

## **Orientations to Happiness, Subjective Well-being and Life Goals**

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### **Abstract**

People pursue happiness through different paths: pleasure, engagement and meaning, which are differently related to well-being. The aim of this research was to compare subjective well-being, life goals and self-control of people with different profiles of orientations to happiness.

Students (484 females, 278 males; mean age 20.60) rated their life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, orientations to happiness, and self-control.

Based on the K-means cluster analysis participants were grouped into four groups: students who highly endorse hedonic and eudaimonic orientation (the "Full life" group), those who do not endorse either of them (the "Empty life" group), those who live eudaimonic and those who live hedonic life.

People who live a full life are the happiest, they value intrinsic life goals and have good self-control. Contrary, people who live empty lives have the lowest well-being, they value extrinsic and intrinsic life goals less than other people and have low self-control.

**Keywords:** orientations to happiness, subjective well-being, life goals, self-control, cluster analysis

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### **Introduction**

From ancient age philosophers have considered happiness to be the highest good and the essential motivation for all human actions. The pioneers in the field of happiness research did not concern themselves with distinction between eudaimonic and hedonic well-being (e.g. Diener, 1984). Only recently the line has

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been drawn between these two historical views of happiness. The first perspective, reflecting the view that well-being consists of pleasure and happiness, is labelled hedonism (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). According to the second perspective, eudaimonism, well-being is not just about happiness, instead it is found in the actualization of human potentials. Eudaimonia refers to the feelings present when an individual is moving toward self-realization in terms of the development of one's unique individual potentials and furthering one's purpose in living (Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti, 2008). Hedonic and eudaimonic traditions are founded on distinct perspectives and philosophies about what constitutes a good life and a good society. Consequently, different approaches to well-being studies emerged. The hedonic approach considers well-being as a satisfactory life fulfilled with positive emotions and without negative emotions (Diener, 1994; Oishi, Diener, Suh, & Lucas, 1999), what's mostly focused on assessment of subjective well-being. The eudaimonic approach is orientated to personal growth and living to one's fullest potential (Waterman, 1993; Waterman et al., 2008). Although research on eudaimonia is more theory driven, there is no single theory that captures the essence of eudaimonic happiness. Researchers favouring eudaimonic approach emphasize meaning and growth in their studies of well-being.

The distinction between eudaimonic and hedonic theories of happiness is the most common division in well-being research. However, Seligman (2002) and Peterson, Park and Seligman (2005) have broaden this area of research by simultaneously examining the pursuit to pleasure and meaning as different orientations (paths) to happiness and by adding a third path – the pursuit of engagement. A pleasant life is based on hedonism: to maximise positive experiences and to minimise pain, to get the pleasures one wants. Engaged life is based on activities in which we are completely engaged – activities that produce a state of flow. Meaningful life is based on activities that contribute to something larger than us, to the greater good: family, community, justice, etc. (Seligman, 2002). Empirical evidence showed that the three orientations to happiness are not incompatible, they can be pursued simultaneously. People who pursue all three orientations to happiness are said to live a full life, while those who do not endorse either of them live empty lives. Living a full life leads to the greatest life satisfaction, with engagement and meaning being better contributors to subjective well-being than pleasure (Peterson et al., 2005; Vella-Brodrick, Park, & Peterson, 2009).

Are there really three orientations to happiness or the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic happiness is more appropriate? The authentic happiness theory (Seligman, 2002) needs to be confirmed. The problem with this theory is the specificity level of orientations: orientation to pleasure is quite general, while orientation to meaning and especially orientation to engagement are related to more specific situations in which they can be experienced. Furthermore, they demand more effort and control. Also, orientation to engagement can not be equalized with

other two orientations: the basis of this component is the flow. The state of flow is rather rare in everyday life, with several strictly defined conditions that must be met in order to experience it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh, & Nakamura, 2005). One can not expect that those conditions will be met most of the time, so this orientation might not be as immanent as the other two.

