

**When do people possess high levels of well-being? A mixed methods approach  
using thematic analysis.**

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### **Abstract**

Nowadays, the idea of studying human qualities and resources has gained more interest in psychological research. Well-being is the term that incorporates the aspects beyond feeling and functioning well. However, less is known about the characteristics of people with a high well-being. Also, elements such as health or significant others that are associated with high well-being are not frequently researched in qualitative papers. This gap is addressed by extracting themes that are related to experiencing high well-being, with a focus on emotional and psychological well-being. Six participants were recruited to engage in a mixed method study, employing a questionnaire, the Mental Health Continuum Short Form, to measure the level of well-being. Additionally, an interview about those aspects of well-being was conducted in order to deepen the quantitative findings. Six themes, namely positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy and health were extracted from the interview data, thought to be important for high mental well-being. Three of them were also connected to the structure of the questionnaire: positive relations with others, self-acceptance and autonomy were recurring themes found in both methods. These themes were also frequently found in other papers, that adopted an in-depth exploration of important constructs positively affecting the level of well-being. Mostly, the significance of positive relations with others is stressed. Factors, such as health and environmental mastery were also commonly reported in other literature. Future research could strive for a long-term panel and applying the identified themes to interventions aiming at enhancing well-being.

*Keywords:* well-being, psychological well-being, emotional well-being, positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy, health, interview, survey

## Introduction

The last decades in psychology research have been subject to substantial changes, where positive psychology is bringing the promotion of well-being more into focus (Ramaprasad, 2007; Diener, 2009). Well-being is defined as an evaluation or declaration that individuals make about the quality of their lives (Keyes, 2007). Within positive psychology research, in which the qualities of humans are studied, it is acknowledged that people who do not display any signs of illness are not consequently healthy. Therefore, more and more research is directed towards enhancing well-being apart from curing illness (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016). This is important as concrete factors can give an indication of how to increase one's well-being. Displaying high levels of well-being has several positive implications for one's life, such as better health, longevity, higher productivity, better cooperation, higher cognitive flexibility, reduced risk-taking, prosocial behavior and social networks (De Neve, Diener, Tay, & Xuereb, 2013). For psychology, this knowledge can also be applied to direct interventions or exercises for enhancing well-being. However, there is a great difficulty about this study topic, namely that well-being is a construct that can vary and is very personal (Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2006). Over years, a great amount of research is already directed to find common determinants often impacting the extent to which well-being is experienced by individuals. For example, personality traits, such as extraversion and conscientiousness, socioeconomic factors, such as higher income and being married and sociodemographic factors, such as being male and being around 50 of age are frequently positively linked to well-being (Grant, Langan-Fox, & Anglim, 2009; Kaplan, Shema, & Leite, 2008; Rothert, VanDerwerken, & White, 2020). Following, although there may be no concrete universal definition, which grasps all elements that comprise well-being, several frameworks are established by significant researchers in the field.

One of these frameworks trying to integrate the essence of well-being is called the PERMA model, introduced by Seligman. It consists of five factors thought to be highly important for promoting well-being: positive emotions, engagement, positive relations, meaning and accomplishment. According to his theory, these five domains make up the construct of well-being, meaning that having high orientations towards and possessing all the domains forms a high level of well-being (Seligman, 2012). This 5-factor conceptualization of well-being is supported by other studies as well (Goodman, Disabator, Kashdan, & Kaufmann, 2017; Seligman, 2019).

However, other studies point to a three-dimensional structure of well-being such as Keyes' prominent model of psychological, social and emotional well-being. The factorial

structure of Keyes' model is thought to be valid, making it one of the most used models in research on well-being (Albuquerque, de Lima, Figueiredo, & Matos, 2012; Lamers et al., 2011). Keyes extracts three underlying dimensions that make up well-being. Eudaimonic well-being is separated into psychological and social well-being. Eudaimonia is defined as a state of fully functioning in which one is succeeding in the face of life's existential challenges (Ryff & Singer, 2008). However, the two-dimensional model of well-being, incorporating hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, received much attention and has been frequently supported in its structure (Fowers, Mollica, & Procacci, 2010).

As a first attempt to identify commonalities between the models' conceptualization of well-being, both integrate emotional well-being elements, such as positive emotions in the PERMA and the emotional well-being dimension of Keyes. According to Keyes (2007) emotional well-being is "the presence and absence of positive feelings about life operationalized as evaluations of happiness and satisfaction with life and the balance of positive to negative affect experiences over a time period. Thus, emotional well-being can be conceptualized as the balance of feelings (positive and negative) experienced in life and the perceived feelings (happiness and satisfaction)." Fredrickson and Losada (2005) support the notion that both, positive and negative emotions, are needed to experience high emotional well-being. Yet, most important is having more positive than negative emotions (Diener, 2009; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), commonly referred to as the emotion ratio. Thus, if individuals display a positive emotion ratio, they experience emotional thriving. Also, the intensity of corresponding emotions impacts the overall evaluation of happiness less than the frequency with which positive emotions in general are experienced (Diener, 2009).

As Keyes' model implements psychological well-being as one dimension, factors from Seligman's model, such as engagement, meaning and accomplishment, are overlapping. Psychological well-being is, according to Burns (2016), defined as „the extent of positive functioning regarding one's relatedness with others, attitudes hold about oneself, sense of mastery and personal growth." Henderson and Knight (2012) relate psychological well-being to a functioning and purposeful living state of being. Ryff and Singer (1996) investigated the underlying components beyond the term of psychological well-being. Mostly, psychological well-being is thought to be dependent on six facets. The first of the six elements of psychological well-being is self-acceptance, which is related to holding a positive attitude towards oneself. Next, positive relations with others, implementing warm and trusting relationships, constitutes an integral part of high well-being. Also, acting upon personal standards and functioning autonomously is a crucial part of psychological well-

being, described as autonomy. Followingly, environmental mastery, which is related to overseeing and shaping the environment one is currently present, needs to be met in order to display high psychological well-being. Next, individuals need to have a sense of direction and meaning in life, referred to as purpose in life. Lastly, people need to live in a way that is in accordance with their potential in order to develop constantly over the lifespan. Ryff describes this as a matter of personal growth. All aspects from Ryff's (1995) work are certainly related to formerly discussed concepts that are manifested by Keyes and Seligman.

