WHETHER INDIVIDUALISM MAKES PEOPLE FROM THE "WEST" HAPPIER AND COLLECTIVISM MAKES PEOPLE FROM THE "EAST" MORE SATISFIED IN LIFE: AN INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. Determinants of the variation of happiness have long been discussed in social sciences. Recent studies have focused on investigating cultural factors contributing to the level of individual happiness in which the cultural dimension of individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL) has been drawing the attention of numerous scholars. At the cultural level of analysis, happiness is associated with personal achievements as well as personal egoism in individualistic cultures, while it is related to interpersonal relationships in collectivist cultures. Empirical research yields unconventional results at the individual level of analysis, that is, individuals in collectivist cultures favour IND to be happy, in contrast, people in individualistic cultures emphasize COL to be satisfied in life. Using data from the fifth wave of the World Values Survey, the authors take the cultural dimension of IND and COL at the individual level of analysis to detect its effects on happiness (conceptualized as subjective well-being) in the comparison between the two cultures. The multiple linear regression models reveal that individuals from the "West" experience greater happiness when they expose themselves less individualist, while, individuals from the "East" feel more satisfied and happier in their life when they emphasize more on IND or being more autonomous.

Keywords: individualism, collectivism, subjective well-being, happiness

1. Introduction

In the last decades, research on subjective well-being (SWB) has attracted scholars' attention from several disciplines. It mainly focuses on the following topics (1) the change of SWB over time; (2) the difference in SWB between cultures; and (3) factors determining the variation of SWB in specific societies or cultures. Inglehart et al. [2008], using data from the World Values Survey (WVS), find out that the level of SWB increases over time. The economic development, democratization process, and expansion of tolerant attitudes lead to an increase in an individu-

al's awareness of freedom, which, in turn, leads to a growth of SWB [Inglehart et al., 2008]. Income and prosperity are important determinants generating SWB. Developed countries have a higher happiness index than that of developing and poor countries. The link between national prosperity and the level of happiness is demonstrated with a relatively high correlation coefficient (0.60–0.70) [Ahuvia, 2002, p. 24]. At the individual level, the relationship between income and SWB varies between poor and rich countries. In rich countries, the link between income and SWB is very low, income only explains 2–3% of the variation in SWB variance [Ahuvia, 2002, p. 24]. In contrast, income is an important predictor of individual SWB in poor countries. In a particular society, income has a curve-shaped effect on SWB, an increase in income leads to an increase in happiness index among the poor. However, income does not have a considerable influence on happiness among rich people [Ahuvia, 2002].

The close correlation between national prosperity and personal happiness index is established and demonstrated through studies, but the mechanism behind this relationship is worth discussing. Rich countries not only ensure good standards of living conditions but also tend to be open, free, maximizing individual expression rather than following social responsibilities and obligations, which then promote happiness [Ahuvia, 2002; Inglehart et al., 2008]. Thus, latent cultural factors that affect SWB are deemed necessary to understand. The link between individualism/collectivism and SWB is at the heart of this approach.

Uchida and Oishi [2016] explore cultural structures of happiness and point out differences in conception and predictors of SWB among cultures. European-American cultures associate happiness with personal achievements, and happiness is determined by the high level of personal egoism. Meanwhile, East Asian cultures see happiness in relation to interpersonal relationships and cohesion and it is determined by personal ego's dependence in social relations. At the level of societal analysis, SWB is determined based on personal orientation values in European-American cultures (hereinafter referred to as the West) and is conceived on the basis of share and promotion of collective values in East Asian cultures (hereinafter referred to as the East) [Uchida & Oishi, 2016]. However, the question is whether it happens similarly at the individual level of analysis. In other words, is it that, in the West, the more people favour value toward personal orientation, the happier they are, while in Eastern society, individuals feel happier when they are satisfied with collectivist values?

