

# Family values and social well-being: Do motives for activities mediate?

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## Abstract

This study explored the extent to which the relationship between family values and social well-being is explained by well-being orientations. We investigated whether hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities mediate the effect of family values of roles hierarchy and kin relations on social well-being. Using a cross-sectional survey design, randomly sampled participants from Ghana ( $N = 390$ ) completed the Family Values Scale, Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities scale, and the Social Well-Being subscale of the Mental Health Continuum. Using structural equation modelling, we tested for direct and indirect effects. The full mediation was well fitting ( $CFI = .910$ ;  $RMSEA = .059$  [90% CI: .052, .066]). Direct effects between roles hierarchy (family values) and social-well-being as well as between hedonic motives (well-being orientations) and social well-being were significant. The relationship between roles hierarchy and social well-being was mediated by hedonic motives. However, kin relations and eudaimonic motives had a non-significant relationship with social well-being. The empirical finding, of how family values as a cultural index intersects with well-being dispositional orientation in the promotion of social well-being, is helpful in the counselling psychology settings. This contribution is particularly relevant in an African sociocultural setting which is known to be characterised by interdependence.

**Keywords:** Family values; Hedonic and Eudaimonic motives for activities; Social well-being; Ghana

## Introduction

Previous studies have shown socio-cultural values and orientations to influence well-being (see Church et al. 2014; Diener et al., 2018; Oishi, 2018; Oishi & Gilbert, 2016). These influences are often observed as expressed through cross-cultural indices such as self-construal (Markus & Kitayama 2003) and family values (Georgas, 1999). For instance, the idea of a good life in the Ghanaian context is associated with the values of living comfortably and commanding respect from younger generations (van der Geest, 1998a). Similarly, in Ghana as in many African countries, the patriarchal family value system is predominant (Gyan et al. 2020), and colours all domains of life. In the present study, family values refer to attitudes

towards roles, responsibilities and hierarchies in the family (Georgas, 1999). These family values form a cultural notion through which the experiences of well-being are influenced. Among others, within the African context, great value is placed on marriage and the social protection it offers (Addai et al. 2015; Gyekey 1997), making it necessary for couples to strive to continuously preserve marital harmony (Osei-Tutu et al., 2019). This could imply that individuals who endorse prevailing family values, given its relational nature, and cultural contextualisation are more likely to have higher levels of well-being.

In the case of the present study, well-being is considered to refer to a sense of connectedness and personal belongingness known as social well-being (Keyes, 1998). It is plausible that individuals who endorse these relational family values would more likely see themselves to adhere to the prevailing norms and thus reinforce a sense of belonging. When family is a building block of society, then the values it enshrines are likely to permeate through the rest of society. However, there is no clear empirical evidence attesting to whether prevailing family values determine social well-being. To the best of our knowledge, there is no cultural exploration into family values as an antecedent of social well-being. In the Ghanaian context, we expect that greater endorsement of family values, particularly roles hierarchy and kin relations will relate to social well-being. This expectation is supported by Khumalo et al. (2020) finding that African communities are characterised by cultural tightness and high norm regulation.

Individual orientations described as either hedonic (pleasure-seeking) or eudaimonic (seeking authenticity and growth) motives for engaging in well-being activities are related to personal well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010), but little is known about social well-being. What we know from the work of Dzokoto et al. (2019) is that in Ghana there is an emphasis on work-related meaning that enhances personal growth and contributes to the well-being of the community. This could imply an emphasis on practices and beliefs to promote authenticity and quality relationships with others in Ghana. In essence eudaimonic motives for activities are likely to be linked to increased social well-being as compared to hedonic motives in this context.

To date, research on either values (such as power and achievement; Schwartz 2012) or motives for activities has focused primarily on psychological outcomes for the individual, most often personal well-being (e.g., Huta & Ryan, 2010; Peterson et al., 2005; Braaten et al., 2019). It is important to understand how social well-being is engendered in the context of Ghana because as an interdependent cultural context, interpersonal harmony is an integral aspect of well-being (Osei-Tutu et al., 2019) that can only be fully understood after considering relational cultural values. More so, such cultural values do not manifest in a vacuum but might be intertwined with individual motives directed at either promoting the greater good or a concern with personal pleasure. Understanding how interpersonal cultural values and intrapersonal motives work together is critical to designing contextually-relevant well-being interventions (Appiah et al. 2020; Wilson & Somhlaba, 2016). The predominating focus on psychopathology and the lack of exploration into cultural indices such as family values in psychological well-being research, leaves a gap as far as more holistic interventions grounded on sociocultural values for well-being promotion is considered. This study addresses some of these gaps, through exploring the role of hedonic and eudaimonic orientations or motives for activities (to be used interchangeably) in the relationship between family values measured as roles hierarchy and kin and social well-being among young adults in the Ghanaian context.

## Family Values and Social Well-Being

Values in some instances reflect abstract goals that transcend specific situations, differ in importance, and guide evaluations and behaviour of individuals and groups (Schwartz, 1992). They reflect people's choice for what ideally ought to be. Family values are preferred conventional behaviours for members of a family, and how families are structured (Georgas, 1999). For instance, while there is variation across families for who shoulders the greater burden of providing for the family, it is common to find male-headed households where men hold the decision-making power even if they are not so financially viable. In understanding family values, it is necessary to highlight that the family should be considered a dynamic entity with emerging complexities depending on the time and context under consideration. This complexity is usually with respect to decision-making and organisation of daily family life (Olah et al., 2018).

At times families do not have a set of well-defined roles but rather negotiate these on a daily basis (Morgan, 2011). Emerging family trends include changes in gender roles, especially women becoming economic providers and men's involvement in childcare increasing (England, 2010). Moreover, gender relations and related values are increasingly becoming fluid and changing across different life stages (Olah et al., 2018). These changes in family systems and defined roles have implications for prevailing values and expectations of family members. These dimensions are reflected in roles hierarchy and kin relations (Georgas 1989), which are aspects of the measure of family values adopted in the present study.