However, investigating what positive mental health entails on a concrete level is essential then to understand, how high rates of well-being can be achieved. In a study by Schotanus-Dijkstra and colleagues (2016) a positive relationship between personality traits such as conscientiousness or extraversion and high mental well-being is established. Additionally, factors such as having social support and positive life events significantly contributed to experiencing high levels of well-being (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2016). These insights are connectable to both Seligman's and Diener's work, as the importance of positive events, inducing positive emotions, is subject to their studies of happiness. Also, social support can be related to Ryff's aspect of interpersonal relations, thought to be influencing the level of psychological well-being positively. Huppert and So (2009) uncovered that the factors of resilience, vitality, self-esteem, optimism, and self-determination also positively affect whether people express high well-being. It is also reported that higher income, higher education, and higher self-reported health are positively related to experiencing a high state of well-being. Those insights have also been frequently replicated by other researchers (Mayordomo, Viguer, Sales, Satorres, & Meléndez, 2016; Michalos, 2008; Aknin, Norton, & Dunn, 2009; Soysa & Wilcomb, 2015; Rand, Shanahan, Fischer, & Fortney, 2020; Acosta-González, Marcenaro-Gutiérrez, 2020; Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011). It is striking that factors such as self-esteem and self-determination can be translated to the components of Ryff's model; here, self-acceptance and personal growth are comparable. Also, the aspects of higher income and health are related to Diener's review about the advantages of possessing high well-being.

The before mentioned studies all approach a quantitative research design. However, as this paper aims to acquire knowledge about individual's well-being, a qualitative way of investigating factors associated with high levels of well-being is considered. A study by González-Carrasco, Vaqué, Malo, Crous, Casas and Figuer (2019) has inspected characteristics of children's and adolescent's well-being. They report that interpersonal relationships, health, leisure activities, school domain and personal aspects are underlying

assessment criteria for well-being. Those factors are also connected to both Ryff's model with regard to positive relations with others and to the PERMA model, as relationships and engagement are equivalent entities. Svensson, Mårtensson and Hellström Muhli (2012) investigated pathways to well-being within elderly women. They found that the factors of relationships with other people and a continuity of self-identity are related to higher well-being. Here, aspects can be compared to self-acceptance and positive relations factors from Ryff and the relationship dimension of the PERMA. An extensive study by Allen, Boddy and Kendall (2017) researched how people acquire and maintain high expressed well-being. They developed a model which states that high well-being is achieved through having a sense of peace by knowing, appreciating, and behaving as one's best self. This orientation prompts one's intention to align with one's values, aspirations and needs. Thus, the circumstance of behaving as one's best possible self can be allied to self-acceptance component from Ryff. Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick and Wissing (2011) also investigated factors related to happiness and meaning. They discovered that happiness is mostly due to family, interpersonal relations, and health. Furthermore, being happy is most prominently ascribed to the factor harmony/ balance. Most frequently reported aspects of a meaningful life are family, work, and interpersonal relations. These characteristics resemble the attributes positive relations with others and environmental mastery from Ryff and the PERMA elements engagement and relationships.

A qualitative perspective for identifying characteristics of individuals with a high level of mental well-being is needed to understand how and why people show a high degree of well-being. Therefore, many researchers suggest, that well-being and consequently high well-being is a matter of individual interpretation, which implies that individuals' conceptions about the topic are essential to get a deeper insight (Jormfeldt, 2019; MacLeod, 2015). Implementing a widely spread target group is advantageous to receive a diverse insight into the subjective construct well-being, covering perspectives from people in different phases in their life. Formerly conducted studies mostly rely on adults aged 30 or above, as they passed the major life stages. In the current study, younger participants, represented by students, are also included. Furthermore, only a few studies have examined the underlying factors beyond high well-being in qualitative studies so far. Mostly, quantitative designs have been chosen to conceptualize high well-being.

However, it is crucial to shift the perspective to derive more deepened and individual indices of how and why certain people reach the state of high mental well-being. Therefore, the current study implements open ended questions about emotional and psychological well-

being. Followingly, a coding scheme is created. For getting deeper into the underlying elements, a thematic analysis is approached in order to extract themes affecting people's well-being. Identifying themes that matter in the connection to well-being can be beneficial due to several reasons. Especially the distinct entities leading to well-being are only infrequently studied. So, there is a clear requirement for establishing determinants of well-being on an individual level to assess well-being, which is considered a complex and varying construct (Thin, 2018). The aim of the current study is to examine how people perceive well-being on an individual level and what high rates of well-being entail by using interviews. Also, results are validated in the light of Delle Fave and colleagues' (2011) work, as they approached a similar methodology. Thus, the current study aims to replicate findings. It has the advantage of validating and comparing former insights, which can rise the generalizability of findings. Moreover, additional elements could be identified or already found factors could be reified. For ascertaining this, several themes are extracted from the coded interviews. Insights are validated by implementing a well-being scale, which assesses the well-being dimensions of interest. In this regard the research questions guiding the paper are presented: To what extent are the extracted themes overlapping with formerly established factors? Are the themes similar when qualitative and quantitative findings are compared?

## **Methods**

### **Design**

The study comprised a mixed-methods approach, in which an interview survey design and a questionnaire survey design were merged. A mixed-method approach is implemented, as the study aims to validate the extent to which overlapping factors emerge. Also, this approach allows for a triangulation of outcomes. The importance of certain themes and factors can be validated for qualitative and quantitative data. The obtained data were handled confidentially, which has been explicitly stated in the informed consent (see Appendix A). All procedural activities applied within the paper have been approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Behavioral, Management and Social Sciences of the University of Twente 200337.

### **Participants**

A convenience sample of six participants was recruited via the researcher's personal network. Participants had to be at least 18 years old. Also, participants had to possess fluent

levels of the German language. Participants were recruited with half of them being female and half of them being male. The participants were on average 48,5 years old ( $SD=23,15$ ). All participants were German and voluntarily participated in the study.