Results from studies on the link between IND/COL and SWB at the individual level of analysis are not consistent. Ogihara and Uchida [2014] show that IND has no relation to the happiness of the American. In addition, IND is negatively associated with the happiness of Japanese people, that is, the more people emphasize personal goals, the unhappier the Japanese are [Ogihara & Uchida, 2014]. Steele and Lynch [2013] discover IND to be an important factor affecting the happiness of Chinese people, in which individualist values positively influence the

SWB of the Chinese. Thus, although Japan and China are of the same cultures that tend to promote COL, Chinese people feel happy when individual values are enhanced, while the relationship does not exist among the Japanese. Similarly, the United States has an individualist culture that tends to promote personal ego, but research shows that favouring personal values does not affect the SWB of American people.

The inconsistent results on the relationship between IND/COL and SWB at the individual level of analysis as presented above leave an unsolved issue on which this study is the next attempt to gauge the link, aiming at contributing new findings to this field of study. The next section deals with theoretical discussions about the concept of SWB, individualist values (individualism), collectivist values (collectivism). The third part presents the research hypothesis, data, strategy, and data analysis methods of the study. The fourth section presents key findings and discussions. The final part is the conclusion.

2.   Individualism and collectivism

Individualism and collectivism are a commonly used dimension in cross-cultural research. The terms IND/COL were first introduced by Hofstede [1980], and since then these concepts have been widely used to explain differences in the ways people think and act in the "West" and the "East" [Kim & Coleman, 2015]. Hofstede [1980] views IND as a focus on rights above duties, a concern for oneself and immediate family, an emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, taking personal accomplishments as one's identity [Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002, p. 4]. Oyserman et al. [2002] further clarified three implications of IND as follows: (a) creating and maintaining a positive sense of self are a basic human endeavour; (b) feeling good about oneself, personal success, and having many unique or distinctive personal attitudes and opinions are valued; and (c) abstract traits (as opposed to social, situational descriptors) are central to self-definition. Collectivism, as opposed to individualism, assumes that individuals are bound and mutually obligated by groups [Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5]. Collectivist societies are constructed from social units with a common fate and common goals and a person is a mere component of society, making the in-group crucial [Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5]. According to Oyserman et al. [2002, p. 5], COL implies that (a) group membership is a central aspect of identity and (b) valued personal traits reflect the goals of COL, such as sacrifice for the common good. Furthermore, COL emphasizes that (a) life satisfaction derives from successfully carrying out social roles and obligations and (b) restraint in emotional expression is valued to ensure in-group harmony [Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5]. Cognitively, COL suggests that (a) social context and social roles figure prominently in perceptions and causal reasoning and (b) meaning is contextualized. Finally, COL is referred to an implication that (a) important group membership is seen as fixed "facts of life" to which people must accommodate; (b) boundaries be-

tween in-groups and out-groups are stable, relatively impermeable, and important; and (c) in-group exchanges are based on equality or even generosity principles [Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 5].

At the national (cultural) level, IND and COL are treated as opposite poles on a unidimensional continuum or a bipolar dimension in which culture with strong individualistic attitudes has weak collectivist attitudes. As a result, a person in a high individualistic culture holds high individualistic sense and vice versa. Gelfand et al. [1996] find the two constructs to be orthogonal to each other at the individual level. This means to say that "*an individual can be high or low in both, or high on one and low on the other*" [Gelfand et al., 1996, p. 407]. Triandis [2018] also adds that individualists and collectivists are present in every society, simply as a result of different environmental influences and/or predispositions. They also claim that this result is also consistent with research on cognitive structures, which has found that "*people generally sample from separate collective and independent cognitive structures depending on the situation*" [Gelfand et al., 1996, p. 407]. Furthermore, this is similar to the idea of 'bicultural' worldviews that include elements of both IND and COL, especially in multicultural societies [Gelfand et al., 1996, p. 407]. Finally, the authors suggested that researchers should take this dimensionality into account in their conceptualizations, measurements, and analysis of IND and COL [Gelfand et al., 1996, p. 407]. This study also takes IND and COL as cultural values following the view of Yoon [2010]. This is because IND and COL are deemed desirable and reflect something durable and trans-situations by the members of a specific group; thus, they are different in attitudes, opinion, and preference. As a result, the value dimension of IND and COL as enduring cultural orientations of an individual is held up theoretically to be comparable notions of culture at the individual level [Yoon, 2010, p. 58].

