Chapter 2
Interdependent Happiness: Progress and Implications

Hidefumi Hitokoto and Yukiko Uchida

Abstract We argue that interdependent happiness, predicated on interpersonal harmony, quiescence and ordinariness, is the core concept of shared meanings of happiness in interdependent cultural contexts. This paper presents its theoretical background based on culture and self studies, methods of measurement, and the latest available evidence from both the East and the West on interdependent happiness, while also elaborating on future directions. In particular, we investigate how interdependent happiness correlates with subjective well-being differently and flourishes differently across cultures. Our argument is an East Asian contribution to the recent world-wide interest in the measurement of culturally diverse types of happiness, that attempts to better appreciate the deeply rooted, socio-cultural nature of human ways of life.

2.1 Independent and Interdependent Happiness

Happiness is vital to social life. If we feel happiness as a result of our current social structure, we are motivated to maintain that structure, because it provides our source of happiness. If we cannot feel happiness, however, we are motivated to change that social structure because it creates obstacles to happiness. In this review, we assume that happiness is one of the key components to elucidating the mutual construction of culture/society and the human mind. In this paper, we will describe (1) the theoretical background of cultural happiness, (2) its measurement, and (3) the recent accumulation of evidence drawn from the cultural psychology of emotion.

Our research is motivated by two perspectives. One is a nuanced approach to the diversity of human happiness. Previous research has found cultural similarities in what leads to happiness, such as economic and material wealth (Diener, 2000). However, while material wealth can secure a certain level of societal well-being, a

H. Hitokoto (✉) · Y. Uchida
Kyoto University, Kokoro Research Center, Kyoto, Japan
e-mail: hitokoto@fukuoka-u.ac.jp

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good portion of happiness comes from the actualization of psychological meaning in life, which is influenced by socio-cultural context. For example, Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995) found a positive correlation between national individualism – the national characteristic of valuing people's freedom – and average subjective well-being (SWB). Here, the value that individualistic societies place on cultivating the inner positivity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) should be reflected in such societal difference. Culturally nuanced researchers frame such findings as an opportunity to closely examine the meaning of happiness in various cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1994) and to look for explanations of true cultural diversity in happiness.[1] From this critical point of view, we argue that existing happiness measures that blindly ask whether "*I* am happy" should be reframed as measuring only one type of available happiness in humans. Relationship researchers have long been aware that relational context matters in promoting well-being (Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000; Demir & Özdemir, 2010). Self as the basis of happiness is essentially context dependent (Church et al., 2008; Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001). According to relationship research across cultures (Lansford, Antonucci, & Akiyama, 2005; Delle Fave et al., 2016), taking into account the contextual perspective on happiness would enrich the understanding that our sense of well-being is in fact "not alone," and that contextual factors ranging from relationships to cultural self-ways should be taken into account (Antonucci, Ajrouch, & Birditt, 2014).

The second motivation concerns the applied need for a sustainable society. A growing political-economic debate, demonstrated in conferences such as RIO + 20 by the United Nations, has risen regarding well-being as a sustainable and valid outcome of society, above and beyond GDP (OECD, 2011). The search for an alternative measure to describe a happy society has led to a promising line of research focusing on interpersonal relationships. For example, Alesina and Giuliano (2010) found family ties to be positively correlated with fertility and happiness across 70 countries. Oishi and Schimmack (2010) demonstrated the positive effect of perceived social support across 131 nations, after controlling for national wealth. Good interpersonal relationships are undoubtedly the prominent component of societal welfare, independent of what economy can bring.

Uchida and Ogihara (2012) theorized that the construal of happiness is conceptualized more interdependently among members of interdependent cultures than among members of individualistic cultures. This cultural psychological theory on the shared meaning of happiness in cultural context became an important milestone for the study of happiness. This is partly because the meaning of happiness could provide a basis for feasible political decision making. For example, no matter how economic globalization transforms institutions into individualistic ones (Ogihara & Uchida, 2014), certain tendencies are so deeply intertwined with the minds of a culture's members that they may hinder the complete implementation of the new

[1] We define happiness as a global, subjective assessment of whether one is a happy or unhappy person (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Also, subjective well-being is defined as the satisfaction of one's life as a whole and the predominance of positive emotion over negative emotion (Diener et al., 1995).

cultural idea (Toivonen, Norasakkunkit, & Uchida, 2011). If this is the case, then political decision making regarding the promotion and measurement of happiness should take into consideration cultural modes of happiness. Achieving a sustainable society in a non-Western nation requires studies that are open to the nuanced diversity, and we believe that the first step is to look into the positive function of interpersonal relationships.