## **Procedure**

The whole study was conducted in German, all participant's native language, in order to ensure that participants can give most accurate and authentic answers. This approach guarantees a minimization of language misunderstanding. Findings were translated for informational purposes afterwards. At first, participants were verbally informed about the content of the research. Participants only had to attend one session, in which the questionnaire and the interview are conducted. In this session, a face-to-face arrangement with appropriate distance was chosen. An informed consent form was provided, which clarifies the ability to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a specific reason, and that the data is handled confidentially. Highlighting the anonymous processing of data was also evident on the screen then. In case of agreement, participants were informed that by clicking the arrow the terms are accepted and the survey begins. At first, demographics, such as age and gender, were assessed. Afterwards, the MHC-SF was presented. It was done by using Qualtrics, a web-based way of delivering quantitative surveys to participants. A tablet was given to the participants, with which they could fill in the questionnaire. An expected time frame of ten minutes was presented on the first slide. When the questionnaire was successfully completed, participants were thanked for it.

During the interview, participants were asked to answer questions related to their feelings that are associated with emotional well-being. More explicitly, the experience of happiness and indications of associated feelings were studied. Then, questions about one's psychological well-being were examined. The meaning in life and meaningful things in one's life were matter of interest. Finally, the general life satisfaction was assessed to uncover important underlying factors. Overall life satisfaction, which is often considered to be part of emotional well-being, was also implemented in order to gain a more extended picture of what really matters for experiencing high well-being. When all questions were answered sufficiently, participants were thanked for their contribution.

## **Measures**

**Mental well-being.** For measuring the level of well-being on a quantitative base, the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) was used. It measured the level of well-being along



three dimensions. These are emotional, social and psychological well-being (Keyes, 2005). Answers were assessed on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) never to (6) every day. Mean scores were calculated for the dimensions and overall well-being. Regarding its psychometric properties, Cronbach's alpha of .89 is reported, indicating good reliability (Lamer, et. al., 2011). The measure allowed for two ways of scoring, which were both implemented in the analysis. The first method indicated that the higher the mean score, the higher a person's mental well-being. For the second method of categorical scoring, participants' scores could fall in either of three categories. People in the first category of flourishing showed high mental well-being. They had to score at least one item of emotional well-being, and six items of psychological well-being and social well-being with "every day" or "almost every day". People in the second category, called languishing, showed low mental health. They had to score at least one item of emotional well-being and six items of psychological well-being and social well-being with "never" or "once or twice". Participants who score other than the two abovementioned categories fell in the third category, namely moderately mentally healthy (Keyes, 2009).

**Interviews.** For assessing the level of well-being in a qualitative way, an interview survey, addressing the different elements of well-being, was conducted. For the interview, a semi-structured approach was chosen in order to have a preliminary structure, allowing for additional follow-up questions. Questions were all open to avoid being suggestive and minimize the risk of confirmation bias. In total, the interview included 23 questions to conceptualize individual understandings of emotional (e.g., "What does happiness mean to you?", "How do you notice whether you are happy?" Which emotions are connected to feeling happy?"), psychological well-being (e.g., "What is meaningful to you?", "How do you manage to handle all responsibilities in your life?") and general life satisfaction (e.g., "Are you satisfied with your life?", "Which aspects of your life contribute to your life satisfaction?"). For the psychological well-being, the structure was related to Ryff's conceptualization of psychological well-being. More explicitly, her model comprises of six aspects namely self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and a sense of personal growth, which were all implemented in the interview. The underlying framework was the MHC-SF because it captured the well-being dimensions of interest. However, only the emotional and psychological dimensions were addressed because they have been frequently researched before. The two dimensions are conceptualized by models and insights can be compared with formerly established findings. Also, Delle Fave et

al. (2011) report a decreasing commitment when it comes to public affairs. Those are mostly captured by the social well-being items. Thus, private matters, linked to emotional and psychological well-being are connected to a heightened commitment and interest.

### **Data analysis**

For statistical analyses, SPSS 26 was used. Descriptive statistics were computed for age and gender of the sample. Mean scores of the overall MHC-SF and each dimension were computed per participant. The categorization of languishing, moderate or flourishing mental health was assessed too (see table 1). Certain items from the questionnaire, namely items one to three and items nine to fourteen were used to compare the different domains of well-being identified in the interviews. These particular items are addressed, as they resemble the chosen well-being dimensions and their content overlaps with the identified themes. The mean scores gained through the questionnaire were related to the qualitative data. This was executed by comparing how the participants rated themselves on each domain and how it was verbalized in the interview. Followingly, the categorization was implemented to report whether the patterns between both methods yield to similar or differing insights. As several themes were extracted, that are represented by certain items from the MHC-SF, their magnitude in the interview was evaluated by looking at the personal understanding of the concept. Also, possible contradictions between the scores in the questionnaire and qualitative insights from the interview could be highlighted. This was done by relating the verbalized insights to the mean scores or the item score of interest.

For analyzing qualitative interview data, interviews were translated into English. Atlas.ti (version 8) was utilized to create a coding scheme. The coding scheme was based on the two primary researched dimensions of emotional and psychological well-being, which made up the categories of the scheme. Seven codes were established for the emotional category; nine codes were extracted from the questions interested in psychological aspects. Based on the codes, several themes were extracted, which were shared by multiple participants. These themes were also separated based on the two dimensions of well-being, such as emotional and psychological. The extracted themes overlapped with certain items of the MHC-SF. Therefore, the extent to which participants displayed certain aspects of well-being, was captured by the quantitative part. How those quantitative differences were exactly expressed can be described with the interview data. As questions were based on already defined concepts and dimensions of well-being, a deductive manner of analyzing the interview data was approached. This also holds for the coding scheme; Ryff's (1997)

conceptualization of psychological well-being and Diener’s (2009) work about emotional well-being was utilized. For the full coding scheme see Appendix B.

Table 1

*MHC-SF scores per participant for emotional and psychological well-being dimensions (1-6) with higher scores indicating higher well-being in the associated aspect.*

	F, 22, student	F, 51, office administrator	F, 71, pensioner	M, 51, contractor	Male, 76, pensioner	Male, 22, student
Happy	4	4	6	4	4	4
Interested	5	5	6	6	6	4
Satisfied	2	5	5	5	5	3
Self-acceptance	4	4	4	4	6	3
Environmental mastery	4	4	3	3	5	3
Positive relations	4	5	5	6	4	4
Personal growth	5	4	1	6	6	5
Autonomy	5	2	2	4	6	5
Purpose in life	6	4	3	6	6	4
Categorization of well-being	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Flourishing	Flourishing	Moderate

*Note.* F = Female; M = Male.

