



Fear of Happiness -

Exploring Happiness in Collectivistic and Individualistic Cultures

By

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Abstract

Cultures emphasize varying orientations (e.g., individualism and collectivism) which lead to notable variances in the way people feel, think, and behave. For example, research has shown that fear of happiness—the belief that happiness leads to negative consequences and should be avoided—is stronger in collectivistic cultures. In the present studies, we compared two cultural groups that vary in collectivistic and individualistic orientation: Asian Americans and European Americans. Both studies were designed to determine fear of happiness levels across these groups, and also to observe any existing correlations between fear of happiness and other psychological variables. Specifically, in Study I, we asked 29 Asian American and 49 European American undergraduates to answer a series of questions designed to measure their levels of fear of happiness, cultural orientation, subjective well-being and happiness, personality, affect, and views on free-will vs. determinism. In Study II, we expanded the participant pool to 275—118 Asian American and 147 European American non-student adults—and measured the same constructs with the addition of perceived social image.

Our main hypothesis was that Asian Americans would display higher levels of fear of happiness than European Americans and thus cultural group would have an effect on fear of happiness. While the results from Study I confirmed our hypothesis, and Asian Americans experienced higher levels in their fear of happiness, the same results were not found in Study II. We also hypothesized that Asian Americans would display lower levels of subjective well-being than European Americans and their fear of happiness would help explain this difference. Although there were no significant cultural differences in subjective well-being in either Study I

or II, as anticipated, for both cultural groups, fear of happiness was negatively correlated with subjective well-being.

Our results also indicated that Asian American participants in this study endorsed both individualism and collectivism. We believe that their observed biculturalism is an important point of consideration when evaluating the results, and the prominent relationship between fear of happiness and biculturalism should be further explored.

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*

“The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship.”

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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Introduction

“Culture is the name for what people are interested in, their thoughts, their models, the books they read and the speeches they hear, their table-talk, gossip, controversies, historical sense and scientific training, the values they appreciate, the quality of life they admire. All communities have a culture. It is the climate of their civilization”

— Water Lippman, 1982

The famous American novelist, Ayn Rand, once said in her 1957 bestseller novel that the “achievement of happiness is the only moral purpose of life...” (Atlas Shrugged, 1957, p. 1014) – a claim which perfectly embodied the conventional belief that everyone should strive for happiness. Psychologists believed for a long time that happiness was universally important across all cultures. In fact, it was assumed that lack of happiness was a major point of concern (Joshlanloo, 2014). Attainment of happiness, as Snarey put it, was “a basic human right” (Snarey, 1985, p. 14). This idea was challenged by Joshlanloo’s work in 2013, which empirically proved that there were cultures that preferred to avoid happiness. Avoidance, or fear of happiness as defined by Joshlanloo, is a relatively new topic in this area of research. This thesis presents two studies on fear of happiness among Asian Americans and European Americans.

Defining SWB and Happiness: What the Terms Mean for the Present Study

In the years following the birth of subjective well-being research, differences emerged in the way psychologists understood and defined the term subjective well-being (Suh et al., 1998). Some considered subjective well-being, life satisfaction, overall well-being, and happiness to be separate concepts, whereas others treated the terms synonymously. In the early 2000s, Seligman wrote that he would use “happiness¹ and well-being interchangeably ... embracing both positive

¹ Some researchers looked at happiness and/or subjective well-being through the lens of *affect*, which later became a subject of Kahneman’s work in early 2000s when he created an *affect grid* and did his evaluations by grouping experiences on the right (“good side”; more positive emotions) or left side (“bad side”; more negative emotions) of grid (Kahneman, 2004, p. 433). Where an individual fell in the affect grid indicated their happiness level. Other researchers evaluated SWB through *affective states* “possibly regarding moods and emotions, but typically regarding hedonic experience” (Angner, 2009, p.19) while others placed more weight on a more cognitive explanation looking at one’s general stand toward one’s life. Angner argued that “those who think of subjective well-being in terms of happiness can be interpreted as preference hedonists who believe that people want to be happy. Those who think of subjective well-being in terms of satisfaction can be understood as preference hedonists who believe that people want to be satisfied. And those who think of subjective well-being in terms of multiple positive evaluations can be read as preference hedonists who think that people desire such things” (Angner, 2009, p.21).

feelings (i.e., ecstasy and comfort) and positive activities that have no feeling component at all" (Seligman, 2002, p. 261). This is also in line with the precedent set by Joshlanloo's work – the first to systematically examine fear of happiness. In accordance with previous literature, this thesis used the terms subjective well-being and happiness interchangeably. Furthermore, we used Diener's definition of subjective well-being – the most commonly accepted and used definition in the subjective well-being literature. According to Diener, subjective well-being has three components: satisfaction with one's life circumstances, the existence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood (Diener et al., 1999).

The existing literature unveils significant cultural differences in happiness across cultural groups. The next section includes an overview of culture-specific values and belief systems that lead to these differences.

Culture-Specific Value Systems

Culture lies at the heart of understanding the human mind, representing shared beliefs, values, and practices. It molds and shapes individuals from birth, and affects their actions, thoughts, and feelings. Individuals within the same culture engage in culture-specific behaviors with shared meaning (Suh, 2000). According to Veenhoven, "the observed differences in average happiness across nations are not unsystematic but go hand in hand with variation in several cultural characteristics" (Veenhoven, 2012, p.18). Indeed, research has shown that cultural differences in happiness levels are associated with cultural differences in value systems. The value systems that have been extensively studied in this literature are individualism and collectivism.

Understanding Individualism and Collectivism

World-renowned anthropologist, Wade Davis, once said that "we are all, by definition, cut from the same genetic cloth...and share the same raw mental activity, the same intellectual capacity," and our differences are simply "a matter...of cultural orientation" (Wade Davis, 1985, p. 107).

Cultural psychology thus focuses on exploring the nuances in cultural orientations with the objective of providing more insight into how people think, feel, believe and act across the world.

Today, the existing literature on happiness revolves around two cultural orientations:

individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1980). In simplest terms, individualism and collectivism are constructs that differ in the degree of social connectedness they emphasize.

Collectivistic cultures tend to prioritize the in-groups (i.e., a family, a friend group, or a work environment) while individualistic cultures prioritize the power of the "individual."

A fairly straightforward demonstration of individualism and collectivism can be observed through family structures. In collectivistic cultures, the family includes relatives beyond the nuclear family – like grandparents – and people tend to live in close proximity or in the same house as their family. In contrast, individualistic cultures believe in the importance of self-sufficiency. They prioritize the development of skillsets necessary for younger members to "survive on their own." Thus, individualism emphasizes the belief that people exist independently of one another (Oyserman et al., 2008).

Individualistic cultures also prioritize the importance of individuals' choices and desires over relational harmony (Oyserman et al., 2008). They value the fulfillment of one's personal goals, desires, and potential as the key to subjective well-being (Oyserman et al., 2008). This is

very different than the value system present in collectivistic cultures. Collectivistic cultures prioritize the needs of the in-group. Such an orientation implies that one's life satisfaction depends on the quality of social relationships, social role, and success at fulfilling duties (Oyserman et al., 2008).

As noted earlier, differences in the way people with different cultural orientations think, act, and believe also affect the way they define and experience happiness. While cultures that emphasize individualism encourage the values of self-sufficiency and autonomy as sources of happiness, in contrast, cultures that emphasize collectivism encourage harmony and interdependence (Triandis, 2001). Differences in the desired sources of happiness affect both what happiness means in cultural groups and also how it is experienced at the individual level. Consequently, it is crucial for the purposes of this work to understand how individualism and collectivism gained importance and later affected the study of well-being.

Cultural Variations in Happiness Due to Individualism and Collectivism

A modern Russian proverb states that "a person who smiles a lot is either a fool or an American." Despite its humorous nature, the statement helps demonstrate in a light-hearted way how culture carries a tremendous importance in the way happiness is perceived, experienced, and prioritized across different cultures. There have been numerous efforts in happiness research to define how cultural values affect well-being. The earliest discussions date back to 1970s. Consequently, to understand the research journey that leads up to the discovery of fear of happiness, it is important

to explore the studies preceding this thesis and focus on individualistic and collectivistic cultural beliefs that influence happiness.

This section includes a chronological overview of the development of subjective well-being research. The goal here is to demonstrate how individualism and collectivism became crucial value orientations that helped understand happiness. This overview also explains how fear of happiness, which is expected to be a correlate of collectivism, adds another dimension to contemporary understandings of subjective well-being.

Foundations of Well-Being Research

Maslow's hierarchy of needs published in 1970 served as the basis for many future well-being studies. According to Maslow, the "degree of basic need gratification was positively correlated with the level of psychological health" (Maslow, 1970, p. 67). The hierarchy of needs proposed an order of needs that the individuals aimed to fulfill. Physical needs like food, water and shelter were at the bottom of the hierarchy, followed by safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. There was no mention of cultural variance, and life satisfaction had a relatively simpler equation: Any change or imbalance in any of these buckets (i.e., safety, food, shelter, belonging, etc.) would lead to less life satisfaction. Indeed, Maslow's theory suggested that "higher need gratification is also assumed to produce more profound happiness than is lower need gratification" (Oishi, Diener, 1999, p. 981). Maslow's theory did not consider how cultural differences in values and beliefs could affect happiness. As a consequence, socio-economic factors were given a vital role in the achievement of need gratification. This led to the argument that the poorer a nation or a cultural group was, the less satisfied they would be with their lives.

Less than two decades after Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, in 1987, Kağıtçıbaşı suggested that individualism and collectivism were "worldviews that differed in the issues they made salient" (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1987, p. 6). Therefore, the definition of "need" was different from one culture to another and more complicated than outlined by Maslow. In 1991, Markus and Kitayama's research on cultural influences on the self-concept empirically showed that there, in fact, were differences in what needs were salient across cultural groups: Attending to one's personal needs and gaining distinction were salient needs in individualistic cultures, whereas group harmony and peace were more valued in collectivistic cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Collectivism encouraged the development of an interdependent self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and the individuals tended to prioritize in-group goals and subordinate their personal goals (Triandis et al., 1988). To further evaluate the differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultural groups, in 1997, Okazaki conducted a two-week diary study with 45 Asian American and 38 European American students with similar socio-economic backgrounds. Despite controlling for factors on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Okazaki found that these two groups displayed different levels of life satisfaction and emotional experiences. He found that Asian Americans tended to have higher social anxiety and negative emotions under the same circumstances as the European American students (Okazaki, 1997). This finding demonstrated that in order to understand the different components of well-being, researchers would need to dig deeper than the needs mentioned within Maslow's framework. Thus, Okazaki's work opened the door to the importance of understanding the differences in cultural values and how those differences affect perception, emotional experiences, and processes. The desire for this in-depth

exploration of well-being urged psychologists to examine the role of culture-specific values in subjective well-being.