Research on family in Ghana has spanned across decades and while initial framings had top-down nuances, research in more recent years showcase the same traditions and values incubated in the family, but in a more positive light (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2006; Brydon, 1979; Osei-Tutu et al., 2018). Families in Ghana have been construed as largely patriarchal with most decision-making being the prerogative of the oldest. Although this pattern has been largely perpetuated overtime, they have been met with positive changes, including males sharing the burden of care and females participating in decision-making (Van der Geest, 2016). Families in Ghana tend to consist of extended kinship networks, which are important in especially supporting and caring for children and older people. In these supportive kinship family networks, individuals have reciprocal obligations, duties, and responsibilities towards each other (Apt, 1995; Coe, 2011; Mba, 2004). However, the demands of the contemporary Ghanaian economy have placed great strains on the extent to which family members can care for each other. The cultural norms around the reciprocal obligation to the family are undergoing major transitions or waning in significance, including the focus on nuclear families due to urbanisation (Nukunya, 2003; van der Geest, 2007).

Among Ghanaians, family relationships, together with material wealth and social status are indicators of success (Osei-Tutu et al., 2018). Norms guiding familial interactions are at times transferred through intergenerational care especially between children and grandparents (Gaibie, 2012). It is in this context that respect and care of the elderly as well as filial piety is taught to children from a young age, making for strong social bonds and better health outcomes (Umberson et al., 2010). That is why we argue that when our sample endorses greater family values this will be related to their social well-being.

Social well-being is the extent to which an individual feels integrated and understood by their community (Keyes, 1998). It is one part of the tripartite model of positive mental health, which is also made up of emotional and psychological well-being (Keyes, 2002). It allows for the understanding of well-being of an individual in relation to their social context. According to Keyes (1998), social well-being is the appraisal of an individual's life circumstances and functioning in society. This appraisal encompasses evaluation of quality of relationships (integration), one's value (contribution), favourable perception of the human nature and feeling at peace with others (acceptance), being hopeful about the future of the society (actualisation), and an understanding of the world (coherence). Keyes (1998) argues in line with philosophical and sociological thoughts, the equal status of the social with personal well-being. Moreover, Krysa et al. (2019) argued that across four different countries (Japan, Poland, Canada and Columbia), considering well-being in the context of a group (e.g family) is highly valued beyond personal well-being. Besides, cultural ecologies in many African settings promote relational ways of (well-)being that are attuned to the embedded interdependence of everyday life, yet few studies in this context have explored social well-being (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020).

In their study of exploring forgiveness in marriages in Ghana, Osei-Tutu et al. (2019) argued that like most African societies, Ghanaians have beliefs and values such as gendered and patriarchal relationships, respect for authority, and interdependence (see also Belgrave & Allison, 2013). Marriage is hierarchically structured and highly gendered. Men are considered the heads of the families, while women have complementary or often subordinate roles (Gyekye, 2003). Moreover, communal and interdependent values found in Ghanaian cultures inform relational processes, which we argue would include social well-being. For example, the Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands who endorse family values gained greater social well-being, feelings of closeness within their family and with relatives back in their homeland (Visser et al., 2015). With this in mind, we explore the extent to which family values relate to an individual's perception of their social well-being. We hypothesise that, in a context like Ghana where specific roles and kin relations are emphasised, it is likely that an individual with high family values (meaning they also subscribe to societal values and expectations) might perceive themselves as functioning well and integrated in the society.

### **Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities and Social Well-Being**

In addition to being both content and outcomes of functioning, eudaimonic and hedonic well-being can be conceptualised as dispositional orientations or motives (Huta et al., 2012). Eudaimonic motives for activities are concerned with seeking personal growth, virtue, excellence, authenticity and autonomy. On the other hand, hedonic motives refer to seeking personal enjoyment, comfort and pleasure, while eudaimonic motives tend to predict meaning and self-connectedness (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Hedonic pursuits are associated with positive affect (Giuntoli et al., 2020; Huta et al., 2012). Braaten et al. (2019) found eudaimonic motives also have significantly stronger relationships with experiences of school satisfaction, meaning, elevation, self-connectedness, and interest at school compared to hedonic enjoyment motives.

The question worth answering is how different well-being motives relate to social well-being, and facilitate individual-level cultural influence on social well-being. Given extant evidence on

the relationship between motives for activities and well-being located at an intrapersonal level (Disabato et al., 2016; Giuntoli et al. 2020; Huta, 2015; Sheldon et al., 2019), there is a likely relationship between motives of well-being activities and social well-being. This relationship is particularly expected in an African sociocultural context where the social is more salient.

Huta et al. (2012) argued for the instrumental role that eudaimonic motives play in enhancing the well-being of the surrounding social world, adding that these pursuits improve the quality of the relationship between individuals and close others (see also Pearce et al., 2020). Ryff's (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryff & Singer, 1998) conceptualisation of eudaimonic well-being included positive relation with others as one of the six dimensions. This dimension of positive relation with others is reminiscent of social well-being. It therefore implies that individuals who are oriented towards eudaimonic pursuits are likely to maintain or promote positive relations with others. Similarly, Ryan et al. (2013) argued that eudaimonic living was associated with pursuing intrinsic goals like growth, intimacy and community. Eudaimonic pursuits are also associated with a sense of connection with a greater whole (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Steger, 2016). In discussing the philosophical basis for eudaimonic psychology, Haybron (2016) noted that feeling understood and respected, and having a sense of belonging were important components of eudaimonic measures.

Hedonic pursuits are reflected in emotional well-being and greater positive affect in the short term (Giuntoli et al., 2020; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Pearce et al. (2020) found hedonic orientation to be related to indices of narrow focus of concern including egoistic values of power and influence. In an earlier study, Henderson et al. (2013) noted that hedonic orientations were associated with affective domains of well-being and judgements of satisfaction with life. As hedonic orientation for happiness includes being carefree, pleasure, comfort and relaxation (Huta and Waterman 2014), and is not an expression of a sense of connectedness, it might be implied that hedonically oriented individuals would be less likely to report higher social well-being. However, it has also been found that hedonic motives for well-being are associated with positive emotions with individuals being more extroverted and open to others taking them along in enjoyment. Huta et al. (2012) argued that hedonic pursuits were less likely to predict the well-being of others, a proxy for the quality of relationship between individuals and close others. One reason why hedonic pursuit may fail is that such goal pursuits are "only a feeling" that resists clear and concrete implementation, which might impede the actual experience of well-being (Gollwitzer 1999; Sheldon et al., 2019).

