

Three Ways to Be Happy: Pleasure, Engagement, and Meaning—Findings from Australian and US Samples

Dianne A. Vella-Brodrick · Nansook Park · Christopher Peterson

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Abstract This study examined the contributions of orientations to happiness (pleasure, engagement and meaning) to subjective well-being. A sample of 12,622 adults from the United States completed on-line surveys measuring orientations to happiness, positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. A sample of 332 adults from Australia also completed these surveys as well as a measure of the big five factor personality traits. Hierarchical regressions generally supported the hypothesis that the three orientations to happiness predict subjective well-being (satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect) beyond sociodemographic variables and personality. Meaning and engagement explained the greatest variance in all three components of subjective well-being. Overall, these findings support the importance of a eudaimonic approach in addition to the hedonic approach to achieving happiness. Moreover, findings were relatively consistent in both the Australian and US samples.

Keywords Orientations to happiness · Subjective well-being · Life satisfaction · Positive and negative affect · Positive psychology · Pleasure · Engagement · Meaning

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D. A. Vella-Brodrick (✉)
School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine, Monash University,
Clayton, VIC, Australia
e-mail: dianne.vella-brodrick@med.monash.edu.au

N. Park
Department of Psychology, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, USA

C. Peterson
Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

1 Introduction

Subjective well-being—happiness—is now the subject of many scientific investigations. Personality and sociodemographic variables consistently predict subjective well-being (Diener and Lucas 1999; Gannon and Ranzijn 2005). However, despite the combined contributions of personality and sociodemographic factors, over half of the variance in subjective well-being remains unexplained. Consequently, many psychologists have turned their attention to the mechanisms underlying well-being including contextual, cognitive, and behavioural aspects (Lent et al. 2005).

The hedonic perspective espouses the importance of pleasurable activities for achieving the good life. From this perspective the aim is to maximise pleasure and decrease pain. Many works have demonstrated the benefits of pleasure, positive emotions, and positive affect on a range of desirable outcomes such as health, social engagement, and success (Davidson et al. 2003; Fredrickson and Losada 2005; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Pressman and Cohen 2005). Indeed the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which has received empirical support, asserts that positive emotions are fundamental to human flourishing by broadening individuals thought-action repertoires and building up useful resources which help to maintain well-being (Fredrickson 2001). Consequently interventions aimed at increasing pleasure experiences, such as savouring and reminiscing (Bryant et al. 2005; Bryant and Veroff 2007), counting one's blessings and considering one's best possible self (Sheldon and Lyubomirsky 2006), have been developed and tested. For example Seligman et al. (2005) examined the efficacy of five positive psychology interventions and found that the intervention which involved writing down three good things that happened each day (a form of savouring), was effective in producing happiness for at least 6 months (which was the final testing period). While it is acknowledged that pleasure and positive affect are not always advantageous (e.g., they can lead to addictions), there is general support for positive emotions being conducive to well-being and a range of positive outcomes.

Another factor which has been receiving attention in relation to well-being is life meaning. While the value of life meaning for well-being has been espoused for some time (e.g., Frankl 1963), scholars have only recently focused on its potential as a predictor of subjective well-being (e.g., Fry 2000) with some claiming it is a critical component of psychological well-being (Ryff and Singer 1998a). Life meaning is positively correlated with good mental health (Adams et al. 2000; Zika and Chamberlain 1992) and negatively correlated with psychopathology (Debats et al. 1993). These findings support Frankl's assertion that individuals need to find meaning in their lives and that a failure to attain meaning results in psychological problems. Indeed research indicates that lack of meaning is not only associated with ill-health but that greater meaning in life is associated with positive health.

Another factor which has also received recent attention is flow or engagement. In particular, the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has shown the importance of experiencing "flow" states for achieving the good life. Flow is characterised by being fully immersed in a specific activity. It is typically measured by summing individual ratings of (1) concentration (2) involvement, and (3) enjoyment during a specific activity. Research has supported the benefits of flow including commitment, achievement and persistence in a diverse range of pursuits including academic and sporting (Csikszentmihalyi et al. 2005).