Schueller and Seligman (2010) tested the model fit at a large sample (over 13000 participants) and concluded that another factor structure, instead of the explained three-factor structure, might be more appropriate. Obviously, more research is needed to find the best model of well-being. This three-factor model could be viewed as a hierarchical model with two-levels. The lower level consisting three orientations to happiness and the higher level consisting hedonic and eudaimonic happiness, where eudaimonic happiness is comprised of orientation to engagement and meaning. The finding of Schueller and Seligman (2010) that orientation to engagement and meaning overlap more to each other than to orientation to pleasure upholds this premise.

Most modern theories of motivation assume that people start and continue the behaviours which they believe to be leading them to desired goals. In everyday life, we devote a large amount of time to think about, choose among and accomplish different goals important to ourselves. When people are asked what makes them happy, they often mention their life goals and plans (Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick, & Wissing, 2010). Happiness of a person is determined by accomplishing important goals, needs and wishes (Emmons, 2003). Through socialization, people adopt different life goals (Cantor et al., 1991), and those goals that we aspire to become a part of our personality (Cantor & Sanderson, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Types of goals, their structure and progress toward them can affect emotions and life satisfaction, serving as an important reference point for the affect system (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) distinguishes extrinsic and intrinsic life goals. Intrinsic goals, like affiliation, community and personal growth, are defined as pursuits generally congruent with basic psychological needs. They reflect a tendency toward self-actualization and growth, and are inherently valuable and satisfying. Extrinsic goals, like money, fame and image, depend on the contingent reactions and evaluations of other people and are typically a mean to achieve something, some reward or social praise, which makes them less likely to be inherently satisfying (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). Making progress toward goals enhance well-being, but only when those goals are consistent with basic psychological needs and growth tendencies (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998).

Do people differently orientated to happiness choose different goals? To the best of our knowledge, there have been only two studies of this relationship (Brdar & Anić, 2010; Brdar, Rijavec, & Miljković, 2009). Both studies showed that extrinsic goals are related to orientation to pleasure, while intrinsic goals are

strongly related to orientation to meaning. Engaged life was not related to neither intrinsic nor extrinsic life goals. People who live pleasant lives are likely to set more extrinsic goals because they can easily lead to many pleasurable moments, while those who live meaningful lives will set more intrinsic goals, which provide them opportunities to use their skills and virtues in challenging and meaningful activities.

Once a person has decided to do something, how does he or she stay on course? One of the most common explanation is self-regulation or self-control (in the papers these terms are used interchangeably). Goal pursuit means having a goal, assessing how far one is from it, and taking actions to reduce the sensed discrepancy (Carver, 2006). The amount of self-regulation necessary for goal accomplishment differs depending on its vicinity and complexity. In the context of life goals, long-term self-regulation has a very important role (Moilanen, 2007). Although meaningful and manageable goals are vital for leading a positive life, they are not enough to guarantee optimal life management. Self-regulatory strategies are one of the most researched units of analysis of goals studies (e.g. Cantor, 2003). Successful self-regulation is necessary for optimal functioning in all life domains (Hoyle, 2006). When one is successful at self-regulation, he or she effectively manages perceptions of oneself and one's social surroundings and behaves in ways consistent with her or his goals. Contrary, when person fails at self-regulation, he or she has lost control over personal and social experience. The chosen behaviour does not contribute to the fulfilment of important goals, and it is not in accordance to self-endorsed standards of behaviour. To the present date, there has been only one study of the relationship between self-regulation and orientations to happiness (Peterson, Ruch, Beerman, Park, & Seligman, 2007). Self-regulation is related only to engagement and meaning while correlations with orientation to pleasure are around zero. This pattern of results is exactly what was expected to be the outcome of this research.

The introduction of three orientations to happiness has recently been offered as a supplement, or even a concurrent model, to the widely accepted division on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Which is true? Are there really three orientations to happiness, or the hedonic/eudaimonic division is more appropriate? Can people at the same time be hedonically and eudaimonically orientated, i.e. can they pursue all three orientations simultaneously? We will try to answer how many paths to happiness are there using factor analysis of the *Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire* (Peterson et al., 2005). If the three-factor structure would be confirmed, we expect to find five profiles of orientations to happiness (Pleasure, Engagement, Meaning, Full life – high scores on all orientations and Empty life – low scores on all orientations). If the two-factor structure is more appropriate we expect to find two profiles (Hedonic and Eudaimonic) or four profiles (Hedonic, Eudaimonic, Full life and Empty life).