Subjective Well-being Research between 1998 and 2003

In 1998, Suh and Diener conducted a large cross-cultural study across 61 nations with over 60,000 participants to examine cultural influences on subjective well-being. By using the *World Values Survey*—a comprehensive research project which collects data on attitudes, values, and beliefs across countries representing more than 70% of the world population— they measured participants' emotional experiences and life satisfaction. Although participants' level of individualism and collectivism was not measured in the study, the included nations were considered to represent different levels of the two cultural value orientations. These nations were grouped as individualistic or collectivistic based on the ratings provided by Hofstede and Triandis. Since the most important construct Suh and Diener wanted to measure was life satisfaction, they pulled the data for the questions related to emotional experiences and well-being from the hundreds of *World Values Survey* questions. In addition, the *Affect Balance Scale* by Bradburn (1969), which asked participants to rate their emotional experiences in the past week (i.e., proud, depressed, etc.), was used, as well as the *Life Satisfaction Survey* which asked participants to rate their answers on questions like "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?". The answers for these measures were collected and compared between individualistic and collectivistic nations. Suh and Diener hypothesized that individuals' emotional experiences would better predict life satisfaction in more individualistic nations whereas social norms would be better predictors of life satisfaction in collectivist cultures. Ultimately, it was proven that nations with different cultural orientations used different

criteria (i.e., social norms vs. individual happiness) to evaluate their life satisfaction. Among the individualistic cultural groups, recent accomplishments and attainment of personal goals determined happiness, whereas in collectivist cultural groups, individual happiness depended on the approval and happiness of the in-group. Suh and Diener also found that participants from individualistic nations tended to experience “a lot of” positive emotions whereas this tendency did not seem prevalent among participants from more collectivist nations. This finding revealed two important points to consider: Salient cultural values had an impact on how satisfied people were with their lives, and these same values had an effect on the magnitude of positive and negative emotional experiences.

Only a year later, Oishi and colleagues (1999) conducted a study to explore factors that influence and explain cultural differences in subjective well-being. Through this work, they demonstrated once more that there was more to happiness than the categories listed in Maslow’s pyramid. Oishi and colleagues collected data across 39 nations from over 54,000 participants through the *World Values Survey*. With this data, they looked at safety needs through participants’ jobs, financial satisfaction, and the need for belonging through the individuals’ reported satisfaction with their family or close relatives/friend circle. In line with Maslow’s theory, Oishi hypothesized that safety would play an important role in determining SWB in poorer nations, while self-actualization and self-esteem needs would play an important role in more prosperous cultures (Oishi et al., 1999). Although the results confirmed these hypotheses, they also discovered that nations with the same socio-economic status had different levels of SWB. This finding was another indication that Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs could not fully explain cross-national differences in life satisfaction. In the end, Oishi and colleagues concluded

that satisfaction of the values associated with a particular culture (i.e., family ties, individual success, attaining one's goals, etc.) carried a notable importance on the individual's life quality and satisfaction (Oishi et al., 1999).

In light of these developments, Diener provided his definition of subjective well-being which has since been adopted by many researchers: a combination of life satisfaction (i.e. the cognitive evaluation of one's life) and affective balance (i.e. the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect) (Diener et al., 2000). With this accepted definition in mind, psychologists studied how subjective well-being related to cultural values, beliefs, and attributes. Furthermore, they evaluated cultures with different orientations – individualistic and collectivistic. Differences in the cultural values and beliefs were already perceived to be important considerations in well-being research, but now it was time to examine and understand certain nuances that drove those differences.

In 2000, Inglehart's analysis of *World Values Survey* data provided further evidence that there existed important cultural differences in subjective well-being based on salient cultural values. He examined the culture-specific values among 65 nations and reported levels of satisfaction over three periods: 1981-1982, 1990-1991, and 1995-1998. He evaluated the nations on the basis of traditional vs. secular-rational (conservative, patriarchal culture vs. liberal gender-equal culture) and survival vs. self-expression (emphasis on safety vs. emphasis on life quality through freedom of thought, feeling and action). Inglehart focused his analyses on ten items that “tapped” these two dimensions. For example, “respondent describes self as not very happy” was an item used to distinguish survival vs. self-expression cultures and “respondent favors more

respect for authority” was an item used to distinguish traditional vs. secular-rational cultures. These dimensions were imperative for Inglehart to understand and evaluate because he believed that specific cultural beliefs would directly translate into different prioritizations of happiness. For example, he hypothesized that individuals in survival-focused cultures would emphasize physical and financial security. Inglehart also asked the participants to rate on a 1 to 5 scale how their happiness was affected by each of the following factors: family, friends, leisure time, politics, work, and religion. According to Inglehart, these happiness factors helped explain whether a culture was more traditional vs. secular-rational or survival vs. self-expression focused. For example, someone who rated family as their primary source of happiness would be categorized as a more traditional person and someone who emphasized leisure time would be categorized as having higher self-expression. Inglehart’s results revealed differences across cultures in the dimensions of traditional vs. secular-rational and survival vs. self-expression. Although there were cross-cultural differences, within each culture there was consistency over time. The observed levels of the two dimensions did not fluctuate significantly over a span of 17 years (i.e. traditional cultures remained traditional, etc.). Most importantly, Inglehart showed that cultures with higher prioritization of survival and tradition tendencies consistently reported lower levels of subjective well-being. Inglehart’s work was essential to the study of subjective well-being because it demonstrated the effect of cultural values and priorities on the perception and experience of happiness.

In 2001, Eid and Diener conducted a significant study with 1,846 participants from both individualistic countries –Australia and the USA— and collectivistic countries –China and Taiwan. Participants were given a questionnaire that consisted of items designed to assess their

level of happiness, personality, and emotional experiences. More importantly, participants were asked to rate the "appropriateness" of certain emotions such as affection, anger, jealousy, happiness, pride, etc. The results demonstrated that cultural norms influenced the way people experienced and/or regulated their emotions. Eid and Diener noted that self-reflective emotions (i.e., "emotions that reflect on the individual's own actions") took the form of promotional feelings (i.e., pride, happiness) in individualistic cultures and of prevention feelings (i.e., guilt) in collectivistic cultures (Eid, Diener, 2001, p.897). Their most important finding that relates to cross-cultural happiness was that individualistic cultures felt "pressure to be joyful, happy, and full of love and pride and to make use of their constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness" (Eid & Diener, 2001, p. 880). Thus, the study confirmed that culture-specific values affected the prioritization and experience of happiness.

Researchers soon began to question whether individualism and collectivism were discrete constructs or whether they existed on a spectrum. In 2002, Oysterman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier demonstrated in "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism" that the composition of individualism and collectivism within cultural groups was, in fact, heterogeneous. Through their comprehensive meta-analysis of the available literature on culture and subjective well-being, they found that cultural groups often consisted of both orientations. However, despite the heterogeneity, each cultural group tended to have a specific cultural orientation associated with most of its individuals. The cultural orientation (i.e., individualism or collectivism) associated with the majority had psychological implications. Thus, they closely evaluated the implications of cultural orientation on well-being, cognition, and the self-concept. Their first study compared "Americans" (including all ethnic groups within the US and Canada) to individuals from other

countries (i.e., Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Poland, Singapore, and Taiwan etc.). Their second study looked specifically within the US to observe differences across ethnic groups (i.e., European American, African American, Asian American, and Latino American etc.). European Americans were considerably more individualistic compared to people from India, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. However, Oyserman and colleagues demonstrated that European Americans, historically categorized as individualistic, surprisingly aligned with their Asian American counterparts on one specific aspect of collectivism. European Americans displayed a pronounced desire to belong to an in-group and seek approval and advice from others— a trait which is more closely associated with groups that orient toward collectivism. However, where European Americans and Asian Americans differed was in the lack of emphasis European Americans put on group harmony and the prioritization of the in-group’s goals over the individual’s. This was an important distinction for the purposes of well-being research: Asian Americans and European Americans differed in their prioritization of the in-group and the self. This difference was considered a major point of consideration when evaluating how happiness was defined in these two cultures and the source of this difference was prioritized as an area for further research.

In summary, the four year period between 1998 and 2002 helped define subjective well-being as it is understood today, i.e., a multi-dimensional construct heavily dependent on culture. This realization encouraged psychologists to further evaluate the value and belief systems in place that affect the way happiness is perceived and experienced across cultures.

Between 2003 - 2014

The period between 2003 and 2014 included crucial studies that aimed to further explore different cultural groups within the collectivistic and individualistic culture clusters.

In 2003, Benet-Martinez examined the roles of individualism and collectivism as predictors of life satisfaction among 321 Asian and European American undergraduates on the West Coast (Benet-Martinez, 2003). Benet-Martinez's study showed that self-esteem and social satisfaction predicted happiness for European Americans whereas satisfaction with family was a more important predictor of happiness for Asian Americans (Benet-Martinez, 2003). She concluded that culture chronically influenced people's perceptions and evaluations of themselves, and consequently their subjective well-being (Benet-Martinez, 2003). Her work was followed by researchers who further explored culture's influence on the factors (i.e., family, self-esteem) that determine individuals' happiness.

In 2005, Peterson conducted a study to measure the differences in the way people attained happiness. 845 African American, Asian American, and European American non-student adults completed Peterson's *Orientations to Happiness Scale* (i.e., measurement of the ways individuals attain happiness) and Diener's *Satisfaction with Life Scale* through an online portal. The categories included in the *Orientations* scale were: pleasure, meaning (i.e., connecting with a greater good) and engagement. He then looked to see if these *means* of achieving happiness were, in fact, empirically distinct and whether any of the means contributed most to subjective well-being. The results showed that while ethnic minorities found happiness through meaning, European Americans found happiness through pleasure (Peterson, 2005).

However, all three means of attaining happiness were predictors of one's life satisfaction. Individuals who did not find happiness in pleasure, engagement, or meaning scored low in their overall happiness and life satisfaction as well. This study was an important contribution to the study of subjective well-being due to its systematic exploration of different sources of happiness across cultures. It revealed that the ways to attaining happiness were unique— although not incompatible— and more importantly *different*.