2.2 Diversity of Self-Ways

The idea of independent and interdependent models of happiness is based on the theory of independent and interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes of the self which we repeatedly use in our daily social lives are diverse. Therefore, how people carry out various social behaviors in their respective lives, the goal of engaging in each social behavior, and the seemingly subtle meanings conveyed in their actions may vary tremendously across cultural contexts (Markus & Conner, 2013). Because our social behavior is necessary to live our life well in a given social environment, these self-related processes can be understood as a chunk of operations that we utilize on a daily bases to live effectively (Kitayama & Park, 2010). Consequently, the socially shared conceptions of what it means to be human, to live a good life, and to be happy, are best understood as a part of the self in context.

One of the defining features of independent and interdependent self-construals is the contextual dependency of the self. Cross-cultural comparisons of the self strongly suggest that for members of interdependent cultural contexts, one's self-view varies according to shifts in social context. Cognitively, members of such cultures recognize themselves differently when they are with friends than when they are with strangers (Kanagawa et al., 2001; Church et al., 2008). On the other hand, in independent cultural contexts, self-consistency is quite important. For example, as Kanagawa et al. (2001) suggest, members of these cultures do not change their self-view based on contexts such as who they are with. They consider cultural self-ways to be learned through one's education (Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Hess, 1981; Wang & Leichtman, 2000) which is also a part of a larger cultural cycle involving daily interactions and institutions that is governed by cultural values (Markus & Conner, 2013).

2.3 Emotion and Culture: Seeking Harmony

Because of this context dependency, happiness that is compatible with the interdependent self—the most relevant for this chapter—mainly concerns emotional processes that are relational in nature. Emotionally, members of interdependent cultures feel strongly positive when respect and friendliness is experienced (Kitayama,

Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000), and are highly concerned when their social standing is at stake (Taylor et al., 2004). They also have a tendency to appraise emotional events by focusing on the relationship between the self and their counterpart and give priority to the preservation of harmony over enhancement of positive self-view (Boiger, Mesquita, Uchida, & Barrett, 2013; Mesquita & Leu, 2007; Uchida, Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009). The culturally colored appraisal of emotion is so much a daily practice that through one's experience the frequency of emotion is skewed in a way that is dependent upon culture (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006).

A typical interdependent cultural context can be found in East Asia. Specifically, Japanese people seek *harmony* between themselves and others. This orientation towards balance affects their emotional experience—in particular, it makes them feel comfortable about inferred others' feelings. Miyamoto, Uchida, and Ellsworth (2010) found that Japanese students report concerns about whether their own success has troubled others. Japanese students, as compared to North American students, report the co-occurrence of positive and negative emotions, in situations where one's benefit weighs against the cost of others. In other words, Japanese emotional ambivalence comes into play because of the value that they place on harmony: a balanced-positive state between the self and others.

In fact, the *positive* correlation between positive and negative emotions in Japanese (Kitayama et al., 2000) can be explained by their concerns about troubling others (Hitokoto, 2009). Hitokoto, Niiya, and Tanaka-Matsumi (2008) studied indebtedness, a social emotion that is felt after appraising one's own benefit (for receiving help) and a helper's cost (for providing help to the self). While European Americans tend to evaluate obligations based on their own benefit, Japanese people evaluated their obligations based on a helper's cost. It appears that Japanese individuals, compared to North Americans, are susceptible to feelings of concern when exchanges take place between the self and others (Hitokoto, 2016). Japanese people try to achieve harmony by accepting some negativity in themselves. Sundararajan (2014) argues that among the members of an interdependent culture, concern about harmony, the capacity to be able to pay attention, mind, and even be embarrassed about one's social misconduct is a crucial means to survive in such contexts. At first glance, regarding the painful emotion of embarrassment as functional may not make sense; however, in an interdependent context, sensitivity to embarrassment can become adaptive due to the importance of a stable in-group (Sznycer et al., 2012). This stability leads to the pursuit of harmony.

These studies together suggest that our emotions, a seemingly private system for survival, is in fact inseparably intertwined with the larger cultural context in which one takes part. Because of this, achieving happiness should also involve fine-tuned adjustments between the culturally afforded meanings of happiness and the individual phenomenological experience that matches with such a meaning system.

2.4 Meaning of Happiness

Just as emotional experiences are affected by culture, predictors of happiness also differ across cultures. Kwan, Bond, and Singelis (1997)'s study shows that the level of subjective well-being across the United States and Hong Kong can be differentially explained by either self-esteem or relational harmony. They also show that these two antecedents of happiness can be explained by using a self-construal scale that measures independence and interdependence. This study is a seminal one that shows how cultural variables might come into play in altering the antecedent, or the meaning of subjective well-being. Additionally, both a daily diary study (Oishi, Diener, Scollon, & Biswas-Diener, 2004) and a priming experiment (Suh, Diener, & Updegraff, 2008) jointly suggest that the meaning of subjective well-being is culture/self dependent. Culture has an impact on how we construe happiness in terms of personal and social implications. These findings point to how direct comparisons of average happiness across cultures may oversimplify the functional aspect of happiness by de-contextualizing the concept from its complex contingencies in daily life. Thus, we can view happiness not as a simple score to rank nations, but as a context-embedded, functional concept in the ways of daily life maintained by the members of a culture. From such viewpoint, we may take into consideration the antecedents and consequences of subtle thoughts, feelings, and motivations underlying cultural behavior. By doing this, we can also realize the value of both taking diverse modes of self into account and examining correlates of happiness across cultures (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012).