The previous research has shown that people who pursue all three orientations simultaneously have the highest well-being. Considering relationship between orientation to pleasure and extrinsic goals and orientation to meaning and intrinsic goals, does it mean that they also value both types of life goals? Finally, what is the role of self-control? Eudaimonically orientated people (i.e. those that pursue happiness through engagement and meaning) should have better self-control, necessary for living the life of virtue, working on personal growth and self-realization, compared to those orientated to having as much pleasure as soon as possible.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

Questionnaires were administered to 769 students (484 females, 278 males, 7 students have not provided information about their gender) from University of Rijeka. Students were aged from 18 to 28 years, with mean age of 20.60 (standard deviation 1.70). Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Questionnaires were administered in following order: *The Satisfaction with Life Scale*, *Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire*, *Positive and Negative Affective Schedule*, *Aspiration Index* and *Brief Self-control Scale*. It took approximately 40 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

### *Measures*

*The Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is comprised of five items that measure personal evaluation of satisfaction with life in general (e.g. *I am satisfied with my life*). In this research, the Croatian translation is used (Rijavec, Brdar, & Miljković, 2006). Answers were given on a 7-point Likert type scale (anchored at 1 – *not at all* and 7 – *very much*), the higher the answer the higher the life satisfaction evaluation. This one-factor scale has already been used with samples of Croatian high school and college students, showing satisfactory reliability. Principal axis factoring confirmed one-factor solution, with 41.62% of the variance explained. The Cronbach alpha was .74.

*Positive and Negative Affective Schedule* (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) – the short version of this scale has 20 items (adjectives), which measure positive and negative affect (10 items for each affect). On a 7-point Likert type scale (we used a 7-point scale to equalise it with other scales used in our research; from 1 – *not at all* to 7 – *very much*) participants rated how they usually feel. Higher ratings mean higher experienced affect. Examples of adjectives used to measure positive affect are: *interested*, *strong*, etc; and for negative affect are: *scared*, *afraid*, etc. The

Croatian translation (Brdar & Anić, 2010) of this scale has already been used in some studies done on samples in Croatia, and the two-factor solution was confirmed. In this research, principal axis factor analysis confirmed existence of two factors, which jointly explain 42.20% of the variance. The data were oblimin rotated. Cronbach alpha for positive affect is .86 and for negative affect is .89. Correlation between factors is -.37.

*Orientation to Happiness Questionnaire* (Peterson et al., 2005) has 18 items that assess three different strategies for pursuing happiness (6 items per strategy): pleasure (e.g., *Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide*), engagement (e.g., *I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities*), and meaning (e.g., *I have a responsibility to make the world a better place*). Participants rated their approach to happiness on a 7-point Likert type scale (from 1 – *not at all* to 7 – *very much*), with higher results showing that person values that particular orientation more. In this research, Croatian translation was used (Rijavec et al., 2006).

A principal axis factor analysis with oblimin rotation was conducted. The first two factors, before rotation, had eigenvalues over 1. They were 3.83 for the first factor and 1.47 for the second factor. Third and fourth factor had eigenvalues of 0.80, and 0.47, respectively. Scree-plot criteria pointed to the two-factor solution as optimal. Therefore, the two-factor solution has been accepted, explaining 30.25% of the variance. The obtained factors go along with theory, which differentiates two approaches to happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic. However, they don't go along with the model proposed by the authors of this questionnaire. The orientation to engagement and orientation to meaning formed one factor – eudaimonic approach to happiness. Most of the items had highest loadings on a factor along with other items intended to assess the same approach to happiness. Two items (*Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly* and *I am rarely distracted by what is going on around me*) had loadings lower than .30 (which was used as cut-off point) on all factors, and are excluded from further analyses. Correlation between factors is .32. Both factors had satisfactory reliability: Cronbach alpha for eudaimonic orientation is .77 and for hedonic .75.

