

CHAPTER C5

Comparing International Perceptions of Wellbeing

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SUMMARY

This chapter is one of three related to wellbeing: it complements chapter A3, Norman Jackson's discussion of theories of wellbeing, and Jenny Willis's chapter C3, which examines the data derived from Lifewide Education's 2013 survey of a group of UK respondents. The survey has since been repeated first with Beijing postgraduate students, then with mental health professionals in Argentina, producing three data sets (of 25:22:29 respondents). In this chapter the quantitative data from each survey is compared to establish convergence and divergence according to cultural background, and both within and between cultures according to gender and age group on what wellbeing means to individuals and how they seek to create their personal wellbeing. Data are also tested according to self-perceived creativity, to investigate whether creative personalities have a generally more positive outlook. Findings are related to the theoretical paradigms of wellbeing set out in the two complementary chapters. Finally, the most and least positive respondents are examined against the National Economic Foundation's 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

BIOGRAPHY



Jenny Willis began her career as a linguist teaching in Inner London comprehensive schools during the 1970s and 80s, a period of continuous radical change for education. She was Deputy Head of a comprehensive school as the 1988 Education Reform Act brought further important changes for the curriculum and management of schools. She later taught for the Open University, pioneering distance and on-line learning pedagogy for languages. She then undertook a PhD in socio-linguistics at the University of Surrey, where she also worked part-time as an Assistant Registrar. This enabled her to pursue research into professional training, which led to her gaining a Fellowship at the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTrE). In 2009 she became an independent consultant and researcher. She continues this work as a member of the core team of the Lifewide Education Community. Jenny is a published author, editor of Lifewide Magazine and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.



CONTEXT

Background

This chapter complements chapter A3 where Jackson (2013) assembles and discusses theories of wellbeing, and chapter C3 (Willis 2013), where I examine data arising from our 2013 Lifewide Education survey of a group of UK respondents. This was a small scale survey with 25 responses. The survey was repeated with a group of postgraduate students studying education, at the Beijing Normal University, in April 2013 (n=22). In light of feedback from our UK respondents, the questionnaire was slightly modified, to include four new sub-sections in question 10. Neither group was typical of their national populations, being skewed in terms of age, professional experience and education. However, some interesting differences in perceptions of wellbeing and individual lifestyles were suggested within and between the two data sets, which warranted further exploration. So, as part of a workshop delivered on the theme of wellbeing at the World Federation for Mental Health Congress in Argentina, in August 2013, I invited participants to complete the same questionnaire. The workshop was attended by around 50 people, all either students preparing for a career in mental health, or experienced professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and general practitioners). 29 returns were made, mostly in Spanish, and with varying degrees of completeness.

All three surveys have been analysed using Excel software for question 10, and qualitative data has been examined as described in chapter C3. For readily understood language reasons, the Beijing survey was unable to collect narrative data. I translated the Spanish language responses from Argentina into English.

In this chapter, we therefore compare the data from three surveys conducted in the same year in three different parts of the world. We examine any apparent differences according to gender and age within each data set, and between data sets in order to determine whether there may be cultural differences in how wellbeing is perceived and hence how individuals prioritise their lifewide activities.

Conceptual frameworks

Chapters A3 and C3 discuss the conceptual frameworks to which our data are related. Without repeating that discussion, readers are reminded briefly of the relevant paradigms. They include:

- Alderfer's (1980) refined model of Maslow's human needs, which identifies three contributors to wellbeing: **growth**, **relatedness** and **existence**
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013) focus on **life-evaluation** (eg work, health, income); **affect** (eg happiness, worry, anger)) and **eudaimonia** (realisation of our potential, eg meaning and purpose, autonomy, competence)
- Seligman's (2012) and Diener et al's (1999) notion of eudaimonia: **health**, **happiness** and **contentedness**



- The National Economic Foundation (nef) (2011) set of five measurable indicators of wellbeing: **connecting** with others; **being active**; **taking notice**; keeping on **learning**; and **giving** to others
- Amabile and Kramer's (2012) organisational nourishers of wellbeing: **encouragement**, **emotional support** and **affiliation**
- Deci and Ryan's (2002, 2008) focus on **competence**, **autonomy** and **relatedness**

Whilst each of these perspectives is unique, they share common elements and are iterative. We shall refer to them in our conclusions regarding each data set.

Survey data sets

Figure 1 summarises the profile of respondents in each data set. They are of similar size and together total 76 people, a relatively small sample, but sufficient to indicate potential differences in perception.

Figure 1 Data sets for the three surveys

	UK	Beijing	Argentina	Total
Total	25	22	29	76
Gender m. f. ?	12 13	6 16	5 20 4	23 49 4
Age <30 >30 ?	6 19	22 0	18 8 3	46 27 3
Nationality	British	Chinese	Argentinian, Peruvian, Spanish, Singaporean, Australian, American	
Occupation	From school student to retired, all professionals	Postgraduate students of English	Psychology students, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurse, general practitioners, sound technician, administrator	

The UK group is biased towards older respondents (oldest is in his 80s), whose lifetime experience is greater and whose aspirations for the future may be influenced by their age. All are British, and all are well educated. There is an equal balance between male and female.

The Beijing group is composed entirely of postgraduate students of education, making it atypical of the population. Women outnumber men at nearly 3:1. The group is cohesive in its culture and language (Chinese).



The Argentinian group actually comprises other South American nationals, one dual nationality American/Argentinian, one Spaniard, one Australian and two Singaporeans. The set is treated as one group, despite these few non-Hispanic representatives. What they have in common is their professional roles: with one exception, they are either students of psychology or experienced professionals working in the field of health or mental health. The one exception is one of the technicians who was servicing the workshop and was so interested that he joined in! This group is diverse in age, overlapping with both the young Chinese respondents and the older UK group. Like the Chinese group, it is biased towards females, perhaps reflecting institutionalised gender roles associated with health and caring.

COMPARATIVE PERCEPTIONS QUESTION 10

The survey comprised 12 questions of which 11 asked for narrative answers. Question 10 was quantitative, making it more easily transferred across languages and enabling comparisons to be drawn between sub-sets of respondents. The following discussion focuses on responses to this question.

Question 10 asked respondents to rate each of twelve potential contributors to wellbeing, on the scale 1 = of very little, to 10 = of very great, personal importance. Dimensions range from interpersonal relationships, through learning and physical activity, and achievement to giving to others. These dimensions reflect theories such as the nef's 5 Ways to Wellbeing, the OECD's life-satisfaction/affect/eudaimonic model and Alderfer's model of growth/relatedness/existence (see chapter C3).

Figure 2 Question 10, possible contributors to wellbeing

Q1	Connecting with/ having good relationships with people I come into contact with everyday
Q2	Being healthy and fit , physically active - walking, sport, dancing etc
Q3	Being involved in the world - being curious and aware of the world around me - looking and finding new opportunities
Q4	Feeling creative - doing things that give me a chance to be creative, inventive or resourceful
Q5	Continually learning and developing myself
Q6	Doing new things that interest me
Q7	Making progress in the things I am doing
Q8	Doing things with and for other people
Q9	Having a close relationship with someone I trust and can discuss anything with
Q10	Feeling that I am valued by the people that matter to me
Q11	Being able to do the things I want or need to do
Q12	Achieving something I think worthwhile
Q13	Having enough money to do what I need to do
Q14	Having a religious or spiritual belief
Q15	Having time to do what I want and need to do
Q16	Being able to deal effectively with difficult situations

Feedback from the UK survey proposed that four additional dimensions might be relevant: (13) having enough money; (14) having a spiritual or religious belief; (15) having enough time; and (16) being able to deal effectively with difficult situations. They were therefore added to make a total of 16 dimensions. Figure 2 lists these, as a point of reference for this discussion of question 10. It should be noted, though, that the first data set addresses only dimensions 1-12, whereas the remaining two address all 16 dimensions.