Chen observed in 2006 another explanation for the different ways to attain happiness and authored “The Way of Nature as a Healing Power”—a comprehensive exploration of Taoism. Prior research had focused on the cultural differences that influenced well-being. Chen focused on *religion*—specifically Taoism—as a major influence on the way people experience happiness and well-being. Through the analysis of religious texts and works of previous researchers who explored Taoism, Chen looked closely at religious history and its effect on happiness. He showed that Chinese people – traditionally a collectivistic group – believed in the avoidance of high levels of happiness. Chinese culture believed that “everything tended to revert to their opposite” (Chen, 2006, p.99) so “bragging” about fortune was looked down upon and thought to bring misfortune. Thus, Chinese culture valued the attainment of happiness through inner peace and in balanced moderation. This insight was a powerful contribution to the well-being research: It confirmed both the variances in the perception, experience and prioritization of happiness, as well as proved that cultural values and beliefs were crucial points of consideration when evaluating one’s well-being.

In this period there were also critical studies that examined the magnitude of positive and negative emotional experiences and their influence on subjective well-being across cultural groups. In 2007, Bryant and Veroff published a book on “*savoring*,” which they defined as the capacity to enjoy positive feelings (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). Bryant and Veroff reviewed the existing studies on positive emotional experiences and happiness to provide an overview of how “savoring” could be measured. They noted that the avoidance of high levels of happiness caused collectivist cultures to engage less in intense positive emotions. A couple of years later, in 2011, Miyamoto conducted four studies with Asian American and European American college students, looking at the phenomenon of “*dampening*”—a form of down-regulating emotional experiences. Miyamoto asked participants to think about a time when they achieved a personal goal and describe how they felt. Miyamoto found that there was a significant difference in the way Asian and European Americans regulated their positive emotional experiences. While Asian Americans tended to dampen their emotions at the time of achievements and recognition by their in-group, European Americans did not show the same tendency (Miyamoto, 2011). In a follow-up study designed to identify the reasons behind the psychological tendency to dampen one’s emotional experiences, Miyamoto found that dampening was a consequence of “emotion regulation mediated by dialectical beliefs about positive emotions” (Miyamoto, 2011, p. 2). In other words, individuals who believed that positive emotions would have negative consequences tended to regulate their experiences and avoid high levels of positive emotions. As the works of Bryant, Veroff, and Miyamoto unveiled, the difference in the way emotions were regulated across cultures was a result of the varying salient values pertaining to each cultural group. This phenomenon influenced the way individuals valued, desired, and experienced

happiness. Individuals reported different feelings and levels of contentment under the same circumstances due to differences in emotional regulation (Miyamoto, 2011).

In short, the research between 2005 and 2014 provided vital insight into the influence of culture on subjective well-being. Psychologists researched different value systems and perceptions of happiness across numerous cultural groups. The differences in the way people "felt" about happiness were ultimately the foundation for Joshanloo's work on the fear of happiness.

2014 Onward

In this period, a need emerged for psychologists to dig deeper beyond individualism and collectivism into yet unexplored belief and value systems. Among the most notable discoveries in well-being research was Joshanloo's work in 2013 that focused on fear of happiness. Joshanloo became the first psychologist to fully dedicate his efforts to explore this construct and the values that drive it. He noted that consideration of fear of happiness was necessary to evaluate differences in reported levels of life satisfaction and happiness. He theorized that the existence of fear of happiness would explain why there were differences between cultural groups on their reported levels of subjective well-being.

The happiness literature preceding Joshanloo's work had demonstrated significant differences in the perception and experience of happiness across groups with different cultural orientations. The present studies further explored the new construct coined by Joshanloo – fear of happiness – by focusing on two cultural groups that have not been previously studied in relation to fear of happiness.

Understanding the Fear of Happiness

The belief that happiness could lead to bad consequences was not explored until Joshanloo's work in 2013. It was previously assumed that despite cultural differences, every individual desired to obtain a high level of happiness. The idea that someone could refrain from striving to achieve higher levels of happiness was unfathomable, and therefore, the existence of cultures that reported lower levels of subjective well-being raised a concern. This concern was a natural consequence of the fact that the perception of happiness in collectivistic cultures was not fully understood. When Joshanloo coined the term *fear of happiness*, he opened another door into understanding culture-specific beliefs around well-being and also about how people *felt* about happiness.

Today, the fear of happiness construct enables researchers to look at well-being through a different lens. It provides an explanation for the nuances associated with collectivistic cultural groups with regard to their perception of happiness. Exploration of this construct reveals that lower levels of reported subjective well-being are, in fact, not a point of concern. Furthermore, it reveals that attainment of happiness may not be the most important goal for individuals in collectivistic cultures.

Exploring Fear of Happiness

In 2000, Braun wrote in "The Science of Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Mood" that "every human being, no matter what culture, age, educational attainment, or degree of physical and mental development, wants to be happy. It is the common end to which all humans strive" (Braun, 2000, p. 97). But by 2012 it was well established that happiness was not a universal goal.

Studies of individuals with high self-criticism, stress, and depression acknowledged the existence of fear of happiness (Gilbert, 2012). Joshanloo's research showed that fear of happiness was an expression of culture and should be evaluated as a belief system embedded into collectivism – rather than a clinical construct. As such Joshanloo provided a deeper understanding of fear of happiness, its causes and its relationship to subjective well-being.

Joshlanloo conducted a study in 2013 to explore culture-specific factors that might affect people's responses to the life satisfaction scale, specifically fear of happiness (i.e., the belief that happiness may have negative consequences). He surveyed 220 (120 female, 100 male) University of Tehran students (average age 23 years old) in Iran, a more collectivist cultural group. The 5-item *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)* scale was developed by Diener and colleagues in 1985 to measure individuals' evaluation of their lives with items like "The conditions of my life are excellent." More specifically, Joshanloo's study's primary goal was to examine the role of fear of happiness in response to the life satisfaction scale. To this end, participants completed the *SWLS* as well as Joshanloo's newly developed *Fear of Happiness Scale*. The results proved his hypothesis: Fear of happiness had an impact on participants' reported levels of well-being. When the participants demonstrated higher levels of fear of happiness, their reported subjective well-being scores were lower on average as well. However, given that he conducted the study with only one cultural group, there was no point of comparison or an explanation for what *caused* fear of happiness.

Following this work, Joshanloo conducted another study—this time with participants across 14 national groups. The main goal of Joshanloo's cross-cultural study was to examine the

reliability and validity of the *Fear of Happiness Scale* across participants from Iran, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, India, Russia, Brazil, Kenya, Pakistan, Kuwait, and New Zealand. While the former cultures were of collectivistic tendencies, New Zealand served as the only representative of a more individualistic culture. Joshanloo rationalized his choice to include participants from New Zealand by arguing that New Zealand had a similar profile to individualistic cultures (i.e., Western Europe and North America). It is important to note that Joshanloo did not measure participants' cultural orientations, but instead assigned cultural orientations to countries as determined by previous studies. Although he collected data among 2,398 participants—university students with an equal gender ratio— from these 14 nations, the lack of representation from more individualistic cultures still served as a weakness in the study.

The *Fear of Happiness Scale* included five items (i.e., 'I believe the more cheerful and happy I am, the more I should expect bad things to occur in my life') that the participants needed to rate on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). To validate this scale, Joshanloo included several other measures. In particular, Diener and colleagues' *SWLS* was included in the study to measure participants' reported levels of life satisfaction and its association with fear of happiness. Further, the *Dampening Scale* developed by Feldman, Joormann, and Johnson (2008) was also included in the study as a complementary scale to the *Fear of Happiness Scale* to measure if people who scored higher on the fear of happiness also tended to dampen their emotions. This scale consisted of eight items that measured whether the participants had a tendency to diminish their positive emotional experiences (i.e., 'I think I don't deserve happiness'). To measure people's desire for personal growth, Robitschek's nine-item

Personal Growth Initiative Scale was used (i.e., ‘I know what I need to do to get started toward reaching my goals’). This scale was included because Joshanloo believed that the possession of goals and a personal drive would correlate negatively with the fear of happiness. Finally, *Autonomy Scale* was also included in the study to determine whether the participants felt like they had control over their life circumstances. Joshanloo noted that collectivistic cultures had lower levels of autonomy compared to individualistic cultures and that this may lead to lower levels of well-being in collectivistic cultures (Joshanloo, 2014) This scale included ten items (i.e., ‘I want to decide myself about things related to my life’). It is important to note that these individual scales were included to look at the correlation of fear of happiness with other constructs as they relate to happiness and well-being.

At the cultural level, the aggregate levels of subjective well-being for each country were taken from a combination of resources (i.e., *World Happiness Database*, *World Values Survey*). Conformity levels for the studied 14 nations were obtained from Schwartz’s work both in 1994 and 2006. Bond’s work in 2004 provided the information on the countries in regard to the values of societal cynicism (i.e., the extent to which individuals believe that people act based on self-interest), and dynamic externality (i.e., engaging in actions that lead to future adversities), while Hofstede’s work (1980) provided information on individualism. National wealth was another factor included in the study, and this information was received from the work of Fischer and Van de Vliert (2011).

Results showed that fear of happiness had a positive correlation with dampening and a negative correlation with life satisfaction. Thus, the more the participants were afraid of

happiness, the more they suppressed their emotions and the less life satisfaction they reported. Furthermore, fear of happiness was also found to negatively correlate with the other constructs measured in his study (i.e., autonomy, personal growth initiative, and wealth). The more an individual felt they had autonomy or greater wealth, the less fear of happiness they reported. If the individuals were personally goal-oriented, and had the resources to attain those goals, they also reported higher levels of well-being and lower levels of fear of happiness. Overall, the results of Joshanloo's work demonstrated that in some cultures, it was in fact possible to not want to be overly happy, and this avoidance of happiness associated with low levels of reported life satisfaction. However, Joshanloo was hesitant to make any generalizations and noted that the results needed to be interpreted by keeping in mind that Western nations with higher individualistic tendencies were not included in the study (Joshanloo, 2013).

Inspired by Joshanloo's initial work but fueled by the lack of adequate representation from the traditionally more individualistic cultures in the dataset, the present studies were designed to expand Joshanloo's work through the examination of cultural differences in the fear of happiness between North American cultural groups. The lack of a strong presence of more individualistic cultural groups had made it difficult for Joshanloo's work to have comparative validity. Reiterating this point, Joshanloo also noted at the end of his work that "the study was exploratory in nature and provided solely a snapshot of the concept of fear of happiness...and thus future studies should include more cultures from Europe, North America..." (Joshanloo, 2014, p.14).