3.   Individualism – collectivism and happiness in literature

"Life satisfaction", "Happiness" and "Well-being" are the terms commonly used in studies of happiness. "Life satisfaction" measures individual satisfaction with life. "Happiness" and "Well-being" both mean happiness, but "Well-being" is multifaceted and more complex than "Happiness", including physical satisfaction and satisfaction of economic conditions (economic well-being). Researchers indicate that SWB must be accurately measured through subjective self-assessment, from which the concept of "SWB" is used popularly to gauge personal happiness. SWB consists of three main aspects: (1) the presence and regularity of positive emotions; (2) the absence of negative emotions; and (3) a perception of an individual's overall satisfaction with life [Ahuvia, 2002, p. 23]. SWB is often measured with an individual assessment of his or her happiness or satisfaction level on a continuous scale of level of happiness [Uchida & Oishi, 2016]. Thus, happiness is used interchangeably with the notion of SWB in this study.

Happiness across cultures has been also taken into account in the literature. Many studies found that in European-American cultural contexts, happiness is defined as a positive emotional state that is typically construed through achieving personal goals and possessing positive personal attributes. In this respect, self-esteem is one of the strongest correlates of happiness [Rego & Cunha, 2009]. In contrast, within East Asian cultures, Rego and Cunha [2009] also showed that interpersonal factors, such as adapting to social norms and fulfilling relational obligations, tend to be connected with happiness [Rego & Cunha, 2009]. Individuals who pursue interpersonal goals over personal goals, who feel positive relational emotional experiences, and who receive emotional support and experience relational harmony are more likely to show higher levels of happiness and psychological well-being [Rego & Cunha, 2009].

Other authors try to detect the link between national wealth and nationally aggregated levels of SWB. They found little evidence supporting the link directly. Instead, the link needs to add the factor of IND and be analyzed at the individual level. As Ahuvia [2002] claims, economic development increases SWB by creating a cultural environment where individuals make choices to maximize their happiness rather than meet social obligations [Ahuvia, 2002]. In this regard, it can be assumed that the positive link between IND and happiness in rich countries, mostly in the West, has been supported through many other studies and it has been also theorized that COL is associated with poor countries because it is a cultural survival mechanism born of the necessity for group solidarity. An explanation has been offered that COL is a survival mechanism that is positively correlated with well-being if one looks only at a sub-sample of poor countries [Veenhoven, 1999]. However, that claim seems to be subjective because studies on IND-COL in Japan did not find evidence to demonstrate the relationship although Japan is a rich country. Ogihara and Uchida [2014] showed an individualistic orientation dampened close to interpersonal relationships, leading to decreasing SWB in Japan. The authors also suggested that IND has a negative influence in East Asian cultural contexts and the results may be generalized to other East Asian countries since numerous studies have shown that East Asian countries have traditionally interdependent or collectivist cultural norms.

Taking the above into consideration, the hypothesis to be tested in this paper is stated as follows:

All else being equal, individual subjective well-being is positively associated with the degree of preference to individualistic values on the "West", in contrast, the subjective well-being of people from the "East" is positively correlated to the degree of preference to collectivist values.

4.   Data and methodology

4.1.   Data

The empirical analysis of this paper primarily relies on the fifth wave of the survey data from the WVS conducted from 2005 to 2009 (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). In this study, the notion of the "West" and the "East" succeeds what Nisbett [2004, p. xxii] implies in his outstanding work, in which the "East" are referred to East Asia and meant to be China and the countries that have a heavy influence of Chinese culture (most notably Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Vietnam), and the "West" are implicated to countries with European culture like Germany and The United State. Given the connotation of the "West" and the "East", the two groups of country representatives for the two worlds are defined for the comparative analysis, in which the "East" are Vietnam, Taiwan, and Japan. These are East Asian countries having the same cultural background influenced by Confucianism and thus it is appropriate to categorize into a block named the "East". Its counterpart in the "West" is United States, West Germany, and Norway. These countries carry similar characteristics of European culture mirroring the Greek civilization, and these countries will be included in the block named the "West". The West represented by 3262 respondents (46.07%) and the East by 3818 (53.93%), giving a total sample size of 7,080 respondents.

