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Selflessness and Happiness in Everyday Life



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An Experience Sampling Method Based Study

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INTRODUCTION

Context

Happiness has been described from a large diversity of models. The classical focus is on satisfaction with life, that is, a cognitive appreciation of one's life. Harmony in life would differ from satisfaction with life by more emphasizing balance and flexibility. In this line, Dambrun and Ricard (2011) developed the Selflessness/Self-centeredness Happiness Model (SSHM). The SSHM is presented here on the right.

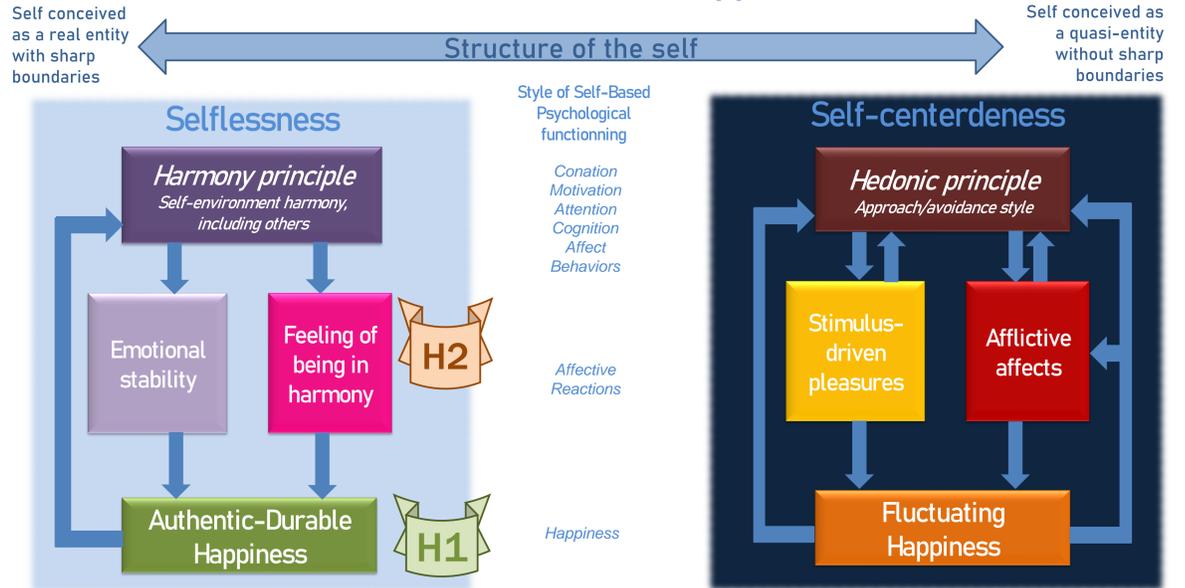
Purpose

Previous work confirmed the main SSHM hypotheses, *but only on the evaluated level*. The purpose of this work was to test the SSHM assumptions *on the experienced level* using experience sampling method. The focus here is on the selflessness part of the model.

H1 Experienced selflessness is significantly related to experienced happiness.

H2 Both experienced harmony and emotional stability mediate the relationship between experienced selflessness and happiness.

The Selflessness/Self-centeredness Happiness Model (SSHM)



The Selflessness/Self-centeredness Happiness Model (SSHM) postulates that the experience of a stable and independent self would lead to affliction and fluctuating happiness, whereas the experience of an interdependent and impermanent self would lead to authentic-durable happiness (Dambrun & Ricard, 2011).

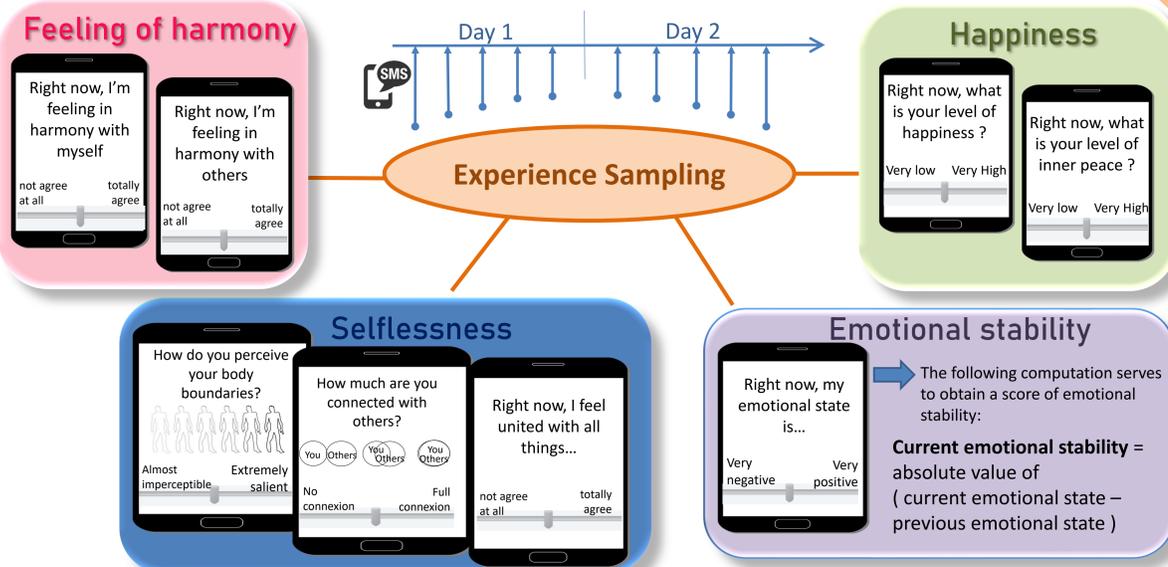
METHOD & PROCEDURE

64 Participants
for 506 Observations

- Response rate: 79.2%
- Women: 81%
- Aged from 18 to 62 year old (M=26, SD=9)
- Undergraduates and upper : 67%
- Middle social class : 78%