Mean scores

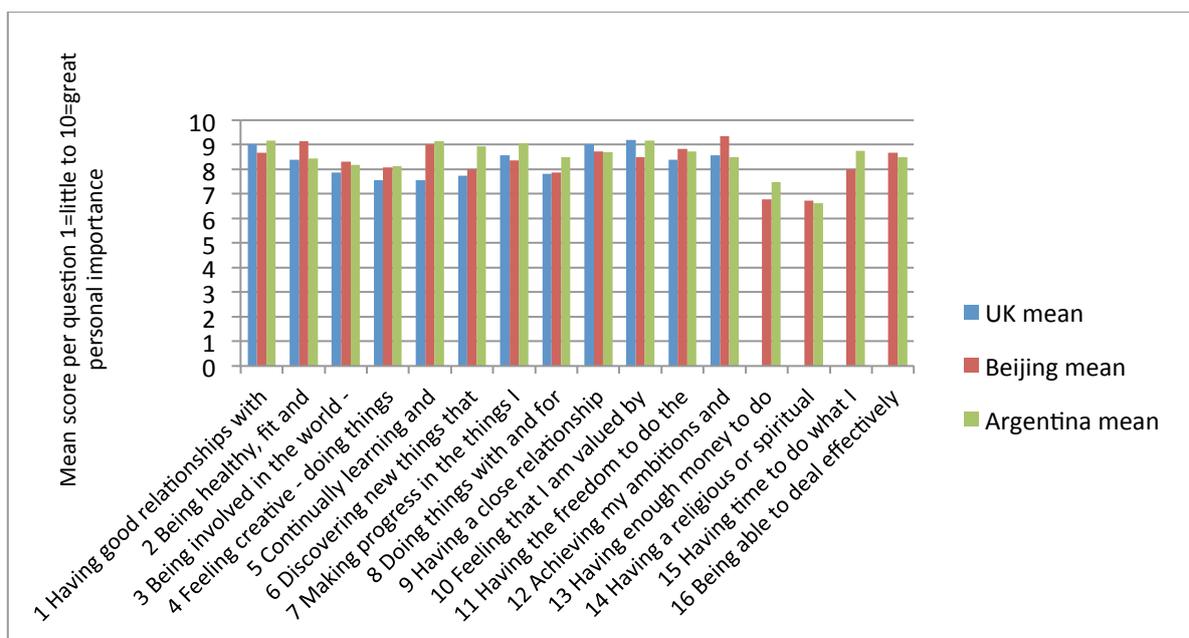
We begin with a comparison of responses by data set. The mean score for each dimension has been calculated and is shown, by group, in Figure 3. Colour coding draws attention to the comparative significance of dimensions to each group.

The first observation is that all three groups were very positive in their responses: mean scores ranged from 9.36 (Beijing, question 12, achieving something worthwhile) to 6.62 (Argentina, question 14, having a religious or spiritual belief). The Argentinian group was the most diverse in its scoring, from mean 9.17 to 6.62.

The Argentinian group was also the most positive, with a mean score across all dimensions of 8.5. This was closely followed by the Beijing group, whose mean was 8.32, and the UK group, with a mean of 8.30.

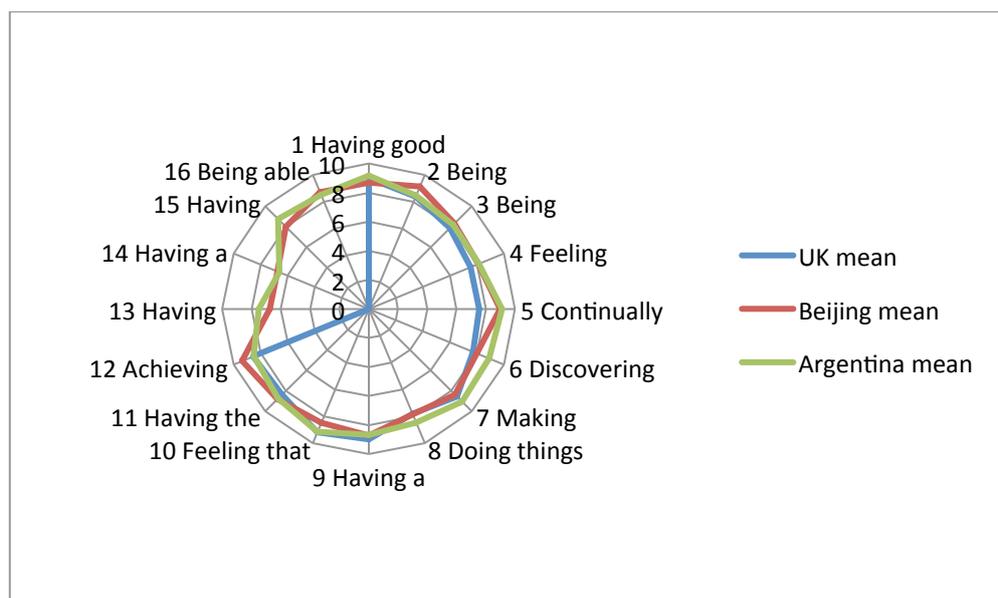
In other words, irrespective of cultural background and age, respondents to these surveys display a high level of wellbeing.

Figure 3 Comparative mean scores by data sets



When we probe the dimensions of greatest and least value to respondents, we begin to find differences. Figure 4 offers an overview of these.

Figure 4 Overview of three data sets



To simplify the analysis, Figure 5 summarises in narrative form the three most significant dimensions to each of the groups.

Figure 5 Most significant dimensions to each group

	UK	Beijing	Argentinian
1 st most important	(10) Feeling valued	(12) Achieving my ambitions and goals	(1) Having good everyday relationships
2 nd most important	(9) Having a close relationship	(2) Being healthy and fit	(=1 st)(10) Feeling valued
3 rd most important	(=2 nd)(1) Having good everyday relationships	(5) Continually learning & developing myself	(5) Continually learning & developing myself

It is immediately apparent that each group is different. This might be due to their different ages eg the Chinese students rate physical health highly, whereas this is not a priority for the older UK group. We shall examine age and gender differences shortly. An alternative interpretation might be that there is a cultural impact.

The UK group rate Q10, feeling valued (mean score 9.19), Q9, having a close relationship and Q1, connecting with others (both mean scores 9). In other words, affect and relationships are paramount for this group. Together with the need to feel valued, they reflect a much less task-oriented perception of wellbeing.

For the Beijing group, favoured dimensions were Q12, achieving something worthwhile (mean score 9.36), Q2, being healthy (mean score 9.14) and Q5, continually learning (mean score 9). These are very high scores, Q12's being the highest for any group. Together, the dimensions seem to confirm a drive for achievement and importance attributed to being physically well, too. It may be significant that the Chinese students appear to be

more independent, conforming to a stereotypical competitiveness associated with the nation.

The Argentinian group combines the importance of relationships, Q1 and of feeling valued, Q.10 (both with mean scores 9.17). Their next priority is Q5, continually learning and developing (mean score 9.14), is almost equally important, revealing an intriguing mix of affect and achievement which straddles the profiles of the other two groups.

Turning to the other end of the spectrum, what are the least important dimensions for each set?

Figure 6 Least important dimensions by group

	UK	Beijing	Argentinian
Least important	= (4) Feeling creative = (5) Continually learning & developing myself (6) Discovering new things	(14) Having a faith (13) Having enough money (8) Doing things with and for others	(14) Having a faith (13) Having enough money (4) Feeling creative

Once more, profiles are quite distinct, though we must bear in mind that the UK group did not have dimensions 13-16 to choose from, so theirs might have been different. As it stands, the UK group shows limited interest in self-development and self-fulfilment, scoring the dimensions 7.56, 7.56 and 7.75 respectively. These could be attributed to the greater age of these respondents, who have reached a stage of life where they are enjoying retirement and their families, as revealed by their priorities (Figure 6).

The Beijing and Argentinian groups share two dimensions: Q14, having a faith (mean scores 6.62 and 6.73 respectively) and Q13, having enough money (means of 6.77 and 7.48). The latter show that financial issues are less of a concern for the Beijing respondents, again possibly reflecting their age as students not yet having to earn a living. The third dimension of least importance to the Beijing group is Q8, doing things with and for others (mean score 7.86). This is numerically significantly higher than the other two dimensions, but is consistent with the competitive stereotype often attributed to their country.

The Argentinians' third dimension of least priority is Q4, feeling creative (mean score 8.14). This is considerably higher than their other two low priorities, and in fact, is rate almost the same as Q3, being involved in the world (scoring 8.17).

It is therefore difficult to draw a clear conclusion on the areas of least importance to the Beijing and Argentinian groups other than that matters of religion and finance are low priorities. Altruism and self-fulfilment through creativity are potentially secondary dimensions.

Relevance to theories of wellbeing

Finally, let us conclude this part of the discussion with an attempt to relate profiles to the themes we met in the theories of wellbeing: affiliation (Amabile and Kramer 2012); eudaimonia (Seligman 2012, Diener et al 1999); growth/ relatedness/ existence (Alderfer 1980); life satisfaction/ affect/ eudaimonia (OECD 2013); connecting/ being active/ taking notice/ learning/ giving to others (nef 2011); competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci and Ryan 2002, 2008). We shall use this format to establish similarities and differences between subsets in the ensuing discussion.

