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# Eudaimonic and Hedonic Wellbeing Among Bangkokians: A Qualitative Study of Maslow's Needs, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values

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## Abstract

What contributes to a person's wellbeing varies from culture to culture and from individual to individual. Some determinants of happiness, though, seem to be similar among certain groups of people. Focusing on Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods, this qualitative study seeks to (i) discuss which levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are most influential for eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing, and (ii) determine whether intrinsic values are more prominent than extrinsic values for happiness. The interviews indicate that the first three levels of Maslow's pyramid were mostly met, thus creating the conditions for the participants to focus on esteem and self-actualization needs. Families' quality of life seems to have the strongest influence on individual subjective wellbeing, which is rooted in Asian philosophies and collectivism. It is also a strong predictor of short- and long-term happiness since the aspirations of most interviewees were related to their family's wellbeing and personal growth. Moreover, intrinsic values focusing on family, relationships, and career development proved to be more prominent than extrinsic values to achieve happiness. These results can help managers and policy makers focus on group strategies and enhance family support in Thailand.

**Keywords:** Happiness, Eudaimonic Wellbeing, Maslow, Intrinsic Motivation, Thailand

## 1. Introduction

Generally, people who are happy seem to be healthier (De Neve et al., 2013; Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016), live longer (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Stavrova, 2019), have more meaningful relationships (Stavrova, 2019; Stavrova & Luhmann, 2016) and do better in their careers (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999; Stavrova, 2019). What makes people happy depends on a number of factors. Variances in the number and the nature of factors that affect happiness have been studied philosophically since ancient times (Stavrova, 2019) and scientifically since the twentieth century (Stavrova, 2019). Happiness and wellbeing also vary from culture to culture, a field that has attracted great interest among researchers in the last decades (Stavrova, 2019). Living in a happy and harmonious place benefits the individual, society, and its economy (West, 2018). It should be noted that since happiness, wellbeing and quality of life are often used interchangeably in the relevant body of literature due to their close similarity of meaning, this will also be the case in this research. The focus in this study is on these concepts in the context of Bangkok, Thailand. Based on the findings of previous studies on this issue, its aim is to understand what the main determinants of eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing are for working-class Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods. More specifically, this study seeks to address the following research questions (RQ1 and RQ2) and verify the two hypotheses (H1 and H2) articulated.

- RQ1: Which levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are most influential for hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods?
  - **H1:** *Love/affection/belonging needs are the most influential ones for eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods.*
- RQ2: Are intrinsic values more prominent than extrinsic values for happiness among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods?
  - **H2:** *Intrinsic motivation is more prominent than extrinsic motivation in reaching higher levels of happiness among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods.*

This study begins with a review of the relevant existing literature. Figure 1 shows the organization of the topics discussed in the literature review section. First, general issues such as the origins, definitions, theories and the main determinants affecting wellbeing around the world are reviewed. Attention then turns to subjective wellbeing in the context of Bangkok, Thailand


**Figure 1:** Organization of Topics in the Literature Review #12
(created by the author for the study)

The methodology utilized in this qualitative study is considered next, beginning with the evaluative, hedonic, and eudemonic criteria (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016) used to measure subjective wellbeing. The way participants assessed their overall happiness and life satisfaction is then explained (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the answers collected in the semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed through content analysis and descriptive exploratory methodology (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006) based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), and intrinsic and extrinsic goals and values (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec, Brdar, & Miljkovic, 2006). As explained in the conclusion, family,

close relationships, and financial stability are among the top determinants of wellbeing once basic needs are met. Moreover, Asian philosophies like Buddhism, as well as the collective nature of the Thai society, influence how they behave and what they find important to reach happiness.

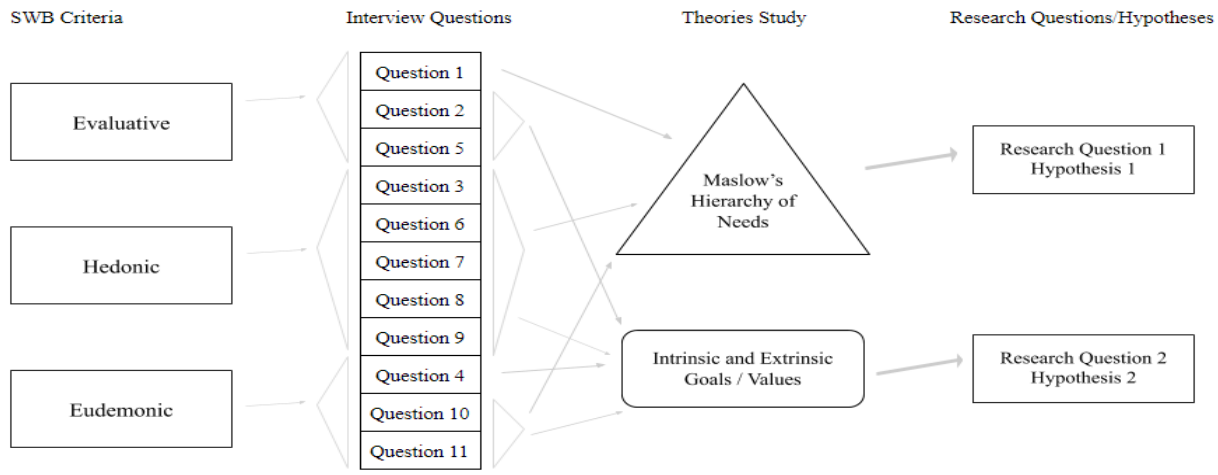


**Figure 2:** Conceptual Framework #12
(created by the author for the study)

## 2. Literature Review

### - *Eudaimonia and Hedonia*

How to live life in the best possible way (Aristotle, 1941; Byers, 2020) is a question that has been analyzed since olden days (Stavrova, 2019). Around 2,400 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle determined that in order to reach profound happiness - or eudaimonia (Byers, 2020; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019), a person should focus on those actions which unleash his/her full potential, acting ethically and in accordance with all levels of excellence (Nussbaum, 2012). "The mean and the good is feeling or acting at the right time, about the right things in relation to the right people and for the right reason" (Bergsma & Samuel, 2010, p. 659). Aristotle was not the only great thinker who tried to decipher this enigma. Philosophers in Asia articulated their own ways of living happily. According to the 14th Dalai Lama, everybody's ultimate goal is to find happiness (Yiengprugsawan, Seubsman, & Sleigh, 2014). For Confucius, it is essential to focus on others' happiness, known as 'Jen', which means "to love fellow men" (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008, p. 427). In Taoism, following the laws of nature is believed to help us reach the state of happiness (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008) and in Buddhism, one is focused on the idea that everything is temporary and interconnected - thus, suffering is inevitable, centering our actions on the reduction of pain (Nitnitiphrut, 2007; Nussbaum, 2012; Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008).

More recently, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the former king of Bhutan, a country perched in the Himalayas, decided to use a new measurement to determine his country's wealth. In 1972, after a careful analysis of his nation, he introduced the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). This unprecedented measurement technique is rooted in Buddhism (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012) and its goal similar to Aristotle's; happiness and the preservation of cultural and spiritual richness (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). GNH measures Bhutanese wellbeing in nine domains: "living standard, health, education, ecological diversity and resilience, cultural diversity and resilience,

community vitality, time use, psychological wellbeing, and good governance" (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019, p. 3), through a combination of methods balancing body and mind (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). Concerns with what makes citizens happy, however, is not just limited to Bhutan. Its causes have been analyzed in other places as well. Happiness has been found to be a combination of two perspectives: eudaimonia and hedonia (Cummins, 2000; Diener et al., 1985; Veenhoven 1988/2002; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014).

**Table 1:** Characteristics of Eudaimonia and Hedonia

| **Eudaimonia** | **Hedonia** |
|---|---|
| Person's full potential (Gui & Stanca, 2010), self-actualization and functioning well (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). | Momentaneous pleasure and avoiding pain - feeling well (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). |
| Long-term wellbeing (LTWB) - Life as a cautious reasoned story, thriving in time (Byers, 2020). | Short-term wellbeing (STWB) - satisfaction for a short period of time - recollective in nature: overall evaluation of a person's life (Byers, 2020). |
| Happiness as a journey (person's self-realization and fully functioning) (Byers, 2020). | Happiness as a duty (factors: relationships and financial gain) (Bergsma, 2008; Ott, 2017). |
| Objective approach (McMahan & Estes, 2011) to measure wellbeing: ethics, self-control, contribution to the greater good and understanding along with life meaning, personal growth and development (psychological approach) (Huta, 2015; Pritchard et al., 2020; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019). | Subjective approach to measure wellbeing (experiences of joy and pleasure) (McMahan & Estes, 2011) - Subjective wellbeing (SWB). (Fredrickson, 2000; Redelmeier & Kahneman, 1996; Stavrova, 2019) - Memory influences one's perception of life satisfaction and affect (cognitive and affective approach) (Gui & Stanca, 2010; Ott, 2017). |
| Based on Aristotle (Camfield et al., 2007; Pritchard et al., 2020; Stavrova, 2019; Waterman, 2008). | Based on Aristippus (Pritchard et al., 2020; Venhoeven, Bolderdijk, & Steg, 2013), Epicurus and Bentham (Camfield et al., 2007). |

Source: created by the author for the study

As noted in the introduction, the relevant literature contains many terms that seem to be either similar or related to happiness, such as wellbeing, quality of life, life satisfaction, etc. (Ye, Ng, & Lian, 2015). Notwithstanding these similarities, to better understand the determinants of living a happy and leading a high-quality life, it is critical to comprehend what each term entails. A review of various research studies in the field indicates that happiness, wellbeing and quality of life are sometimes used interchangeably or with a very similar meaning, even though researchers have diverse approaches (Krys et al., 2019; Ott, 2011; Veenhoven, 2000b). For readers' easier comprehension, Figure 3 provides a visual representation of where each term stands in the literature.