The additional insight provided by life meaning and flow research has fostered a new approach to the traditional hedonic perspective of maximising pleasure and life satisfaction, and minimising pain. A parallel view stating that well-being involves eudaimonic

qualities such as personal growth, meaning and serving a higher purpose is gaining recognition (Keyes et al. 2002). Moreover a comprehensive and inclusive approach which examines the contributions of both the hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being is emerging. Indeed there is a viewpoint that by engaging in eudaimonic pursuits, subjective well-being (happiness) will occur as an end or by product (Ryan and Deci 2001). Based on this latter perspective, life purpose and higher order meaning are believed to produce happiness.

These various schools of thought on the process of attaining happiness have illuminated the possibility that there may be different ways of achieving happiness aside from the pleasure 'route'. Consequently, scholars have recently integrated this information into a single theoretical framework. For example, Peterson et al. (2005) proposed that individuals may seek life satisfaction via three different orientations; (1) pleasure, (2) engagement, and (3) meaning. The pleasant life involves enjoyable and positive experiences. The good (engaged) life emerges when individuals engage in activities that fully immerse them. The meaningful life results when individuals undertake activities that contribute to the greater good, such as parenting, developing friendships or community services. The pleasure and meaning orientations reflect the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to happiness, respectively, whereas the engagement orientation transpired from work on flow states by Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

Peterson et al. (2005) developed the Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire to measure these three orientations to happiness. Initial psychometric data on the 18 item scale supported a three-factor solution representing the pleasure, engagement and meaning orientations. Using this measure, Peterson et al., conducted an empirical investigation into the contributions of the three orientations to satisfaction with life. One of the primary questions they sought to investigate was whether these three orientations to happiness were equally important to satisfaction with life or whether some were more important than others. A further point of enquiry was whether combinations of these orientations to happiness are more significant in predicting satisfaction with life than are independent orientations. Their study included a sample of 845 participants who completed the orientations to happiness questionnaire and the satisfaction with life scale online. Results indicated that all three orientations to happiness predicted satisfaction with life but that engagement and meaning were more highly correlated with satisfaction with life than was pleasure ($r = .30, .26, \text{ and } .17$, respectively).

Further support for the importance of the engagement and meaning orientations to satisfaction with life is evident from a study by Peterson et al. (2007) on character strengths. Using a large sample of US adults ($N = 12,439$) and a sample of Swiss adults ($N = 445$), they found that character strengths most highly associated with satisfaction with life (humor, zest, curiosity, perseverance, and religiousness) also correlated with all three orientations to happiness, and especially with engagement and meaning. Therefore, it appears that all three orientations to happiness are important but that engagement and meaning are most significant.

An issue raised in the well-being literature is whether the predictors of happiness are consistent across a range of different nations and cultures. Cross cultural comparisons generally indicate that culture can influence predictors and levels of subjective well-being (Biswas-Diener et al. 2005; Diener et al. 2003). To date, cross-cultural research on orientations to happiness is restricted to the aforementioned study by Peterson et al. (2007) which compared a Swiss sample with a US sample. A comparison of the means for the three orientations to happiness indicated similar ratings for the two samples, except on the meaning subscale where higher means were found for the US sample (3.58) than for the

Swiss sample (2.99). Further studies using cross-cultural samples are needed to address this issue of generalisability more fully.

The present study extends Peterson et al.'s (2005) work by comparing data from Australian and US samples and by measuring positive and negative affect, not just satisfaction with life. To date, published works on orientations to happiness have focused only on satisfaction with life as the criterion variable. This study examines the contributions of meaning, engagement and pleasure as predictors of positive affect, negative affect and satisfaction with life. Furthermore this study controls for sociodemographic variables, and in the case of the Australian sample, personality (based on the big five factor model). An assessment of subjective well-being from both affective and cognitive perspectives is an important addition, as each of these components may be differentially influenced (Chamberlain 1988) by the orientations to happiness variables.