Figure 7 Conceptual alliance of each group

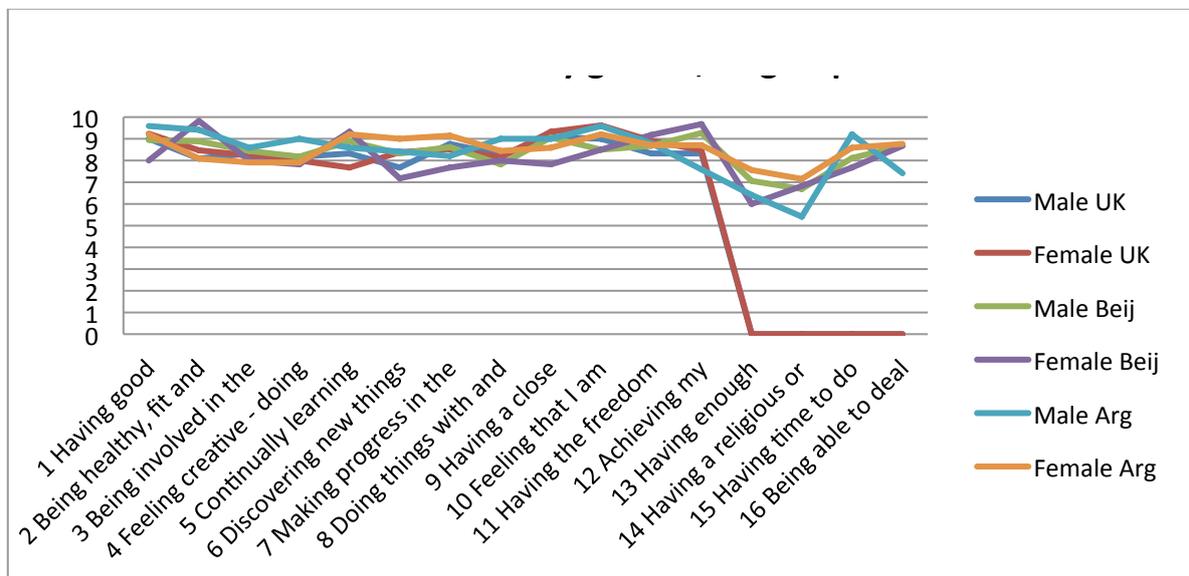
	UK	Beijing	Argentinian
Group profile	Affiliation Life satisfaction/ affect/eudaimonia	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Affiliation Growth/ relatedness/ existence

When viewed in these terms, we can see the subtle differences between the ‘national’ profiles. The similarity between the UK and Argentinians is evident, whilst the Beijing profile is distinct.

Comparisons by gender

Figure 8 collates the mean scores for each dimension of question 10, by gender sub-sets for each group. Again, we recall that the UK survey did not include dimensions 13-16, so these feature as zero scores in the figure.

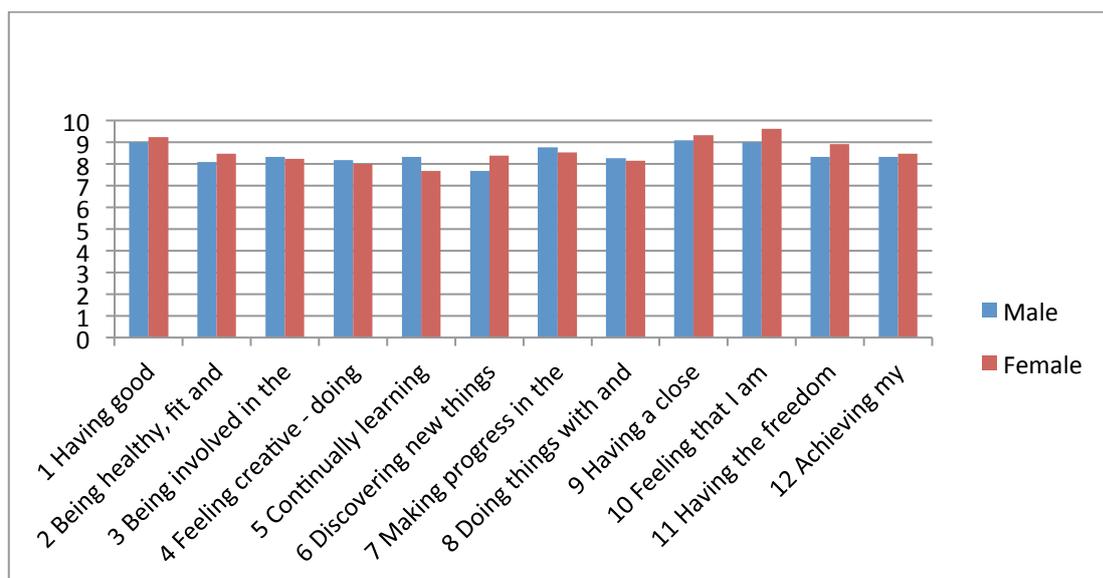
Figure 8 Mean scores by gender, all groups



The data are difficult to extrapolate from this image, though they confirm the overwhelming positive response to most dimensions. Let us therefore look at each group’s subsets in turn.

UK gender sets: The balance of male to female respondents in this group is 12:13, enabling us to have a fair gender profile. As illustrated in Figure 9, the UK women were slightly more positive in their views than were the men, with mean scores of 8.58 and 8.44. Their lowest score was also marginally higher than the men’s, at 7.69 compared with 7.67.

Figure 9 Mean responses by gender UK survey



The three highest mean scores for the men were Q9, having a close relationship (score 9.08) followed by Q1, having good everyday relationships and Q10, feeling valued (both scoring 9). The women's favoured dimensions were the same, but in a different order, and to a higher degree of positivity. They were: feeling valued (9.62), having a close relationship (9.31) and having good everyday relationships (9.23). This would suggest that there is substantial agreement between the genders, though the women are more positive.

When we examine the dimension of least significant to these respondents, the men choose Q6, doing new things (mean score 7.67) and the women Q5, continually learning and developing (mean score 7.69). Again there is consistency, these two dimensions both relating to personal development, and their scores being almost identical.

The reasons for these scores is posited as lying in the age of most UK respondents: as noted earlier, they are mostly retired or approaching retirement age, a time traditionally for 'winding down' and enjoying family relationships.

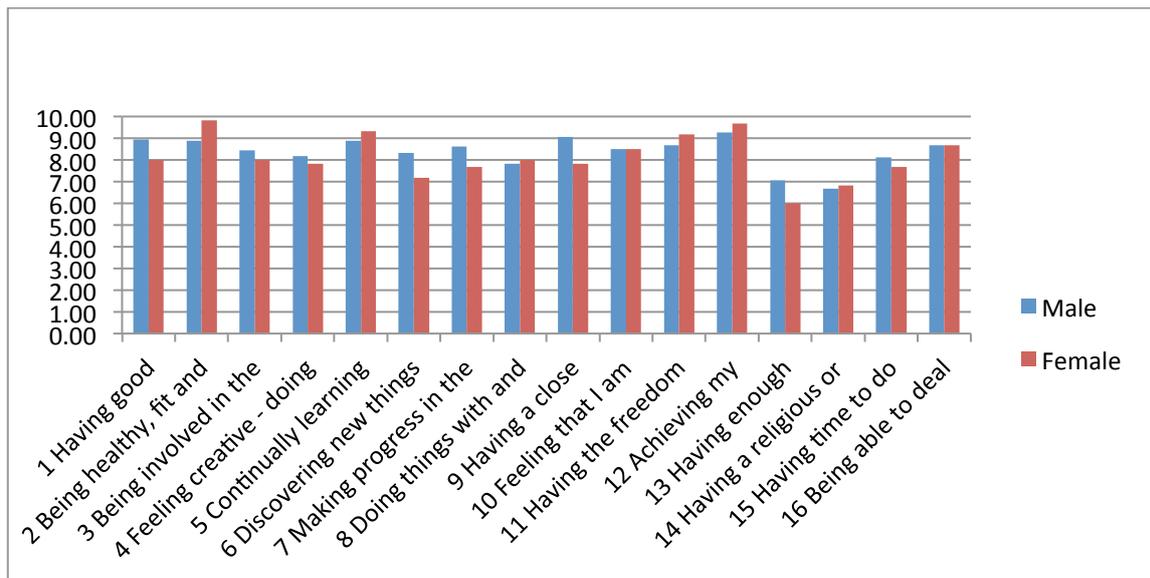
Beijing gender sets

The imbalance between male and female respondents in this group has already been noted, at 6:16. This naturally impacts on the generalisability of any findings in this respect.