## Results

Six themes were extracted from the interview data. They were divided into themes matching the context of emotional well-being and themes associated with psychological well-being. The theme of engagement is based on the emotional dimension, whereas the theme self-acceptance is based on psychological well-being. This is due to the dimensions employed in the coding scheme: codes related to engagement are all ascribed to the emotional category, whereas the codes forming the theme self-acceptance are solely found in the psychological well-being category. The themes of positive relations with others, environmental mastery, health and autonomy are extracted from codes belonging to both dimensions (see Appendix B). The theme positive relations with others is the most central theme, reported by all participants. Most of the other themes, including engagement, self-acceptance and environmental mastery, are evident in 5 interviews. In general, the frequency lies between three and six times. So, only one theme is found in all interviews, indicating an individual

variance in conceptualizing well-being. However, themes are at least reported in 50% of the interviews (see table 2).

Table 2.

*Well-being mean scores per dimension and extracted themes per participant.*

Participant	Emotional well-being score	Psychological well-being score	Overall well-being score	Themes
Female, 22-year-old, student	3.67	4.67	3.64	Positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, environmental mastery
Female, 51-year-old, office administrator	4.67	3.83	3.64	Positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery
Female, 71-year-old, pensioner	5.67	3.00	3.93	Positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, health
Male, 51-year-old, contractor	5.00	5.17	4.64	Positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, health
Male, 76-year-old, pensioner	5.00	5.17	5.07	Positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, health
Male, 22-year-old, student	3.67	4.00	3.29	Positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, health

*Note.* Scores according to MHC-SF outcomes per participant. Themes extracted from the coding scheme, derived from participant’s interviews.

### **Female, 22-year-old, student**

The first participant is a 22-year-old female, who considered herself an ambitious student. She had clear expectations for the future and was therefore determined to pursue her lifegoals. It can also be translated to her high score on the purpose of life item. The main topic of the interview was about the necessity of feeling comfortable and how it can be reached. In this interview four themes have been extracted namely positive relations with others, engagement, environmental mastery and self-acceptance. The first theme positive relations with others was found, as close members of the family are associated with feeling happy: *“If I am with the inner circle of my family, I can be very happy.”* Also, friends and artists inspiring her contributed to feeling happy. In the questionnaire, she also indicated that feeling happy and having positive interactions with others was experienced several times per week. Thus, when meeting people, the rate of happiness was high.

For the second theme, engagement, happiness was regarded as the basis. This made clear that happiness induces motivation within the participant: *“When I feel happy it is my best motivation. Also, for little things like sport.”* The next theme environmental mastery was chained by the participant implying that achievement plays an important role in her life: *“Success is important to me- I want to achieve much, such as graduating, finding a good job and being self-confident.”* She also stated in the questionnaire that she is control of her duties and goals several times per week, which also helped her to have a positive outlook. Self-acceptance, the fourth theme is a complex and multifaceted construct. For the participant, people fostered the possibility of being authentic and accepting oneself also played a role in forming authenticity. Being able to reach this state is ultimately connected to high levels of emotional well-being: *“The most important thing for me is having the feeling of being who I am right now without dissimulation.”* Thus, feeling well was often related to the people by whom the participant is surrounded. This insight was also in line with the questionnaire data; she could accept herself several times per week. Thus, in the presence of others, and with higher engagement, she was more prone to accept herself, which in turn facilitated high well-being several times per week.

Also, she set high standards for herself, as her evaluation of life satisfaction was organized and clear. As her expectations about her future outlook were high and set high standards for herself, she rated low on the satisfaction with life item. However, she was highly determined and showed confidence in reaching her life goals. In general, her emotional well-being was high, as she had meaningful interpersonal relationships that make her happy. Also, being successful in career-related affairs and being interested in life almost every day

contributed to her happiness. However, her functioning was evaluated to be lower. She had clear conceptions of how to reach higher functionality and what it implements concretely. In this regard, life satisfaction was reported once or twice, which can be related to her high standards and clear expectations about the future outlook. As this overall judgement was used for assessing emotional well-being, she only scores in the average sector. However, she was already aware of her high extent of functioning well, which positively affected her global level of happiness. In summary, the participant is moderately mentally healthy. However, her psychological well-being can be considered high. In situations in which she is around meaningful others, she can be happy. Also, she is clearly dedicated to live a life of self-growth and purpose.

### **Female, 51-year-old, office administrator**

The second participant was a 51-year-old woman, who strived for independence and emotional closure. The main topic of this interview was the necessity of positive relations with others, which were family members and colleagues. On the psychological well-being dimension, this was also the item with the highest rating. Both methods suggest that positive relations with others is the most important pillar of well-being apart from the emotional dimension. The need of harmony within those relationships has been stressed often. Three themes were found within the interview data. Positive relations with others was the first theme and it is seen as a precondition for happiness and family can also induce happiness on direct means: *“There are many people making me happy within the family- my husband, my children, my parents, my sisters and my parents-in-law. The relationships with my colleagues are also meaningful for me.”* She also highlighted that harmony in those meaningful interactions was the most important aspect for perceiving it as a close and trusting relationship.

Additionally, the theme autonomy was found in the interview data. It was a meaningful status itself, which was also related to evaluating one's life satisfaction: *“I had to do something new and nobody explained me how to do it. After all, I succeeded by myself and this is always a nice thing.”* Interestingly, the participant scored high on the satisfaction with life item. However, the item autonomy had a low score. Therefore, a discrepancy between the interview and questionnaire data emerge. The questionnaire uses one's evaluation about expressing opinions for assessing autonomy. In turn, the interview yield to the importance of being financially independent: *“I was able to create this on my own, without lending money from my parents or asking others for help.”* The third theme environmental mastery illustrated the need for achievement in order to be happy: *“I feel proud and happy when*

*thinking about being successful in caring for my children.*” This circumstance was met several times per week, which is connected to the high level of emotional well-being. So, two themes are related to the emotional dimension, whereas one theme represents the eudaimonic dimension. For the participant being happy was most important. Many resources and relations were used to create an environment of harmony, in which feelings of happiness could be shared. Thus, the need for being successful and autonomous was regarded as a precondition for functioning well. In comparison to the questionnaire scores, emotional well-being was in the range of high well-being, whereas eudaimonic well-being was in the medium range, which reflects her general understanding of creating happiness as the main life goal. Additionally, the participant reported feeling happy several times per week, which is related to having positive interpersonal relationships, being successful and financially independent. For the second participant, scores also suggest a moderate mental health. Specifically, the emotional well-being score is high. Autonomy and positive relations with others are the most important assets for experiencing a happy life. As they are frequently met in her daily life, she considers herself satisfied.