Therefore, the question of how hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities relate to social well-being will benefit from further exploration. In a Ghanaian society with a greater inclination towards collectivist values, it is likely that eudaimonic pursuits will be a stronger predictor of social well-being. In addition to the hypothesised direct effect between family values and social well-being as well as motives for activities and social well-being, the present study sought to determine whether the family values has a link to motives for activities, given that an individual's values might be responsible for their well-being pursuits. For instance, the values of authority and social harmony might be associated with higher eudaimonic motives for activities (see Dzokoto et al., 2019; van der Geest, 1998b).

## The Present Study

The evidence on the importance of family values as a norm in Ghana (Gyekeye 1997) has not been adequately extended to social well-being research, despite its underlying relational characteristics. Beyond this, empirical evidence has shown that maintaining interpersonal harmony is crucial for the experience of well-being in Ghana (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020), with such harmony being at times dependent on adherence to cultural norms (Khumalo et al., 2020), which could include family values. Endorsement of strict adherence to rules in an African context has been found to be related to eudaimonic motives (Khumalo et al., 2020). This would imply that in order to fully understand social well-being in Ghana, it is necessary to explore the extent to which family values as well as eudaimonic motives as compared to hedonic motives might be a pathway towards greater social well-being. As a result, in this study, we aim to test a hypothesised mediated model to determine the nature of the relationships between family values and social well-being, and whether motives for activities mediate will this relationship.

**H1:** Family values will be positively related to social well-being.

**H2:** Family values will be positively related to eudaimonic motives for activities and negatively related to hedonic motives.

**H3:** Hedonic motives will be negatively related to social well-being and eudaimonic motives for activities will have a positive relationship with this outcome variable.

**H4:** Motives for activities will mediate the relationship between family values and social well-being.

## Methods

### Participants and Setting

Participants were recruited from a university in the capital city, Accra. This region is the wealthiest with a high population density due to in-migration. It is a coastal city and most urbanized region in the country with 87.4% of its total population living in urban centres. Although information on the socio-economic status of the students was not gathered, most of the participants might have been from similar socio-economic background, between middle and low-income given that the University is one of the most affordable in the country.

Using random sampling, a total of 390 university students from Ghana with an average age of 21.08 ( $SD = 3.18$ ) were included in the study. The most represented age was 19 years ( $n = 59$ ). The majority of the sample were female ( $n = 258$ ; 66%) and were single ( $n = 370$ ; 93.7%), while others were either cohabiting ( $n = 4$ ) or married ( $n = 17$ ; see Table 1). To be included in the study, participants had to be registered students at the university.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

| Variable  | Family Values: Roles               |          |     |     |          |          |
|---|------------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|----------|----------|
|   | Mean                               | Variance | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| FV 1: The father should be the head of the family.  | 5.34                               | 1.62     | 1   | 6   | -2.18    | 3.96     |
| FV 3: The mother's place is in the home.  | 2.65                               | 3.08     | 1   | 6   | .71      | -.86     |
| FV 5: The father should handle the money in the house   | 3.43                               | 2.68     | 1   | 6   | -.08     | -1.12    |
| FV 7: The mother should accept the decisions of the father                                      | 3.84                               | 2.08     | 1   | 6   | -.25     | -.75     |
| Variable  | Family Values: Kinship relations   |          |     |     |          |          |
|   | Mean                               | Variance | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| FV 2: The children have the obligation to care for their parents when they become old           | 5.48                               | 1.16     | 1   | 6   | -2.42    | 5.67     |
| FV 4: The problems of the family should be solved within the family                             | 5.56                               | .97      | 1   | 6   | -2.72    | 7.49     |
| FV 6: We should honour and protect our family's reputation                                      | 5.66                               | .75      | 1   | 6   | -3.20    | 10.85    |
| FV 8: Children should respect their grandparents  | 5.79                               | .43      | 1   | 6   | -4.04    | 18.34    |
| Variable  | Motives for activities: Eudaimonia |          |     |     |          |          |
|   | Mean                               | Variance | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| HEMA 2: Seeking to develop a skill, learn, or gain insight into something?                      | 6.01                               | 1.70     | 1   | 7   | -1.46    | 1.84     |
| HEMA 3: Seeking to do what you believe in?  | 6.01                               | 1.64     | 1   | 7   | -1.55    | 2.28     |
| HEMA 5: Seeking to pursue excellence or a personal ideal?                                       | 6.23                               | 1.31     | 1   | 7   | -1.90    | 4.07     |
| HEMA 8: Seeking to use the best in yourself?  | 6.21                               | 1.32     | 1   | 7   | -1.82    | 3.91     |
| Variable  | Motives for activities: Hedonia    |          |     |     |          |          |
|   | Mean                               | Variance | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| HEMA 1: Seeking relaxation?   | 4.63                               | 3.21     | 1   | 7   | -.38     | -.61     |
| HEMA 4: Seeking pleasure?   | 4.53                               | 3.24     | 1   | 7   | -.44     | -.67     |
| HEMA 6: Seeking enjoyment?  | 4.76                               | 3.17     | 1   | 7   | -.56     | -.50     |
| HEMA 7: Seeking to take it easy?  | 5.09                               | 2.68     | 1   | 7   | -.84     | .12      |
| HEMA 9: Seeking fun?  | 4.52                               | 3.59     | 1   | 7   | -.40     | -.91     |
| Variable  | Social Well-Being                  |          |     |     |          |          |
|   | Mean                               | Variance | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| MHC-SWB 4: That you had something important to contribute to society                            | 3.55                               | 2.07     | 0   | 5   | -.76     | -.55     |
| MHC-SWB 5: That you belonged to a community [like a social group, your neighbourhood, or —city] | 3.38                               | 2.71     | 0   | 5   | -.81     | -.54     |
| MHC-SWB 6: That our society is becoming a better place for people                               | 2.41                               | 2.87     | 0   | 5   | -.03     | -1.31    |
| MHC-SWB 7: That people are basically good   | 2.73                               | 2.14     | 0   | 5   | -.24     | -.99     |
| MHC-SWB 8: That the way our society works makes sense to you                                    | 2.09                               | 2.57     | 0   | 5   | .18      | -1.23    |

## **Measuring Instruments**

### ***Socio-demographic questionnaire***

This instrument gathered information on participants' country of origin, home language, gender, age and relationship status.