More specifically, the present study examines whether the eudaimonic factors of engagement and meaning contribute to subjective well-being (positive affect, negative affect and satisfaction with life) beyond the hedonic factor of pleasure and the control variables. It is hypothesized that the eudaimonic factors predict subjective well-being beyond pleasure and the control variables. This finding is expected to be relatively consistent for both the Australian and US samples, although meaning is expected to be endorsed more highly for the US sample than the Australian sample.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

Participants from the Australian sample were 332 adults from the general population with a mean age of 37.27 and a standard deviation of 13.23 (range = 18–81). Forty percent were male while 60% were female. Over 50% of the sample had a tertiary qualification and 84% were employed.

Participants from the US sample were 18,326 participants, of whom 28.5% were male and 71.5% were female. The most frequently selected (27.3%) age category was 45–54 years and the second most frequently selected (22%) age category was 35–44 years old, while the majority of participants were between 25 and 64 years old. Seventy eight percent of the sample had some college or post-college degree and 72.6% of the sample were employed (as opposed to being retired). With the selection of the listwise method for the regression analyses, the data set was reduced to approximately 12,622.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 *Orientations to Happiness Questionnaire* (Peterson et al. 2005)

The orientations to happiness questionnaire has three subscales, pleasure, engagement and meaning, and contains six items per subscale (18 items in total). Cronbach alpha coefficients were reported by Peterson et al. (2005) as .82, .72 and .82 for the pleasure, engagement and meaning subscales, respectively. Higher scores represent higher orientations to happiness. Example items include: "life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide" (pleasure subscale), "I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities" (engagement subscale), and "I have spent a lot of time thinking about what life means and how I fit into its big picture" (meaning subscale).

2.2.2 Subjective Well-being

2.2.2.1 Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al. 1988) This scale contains 10 items measuring positive affect and 10 items measuring negative affect. Respondents are required to indicate the extent to which they agree with each of the 20 adjectives. Higher scores reflect higher levels of the respective affective state. Therefore negative affect scores are expected to correlate negatively with the orientations to happiness questionnaire scales. The PANAS possesses satisfactory convergent validity and has been shown to be reliable (Crawford and Henry 2004; Watson et al. 1988).

2.2.2.2 Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985) The satisfaction with life scale contains five items and is psychometrically sound (Diener et al. 1985; Lucas et al. 1996). Higher scores indicate higher levels of life satisfaction.

2.2.2.3 International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg 1999) This Scale was Administered to the Australian Sample only. This scale measures the big five factors of agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness (intellect/imagination) using 50 items. The corresponding alpha coefficients have been reported as .82, .87, .79, .86 and .84 (Goldberg 1999). Higher scores represent higher levels of the respective personality factor.

2.2.2.4 Sociodemographic Questions Participant details such as age, gender, income, education, illness, occupation, number of dependents and relationship status were collected for each sample.

2.3 Procedure

Approval was gained from the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans at Monash University for the collection of the Australian data. Posters and questionnaire kits were placed in public locations around Victoria, Australia such as health centres, public libraries, recreational clubs and work sites. All responses were anonymous and could be completed at a time and location that suited participants. Completed questionnaires were returned using addressed envelopes supplied to the participants. A response rate of 27% was obtained.

The US sample completed the aforementioned measures on the Authentic Happiness website (www.authentichappiness.com) between September 2002 and January 2006. Although this survey can be completed by individuals from all around the world, only participants who specified that they resided in the US were selected for inclusion in this study. Participants were required to register on the website and complete a range of questionnaires and sociodemographic questions.

3 Results

The data were analysed using the SPSS V14 statistical package. The descriptive statistics for orientations to happiness and subjective well-being for both the Australian and US samples are provided in Table 1.