4.2.   Measurements

Dependent variable

SWB index: The fifth wave of the WVS measured "feeling of happiness" by asking respondents this question "*Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, rather happy, not very happy, or not at all very happy?*" In turn, "life satisfaction" was indicated by the question: "*All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?*" on a 10-point scale. This paper follows Inglehart et al. [2008, p. 267] who developed the SWB index by using two measures: life satisfaction (10-point scale) and feeling of happiness (4-point scale). To yield positive SWB index scores, 10 points were added to the formulation. The resulting formulation for this study is thus: SWB = 10 + (life satisfaction – 2.5 × happiness). Accordingly, respondents who are the happiest and the most satisfied would have a maximum SWB score of 17.5 and a minimum of 1.

Independent variables

IND and *COL index*: According to Oyserman et al. [2002, p. 16], IND consists of independence, competence, goal, uniqueness, privacy, self-know, and direct communication. COL includes relationship, advice, belonging, context, duty, group, harmony, and hierarchy [Yoon, 2010, pp. 59–60]. Based on Yoon [2010], this study constructs the two indices based on the WVS

item "*Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five!*" asked in the survey with ten answers. Each component of IND and COL at the individual level will be constructed as the following additive formulas [Yoon, 2010, p. 59]: *Individualism (IND) = independence + feeling of responsibility + imagination + determination and perseverance; Collectivism (COL) = tolerance and respect for other people + religious faith + unselfishness + obedience.* For analysis, this paper recodes the answer "not mentioned" from 2 to 0 while the code of the answer "mentioned" is remained as 1, thereby giving people with the highest individualist the highest score of 4, while people with lowest individualist sense would have the lowest index score of 0. The same procedure is applied to generate the collectivist index.

Region variable: The region variable derives from the country variable in the WVS survey. This variable is treated as a dummy variable in which "1" denotes the "West", and "0" denotes the "East".

This study also controls the effects of internal and external factors on the variation of SWB. The internal and external factors are identified following suggestions of Uchida and Oishi [2016, pp. 127–128] as follows:

Internal factors: *Gender* is a dummy variable with 1 as "Male" and 0 as "Female". *Age* is a continuous variable in the WVS and will be used as such. In turn, WVS indicates the status of being *religious* by offering three categories: "A religious person", "Not a religious person" and "A convinced atheist". To make this variable workable in a regression model, two dummy variables were created: Being a convinced atheist (1) or not (0), and being a religious person (0) or not (1). *State of health, as measured in the WVS,* has scale scores from 1 (*Very Good*) to 4 (*Poor*). This study adopts the 4-point scale but recodes the rank order by classifying 1 as "Poor" and 4 as "Very good". *Trust variable* will be a dummy variable with 1 representing "Most people can be trusted" and 0 denoting "Need to be very careful". Finally, the *degree of freedom of choice* follows the WVS 10-point scale in which 1 implies "Not at all" and 10 implies "A great deal". The *degree of satisfaction of financial situation* also follows the WVS 10-point scale with 1 as "Dissatisfied" to 10 as "Satisfied".

External factors: *Scale of income* has 10 score points with 1 as the "lowest decile" to 10 as the "highest decile". *Marital status* has 6 categories "Married", "Living together as married", "Divorced", "Separated", "Widowed", and "Single/Never married". This analysis simplifies this variable by creating a new dummy marital status variable with two categories: 1 as "Married" and 0 as "Other". The "married" category includes "Married" and "Living together as married", while the "Other" category comprises the rest of the categories. *Level of education* covers four dummy variables labeled as "Complete primary school", "Complete secondary school", "Complete high school", and "higher education". Each dummy variable has two categories: 1

as "Yes" and 0 as "No". Finally, the *social class* will consist of three new dummy variables named "Upper middle and upper class", "Lower middle class", "Working class". Each dummy variable has two categories, 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No".