### ***Family values scale (Georgas 1989)***

This is an 8-item scale assessing an individual's inclination towards family-oriented values. The Family values scale was first developed by Georgas (1989) and later adapted by Georgas, Van de Vijver, Berry, Poorting, & Kagitcibasi (2006). The family values scale is scored on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is a two-dimensional scale that taps into family roles hierarchy and family kin relations. Items on roles hierarchy assesses an individual's support for the hierarchy of the roles of the father and mother in the home while kin relation assesses the extent to which a person endorses specific kinds of relational interactions. Examples of items on family hierarchy include "The father should be the head of the family"; The father should handle the money in the house and on family kin relations "Children should take care of old parents"; and We should honour and protect our family's reputation. The total score from the scale can be computed by summing up scores on each item, greater scores reflect higher family values. Byrne and van de Vijver (2014), based on their validation work on the 18-item version later developed by Georgas (1999), recommended a resulting 14-item scale instead of the 18-item scale and found that this shorter version exhibited a good fit to the pooled multi-country data (CFI = .936; RMSEA = .057; SRMR = .054). The first developed 8-item two-dimensional model, which we used in this study produced poor fit indices. Based on the modification indices (MI), we adjusted the model by correlating item 2 with item 1 as well as items 3 and 1 and acceptable fit indices emerged. In this study, we obtained a reliability coefficient of .70 for the total scale, family roles hierarchy was .62 and kin relations was .82.

### ***Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities (HEMA; Huta & Ryan, 2010)***

The first version of the HEMA consisting of nine items, divided into hedonic pursuits (5 items) and eudaimonic pursuits (4 items) subscales was used in this study. The hedonic orientation comprises two core elements, namely pleasure and comfort, examples of items include Seeking relaxation; Seeking enjoyment. The eudaimonic orientation has four core elements, namely authenticity, meaning, excellence, and growth, examples of items include Seeking to pursue excellence or a personal ideal; Seeking to use the best in yourself. Previous empirical studies conducted by Huta (2015) found a two-factor structure. Construct validity for the scale has been confirmed in two separate studies by Anić (2014) and Khumalo et al. (2020) who reported acceptable levels of reliability. In this study, we obtained a reliability coefficient of .86 for eudaimonic motives and .80 for Hedonic motives.

### ***Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2005)***

This scale measures levels of emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being. In the present study, we applied the social well-being sub-scale comprising 5 items



measuring social coherence, social contribution, social actualisation, social integration, and social acceptance. Social well-being taps onto an individual's perception of the quality of their relationships with other people, the neighbourhood, and the community. Items of the scale include *"That you had something important to contribute to society"*; *"That the way our society works makes sense to you"*, and *"That you belonged to a community [like a social group, your neighbourhood, or city]"*. The social well-being component of the MHC-SF was scored on a six-point agreement Likert scale from "Never" to "Everyday". The social well-being subscale as been found to be reliable in the South African context (Keyes et al., 2008). In the present study, we obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .75 for the social well-being subscale. The measurement model indicated an initial poor model fit, but on consideration of the modification indices, we adjusted the model by correlating items 1 (*That you had something important to contribute to society*) and 2 (*That you belonged to a community*) and the emerging fit indices improved.

### **Procedure and Ethical Considerations**

The study took place within the research project named *"Measuring and exploring the contextual manifestation of well-being: A cross-cultural African study"*, which was granted ethical clearance by the Ethics Review Board at the North-West University in South Africa, NWU-HS-2015-0126. Ethical approval was also granted by the University of Ghana, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, NMIMR093/16–17. Data were collected using questionnaires from students who had been recruited via lecture announcements. University lecturers informed the participants of the study, provided appropriate contact details for interested participants and postgraduate research assistants recruited the students. Students who were interested in partaking in the study contacted the postgraduate research assistants and were provided with detailed information sheets that explained the purposes and aims of the study. Following this, consent to participate in the study was obtained.

The students who volunteered to participate completed the battery of questionnaires without any form of coercion nor compensation, which were returned after a week to the postgraduate research assistants. Participants were assured of confidentiality, which was effected through assigning participant numbers to their questionnaires. The required ethical standards and principles were observed in gathering the data and presenting the findings of the study (South African Department of Health, 2015; World Health Organisation, 2001). After data gathering, they were captured and checked for accuracy by trained psychology postgraduate students.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) to determine descriptive statistics and intervariable correlations (see Field, 2018). Mplus, version 8.1 (Muthén and Muthén 1998–2017) was used to estimate and test the measurement and structural models for construct validity and mediation analysis. Descriptive statistics were computed and reported alongside intercorrelations across the indicator and latent variables. A two-step process was adopted in determining the nature of relationships across the variables (Weston & Gore, 2006), namely testing a measurement and structural model (see Byrne, 2012a). The measurement model component of the hypothesised model

used in this study comprised the latent variables of family values, hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities and social well-being. In the first step, the measurement models demonstrating the distinction and independence among the three latent variables were tested. Structural models testing direct and indirect effects were estimated in the second step.

The following criteria for model fit indices cut-off points, indicating good fit as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999), and applied by Geiser et al. (2013) and Kline (2011) were used: smaller and insignificant chi square ( $\chi^2$ ); root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standard root mean square residual (SRMR) of less than .06; comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) of more than .90, as well as smaller Akaike information criterion (AIC), and smaller Bayesian information criterion (BIC) (Byrne, 2012b; Geiser, 2013; Wang & Wang, 2012).

