

Integrating Individual- and Social-Oriented Happiness

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Since the 1960's an extraordinary record of references to happiness and well-being in economic, medical, self-help, academic and policy discourses has been widely documented (for example, Atkinson, 2013, Diener & Tay, 2017, Haybron, 2008; Seligman, 2011) and it appears in the most various shapes, like the exhortation to eat healthy and possibly organic food, to exercise every day or to have a good sleep, among the most quoted suggested actions (Rath & Harter, 2010), linked to the promise of inner peace and harmony and repositioning not only individuals but governments goals and policy interventions (Marks & Shah, 2004, Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009). The fact that the constant searching for happiness and well-being shares simultaneously aspects of the self and sides of social policy may imply that its root may be common to both (White, 2017). Happiness research is grounded in the Western tradition, with its individualistic features shared by a minority of nations (Triandis, 1995). The majority of studies about happiness and well-being have presumed Western or independent self-construal, emphasizing personal agency and self-improvement (Shin & Lyubomirsky, 2017). On the contrary, Eastern and African cultures can be viewed as interdependent self-construal, and people in these contexts tend to consider oneself as connected, relational, and a part of a larger social unit (Vignoles et al., 2016). In response to these problems, Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) developed the Interdependent Happiness Scale (IHS) to evaluate a more collectivist conceptualization of happiness, which is based more on harmony with others. Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) argue that interdependent happiness focuses on the relational nature of human beings, which is basically interdependent, harmony-oriented, risk-averse and quiescence-based, and preferring ordinariness.

A way to analyze the relational aspect of happiness could be to investigate, in addition to the individual, the family as a target of independent and interdependent happiness, due to the fact that family is the primary reference group in collectivist societies (Triandis, 2001). On the basis of these premises, a wide cross-nation research consortium has been constituted with the aim to investigate the relations among independent/interdependent happiness of person/family in individualist/collectivist cultures, which are already developing some preliminary studies in this directions (Krys et al., 2018). Here we propose some preliminary data about the IHS in the Italian culture. The scale was digitally administered to 290 undergraduate volunteers from different Universities of Rome (female = 53,4 %; age ranging 18-50, M = 25.13; SD = 4.51) alongside other self-reported measures of happiness: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985); Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS, Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) and individual factors: Self-construal Scale (SCS, Vignoles et al. 2016, 7 dimensions); Sociability Scale (Foschi & Lauriola, 2014); Honor, Dignity, Face (Leung & Cohen, 2011); Familism Scale (Foschi & Lauriola, 2016). With the aim to measure real (filled) and ideal (pursued) components of wellbeing, we administered the SWLS and the IHS to the same subjects with different targets: self, family, ideal person and ideal family. Given that previous studies within an individual research frame were already conducted, we believe that a synergistic view of diversity, incorporating a relational aspect, would greatly benefit happiness research. Implications for future research as well as for policies oriented to happiness and well-being will be discussed.

Key-words: Independent-Interdependent Happiness, Satisfaction with life, Self-construal, Associative Sociability, Family