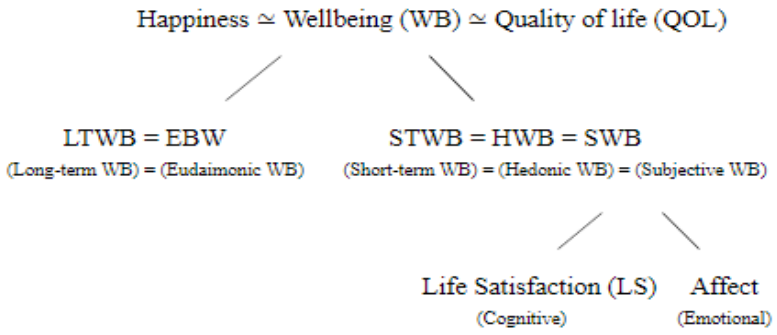


**Figure 3:** Happiness, Wellbeing and Quality of Life in the Relevant Literature #12
(created by the author for the study)

***- Happiness***

Happiness can be defined as an individual overall appreciation and evaluation of one's life (Oishi et al., 2013; Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Veenhoven, 2001), joyful and satisfying moments, and contentment with everything around and the life quality achieved by fulfilling one's potential. Happiness can be measured objectively and/or subjectively (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Nitnitiphrut, 2007). "Aspiration, adaptation and social comparison" are part of the psychological evaluation that affects a person's happiness (Nitnitiphrut, 2007, p. 332).

***- Quality of Life***

Similarly, quality of life (QOL) refers to how a person perceives his/her own life taking into consideration expectations, objectives, cultural life, and social standards, to name a few (Iwasaki, 2007; World Health Organization, 1997). QOL is affected by our psychological and physical states, level of independence, and relationships with others and with the environment (Iwasaki, 2007). Veenhoven (2000b) has identified four kinds of qualities of life: "live-ability, life-ability, usefulness of life and satisfaction with life" (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016, p. 15).

***- Wellbeing***

Consistent with the two terms discussed above, wellbeing (WB) refers to the diverse ways we feel content, happy, satisfied, and in harmony with the life we have (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Taylor, 2015). "In 2011, the UN recognized wellbeing as a fundamental human goal and a universal human aspiration" (Krys et al., 2019, p. 1). Individual wellbeing is strongly influenced by the conditions a person lives in. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between several wellbeing categories: eudaimonic (EWB) and hedonic wellbeing (HWB), long-term (LTWB) and short-term wellbeing (STWB) (Byers, 2020), individual and community wellbeing (Sirgy, 2018) and objective and subjective wellbeing (SWB) (Diener et al., 1999).

Subjective wellbeing (SWB) is a term coined by Diener in the 1980s who stated that this is "a general area of scientific interest rather than a single specific construct" (Diener et al., 1999, p. 277; Stavrova, 2019, p. 431) formed by two components: life satisfaction (LS) and affect. Life satisfaction refers to the control an individual has over his/her life (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Veenhoven, 1996). This cognitive side of subjective wellbeing compares a person's achievements to their aspirations (Diener, 1984; Kahneman & Angus, 2010; Niedźwiedź et al., 2012; Stavrova, 2019). The other side of subjective wellbeing consists of affect, the emotional component, which measures the intensity and frequency of the sentiments and emotions involved in the experiences that form a person's life (Diener, 1984; Kahneman & Angus, 2010; Stavrova, 2019). An individual's own perception of his/her life is often determined by factors such as living standards, financial resources, psychological and physical conditions, the natural environment, relationship with others, education, etc. (Diener, 1984; Jawad & Scott-Jackson,

2016). These indicators are usually evaluated in a subjective way in a brief span of time trying to find the balance between negative and positive outcomes (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Niedźwiedź et al., 2012).

Some SWB predictors seem to have a stronger influence than others. Family, social relationships, economic situation, faith/religion, leisure, and politics have both a direct and indirect robust effect on how people subjectively assess their lives (Krys et al., 2019; World Values Survey, 2016). A number of studies have shown that family is the most important indicator in personal wellbeing (e.g. Cousins, 1989; Krys et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2012), affecting individuals both positively and negatively, depending on the circumstances under which they find themselves (Krys et al., 2019; Stavrova, 2019). Luhmann et al. (2012) explored the differences between family members – parents who had children versus parents who did not – and determined that parents who were childless reported higher SWB, possibly because they had fewer worries than people with children (Luhmnann et al., 2012; Stavrova, 2019).

The degree of influence of social relationships on SWB is very close to that of families. Individuals who have close relationships with others rate their SWB much higher (Becchetti, Pelloni, & Rossetti, 2008; Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Gui & Stanca, 2010) since they feel loved and cared for, among many other positive outcomes thus reducing stress, improving their overall health, and encouraging them to do good for others (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Kawachi, Kennedy, & Glass, 1999; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). The life of virtue that Aristotle and Plato studied was one that encompassed social bonding, altruism and volunteer activities that contributed to the wellbeing of others (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen. 2016; Stavrova, Thomas, & Detlef, 2013; Stavrova, 2019; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). The same desire is instilled by religion and faith, which suggests that this determinant is also very influential in terms of happiness levels (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen. 2016). Being part of a group is related to the concept of leisure, another important SWB indicator (DeLeire & Kalil, 2010; Gui & Stanca, 2010). Cultural traditions and celebrations in China, for example, are relevant factors for happiness and health (Iwasaki, 2007; Wang & Stringer, 2000). One reason for it is food consumption as meals are also a strong SWB indicator (Iwasaki, 2007; Nagla, 2005). Investment in leisure is the only factor that is positively correlated to wellbeing, as opposed to spending money on other material possessions (DeLeire & Kalil, 2010; Gui & Stanca, 2010).

- ***The Easterlin Paradox***

The Easterlin paradox - can money buy happiness? - has become very popular in research in the 21st century (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005; Reeskens & Vandecasteele; 2017). Studies indicate that the relationship between the two is not linear (Clark, Frijters, & Shields, 2008; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Diener & Oishi, 2000; Reeskens & Vandecasteele; 2017). Instead, past a certain amount – USD75,000 annually as determined by Kahneman and Angus (2010) – higher annual incomes do not translate into correlated growth rate in terms of happiness level (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016). Nevertheless, economic freedom, monetary saturation, and financial security have been shown to be positive SWB factors (Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017; Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010; Wolbring, Keuschnigg, & Negele, 2013). One reason is the capacity to meet basic needs (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Once these have been satisfied, the ending point of a parallel growth between income and happiness – a point known as satiation – cannot be found (Grant, 2014). This raises two key issues: Do people want more the more they have? What is the right amount of money and material goods to ensure a good quality of life? Poverty is negatively associated

with SWB. Even though the theory of adaptation suggests that people are able to adapt to the circumstances under which they find themselves (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999), not being able to satisfy one's own survival needs and those of loved ones decreases wellbeing profoundly (Diener et al., 1999; Gudmundsdottir, 2013; Hagerty, 2000; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Inaba's (2009) study on the relationship between economic situation and happiness, however, reveals that in some developing countries, income inequality between social classes actually builds hope in people. Known as the 'tunnel effect' theory, this finding surmises that people in these countries perceive this inequality as an incentive to keep on working and believe in the possibility of change in the near future (Hirschman & Rothschild, 1973; Ngamaba, Panagioti, & Armitage, 2018; Tomes, 1986). People differ in what they find important in life, which influences what the best possible life entails. Some individuals are more drawn to experiences, ideas, and things that are driven by inner motivation (intrinsic goals/values) while others pay more attention to those that have an outer reason (external goals/values) (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). Table 2 summarizes this dichotomy.