Good fit indices demonstrate that the hypothesised model fits with the data from the study sample. The second step was concerned with the structural model. Here we tested the direct effects involving family values (family roles hierarchy and family kin relations) and motives for activities (eudaimonic and hedonic) as determinant variables, and social well-being as outcome variables. The mediation analysis was applied through an indirect effects model involving the pathway between family values and social well-being being explained by motives for activities. The strength and significance of direct and indirect effects were tested based on their direction, probability values and confidence intervals.

## Results

The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationships among family values of roles hierarchy and kin relations, hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities and social well-being. The results of the correlational analysis showed a relationship between social well-being and family roles hierarchy as well as hedonic motives for activities. We also found that hedonic orientations demonstrated strong correlations with family values (see Table 2 for summary of correlations). In Table 1 we present the summary of means for each item on the latent variables.

### Measurement Model

Model fit indices of the measurement model for the hypothesised two-dimensional model of the Family Values Scale (Model 1: after correlation item 2 and 1) demonstrated acceptable fit indices CFI = .955; RMSEA = .054 [90% CI: .031, .08]; SRMR = .045 and (Model 2: after correlation of item 3 and 1) CFI = .960; RMSEA = .053 [90% CI: .028, .08]; SRMR = .045 (see Table 2). The criteria for an acceptable model fit for these goodness-of-fit indices were defined by CFI  $\geq$  .90, RMSEA < .06, and SRMR < .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All items had significant factor loadings on their hypothesised factor. The intended two-dimensional models for the motives for activities emerged with good model fit indices for the sample of study CFI = .944; RMSEA = .067 [90% CI: .049, .087]; SRMR = .061. We tested the model fit of the social well-being dimension of the mental health continuum short form. We found that the unidimensional model had poor fit indices and based on the MI, we correlated items 2

**Table 2.** Latent variable descriptive statistics and inter-variable correlations

|         | Reliability | Mean (SD)    | Min | Max | MHC SWB | HEMA EU | HEMA HE | FVS RH | FVS KR |
|---------|-------------|--------------|-----|-----|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| MHC_SWB | .75         | 14.13 (5.54) | 0   | 25  | 1       |         |         |        |        |
| HEMA_EU | .86         | 24.26 (4.30) | 4   | 28  | -.05    | 1       |         |        |        |
| HEMA_HE | .80         | 23.60 (6.66) | 5   | 35  | .17**   | -.07    | 1       |        |        |
| FVS_RH  | .62         | 15.25 (4.14) | 4   | 24  | .15*    | -.53    | .20**   | 1      |        |
| FVS_KR  | .82         | 22.54 (2.85) | 4   | 24  | .14     | .01     | .15*    | .32**  | 1      |

Note: MHC\_SWB = Mental health Continuum-Social Well-being; HEMA\_EU = Eudaimonic Motives for Activities; HEMA\_HE = Hedonic Motives for Activities; FVS\_RH = Family roles hierarchy; FVS\_KR = Family kin relations, \* $p > .05$ ; \*\* $p > .001$

**Table 3.** Fit indices

| Model                                    | $\chi^2$ | Df  | p value | CFI  | TLI  | RMSEA | LL   | UL   | p value | SRMR |
|--|----------|-----|---------|------|------|-------|------|------|---------|------|
| 1 Factor, all variables                  | 1980.32  | 209 | .00     | .403 | .340 | .146  | .14  | .15  | .00     | .135 |
| 5 Factors, all variables                 | 574.288  | 199 | .00     | .874 | .853 | .069  | .063 | .076 | .00     | .076 |
| 2 Factors Original Family Values         | 96.27    | 18  | .00     | .831 | .738 | .106  | .09  | .13  | .00     | .114 |
| 2 Factors Family Values with adjusted MI | 35.43    | 17  | .00     | .960 | .935 | .053  | .03  | .08  | .39     | .045 |
| 1 Factor Original Social WB              | 79.43    | 6   | .00     | .765 | .609 | .176  | .14  | .21  | .00     | .135 |
| 1 Factor Social WB with adjusted MI      | 11.88    | 4   | .01     | .975 | .937 | .071  | .03  | .12  | .19     | .030 |
| 2 Factors WB motives                     | 71.78    | 26  | .00     | .944 | .922 | .067  | .05  | .09  | .06     | .061 |
| Direct effects structural model          | 463.071  | 196 | .00     | .910 | .894 | .059  | .05  | .07  | .02     | .071 |
| Full indirect effects structural model   | 463.07   | 196 | .00     | .910 | .894 | .059  | .05  | .06  | .02     | .071 |

Note.  $\chi^2$  = Chi square; df = degrees of freedom; p = probability estimate; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; LL = 90% Confidence Interval Lower limit; UL = Confidence Interval Upper Limit; SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Square Residual

and 1 and obtained the following fit indices CFI = .975; RMSEA = .071 [90% CI: .026, .12]; SRMR = .030 indicating a good model fit. Table 3 and 4.

**Table 4.** Standardised direct and indirect effects

| Pathway                        | Estimate | S.E. | Est/<br>S.E. | p value | 95% CI |     |
|--------------------------------|----------|------|--------------|---------|--------|-----|
| Roles to Soc. WB               | .21      | .09  | 2.27         | .02     | .03    | .38 |
| Kin to Soc. WB                 | -.00     | .10  | -.03         | .97     | -.20   | .19 |
| Eud to Soc. WB                 | .07      | .08  | .88          | .37     | -.08   | .22 |
| Hed to Soc. WB                 | .23      | .06  | 3.74         | .00     | .11    | .36 |
| Roles to Eud                   | -.13     | .07  | -1.78        | .07     | -.27   | .01 |
| Kin to Eud                     | .61      | .06  | 10.17        | .00     | .49    | .73 |
| Roles to Hed                   | .21      | .08  | 2.49         | .01     | .04    | .37 |
| Kin to Hed                     | .01      | .08  | .07          | .94     | -.15   | .16 |
| Ind., Roles via Eud to Soc. WB | -.01     | .01  | -.76         | .45     | -.03   | .01 |
| Ind., Roles via Hed to Soc. WB | .03      | .02  | 2.01         | .04     | .00    | .09 |
| Ind., Kin via Eud to Soc. WB   | .03      | .03  | .86          | .39     | -.05   | .14 |
| Ind., Kin via Hed to Soc. WB   | .00      | .01  | .07          | .94     | -.04   | .04 |

