live” (Yang, 2018, p. 22). He even compliments Yan Hui, his student, for Yan’s contentment in poverty and his dedication to self-cultivation (Zhu, 2019) called “happiness of Confucius and Yan” (*Kong Yan Zhi Le*) by later generations.

Following Confucius’ view, the inheritors pay more attention to collective happiness. Mencius (2016) pointed out three kinds of happiness: “the family is safe and harmony”, “being upright and virtuous”, and “all the talents in the world can be educated”. The first happiness reflects the “benevolence” and “filial piety”; the second one stresses learning and self-cultivation; and the final one embodies the expectation of social harmony and benevolent governance of a country. Afterward, Dai Sheng, a Confucianist in the Western Han Dynasty, describes the “great harmony” (Datong Society) in the *Book of Rites*: people with morality and ability serve the society; the social atmosphere is characterized by honesty and harmony; the elderly and children are raised by the community together; the elderly enjoy their life, the youth contributes to the society, and the children receive appropriate education; widowers, widows, the elderly without children, and the disabled are all supported (Dai, 2017). The method to achieve the “great harmony” is to establish a benevolent governance. The origin of benevolence is filial piety (Yang, 2018).

Balanced by “filial piety”, “propriety”, and “benevolence”, “father-son relationship” is an essential and central relationship among Chinese people (Fei, 2006; Liang, 2005). Liang Shu-ming, a well-known modern Confucianist, believes that Chinese ethics begin with the family (Liang, 2005). Confucianists contend that parents’ love and kindness are the foundation of father-son relationships and family harmony. There is a saying in *The Book of History*, a Confucian classic, “if a father does not love his son, but resents him, he will be punished by God, and it even leads to social chaos” (Gu, 2016, p. 132). In the “Datong society”, the primary harmony is that the elderly and children are well raised (Dai, 2017), since it indicates the material support and

affection from parents. In addition to the affection between parents and children, Confucius holds that family affection is also reflected in the affection between brothers and sisters (Yang, 2018). Mencius believes that loving parents, brothers, and sisters are human's nature (Feng, 1998).

Overall, the happiness view of Confucianism focuses on two keywords, namely, "harmony" and "virtue". "Harmony" contains not only an individual's proper state of harmony and family health and harmony but also the great harmony of a society. Obtaining virtues is the fundamental way to realize harmony and ultimate well-being. "Benevolence" is the core element of the virtues, which means that "restrain yourself and follow social norm" (Yang, 2018, p. 49). More specifically, it is essential for a man to restrain one's inertia and sensory desire and to regulate one's thinking, words, and deeds with propriety. The fact that should be noticed is that "filial piety" lays a foundation for all virtues, including "benevolence" (Yang, 2018). It is the duty of a gentleman to follow filial piety, which is also the primary condition for a better life. The view of "filial piety and benevolence" enables people to do their best for others, thus exerting influence on the administrators and enhancing the society (Yang, 2018, p. 26).

Taoists' "Inaction" and "Uselessness"

With regard to Taoist views of well-being, both Laozi (571-471 BC) and Zhuangzi (369-286 BC) have related discussions. Laozi advocates "inaction" and believes that "contentment makes happiness" (Liu, 2011; Zhang & Guan, 2020). "Inaction" means adapting to the environment and not endeavoring excessively, rather than attempting nothing and accomplishing nothing (Zhang & Guan, 2020). "Contentment makes happiness" means that happiness has nothing to do with possessing a large amount of material property, having great power and fame. Instead, it is more related to physical and mental pleasure and spiritual satisfaction (Liu, 2011). Laozi holds that the struggle for fame and wealth and insatiable desire are the causes of unhappiness. As he says, "there is no greater evil than desire, no greater disaster than discontent" (Ren, 2012, p. 19). Therefore, Laozi upholds love of life, love of nature, and lack of desire. Another Taoist philosopher, Zhuangzi (Chuang-tzu), proposes "uselessness" (Buckingham, 2012). In Zhuangzi's view, happiness does not lie in obtaining status and wealth but in making oneself useless and free to do anything. Similar to Laozi, Zhuangzi also claims that it is the eager endeavor that brings us troubles and unhappiness (Buckingham, 2012; Ding, 2020). He is assured that the final happiness is a state of no-self, no desire, no use, and no fear, which is achieved by integrating ourselves with nature (Ding, 2020; Tan & Zhang, 2013).