**Table 2:** Characteristics of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals and Values

| **Intrinsic Goals/Values** | **Extrinsic Goals/Values** |
|---|---|
| Personal growth, relationships, and volunteering (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). | Status, physical beauty, and financial outcomes (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). |
| Influenced by knowledge and social bonding - more connected to natural needs (Rijavec et al., 2006). | Influenced by external circumstances such as culture, societal expectations, etc. (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004). |
| Positively associated with wellbeing (Rijavec et al., 2006). They contribute to reaching happiness to a greater extent (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019). | Indirectly related to wellbeing (Rijavec et al., 2006). They need to be balanced with intrinsic goals to affect WB positively (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019). |

Source: created by the author for the study

Many researchers have focused on happiness/wellbeing/quality of life and developed various theories to assess the factors that affect it. They include among others the QOL indicator projects (Sirgy, 2011), the happiness pie (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005), the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001), the QOL classification (Veenhoven, 2000a, 2000b), the social production function theory (Ormel et al., 1999), the quest for meaningful life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002), the wellbeing scale/Ryff's psychological model (Ryff, 1989), general human needs (typology of motivation) (Wentholt, 1980), and the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). Table 3 in Appendix 1 summarizes the main characteristics of each of these theories. According to Maslow (1943), living a good life is synonymous with satisfying certain needs and attaining goals that positively contribute to individual wellbeing (Ye et al., 2015). Needs and goals 'hold hands' since people not only focus on meeting their needs, but also on the outcomes that come with them (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs follows a specific order according to which lower needs should be satisfied first in order to subsequently meet others (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006; Maslow, 1943; Niedźwiedź et al., 2012; Sirgy, 2018). Based on the theory of human motivation, Maslow (1943) identified five kinds of needs by which humans are driven (Abulof, 2017). The first are survival needs, also known as physiological needs, such as food, water, sleep, excretion, etc. It is believed that the satisfaction associated with these needs is not

limitless; once they are met, the individual must then satisfy other needs to feel content (Ye et al., 2015). The second level of needs pertains to safety in all its forms; physical, financial, resources and the safety of loved ones, etc. (Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015). Next are the needs to belong, i.e., love and affection. Here relationships play a key role (Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015). The closer and more trustworthy these are, the more positively they contribute to subjective wellbeing (Gui & Stanca, 2010). The fourth type is esteem needs; feeling respected, acknowledged, and cared for by others, mainly by those who are part of the same group but also those outside (Gui & Stanca, 2010). Individuals tend to compare themselves to others – an action that has great influence on how a person perceives his/her own life (Nitnitiphrut, 2007). Finally, standing at the top of the pyramid are self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010), or needs for fulfillment, for achieving one's aspirations. Once achieved, people are among others characterized by deeper human connections, richer emotional attitudes, more problem-solving skills, greater creativity, and acceptance of one-self (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). It has often been argued that once this last need is met, happiness is reached (e.g. Bergsma & Samuel, 2010).

Some authors disagree with the importance given to self-actualization since it is usually at the expense of basic needs, which many people around the world are not able to meet (e.g. Abulof, 2017). Nevertheless, the pyramid of needs coined by Maslow has been extensively analyzed and confirmed as a universal human developmental model (Maslow, 1943; Stavrova, 2019). What usually differs across communities are the material needs people have versus spiritual needs, the former being the same around the globe and the latter being different from culture to culture (Ye et al., 2015). For instance, in Asian cultures, level three in Maslow's hierarchy of needs has great importance for subjective wellbeing (Awanis, Schlegelmilch, & Cui, 2017; Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Schwartz, 1990). Since these cultures are socially oriented, group needs have a higher priority than individual ones (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Triandis, 1997). In these cultures, self-actualization is reached through satisfaction of the rest of the in-group necessities (Triandis, 1997; Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018).

Still, even though high levels of collectivism are usually positively associated with subjective wellbeing (Ye et al., 2015), some members of individualistic societies scored higher in life satisfaction than those in collective ones (e.g. Stavrova, 2019). The cultural dimension of collectivism in Asian countries is often rooted in Asian philosophies such as Buddhism and Daoism, which emphasize harmony among members of a group and respect of social norms (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2002; Ye et al., 2015). Thailand is a country mostly grounded in Buddhism and sharing some Confucian traditions (Awanis et al., 2017; Pace, 2013). Both promote behaviors that involve compassion, love, and kindness in interpersonal relationships (Awanis et al., 2017; Schwartz, 1990). Thailand ranks high in several happiness indices. According to a Gallup poll, when asked if they had experienced positive emotions the day before, Thai people ranked 14th in the world (West, 2018). In another study, 56.7 percent of the people surveyed reported being happy most of or all the time (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). In the list of Happiness in nations between 2010 and 2018 released by the World Database on Happiness, Thailand scores 7.3 out of 10 (Veenhoven, 2013-2020).

- ***The Green and Happiness Index***

The Thai National Economic and Social Development Council (the Council) published the Green and Happiness Index (GHI) between 2007 and 2018; the index main components are "health, a strong and equitable economy, a balanced environment and ecosystem, a democratic society with good governance and a just society and inequality reduction" (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2007–2018, p. 1). The Council also issued the Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan 2017-2021 with several

strategies for development (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). The following excerpt outlines some key aspects of the strategy:

> "Human society should be developed in such a way as to achieve wellbeing in all age groups and to have the capacity to cope adequately with daily life changes through the leverage provided by quality education, learning and skills enhancement, and through quality public health services in all areas, and by promoting the role of social institutions to imbue good, disciplined people with strong values and social responsibility. [...] Thai people's attitudes must be changed to be virtuous, disciplined, accountable, and ready to adapt to changes in accordance with the principle of protecting the common interest. [...] 'People-Centered Development' seeks to create quality of life and healthy conditions for Thais. It aims to develop quality citizens who are disciplined, receptive to learning, knowledgeable, skillful, and creative. They should also have good attitudes, social responsibility, morality, and ethics." (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021, p. 2-5).

Family, community, health, and economic equity are described as key wellbeing determinants among the Thai population (Guillen-Royo, Velazco, & Camfield, 2013; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Family appears to be the most important factor affecting wellbeing among Thais for public policy makers and people who have a job (Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2014). Furthermore, this indicator seems to be the only one that acts as an accurate predictor for present and future wellbeing (Guillen-Royo et al., 2013; Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2014). Along with family relations, other social relationships greatly matter to Thais, especially those that deal with neighbors, social behavior, and children's conduct (Camfield et al., 2007; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2010, Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Religion also plays an important role in Thai society and is a strong determinant and moderator of wellbeing. Several studies have evidenced the positive correlation between being affiliated to a religious group, being happier and having better mental health (e.g. Ellison, 1991; Nelson, 2009; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). In addition, the concept of karma - "we reap what we have sown" (Thijssen & Loy, 2016, p. 162) has been shown to strongly influence people's behavior and decision-making and help them find happiness in adverse circumstances (Thijssen & Loy, 2016; Yiengprugsawan, Seubsman & Sleigh, 2010; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012).

Finally, wealth and income are powerful determinants of people's happiness and wellbeing as well in this country (Guillen-Royo et al., 2013). The first reason is to cover their basic needs. A second one is that ownership and interaction with material things (materialism) is believed to be a means to attain happiness (Watchravesringkan, 2012). In general, having a stable income and money along with being satisfied in the workplace highly and positively affect wellbeing (Senasu & Singhapakdi, 2018). While the general happiness and wellbeing parameters discussed above apply to the country as a whole, they remain similar for Bangkok, Thailand's capital. Bangkokians reported 3.72 out of 5 in life satisfaction, a 74.4 percent rate (Nitnitiphrut, 2007). Health and basic needs, family and social relationships seem to be the most important indicators of wellbeing in the city. Sacrifice is believed to be the foundation of human relationships as it decreases one's level of selfishness and contributes to building a more peaceful society (Nitnitiphrut, 2007).

## 3. Methodology

In this qualitative research, subjective wellbeing is evaluated by the individual and is highly dependent on affect and recency (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). This means that the observers in this study seek to find patterns and similarities in the responses given by the participants and draw conclusions from them..

### - *Criteria*

Four types of criteria can be used to measure SWB (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). They include:

*(i) Evaluative Criteria*: Questions such as "how satisfied / happy are you with your life?" are used for a cognitive assessment of the objective factors that affect one's life (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016).

*(ii) Hedonic Criteria*: This type of criteria measures how the experiences a person goes through affect him/her in a positive or negative way over a short period of time (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ott, 2017; Stavrova, 2019).

*(iii) Eudemonic Criteria*: Based on Maslow's self-actualization need, they reflect the long-term effect of factors such as relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, etc. (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019).

*(iv) Comparative Evaluation:* This type of evaluation occurs when several groups' subjective wellbeing rates are compared (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016).

Since the participants were asked to assess their own lives and the short-term and long-term factors that affect their happiness and wellbeing, this study uses the first three criteria, i.e., evaluative, hedonic and eudemonic criteria (Byers, 2020).

### - *Common Measures*

Common measures of SWB include:

*(i) Single-Item Measures:* For these measures, a single-item scale ranging from 0 to 10 is often used, where 0 represents the worst life and 10 means the best life possible (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). This scale encourages respondents to assess determinants such as family, relationships, work, environment, etc. and determines whether they are content with them (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). Although answers can be influenced by participants' mood, the words used in the questions, the organization of the questions, and so on, they nevertheless have good external validity since they help to gain information on what individuals find important, draw conclusions from comparisons between various participants, and attempt to increase wellbeing by contributing to decision-making and policy making (Diener, 2013; Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). Examples of this kind of scales are the ten-point Likert scales used to measure life satisfaction in different countries (Stavrova, 2019; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019) and the ladder of life scale (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016) which measures the cognitive dimension of happiness shown as contentment in the World Database of Happiness (Ott, 2011).