Uchida and Kitayama (2009) examined the meaning of happiness among students in the United States and Japan. They gathered qualitative data by asking both groups of students to first nominate multiple meanings of happiness and evaluate the desirability of the resulting descriptions. They then asked another group of participants to manually categorize the items nominated by their own cultural members, which revealed how happiness is construed around different themes across cultural groups. The results of the first stage suggest that whereas 98% of American happiness is filled with positive valence-associated words and a central meaning of personal achievement, Japanese happiness is only 66% positive. Furthermore, multi-dimensional mapping of the second stage reveals that Japanese cultural components also include transcendental reappraisal (i.e., feeling happy while easing the time away) and social disruption (i.e., concerns about disharmony caused by being happy). These two components rarely appeared in the United States, where the central meaning of happiness is personal achievement. Importantly, for Japanese people, the central meaning of happiness is social harmony, rather than personal achievement.

In another study using Japanese students, Uchida (2010) further showed that the Japanese conception of happiness was a transitory interpersonal idea fraught with negative consequences, such as inviting the envy of others for being happy, or reducing the ability to attend to one's surroundings in ways such as being inconsiderate

to others. The low levels of happiness among East Asians, therefore, could in large part be due to concerns about harmony in one's social circle (Oishi & Sullivan, 2005).

This cultural inclination to perceive happiness as harmony seems to be the major shared meaning for the members of interdependent cultures, or among those living in collaborative lifestyles such as farming. Hitokoto, Takahashi, and Kaewpijit (2014) corroborated the past findings that the source of happiness is predominantly harmony among adults in Thailand, and that the level of interdependent happiness tends to be even higher among those living in rural, agricultural regions. This result fits nicely with the argument by Talhelm et al. (2014) that the socio-ecological antecedent to collectivism was a rice making, farming lifestyle which required collaborative work to provide carbohydrates to the population. When daily collaboration is necessary for survival, the participants involved tend to communicate, converse, and ultimately conceptualize happiness as harmony.

These past studies together point to how cultural context might be responsible for our meaning of happiness, and how happiness tends to imply interpersonal harmony among the members of interdependent cultures. We will argue below that this sense of harmony, coupled with those of quiescence and ordinariness in one's close relationships, is one important variety of human happiness that is attained through living in an interdependent cultural context. We will offer some evidence on this account, and conclude by demonstrating how interdependent happiness has positive functions in an interdependent context, and how it might lead to a culturally meaningful course of development.

2.5 Cultural Happiness as Cultural Task Achievement

Kitayama, Park, Sevincer, Karasawa, and Uskul (2009) argue that cultural contexts contain repertoires of tasks, and that people living in that cultural context are, more or less, destined to self-actualize by completing those tasks. This completion might depend on individuals choosing which of the tasks to excel at using their acquired cultural skills. Cultural happiness, then, is considered to be the positive result of such endeavors, rewarding individuals for doing well in those tasks.

In an independent cultural context such as that of North America, the repertoire of tasks revolves around the ideal way of being independent. To be independent, one may choose to have high self-regard (Heine et al., 1999), be good at controlling one's environment (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002), process things analytically (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), be positive (Markus & Kitayama, 1994), and so on. In an interdependent cultural context, on the other hand, one may choose to be self-effacing (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997), be able to keep one's social standing (Taylor et al., 2004), process things holistically (Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), be contextual (Church et al., 2008), and so on. As the result of these endeavors, people feel harmony in their close relationships, quiescent for being able to avoid trouble around their social circle, and feel the self to be

ordinary—neither too special nor too behind, but at about the similar level as others (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015). Good feelings revolve around the consequences of this obligation fulfilling (Oishi & Sullivan, 2005), a minimalist style of life that focuses on the transcendental reappraisal discussed above (Kan, Karasawa, & Kitayama, 2009). Lu and Gilmour (2006) measured social-oriented SWB, or the belief people have in happiness as role obligation and dialectical balance across Taiwan, the People's Republic of China, and the United States. The results clearly show that the Chinese endorse this belief more than the Americans. Because our interdependent happiness is tapping into the more personal and emotional implications of cultural happiness and adding on ordinariness as another element (Hitokoto & Sawada, in press), the input from Chinese culture coincides nicely with our interests.