*Aspiration Index* (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) – the scale has 35 items that assess seven life goals, combined in two higher-order categories: intrinsic (e.g., *You will help people in need; You will have good friends that you can count on*) and extrinsic (e.g., *You will be financially successful; You will have people comment often about how attractive you look*) (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Schmuck, Kasser, & Ryan, 2000). On a 7-point Likert type scale (anchored at 1 – *not at all* and 7 – *very much*) participants assessed how important each goal is to themselves, where higher score means that the participant values that goal more. The questionnaire, translated to Croatian (Rijavec et al., 2006) has already been used on some Croatian samples and the original factor structure was confirmed (Brdar, 2006). This study

has put the focus on comparison of extrinsic and intrinsic life goals, not on specific goals. The principal axis factor analysis was used to test the factor structure of this questionnaire. The accepted two-factor solution (intrinsic and extrinsic goals) explained 37.08% of the variance. The data were oblimin rotated. Correlation between factors is .15. Cronbach alpha for extrinsic life goals is .92, and for intrinsic life goals is .89.

*The Brief Self-control scale* (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004) – the scale has two forms: the long and the short one (*The Total Self-Control Scale and The Brief Self-Control Scale*), where the long version includes the short one. *The Total Self-Control Scale* was translated to Croatian for purposes of this research. The results of the preliminary study have shown that the short version has better metrical characteristics therefore it was decided to use it in the main study.

This scale has 13 items that measure general self-control. On a 7-point Likert type scale (from 1 – *not at all* to 7 – *very much*) participants rated presented items (e.g., *I am good at resisting temptation; I refuse things that are bad for me*), with higher score showing that a participant has better self-control. Principal axis factor analysis confirmed one-factor solution, explaining 26.55% percent of the variance. Cronbach alpha is .82. The percentage of the explained variance is small for this scale therefore, the results should be interpreted cautiously.

## Results

Eudaimonic orientation is moderately positively correlated with positive affect and intrinsic life goals. Hedonic orientation is moderately positively correlated with extrinsic goals, and positive affect, but the correlation with positive affect is lower than it was for eudaimonic orientation (Table 1).

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and correlations for variables included in the study*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Life satisfaction	-							
2. Positive affect	.52**	-						
3. Negative affect	-.39**	-.38**	-					
4. Intrinsic goals	.21**	.37**	-.07	-				
5. Extrinsic goals	.08*	.13**	.12**	.13**	-			
6. Hedonic orientation	.21**	.34**	-.02	.24**	.34**	-		
7. Eudaimonic orientation	.30**	.51**	-.09*	.50**	.07*	.37**	-	
8. Self-control	.27**	.33**	-.36**	.16**	-.13**	-.11**	.28**	-
<i>M</i>	4.81	4.74	2.83	5.87	3.90	5.06	4.68	4.23
<i>SD</i>	0.94	0.85	1.02	0.68	1.14	0.87	0.86	0.89

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

*Profiles of Orientations to Happiness*

K-means cluster analysis has been performed on the standardized scores in order to classify participants according to their orientations to happiness. Decision on the right number of clusters is a well-known problem of clustering techniques, characteristic also for the K-means method that was employed in this research. As explained below, some additional analyses have been done to check the stability of clusters.

The first hypothesis about existence of two groups, hedonic and eudaimonic, was not confirmed – the groups that emerged were the group with high scores on both orientations and the group with low scores on both orientations. The solution with four clusters grouped the participants as it was expected, in an interpretable way. To check the stability of this solution, seven random samples of participants were selected from the whole dataset and cluster analyses have been redone on those subsamples. Six out of seven analyses confirmed the four-group solution; therefore, it was concluded that this solution is stable and it was accepted as optimal. The results of the analysis that have not confirmed the accepted four-group solution were theoretically uninterpretable. Since those results were obtained only once out of seven analyses, it was decided to discard them because they were not stable. Mean values and the number of participants in groups are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Standardized Mean Values of Orientations to Happiness and Number of Participants for Profiles of Orientations to Happiness*

Groups	Orientations		N
	Hedonic	Eudaimonic	
Hedonic	0.41	-0.49	248
Eudaimonic	-0.71	0.56	157
Full life	0.93	1.00	198
Empty life	-1.23	-1.17	140

Participants who scored above mean on both orientations comprise a group named "Full life". A group named "Eudaimonic" is consisted of participants who have scores above mean on eudaimonic and below mean on hedonic orientation. Participants with scores below mean on both orientations are in a group named "Empty life" while those with hedonic orientation above mean and eudaimonic orientation below it are in a group named "Hedonic".