(ii) *Life Satisfaction Measures:* Scales ranging from 0 to 10 are usually used for these measures. Typically, questions such as "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"/ "In general, how happy do you feel?" are asked (Huppert et al., 2009; Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016). The scale measurement is followed by the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) (Cummins, 2002), which measures life satisfaction in seven different domains: "material status, personal health status, achievement in life, relationships with family and friends, feelings of physical safety, acceptance by the community and future security" (Kaliterna-Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2016, p. 4).

(iii) *Overall Happiness Measures*: Scales ranging from 1-4 are sometimes used, where they ask the respondents to answer the query "How happy are you?" by choosing one of four responses: "very happy," "rather happy," "not very happy," and "not happy at all." This question has been used by the World Values Survey and European Values Study (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). This study uses a mix of the three aforementioned techniques by measuring satisfaction according to Maslow's five levels of needs, including intrinsic and extrinsic goals and values.

***- Interviewees***

The researcher conducted fifty face-to-face interviews with local citizens around Bangkok. The target group was working-class adults and families who live in low- and middle-income neighborhoods in Bangkok and volunteered to participate in the study. The sample size was determined following previous studies and theoretical saturation. Fugard and Potts (2015) suggested that "to have 80% power to detect two instances of a theme with a 10% prevalence in a population, 29 participants would be required" using a random sample (Fugard & Potts, 2015, p. 669). The size also depends on the homogeneity of the sample. For example, in a very homogeneous sample, twelve interviews were proposed (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Since the participants of this study differ in terms of field of employment, age, and gender, the researcher decided to increase the sample size to fifty. Furthermore, previous studies conducted by, for example, Francis et al. (2010), Guest et al. (2006), Isman, Ekéus, and Berggren (2013), and Morse (2000) suggest that theoretical saturation might be achieved between the first six and thirty interviews (Fugard & Potts, 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2018). In this research, the main themes were suggested in the first ten to fifteen interviews.

***- Interviews***

As noted earlier, a qualitative approach is better suited to study wellbeing and happiness as it is believed to capture deeper insight from the participants (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). This qualitative study used several techniques that include structured and semi-structured in-depth interviews, content analysis, and a descriptive exploratory methodology (Gill et al., 2008; Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). Each interview lasted approximately between 30 and 40 minutes. The author and her assistant took notes of all the ideas discussed with the interviewees both during and after every interview in order to capture as much information as possible. The data were subsequently analyzed in an Excel document and assessed using descriptive exploratory methodology (Research Methodology, 2019) and content analysis; two general approaches that have been shown to be very accurate for qualitative research (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hagedoorn et. al., 2017; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Sandelowski, 2000). The steps taken to analyze the data/content in each interview followed a systematic approach. First major common themes were sought following each of the questions asked and subthemes and correlations between patterns in participants' answers identified next (Ponterotto, 2006; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). The relevant body of literature provides both major topics and subtopics in the field of happiness, wellbeing and quality of life. These were evaluated in the responses of the interviewees, connecting eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and intrinsic and extrinsic values and goals, as shown in the conceptual framework.

The interview questions aimed at understanding the factors affecting participants' wellbeing and identifying which ones have the strongest influence. Some argue that it is not possible to arrive at credible answers by simply using a scale, while others defend this method. In this research study, the methodology started with single-item measurements and scales (e.g. Diener, 2013; Diener et al., 2010; Hone et al., 2014; Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). It then allowed the

interviewees to explain their feelings and what they find important in terms of quality of life. The qualitative approach based on semi-structured in-depth interviews considers both cognitive and affective aspects of subjective wellbeing (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2006). Special attention was given to the wording used in the questions (Etzioni, 2017), providing clarifications as much as needed, with the aim of promoting accuracy in the answers received.

## 4. Analysis of Findings and Discussion

This section reports the findings of the interviews which were analyzed in light of the relevant previous literature discussed above. The findings and analysis pertaining to each semi-structured question will be presented individually and the major themes and subthemes summarized next. The order of the questions was important and reviewed by the researcher and her assistant with the objective of inviting the interviewees to think about their overall wellbeing and the factors affecting it. Based on the responses to the structured questions at the beginning of each interview, the participants' demographics can be summarized as follows: 62 percent of them were females and 38 percent males; ages ranged between 18 and 65 years old, with 24 percent of them aged 18-29, 32 percent 30-39, 24 percent 40-49, 16 percent 50-59, and 4 percent 60-70. In terms of occupations, they worked in the administration, transportation industry, food and service sectors, humanitarian field, and freelance, to name a few. The following paragraphs show the findings of the questions related to eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing.

**- *Question 1*** (see Figures 4 and 5 in Appendix 2)

After completing the demographic questions, meant to ensure that the participants fitted the target group, the first query related to participants' happiness ('What makes you happy?'). Interviewees discussed the first things that came to their mind when thinking of happiness. Most participants used hedonic criteria describing short-term to mid-term happiness. 60 percent of the participants claimed that 'family' was what made them happy. Having and being part of a family was very important to them since they not only felt loved and cared for, but also felt other people needed them to be happy. Family was followed by 'income': 16 percent of the responses related to either having more money and being self-sufficient, increasing the sales of their businesses, or paying off their debts.

Using content analysis (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006), answers to the first question were classified according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs so as to find out which need the participants most associated with happiness. Some participants mentioned ideas that belonged to more than one type of need. This was taken into account when grouping them. Most of the answers (88%) were directly or indirectly related to the third level of needs: love, belonging and affection. Family, children, friends, romantic partners, having people to love and helping other people, were some of the responses that fit this category. The next highest types of need that this group of Bangkokians associated with their happiness were Level 2 (safety) and level 5 (self-actualization), standing for 30 percent and 24 percent of the target group, respectively.

**- *Question 2*** (see Figure 6 in Appendix 2)

After interviewees had been given time to think about the factors that influenced their happiness, they were asked to rate their overall happiness/wellbeing – 'How happy are you?' – on a 11-point scale, ranging from 0 to 10, (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). 22 percent of them claimed to be utterly happy, not needing or lacking anything at that moment; 52 percent stated that they were very happy (rating their happiness levels between 7 and 9); 24 percent mentioned that they were only in the middle, being happy sometimes, while 2 per cent claimed to be extremely sad. To explain why they were feeling a particular way, respondents used evaluative criteria to rate their overall happiness and life satisfaction, and a mix of eudemonic and hedonic

criteria (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016). The reasons given by those who rated themselves as either completely or very happy (7-10 on the scale), related to family relationships, having fun, and financial stability. Those who rated themselves in the middle (5-6 and a few that chose 7), mentioned stress, not being close to family, not performing well at school, a bad economic situation, and not having enough money for things they needed as the main reasons for their unhappiness. The participant who claimed to be extremely sad explained that the main reason for it was because of family issues. The average score by participants (7-8/10) shows strong similarity with the score of 7.3/10 shown on the World Database on Happiness with regard to Thailand (Veenhoven, 2013-2020) and the score of 74 percent in Bangkok (Nitnitiphrut, 2007). When analyzing why Bangkokians reported high levels of happiness, family, leisure, and economic stability were among the top reasons. As shown in the relevant literature, these reasons are also the root cause of wellbeing in previous studies (e.g. Guillen-Royo et al., 2013; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Family relations and social interconnectedness are two clear intrinsic values (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006). Economic stability, however, can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. As indicated by interviewees in their responses, when income is not capable of providing for physiological/basic needs and family wellbeing and health, it contributes negatively to SWB and therefore affects intrinsic goals. When discussing income and their financial situation, all the participants who elaborated on their answers made it clear that they wanted more money not for status but to help their families.

**- *Question 3*** (see Figure 7 in Appendix 2)

The third question - 'Can you please tell us about your daily life?' - took a hedonic approach since the interviewers wanted to understand how the experiences which the participants had on a daily basis might influence their life satisfaction and affect. 94 percent of the respondents said that they followed a routine of going to work, then going back home, doing domestic chores, sports, meditation, meeting friends, and so on; 10 percent of them actually claimed to have two jobs at the same time. Only one participant was fully focused on training and studying and also on having a routine. Another was in a period of neither working nor studying and was even homeless at times. Work satisfaction and financial stability are SWB determinants discussed in the literature. Most participants claimed to be working in one place and two places in a few cases. They described their daily life in a routinely way, discussing what they did in the morning, afternoon, and evening, on weekdays and on weekends. As argued by Heybroek, Haynes, and Baxter (2015), having a daily routine contributes to overall happiness since it usually encourages responsible and healthy habits that promote emotional and financial stability (Amorim, França, & Valentini, 2018). Having a job has been shown to contribute to higher levels of happiness since it relates to less economic burdens. If in addition to that, the person is happy in his/her job, that level is even higher. Performing well at their job and/or getting a better job were among the interviewees' aspirations (see findings for questions 4 and 11). These objectives were thus analyzed as potential positive predictors for future subjective wellbeing. The analysis of this question was, to some extent, similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), whereby once physiological, safety (here, in financial terms), and love needs are met, individuals focus on their higher needs (esteem and self-actualization, especially regarding career development).