Figure 10 shows that the most important dimensions for the men were Q12, achieving ambitions (mean score 9.25), Q10, having a close relationship (mean 9.06) and Q1, having good everyday relationships (8.94). This implies a less driven, and more affective focus, than stereotypes would suggest.

The women's profile is quite different: they prioritise Q2, being fit and health (mean score 9.83), Q12, achieving ambitions (mean 9.67) and Q5, continually learning and developing (mean 9.33). Whilst their age may impact on their current priorities, these women appear far more driven to achieve than the men, and the degree of positivity these scores represent is higher than that of the men.

Figure 10 Mean responses by gender Beijing survey

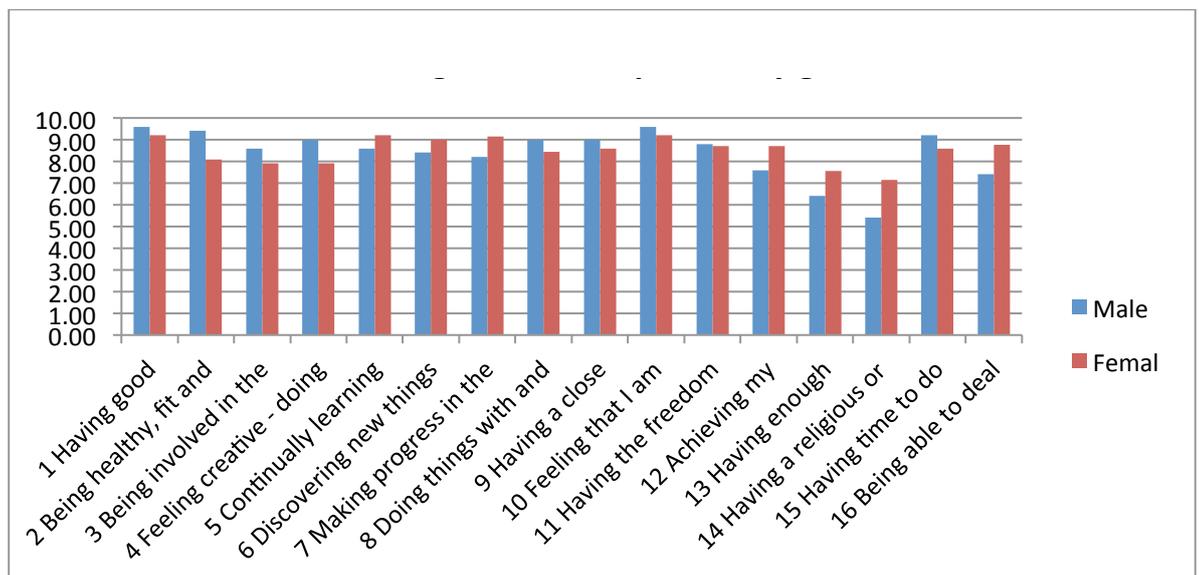


If we compare the dimensions of least importance to the Beijing respondents, we find the men and women are largely in agreement, and to the same degree: for men, they are Q14, having a faith and Q13, having sufficient money (mean scores 6.19 and 7.06 respectively) and for women, they are Q13 and Q14 (mean scores 6 and 6.83). As has already been suggested, these tendencies may be a reflection of respondents' age and stage of career development, and will change over time.

Argentinian gender sets

Figure 11 gives the gender overview for the Argentinian group. We recall that there is an imbalance for this group, too, with data relating to five men and 20 women (four respondents withheld this information, and have not been included in this part of the analysis).

Figure 11 Mean responses by gender Argentinian survey



In this group, it was the men who were more positive than the women. Their first equal dimensions were Q10, feeling valued and Q1, having good everyday relationships (with mean scores of 9.60), then Q2, being healthy and fit (mean score 9.40). These are the most positive scores of any gender subset across the three groups. They reveal the importance of other people and their opinions to these men.

The female Argentinians rated three dimensions equally: Q1, having good everyday relationships, Q5, continually learning and developing, and Q10, feeling valued (mean scores of 9.20). Two of these dimensions overlap with their male counterparts, but physical fitness is replaced for the women by intellectual development.

Turning to the least important dimensions, both men and women chose Q14, having a religious belief. However, the men were more negative than the women, with means scores of 5.40 and 7.15 respectively. This finding contradicts expectations from a part of the world often associated with Roman Catholicism.

Summary of gender differences

Figure 12 summarises the discussion, showing the most and least significant dimensions for each subset, and the mean score for each. The table allows us to compare laterally across cultures and vertically, within cultural groups.

Figure 12 Dimensions by gender and group

	UK group	Beijing group	Argentinian group
Most important, male	Q9, close relationship 9.08 Q1, good relationships 9.00 Q10, feeling valued 9.00	Q12, achieving goals 9.25 Q9, close relationship 9.06 Q1, good relationships 8.94	Q1, good relationships 9.60 Q10, feeling valued 9.60 Q2, being healthy 9.40
Most important, female	Q10, feeling valued 9.62 Q9, close relationship 9.31 Q1, good relationships 9.23	Q2, being healthy 9.83 Q12, achieving goals 9.67 Q5, learning 9.33	Q1, good relationships 9.20 Q5, learning 9.20 Q10, feeling valued 9.20
Least important, male	Q6, new things 7.67	Q14, religious belief 6.19	Q14, religious belief 5.40
Least important, female	Q5, learning 7.69	Q13, enough money 6.00	Q14, religious belief 7.15

Any conclusions must be cautious, given the size of samples but, if they are typical of their cultures and gender, we make the following observations:

- The Argentinian males are the most positive about their high priorities
- The UK females are the most positive women, indicating no cultural difference



- The women in each group score priorities highly, perhaps indicating a gender trait
- The recurrent dimensions of greatest importance for men and women, and across cultures, are Q1, good relationships, Q9, having a close relationship and Q10, feeling valued. These reflect the importance of interpersonal relationships to our sense of wellbeing, wherever we come from
- For men and women in the Beijing group, achieving goals is a priority. This is consistent with cultural attitudes
- Being physically fit straddles the genders, being important to male Argentinians and the female Chinese respondents
- Having a religious belief is a low priority for men and women in the Beijing and Argentinian groups, belying stereotypical expectations of the latter
- Both men and women in the UK give low importance to learning and developing, a finding we have attributed to the age profile of this group

An alternative view is to summarise the subsets by their theoretical alliances, as we did in Figure 7 for the full groups.

Figure 13 Theoretical alliances by gender and group

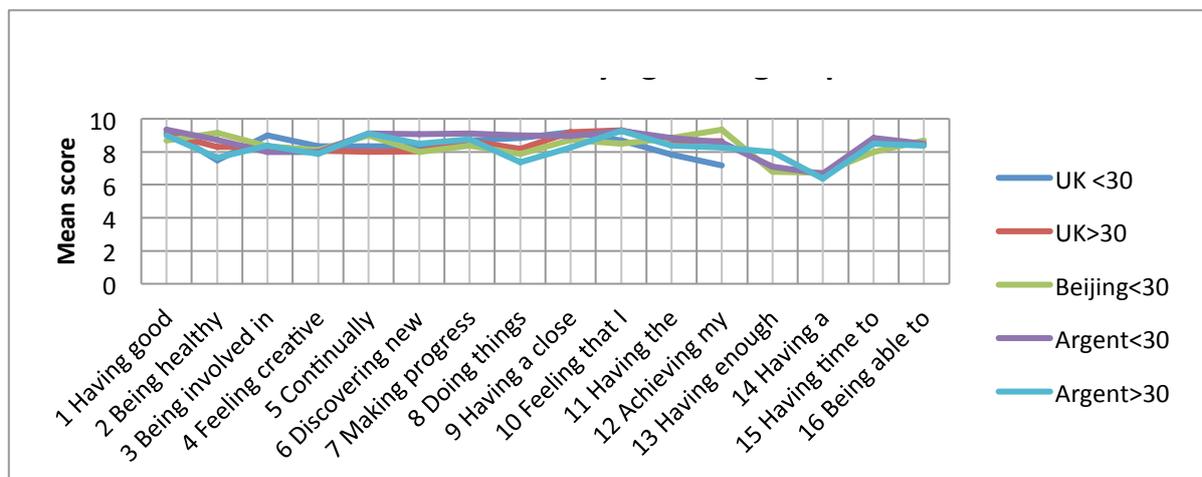
	UK group	Beijing group	Argentinian group
Male profile	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Life satisfaction/ affect/ eudaimonia
Female profile	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/relatedness	Life satisfaction/ affect/ eudaimonia

In short, the gender differences are less apparent within the cultural groups than between cultural groups. This is an intriguing finding and would be worth exploring further in the context of equalities legislation.