Note: Roles = Family Values Roles Hierarchy; Kin = Family Values Kinship Relations; Soc. WB = Social Well-being; Eud = Eudaimonic Motives for Activities; Hed = Hedonic Motives for Activities

### Structural Model

We tested a structural model that determined the relationship between family values and social well-being as mediated by motives for activities. We found an acceptable model fit for the structural model CFI = .910; RMSEA = .059 [90% CI: .052, .066]; SRMR = .071. We will like to indicate that although the CFI value was < .95, it was > than .90, which Hu and Bentler (1999) and Kline (2015) indicated as an acceptable model fit, while RMSEA and SRMR were less than .08. Eudaimonic motives for activities accounted for 31% of the variance in the model while social well-being accounted for 13% of the variance. In addition to the model fit indices, it is important to report significant paths coefficients and parameter estimates (see Fig. 1).

- *H1. Relationship between family values and social well-being.*

Results from the structural model indicated that social well-being is related to family roles hierarchy (b = .21, [95% CI: .03, .38],  $p < .05$ ) but not kinship relations, hence the hypothesis was only partially supported.

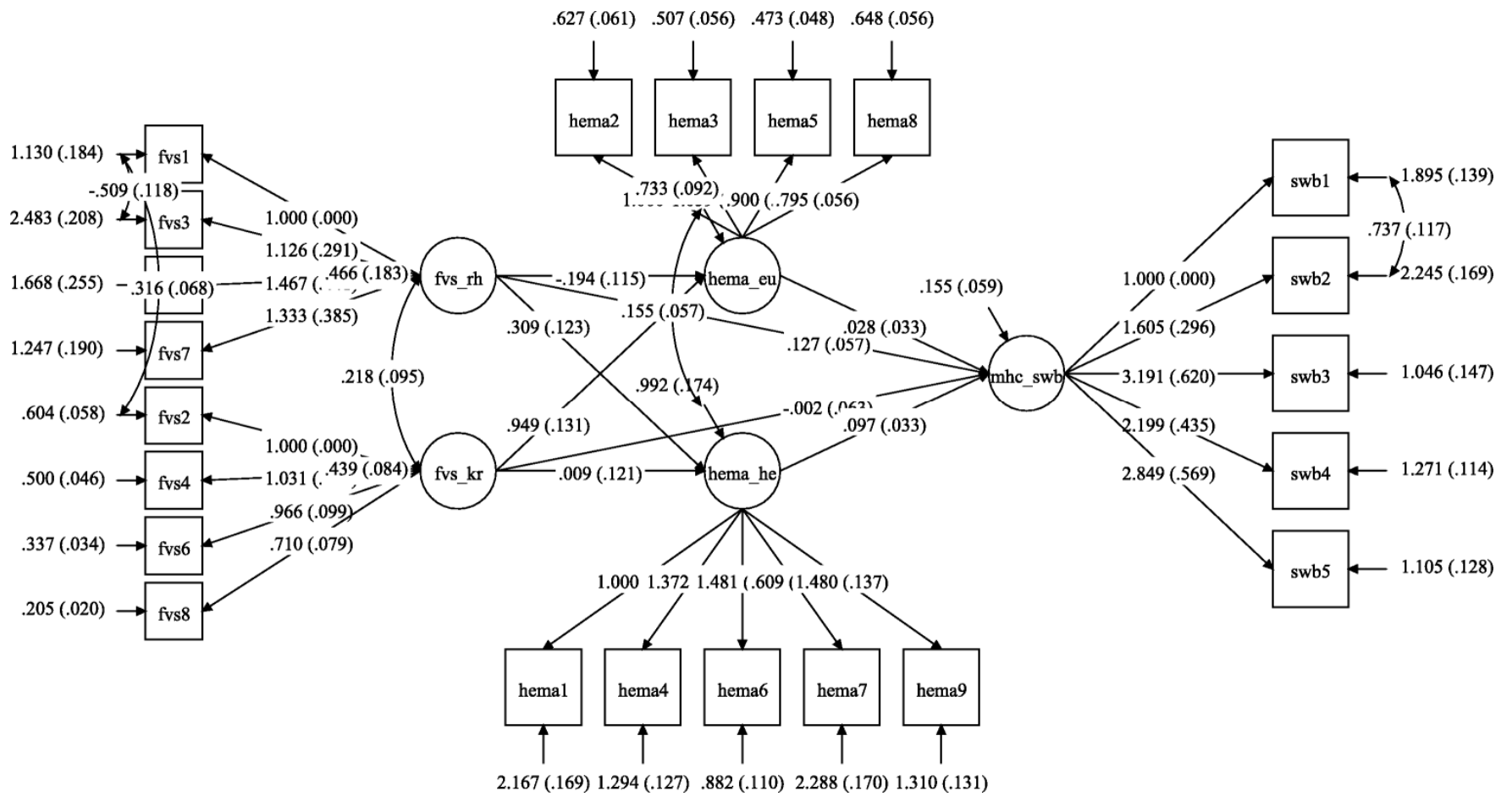


Fig. 1. Hypothesised mediated relationships across family values, motives for well-being and social well-being

- *H2. Relationship between family values and hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities.*

The relationship between role hierarchy and hedonic motives for activities was significant ( $b = .21$ , [95% CI: .04, .37],  $p < .05$ ), however, the relationship with eudaimonic motives for activities was not significant. Our findings showed that the kin relations dimension of the family values scale was not related to hedonic motives for activities but significantly positively related to eudaimonic motives for activities ( $b = .61$ , [95% CI: .49, .72],  $p < .001$ ).

- *H3. Relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic motives for activities and social well-being.*

The model showed a positive relationship between hedonic motives for activities and social well-being  $b = .23$ , [95% CI: .11, .36],  $p < .01$  but a non-significant relationship with eudaimonic motives for activities.