The Australian sample reported higher levels of pleasure and meaning in comparison to their engagement scores. The US sample reported consistent scores on pleasure and engagement and comparatively high scores on meaning. The US sample produced the

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for study variables

	Pleasure Aust. (US)	Engagement Aust. (US)	Meaning Aust. (US)	SWL Aust. (US)	PA Aust. (US)	NA Aust. (US)
Pleasure	—	.31** (.27)***	.22** (.14)***	.06 ^{ns} (.19)***	.26*** (.21)***	-.07 ^{ns} (-.04)***
Engagement		—	.46*** (.44)***	.28*** (.35)***	.39*** (.45)***	-.19*** (-.19)***
Meaning			—	.23*** (.38)***	.42*** (.44)***	.01 ^{ns} (-.18)***
<i>M</i>	3.13 (3.14)	2.89 (3.11)	3.21 (3.58)	24.52 (21.84)	35.21 (29.91)	17.29 (15.20)
<i>SD</i>	.89 (.86)	.65 (.74)	.88 (.93)	6.13 (7.54)	6.85 (8.31)	5.70 (6.19)
<i>N</i>	322 (12,622)	331 (12,622)	329 (12,622)	331 (12,622)	325 (11,573)	332 (11,573)

Table 2 Change statistics for variables predicting satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect (US sample)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Change statistics				
				<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i> change	df1	df2	Sig. <i>F</i> change
SWL								
1 ^a	.051(a)	.003	.002	.003	16.275	2	12,619	.000
2 ^b	.195(b)	.038	.038	.035	462.684	1	12,618	.000
3 ^c	.369(c)	.136	.136	.098	1,437.123	1	12,617	.000
4 ^d	.445(d)	.198	.198	.062	972.133	1	12,616	.000
PA								
1 ^a	.174(a)	.030	.030	.030	179.566	2	11,570	.000
2 ^b	.303(b)	.092	.092	.062	787.547	1	11,569	.000
3 ^c	.480(c)	.231	.231	.139	2,088.351	1	11,568	.000
4 ^d	.548(d)	.300	.300	.070	1,150.700	1	11,567	.000
NA								
1 ^a	.145(a)	.021	.021	.021	123.516	2	11,570	.000
2 ^b	.159(b)	.025	.025	.004	51.060	1	11,569	.000
3 ^c	.225(c)	.051	.051	.026	312.514	1	11,568	.000
4 ^d	.247(d)	.061	.061	.010	127.919	1	11,567	.000

^a Predictors: (constant), gender, age

^b Predictors: (constant), gender, age, pleasure

^c Predictors: (constant), gender, age, pleasure, engagement

^d Predictors: (constant), gender, age, pleasure, engagement, meaning

highest overall scores on the orientations to happiness measure in comparison to the Australian sample, particularly in relation to engagement and meaning. Nevertheless, the Australian sample reported significantly higher means for satisfaction with life and positive affect ($p < .001$). So while the US sample endorsed higher engagement and meaning orientations to happiness compared to the Australian sample, this did not translate into higher positive affect or satisfaction with life scores. The US sample did, however, report significantly lower levels ($p < .001$) of negative affect than the Australian sample.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were undertaken for each of the three subjective well-being outcome variables (satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect) on the US and Australian data sets independently. Predictor variables were entered in four steps. For the US sample, step 1 controlled for age and gender. In step 2, the pleasure orientation to happiness was entered, followed by the engagement orientation to happiness at step 3, and the meaning orientation to happiness at step 4. The same four steps were entered for the Australian sample. However, the big five personality variables were also included in step 1 of each of the three regressions.

Tables 2 and 3 present results from the hierarchical regressions for the US samples. In regards to satisfaction with life, all four steps of the regression were significant and explained 19.8% (adjusted R^2) of variance in satisfaction with life (see Table 2). Interestingly, most of the variance was contributed by the addition of engagement and then by meaning, with pleasure contributing the least variance to satisfaction with life, even though it was the first orientation to happiness variable to be entered into the regression.

Table 3 Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis for variables predicting satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect (US sample)

Model 4	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
SWL					
Age	-.219	.040	-.045	-5.466	.000
Gender	.539	.134	.032	4.030	.000
Pleasure	.742	.075	.084	9.851	.000
Engagement	2.166	.095	.211	22.684	.000
Meaning	2.251	.072	.278	31.179	.000
PA					
Age	.709	.043	.134	16.577	.000
Gender	-.153	.143	-.008	-1.069	.285
Pleasure	1.223	.080	.127	15.262	.000
Engagement	3.018	.102	.268	29.497	.000
Meaning	2.630	.078	.295	33.922	.000
NA					
Age	-.461	.037	-.117	-12.518	.000
Gender	-.368	.123	-.027	-2.991	.003
Pleasure	-.092	.069	-.013	-1.326	.185
Engagement	-1.012	.088	-.121	-11.471	.000
Meaning	-.756	.067	-.114	-11.310	.000

Age, gender and all three orientations to happiness predictors were significant in the final model (see Table 3).