Comparisons by age

Figure 14 shows the mean score for all respondents by group age set for each question.

Figure 14 Mean scores by age and group



The age of UK respondents ranged from 14 to 80+ years, but only six of the 25 were under 30; the remainder were over 50. All Beijing students were between 21 and 30 years of age. The Argentinian group was more mixed, with 18 respondents under the age of 30, eight over, and three undeclared. This means that the profiles of the three groups are quite different, but there seemed to be a common demarcation at age >30. For this reason, the data is now examined according to two age groups: up to 30 and over 30.

The UK data did not include questions 13-16, so these respondents' lines stop at question 12. It will also be noticed that there is only one line for the Beijing group, they being in the same age set.

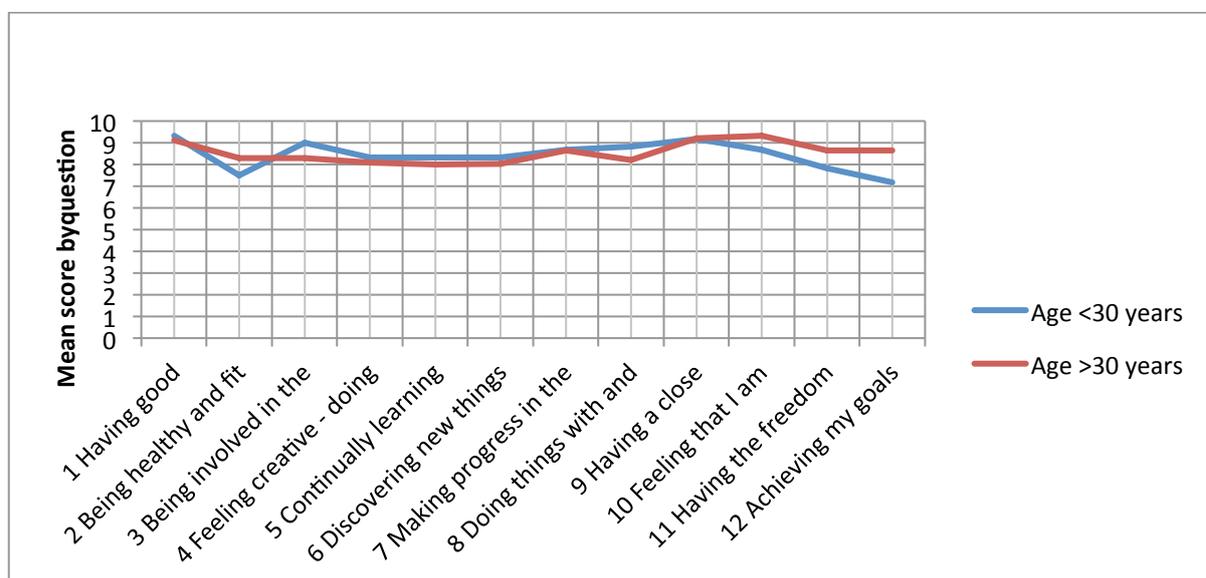
Whilst the data in Figure 14 is difficult to read, in view of the closeness of scores for each set, we again observe that mean ratings are very high. The lowest score is registered by the Argentinians aged >30, for Q14, having a religious belief, at mean 6.38. The younger Argentinians score this 6.67 and the Beijing group scores it 6.73. These figures are consistent with the low priority of religion discussed in the last section.

The highest mean score is 9.36. This is for Q12, achieving goals, and is registered by the Beijing group. The score is followed very closely by Q1, having good everyday relationships, which receives a score of 9.33 by the young UK and young Argentinian sets. The older UK and Argentinian sets both prioritised Q10, feeling valued, at 9.32 and 9.28 points respectively.

UK respondents by age group

Figure 15 shows the profiles for the under and over 30s.

UK respondents by age group



We are now able to identify the points of discrepancy according to age. There are some clear dimensions where scores follow a similar pattern, though to a less positive degree for the older set eg Q4-6, and at three points, they converge: Q1, having good relationships, Q7, making progress and Q9, having a close relationship. But what are the points of greatest divergence?



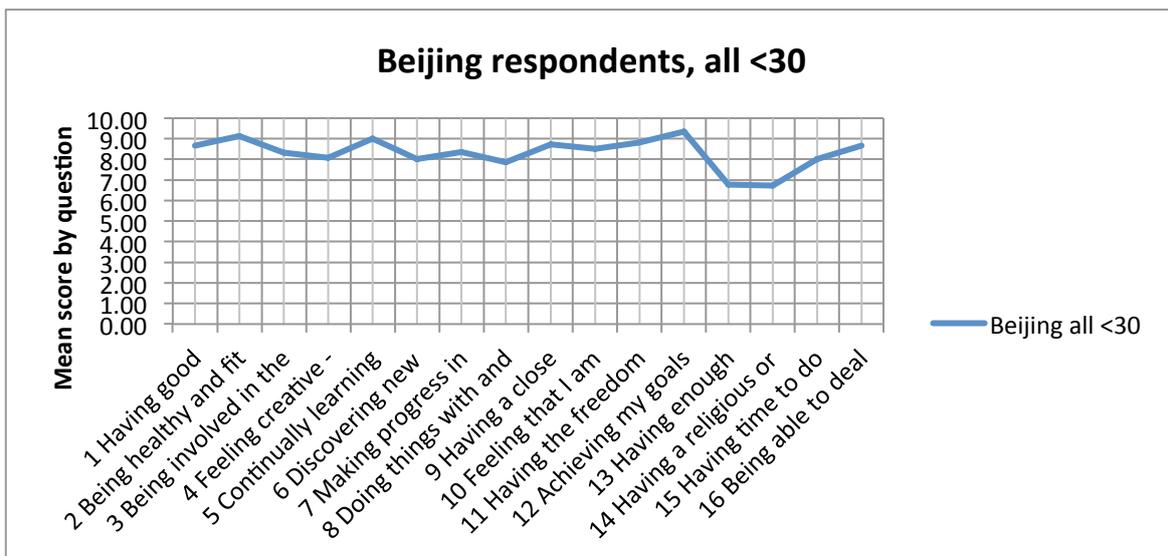
There is most disagreement regarding Q12, achieving goals, with a divergence of 1.47 points. It is perhaps surprising that it is the older group who prioritise this dimension. The over 30s also score dimensions 10 (feeling valued), 11(freedom to do things of interest) and 2 (being healthy) more highly than the younger set, with mean differences of 0.65, 0.81 and 0.78 respectively. Achievement and recognition are paramount for them. We might hypothesise that as we grow older and our life expectancy diminishes, we value our days more, and, when retired, have the time to devote to others, as well as perhaps a greater understanding of the needs of others.

Conversely, the younger set is more positive than their older peers in respect of Q3, being involved and curious, with a difference of 0.72 points, and Q8, doing things with and for others (difference 0.65). We would need to probe these responses to determine whether it is lack of volition on the part of older respondents to be involved in these domains, or constraints of age.

Beijing respondents by age group

Since all respondents in this group fall into one age bracket (<30), the profile we have is the same as features in Figures 3 and 4, though it is presented differently in Figure 16.

Figure 16 Beijing respondents



We are reminded that the dimensions of highest priority for these respondents are 12 (achieving goals), mean score 9.36, 2 (being healthy), scoring 9.14, and 5 (continually learning), score 9.0. Least importance is attributed to having enough money or a religious belief (scores 6.77 and 6.73 respectively). The focus is therefore on personal development and achievement, though whether this is age-related or a cultural tendency would require further investigation.

Argentinian respondents by age group

Figure 17 shows the means scores for the Argentinian group, by age set.