Obtained clusters differed significantly in orientations to happiness: both hedonic orientation ( $F(3,739)=526.98$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and eudaimonic orientation ( $F(3,739)=498.63$ ,  $p<.01$ ).



*Subjective Well-being, Life Goals and Self-control of Groups with Different Orientations to Happiness*

To compare differences in subjective well-being, importance of life goals and self-control between participants with different profiles of orientations to happiness, series of analyses of covariance were performed, controlling for age and gender (Table 3).

Table 3. *Subjective Well-being, Goals and Self-control Differences across Four Groups of Orientations to Happiness Controlling for Gender and Age*

Dependent variables	Group	Estimated marginal means	SD	Covariates			Group		
				F Gender	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )	F Age	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )	F	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	1. Full life	5.15 <sub>2,3,4</sub>	0.83	1.97	.00	1.16	.00	23.86**	.09
	2. Eudaimonic	4.86 <sub>1,3</sub>	0.92						
	3. Empty life	4.30 <sub>1,2,4</sub>	0.97						
	4. Hedonic	4.82 <sub>1,3</sub>	0.88						
<b>Positive affect</b>	1. Full life	5.30 <sub>2,3,4</sub>	0.70	3.95	.01	2.59	.00	82.90**	.26
	2. Eudaimonic	4.82 <sub>1,3,4</sub>	0.73						
	3. Empty life	4.04 <sub>1,2,4</sub>	0.78						
	4. Hedonic	4.62 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	0.71						
<b>Negative affect</b>	1. Full life	2.74	1.08	2.57	.00	1.42	.00	1.36	.01
	2. Eudaimonic	2.76	1.02						
	3. Empty life	2.93	1.05						
	4. Hedonic	2.89	0.93						
<b>Intrinsic goals</b>	1. Full life	6.21 <sub>3,4</sub>	0.55	84.46**	.11	0.63	.00	59.12**	.20
	2. Eudaimonic	6.04 <sub>3,4</sub>	0.65						
	3. Empty life	5.39 <sub>1,2,4</sub>	0.73						
	4. Hedonic	5.75 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	0.56						
<b>Extrinsic goals</b>	1. Full life	4.20 <sub>2,3</sub>	1.17	4.87*	.01	24.79**	.03	20.86**	.08
	2. Eudaimonic	3.59 <sub>1,4</sub>	1.10						
	3. Empty life	3.42 <sub>1,4</sub>	0.92						
	4. Hedonic	4.10 <sub>2,3</sub>	1.08						
<b>Self-control</b>	1. Full life	4.36 <sub>4</sub>	0.93	6.89**	.01	0.00	.00	13.72**	.06
	2. Eudaimonic	4.52 <sub>3,4</sub>	0.81						
	3. Empty life	4.17 <sub>2</sub>	0.89						
	4. Hedonic	3.98 <sub>1,2</sub>	0.83						

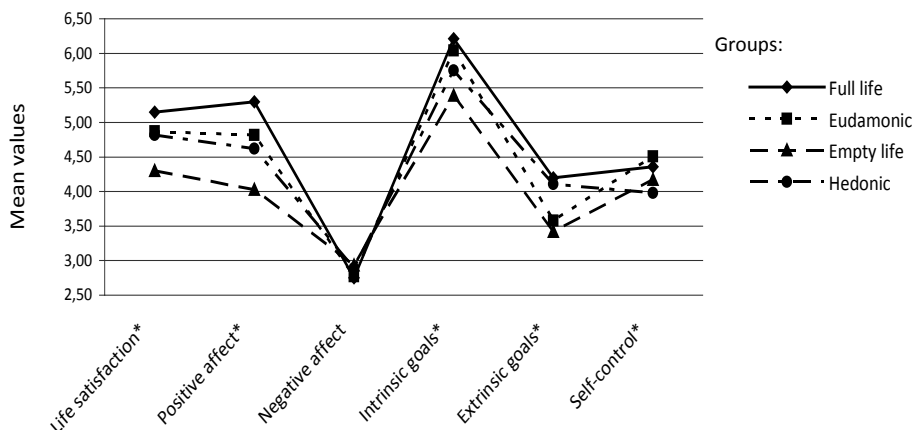
<sup>a</sup> *df* for gender and age: 1, 698-717; *df* for group: 3, 698-717. The subscripted numbers indicate groups that differ significantly (Bonferroni post-hoc test).