Findings for positive affect were similar to satisfaction with life. As presented in Table 2, each step of the regression was significant and explained 30% (adjusted R^2) of the variance in positive affect. Again engagement was the highest predictor (13.9%), with meaning next (7%), and then pleasure (6.2%). As indicated in Table 3, all variables except gender were significant predictors of positive affect in the final model.

All four steps of the regression were significant in predicting negative affect. However, only 6.1% (adjusted R^2) of the variance in negative affect was explained. The final model (see Table 3) indicated that relative to all the other variables entered into the regression, pleasure was not a significant predictor of negative affect. In fact, once engagement and meaning were entered into the regression at steps 3 and 4, pleasure did not remain significant. Age, gender, engagement and meaning were significant predictors of negative affect in the final model.

The results for the Australian sample are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Turning first to satisfaction with life, apart from the first step which included age, gender and personality as control variables, only the third step of the regression which involved the addition of engagement was significant. Therefore the pleasure and meaning orientations to happiness were not significant predictors of satisfaction with life. Overall the model accounted for 19.9% (adjusted R^2) of the variance in satisfaction with life. The unique contribution of adding engagement at step 2 was 1.8%. Based on the coefficients in the final model (see Table 5), all personality variables except openness were significant. Engagement was the

Table 4 Change statistics for variables predicting satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect (Australian sample)

Model 4	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Change statistics					
				<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i> change	df1	df2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	
SWL									
1 ^a	.451(a)	.204	.185	.204	11.174	7	306	.000	
2 ^b	.455(b)	.207	.186	.003	1.233	1	305	.268	
3 ^c	.474(c)	.224	.202	.018	6.933	1	304	.009	
4 ^d	.474(d)	.225	.199	.000	.125	1	303	.724	
PA									
1 ^a	.577(a)	.333	.317	.333	21.657	7	304	.000	
2 ^b	.594(b)	.353	.336	.020	9.448	1	303	.002	
3 ^c	.616(c)	.379	.361	.026	12.688	1	302	.000	
4 ^d	.627(d)	.393	.373	.014	7.051	1	301	.008	
NA									
1 ^a	.583(a)	.339	.324	.339	22.455	7	306	.000	
2 ^b	.592(b)	.351	.334	.011	5.279	1	305	.022	
3 ^c	.592(c)	.351	.332	.000	.106	1	304	.745	
4 ^d	.607(d)	.369	.348	.018	8.530	1	303	.004	

^a Predictors: (constant) age, gender, big five personality variables

^b Predictors: (constant) age, gender, big five personality variables, pleasure TOT

^c Predictors: (constant) age, gender, big five personality variables, pleasure TOT, engage TOT

^d Predictors: (constant) age, gender, big five personality variables, pleasure TOT, engage TOT, meaning TOT

only orientation to happiness variable which provided unique variance to satisfaction with life beyond the control variables.

Regarding the results of the hierarchical regression examining positive affect as the outcome variable, all three steps involving the orientations to happiness variables significantly predicted positive affect beyond the sociodemographic and personality variables (see Table 4). Overall, this model accounted for 37.3% (adjusted R^2) of the variance in positive affect. The unique contribution of adding the pleasure, engagement and meaning orientations to happiness variables at steps 2, 3 and 4 were 2%, 2.6% and 1.4%, respectively. The final model, indicated that once again all personality variables except for openness were significant, as were age, engagement and meaning. Pleasure was not a significant predictor of positive affect.