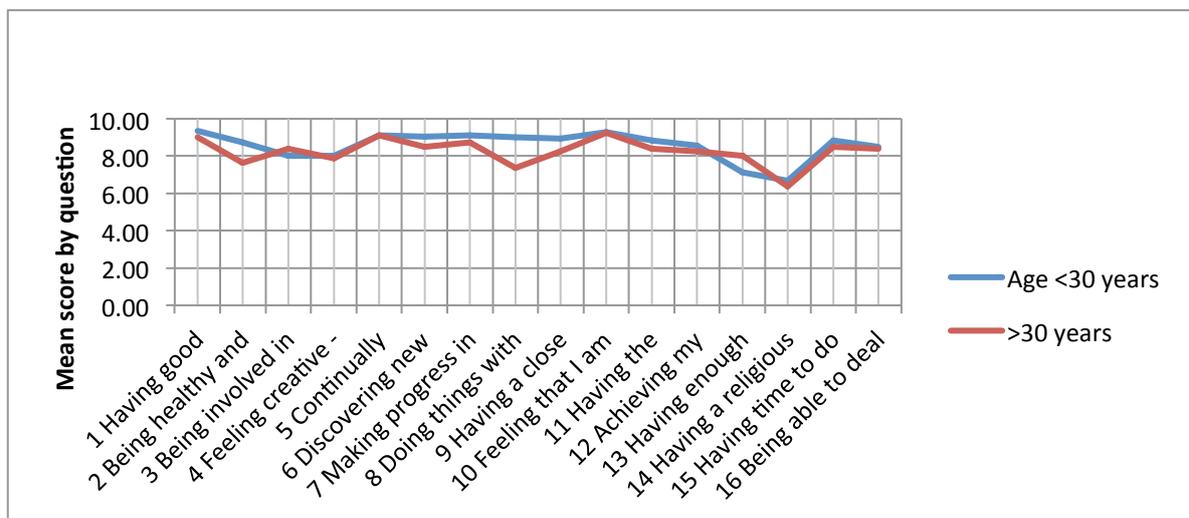
The two lines are more divergent than are the UK sets, though there are a few points of agreement between both age groups: Q4, being creative, mean scores 8.0 and 7.88; Q5, continually learning, scores 9.11 and 9.13, and Q10, feeling valued, scores 9.28 and 9.25.

These dimensions are all related to self-actualisation and personal respect.

Like the UK group, the Argentinian age sets have differing priorities. The under 30s have a mean score of 1.63 points higher than the older group for Q8, doing things with and for other people, and Q2, being healthy and physically active, is 1.10 points higher. The older group scores more highly than the under 30s for Q13, having sufficient money.

The under 30s' highest priorities are Q1, having good relationships, mean score 9.33; Q10, feeling valued, mean score 9.28; Q5, continually learning and Q7, making progress, both with mean score 9.11. The over 30s also prioritise three of these dimensions, though in a different sequence and to a lesser degree of positivity: Q10, feeling valued, Q5 continually learning, and Q1, having good relationships, with means scores respectively of 9.25, 9.13 and 9.0.

Figure 17 Argentinian respondents by age group



The dimension of least importance to both age groups is Q14, having a religious belief, which has means of 6.67 and 6.38 respectively.

We can conclude that, if these respondents are representative, there are some dimensions which retain their value irrespective of age, whilst others have a distinct importance at certain stages of life.

Summary of differences by age group

Having compared the age sets within their groups, now let us consider the sets across groups. Figure 18 summaries the highest and lowest scores for each age by group, allowing for both lateral and vertical reading (cf Figure 11).

Figure 18 Priorities by group and age set

	UK group	Beijing group	Argentinian group
Most important, <30	Q1, good relationships 9.33 Q9, close relationship 9.17 Q10, feeling valued 9.00	Q12, achieving goals 9.36 Q2, fit and healthy 9.14 Q5, learning 9.00	Q1, good relationships 9.33 Q10, feeling valued 9.28 Q5= learning 9.11 Q7= making progress 9.11
Most important, >30	Q10, feeling valued 9.32 Q9, close relationship 9.20 Q1, good relationships 9.12		Q10, feeling valued 9.25 Q5, learning 9.13 Q1. good relationships 9.00
Least important, <30	Q2, fit and healthy 7.50	Q14, religious belief 6.73	Q14, religious belief 6.67
Least important, >30	Q5, learning 8.00		Q14, religious belief 6.38

We can make the following observations from this comparative data:

- The age sets in the UK group were in agreement on the three dimensions of highest significance, and their scores were almost identical, suggesting that there may be consistency of values through life in this culture, if these respondents are typical
- The three dimensions of greatest significance point to social needs and that of being valued by others
- The UK respondents differ, however, on their least favoured dimension: the young set appear to depart from the trend for fitness, scoring this only 7.50, whereas the older set no longer feels the drive to keep learning. The mean score of 8.0 is nevertheless relatively high, which would suggest that learning is a part of their lives. Once again, further qualitative research would be necessary to determine whether respondents' circumstances force them to curtail what they might have wished to pursue, had they had the time and other resources
- The Beijing group is driven by achievement, both intellectually and physically
- As we have seen previously, spiritual belief is a low priority for the Beijing group
- The younger Argentinian set favours an interesting mix of affect and achievement/approval needs
- The over 30s Argentinians also prioritise good relationships and learning, but do not feel the need to mark progress
- For both Argentinian sets, religious belief is a low priority, registering almost identical scores

Once again, we can summarise these findings by aligning each subset with the key theories that best describe them. Figure 19 confirms the consistency with cultural groups for both age sets, and highlights the points of difference between the cultural groups.



Figure 19 Theoretical alliances by national and age groups

	UK group	Beijing group	Argentinian group
<age 30	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Affiliation Eudaimonia
>age 30	Affiliation		Affiliation Eudaimonia

TOWARDS SOME CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions may we draw from this comparison of our three data sets? Figure 20 draws together the theoretical alliances shown in Figures 7, 13 and 19, in order to provide an overview of key tendencies for each subset. As before, the figure can be read laterally to compare by cultural group, or vertically, to compare subsets within each cultural group.

Figure 20 Comparative theoretical alliances

	UK group	Beijing group	Argentinian group
Group profile	Affiliation Life satisfaction/ affect/eudaimonia	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Affiliation Growth/ relatedness/ existence
Male profile	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Life satisfaction/ affect/ eudaimonia
Female profile	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/relatedness	Life satisfaction/ affect/ eudaimonia
<age 30	Affiliation	Competence/ autonomy/ relatedness	Affiliation Eudaimonia
>age 30	Affiliation		Affiliation Eudaimonia

When viewed in this way, it is clear that cultural groups are consistent in their priorities, both between the genders and in age groups. Each cultural profile differs from the others, though affiliation/relatedness is a common dimension. A sense of achievement/eudaimonia is also present for all three groups, but is of far less significance to UK respondents.

We recognise that the size of the samples is modest, but these findings suggest avenues for further research in order to confirm or disconfirm apparent trends.

1 Impact of creativity on perceptions of wellbeing

A focus of Lifewide Education's research is the importance of creativity to the individual and society. For this reason, we now explore the data to see whether those students who believe themselves to be highly creative (ie those who scored Q4 the maximum 10 points) share the same mean profile as the remainder of their groups.

Eight UK respondents fell into this subset (respondents 3, 4, 9, 12, 16, 21, 22 and 24); six Beijing respondents (respondents 4, 6, 17, 18, 19 and 22) and eight Argentinian respondents (2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 22, 25, 29). The three 'creative' sets are proportionate to the