4.3.   Model specifications

To test the research hypothesis, two multiple linear regression models using the ordinary least squares method are performed to identify the effects of IND and COL on SWB among the regions. Multiple linear regression is employed because SWB as a response variable is measured on an interval scale. The two equations are as follows:

SWB index = β_0 + $\beta_1 \times$ *IND index* + $\beta_2 \times$ *region* + $\beta_3 \times$ *IND index* × *region* + $\beta_4 \times$ (*Internal factors*) +   (1)
$\beta_5 \times$ (*External factors*) + ε

SWB index = β_0 + $\beta_1 \times$ *COL index* + $\beta_2 \times$ *region* + $\beta_3 \times$ *COL index* × *region* + $\beta_4 \times$ (*Internal factors*)   (2)
+ $\beta_5 \times$ (*External factors*) + ε

These two linear regression models are tested regarding model fit. Assumptions for a linear model such as linearity in parameters, no perfect collinearity, normal distribution of errors, no autocorrelation between errors are satisfied. Whereas, the models violate the assumption of homoscedasticity so that White's heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors are used instead. In addition, because IND and COL are theoretically considered to be orthogonal or independent constructs at the individual level, these two variables are excluded in the same model. The two models present the prediction of the effects of main variables IND and COL index on SWB. In order to clarify how the effects of IND index and COL index on SWB index differs between the "West" and the "East", interaction terms "*IND index* × *region*" and "*COL index* × *region*" are created and added into the two models [Brambor, Clark, & Golder, 2006].

5.   Empirical findings

5.1.   The relationship between IND and SWB at individual level

Table 1 presents results from six linear regression models predicting the effect of IND and COL index on SWB index. The relationship between individual SWB and individualistic values appears in the first three models (Model 1a, 2a, and 3a). The results from Model 1a, excluding the region variable and the interaction term, reveal that with controlling for internal and external factors, the relationship between IND index and SWB is not statistically significant as it does in their bivariate relationship. In terms of internal factors, the findings show that women report being happier than men ($p < 0.01$), while the degree of happiness is the same among individuals across age groups. As well, non-religious individuals and convinced atheists tend to say that they are less happy in life compared with religious people ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, people who

report their state of health as good are more likely to say they are happy compared with those who say their state of health is not good ($p < 0.001$). Similarly, individuals think most people can be trusted. Those who experience a greater level of freedom and control over their lives and those who have a higher degree of financial satisfaction are more likely to score higher on the SWB index compared with their respective counterparts ($p < 0.001$). Concerning external factors, the results show that individuals state that their household income belongs to higher income groups. Those who are married or living together, those who have a higher educational level and those belonging to higher social classes are also more likely to report being happier than their respective comparison groups ($p < 0.001$). Overall, these internal and external factors explain about 37.1% of the variance in the SWB Index.

Table 1. Multiple linear regression models with dependent variable of SWB index

Independent variables		IND index on SWB index			COL index on SWB index		
		Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 3a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b
IND index		0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.11* (0.05)			
COL index					0.16*** (0.04)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.03 (0.05)
Region (West)			0.25*** (0.07)	0.66*** (0.18)		0.22** (0.07)	−0.08 (0.13)
IND index × region				−0.17* (0.07)			
COL index × region							0.21** (0.08)
Internal factors							
Gender (male)		−0.17** (0.06)	−0.17** (0.06)	−0.18** (0.06)	−0.16** (0.06)	−0.016** (0.06)	−0.17** (0.06)
Age		−0.001 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.002)	−0.001 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.002)	−0.002 (0.002)
Religious person (A religious person)	A convinced atheist	−0.43*** (0.10)	−0.35*** (0.10)	−0.35*** (0.10)	−0.39*** (0.10)	−0.32** (0.10)	−0.30** (0.10)
	Not a religious person	−0.17* (0.07)	−0.13 (0.07)	0.12 (0.10)	−0.11 (0.07)	−0.09 (0.07)	−0.07 (0.07)
State of health		0.82*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.82*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)
Trust		0.31*** (0.06)	0.28*** (0.06)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.31*** (0.06)	0.29*** (0.06)	0.29*** (0.06)
Freedom of choice a		0.28***	0.28***	0.28***	0.28***	0.28***	0.28***