2.6 Interdependent Goal Pursuit

The quality of emotional experiences resulting from the pursuit of such interdependent goals, in contrast to the high-arousal positive emotions idealized in the individualistic cultural context (Tsai, 2007), is more of a benign, tentative intermission that arises from the absence of social disharmony. To fully digest this critical point regarding the enjoyment of the non-negative, the concept of *face* needs to be explicated. *Face* is the respectability and/or deference that a person can claim from others by virtue of the relative position he/she occupies in a social network and the degree to which he/she is judged to have functioned adequately in that position as well as acceptably in his/her social conduct (Ho, 1976). As detailed by Hamamura and Heine (2008), the maintenance of *face* hinges on others' evaluation of it; therefore, the critical task here is to not fail to live up to the minimal expectations of related others (Oishi & Sullivan, 2005). Minimal expectations can take the form of fulfilling one's social role, maintaining the minimum standard of life, or simply being ordinary. Importantly, others' evaluations cannot be fully controlled by the self; therefore, the effort involves careful attention to social context and the seamless and smooth coordination of transient evaluations. Doing "well" in such a context would best be described and experienced as the absence of social trouble or interpersonal strain (Kitayama, Karasawa, Curhan, Ryff, & Markus, 2010). In order to devise a nuanced measurement of such a well-being, an interdependent framework which encompasses these cultural processes and outcomes of a meaningful life are required.

Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) standardized a self-report scale named the "interdependent happiness scale," or IHS, to measure individual perceptions of the interpersonally harmonized, quiescent, and ordinary nuances of happiness which are the shared meaning of happiness in an interdependent cultural context. Examples of items on the scale are, "I believe that I and those around me are happy", "I feel that I am being positively evaluated by others around me", and "I can do what I want without causing problems for other people". The scale is a nine-item, five-point Likert-type scale, and data indicates uni-dimensionality for the 9 items. Among the

American sample, the IHS showed no gender differences across both students and adults. Among the Japanese sample, females scored higher than the males across both students (t (282) = 2.98, $p < .01$) and adults (t (3138) = 5.27, $p < .001$).

Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) standardized the scale using Japanese and American students. Thai adults were also sampled (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015; Hitokoto et al., 2014; Hitokoto & Uchida, 2016a), and three representative items were used for comparison between Japanese, American, German, and Korean adults (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015). These studies together point to how people's definition of happiness implies harmony under the cultural context of interdependence.

The student sample has now been extended to other countries (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2016b), and the scale has been compared to Japanese counterparts regarding its cross-cultural equivalence. Datu, King, and Valdez (2015) measured Philippine high school students' interdependent happiness and came up with three factors with a single second order factor solution. This finding in a highly collectivistic country is theoretically meaningful because Hitokoto and Uchida (2015)'s original item production started as three interrelated facets of relationship-oriented happiness, quiescent happiness, and ordinary happiness. At this point, users of the scale may aggregate the nine items to form a single scale score, since predominant replications suggest that the three facets are correlated very strongly with each other.

2.7 Cross-Cultural Comparison

In their study, Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) measured interdependent happiness of students in Japan and the United States and adults in the United States, Germany, Japan, and Korea, and compared how the scale score would differentially predict subjective well-being across these countries, showing the semantic overlap between interpersonal harmony and a sense of well-being. In some studies, such analysis is known as "nation profiling" (Bond, 2013, p.161). The hypothesis is that in more collectivistic countries, the relative impact of the scale score on self-esteem – theoretically treated as a measure of positive self-regard encouraged under an independent context – would be higher. The study confirms this hypothesis; interdependent happiness predicts overall well-being much better than self-esteem, especially in Korea, where the impact of self-esteem is negligible. Therefore, the degree to which participants' spontaneous well-being rating implies either interpersonal harmony or positive self-regard is meaningfully different according to individualistic and collectivistic cultural variations. Recently, adding another student sample from the United Kingdom, Hitokoto and Uchida (2016a; 2016b) examined the same regression model, and replicated the stronger impact of IHS for Japanese well-being and the stronger impact of self-esteem for English students.

Using the Filipino high school student sample, Datu et al. (2015) demonstrated the reliability as well as discriminant validity of the IHS against the sense of relatedness to others—whether one feels accepted and/or special when one is with one's

parents, teachers, and peers. The small size of the correlations (.14 < r < .26) suggests that interdependent happiness is something beyond distinct acceptances by each of the close others, but an integrated interpersonal happiness experienced through one's social relationships.

The Commission on Measuring Well-Being, Japan (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, 2012) sampled 10,000 Japanese adults aged 15 to 69 who completed the IHS. Cross-age group comparison of the scale indicates that the scale score increased with age, and it correlates strongly with current happiness level (r = .69), family happiness (r = .65), and life satisfaction (r = .77). Interestingly, it correlates only weakly (r = .29) with the "future happiness (the degree to which one estimates increase (+) or decrease (-) of happiness in the next 5 years)," which may indicate the transitory nature of interdependent happiness. This finding is reasonable if one's social harmony is understood as something essentially uncontrollable, and is enjoyed only in the moment of transitory harmony with its potential loss.