On the whole, although views of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism regarding happiness are not the same, they all share a common idea that the pursuit of happiness is the true meaning of life. The Eastern views of well-being not only focus on the inner world of individuals but also emphasize the harmony between the individual and the external world. Meanwhile, they all hold the belief that restraining desire and cultivating virtue are the core methods to attain happiness. Nevertheless, their understandings of "restraining desires" are divided. Buddhism and Taoism point out that an individual should be contented with what one has and conform to the circumstance. By contrast, Confucianism does not deny the role of desire in well-being, and it encourages individuals to restrain one's inertia and sensory desire. The purpose of controlling desire is to foster personal growth and gain morality to make a contribution to society, while also reaping fame and wealth. Thus, it can be concluded that Confucianism deems that a good life can only be realized by self-advancement, while Buddhism and Taoism suggest that people can get inner peace and pleasure by self-withdraw.

Both the Western and Eastern perspectives on well-being mention pleasure and pains. Aristippus, Hobbes, Locke, Bentham, and Mill hold that well-being equates with pleasure and pain means unhappiness. In their views, they consider all types of pleasures to be equivalent. Epicurus deems that it is unwise to be eager to obtain sensory pleasure. He also argues that some pains which could bring about future well-being are worth bearing. On the contrary, Aristotle, Buddhism, and Confucianism hold that pains and misfortune make people unhappy, but they are not equal to unhappiness. They all believe that pains and misfortune are everyday things. The essence of happiness lies not in the absence of suffering but in inner peace in the face of pain. In addition, Aristotle, Buddhism, and Confucianism are in favor of the opinion that sensory pleasure is not the final and true happiness. Aristotle, Christian philosophers, and Buddhism highlight soul and spiritual happiness. Aristotle and Confucius also focus on virtues: they both hold that learning virtue and virtuous behaviors lead to joy. According to them, virtuous people can experience happiness even in the face of pain and misfortune, and only when a man gets morality can he have real happiness.

Subjective Well-being

The concept of subjective well-being is proposed by Ed Diener (1984) in his influential paper: “Subjective Well-being”. Subjective well-being refers to individual’s subjective judgement about their lives, including “cognitive judgments of satisfaction (life satisfaction) and affective appraisals of moods and emotions (emotional feelings)” (Diener, 2009, p. 61). Subjective well-being highlights the significance of a person’s subjective judgement. In other words, subjective well-being refers to how well you think you live, rather than how well others think you live. Some scholars have discussed the definition of well-being from the subjective perspective before Diener. In the early years, Jahoda (1958) and Bradburn (1969) defined well-being in terms of individual’s mental health and mental illness. Further, some scholars discuss life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976) as well as domain life satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). Life satisfaction is a stable cognitive judgement of life quality (Diener et al., 2009). Apart from the field of psychology, the concept of life satisfaction (LS) has been extensively utilized by social scientists and educational researchers (e.g., Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, & Wold, 2009; Yuen, 2016) to assess people’s life. Besides, with the influx of the research on subjective well-being in sociological journals (e.g., E. Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & M. Diener, 1993; Dufur, Parcel, & McKune, 2008), subjective well-being has increasingly become an important topic in sociological research and been understood from a sociological perspective.