In the hierarchical regression predicting negative affect, steps 1, 2 and 4 were significant. Overall, this model accounted for 34.8% (adjusted R^2) of the variance in negative affect. The unique contribution of adding pleasure at step 2 was 1.1% and meaning at step 4 was 1.8%. In step 4, extroversion, agreeableness, pleasure and meaning significantly predicted negative affect. The beta weights for pleasure and meaning were both positive suggesting that increased pleasure and meaning were associated with increased negative affect, although the bivariate correlation between meaning and negative affect (.01), and pleasure and negative affect (-.07) were not significant.

In sum, all three orientations to happiness significantly predicted various aspects of subjective well-being particularly for the US sample. Meaning and engagement made the

Table 5 Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis for variables predicting satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect (Australian sample)

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	Standard error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
SWL					
Gender	-.160	.684	-.013	-.234	.815
Age	-.024	.025	-.052	-.953	.341
Extroversion	.107	.053	.128	2.018	.044
Conscientious	.145	.073	.110	1.994	.047
Openness	-.065	.061	-.064	-1.068	.286
Emotional stability	.193	.046	.253	4.168	.000
Agreeableness	.150	.061	.156	2.448	.015
Pleasure TOT	-.124	.068	-.108	-1.836	.067
Engage TOT	.235	.100	.150	2.346	.020
Meaning TOT	.026	.074	.022	.353	.724
PA					
Gender	.475	.679	.034	.699	.485
Age	.050	.025	.097	1.984	.048
Extroversion	.120	.053	.129	2.290	.023
Conscientious	.241	.072	.164	3.341	.001
Openness	.023	.061	.020	.382	.703
Emotional stability	.147	.046	.172	3.188	.002
Agreeableness	.142	.061	.133	2.339	.020
Pleasure TOT	.126	.067	.098	1.878	.061
Engage TOT	.245	.099	.140	2.461	.014
Meaning TOT	.194	.073	.149	2.655	.008
NA					
Gender	-.420	.574	-.036	-.730	.466
Age	-.008	.021	-.017	-.351	.725
Extroversion	-.026	.045	-.034	-.594	.553
Conscientious	-.105	.061	-.086	-1.715	.087
Openness	-.077	.051	-.081	-1.506	.133
Emotional stability	-.368	.039	-.517	-9.443	.000
Agreeableness	-.129	.052	-.144	-2.503	.013
Pleasure TOT	.113	.057	.106	1.988	.048
Engage TOT	-.059	.084	-.040	-.698	.486
Meaning TOT	.180	.062	.167	2.921	.004

greatest contributions while pleasure made the least, particularly in light of the sequence of entry of the orientations to happiness variables in the regressions.

As expected when personality was taken into account in the case of the Australian sample, a greater percentage of the overall variance in subjective well-being was explained (when compared to the US sample which did not include personality). To reduce the likelihood that this difference was due to the different samples, a hierarchical regression using the Australian data with the personality variables removed was undertaken and

compared with the results of the Australian sample which included personality. The percentage of variance explained (adjusted R^2) in satisfaction with life, positive affect and negative affect for models without personality (versus models with personality) were substantially less 7.9% (19.9%), 26.5% (37.3%), 5.7% (34.8%), respectively, supporting the proposition that personality is a substantial predictor of subjective well-being and also shares some variance with the orientations to happiness variables.

To determine the effects of the markedly different sample sizes between the US and Australian samples, 3% of the US data was randomly selected using SPSS “Select Cases” option. This amounted to 384 cases for SWL and 360 for each of positive affect and negative affect. Three percent of the data was selected as it approximated the Australian sample size. All the analyses were re-run using the reduced data set and results were compared with the complete data set. The analyses produced consistent results in relation to the predictive ability of the three orientations to happiness across the two US data sets. The only difference was for NA whereby the full data set found both engagement and meaning to be significant predictors of NA, whereas the reduced data set found only meaning to be a significant predictor. Overall this comparison across the two US data sets demonstrated relatively stable results.

4 Discussion

As hypothesised, engagement and meaning significantly predicted SWL, positive affect and negative affect beyond that of pleasure and the demographic variables for the US sample. For the Australian sample, engagement predicted satisfaction with life, engagement and meaning predicted positive affect, and meaning predicted negative affect beyond the control variables and pleasure. Therefore engagement and meaning are important predictors of subjective well-being and provide unique variance in subjective well-being that is not explained by other variables which have been previously shown to be related to subjective well-being (i.e., demographics, personality, and pleasure).