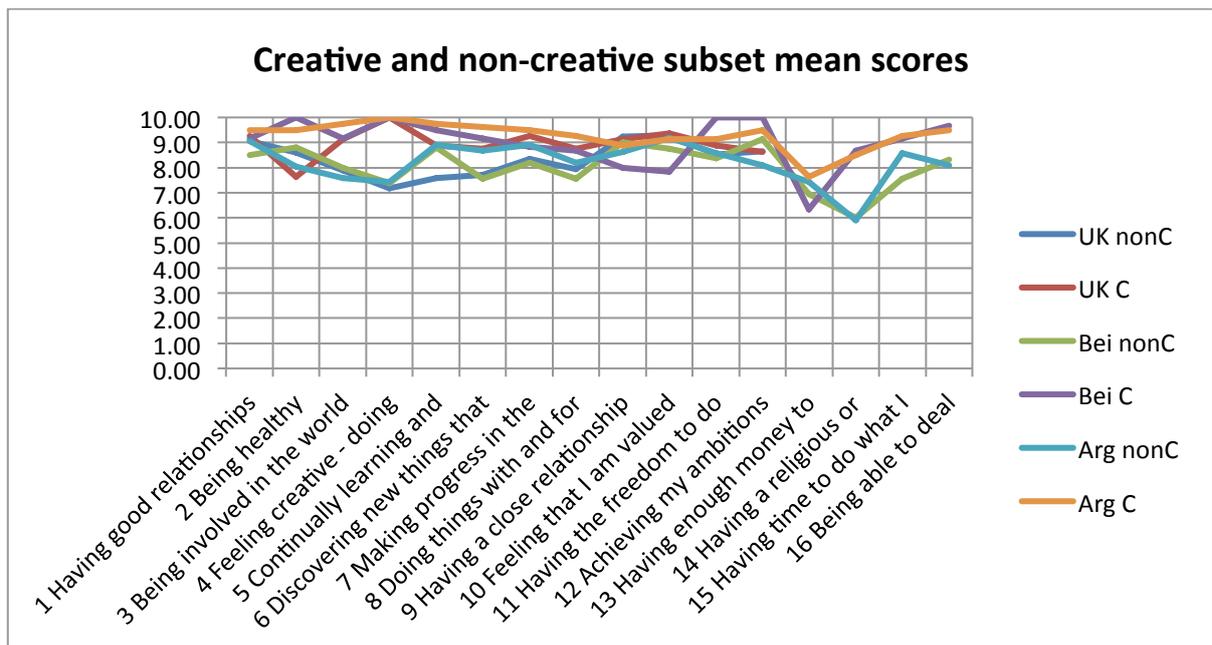


size of the group and to one another. The mean score for each of the questions was calculated for these sets.

The scores for the remaining respondents in each group were then combined and a mean for each 'non-creative' subset was calculated. The aim was to identify whether there was any difference between the profiles of the creative and non-creative sets. Figure 21 reveals the findings.

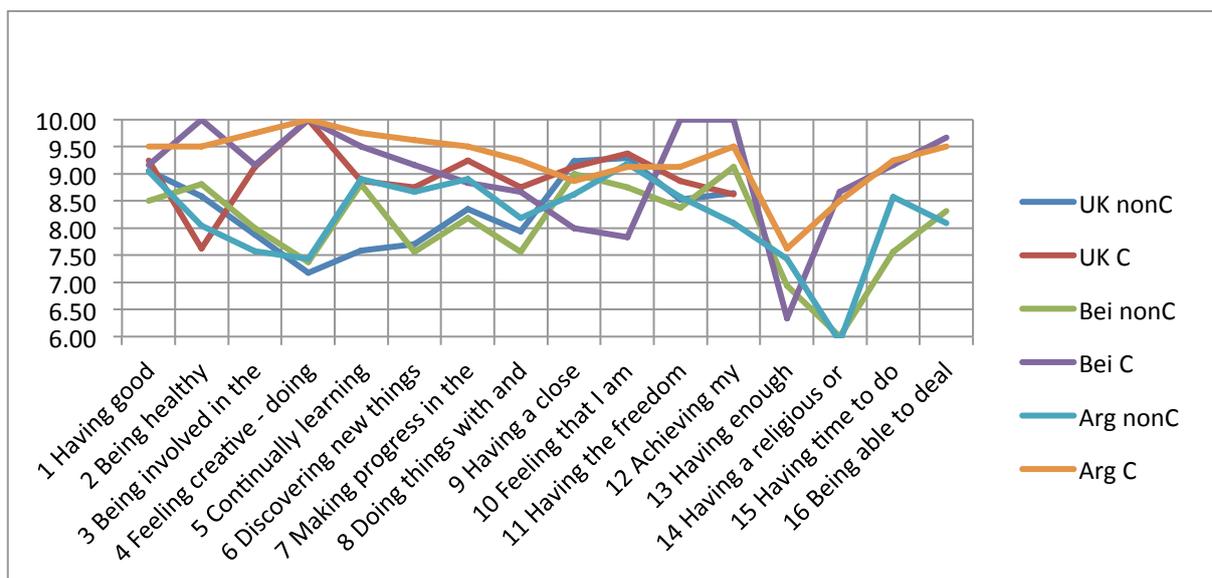
The 'creative' lines appear as brown, purple and orange. We recall that the UK group responded to only 12 questions, hence their profiles terminate at that point.

Figure 21 Differences by self-declared creativity



To view the data more easily, Figure 22 homes in on the score area (mean scores 6 - 10).

Figure 22 Creative and non-creative subset mean scores



In general, the creative groups (brown, purple and orange lines) are above the other, indicating greater positivity on the dimension in question. However, the UK 'creatives' differ widely in respect of health (Q2), which they do not rate highly, whilst Beijing creative set is the least interested in money (Q13) and the least inclined to feel a need to be valued by others (Q10). With these exceptions, the non-creative subsets are less positive in their scores. The mean scores for all questions by subset confirm the more positive outlook of creative types. They are:

UK non-creative	8.33
UK creative	8.97
Beijing non-creative	8.05
Beijing creative	9.01
Argentinian non-creative	8.20
Argentinian creative	9.27

Significantly, the three creative sets score the highest means. Of these, the Argentinians appear to be most positive. The size of our samples would need to be increased in order to establish the validity of these findings. We should also be aware that other factors that impact on lifestyle eg climate, diet, might also play a part in personal outlooks.

Nevertheless, the high mean scores suggest that most of the dimensions are important to a sense of wellbeing. This would be consistent with the nef's 5 Ways to Wellbeing, which recommend a healthy balance of activities (connecting with others; keeping active; taking notice; continuing to learn; giving to others).

2 Individual perceptions of wellbeing

The discussion has focused on collective perceptions, but to conclude this analysis, let us look briefly at some individuals. What are their priorities for wellbeing?

Most positive individuals

If we extract the most positive individuals, as identified by mean scores of nine or more points, we find a comparable proportion in each group (Figure 23).

Figure 23 Most positive respondents by personal mean score

UK		Beijing		Argentina	
Respondent	Mean Score	Respondent	Mean Score	Respondent	Mean Score
UK3	9.97	B1	9.13	AR5	10.0
UK5	9.50	B3	9.38	AR7	9.25
UK7	9.25	B7	9.25	AR8	9.31
UK12	9.00	B17	9.69	AR11	9.19
UK16	9.25	B18	9.56	AR19	9.06
UK24	10.0	B20	9.63	AR22	10.0
		B22	10	AR25	10.0

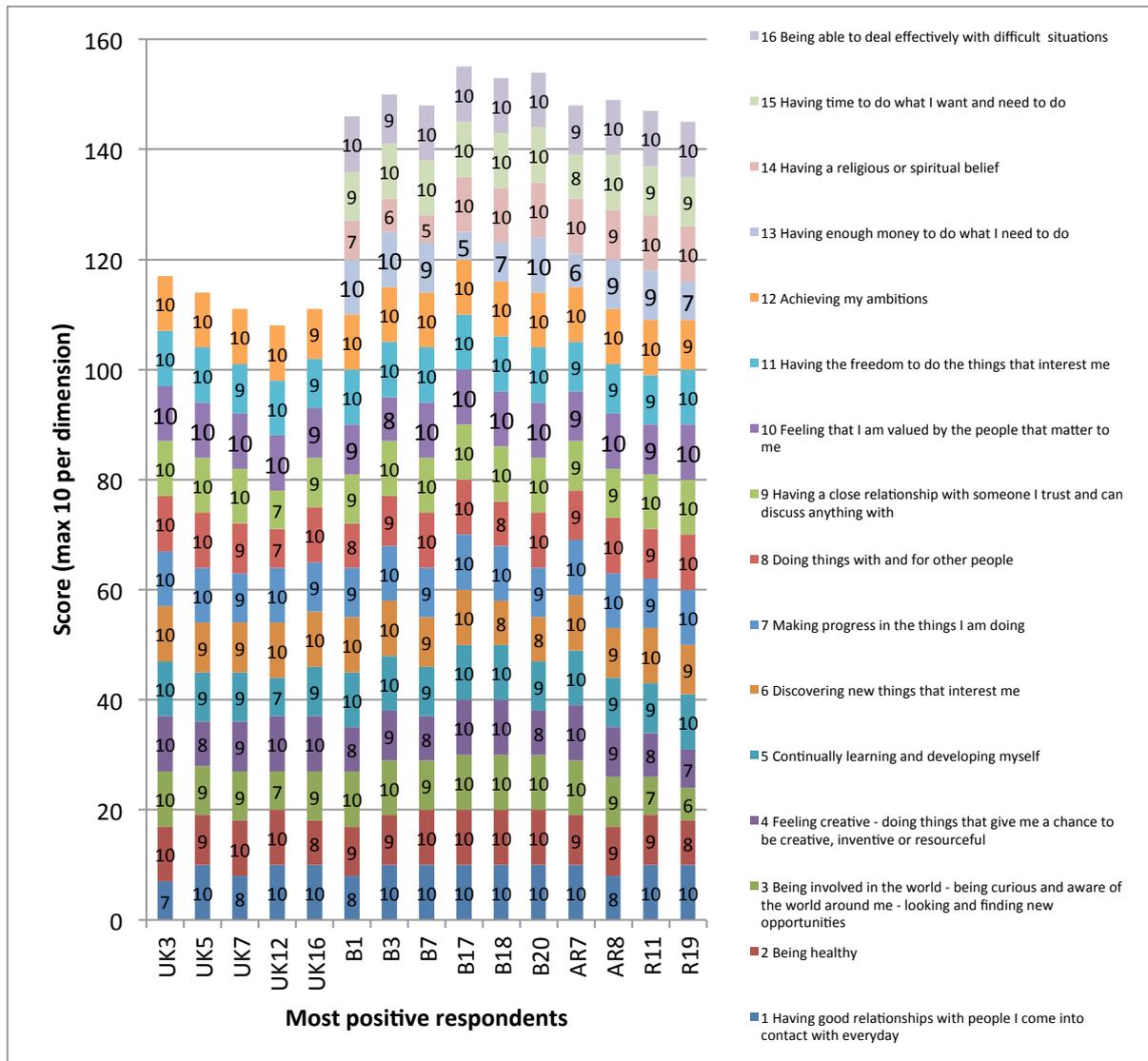
Those respondents who scored a perfect 10 have been excluded from the following analysis, since there would be no distinction between their scores for each dimension of question 10.