control		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Satisfaction of financial situation		0.49***	0.49***	0.49***	0.49***	0.49***	0.49***
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0. 02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.20)
External factors							
Scale of income		0.04**	0.04**	0.04**	0.04**	0.05**	0.04**
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Marital status		0.59***	0.62***	0.63***	0.59***	0.62***	0.62***
		(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Education (IPS)	CPS	0.58***	0.55***	0.53***	0.54***	0.53***	0.53***
		(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
	CSS	0.59***	0.55***	0.51***	0.54***	0.50***	0.50***
		(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
	CHS	0.60***	0.60***	0.56***	0.56***	0.56***	0.56***
		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
	HE	0.37*	0.37*	0.39*	0.33*	0.33*	0.33*
		(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Social classes (LCL)	UM	0.46*	0.40*	0.41*	0.46*	0.42*	0.42*
		(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.20)
	LM	0.52**	0.50**	0.50**	0.52**	0.50**	0.50**
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.8)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.19)
	WCL	0.50**	0.52**	0.53**	0.51**	0.53**	0.53***
		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Constant		3.21***	3.23***	3.02***	3.05***	3.07***	3.07***
		(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)
N		5982	5982	5982	6150	6150	6150
Rsq.		0.3708	0.3722	0.3729	0.3725	0.3735	0.3743

Notes: UM is the upper-middle and upper class; LM is the lower middle class; WCL is the working class; LCL is the lower class; IPS is the incomplete primary school; CPS is the complete primary school; CSS is the complete secondary school; CHS is the complete high school; HE is the high education; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests) – Main entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and the numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

In Model 2a, when the region variable is included, the finding points out the difference between individuals from the "West" and individuals from the "East" in the level of experience SWB. It is evidenced that individuals from the "West" are obviously happier than individuals from the "East" ($p < 0.001$). The IND index in Model 2a is still not statistically and significantly associated with SWB index as it does in Model 1a. The effects of internal and external factors on the SWB index are stable in terms of direction compared with those in Model 1a although their coefficient magnitude more or less changes compared with that in Model 1a.

Model 3a is a full model that includes the interaction term. The results show that the IND index is positively and significantly correlated to the SWB index ($p < 0.05$), while the coefficient of region variable increases by 0.41 compared with that in Model 1a. Likewise, the interaction

variable of IND index and region is statistically, significantly and positively associated with the SWB index ($p < 0.05$). Accordingly, the relationship between the IND index and SWB index is manifested differently between respondents from the "West" and those from the "East". The coefficient of the correlation between IND index and SWB index of respondents from the "East" is 0.11, while this coefficient for respondents from the "West" is –0.06 (sum of 0.11 and –0.17). As a result, we can see that while the more people in the "East" prefer to individualistic values, the more they experience happiness, and there is a diverse trend for people in the "West". In fact, the more people in the "West" emphasize individualistic values, the less they are satisfied in their life although this association is relatively weak among Westerners. The *R*-squared coefficient is higher in Model 3 (0.3729) than in Model 2 (0.3722) and in Model 1 (0.3708), which indicates that the variation of SWB index can be explained better by predictors in Model 3a than those in the first two models. As for the effects of internal and external factors on the SWB index in Model 3a, there are no considerable changes as it does in comparison with Model 1a and Model 2a.

Taken together, these results do not support the first part of the hypothesis where individualistic values are expected to make people greater experience with subjective well-being in the "West" than in the "East". This result shows a new interesting finding in the relationship between IND and individual SWB at the individual level of analysis. Opposite to conventional view, as for people from the "East", being autonomous is one of the key factors that make them satisfied in life, while West people need to have relations with others to be happier.