Pleasure, although a significant predictor of satisfaction with life and positive affect for the US sample, was not significant for the Australian sample other than for negative affect (and it had a negative beta weight). The finding that pleasure had a negative beta weight when predicting negative affect can be explained. Positive and negative emotions have been shown to be independent constructs (e.g., Diener and Emmons 1984) and individuals can experience elevated levels of both emotions over a period of time. Overall, however, pleasure did not play as significant a role in predicting subjective well-being as meaning and engagement. This was particularly evident for the prediction of negative affect in the US sample, whereby at step 2 in the regression, pleasure was significant but when engagement and meaning were added at steps 3 and 4, pleasure did not remain significant. Furthermore, the entry of engagement and meaning after pleasure was undertaken to determine if engagement and meaning could contribute to the prediction of subjective well-being once the variance in pleasure had been accounted for.

Engagement was a significant predictor of positive affect (Australian and US), satisfaction with life (Australian and US) and negative affect (US). This rather robust finding aligns with the concept of flow presented by Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2005) which emphasises the importance of concentration, involvement and enjoyment, to numerous positive outcomes. This finding may however, have been exaggerated as a result of using the PANAS as a measure of affect, as this scale contains high activation descriptors (such as attentive, interested, alert and enthusiastic) and excludes low activation descriptors such

as being calm, content and relaxed. Hence, it is likely that the aforementioned high activation forms of affect will be correlated with activated states such as flow. Nevertheless, engagement was correlated with satisfaction with life, not just positive and negative affect, suggesting some validation of this finding.

Peterson et al. (2005) found that both meaning and engagement were significant and primary predictors of satisfaction with life. Moreover, the study by Peterson et al. (2007) which examined character strengths most highly associated with satisfaction with life (humour, zest, curiosity, perseverance, and religiousness) found these strengths to also be most highly correlated with engagement and meaning in comparison to pleasure.

Meaning was an important predictor of all three components of subjective well-being for the US sample and of positive affect and negative affect for the Australian sample. In the main, this finding is consistent with previous research findings indicating that meaning and well-being are positively correlated (e.g., Zika and Chamberlain 1992). For the Australian sample the beta weight for meaning predicting negative affect was negative. That is, higher levels of meaning were associated with higher levels of negative affect. Some authors (e.g., Ryff and Singer 1998b) have noted that the process of finding life meaning can invoke mixed feelings and can include life challenge and growth, hence the association between meaning and both positive affect and negative affect are not so surprising. Furthermore these findings support Chamberlain's (1988) view that it is important to assess all three components of subjective well-being. In the current study meaning differentially predicted the three components of subjective well-being for the Australian sample. It will be worthwhile ascertaining if future research also finds that satisfaction with life, positive affect, and negative affect are differentially predicted by the three OTH and whether the predictive patterns are similar. Once this information is obtained, possible explanations for these differences can be generated.

Collectively these findings support the notion of a full life including pleasure, engagement and meaning, particularly for the US sample. However, a life with engagement or meaning may produce the greatest amount of happiness, and in the case of meaning, it may concurrently produce high levels of negative affect resulting in a wide range of emotional experiences. Pleasure was most significant for the US sample in contributing to satisfaction with life and positive affect, although even for this sample it was not as strong a predictor as meaning and engagement. In the Australian sample which controlled for personality, it is possible that some of the variance in pleasure was absorbed by personality factors such as extraversion. The bivariate correlations between pleasure and each of the personality measures support this proposition. Out of the personality variables, extraversion which was the most significant factor to correlate with the orientations to happiness variables, and was most highly correlated with pleasure ($r = .423, p < .001$).

This study's findings emphasise the importance of including engagement and meaning to the stereotypical western perspective of maximising pleasure. Many scholars such as Frankl (1963), Ryan and Deci (2001), and Ryff and Singer (1998a) espoused the need to include existential and eudaimonic factors when examining predictors of lasting happiness.