- *H4. Role of Motives for activities in the relationship between family values and social well-being.*

The sum of indirect effects of the mediated role of motives for activities was not significant. However, the indirect path from roles hierarchy to social well-being mediated by hedonic motives for activities was significant ( $b = .05$ , [95% CI: .00, .06],  $p < .05$ ). The other three mediated paths were not significant.

## **Discussion**

The present study investigated the dynamic relationships among family values, motives for activities and social well-being in a sample of Ghanaian university students. In addition to testing intervariable correlations, and direct effects, the full structural model in this study tested indirect effects in which motives for activities were hypothesised to mediate the relationship between family values and social well-being. The finding was that hedonic motives for activities partially mediated the relationship between family values and social well-being. The data partially supported the model. Thus, this finding implies that an individual's evaluation of the quality of their relationship and functioning in community with other individuals (social well-being) is associated with their endorsement of cultural values underling the family unit, via dispositional well-being motives for activities. These findings and their contribution to the field are discussed in the context of current literature.

### **Family Values and Social Well-Being**

Our data partially supported the relationship between family values and social well-being. Specifically, we found that family roles hierarchy is related to experiencing a sense of belonging and mattering in the community and society (social well-being). Supporting our findings, previous research proposed that individuals who endorsed values important to their community and family tend to experience a sense of belonging and recognition within the community (Visser et al., 2015). This is in keeping with Bonnerjee et al.'s (2012) observation that in Ghana, values related to patriarchal relationships and interdependence are

predominant and therefore individuals who score high on these are more likely to feel a sense of significance and integration in their community since the family is a building block of the wider society.

It is likely that upholding family roles hierarchy that specify responsibility of each family member in order to maintain the cohesion of the unit allowed them to feel that they are well integrated into their community. This is so because the family forms the building block of communities and the values preserved at this micro-level are likely to be reflective of the organisation of the wider community. Strongly underlying these values is the experience of hierarchical interdependence reflected in the father being the head of the home. This patriarchal leadership expectation is thought to be an established characteristic of several African communities (Gyekye, 2003; Wilson et al., 2017; Van der Geest, 2016). As a result, upholding these values tends to have implications for perceptions of being a significant member of the society as measured by social well-being.

### **Family Values and Motives for Activities**

We expected that family values of young adults in Ghana will be related to their motives for activities, such that roles hierarchy and kin relations would be associated with eudaimonic motives for activities rather than hedonic pursuits. Contrary to expectation, we found that family roles hierarchy was related to hedonic motives for activities. This means that endorsing patriarchal family hierarchy of roles is linked to pursuing comfort and pleasure. The retention of male dominance allows for meeting of both the material and psychological well-being of the individual and family. Relatedly, Dzokoto (2012) argued that happiness in Ghana was pursued only to the extent that it ensures harmony. So it is possible that endorsing values on family roles hierarchy necessary for social harmony yielded motives to pursue pleasure as long as these pursuits were in keeping prevailing family values. However, this finding requires further enquiry.

A plausible explanatory mechanism is high norm adherence (see Gelfand, 2012). For the purposes of maintaining harmony and ensuring survival, many societies tend to adhere to strict norm regulation. In this case, we see male leadership and dominance in the families bringing about a sense of comfort.

Interestingly, our data show that kin relations was significantly related to eudaimonic motives for activities. This means that greater endorsement of a broad family kinship network was associated with personal disposition towards purpose, meaning and growth as orientations towards well-being. Braaten and Huta (2016) highlighted the need to understand what leads people to pursue either eudaimonic or hedonic motives. In our study, we were interested in the relationship between the family values and motives for activities. Using the worldviews compiled by Koltko-Rivera (2004), Braaten and Huta (2016) found that most worldviews were related to either eudaimonic orientations or hedonic orientations. Specifically, the authors found that beliefs in a greater purpose and moral absolutism were antecedents of eudaimonic orientations. Eudaimonic orientation includes the pursuit of ethical and moral excellence, the best in oneself, ideals, and high-quality performance (Huta 2013). This form of well-being pursuit is also said to relate to identity commitment grounded in personal or communal values (Pearce et al., 2020) as evident in kin relations.

In the present study, we showed that family values pertaining to kin relations were related to eudaimonic motives for activities. It is possible that the nature of the Ghanaian society in which these young adults lived, esteemed values of preserving kin relations making these values part of their fundamental belief system as well as what they regard as true and real. The observed relationship can be attributed to the notion that eudaimonic orientation which focuses on seeking authenticity and meaning will draw heavily from values that reflect the core of an individual's beliefs (including family values). These values serve as a "reference system or rules of the game in which a person operates while eudaimonic motives for activities influences how the person navigates within that framework" (Braaten and Huta 2016). The emerging value of preserving kin relations resonates with the need to forge and maintain social ties, which is a fundamental value of Ghanaians thereby guiding student's daily well-being motives for activities.

The relationship between eudaimonic motives for activities and kin relations is also underscored in previous anthropological studies in Ghana where notions of a good life among the aged is based on experiencing respect from the younger generation (van der Geest 1999). The value of respect is regarded as an ideal because of its usefulness in preserving kin relations, in turn, serving as a reference system for eudaimonic orientations that focuses on extending oneself beyond individual pleasure. These values appear to be congruent with the ideals of eudaimonic motives for activities, hence the emerging relationships. Additionally, our findings point to the interaction of contextual and psychological factors in understanding human behaviour. Wissing et al. (2019) argued that in Ghana, the psychological experience of well-being is fully understood considering the context of socio-cultural nuances influencing daily functioning. This is in line with the opinions of Agbo and Ome (2017) who indicated that cultural adaption is necessary to understand the concept of happiness among the Igbos in the Eastern part of Nigeria.

### **Motives for Activities and Social Well-Being**

On motives for activities, our findings showed a positive relationship between hedonic motives well-being activities and social well-being. Previous studies by Huta et al. (2012) and Braaten et al. (2019) revealed that hedonic pursuits might be related to the quality of social interactions because individuals scoring high on these pursuits were quite pleasurable to engage with and can easily carry others along. In addition, individuals with greater hedonic motives for activities have the tendency to foster and savour positive experiences from social experiences, lending to increased experience of social well-being.