### **Female, 71-year-old, pensioner**

The third participant is a 71-year-old woman, who valued strong social bonds, especially within the family. She also reported that her close friends are important to her as well. The main topic of the interview was the shifting understanding of happiness with progressing age and knowledge. In this interview, all six themes are evident. Firstly, the theme positive relations with others was reported in a way that gives rise to the formulation that family is set as a source and precondition for happiness: *“My husband, my children, my grandchildren and my cousin make me happy.”* The item score of the questionnaire also indicates that interpersonal relations are the most important aspect, as it is rated highest. Secondly, engagement in activities boosted feelings of happiness: *“Everything works better. Doing the household is no problem then. Sometimes, I also want to turn the music loud, which also gives me power.”*

Thirdly, the theme self-acceptance was covered. It was regarded as a state of being, that is evident in the presence of others. It was also affecting the perceived level of life satisfaction: *“I can let myself go in the presence of significant others. Sometimes, I can even shed a tear.”* The participant also indicated in the questionnaire, that self-acceptance is met several times per week. Fourthly, autonomy was extracted from the interview data. This theme made up an integral part of meaning in life for the participant, associated with making

autonomous decisions and evaluating one's life satisfaction: *"I was happy flying to Croatia alone- that I accomplished this on my own."* In the questionnaire, this item was rated low. Contradictions could be due to the easiness with which an opinion is expressed. In general, she had a strong sense of autonomous decision-making, but cannot express those assertively. The fifth theme environmental mastery was explored. Achieving something meaningful and social creates feelings of being happy: *"To create the environment around me with my family. Making something out of life without a high burden. You try to make the best out of it, and I reached that for me."* In the questionnaire, environmental mastery was reported to be met once a week. However, her understanding was more global, taking all achievements together, which ultimately led to a high life satisfaction. The last theme health was captured and constitutes an integral part for the participants' meaning in life: *"I can still fully participate in life, even though I have that age. That I am still healthy or that we both are."* To maintain her vitality, she frequently went to sport courses and rides her bike up to four times per week. Thus, being healthy is related to physical exercise on a regular basis.

In the questionnaire, the participant reported a high level of emotional well-being, as she was happy and interested every day. For her, being happy was also the most integral part of life. The social environment and the will to create a friendly and supporting social network made her happy. Regarding the psychological dimension of the questionnaire, a lower score was observed. Other people significantly contributed to her well-being, but she also experienced burdening demands, lowering her functionality. With respect to personal growth item, it was indicated that she never experienced growth. This is contrasted by the statement that the changing understanding of happiness was the main topic within the interview. In the questionnaire, challenging experiences were used to assess personal growth. For the participant, personal growth might be more of a natural process without concretely looking on challenges, as she also indicated that she is able to create her environment without a high burden. Thus, she experienced growth but not in relation to challenging experiences. She also rated her purpose in life rather low. All in all, the third participant lies in the moderately mentally health sector, as the functionality was rated as low. Overall, she is a happy person, as she has the highest score on the emotional dimension. Especially her interest in life and positive relations with others prompts a high well-being. The low rating on the eudaimonic dimension can also indicate modesty, as she did not want to present herself superior, as she underestimated her abilities and efforts.



### **Male, 51-year-old, contractor**

The fourth participant is a 51-year-old man, who considered himself an affectionate lover and caretaker. His family and supporting them was important to him. The main topic of the interview was the spiritual awakening, which has taken place a few years ago. This can be related to the high score on the personal growth item. Also, the deep impacting questions were discussed on basis of philosophical tenets. For the participant, the themes of positive relations with others, self-acceptance, engagement and health were found. The theme positive relations with others was perceived as a meaningful entity itself, which creates happiness and determines the life satisfaction of the participant. It is mostly related to family members. Also, the participant's responsibility was directed towards the family: *"I am satisfied with my life because of my family-my children and my wife."* The questionnaire data supported the former statement, as meaningful relations were experienced every day.

Self-acceptance is an important status for feeling good about oneself, which implied that the interviewee can behave authentically in the presence of others: *"You can be free. That is it- you are free, and you do not have to hide behind a facet."* With regard to the questionnaire data, self-acceptance was experienced several times per week. Thus, not every positive relation was fostering self-acceptance for the participant. It is mentioned that the participant adapted certain roles, especially at work-related affairs and in less trusting interpersonal interactions. These roles can lower the sense of self-acceptance under those circumstances. The third theme health was also connected to the family, as their health was also seen as important. In this vein, the man's own health and the health of his family members served as a precondition or factor for feeling happy: *"The health of my children is the source of my happiness."* In this case, being healthy is a state for which one can be grateful for. He does not connect it to physical exercise or healthy alimentation. The last theme engagement was related to high levels of emotional well-being, implying that he can *"be carried by the feeling of happiness. It is like a drug. It is awesome."*

This participant can be described as a grateful person, valuing his family and their health. His source of happiness are social bonds within the family, health and his spirituality. In the questionnaire data, both dimensional scores were considered high, as he experiences feelings of happiness and interest in life every day. Satisfaction with one's life was reported as being noticeable almost every day due to the family's health and as he was in charge of maintaining the familial wealth. Thus, he reported to be happy almost every day and considered himself functional. In summary, the participant can be ascribed to have a flourishing mental health. His report of being happy about his family, his spiritual path and

being able to meet the demands he and others put on him are in line with the necessary criteria for being flourishing.

