

**A STUDY OF THE IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT OF
AUTONOMY ON THE MOTIVATION AND SUBJECTIVE
WELL-BEING OF BRITISH AND ECUADORIAN
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

by

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ABSTRACT

Autonomy has been proposed by Self-determination theory (SDT) as universally beneficial to subjective well-being (SWB). This assumption is questioned, however, by cross-cultural researchers who argue that autonomy is less central within collectivist societies. The thesis addressed this controversy by conducting a mixed methods study with Ecuadorian and British university students. In line with SDT, the results of questionnaires and focus groups demonstrate that autonomy is likely to be conducive to SWB in both collectivist (Ecuador) and individualist (the UK) societies. On the other hand, the findings suggest a cross-cultural differentiation in ways in which various versions of autonomy correlate with SWB. Self-generated or individual autonomy correlated positively with SWB in both cultural contexts, whereas autonomy achieved by genuine self-endorsement/internalization of external influences was only beneficial for participants from the collectivist culture. Furthermore, the data point to higher levels of individual autonomy in the British sample. Finally, the findings from focus groups indicate the higher importance and internalization of external influences among Ecuadorian students. Overall, therefore, although the study reconfirms key tenets within SDT, it also suggests that the studied variables and their relationships might be mediated by cultural self-construal, which, in turn, can have implications for international pedagogical practices.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the topic

The goal of this study is to analyze the concepts of educational motivation and autonomy and their relationship to subjective well-being: a topic that has relevance for adult students, their teachers as well as educational program providers (Levesque et al., 2004). Understanding the reasons behind educational pursuit, and discovering what drives students to pursue learning and how it affects their well-being are essential for 'adult educators who are interested in developing a program to meet public demands and increase participation in their programs' (Henry and Basile, 1994, p. 64). As Boshier (1971, p. 3) stated, 'the nature of the individual learner and his reasons for participation are an important starting point for any research on adult education.'

Still, however, discovering what motivation really means and how it affects students at an emotional level is not an easy task, especially in the case of post-secondary students. For instance, educational motivation can be viewed as a manifestation of universal human tendencies or, conversely, as an expression of a specific cultural self-construal. In regards to these aspects, two different attitudes emerge. On one side, some cross-cultural researchers argue that the cultural context in which students live is an important determinant of their motivational orientation as well as the relationship between their motivational orientation and their satisfaction with the learning process (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). The role of culture might be especially crucial when one considers the differences between individualist and collectivist self-construal. The former - predominant in Western democracies - places emphasis on emotional independence and self-fulfillment or self-actualization. The collectivist self-construal - predominant in Asian countries as well as many parts of South

America and Africa – values, on the other hand, emotional dependence, collective identity, group solidarity, and fulfilling societal and family obligations (Hofstede, 1980; Hui and Triandis, 1986; Sinha and Verma, 1987; Kim et al., 1994).

This divide between cultural contexts, cross-cultural researchers point out, informs students' motivational orientation and the relationship between motivation and well-being (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Oishi, 2000). In individualist countries, it is argued, motivational orientation that is based on the values of self-fulfillment and autonomy in learning pursuits leads to emotional well-being, because those values are championed within the individualist culture. In collectivist countries, however, autonomy, independence and self-actualization are less emphasized and thus less crucial to achieving well-being educational contexts. It is, instead, the desire to fulfill societal and family obligations or wishes that motivates students and increases their well-being. In other words, the congruence between a given student's motivational orientation and the values predominant in his or her cultures is associated with gains in well-being (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000).

This line of argument has, however, been questioned by proponents of the highly influential Self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000) who argue that autonomy and intrinsic interest in learning are beneficial to emotional well-being in all cultural contexts. Autonomy is therefore positioned by these theorists as a universal human need, albeit being manifest differently in individualist versus collectivist cultures. In essence, autonomy is considered to remain universally pivotal, regardless of the cultural self-construal to which particular students subscribe.

Both sides provide arguments to support their respective position, alongside the wealth of research. Still, however, the debate continues and remains unresolved. It is, thus, precisely my own desire to contribute to this debate through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data that has led me to the present research topic.

1.2 Personal context

My interest in pursuing the topic of motivation and well-being has also developed as the result of temporarily staying in Ecuador. I realized that in Ecuador, family and social obligations tend to play a greater part in people's everyday behaviour than in the case of people born and brought up in Poland, Canada, and the United States; the countries where I had previously lived and studied.

What I saw in Ecuador reminded me of my earlier experiences of teaching English as a second language (ESL) in the United States and Canada. During this time, I noticed that students from different cultures often presented dissimilar motivational orientations for entering the classroom and for persisting in a given program. They also responded differently to different methodological techniques. In a wide generalization, learners from South America, Africa and some Asian countries appeared to favour a top-down methodological approach - with a teacher being in charge of the learning process - over having more independence and control of the learning process.

My own educational experiences from Canada, where I studied English literature at the University of Toronto, also validated the role of culture in adult students' responses to the learning process.

The Canadian system seemed so different to me. In Poland, my native country, a professor had an unquestioned authority, and learning mostly consisted of a passive

memorization of a given material. Therefore, I was surprised to discover that in Canada my own input and ideas were not only solicited but also appreciated. Students could disagree with professors and they were encouraged to present their own arguments. At first, this independent, creative, and self-determined learning process was not real learning for me. It lacked authority and structure, and was not rooted in absolutes.

With time, however, I learned to appreciate this methodological approach, especially in the context of adult education. I do not know, however, if my present convictions are universally valid and beneficial to all cultural contexts. Indeed, describing views of some cultural determinists, Chirkov (2009, p. 254) writes that they believe that ‘the construct of autonomy or self-determination, together with such cultural values as individualism, liberalism, independence, self-reliance and many others, are constructions of Western civilization that are not (or are only partially) applicable to the rest of the world’ (Chirkov, 2009, p.254). Perhaps, my ESL students’ expectations of the learning process as well as my own initial animosity towards the Canadian educational system reflected this different cultural reality underpinning the learning process.

Therefore, when I saw the same response to academic learning and professional tasks in Ecuador as I had seen during my ESL teaching years and had experienced during my own university studies, an interest in studying educational motivation and autonomy at greater depth arose, and I was intrigued by a number of questions:

1. Is having autonomy in an educational or professional environment less important in some cultural contexts, such as Ecuador, or are my observations simply anecdotal findings - personal opinions unsubstantiated by any hard data?

2. Are individuals in some cultures more willing to embrace external influences in their professional and academic life?

3. Is having control over one's destiny and being intrinsically interested in goals that one pursues equally important in all cultures?

4. Do subjective well-being and autonomy relate differently to each other in different cultural contexts?

5. Is autonomy constructed and internalized in the same way in different cultural contexts?

Pursuing those questions has led me to the previously mentioned Self-determination theory. The theory's core tenet that autonomy is a universal value and is equally important and beneficial to all cultures caught me by surprise, as if contradicting what I had seen with my own eyes (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Reading more about it has helped me, however, appreciate the depth and subtlety of SDT's position. What the proponents of SDT have been saying is that autonomy is, indeed, equally crucial to all cultures but it can have culture-specific forms and manifestations (Deci and Ryan, 1991). Some individuals, especially from collectivist cultures, can internalize the influences of others to a point that those influences do not feel external any more: they have rather become an indistinguishable part of the self. Acting on those external influences does not clash with autonomy nor does it diminish well-being because those influences are now fully incorporated into one's autonomous functioning (Deci and Ryan, 1991; Chirkov et al., 2003).

In other words, SDT proponents argue that the theory's cross-cultural critics have misunderstood its definition of autonomy, and have merged it with independence, even though, for proponents of SDT, autonomy means only volition in action or genuine self-

endorsement of a given action. As long as following external pressures and influences *feels* like following one's own genuine wishes and desires, autonomy remains intact. This 'autonomous interdependence' might be easier to achieve in collectivist cultural contexts, but this does not undermine the universal importance of educational autonomy for emotional well-being (Deci and Ryan, 1991, p. 271).

Still, however, as already mentioned, the issue remains unresolved. Therefore, incidentally, following my personal interests, I discovered one of the major controversies in cross-cultural education: from this point on, I determined that I would like pursue this topic in my doctoral thesis.

1.3 The importance of the study and its potential contribution

The thesis addresses a set of timely and widely debated issues. It is probably best to illustrate the significance of the topic through a series of quotations from leading researchers in the area. As Chirkov (2009, p. 257) writes, 'the topic of human autonomy, agency, and culture remains at the centre of the battle for the humanistic, empowering, and liberating cultural psychology of academic motivation.' Indeed, SDT's claim that autonomy is universally important to well-being can have profound pedagogical implications:

'...distinguishing autonomy from the concept of individualism in cultural analyses appears to be an important step both in more detailed and differentiated understanding of cultural differences and for creating policies toward enhancing mental health worldwide. However, should the claim of no functional value for autonomy in collectivistic or vertical cultures (e.g. Miller, 1997; Oishi, 2000) prove correct, the policy implications would also be manifold (Sen, 1999)' (Chirkov et al., (2003, p.99).

For instance, if SDT proponents are right, then optimal pedagogical practices - regardless of the cultural context - should always incorporate students' intrinsic motivation and autonomy

in designing and supporting any educational experience. In essence, the Western principles of student-centered classrooms should govern educational programs in every cultural context (Knowles, 1980; Ryan and Deci, 2000). On the other hand, however, 'should the claim of no functional value of autonomy in collectivistic or vertical cultures prove correct' (Chirkov et al., 2003, p. 99), then arguments in favour of student-centered classrooms, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and self-direction in the learning process might be argued to have only culture-specific significance. They might be of lesser importance in collectivist countries because they depend on and are related to autonomy that has 'no functional value' in these countries (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Markus and Kitayama, 2000).

This is an important debate because a lot is at stake. The proponents of SDT are unabashed in attacking some cross-cultural researchers in highly charged language:

'The denial that autonomy is a basic human need may even provide a justification for stripping representatives of some nations from essential human competencies, or casting them as puppets of social expectations and socio-cultural pressures...The main argument of cultural determinists is that many cultures highly value obedience to authority, strict discipline, and a hierarchical, authoritarian style of teacher-student relations...The SDT researchers argue against this position, instead suggesting that autonomy support is a necessary condition for the satisfaction of the need for autonomy and cultivating autonomous motivation, and it is universally beneficial, even within cultures in which parents or teachers do not endorse this mode of social interaction (Ryan and Deci, 2003)' (Chirkov, 2009, pp. 255-256).

The theoretical and practical importance of this area of study stems also from the fact that educational and professional practices from Western societies are now being implemented in collectivist cultural contexts (Kim et al., 1994; de Wit, 2005). Increasingly, 'globalization of education' takes place, which, in reality, means that Western educational values are being promoted as a norm, regardless of a given cultural context (de Wit et al., 2005, p. 5). What needs to be determined, however, is whether the Western pedagogy based on the assertion of autonomy in the learning process suits collectivist students brought up in an interdependent

cultural context (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In other words, do self-directed learning and following individual, entirely self-generated interests provide them with emotional benefits similar to those achieved by students brought up in individualist Western societies?

Therefore, the present debate should be at the center of discussions about this implementation process. For instance, if Western educational practices were to be deemed relevant only to Western contexts – as cultural determinists claim (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) – then each international educational and professional development initiative would require methodological re-evaluation.

The importance of the present study stems also from its partial focus on the South American cultural context. SDT-related research in this part of the world is well overdue, since most relevant studies in non-Western contexts have so far been conducted in Asia, mainly Japan, China, and South Korea (Matsumoto, 1991). Although this is understandable because of the continent's economic importance, relevant research needs now to move to other parts of the world. South America should be one of those places. This is crucial, because of SDT's claim of the universality of autonomy, and because this claim's relevance is most intensely debated in the context of collectivist cultures. South America represents one of these cultures and thus needs to be studied. Chirkov et al., (2003, pp. 107-108) argue this point in the conclusion to their research that analyzed the importance of autonomy in four different cultures:

‘Despite the diversity of these four cultures, they do not begin to capture all cultural forms. In particular, countries from South America, Africa, and other parts of the world should be studied for their similarities and differences concerning the role of autonomy and internalization within culture.’

Matsumoto (1999, p.293) goes along the same lines when he analyzes cross-cultural researchers' argument that autonomy is less important to collectivist cultures. Whether this

argument is valid or not can only be settled after it has been tested in all collectivist cultures. This has not been done, however, because research ‘on Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa...is almost non-existent in their presentation, because empirical work of the level of quality and rigor that is acceptable to the field is almost nonexistent in these areas.’

The present study aims to redress this problem. If more research follows this thesis or if its findings contribute to developing sound educational practices, I will have deemed my work a success.

1.4 Research objectives

The study had a number of objectives that were addressed in the context of Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000). A rationale for the study and its practical and theoretical importance are presented in-depth in the Literature Review Chapter of the study. In general terms, I intended to do the following:

Objective 1: evaluate whether, how, and to what degree Ecuadorian and British university students differ in their motivational approaches to higher education.

Objective 2: assess and describe the factors that underlie any such motivational differences.

Objective 3: assess whether educational autonomy is differently perceived in the two cultural contexts.

Objective 4: compare the importance of educational autonomy for students from the two cultural contexts.

Objective 5: find out if educational autonomy relates differently to subjective well-being in the two cultural contexts.

1.5 Study plan

The study employed a mixed methods approach to collect, analyze, and describe data. First, I used the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992), Inclusive Motivation Scale (Rudy et al., 2007), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) to collect quantitative data from Ecuadorian and British participants. I then conducted focus groups with different participants in each country in order to obtain qualitative data related to academic motivation and well-being. In the next step, the collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately in the context of extant research questions and objectives. Finally, all the collected findings were compared and analyzed together in the context of some earlier research in hope of providing a comprehensive and multi-faceted contribution to the research domain.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The first chapter defines the concept of subjective well-being and conceptual differences between collectivism and individualism. It also provides an overview of the SDT theoretical framework and analyzes research studies supportive as well as critical of this framework.

2.1 The concept of well-being

2.1.1 *Different cultural concepts of well-being*

Since emotional well-being is one of the studied phenomena in the present research, it requires a thorough overview and consideration. This is especially important because the concept of well-being might be differently defined and understood in various cultural contexts (Diener and Diener 1995; Arrindell et al., 1997; Oishi et al., 1999; Kitayama et al., 2000, Oishi and Diener, 2001). In general, the cultural perspective assumes that the nature and experiences of well-being are culturally constituted and thus a Western concept of well-being is inadequate to analyze well-being in collectivist cultures (Lu and Gilmour, 2004, p.271). It is proposed that indigenous culture plays a major role in constructing the concept of happiness and that particular 'self views (e.g. independent self vs. interdependent self) function as regulatory mechanisms when an individual attempts to judge his or her well-being' (Lu and Gilmour, 2004, p.272).

For instance, a Western concept of well-being is believed to emphasize a highly individual self-definition (Geertz, 1975). An individualistic person strives to be 'a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural

background'(Geertz, 1975, p.48). According to some researchers, the Western concept of well-being entails an active pursuit of self-directed goals and the realization of perceived potentials (Lu and Gimour, 2000). Furthermore, there are certain factors such as personal accomplishments (Emmons, 1991; Uchida et al., 2004) and self-esteem (Diener et al., 1985; Diener et al., 1995) that have been showed to be strongly correlated with well-being in Western cultures.

Well-being in collectivistic cultures might be, on the other hand, the result of different causative factors. It is proposed that self-esteem is less important for members of Eastern collectivistic cultures than it is for people living in Western societies (Diener et al., 1995; Suh, 2000). In essence, in accordance with the main principles of collectivism, it is speculated that the Asian concept of subjective well-being (SWB), contrary to the Western concept of SWB, emphasizes mostly interdependent factors, such as 'the creation and maintenance of interdependent harmony' Lu and Gilmour (2000, p.276).

Another issue related to SWB from a cross-cultural perspective has its root in Maslow's (1943) need-gratification theory. In his organization of universal human needs, physiological needs are considered most essential, and are followed by safety needs, love needs (affection, belonging), esteem needs (self-respect, freedom or autonomy), and self-actualization needs. Furthermore, all needs are dependent on external conditions and circumstances that might enhance or thwart their realization. Since some of those conditions are economic in nature, physiological and safety needs are argued to be more salient in poor countries than in rich countries (Oishi et al., 1999).

This line of theorizing has implications for cross-cultural views of well-being. First, people living in wealthy nations should be more satisfied with their lives because, on

average, they reach a higher level in Maslow's need-gratification theory (McMahon, 2006). Second, since physiological and safety needs are more easily attained in wealthy nations, people living in those nations might base their life satisfaction judgments on higher level needs, such as autonomy and self-actualization.

If empirically confirmed, these arguments would make the issue of well-being very complex from a cross-cultural perspective. In addition to cultural differences, economic and political conditions in particular countries would also bear on how well-being is defined and attained. Access to food, housing or personal freedom might have a culturally different impact on well-being, depending of the availability of the means toward satisfaction of these needs in given societies.

2.1.2 Subjective well-being

Another problem related to well-being pertains not only to what influences and defines it across nations, but also what its very definition consists of. Here, again, certain problems arise. Happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction are not necessarily synonymous, although they might be used interchangeably in everyday life and popular culture. This study, in its analysis of well-being, uses only the concept of subjective well-being (SWB), which, according to Diener et al. (1999, p. 277) is 'a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction' (Diener et al., 1999, p. 277).

2.1.3 The cognitive dimension of subjective well-being

According to (Diener, 1994) subjective well-being (SWB) consists of two components: an affective part and a cognitive part. The affective part is a hedonic evaluation guided by

immediate emotions and feelings, while the cognitive part is an information-based appraisal of one's whole life, with people judging the extent to which their life so far measures up to their expectations and resembles their envisioned ideal life (van Hoorn, 2007).

This thesis used only the cognitive dimension of SWB in its quantitative data collection phase. Specific reasons guided this choice. There is a large body of research that has studied the cognitive aspect, and this research will be analyzed in depth in Section 4.1.2.3 in relation to Satisfaction with Life Scale (the SWLS, Diener et al, 1985), a measurement of subjective well-being in the present study. In general terms, the cognitive dimension of SWB has been the most used concept in relation to well-being, and the most popular view of happiness has been the one that is expressed through whole life satisfaction (Feldman, 1998). The majority of the studies of the correlation between SWB and other variables have used the concept of whole life satisfaction as one of the measurements and, the SWLS, specifically, has been the most popular of all the scales applied in this type of research (Gouveia et al., 2008). It is thus this practical aim of enabling the research presented within the current thesis to be compared to previous research that partly motivated me to choose the cognitive component of SWB in the data collection process.

Apart from its popularity, there is a lot to recommend about cognitive appraisal as an estimation of well-being. The cognitive component of SWB elicits from an individual a conscious and reflective estimation of his or her life in accordance with personal values and goals. It is a distinguishing feature of the cognitive part that it focuses on a given individual's own judgments and values, rather than on criteria that are arbitrarily chosen by others (Diener, 1984). For example, although health and energy may be universally desirable, particular individuals can place different values on them (Diener et al., 1985).

Furthermore, the cognitive dimension - by eliciting global judgments - concerns itself with both overall life satisfaction and with satisfaction of specific domains. A given person judges all that is good and bad in his or her life and, then, in accordance with his or her beliefs, makes an overall judgment. As such, the cognitive component fulfils the requirement of the philosopher Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz (1976, p.8) who writes that 'happiness requires total satisfaction, that is satisfaction with life as a whole.'

Freedom to choose one's own criteria and the holistic nature of the life satisfaction component of SWB explain its popularity in social and psychological research. There is something deeply humanistic – at least in the eyes of this researcher – about overall life satisfaction as a measure of well-being. It goes against our often premature judgments about the happiness of disabled, sick or impoverished people. In doing so, it reminds us that we should always seek and value the subjective perspective of other human beings.

2.2 Individualism and collectivism

2.2.1 Overview of the concepts

Ecuador and the United Kingdom are described in cross-cultural research as countries predominantly characterized by, respectively, collectivist and individualist self-construal (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Therefore, given the context of the present study, it is important to provide an overview of individualism and collectivism and describe how they have been defined and studied in cross-cultural literature.

The interest in individualism and collectivist (I/C) started with the publication of *Culture's Consequences* (Hofstede, 1980; 2001), a vast cross-cultural study of work motivation and organizational dynamics. In this book, Hofstede collected and analyzed data

from more than 117,000 IBM employees working in 66 countries and proposed four dimensions of cultural variation: power distance, masculinity, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. Although the author considered all the dimensions to be important, it was the concept of individualism that captured the interest of cross-cultural researchers. As defined by Hofstede, Western European countries, the United States and Canada correspond to individualistic self-construal, whereas Asian countries as well countries in Latin America and Africa correspond to collectivistic self-construal.

A number of potential influences have been suggested as implicated in cultural differentiation, ranging from Confucianism versus Protestant beliefs, agrarian versus urban economy, and cultural homogeneity versus diversity (Hui and Triandis, 1986, Kim et al., 1994; Hofstede, 2001).

In terms of definitions, Hofstede (1991, p.51) distinguishes individualism from collectivism by describing how people function in a given society:

‘...individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.’

The issue of identity and selfhood are central to distinguishing between individualistic and collectivistic self-construal. Individualist societies, Hofstede (2001) says, put emphasis on ‘I’ consciousness, emotional independence, individual initiative, assertiveness, pleasure seeking, and self-fulfillment or self-actualization. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, emphasize ‘we’ consciousness, collective identity, group solidarity, emotional dependence, duties and obligations, and sharing (Hofstede, 1980; Hui and Triandis, 1986; Sinha and Verma, 1987; Kim et al., 1994). Furthermore, in collectivist cultures, ‘one of the most

important differentiations made about individuals is whether a person is part of an in-group or an out-group. Collectivist cultures emphasize a ‘we’ versus ‘they’ distinction. However, the emphasis on ‘collective welfare, harmony, and duties typically applies only to the in-group and usually does not extend to out-groups’ (Kim et al., 1994, p. 32).

Furthermore, according to Hofstede (1980), the dimensions of individualism and collectivism should be used only to describe nations at cultural level and should not be applied to stereotype individual people living in those countries. He writes that cultures ‘are wholes, and their internal logic cannot be understood in the terms used for the personality dynamics of individuals’ (1980, p.31). In other words, societies and cultures are more than the sum of the individual characteristics of people residing in those societies and they ‘constitute phenomena not reducible to the actions of individuals’ (Kim et al., 1994, p. 4).

Overall, the I/C dimensions have had a profound impact on the field of cross-cultural psychology. They have provided a useful structure for the construct of culture and allowed for the linkage of psychological phenomena to cultural dimensions (Kim et al., 1994). Indeed, I/C has provided an impetus for wide-ranging research. As Kim et al. (1994, p.2) state:

‘...these constructs also allowed fruitful integration of knowledge within the discipline of psychology (such as cognitive, developmental, social, organizational, and clinical psychology) and across disciplines (such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and management), and suggested convergence across different methodologies (such as ethnographies, surveys, and experiments).’

2.2.2 The criticism of the concepts

The individualism/collectivism distinction remains, however, a controversial one: firstly, questions of terminology emerge. As Kagitcibasi (1994, p.55) explains, ‘it is hard to create value-free concepts and terminology, because these are not formed in a vacuum but emerge

in a sociocultural-ideological context'. Collectivism, especially, might evoke some pejorative connotations (Lawler, 1980). It is often associated with uniform thinking, conformity, simplicity, crowd behaviour, and the lack of individuality. It might also bring some negative political and economic connotations (e.g., collective farming) (Kagitcibasi, 1994).

Another potentially pejorative connotation inherent in the I/C dimensions has to do with socio-economic progress and evolution. Explicitly or not, collectivism is often described as the socio-cultural order of the past, while individualism is associated with complexity and modernity (Triandis et al., 1988) and with an assumption that 'individualism rather than collectivism [is] compatible with social organization, economic development, and cultural and social complexity' (Kagitcibasi, 1994, p. 56). For example, Yang (1988) points out that fourteen out of twenty common modernity traits reflect individualism.

However, despite these common connotations, the word *individualism* does not have to describe a higher or more complex social order. For instance, the research conducted by Billings and Majors (1989) with Melanesian Island cultures demonstrates the possibility of the existence of both collectivist and individualist societies with similar modes of subsistence. The researchers did not find any significant differences between the groups in terms of stratification and hierarchy (Kagitcibasi, 1994). It is possible, therefore, that collectivism/simple and individualism/complex associations are merely the reflections of the predominantly Western mind-set rather than an adequate description of reality. Kagitcibasi (1994, p. 60) writes the following, referring again to the research with Melanesian Island cultures:

'...if even at this preindustrial level there appears an uncertainty about the relationship between complexity and I/C, the connotation that higher levels of

complexity are associated with individualism stands on very shaky ground in contemporary societies, which are all highly complex.’

A second charge against the I/C dimensions has to do with the issue of generalizability (Kim et al., 1994). Once nations are defined as collectivist or individualist, there is a risk that people living in those nations might lose their own personal characteristics in the eyes of strangers. We all are - to a lesser or greater degree - prone to stereotyping. It allows us to simplify reality as we go through life dividing the world between *us* and *them*. Generalizing and stereotyping replace the hard work that is always necessary to get to know another human being. Indeed, on some level, the I/C dimensions might be supportive of those tendencies: these constructs propose that Chinese people are inherently different from British people and that Brazilians function differently than Germans.

Cross-cultural literature goes to great lengths, however, to emphasize that the distinction between individualism and collectivism is about generalities and overall tendencies only (Kim et al., 1994; Triandis, Schwartz, 1994; Hofstede, 2001). In the same ways that siblings differ from one another, so people living in collectivist countries differ from one another. As Triandis (1994, p.42) says, we all carry ‘both individualist and collectivist tendencies; the difference is that in some cultures the probability that individualist selves, attitudes, norms, values, and behaviors will be sampled or used is higher than in others.’

The distinction at the country level is about proportionality, and the classification into an individualist or collectivist category is based on the cultural choices that the majority of a given population makes. Although imperfect, such a classification can be useful. It allows us to ‘make prediction about behavior in a culture, because most predictions in social

psychology concern samples of individuals in a culture, rather than the behavior of one specific individual' (Triandis, 1994, p. 42).

Finally, some researchers question the fundamental assumption behind the I/C constructs. In other words, is the individualism/collectivism distinction even valid at the cultural level? Hofstede's influential study was conducted, after all, in 1980 and a lot has changed since that time. The collapse of communism and the emergence of diverse economic models in Asia and Latin America might have had profound social and cultural consequences. Even Western nations have been described as moving from materialist to post-materialist values (Inglehardt, 1977). Furthermore, Hofstede obtained all the data from highly skilled professionals working for the single multinational corporation. It is plausible to assume that they differed from the general population, and that those potential differences were of different magnitude in different nations. As Schwartz (1994, p.91) notices, the level of divergence 'was probably greater, for example, in Third World nations (e.g., El Salvador, Pakistan) than in industrialized Western nations (e.g., Switzerland, United States). Such variability would affect the order of the nations on the dimensions and might even affect which dimensions emerge.'

2.2.3 More recent research and concluding summary

It is thus important look at more recent large scale research that deals with cultural diversity. The largest and most wide-ranging work in this area was reported by the Israeli psychologist Shalom Schwartz (1994). The researcher obtained data from elementary school teachers and college students in over 50 countries. During a four-year period, 86 samples were drawn from 41 cultural groups in 38 nations. About 80 percent of the samples included between 150 and 300 respondents, with 4 smaller samples (minimum 76

respondents) and 11 larger samples (maximum 1,868 respondents) (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). The choice of teachers as participants was not accidental. According to the authors, teachers are ‘the best available group when one is trying to characterize cultural priorities. They play an explicit role in value socialization, they are presumably key carriers of culture, and they are probably close to the broad value consensus in a society’ (Schwartz, 1994, p. 91).

Instead of Hofstede’s four dimensions, Schwartz (1994) distinguished seven dimensions: Conservatism, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective autonomy, Intellectual autonomy, Egalitarian commitment and Harmony. He then measured them using a list of 56 values. The data analysis was mostly supportive of Hofstede’s earlier research. Country scores in Schwartz’s (1994) study were strongly correlated with IBM findings for Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Power Distance (PD) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) (Hofstede, 2001, p. 265). Comparing his research with that of Hofstede, Schwartz (1994, p. 117) says the following:

‘The substantial correlations of IDV and PD with the Autonomy and Conservatism value types indicate similarity in the rankings of nations in the two studies. This is striking in light of the passage of some 20 years between the studies and the use of different empirical measures and different samples of respondents...The value types show a reasonable pattern of associations with Hofstede’s dimensions, and they show the theoretically predicted pattern of conceptual relations with the individual-level value types.’

The I/C constructs, as originally conceptualized and researched by Hofstede, appear thus to retain their broad application value in the changing world. Schwartz’s (1994) study, despite its different methodology, provided a strong supportive argument for the validity of these dimensions and their use in cross-cultural research. As Schwartz (1994, p. 117) states,

‘Considering all of these differences, the fact that a dimension similar – though far from identical – to Hofstede’s individualism was found speaks powerfully to the usefulness of this basic idea for comparing cultures. It is not surprising that so many researchers have found I/C an appealing rubric for thinking about cultures.’

Of course, the world continues to change and it has changed a lot even from the time of Schwartz’s study. Furthermore, as with other latent phenomena, more empirical research is needed in order to get a better grasp at how culture manifests itself in different nations. Still, for over 25 years, the I/C constructs have proven themselves to align with a useful - though imperfect – methodological approach to compare nations and societies at the cultural level.

2.3 Self-determination theory

2.3.1 Motivation research preceding Self-determination theory and the Self-determination theory framework

Since the present research looks at the relationship between motivation and well-being in a collectivist versus individualist cultural contexts through the prism of Self-determination theory (SDT), it is important to overview some motivational theories that led to the creation of SDT. Arguably the most famous of these is the already mentioned hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943). As explained earlier (Section 2.1.1), this theory identifies five levels of needs, from the lowest to the highest: physiological, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and need for self actualization. According to Maslow, humans have to have lower needs fulfilled before they can move to higher level needs, and thus particular needs turn into powerful motivational factors.

Important pioneering work related to cognitive theories of motivation was also done by Tolman (1959) and Lewin (1951). Both of these researchers proposed that internal energy sources (drive stimulations, tensions) led to the formulation of goals, with the

expectations that the fulfillment of those goals would ‘reduce the drive stimulation or tension’ (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 213). In other words, energy sources lead to goals and goals lead to behaviour. What is crucial about this early work is the introduction of ‘cognitive purpose’ into the concept of human motivation. The research ‘introduced the concept of purposiveness suggesting that people (and rats) behave with purposes, and that these cognitive factors represent the central elements in the motivation of behavior’ (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p. 214).

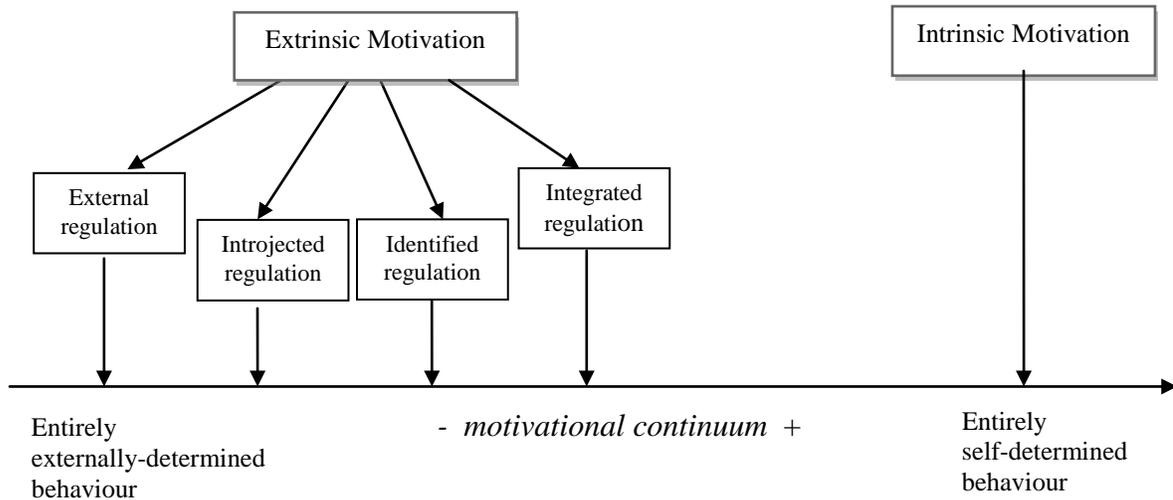
The works of Maslow, Lewin, Tolman and others (Vroom and MacCrimmon, 1968; Bandura, 1997) influenced the formulation Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). This theory of human behaviour and motivation studies human beings’ inherent growth tendencies and their innate psychological needs. It has been proposed as an alternative explanatory paradigm and research approach in such fields as medicine (disease prevention, obesity, addiction research), exercise and sport, management studies, and education (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

In terms of its theoretical underpinnings, SDT posits three needs that are considered universal to the human condition. The proponents of SDT have identified perceived competence (Harter, 1978; White, 1963), relatedness (Reis, 1994; Baumeister and Leary, 1995) and autonomy (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975) as essential for ensuring optimal personal growth and integration.

What is, however, necessary to create conditions in which these three basic human needs will be met and the person will flourish? For SDT researchers, an answer to this question lies in the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Figure 2.1).

Human motivation, SDT supporters write, can be intrinsic or it can reflect different shades or degrees of extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Kagitcibasi, 2005).

Figure 2.1 *The Self-Determination Continuum (modified from Ryan and Deci, 2000)*



Intrinsic motivation - as in the case when a student studies solely because he or she truly enjoys the learning process and is stimulated by it - is viewed as superior to extrinsic motivation, since it directly nourishes the three basic needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is considered to undermine these basic needs and thus impede personal growth and well-being. This type of motivation is likely to be invoked when an individual is prompted into action by external sources such as teachers, parents, the prospects of financial security or professional career advancement.

Furthermore, according to SDT, extrinsic motivation comprises four experientially and functionally distinct types of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The type of motivation most removed from intrinsic motivation and by definition least identifiable with autonomous behaviour is called *external regulation*. It covers such external motivational forces as

tangible rewards, punishments, demands, and threats or fear of admonition. A second, somehow less alienating type of extrinsic motivation, is referred to as *introjected regulation*. As with *external regulation*, a given behaviour is not motivated by internal needs. This time, however, it is a desire to avoid guilt and shame or to achieve ego enhancement that prompts individuals into action: essentially, the individual has internalized or introjected the demands, expectations, values and norms of 'significant others', and so, from a person-centred perspective, may have lost sight of the personal values, goals and endeavours whose realization would truly support self-actualization. A third, still more autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation, is labelled *identified regulation*. Individuals who are receptive to identified regulation genuinely value a particular behaviour and consider it personally important. They choose to act not because of fear of punishment or hopes for external rewards and not because they fear losing their self-esteem. They do not, however, genuinely enjoy the action in which they are involved. Finally, the last and the least external type of extrinsic motivation is called *integrated motivation*. Here, actions are fully integrated into the self and reflect participants' own beliefs and needs. Yet, even this motivation is not fully intrinsic, because it is still outcome-oriented: a given learner is not involved in the educational process solely because of enjoyment or need for stimulation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

As already stated, according to SDT, a greater amount of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation in a given behaviour will lead to greater emotional gains due to a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and the three basic human needs (autonomy, relatedness and competence). Therefore, within an extrinsic motivation framework, *identified regulation* would be superior - in terms of fostering the three universal needs and

optimal emotional functioning - to *introjected regulation*, while *introjected regulation* would, in turn, be superior to *external regulation* (Kuhl and Furhmann, 1998). All of them, however, would be less conducive to well-being than *intrinsic motivation*.

2.3.2 SDT in the context of positivist and interpretivist epistemology

Self-determination theory's perspective embraces both positivist and interpretivist epistemology. On the one hand, the theory's relationship to positivism reveals itself in its alliance with natural sciences and explicit references to objective physiological phenomena:

'Like physical needs, psychological needs are argued to be objective rather than merely subjective phenomena...This is analogous to the idea that, regardless of whether or not one subjectively values nutrition, deprivation of it will lead to ill health' (Ryan & Niemiec, 2009, p.268).

On the other hand, however, SDT also aligns itself with interpretivist epistemology. As Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p.267) state, 'in the SDT view it is the individual meaning or experience that has functional significance in behavioural events (Deci and Ryan, 2000), and this focuses us on the embedded meanings and perceptions of individuals as the determinants of behavior.' Elsewhere, in the same article, the authors write that 'SDT is allied with qualitative and critical theories in understanding the situational nature of learning and growth, the importance of individual's frame of reference in shaping meanings and the behaviors that follow them (p.268).'

In essence, therefore, SDT accepts individual frames of reference, while remaining non-relativistic in terms of its overriding principles. It concedes that the universal basic needs (e.g. autonomy) can be differently generated and manifest, depending on the individual's frame of reference. It is SDT's only concession to relativism. Individual experiences dictate only how the basic needs are achieved and enhanced in a given context

or culture and not how valuable they are to individuals. This beneficial value of conditions within which the basic needs can be satisfied is considered invariably universal, cutting across all cultures and societies.

2.3.3 A summary of main arguments against SDT's assumptions

2.3.3.1 Theoretical argument: Markus and Kitayama's (1991) paper

Of the three basic needs, it is autonomy and its proposed universal contribution to well-being – achieved through enhancing intrinsic motivation - that have caused most of the controversy around SDT (Chirkov et al., 2003). For instance, Markus and Kitayama (1991) in ‘arguably one of the most influential works in the past decade in culture and psychology’ (Matsumoto, 1999, p.291) propose self-system theory which states that autonomy support is crucial to self-construal of North Americans, but is of lesser importance to self-construal of individuals from collectivist cultures.

The self, the authors suggest, is perceived differently across cultures, and this difference is especially striking between Western and Eastern societies. While Asians perceive other individuals as mutually interdependent, Americans and Western Europeans see them as independent. Asians, for example, pay closer attention to context, while Americans focus their attention on the problem itself. The goal for independent construal is to achieve self-actualization, self-efficacy and self-enhancement. On the other hand, individuals oriented toward more interdependent construal strive to maintain connectedness and approval of others (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Heine et al., 1999; Kitayama and Markus, 1999; Kitayama and Uchida, 2003).

As a result, Markus and Kitayama (1991) write, numerous psychological processes – motivation among them - are filtered, reinforced or undermined through participating in

diverse cultural environments and, because of this, these processes are culturally contingent rather than universal. Therefore, achieving autonomy, according to this line of thought, is not a prerequisite for well-being in cultures that downplay self-actualization and praise connectedness, such as Asian collectivist cultures.

Miller (1997) reiterated the arguments of culture-dependent importance of autonomy by pointing to the Hindu culture. Hindus, she writes, do not clearly differentiate between the individual and the collective. Acting in accordance with one's dharma, which means performing one's social duties, is the surest way to attain life satisfaction. The conflict between internal desires and external norms ceases to exist. In the collective Hindu culture, Miller argues, it is striving to fulfill one's collective responsibilities that leads to self-actualization. Paradoxically, therefore, accepting those external pressures defines self-actualization instead of undermining it. The distinction between 'I' and 'we' becomes blurred, and the choice between social duties and autonomy disappears.

2.3.3.2 Empirical research critical of the SDT view of autonomy

Empirical data supporting the culturally-relative importance of autonomy have also emerged. In Iyengar and Lepper's (1999) study, children were asked to play games that they had chosen by themselves and also games that had been chosen by their parents. The researchers demonstrated that, contrary to American children, Asian children displayed greatest interest and motivation in activities when the choice of these activities had been made by their mothers rather than by themselves. Therefore, the choice made by significant others did not clash with level of involvement or enjoyment for the members of collectivistic societies. On the contrary, this was a preferred form of social interaction. The study would

thus appear to indicate that autonomy is not universally essential to fostering genuine enjoyment.

Oishi (2000) also looked at the relationship between autonomy and happiness and concluded that, apart from a few highly individualistic countries, fully autonomous people were no happier or more satisfied with their lives than less autonomous people. One of the questions posed by Oishi (2000, p.95) was:

‘Do autonomous individuals perceive their life as better than dependent individuals in all cultures?’

The collected data revealed that the degree of positive correlation between autonomy and life satisfaction was much higher in individualistic nations than was the case in collectivistic cultures. In other words, the study undermines the fundamental principle governing Self-determination theory. Not only is autonomy less important for members of collectivistic societies, but it also fails positively to correlate with subjective well-being in these cultural contexts.

In some ways, this study mirrors the findings of Oishi and Diener (2001) which showed that, compared to European Americans, Asian students did not achieve greater well-being by pursuing goals for ‘fun and enjoyment’. In this study, the participants were presented with the following statements:

1. ‘I pursue this goal because I want to make my parents and friends happy.’
2. ‘I pursue this goal for myself and not for others.’
3. ‘I pursue this goal to meet expectations of others.’

The results of the research indicated that progress toward goals was especially beneficial for the well-being of those Japanese students who engaged in a given activity to make their

friends and family happy and to meet expectations of others. Contrary to European Americans, independent goal pursuit did not enhance the well-being of Japanese students.

Therefore, those empirical studies, as well as the previously described famous paper of Markus and Kitayama (1991), put forward an argument of cultural relativism; the role of autonomy as an ingredient of well-being is culturally-dependent rather than universal. In the case of interdependent-construal prevalent in Asian countries, it is precisely this interdependence and not self-actualization that constitutes a base for life satisfaction.

2.3.4 In depth analysis of the above research studies: arguments against SDT

2.3.4.1 Autonomy equals independence

Is autonomy, indeed, of lesser importance to collectivist than to individualist societies? An answer to this question requires a much more thorough analysis of the cross-cultural studies summarized above.

Firstly, questions of definition emerge. It appears that the cross-cultural research described above equates autonomy with independence. In some ways this is understandable, given the typical definition of autonomy in research literature that barely differentiates between choice, autonomy and independence. For instance, Zimmer-Gembeck (2001, p.1) in a book entitled *Adolescence in America: An Encyclopedia* writes the following:

‘Stand on your own two feet. “Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps.” “If your friends jumped off a bridge, would you jump, too?” When one thinks of all the slogans that reflect the importance of personal choice and independence in the United States, it is obvious that autonomy is highly valued.’

Along the same lines, the seminar article by Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.226) explicitly identifies autonomy with independence: ‘...the essential aspect of [independent construal] involves a conception of the self as an autonomous, independent person.’ Autonomy thus

goes hand in hand with independence and is not essential in the construction of the collectivist self-construal. As Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.227) write, ‘understanding of one’s autonomy as secondary to, and constrained by, the primary task of interdependence distinguishes interdependent selves from independent selves, for whom autonomy and its expression are often afforded primary significance.’

Indeed, it is the culturally-dependent role of autonomy, Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.227) write, that distinguishes interdependent individuals from independent individuals:

‘Such voluntary control of the inner attributes constitutes the core of the cultural ideal of become mature. The understanding of one’s autonomy as secondary to, and constrained by, the primary task of interdependence distinguishes interdependent selves from independent selves, for whom autonomy and its expression is often afforded primary significance.’

Words such as ‘control’, ‘constrained’ and ‘secondary’ define the optimal dealing with autonomy in collectivist societies. Furthermore, the authors place autonomy in the context of adjectives that suggest separation and even selfishness. The independent construal of the self can be defined by labels such as ‘individualistic, egocentric, separate, autonomous, idiocentric, and self-contained’ (p.226). In their later work, Markus and Kitayama (2003, p.2) elaborate more on this issue:

‘...the predominant behavior of individualist societies reflects an implicit cultural model of agency – normatively good actions originate in an independent, autonomous self, and actions of this self are disjoint, that is, in some ways separate and distinct for the actions of others. By contrast the Asian and Asian American examples reflect another cultural model of agency – normative and good actions originate in an interdependent self, and the actions of this self are conjoint, that is, in some ways impelled by others, in relationship and interaction with others.’

The same authors also state that ‘in collectivistic societies the pressure is not to become separate and autonomous from others, but to fit in with others’ (Markus and Kitayama 1994, p.97). What is very telling about this sentence is that in order to be autonomous, one needs

to be 'autonomous from others'. Individuals are perceived as autonomous only when they separate themselves in their actions and behaviour from external social pressures. Since, in collectivistic societies, this separation is not necessary to foster well-being, autonomy is also argued to be of lesser importance.

Iyengar and Lepper (1999), in the previously described article, similarly equate autonomy with independence or individuality. The authors (1999, p.3540) say that their findings 'appear to challenge a fundamental assumption of traditional American social psychological research that a lack of individual choice or personal control and autonomy will necessarily be linked to negative consequences, such as decreases in intrinsic motivation.' Enjoying activities chosen by their mothers implies that for Asian American children, 'a lack of individual choice or personal control and autonomy' is not that important.

Similarly, Oishi (2000) takes autonomy to be synonymous with independence. As described earlier, one of the questions posed by his study was whether 'autonomous individuals perceive their lives as better than dependent individuals in all cultures (Oishi, 2000, p.95).' It is evident therefore that for this researcher - just as for Markus and Kitayama, and Iyengar and Lepper - autonomy resembles independence.

This particular definition of autonomy reflects those researchers' tendency to follow an individualistic view of autonomy. As mentioned, this is understandable because some of the earlier psychological research emphasized the importance of emotional separation in the process of formation of adolescent autonomy. According (Kagitcibasi (2005, p. 406), Freud (1958), Blos (1979) and Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) view the 'psychoanalytical conceptualization of adolescent autonomy in terms of a second separation-individuation

process.’ Hoffman (1984) and Kroger (1998) also stress ‘the importance of distancing and disengaging of the adolescent from parents as a significant phase of healthy development’ (Kagiticbasi, 2005, p. 406).

2.3.4.2 Autonomy clashes with the interdependent cultural construal

A second issue worth considering in regard to the cross-cultural researchers’ view of autonomy is *why* autonomy – understood as independence – is not crucial for well-being in collectivistic cultures. It is, in their opinion, autonomy’s clash with the dominant cultural feature of interdependence that renders autonomous individuals who live in collectivistic contexts less satisfied with their lives. Happiness, in those cultures, stems not from fulfilling self-generated goals but from submitting oneself to external pressures. Oishi (2000, p.94) states:

‘...the degree to which one is living a life close to external standards is a better indicator of life satisfaction in collectivistic nations. Such external contrasts present a sharp contrast with self-determination model of psychological well-being (Ryan, 1996) which posits that individuals are “well” to the extent that they live a life congruent with their internal standards.’

A few pages later, he continues (2000, p.104):

‘...Children living in individualistic countries learn that being independent is good, and being dependent is bad. Adults living in the individualistic cultures therefore tend to strive for independence. Similarly children living in collectivistic cultures learn that being cooperative with others and being responsible for their roles are crucial. To the extent that societal goals and individuals’ goals are congruent, striving for individuals’ goals manifest itself as normative behaviour.’

Therefore, paraphrasing the author, Self-determination theory’s concept of autonomy (internal standards) as a universal value does not apply to collectivistic cultures because it goes against these cultures’ adherence to external standards. It is, instead, the level of congruence with the predominant features of a given cultural model that determines

individual happiness. In a sense, a high level of well-being comes from following cultural patterns and beliefs. Because in individualistic societies, autonomy is cherished, being autonomous enhances well-being in those cultural contexts. On the other hand, since the collectivist construal gives preference to external standards, conforming to those standards results in greater life satisfaction in the case of interdependent individuals.

As Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.224) say: ‘...in America, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease’. In Japan, on the other hand, ‘the nail that stands out gets pounded down’. Then, in relation to well-being and self-esteem, they write the following (1991, p.242):

‘For those with independent selves, feeling good about oneself typically requires fulfilling the tasks associated with being an independent self; that is, being unique, expressing one’s inner attributes, and asserting oneself... Instead, [for interdependent selves] feeling good about the self should derive from fulfilling the tasks associated with being interdependent with relevant others: belonging, fitting in, occupying one’s proper place, engaging in appropriate action, promoting others’ goals, and maintaining harmony ...Second, self-esteem among those with interdependent selves may be based in large measure on their capacity to exert control over their own desires and needs so that they can indeed belong and fit it.’

Therefore, according to this interpretation, feeling good and having high self-esteem result from following the culturally valued norms in which one lives rather than from asserting individual, self-generated preferences. This rule applies to interdependent individuals even if it requires ‘the capacity to exert control over their own desires and needs.’ Iyengar and Lepper (1999, p.350) go along the same lines when they state that:

‘...in some situations the exercise of personal choice might even pose a threat to individuals whose personal preferences could prove to be at variance with those of their reference group. Interdependent selves, therefore, might sometimes prefer to submit themselves to choices expressed by others if the situation enables them to fulfill the superordinate cultural goal of belongingness.’

Conformity or submitting to choices expressed by others leads to emotional gains because it corresponds to the collectivistic cultural model. Exercising personal choices, on the other

hand, might pose a threat to an individual and thus thwart his or her well-being because it clashes with the predominant cultural model.

2.3.5 The response to the critical cross-cultural research from SDT perspective

Overall, therefore, two issues have pitted cross-cultural researchers against the supporters of SDT:

1. Autonomy - conceived as independence from external standards – is not important in collective cultures.
2. Achieving higher well-being in collective cultures requires unconditional conforming to these external standards.

Consequently, SDT researchers have attempted to defend their theory by addressing precisely these two issues.

Firstly, according to SDT, autonomy *does not equal independence*, even though it was presented as such by the cross-cultural researchers. Those researchers chose to follow the previously described individualistic definition of autonomy, rather than the definition that SDT proposes. Chirkov et al. (2003, p.272) make this distinction clear by stating that ‘a person is autonomous when his or her behaviour is experienced as willingly enacted and when he or she fully endorses the actions in which he or she is engaged and/or values expressed by them’. Deci and Ryan (1991, p.272) even coin a term for this: ‘autonomous interdependence.’

It is an inner endorsement of a given action or its internalization that defines autonomy from the perspective of SDT. The theory argues that autonomy ‘concerns the extent to which people genuinely concur with the forces that do influence their behavior’

(Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 330). People are driven by autonomous needs when, in an authentic way, they stand behind and support their endeavors. Therefore, from the SDT standpoint, the opposite of autonomy is not dependence but, heteronomy, a concept that implies explicit external control over individuals regardless of those individuals' own values or beliefs.

The previously described research by Oishi (2000) can be challenged on those terms. Oishi interpreted his findings as indicating that individualism was less important for life satisfaction in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures and, by extension, so was autonomy. What his data might indicate, however, is that individualism (separateness or independence) not autonomy has less value in collectivist cultures.

This is the crucial difference. Since, within the SDT framework (Deci and Ryan, 1991), it is the inner endorsement of an action or its genuine internalization that defines autonomy, an autonomous motivation can be external (coming from outside) or internal (self-generated) in its origin. It does not really matter because it is the full and voluntary identification with a given action that makes all the difference in distinguishing autonomous from non-autonomous behaviour. For instance, our voluntary endorsement of traffic lights, seat belts, and rules of non-violent behaviour points to the possibility of maintaining autonomy, despite external expectations and regulatory forces.

Similarly, Oishi and Diener (2001, p.1680) - in the previously described article which, on the surface, argues against the universal importance of autonomy – point to the genuine internalization of external influences or ‘autonomous interdependence:’

‘Interestingly, intrinsic goal pursuit (i.e., for fun and enjoyment) was positively correlated [for the Japanese] participants with goal pursuit to make friends and family happy and to meet the expectations of others. Thus, the descriptive statistics and patterns of correlations among goal motives reveal an interesting picture of the

Japanese participants. On one hand, these Japanese showed that they pursued their goals for independent reasons. On the other hand, the goals they pursued to make friends and family happy and to meet the expectations of others were the goals that were fun and enjoyable. Here, one can see that so-called extrinsic goal motives (e.g., Sheldon & Kasser, 1998) are highly internalized among the Japanese participants.'

What Oishi and Diener find 'interesting' constitutes for Deci, Ryan, Chirkov, and other proponents of SDT the very essence of autonomy from a universal perspective. Contrary to European American participants, for Japanese participants, 'intrinsic goal pursuit (i.e., for fun and enjoyment)' was positively correlated with goal pursuit 'to meet the expectations of others' because they were able to internalize those 'expectations of others' into their own system of beliefs and preferences. External influences ceased to be perceived as solely external influences, and they became, instead, aspirations which these participants had been intrinsically motivated to attain. In other words, those Japanese participants experienced 'autonomous interdependence' or genuine self-endorsement of external influences, an equally valid - but more easily attainable in collectivist cultures - form of autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 1991, p. 271)

Viewed from the perspective of internalization or intrinsic identification with external pressures, the data obtained by Iyengar and Lepper (1999) can also lead to different conclusions. It is possible that the Asian children in this study found greatest motivation and enjoyment in activities chosen by their mothers not because autonomy was not important for them but because the decisions of significant others *felt* like autonomous decisions to them. It is this greater facility to internalize external pressures - and not the value of autonomy itself - that differentiates independent from interdependent selves according to Self-determination theory (Chirkov et al., 2003).

A similar interpretation applies also to the famous article by Markus and Kitayama (1991). The writers say that Asians achieve greater satisfaction by submitting themselves to external pressures and by exerting control over their desires. Furthermore, an interdependent self wants to ‘adjust one’s own demands and desires.’ The words ‘submitting’, ‘exerting control over desires’, and ‘adjusting’ (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 242) might not, reflect, however, how extrinsic motivation is negotiated in collectivistic cultures. In reality, in accordance with SDT’s principle of internalization, there might be little to submit to, exert control over or adjust to. Through a subconscious process, external influences enter one’s intrinsic motivation and become an indistinguishable part of it (Ryan and Deci, 1991). In fact, Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.229) admit as much by saying that ‘the goals of others may become so focal in consciousness that the goals of others may be experienced as personal goals.’

2.3.6 SDT-related research: Support for SDT’s view of human autonomy

It is possible, therefore, that the conflict between the proponents of SDT and some cross-cultural researchers is more about how autonomy manifests itself in different cultural contexts than about autonomy as a universal value. If so, there is a need for research that demonstrates the possibility of attaining autonomy through a voluntary internalization of external pressures and influences.

2.3.6.1 Research with children

In this context, the study by Bao and Lam (2008) provides some important data. In response to Iyengar and Lepper (1999), the researchers directly addressed the possibility of there

being a difference between autonomy obtained through a voluntary acceptance of external pressures and controlled behaviour. In line with SDT, they proposed that choice and autonomy were not synonymous, because an individual might follow others and still feel autonomous as long as he or she fully endorses the choices of others. Furthermore, they add, freedom to choose does not always entail autonomy. Indeed, 'it is possible for individuals not to feel autonomous when they are offered a choice but none of the options is preferred' (Bao and Lam, 2008, p. 270).

To further illuminate differences between choice and autonomy and to test the importance of autonomy in collectivist societies, the researchers conducted a study that, on the surface, mirrored the often-quoted research conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999). What Bao and Lam (2008, p. 270) hoped to demonstrate was that once 'socioemotional relatedness is high, lack of choice will not decrease motivation because internalization may leave the sense of autonomy intact.' On the other hand, however, 'when socioemotional relatedness is low, lack of choice will result in low motivation because internalization does not take place and the sense of autonomy is jeopardized' (2008, p. 270).

The four-part study, of which only Part 1 will be examined here, involved 60 participants from fourth, fifth, and sixth grade from two elementary schools in Hong Kong. In Part 1 of the Study, the children indicated who had chosen the extracurricular course that they were attending. Thirty-three children reported that they had made their own choice, whereas 23 reported that their mothers had made the choice for them. The children also answered three questions related to motivation (2008, p.271):

(a) 'How willing are you to attend this course?' (b) 'How interesting is this course to you?' and (c) 'How much do you like this course?'

Finally, the researchers measured the children's perceived relatedness with their mothers, using the Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (Rohner and Rohner, 1980). This questionnaire has 24 items that are divided into four subscales: (a) warmth/affection, for example, 'my mother says nice things about me'; (b) hostility/aggression, for example, 'my mother goes out of her way to hurt my feelings'; (c) indifference/neglect, for example, 'my mother ignores me as long as I do not do anything to bother her'; and (d) undifferentiated/rejection, for example, 'my mother does not really love me' (2008, p.275). The participants indicated the degree of agreement with each of the items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly). Internal consistency was .81 for this study.

The data analysis supported the claim that the effect of freedom of choice on motivation depends on the degree of mother – child relatedness. When this degree of relatedness was high, freedom of choice did not play an important role, and a child was still highly motivated to participate in the activities because he or she was able to internalize external pressures to the point of experiencing 'autonomous interdependence.' The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation disappeared, and a child experienced autonomy despite the seeming lack of choice.

On the other hand, when the mother – child relationship was not close, freedom of choice played a decisive role in children's motivation. They were significantly less willing to take part in the activities because, in the context of low relatedness and internalization, they felt forced to participate. In contrast to the first scenario, autonomy and external pressures clashed, and the sense of autonomy was jeopardized.

Therefore, the study confirms SDT's stand that autonomy understood as a genuine self-endorsement of a given action is universally beneficial for optimum functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Possibly, this self-endorsement or internalization of parental pressures – an alternative route to autonomy - might be easier to achieve for Asian than for American children (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999): a view that is not inconsistent with Self-determination theory (Chirkov et al., 2003). However, when this self-endorsement or internalization of external pressures does not take place, emotional well-being suffers, even in the case of Asian collectivist selves. That is why, although Asians may ascribe lesser importance to following solely self-generated decisions and they might have greater ability to internalize the choices of others than Western individuals, this does not mean that collectivistic societies value autonomy any less than do individualistic societies.

Despite its importance, Bao and Lam's (2008) study has one crucial limitation. Contrary to the research conducted by Iyengar and Lepper (1999), the researchers included only Chinese participants in their analysis. It is an important shortcoming. An overall goal of this line of research is to see if the benefits of autonomy apply to all cultures, and if the difference between freedom of choice and autonomy is moderated by country membership. That is why, to obtain a more comprehensive picture about these issues, it is necessary to include individualistic samples as well as samples from other collectivistic countries in relevant research.

The psychological benefits of autonomy – an essential premise of SDT - were also investigated in a research study conducted with South Korean high school students (Jang et al., 2009). The researchers were concerned with two questions:

What underlies a productive, satisfying learning experience for collectivistic Korean students?

Can basic needs theory (SDT) account for Korean students' productive and satisfying learning outcomes?

The research comprised two studies. In Part 1a of Study 1, participants were instructed to write a short essay describing a recent satisfying learning experience and then to complete two measures to elaborate on the nature of this experience. The first measure asked them to make ratings about the satisfying learning experience by describing to what degree they agreed with 24 items adapted from Sheldon et al.'s (2004) Need Satisfaction Questionnaire. The measure began with 'During my highly satisfying experience, I felt...' and then provided participants with three items for each of eight different psychological needs. Each item had a scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true). High autonomy was one of eight psychological needs that were tested. A second measure sought to determine to what degree participants had experienced each of 10 positive feelings during their satisfying learning experience. The items were selected from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988).

The data analysis revealed that high autonomy, apart from relatedness and competence, was important for the satisfying learning experience and was significantly associated with positive emotion. These positive correlations demonstrated thus that, in accordance with SDT, autonomy and other basic human needs 'were salient within Korean students' highly satisfying learning experiences and were associated with positive affect' (Jang et al., 2009, p. 656).

In Part 1b of Study 1, students were asked about an unsatisfying learning experience. Again, autonomy emerged as an important factor. Data analysis showed that autonomy frustration was significantly associated with both a negative learning experience and high negative affect. These findings, the authors (2009, p. 656) state, support the SDT's position that autonomy is important in collectivist contexts. On the other hand, they go against the views of some cross-cultural researchers, 'because it might not be expected within some frameworks (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991) that the frustration of autonomy would be salient among Koreans.'

Study 2 measured, among other things, the importance of autonomous support versus external control and the importance of the fulfillment of psychological needs for positive educational outcomes. To assess perceived teachers' support for autonomy, the researchers used the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ; Williams et al., 1996). This questionnaire includes eight items, such as 'My teacher provides me with choices and options' and 'When I offer suggestions to my teacher, he or she listens carefully and considers my suggestions seriously'. The LCQ had high internal consistency (.88). Perceived external control was assessed, on the other hand, by means of the Teacher Control Questionnaire (TCQ; Jeon, 2004). The questionnaire includes four items, such as 'My teacher tries to control everything I do' and 'My teacher puts a lot of pressure on me.' It also had high internal consistency (.87). Psychological needs, meanwhile, were assessed using the Activity-Feelings States Scale (Reeve and Sickenius, 1994). Three items of the scale measure perceived autonomy: 'During class I feel a) free, b) I'm doing what I want to be doing, c) free to decide for myself what to do'. Finally, in order to test positive learning outcomes, the researchers used a

variety of measures) Engagement Questionnaire, Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Ryan and Connell, 1989) and the Mood Rating Scale (Diener and Emmons, 1984).

Data analysis again demonstrated the importance of autonomy for a satisfying learning experience. Autonomy support correlated positively with perceived autonomy, and perceived autonomy correlated in the expected direction with each educational outcome. As Jang et al. (2009, p. 656) conclude, ‘the psychological needs collectively explained substantial variance in all four indicators of productive (high engagement and high achievement) and satisfying (high intrinsic motivation and low proneness to negative affect) learning experiences.’

The study appears to reiterate, therefore, the importance of autonomy for optimal functioning in educational contexts. More importantly, it relates the issue to collectivistic societies, strengthening thus SDT’s claim of universality.

The obtained findings need to be interpreted with some caution, however. In Study 2, for example, both the information about teachers’ instructional styles and students’ own classroom functioning was obtained solely by asking students. It is thus possible that participants’ own intrinsic motivation had colored their evaluation of teachers and their reporting of psychological need satisfaction.

2.3.6.2 Research with university students

A different approach to study autonomy comes from the research focusing on autonomy and relatedness. Vansteenkiste et al. (2005) conducted a research study with two groups of Chinese students. The majority of these students lived and studied in Belgium (sojourners), whereas a smaller percentage of students were still living in China but applying to study in

Belgium (applicants). The study attempted to test three hypotheses. Firstly, the researchers wanted to see if autonomy and relatedness or dependence were conflicting needs, as proposed by cross-cultural researchers (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Secondly, the importance of autonomy on students' adjustment was analyzed. Finally, the study attempted to find out if the positive effect of autonomy would be absent in respondents characterized by high relatedness.

Sixty-six male and fifty-three female students took part in the study and the participants' ages ranged from 18 to 42 years, with an average of 23 years. A basic need satisfaction questionnaire was used to measure participants' levels of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Reis et al., 2000; Deci et al., 2001).

Subjective well-being was measured using The Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), (Watson et al., 1988) and The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), (Diener et al., 1985). The study also assessed participants' levels of vitality using a seven-item scale, (Ryan and Frederick, 1997) and depression (20-item Centre for Epidemiological Studies-Depression (CES-D) scale, (Radloff, 1977). Internal consistency for the well-being composite score and for the vitality and depression scales was, respectively .87, .84, and .92.

The results of the study appear to have confirmed SDT's universal needs model. Autonomy and relatedness were not found to be conflicting strivings but were, instead, positively correlated, and explained independent variance in participants' well-being, vitality and depression. In other words, it is possible, especially in collectivist contexts, to be autonomous and dependent on others at the same time.

Furthermore, the study confirmed the cross-cultural importance of autonomy. Satisfaction with the level of autonomy was significantly negatively related to depression,

under conditions of both low and high relatedness satisfaction, although this relationship was stronger in case of low relatedness.

Finally, the study examined whether the effects of autonomy and relatedness (dependence) satisfaction would be different for Chinese participants residing in China (i.e. applicants) compared to Chinese participants living in Belgium (i.e. sojourners). However, none of the interactions reached statistical significance. Therefore, it appears that autonomy and relatedness similarly affect Chinese participants living in the collectivist society as well as those living in the individualist society, again strengthening SDT's claim of universality.

Despite the significance of these findings, the study had a number of limitations, the most important of which is related to the choice of participants. Although the researchers wanted to see if the basic need satisfaction model applied to collectivistic individuals, they chose participants from a collectivist culture with potentially greater levels of individualistic tendencies. All the participants were studying or were applying to study in a different country. Although Chinese by birth, they had left, or intended to leave their native country in order to reside in a predominantly individualistic cultural context. It is therefore plausible to infer that they were more individualistically inclined than their peers studying in China.

2.3.6.3 Research comparing individualist and collectivist cultures

SDT-related research with university students

An important contribution of the concept of internalization of external influences that lies at the core of SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1991) comes from a study by Bontempo et al. (1990). The researchers asked students from Brazil - another collectivistic society (Oyserman et al., 2002) - and U.S. students to rate how likely they would be to participate in certain activities.

These activities were time consuming but expected by the in-group and included visiting a friend in hospital when this would require a lot of time and effort.

Participants were randomly assigned to either a public or a private condition. When they provided their responses in the public condition, they had to give their full name and contact information and were told that some of them might be asked to come to the laboratory later to discuss their responses with a group of friends. Participants from the private condition were promised anonymity and assured that their responses would not be shared with anybody.

The analysis of the data revealed significant differences between the participants from individualist and collectivist culture. The U.S. participants in the public condition responded that they were willing to perform the expected behaviour to a greater extent ($M=64.30$, $SD=18.72$) than those in the anonymous condition ($M=36.74$, $SD=26.89$), $t=7.26$. The Brazilian participants, on the other hand, expressed very similar intent to engage in the pro-social behaviour in both the public and private condition ($M=71.00$, $SD=25.20$ and $M=70.04$, $SD=25.41$).

These data confirm SDT's contention that expectations of others can become internalized to the point that they no longer clash with autonomous behaviour. Furthermore, this process is more easily attainable in collectivist cultures. While for the American participants, a very definite line separates intrinsic from extrinsic motivation, for the Brazilian participants, this line largely disappears. External social expectations have become internalized, and the Brazilian students were 'responding not out fear of reprisal, but in consonance with their values' (Bontempo et al., 1990, p.208).

Chirkov et al. (2003) also analyzed the issue of autonomy and its psychological consequences by studying university students from both individualist and collectivist cultures (Hoestefe, 2000). Participants came from South Korea, Russia, Turkey, and the United States: 159 from two universities in Russia, 195 from a northwestern U.S. university, 94 from a university in Turkey, and 111 from a South Korean university.

In terms of procedure, it was explained to the students that the goal of the activity was to measure everyday behaviours, values, and life attitudes. The level of internalization was assessed using the Self-Regulatory Questionnaire of Cultural Practices (Ryan and Connell, 1989; Vallerand, 1997; Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001). For each belief or feeling, a question ‘Why do or would you do [feel, believe] this?’ was posed. Four possible explanations that reflect different levels of internalization were provided: external regulation, introjection, identification, and integration. The authors calculated the participants’ relative autonomy using a formula based on Ryan and Connell’s (1989) formulations. To obtain final results, external regulation was multiplied by (-2), introjection by (-1), identification by (1), and integration by (2). All the scores were added and divided by 4. The larger the index, the greater the relative autonomy associated with motivation behind a given belief, attitude or value.

Psychological well-being was measured, on the other hand, using various scales: the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), six items from the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Inventory (Radloff, 1977), the Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones and Crandal, 1896), a 15-item measure of growth and self-actualization, and the 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The rationale behind

using these different scales was to reflect hedonistic (happiness) and self-fulfillment aspects of well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

The analysis of the collected data demonstrated that relative autonomy had a positive correlation with the indices of well-being in all four cultural contexts. Therefore, the fact that more autonomous behaviour was associated with greater well-being regardless of the cultural self-construal appears to reconfirm SDT's claim that 'autonomy is a basic human concern' (Chirkov et al., 2003, p.103).

In a more recent study, Sheldon et al., (2004) asked students from South Korea, China, Taiwan, and the USA to rate the extent to which they undertake certain actions, rating reasons ranging from controlled to autonomous. Over 500 students participated in the research. All of them filled out a personal-strivings assessment (Emmons, 1989). The researchers explained that they wanted to find out what the students were typically trying to do in their everyday behaviour. Participants were provided with examples of strivings and were also asked to write eight personal strivings on their own.

Next, all the participants were instructed to rate the extent to which they pursued these strivings for reasons ranging from controlled to autonomous. The researchers again followed SDT-based model of internalization. External motivation and introjected motivation corresponded to more controlled motivation, whereas identified motivation and intrinsic motivation corresponded to autonomous motivation. To rate their answers, students used a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (not at all for this reason) to 7 (completely for this reason).

Subjective well-being was measured by Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988) which estimates how much participants felt each emotion in the past

month and asks them to rate 20 mood adjectives in so far as each is true for them. The students also completed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). An aggregate measure of subjective well-being was obtained by standardizing all scores and subtracting negative affect from the sum of positive affect and life satisfaction (Diener, 1994).

The results of the study were consistent with Self-determination theory, indicating that more autonomous motivation correlated significantly and positively with aggregate well-being in each studied sample. More externally directed motivation, on the other hand, displayed negative correlations with aggregate well-being in all four countries. The US sample had the following correlations: external (-0.39), introjected (-0.7), identified (0.8) and intrinsic (0.19), while in the Chinese sample, these correlations were: external (-0.7), introjected (-0.4), identified (0.26) and intrinsic (0.46). The South Korean sample and Taiwanese sample were characterized by correlations pointing in the same direction. They were, respectively: external (-0.14/-0.27), introjected (-0.23/-0.18), identified (0.5/0.6) and intrinsic (0.13/0.25). These findings, the researchers write, 'suggest that it is possible for people to own their goals everywhere, regardless of their cultural membership, their income, family education, and the concrete focus of the goals' (p. 219).

Chirkov et al., (2005) also analyzed the relationship between autonomy and well-being in different cultures by, again, comparing participants from a more individualistic country (Canada) with those from a more collectivistic country (Brazil) (Hofstede, 2001). The researchers focused on the extent to which different behaviours and attitudes are present in each country and measured to what degree these behaviours and attitudes were internalized by the study's participants. Finally, the relationship between the level of internalization and well-being was calculated.

In terms of measurement instruments, the perceived cultural context (PCC; Chirkov et al., 2003) was used to measure the perceived importance and frequency of behaviours and attitudes in both countries; 24-items were rated on 5-point Likert scales. Then, in order to measure the level of autonomy, for each item the participants rated the extent to which they participated in a given behaviour for reasons ranging from external, introjected, identified or integrated. Again, a 5-point Likert scale was used. Finally, the assessment of well-being was achieved by using 5-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), the 15-item Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones and Crandal, 1986), the 10-item Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and 6 items from the CES-Depression Inventory (Radloff, 1977).

The results of the study indicated that, in both countries, the more cultural practices were ‘internalized or autonomously regulated, the higher the psychological well-being of the participants’ (Chirkov et al., 2005, p. 438). Therefore, as in the case in the previously quoted research, autonomy was shown to be a universal need that, where satisfied, correlates positively with well-being in different cultural contexts.

SDT and Rogers’s self-concept prediction

An innovative attempt to validate the universal value of autonomy was made by placing this need in the context of Rogers’ (1961) self-concept prediction (Lynch et al., 2009). Carl Rogers, an influential American psychologist, proposed that people had an ideal view of themselves, and that the gap between the perceived reality (self-concept) and this ideal self was an important indicator and determinant of self-esteem and well-being. In essence, the smaller is the gap between the actual view of self and the ideal view of self, the greater is a given person’s subjective well-being (Rogers and Dymond, 1954; Rogers, 1961).

Lynch et al. (2009) argued that SDT and Rogers share a common perspective on human functioning. Autonomy, according to SDT, means being able to pursue goals and ideas with which one genuinely identifies. It is thus logical, the researchers say, that an environment supportive of autonomy would allow for a greater self-fulfilment of personal wishes and desires, which, in turn, might lead to narrowing the gap between the ideal view of self and the current view of self. To put this differently, ideal/actual self concept discrepancies would be smaller in autonomy-supportive environments or relationships.

To test this hypothesis, the researchers conducted a study with 642 college students from three countries: 205 from an American university, 192 from a university in European Russia, and 245 from a university in China. The researchers' main prediction was that, in accordance with SDT, 'country membership would not moderate the relation between autonomy support and self-concept discrepancies, that is, that autonomy support (autonomy in close relationships) would be negatively associated with ideal/actual self-concept discrepancies, regardless of country membership' (Lynch et al., 2009, p. 292).

The study used 'Big Five' traits to measure participants' personality characteristics. The Big Five Model contains five broad core domains or dimensions that have been proposed to define human personality (John and Srivastava, 1999). These five dimensions are Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Openness to Experiences, and Conscientiousness. The model's application to cross-cultural studies has been validated by a considerable amount of empirical research (e.g., McCrae and Allik, 2002; McCrae et al., 2004).

In their own study, Lynch et al. (2009) measured participants' ideal Big Five self-concept and actual Big Five self-concept using a set of 30 trait adjectives (Sheldon et al.,

1997) on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much). Participants rated each adjective in terms of how they really saw themselves (self-concept) and then contrasted it with how they would like to see themselves (ideal self). Perceived autonomy support was, on the other hand, measured using 7 items adopted from two scales: the Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationships Scale (BPNS-R) (La Guardia et al., 2000) and the Health Care Climate Questionnaire (HCCQ) that was validated by Williams and Deci (2001). Furthermore, to test the assumption that ideal/actual discrepancies would be inversely related to well-being within relationships, four indicators of well-being were used: satisfaction, vitality, and positive and negative affect.

The data analysis confirmed the researchers' expectations. First, a greater discrepancy between the actual and ideal self-concept was associated with lower well-being. In other words, regardless of country membership, larger self-concept/ideal self discrepancies were associated with lower well-being. The second prediction of the study was also confirmed. In line with SDT, being with autonomy supportive partners was associated with smaller ideal/actual discrepancies in all three countries. Finally, the results of the data analysis indicated that support for autonomy was associated with greater well-being for American, Russian as well as for Chinese participants.

In general, the study provided a strong support for SDT's argument regarding the universality of basic psychological needs, including the need for autonomy. Although there was some moderation by country membership - reflecting the continuing importance of the individualism/collectivism divide - the expected direction was seen in all three countries, suggesting thus that the need for autonomy as a motivating force whose satisfaction has

wide-reaching social and emotional benefits applies within both individualistic and collectivistic cultural contexts.

Still, despite these results, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions. As with most of the other research conducted so far, Lynch et al.'s study limited the generalizability of its findings by not including participants from less studied collectivist contexts such as Africa or South America.

2.3.6.4 Autonomy as a need containing two separate dimensions

In light of the presented research studies and their findings, it appears that autonomy is an important emotional need in both individualist and collectivist cultural contexts. This view is convincing, however, only when the concept of autonomy also reflects - especially in collectivist contexts - a genuine self-endorsement of external influences. In other words, in order to be considered an emotionally beneficial need in collectivist contexts, autonomy cannot undermine high relatedness or high dependence that those cultures highly value.

Proponents of SDT have always maintained that it is, indeed, the case and autonomy does not have to come into conflict with dependence or relatedness. Still their disputes with cross-cultural researchers appear to prolong confusion, instead of resolving it (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Iyengar and DeVoe, 2003). Nor did the research presented above managed to reconcile the two positions

Therefore, in this context, an innovative approach to the concept of autonomy proposed by Kagitcibasi (2005) offers a more refined platform for reconciling the positions of SDT proponents and their cross-cultural critics. The difference between the two traditions - this new line of thought suggests - results from referring to subtly different features of

human motivation. In line with this argument, Kagitcibasi (2005) proposes a multi-level concept of autonomy that is compatible with interdependence. The author states that the concept of autonomy combines two distinct dimensions. The first called ‘the interpersonal distance’ dimension is defined by the degree of distancing of self from others and can extend from ‘separateness’ to ‘relatedness’ poles. This dimension describes how closely one is connected with others: ‘...separate selves are distanced from others with well-defined self-boundaries, whereas the boundaries of connected selves may be fused with others’ (Kagitcibasi, 2005, p. 404). The second dimension, called ‘agency’, describes the degree of autonomous functioning and extends from autonomy to heteronomy. Autonomous behaviour means that one follows his or her own rules, whereas heteronymous behaviour reflects passively subjecting oneself to another’s rule. It is only this second dimension that corresponds to SDT’s definition of autonomy because it explicitly deals with volition.

The two dimensions underlie self and self-other relations, and a given person’s ‘standing on the interpersonal distance dimension may or may not affect one’s standing on the agency dimension’ (Kagitcibasi, 2005, p. 404). Indeed, ‘becoming an autonomous individual and maintaining an interdependent relationship with one’s parents are not mutually exclusive’ (Daniels, 1990, p. 107). This is a finding that some of the cross-cultural research presented before had failed to notice. As Kagitcibasi (2005, p. 405) says, ‘in the individualistic view of autonomy, reflected in much theorizing on the topic, these two distinct dimensions [interpersonal distance and agency] are often seen to overlap and are even used interchangeably’.

What Kagitcibasi proposes, instead, is the construct of autonomous-related self, where being autonomous does not impact on interdependence or relatedness. This concept,

the author writes, is the reflection of ‘a global pattern of urbanization and socioeconomic development in the “majority world” with collectivistic cultures of relatedness’ (Kagitcibasi, 2005, p. 410). In essence, the concept of autonomous-related self takes issue with the view that urbanization and economic development create ‘a global shift from the family model of interdependence to the family model of independence’ (Kagitcibasi, 2005, p. 411). Kagitciabasi regards this view as too simplistic because it fails to differentiate between material and psychological interdependencies in the family. She argues that rather different dynamics take place, instead (2005, p. 441):

‘What seems to happen is that with urban lifestyles and increasing affluence, material interdependence between generations decreases, because elderly parents do not need any longer to depend on the economic support of their adult offspring (Astone, Nathanson, Schoen, & Kim, 1999; Caldwell, 2001; Fawcett, 1983; Hoffman, 1987; Nauck & Kohlman, 1999). Nevertheless, psychological interdependence, as closely-knit selves, continues, because it is ingrained in the culture of relatedness (collectivism) and is not incompatible with changing lifestyles.’

This ‘weakening of intergenerational material interdependences’ in the context of continuous psychological interdependence allows for the formation of autonomy that does not conflict with interdependence. It is the model of family – more prevalent in collectivistic cultures - that simultaneously encourages relatedness and autonomy. It reflects, Kagitcibasi (2005, p.412) says, the changing world:

‘This is because with the greater prevalence of schooling, and increasing specialization in the workplace, capacity for individual decision making emerges as a new asset. Thus, beyond tolerating autonomy, parents may come to value it. Nevertheless, even though autonomy is now valued, separation is not the goal; relatedness continues to be valued, given the enduring influence of the cultures of relatedness (Nauck & Kohlman, 1999; Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001).’

This line of reasoning brings the reader back to the family model that proposes the distinctness of the two dimensions of interpersonal distance (relatedness-separateness) and

agency (autonomy-heteronomy). Since only the second dimension matches SDT's definition of autonomy, it is possible to have the autonomous-separate self that is high in autonomy and low in relatedness or dependence. It is also possible to have the autonomous-related self that is high in relatedness and high autonomy, as some of the recent research has demonstrated (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006; Bao and Lam, 2008). The first version is, in general, more prevalent in individualistic cultural contexts, whereas the second version is more applicable to collectivistic cultural contexts (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In both versions, however, autonomy is present because how well-defined the boundary of dependence is does not necessarily impact on the perceived level of autonomy. Failure to distinguish these two, equally valid, forms of autonomy might be at the heart of the continuing conflict between cross-cultural researchers and the proponents of SDT.

2.3.6.5 Research influenced by Kagitcibasi's (2005) concept of autonomy

The theoretical perspective proposed by Kagitcibasi has been influential in informing both the theoretical and methodological approach of a recent comparative study on the relationship between autonomy and well-being. Building upon her work, Rudy et al. (2007) propose to distinguish between the subject of motivation, for instance, 'me' or 'my family and I' (a distinction corresponding to Kagitcibasi's interpersonal distance dimension) and the type of motivation, ranging from external to intrinsic on the relative autonomy continuum (a distinction corresponding to Kagitcibasi's agency dimension). Referring to the dispute about the universal importance of autonomy, Rudy et al. (2007) argue that SDT proponents have focused on *the reasons for behaviour*, whereas cross-cultural researchers have been preoccupied with *who is behaving*. To put this differently, the latter concerned

themselves with interdependent versus independent self-construal, whereas the former analyzed autonomous versus controlled reasons for behaviour.

In reality, however, what happens to a larger degree in collective societies is an extension of 'I' as a subject to include important others rather than its negation. 'I' turns into 'we' and this 'we' includes now the person in question as well as his or her important others. Instead of autonomy or lack of autonomy, Rudy et al. (2007) state, we have individual autonomy and inclusive autonomy coexisting within the same individual. Such a re-definition of a subject is especially pertinent to collectivist cultures, since, as the previously analyzed research indicates, the inclusion of others into one's intrinsic motivation is more readily attainable in those cultural contexts (Bontempo et al., 1990; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999).

Still, Rudy et al. (2007) argue, in accordance with SDT, even in these collectivist cultures there has to be a genuine and voluntary inclusion of others to bring about positive emotional outcomes (Bao and Lam, 2008). The fact that collectivist cultures value dependence and group solidarity does not automatically make external influences emotionally beneficial. What makes a positive difference in emotional well-being in collectivist cultures is not operating under external pressures but, instead, operating under external pressures that have been fully self-endorsed by an individual and with which he or she fully identifies. As Rudy et al. (2007, p.987) write, 'behaving with a feeling of being more controlled than autonomous should be problematic in any culture, even if it is an interdependent self that has this feeling.'

Apart from revisiting, in theoretical terms, the debate between proponents of SDT and their cross-cultural critics, Rudy et al. (2007) also addressed empirically the relationship

between different types of autonomy and well-being by conducting a quantitative study with Singaporean, European Canadians and Chinese Canadian university students. This research is of special interest to the present investigation because it approaches the problem of autonomy and well-being from an individualist versus collectivist perspective and relates it to subjective well-being.

In their quantitative study, the researchers presented Chinese Canadians and European Canadians - and then separately Singaporean students - with two versions of an academic motivation questionnaire. In the first version, which measured individual relative autonomy (Individual RAI), the self was the subject ('I'), whereas in the second version, which measured inclusive relative autonomy (Inclusive RAI), the self and the family were the subject ('we' or 'our family'). For example, an item asking for reasons to study hard ('because that's what I'm supposed to do') changes in the second version into 'because in my family, we think it's what you're supposed to do.'

Despite its similarities to earlier research (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006; Bao and Lam, 2008), Rudy et al.'s study is the first to test explicitly the relationship between two versions of autonomy (individual and inclusive) and well-being. The rationale for conducting the study came from the authors' expectations (2007, p.987) that 'the measures might have different correlates in different cultural groups [with well-being], because the explicit reference to family and groups that was contained within the inclusive autonomy measure fits better with the more explicit allocentrism of collectivistic groups.'

In terms of one of their hypotheses, and given the fact that inclusive autonomy is more congruent with collectivist cultural contexts (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000), the researchers expected that the inclusive relative autonomy index (RAI)

would have a stronger positive correlation with well-being for Asian students than for European Canadians.

In order to compare their study to the previous research, Rudy et al. (2007) calculated separate relative autonomy indices (RAIs) for the individual and inclusive items. The creation of the RAI involved weighing the external, introjected, identified, and intrinsic scales by -2, -1, 1, and 2 respectively and averaging them (Chirkov et al., 2003; Chirkov et al., 2005; Grolnick and Ryan, 1989). Psychological well-being was measured, in turn, by having the participants fill out the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), Rosenberg's (1979) measure of self-esteem as well as some other previously used instruments.

The analysis of the data confirmed the authors' hypotheses. Firstly, in all the groups the individual RAI was positively correlated with well-being. This finding is consistent with the previous SDT research that measured only individual ('I' as a subject) autonomy in individualistic as well as in collectivistic cultural contexts (Chirkov et al. 2003; Sheldon et al., 2004; Chirkov et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2005).

Next, the analysis of the correlations also indicated that the inclusive RAI was positively associated with well-being in collectivist cultures, but not in the case of European Canadians. For the Chinese Canadians, the well-being composite had a .25 correlation with inclusive autonomy, whereas for the Europeans Canadians this correlation was insignificant at .01. Furthermore, considering individual indicators of well-being, the inclusive RAI was negatively correlated with depression and positively correlated with self-actualization for the Chinese Canadians but not so, again, for the European Canadians.

The results obtained from the European Canadian sample raise some important questions. The high level of the inclusive RAI corresponds to what SDT proponents would call autonomously interdependent motivation or relational autonomy. In the words of Ryan and Deci (1991, p. 271), it indicates that a person is ‘autonomously interdependent’. Therefore, the data obtained by Rudy et al. (2007) suggest that the process of internalization – an alternative route to attain autonomous motivation, according to SDT – enhances subjective well-being only in collectivistic cultural contexts.

It is a finding that is not accounted for within Self-determination theory. Although the proponents of SDT acknowledge that internalization might be more readily achieved in collectivist societies (Bontempo et al., 1990; Chirkov, 2003), its positive impact on emotions is not explicitly proposed to be limited to those societies only. The argument that SDT has against some cross-cultural researchers is solely related to those researchers’ tendency to confuse autonomy with independence (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Still, regardless how it is conceived and regardless which subtype of autonomy is more prevalent in a given culture, individualistic and inclusive autonomy should be, in theory, positively correlated with well-being in all cultures. What SDT argues for is the expansion of the definition of autonomy and the diversity of its cultural manifestations, and not the relativity of its emotional benefits.

Furthermore, going back to the Rudy et al. (2007) study, once the inclusive and individual RAIs were entered as predictors of well-being in the same regression equation, the correlations between the inclusive RAI and well-being became insignificant for the Asian participants, and negative for the European Canadians. The results obtained for the Chinese Canadians and Singaporeans partially support the arguments of both SDT

researchers and some cross-cultural scientists. As mentioned before, both groups - though from different perspectives - have argued that the influences of significant others can enter into the motivational makeup of an individual to such a degree that they become indistinguishable from self-generated intrinsic motivation. The behaviour they engender might feel entirely autonomous. This is what Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.229) mean when they say that 'the goals of others may become so focal in consciousness that the goals of others may be experienced as personal goals'.

Similarly, the findings from the Asian students align with what Deci and Ryan (1991) refer to when they use a term 'autonomous interdependence' (p.272). In other words, in the case of strong internalization a person who says 'I do it because I enjoy it' is also like to say 'I do it because in my family we enjoy it'. Through the process of internalization, a wider 'I' emerges. Therefore, a commonly understood 'I' is now only a subset of a larger 'I', and 'the RAI referenced to 'I' should often account for the variation in WB associated with the RAI referenced by 'my family and I.' (Rudy et al., 2007, p.1000).

The question remains, however, of how to interpret 'the negative association between the inclusive RAI and WB for the the European Canadians, when controlling for scores on the individual RAI (Rudy et al., 2007, p. 1002). In the study, European Canadians who scored high on the individual RAI but low on the inclusive RAI showed higher levels of well-being than those European Canadians who scored high on both indices. The authors provide some possible explanations for these findings. They propose that in cultures where individualism is sanctioned as a self-construal, family-centrism may put individuals outside of the cultural mainstreams. A given person's inclusive strivings are undermined by the predominant cultural values, and this clash erodes subjective well-being. This is an

interpretation, Rudy et al. (2007, p. 1002) write, which requires more empirical data before it can be sufficiently validated. However, if it is confirmed by further research, it can, indeed, point to the culturally-dependent importance of the inclusive autonomy.

2.4 A rationale for the current study

2.4.1 A need for more research of the studied variables

2.4.1.1 Theoretical implications

Although many of the recent empirical studies suggest that autonomy is beneficial to optimal human functioning and well-being, regardless of a cultural context, some important questions persist. Firstly, in light of SDT's assertion that autonomy is a universal human need – an assertion still questioned by some cross-cultural researchers - more studies conducted in less researched societies are necessary (Deci and Ryan, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Iyengar and DeVoe, 2003; Bao and Lam, 2008). Only a wide ranging body of empirical evidence can strengthen or undermine SDT's position.

The focus of Asia and North America – predominant in the recent research – is not enough, given the socio-cultural diversity of both individualist and collectivist contexts. As Chirkov et al. (2003, p. 107) argue at the conclusion of their own research, 'countries from South America, Africa, and other parts of the world should be studied for their similarities and differences concerning the role of autonomy and internalization within culture.' Matsumoto (1999, p. 293) also calls for more studies in various under-researched cultures, such as South America, because 'empirical work on the level of quality and rigor that is acceptable to the field is almost nonexistent in these areas.' Still, despite these repeated calls, little empirical work has been done in those regions (Nunez et al., 2005; Gouveia et al., 2008).

Furthermore, such wide-ranging studies can shed more light on some recent questions concerning the relationship between various forms of autonomy and well-being that have been raised as the result of the research conducted in the Asian and North American cultural contexts. For instance, the different relationships between inclusive (internalized) autonomy and well-being in collectivist versus individualist cultural contexts require more research (Rudy et al., 2007). What is more, the surprising negative association between the inclusive relative autonomy index and well-being for the European Canadians in Rudy et al.'s (2007) study directly point to the importance of conducting more SDT-research not only in collectivist contexts – an argument usually put forward (Matsumoto, 1999; Chirkov et al., 2003) – but in different individualist countries as well. As Rudy et al. (2007) state, since ‘the results were found in only one sample of European Canadians, the results must be replicated in other individualist samples...Obviously, future research will be required to test these ideas’ (p. 1002).

Apart from inclusive (internalized) autonomy, individual or self-generated autonomy also deserves further analysis. This form of autonomy appears to be, on the surface, incompatible with the concept of collectivism because it is based on self-assertion, self-actualization, and pursuing individually generated goals. Therefore, its benefits to well-being found in the recent research studies conducted in collectivist cultures (e.g., Rudy et al., 2007) could be argued to run counter to the theory that only behaviour that is congruent with a prevailing cultural self-construal is emotionally beneficial (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1997; Iyengar and DeVoe, 2003). Indeed, such benefits of autonomy to well-being contradict the view of some cross-cultural researchers that, in the case of collectivist cultures ‘supporting students’ autonomy, providing them with choices, and acknowledging their

feelings, thoughts and opinions will not be appreciated' (Chirkov, 2009, p. 255). Since empirical work researching this topic in South American collectivist context is lacking, the present study offers an important contribution to the debate.

The need for more research is also justified by the recent line of thought concerning the concept of human autonomy. Kagitcibasi's (2005) theoretical work pointing to the two separate dimensions of autonomy promises to reconcile or, at least, clarify the perspectives of SDT proponents and their cross-cultural critics. Therefore, empirical research studies that incorporate Kagitcibasi's ideas into their methodology design are necessary. Rudy et al. (2007) conducted such research with Canadian (individualist) and Asian (collectivist) student populations. The present research intends to employ a similar theoretical background and methodological stand in its quantitative component but will collect data from students representing very cultural contexts (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). In this way, the study will offer new data to the debate surrounding the multi-faceted concept of autonomy and its contribution to optimal human functioning.

2.4.1.2 Practical implications

Finally, the findings of the present study might offer a contribution to the design and implementation of international programs and initiatives. As Chirkov et al. (2003, p. 5) write, 'distinguishing autonomy from the concept of individualism in cultural analyses appears to be an important step both in more detailed and differentiated understanding of cultural differences and for creating policies toward enhancing mental health worldwide.' Indeed, understanding how autonomy – in its various versions – relates to well-being across cultures will help in creating education programs that take into account the characteristics of a given cultural self-construal.

It is an important research area with practical pedagogical implications, especially in light of ‘globalization of education’ (Chirkov et al., 2003, de Wit et al., 2005, p. 6). Since, in reality, globalization of education means promoting Western educational principles based on individualism and assertion of autonomy in other cultures, there is a need to determine if those principles do apply to non-individualist cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; de Wit et al., 2005). Western-educated teachers and program developers are, after all, inclined to follow instructional methodologies that reflect their own cultural context and learning. As Li (2003, p. 76) writes, ‘teachers enact pedagogies based on their epistemological beliefs, professional ideology and interpretative systems. The accuracy of their perception and interpretation of the contexts are generally shaped by their cultural perspective.’

Are, however, self-directed learning, following self-generated interests, and being motivated to learn for learning’s sake emotionally beneficial to students brought up in the interdependent cultural context? Is providing collectivist students with a less structured teaching environment beneficial to their well-being?

In the context of this study, determining whether autonomy and intrinsic motivation are conducive to students’ well-being - as appears to be the case in Western and Asian students (Rudy et al., 2007; Bao and Lam, 2008;) – might have profound implications for higher education planning in Ecuador and Latin America, in general. Research data indicate that ‘in recent years foreign providers have entered the market for higher education in Latin America. European and U.S.-based institutions provide learning opportunities or are setting up institutions in Latin America, and universities in the region are developing strategic alliances with sister institutions abroad’ (de Wit et al., 2005, p. 63). Furthermore, in terms of education, ‘for the poorer countries, including most of Central America, Bolivia, Ecuador,

and Peru, international cooperation is still primarily vertical' (de Wit et al., 2005, p. 367). Increasingly, therefore, Western educational models that reflect the SDT framework and are based on class discussions, greater autonomy in learning, and independent studying are being implemented in those countries.

The implementation of the Western educational models is also promoted by international financial institutions and is thus indirectly linked to financial assistance in some underdeveloped regions (Gentili, 2005). An extensive report on the state of higher education in Latin America published by the World Bank states that Latin American countries should 'fully adopt a pedagogical model that involves student participation and an emphasis on "learning to learn" methodologies' and that places more emphasis on 'cultivating skills such as creativity, reflection, and entrepreneurship.' (de Wit et al., 2005, p. 47). Even if these principles sound fine, they first have to be determined to be culturally appropriate, especially in light of cross-cultural researchers' arguments against the application of Western individualist models in collectivist societies (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999). Even the authors of the World Bank report admit that 'risks are inherent in internationalization, particularly when it is implemented without regard to — or even in opposition to — national values and traditions' (de Wit et al., 2005, p. 281).

A lot is therefore at stake. Certainly, if autonomy in learning is proven to be beneficial to well-being also in South American collectivist contexts, then the arguments for adopting Western methodological approaches based on SDT premises will gain strength (Ryan and Deci, 2000; *El Comercio*, May 11, 2009;). If, on the other hand, given the specificity of the South American culture, it turns out that autonomy has 'no functional value' (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Chirkov et al., 2003, p. 99) in the studied collectivist

culture, and, indeed, as Li (2003, p. 76) writes, ‘teaching and learning are culture-dependent’, then the cross-cultural argument in favour of congruence between students’ emotional needs and a dominant self-construal might prevail (Miller, 1997; Oishi, 2000). Therefore, the importance of the topic in terms of practical pedagogical implications in collectivist contexts contributes to the rationale for conducting the present study.

2.4.2 Researching the topic in a different individualist cultural context

By choosing UK students as an individualistic sample, the present study moves beyond the American and European Canadian contexts of recent research. This is important because the UK’s score on *the Individualism dimension* (89) is the third highest internationally and the highest in Europe. It is only slightly lower than the United States (91) but it is higher than Canada (80) (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Therefore, the UK’s high standing on *the Individualism dimension* combined with significant differences between the UK’s and the United States’ or Canada’s historical and cultural background, social structure, and geographic location provides a strong rationale for including it in the present research (Roberts, 2003; Harman, 2008; Higgins et al., 2010). This rationale reflects the frequently stated goal of including a wide range of socio-cultural contexts in SDT-related research (Matsumoto, 1999).

2.4.2.1 Differences between the American and the British university education

Moreover, this research study will focus on university students. This is an important factor to consider because the differences between higher education in North America and the UK are considerable. On the one hand, the American education system is similar to the Canadian education system in terms of structure, methodological approach, and student participation and completion rates (Skolnik and Jones, 1992; Rosenbaum et al., 1996; Jones, 1997;

Rubinson, and Hurst, 1997; Davis and Hammack, 2005). On the other hand, however, it differs from the British education system in such areas as student maturity, completion rates, financing, mode of studying, flexibility, student preparedness, entry requirements, and societal attitudes to higher education. Those differences, which are presented below, can, in turn, have an impact on the relationship between autonomy and well-being.

Differences in university completion rates

The difference in degree completion between the two countries is substantial. In the UK, 82 percent of students complete their degree, whereas in the US only about 67 percent of students continue studying until graduation (Weko, 2004; Yorke, 2007). British university funding policies that are largely dependent on student graduation ratios contribute to the difference. This is why, in the UK, universities as well as instructors have a greater incentive for assisting students in their educational process and in keeping them motivated. It could be argued that this external pressure and involvement could lead to the greater importance of introjected and extrinsic motivation for British than for American students.

The difference between university completion rates may also be the result of the economic context. A far greater percentage of full-time American than British students work during their studies, which might impact on their energy level, ability to focus and overall commitment to studying (Weko, 2004). It can also affect their motivation, since it might be more difficult for an American student to immerse herself intrinsically in her subjects and study for pure enjoyment and desire to learn when a considerable part of her time is spent on paid work (Weko, 2004). For a British student, on the other hand, university studying 'was - and in many respects, still is - expected to be a dense, compact, sharply bounded,

concentrated, and intimate experience...free from worldly concerns of family, work, and other responsibilities' (Weko, 2004, p. 49).

Differences in teacher-student ratios

US universities have, in general, a lower ratio of students to teachers than do UK universities (Weko, 2004). American faculty members are thus able to devote more time to individual students and, possibly, engage more fully in various aspects of their motivational orientation. As a result, intrinsically motivated students in American universities can gain reinforcement in their desire to learn from a closer partnership with their professors. This may also positively affect American students' well-being since they might feel less neglected and more appreciated in their learning efforts.

Different entrance requirements

As Weko (2004, p. 8) writes, "viewed in comparison to the US university system, the English university system appears to have more consistent standards of entry and a much closer alignment of its upper secondary curriculum and assessment to the needs of university education.' Compared to British students, many American students 'enter university with little if any familiarity with the course that they will undertake at university' (Weko, 2004, p. 44). This fact can influence American students' level of intrinsic motivation and their well-being. They might be less intrinsically motivated than their British counterparts since the studied subjects are a lesser reflection of their long-standing interests (Trow, 1987; 2001; Weko, 2004). In an early stage of studying, American students are engaged more in search of what really interests them than in a process of deepening their long-held interests (Adelman et al., 2003). This greater unfamiliarity with the studied area can also contribute to

stress, anxiety and confusion, which, in turn, could lower the subjective well-being of American students.

Furthermore, the level of maturity at entrance is higher for British than for American students. Although, '21.2 per cent of students beginning full-time first degree study in the UK are 21 years and older, in the US only 8.5 per cent of students beginning full-time first degree study are 21 and older' (Weko, 2004, p. 10). Therefore, this disparity in maturity can cause American students 'to make [more] choices that poorly suit their needs' than British students, with possible repercussions on their motivational orientation and subjective well-being (Weko, 2004, p. 10).

Differences in attitudes to acquiring part of a degree

There is a striking difference in the value that the respective societies place on a partial completion of a degree. Whereas, in the US, acquiring part of a degree is viewed as 'better than nothing', students, educators as well as employers 'in the UK commonly express a view that is nearly the opposite of that expressed in the US: that nothing is better than something (Wellman and Thomas Ehrlich, eds., 2003). Research suggests that men who begin a university course in the UK but do not finish it are, in fact, 'worse off than those who do not begin' (Weko, 2004, p.10). The British cultural context reflects the thinking that it is wiser 'not to have tried than to have tried and left a course, since employers will view one as feckless' (Weko, 2004, p. 58).

There are possible implications of these differences in attitudes towards university degree on students' motivation and well-being in both countries. Since acquiring part of a degree has little value in the UK, a greater number of British than American students might feel that they have to complete their studies, even though they are no longer interested or

autonomous in the process of learning. In the UK, therefore, extrinsic motivation may play a greater role in later years of students' educational experience. Furthermore, feeling forced, in the British context, to study in order to ensure employability and avoid being viewed as 'feckless' can lead to a different relationship between motivational orientation and well-being for British than for American students (Weko, 2004, p. 58).

2.4.2.2 A rationale for including the University of Birmingham in the study

Since this research study collects data from only one UK university, it is important to evaluate how representative this university is against relevant criteria. An analysis on the information published by Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (2011) indicates that the University of Birmingham closely mirrors general trends in regards to students' place of permanent residence. The data show that for the UK, in general, 89.5 percent of undergraduate students list the UK as their domicile, 4 percent list other European Union nations, and 6.5 percent list non-European Union nations. In the case of the University of Birmingham, these percentages are 90, 3.2, and 7, respectively. It appears, therefore, that in terms of students' permanent associations with Western individualist self-construal – an aspect critical to this study – the University of Birmingham provides a good representation of the UK student population as a whole.

Conclusion

Altogether, it appears that there are substantial differences between the American and the British education systems. Those differences can, in turn, have an impact on students' educational motivation and the relationship between this motivation and well-being. Some of those differences suggest the possibility of greater intrinsic motivation on the part of UK students, while others favour greater autonomy on the part of American students. The

relationship between the studied phenomena in the two countries is thus complex and multifaceted. The US and the UK are different in many respects, and their higher education systems are also different, despite the overall culture in both countries being highly individualistic. Therefore, given the UK's relative under-representation in SDT research, there is a strong rationale for including this country and the University of Birmingham in the present study.

Overall, the inclusion of the University of Birmingham can serve two purposes. Firstly, the United Kingdom's comparison with Ecuador can provide more data to SDT-related research conducted along the individualist/collectivist divide. Furthermore, however, and equally important, the UK can, on its own, broaden our understanding of the relationship between the studied phenomena in different individualist contexts.

2.4.3 Conducting more research in South America

The present research study also collected data from the relatively neglected collectivist context of South America (Matsumoto, 1999; Chirkov et al., 2003). By moving beyond Asia and by studying the phenomena in the Ecuadorian society, the research can potentially strengthen or undermine the concept of autonomy as a universal human need.

This is a much needed step, acknowledged by other researchers (Matsumoto, 1999). Indeed, one of the limitations in the debate over autonomy as a culturally-dependent construct was the relative lack of geographically-diverse data. It is especially significant in the case of collectivist societies which, as already discussed, have been proposed by cross-cultural scientists as examples to refute the principles of SDT (Ivengar and Lepper, 1999; Oishi et al, 1999; Oishi, 2000). The focus on Asia - though understandable in the early stages of SDT-related research - is not sufficient to support or undermine the universality of

SDT framework, nor can it provide a robust foundation informing adjustments to educational practices. South America and Africa also consist of collective societies that need to be studied before any definite conclusions can be reached (Matsumoto, 1999).

Furthermore, those societies were formed by different social, cultural, historical as well as religious influences and thus can add new data to the currently available research. David Matsumoto (1999) directly addresses the shortcomings of cross-cultural research in this respect. The concept of the interdependent self-construal, which is proposed to question the universality of autonomy, covers vast regions of the world, apart from Asia. However, as Matsumoto (1999, p.293) points out, Markus and Kitayama as well as other cross-cultural researchers have provided little empirical data to substantiate the geographic scope of their theoretical assumptions:

‘One of the first issues to be raised concerns the coverage of the cultural areas to which the theory is supposedly applicable. Markus and Kitayama (e.g., 1994b) suggest that the interdependent self-construal is applicable in Japan, China, Korea, Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa. The evidence they present shows considerable coverage of work in Japan and China, some work in India, less in Korea. Work on Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa, however, is almost non-existent in their presentation, because empirical work on the level of quality and rigor that is acceptable to the field is almost nonexistent in these areas.’

Latin societies have, indeed, continued to be treated very scantily by the research related to SDT. One of few studies conducted in this part of the world focused on Mexican university students and measured different types of motivation. The research showed results comparable to those of U.S. students (Alonso et al., 2005). In terms of South America, the importance of autonomy was also demonstrated for Brazilian students in a recent comparative research study (Chirkov, Ryan and Willness, 2005). In this study, Brazilian participants rated autonomy similarly to their Canadian counterparts, despite having displayed a greater identification with collectivist self-construal.

This evidence is not sufficient, however, for forming any generalities. South America comprises a number of countries with distinctive historical and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, neither Mexico nor Brazil constitutes a representative example of collectivist Latin societies. Mexico's proximity to and close economic relationship with the United States exert a powerful impact on its culture and create a unique set of influences (Nauert, 2008). Brazil, on the other hand, is composed of a highly diversified population in terms of race and cultural background. Additionally, both of those countries are in the grip of chronic crime and violence, less commonly occurring features of other collectivist societies (Latinobarometro, 2008).

2.4.3.1 Cultural features of South America

It is, therefore, important to shed more light on the collectivist nature of other Latin countries and its potential impact on the theoretical principles of SDT. This goal is justified by the region's different religious, historical, and cultural influences. For instance, if it is Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism that have contributed to the collectivism in Asian societies, it is Catholicism, among other aspects discussed below, that has led to the formation of South American culture (Marin and Marin, 1991; Osland et al., 2007).

Catholicism

Catholicism has had a great impact on many aspects of Latin culture (Osland et al, 2007). The Catholic Church has left, for example, the legacy of paternalism (Rosen, 1988). In Latin American culture, paternalism presents itself in two forms: the power of 'the boss' and government to make decisions for others and in their responsibility to take care of people (Osland et al., 2007). Catholicism also, indirectly, contributed to *fatalismo*, a sense of external control over one's destiny that strongly exerts itself in South American countries

(Ross et al., 1983). For example, the phrase ‘Dios quiere’ (God willing) frequently accompanies discussions about future business plans (Osland, De Franco, & Osland, 2007). To a greater degree than in other cultures - except, perhaps, for African societies - the sense of fate governing human endeavours still resonates in the collectivist societies of South America (Harrison and Huntington, 2000).

Personalismo

South American culture can also be characterized, to a greater degree than Asian culture, by warmth in displaying personal relationships, a cultural trait often referred to as *personalismo*. Openness, empathy, cheerfulness, and insistence on displaying personal connections are values that run high in Latin culture (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Greeting and showing emotions often take tactile forms of kissing and hugging, again contrary to many Eastern cultures (Marin and Marin, 1991).

Simpatia

Another important feature that both reaffirms Latin America’s collectivist self-construal and distinguishes it from other interdependent cultures is a cultural script called *simpatia*. Triandis et al. (1984) analyzed this pattern of social interaction in greater detail in their highly influential paper. The researchers write that a person who is *simpatico*, ‘shows a certain level of conformity and an ability to share in other’s feelings (Real Academia Espanola, 1980), behaves with dignity and respect toward others, and seems to strive for harmony in interpersonal relations’ (1984, p. 1363). The last characteristic is indicative of the tendency to avoid interpersonal conflict and to deemphasize differences in opinions and attitudes. Mexican Americans tend to believe, for example, that directly questioning others’ opinions and actions may be offensive. In Latin America, arguments and direct

confrontations are considered assaults on the essential dignity of others (Marin and Marin, 1991).

The cultural features presented above serve two purposes in the context of this research study. Firstly, they suggest distinctive differences which may well prove relevant to collectivistic self-construal in Asia and South America. Those differences justify, in turn, an argument that we should undertake more studies in South America before we can decide how autonomy and subjective well-being relate to each other in the majority of collectivistic contexts (Matsumoto, 1999).

Secondly, some of the cultural features presented above not only point to differences between Asia and South America, but also suggest the possibility of their independent contribution to the experience of autonomy and well-being. In other words, apart from demonstrating the distinguishing aspects of South American self-construal, those features might also contribute to forming a uniquely South American concept of autonomy.

For instance, the legacy of paternalism, the profound influence of Catholic religion as well as *fatalismo* might instill in the culture not only the sense of some supreme power guarding over people but might also affect the psychological processes necessary for generating individual autonomy (Triandis et al., 1984). The sense of control over one's destiny and individual responsibility for shaping it – the predominant features of the individualistic self-construal – can be undermined in the South American context by the belief in ultimate powerlessness that one has in the face of great forces. It is, indeed, important to ask how valuable autonomy is in the societies in which the very concept of autonomy as a life force is circumscribed by cultural and religious beliefs.

Personalismo and *simpatia* might also contribute to a distinct nature of the relationship between autonomy and well-being in the South American culture. Both of those cultural features emphasize warmth and deemphasize competition and asserting oneself in professional and educational settings. Charging ahead, defending one's arguments and opinions, and acknowledging differences clash with an overriding cultural script. Therefore, it would be hypothesized, the importance of autonomy - understood as a genuine identification with one's actions - and its impact on subjective well-being can again become diminished in such a cultural context.

The above features can also lead to potentially different behavioural and educational consequences. The importance of close personal relationships as well as a deeply embedded need to enjoy life can affect work or school performance (Osland, 1993). Since time with family and friends is treasured above all, the completion of some professional responsibilities might be protracted or postponed. Indeed, research indicates that, in general, South American students display less determination for academic 'overachievement' than their Asian counterparts (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Of course, as with other cultural features, there is a danger of stereotyping. What this line of argument strives for, instead, is to delineate comparative strengths of certain tendencies in South American culture. It also argues against a monolithic attitude towards collectivism and thus encourages more cross-cultural research, especially in the still understudied part of the world.

There is more, however, to South America to justify the inclusion of a country from this region in the present dissertation. It is valid to consider, for example, if the features that South American societies do share with Asian societies find a different outer manifestation

as result of being played out in a different linguistic, religious, cultural, geographic, and political context.

Respeto and Familismo

Does the shared cultural tendency of Asian and South American countries for maintaining close family relationships bring about similar consequences for autonomy and well-being in both cultural contexts?

To consider this issue, one needs to examine, in comparative terms, two crucial features of Latino self-construal; *respeto*(respect) and *familismo* (the importance of family). The former stresses the importance of setting clear boundaries and recognizing one's place in hierarchical relationships (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). It implies high regard for family and the elderly (Arredondo et al., 1996) and the importance of age, gender, and class in everyday relations (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010). Overall, *respeto* again points to the collective nature of South American societies and provides additional support for including this part of the world in the empirical research on the universality of autonomy.

Collectivist self-construal of Latin America emerges in an even more pronounced way from through the concept of *familismo*. This cultural concept refers to placing family ahead of personal interests, living close to extended family, making collective decisions, and a sense of responsibility for and obligation to the family (Marin and Marin, 1991; Schwartz, 2007). *Familismo* is regarded as on the most important culture-specific values of Hispanics (Moore, 1970, Marin and Marin, 1991). Furthermore, 'there is an implicit assumption in the extant literature that familism is primarily applicable to Hispanic people' (Schwartz, 2007, p.102) and that it distinguishes Hispanic people from other cultural groups (Santisteban et al., 2002).

Its role in the culture has been frequently acknowledged. It is thought to be one of the mechanisms that assists Hispanic immigrants in maintaining their heritage culture (Sabogal et al., 1987) and that shields them from drug and alcohol abuse (Ramirez et al., 2004). Even more centrally to the present research thesis, *familismo* is given as a reason for greater allegiance toward family and family roles among Hispanic people (Toth and Xu, 1999).

What is most striking about *familismo* in the context of the present research is its proximity to broadly defined collectivism. Schwartz (2007, p.1020) points out those similarities:

‘...familism emphasizes prioritizing the family over the individual, showing respect for elders, and honoring the family name. Broadly, familism and other similar cultural constructs may reflect a collectivist value system (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006), where *collectivism* is defined as “interdependen[ce] within in-groups . . . giv[ing] priority to the goals of the in-group, shap[ing] behavior primarily on the basis of in-group norms, and behav[ing] in a communal way” (Triandis, 2001, p. 909).’

Familismo has also been explicitly acknowledged as a component of collectivism by some other researchers. Realo et al. (1997) place *familismo*, along with companionship and patriotism, as a defining feature of this cultural construct. The researchers even provide a definition of collectivism underpinned by *familismo*. This form of collectivism, they write (1997, p.110), means ‘the dedication of one’s life to the family, putting its interests higher than personal aspirations. Family security, honoring parents and elders, respect for traditions, and reciprocation of favors serve as guiding principles in familists’ life.’

Similarly, in creating a new *familismo* measure, Steidel and Contreras (2003) distinguish four components of this cultural trait that relate to collectivism: familial honor, respect for familial elders, familial interdependence, and subjugation of self to family. As

Schwartz (2007) notices, the same components also characterize collectivist values such as communalism (Boykin et al., 1997) and filial piety (Yeh and Bedford, 2003). Therefore, rather than being specific to Hispanic populations, '*familismo* may actually generalize to other ethnic groups beside Hispanics, and especially to groups that espouse collectivist principles' (Schwartz, 2007, p. 103).

A strong positive correlation between *familismo* and collectivism is also suggested by Schwartz's (2007) own research. The researcher asked the study's participants to complete both familism scales (Bardis, 1959; Triandis et al., 1985) and collectivism scales (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). The data analysis demonstrated a significant association between familism and collectivism.

In the light of the arguments explicitly linking *familismo* with the concept of collectivism, it is striking that the research attempting to explore concepts of autonomy along the I/C divide has neglected to include Latin populations (Matsumoto, 1999). After all, what separate cross-cultural researchers from the proponents of SDT are the judgments about the importance of autonomy in collectivist cultural contexts. This dispute cannot be resolved, however, by focusing solely on Asian societies and excluding South American cultures. This omission is especially glaring because the Hispanic version of collectivism is based on family obedience and subjugation (Schwartz, 2007). These cultural values are, in turn, pointed out by cross-cultural researchers as undermining the importance of autonomy in collectivist societies (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). After all, the argument against autonomy rests not on companionship, patriotism or communalism, but it is based on in-group allegiance that is most obviously associated with close and extended family.

Paradoxically, therefore, although what could be defined as *familismo* has been proposed as a main argument against SDT, this cultural value has not been studied sufficiently in all those cultures with which it is most closely associated. If *familismo* – a core feature of collectivism – is, indeed, central to the Latin culture, SDT-related research needs to test the theory’s principles in this cultural context.

2.4.4 Rationale for the choice of Ecuador for the study

2.4.4.1 Cultural self-construal

Within the context of Latin America, the choice of Ecuador as a setting for part of the research is not accidental. Certainly, there is an element of convenience behind this choice, but, apart from this, Ecuador possesses cultural features that render it especially suitable for this type of comparative research. For example, the data collected in earlier studies point to the country’s very strong collectivist tendencies, even within the context of South America. Geert Hofstede’s research is crucial in this respect. As earlier described, this Swiss scientist conducted the most comprehensive study on how values in the workplace are influenced by culture (Hofstede, 2001). He analyzed countries according to four cultural dimensions; Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). PDI, IDV, and UAI are especially pertinent to the topic of this thesis because they relate to the position, duties and responsibilities of an individual in society. In contrast to Masculinity, these three dimensions do not concern themselves directly with gender but, instead, with societal hierarchy, self-assertion, and the in-group versus out-group dynamics that are central to the individualism/collectivism distinction.

Power Distance Index

Ecuador scored 78 on PDI, which is much higher than the average for Latin American countries. A high score on this scale indicates a country with a high level of inequality - in terms of social hierarchy - and this inequality is accepted in the society as part of its cultural heritage. Ecuador's scoring much higher than the average for South America is very telling since this part of the world displays, in general, a greater tendency for accepting hierarchy in social relations than do Western countries. Triandis et al. (1984) studied Hispanics and non-Hispanics in the United States and concluded that Hispanics 'saw high status actors as more likely to discipline, give orders to, and less likely to treat as a brother, ask for permission, reveal intimate thoughts, or tell personal problems to a lower status person' (1984, p.1374). Still, even in this cultural context, Ecuador scores higher than the average for the surrounding countries.

This cultural acceptance of hierarchy can have implications for the associations between autonomy and well-being that are central to this thesis. A greater willingness to defer to authority in the Ecuadorian context might weaken the arguments that autonomy is universally essential for subjective well-being (Oishi, 2000; Oishi and Diener, 2001). In accordance with some cross-cultural research, being culturally conditioned to accepting hierarchy mitigates the potentially negative effects of conforming to expectations of others (Oishi et al., 1999; Oishi, 2000; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

Individualism

Ecuador has also an extreme score on individualism. On this dimension, the country not only ranks lower than other South American countries but also lower than the average for Asian countries. For example, its score is almost twice as low as that of China. This is an

important finding in relation to individual autonomy versus inclusive autonomy. A low score on individualism points to a society that is collectivistic rather than individualistic in nature. From an early on, individuals become a part of in-groups which will continue to care for them and protect them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 2001). Of course, in accordance with the principle of internalization or autonomous interdependence, it is possible that Ecuadorians can still feel highly autonomous through the process of genuine identification with external demands (Chirkov, 2003). It is therefore important to study how in this collectivist context – very different from the Asian one – the experience of autonomy shapes emotional outcomes.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Furthermore, Ecuador is characterized by very high uncertainty avoidance. Again, this score points to a collectivist society. According to Hofstede (2001), societies with a high level of uncertainty avoidance (UAI) are averse to risk and prefer to implement strict rules and regulations to minimize potential uncertainty. The goal of such populations is to control all aspects of life in order to eliminate unexpected occurrences. Ecuador's score on this dimension is 67, which is twice as high as that for the United Kingdom.

2.4.4.2 Political system

Hofstede's findings about Ecuador are further supported by media reports coming from this country. The highly collective nature of Ecuador - even in comparison to other South American countries - reveals itself, for instance, in the country's economic and political system. In recent years, the country has been ruled by a leftist government of Rafael Correa. If anything, Correa's political outlook is based on collective well-being rather than on encouraging individualistic pursuits and non-conformism. The president passed into law a

new constitution which promotes socialist values and subordinates individual rights to that of the society (El Comercio, March 17, 2009). Still, however, Correa and his politics remain popular in Ecuador. It can, therefore, be argued that his populist agenda struck a chord with Ecuadorian society, which, again, points to this country's strong collectivist construal (El Comercio, March 17, 2009).

2.4.4.3 Educational system

a) testing the SDT framework

Finally, Ecuador also offers an interesting ground for testing the SDT framework because of its education system. It is - in its government-sponsored incarnation - an extension of the country's highly collectivistic cultural principles. Throughout secondary schooling as well as through university studies, there prevails in Ecuador an authoritarian, top-down pedagogical approach that gives teachers and administrators considerable power over students and parents (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008). This pedagogic orientation might have profound consequences for the learning process. Cabrera and Espinosa (2008, p.69) write the following:

‘los estudiantes no disponen de habilidades para pensar bien, aprender, ser productivo, trabajar autonomamente y en grupo (...) so una pequena minoria de estudiantes y egresados de bachillerato se ubican en la etapa de pensamiento logico-formal’ (Ministerio de Educacion, 1998). /the students do not possess skills for logical thinking, learning, being productive, work independently and in groups ...only a small minority of high school students and graduates are in possession of logical and formal knowledge’./ (trans. B.B.).

Does therefore the positive correlation between autonomy and well-being proposed by SDT also hold true in the Ecuadorian society? Paradoxically, after many years of top-down schooling, such a constraining setting could feel like a ‘comfort zone’, a familiar environment for Ecuadorian university students. Perhaps, strong external regulation -

frequent testing and teachers deciding how and what to study - give students used to this system a sense of structure that does not negatively affect their well-being or their sense of competence. It might, in fact, be the case that an autonomy-promoting approach would evoke stress in such students. Autonomy means, after all, making your own decisions and self-directing your learning process. For students conditioned from childhood to a teacher-controlled learning environment, a sudden shift in responsibility for the learning process might bring out feelings of anxiety and confusion (Markus and Kitayama, 2001). Those feelings could, in turn, lessen both their well-being and their perception of competence.

If this argument has any merit, Ecuador presents an ideal ground for testing it. Again, the country's two collective cultural features come to the forefront. Firstly, the implications from the very high score on the *Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension* (UAI) are likely to pertain to education, as well. There is an inherent lack of certainty embedded in autonomous learning: a student has to rely on himself or herself, rather than on some external guidance and authority. This learning environment might have greater significance in the Ecuadorian context. High UAI indicates a cultural preference for strict regulation and control as well as fear and anxiety when faced with unfamiliar contexts. Therefore, the authoritarian education system - however inadequate it might be from the point of view of modern learning methodology - has at least the benefit of familiarity and low level of uncertainty (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008).

Furthermore, the previously described high *Uncertainty Avoidance* appears to be antithetical to striving for educational autonomy. Paradoxically, the top-down instructional approach and the lack of class discussion might also positively relate to the deeply embedded sense of authority in Ecuadorian culture. Real learning becomes, in such a

cultural context, synonymous with authoritative and ‘verified’ dissemination and assimilation of information. Ecuador, with its preference for rules and authority, – traits that are evident in both its social and political life - might be a place where teacher-centered, authoritarian learning is perceived as the only real learning (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008).

Ecuador’s second collective trait on Hofstede’s (2001) framework of cultural dimensions also relates to education. The country’s low score on *Individualism* might mean that students in all levels of education strive toward meeting only the required norms, and prefer not to distinguish themselves from other students. Indeed, this lack of opportunity for higher self-realization and academic achievement – also manifest in very low publication rate (Idrovo, 2009) - is often quoted by some Ecuadorian politicians and educators as the main obstacle to socio-economic advancement (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008). It is also the reason that many Ecuadorians – including the President Correa himself – have decided to pursue their higher education abroad (El Comercio, July 18, 2009). In fact, Latin America, with Ecuador being a part of it, ‘has more students at U.S. universities relative to the proportion enrolled at home than any other region in the world’ (de Wit, 2005, p. 61).

Educational performance is, therefore, yet another reason why Ecuador presents such an interesting case for studying academic motivation and well-being in the context of Self-determination theory. The case of Ecuador becomes a reminder that cultural collectivism is not a uniform or undifferentiated concept. Asian societies insist on educational excellence, and individual research achievements are praised and desired (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000). In Ecuador, those cultural features are less pronounced, however. In this country, collectivism appears to extend itself to academic life with different consequences than in East Asian societies, which makes testing autonomy a worthwhile research task.

Indeed, data that emerge from such research might answer some important questions: does the relatively low level of intrinsic motivation required from students and instructors necessarily translate into lower subjective well-being? Or, does the sense of predictability resultant from the clearly established requirements engender students' feeling of security? In the country with a very high *Uncertainty Avoidance*, very low *Individualism*, and a culturally ingrained top-down pedagogical approach, an answer to these questions is far from certain.

b) *providing data that can assist in addressing Ecuador's educational challenges*

Finally, an important rationale for conducting the present research study stems from the fact that, in terms of higher education, Ecuador has been lagging behind other South American countries (Giugale and Lopez, 2003; Carbera and Espinosa, 2008). Data are needed, therefore, to indicate which areas require improvement and how this improvement can be accomplished (Carbera and Espinosa, 2008).

Ecuador spends a low percentage of its overall budget on education, even in comparison with other Latin American countries (Giugale and Lopez, 2003). Furthermore, the percentage of university costs borne by students is very high in Ecuador, second only to much richer Chile (de Wit et al, 2005). In light of these facts, it is paramount to provide students with a learning environment which counterbalances insufficient government spending as fully as it is viable, and which values students' contribution. Finding out what works in education is always important, but it is especially crucial in the context of budgetary cuts and students' and their families' financial sacrifices in pursuit of educational and vocational goals.

Data collected by the present study can also help in addressing two other challenges of the Ecuadorian higher education context: low enrollment in institutions of higher education and low graduation ratio. Historically, only about ‘14 percent of the population between 18 and 24 years of age...were enrolled in institutions of higher education’ and ‘rarely more than 10 to 15 percent of the original freshman class’ graduate from public universities (World Bank, 2000; Giugale and Lopez, 2003, p. 274). These data are especially discouraging because in Ecuador, similar to other South American countries, university education shows a very high correlation with economic well-being. In this country, ‘2 percent and 5 percent [of] the poorest quintiles and 38 percent [of] the wealthiest quintile of the population’ have a university degree (Giugale and Lopez, 2003, p. 274). Getting a degree pays off in a long term, and thus research needs to explore how to increase both students’ participation in higher education and university graduation rates. Furthermore, the higher education system clearly does not meet students’ expectations. As previously mentioned, Ecuador is one of the countries with the highest proportion of students at U.S universities (de Wit, 2005).

The present study addresses students’ motivational orientation, their experiences within a university environment, and their satisfaction with teaching and learning processes. It can thus provide data that directly relate to some of the most pressing problems facing the Ecuadorian higher education system.

2.4.4.4 A rationale for including Universidad Central and Universidad Catolica

Since universities in Ecuador differ from one another in terms of students’ financial status rather than in terms of their ethnic origin, I intended to collect data from two universities that cater for students from different socio-economic groups (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008).

Universidad Catolica charges substantial tuition fee and attracts a more affluent section of the population, whereas Universidad Central de Ecuador is an entirely publicly-funded university, and fees are subsidized by the government (Universidad Catolica website; Universidad Central website). There are two main reasons behind such a choice of participating universities. Firstly, selecting participants from these universities allowed for the analysis of the potentially mediating factor of financial status (Maslow, 1943; Diener et al., 1995; Oishi et al., 1999) on well-being in this collectivist culture. Secondly, including in the study the two dominant structures of post-secondary education in Ecuador increased the generalizability of the findings of the study.

2.4.5 Summary of research expectations

2.4.5.1 Ecuador

Summarizing all the previously addressed points, it appears that Ecuador presents a context in which a refutation of some of SDT principles could be expected. The match between the authoritarian educational system and deeply-ingrained cultural values and realities might be argued to enhance rather than diminish academic well-being (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1999). In fact, an autonomy-promoting approach may well evoke anxiety which could, in turn, lead to lower well-being for students brought up in such a cultural context. After all, autonomy means making your own decisions and self-directing your learning process. For students conditioned from childhood to a teacher-controlled learning environment and clearly defined requirements, a sudden shift in responsibility for guiding the learning process could bring out feelings of confusion (Markus & Kitayama, 2001). Those feelings could, in turn, lessen students' subjective well-being.

The authoritarian educational system - however inadequate it might be from the point of view of modern learning methodology – has at least the benefit of familiarity and low levels of uncertainty. The path ahead might be constraining and antithetical to creativity and self-expression but is, at least, clear and well-defined. A student used to this system might find comfort in externally imposed limitations. Again, it needs to be stressed that it is students' subjective well-being that this study intends to measure and not their intellectual development or personal growth.

However, despite all the arguments presented above, this researcher is open to the possibility that even in the Ecuadorian collectivist context autonomy can still correlate positively with subjective well-being. Again, everything depends on how autonomy is defined. If the Western definition of separation and individualism is proposed then, indeed, autonomy might be of lesser importance to Ecuadorian students, as it is to Asian students (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). On the other hand, if SDT's definition based on the full internalization of external influences is accepted, then Ecuadorian participants - just as their British counterparts – might need autonomy in order to achieve greater subjective well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Cherkov et al., 2003).

In accordance with the arguments presented in the earlier parts of this thesis, it is the second definition that will be employed within the current study. From this perspective, the concept of autonomy becomes much more multi-faceted and reflects students' inner identification with a given behaviour. Therefore, Ecuadorian samples may still support the premises of SDT, because the cultural distinctiveness of South America does not have to mitigate the emotional benefits of autonomy once autonomy is conceptualized as a genuine self-endorsement of a given action or phenomenon. As in the case with Asian participants,

the differentiation between choice and intrinsic motivation is crucial to a thorough investigation of autonomy and well-being. Autonomy or intrinsic motivation can acquire culture-specific manifestation and forms, which in the context of Ecuador can mean internalizing external influences and fully incorporating them into the self (Cousins, 1989).

That is why, despite their cultural distinctiveness, Ecuadorian students are expected to employ similar internalization mechanisms that were seen with the collectivist groups studied to date (Rudy et al., 2007). The cultural distinctiveness of South America should not impair the process of forming autonomy that incorporates important others into one's concept of self. In fact, these are precisely such aforementioned cultural traits of South America as *familismo*, *simpatia* and *respeto* that make inclusive autonomy a possibility in this collectivist context as well.

Still, empirical research is necessary to confirm or contradict such expectations. I am open to the possibility that the data might, in fact, undermine the premises of SDT about autonomy and subjective well-being. Perhaps, culture matters, after all, and SDT principles are not universally shared (Oishi, 2000). The lack of relevant studies in South America and this part of the world's cultural distinctiveness provide a sound rationale for conducting an empirical study (Matsumoto, 1999; Chirkov et al., 2003).

2.4.5.2 *The UK*

In the case of UK participants, the researcher expects findings to be similar to those obtained by Rudy et al. (2007) or by Levesque et al. (2004). Given, the UK's similar standing on individualism to that of the United States and higher than that of Canada (Hofstede, 1980; 2001), it is expected that individual autonomy will correlate significantly and positively with well-being in this student population as well. As far as inclusive or internalized autonomy is

concerned, it is expected that the study's finding might mirror those of Rudy et al. (2007). In that research, inclusive autonomy did not correlate positively with well-being in the European Canadian sample. As was argued by the researchers (2007), 'inclusive participants' standing in opposition to the dominant individualist self-construal led to the feeling of being outside the norm, which, in turn, contributed to lower well-being. The same emotional process might take place in the case of family-oriented UK participants.

Again, however, I am open to the possibility of different findings. The substantial differences between the North American and British educational systems presented earlier in this chapter might contribute to the different relationship between autonomy and subjective well-being in the case of University of Birmingham students. Individualist cultures are as diverse and complex as their collectivist counterparts, and only well-designed empirical research studies can reveal the full complexity of the relationships between the studied phenomena.

2.5 The aims of the study

A better understanding of the relationship between educational autonomy and subjective well-being has both theoretical and practical implication (Chirkov et al., 2005). Furthermore, as the Literature Review indicates, controversy remains about how these phenomena are related to each other in different cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Bao and Lam, 2008).

Therefore, addressing the topic in less researched individualist and collectivist contexts, such as Ecuador and the UK, might lead to new and important insights (Hofstede, 2001, Weko, 2004). The study might also contribute to this area of research by addressing the researched phenomena by means of a mixed methods approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie,

2003): most of SDT research conducted so far has employed only quantitative methods of data collection, and the need for qualitative studies has been acknowledged (Matsumoto, 1999; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009). The present research attempts to respond to this need. By combining the benefits of both statistical analysis and focus group interviewing, the study addresses a number of objectives:

Objective 1: Evaluate whether, how, and to what degree Ecuadorian and British university students differ in their motivation approaches to higher education.

Objective 2: Assess and describe the factors that underlie any such motivational differences.

Objective 3: Assess whether educational autonomy is differently perceived in the two cultural contexts.

Objective 4: Compare the importance of educational autonomy for students from the two cultural contexts.

Objective 5: Find out if educational autonomy relates differently to subjective well-being in the two cultural contexts.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter provides a justification for employing a mixed methods approach in this study. It also discusses the appropriateness of quantitative and qualitative techniques in SDT-related research conducted in different cultural contexts.

3.1 Mixed methods approach

3.1.1 Differences between quantitative and qualitative methods

Mixed methods research remains a somewhat controversial approach to scientific enquiry and requires methodological justification (Patton 2002). From an ontological and epistemological standpoint, quantitative methods typically subscribe to a positivist view that social phenomena can be adequately measured by applying statistical analysis to a clearly defined set of variables (Halfpenny 1979; Hoepfl 1997; Cohen et al. 2000). These variables are established at the outset of the research and the investigator uses numbers, statistics and scales to confirm or disconfirm relationships between the variables. The process of selecting participants adheres to the principle of randomization in an attempt to reduce risks of sampling bias and to provide an accurate representation of the larger population to whom research findings will be applied. Quantitative research strives, therefore, for precision, generalizability, and a large scale of analysis, in hope that such an approach can ensure gathering more reliable and unbiased data (Bogdan and Bilken 1998; Denzin and Lincoln 1998).

Qualitative methods are, on the other hand, frequently associated with an interpretivist view that argues that the ‘truth’ of the research emerges from tapping into multiple realities (Halfpenny 1979; Hoepfl 1997; Patton 2002). While quantitative methods champion scope and generalizability, qualitative approaches prefer depth, range and complexity (McCracken 1988). The idea is to have a deeper and more comprehensive look into the complexity of human behaviour, instead of determining how many people display, statistically, certain behavioural traits. Not surprisingly therefore, subjectivity is openly acknowledged in qualitative research, as both data collection and their analysis also become filtered through the imagination and cognitive processes of the researcher (Patton 2002; Creswell 2003).

Those differences between the methods have led to the belief among some researchers that the methods should not be mixed during the conduct of a particular research study. Researchers subscribing to epistemological ‘purity’ pointed out – especially at the height of so-called paradigm wars – that fundamentally different underlying philosophies of the two methods prevent their successful integration (Smith, 1983; Smith and Heshusius, 1986; Guba, 1987). In other words, the potential detrimental consequences of epistemological ‘confusion’ were considered to outweigh the benefits of integration (Bryman 1998; Fielding and Fielding 1986).

This criticism of a mixed methods approach was also augmented by the criticism of particular shortcomings of each method of data collection. For instance, the appropriateness of quantitative studies to investigate educational issues has been questioned by some researchers who state that these studies offer data on behaviour that are analyzed out of context and typical settings (Coyle and Williams, 2000; Eaves, 2009). The quantitative

approach's most celebrated features of 'objectivity' and 'rationality' were exactly the reasons for its inadequacy in educational research. As Brew (2001, p. 75, cited in Eaves, 2009, p.117) writes, current quantitative studies are 'trapped by the methodological noose of rationalism and objectivism' and present findings that are weak in addressing and ameliorating major educational problems.

Furthermore, quantitative techniques have been accused of not keeping up with changes in society. According to some researchers, these methods have become obsolete in the increasingly post-positivism reality and should relinquish their position to methodological techniques that reflect the latest scientific discoveries (Clarke, 1998; Phillips and Burbules, 2000).

The qualitative approach has also met with considerable criticism, especially in terms of its validity and reliability (Winter, 2000; Eaves, 2009). Contrary to quantitative research that establishes validity and reliability using numbers and scales, qualitative research operates in a context in which evidence for the integrity of knowledge claims is much more elusive (Seale, 1997). There is a fundamental problem of incorporating reliability - defined in terms of consistency of measures and data (Black and Champion, 1976) - into a methodological approach that emphasizes subjectivity, interpretation, and multiple frames of reference (Eaves, 2009, p. 213).

Such issues have led qualitative researchers gradually to abandon terms such as validity and reliability and replace them with 'trustworthiness' that was deemed more appropriate for a qualitative approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In essence, researchers advocating the change propose 'that qualitative studies should use criteria of credibility rather than truth value, transferability rather than external validity, dependability via peer

audits rather than reliability and confirmability and self-critical accounts rather than objectivity’ (Eaves, 2009, p.119).

Still, despite these attempts to develop an alternative version of validity more suitable for qualitative research, the crucial epistemological problems persist. Rooted in subjectivity and dependent on an interpretivist view, qualitative research is burdened with ‘proliferation of concepts’ of quality (Seale, 2003, p.467). Accepting and emphasizing the existence of multiple realities inevitably make the goal of arriving at a universally acceptable concept of validity difficult to achieve.

3.1.2 Arguments supportive of a mixed methods approach

3.1.2.1 Epistemological justification

Despite the important distinctions described above, an argument can be made that qualitative and quantitative approaches have more in common than is often assumed. First of all, the typical comparisons between the two approaches are no longer valid. What is usually compared to qualitative research is the traditional ‘positivist’ version of quantitative research that has been rendered obsolete by recent methodological advances. As Eaves (2009, p.122) argues, referring to the theoretical findings of Coyle and Williams (2000), quantitative research has lately become much closer to qualitative research in its objectives and goals:

‘...the epistemological basis of the quantitative approach has changed considerably over recent years making it more similar to the assumptions of a qualitative approach. Quantitative research based on a post-positivistic epistemology such as critical realism assumes that the aim of research is to study reality imperfectly and it acknowledges the role of the researcher and research process on the outcomes (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Coyle and Williams, 2000). Consequently, the perspectives of research outcomes held by post-positivism and interpretative paradigms are compatible and coherent in assuming an imperfect representation of reality rather than pursuing an absolute form of truth (Coyle and Williams, 2000; Badley, 2003).’

Indeed, even quantitative research studies which measure observable variables cannot remain totally neutral and value-free. The very presence of a researcher or having respondents confined to a research setting shatters the illusion of neutrality. A well known phenomenon of so-called ‘white coat hypertension’ illustrates this point (Ruxer et al., 2007). For a certain subset of patients, it is difficult to measure their resting blood pressure because the anxiety of having blood pressure measured increases it to above normal levels. That is why, although the researcher is objective and the measurement is quantitative in nature, total neutrality cannot be sustained (Finlay and Gough 2003). Therefore, abstaining from mixed methods research on the basis of supposedly profound differences in subjectivity and neutrality cannot be justified. Both methods bring their own sets of values or impacts, and honest researchers need to adopt a reflexive approach which reveals any values and circumstances that can influence the implementation of the study (Greenbank 2003).

Furthermore, not only is a quantitative approach getting closer to a qualitative approach in its epistemological assumptions, but each method’s traditional domain can often be better described by the other method. In fact, the whole concept of a particular kind of knowledge being better suited to qualitative or quantitative research has fallen out of fashion. Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (2003, p. 5) reiterate this point by stating that ‘there is no one to one correspondence between research paradigm and research methodology’. Greater flexibility in social research needs thus to be stressed because ‘methods which are traditionally considered quantitative can be applied in a qualitative approach and *vice versa*, depending on how the outcomes are processed and interpreted’ (Eaves, 2009, p.123).

The arguments such as those – as well as the issues of triangulation and comprehensiveness discussed later – help make the case for a mixed methods approach.

Indeed, despite admitting epistemological and ontological discrepancies between the approaches, an increasing number of researchers agree that quantitative and qualitative methods can and should be combined for the overall benefit of the research (Fielding and Fielding 1986; McCracken, 1988).

In fact, epistemological differences might enhance the data instead of undermining them. Since both methods address different levels of enquiry, their integration ‘cuts through inconclusive methodological disputes’ (Seale, 1999, p. 472) and offers the possibility of arriving at more a comprehensive understanding of the researched phenomenon (McCracken, 1988).

3.1.2.2 Comprehensiveness and complementarity

Societies are multi-faceted entities that demand a multi-faceted approach. The same principle of approaching issues by means of different methods also applies to social science research. As McCracken (1988, p.28) says, ‘in highly heterogeneous, complex societies, [mixed methods] are indispensable’. It is for this reason that the present study elected to employ a mixed methods approach as its methodological stance: adding qualitative methods of data collection as a way to enrich quantitative results can help in exploring interactions between subjective phenomena of motivation and subjective well-being with greater thoroughness (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

There are number of specific reasons that support such a methodological choice. Reality, in its complexity, defies rigid categorization, and the elusive, multi-faceted nature of human consciousness calls for a methodological approach that embraces contradictions and different ways of tapping into the human psyche. Even purists acknowledge that one method cannot describe a complex study problem in its entirety (Bryman 1984; Tashakkori

and Teddlie 1998). If that is the case, should not the demands of the research problem overrule arbitrary and theoretical ‘tidiness?’ Concern for the quality of research data, rather than a rigid methodological stance needs to determine the terms of scientific inquiry. A tool serves a purpose and not the other way around. In a sense, a sound scientific approach demands what pragmatic researchers call ‘dictatorship of the research question’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003, p. 21).

The present research study aligns itself with the philosophical perspective of pragmatism. If both quantitative and qualitative methods have their strengths and weaknesses and if thorough coping with a research problem requires putting together all the ‘strengths’ one can gather, then the complementary nature of mixed methods research seems best suited to study complex human phenomena (Bryman, 1984; Robson, 2002; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

This comprehensive approach is especially beneficial in studying abstractions or latent constructs that cannot be directly measured. This current research study deals precisely with such constructs. Both motivation and well-being defy direct observation and necessitate creation of theoretical models that define and measure these phenomena indirectly (McCracken, 1988). The very act of creation of these models strengthens the argument for opting for mixed methods research. In essence, analyzing latent constructs by quantitative means requires a prior formation of theoretical models which, at some stage of creation, were guided by subjective decisions (McCracken, 1988). Indeed, in the end, quantitative measures purport objectively to measure variables in a numerical way, but the choice of these variables reflects earlier subjective decisions. Quantitative and qualitative methods are, therefore, not so epistemologically distinct in their origin. There is subjectivity

to both, and this lack of uniform purity also allows for the mixed methods approach (Sieber 1973; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003).

Such a defense of mixed methods research often comes from researchers subscribing to so-called duality of structure (Giddens 1976). They put forward a dualistic vision of processes that take place in a society. Macro-structural or general ways of viewing a society find better explanation in quantitative research, whereas micro-structural ways that emphasize context, background and complexity are better illuminated by qualitative research (Brannan 1992, p. 16). In other words, combining the two methods bridges the gap 'between the precision of quantitative methods and the complexity-capturing ability of qualitative ones' (McCracken 1988, p.16).

In its rationale, such an approach to mixed methods research embraces rather than minimizes the different philosophical underpinnings of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The combined approach compensates for the shortcomings of each method and, as a result, a fuller picture emerges (Creswell, 2003). Divergent findings, contradictions, the lack of corroboration are no longer viewed as risks of mixed methods research but, instead, as indications of the complexity of the studied problem and indications of the need for a re-defined study design. In a sense, adding a 'messy' and often contradictory qualitative component to quantitative research is, perhaps, the best line of defense against what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls the 'craving for generality' (Wittgenstein, 2003, p. 18).

An intention to embrace and indeed search actively for contradictions also stems from the dialectic stance on societal issues (Greene and Caracelli, 1997, Robson, 2002). The proponents of this stance insist on dialectic thinking, considering divergent viewpoints and

dealing with the 'tension' caused by their juxtaposition (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p. 22). In other words, again, proponents point to the very essence of a sound mixed methods approach.

3.1.2.3 Triangulation

The concept of triangulation provides one way for analyzing the benefits of a mixed methods approach. The data emerging from one kind of study get compared with the data from the other kind of study, and such a comprehensive data analysis helps in increasing the research's overall validity (Denzin 1970; Brennan 1992; Robson, 2002).

The concept of triangulation, deriving from the idea of multiple operationism, acknowledges the complexity of human psychology and strives for mutual reinforcement of data as a way to strengthen the interpretive value of the research. Convergence and corroboration of findings from quantitative and qualitative research build a stronger case for the soundness of the researcher's conclusions or recommendations (McCracken 1988). The two methods work together, as noted above. The strength of quantitative research lies in its scope and statistical generalizability as well as in its ability to establish numerical relationships between variables. What it lacks, however, is a capacity to explore and explain its findings in greater depth. Here, the richness and interpretive power of qualitative research can provide reinforcement or challenge to the statistical analysis (McCracken 1988).

Furthermore, there is 'a real world' component to advocating triangulation within a mixed methods approach. Since qualitative methods are still met with doubts and resistance in political and decision-making circles, combining them with quantitative data might enhance the overall credibility of interpretive educational research (Creswell, 2003). The inherent

challenges of validity become better addressed, leading decision makers to assign greater importance to qualitative findings in forming educational policies.

3.1.2.4 Randomness and 'messiness' of life

Despite all those arguments in support of a mixed methods approach, the fact remains that both methods embrace somewhat different epistemological perspectives and merging these together remains controversial. In essence, are they really 'tapping the same thing even when they are examining apparently similar issues?' (Brennan 1992, p. 64). This is a valid question that certainly requires more research before it is unequivocally resolved.

If anything, however, the history of social sciences and the observation of the world around us should teach us that there is a greater danger in holding on to one theory or model of enquiry than there is in somewhat 'careless' mixing of approaches. For example, Taleb (2004) builds a strong case that the search for pure paradigms and theories has made scientists neglect the randomness and 'messiness' of life. This neglect has led them, in turn, on a path of often fruitless research. For example, none of the recent Nobel Prize winners in economics had the foresight to predict the recent financial crisis. Gary Thomas (2009, July 9) in his article in Times Higher Education argues along the same lines:

'The financial crisis and economists' failure to predict it surely should presage a renewed questioning of the shibboleths of the social science enterprise. Instead of the relentless homogenise-generalise-theorise enterprise beloved of social science, we can try giving a little more credence to analyses of the singular - to learning from what is different.'

Perhaps, as Thomas says, it is because of searching for patterns where there are no clear patterns that the social sciences still cannot answer some basic questions about human nature.

Therefore, even if the arguments against triangulation as a way to strengthen data validity have some foundation, the benefits of mixed methods research compensate for the partial incompatibility of the data collection processes. For example, even if the results from two epistemologically diverse methods cannot be directly compared, those respective results can still provide a much more comprehensive picture of the studied phenomenon than either method alone. Here, the complementary benefit of a mixed methods approach - rather than its potentially controversial confirmatory benefit - becomes a goal (Creswell, 2003).

3.1.3 Support for a qualitative component within the present research

3.1.3.1 The depth and range of the studied phenomena

In terms of SDT-related research, adding a qualitative component could result in obtaining some new and insightful data. As already explained, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and well-being are all latent or unobservable variables and can only be indirectly measured through arbitrarily created models. These models, in turn, need to be tested for their validity and cultural equivalence, which implies that they might not be totally culture-free.

Therefore, employing a mixed methods approach can illuminate with a greater nuance than numerical scales the question of how SDT's principles manifest themselves in the face of individual psychological and cultural differences. This is a much needed step. A great majority of cross-cultural studies conducted so far has relied solely on quantitative approaches to explore such issues as autonomy, intrinsic motivation, relatedness and perceived competence (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009). This is surprising given the fact that the necessity of more diversified research - and especially including qualitative data - has been acknowledged by some leading researchers in the field:

‘We need to reconsider the use of qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with individuals across time, much like the personality studies of the past. Such data will afford us views of the complexity of self-knowledge, its relationship to behaviors, and the influence of the larger socio-cultural milieu on that self-knowledge. In particular, we need to use such approaches in areas of the world that have typically been understudied, such as Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin and South America. These investigations may tell us about self and culture in ways that we cannot even dream of now, and are sure to give us more clues about the complexity of the self in ways that cannot be captured through questionnaire studies of well-examined populations’ (Matsumoto, 1999, p. 304).

Matsumoto’s call has not been sufficiently answered, however. The continuing lack of qualitative research goes against the very principles on which Self-determination theory stands. As Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p.264) explain, SDT ‘opposes reductionism and instead focuses on the internal frame of reference of participants in understanding and predicting what energizes, directs, and sustains behavior’. By definition, Self-determination theory is therefore open to comprehensive approaches aimed at validating the subjective perspective of research participants. As such, it seems well-suited to qualitative research. The proponents of SDT also agree on this point. Although defending the use of quantitative methods, Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p. 268) acknowledge that Self-determination theory is also ‘allied with qualitative and critical theories in understanding the situational nature of learning and growth, and the importance of the individual’s frame of reference in shaping meanings and the behaviours that follow from them.’ Furthermore, ‘in the SDT view it is the individual meaning or experience that has functional significance in behavioural events (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and it focuses us on the embedded meanings and perceptions of individuals as the determinants of behavior’ (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009, p.267).

3.1.3.2 Specific benefits of using focus groups as a qualitative data collection method

The cultural features of Ecuador

Focus group interviewing - the qualitative approach chosen in the study - fits well with South American culture: a cultural environment that thrives on personal contact and spontaneous exchange of information. Latin culture is full of gestures and facial expressions that add another level to the understanding of respondents' perspectives (Sabogal et al., 1987). Furthermore, focus groups offer the safety of companionship and, in some sense, constitute a very close approximation of the way discussions are carried out in large Ecuadorian families (Sabogal et al., 1987).

The cultural background of the researcher

I come from a different cultural background from the participants and might therefore misinterpret some of statements made during qualitative data collection (Lazear *et al.*, 2008). However, in a focus group setting, contrary to individual interviews, those statements are additionally fleshed out and elaborated upon by other participants (Kreuger, 1994; van de Vijver and Leung, 1997; Halcomb et al., 2007; Eaves, 2009). As Eaves (2009, p.131) writes, focus groups can 'improve the communication process and the quality of data generated by it through reducing the potential for intercultural miscommunication and misunderstanding'.

Furthermore, the shared linguistic and cultural background of the participants might generate spontaneous exchanges. Those exchanges depend on the shared knowledge and cultural codes, and are helpful in arriving at better understanding of the studied phenomena. These cultural codes might, however, be consciously avoided by participants in one-on-one

setting out of fear of not being understood by the interviewer who comes from a different culture.

Finally, being alone with an interviewer foreign to the world of the students could inhibit some of them from the in-depth elaboration of relevant issues. As theories of cultural identity point out, people tend to function differently in in-group versus out-group settings (Berry, 2003). An in-group setting, with its cultural familiarity, puts a person at ease and facilitates communication, which leads to obtaining more insightful and in-depth information (Tajfel, 1978; 1981; Eaves, 2009).

This section of the thesis provides, of course, a very general rationale for the chosen qualitative approach. A more thorough and detailed description of focus group interviewing and its application in the present research is offered in Section 5.2.2.3 and Section 6.2.2.

Enhancing cross-cultural equivalence of the collected data

Employing focus group interviewing in the study provides an opportunity, especially for Ecuadorian students, to approach the concepts of autonomy, motivation, and subjective well-being on their own terms. Instead of being forced to express their views by means of predetermined scale items developed in the West, these students can relate the studied phenomena to their own cultural experiences. In this way, the qualitative research study can mitigate some bias or a potential lack of cross-cultural equivalence that arise from applying quantitative scales that were developed and mostly tested in Western countries in collectivist societies (Embretson, S.E. (1983; Hui and Triandis, 1989; Creswell, 2003; van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004; Fairchild et al., 2005; Nunez, et al., 2005; Gouveia et al., 2008).

In specific terms, focus groups can partially counterbalance construct bias that might have occurred in the process of developing the quantitative scales used in the present study.

Both versions of the AMS (Academic Motivation Scale) as well as the SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) were designed and used in cross-cultural research studies under the assumption that ‘universal (i.e., culture-independent) validity of the underlying psychological construct’ can be taken for granted (Triandis and Martin, 1983; Vallerand, et al., 1992; van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004, p. 121; Rudy et al., 2007; Gouveia et al., 2008). However, as van de Vijver and Tanzer (2004, p. 131) argue, ‘it cannot be taken for granted that scores obtained in one culture can be compared across cultural groups. Score differences observed in cross-cultural comparisons may have a partly or entirely different meaning than those in intracultural comparisons.’ Of course, focus groups cannot eliminate this problem entirely. Still through the process of triangulation of data, they enhance the study’s trustworthiness and its cross-cultural equivalence (McCracken, 1988; Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

3.1.4 Arguments supporting use of a quantitative approach in the present research

3.1.4.1 Making generalizations

While qualitative techniques can address the depth and range of psychological underpinnings of SDT and better flesh out the individual perspectives this theory focuses on, quantitative methods can provide a basis for forming generalizations. This is an important issue because SDT is an organismic theory and, thus, proposes that its principles are universally shared. As Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p.267-268) state:

‘...we see a basis for generalizations precisely because, whatever our cultural differences, *we have a common nature*. Specifically, we all have deeply and developmentally persistent needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness...We can ally with quantitative researchers in the belief that there are some general truths or principles about human nature that can be demonstrated and reliably observed.’

Since the theory asserts that its findings are universal and can be generalized, quantitative cross-cultural research has become the predominant approach to test SDT (Chirkov et al., 2003; Rudy et al., 2007).

A quantitative component needs therefore to remain an essential part of SDT-related research. Although I see the relative lack of qualitative approaches in studying SDT as an omission that needs to be remedied, I do not give the qualitative methodology preference. The use of quantitative approaches and seeking generalizations are crucial because 'SDT is opposed to *cultural relativism* – the belief that one cannot impose meanings on culture or contexts, as each situation must be understood from the inside' (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009, p.267).

In essence, although qualitative methods can broaden our understanding of how SDT principles manifest themselves in different cultures, the theory also argues that there exist objective and universal truths which quantitative methods can substantiate and generalize.

'SDT holds that people have a set of basic psychological needs that must be satisfied for them to remain active and for optimal development to occur...Like physical needs are argued to be objective rather than merely subjective phenomena. They are objective in the sense that deprivation of any of them leads to readily observable decrements in growth, integrity, and wellness, at all points in development and across all settings and cultures...This is analogous to the idea that, regardless of whether or not one subjectively values nutrition, deprivation of it will lead to ill health. Similarly, regardless of whether or not one values autonomy, competence, or relatedness, deprivation of any of these needs has demonstrable impact on growth and wellness' Ryan and Niemiec, 2009, p.268).

By its own admission, the theory has to defend itself in all cultures and societies, regardless of each individual's idiosyncrasies or personal beliefs. That is why I elected to use quantitative methods to test the psychological benefits of autonomy – one of SDT's main and most controversial principles - in Ecuadorian and British cultural contexts.

3.1.4.2 Comparison with previous research

The use of quantitative methods is also warranted by the desire to compare the findings derived from this study with previous research. Whether or not one is epistemologically opposed to quantitative research, the fact remains that it has been the preferred approach to inquiry as far as SDT is concerned (Levesque et al., 2004; Rudy et al., 2007). Therefore, it is my intention to compare my findings with those of previous investigators to be able to shed new light on and to participate in the debate about cross-cultural relevance of Self-determination theory.

These considerations informed the decision to use well-established and cross-culturally validated scales as measurement instruments for the study. The specific, independent benefits of these scales are discussed later in Section 4.1.2. It is important, however, at this juncture, to state that the scales' popularity and thus the potential to enable the collected data to be compared with the previous studies have contributed to the inclusion of the quantitative component in the present research.

3.1.5 Summary: the benefits of the mixed methods approach

Overall, consideration of the complementary methodological benefits of quantitative and qualitative methods and the inherent complexity of the studied latent phenomena encouraged me to employ a mixed methods approach. As discussed above, the inevitable shortcomings and limitations of each of these methodologies individually can be significantly mitigated and compensated for by employing a more comprehensive approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

I also anticipated that synergy would take place (Creswell, 2003). Each method has a potential to provide new insights on its own as well as to illuminate and enrich the findings

of the other method (McCracken, 1988). Comprehensiveness, depth, triangulation of data, and precision in addressing the researched phenomena are the goals of this investigation. That is why, by embracing a mixed methods approach, I elected to privilege the ‘dictatorship of the research question’.

3.2 Study Plan

3.2.1 Ethical considerations for both quantitative and qualitative components

As a first step, prior to collecting any data, I obtained approval for conducting the study from the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee (Ethical Review ERN_09-977).

The present study complied with the ethical guidelines and requirements specified by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009). Following the BERA and BPS guidelines, I gained institutional consent for the study prior to initiating the process of data collection. In accordance with the BPS guidelines (BPS, 2009, p. 12), I obtained ‘the informed consent’ of participants and ensured that they had adequately understood the nature of the study and its anticipated consequences. Throughout this process, there was no ‘deception or subterfuge’ on my part (BERA, 2011, p. 6). Participants were informed how the research data would be used, and how it would be reported (BERA, 2011, p. 5). They were always ‘treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity’ and they were informed about the ‘confidential and anonymous’ nature of their participation (BERA, 2011, pp. 5-7). In line with BPS (2009, p. 19) guidelines, their participation in the study was secured without ‘using financial compensation or other inducements.’

The research conducted in Ecuador adhered ‘to the same ethical standards as [the] research in the UK’ (BERA, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, I explained to all the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason (BERA, 2011, p. 6).

3.2.2 An overview of data collection procedures and analysis

The topic of the thesis, its comparative nature, and a decision to employ a mixed methods approach determined the design of the research and its techniques of data collection. Both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained first in Ecuador and then in the UK. A strict adherence to ethical considerations guided the sampling procedures as well as the process of data collection and analysis.

Because of their appropriateness to the topic of this study, I used the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, 1992), Inclusive Motivation Scale (Rudy et al., 2007) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) to collect quantitative data from Ecuadorian and British participants.

In terms of the qualitative component, four focus groups were conducted in Ecuador, two in each university, and two focus groups were conducted in the UK. I used a focus group guide developed on the basis of a pilot study and previous research to guide me throughout the interviewing process.

In the next step, the collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately in the context of the research questions and objectives. Statistical tests related to the relationships between the studied phenomena, such as means and correlation analysis, were used in the quantitative component, while McCracken’s (1988) five stage process was used to analyze qualitative data. Finally, all the collected findings were compared, analyzed,

and discussed in order to provide a comprehensive and multi-faceted contribution to the research topic.

A detailed description of all the steps of the study and the rationale behind them is presented in the following Sections of the thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

In this section, arguments for using the specific data collection instruments are presented. First, research data related to Academic Motivation Scales and Satisfaction with Life Scale are analyzed. Second, the applicability of a focus group approach is discussed by comparing it to other methods of collecting qualitative data.

4.1 Quantitative methods of data collection

4.1.1 General rationale for using the selected scales in the research

In general terms, the decision to use the selected measurement instruments was made because of the following:

1. These scales had been used in a large number of the previous cross-cultural studies and in SDT-related research in particular (Diener, et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993; Vallerand, 1993; Fairchild et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 2005). Therefore, employing them in the different cultural contexts, in which the current study was situated, allowed for a more direct comparison with previously collected data.
2. A large body of relevant literature supports the appropriateness of these scales for cross-cultural research in terms of their validity, temporal reliability, factor structure, and measurement equivalence (Diener, et al., 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993; Vallerand, 1993; Cokley, 2000; 2001; Fairchild et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 2005; Gouveia et al., 2008).
3. A pilot study conducted in Ecuador confirmed that these scales were applicable to the South American contexts in terms of content, cultural appropriateness, and linguistic clarity. These were important consideration, since a large majority of the research with the scales

had been conducted in Western countries (Nunez et al., 2005). A description of the pilot study is included in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 The scales

4.1.2.1 Individual Academic Motivation Scale

Description of the scale

The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS; Vallerand et al., 1992) (Appendix 2) was used to determine the participants' *individual* motivational orientation. This scale was built on Self-determination theory's principle that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be divided into sub-categories, depending on the level of autonomy or self-determination that they represent (Vallerand et al., 1992). Those sub-categories include external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation. All of those sub-categories were more thoroughly described in Section 2.3.1. The Academic Motivation Scale does not include, however, integrated regulation - the most internalized form of extrinsic motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000). The decision not to include intergrated regulation in the scale was motivated by the fact that 'factor analyses on experimental forms of [AMS] revealed that integrated regulation did not distinguish itself from identified regulation' (Vallerand et al., 1992, p. 1006).

Furthermore, in the present research study, an abridged version of the AMS was used, with three questions for each subcategory of motivation (Appendix 2). This abridged version of the AMS was employed and validated in a number of studies (Ratelle et al., 2005; Boiche and Sarrazin, 2007; Julien et al., 2009). I decided to use this version of the AMS because, in this study, students needed to fill out two other scales additionally, and I did not

want them to experience ‘a test fatigue’ or rush through questions (Botman and Thornberry, 1992; de Heer and Israels (1992).

Validation of the scale and rationale for its use

An early attempt to validate the AMS was undertaken by Cokley (2000) who studied a sample of 263 English-speaking undergraduate students. The research aimed to analyze the proposed simplex pattern of the AMS: with adjacent subscales on the horizontal axis having higher positive correlations than the subscales of the opposite sides of the continuum (Deci and Ryan, 1991). For instance, since adjacent types of motivation - *introjected* and *identified regulation*, for example - differ only slightly in the level of motivational internalization, the positive relationship between them should be greater than the relationship between *identified regulation* and *external regulation*: scales which are far removed from each other on the linear scale. Therefore, in accordance with SDT, *amotivation* should display a stronger negative relationship with the subscales at the opposite end of the continuum than with the subscales closer to it (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Contrary to these expectations, however, *amotivation* ‘had a stronger negative relationship with *identified regulation* (-.31), followed by *to know* (-.27), *to accomplish* (-.19), *introjected regulation* (-.12), *to experience stimulation* (-.11) and *extrinsic regulation* (-.02)’ (Cokley, 2000, p.503). Furthermore, while the intrinsic motivation subscales should have a stronger positive correlation with *identified regulation* than with *introjected regulation*, in the study, the converse was true.

Finally, *to accomplish* subscale had a stronger positive correlation with *identified regulation* and *introjected regulation* than these individual extrinsic motivation subscales had with each other. These findings contradict SDT’s view on the nature of qualitative differences among the subtypes of human motivation. Perhaps, as the author suggests, ‘the

differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as measured by the Academic Motivation Scale are not as distinct and well-defined as theory suggests' (Cokley, 2000, p. 247).

An attempt to provide more comprehensive analysis of the AMS came from the study by Fairchild et al., (2005). They analyzed a seven-factor model of academic motivation, estimated the internal consistency of the scores for each subscale, studied the scale's simplex pattern, and evaluated correlations with other motivational constructs in order to collect both convergent and discriminant validity evidence.

Significant data emerged. First of all, the researchers found substantial support for the seven-factor structure: it represented the correlations among the items better than a five- or three-factor model. Internal consistency of the scale was confirmed for each of the AMS subscales, although, again, *identified regulation* remained the least reliable of all the subscales. Finally, the study dealt with the issue of the proposed simplex pattern. Here the data are less straightforward. The obtained correlations among the adjacent subscales did not fully support the hypothesized motivational continuum. The researchers did not find linear and ordered magnitudes of correlations that would substantiate Ryan and Deci's (2000) theoretical assumptions about the SDT framework.

The study also tested the distinctiveness of the intrinsic motivation subscales and found problems with IMTA (Intrinsic Motivation to Accomplish Things) and IMTK (Intrinsic Motivation to Know). The data analysis revealed that these subscales correlated strongly (.87). Such a high correlation might indicate that these two subscales do not represent distinctive measurement units but that they evaluate, instead, the same or indistinctively similar motivational aspects. On the other hand, further analyses revealed

differential relationships of the individual intrinsic subscales with other criteria, pointing thus to a possible validity and usefulness for such a subdivision of intrinsic motivation. This position was additionally supported by confirmatory factor analysis which found a stronger statistical basis for the seven-factor model than for a model with intrinsic motivation left undifferentiated.

Overall, the study provided some additional confirmatory evidence as to the AMS's usefulness and the soundness of its theoretical base, while at the same time, reinforcing persisting problems with the scale. On the positive side, the study supported the seven-factor structure of the scale. It also demonstrated internal consistency estimates of the scores for each of the subscales. Again, however, the analyzed data did not provide sufficient support for the theorized simplex pattern. The lack of persuasive argument in this respect is especially troubling because it falls in line with the findings of previous research (Vallerand, 1993; Cokley, 2000; Cockley et al., 2001). This might reveal not only methodological limitations of the AMS but also some problems with the theoretical foundations underlying the scale's construction. The lack of definite support for the simplex pattern of the AMS can indicate that Self-determination theory's differentiation of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is neither as definite nor as clear-cut as the theory assumes (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

In terms of the South American cultural context, a research study to validate the AMS was conducted with Nunez et al. (2006) with Paraguayan university students. The study supported, in general terms, the continuum structure of the scale, with adjacent subscales having stronger positive correlations than those further away. Still, however, some inconsistency emerged. The research demonstrated strong positive correlations between *introjected regulation* and *intrinsic regulation to accomplish*, despite the scales being far

removed from each on the on the horizontal continuum. This finding is, again, in line with some previous research (Fairchild et al., 2005) but is in opposition to Self-determination theory as it undermines the simplex pattern of the AMS. Furthermore, *identified regulation* had a stronger positive correlation with *external regulation* than with the adjacent *introjected regulation*. Again, according to SDT's concept of the motivational continuum, the converse should hold true.

All of those problems leave an unresolved set of questions. Especially, the issue of the simplex pattern requires further research. A persistent failure to confirm its existence points to two possibilities:

- the faulty structure of the AMS prevents the simplex pattern from being revealed (Fairchild et al., 2005); or
- contrary to SDT's philosophical assumptions, the simplex pattern of human motivation does not exist and thus it cannot be demonstrated by any reliable scale (Cokley, 2000). Perhaps, indeed, particular aspects of extrinsic and intrinsic subtypes of motivation are not as categorically distinct as the theory proposes.

Again, only more research data can provide clarification. Still, however, despite all this unresolved conflict, the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) has emerged as the most tested and applied instrument to measure academic motivation (Fairchild et al., 2005). As Hegarty (2010, p. 49) writes, 'other measuring instruments have been developed to measure internal motivation but have failed to gain the traction of the AMS.'

Nunez et al. (2006, p. 397) also support the validity of the scale to study the South American population. In conclusion to their research, they write the following:

'Los resultados de la presente investigación aportan evidencias que apoyan la validez de constructo y la consistencia interna de la EME aunque con ciertas limitaciones, lo

que permite la utilización del instrumento en el contexto educativo paraguayo para evaluar diferentes tipos de motivación/ The results of the present study provide evidence that supports the validity and internal consistency of the AMS, though with certain limitations. The scale could be used in the Paraguayan context to evaluate different types of motivation. (trans. B.B).

4.1.2.2 Inclusive Motivation Scale

Description of the scale

This scale was used to measure the participants' *inclusive* academic motivation (Appendix 3). The original AMS was modified following the principles suggested in previous research (Rudy et al., 2007). In the questionnaire all the items were worded in a consistently inclusive way: instead of the self being the subject, the family and the self were the subject. In other words, 'I' was changed to 'my family and I' or 'we', and 'me' was changed to 'my family and me' or 'us'. For example, Item 3 on the original AMS says: 'Because I think that a college education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen'. In the inclusive Academic Motivation Scale, the same item is changed into: 'Because in my family, we think that a college education will help us better prepare for the career we have chosen'.

The scale follows the concept of distinguishing between *the reasons for behaviour* and *who is behaving* (Rudy et al., 2007) that was addressed in Section 2.3.6.5. Contrary to the standard AMS which measures individual autonomy, the inclusive scale explicitly includes others into the subject's sense of self. It deals with the issue that goes back to Iyengar and Lepper's (1999) study that showed that Asian American children were more motivated to pursue activities chosen by their mother, an apparent contradiction of the SDT position. However, as Rudy et al. (2007, p.989) say, instead of 'implying that these children

do not value personal choice...these results might imply that these children include their mothers to a greater extent within their sense of self’.

Making a choice to follow others tells little about autonomy, especially once the boundary between self and important others overlaps. What matters - in terms of well-being – is whether this choice makes one feel controlled or autonomous. Rudy et al. (2007, p.989) write the following:

‘...pursuing the behaviour for identified reasons as an individualized self, or pursuing it for identified reasons as an inclusive self. Still, even in the inclusive case, the type of motivation should remain important, according to SDT: behaving with a feeling of being more controlled than autonomous should be problematic in any culture, even if it is an interdependent self that has this feeling.’

The inclusive AMS scale used in the present thesis attempts to address all these issues. It combines concepts from the self literature (e.g., interdependent versus independent self-construal) and motivational research (autonomous versus controlled motivation) and thus has a potential to shed new light on some unresolved issues. In essence, the inclusive AMS scale corresponds in measurement terms to the dispute between SDT proponents and cross-cultural researchers. Indeed, some research indicates that when the subject of motivation is defined as ‘I’, autonomy is less relevant to well-being in collectivist cultures (Oishi and Diener, 2001). On the other hand, however, SDT research has demonstrated that higher levels of intrinsic and identified motivation – again, measured with ‘I’ as the subject of motivation – positively predicted well-being in both individualist and collectivist cultures (Sheldon et al., 2004). That is why the uncertainty about which of the following two statements is true has emerged: ‘autonomy is less important in collectivist cultures’ versus ‘autonomy is more readily internalized in collectivist cultures’.

Therefore, unless research studies specifically measure internalized (inclusive) motivation by using subjects such as ‘we’ or ‘my family and I’, resolving the uncertainty will be difficult to achieve. Still, paradoxically, although the proponents of SDT have always claimed that autonomy or intrinsic motivation can co-exist with the influences of others – especially in collectivist cultures – the majority of empirical studies have used ‘I’ and not ‘we’ or ‘my family and I’ as the subject of motivation (Rudy et al., 2007). In other words, ‘I’ has been contrasted with ‘others’, even though the whole concept of internalization as defined by SDT argues that the self can include others to form a more inclusive ‘I’ or self (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

However, if ‘I’ can mean different things to different individuals – especially in the context of individualism versus collectivism – then measurement instruments need to move beyond using solely this generic ‘I’ in cross-cultural studies on the importance of autonomy. Comparing individualists and collectivists and using only ‘I’ as a subject of the motivation is bound to create inconsistencies (Rudy et al., 2007).

The lack of a sensitive enough measurement instrument to address different versions of autonomy has contributed to the conflict between cross-cultural researchers and the proponents of SDT. Rudy et al. (2007, p.989) point to this in the explanation of their methodological approach:

‘In sum, other recent approaches to inclusive motivation have not made distinctions among various reasons for acting specified by SDT, and/or have not made distinctions between reasons for action and the subject of motivation. Also, past SDT research has not focused upon variations in the subject of the motivation, as have some of the recent cross-cultural approaches within the self literature. In current research we developed a measurement approach to accomplish both of these purposes simultaneously, hoping to show that both the SDT and the cross-cultural positions have merit.’

Rationale for using the scale

The current study sought to reconcile contrasting views by using a similar inclusive autonomy scale with different populations. As with Rudy et al.'s (2007) research, it was anticipated that employing the inclusive autonomy scale might help explain how a person could be both a part of a collective and an autonomous individual at the same time. Furthermore, contrasting individual autonomy as measured by the original AMS with inclusive autonomy as measured by the inclusive AMS affords an opportunity to determine if, indeed, autonomy is differently defined and manifest in collectivist cultural contexts. For instance, if the internalization of the influences of important others is more easily achieved in collectivist contexts, then there should be a greater overlap between the original AMS and the inclusive AMS in an Ecuadorian sample. In other words, the number of individuals endorsing both the item, 'I work hard at my course work because I think it's important to understand the subject' and the item, 'I work hard at my course work because my family thinks it's important to understand the subject'" should be greater in the case of Ecuadorian participants than in the case of British participants.

Furthermore, the use of the inclusive AMS allows for comparison of the present study with previous cross-cultural research on autonomy and well-being. It was expected, for example, that high scores for inclusive autonomy would show stronger positive correlations with well-being for Ecuadorian participants than for British participants. Individualist versus collectivist self-construal might play a role in establishing those correlations. In Rudy et al.'s (2007) study, the correlation between inclusive autonomy and well-being was non-significant for European Canadians (individualist self-construal) but not for Chinese Canadians (collectivist self-construal). The researchers argued this difference

might have been caused by the fact that ‘inclusive’ European Canadian participants placed themselves outside of the cultural mainstream. As they write (2007, p.1006), ‘...in cultures where individualism is normative, inclusive autonomy may actually be problematic once individual autonomy is taken into account; such family-centrism may place the individual outside of the cultural mainstream.’

Since the UK scores even higher on *the Individualist* dimension than Canada (Hofstede, 1980), it is important to see if British students displaying high levels of inclusive motivation would also fare worse in terms of subjective well-being than ‘inclusive’ Ecuadorian students. Obtaining such results would strengthen the case that the relationship between academic motivation and subjective well-being is, indeed, partially mediated by cultural self-construal.

4.1.2.3 Satisfaction with Life Scale

Description of the scale

The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) (Appendix 4) was used to determine participants’ subjective well-being. This frequently employed scale contains five questions, each answered on a scale from 1 to 7. It takes about five minutes to complete and, after scoring gives a narrow range that represents the level of subjective well-being. A total result can range from 5 (extremely unsatisfied) to 35 (extremely satisfied).

Rationale for the scale

The SWLS attempts to evaluate overall life satisfaction by eliciting personal judgments from people and to determine the quality of their lives by using their own sets of criteria (Shin and Johnson, 1978). This subjectivity as well as leaving the responsibility for a

score in the hands of each respondent is the hallmark of the SWLS. Pavot and Diener (1993, p.164) write the following:

‘A comparison of one’s perceived life circumstances with a self-imposed standard or set of standards is presumably made, and to the degree that conditions match these standards, the person reports high life satisfaction. Therefore, life satisfaction is a conscious cognitive judgment of one’s life in which criteria for judgment are up to the person...The SWLS items are global rather than specific in nature, allowing respondents to weight domains of their lives in terms of their values, in arriving at a global judgment of life satisfaction.’

This holistic and subjective nature of the SWLS is especially useful in cross-cultural research. For example, specific elements such as money, material goods, and even health might have culture-specific importance (Feldman, 2008). Therefore, judging well-being across cultures according to uniform benchmarks that purport to measure the level of fulfillment of particular needs can present a false picture of the individual’s well-being. For this reason, evaluating whole life satisfaction has become the most popular way to assess well-being (Oishi et al., 1999).

Furthermore, the SWLS offers logistical benefits. It taps a single factor, can be administered for different age groups, and has a short format (Pavot et al., 1991; Pavot and Diener, 1993; Gouveia et al., 2008). All those reasons have contributed to making the SWLS the most widely used instrument in research to measure well-being (Pavot and Diener, 1993). It has been translated into a number of languages, and a search of the Social Science Citation Index reveals that the scale has been used in more than 4,000 studies (Gouveia et al., 2008).

Validation of the scale

Pavot and Diener (1993) list studies which have employed the SWLS with corresponding normative data. Diener et al. (1985) found a 2-month test-retest correlation coefficient of .82

and an alpha coefficient of .87 for a sample of 176 undergraduates, whereas Pavot et al. (1991) obtained an alpha coefficient of .83 in their study of elderly individuals.

A number of studies have also analyzed the methodological appropriateness of the SWLS. In terms of factor structure, most studies that have been conducted so far have indicated that the SWLS measures a single dimension. For instance, Diener et al. (1985) conducted a principal-axis factor analysis of the SWLS that identified a single factor accounting for 66 percent of the variance of the scale. The single-factor solution was also found in studies using the translated versions of the SWLS (Arrindell et al., 1991; Blais et al., 1989).

Finally, the SWLS has been proven to be strongly positively correlated with other measures of well-being and negatively associated with measures of psychopathology (Diener et al., 1985). The SWLS has correlated negatively with clinical measures of distress (Blais et al., 1989). It also had a strong negative correlation ($r = -.72$, $p = .001$) with the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1961). Employing a Dutch version of the scale, Arrindell et al. (1991) showed the SWLS to be negatively associated with all eight psychiatric symptom dimensions, among them depression ($r = -.55$), anxiety ($r = -.54$) and general psychological distress ($r = -.55$) (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Furthermore, Smead (1991) compared the SWLS with the PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Scale) (Watson et al., 1988), another popular instrument to assess well-being. The SWLS had correlations of .44 with positive affect and correlations of -.48 with negative affect, as measured by the PANAS. Finally, the scale has been found to correlate negatively with neuroticism (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot and Diener, 1993).

Although all these studies provide support for using the SWLS to measure subjective well-being, they were conducted in Western countries and do not address the issue of cross-cultural applicability. It is important, therefore, to discuss research studies which specifically sought to test the properties of the scale in the Latin America's cultural context.

One such study was conducted with Brazilian students by Gouveia et al. (2008) and had two principal goals. Firstly, it intended to measure the construct validity of the SWLS across five Brazilian samples (i.e. undergraduate and high school students, elementary school teachers, physicians, and the general population). Secondly, the researchers wanted to evaluate the criterion-related validity of the SWLS by looking at the associations between the scale and both affect components of well-being and psychological distress measurements.

A total of 2,180 participants enrolled in the study. Apart from the SWLS, they completed the 10-item Brazilian-Portuguese scale of affect based on Reis et al.'s (2000) measure. This scale includes five positive affects (enjoyment, joyful, happy, optimistic, and satisfied) and five negative affects (angry/hostile, depressed, frustrated, unhappy, and worried/anxious). Each affect is rated using 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Participants also filled out the 12-item Brazilian-Portuguese version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Gouveia et al., 2003). Using a 4-point scale, they were asked to rate their self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and cognitive processing.

The results of the study confirmed most of the previous assumptions about the SWLS. A single factor accounted for 57 percent of the variance, and acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found for each sample, ranging from 0.77 (high school students and general population) to 0.88 (physicians). Furthermore, in order further to confirm the factor

structure of the SWLS, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed to evaluate the fit indices of the one-dimensional model for each sample as well as for the overall sample. The results upheld ‘the assumption of configural invariance, indicating that the unidimensional factor structure of the SWLS was supported across all five Brazilian samples’ (p. 272).

The findings related to the second goal of the study also followed expectations. The SWLS correlated positively with positive affect ($r = 0.62$; ranging from 0.49 for elementary school teachers to 0.67 for undergraduate students). It also demonstrated negative association with both negative affect ($r = -0.21$; ranging from -0.19 for undergraduate students to -0.50 for high school students) and psychological distress ($r = -0.51$, ranging from -0.40 for elementary teachers to -0.55 for undergraduate students).

This large scale Brazilian study and the previously reviewed research confirm the usefulness and the validity of the SWLS as a measurement instrument. Indeed, as Gouveia et al. (2008, p.274) conclude in discussion of their study, the findings reported so far ‘support the SWLS as a valid and reliable measure of the cognitive-judgmental component of subjective well-being.’

Still, however, the scale has some limitations. Firstly, it relies on self-reporting and thus can be affected by number of factors such as mood, physiological state, social desirability effects, physical surroundings or even weather (Schwarz and Clore, 1983; Schwarz et al., 1991). In addition, all of the items on the SWLS are keyed in a positive direction, which can cause the problem of inflated response or so-called response acquiescence (Pavot and Diener, 1993). Those issues, although deserving research attention,

do not invalidate the SWLS as a method to assess well-being (Gouveia et al., 2008). Overall, the benefits of the SWLS are manifold.

The scale's holistic structure, its internal frame of reference, as well as its brief nature, cross-cultural popularity, and thorough validation influenced the decision to employ it in the present research study.

4.2 Method used to collect qualitative data

4.2.1 The rationale for using focus groups in the research study

This research study used focus groups to collect qualitative data. In my choice of the research method, I followed Krueger and Casey (2000, p. 24) who argued that the researcher should be 'looking for the range of ideas or feelings that people have about something'. One of the purposes of the study was to discover factors that impact on opinions, behaviour, and motivation. Furthermore, the study intended to gather information to 'help shed light on quantitative data already collected' (Krueger and Casey, 2000, p. 24).

Still, better to justify methodological decisions relevant to this thesis, it is important to present the strengths and weaknesses of focus group research in greater depth and to contrast this method of data collection with other methods that might have been used to elicit and elaborate on participants' subjective perspective.

4.2.2 Focus groups compared to participant observation

Compared to participant observation, for example, focus groups offer an opportunity to obtain a greater amount of relevant information in shorter period of time (Morgan, 1988). Furthermore, because of moderator relative control over the questioning process, participants tend to talk mostly about issues related to the studied area.

On the other hand, however, the presence and inherent influence of the moderator also demonstrates a weakness of focus group interviewing. In the focus group setting where the moderator tends to control discussions, his or her effect on data collection is greater than in the case of participant observation. In such a setting, 'we can never be sure how natural the interactions are' (Morgan, 1988, p.16). Despite the moderator's best efforts, there always remains some residual doubt as to the reliability and impartiality of gathered data.

It might be necessary to compromise, however. In the case of this study, for example, it would be very difficult to have had access to a natural setting where participants would talk spontaneously about issues related to motivation and subjective well-being. Therefore, forgoing a natural setting for the purpose of this research might mean forgoing something that would be very hard to obtain in the first place anyway (Morgan, 1988).

4.2.3 Focus groups compared to individual interviews

Choosing focus group over individual interviewing also necessitates justification. As Morgan (1988) points out, focus groups might provide greater stimulation (Goldman 1962), synergy (Hess 1968), spontaneity and candour (Hess 1968), and feelings of security (Hess 1968). There are, however, some tangible benefits of individual interviews that even the best designed focus group cannot replicate. Some authors argue that individual interviews will elicit more open and thorough descriptions of personal experiences and attitudes (Merton et al., 1956). The psychological phenomenon of 'group think' might also prompt some focus group participants to follow what they consider to be a dominant tendency in the focus group. Deeply held beliefs and attitudes may become inhibited and this conformity in behaviour can undermine the validity of findings (Janis, 1982). On the other hand, however, this very feature of focus group can also be seen as a potential advantage. Human beings

function in social environments which they influence or are influenced by, and thus focus groups can provide a greater approximation to natural, everyday settings (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

The focus group interview might also be more revelatory in terms of collected data. As life experiences indicate, individuals are often more willing to share their views and values with strangers: people they have not seen before and are not likely to see again (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Focus group experience resembles, at some level, those accidental meetings. A one-on-one meeting with the interviewer creates, on the other hand, a greater sense of relationship, which might, paradoxically, thwart rather than enhance the level of communication (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

Moreover, specifically for this study, the issue of status and age also supports using focus group interviewing as a qualitative method of choice. As Krueger and Casey (2000, p.9) write: ‘...subjects [tend] to disclose more about themselves to people who [resemble] them in various ways than to people who differ from them.’ Since this research project has university students as participants, a focus group setting with peers talking to one another can lead to more revelatory data than individual interviews with the moderator/researcher. This issue might be especially important in the Ecuadorian context. In this case, the moderator is not only of different age than respondents, but he also comes from a very different cultural context.

An important argument for using focus groups stems also from their ability to generate unexpected insights. In a group setting, Morgan (1988, p.18) says: ‘...participants’ discussions among themselves replace their individual interaction with the moderator, leading to a greater emphasis on participants’ point of view.’ This change in emphasis

creates a greater opportunity for generating some unexpected, yet potentially important findings. Feeding off one another, participants might verbalize opinions and sentiments that would not have emerged by means of more structured questioning (Morgan, 1988).

4.2.4 Considerations in applying focus group interviewing in the present study

All the potential benefits of focus group interviewing led me to employ it in the present study. On the other hand, the awareness of the approach's limitations helped in trying to minimize these when talking with students in both Ecuador and the UK. A detailed description of this process is described in Appendix 5.

Furthermore, prior to the research, I had conducted a qualitative pilot study in Ecuador that allowed me to have some practical experience with the benefits and limitation of focus groups and thus helped in better preparation for conducting them. The findings of this pilot study are presented and discussed in Appendix 1.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

In this section, all the issues related to selecting participants for the research and collecting data from them are discussed. Furthermore, a further elaboration of the focus approach undertaken to collect qualitative data is presented.

5.1 Selection of the participants

5.1.1 Quantitative component

5.1.1.1 Contacting gatekeepers and potential participants

Ecuador

There was a certain element of convenience in the choice of the participating institutions, which, it is recognized, limits the generalizability of the study and the scope of its conclusions (Robson, 2002). I resided in the city where Universidad Catolica and Universidad Central are located, and studied for my PhD at the University of Birmingham.

In order to include in the analysis the potentially mediating factor of financial status on well-being in less affluent nations, I chose two Ecuadorian universities to participate in the study. The decision to include in the research two universities from Ecuador and only one from the UK was motivated by findings from previous research on well-being. These findings demonstrated that disparities in an economic status affected well-being to a significantly greater degree in poorer than in richer countries (Maslow, 1943; Diener et al., 1995; Oishi et al., 1999). In other words, previous research studies appear to indicate that correlations between autonomy and well-being might differ to a greater degree between more affluent and less affluent university students in Ecuador than in the UK.

Such a structure of the present research study is, however, also one of its limitations. Although differences in economic status might, indeed, be more salient to well-being in the Ecuadorian context than in the UK context, even in the latter, they can affect the correlation between autonomy and well-being (Diener et al., 1995).

The universities chosen for the Ecuadorian component of the study differed significantly from each other. Universidad Catolica is a private university that attracts a more affluent section of the population, whereas Universidad Central de Ecuador is a public university, where students' tuition fees are entirely subsidized by the government. It could be argued therefore that comparing them might, indeed, demonstrate the relative importance of the mediating factor of economic status on the relationship between autonomy and well-being in poorer nations.

Since this study is comparative in nature, I intended to collect data from students who studied at similar departments in both countries. In Ecuador, I was given permission to talk to the Deans of the Department of Psychology, Law, and Business at Universidad Catolica and Universidad Central. I described to them the purpose of my research, its structure and the form in which it would be presented. I also gave them translated information sheets and consent forms. Only the Deans from the Department of Psychology expressed potential interest in my study.

After a few days, I was called by the department secretary (Universidad Central) and the Dean (Universidad Catolica) and informed that I had been given permission to discuss my research study with second and third year undergraduate students during their classes. In both cases, I entered students' classrooms during classes and explained to students, in general terms, what the purpose of the research was and what their potential participation

involved. They were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. The procedures related to ensuring participants' anonymity, storing the data as well as procedures related to data analysis and reporting were explained orally. Students were informed that, if they agreed to participate, they would not have to reveal any personal information about themselves, including their age, gender, ethnicity or their year of study. The lack of this information is one of the limitations of the present study, but I made a decision not request such personal data in order to obtain a higher participation rate.

All the information that was given to students orally was also included in the information sheets and consent forms that were provided to them, together with copies of the questionnaires. These documents are included in Appendix 6.

The UK

Since, in Ecuador, I was only allowed to collect data from psychology students I decided to contact the School of Psychology at the University of Birmingham. Overall, my intention was to obtain data that would attain a high level of cross-cultural equivalence (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). As some research indicates, the relationship between extrinsic motivation and well-being might also differ between university departments (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000).

In the UK, information related to the quantitative component of the study was transmitted by electronic means. The reason for this was that during this time I was living in Ecuador, collecting data from university students there. I contacted, by email, the secretary of the undergraduate Department of Psychology at the University of Birmingham and explained, briefly, the purpose of my study. I was informed that I should email a more

thorough description of my study, information sheets and consent forms that students needed to read and sign as well as a description of electronic procedures through which all the data would be collected. A few days later, I sent all this information – identical to the information given to Ecuadorian students - to the secretary. This email also contained a link to a website ‘Survey Monkey’ (www.surveymonkey.com/) which I used to collect quantitative data. A detailed description of its application in the present research will be provided in Data collection component.

The secretary forwarded my email to undergraduate students’ mailboxes. This email described the study and invited them to participate. Those students who agreed to participate in the study needed to sign electronically a consent form (identical to that given to Ecuadorian students) that was placed ahead of the questionnaires on the Survey Monkey website. My written exchanges with the Department of Psychology are included in Appendix 7.

5.1.1.2 Enrolling participants in the study and initial data collection procedures

Size

My intention was to have the largest comparative samples I could obtain (Aron and Aron, 1999). Therefore, there was no upper limit on the number of participants I would accept. On the other hand, this number of participants needed to be large enough to ensure statistical significance of my findings (Aron and Aron, 1999; Rudestam and Newton, 2001). For instance, the medium effects between the means of two groups ‘would require 64 subjects per group to achieve a power of .80 when using an alpha level of .05 (Rudestam and Newton, 2001, p. 80).

Composition of the samples

To ensure the highest number of participants, I did not require students to include information indicating their age, gender or ethnic origin (Botman and Thornberry, 1992; de Heer and Israels, 1992). In terms of age and gender, this decision is in line with previous SDT-related research with university students which did not record or did not consider age/gender differences in the studied variables (Levesque et al., 2004; Chirkov et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 2005).

In regards to the issue of ethnicity, I expected that practically all Ecuadorian participants would be of Latino ethnicity, due to the demographics of Ecuador, the requirements of its educational system, and the country's immigration policies (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008). In terms of the ethnic background of UK participants, I expected them to be predominately of White ethnic origin or to be acculturated to the British society. This assumption is based on the data presented in Section 2.4.2.2 in relation to the rationale for selecting the University of Birmingham for the British part of the study. It also stems from the fact that '92% of students accepted onto postgraduate [psychology] courses in 2002 in the UK were of white ethnic origin' (Zinkiewicz and Trapp, 2004, p. 13). Furthermore, all the students who wanted to participate in the focus groups in the present study were of White/British ethnic origin. Finally, the data collected by HESA (2011) show that, in 2004, of 36,410 undergraduate psychology students, 34,245 (94.4 percent) students listed the UK as their domicile and only 950 (2.6 percent) students listed non-European Union nations as their domicile.

5.1.1.3 Procedure

Ecuador

In Ecuador, those students who agreed to participate read the information sheets and signed the consent forms at home. They then completed the individual AMS, inclusive AMS, and the SWLS questionnaires in their own time and placed these, as well as their signed consent forms, in an envelope that had been left for them in the reception area of each given university. Students pass the reception area every day on their way to and from classes. In the two weeks following distribution, all the returned envelopes were collected by me. In all, 80 participants from Universidad Central and 87 participants from Universidad Catolica were enrolled in the study (Table 5.1).

The UK

In the UK, the procedure was different. As described earlier, the Psychology Department secretary forwarded an introductory email, the consent form and the questionnaires to undergraduate students' mailboxes. Those who were interested in participating clicked on a link and were taken to the Survey Monkey website. On this website, they read (English version) information sheets and consent forms, identical to those presented to the Ecuadorian participants. They agreed to participate by clicking 'Yes' on the consent form and then proceeded to fill out electronic versions of the questionnaires (identical to the paper versions). When they finished, they clicked 'finish', and all the information was sent to a password-protected database. Altogether, 77 students from the University of Birmingham participated in the study (Table 5.1).

Table 5.0.1 *Information about participants that enrolled in the quantitative study*

Country	The UK	Ecuador	
Department	Psychology	Psychology	Psychology
University	University of Birmingham	Universidad Catolica	Universidad Central
Number of students	77	87	80

5.1.2 *The qualitative component*

5.1.2.1 Contacting gatekeepers and potential participants

Ecuador

I gained access to the participants through the Deans of Psychology Departments and presented to them the purpose of the research as well as information sheets and consent forms related to it. Again, I was allowed to talk to second and third year students in their classes. The purpose and the structure of the research were explained to them, and they were assured that their participation in the study would be kept confidential. The participants were also advised that their responses during focus groups would be taped and transcribed. All the details related to the data collection, analysis, and reporting were included in the information sheets that were provided to the participants along with the consent forms and my contact information. These forms (English and Spanish versions) are included in Appendix 6.

The UK

In the UK, I gained access to potential participants in two different ways. In the case of the first focus group, I obtained permission from a university professor to talk to her students about participation in a focus group. I used this opportunity to present to them exactly the same information that had been given to the Ecuadorian students.

As far as the second focus group is concerned, I again sent an email to the Psychology Department secretary, explaining the purpose and structure of my qualitative research and

asking students to participate in it. The secretary forwarded the email to students' mailboxes. My email exchanges with the Department secretary are included in Appendix 7.

5.1.2.2 Focus groups' size/composition and enrolling participants in the study

Size of the focus groups

A general assumption about the focus group is that its size should range from four to twelve members (Morgan, 1988; Krueger and Casey, 2000). Sampson (1972) writes, however, that there is no optimal size and that the focus group's effectiveness depends on the quality of the interviewing skills of the moderator and on respondents' willingness to participate. Some researchers prefer even larger groups – twenty or more members – because of the possibility for a significant synergistic effect (Hess, 1968). On the other hand, Payne (1976) argues that once the focus group's size exceeds seven, its potential for generating quality data diminishes. Fern (1982) also points out that holding a large focus group (more than 8 members) leads to greater superficiality of responses.

This study also supports the view that opting for the smaller size of the focus group – six or seven participants - might result in greater depth of generated data. I intended to probe respondents about issues of considerable psychological complexity. Illuminating these more fully requires reflection and being given an opportunity to speak at length. Motivation and well-being are latent, unobservable constructs that can only become evident to both participants and the moderator through the process of in-depth interviewing (McCracken, 1988). Therefore, I made an arbitrary decision to have no more than six participants in each focus group.

Sampling approach

In qualitative research, some form of non-random or purposive selection is often used (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This selection process might reflect what is available to the researcher or it can be undertaken with the overall goal of having greater depth and range in the collected data (Gobo, 2007). In the case of the present study, in order to ensure a sufficient number of participants for each focus group, I did not purposefully seek any specific gender or age composition for the focus groups. This decision was also in line with previous SDT-related research with university students that did not find or did not consider age/gender differences in the studied variables (Levesque et al., 2004; Chirkov et al., 2005; Nunez et al., 2005).

5.1.2.3 Enrolling participants in the study

Ecuador

For each of the focus group I enrolled the first six students who had contacted me. There happened to be both males and females enrolled in all focus groups, with female predominance in each case. The students' information and coding system for each focus group are included in Appendix 8. All the other students were thanked for their interest in the study and informed that I might still contact them if circumstances changed.

As far the enrolled students are concerned, in each case, I informed them about the location and time of a scheduled focus group and reminded them that they needed to bring their signed consent forms with them. They were also asked to contact me if they changed their mind about participation in the study. In this way, I would still have time to find their replacement for the focus group. Finally, I also asked them if they had participated in the quantitative component of the study. None of the students had done so.

The UK

In the case of the first focus group, six of the students signed the consent forms right after I had finished explaining to them the purpose and structure of my study. All the students were of White ethnic origin. The group was heterogeneous in terms of gender with female predominance. The students' information and coding system are included in Appendix 8.

As far as the second focus group was concerned (students who had received the forwarded email), my contact with the students and their enrollment in the study followed exactly the same steps as in the case of the Ecuadorian students. Again, none of the students had participated in the quantitative part of the study. All the students were of White ethnic origin. The group was heterogeneous in terms of gender with female predominance. The students' information and coding system are included in Appendix 8.

The fact that both in the case of Ecuador and in the case of the UK, different students participated in the quantitative and qualitative components of the study requires some elaboration. It was not my intention to preclude any participants from the quantitative stage from taking part in the focus groups. It happened on its own, probably due to scheduling factors or, possibly, due to a feeling on the part of the participants from the quantitative component that they had already done enough to help the researcher. However, given the fact the quantitative and qualitative components were structured very differently, it is unlikely that the final results of data analysis would have been significantly different had some of the same students participated in both components of the study.

5.2 Collecting data

5.2.1 The quantitative component

5.2.1.1 Ethical considerations

Ecuador

In the case of Ecuadorian participants, prior to organizing the received quantitative data, all the signed consent forms were separated from questionnaires and locked in a secure place.

The UK

In the case of British participants, all the consent forms were signed electronically by typing 'Yes', and did not reveal identities of the participants. Still, I was the only person who had access to this set of raw electronic data because it was protected by a password.

5.2.1.2 Procedure

All the data from both the Ecuadorian and British samples were imported into a statistical software program. For the quantitative part of my study, I used SPSS Statistics Software 19.0 for Windows. In this program, individual students are coded as numbers, and their responses become research variables. Again, all this information was protected by a password.

5.2.2 The qualitative component

5.2.2.1 Ethical considerations

It was my responsibility to make sure that all the focus groups were conducted in a manner that respected the dignity of each participant and that participants were not subjected to any emotional harm (Burgess, 1989). I took pains to pose questions in a respectful and inclusive way and also endeavoured to ensure that the emotional well-being of individual participants

was not threatened by other focus group participants. Furthermore, I exercised caution and discretion in exploring issues that might reveal traumatic experiences or details from participants' personal life (Burgess, 1989).

5.2.2.2 Reflexivity

The question of biases and attitudes also required a systematic reflection. I come from an individualistic cultural context and, on a personal level, share the Western beliefs that assertion of individuality and following goals that are self-generated lead to greater happiness and emotional fulfillment. In the case of Ecuador, however, the family's influences and social pressures are considered to be much more fully embedded in the individual psyche, which is what makes the notion of life satisfaction such a controversial and culturally-dependent phenomenon (Triandis et al., 1984b). It was therefore my obligation to approach the studied cultures with an openness of mind and without a sense of condescension or preordained judgment. In other words, I had to remain aware of the possibility of signaling my own attitudes during the focus groups and to control for this risk (Wilkinson, 1988). For example, during one of the Ecuadorian focus groups, some of the students dismissed, laughingly, one of the other student's excessive attachment to his mother. I did not make light of it, however, in any way and, instead, reminded the students that all the views and opinions were equally valid. Furthermore, I remained non-judgmental in terms of my words and facial expressions when listening to utterances that might have been construed as indicative of *machismo*.

5.2.2.3 Methodological considerations

The focus group interviewing process employed in the study reflected two different approaches: one that is more common with a conventional approach to content analysis and one that usually accompanies a direct approach to content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). A conventional approach to content analysis is often used when the researcher wants to illuminate the studied phenomena but does not have predetermined categories in mind that would guide an inquiry about these phenomena (Kondracki and Wellman, 2002). As Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1279) write, during the data collection process, ‘probes also tend to be open-ended or specific to the participant’s comments rather than to a preexisting theory.’ In the context of the present study, inquiring about respondents’ subjective well-being reflects this methodological approach. For instance, I planned to ask the students a very general question, such as ‘Are you satisfied with your life?’ Then, depending on their answers, I would develop probes and continue questioning.

On the other hand, however, inquiring about participants’ external motivational influences reflected the data collection process that is often associated with a direct approach to content analysis (Hickey and Kipping, 1996; Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). A direct approach to content analysis is employed when ‘existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description’ (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). In terms of an interviewing method, ‘an open-ended question might be used, followed by targeted questions about the predetermined categories (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1281).

The reason for such an approach in the present study stems from the fact that cross-cultural factors or categories that affect students' educational motivations have been researched in a number of ways. In my own study, the selection of some of those categories - such as family influences, cultural influences, pedagogical influences, social and professional factors as well as the influence of friends – was determined by previous research that had investigated the topic of academic motivation (Vallerand et al., 1992; Rudy et al., 2007; Acharya and Joshi, 2009). Secondly, the information obtained from the pilot study in Ecuador and from a number of conversations that I had had with students in both Ecuador and the UK helped in identifying potential motivational influences. Finally, the choice of themes in relation to motivational influences was also dictated by a desire to collect data that would be thematically comparable to the quantitative findings of the study and relate to the topic of this thesis.

Therefore, in specific terms, following a direct approach to content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), I would begin a phase of the focus group interview related to motivational influences with a general, open-ended question, such as 'What have been the most important influences or factors in your decision to study at university level?' Next, depending on participants' responses, I employed specific and predetermined probes that related to previous research findings (e.g., Guay et al., 2008) and my own findings from the pilot study. Those probes would aim to solicit more specific information, for example: 'How important was your family in your educational decisions?' Then again, depending on responses, these more specific probes would be supplemented by even more detailed questioning, for example: "Was it important for you to make your parents proud?' or 'Did

you try to set an example for your younger siblings?’ The semi-structured interview schedule used to guide the focus group interviews is included in Appendix 9.

5.2.2.4 Themes and questions explored in the qualitative component of the study

In the case of this qualitative research, I made an effort to address the main themes and questions of the research during the data collection phase. In a sense, my approach did not reflect grounded theory but was, instead, mostly thematic in nature (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006). On the basis of the literature and the pilot study, particular questions that the qualitative study intended to answer were incorporated into the processes leading to the data collection phase – such as constructing an interview guide – and into the actual focus groups (McCracken, 1988; Guay et al., 2008; Acharya and Joshi, 2009; Ivy, 2010). In general, the qualitative component of the study was intended to research the themes that corresponded to the data that had been collected in the quantitative component of the study. In this way, a mixed method approach would allow for the triangulation of the collected data, which, in turn, could provide a more reliable answer to the main research questions (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003), and facilitate greater depth of understanding of the studied phenomena.

Still, however, there was one important difference in data collection between the quantitative and qualitative component. Overall, the qualitative component was better suited to identify particular external motivational influences and to judge their relative importance in participants’ educational choices in the two cultural contexts. These aspects cannot be ascertained from the academic motivation scales used in the research. The scales analyze various types of extrinsic motivation, such as *external regulation*, *introjected regulation* and *identified regulation*, but do not provide enough insight to tell whether it is, for example, the

influence coming from parents, siblings, friends, or socio-cultural characteristics that contributes to these various types of extrinsic motivation (Diener et al., 1985; Vallerand et al., 1992; Fairchild et al., 2005).

This is an important contribution of the qualitative component of the study: a better understanding what particular external factors are the most important or the most conducive to students' academic functioning will help in designing more effective educational programs. Such knowledge reflects Chirkov et al.'s (2003, p. 108) call to study what 'type of practices are most assimilable and conducive to well-being and what forms of socialization foster most integration for human beings, wherever they reside.' If the qualitative data showed, for example, that grandparents' or siblings' influence was essential and beneficial to students from collectivist cultures, then an effort could be made explicitly to incorporate these familial influences into students' academic experience. University professors would then need to demonstrate a greater sensitivity to and understanding of the relationship between a student and his or her extended family members, and might even engage in more frequent consultations with these family members regarding a student's goals and motivational drives.

Overall, therefore, there are two separate benefits of the design of the qualitative component. On the one hand, covering the same aspects and questions as the quantitative component would lead to the triangulation of the collected data and their greater reliability (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). On the other hand, addressing through the qualitative analysis certain aspects of the studied phenomena that were not investigated by statistical means would result in greater comprehensiveness and complementariness of the research (Bryman 1984; Collins 1984; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998).

5.2.2.5 The main research questions explored in the qualitative component of the study

On the basis of the literature review and the pilot study, the qualitative component of the research was designed to analyze the main themes in order to address the following research questions:

1. Is individual or self-generated autonomy in the learning process less pronounced in some cultural contexts?

2. What is the importance of various external motivational influences in the two studied cultures?

3. Are individuals in some cultures more willing to embrace and fully internalize external influences in their academic life?

4. Do subjective well-being and autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

5. Are there any differences in the levels of subjective well-being between the individualist and collectivist culture?

5.2.2.6 Procedure

The number of the focus groups and their duration

There were two focus group contacted with University Catolica students, two focus groups with University Central students, and two focus groups with students from the University of Birmingham. Each focus group lasted slightly over an hour.

Locations and settings for the focus groups

In each case, both in Ecuador and the UK, the focus groups took place on the campuses of the respective universities in classrooms that were not occupied by other students. I collected the signed consent forms from all the participants and reviewed with them the

purpose and the procedure of these focus groups. The students sat around a table and were informed that their responses would be recorded by an electronic recording device that was placed on a chair in front of me. I did not take any notes during the focus groups but I had with me the focus group guide to which I referred occasionally. This focus group guide was developed to harness themes identified in the Literature Review and during the pilot study, and was designed to guide me in addressing potential motivational influences and exploring the relationship between educational autonomy and subjective well-being. All the specifics of conduct during the focus groups are described in Appendix 5, and a copy of the focus group guide is included in Appendix 9.

Ensuring the equivalence of the collected data

Since the participants might have differed in their level of studies and life experiences – both within a given sample and between samples – an effort was made to elicit responses about motivational influences and subjective well-being that they had experienced at the similar stage of their studies. In this way, despite any heterogeneity in terms of age and educational attainment, it was expected that the qualitative data would tend to describe a similar developmental stage of the participants (Gould, 1978).

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The statistical approach designed to address the research questions is described. Following it, the results of the relevant statistical tests are presented. As far as the qualitative data are concerned, the methodological approach is described as well as the main themes emerging from the analysis of the transcripts.

6.1 Quantitative Component

6.1.1 Research questions addressed in the quantitative component

As the review of the literature related to SDT's concept of autonomy, human motivation, and the relationship between autonomy and subjective well-being indicates, the controversy between cross-cultural researchers and SDT proponents centers around a number of important issues. These research groups continue to differ in their understanding of the concept of autonomy, and in their views on how important autonomy is and how it contributes to subjective well-being across cultures. The quantitative component of the present study posed thus specific questions related to these issues and attempted to answer them by statistical analysis.

Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions, using statistical tests designed to answer them:

1. *Is individual or self-generated autonomy in the learning process less pronounced in some cultural contexts?*

Comparison of means (the individual RAI)

2. *Do subjective well-being and individual autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?*

Correlation analysis: the individual RAI and SWLS

Comparison of means (the individual RAI)

Comparison of means (the SWLS)

3. *Do subjective well-being and inclusive autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?*

Correlation analysis: the inclusive RAI and SWLS

4. *Are there any differences in the levels of subjective well-being between the individualist and collectivist culture?*

Comparison of means (the SWLS)

6.1.2 Procedures preceding Data Analysis

6.1.2.1 The relative autonomy indices

In order to compare the study to previous research, the relative autonomy indices (RAIs) were calculated for the individual and inclusive items. In the creation of the RAIs, the external, introjected, identified and intrinsic scales were weighted by -2, -1, 1 and + 2, respectively, and then averaged. According to this approach, individual RAI = [(-2) x external regulation + (-1) x introjected regulation + 1 x identified regulation + 2 x intrinsic motivation] / 4. This method follows the approach used in many previous studies (Chirkov et al., 2003; Chirkov et al., 2005; Grolnick and Ryan, 1989; Vallerand et al., 1997 and Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

‘Autonomous’ (the weighted identified and intrinsic items) and ‘controlled’(the weighed external and introjected items) facet scores were created additionally to test the

effects of motivational orientation (level of autonomy) on subjective well-being (Rudy et al., 2007).

A number of statistical analyses were conducted: internal consistency, means, correlations, and others. All those statistical procedures and their results are described in the following section of this chapter.

6.1.3 The Results of the quantitative data analysis

6.1.3.1 Internal Consistency

The internal consistency of the motivation subscales was measured with Cronbach's alpha. The collected data are presented in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2. The goal was to measure the correlations between the items of each individual and inclusive AMS subscale. For instance, the external regulation subscale on the individual AMS contains the following items: mi5 (In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on.), m10 (Because I want to have 'the good life' later on), and mi14 (In order to have a better salary later on). Since those items are purported to measure the same subtype of academic motivation, the correlation between them should be high.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient can range from 0 to 1. The closer it is to 1, the greater is the internal consistency of items on a given scale. Generally, internal consistency is considered *excellent* when it is more than 0.9, *good* when it is 0.9-0.8, *acceptable* when it is more than 0.8-0.7, and *questionable* when it is less than 0.7 (George and Mallery, 2003).

As Table 6.1 shows, in the case of individual academic motivation, internal consistency was mostly acceptable, good or excellent. It was, however, questionable for introjected motivation in the UK sample and for identified motivation in the Catolica sample.

Table 6.1 Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the individual Academic Motivation Scale

University	Motivation subscale	Cronbach's alpha
Central	indEXT	0.92
	indINTRO	0.77
	indIDEN	0.72
	indINTRI	0.89
Catolica	indEXT	0.91
	indINTRO	0.79
	indIDEN	0.62
	indINTRI	0.81
Birmingham	indEXT	0.77
	indINTRO	0.65
	indIDEN	0.70
	indINTRI	0.81

Note. Individual external regulation (indEXT), individual introjected regulation (indINTRO), individual identified regulation (indIDEN), individual intrinsic motivation (indINTRI)

In case of inclusive academic motivation (Table 6.2), internal consistency was acceptable, good or excellent, except for the intrinsic motivation in the UK sample, where it was questionable.

Table 6.2 Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the inclusive Academic Motivation Scale

University	Motivation subscale	Cronbach's alpha
Central	incluEXT	0.94
	incluINTRO	0.89
	incluIDEN	0.85
	incluINTRI	0.95
Catolica	incluXT	0.91
	incluNTRO	0.82
	incluDEN	0.74
	incluNTRI	0.90
Birmingham	incluXT	0.81
	incluNTRO	0.86
	incluDEN	0.77
	incluNTRI	0.66

Note. Inclusive external regulation (incluEXT), inclusive introjected regulation (incluNTRO), individual identified regulation (incluDEN), individual intrinsic motivation (incluNTRI)

The internal consistency of SWLS items was also measured and ranged from excellent for the Central sample (.93) to good for the UK sample (.81) and acceptable for the Catolica sample (.78).

6.1.3.2 Means and Standard Deviations for the SWLS

Table 6.3 shows the data related to life satisfaction as measured by the SWLS, presenting the means and standard deviation for three universities.

Table 6.3 Mean, Standard Deviations, and Confidence Intervals for SWB

University	Mean	Standard deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Central	4.16	1.57	3.81	4.51
Catolica	4.53	1.06	4.31	4.76
Birmingham	5.02	1.07	4.77	5.26

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the three samples. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the three groups demonstrated the following results:

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Catolica sample was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Central sample was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The difference between Universidad Catolica sample and the Universidad Central sample was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 6.4 shows the data related to the individual RAI as measured by the individual Academic Motivation Scale. It presents the means and standard deviation for all three universities.

6.1.3.3 Means and Standard Deviations for the individual RAI indices

Table 6.4 *Means, Standard Deviations, and Confidence Intervals for the individual RAI*

University	Mean	Standard deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Central	-0.19	3.12	-0.89	0.50
Catolica	-0.02	3.30	-0.72	0.69
Birmingham	1.16	2.84	0.52	1.81

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the three samples. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the three groups demonstrated the following results:

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Catolica sample was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Central sample was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The difference between Universidad Catolica sample and the Universidad Central sample was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 6.5 shows the data related to the inclusive RAI as measured by the inclusive Academic Motivation Scale. It presents the means and standard deviation for all three universities.

Table 6.5 Means, Standard Deviations, and Confidence Intervals for the inclusive RAI

University	Mean	Standard deviation	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Central	0.05	3.13	-0.65	0.74
Catolica	-0.10	2.91	-0.72	0.52
Birmingham	0.53	1.87	0.10	0.95

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the three samples. Bonerroni post-hoc comparisons of the three groups demonstrated the following results:

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Catolica sample was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

The difference between the UK sample and the Universidad Central sample was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

The difference between Universidad Catolica sample and the Universidad Central sample was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 6.6 presents means for each of the individual RAI subscales. In none of the cases did the differences between the means on a given subscale reach statistical significance.

6.1.3.4 Means and Standard Deviations for the individual RAI subscales

Table 6.6 Means and Standard Deviations for the individual RAI subscales

University		indINTRI	indIDEN	indINTRO	indEXT
Central	Mean	5.39	5.78	5.36	5.70
	Std. Deviation	0.87	1.08	1.25	1.38
Catolica	Mean	5.54	5.95	5.27	5.89
	Std. Deviation	0.70	0.71	1.26	1.42
Birmingham	Mean	5.71	6.12	5.00	5.70
	Std. Deviation	0.76	0.59	1.04	1.03

6.1.3.5 Correlations between life satisfaction and RAI indices

Table 6.7 presents correlations between the SWLS, individual RAI, and inclusive RAI.

Table 6.7 Correlation: SWB, individual RAI, and inclusive RAI

Central	indRAI	incluRAI
Lifesat	0.22*	0.26*
incluRAI	0.66**	
Catolica	indRAI	incluRAI
Lifesat	0.25*	0.33*
incluRAI	0.71**	
Birmingham	indRAI	incluRAI
Lifesat	0.37**	0.03
incluRAI	0.20	

* $p < .05$, two tailed

** $p < .01$, two tailed

Following traditional thinking in psychology, correlations above .50 are large, those about .30 are moderate, and those of about (.10) are small (Cohen, 1988 in Aron and Aron (1999)).

Therefore, for the Universidad Central sample, the correlations between subjective well-

being and both the individual and inclusive RAI were borderline moderate, and the correlation between individual RAI and inclusive RAI was large.

For the Universidad Catolica sample, the correlation between subjective well-being and the individual RAI was borderline moderate, and the correlation between subjective well-being and the inclusive RAI was moderate. Again, however, the correlation between individual RAI and inclusive RAI was large.

For the UK sample, the correlation between subjective well-being and the individual RAI was moderate, and so was the correlation between the individual RAI and inclusive RAI. On the other hand, the correlation between subjective well-being and inclusive RAI was very small.

To measure the differences between the correlation between subjective well-being and individual RAI, z-tests were conducted. They demonstrated that those differences were not statistically significant. In terms of correlations between subjective well-being and inclusive RAI, the results were statistically significant only when the Catolica sample was compared to the UK sample ($z = 2.02, p < .05$).

Finally, the differences between the cross-correlations of the individual and inclusive RAIs were statistically significant between the two cultural contexts. The difference between the Universidad Central sample and the UK sample was $z = 3.62, p < .05$ and the difference between the Catolica sample and the UK sample was $z = 4.29, p < .05$.

6.1.3.6 Correlations between subjective well-being and the individual AMS subscales

Table 6.8 demonstrates the correlations between subjective well-being and the individual motivation subscales. In each case, the association increased as the motivational orientation moved from a less autonomous subscale to a more autonomous subscale. However, the differences between any two neighbouring subscales were not statistically significant.

Table 6.8 *Correlations between life satisfaction and the individual AMS subscales*

Central	indINTRI	indIDEN	indINTRO	indEXT
Lifesat	0.34**	0.18	0.13	-0.03
Catolica	indINTRI	indIDEN	indINTRO	indEXT
Lifesat	0.27*	0.09	-0.08	-0.11
Birmingham	indINTRI	indIDEN	indINTRO	indEXT
Lifesat	0.45**	0.34**	0.10	-0.14

* $p < .05$, two tailed

** $p < .01$, two tailed

6.1.3.7 Cross-correlations between the subscales

Table 6.9 shows the correlations across the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales in the Universidad Central sample. The strength of correlations ranged from mid-high moderate to large.

Table 6.9 *Correlation across the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales for Universidad Central*

-----	incluEXT	incluINTRO	incluIDEN	incluINTRI
indEXT	0.70**	-----	-----	-----
indINTRO	-----	0.43**	-----	-----
indIDEN	-----	-----	0.46**	-----
indINTRI	-----	-----	-----	0.43**

** $p < .01$, two tailed

Table 6.10 shows the correlations across the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales in the Universidad Catolica sample. In each case, the strength of the correlation was large.

Table 6.10 Correlation across the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales for Universidad Catolica

-----	incluEXT	incluINTRO	incluIDEN	incluINTRI
indEXT	0.77**	-----	-----	-----
indINTRO	-----	0.79**	-----	-----
indIDEN	-----	-----	0.51 **	-----
indINTRI	-----	-----	-----	0.69**

** p < .01, two tailed

Table 6.11 shows the correlations between the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales in the UK sample. The strength of the correlations ranged from borderline large and borderline moderate to small.

Table 6.11 Correlation between the individual and inclusive versions of each of the four subscales in the UK sample

-----	incluEXT	incluINTRO	incluIDEN	incluINTRI
indEXT	0.39**	-----	-----	-----
indINTRO	-----	0.40**	-----	-----
indIDEN	-----	-----	0.16	-----
indINTRI	-----	-----	-----	0.20

* p < .05, two tailed

** p < .01, two tailed

6.1.3.8 Correlations between autonomous and controlled facets

Table 6.12 shows the correlations between the autonomous and control facets of the individual RAI. For both Ecuadorian samples – but not for the UK sample - the correlation was large.

Table 6.12 Correlations between the individual facets

Central	Individual Controlled facet
Individual Autonomous facet	0.58**
Catolica	Individual Controlled facet
Individual Autonomous facet	0.51**
Birmingham	Individual Controlled facet
Individual Autonomous facet	0.23*

* p < .05, two tailed

** p < .01, two tailed

Table 6.13 shows the correlations between the autonomous and control facets of the inclusive RAI. In each case, the correlation was large.

Table 6.13 *Correlations between the inclusive facets*

Central	Inclusive Controlled facet
Inclusive Autonomous facet	0.70**
Catolica	Inclusive Controlled facet
Inclusive Autonomous facet	0.62**
Birmingham	Inclusive Controlled facet
Inclusive Autonomous facet	0.54**

** $p < .01$, two tailed

Finally, correlations between the individual intrinsic motivation subscale and the remaining individual motivation subscales were calculated for each university. The collected data are presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 *Correlations between the individual intrinsic motivation subscale and other individual motivation subscales*

Central	IndEXT	IndINTRO	IndIDEN
IndINTRI	0.37**	0.42**	0.66**
Catolica	IndEXT	IndINTRO	IndINDEN
IndINTRI	0.35**	0.52**	0.50**
Birmingham	IndEXT	IndINTRO	IndINDEN
IndINTRI	0.11	0.31**	0.27*

* $p < .05$, two tailed

** $p < .01$, two tailed

Additionally, a z-test was performed to compare the strengths of correlations. Only the results from the University Central sample were statistically significant. Comparing the correlation between indINTRI and indIDEN with the correlation between indINTRI and indEXT resulted in $z = 2.51$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, comparing the correlation between indINTRI and indIDEN with the correlation between indINTRI and indINTRO resulted in $z = 2.14$, $p < .05$.

6.1.3.9 Summary

Overall, the quantitative data demonstrate that individual autonomy is likely to be conducive to subjective well-being in both Ecuadorian and British cultures. On the other hand, however, there are some significant differences between the two cultures, especially in the levels of individual autonomy and subjective well-being as well as in the relationship between inclusive autonomy and subjective well-being. A thorough and detailed discussion of all these findings in the context of the research questions is presented in Section 7.1.

6.2 The qualitative component

6.2.1 Theoretical consideration and background related to qualitative data analysis

According to Miles and Huberman (1984, p.16), there are ‘few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness’. Indeed, there have been a number of approaches proposed for conducting qualitative research and they differ from one another in both methodological steps and theoretical underpinnings (e.g., Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998; Patton, 2002). Some of the approaches, such as grounded theory, rely mostly on inductive reasoning and try to discover themes and patterns from data by means of careful, open-minded analysis and comparison (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). On the other hand, however, qualitative data analysis can also reflect deductive reasoning. In this approach, previous research studies, theories and findings contribute to the search for concepts and variables (Patton, 2002; Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009).

For instance, there is a considerable difference between the original version of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and Yin’s (1989) case study research. The

former attempts to develop theory inductively from a corpus of data, without any preconceived assumptions. In other words, themes and patterns emerge from ‘the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1980, p. 306). Yin’s case study research, on the other hand, develops some tentative theories and hypotheses prior to data collection and analysis. In contrast with grounded theory, this approach seeks to employ the collected data to test these theories or hypotheses.

Different views on how to analyze qualitative data exist even within the same philosophical framework. For instance, the more recent version of grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) differs from the original grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in its greater reliance on deductive analysis and in admission that this theory could be used to verify prior research assumptions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The approach undertaken in the present study follows the five-stage process developed by McCracken (1988) and is neither strongly and predominately inductive like the early version of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) nor does it attempt to test narrowly defined hypotheses. On the one hand, similar to grounded theory, the five-stage process involves approaching the data with an open mind and developing categories as well as connections between a category and its sub-categories in the early stages of data analysis (McCracken, 1988). In this sense, the approach undertaken at the outset of the data analysis phase follows the principles of conventional qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), in which coding categories are derived inductively from the data.

However, in contrast with the early version of Glaser and Strauss (1967) or conventional qualitative content analysis, the five-stage process is not ‘purely’ grounded in a sense of generating theory based solely on the presented data. The researcher also refers to

relevant theories away from the transcript, analyzing the data ‘according to the previous literature and cultural review’ and makes judgements about the importance of particular data in relation to the studied phenomena (McCracken, 1988, p. 42).

Furthermore, I expected certain categories to emerge on the basis of the relevant literature and on the basis of the methodological approach that guided the focus group interviewing process. The focus group interviewing process and the probing approach employed in the study - especially in terms of exploring participants’ motivational influences - were built around the general themes, such as familial influences or peer pressure, that had emerged from the motivational literature and the pilot study conducted in Ecuador (Diener and Diener, 2001).

In essence, the analytical process employed in the study subscribes to the view expressed by Srivastava and Hopwood (2009, p. 77):

‘From our experience...patterns, themes, and categories do not emerge on their own. They are driven by what the inquirer wants to know and how the inquirer interprets what the data are telling her or him according to subscribed theoretical frameworks, subjective perspectives, ontological and epistemological positions, and intuitive field understandings.’

6.2.2 The description of data analysis process applied in the study

As already indicated, I followed the five-stage process of qualitative data analysis proposed by McCracken (1988). Apart from practical benefits, this approach offers an opportunity to follow and, possibly, recreate the researcher’s thinking process during the data analysis phase. As McCracken (1988, p. 43) states, these are important considerations in the context of a qualitative study:

‘Analytic advantages aside, this scheme has the additional virtue of creating a record of the processes of reflection and analysis in which the investigator engaged. Such a record has recently been identified as a condition of the qualitative reliability check (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 51).’

Overall, the five-stage process is based on a movement from the specific to the general. It is based on constant revision and readjustment of previous opinions or assumptions (McCracken, 1988). Throughout the data analysis stage, the researcher uses pens, colored markers and other tools to write comments on transcript pages and to underline students' utterances.

In the first stage, the researcher looks at each sentence or utterance with an open mind and without any preconceptions or assumptions. In some ways, at this stage, this approach reflects grounded theory in its line-by-line analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Similar to grounded theorists, the researcher begins by 'asking, What is this sentence about?' (Ryan and Bernard, 2003, p. 91). Participants' utterances are treated in their own terms, with no concern for how they relate to the rest of the script or to more general themes. As McCracken (1988, p. 44) writes, 'the investigator acts much like an archeologist, sorting out important material from unimportant material with no attention to how the important material will eventually be assembled.' For instance, at this stage, I looked at the sentence 'it is my duty to study' without ascribing any cultural significance to it. Instead, I looked at the word 'duty' and tried to imagine it in the context of academic study.

In the second stage, individual observations or utterances 'are examined, one in relation to the other' (McCracken, 1988, p. 45). In this stage, both the similarities and differences between utterances are explored. For instance, the relationship between such sentences as 'it is my duty to study' and 'you need to follow your parents' advice' would be analyzed.

In the third stage, ‘general properties of the data should be emerging’ (p. 45). A higher level of organization takes place, and the previously related observations give rise to initial patterns and themes. Furthermore, for the first time, ‘the main focus of interest has shifted away from the main body of the transcript’ and the researcher uses the transcript ‘only to confirm or discourage developing possibilities’ (McCracken, 1988, p. 45).

In the fourth stage, the researcher organizes themes in a more refined manner. Themes that are unrelated to the research questions might be discarded, while remaining themes might be organized hierarchically into main themes and subsumed themes.

Finally, at stage five, the researcher compares and combines the themes from different focus groups in order to address the research questions in a more comprehensive way. Again, both similarities and contradictions are analyzed, and a final synthesis emerges. It is at this stage that the identified general themes derived from the data corpus attain the highest level of complexity and substantiation, and are best suited to address the research questions in the most trustworthy manner (McCracken, 1988).

6.2.3 Ethical consideration

Apart from coding the identities of the participants, I also exercised caution over including any highly sensitive or highly personal parts of the transcript. Even though the identity of participants remained hidden, it might still be ethically questionable to include statements that reveal some traumatic experiences or details from participants’ personal life (Burgess, 1989). Of course, there is also a risk of selectivity and suppressing some voices that needs to be considered. These are the concerns that influenced my editorial judgments. I had to remain open to the possibility that there were differences between my sensibilities and those of the participants, which reaffirms the importance of reflectivity discussed below.

6.2.4 Reflexivity

The issue of reflexivity comes to the forefront during the data analysis phase. Sparks (2002, p.127) states the following:

‘...acknowledging that we are doing cross cultural research, however, is not simply a matter of waking up one morning and deciding to do it. We must confront our own theoretical, personal, and professional biases and begin to move beyond them...Questions such as how can we minimize inevitable biases that come from being raised in a different, dominant racial or ethnic population’[need to be addressed].’

The researcher needs to ensure that his or her personal convictions or deeply hidden expectations do not undermine the interpretation of the data. His or her personal traits as well as a given study’s methods and contexts deserve thorough scrutiny (Wilkinson, 1988). A high level of self-awareness in this respect is a prerequisite. As Maso (2003, p.41) writes, this ‘is not only a way to “come clean” about the influence of the subjectiveness on qualitative research, but that it can also function as an instrument to improve the quality of the research.’

Endeavours to ensure a high level of critical self-awareness are not, however, sufficient: additionally, to control for potential biases and omissions in interpretations, extensive parts from all the transcripts are included in the presentation and discussion of the finding from the focus groups. In this way, readers can independently go through what actually happened during those focus groups as opposed to relying mostly on the researcher’s interpretation (Finlay and Ballinger, 2007).

Finally, although the words on a page are mostly mine and the participants’, reflexivity can and should be a collaborative activity. The process of self-reflection can be greatly enhanced through conversations with supervisors, friends and colleagues (Arvey, 2003). Throughout this three-year journey I sought such advice and expertise, which has

proven to be an invaluable asset in writing this thesis. An internal landscape suddenly achieved a better illumination and I was able to see things that my lonely self-reflection had thus far not rendered visible.

6.2.5 Transcription

The first step of the analysis involved transcribing all the recorded materials word for word, with the participants' identity coded. Non-verbal aspects of communication were also included and marked by such words as, for example, 'pause', 'long pause' or 'laughter' (Eaves, 2009).

6.2.6 Translation

In terms of the excerpts included in the presentation of results, there is a difference in style between the Ecuadorian and British samples. The language from the British samples tends to be more natural and colloquial since it represents word for word transcription of the students' utterances from the focus groups conducted there. In the case of the Ecuadorian samples, however, the students' words were first translated into English by me and only then included in the thesis. Therefore, as is often the case with translated speech, a certain amount of liveliness, individuality, and colloquialism might have been lost.

6.2.7 The amount of the transcribed text included in the thesis

There are more excerpts from the Ecuadorian students because twice as much time was spent with them in the focus groups. There were two focus groups (about one hour each) with Universidad Catolica students and two focus groups (about one hour each) with Universidad Central students, compared with just two focus groups with the UK participants

(about one hour each). However, each of the three universities was given an approximately equal representation in the thesis to ensure that their respective contributions were balanced.

6.2.8 Coding system used in the study

In order to keep identities of the participants confidential, I used a coding system in which each participant is assigned a number, gender, and a focus group. For instance, a female student who was sitting most to the left in the second focus group conducted at Universidad Central was coded as (Female, #2.1, Central). A complete list of students, using this coding system, is included in Appendix 8.

6.2.9 Results of the focus groups: main themes and sub-themes

A number of issues related to the topic of this study emerged from the focus groups. Below, in Tables 6.15, 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18 there is a description of the main themes as well as, in the case of motivational influences, a short description of sub-themes that were identified in each cultural context.

Table 6.15 *External motivational influences*

External Motivational influences	
<i>1. Family as a motivational influence</i>	
Ecuador	The UK
<p><i>Identification with/subjugation to close family wishes</i> Participants conform to the wishes and expectations of their close family members</p>	<p><i>Seeking parental help in finding motivation sources</i> Parents have provided participants with opportunities and context to discover their own interests and passions</p>

External Motivational influences	
<i>1. Family as a motivational influence</i>	
Ecuador	The UK
<i>Repayment of parent's sacrifices</i> Participants view their dedication to studying as a way to repay for all the sacrifices their parents have made for them. They also hope that education will help them assist their family members in the future.	<i>Viewing parents as an example to follow</i> Parents – through their own educational choices and their general conduct – provide an example for participants to follow
<i>Making the family proud</i> Participants are motivated to study because they want to make their parents/guardians proud	<i>Students responding to parental insistence to find their own happiness</i> Participants view their educational journey as a response to their parents' wishes to find 'their own way' and happiness
<i>Showing Respect</i> Participants conceive of their educational process as an opportunity to show respect to their close family members	<i>Motivation to assert independence from parents</i> Participants view their education process as a way to assert their independence, including financial independence, from their parents
<i>Viewing extended family as a motivational influence</i> Participants look to their extended family as a motivational factor in pursuing higher education	<i>Physical separation from parents and the motivation for self-discovery</i> Participants wished to be free from parental influences, which, in turn, led to self-discovery and making independent educational decisions
<i>Intergenerational relations: following an example set by others</i> Participants are motivated to follow educational paths set by their close family members	
<i>Providing an example to siblings</i> Participants want to provide an educational example for their younger siblings	
<i>2. Cultural motivational factors</i>	
<i>Duty</i> Participants experience societal pressures that motivate them to continue studying. Some of this pressure might reflect a belief that higher education is the only way to a	<i>Social obligation</i> Since not everyone has a chance to study, participants feel that it is their social obligation not to waste an opportunity that was given to them

secure and respectable living in the society	
External Motivational influences	
<i>2.Cultural motivational factors</i>	
Ecuador	The UK
<i>Simpatia</i> Participants refer to the cultural script <i>simpatia</i> to guide their behaviour during the learning process	
<i>3.Pedagogical motivational factors</i>	
<i>Teachers and learning for exams</i> Participants are motivated to study because of their teachers' expectations and because of fear of failing exams	
<i>Universities' educational Philosophy</i> Participants prefer, as a motivational drive, an educational system that assigns courses and provides a straightforward structure for studying	
<i>Curriculum and pedagogy</i> Participants respond to and are motivated by a top-down pedagogical approach	
<i>4.Social and professional status as motivational factors</i>	
<i>Prestige</i> Participants are motivated to pursue studying because of a high social status that higher education enjoys in Ecuador	<i>Prestige</i> The issue of prestige is present, but British participants are less motivated than their Ecuadorian counterparts to overtly seek prestige through their educational choices
<i>Career options</i> Thinking about future professional choices plays an important role, as a motivational factor, in participants' educational decisions and their behaviour during the learning process	<i>Career choices</i> British participants are also motivated to study their chosen area because of career choices it offers. They have, however, a clearer vision than Ecuadorian participants what those career choices entail.

External Motivational influences	
<i>5. Friends as motivational influences</i>	
Ecuador	The UK
<p><i>Friends as a minor motivational factor in comparison with close family members</i> Participants view their friends as additional motivational factors in their educational decisions, but the importance of their friends is much lower than that of their family members.</p>	<p><i>Friends as an example and a social context for educational decisions</i> Participants view their friends as an example for educational choices and dedication. Furthermore, participants' educational decisions are motivated by a desire to 'free' themselves from high school friends and to broaden their social context.</p>

Table 6.16 *Subjective well-being*

Subjective well-being	
Ecuador	The UK
<p>Financial problems and family relations are pointed out as two factors affecting participants' subjective well-being.</p>	<p>To a larger degree than their Ecuadorian counterparts, British participants credit their educational experiences for increasing their levels of subjective well-being.</p>

Table 6.17 *Relating learning to subjective well-being*

Relating learning to subjective well-being	
Ecuador	The UK
Overall, there is a sense that university experience has a diminishing effect on overall happiness	In contrast with the Ecuadorian samples, for many of the British participants their university experience is positively related to the overall level of happiness

Table 6.18 *Relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors*

Relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors	
Ecuador	The UK
In the Ecuadorian samples, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors often tended to merge with each other, and lead to the formation of self-endorsed goals which are congruent with family expectations	For the UK participants, there appears to be a much clearer distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA DISCUSSION

Introduction

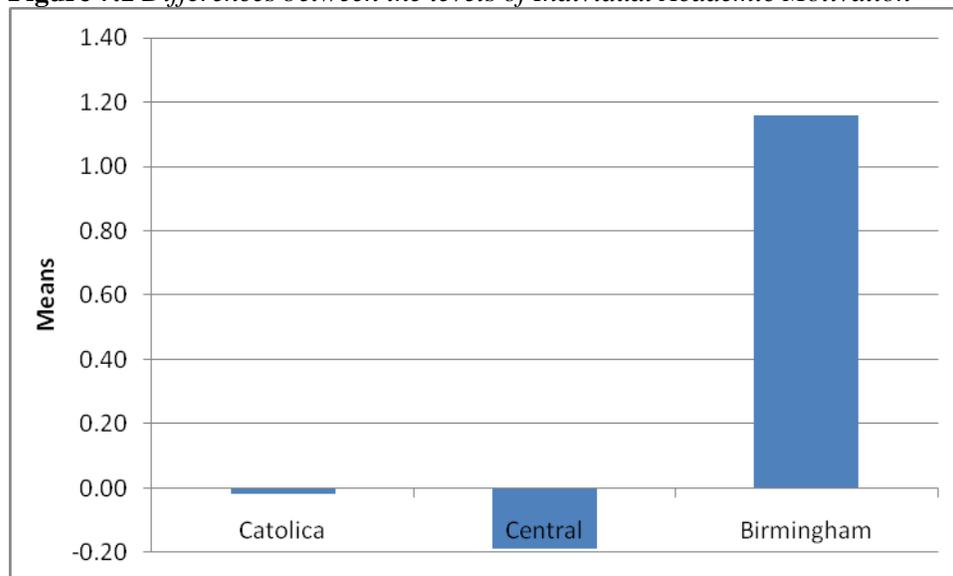
In this chapter, the collected quantitative data are discussed in the context of the main research questions. The qualitative data are discussed, on the other hand, in the context of the main themes emerging from the transcripts and their relation to the research questions.

7.1 Quantitative Component

7.1.1 Levels of individual autonomous academic motivation

The first set of analyzed data relates to the level of individual academic autonomy (indRAI) among British and Ecuadorian students. It was expected that this type of autonomy would be higher in the UK sample than in the Ecuadorian samples. The data confirmed this expectation. The mean individual RAI score was 1.16 for the UK sample, -0.02 for Catolica sample, and -0.19 for the Central samples (Table 6.4; Figure 7.1). The difference between the UK sample and the Ecuadorian samples was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 7.1 Differences between the levels of Individual Academic Motivation



7.1.1.1 Individualism

There are a number of factors that are likely to explain those findings. For instance, Ecuadorians' scores on *the Individualism dimension* - in the previously described research by Hofstede (2001) - provide some telling information. On this dimension, Ecuadorian participants in Hofstede's study scored much lower than their British counterparts, and, according to the Swiss researcher, low scores on *the Individualism dimension* are associated with low striving for self-assertion or autonomy. Individualist societies, Hofstede (1980, 2001) argues, put emphasis on 'I' consciousness, emotional independence, individual initiative, assertiveness, pleasure seeking, and self-fulfillment or self-actualization. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, emphasize 'we' consciousness, collective identity, group solidarity, emotional interdependence, duties and obligations, and sharing (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Hui and Triandis, 1986; Sinha and Verma, 1987; Kim et al., 1994). It is therefore possible that the lower levels of individual autonomy found among the Ecuadorian participants in the present research are partly attributable to the generally lower levels of individualism in South America and other collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 2002).

Low individualism and its impact on the overall level of individual autonomy are, in turn, related to the already discussed *simpatia* script (Section 2.4.3.1). This cultural feature - most characteristic of Latin America societies - signifies a tendency to avoid interpersonal conflict and to deemphasize differences in opinions and attitudes (Triandis et al., 1984). *Simpatia* is antithetical to striving for self-assertion and to following one's own path regardless of external pressures. In other words, it is antithetical to asserting autonomy. Defending one's arguments and an open identification with one's preferred choice of action are features of autonomous behaviour. However, these very features clash with the

overriding cultural script of *simpatia* in the context of Ecuador. As a result, levels of individual autonomy would be expected to become diminished.

Furthermore, the proposed relationship between *simpatia* and autonomy gains strength in the contexts of the participant selection for the Ecuadorian part of the current study. The concept of *simpatia* is especially prevalent in the Sierra part of the country of Ecuador, which encompasses the capital city, Quito, the location of the present research. People living there were described by Jorge Enrique Adoum (2009, p.68), one of the best-known Ecuadorian writers, as ‘...Columbianos en valium / Colombians on valium.’ In this context, the comparatively low levels of individual autonomy found among the Ecuadorian participants are not accidental findings. They are, instead, representative of the highly collectivist sub-culture even in the context of the generally collectivist South America.

As already mentioned, low individualism also entails, by definition, following the expectations of others. It is therefore important to see if the findings of the present research are congruent with studies that looked specifically at the issue of following the expectations of others in educational contexts. An important study in this context was conducted by Mine Isiksal (2010) who looked the intrinsic motivation of Turkish and U.S. university students. As in the present thesis, the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992) was used to measure levels of educational autonomy. Consequently, consistent with the assumptions of the scale, intrinsic motivation was treated as a proxy indicator of educational autonomy, while extrinsic motivation was considered indicative of non-autonomous behaviour.

The findings of Isiksal’s study show resemblance to the findings of the present study in terms of cross-cultural differences in autonomy levels (Table 6.6). This resemblance is especially important since – as in the current study – a collectivist society (Turkey) was

compared with an individualist society (the United States). Turkish university students, Isiksal writes, ‘begin higher education with high extrinsic motivation and low intrinsic motivation scores’ and ‘US undergraduate students had higher intrinsic motivation scores compared to their Turkish partners in their first year of university education’ (p. 579). In the discussion of her study, the researcher provides arguments that could also be applied to the present research:

‘As mentioned above, entrance to the universities in Turkey is highly competitive and parents place a strong emphasis on their children’s university success. In other words, similar to most Asian societies, Turkish families tend to spend a lot of money and express interest in order to support their children university education where social status of families is well appreciated if their children could enter one of the prestigious universities. To have been accepted by those universities is perceived as an indication of catching good job opportunities after graduation which yields economical power, increase in social acceptance, and welfare. Additionally, entrance to prestigious universities is perceived as a good model for the younger siblings in the family. Thus, this could be the reason why Turkish undergraduates begin higher education with high extrinsic motivation and low intrinsic motivation scores’(p.581).

Indeed, the aspects of prestige, paying back parents’ financial sacrifices, social acceptance, and providing a good example to younger siblings have been identified as characteristic also of South American collectivist self-construal (Schwartz, 2007). In the present research, they were specifically acknowledged and elaborated upon by the participants during the focus group sessions, as will be discussed further in Section 7.2.

Isiksal also considers her findings in the context of collectivist self-construal. As she argues, ‘belonging to the collectivist culture where individual choice is less important (Iyenger and Lepper, 1999) could be an important factor in increasing extrinsic motivation of Turkish freshman undergraduates’ (p. 582). In essence, ‘social environments could facilitate or hinder intrinsic motivation by supporting or discomfoting people’s innate psychological needs where there is a strong link between intrinsic motivation and

satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000)' (p. 582). Furthermore, the arguments supporting the data collected from the Turkish students can be even more applicable to the present research because Ecuadorian culture appears to be more collectivistic than Turkish culture (Hofstede, 2001). For instance, while Turkey's score on Individualism is 40, Ecuador's is only 15.

Isiksal's discussion of the data obtained from the US participants is also relevant to the present research. The United States and the UK resemble each other in terms of self-construal features, with both countries scoring high on *the Individualism dimension* (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). As a result, the relatively high levels of intrinsic motivation on the part of the US participants found by Isiksal (2010) can stem from the same underlying factors as those behind the high levels of intrinsic motivation among the UK participants found in the present research. In respect of this issue, Isiksal (p. 582) writes that going 'to the university after high school is usually a more individualistic decision and families apply less social pressure to attend higher education in the United States (p.582).' Contrary to 'the Turkish partners, entrance to the university could be perceived more as self interest than behavior valued by others for US students'(p. 582). That is why, the researcher concludes, 'US undergraduates participate in higher education for the enjoyment of learning itself compared to the Turkish undergraduate students' (p. 582). All those factors might have contributed, according to Isiksal, to the US students' higher levels of intrinsic motivation or autonomy, compared to their Turkish counterparts. The same might have been true for the UK participants in the current research.

The research conducted by Isiksal (2010) is also important in the context of the present thesis because of the data which *do not correspond* to the findings collected from the

Ecuadorian and UK participants. Specifically, although the Turkish participants scored lower on the intrinsic components of the AMS than the US students at the onset of their studies, those scores ‘were almost the same in their second year and Turkish undergraduates had higher scores in their last two years of university education when compared to their US counterparts’ (p. 579). Furthermore, again in contrast to the present research, the representatives of individualist self-construal (the US students) reported higher extrinsic scores compared to their collectivist counterparts (the Turkish students) throughout their university years.

From this perspective, the analysis of the Turkish and American data in their totality shows that collectivist self-construal can, indeed, depress intrinsic motivation and autonomy, but this effect is of limited duration. In the context of Turkish collectivism, the effect seems to have disappeared as a discriminating factor by the second year of studies. To put this differently, the researcher’s argument that the Turkish society’s collectivist tendencies hinder intrinsic motivation or autonomy might be valid, but only at the onset of participants’ university studies.

This is an area where Isiksal’s study differs from the present study. The collectivist argument proposed by Isiksal to explain the first year findings collected from the Turkish sample remains relevant throughout the whole university experience for the Ecuadorian students in the current research. As the description of the Ecuadorian samples demonstrates (Section 5.1.1.1) none of the students was enrolled in the first year of study. Still, despite this, the Ecuadorian students continued to score lower on the intrinsic scales and higher on the extrinsic scales than their UK counterparts.

Again, all the collected data provide thus a strong argument for conducting more research in various collectivist contexts before any definitive conclusions about the relationship between self-construal and individual autonomy can be drawn (Matsumoto, 1999). The data also suggest the studied phenomena might have their own, culturally-mediated relationship within the higher education context.

As the comparison of Isiksal's (2010) study to the present research indicates, the extent of differences in autonomy between a collectivist sample and an individualist sample might be dependent on the very strength of collectivism in the former. Collectivist features are not as strongly entrenched in Turkish as in Ecuadorian society (Hofstede, 2001) and, consequently, the disparity in the levels of educational autonomy between the Turkish collectivist culture and the individualist culture (the US students) does not persist throughout the university experience. This disparity remains significant, however, when a much stronger collectivist culture of Ecuador is compared to the individualist culture, such as the UK.

Overall, the analysis of these two research studies demonstrates that an overly general discussion of collectivism and individualism is inadequate fully to address the issue of individual autonomy. Although Turkey - just as Ecuador or Asian societies - is classified under the umbrella of collectivism, the relative importance of autonomy might be different in Turkey than in Ecuador or, for that matter, in Asian countries. Again, Matsumoto's (1999) call for more research in South American and African nations appears warranted.

Finally, some of the studies already discussed in depth in the Literature Review Chapter also signal an inverse relationship between low individualism and autonomy. As Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 224) write, collectivist self-construal emphasizes 'attending

to and fitting in with others and the importance of harmonious interdependence with them'. In other words, according to these researchers, collectivism is both supportive of low individualism ('fitting in with others') and *simpatia* ('harmonious interdependence'). Furthermore, the researchers also suggest that because of those characteristics, assertion of autonomy is less pronounced among people coming from collectivist cultural contexts. As they write (1991, p.227), 'understanding of one's autonomy as secondary to, and constrained by, the primary task of interdependence distinguishes interdependent selves from independent selves, for whom autonomy and its expression is often afforded primary significance.' This line of argument again suggests that the comparatively lower level of individual autonomy among the Ecuadorian participants is partially attributable to the general cultural features of this South American country. Low individualism and subscribing to the cultural script *simpatia* clash with assertion of autonomy in the Ecuadorian context. As a result, this need is less pronounced in this country than in the UK.

Two aspects are important to address at this point. First, the comparatively lower level of autonomy among the Ecuadorian participants relates specifically to the individual version of autonomy. In other words, it relates to 'I' as a subject, and this type of autonomy is, indeed, strongly associated with independence (Rudy et al., 2007). On the other hand - as already discussed in Section 2.3.5, autonomy can also mean 'genuinely identifying' with a given behaviour, which might or might not clash with independence. For instance, obeying traffic rules might be a fully autonomous decision, although at some level it clashes with independence. Therefore, the data in this sub-section point only to the higher level of the sub-type of autonomy that is identified with independence but does not determine the overall level of autonomy. The instrument employed to collect the present research data (the

Individual Academic Motivation Scale, Vallerand et al., 1992) uses ‘I’ as a subject of motivation and, as a result, explicitly inclusive motivation (‘we’ as a subject) or ‘autonomous interdependence’ might have been lost. This type of autonomy – arguably more beneficial to collectivist contexts (Rudy et al., 2007) - was analyzed in relation to the Inclusive Academic Motivation Scale in Section 4.1.2.2.

Furthermore, the lower level of individual autonomy in the Ecuadorian samples does not signify that this type of autonomy is less crucial to the emotional well-being of these South American participants. All that the present discussion says is that there is a difference in the levels of individual autonomy and that there are some cultural factors behind this difference. To use an analogy, different nutritional levels of two individuals do not mean that food and nutrients are of different importance to the health status of each of them. That is why a direct relationship between two aspects – in this case, individual autonomy and emotional needs – will be addressed separately by a direct correlation analysis.

7.1.1.2 South American educational features

The disparity in the levels of individual autonomy might have also resulted from the higher level of pedagogical pressures - compared to the UK participants - which Ecuadorian students receive during their studies. A top-down pedagogical approach, greater rigidity of curricula, and the more hierarchical societal structure all mitigate against the development of autonomous tendencies in South American students (Marin and Triandis, 1985; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002).

Indeed, it could be argued that a top-down pedagogical approach on its own – apart from the collectivist context of Ecuador – contributes to lowering the level of student autonomy. Certainly, the two factors potentially detrimental to the assertion of autonomy –

collectivist self-construal and a top-down pedagogical approach – happen to co-exist in the case of Ecuador, but each contributes on its own to the net level of autonomy. The possibility of the independent and inter-dependent influence of those two factors is something that is often not considered in cross-cultural research. Self-construal, be it collectivist or individualist, is viewed to be such a powerful and overriding cultural feature that other aspects within a given culture might not be adequately considered in autonomy-related research (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000).

In reality, however, crediting solely a given self-construal for having an impact on the level of autonomy addresses only a part of the picture. For instance, the research conducted by Levesque et al., (2004) demonstrates that the influence of pedagogical approaches is independent of cultural self-construal. In this study, the researchers compared university students from the US and Germany, the two countries that are argued to have similar individualist self-construal:

‘In the present investigation, the debate surrounding the crosscultural relevance of autonomy appears somewhat less central because many cultural theorists consider Germany and the United States to be similar in terms of their cultural orientations. For instance, both can similarly be characterized along dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and vertical versus horizontal orientations (Triandis, 1997)’ (Levesque et al., p. 69).

Therefore, the two countries ‘are interesting to compare, not because of the cultural backdrops, as much as for the differences in the structure of university education’ (p. 69). As far as this issue is concerned, the researchers saw substantial differences between the US and Germany:

‘...German students seem to experience fewer constraints and external regulations throughout their studies. For example, although German students are often encouraged to attend lectures, attendance is not required (Gellert, 1993)... The oral examinations held at the end of the German studies typically focus on

conceptual learning as well as students' ability to transfer this knowledge to other areas' (p.70).

In this context, the researchers expected that any differences in the levels of autonomy would be attributable to the differences in the educational systems. They also hypothesised that due to 'less ongoing pressure' and 'more freedom to self-organize their studies', German students would be more autonomous in their approach to higher education (p. 79).

Indeed, notwithstanding the similar cultural self-construal, the German students displayed higher levels of educational autonomy. Furthermore, the trend applied to each of the four universities enrolled in the study. Finally, the researchers used the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Ryan and Connell, 1989) to measure autonomy. This scale also sub-divides human motivation in accordance with the individual Academic Motivation Scale (the AMS) and thus provides a similar estimation of individual autonomy as the AMS used in the present research.

Because of those factors, Levesque et al.'s arguments apply to the discussion of the quantitative data in the present research. An independent effect of the educational systems on the levels of autonomy found in Levesque et al.'s (2004) study supports the argument that the differences in autonomy levels between the Ecuadorian and UK participants in the current research may also be attributable to pedagogical factors. If anything, the effect of the education system is, probably, even more pronounced in the present research. Although the German and American educational systems, indeed, differ, at least 'both German and American students largely choose their own curricula and are responsible for planning their studies.' (p. 70). The same mostly applies to the UK students but not to students from Universidad Catolica and Universidad Central (Weko, 2004, Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008). In those Ecuadorian universities, students largely follow a uniform study format from

enrolment to graduation. As a result, in the context of Ecuador, it could be argued that the contribution of a top-down pedagogical approach in lowering individual autonomy may be substantial and independent of the country's collectivist factors. This hypothesis was not, however, tested in the quantitative component. Instead, it was expected that the planned focus groups might illuminate this issue.

Overall, the above analysis points to the importance of disentangling potential independent variables in the cross-cultural analysis of the importance of autonomy. Although cultural self-construal is, indeed, of crucial importance in this context, educational aspects can also play a part in influencing levels of student autonomy. Furthermore, those educational aspects do not always mirror the cultural orientation in a given society. For instance, Singapore and Ecuador can be considered collectivist societies since they both score toward the lower range on Hofstede's (2001) *Individualism Dimension*. Singaporean university students - just as their Ecuadorian counterparts - also lag behind students from individualist Western societies in terms of individual autonomy. For example, the disparity between the Ecuadorian and UK university students found in the present research corresponds to the results from Rudy et al.'s (2007) study, where Singaporean participants scored lower than European Canadian students on a similar measurement of individual autonomy.

However, apart from those similarities, there are also important differences between Ecuador and Singapore that can have an impact on generating autonomy. Specifically, although both countries espouse collectivism, their educational systems are strikingly different. In Ecuador, a top-down pedagogical approach, uniformity, and passive subjugation to teacher-driven curricula can be seen as an extension of South American

collectivist self-construal that is based on *paternismo* and *simpatia*. In Singapore, on the other hand, the educational system demands creativity and achievement from students to the point of encouraging fierce competition among them, a tendency clearly clashing with the South American preference for *simpatia*.

An initiative launched in Singapore in 1997, *Thinking school, Learning nation* explicitly focused on aspects that are, at least theoretically, associated with the most progressive Western educational systems (Economist, March 29, 1997). Key features of this initiative included: '(1) the explicit teaching of critical and creative thinking skills; (2) the reduction of subject content; (3) the revision of assessment modes, (4) a greater emphasis on processes instead of on outcomes' (Tan, 2000, p. 7). Even if the full implementation of the initiative might take some time, there is at least explicit support for changes at the political level, something that is still lacking in Ecuador (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008). The private Universidad de San Francisco -the only university in Ecuador that openly promotes students' independence, student-centered classrooms, and choice of curriculum – has been recently criticised by President Rafael Correa for not following sufficiently the rigid principles developed by the Ministry of Education (El Comercio, 2010, July 16).

Overall, it could be argued that, in Ecuador, collectivist self-construal and the prescriptive educational system go hand in hand, and both affect autonomy in the same direction. The net level of autonomy is thus the result of cumulative, one-directional impact of those two factors. In Singapore, however, the diminishing effect of collectivist self-construal on the assertion of autonomy is mitigated by the educational philosophy, which, in essence, fosters and promotes individual achievement. Therefore, again, it is important to refrain from viewing collectivist nations as a monolithic group, and self-construal as the

only factor affecting autonomy. Although, the research comparing South Korea, China, Japan or Singapore with Western countries is helpful in establishing cross-cultural differences in the importance of autonomy, it is not sufficient. It needs to be complemented by research conducted in those collectivist countries in which the relationship between self-construal and educational achievement is different than in Asian societies. Ecuador is one of those countries.

7.1.1.3 *Familismo and respeto*

The previously analyzed issue of power distance (PDI) also has relevance to the discussion of individual autonomy (Hofstede, 2001). A strong cultural tendency to accept hierarchy in social relations and to subjugate oneself to the demands of others has an adverse effect on asserting autonomy. In the context of Ecuador, subjugating oneself to important others is, in part, a legacy of *familismo*, a cultural script that partly defines South America (Steidel and Contreras, 2003). As described in Section 2.4.3.1, *familismo* refers to placing family ahead of personal interests as well as to making collective decisions with a sense of responsibility for and obligation to the family (Marin and Marin, 1991; Schwartz, 2007). It is likely that strong cultural adherence to this concept clashes with fostering individual autonomy and contributes to the differences between the Ecuadorian and UK samples on the individual AMS scores.

Finally, *respeto* is yet another cultural feature characteristic of South American culture that helps explain the low level of individual RAI in both Ecuadorian samples. As described in Section 2.4.3.1, this concept relates not only to family – as *familismo* does – but also stresses the importance of setting clear boundaries and recognizing one's place in hierarchical relationships in all areas of social, civic, academic, and professional life

(Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). It establishes, for instance, the high social standing of teachers in more hierarchal societies. Since those teachers wield a high degree of largely unchallenged authority over a student, they have a considerable effect in reinforcing the extrinsic component and undermining the intrinsic component of students' motivational orientation. Therefore, the combined effect of the demands from parents (*familismo*) and from teachers (*respeto*) could also have affected Ecuadorian students' lower standing on individual autonomy.

7.1.1.4 Comprehensive effect of the motivational continuum

Looking back at collectivist self-construal and its effect on autonomy, one question comes to the forefront; does the collectivist self-construal prevalent in Ecuador affect each of the motivational sub-categories of the motivational continuum or only some of them? The individual RAI index is, after all, the result of subtracting the weighted extrinsic component (external regulation, introjected regulation) of the continuum from the weighted intrinsic component (identified regulation, intrinsic motivation). Therefore, the higher this extrinsic score is, the more effectively will it lower the individual RAI. The opposite effect is exerted by the intrinsic part; the higher it is, the higher the individual RAI. The question remains, which of the components influences Ecuadorian collectivist orientation more?

The data point to a comprehensive effect (Table 6.6). It appears that the collectivist self construal has an opposite effect on the autonomous and controlled sub-types of human motivation. It lowers the former while strengthening the latter. Each of those sub-types was described in depth in Section 2.3.1. As Table 6.6 shows, the Ecuadorian students generally scored lower than their UK counterparts on the more autonomous/intrinsic components (indINTRI, indIDEN) and higher on the more controlled components (indINTRO, indEXT).

Therefore, in the context of the index, the autonomy-undermining effect was all the more pronounced.

This index - described in greater detail in the presentation of the results of quantitative analysis in Section 6.1.2.1 – is, after all, the result of the following equation: $(2 \times \text{intrinsic motivation}) + (\text{identified regulation}) - (\text{introjected regulation}) - (2 \times \text{external regulation})$. That is why, not only the purely external regulatory aspects discussed before - such as fear of punishment, tangible rewards, sanctioning, financial dependence as well as top-down pedagogical and familial relations – contribute to depressing individual RAI in the Ecuadorian samples. As Table 6.6 shows, introjected motivation defined by such factors as a sense of shame and a need to please others (Deci and Ryan, 2000) tends to be higher in those samples, which in the context of the index also has a lowering effect on the individual RAI.

This comparatively high level of introjected regulation in the collectivist society should not come as a surprise. As Hofstede (2001, p.235) writes, in regards to ‘shame’ ‘in the collectivist classroom, the virtues of harmony and the maintenance of face reign supreme. Confrontations and conflicts should be avoided, or at least so formulated as not to hurt anyone: neither teachers nor students should lose face.’ As far as pleasing teachers is concerned, on the other hand, Lepper et al., (2005, p. 193) state the following in their cross-cultural study of learning and motivation:

‘Notably, the correlation between intrinsic motivation and a desire to please one’s teacher was actually positive for Asian American children but—as expected—negative for Caucasian children. For children of Asian descent, pleasing others appears not to be inherently oppositional to seeking challenge, being curious, and desiring independent mastery.’

The same might be true for the Ecuadorian students. The extrinsic motivation to have good grades is thus not only externally regulated by fear of punishment, sanctioning, or the

expectations of tangible rewards, but also stems from the more internalized introjected motivation to please teachers and parents as well as to avoid shame or losing face. Of course, those factors are also present in individualist societies, but possibly to a lesser degree (Hofstede, 2001). That is why, apart from external regulation, the high introjected regulation among the Ecuadorian participants might explain the lower level of individual autonomy found in the collectivist samples.

It appears, therefore, that it is the combination of the attributes assessed by the individual subscales working together that explains the statistically significant difference between the UK students' individual RAI means and those of the Ecuadorian students. Although on each of the subscales, the Ecuadorian participants scored lower than their British counterparts in terms of autonomy, those differences were not statistically significant. In combination with one another, however, they contributed to a marked and statistically significant difference.

To summarize then, the data indicate that the collective self-construal has an autonomy-undermining effect that is expressed within each of the subscales rather than any one of them in particular. Increasing overall autonomy among the collectivist students – if such a goal is deemed conducive to fostering well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000) – would thus require a comprehensive approach. Lowering extrinsic regulation and increasing intrinsic motivation would need to be accompanied by decreasing introjected regulation and strengthening identified regulation.

Altogether, the data from the individual RAIs give support to the argument that the strength of the drive toward self-actualization and individuality displayed by the levels of individual autonomy might be culturally dependent, as argued by cross-cultural opponents

of SDT (Markus and Kitayma, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999). On the other hand, the fact that the actual net level of individual autonomy might be different in individualist versus collectivist cultures does not openly clash with SDT's principles. What SDT says is that *the emotional benefits of individual autonomy* are universally equal and not that the level of individual autonomy is necessarily uniform across cultures. Again, the parallel with the relative availability of nutrition versus its universal necessity becomes relevant. In other words, the differences in the level of individual RAI seen in this study again demonstrate that the cultural construal is a powerful factor in fostering or constraining individual autonomy. Whether this cultural construal also affects the proposed emotional benefits or importance of individual autonomy cannot be established from only this set of data.

7.1.1.5 Comparison with methodologically similar research

An additional interpretation of the differences in the RAIs can be drawn by comparing the present research with another study that used similar data collection instruments. In Rudy et al.'s (2007) study, as in the present case, the means for the individual RAI were lower in the collectivist samples (Chinese Canadians and Singaporean students) than in the individualist sample (European Canadians). The authors stated that the Chinese Canadian participants reported 'feeling less autonomous and agentic in their individually based behavior' (p. 992). By way of interpretation and as a basis for forming their hypotheses, the researchers assumed that 'that Chinese and/or Asian immigrant children feel a great deal of pressure to succeed academically, and are more fearful of parental reactions to academic failure than children from non-Asian groups (Chung, Walkey, & Bemak, 1997; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992)' (2007, p. 988).

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the present research, especially in light of the already discussed *familismo* and *respeto*, as well as in the context of Ecuador's standing on Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensions.

7.1.1.6 Maslow's (1943) need-gratification theory

The Ecuadorian samples' lower scores on the individual autonomy index, compared to the UK sample, can also be interpreted by going back to Maslow's (1943) need-gratification theory. In accordance with this theory, human beings focus on having their lower needs fulfilled before they move on to higher needs. Physiological needs precede safety needs, which, in turn, precede love needs (affection, belonging) and esteem needs (self-respect, freedom or autonomy), while self-actualization needs are realized last. In the context of Ecuador being poorer and less economically stable than the UK, it is possible that the participants from this South American country have a greater preoccupation with the lower level needs than their British counterparts.

A direct relationship between Maslow's theory and extrinsic motivation is further strengthened by the way safety needs are defined. In accordance with the need-gratification theory, safety needs encompass such aspects as employment, family, and property (Oishi et al., 1999). They are, therefore, related to external or extrinsic components of human motivational orientation and can directly decrease individual levels of autonomy. Such an interpretation gains strength when we distinguish between the two Ecuadorian samples. Although both Universidad Catolica students and Universidad Central students scored lower than the UK students in terms of individual autonomy, the difference was more marked for Universidad Central: the score for the Universidad Catolica was (-0.02), but was (-0.19) for Universidad Central (Table 6.4).

It is therefore possible that the generally lower socio-economic status of Universidad Central students - discussed in Section 2.4.4.4 - and, consequently, their greater preoccupation with extrinsic safety needs contributed to their scoring the lowest in terms of the individual RAI.

On the other hand, however, it is an assumption not fully substantiated by the present research. Although, Universidad Central students indeed scored lower than Universidad Católica students, the independent t-test demonstrated that the difference between the universities did not reach statistical significance. It is thus important to address this issue in future research studies conducted, preferably, with larger samples to see if collected results will indicate statistically significant differences, which reflect socio-economic security.

7.1.1.7 Cross-cultural research on well-being

Finally, the data indicating differences in levels of individual autonomy can also be explained in the context of the cross-cultural studies on well-being already discussed in the Literature Review Chapter. Those studies demonstrate that people living in collectivist countries generally score lower for subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1995). One explanation for this phenomenon is the lower level of individual autonomy in those collectivist countries. Therefore, indirect support for differences in individual RAIs could also be argued by interpreting the findings of those cross-cultural studies on well-being from a SDT perspective. In essence, since individual autonomy is proposed to correlate positively with subjective well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2000), and since collectivist countries score lower on well-being than individualist countries (Veenhoven, 1991; Diener et al., 1995; McMahon, 2006), the level of individual autonomy should be lower in collectivist countries.

This argument cannot be fully addressed here, however. It requires first determining if, indeed, individual autonomy independently correlates positively with subjective well-being, especially in light of the confounding factors associated with a direct cross-cultural comparison of individualist and collectivist countries. As already discussed in Section 2.1.1, people living in rich countries, such as the individualistic UK, score higher on subjective well-being, which makes it difficult to establish whether it is financial security or self-construal that contributes to the differences in subjective well-being.

7.1.1.8 Conclusion

The data discussed in this section are related to the first question that the quantitative study intended to address:

Is individual or self-generated autonomy in the learning process less pronounced in some cultural contexts?

The data indicated that individual autonomy might be less pronounced in collectivist than in individualist cultures. The mean individual RAI score was 1.16 for the UK sample, -.02 for the Catolica sample, and -0.19 for the Central samples (Table 6.4). The difference between the UK sample and the Ecuadorian samples was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Overall, despite some conflicting evidence, there is strong theoretical as well as empirical support for the results on the individual RAI that emerged from this study. The present findings coincide with those of Rudy et al. (2007), whose research was conducted with different collectivist and individualist samples and reflect the assumptions behind Hofstede's (2001) work as well as Maslow's (1954) need-gratification theory. In this respect, the current study contributes therefore to the body of research that argues that collectivist self-construal is less conducive to fostering self-generated autonomy than

individualist self-construal (Markus and Kitayma, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999, Oishi, 2000).

Furthermore, the data show that the impact of a given self-construal might be spread across the motivational spectrum. It appears that the difference between overall autonomy levels becomes statistically significant only when scores on each of the subscales are added. Moreover, apart from a collectivism versus individualism divide, the collected data on the differences in individual autonomy might be interpreted in the context of a top-down pedagogical approach prevalent in Ecuador, although it must be noted that the present study provides no evidence for this association.

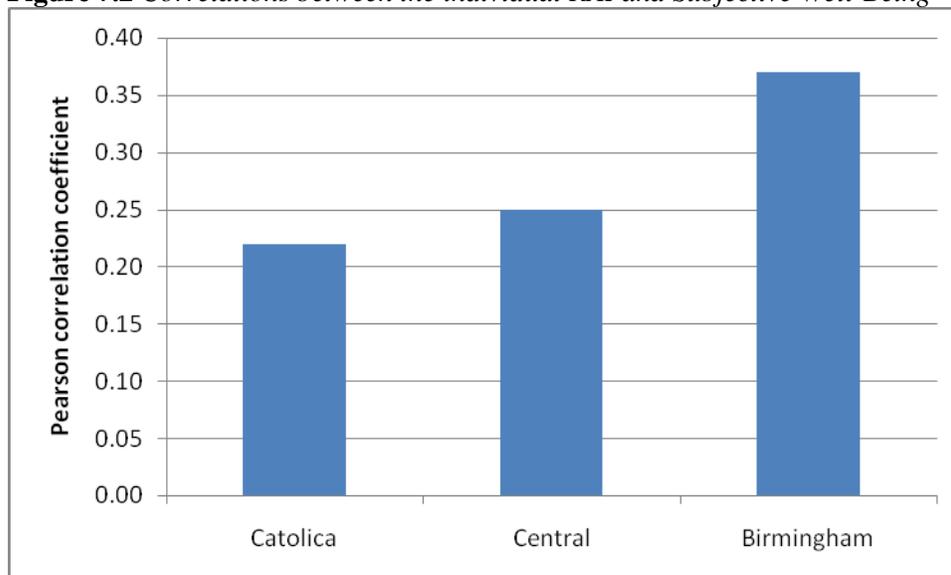
On the other hand, however, this part of the study cannot confirm or disconfirm the argument for the lower emotional importance of autonomy in collectivist contexts proposed by some of the cross-cultural researchers (Oishi, 2000). This is an issue that needs to be addressed separately by a direct correlation analysis.

Finally, the present data can also be interpreted in the context of the cross-cultural studies on well-being. The data show that students from individualist countries generally score higher than students from collectivist countries for well-being, suggesting thus a possibility of an indirect positive relationship between individual autonomy and well-being. It is, however, a very tentative hypothesis that needs first to address and control for such confounding factors as differences in economic wealth (Diener et al., 1995; McMahon, 2006).

7.1.2 The Relationship between individual autonomy and subjective well-being

The research data collected in previous research studies (e.g., Chirkov et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2005; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005; Rudy et al., 2007) point to a universally positive relationship between individual relative autonomy and subjective well-being. Therefore, data were collected to analyze if the potential clash between feelings of individual autonomy and societal pressures to conform might somewhat mitigate the emotional benefits of autonomy for the Ecuadorian participants compared to the British participants. The analysis indicated a positive relationship between the variables in each sample, and did not point to statistically significant differences in the strength of the correlations between University of Birmingham and the Ecuadorian universities (Table 6.7, Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 Correlations between the individual RAI and Subjective Well-Being



7.1.2.1 Overall data

There was a statistically significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and the individual RAI in each tested sample. Although this correlation was stronger in the UK sample (.37) than in both the Universidad Central (.25) and the Universidad Catolica (.20) samples, the z-tests did not show those differences to be statistically significant (Table 6.7).

In this context, the present results resemble those obtained in Rudy et al.'s (2007) cross-

cultural research with European Canadian and Chinese students. In this study, the relationship between individual autonomy and well-being was (0.31) and (0.45) for Chinese and European Canadian students, respectively.

Still, given the lack of quantitative studies dealing with individual autonomy and well-being in South American contexts, it is too early to draw any definite conclusions about the generalisability of the present results. On one level, however, the positive relationship between individual autonomy and subjective well-being across the studied samples found in the present study – as well as in Rudy et al.’s research - seems to contradict the arguments of cross-cultural critics of SDT. As described in the Literature Review Chapter, the central premise of the opponents of SDT is that traditionally defined autonomy (individual autonomy) is less essential in collectivist contexts because it clashes with the dominant interdependent self-construal (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999, 2003; Oishi and Diener, 2001). A quote from Oishi (2000, p.94) appears relevant here:

‘...the degree to which one is living a life close to external standards is a better indicator of life satisfaction in collectivistic nations. Such external contrasts present a sharp contrast with self-determination model of psychological well-being (Ryan, 1996) which posits that individuals are “well” to the extent that they live a life congruent with their internal standards.’

Later in the same article, Oishi states that ‘to the extent that societal goals and individuals’ goals are congruent, striving for individuals’ goals manifests itself as normative behaviour’ (2000, p.104).

Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 242) also describe the dichotomy between autonomy and the collectivist cultural script, and point to the impact of this dichotomy on subjective well-being.

‘For those with independent selves, feeling good about oneself typically requires fulfilling the tasks associated with being an independent self; that is, being unique, expressing one’s inner attributes, and asserting oneself... Instead, [for interdependent selves] feeling about the self should derive from fulfilling the tasks associated with being interdependent with relevant others: belonging, fitting in, occupying one’s proper place, engaging in appropriate action, promoting others’ goals, and maintaining harmony.’