**- *Question 4*** (see Figures 8 and 9 in Appendix 2)

The previous question was followed by a more eudaimonic query as participants were asked the following: What are your aspirations for the future?'. When reflecting on their long-term happiness, more than half of the interviewees (56%) saw taking care of their family as the first priority, followed by performing better at their jobs, getting their dream job, and personal and professional growth (20%). To assess whether their goals came from inner or outer motivation, aspirations were divided between the two kinds: 84 percent of the respondents were more

focused on intrinsic goals, totally or partially, such as family, personal growth (education, job, religion), helping others and accepting life the way it is. These findings are consistent with those discussed in the literature review: family, social relations and helping others (e.g. Camfield et al., 2007; Yiengprugsawan, et al., 2010; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012); religion affiliation and faith (e.g. Ellison, 1991; Nelson, 2009; Yiengprugsawan et al., 2012). Goals that came from external motivation were mentioned by 18 percent of the participants, including gaining more money or getting a better job as previously found by Watchravesringkan (2012). These results will be further analyzed in question 11 ('What would you like to accomplish in the future?') to compare similarities and differences.

**- *Question 5*** (see Figure 10 in Appendix 2)

The fifth question in the interview, using evaluative criteria, referred to the Easterlin paradox: 'Do you believe money helps achieve/buy happiness?' (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005). Responses showed that 58 percent believed that it did. However, not all of them thought that everything that made them happy could be bought. Only 18 percent of those respondents said that it could thoroughly. The other 40 percent were of the opinion that money could only help them achieve a higher quality of life when spent, mainly, on physiological needs, health and education. Needs and goals go hand in hand: people are not only focused on meeting their needs, but on the outcomes that come with them (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). In this paradox, money might be interpreted as a need/resource and happiness seen as an outcome. Money, though, cannot always be categorized as an extrinsic need translated into power or status. It can also be an intrinsic value/goal needed for personal growth and for helping others. Depending on why this resource is needed and/or what it is used for, it can generate one outcome or another. This paradox then leads to another: what is happiness?

As shown in the body of literature on this issue, this question has been analyzed since ancient times. There is not an absolute answer. What if some individuals see both - money and happiness - as outcomes, meaning that having money and being happy are two goals in life instead of the former helping the latter? When respondents in this study answered 'yes' or 'no', they explained their reasons, which allowed the researcher to understand this determinant (money) at a deeper level. Combining all responses, this group of Bangkokians did not see money as an outcome but instead as a resource needed to achieve the important determinants for their happiness. Once their physiological and safety needs – their own and those of their families – were met, their main focus was on the family wellbeing, personal growth and social relationships (see question 1 findings). A balance between intrinsic and extrinsic goals, needed for positive wellbeing, was found here (Rijavec et al., 2006; Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Stavrova, 2019). None of the participants stated that they saw being rich and having power or status as an aspiration, which are usually extrinsic values associated with having more money (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Rijavec et al., 2006).

**- *Question 6*** (see Figure 11 in Appendix 2)

From the sixth question onwards, the analysis focused on each level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, starting with 'Are your basic needs to survive met on a daily basis?' In their responses, 90 percent confirmed that physiological needs such as water, food, shelter, clothing, etc. were covered. For those who mentioned that sometimes they were not, shelter and money for medicine were among the needs missing. As noted earlier, living standards and health are two of the key components of Gross National Happiness, which measures Bhutan's wealth (Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019) and are similar to those found in the Green and Happiness Index in Thailand (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). The results analyzed in this question confirmed that the first level of needs is met for the most part.

They also correlate with the responses given about future aspirations and accomplishments, where physiological needs were not present, assuming they had already been met.

- ***Question 7*** (see Figure 12 in Appendix 2)

When asked about their safety needs and answering questions such as 'Is your community safe?', 76 percent of the participants responded that they felt safe in the area in which they lived. They also mentioned that they felt safe with the people around them, since they thought they could count on them if/when needed. Those who did not feel safe in their environment attributed this feeling, among other causes, to the possibility of something being stolen and too many people living together. Access to healthcare, education and public safety positively influenced the QOL affected by lower levels of income (Ott, 2010). The target groups of this study were low- and middle-income neighborhoods around Bangkok. For the most part, the respondents felt safe where they were. Almost a quarter of them nevertheless reported some safety challenges that might have prevented them from satisfying Maslow's second level of needs at times.

- ***Questions 8 and 9*** (see Figures 13 and 14 in Appendix 2)

Maslow's need for love, belonging and affection was addressed in two different questions: 'Are you part of a united family?' and 'Do you have someone to love/to be loved?' 90 percent of the participants felt they belonged to a united family and had close relationships with family members. And 92 percent of them also felt they had someone to love and felt loved by, especially within the family circle. Maslow's need for esteem was also discussed by the participants as they talked about feeling respected and felt that their lives had a meaning. The findings for these two questions confirmed the results of previous studies conducted in Thailand regarding collectivism and the priority of group wellbeing over individual wellbeing (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018; Triandis, 1997) and around the world in regard to the importance of close relationships (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Kawachi et al., 1999; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017). Maslow's third level of needs and intrinsic factors such as relationships seem to be the greatest contributors to happiness and subjective wellbeing among this group of Bangkokians. These results can be correlated to the findings, representing a high score on the scale of happiness (7-8/10) (see Question 2).

- ***Question 10*** (see Figure 15 in Appendix 2)

'Have you achieved your aspirations?' is a question that addresses Maslow's needs for both esteem and self-actualization. Recall from above that esteem is related to a sense of accomplishment and achievement of one's goals. It also helps with problem-solving, acceptance of facts and morality, which are present in the need for self-actualization (Scheffer & Heckhausen, 2018). As mentioned in the hierarchy of needs, there is an order whereby to accomplish a higher level, the level before should be met. Among the participants, 24 percent claimed to have achieved their aspirations completely while 52 percent of the total mentioned that they had accomplished some and were on their way to fulfilling the rest. Long-term wellbeing and seeing life as a journey are constructs associated with eudaimonia (Byers, 2020). Short-term satisfaction does not guarantee greater wellbeing, even though it contributes to it (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Delle Fave et al., 2011; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2001). When asked about achieving the aspirations mentioned in question 4, more than half of the participants were optimistic about them as they combined short-term and long-term goals. By correlating the findings in this question with the findings in Question 4, it is possible to perceive an ascending journey in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Physiological, safety and love/affection needs seemed to be met, and participants are on their way to achieve the last levels of the hierarchy: esteem (job satisfaction, family wellbeing and respect in the community) and self-

actualization (personal growth, accepting life, finding their purpose in life and stronger interconnectedness with others) (see Question 11).

- ***Question 11*** (see Figures 16 and 17 in Appendix 2)

The last question, using eudemonic criteria, encouraged the interviewees to think about their future – their long-term wellbeing – and discuss what they would like to achieve ('What would you like to accomplish in the future?'). This is basically the same query as Question 4 but with a different wording. The researcher wanted to pay special attention to the need for self-actualization and the eudaimonic approach to happiness. Most people (20%) wanted to make people around them happy (need for love; intrinsic value), 18 percent wished to have a stable income for themselves and to be able to provide for their family's wellbeing (need for safety and for love; intrinsic goal); and 16 percent aspired to perform better at their jobs (need for esteem and self-actualization; intrinsic and extrinsic values). The analysis conducted in Question 4 was repeated in this question in order to compare intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Some participants were mainly focused on one or the other, whereas others had a combination of both. Taking all into account, 74 percent were focused on intrinsic goals either entirely or in part. Closer and more meaningful relationships, making others happy, and personal growth were the intrinsic goals Bangkokians focus on. As for extrinsic goals, their answers zeroed in on gaining more money and owning businesses and real estate, among others. By comparing both sets of results, it was possible to perceive a slight 10 percent decline in the focus on intrinsic goals (from 84% to 74%). As mentioned in the methodology, the interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and the participants first analyzed their happiness and wellbeing as a whole.

From the opening of the interview to the last query, interviewees had time to individually evaluate several SWB determinants (following Maslow's hierarchy of needs) at a deeper level. It was the researcher's intention to ask this question twice (at the beginning and at the end of the interview) to compare results and see if they varied; indeed, they did. There are possible explanations for this variance. One could be the choice of words – 'aspirations' can be viewed as conveying more freedom to discuss what a person could achieve even if they have a low chance of becoming a reality, while 'accomplishments' seem to refer to goals that have a higher probability of being attained. Another explanation could be the time allocated to analyzing their contentment in life and overall happiness. Whereas at the beginning of the interview, participants share the first thing that came to their mind, they subsequently had the chance to mull over the determinants. These results also show the difference between using hedonic criteria (short-term effect analysis) versus eudemonic criteria (long-term effect analysis) when assessing subjective wellbeing (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019).