The first observation is how high these mean scores are, implying positivity across all or most dimensions.

Figure 24 compares the remaining respondents' personal mean scores for each dimension. We have noted previously that the UK group had only 12 dimensions.

Figure 24 Most positive individuals' means scores



As expected, each individual has his/her own priorities and pattern of scores, but some dimensions emerge that are of common importance. Notably, Q12, achieving ambitions is paramount, as are Q11, having freedom, Q10, feeling valued and Q16, being able to deal effectively with difficult situations. These combine to suggest that these individuals are highly ambitious achievers for whom autonomy is vital.

Conversely, the least importance dimensions to them as a subset are Q14, having a religious belief. As individuals, dimensions with 'low' scores vary, but even these scores are relatively positive, 7 being the lowest.

The positivity shown by these respondents indicates that they are, effectively, leading the lifestyles advocated by the nef's 5 Ways to Wellbeing, balancing different needs.

Least positive individuals

The least positive individual in each group is shown in Figure 25.

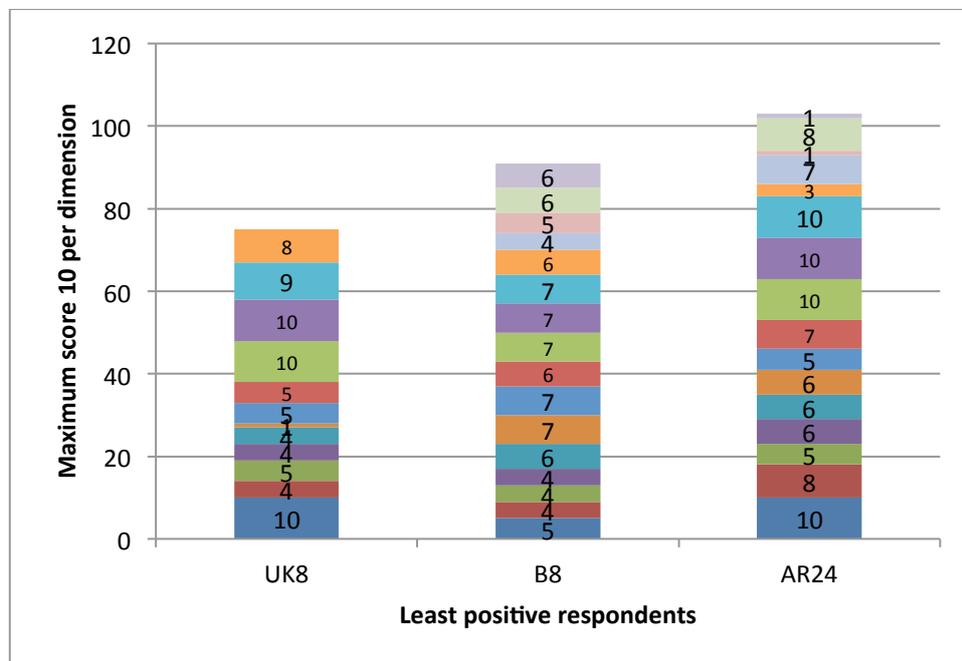
Once again, there is considerable consistency across the groups, and their mean scores are vastly different from those of the set just discussed.

Figure 25 Most negative respondent by group

UK		Beijing		Argentina	
Respondent	Mean Score	Respondent	Mean Score	Respondent	Mean Score
UK8	6.25	B8	5.69	AR24	6.44

We can examine their individual priorities (Figure 26), using the same legend as in Figure 24.

Figure 26 Least positive respondents by group



It is clear that these respondents have much more personalised profiles. There is no perfect unanimity on any one dimension, but Q10, feeling valued (purple band), has high scores of 10, 7 and 10 respectively, as does Q9, having a close relationship (upper green band). These more negative individuals therefore favour affect.

The dimensions of least importance to all three are Q3, being involved in the world (lower green band), with scores of 5, 4 and 5. This leaves us with the question, are they less positive because of their lack of engagement with the world, or does their lack of positivity make them disengaged? Either way, it seems that there may be a connection between a sense of wellbeing and engagement with the world around us.

The other dimensions least favoured by these respondents are individual to each and register scores as low as 1.



Positivity and negativity related to gender, age and creativity

Finally, can we attribute the positivity and negativity of these respondents to a common factor such as gender, age or creativity? Figure 27 shows the profiles of the most and least positive respondents, with the shaded cells indicating their gender and age group. Those who featured as 'creatives' are highlighted in red.

Figure 27 Personal profiles of most and least positive respondents

UK					Beijing					Argentina				
Resp/Mean		m	f	<30 >30	Resp/Mean		m	f	<30 >30	Resp/Mean		m	f	<30 >30
UK3	9.97				B1	9.13				AR5	10.0			
UK5	9.50				B3	9.38				AR7	9.25			
UK7	9.25				B7	9.25				AR8	9.31			
UK12	9.00				B17	9.69				AR11	9.19			
UK16	9.25				B18	9.56				AR19	9.06			
UK24	10.0				B20	9.63				AR22	10.0			
					B22	10.0				AR25	10.0	?	?	?
UK8	6.25				B8	5.69				AR24	6.44			

In terms of both gender and age group, there is no clear distinction across the groups, at either the highest or lowest level of positivity. 11 of the 23 respondents were identified as creative, which is a high proportion, though it has not been subject to rigorous statistical testing.

However, once we look at the profiles by cultural group patterns emerge, albeit distinct to each. The UK group's most and least positive respondents are in the older age group, which may sound counterintuitive. The Beijing group were all of a similar age so we can draw no conclusions there. The Argentinian group, however, is the mirror image of the UK one in terms of age, all but one being under 30. Where the other two groups are of mixed gender, the Argentinians are predominantly female. These findings suggest that there could be differences between the cultures, but larger scale and more in-depth research would be necessary to confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

FINAL COMMENTS

What, then, can we conclude from this close examination of our three data sets? We have compared them by cultural group, by gender, age and self-determined creativity, and at the level of individual responses to the 16 proposed dimensions of wellbeing.

We found that cultural groups are consistent in their priorities, both between the genders and in age groups. Although each cultural profile differs from the others, affiliation/relatedness was a common dimension to all. A sense of achievement/eudaimonia was also important to all three groups, but to a lesser degree for UK respondents.

It is at the individual level that we are best able to see the efficacy of models such as the nef's 5 Ways to Wellbeing. Here, we discovered that the most positive respondents incorporate elements of the five dimensions in their everyday lives, whilst the least positive do not. It seems probable that the dimensions provide a valuable recipe for our sense of personal wellbeing and we encourage individuals to reflect on the part they play in their own lives. They are: **connecting** with others; **being active**; **taking notice**; keeping on **learning**; and **giving** to others.



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