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Individuals with different profiles of orientations to happiness differ in all variables except for negative affect. From Table 3 it can be seen that gender or age

were significant correlates for several variables, but the effect of group remained significant even after they were controlled (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Subjective Well-being, Life Goals and Self-control for Groups with Different Orientations to Happiness Profiles*



\* significant differences between groups (Table 3)

The participants who live full lives have the highest subjective well-being. They value intrinsic life goals more than the participants in the hedonic group and those who live empty lives. In addition, they value extrinsic goals more than the participants in the eudaimonic group. Finally, they have better self-control than those who are hedonically orientated.

The participants who live a eudaimonic life have higher subjective well-being, better self-control and value intrinsic goals more than those who live an empty life. Compared to the hedonic group, they experience more positive affect, value intrinsic goals more and have better self-control.

The "Hedonic" group participants' are more satisfied with their lives, have higher positive affect and value intrinsic and extrinsic goals more than those who live an empty life. They value extrinsic goals more than participants who live their lives eudaimonically.

## Discussion

Our findings are not in line with authentic happiness theory (Seligman, 2002), which differentiates between three orientations to happiness: pleasure, engagement and meaning. We found only two orientations: hedonic and eudaimonic. The hedonic orientation is the same as the authors of the theory and questionnaire used

have described (Peterson et al., 2005; Seligman, 2002), while eudaimonic orientation differs, because it unifies orientation to engagement and orientation to meaning. A similar phenomenon was found in research done by Anić (2007) on a large sample of elementary school pupils. Seligman points to the possibility of alternative factor structure that might be more appropriate (Schueller & Seligman, 2010). He proposes a new model called PERMA, which differentiates five paths to happiness.

The general distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic happiness was supported by the present study's results. Furthermore, as seen, eudaimonic happiness is compound of engagement and meaning, which suggests that the three orientations to happiness might be considered as a hierarchical model. State of flow actually does relate to both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness, with the relationship being stronger for the eudaimonic one (Waterman, 1993; Waterman et al., 2008). In addition, meaning and engagement are strongly correlated to each other than to pleasure (Schueller & Seligman, 2010).

The next issue that the present study aimed to address refers to the possibility that the two orientations can be pursued simultaneously. Ever since Aristotle's *Nichomachean ethics*, co-existence of hedonic and eudaimonic happiness was considered as impossible, and studies were mainly unilateral, researching only one of them. However, more recently, distinction of the hedonic and eudaimonic happiness has been debated (e.g. Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; Waterman, 2008), especially after several studies have shown that the best psychological outcomes are related to simultaneously pursuing hedonia and eudaimonia (e.g. Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Peterson et al., 2005).

### *Which Path Leads to Happiness?*

According to some authors, eudaimonia was from ancient age considered as the only life worth living. At the other side, some authors wrote that a good life is a life full of pleasure and joyful moments. Which premise is true? Based on our findings, the best way to live our lives is to combine hedonia and eudaimonia. People who endorse eudaimonia and hedonia equally, take the best out of both: their lives are full of pleasures, engagement and meaning. They know how to enjoy going out, being with friends, having fun, but they will not let it stand in a way of accomplishing some important goals, like finishing a work project. It seems like it is all about balance: people who are able to balance hedonic pleasures with eudaimonic engagement and meaning are the best functioning ones.

On the opposite, there are people who do not endorse either of the orientations to happiness. They have the lowest subjective well-being. Furthermore, they value life goals less than other people and have low self-control. In present study, orientations to happiness are conceptualized as a sort of disposition, which leaves little space for interventions. However, orientations to happiness can also be

conceived as reflections of different motivations (Huta & Ryan, 2010). In that case, people who do not endorse either of the orientations actually could lack any motivation, which opens up the opportunity to develop some programs to help them to become more motivated. Hopefully, this will enable them to be more satisfied, happier, and give more meaning to their lives.