## 5. Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Limitations

Answers to questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were analyzed based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs so as to assess which ones were satisfied and which ones contributed most to participants' eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing and also to determine whether RQ1 was answered. Most interviewees stated that their physiological needs and love/belonging/affection were covered. Safety needs were mostly met, but the latter not for as many participants as the two former ones (safety being understood not only in terms of public safety but also in relation to financial stability). In respect of which needs contributed the most to their hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, H1 was validated. The most influential level was the third one: love, belonging, affection, and family wellbeing were shown to be the main determinants for individual eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing. These needs were followed by self-actualization needs and safety needs, which related to career and income stability. For the majority of the respondents, hedonic wellbeing meant the satisfaction of physiological needs (90%) and safety

needs (76%), whereas eudaimonic wellbeing – fulfilling one's potential and functioning well – was represented by a combination of four Maslow levels (once basic survival needs were met).

Self-actualization was interpreted, first, as family wellbeing (level three), followed by financial security and good performance on the job (level two and four) and finding one's meaning (level five). Regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, the responses to questions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11 answered RQ2. They suggested that intrinsic values and goals such as family and meaningful relationships, along with career development, were stronger factors in subjective wellbeing and eudaimonic wellbeing than extrinsic values and goals, thus validating H2. Individual self-actualization needs seemed to be strongly related to family quality of life. When asked about long-term wellbeing, most participants referred to their bonds to their family members and to family happiness. By way of concluding, it can therefore be said that family wellbeing, meaningful relationships and financial stability seem to be the strongest determinants of subjective wellbeing among Bangkokians living in low- and middle-income neighborhoods. Family relationships are seen to have the most positive influence on both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing; they also seem to be satisfied in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, along with physiological needs for most participants, contributing to their happiness levels. Following the pyramid's order of needs, esteem and self-actualization needs were not fully met yet but, for the majority of the respondents, they were on their way to achieving them and feeling optimistic about it. Among their aspirations, family wellbeing and personal growth were the most prominent, making intrinsic motivation more important than extrinsic ones for both their short- and long-term wellbeing. Their eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing appeared to translate into family relations and intrinsic values and goals.

- *Recommendations and Limitations*

Societal wellbeing, individual and collective happiness, and high quality of life are priorities at local, regional, national, and organizational levels the world over (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016; Thinley & Hartz-Karp, 2019). For these reasons, understanding, analyzing, and promoting what makes people happy and content with their lives in a healthy and ethical way continues to be investigated by policy makers, scientists, and managers (Niedźwiedź et al., 2012). Further research may not only identify the main determinants of happiness across nations but also encourage people to behave in ways that can help them achieve long-term wellbeing (Sirgy, 2018). This paper has shown the importance of family and group wellbeing for individual happiness among working-class Bangkokians in low- and middle-income neighborhoods. It can help to promote and multiply the domino effect that a relative might have on others to find ways for all members of a close family circle to be able to satisfy the first of Maslow's needs, at least. It is therefore recommended to develop policies and strategies that promote high QOL among citizens such as those adopted and those currently being considered by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017-2021). Another possibility is the creation of wellness programs for employees within social responsibility departments to enhance their QOL, which would later contribute to the wellbeing of their families and communities.

Evaluating other wellbeing theories besides Maslow's hierarchy of needs and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (see Table 3 in Appendix 1) is encouraged in future studies to find similarities and differences that affect hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. But not only should other theories be used, other regions in Thailand should also be explored. Moreover, other variables besides income and living areas should be studied. In addition, given the limited areas researched in this paper, a strong recommendation can be made for further research to compare and analyze the results of the present study to similar ones conducted in countries

classified as individualistic. Such studies would among other merits make it possible to see how much this cultural dimension affects wellbeing (Stavrova, 2019). When analyzing diverse cultural groups, a strong command of the language and an in-depth knowledge of the roots of cultural traditions are essential to interpret results. To overcome those limitations, the author enrolled a local research assistant. These challenges come in addition to the fact that collecting and validating empirical data is more complicated when conducting qualitative as opposed to quantitative research (Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2006). The key point here is that these various limitations can also become recommendations for future studies to compare the same variables through quantitative surveys and questionnaires.

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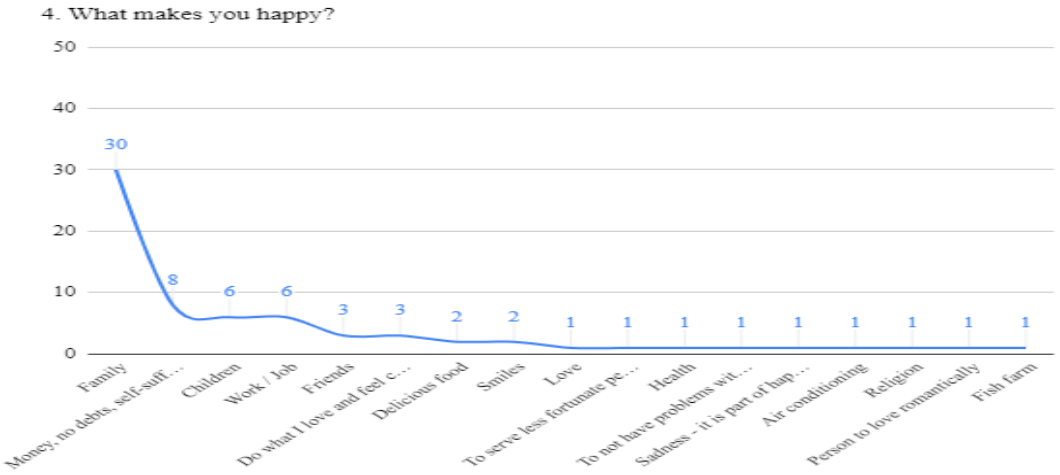
## Appendix 1

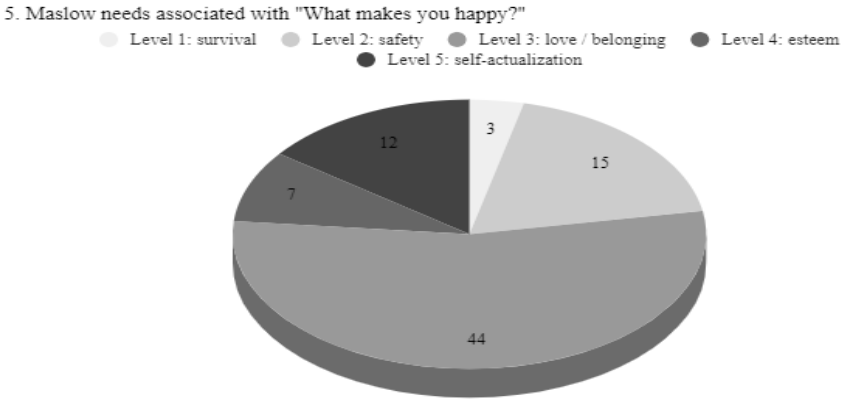
**Table 3:** Other Theories Assessing Happiness, Wellbeing and/or Quality of Life

| Theory and author | Explanation and factors |
|---|---|
| QOL indicator projects (Sirgy, 2011). | Six major theoretical concepts influencing QOL: "Socio-economic development, personal utility, just society, human development, sustainability and functioning" (Sirgy, 2011; Sirgy, 2018, p. 4). |
| The happiness pie (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). | Happiness' three main determinants:<br>"genes (50%) + intentional activities (40%) + circumstances (10%)" (Brown & Rohrer, 2020, p. 1286; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). |
| Self-determination theory/view (Ryan & Deci, 2001). | Achieving goals is the most important criterion for wellbeing. Three needs positively associated with SWB (intrinsic motivation) (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Rijavec et al., 2006; Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Wielers & van der Meer, 2020):<br>● Autonomy (how a person chooses to behave)<br>● Competence (ability and effectiveness)<br>● Relatedness (harmonious relationships with others)<br>Positive influences for SWB: self-direction, stimulation and achievement / Negative influences for SWB: conformity, security and tradition (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Stavrova, 2019). |
| Quality of life classification (Veenhoven, 2000 a,b). | "Life chances and life results / Outer and inner QOL" (Spruk & Kešeljević, 2016, p. 662; Veenhoven, 2000 a,b).<br>"Four qualities of life:<br>Livability of the environment / Life ability of the individual / External utility of life / Inner appreciation of life" (Jawad & Scott-Jackson, 2016, pp. 14-16; Veenhoven, 2000a). |
| Social production function theory (Ormel et al., 1999). | SWB's "five universal goals: stimulation, comfort, status, behavioral confirmation and affection" (Ormel et al., 1999; Stavrova, 2019, p. 436). |
| Quest for meaningful life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). | "Four main needs for meaning":<br>● "Need for purpose" (relation between the past and the future)<br>● "Need for values" (positivity and kindness)<br>● "Need for a sense of efficacy" (a person's contribution)<br>● "Need for a basis of self-worth" (seek confirmation a person is valuable)" (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Iwasaki, 2007, p. 254). |
| Wellbeing scale / Ryff's psychological model (Ryff, 1989). | Six hedonic universal needs related to SWB: "autonomy, growth, relationships, purpose in life, environmental mastery and self-acceptance" (Ryff, 1989; Stavrova, 2019, p. 441).<br>*Vitality (another need - eudaimonic) (Pritchard et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Zelenski & Nisbet, 2014). |
| General human needs (typology of motivation) (Wentholt, 1980). | "Motivation based on homeostatic regulation" (hunger, thirst, body temperature, sexuality, and safety)<br>"Motivation based on stimuli-seeking (intrinsic motivation and affection)" (Ott, 2017, p. 318; Wentholt, 1980).<br>When assessing one's happiness state, it is very important to "be aware of cognitive inconsistencies, moods and emotions, existential conditions and own identity" (Ott, 2017, p. 318; Wentholt, 1980). |
| A theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). | Five "innate needs":<br>● Survival need<br>● Physiological and safety need<br>● Love, affection and belonging need<br>● Esteem, reputation and prestige need<br>● Self-actualization need<br>(Abulof, 2017, p. 508; Maslow, 1943; Ye et al., 2015) |