The present studies uniquely contribute to Joshanloo's work and the literature available on this topic because they incorporate two cultural groups from which Joshanloo needed more representation –Asian Americans and European Americans. Through involvement of participants from these two cultural groups that represent different value systems, the present study provides a comparative overview of individualistic and collectivistic cultures that was excluded from the current literature on the fear of happiness.

Overview of the Studies

The existing subjective well-being literature has shown that Asian Americans generally value collectivism more than European Americans do (Oyserman et al., 2002). It has also demonstrated that group harmony and interconnectedness are important values for Asian Americans (Kim, 2006). In addition, individual success or fortune is not heavily prioritized and thus an individual's well-being is also based on the well-being of important in-groups, like one's family (Uchida et al., 2004). Consequently, the experience of high levels of happiness at the individual level is avoided because achieving happiness at a group level is seen as more desirable (Uchida, 2004).

In contrast, European Americans value individualism more than collectivism thereby prioritizing the self above the group. Although collectivism and individualism exist on a spectrum and European Americans display similar care for their in-group members as Asian Americans, they still place a higher importance on the self and improving one's life circumstance as an individual. Overall, personal happiness is desired and prioritized among European Americans (Triandis, 2001).

Given the different cultural meanings of happiness between Asian Americans and European Americans, we hypothesized that Asian Americans would show higher fear of happiness compared to European Americans. Studies I and II aimed to compare fear of happiness levels between these two cultural groups. The studies are novel as previous research did not explore the fear of happiness among European Americans and Asian Americans. Furthermore,

the two studies examined correlates to the fear of happiness in the two cultural groups. In particular, Study I measured individualism, personality traits, positive and negative affect, and cultural views on determinism and free-will.

These measures were important contributions to the study of fear of happiness as they were not fully explored by Joshanloo, who did not measure cultural orientations but rather used the national averages available from previous studies. In addition, Joshanloo did not examine personality traits or affect. Furthermore, Joshanloo also did not measure the views on determinism as it related to the fear of happiness. His evaluation of “dynamic externality”—the belief that people have the power of changing their circumstances—was based on the country-level averages obtained from Bond (2004). With the hope of exploring this relationship further, the present studies used the *FAD-Plus Scale* which measured participants’ views on free-will and determinism.

Study II measured the same predictors with the addition of perceived social image (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada, 2013), a measure that has never been included in the fear of happiness literature but is relevant as Asian populations show higher levels of concern for perceived social image compared to European Americans (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada).

Hypotheses

The key hypothesis of Studies I and II was that Asian Americans would score higher on fear of happiness compared to European Americans. Furthermore, collectivism would have a positive

correlation with fear of happiness, whereas individualism would have a negative correlation (Joshanloo, 2014).

We expected that Asian Americans would show lower levels of life satisfaction and subjective happiness compared to European Americans (Diener et al., 2003). Given that Joshanloo's work demonstrated a correlation between fear of happiness and life satisfaction, we anticipated that fear of happiness would explain this cultural difference in the reported life satisfaction levels.

We also hypothesized that determinism would correlate positively with fear of happiness (Joshanloo, 2013). In relation to personality traits, extraversion and emotional stability would correlate negatively with fear of happiness (Gutierrez, 2005). In addition, recent positive emotional experiences measured with *PANAS-X* (i.e., joviality, positive affect etc.) would correlate negatively with fear of happiness and negative emotional experiences (i.e., sadness, fatigue etc.) would correlate positively (Howell, 2010). We also anticipated that Asian Americans would value the protection of a positive image more than European Americans.

Study I.

Participants

Study I was carried out among 29 undergraduates who self-identified as Asian American ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.79$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.42$) and 49 who self-identified as European American ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.92$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.59$) with a grand total of 78 participants. While 50 of these participants identified as male, 27 identified as female and 1 chose “other.”

Measures

Participants completed a preliminary questionnaire using Qualtrics to report their demographic information (i.e., age, biological sex, religion, and ethnic or cultural background). Only participants who self-identified as Asian American or European American completed the measures. If the participants signed the informed consent form, the following additional preliminary questions were asked: Information on where they and their parents were born, if not in the US, the duration of stay in the US, and lastly marital status.

Personality traits were measured with John and Srivastava’s (1999) *Big 5 Personality Test*. The scale consisted of 50 statements that measured participants’ openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (i.e., ‘I am the life of the party,’ ‘I have excellent ideas’). Participants rated each statement on a 5-point scale from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*agree*).

Watson and Clark's (1994) *PANAS-X* was used for measuring participants' positive and negative affect. The scale consisted of 60 emotional adjectives grouped into the following affect clusters: Negative Affect (i.e., afraid, scared), Positive Affect (i.e., active, interested), Hostility (i.e., angry, disgusted), Fear (i.e., afraid, shaky), Guilt (i.e., ashamed, dissatisfied with self), Sadness (i.e., blue, alone), Joviality (i.e., delighted, lively), Self-Assurance (i.e., proud, bold), Attentiveness (i.e., alert, determined), Shyness (i.e., bashful, timid), Fatigue (i.e., sleepy, drowsy), Serenity (i.e., calm, at ease) and Surprise (i.e., amazed, astonished). The participants were asked to read each emotional adjective and indicate on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*) how much they have felt as described by the emotional adjective during the past week.

Paulhus and Carey's (2011) *FAD-Plus* was used to measure each participant's view on determinism and free-will. More specifically, *FAD-Plus* included the three sub-scales of Free Will (i.e., 'people have complete control over the decisions they make'), Scientific Determinism (i.e., 'people's biological makeup determines their talents and personality'), Fatalistic Determinism (i.e., 'no matter how hard you try, you can't change your destiny') and Randomness (i.e., 'no one can predict what will happen in this world'). *FAD-Plus* had 27 statements and the participants rated their level of agreement and disagreement with each statement on a 5-point scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) or 5 (*totally agree*).

Triandis and Gelfand's (1998) *Cultural Orientation Scale* was used to determine participants' level of individualism and collectivism. Importantly, Triandis and Gelfand's scale distinguishes two different types of individualism and collectivism: Horizontal and Vertical.

More specifically, Horizontal Individualism measures the value of independence from others (e.g., ‘I’d rather depend on myself than others’), Horizontal Collectivism measures the value of cooperation (e.g., I feel good when I compete with others), Vertical Individualism measures the value of achievement (e.g., winning is everything) and Vertical Collectivism measures the important of family and other in-groups (e.g., parents and children must stay together as much as possible). The scale included 16 statements and participants were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Diener and colleagues’ *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS) was used to measure life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). The scale consisted of five sentences that measured participants’ life satisfaction (i.e., ‘in most ways my life is close to my ideal;’ ‘the conditions of my life are excellent.’). Participants were asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with each statement on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

In addition to Diener’s SWLS, Lyubomirsky and Lepper’s (1999) *Subjective Happiness Scale* was also used. While Diener’s scale measured the participants’ evaluations of their life circumstances, the *Subjective Happiness Scale* focused more heavily on the feeling of happiness, independent of the life circumstances through statements such as “Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?” In total, there were four items in the scale and each item had its own response scale from 1 to 7. For example, one of the items was “In

general, I consider myself...” and the participants needed to choose from 1 (*not a very happy person*) to 7 (*a very happy person*).

Lastly, the study included Joshanloo’s (2013) *Fear of Happiness Scale*. The scale consisted of five statements that measured participants’ belief that happiness and good fortune have negative consequences (i.e., ‘disasters often follow good fortune;’ ‘fun causes bad things to happen’). Participants rated how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Procedure

Identical protocols were used for both cultural groups during the data collection process. Both European American and Asian American participants were recruited from Wesleyan University student body through the usage of an on-campus student platform called Wesleying. Wesleying is the most frequently and popularly used student-run blog about the events and news at Wesleyan University. We also reached out to the following student groups on campus: Asian American Student Collective, East Asian Studies Journal, Freeman Asian Scholars Association, International House, Japan Society, Korean Students Organization, Multi-ethnic Interracial Cross-cultural, PANGEA, Taiwanese Cultural Society, Vietnamese Student Association, and Wesleyan Chinese Cultural Club. Participants did not receive any financial compensation for their participation in the study.

Prior to taking the survey, the students provided informed consent and after the completion of the survey, they were debriefed via the email address they provided.

Results

Do Asian Americans and European Americans differ in their fear of happiness? A key prediction of the present study was that Asian Americans would have more negative beliefs about happiness compared to European Americans. A composite total score for fear of happiness was created by averaging the five items of the *Fear of Happiness Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .86). Next, an analysis of variance was carried out with participants' cultural group (Asian American vs. European American) as the independent factor. Cultural group had a significant effect on fear of happiness, $F(1, 69) = 7.26, p = .01$, Cohen's $d = .63$. Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for fear of happiness. As expected, Asian Americans reported higher levels of fear of happiness compared to European Americans (see Table 1).

Do Asian Americans and European Americans differ in their subjective well-being?

Subjective well-being was assessed with the *SWLS* and the *Subjective Happiness Scale*. A composite total score for life satisfaction was created by averaging the five items of the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .87.) Next, an analysis of variance was carried out with participants' cultural group (Asian American vs. European American) as the independent factor. Cultural group did not have a significant effect on life satisfaction, $F(1, 74) = 1.13, p = .29$. Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for the *SWLS*. Both East Asian Americans and European Americans reported moderate to high levels of life satisfaction (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for Fear of Happiness, Life Satisfaction, and Subjective Happiness

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Fear of Happiness Scale</i>	2.61	1.26	28	1.92	.90	43
<i>Satisfaction with Life Scale</i>	4.85	1.42	28	5.15	1.07	48
<i>Subjective Happiness Scale</i>	4.74	1.17	29	4.75	1.26	46

Further, a composite total score for subjective happiness was created by averaging the four items of the *Subjective Happiness Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .88). Next, an analysis of variance was carried out with participants’ cultural group (Asian American vs. European American) as the independent factor. Cultural group did not have a significant effect on life satisfaction, $F(1, 73) = .001, p = .98$. Table 1 presents means and standard deviations. Both Asian Americans and European Americans reported moderate to high levels of life satisfaction (see Table 1).