The hypothesis that living the full-life is the best for optimal functioning (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Peterson et al., 2005) was partially confirmed. Those people indeed have the highest subjective well-being, and they value intrinsic goals, which are considered as more important for well-being than the extrinsic ones (e.g. Brdar, Rijavec, & Miljković, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Martos & Kopp, 2011; Rijavec, Brdar, & Miljković, 2005; Rijavec et al., 2006; Spasovski, 2009). However, they also have lower self-control than those who live eudaimonic lives, which might affect their success in goal accomplishment, which is further related to well-being (Diener et al., 1999).

It is interesting to note that people who live their lives eudaimonically experience more positive affect than people that are dominantly hedonically orientated. Intuitively, one might expect the opposite. A hedonic life, full of pleasure and fun, should be a source of positive affect, but we must ask ourselves how long does it last? Are there any long-term effects on well-being? Pleasure seeking is a bad strategy for enhancement of long-term well-being (Diener, 2000), and it can result in higher positive affect only on within-person level of measurement (Huta & Ryan, 2010). The engagement in hedonic activities should momentarily bring individual more positive feelings than the engagement in eudaimonic activities. However, on a general, trait level, the effects are opposite: people who engage in eudaimonic activities have higher positive affect than those who are dominantly hedonically motivated. Living a eudaimonic life includes engagement in activities that nurture people's talents and skills, cultivate interests (Schueller & Seligman, 2010), activities that are a source of meaning and purpose used to define goals that guide people's actions and promote well-being (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002).

### *Importance of Life Goals and Self-control in Pursuing Happiness*

The relationship between eudaimonic life and intrinsic goals can be found as early as in work of Aristotle (350 B.C./1999), who said that true happiness can only be achieved through expression of virtue, living to one's fullest potential and in accordance with internal values. Intrinsic goals should be closer to individual's true self because they, unlike extrinsic goals, do not depend on other people's opinions, but on the personally defined criteria. Furthermore, the concepts of eudaimonic life and intrinsic goals are quite similar: people who live a eudaimonic life are more oriented to full engagement in some intrinsically motivated activity or to contributing to society in which they live, which is similar to intrinsic goals

(affiliation, community feeling, and self-acceptance). Our results confirmed the notion of self-determination theory according to which eudaimonia is a way of living in which intrinsic values predominate – people are focused on what has inherent worth (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). However, it must be emphasized that people who live a full life pursue eudaimonia and hedonia simultaneously, and they still manage to value intrinsic life goals, which means that they are good at balancing these two orientations. Pursuing hedonism is not detrimental for a good life if it is combined with pursuing eudaimonism. Grouzet et al. (2005) found that hedonism falls between intrinsic and extrinsic pursuits. Hedonic pursuits are in many cases done for their own sake, and are worthwhile in terms of a good life (Ryan et al., 2008).

People who live full lives also have lower self-control than people who live eudaimonic lives. This indicates that they would not be ready to work on accomplishing long-term goals as devoted as it would be needed. On the other hand, a dose of pure hedonism may be good to relax, as long as it does not interfere with pursuing the chosen goals. These results suggest that the full life hypothesis (Peterson et al., 2005) should be further studied, but including more variables, such as school or work success, relationship qualities, friendship characteristics, etc. It could be that people who live a eudaimonic life are more oriented to work and goals achievement, while they neglect the informal activities and casual interpersonal relationships. Similarly, people who highly endorse both orientations might be somewhat less successful at their jobs than eudaimonically oriented people, but they might experience more fun in life, and have more good relationships. Further research is needed to find which is better for optimal functioning.

Self-control has been linked to many positive outcomes, but apart from self-determination theory, there are only few studies about its relationship with subjective well-being (e.g. Peterson et al., 2007; Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, & Carver, 2003). They point to the positive relationship between self-control and subjective well-being, a finding confirmed in this study. People with higher self-control are more satisfied with their lives, and experience more positive and less negative emotions. Self-control might have a mediating role between life goals and subjective well-being: the attainment of life goals is related to subjective well-being, and people who have better self-control are more likely to attain chosen goals.