5.2.   The relationship between COL and SWB at individual level

The relationship between individual SWB and collectivist values is shown in the next three regression models (Model 1b, 2b, and 3b) in Table 1. In Model 1b, the main independent variable, COL index, has a positive relationship to the SWB index after the effects of internal and external factors on the SWB index are controlled. The unstandardized coefficient is 0.16 and very statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This finding demonstrates that the more collectivist values individuals prefer the more satisfied they are in life. Regarding internal factors, males are less satisfied in life than females ($p < 0.01$), while individuals have the same degree of experiencing happiness regardless of how old they are. Non-religious individuals expose themselves to have the same degree of SWB compared with religious people, while people who convince themselves as atheists are less happy than religious people ($p < 0.001$). State of health is demonstrated as a remarkable determination of SWB ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient of relationship between the individual state of health and SWB index is really high (0.82) and statistically very significant ($p < 0.001$). Internal factors also point out that those who think most people can be trusted are happier than people who need to be careful about other people ($p < 0.001$). Further-

more, people who are more satisfied with their household financial situation and feel to have more freedom of choice are likely to be happier ($p < 0.001$).

Concerning external factors, people who place their household income in richer groups are inclined to be happier than individuals who place their household income in poorer groups ($p < 0.01$). Among people with different marital groups, individuals who are married or living together as married are happier than other people ($p < 0.001$). In terms of the level of education, in comparison with people not completing primary school, those who have a higher level of education are more satisfied in their life ($p < 0.001$). People in different social classes are differently satisfied with their life. More specifically, people belonging to the "upper-middle and upper class", the "lower middle class" and the "working class" are happier than people in the "lower class" ($p < 0.001$).

In Model 2b, after the region variable is included in the model, the COL index is still positively correlated with the SWB index ($p < 0.001$). Similar to the results of the models in Table 1, the positive coefficient of the region variable reveals that individuals from the "West" experience greater SWB than do individuals from the "East" ($p < 0.01$). The effects of internal and external factors on SWB index do not have any remarkable change in terms of direction and statistical significance after the region variable is added compared with that of Model 1b, except for inconsiderable changes in the statistical coefficients of variables of the groups of factors.

In Model 3b, after the interaction variable of region and COL index is added, the coefficient between the region variable and the SWB index is no longer statistically significant. Moreover, the coefficient of the relationship between the interaction term and SWB is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The finding is interesting to interpret. When we look at the coefficient of the COL index, it drops to 0.03 compared with that in Model 1b and 2b. In this model, the COL index coefficient is for the "East" (the "West" is taken as a preference) and it is proven that the relationship between collectivist values and subjective well-being is not statistically significant. This means that the degree of SWB of the Easterners does not depend on how much collectivist values they hold. As for the "West", the coefficient of the relationship between the COL index and the SWB index is 0.24 (the sum of 0.03 and 0.21). This reveals that in the "West", the more collectivist values people prefer the happier and satisfied they are. The *R*-squared coefficient is higher in Model 3b (0.3743) than in Model 2b (0.3735) and in Model 1b (0.3725), which indicates that the variation of SWB index can be explained better by predictors in Model 3 than those in the first two models.

As a result, for the second part of the hypothesis, the findings from this section do not support what was assumed. Moreover, the results reveal the opposite evidence of the previous studies on the relationship between COL and SWB.

6.   Conclusion

This paper has attempted to test the hypothesis on the relationship between the value dimension of individualism-collectivism and subjective well-being. This research assumes that individualist values make people from the "West" happier and satisfied in life; in contrast, collectivist values raise happiness and satisfaction in life among the East Asian people. The findings from the empirical analysis do not hold up the hypothesis formulated.

The results show that, on the side of the relationship between individualistic values and subjective well-being, individuals from the "West" experience greater happiness when they expose themselves less individualist. In contrast, individuals from the "East" feel more satisfied and happier in their life when they lay more emphasis on individualism, being more autonomous. Regarding the relationship between collectivistic values and subjective well-being, while experiencing subjective well-being of people from the "East" does not depend on the degree of preference to collectivist values experience, individuals from the "West" show to be happier when holding more collectivist values. It is to say that in experiencing the degree of subjective well-being, fulfilling collectivism is an important value for people from the "West", whereas that of individuals from the "East" is individualism. It is a completely different finding proposed by this study in terms of the relationship between individualism-collectivism and subjective well-being among people from the "West" and people from the "East". Taken together, we hope that new findings in this study will contribute a new light to the debate as well as to future studies with more proper analysis methods on the association between individualism-collectivism and subjective well-being.

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