Next, correlations between fear of happiness, life satisfaction and subjective happiness were computed for each cultural group. For both cultural groups, fear of happiness had a negative correlation with life satisfaction (Asian Americans: $r = -.57, p = .002$; European Americans: $r = -.21, p = .18$) and subjective happiness (Asian Americans: $r = -.19, p = .33$; European Americans: $r = -.33, p = .03$). This means that negative beliefs about happiness had a negative association with how happy and satisfied individuals felt for both cultural groups. But, Asian Americans’ higher levels of fear of happiness translated into lower levels of life satisfaction but not subjective happiness.

Cultural orientation, personality traits, affect, determinism/free-will. For the *Cultural Orientation Scale*, first a composite total score for each of its subscales (i.e., horizontal individualism, horizontal collectivism, vertical individualism, and vertical collectivism) was created. Each subscale consisted of four items (Cronbach alpha: Horizontal Individualism - .81, Horizontal Collectivism - .79, Vertical Individualism - .83, and Vertical Collectivism - .84).

The multivariate main effect of cultural group was marginally significant, $F(4, 63) = 2.14$, $p = .08$. However, in univariate terms, cultural group did not have a significant effect on horizontal individualism, $F(1, 67) = 2.12$, $p = .15$, horizontal collectivism, $F(1, 66) = .23$, $p = .63$, vertical individualism $F(1, 66) = .23$, $p = .64$, and vertical collectivism, $F(1, 66) = 2.69$, $p = .11$. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for vertical and horizontal individualism and collectivism separately by cultural group.

Table 2 – Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for Cultural Orientation

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Cultural Orientation Scale</i>						
<i>Horizontal Individualism</i>	6.80	1.59	26	7.27	1.08	42
<i>Horizontal Collectivism</i>	6.66	1.72	26	6.82	1.00	42
<i>Vertical Individualism</i>	5.06	2.01	26	4.85	1.65	42
<i>Vertical Collectivism</i>	5.96	1.39	26	5.32	1.67	42

Since there were no cultural differences in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of individualism and collectivism, a total score for individualism (Cronbach alpha: .81) - that included both the vertical and horizontal items - and a total score for collectivism (Cronbach alpha: .85) – that included both the vertical and horizontal items - were created. There were no cultural differences for individualism (European Americans: $M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.12$ and Asian Americans: $M = 5.92$, $SD = 1.44$), $F(1, 67) = .21$, $p = .65$, or collectivism (European Americans: $M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.17$ and Asian Americans: $M = 6.31$, $SD = 1.42$), $F(1, 66) = .61$, $p = .44$. While Asian American participants showed higher levels of vertical collectivism and European American participants showed higher levels of horizontal individualism, both participants showed moderate levels of both cultural orientations.

For the *PANAS-X Scale*, a total positive affect (Cronbach alpha: .96) and a total negative affect (Cronbach alpha: .94) composite scores were computed by averaging the positive and negative emotional adjectives in the scale respectively. The multivariate main effect of cultural group was not significant, $F(2, 65) = .32$, $p = .73$.

Table 3 – Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for PANAS-X

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
PANAS-X						
<i>Positive Affect</i>	4.76	1.04	27	4.64	.90	41
<i>Negative Affect</i>	3.72	.94	27	3.60	.97	41

For the *Big 5 Personality Test*, first a composite total score for each of its subscales (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Openness) was created. (Cronbach alpha: Extraversion - .88, Agreeableness - .84, Conscientiousness - .78, Emotional Stability - .87, Openness - .79). Cultural group had a multivariate significant effect on personality, $F(5, 62) = 2.41, p = .046$. In univariate terms, cultural group only influenced openness to experience, $F(1, 66) = 11.23, p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.82$. European Americans scored higher on openness than Asian Americans did (see Table 4). Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for personality traits separately for each cultural group.

Table 4 – Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for Personality

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Big 5 Personality Test</i>						
<i>Extraversion</i>	2.86	.76	27	2.94	.78	41
<i>Agreeableness</i>	3.90	.55	27	3.96	.63	41
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	3.41	.62	27	3.40	.66	41
<i>Emotional Stability</i>	3.04	.79	27	3.02	.81	41
<i>Openness</i>	3.58	.54	27	4.01	.50	41

For the *FAD-Plus Scale*, a composite total score for each of its subscales (i.e., free-will, scientific determinism, fatalistic determinism and randomness) was created. Each subscale consisted of 4-8 items (Cronbach alpha: Free Will - .66, Scientific Determinism - .47, Fatalistic Determinism-.72, and Random - .71). Given that the alpha for scientific determinism was low, it was not included in further analysis. Next, an analysis of variance was carried out with

participants' cultural group (Asian American vs. European American) as the independent factor and the three subscales and the dependent variables. The multivariate main effect of cultural group was significant, $F(3, 66) = 5.75, p = .001$. In univariate terms cultural group had a significant effect on free-will, $F(1, 68) = 4.23, p = .04$, Cohen's $d = 0.51$, and fatalistic determinism, $F(1, 68) = 15.78, p = .00$, Cohen's $d = 1.01$, while it did not have an effect on randomness ($F(1, 68) = 1.76, p = .189$). The means for free-will and fatalistic determinism were higher in Asian American participants while randomness means very similar in both cultural groups (see Table.5). These findings are contradictory given that fatalistic determinism meant believing in the inevitable power of external forces and individual's inability to change them whereas free-will implied that the individuals believed in their ability to change their circumstances (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for Free-will vs. Determinism

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>FAD- Plus</i>						
<i>Free Will</i>	3.36	.60	26	3.06	.57	44
<i>Scientific Determinism</i>	2.78	.55	26	2.74	.47	44
<i>Fatalistic Determinism</i>	2.48	.54	26	1.87	.66	44
<i>Randomness</i>	3.32	.60	26	3.15	.47	44

Relationship between fear of happiness and other variables. In order to examine culture-specific associations between fear of happiness and other variables, correlations were computed between fear of happiness and the other measures separately for each cultural group.

For Asian Americans, fear of happiness was correlated significantly and negatively with emotional stability ($r = -.40, p = .04$), positive affect ($r = -.47, p = .02$), and life satisfaction ($r = -.57, p = .002$). As expected, higher levels of emotional stability, positive affect, and life satisfaction were associated with lower levels of fear of happiness among Asian Americans. Further, and as expected, negative affect had a positive correlation with fear of happiness ($r = .40, p = .04$). The more Asian American participants experienced negative emotion in the last week, the higher their levels of fear of happiness.

For European Americans, fear of happiness was correlated significantly and negatively with horizontal collectivism ($r = -.33, p = .04$), positive affect ($r = -.35, p = .03$), and subjective happiness ($r = -.33, p = .03$). Thus, and as was the case for Asian Americans, the more European Americans experienced positive affect in the last week and the greater their reported level of happiness, the less their fear of happiness was. Interestingly, higher levels of horizontal collectivism were associated with lower levels of fear of happiness. Thus, the more participants valued cooperation and in-groups, the less strong their fear of happiness was. Further, the more European Americans experienced negative affect in the last week, the higher their fear of happiness was ($r = .37, p = .02$).

No other correlations were statistically significant. However, given the small sample size of Study 1, these correlations needed to be examined with a larger sample of each cultural group, which was obtained for Study II.

Discussion

The main objective of Study I was to compare levels of fear of happiness in two cultural groups, (i.e., Asian Americans and European Americans). These cultural groups have not been previously studied in fear of happiness literature.

Our goal was to understand the degree to which Asian American and European American cultures experienced fear of happiness. We also looked for correlations between fear of happiness and other measures: life satisfaction and happiness levels, personality, affect, and beliefs related to free-will and determinism. Below is a summary of our findings based on the hypotheses:

Asian Americans should show higher levels of fear of happiness compared to European Americans. The results obtained from Study I were consistent with the key hypothesis: Culture had a significant effect on fear of happiness and Asian Americans displayed higher levels of negative beliefs about happiness compared to European Americans.

Asian Americans should show lower levels of subjective well-being and subjective happiness compared to European Americans. Both groups displayed moderate to high levels of

life satisfaction and subjective happiness and thus culture did not have a significant effect on subjective well-being.

Cultural Orientation of Asian Americans and European Americans. Unlike what we have expected, our results showed that cultural group had a marginally significant effect on cultural orientation. In fact, culture was found to have a significant effect on neither individualism/ collectivism nor their vertical and horizontal dimensions. While Asian American participants did report slightly higher levels of vertical collectivism and European American participants reported higher levels of horizontal individualism, the cultural differences were not statistically significant. Both participants displayed similar levels of both cultural orientations. We have hypothesized that ***collectivism should correlate positively with fear of happiness and individualism should correlate negatively with fear of happiness.*** Among European American participants, fear of happiness was correlated significantly and negatively with horizontal collectivism . Interestingly, higher levels of horizontal collectivism were associated with lower levels of fear of happiness. Thus, the more participants valued cooperation and in-groups, the less strong their fear of happiness was.

Fear of happiness should have a negative correlation with subjective well-being and subjective happiness. In Asian Americans, fear of happiness was found to correlate negatively with subjective well-being and in European Americans, it was found to correlate negatively with subjective happiness.

Determinism should correlate positively with fear of happiness. We confirmed our hypothesis that cultural groups with higher levels of fear of happiness would also have more deterministic views on life. Asian Americans, who scored higher on fear of happiness, demonstrated high fatalistic determinism, meaning that they believed in the inevitable power of the external circumstances on their lives. However, they also scored high on free-will which was a contradictory result. Further studies need to be conducted to explore this phenomenon.

Extraversion and emotional stability should correlate negatively with fear of happiness. Among Asian Americans, fear of happiness was found only to negatively correlate with emotional stability. This correlational relationship was not observed among European Americans. We found that at a cultural level, openness to experience was the only personality trait for which differences were found. European Americans scored higher on openness, meaning that they were more intellectually adventurous and curious, and more attentive to their emotions and thoughts.

Recent positive emotional experiences measured with PANAS-X (i.e., joviality, positive affect etc.) should correlate negatively with fear of happiness and negative emotional experiences should correlate positively. The positive and negative affect means for both cultural groups were similar and culture was not found to have a significant effect on either affect. But as anticipated, among both cultural groups, fear of happiness was significantly and negatively correlated with positive affect and positively correlated with negative affect. As expected, whether the participants had positive or negative emotional experiences in the recent past was associated with their perception of happiness.

