**Empirical and Theoretical Developments on Eudaimonia and Hedonia**

**from the University of Ottawa Well-being Lab**

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**Definition Categories Identified in Eudaimonic-Hedonic the Literature**

* ORIENTATIONS: priorities, motives, values, goals
* BEHAVIORS: specific activities
* EXPERIENCES: emotions, feelings, appraisals
* FUNCTIONING: abilities, achievements, habits, character strengths

**Our Lab Focuses Primarily on Orientations**

* Eudaimonia & hedonia primarily defined as orientations
	+ Assessed using HEMA-RX (Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities – Revised and Expanded) (Huta & Ryan, 2010) (revision unpublished)
* But all four definition categories viewed as necessary for complete picture
* **Reasons for making orientations primary**:
	+ Why not behaviors?
		- Two people can do the same behavior for very different motives
	+ Why not experiences or functioning?
		- Experiences & functioning less under our direct control than orientations/behaviors
		- There is a much clearer distinction between hedonia & eudaimonia in orientations & behaviors, than in experiences & functioning
		- Seems fairer to characterize a person’s life in terms of their efforts, not successes
* Emphasize defining eudaimonia & hedonia in parallel terms, to permit direct empirical comparison
	+ At same time, acknowledge conceptually that eudaimonia focuses more on quality of process, hedonia focuses more on outcome

**Definition Contents Currently Used in Our Lab, With Facets and Sub-facets**

* **Eudaimonic orientation** is prioritizing:
	+ Authenticity
		- Know self, own values, truth
		- Act in congruence with self, own values, truth
	+ Meaning
		- Care about the bigger picture
		- Understand the bigger picture
		- Act in congruence with the bigger picture
		- Contribute to the bigger picture
	+ Excellence
		- Virtue, morality, ethics – good behavior
		- Quality work, performance – good work
	+ Growth
		- Self-realization – growth unique to the self
		- Learning – growth somewhat unique to the self
		- Maturity, wisdom, refinement – growth universal to all people
* **Hedonic orientation** is prioritizing:
	+ Pleasure / pleasant feelings
	+ Comfort / absence of unpleasant feelings

**Summaries of Empirical Findings With HEMA Scale**

* Experiences related to eudaimonic orientation: meaning, congruence, awareness; more cognitive
* Experiences related to hedonic orientation: pleasantness, more affective/visceral
* Some experiences related to both eudaimonic & hedonic orientations
* Experiences related to hedonic orientation: stronger at state level than trait level, i.e., immediate gratification
* Eudaimonic orientation related to heart rate variability: self-regulation/adaptability
* Eudaimonic orientation: concern beyond the self
* Hedonic orientation: concern beyond the self if easy
* Hedonic orientation: double-edged sword, focus on experience rather than activity can be problematic
* Eudaimonic orientation: broad concern beyond me, here, now, tangible
* Hedonic orientation: narrow concern with me, here, now; fatalistic
* Eudaimonic orientation: includes narrow concern, not just about self-sacrifice, i.e., eudaimonia = “hedonia plus”
* Eudaimonic orientation: shaped by experiences, cognitively constructed
* Hedonic orientation: probably more innate, based on temperament
* Eudaimonic processes: “Cold systems” of forebrain – especially advanced in humans
* Hedonic processes: “Hot systems” of mid/hindbrain – shared with other species

**Degree of Distinctness Between Hedonia & Eudaimonia With Many Scales Used in Well-being Research**

* EFA of Trait Orientations: Clearly 2 factors, correlation low, so very distinct as orientations
* EFA of Trait Behaviors: Somewhat clearly 2 factors, correlations low, so very distinct as behaviors
* EFA of Trait Experiences: Most studies had 2 factors & some 1 factor, correlation high, so only subtly distinct at trait level as experiences
* EFA of State Experiences: Studies showed 2 factors, correlation low, so very distinct at state level as experiences
* EFA of Trait Functioning: One factor, correlation high, only 1 study; not likely very different as functioning
* Elements of PWB that form distinct factor from SWB: Purpose, Growth, Autonomy