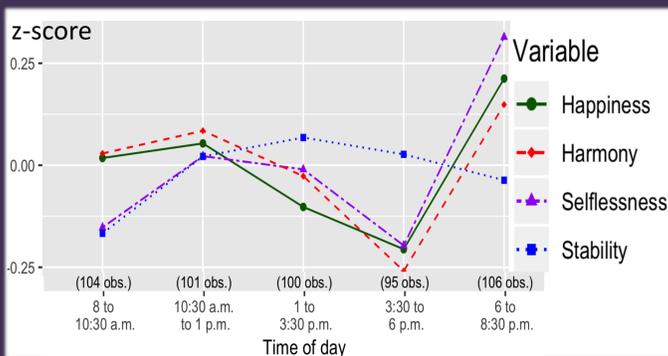
Statistical analyses

- We computed linear mixed models using the *lme4* package for R
- Mediation analysis was performed using the *mediation* package for R



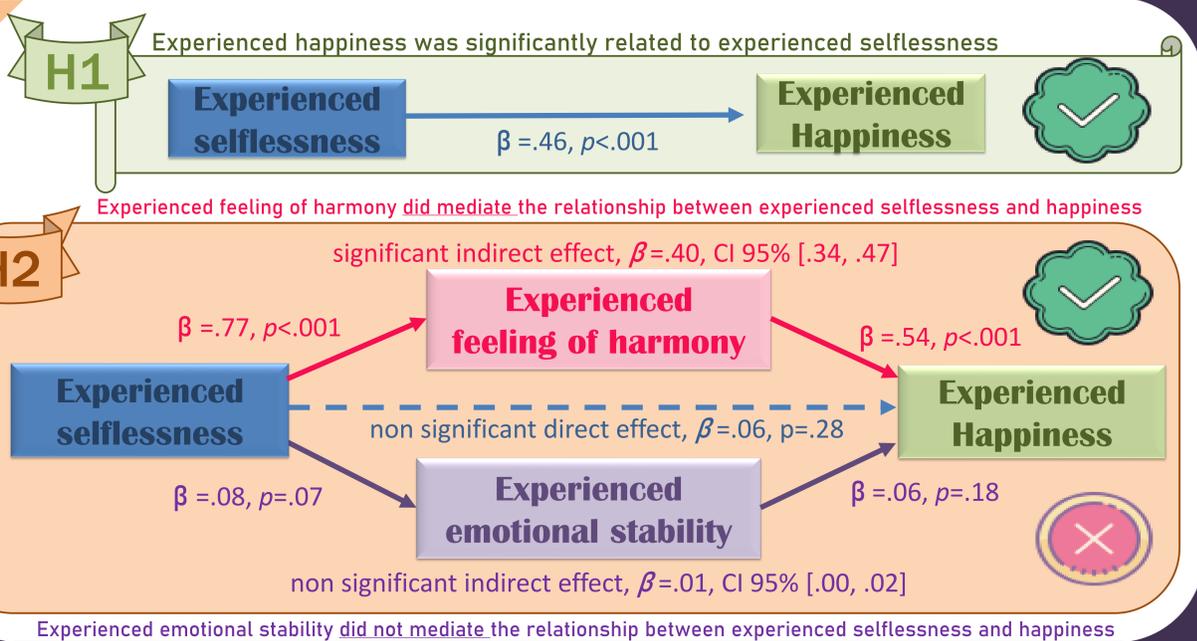
- 1) Text messages were randomly sent in each of five periods of 2h30 per day, starting from 8 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.
- 2) The messages contained a link to an online questionnaire with the measures described here.

RESULTS



Daily intra-individual variability

The figure shows the individuals mean scores for each of the five periods of the day. We can see that most of the variables behave in the same way, excepting for emotional stability.



Main findings

Our result fully supported H1 : experienced happiness was very strongly associated with experienced selflessness

Our results partially supported H2 : while experienced feeling of harmony did *fully* mediate the happiness/selflessness relationship, this was not the case for emotional stability

Limits & Perspectives

- Participants were mostly middle-class young educated women. Future studies should include more diversified samples to improve generalizability.
- This study focused on the selflessness part of the model. The Self-centeredness part remains to be tested at the experienced level.
- Measuring experienced emotional stability might be paradoxical in itself. In this context a measure of momentary equanimity might be more suitable.

DISCUSSION

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References

Dambrun, M., & Ricard, M. (2011). Self-centeredness and selflessness: A theory of self-based psychological functioning and its consequences for happiness. *Review of General Psychology*, 15, 138–157. doi:10.1037/a0023059