Overall, Study I results showed that Asian Americans experienced higher levels of fear of happiness than European Americans and that their fear of happiness was negatively correlated with their levels of emotional stability, positive affect, and life satisfaction. However, cultural orientation was not found to be associated with fear of happiness or well-being because both cultural groups showed moderate to higher levels of subjective well-being and happiness. It is important to note that we have chosen Asian American and European American cultures because past literature suggested that they would exhibit different cultural orientations. However, in Study I, culture did not have a significant effect on individualism and collectivism levels: The participants endorsed both individualism and collectivism. Thus, it was difficult to measure the effect of culture on fear of happiness. This result could be due to the small sample size, a limitation addressed in Study II.

Study II

Participants

Study II was carried out among 118 adults (74 female and 44 male) who self-identified as Asian American ($M_{\text{age}} = 31.62$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.35$) and 147 (69 female and 78 male) who self-identified as European American ($M_{\text{age}} = 36.6$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.01$) with a grand total of 265 participants. In total, while 122 of these participants identified as male, 143 identified as female.

Measures

The measures were identical to the Study I where the participants completed a preliminary questionnaire using Qualtrics to report their demographic information, followed by a series of scales designed to measure their fear of happiness, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, cultural orientation, inclination towards free-will vs. determinism, and personality traits. As an additional measure, we incorporated the *Perceived Social Image Scale* to Study II as perceived social image has been shown to relate differently to subjective well-being for different cultural groups (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada, 2013).

Procedure

Identical protocols were used for both cultural groups during the data collection process. Both European American and Asian American participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk (MTurk) which is a platform based on “crowdsourcing” where researchers can have access to

individuals around to work and have them participate in their survey studies. The participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of preliminary questions as well as the scales discussed above. Participants received \$1 for their participation, in line with Mturk's guidelines for participant payment.

Prior to taking the survey, participants provide informed consent. Participants were debriefed after completion of the study.

Results

A series of analyses of variance were computed with cultural group (Asian American vs. European American) and gender (female vs. male) as the independent factors. Given the different age averages for the two cultural groups, age was included as a covariate in all analyses. Age did not have a significant effect on any of the measures.

Do Asian Americans and European Americans differ in their fear of happiness? A composite total score for fear of happiness was created by averaging the five items of the *Fear of Happiness Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .91). Cultural group did not have a significant effect on fear of happiness $F(1, 260) = 1.73, p = .19$. Neither gender, $F(1, 260) = 2.20, p = .14$, nor the interaction term, $F(1, 260) = .03, p = .87$, had a significant effect on fear of happiness. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations separately by cultural group.

Do Asian Americans and European Americans differ in their subjective well-being? Subjective well-being was assessed with the *SWLS* (life satisfaction) and the *Subjective*

Happiness Scale. First, a composite total score for life satisfaction was created by averaging the five items of the *SWLS* (Cronbach alpha: .94.) Cultural group, $F(1, 259) = .98, p = .32$, gender, $F(1, 259) = 1.90, p = .17$, or the interaction between cultural group and gender, $F(1, 259) = .19, p = .67$, did not have a significant effect on life satisfaction. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations for life satisfaction separately for each cultural group. Both Asian Americans and European Americans reported moderate to high levels of life satisfaction (see Table 6).

Further, a composite total score for subjective happiness was created with the four items of the *Subjective Happiness Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .90). Cultural group, $F(1, 260) = 1.93, p = .17$, gender, $F(1, 260) = .03, p = .87$, or the interaction term, $F(1, 260) = .11, p = .74$, did not have a significant effect on subjective happiness. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations for subjective happiness separately for each cultural group. Both Asian Americans and European Americans reported moderate to high levels of subjective happiness (see Table 6).

Table 6 – Study 2 Means and Standard Deviations for Fear of Happiness, Subjective Well Being, Subjective Happiness, and Perceived Social Image

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Fear of Happiness Scale</i>	3.09	1.60	118	2.82	1.39	147
<i>Life Satisfaction Scale</i>	4.37	1.67	118	4.13	1.63	147
<i>Subjective Happiness Scale</i>	4.45	1.58	118	4.24	1.49	147
<i>Perceived Social Image Scale</i>	5.20	1.28	118	4.73	1.10	147

Cultural differences in perceived social image. A composite total score for perceived social image was created by averaging the 6 items of the *Perceived Social Image Scale* (Cronbach alpha: .90). Cultural group had a significant effect on perceived social image, $F(1, 260) = 9.48, p = .002$, Cohen's $d = 0.39$. Asian Americans valued the protection of positive social image more than their European American counterparts did (see Table 6). Neither gender, $F(1, 260) = .17, p = .68$, nor the interaction term, $F(1, 260) = .49, p = .49$ had a significant effect on social image.

Are there cultural differences in cultural orientation? For the *Cultural Orientation Scale*, first a composite total score for each of its subscales (i.e., horizontal individualism, horizontal collectivism, vertical individualism, and vertical collectivism) was created. Each subscale consisted of four items (Cronbach alpha: Horizontal Individualism - .77, Horizontal Collectivism - .82, Vertical Individualism - .70, and Vertical Collectivism - .79). The multivariate main effect of gender was marginally significant, $F(4, 258) = 2.07, p = .09$. In univariate terms, gender only had a marginally significant effect on horizontal individualism, $F(1, 260) = 3.43, p = .07$, Cohen's $d = 0.21$. Female participants ($M = 5.53, SD = .99$) scored higher on horizontal individualism than male participants did ($M = 5.32, SD = 1.02$).

Further, the multivariate main effect of cultural group was significant, $F(4, 257) = 4.02, p = .003$. In univariate terms, cultural group had a significant effect on vertical individualism, $F(1, 260) = 9.54, p = .002$, Cohen's $d = 0.37$, vertical collectivism, $F(1, 260) = 7.55, p = .006$, Cohen's $d = 0.34$ and a marginally significant effect on horizontal collectivism, $F(1, 260) = 2.97, p = .09$, Cohen's $d = 0.26$. Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations for vertical

and horizontal individualism and collectivism separately by cultural group. Asian Americans scored higher on horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism than European Americans did (see Table 7). Thus, Asian Americans valued cooperation and cohesiveness within in-groups more than European Americans did. Interestingly however, Asian Americans also scored higher on vertical individualism, which means that they valued achievement more than European Americans did (see Table 7).

The interaction between cultural group and gender was not significant, $F(4, 257) = .62, p = .65$.

Table 7 – Study 2 Means and Standard Deviations for the Cultural Orientation

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Cultural Orientation Scale</i>						
<i>Horizontal Individualism</i>	5.38	.97	118	5.48	1.04	147
<i>Horizontal Collectivism</i>	5.05	1.08	118	4.75	1.18	147
<i>Vertical Individualism</i>	4.30	1.18	118	3.87	1.14	147
<i>Vertical Collectivism</i>	5.11	1.08	118	4.71	1.28	147

Inclinations toward determinism vs. free will. For *FAD-Plus*, a composite total score for each of its subscales (i.e., free-will, scientific determinism, fatalistic determinism and randomness) was created. Each subscale consisted of 4-8 items (Cronbach alpha: Free Will: .85, Scientific Determinism: .69, Fatalistic Determinism: .86, and Random: .78). The multivariate

main effect of gender, $F(4, 247) = 1.73, p = .15$, or the interaction between gender and cultural group, $F(4, 257) = 1.18, p = .32$, were not significant.

However, the multivariate main effect of cultural group was significant, $F(4, 257) = 3.12, p = .016$. In univariate terms, cultural group only influenced fatalistic determinism $F(1, 260) = 11.58, p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.47$. Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations for each subscale of the FAD-PLUS scale separately for each cultural group. Asian Americans scored higher than European Americans did on fatalistic determinism. This means that Asian Americans believed in the fact that destiny or individual's life circumstances could not be changed.

Table 8 – Study 2 Means and Standard deviations for Free-will vs. Determinism

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>FAD-Plus</i>						
<i>Free Will</i>	3.6	.70	118	3.68	.76	147
<i>Scientific Determinism</i>	3.13	.62	118	3.01	.57	147
<i>Fatalistic Determinism</i>	2.83	.96	118	2.40	.86	147
<i>Randomness</i>	3.40	0.67	118	3.31	0.69	147

Affect. For PANAS-X, first a composite total score for its subscales (Negative Affect, Positive Affect, Hostility, Fear, Guilt, Sadness, Joviality, Self-Assurance, Attentiveness, Shyness, Fatigue, Serenity, and Surprise) was created given the larger sample size of Study II compared to Study I (Cronbach alpha: Negative Affect - .92, Positive Affect - .91, Hostility - .90, Fear - .9, Guilt - .93, Sadness - .91, Joviality - .94, Self-Assurance - .87, Attentiveness -

0.83, Shyness - .85, Fatigue - .91, Serenity - .85, and Surprise - .82). Gender, $F(13, 248) = 1.30$, $p = .21$, or the interaction term, $F(13, 248) = .74$, $p = .73$, did not have a significant effect on participants' affect. Consistent with the findings of Study I—culture did not have an effect on the emotional experiences as well, $F(13, 248) = 1.39$, $p = .17$. Both cultural groups reported similar levels of negative affect (i.e., sadness, fear, guilt etc.) and positive affect (i.e., serenity, surprise etc.) Table 9 presents the means and standard deviations for each subscale of the PANAS-X.

Table 9 – Study 2 Means and Standard Deviations for Affect

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
PANAS-X						
<i>Negative Affect</i>	2.37	1.30	118	2.49	1.23	147
<i>Positive Affect</i>	4.38	1.34	118	4.19	1.14	147
<i>Hostility</i>	2.30	1.27	118	2.37	1.28	147
<i>Fear</i>	2.26	1.28	118	2.32	1.31	147
<i>Guilt</i>	2.27	1.42	118	2.44	1.47	147
<i>Sadness</i>	2.7	1.55	118	2.97	1.57	147
<i>Joviality</i>	4.24	1.53	118	3.84	1.36	147
<i>Self-Assurance</i>	3.65	1.51	118	3.41	1.24	147
<i>Attentiveness</i>	4.84	1.29	118	4.9	1.18	147
<i>Shyness</i>	2.47	1.33	118	2.35	1.34	147
<i>Fatigue</i>	3.24	1.63	118	3.72	1.66	147
<i>Serenity</i>	4.63	1.43	118	4.35	1.36	147
<i>Surprise</i>	3.06	1.56	118	2.68	1.39	147

Personality. For the *Big 5 Personality Test*, first a composite total score for its subscales (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Openness) was created. (Cronbach alpha: Extraversion - .91, Agreeableness - .90, Conscientiousness – .84,

Emotional Stability - .92, Openness - .81). Cultural group had a multivariate significant effect on personality, $F(5, 256) = 3.65, p = .003$. In univariate terms, cultural group influenced conscientiousness, $F(1, 260) = 5.14, p = .024$, Cohen's $d = 0.21$, and openness to experience, $F(1, 260) = 7.27, p = .007$, Cohen's $d = 0.34$. Cultural group also had a marginally significant effect on emotional stability, $F(1, 260) = 3.40, p = .07$, Cohen's $d = 0.16$. Table 10 presents the means and standard deviations for personality traits separately for each cultural group. Asian Americans scored higher on conscientiousness and emotional stability than European Americans, whereas European Americans scored higher than Asian Americans did on openness to experience.