### **Male, 76-year-old, pensioner**

The fifth participant is a 76-year-old man, who was embossed by his former work at the police. His personality and his meaningful times and actions mostly referred to his time as an officer. The main topic of the interview was his time as an officer. Certain stories that contributed to his nowadays understanding of life are told. Also, he can be considered a fit and health-conscious man. The themes applying to the interview were positive relations with others, engagement, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery and health. For the first theme, positive relations with others, the participant noted that happiness is experienced in the surrounding of others and that others are regarded as a precondition for feeling happy: *"I had been proud, as I have held my daughter for the first time. I was glad to be with my family."* According to the questionnaire data, he experienced several positive relations per week. As he is living alone due to the death of his spouse, he is experiencing less interactions ever since. Next, the second theme engagement was related to realizing feeling happy, when an increased motivation is evident: *"It is a kind of self-satisfaction. You can give assistance and you get something back- the joy from others."*

The third theme self-acceptance was considered meaningful, as it ensures that people can value oneself for being original: *"I want to live in a way that you know five years later who you are, who you were. Being authentic that people remember you."* The participant also indicated in the questionnaire that he experiences self-acceptance every day. Thus, he was inclined to act in an authentic manner every day. The fourth theme, autonomy, was a concept that plays a significant role within different aspects of life, as it was needed for feeling happy. Also, being independent meant to decide autonomously. Furthermore, life satisfaction was based on the extent of perceived autonomy: *"My car, when I can go for a cruise. I know I am independent then."* This statement and the extent of autonomy was also seen in the questionnaire, as he indicated that autonomous decision-making is met on daily basis. For the theme environmental mastery, it became clear that responsibilities were appraised by one's achievement. Also, achievement fosters personal growth. It was also mentioned the other way around, namely that personal growth in itself can be considered an achievement: *"I quit smoking. That was a real achievement for me."* Those aspects of psychological well-being were also rated high in the questionnaire. Environmental mastery was experienced almost every day. Also, personal growth was evident every day. Thus, he was experiencing personal

growth apart from mastering his environment. His job highly influenced him in the personal process of self-development as well.

The last theme health is one of the most important aspects of the participants life, as he was highlighting the importance of physical activity, nutrition and a having an overall healthy lifestyle: *“The need for material wealth has declined with becoming older. Today it is about being satisfied, being healthy.”* To maintain his vitality, he values a balanced alimentation, including the right number of calories and sufficient minerals and vitamins. Also, he takes long walks in the nature and rides a bike on a regularly. Furthermore, he rides a bike frequently and engages in walks. In summary, the participant is an active member of society with a high sense of justice and social support. He can be considered a grateful person, as he values little things over material wealth. It can also be related to his appreciation of being healthy since he has stated this multiple times. Significant others and his consistent way of behaving make him satisfied and happy. Additionally, he evaluated himself as highly functional, which in turn also relates to his helping behavior and his good will of maintaining an honest society. His rating of being functioning well is also applicable to the high score on the psychological dimension in the MHC-SF. The participant is satisfied with his life almost every day, as he always points to his former work and the associated meaningfulness within his activities. Also, he reports to be happy almost every day and interested in life every day. Thus, he scores high on the emotional dimension. Taken together, the fifth participant can also be considered as flourishing. He can meet his duties and decides independently which fosters his sense of functionality. Also, being with others and valuing his life choices is associated with happiness.

### **Male, 22-year-old, student**

The sixth participant is a 22-year-old male who was studying. He was a reflective person, who liked to have insightful and sophisticated discussions about meaningful content. Also, he was an active actor and likes to be creative. The content of the interview was encompassing the preconditions for feeling good; to define what it is to feel good and which societal implications these insights have. In the interview, five themes were mentioned: engagement, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others and health. The first one, engagement was based on the assumption that people are needed and/ or evoke feelings of happiness: *“Experiencing a certain happiness, a happy moment, can increase motivation, especially in the presence of friends.”* Moreover, meaning of things was realized through an expanded motivation towards the meaningful circumstance. The second

theme of possessing autonomy was attained by making autonomous decisions: *"If I could not decide which clothes I want to wear, it would be cruel for me, as the control about my appearance would be gone."* The importance of autonomy is also transferable to the questionnaire score; he could decide autonomously almost every day.

The third theme health was presented in a way that it implied that the participant sees health as a fundamental ground for being happy: *"I feel strong and I feel healthy when I am happy."* For him, being healthy is mostly about eating nutritious dishes. Physical activity is also important, especially for physiological activation to reduce pain. About the theme self-acceptance, he achieved to be settled as a person, meaning that he can enjoy his character. Furthermore, he implemented that self-acceptance is easier in the presence of others: *"It is much easier for me to be self-accepting when in contact with friends or other meaningful people."* Positive relations with others were mostly due to insightful and trusting conversations that were forming the ground for good cooperation and harmony. Also, he got inspired by other people: *"My friendships make me happy, especially when I am experiencing interactions that are insightful and inspiring."* The last theme environmental mastery was related to the statement that accomplishing something meaningful can increase feelings of happiness: *"When an activity goes smoothly and successfully, it can add up to feelings of happiness."* His score in the questionnaire suggested that he meets his duties once a week.

This participant scored higher on eudaimonic than on the emotional well-being dimension. This can be explained by the fact that he is able to meet his standards for functioning well, such as eating healthy and laying the foundation for his career. He also acts according to his planned futurity. On the other side, regarding emotional well-being, he is happy when he engages in interpersonal activities, such as having a good conversation. However, interpersonal relations are only experienced several times per week. Also, he also experienced happiness in short time periods with low frequencies, as he often spends time alone. Happiness and interest in life are experienced two to three times a week. Satisfaction was reported to be evident once a week. For him, positive relations with others and happiness are connected constructs. Being with friends poses a foundation for experiencing positive emotions and interest. Also, he scored high on the personal growth item, which is connected to his former depression. He adds that what he learned from this time positively affected his overall understanding and his acquaintance with life. In total, the participant can be considered to have a moderate mental health. His insights about his psychological well-being yield to a high score on this dimension. Also, being with friends with whom inspiring

conversations can be held and by maintaining his vitality in terms of eating healthy and being physically active, high well-being is experienced.

### **Discussion**

The aim of the study was to identify areas of people's life contributing to their well-being. This was done by examining the perspectives of six individuals about their well-being, both in an interview and a survey. Results demonstrated that the theme positive relations with others is the most important fundament for experiencing high well-being, as every participant mentioned its importance. Additionally, people who scored high on this item in the questionnaire tended to display the highest overall well-being. Also, several similar themes are found in both methods, impacting the well-being of participants. These were positive relations with others, self-acceptance and autonomy. Apart from those themes, the interviews yield to additional aspects important for high well-being. These were engagement and health. They were not specifically measured in the MHC-SF. Results also demonstrated that similar themes emerge when comparing with formerly conducted studies. The importance of health and positive relations with others is also reported in other studies (Delle Fave et al., 2011; Huppert & So, 2009).