The relationship between orientations to happiness and self-control has received almost no attention until now, with only one study (Peterson et al., 2007) showing that character strength of self-regulation has higher correlations with orientations to engagement and meaning (i.e. eudaimonic) than with orientation to pleasure (i.e. hedonic). The present study's results are similar: people who live full lives and those who live eudaimonic lives have better self-control than people who live hedonic lives. Eudaimonic pursuits are often long-term pursuits that demand

investment of time, effort and energy, as well as renunciation. For example, if a person tries to improve her sport results to meet certain standards necessary to enter the competition, it will take quite a long time, a lot of effort and sacrifice to accomplish that. On the other side, hedonism is characterized by pursuing pleasures that are immediately available, lacking the willingness to delay immediate satisfaction in order to achieve greater award later.

### *Study Limitations*

Apart from the usual limitations related to the use of questionnaire measures that are influenced by interpretative issues characteristic for all self-assessment approaches, this study has several other limitations, too.

Some of them are related to the measures used, especially *The Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire* and *The Brief Self-control Scale*, because the percentage of the variance explained is rather small and the obtained results should be considered with caution and verified in some future study. Furthermore, factor structure of *The Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire* obtained in this research is quite different from the original factor structure. However, it was decided to accept and work with the factor structure obtained, because there are several indices suggesting that this questionnaire has to be modified. For example, several studies done in Croatia showed low reliability of the engagement factor (e.g. Brdar et al., 2009), or problems in distinguishing engagement and meaning factors (e.g. Anić, 2007). Those results suggest that the proposed three-factor structure might not be the best solution. Even Martin Seligman, who is one of the authors of that questionnaire, recently offered a new perspective on paths to happiness. Because of the differences in factor structures, the comparison of results obtained in this study with earlier studies are somewhat questionable and should be taken with caution.

Next, participants of this research were students, therefore the generalization of results on the entire population is questionable and in future research obtained results should be verified on different samples (e.g. adults, elderly, less or more educated than students). This is especially important regarding life goals and orientations to happiness which might be somewhat different in older population.

### **Conclusions and Future Research Directions**

There are different paths to happiness, with each having good and bad aspects. People that pursue hedonic path are quite satisfied with their lives, experience a lot of pleasure and fun, but they have low self-control which might get in a way with goal accomplishment. On the other hand, people who live eudaimonic lives are satisfied with their lives too, and have good self-control. However, they could lack joy and pleasure in life. Logically, simultaneous pursuit of hedonic and eudaimonic

paths should lead to the best psychological outcomes. The present study has empirically confirmed this premise: people who live full lives are the happiest, have good self-control and know which goals to choose.

In future research, it would be interesting to test the idea that orientations to happiness can be conceived as reflections of different motivations, by adding a motivation questionnaire to the research. If orientations to happiness are actually reflections of different motivations, then we can use it as a foundation for intervention programs development, which should help people who live empty lives to improve their life quality and to be happier.

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## **Profili orijentacija prema sreći, subjektivna dobrobit i životni ciljevi**

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### **Sažetak**

Ljudi nastoje ostvariti sreću slijedeći različite puteve: ugodu, angažman i smisao, koji su različito povezani s dobrobiti. Cilj je istraživanja bio usporediti subjektivnu dobrobit, životne ciljeve i samokontrolu ljudi s različitim profilima orijentacija prema sreći.

Studenti (484 ženskog i 278 muškog spola, srednje dobi 20.6 godina) procijenili su svoje zadovoljstvo životom, pozitivno i negativno raspoloženje, orijentacije prema sreći i samokontrolu.

Na temelju K-means klaster analize ispitanici su svrstani u četiri grupe: studenti koji imaju visoku hedonističku i eudaimonističku orijentaciju (grupa "Pun život"), oni koji imaju niske rezultate na obje orijentacije (grupa "Prazan život"), studenti koji žive eudaimonistički i studenti koji žive hedonistički život.

Ljudi koji žive pun život su najsretniji, vrednuju intrinzične ciljeve i imaju visoku samokontrolu. Suprotno tome, ljudi koji žive prazan život imaju najnižu dobrobit, manje od drugih vrednuju ekstrinzične i intrinzične životne ciljeve i imaju nisku samokontrolu.

**Ključne riječi:** orijentacije prema sreći, subjektivna dobrobit, životni ciljevi, samokontrola, klaster analiza

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