Furthermore, the multivariate main effect of gender was also significant, $F(5, 256) = 2.94, p = .013$. In univariate terms, gender had a significant main effect on agreeableness, $F(1, 260) = 4.47, p = .035$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$ and a marginally significant effect on extraversion, $F(1, 260) = 2.98, p = .085$, Cohen's $d = 0.20$. Whereas female participants ($M = 3.78, SD = .76$) scored higher than male participants ($M = 3.59, SD = .75$) did on agreeableness, male participants ($M = 2.94, SD = .86$) scored higher than female participant ($M = 2.76, SD = .92$) did on extraversion.

Table 10 – Study 2 Means and Standard Deviations for Personality

	<u>Asian Americans</u>			<u>European Americans</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Big 5 Personality Test						
<i>Extraversion</i>	2.89	.84	118	2.8	.93	147
<i>Agreeableness</i>	3.7	.75	118	3.67	.77	147
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	3.71	.66	118	3.56	.73	147

<i>Emotional Stability</i>	3.32	.98	118	3.17	.85	147
<i>Openness</i>	3.52	.65	118	3.74	.64	147

Relationship between fear of happiness and other variables. First, correlations were computed between fear of happiness and other variables separately for each group.

For Asian Americans, fear of happiness was negatively and significantly correlated with horizontal collectivism ($r = -.19, p = .04$), serenity ($r = -.23, p = .01$), subjective happiness ($r = -.28, p = .002$), agreeableness ($r = -.27, p = .003$), conscientiousness ($r = -.26, p = .004$), and emotional stability ($r = -.42, p < .001$). Thus, the more Asian American participants valued cooperation and in-groups, the more they had experienced serenity in the past week, the higher their score on subjective happiness, and the higher their scores on the personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, the lower their fear of happiness was.

Furthermore, fear of happiness among Asian Americans was positively and significantly correlated with vertical individualism ($r = .34, p < .001$), scientific determinism ($r = .40, p < .001$), fatalistic determinism ($r = .42, p < .001$), negative affect ($r = .37, p < .001$), fear ($r = .36, p < .001$), hostility ($r = .33, p < .001$), guilt ($r = .36, p < .001$), sadness ($r = .35, p < .001$), and fatigue ($r = .25, p = .006$). Thus, the more Asian American participants valued achievement, the greater their fear of happiness. In addition, the more Asian American participants believed in scientific determinism and fatalistic determinism, the greater their fear of happiness was. Finally,

fear of happiness was positively associated with a host of negative affective experiences, including guilt, sadness, and fear.

For European Americans, fear of happiness was negatively and significantly correlated with horizontal collectivism ($r = -.26, p = .002$), positive affect ($r = -.19, p = .02$), joviality ($r = -.21, p = .01$), attentiveness ($r = -.19, p = .02$), life satisfaction ($r = -.20, p = .24$), and subjective happiness ($r = -.34, p = .04$). Thus, the more European American participants valued cooperation and in-groups, the more they experienced positive affect, attentiveness and joviality in the past week, and the higher they scored on subjective happiness, the lower their fear of happiness was. Furthermore, fear of happiness was negatively and significantly associated with all measured personality traits for European Americans: extraversion ($r = -.18, p = .03$), agreeableness ($r = -.36, p < .001$), conscientiousness ($r = -.18, p = .03$), emotional stability ($r = -.40, p < .001$), and openness to experience ($r = -.25, p = .003$), meaning that the more European American participants were extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable and conscientious, the lower their fear of happiness was.

Further, fear of happiness correlated positively and significantly among European Americans with vertical individualism ($r = .36, p < .001$), scientific determinism ($r = .23, p = .004$), fatalistic determinism ($r = .41, p < .001$), randomness ($r = .29, p < .001$), negative affect ($r = .27, p = .001$), fear ($r = .29, p < .001$), hostility ($r = .35, p < .001$), guilt ($r = .26, p = .002$), sadness ($r = .23, p = .006$), and shyness ($r = .28, p = .001$). These correlations indicated that the more European Americans valued autonomy and individuality, the more they believed in the determinism of fate and their inability to change their circumstances, and the more they

experienced negative effect, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness and shyness in the past week, the higher their fear of happiness was.

Discussion

The main objective in Study II was to measure the degree to which Asian Americans and European Americans experienced fear of happiness with a larger set of participants than examined in Study I. The larger sample size of participants provided higher statistical power to observe differences among the two cultural groups. Similar to Study I, we looked for correlations between fear of happiness and other measures. We surveyed 275 participants — 118 Asian American and 147 European American— on their fear of happiness, personality traits, emotional experiences, and beliefs on free-will and determinism. *Perceived Social Image Scale* was added to the survey in Study II.

Asian Americans should score higher on fear of happiness compared to European Americans. Study II did not confirm our main hypothesis that Asian Americans would report higher levels of fear of happiness. Asian Americans scored higher on the fear of happiness scale but the difference between the two cultures was not statistically significant.

Asian Americans should show lower levels of subjective well-being and subjective happiness compared to European Americans. Culture was not found to have an effect on subjective well-being and subjective happiness, as was the case in Study I. Both cultural groups demonstrated moderate to high levels of well-being. Surprisingly, the means for Asian Americans were higher than European Americans: the existing literature on subjective well-being suggests that we should have observed otherwise. Asian Americans in this study endorsed

both individualism and collectivism—explained further below— meaning that their individualism could have diminished negative beliefs about happiness, and increased their reported levels of subjective well-being.

Collectivism should correlate positively with fear of happiness and individualism should correlate negatively with fear of happiness. Our results showed that cultural group had a significant effect on cultural orientation. In Study II, Asian Americans scored higher both on horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism than European Americans did. Thus, Asian Americans valued cooperation and cohesiveness within in-groups more than European Americans did. Interestingly, and similar to the results of Study I, Asian Americans also scored higher on vertical individualism, which means that they valued achievement more so than European Americans. This demonstrated the biculturalism of our Asian American participants. We have hypothesized that collectivism would have a positive correlation with fear of happiness and individualism would have a negative correlation. Interestingly however, for both cultural groups, horizontal collectivism had a *negative* correlation with fear of happiness and vertical individualism had a *positive* correlation with fear of happiness. The more Asian Americans and European Americans valued group harmony, the less they feared happiness. Further, the more the participants valued achievement, the stronger their fear of happiness. This was a crucial finding in regard to exploring the effect of culture on fear of happiness. We looked beyond individualism and collectivism into their two distinct dimensions (i.e., horizontal vs. vertical) and demonstrated that the results were the opposite of what the literature suggested we would find (i.e., vertical dimension of individualism correlated positively with fear of happiness whereas horizontal dimension of collectivism correlated negatively). Thus, it is pivotal to further explore

the effect of different aspects of individualism and collectivism (i.e., horizontal vs. vertical) to unpack their relationship with fear of happiness.

Fear of happiness should have a negative correlation with subjective well-being and subjective happiness. For Asian Americans, we found that the fear of happiness had a negative correlation with subjective happiness and for European Americans, fear of happiness had a negative correlation with both life satisfaction and subjective happiness.

Determinism should correlate positively with fear of happiness. Consistent with Study I, Asian Americans scored higher than European Americans on fatalistic determinism, an indication that they believe in the power of external circumstances on their lives and that they could not change their circumstances. This time, cultural group did not have an effect on any other dimensions of the *FAD-Plus Scale* (i.e., randomness, free-will). In both cultural groups, scientific determinism—the belief that biological makeup determines one’s abilities and talents—and fatalistic determinism—the belief that destiny cannot be changed—had a positive correlation with fear of happiness. The more individuals believed in determinism, the more they experienced fear of happiness. For European American participants, randomness—the belief that everything happens by chance and unplanned—also had a positive correlation with fear of happiness. This meant that the more individuals believed in chance and ambiguity, the more they experienced fear of happiness.

Extraversion and emotional stability should correlate negatively with fear of happiness. Culture was found to have a significant effect on personality. While Asian Americans scored

higher on conscientiousness and emotional stability than European Americans, European Americans scored higher on openness to experience. Among Asian Americans, personality had significant correlations with fear of happiness: Fear of happiness had a negative correlation with agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability.

Recent positive emotional experiences measured with PANAS-X (i.e., joviality, positive affect etc.) should correlate negatively with fear of happiness and negative emotional experiences should correlate positively with fear of happiness. Cultural group did not have a significant effect on participants' affect or recent emotional experiences. As expected, in both cultural groups, fear, hostility, guilt and sadness were found to have a positive correlation with fear of happiness, meaning that the more participants experienced these emotions, the greater their fear of happiness was. While negative affect and fatigue also had a positive correlation with fear of happiness among the Asian American participants, among European Americans, shyness had a positive correlation with fear of happiness.

Asian Americans should score higher on the Perceived Social Image scale than European Americans. The means for Asian Americans were greater and the effect of culture was found to be statistically significant, meaning that Asian Americans valued the protection of a positive image more so than European Americans did. There was no correlation between the fear of happiness and perceived social image.

Limitation and Future Directions

The present studies were based on results collected through a series of questionnaires. We focused on the measurement of fear of happiness through the study of self-reported answers to various prompts, and then analyzed any existing correlations between fear of happiness and the other measured constructs (i.e., affect, personality, social image etc.).