Although, the different control variables and sample sizes for the Australian and US samples prevent direct comparisons from being made, some of the main differences between the two samples will be cautiously noted. The US sample generally endorsed all three orientations to happiness for subjective well-being whereas the Australian sample endorsed engagement and meaning orientations to happiness most highly, particularly in relation to positive affect. Although Australians are not regarded as highly religious, they value their environment and find solace in a deeper personal meaning that is not affiliated with an institution (Mackay 2004). Therefore, the higher contributions of engagement and

meaning, relative to pleasure for the Australian sample are not surprising. It should however, be noted that the mean for the Australian sample was lower than that of the US sample (3.21—Australian vs. 3.58—US). As expected, the US sample strongly endorsed a meaningful life—this was also evident in Peterson et al.'s 2007 study in comparison to their Swiss sample. It is also possible that the lack of controlling for the big five personality variables for the US sample may have enabled the orientations to happiness variables to absorb some of the variance that may have otherwise been absorbed by personality such as extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. These personality variables were all significant predictors of the various subjective well-being outcomes for the Australian sample. However, although personality variables were found to be significant predictors of subjective well-being for the Australian sample, so too were many of the OTH variables despite being entered into the equation after all the variance in personality had been accounted for. Therefore the Australian data supports the important and unique contributions that OTH variables make towards subjective well-being which extend beyond the contributions of personality. This finding also supports the view that OTH and personality are sufficiently distinct constructs.

Another point concerns the use and interchange of terms such as positive affect, positive emotions and pleasure both in the previous literature and throughout this paper. It could be argued that the use of the pleasure orientation as a predictor of positive affect is problematic as they are essentially the same construct. However, this depends on the measures employed in the study. The pleasure orientation to happiness includes items such as “Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide”, “O love to do things that excite my senses” and “For me the good life is the pleasurable life”, whereas positive affect involved an assessment of how accurate certain descriptors such as interested, proud, alert and inspired were of an individual in general (the “general” timeframe was selected for the current study). Interestingly considerable overlap between the two constructs was not evident (.26 and .21 for the Australian and US samples, respectively) and therefore the premise that the two constructs are substantially overlapping was not supported in the current study. Likewise the three OTH and the subjective well-being measures were also not highly correlated. The highest correlation attained resulted in only 20% shared variance (between engagement and PA). This supports the notion that the variables in question are relatively independent.

There are some limitations to the current study that warrant consideration. First, due to the cross sectional design of the study, causal relationships cannot be ascertained. Second, the sample included a large proportion of highly educated individuals who may be more likely to value the engagement and meaning orientations to happiness than the average person and in comparison to the pleasure orientation to happiness. Third, the measure of positive affect used in the current study, the PANAS, does not include low activation descriptors and hence, the full range of affect, as espoused by the circumplex model of affect (Russell 1980) was not assessed. Finally, the Orientations to Happiness scale employed for the current study is a measure of endorsement of the various orientations to happiness and does not necessarily reflect participants' actual behavior.

The orientations to happiness framework is a relatively new area of research hence, considerable work is needed in the field. Future studies should control for the big five personality variables. Also it would be interesting to explore if the big five personality variables moderate orientations to happiness as a predictor of well-being by examining personality and orientations to happiness interaction terms as predictors. Future research could also compare how orientations to happiness influence subjective well-being and psychological well-being differently.

In conclusion, the engagement and meaning orientations to happiness provide additional variance in subjective well-being beyond pleasure, personality and demographics. While it is known that pleasure, engagement and meaning are important to well-being, this study provides new insight as it has examined the *relative* contributions of each of these orientations to happiness. Engagement and meaning contributed more variance in subjective well-being than did pleasure. Collectively these findings offer increasing insight into ways of achieving happiness and support the development of interventions aimed at fostering subjective well-being through a range of hedonic and eudaimonic avenues. Such findings offer hope to those who are not genetically destined to have high levels of trait positive affect or who do not lead highly ‘pleasurable’ lifestyles as they indicate other avenues involving engagement and meaning may also be related to subjective well-being.

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