Prior studies also showed that positive relations with others is a fundamental pillar of well-being (Ryff, 1997; Seligman, 2012; Keyes, 2007; Huppert & So, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2006). For example, in the study of Delle Fave et al. (2011), the most frequently mentioned aspects of emotional and psychological well-being contain family and relations with others. Aspects of positive relations with others employed in this paper is comparable to a merge of family and relations from Delle Fave and colleagues (2011). Huppert and So (2009) reported that having positive relationships contributed to the probability of displaying high well-being. Additionally, the models from Seligman (2018) and Ryff (1995) also include a relationship aspect, implementing meaningful experiences and contacts with others. Most studies highlight the importance of social belonging, as it is one key element of life as social beings. Consequently, without associated processes, such as social integration, reassurance of worth or guidance, well-being is negatively affected (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006). Thus, positive relations can be considered a universal element of well-being, everybody is dependent on.

Additionally, insights yield to an overlap between both methods employed in the study. Positive relations with others, self-acceptance, environmental mastery and autonomy are found to be impacting the level of well-being in both, the survey and the interview. This overlap can be explained by the nature of the interview. Since a deductive approach is chosen,

formerly established theorems and models are used to structure the interview. In both cases, Ryff's model of psychological well-being is embedded which could lead to a high overlap. More importantly, results could also imply that the important aspects of well-being are similar when comparing differing research designs. Delle Fave et al. (2011) also report an impact of autonomy and engagement, even though they did not structure the interview on basis of Ryff's model. Also, the aspects of positive relations with others and environmental mastery are captured in Seligman's PERMA model, which was not applied to structure the interview. Thus, autonomy, engagement and environmental mastery also seem to display general elements of well-being, as they are frequently reported in other studies that were not used for structuring the interview. Self-acceptance is the only feature, which is only emphasized by Ryff (1995) and should be interpreted with caution.

A difference between the interviews and survey was found in the topic of health, which was not covered by the survey but was frequently mentioned during the interviews. Other studies reported health as an aspect affecting the level of emotional and psychological well-being (Huppert & So, 2013; Delle Fave et al., 2011). For example, Huppert and So (2009) found that the level of self-rated health positively predicts whether people experience high well-being or not. Delle Fave and colleagues (2011) identified the factors of family, work, interpersonal relations, and health to be most significantly related to well-being. Former studies demonstrated that perceiving oneself as healthy is connected to physical activity and healthy nutrition, which is ultimately affecting ratings of well-being in a positive manner (Penedo & Dahn, 2005; Owen & Corfe, 2017). Those lifestyle behaviors are regularly performed to stay healthy and were indicated in the interviews as contributing factors for high well-being. From the interviews, it can be concluded that many people perceive physical health as a precondition for being an active member of society. Also, health is affecting the perceived autonomy of people, which has been viewed as a trajectory to well-being too. Thus, high levels of health are related to maintaining social activities, to decide autonomously and stay in a self-accepting state, which preserves high levels of well-being. However, it is not clear whether health promotes such positive trends or whether well-being is considered the underlying factor.

The relevance of work on well-being is identified but is not specifically captured in this study (Delle Fave et al., 2011; Weziak-Bialowolska, Bialowolski, Sacco, VanderWeele, & McNeely, 2020). However, aspects from the environmental mastery theme can be applied to the work factor, since several participants mentioned the importance of achievement and colleagues at work. The connection between work and well-being can partly be explained by

the fact that positive relations with others are experienced at the workplace. Also, developing a career is part of purpose in life and can enhance well-being (Hartung & Taber, 2008). To conclude, when comparing the commonalities gained from Delle Fave et al. (2011) and Huppert and So (2009), health and positive relations with others are aspects of high well-being that are frequently reported in qualitative studies investigating pathways to well-being.

For defining well-being with the insights of the current study, it is crucial to implement the aspects of having positive relations with others, displaying considerable high levels of physical health, having high autonomy, being engaged in every day's life, mastering one's environment and being in a self-accepting state. Positive relations with meaningful others, such as friends and family are, according to the findings, the most essential aspect for defining well-being. This aspect can also be regarded as the most promising determinant leading to high levels of well-being. However, before mentioned elements of the well-being definition also contribute to high rates of well-being.

### **Strength and Limitations**

A major strength of the current study was the mixed method approach as it allows for a triangulation of findings between quantitative and qualitative insights. Additionally, the implementation of a semi-structured interview frame is beneficial in terms of creating and using a standardized scheme, that can be adopted for certain clarifications or deeper insights into an already defined template. Involving participants with different ages and with an equal distribution of gender enhances the variety information in the sense that one can better gain an insight into the factors that conceptualize happiness and well-being with respect to age and gender-related differences.

There are also some limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, participants were contacted out of the researcher's network. Therefore, the bias of social desirability might be increased when comparing with participants who would have been unfamiliar with the researcher and the design (Caputo, 2017; Diener, Sandvik, Pavot, & Gallagher, 1991). This could result in remarkably high scores, meaning that participants present themselves with a higher well-being than experienced in reality (Caputo, 2017). The utilization of a deductive approach for coding the interviews could result in confirmation bias, meaning that the reported themes resemble certain factors of Ryff's model, as it was initially employed to structure the interview (Pearse, 2019; Brinkmann, 2013). Also, no interrater reliability has been employed in order to check whether the coded themes can be

extracted universally. Corresponding themes are therefore not critically reflected in their appropriateness and universality when it comes to the interpretation of findings.

### **Future implications**

For future studies, another sampling method is advisable to reduce the potential risk of a high social desirability bias. One possibility to address this is to insert an invitation to participate in a well-being study in the newspapers or on social media in order to reach participants unfamiliar to the researcher and the study design. Thus, an availability sampling method, recruiting people apart from the researcher's network, would be more convenient. Homogeneity within the sample could possibly be reduced and would give the benefit that more variety within the sample better catches global or representative understandings of well-being. Furthermore, one could conduct a study design with an open interview in order to validate whether same themes emerge when no deductive structuring of the interview is employed. Also, implementing multiple researchers for assessing an interrater reliability is advantageous in order to derive themes.

Another possible recommendation is to only include flourishers or compare the definitions of flourishers with languishers and see how those descriptions differ. Also, as the most important theme contributing to well-being is positive relations with others, future studies could investigate whether this theme indeed resembles the most substantial part of well-being. For doing this, a quantitative design can be chosen to evaluate the impact of several well-being determinants. The significance of those aspects can then be compared with regard to their contribution to well-being. In general, aspects of well-being might have more of a hierarchical order, which could also be subject to further investigations.