Positive and Negative Affect

The affective component of subjective well-being refers to one’s emotional experience in a short-term period (Diener, 2009; Gilman, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000), such as joy, hope, sadness, depression, etc. In the 1950s, Jahoda took the lead in defining well-being as a positive state of an individual’s mental health (Jahoda, 1958). Bradburn (1969) argued that well-being not only refers to mental health but also involves the low level of mental illness. Bradburn and Caplovitz’s (1965) and Carver, Sutton, and Scheier’s (2000) studies demonstrate that distinctive factors could cause positive affect or negative affect. For instance, positive affect is associated with extraversion while negative affect is related to neuroticism (Carver et al., 2000). As a result, positive affect and negative affect are two independent indicators that should be measured separately (Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965). Later, positive and negative affect has become two widely used indicators to assess the affective component of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2009; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Frequent

positive feelings and infrequent negative feelings serve as signs of an individual's positive affective well-being (Diener, 2009).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is the cognitive component of subjective well-being (Diener, 2009) which is relatively stable for an extended period (Cook, 2002) unless destructive life events or challenges occur (Cummins, 2010). Generally, life satisfaction is divided into two categories, including global life satisfaction and domain satisfaction (Diener, 2009). Global life satisfaction or general life satisfaction (sometimes written in life satisfaction in some studies) means judgement of one's whole life without context, while domain satisfaction or multidimensional life satisfaction stresses the evaluation of crucial life domains.

Academics believe that people's understanding of their life satisfaction relies on various information (Diener et al., 2009), such as current mood and daily pleasant experience (Oishi, Schimmack, & Diener, 2001; Schwarz & Clore, 1983), social comparison with some life domains, and significant persons' thoughts about their life. Compared with people in collectivist societies, people in individualistic societies are more prone to construct their life satisfaction based on their affective well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Even though the information people use to make a judgement of their life satisfaction varies in individuals and cultures, Diener and his co-authors (2009) deemed that people's subjective judgement of their overall lives is accessible and valid. When people evaluate their overall life satisfaction, only the things that hold importance and meaning to them come into their mind. Thus, the information people use to make a judgement is strongly correlated with their life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2009).

As for the connotation of global life satisfaction, in Diener's early conceptual framework, global life satisfaction (written in life satisfaction in Diener's framework) involves "desire to change life", "satisfaction with current life", "satisfaction with past", "satisfaction with future", and "significant other's views of one's life" (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999, p. 277). Afterward, Diener included the *eudaemonic* idea into the concept of global life satisfaction and further revised his model of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2009). In the new model, global life satisfaction also contains self-perceived fulfillment, meaning in life, success, etc. (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2009, p. 71). Additionally, some cross-national studies such as *the PISA Survey* (OECD, 2019) and *World Health Statistics* also incorporate the concept of "meaning in life" into the assessment of global life satisfaction.

Domain satisfaction refers to the evaluation of one's life aspects. Diener asserts that this evaluation can be divided into two steps: the first one is to weigh the importance of life domains; the second one is to report the degree of satisfaction (Diener et al., 2009, p. 71). Diener and his co-authors only provide four specific domains including marriage, work, health and leisure (Diener et al., 2009, p. 71). Similarly, Cummins (1997) also insisted that both the importance and satisfaction should be taken into consideration to understand domain satisfaction. In his points of view, subjective well-being refers to the product of the perceived importance and satisfaction for each domain. Compared with Diener, Cummins lists more life aspects, involving material, health, productivity/learning, intimacy, safety, community, and emotion. However, Diener and his co-authors (2009) argued that the weight of each domain is affected by various factors, making this type of assessment unreliable. Accordingly, the better approach is to examine particular groups' domain satisfaction according to their characteristics and concerns (Diener et al., 2009). For school-aged adolescents, Huebner (1994) put forward a widely used model of multidimensional student life satisfaction scale (MSLSS) including five

domains, namely family, friends, school, self, and living environment. The domains are all core life aspects of school-aged adolescents developed based on a sea of empirical evidence (Gilman et al., 2000).

Psychological Well-being and Flourishing

The development of positive psychology generates a new definition of well-being in the eudaemonic approach. From the standpoint of positive psychology, well-being could be understood as “flourishing” or “positive functioning” (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Seligman, 2012). Following Aristotle’s view, positive psychologists hold that “the good life” can be objectively verified by a list (Diener, Sapyta, & Suh, 1998). Carol Ryff, a famed psychologist, believes that well-being is a holistic construct which does not merely include pleasure and satisfaction of life (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Based on humanistic theories, Ryff and her co-author (1998) pioneered the concept of “psychological well-being”. In Ryff’s view, well-being is described in six aspects, namely “autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance”.