An alternative explanation could be that the students in this study, as a result of their life phase, were more peer-focused and seeking of social contact, making pleasureable experiences from social interactions being necessary for their social well-being. Supporting a life phase explanation for hedonic pursuits, Lorente et al. (2019) found that younger adults (ages 35 or younger) reported a higher Life of Pleasure than older adults (ages 50 or older) but not higher than middle-aged adults (ages 35 to 50). Moreover, Isler and Newland (2017) found that participants aged 18 to 25 scored higher on the Life of Pleasure than participants aged 26 to 53. Similarly, LeFebvre and Huta (2020) found that eudaimonic motives only increased from age 30, and in our case the majority of the sample were below age 30. This in turn might explain the importance of such pursuits for social well-being.



## **Hedonic Motives for Activities as a Mediator of Family Values and Social Well-Being**

In our model, we found that hedonic pursuits mediated the relationship between family roles hierarchy and social well-being. This would mean experiences of social well-being among Ghanaian students is related to endorsing roles hierarchy in the family and motives for well-being that encourage pleasure-seeking and comfort. Given that the sample of the study included young adults who are likely to seek out pleasureable activities including social contacts, these motives in addition to the family values they endorse might therefore, be connected to their sense of belonging and significance in the society. In other words, an individual who upholds community-expected values and is still interested in pursuing pleasurable activities (including social interactions) is likely to experience increased social well-being. Such an individual is endorsing interpersonal-level trait (family values) and intrapersonal (hedonic pursuits), but perhaps with the aim of promoting engagements with others.

Cultural models for well-being in four Ghanaian languages pointed to respect, little social disruptions in familial relationships and fulfilling of obligations as indicators of proper relationality (Osei-Tutu et al., 2018; Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). This could imply that students endorsing family roles hierarchy are likely to experience sense of belonging in their relationships because these values are in line with society's expectations of respect, morality and preservation of social ties. This relationship is further accentuated by hedonic pursuits in pleasureable social interactions that tends to be common among young adults.

### **Limitations**

As highlighted in the the paper, there were many useful contributions of the study, however, the study is not without limitations. Like all cross-sectional studies, causal inferences on the relationship between family values and motives for activities as well as how this relates to social well-being could not be determined. The sample size could be increased and diversified in future studies. The emerging finding on the role of hedonic pursuits could benefit from further exploration because our study did not show whether these group of participants had a more collectivist orientation or otherwise. Another limitation is that we utilised measures that were developed in a Western context, whereas constructs may have different denotations and connotations in various cultural contexts and the applicability of the current measures can be questioned, but we will like to point out that all the measures demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Several conclusions are worth highlighting. Regarding the hypothesised relationships, our findings supported the mediated role of motives for activities in the relationship between family values and social well-being. In summary, our findings revealed that family roles hierarchy is more consistently associated with hedonic pursuits and social well-being compared to kin relations. Apart from the relationship between kin relations and eudaimonic motives for activities, none of the other path linking to kin relations was significant. This is surprising as we expected both aspects of family values to predict social well-being. Even

more, we expected kin relations to have a consistent and stronger relationship with social well-being.

The emerging emphasis on roles hierarchy might be reflecting the endorsement strict cultural norms (see Khumalo et al., 2020), and possibly, kin relations only significant when understood in terms of hierarchical relations. This will imply that efforts at improving social well-being should consider values on the hierarchical organisation of the family that are endorsed as well as the specific motives for activities for that group. More so, it could be that the waning cultural norms on kin relations (van der Geest, 2007) might explain its lack of prominence in the model. On kin relations and eudaimonic motives, it can be reasoned that the appreciation of kin relations demonstrates that such an individual will be more concerned with activities that promote authenticity and quality social interactions.

In our study involving young adults, hedonic pursuits emerged as a significant factor in comparison to eudaimonic motives for activities which we expected to have a stronger relationship. Our findings on the role of hedonic pursuits in the hypothesised model might point to the need to consider the life stage in which participants find themselves. Young university students might be prone to pleasure-seeking from social interactions which might in turn improve their social well-being. Following previous work on age and well-being pursuits (Isler & Newland, 2017; Lorente et al., 2019), the life phase of our sample might explain the role of hedonic pursuits in the mediated model. Worth noting is the need to understand whether urbanisation is influencing values on roles hierarchy in so far as it does not appear to improve pursuits targeted personal growth and contributing to the greater good. A comparative study across different age groups on family values and motives for activities will be beneficial.

Finally, the importance of hedonic motives for activities for social well-being points to the intertwined nature of the self and the collective in contexts like Ghana (see Wissing et al., 2020). Further research could elucidate why seeking pleasure contributes to perceptions of social well-being. As a practical implication, the promotion of well-being in therapeutic and intervention settings could benefit from understanding underlying norms or values of individuals and how this might be linked to experiences of well-being. The consideration of values must be accompanied by designing interventions that aim to transform orientations of well-being (see Huta & Ryan, 2010) as these will have greater implication for actual well-being experiences. Educational psychologist and social workers working the youth must consider how to make hedonic motives more beneficial for the individual rather than seeing them as inherently motivated by self-interest as research has shown that both motives complement each other in the promotion of well-being. In Ghana, where there is sparse evidence for the design of well-being interventions, our findings do provide suggestions (family values and motives for activities) for developing and designing interventions for mental health promotion.

On a theoretical level, the study provides empirical grounding to previous sociological and anthropological research as well as its link to well-being, on why cultural values, family norms specifically, are argued to be a crucial part of the Ghanaian system's social fabric. Individuals holding such values experience better social well-being because the family system is a mirrored reflection, albeit smaller, of how they feel about their place in the society.

Furthermore, our study now demonstrates the intertwined nature of relational cultural values and individual motives in predicting well-being. Although African societies are described as mostly valuing collectivist norms, individual pleasure (hedonic motives) seems critical for young people in order to experience a sense of belonging.

## Ethics declarations

### Conflict of Interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

### Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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