2.8 Cross-Regional Comparison

Since cultures are not rigid, physically demarcated systems, but "dynamic open systems that spread across geographical boundaries" (Hong & Chiu, 2001), the sharing of values and worldviews can also take place within local units, such as regions, that are divergent in terms of historically-derived prevalent ideas, norms, and products (Plaut, Markus, & Lachman, 2002; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Therefore, the impact of IHS on overall well-being – the meaning of happiness as interdependent – can be different depending on the local cultural context paralleling national individualism-collectivism (Varnum & Kitayama, 2011).[2]

Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) replicated the four countries' difference of the impact of the IHS on subjective well-being using Japanese adults from various regions (N = 3045). That is, those groups of Japanese adults who were from more collectivistic and historically agricultural regions of the country, such as Niigata or Yamagata, implied that happiness was more interdependent: they showed stronger association between IHS and SWB compared to more individualistic or modern regions, such as Tokyo or Hokkaido. Further, Hitokoto and Uchida (2016a) replicated this association between IHS and SWB among American adults from various original states using an online survey (N = 809): adults who were from more collectivistic states exhibited a stronger association than those from individualistic states. These findings suggest that one's local cultural context, in terms of individualism-collectivism, is one determinant of the ways in which happiness implies either harmony or positive self-regard.

[2] There are also some methodological advantages in regional comparisons, such that within a nation, institutions that are often quite distinct across nations –political systems and economic situations, education and so on– can be held constant. Also the methodological problems due to translation (van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004), response biases (Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, & Shavitt, 2005) and reference group effect (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002) can also be kept minimum.

According to the argument by Talhelm et al. (2014), a farming lifestyle in one's local living environment can be a socio-ecological base of interdependent happiness. In Thailand, Hitokoto et al. (2014) found that residents among the farming villages of this collectivistic country exhibited a higher level of interdependent happiness compared to residents in the urban cities. Culture, which has emerged from human group living, corresponds to various collective means of living. In particular, farming, which inevitably involves accommodation with others and organized group norms has provided the meaning of happiness as interdependent throughout the history. Similarly, certain social ecologies may have created self-oriented happiness as it exists in independent cultures today.

2.9 Interdependent Happiness as "Cultural Strength"

Ryff and her colleagues suggest that psychological well-being (PWB; Ryff, 1995) is a meaningful flourishing—a sense of meaning and a feeling of richness that emerge in one's life course—and is *eudaimonic* and long-term in nature, instead of *hedonic* and short-term. PWB is also reported to have positive effects on physical health through facilitating biological health (Morozink, Friedman, Coe, & Ryff, 2010).

Reconsidering its theoretical background, PWB is predicated on Western theories of flourishing (Christopher, 1999), such as those of Neugarten, Buhler, Erickson, Birren, Jahoda, Jung, Maslow, Rogers, and Allport (Ryff, 1995). Taking into account the criticism that psychological findings are biased towards using Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic participants and thus are based on the theories made by such unique sub-group of humans (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), composing a theory of human flourishing from Western theories alone can limit the scope of what constitutes good flourishing in life, for flourishing should also be intertwined with cultural context. How is one flourishing, for example, if they end up appreciating the opportunity to die through controlling nothing under a sal tree as Buddha did? There should be a richer diversity in theories about the cultural logic of how to flourish in life.

Kitayama et al. (2010) demonstration of divergent contributions of relational strain on PWB persuasively demonstrates the above point. Relational strain – the degree to which one is being criticized by, being demanded by, being let down by, and being irritated by one's family and friends – negatively explains PWB, especially among Japanese. Because of the interdependent cultural context that requires tasks of harmony, flourishing may imply building one's social standing firmly, being skilled at attending and responding to others' expectations efficiently, and as a consequence, preserving harmony.[3]

[3] In this regard, the *positive relationships* factor of the PWB apparently overlap with interdependent happiness. However, while the former involves active management of and control over relationships, the latter is predicated on a harmonious approach to relationships, such as maintaining