Source: Created by the Author for the Study

**Appendix 2:** Graphs Showing the Summary of the Responses to Each Semi-structured Question




**Figures 4 and 5:** Responses to the Question 'What makes you happy?' and their Association to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?'

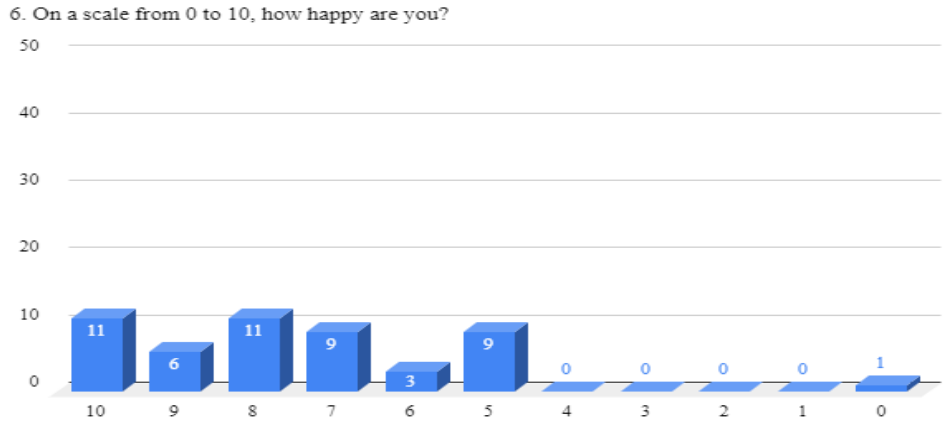



**Figure 6:** Response to the Question 'On a scale from 0 to 10, how happy are you?'

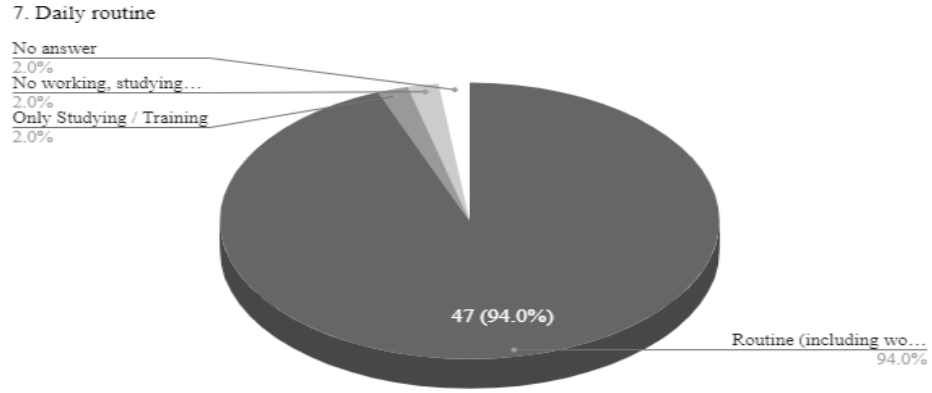
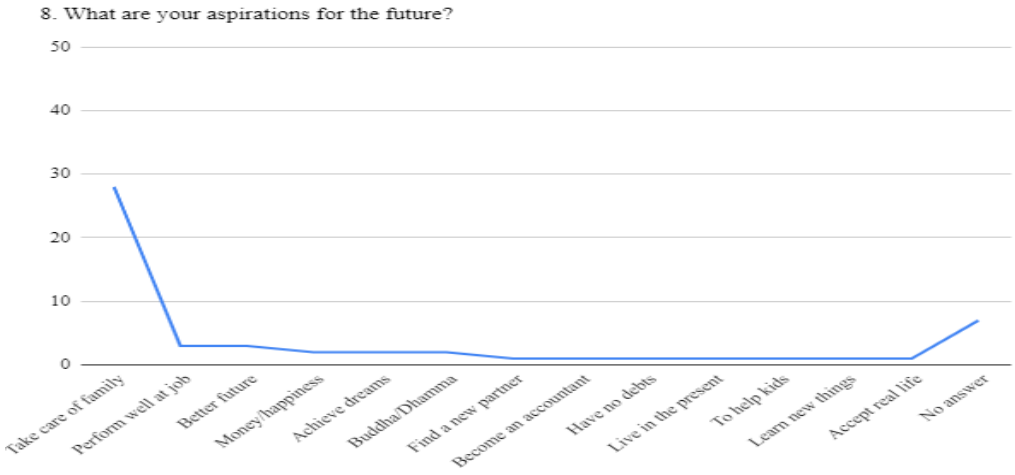
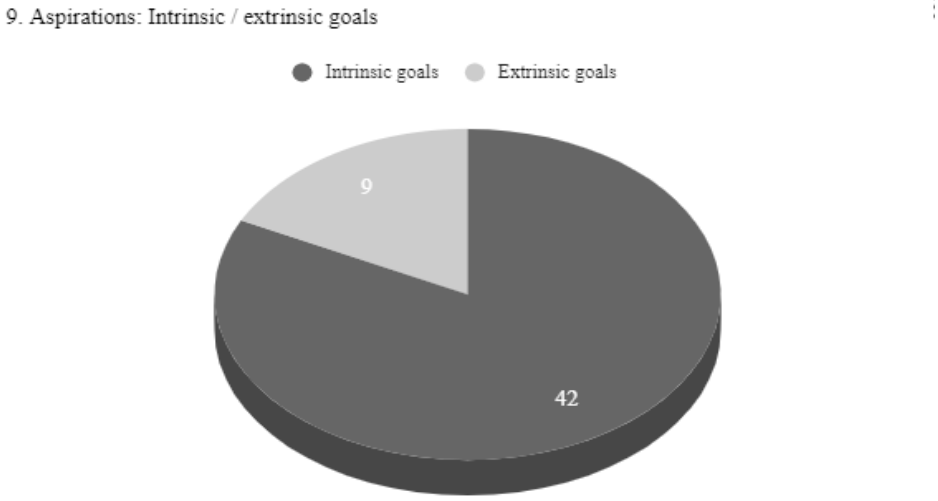



**Figure 7:** Response to the Question 'Can you please tell us about your daily life?'




**Figures 8 and 9:** Responses to the Question 'What are your aspirations for the future?' and their Respective Distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals

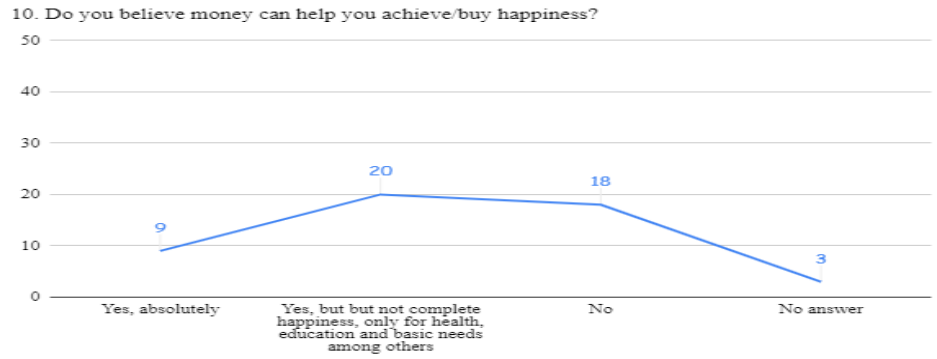



**Figure 10:** Responses to the Question 'Do you believe money can help you achieve/buy happiness? and 'Why?

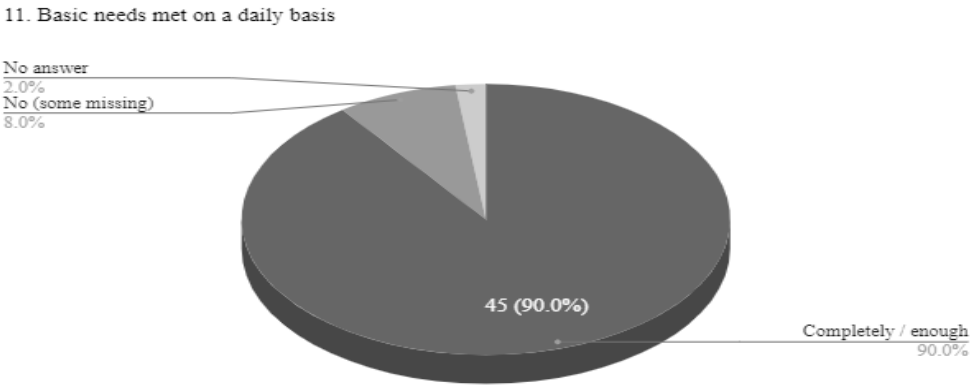



**Figure 11:** Response to the Question 'Are your basic needs to survive met on a daily basis?'

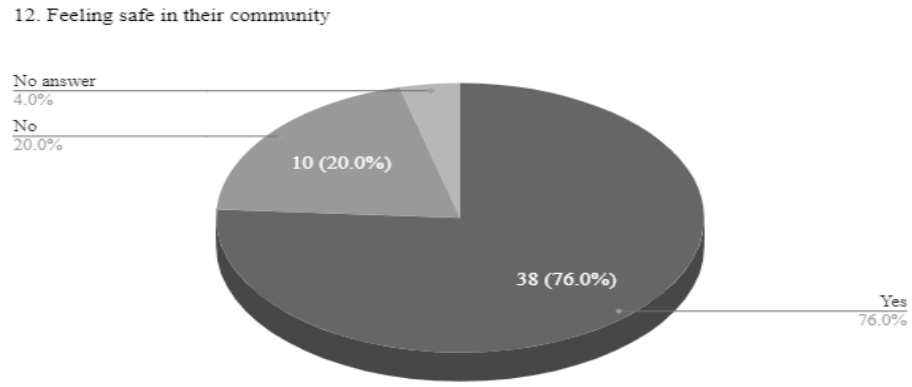
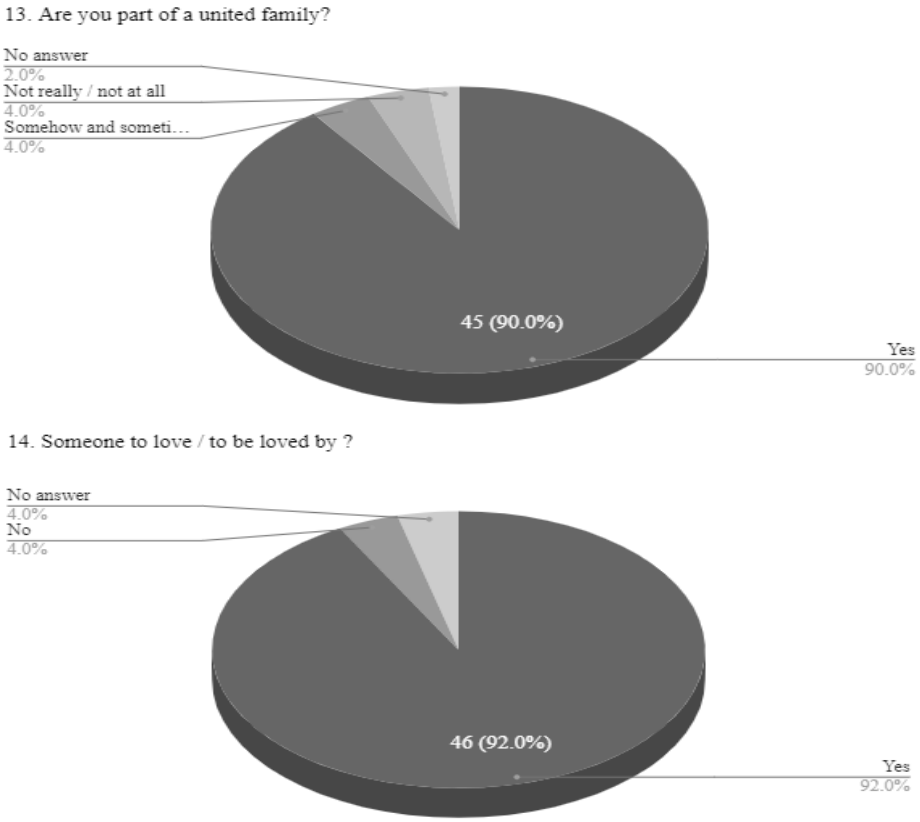



**Figure 12:** Responses to the Questions 'Are your safety needs to survive met on a daily basis? and 'Is Your Community Safe?'




**Figures 13 and 14:** Responses to the Questions: 'Are you part of a united family?" and 'Do you have someone to love/to be loved?'

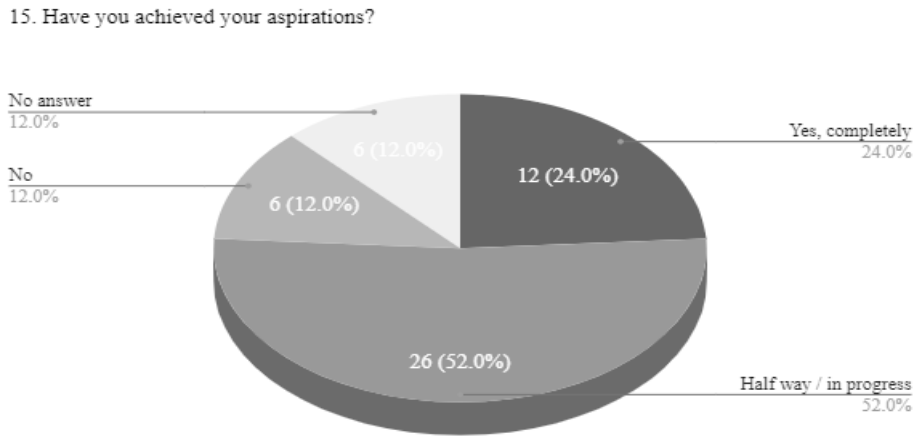
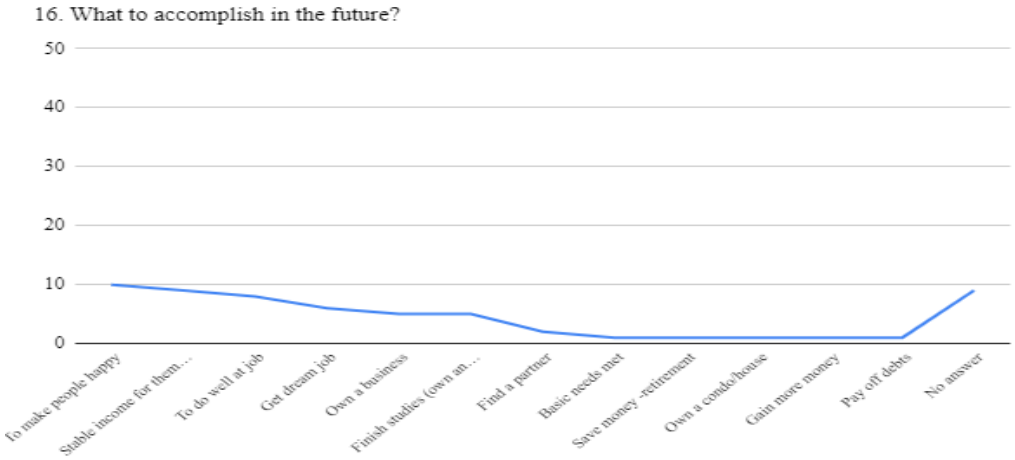
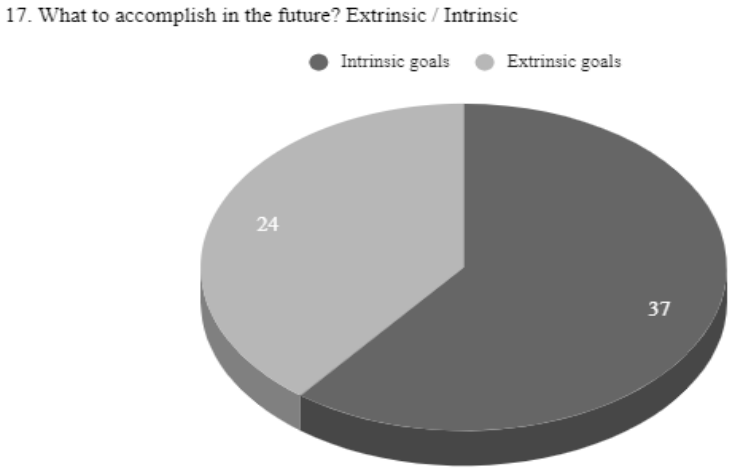



**Figure 15:** Responses to the Questions: 'Are your esteem needs met on a daily basis?' and 'Have you achieved your aspirations?'




**Figures 16 and 17:** Responses to the Questions: 'What would you like to accomplish in the future?' and their Respective Distinction between Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals