

Feeling meaningfulness promotes life satisfaction better than pleasure

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Providing meaning and spiritual fulfilment is more effective at increasing life satisfaction than giving pleasure, regardless of the cultural context, research from ESCP Business School reveals.

Ben Voyer, Charlotte Gaston-Breton, and Minas Kastanakis, Professors in Marketing at ESCP, and Professor Jeremy Lemoine from the University of East London, surveyed the responses to more than 2,600 questionnaires administered to respondents in 12 countries.

Participants rated on a numerical scale how much they agreed with statements indicating the pursuit of pleasure (hedonia), meaning and a spiritual relationship with higher powers (eudaimonia) were beneficial to their satisfaction with life.

Included in the research were both countries with an individualist culture (Australia, France, Germany, USA), and countries with a collectivist culture (Brazil, China, Nigeria, UAE), as well as India which combines elements of both.

The results indicate that a combination of experiencing pleasure and meaningfulness led to higher overall contentment than either pursuit in isolation.

However, of the two pursuits, feeling a sense of significance was a greater predictor of life satisfaction than gratification in all countries studied.

The research is valuable to managers in multiple fields, who can use the findings to design more effective corporate incentives, such as pleasure-driven motivators (like financial rewards) or meaning-driven ones (like altruistic time-allocation).

It is also useful for a marketing audience, as the findings can inform better practices in need identification and communication with consumers across countries and cultures.

“Traditionally, providers of well-being services such as gyms or spas have focused on the personal and individualist benefits of their services. The recent rise in popularity of gym communities (e.g. CrossFit, Peloton online) may be due to the provision of more meaningful experiences,” says the ESCP Business School research team.

The research was published in the Journal of Business Research, one of the top academic journals in the management field.

For more information, to speak with Professors Voyer, Gaston-Breton, and Kastanakis, or see a copy of the research paper, contact Jamie Hose at BlueSky Education on jamie@bluesky-pr.com, or call +44 (0)1582 790 706

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