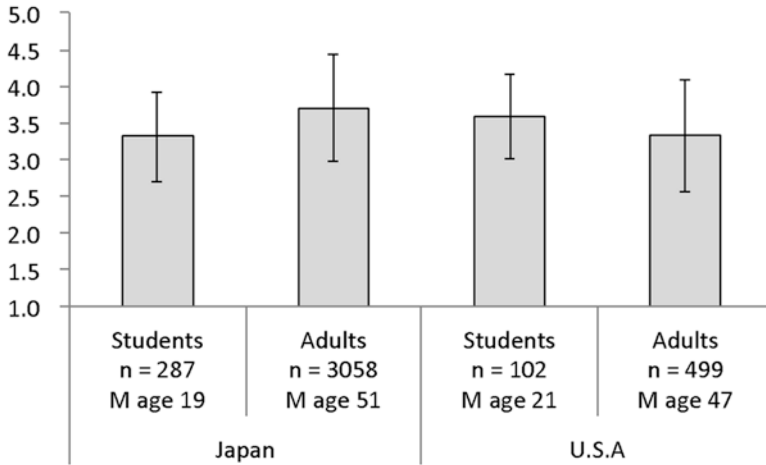

Fig. 2.1 Average level of the IHS score across Japanese and Americans, divided by students and adults
Note. Student and Japanese adult data were retrieved from Hitokoto and Uchida (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015), and data for the American adults are from Hitokoto (2016a)
Error bars represent +/− 1SD

There is an interesting cross-cultural difference in the age trajectory of happiness across Japan and the U.S. Japanese happiness levels decline with age, while those of Americans follow a U curve, hitting the lowest level during midlife. This developmental pattern, however, might be true only when personalized happiness questions are used, as is the case in this census. IHS score is *higher* among adults as compared to students in Japan (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015). However, when American students and adults were compared on the IHS, adults scored *lower* than students (Fig. 2.1). These results indicate the possibility of a culturally based course of flourishing. In other words, interpersonal harmony can flourish through life more successfully in an interdependent cultural context, while it may not do so in an independent context. Because the more interdependent European Americans experience *negative* emotions in their life (Hitokoto, 2015), being harmonized may, in part, hinder one's independence selectively for adult Americans –who are primarily expected to live on their own, and actively choose relationships that are operational to maintain their self-esteem (Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Morling, 2008). In light of this argument, why young Japanese students have scored lower than young American students on the IHS (Hitokoto and Uchida (2015), can be understood as the former group being placed in a cultural challenge to succeed in mainstream interdependent life (Kitayama et al., 2009). After experiencing

quiescence and being ordinary without necessarily controlling it, as we discussed regarding *face* maintenance above. In fact, the two correlate modestly (Japan: $r = .52$, $p < .001$; U.S.: $r = .40$, $p < .001$, Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015).

mainstream Japanese interdependent life, elderly Japanese people can maintain interdependent happiness.

Importantly, members of both cultures do place importance on their relationships throughout life. However, because interdependent happiness is the outcome of interdependent social life, which is full of opportunities to preserve one's obligatory or normative relationships, it is preserved by maintaining one's expected role and social *face*, which is essentially out of one's personal control (Hamamura & Heine, 2008), as is actively choosing one's relationships. This is the first feature of interdependent relationships predicated on a stable, given, and closed in-group. The primary goal of such relationships is to maintain harmony by being mindful of ones' mistakes and avoid disharmony by being loyal and committed to the group norm, so that one can maintain quiescence and ordinariness that might be abruptly lost when losing social *face*. The second feature of interdependent relationships is that the members share the ideal of emotions as quiescent. Meeting one's norm, or one's obligatory self (Higgins, 2005; Lee, Arker, & Gardner, 2000), is not a mere strategy of effacement for maintaining social evaluations; rather, it is an effective means to achieve the ideal of emotions shared among interdependent cultural members, which is a low arousal, positive emotional state (Tsai, 2007). When cultural members share such an ideal, the ways in which interpersonal relationships are managed can become entirely normative.

If Japanese relationships generally involve such a normative style of management, then interdependent happiness should be comparable between the formally given relationship and the personally chosen friendship. Even in this low-mobility country, university students are relatively open to choosing their close friends (Sato & Yuki, 2014), but they also have formal acquaintances in their seminars or classrooms, about whom they have limited knowledge but with whom they interact formally (Sasaki, Sugawara, & Tannno, 2005). We examined the above hypothesis by sampling 80 Japanese students and asking them first to choose their in-group, defined as the group they belong to and spend the most time with during a typical weekday, from the options: 1: Acquaintance in their seminar or classroom, 2: Personally close friends, and 3: other. Of the 80, 30 students chose the first option, while 46 students chose the second, and four chose the third. They then responded to the IHS by referring to the self in the respective in-group context. Comparison of the first two groups showed negligible difference in the average IHS score ($t\,(74) = .14$, $p = .89$). This result may indicate the nature of Japanese interpersonal relationships; personal friendship is as harmony, quiescence, and ordinariness nurturing as the normative relationship.

However, exactly what relationships participants imply when responding to the IHS in various cultures is an important question to be addressed in the future. Also, students are limited in terms of interactions to those in the workplace hierarchy or interactions with their marital partner (Japanese university students are rarely married), and the above data did not single out family and romantic relationships, some of the most personal relationships for students (Bugental, 2000). Therefore, com-

parisons would benefit from addressing the detailed differences among possible social relationships, and how they relate to interdependent happiness. We believe, however, that because culture is a collection of interactions that is set into motion by institutions which themselves are informed by collectively held ideas (Markus & Conner, 2013), any relationship may involve some type of interdependent tasks, if it is situated in a collectivistic cultural context. For example, friendship may involve a stronger sense of indebtedness among interdependent cultural members (Hitokoto, 2016), hindering active help-seeking among friends (Taylor et al., 2004), and confining it to very close family members. In this case, cross-cultural investigations of the ways in which cultural tasks are required in various types of social relationships (Lansford et al., 2005) and how people differently maintain/choose such relationships throughout their lives (Fiori, Antonucci, & Akiyama, 2008) will be informative, not only for cultural psychologists, but also for relationship researchers (Reis et al., 2000).

Because interdependent happiness is considered to capture success in interdependent social life, thriving in a non-interdependent life would undermine interdependent happiness. One type of non-interdependent life is be a highly competitive, economically successful life among those of high socio-economic status (SES) (Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). Particularly in an economically developing East Asian cultural context, such as in Thailand, the correlation between objective social status and level of IHS is negative since status pursuit in such a context may require sacrificing one's relationships (Ogihara & Uchida, 2014). In contrast, a well-being measure that does not tap into the success of interdependent life would be free from such a cost. We put this hypothesis to a test using representative Thai adults (Hitokoto, 2014) and the IHS satisfaction with life question (i.e., "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?"). We then examined whether objective SES would negatively correlate with the IHS, whereas satisfaction with life would not. The results supported the hypothesis, and interdependent happiness was negatively correlated with objective SES ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$), while satisfaction with life was not ($r = .03$, $p = .78$). The results indicate that the IHS captures success in interdependent life, while the traditional overall SWB questions may not.

Because knowing that the self is committed to a task is only a part of the felt success in a task, having an interdependent self-construal does not directly imply having interdependent happiness. In fact, the correlation between the two is negligible across Japan and the U.S. ($-.08 < r < .14$). We interpret this result as reasonable, and believe that a larger cultural context such as country or region mediates the IHS-SWB link. However, future studies need to show a clearer link between the two different levels by focusing on the process of how individual interdependent happiness comes about, on the condition that an individual is situated in a collectivistic cultural context, as well as how such a context can be re-created. We believe one possible route to these goals is tightly knit communication among individuals who are mutually related.

2.10 Interdependent Happiness and Health

Kitazawa, Hitokoto, and Yoshimura (n.d.) measured 1200 Japanese university students' level of IHS and examined if this measurement is related to healthy lifestyles. Particularly, it focused on the relationship with sleep quality, since social disintegration is known to hinder sleep (Cacioppo et al., 2006). As was previously discussed, interdependent happiness is a social harmony among one's related others. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that interdependent happiness is positively correlated with good sleep quality. In addition to sleep, social harmony may also accompany healthy social activity, because harmony is achieved through daily interactions with close others. Therefore, chronic, modern, asocial behaviors such as retreating from university life and net-surfing during holidays would negatively correlate with interdependent happiness. The results supported these predictions; interdependent happiness is positively correlated with good and long sleep, more attendance at university, and less internet use during holidays. Although these results were correlational, the survey was one of the first to examine interdependent happiness and health behaviors using an epidemiological approach. We await future replications, especially those investigating whether such pro-health effect is adjusted by a larger cultural context.

Social capital is a social networks of reciprocity, trust, and cooperation (Putnam, 2000). Because of its relational nature, it was hypothesized that the extent to which happiness implied harmony is related, at the group level, with social capital. Our preliminary data (Hitokoto, Fukushima, Takemura, & Uchida, (n.d.)) suggests that this is the case, and even after controlling for individual level variables (e.g., gender, age, individual-level number of face-to-face interacting partners), the impact of interdependent happiness on general happiness was systematically stronger in Japanese local municipalities with larger average numbers of face-to-face interacting partners. The average number of face-to-face interacting partners in a municipality can be interpreted as one local-level feature of the size of a social network. Therefore, we suggest social network as another socio-ecological background component of the IHS-SWB link. The group-level function of IHS, or its community-level pro-health function, is another frontier that could be pursued in future research.

2.11 Frontiers of Cultural Happiness

Delle Fave et al. (2016) demonstrated nation-level dimensions of the content of happiness (i.e., family, friends, health, work, and so on) and lay definitions of happiness (i.e., internal harmony and balance, satisfaction, positive emotions and so on). The gist of these findings, which are derived from asking people "what is happiness for you?", is that the dominant component of happiness is positive and harmonious familial and social relationships, and that the most frequently observed psychological definition was inner harmony (i.e., inner peace, balance, contentment, and

psychophysical well-being). If personal achievement is the dominant component of happiness for the WEIRD culture (Henrich et al., 2010; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009), then a more central implication of human happiness is the interpersonal and quiescent mind that overlaps with the conception of interdependent happiness.

Unfortunately, at this point there is a shortage of truly diverse and representative human data from every corner of the world. Future studies of interdependent happiness need more diverse cultural samples. Importantly, interdependent happiness is only one demonstrative alternative to the personalized happiness that has often been used by positive psychologists, and there are countless possibilities of entirely different cultural well-being measures. Some may not even take the form of self-reports, if the concept of happiness is missing in their local language, or is *hypo-cognized* by the members for cultural reasons. This might be applicable to interdependent cultures, where merely claiming that one is happy can be considered a potential breach of harmony by means of inviting others' envy, which may be often the case when these others idealize ordinariness and not standing out. It is also plausible that the dialectic conceptions of life (Miyamoto et al., 2010) may render any straightforward questions about whether the life is "good" or not meaningless in some cultures. In some cultures, positive feeling itself is less valued, and alternatively, what one did to fulfill one's given duty and obligation is the main point of wellness in life. In these cases, self-reflection about whether one's life is good is rarely practiced in people's minds, that it may almost lose ecological validity in the context. Further, in such contexts, presence of a positive may not be recognized as in other cultures, but something negative such as a loss of a valued target (i.e., death of a close other) would only make the members to reminisce, self-reflect and clearify the conception of what happiness *was*. If happiness is so embedded in the culture, it may go beyond the methodological scope of the self-report measure. Use of simple reports requires a certain degree of self-reflection and de-contextualization. Richer conceptualizations, both incorporating diverse meanings and using careful approaches to these *happiness-ways*, will be needed to answer these very interesting empirical issues.

As culture can spread across historically demarcated boundaries, we also need to be aware of both its unit and change. Specifically, culture seems to be the unit of semiotic space: temporal period and/or spatial zone where a group of people share, via communication, certain meanings about cognition, emotion, and behavior regarding how to live feasibly. Which unit provides the meaning of happiness to its subscribed members is yet to be clearly defined. Also, this unit itself seems to change, usually slowly, but sometimes in a short period of time. The dictionary definition of happiness has dropped the implication of "luck" within the past century in the United States (Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, & Galinha, 2013), and economic stagnation can alter national well-being within a short period of time (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000), while some cultural aspects of happiness may last for generations (Rice & Steele, 2004). Collective behaviors can radically change in less than half a century (Punam, 2000), while the genes responsible for social learning might have been selected for throughout the past several millennia (Kitayama, King, Hsu, Liberzon, & Yoon, 2016). Out of these different layers/levels of cultural phenomena,

health and happiness emerge as a consequence of survival, group living, and self-actualization of the people sharing semiotic space that offers humans a meaning by which they live. It is yet to be known which units, changes, or the interactions are truly responsible for how we came up with the happiness we recognize today. Therefore, the suggestion is that we continue to develop, monitor, re-construct, and progressively establish the empirical measures of happiness across cultures, keeping in mind that culture interacts with meanings of happiness.

As for a good example to focus on a semiotic space other than the traditional "country" unit, Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) and Hitokoto (2016a) pointed out how regional culture might also be responsible for defining the meaning of happiness. Specifically, state-level individualism-collectivism (i.e., an aggregate of state-level indicators of this cultural value orientation, such as divorce rate or average number of family members, and so on; Vandello & Cohen, 1999) of the original regions where participants spent large parts of their life before becoming 15 years old had significant impacts on the degree to which their general happiness was explained by either interdependent happiness or self-esteem. Specifically, their original regional/state-level collectivism positively mediated the impact of interdependent happiness on SWB, while the impact of self-esteem on SWB was negatively mediated. The results were interpreted as evidence of happiness as a product of cultural learning when humans are developmentally susceptible to their environments. Considering how life-long development may alter the level of interdependent happiness, social experiences or behaviors that people engage in during their life course can be one factor that promotes or decreases interdependent happiness. In fact, a cultural priming study has demonstrated how tentative priming involving thinking about what is different or common with one's families and friends may able to alter modes of happiness (i.e., the degree to which life satisfaction is explained by either one's positive emotions or social appraisal) across Americans and Koreans (Suh et al., 2008). If this is not limited to tentative phenomena, then cultural happiness might be open to learning.

2.12 Conclusion

Culture can offer tremendous diversity to our shared meaning of happiness. Current reliance on personalized happiness (i.e., whether I am happy) is one special version of cultural happiness in independent contexts. Interdependent happiness, which is predicated on harmony (i.e., whether I and others around me are happy), is another version that we offer from interdependent cultural contexts where *face* maintenance and ordinariness are the art of social life. As demonstrated here, culture, or the semiotic space where people share certain meanings regarding how to live, can be a significant context for individuals to feel happy on their own terms. Future research is encouraged to explore culture's positive functions in both society and individuals, and to further demonstrate how happiness is a joint product of cultural meaning and the self as an agent of social life.

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