In addition to Ryff, Martin Seligman, acknowledged as the father of positive psychology, also explores the notion of well-being. In the *Authentic Happiness*, Seligman (2002) said that happiness is not built by “good genes or luck” but by personal “strength and virtue” (p. x). He highlights the objective approach in assessing happiness as well. In his list, there are three core elements of happiness: positive emotion, engagement, and meaning (Seligman, 2002). The first element, which involves pleasure and comfort, is related to “the pleasant life”; the second element means that an individual engages in some activities involving education, career, and citizenship activities leading to “the good life”; and the third element highlights that happiness is linked with the sense of fulfillment, the sense of belonging (Seligman & Royzman, 2003), and transcendence (Buckingham, 2012). In the *Flourish*, building upon and modifying Aristotle’s theory, Seligman (2012) put forward his “well-being theory”, a five-element model of well-being (PERMA): positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. He claims that no single element constitutes a flourishing life (Seligman, 2012).

In the lens of the eudaemonic approach, some positive psychologists come up with theories to explain the mechanism of well-being. Representative theories are Edward Deci and Richard Ryan’s self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001; 2017) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Self-determination theory holds that people have three basic psychological needs, namely the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. People experience well-being when their basic psychological needs are satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The flow theory deems that individuals’ positive experience comes from their deep engagement in the current task or activity (Csikszentmihalyi, Montijo, & Mouton, 2018). The term “flow” means an optimal state in which an individual is engaged in some activities which contribute to one’s growth and fulfillment (Sirgy, 2012).

Comparing subjective well-being to psychological well-being, Ryan and Deci (2001) maintained that the connotation of subjective well-being is the assessment of life through the lens of new hedonic psychology, whereas psychological well-being is proposed based on eudaimonism (p. 144). In *Well-being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz (1999) used the hedonic psychology concept to refer to the research field in which studies are “of what makes experiences and life pleasant or unpleasant” (p. ix). However, Sirgy (2012) argued that it is inappropriate to consider subjective well-being as a hedonic concept.

Diener et al. (2009), Sirgy (2012), and Bradburn (2015) contended that only affective well-being belongs to the hedonic component. Sirgy (2012) held that the cognitive component of subjective well-being belongs to the notion by a prudential approach. Bradburn (2015) deemed that life satisfaction is the evaluative component. Although the concept of subjective well-being encompasses some hedonic elements, it has a broader connotation. Subjective well-being not only contains pleasant and unpleasant feelings but also involves the judgement of one's overall life, life meaning, and multiple life domains. It seems that there is no clear distinction between subjective well-being and eudaemonic well-being (Buckingham, 2012). Consequently, subjective well-being should be understood as another amendment to traditional hedonism or a brief combination of hedonic and eudaemonic well-being. As Diener believes, subjective well-being is a proxy for well-being (Diener, 2009, p. 62).

Conclusions

The hedonic approach defines “the good life” as the maximization of pleasure, holding that seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are human's nature and goal of life. Nevertheless, modern psychology has broadened and modified the hedonic view of well-being (Kahneman et al., 1999) to respond to the criticism of the “philosophy of swine”. On the contrary, the eudaemonic approach opposes to the opinion that equating well-being with pleasure or satisfaction of life. Eudaimonism emphasizes a persons' natural needs and overall flourishing (Diener, 2009). Apart from the perspectives expressed by Western scholars, philosophers of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in the East also possess unique views on well-being, which attach more importance to harmony.

Subjective well-being highlights the subjective judgement of one's life based on one's criteria (Diener, 2009, p. 13), encompassing cognitive (life satisfaction) and affective (emotional experience) components of well-being (Diener, 2009). As opposed to subjective well-being, psychological well-being assesses well-being in relation to some objective elements (Diener et al., 1998), emphasizing autonomy and mastery, meaning and life goals, as well as flourishing and fulfillment (Diener et al., 2009).

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