In the literature review of Ulloa, Møller, and Sousa-Poza (2013), the responsible researchers highlight the idea of designing a more expanded panel, that follows representative individuals over their lifespan. In this vein, certain people can be evaluated based on their rate of well-being for different periods of time, which might shed additional insights into the role of certain themes on emotional and psychological well-being in multiple life stages. In the current study, especially independence and health seem to be important assets of well-being in the elderly. Also, results imply that younger participants rather highlight their friends as positive relationships. Older participants experience more positive relations with others in the family. Environmental mastery is also more frequently addressed by female participants, as they highlight the importance of achievement more often. Such tendencies could be evaluated by future studies too.



The themes that have been identified within the research impacting the level of well-being are also found in other studies (Delle Fave et al., 2011; Huppert & So, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2006). However, a large-scale study could investigate the pathways of how the themes lead to increased well-being and which dimension of well-being are associated with a certain theme. Certain factors per life stage impacting the importance of a particular theme could be identified. Furthermore, the theme positive relations with others could be used in a study setting up an intervention to increase well-being. The implementation of the theme and its added benefit could be evaluated accordingly. Thus, focusing on herein identified factors affecting the level of well-being might increase aspects such as adherence or effectiveness.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this study sheds light into the importance of positive relations with other people, as results imply that it is the most essential aspect of high well-being. Themes such as autonomy, self-acceptance, engagement, environmental mastery and health also positively impact the level of mental well-being. Additionally, outcomes of both the qualitative interview and quantitative surveys were similar in the sense that both yield to the value of positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery and self-acceptance. More universal claims can be drawn about the significance of positive relations with others since former studies also demonstrated its impact. The theme positive relations with others could be embedded in interventions in order to facilitate higher well-being. Also, focusing on well-being and understanding the pathways leading to high well-being should be continued, as insights can yield effective elements for structuring interventions that are fostered to expand levels of well-being for individuals on a sustainable fundament. More longitudinal data of individuals are needed to understand how individual conceptions about well-being change over the lifespan and which patterns emerge.

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Appendix A Informed consent

**Consent Form for “When do people possess high levels of well-being?”**

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

**Yes No**

**Taking part in the study**

I have read and understood the study information dated 20.04.2020, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

I understand that taking part in the study involves an audio-recorded interview and a survey questionnaire. The recording will be destroyed, and the participant has to fill in the survey.

**Use of the information in the study**

I understand that information I provide will be used for publication.

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as [e.g. my name or where I live], will not be shared beyond the study team.

**Signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher name [

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Study contact details for further information: Cedric Schniederjohann  
c.schniederjohann@student.utwente.nl**

When do people possess high levels of well-being? A mixed methods approach using thematic analysis.

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**Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant**

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente by [ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl](mailto:ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl)



## Appendix B. Full interview schedule

1. Do you remember a situation in which you were happy?
2. What was so special about that moment?
3. Which emotions did it evoke?
4. What does happiness mean to you?
5. Has your understanding of happiness changed with time?
6. Which emotions are connected to feeling happy?
7. Have you made experiences that shaped your understanding of happiness?
8. How do you notice whether you are happy?
9. Where are you happy?
10. Who makes you happy?
11. Which parts of your life determine whether you are happy?
12. How important is it for you to experience happiness?
13. What is meaningful for you?
14. Can you describe five areas of your life that are meaningful for you?
15. How do you notice that these aspects are indeed important for you?
16. What is the meaning of life for you?
17. Which role does self-acceptance plays in your life?
18. Have you developed personally in your life?
19. How do you manage to handle all responsibilities in life?
20. Are you able to decide autonomously?
21. Do you have warm and trusting relationships with others?
22. Are you satisfied with your life?
23. Which aspects of your life contribute to your life satisfaction?

Appendix C Complete coding scheme

*Complete coding scheme with all codes per category*

Category of codes	Codes per category	Explanation	Quotes
Hedonic well-being	Emotions	Feelings that are connected to the state of happiness	P5: "I was proud, I was glad to be with my family."
	Manifestation of happiness	Insight into how people perceive and notice happiness	P1:" If you think about nothing else than the enjoyable moment, then I am happy."
	Time and happiness	Shifting understanding of happiness with time	P1: "It is more about the joy of an unexpected moment that you cannot anticipate before."
	People and happiness	Which people are connected to feel happy	P2: "My family, my husband, my sons. A lot of people make me happy."
	Locations and happiness	Connection between happiness and specific locations	P4: "I enjoy being at home. I do not have to go out. It is good to come home after work."
	Conditions for happiness	Conditions that have to be met in order to possibly experience happiness; it is the precondition	P1: "When you are in a moment where you feel happy, you are complete and nothing bad comes into your mind."
	Consequences of happiness	Understanding about what happiness does with people	P3: "Everything works well. [...] This in turn empowers me."

Eudaimonic well-being	Dimensions of meaning	Related to different aspects in life, that people consider meaningful	P6: "Diet, friendships, inspiring and meaningful activities, me-time and sleep."
	Responsibility	Understanding of responsibility and contextualized what people perceive as responsibilities	P4:" I have a family and their financial needs givesme some pressure. [...] but I seldomly look into unsatisfied faces."
	Self-development	How people have developed, and which experienced shaped their self	P5: "Eight years of school, as my parents ahd no money for secondary school, I began working at the pit.
	Autonomous decision-making	What autonomous decision-making means for people and what it implements for them	P3: "If I would have to ask somebody for permission, it would not be that interesting for me anymore."
	Meaning of people	Why people are meaningful for humans	P6:" Getting to know people has a special quality for me, which brings certain advantages."
	Acceptance	How people implement it in their life and what meaning it entails	P4: "The constant self-reflection, where you have to go back and forth and again."
	Recognizing meaning	How people notice that something is important for them.	P5: "I realize my good mood by the sudden onset of whistling."
	Satisfaction	Explores if people are happy	P6: "All in all, taking all years together, I feel happy. I do not remorse anything distressingly."

Evaluation of satisfaction

Evaluation of satisfaction; how do people know they are satisfied, and which elements in life determine it

P2:” Because I reached everything that I have dreamed of and what I wanted for myself.”

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*Note.* P= Participant. Quotes derived from personal interviews, based on the two-dimensional conception of well-being, implementing emotional and psychological well-being.