The results from both Study I and II revealed important findings in regard to the study of well-being and made significant contributions to Joshanloo's work (2014) in the following ways: Joshanloo found that fear of happiness had a negative correlation with subjective well-being and a positive correlation with dynamic externality. He also demonstrated that more collectivistic cultures in his study (Singapore, Malaysia, etc.) experienced higher levels of fear of happiness compared to New Zealand which was the only representative from a more individualistic culture. Consistent with his theory, we found a negative correlation between fear of happiness and well-being. More specifically, in both studies, fear of happiness had a negative correlation with either life satisfaction or subjective happiness, or both. However, from a cultural orientation perspective, in Study I, we found that for European Americans, horizontal collectivism was negatively correlated with fear of happiness. In Study II, we saw that horizontal collectivism was again negatively correlated with fear of happiness, but this time, in both cultural groups. In Study II, among Asian Americans, vertical individualism was found to correlate positively with fear of happiness as well. This was a crucial finding: In his work, Joshanloo has not explored both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Our results indicated that these dimensions influence the relationship between fear of happiness and the larger cultural

orientations of individualism and collectivism. Future research should further examine the processes that explain the negative association between fear of happiness and horizontal collectivism and the positive association between fear of happiness and vertical individualism. Furthermore, we found that fatalistic determinism had a positive correlation with fear of happiness. This was in line with Joshanloo's finding but it was again very important given that Joshanloo examined this construct under the general umbrella of dynamic externality whereas we looked at the four dimensions of determinism and found that only one—fatalistic determinism—had a direct negative correlation with fear of happiness.

Our results also revealed crucial correlations which were not covered in Joshanloo's work. Studies I and II looked at personality and both found that fear of happiness had a negative correlation with emotional stability in Asian Americans. In Study II, we also observed a negative correlation between agreeableness, conscientiousness and fear of happiness in both cultural groups. Affect was another dimension we explored, and found that in Study II, in both cultural groups, fear, hostility, guilt and sadness had positive correlations with fear of happiness.

Future directions. Studies I and II exposed a key relationship which we did not initially anticipate to see—the effect of biculturalism in the study of fear of happiness. Biculturalism had an influence on cognitive and emotional processes associated with happiness and well-being. Moving forward, it is crucial to attend to biculturalism to unravel the unique ways in which biculturals experience happiness and related emotional experiences.

Another opportunity to further the study of fear of happiness would be to analyze this construct through a narrative study. Fear of happiness is rooted in engrained beliefs that happiness leads to negative consequences. A future narrative study would present researchers an opportunity to dig deeper into the emotional and cognitive processes associated with fear of happiness, and thus provide additional insight into the complexities associated with this construct.

Conclusion

Ancient Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, said the “happiness of our lives depends on the quality of our thoughts” (121 AD) – thoughts that are the fruits of our upbringing, belief system and primarily our culture. Culture thus has played and continue to play a crucial role in the study of well-being today as it opens a window into the way people think and consequently *feel*.

The present studies are the first to examine fear of happiness among Asian Americans and European Americans. These studies provide a better understanding of how different cultures *feel* about happiness. Until very recently, happiness was considered to be a universal goal that everyone—regardless of their culture or origin—strived for. Today, our efforts combined with Joshanloo’s research demonstrate that fear of happiness influences people’s desires to attain happiness and thus has a negative effect on life satisfaction and happiness. Future research should pay special attention to the effect of cultural orientations’ vertical and horizontal dimensions on fear of happiness. Lastly, first and second generation Asian American and European American cultural groups should be compared in order to accurately depict the complexities in cultural belief and value systems that lead to changes in the perception of happiness.

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Appendix A

Subjective Well-Being Scale

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

1=Strongly Disagree

7= Strongly Agree

Appendix B

Big 5 Personality Inventory

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 2 3 4 5

Rating	I....	Rating	I....
	1. Am the life of the party.		26. Have little to say.
	2. Feel little concern for others.		27. Have a soft heart.
	3. Am always prepared.		28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
	4. Get stressed out easily.		29. Get upset easily.
	5. Have a rich vocabulary.		30. Do not have a good imagination.
	6. Don't talk a lot.		31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
	7. Am interested in people.		32. Am not really interested in others.
	8. Leave my belongings around.		33. Like order.
	9. Am relaxed most of the time.		34. Change my mood a lot.
	10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.		35. Am quick to understand things.
	11. Feel comfortable around people.		36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.
	12. Insult people.		37. Take time out for others.
	13. Pay attention to details.		38. Shirk my duties.
	14. Worry about things.		39. Have frequent mood swings.
	15. Have a vivid imagination.		40. Use difficult words.
	16. Keep in the background.		41. Don't mind being the center of attention.
	17. Sympathize with others' feelings.		42. Feel others' emotions.
	18. Make a mess of things.		43. Follow a schedule.
	19. Seldom feel blue.		44. Get irritated easily.
	20. Am not interested in abstract ideas.		45. Spend time reflecting on things.
	21. Start conversations.		46. Am quiet around strangers.
	22. Am not interested in other people's problems.		47. Make people feel at ease.
	23. Get chores done right away.		48. Am exacting in my work.
	24. Am easily disturbed.		49. Often feel blue.
	25. Have excellent ideas.		50. Am full of ideas.

1= Disagree

5= Agree

Appendix C

Cultural Orientation Scale

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Horizontal individualism items:

1. I'd rather depend on myself than others.
2. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
3. I often do "my own thing."
4. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Vertical individualism items:

1. It is important that I do my job better than others.
2. Winning is everything.
3. Competition is the law of nature.
4. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

Horizontal collectivism items:

1. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
2. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
3. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
4. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Vertical collectivism items:

1. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
2. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.
3. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.
4. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

1= *Strongly Disagree*

9= *Strongly Agree*

Appendix D

Fear of Happiness Scale

For each of the following, please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the scale from 1 to 7 as shown below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. I prefer not to be too joyful, because usually joy is followed by sadness.
2. I believe the more cheerful and happy I am, the more I should expect bad things to occur in my life.
3. Disasters often follow good fortune.
4. Having lots of joy and fun causes bad things to happen.
5. Excessive joy has some bad consequences.

1 = Strongly Disagree

7 = Strongly Agree

Appendix E

FAD-Plus: Freewill vs. Scientific Determinism

For each statement below, choose a number from 1 to 5 to indicate how much you agree or disagree:

1 2 3 4 5

1. I believe that the future has already been determined by fate.
2. People's biological makeup determines their talents and personality.
3. Chance events seem to be the major cause of human history.
4. People have complete control over the decisions they make.
5. No matter how hard you try, you can't change your destiny.
6. Psychologists and psychiatrists will eventually figure out all human behavior.
7. No one can predict what will happen in this world.
8. People must take full responsibility for any bad choices they make.
9. Fate already has a plan for everyone.
10. Your genes determine your future.
11. Life seems unpredictable - just like throwing dice or flipping a coin.
12. People can overcome any obstacles if they truly want to.
13. Whether people like it or not, mysterious forces seem to move their lives.
14. Science has shown how your past environment created your current intelligence and personality.
15. People are unpredictable.
16. Criminals are totally responsible for the bad things they do.
17. Whatever will be, will be – there's not much you can do about it.
18. As with other animals, human behavior always follows the laws of nature.
19. Luck plays a big role in people's lives.
20. People have complete free will.
21. Parents' character will determine the character of their children.
22. What happens to people is a matter of chance.
23. People are always at fault for their bad behavior.
24. Childhood environment will determine your success as an adult.
25. Life is hard to predict because it is almost totally random.
26. Strength of mind can always overcome the body's desires.
27. People's futures cannot be predicted.

1= Totally Disagree

5= Totally Agree

Appendix F

Importance of Social Image Scale

Please rate how important each of the following are for you:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. Your social image (i.e., how positively other people think of you).
2. The reputation of your family.
3. Respect (i.e., how much other people respect you)
4. Social image of your family (i.e., how positively other people think of your family).
5. Your reputation.
6. Respect towards your family (i.e., how much others respect your family).

1= Not at all important

7= Extremely Important

Appendix G

Subjective Happiness Scale

For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you:

1. In general, I consider myself:

1 (not a very happy person) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a very happy person)

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:

1 (less happy) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (more happy)

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a great deal)

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a great deal)

Appendix H

Panas – X Scale

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past week. Use the following scale to record your answers:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
___ cheerful	___ sad			___ active			___ angry at self	
___ disgusted	___ calm			___ guilty			___ enthusiastic	
___ attentive	___ afraid			___ joyful			___ downhearted	
___ bashful	___ tired			___ nervous			___ sheepish	
___ sluggish	___ amazed			___ lonely			___ distressed	
___ daring	___ shaky			___ sleepy			___ blameworthy	
___ surprised	___ happy			___ excited			___ determined	
___ strong	___ timid			___ hostile			___ frightened	
___ scornful	___ alone			___ proud			___ astonished	
___ relaxed	___ alert			___ jittery			___ interested	
___ irritable	___ upset			___ lively			___ loathing	
___ delighted	___ angry			___ ashamed			___ confident	
___ inspired	___ bold			___ at ease			___ energetic	
___ fearless	___ blue			___ scared			___ concentrating	
___ disgusted with self	___ shy			___ drowsy			___ dissatisfied with self	

1= *Not at all*

7= *Extremely*

Appendix I

A. Ice-Cream Attention Question

There are many ice cream flavors. We present you below with several ice cream flavors and we ask you a question about your favorite ice cream flavor. Please do not respond to this question, choose the option "strawberry" instead and then click the next button. Thank you very much:

Butter Pecan

Chocolate

Coffee

Caramel Cone

Pineapple Coconut

Rum Raisin

Strawberry

Vanilla

White Chocolate

Banana Split

Peanut Butter

B. Attention Questions

Please show that you are paying attention by choosing number (1-7) on the scale.

Appendix J

Preliminary Questionnaire

Welcome to the Attitudes towards Life Survey. Please answer the questions on the next page to see if you qualify to participate:

1. Age
2. What is your biological sex?
 - Female
 - Male
3. What is your religion?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Atheist/ Agnostic- Buddhist- Catholic- Christian- Evangelical Protestant- Protestant- Hindu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Jewish- Mormon- Muslim- Sikh- No particular religion- Other
---	--
4. What is your ethnic or cultural background (check all that apply)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Asian American- Arab American- African American- Latino/Latina	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Native American/ American Indian- European American- Other (Please specify)
---	---
5. Where were you born?
6. If you were not born in the US, how long have you lived here? If you were born in the US, please write N/A.
7. Where was your mother born?
8. Where was your father born?
9. What is your marital status?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Single- Married- Civil Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Living Together- Separated/ divorced- Other, please write:
--	--