The line of argument based on this suggested dichotomy between autonomy and belonging also finds some support in the cross-cultural research on goals and well-being. As Sagiv and Schwartz (2000, p. 186) write, ‘the fit between the person’s value priorities and the values prevailing in the environment is crucial to well-being.’ Therefore, individuals ‘are likely to experience a positive sense of well-being when they emphasize the same values that prevail in the environment.’ Sagiv and Schwartz’s (2000) study of students from psychology and business departments confirmed this hypothesis. Business students who subscribed to values (benevolence, universalism) which were deemed antithetical to their business department’s predominant values (power, achievement) scored lower on well-being than business students who followed their department’s values (0.34 and 0.36 versus 0.08 and -0.35).

The views of Oishi, Kitayama and Markus as well as Sagiv and Schwartz do not find statistical confirmation in the present research. The positive relationship between individual autonomy and subjective well-being found here finds support, instead, in SDT’s argument about the universal importance of autonomy as well as in findings collected by Rudy et al., (2007). Those findings were, in turn, supportive of some earlier research cited by Rudy et al., (2007). In the discussion part of their study, these researchers put forward an argument which could be equally applied to the presently collected data from the Ecuadorian and British university students:

‘The fact that Chinese Canadian, European Canadian, and Singaporean students’ scores on the individual RAI were all associated with WB is consistent with those of other SDT researchers who have administered measures of relative autonomy to a variety of collectivist samples, that include Brazil, China, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey, ([Chirkov et al., 2003], [Chirkov et al., 2005], [Ryan et al., 2005], [Sheldon et al., 2004] and [Vansteenkiste et al., 2005]; see also [Hayamizu, 1997], [Tanaka and Yamauchi, 2000] and [Yamauchi and Tanaka, 1998]). These researchers have all measured motivation on a continuum as suggested by Deci and Ryan (2000), have all used the pronoun “I” as the subject of their items, and have all shown that higher levels of autonomous (as compared to controlled) motivation are positively associated with WB and positive functioning. The current results reinforce these patterns’ (p. 1001).

And so does the present research. Furthermore, the different collectivist context studied in this thesis both strengthens the universality argument and reiterates that more diverse studies are required before any definitive conclusions about the relationship between autonomy and subjective well-being are reached (Matsumoto, 1999).

There might be a different relationship between the variables in different collectivist contexts. After all, Oishi as well as Markus and Kitayama drew their conclusions about the less pronounced emotional benefits of autonomy in collectivist contexts on the basis of research conducted only in the Asian collectivist societies. As the present research and its findings indicate, however, drawing conclusions about all collectivist cultures from research conducted solely in those Asian cultures might be premature.

The collected data also provide a better elaboration of the issues tentatively addressed in Section 7.1.1.4. As argued within this Section, the lower levels of individual autonomy found in the Ecuadorian samples compared to the UK sample do not signify that the emotional importance of individual autonomy is also lower in the South American context. In other words, it might be misleading to assume that differences in the levels of

individual autonomy between the samples signify differences in the importance of individual autonomy for well-being.

The correlation data support this cautionary interpretation. Although the difference between the Ecuadorian and UK samples' individual autonomy measures was statistically significant (Table 6.4), the difference between the correlations of individual autonomy with subjective well-being in the two countries was not (Table 6.7). To put it differently, individual autonomy might be less predominant in collectivist cultures, but it is no less emotionally beneficial in these cultures. Just as good nutrition is equally important, regardless of its availability in different countries, so might be individual autonomy. Indeed, this is the way that some of SDT leading researchers perceive autonomy. Ryan and Niemiec (2009, p.268) write the following:

‘Like physical needs, psychological needs are argued to be objective rather than merely subjective phenomena...This is analogous to the idea that, regardless of whether or not one subjectively values nutrition, deprivation of it will lead to ill health. Similarly, regardless of whether or not one values autonomy, competence, or relatedness, deprivation of any of these needs has demonstrable impact on growth and wellness.’

Therefore, in this context, the data collected in this study might be argued to indicate that, even in collectivist cultures, asserting individual autonomy is more beneficial to subjective well-being than suppressing this autonomy and conforming to external pressures. In this sense, the data clash with Oishi's (2000, p. 94) statement that ‘the degree to which one is living a life close to external standards is a better indicator of life satisfaction in collectivistic nations.’ Contrary to this statement, SDT-supportive data demonstrate that in collectivist as well as individualist contexts, asserting autonomy - rather than passive fulfillment of ‘external standards’ - leads to higher life satisfaction.

Similarly, Markus and Kitayama's (1991, p. 242) statement that '[for interdependent selves], feeling good about the self should derive from fulfilling the tasks associated with being interdependent with relevant others: belonging, fitting in, occupying one's proper place, engaging in appropriate action, promoting others' goals, and maintaining harmony' is not necessarily true. This statement reflects the culturally preferable behaviour in the collectivist societies. It does not mean, however, that subscribing to this culturally preferable behaviour translates into higher levels of well-being. It can do so, but only when a person – even in a collectivist context – voluntarily and autonomously endorses 'fitting in' or 'occupying one's proper place' (Ryan and Deci, 2003; Chirkov, 2009).

7.1.2.2 Conclusion

The data collected in this part of the study are related to the second question that the quantitative study intended to address:

Do subjective well-being and individual autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

The data demonstrate that, indeed, regardless of the cultural context, individual autonomy is likely to foster subjective well-being. Autonomy can trump culture in enhancing subjective well-being, SDT as well as the data collected here appear to suggest. Indeed, Markus and Kitayama (1991, p.224) might be right in saying that '...in America, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" whereas in Japan, "the nail that stands out gets pounded down."' It does not mean, however, that adhering to the latter ensures higher well-being, even in collectivist Japan. It is, perhaps, in this assertion of SDT that lies most of the controversy associated with this theoretical perspective. By correlating well-being with autonomy, SDT also correlates well-being with subscribing to Western cultural values,

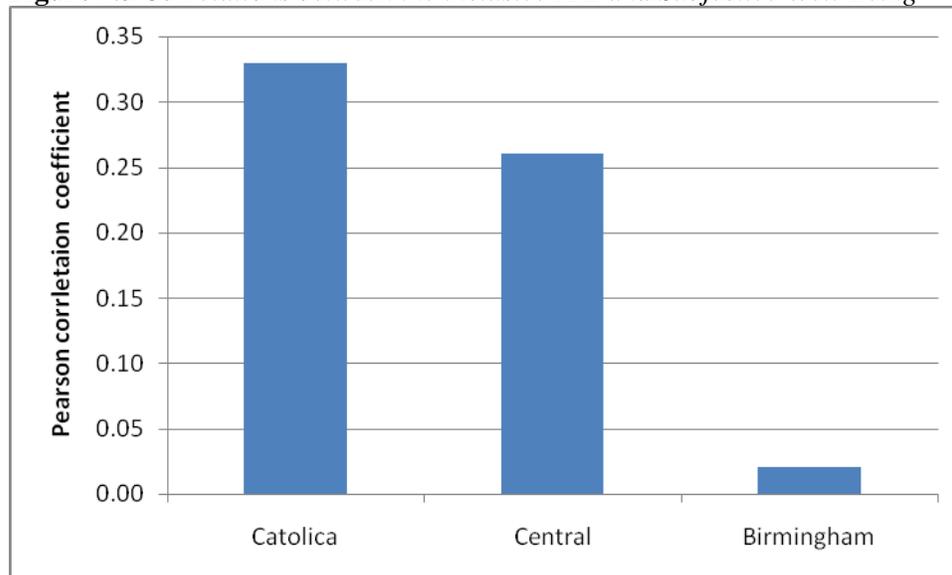
because those cultural values are more supportive of traditionally-understood autonomy than are Asian or South American cultural values. In the historical context of colonies, imperialism, and Western dominance, such a grading of cultures is likely to arouse deep passion (Chirkov, 2009).

It is, however, a largely unnecessary backlash. Although, indeed, individualist Western cultural values are more obviously related to a typically understood autonomy: autonomy as self-assertion or independence, collectivist values can also be achieved through autonomous means. An answer to fulfilling both collectivist cultural prescriptions and autonomy needs lies in inclusive autonomy or 'autonomous interdependence' (Ryan and Deci, 1991, p.272), the concept discussed in greater depth in Section 7.1.3.

7.1.3 The Relationship between inclusive autonomy and subjective well-being

It was expected that the inter-dependence characteristic of the Ecuadorian collectivist self-construal might lead to benefits of the internalized form of autonomy for subjective well-being. On the other hand, the clash between family centrism and the dominant independent self-construal in the UK might place participants subscribing to inclusive autonomy outside the cultural mainstream. Such a cultural marginalization would, in turn, lead to the smaller positive correlation between inclusive autonomy and well-being. In line with those expectations, the collected data demonstrated a stronger relationship between inclusive autonomy and well-being in the Ecuadorian samples than in the UK sample. The relationship was 0.26 for the Central sample, 0.33 for the Catolica sample, and only 0.03 for the UK sample (Table 6.7, Figure 7.3). It appears therefore that in the collectivist contexts inclusive autonomy is both more emotionally beneficial and differently conceptualized than in the individual contexts.

Figure 7.3 *Correlations between the inclusive RAI and Subjective Well-Being*



7.1.3.1 The Ecuadorian samples

For the Ecuadorian samples, the collected data correspond to Rudy et al.'s (2007) findings. In this study, the relationship between inclusive autonomy and well-being was 0.25 for both Chinese Canadians and Singaporean students. The present data reinforce, therefore, the argument for emotional benefits of internalized or inclusive autonomy in collectivist cultures and point to the importance of distinguishing between independence and autonomy, the distinction that is at the core of the SDT framework (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

In terms of the second aspect, South America culture appears to value interdependence over independence as the research on *familismo*, *simpatia*, and *respeto* demonstrates (Triandis et al., 1984; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002, Schwartz, 2007). The cultural sanctioning of familial subjugation, fitting in, and respecting hierarchy is also evident in the research by Hofstede (2001). However, in the present study, individual autonomy correlated positively with subjective well-being even in this highly collectivist

cultural context (Table 6.7). Therefore, if autonomy is to remain a universal value (Ryan and Deci, 2000), it needs to be realized in different ways in different cultures.

Reviewing SDT's concept of autonomy might help to address this issue. As explained in Literature Review Chapter, autonomous motivation is asserted for an individual when 'behavior is experienced as willingly enacted and when he or she fully endorses the actions in which he or she is engaged and/or values expressed by them' (Chirkov et al., 2003, p. 272). In other words, as Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 330) write, autonomy 'concerns the extent to which people genuinely concur with the forces that do influence their behavior'. It is thus possible to be dependent on important others and autonomous at the same time (Kagitcibasi, 2005). When a given person genuinely endorses the values of others, those values become indistinguishable from his or her own, and 'autonomous interdependence' takes place (Ryan and Deci, 1991, p.272). It is this inner endorsement or internalization that provides an alternative path to autonomy and makes all the difference in distinguishing autonomous from non-autonomous behaviour.

Indeed, the possibility of internalized or inclusive autonomy was even acknowledged by cross-cultural critics of SDT. As Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 229) write in their famous article, 'the goals of others may become so focal in consciousness that the goals of others may be experienced as personal goals.' Although those authors and other cross-cultural critics of SDT do not see this merging of the goals of others and personal goals as 'proper' autonomy, it is autonomy, nevertheless, because – in accordance with SDT's concept of internalization - a clash between the inner and outer perspective no longer exists.

7.1.3.2 The correlation between the individual and inclusive RAIs

Do the obtained data provide, however, some additional substantiation of SDT's claim that it is internalized autonomy or 'autonomous interdependence' that accounts for a positive association between inclusive autonomy and subjective well-being in collectivist cultures? To put this differently, what data in the present study point to positive emotional consequences taking place once external factors are fully internalized in collectivist samples? Furthermore, what data suggest different internalization patterns of external factors in the individualist versus collectivist samples? These are crucial questions. SDT's claim that autonomy – regardless of how is realized – is universally beneficial can only be supported if the data demonstrate both genuine internalization of external influences in collectivist cultures and beneficial consequence of this internalization.

One of the ways to determine whether there is a different relationship between internalized autonomy (inclusive RAI) and subjective well-being in collectivist versus individualist cultures is to compare how internalized and individual autonomy correlate with each other in those cultural contexts. A greater positive correlation between the two versions of autonomy would indicate a greater of internalization or self-endorsement of a given behaviour (Deci and Ryan, 1991). The present research has made such a comparison. The cross-correlations of the RAI indices showed that the correlation between the variables was much stronger in both Ecuadorian samples than in the UK sample (Table 6.7). In term of the z-tests, the difference between the Central sample and the UK sample was statistically significant ($z = 3.62, p < 0.01$) and the difference between the Catolica sample and the UK sample was also statistically significant ($z = 4.29, p < 0.01$).

It appears that for the Ecuadorian participants both types of autonomy merge to a higher degree than for the UK participants. Indirectly - as the result of this high degree of overlap - these data indicate that for the Ecuadorian samples inclusive autonomy played a more decisive role in explaining the positive relationship between individual autonomy and subjective well-being. As explained in Section 7.1.2, a positive relationship between individual autonomy and well-being was found in each of the studied samples. However, the fact that in the Ecuadorian sample, inclusive autonomy correlated very strongly with individual autonomy suggests the possibility of a culturally-distinct relationship between those variables. It also reinforces the argument for greater emotional benefits of inclusive autonomy in collectivist cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). In other words, following Deci and Ryan's (1991, 2000) argument, autonomy still contributes to well-being, although it might be differently conceived in the collectivist contexts.

Interestingly, however, similar differences in the strength of the cross-correlations were not found by Rudy et al.'s (2007) methodologically similar study. In this research, the cross-correlations between the individual and inclusive RAIs were of comparable strength in both the individualist sample (European Canadians) and the collectivist samples (Chinese and Singaporeans). It is too early to draw any definite conclusions from the disparity in the collected results. Arguably, this disparity might point to a different relationship between autonomy and well-being in Asian and South American societies. If so, Matsumoto's (1999) and Chirkov et al.'s (2003) call for more diversified research gains urgency. Indeed, collectivist self-construal might not be as monolithic or one-dimensional as it is often portrayed, and more research is needed in order better to distinguish how particular versions and features of collectivism affect the interactions between variables.

7.1.3.3 *The correlation between the individual and inclusive autonomous facets*

There are, however, already more data in the present study that point to a different conceptualization of inclusive autonomy in collectivist cultures. Firstly, an analysis of the cross-correlations between the intrinsic components of the individual RAI (indINTRI) and the intrinsic components of the inclusive RAI (incluINTRI) shows that those correlations are stronger in the Ecuadorian than the UK samples (Table 6.9, 6.10, and 6.11). The difference between Universidad Central and the University of Birmingham was marginally statistically significant ($z = 1.58$, $p < 0.06$), while the difference between Universidad Catolica and University of Birmingham was statistically significant ($z = 4.05$, $p < 0.05$). On the measurement level, these data signify that there was a greater positive correlation in the Ecuadorian samples between the intrinsic items on both scales. For example, there was, generally, a stronger positive correlation in the South American samples between such intrinsic items on the respective scales as:

Why do you go to university?

Because we believe, in my family, that our studies allow us to continue to learn about many things that interest us. (incluINTRI)

and

Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me. (indINTI)

In essence, it was easier for Ecuadorian participants to endorse the beliefs of their family members to the point that those beliefs became those participants' own autonomous beliefs. Following Ryan and Deci's (1991; 2000) broad definition of autonomy, the Ecuadorian participants found it easier to become 'autonomously interdependent', which again explains benefits in well-being associated with this type of autonomy in the collectivist culture.

7.1.3.4 The correlation between the individual autonomous and controlled facets

There are still more findings showing a different degree of internalization of the influences of others between the two cultures. These come from an analysis of the relationships between the individual autonomous facet and the individual controlled facet (Table 6.12). In the UK sample, the correlation between these variables was 0.23. On the other hand, this correlation was 0.58 and 0.51 for Universidad Central and Universidad Catolica, respectively. In terms of z-tests, the differences between the correlation found in the UK sample and the correlations found in the Ecuadorian samples were significant for both the comparison with Universidad Catolica ($z = 2.06, p < 0.05$) and for the comparison with Universidad Central ($z = 2.63, p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, the correlations between the most intrinsic individual subscale (intrinsic motivation) and the most extrinsic individual subscale (extrinsic regulation) were of different strength in the two different cultural contexts (Table 6.14). In the UK sample, the correlation was 0.11, whereas it was 0.37 for Universidad Central and 0.35 for Universidad Catolica. The differences between the UK and the Ecuadorian samples were marginally significant in the case of Universidad Catolica ($z = 1.60, p < 0.06$) and statistically significant in the case of Universidad Central ($z = 1.71, p < 0.05$).

All these findings point to a different and culturally-mediated relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The non-significant correlation between the two variables seen in the UK sample indicates that autonomy is a need that is largely self-generated and independent of external influences. On the other hand, the strong correlation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in both Ecuadorian samples indicates that these motivational orientations are more closely correlated in the collectivist culture.

7.1.3.5 The two dimensions of autonomy

An argument that autonomy can be differently construed and that it can flourish despite the significant positive correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations also finds support in research by Kagitcibasi (2005). As already explained in greater detail in the Literature Review Chapter, Kagitcibasi argues that autonomy is compatible with interdependence, especially in collectivist contexts. To reiterate briefly, she proposes to split autonomy into two independent dimensions: the first of which is called the ‘interpersonal distance’ dimension and defines the degree of distancing of self from others and ranges from separateness (independence) to relatedness (dependence). It demonstrates how closely a given person is connected with others, but it does not reveal if - in everyday situations - this person follows a path that was self-endorsed (an autonomous path). The second dimension, ‘agency’, defines the true level of autonomous behaviour and ranges from autonomy to heteronomy. It determines the presence of autonomy depending on whether an individual genuinely endorses his or her behaviour, regardless of whether this behaviour originated from external influences. For instance, if an impetus for a given action originates from important others, but an individual fully endorses this action, he or she behaves in an autonomous fashion. It is thus only this second dimension – agency - that reflects SDT’s view of autonomy because it explicitly links this need to the self-endorsed views of an individual.

This two-dimensional concept of autonomy proposed by Kagitcibasi (2005) throws some light on the data collected from the Ecuadorian samples. From this perspective, the participants whose scores on the intrinsic subscales were highly correlated with their scores on the extrinsic subscales exemplify Kagitcibasi’s dualistic concept of human autonomy.

Scoring high on both extrinsic and intrinsic subscales indicates a high score on the ‘interpersonal distance’ dimension and a high score on the ‘agency’ dimension. Since both dimensions are independent of each other, and only the second represents SDT’s version of autonomy, the Ecuadorian students who scored accordingly would still display a high level of autonomy.

Overall, the collected data strengthen SDT’s view that differences between cultures are related not so much to the importance of autonomy for fostering well-being but, instead, to the process through which various forms of autonomy are generated (Chirkov et al., 2002). It is possible that in collectivist cultures autonomy is, to a greater degree, the result of genuine acceptance of inter-dependence and a full internalization of external influences. The process leads to the emergence of inclusive autonomy, and this form of autonomy’s positive correlation with subjective well-being indicates, in turn, that autonomy - as a multi-faceted concept (Kagitcibasi, 2005) - might indeed be universally beneficial to subjective well-being.

7.1.3.6 The correlations between the AMS subscales

Empirical data from some of the other studies conducted in both individualist and collectivist cultures are consistent with the present research and its interpretation. These data are related to the individual Academic Motivation Scale, whose shorter version served as a measurement instrument in the present study. Of these studies that attempted to validate the AMS, two seem most relevant. Both of these looked at the correlations among the subscales. The first, (Fairchild et al., 2005), was conducted with American college students, while the second, (Nunez et al., 2006), had Paraguayan students as participants.

In those studies, as in the present research, the correlations between extrinsic and intrinsic components of motivation were of different strength, depending on cultural construal. In the more individualist American sample, the correlations between the measures of extrinsic regulation and the three intrinsic motivation subscales were 0.11, 0.05, and 0.21. For the collectivist Paraguayan sample, those correlations were 0.30, 0.39, and 0.32. In the present study, the correlations between individual external regulation (IndEXT) and individual intrinsic motivation (IndINTRI) were 0.11 for the UK sample and 0.37 and 0.35 for the Central and Catolica samples, respectively (Table 6.14).

These results have implication for the present study. In both cases, the relationship between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation was stronger in the collectivist samples (Paraguay and Ecuador) than in the individualist samples (the United States and the UK). The resemblance between the two studies reinforces thus the argument that the two seemingly clashing motivational orientations are much more closely related to each other in collectivist cultures. In this context, the current thesis provides further support for the argument that autonomy can be the result of internalization, especially in collectivist contexts, and that such autonomy correlates positively with subjective well-being. In essence, the freshly collected data support SDT's view that an alternative form of autonomy does exist and it is beneficial to well-being in collectivist cultural contexts.

7.1.3.7 The British sample

The data obtained from the British sample demonstrate a different relationship between inclusive autonomy and subjective well-being than the one found in the Ecuadorian samples. The lack of the positive relationship between the variables is, however, consistent with the findings from Rudy et al. (2007). As in the present thesis, in this earlier research it was only

the individual RAI that was associated positively with life satisfaction in the case of the Western sample (European Canadians). In Rudy et al.'s research the correlation between the inclusive RAI and life satisfaction was 0.01 for the European Canadian sample, whereas in the present study the association between the inclusive RAI and life satisfaction was 0.03 for the British sample.

In terms of interpreting the individualist culture's data, an argument put forward by Rudy and his collaborators (2007) also appears relevant to the present study. In the discussion of their findings, Rudy et al., (2007) write that 'in cultures where individualism is normative, inclusive autonomy may actually be problematic once individual autonomy is taken into account; such family-centrism may place the individual outside the cultural mainstream' (2007, p. 1002).

Indeed, the same phenomenon might apply to the UK sample of university students. In essence, the argument goes back to the question of congruence between individual values and societal values (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). As Sagiv and Schwartz (2000, p. 194) argue, individuals 'are likely to experience a positive sense of well-being when they emphasize the same values that prevail in their environment.' In the case of Ecuadorian students, inclusive autonomy - rather than individual autonomy - accounted for well-being, because, it could be argued, it reflected 'family-centrism' that is normative in South American collective cultures.

The converse is true for individualist societies. In Western cultural contexts, the incongruence between a given person's family-centrism and the prevalent individualist cultural script can create an emotional conflict. This conflict might explain the correlations found in the UK sample in the present study as well as in the European Canadian sample by

Rudy et al. (2007). As Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 242) write, for individuals ‘with independent selves, feeling good about oneself typically requires fulfilling the tasks associated with being an independent self; that is, being unique, expressing one’s inner attributes, and asserting oneself’. These attributes run against the essence of inclusive autonomy which is reflected in high scores on items containing ‘my family and I’ as subject. Therefore, adhering to family-centrism in the face of antithetical cultural signals can generate an inner conflict in the individual who was brought up in the Western society and, consequently, a conflict which can lead to reduction in life satisfaction.

7.1.3.8 Conclusion

The data collected in this part of the study are related to the third question that the quantitative study intended to address:

Do subjective well-being and inclusive autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

The data demonstrated that the relationship between the variables might be dependent of cultural self-construal. In a collectivist society, such as Ecuador, this relationship is likely to be positive because high interdependence characteristic of this society is conducive to the emergence of inclusive autonomy (Bontempo et al., 1990; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Rudy et al., 2007). Furthermore, the approval of high interdependence and its prevalence in the Ecuadorian society (Hofstede, 1980) render inclusive autonomy socially acceptable, which, in turn, can contribute to its positive relationship with subjective well-being.

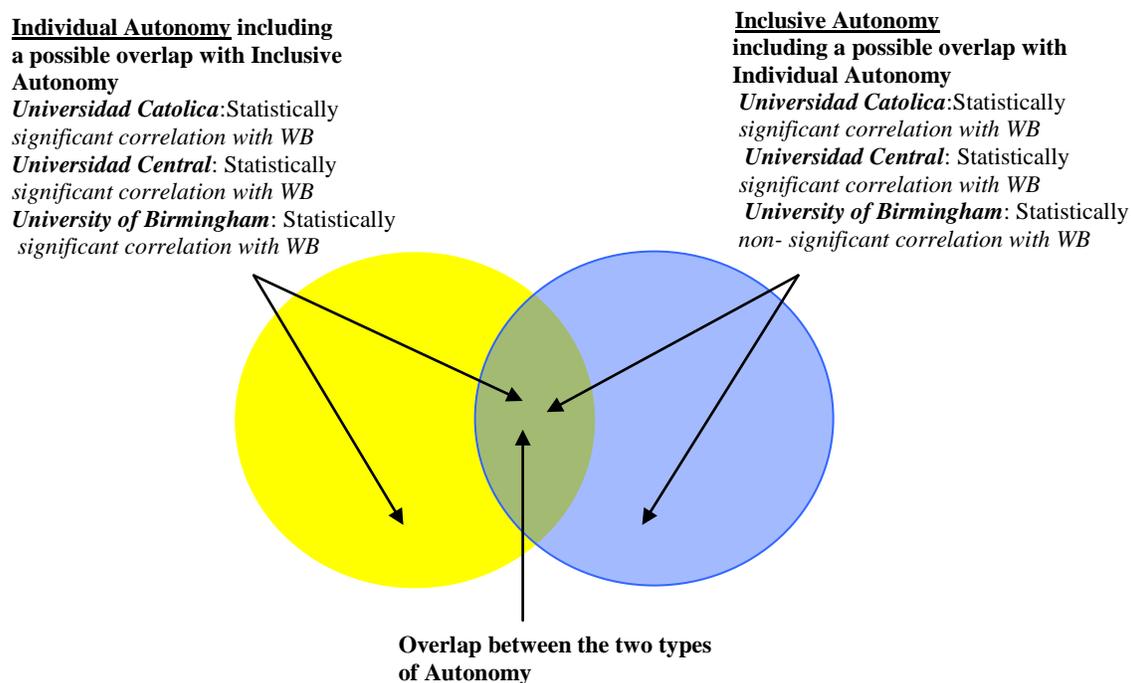
On the other hand, however, in individualist cultures, such as the UK, inclusive autonomy might not be conducive to fostering subjective well-being. The present study’s similar findings to these of Rudy et al. (2007) increase the confidence placed in this

hypothesis. It is possible that the clash between the family-centrism characteristic of inclusive autonomy and the dominant independent self-construal in the British society (Hofstede, 2001) places participants who are subscribing to inclusive autonomy outside the cultural mainstream (Rudy et al., 2007). Such a feeling of cultural marginalization can, in turn, lead to negating any benefits that might be associated with genuine internalization of external influences.

Overall, therefore, it appears that in contrast to the universal benefits of individual autonomy, inclusive autonomy might be a construct whose contribution to subjective well-being is mediated by the cultural values in which it is enacted.

The figure below (Figure 7.4) presents the relationship between the two forms of autonomy as well as cross-cultural differences in the relationship between the two forms of autonomy and subjective well-being.

Figure 7.4 *The relationship between well-being and the two types of autonomy*

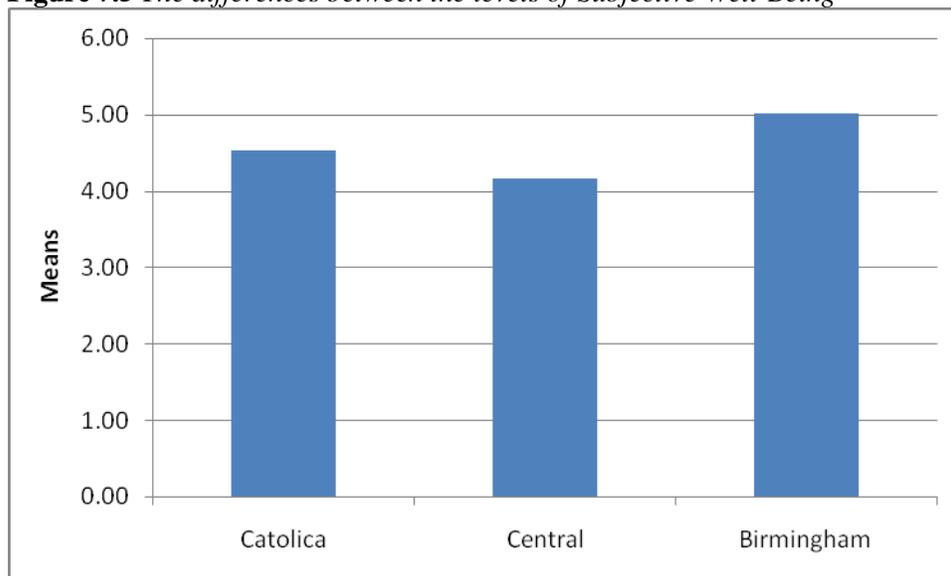


7.1.4 Subjective well-being in the studied cultural contexts

It was expected that the collected data would be consistent with previous cross-cultural research that indicated that individuals from richer individualist countries scored higher on subjective well-being than those from poorer or collectivist countries. The present study confirmed these expectations (Table 6.3; Figure 7.5).

The combination of factors related to lower overall autonomy and a less secure economic situation were usually presented as reasons for the differences in well-being. The present study also suggests that, indeed, both of these factors might be partially responsible for the difference in the levels of subjective well-being.

Figure 7.5 *The differences between the levels of Subjective Well-Being*



7.1.4.1 Overall data

As Table 6.3 shows, the UK sample scored higher than both the Universidad Catolica and Universidad Central samples on life satisfaction. The differences between the means are statistically significant and consistent with previous research that demonstrated that people living in richer and more individualist countries were more satisfied with their lives than those living in poorer, collectivist countries (Veenhoven, 1991; Diener and Diener, 1995; McMahon, 2006). Of course, interpreting the differences in well-being as resultant from

only one or two specific aspects is problematic. Different cultural, economic, religious, social, political, as well as geographic or even climatic factors render such cross-cultural comparisons difficult to defend and validate. This is precisely the reason why the present study focused mostly on comparing within-culture correlations to illuminate the nature of the relationship between autonomy and well-being.

Still, the fact remains that in this research as well as in other published research, Western individualist samples scored more highly on both individual autonomy and well-being than their collectivist counterparts (Rudy et al., 2007). When these findings are considered together with the positive within-sample correlations between autonomy and well-being found in some previous studies (Chirkov et al., 2005; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005) and in the present thesis (Table 6.7), the argument for the overall positive association between the two becomes even stronger. As a consequence, SDT's view that autonomous motivation fosters optimal human functioning in all cultural contexts can be approached with a greater confidence (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2006).

A significant level of caution needs to be exercised, however, while making general statements. Promoting autonomy as a way to enhance well-being has to be done with an appreciation of the specific cultural features of a given country or ethnic group. Furthermore, a comparison of the data from the two Ecuadorian samples (Table 6.3 and Table 6.4) shows that they differ statistically in life satisfaction but not in terms of individual autonomy. The Universidad Catolica sample scored statistically significantly more highly on Satisfaction with Life Scale (the SWLS) than the Universidad Central sample, and this difference cannot be explained by differences in the level of individual autonomy.

Instead, it could be argued that the higher socio-economic status of Universidad Catolica students provides a more reliable explanation for the disparity in the means for life satisfaction. Universidad Central offers tuition-free education and caters to lower-middle class students. In the context of Ecuador, this means that students often come from families that struggle with some basic life necessities (Latinobarometro, 2009). Universidad Catolica, on the other hand, provides education to upper-middle class students who can afford the university's substantial tuition fees. While working as a volunteer English teacher at Universidad Catolica, I found that some students had studied or lived in the U.S. and Western Europe. On the other hand, my personal inquiries with various professors and students indicated that living and studying abroad would be a rare occurrence among students from Universidad Central.

That is why that the previously analyzed studies of Veenhoven (1991) and Diener and Diener (1995) as well as the theoretical arguments of Maslow (1954) might be more helpful than the construct of autonomy in understanding the reasons for the lower level of life satisfaction found in the sample from the government-subsidized Universidad Central. For example, Veenhoven's research shows that there is a 0.84 correlation between Gross National Product (GNP) and life satisfaction. Furthermore, as the findings collected by Diener and Diener (1995) demonstrate, economic status has especially profound impact on well-being in poorer and less developed communities. At start of the twenty-first century, Ecuador would fit into this category.

7.1.4.2 Conclusion

The data collected in this part of the study are related to both the second and the fourth questions:

Do subjective well-being and individual autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

Are there any differences in the levels of subjective well-being between the individualist and collectivist culture?

It was expected that the collected data would be consistent with previous cross-cultural research that indicated that individuals from richer individualist countries scored higher on subjective well-being than those from poorer or collectivist countries. The combination of factors related to lower overall autonomy and less secure economic situation were usually presented as reasons for the differences in well-being. The present study suggests that, indeed, both of these factors might be partially responsible for the difference in the levels of subjective well-being.

Firstly and less centrally to this study, in terms of the fourth question, the data indicate that people from the richer individualist country tend to score higher on subjective well-being than those from the poorer and collectivist country. These findings are in line with some previous cross-cultural research (Veenhoven, 1991; Diener and Diener, 1995; McMahon, 2006).

The collected data also address, indirectly, the second question of the study. It could be argued that the findings demonstrating that the UK sample scores more highly on the SWLS than the Ecuadorian samples (Table 6.3) support the already discussed positive correlation between individual autonomy and subjective well-being. Since individualist countries tend to display higher levels of both individual autonomy and subjective well-being than their collectivist counterparts, an argument could be made that the two variables are, indeed, positively correlated. This argument is in line with SDT's view of human

autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and has been supported in this study by the positive relationship between individual RAI and SWLS (Table 6.7).

The present data need to be interpreted with caution, however. Since the UK and Ecuador differ from each other not only in self-construal but also in economic prosperity, autonomy might be only one of many factors that affect subjective well-being. This need for autonomy - even if it is deemed universal – has to be judged in the context of other needs and values, and its role in fostering optimal human functioning should not be overstated (Diener and Diener, 1995).

7.1.5 A summary of the quantitative chapter: data trends and their meaning

Overall, the data analyzed in the quantitative component of the study appear consistent with Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Individual or self-generated autonomy was found to correlate positively with subjective well-being in all the samples, although, on the surface, this relationship goes against the cultural preference for dependency and conformity associated with collectivist self-construal (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Indirectly and with reservations due to confounding factors, the positive association between individual autonomy and subjective well-being could also be concluded in the present study from the higher levels of both individual autonomy and subjective well-being in the UK sample, suggesting, again, that these variables might be positively correlated. Furthermore, the fact that all these findings are consistent with the research conducted by Rudy et al. (2007), with different collectivist and individualist samples, strengthens SDT's position that autonomy is universally beneficial to well-being.

The study also supports SDT's stand that autonomy differs from independence and can be achieved, especially in collectivist societies, by means of genuine self-endorsement

or internalization of external influences (Deci and Ryan, 1991; Chirkov et al., 2003; Kagitcibasi, 2005). In the present research, the positive correlations between the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational orientations in the Ecuadorian samples, point to the possibility of inclusive autonomy, an equally valid form of human autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1991; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Rudy et al., 2007).

Interestingly, however, this inclusive form of autonomy was found in the present study to be positively correlated with well-being only in the Ecuadorian samples: a finding that is not predicted by SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Rudy et al., 2007).

In light of all these findings, the qualitative component of the study can thus bring additional substantiation and clarification to the main research questions. Combining the qualitative data with the quantitative component will not only lead to the triangulation of data but might also point to discrepancies in the findings and therefore contribute to the study's comprehensiveness and complementariness (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

In essence, the statistical correlations presented above broaden our knowledge about the studied phenomena, but this knowledge needs to be supplemented with qualitative data that can offer depth and interpretive richness to the study (McCracken 1988).

7.2 Qualitative data

7.2.1 General cross-cultural differences in behaviour during the focus groups

7.2.1.1 Volunteering information

In general, the UK participants tended to speak longer and needed less prompting or probing to elicit their views and opinions. In the case of the Ecuadorian students, answers were shorter and less elaborated. Furthermore, the Ecuadorian participants anticipated that I

would pose a question directly to each of them individually. They were more hesitant to express opinions on their own and, to a greater degree than their British counterparts, waited for ‘permission’ from me to speak. In some ways, this different dynamic during the focus groups also points to differences in asserting autonomy and in the levels of autonomy in both cultures, reinforcing thus the data found in the quantitative analysis (Table 6.4).

This different behaviour during the focus groups is likely to be related to the cross-culturally conditioned formation of autonomy than to any general shyness or reticence of the Ecuadorian students (Schwartz, 2007). When I observed similar Ecuadorian students in a cafeteria - talking among themselves - they were very vocal, animated and had no problems interrupting one another. In the absence of a person of authority and among ‘equals’, they had no trouble asserting their individuality. Just as the actual focus groups, these somewhat incidental observational findings demonstrate that the educational context in itself conditions both expectations and assertion of autonomy.

7.2.1.2 Individual as opposed to collective framing of issues

There was a difference between the two cultural groups in how they related to the discussed issues. The participants from the Ecuadorian samples displayed a greater tendency to express their opinions using ‘we’, ‘us’, or ‘our’ as personal pronouns. This tendency was not limited to the family context (e.g. [in my family] *we thought it would be good to get education here*), but also encompassed situations where the participants appeared to talk as representatives of their peer group. For instance, the following inclusive sentences were more likely to come up during the focus groups with the Ecuadorian students:

‘We try to behave well in the class and listen.’

‘That’s why we study and that’s what it is for me.’

‘Of course, it’s one of the main reasons that we study.’

In those instances, individual Ecuadorian students spoke for the group and expressed views and attitudes about which they had not explicitly consulted with that group. This kind of presumed identification was less visible in the British groups, where the students expressed their opinion almost exclusively in terms of ‘I’, ‘me’ or ‘my’ as pronouns (eg. *‘I wanted it to be my own journey from the beginning to end’*). It is as if, in the case of the Ecuadorian participants, prior consultation with the peer group was often not necessary since all of them implicitly understood and subscribed to a common cultural pattern.

Indirectly, through those statements, the Ecuadorian participants tended to reaffirm their collectivist self-construal. A greater adherence to the peer group in terms of solidarity and sharing beliefs might render individual autonomy a dissonant value, as argued by cross-cultural researchers (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000). Therefore, asserting oneself apart from the cultural code and insisting on self-generated autonomy - as opposed to inclusive autonomy or ‘autonomous interdependence’ (Deci and Ryan, 1991, p.272) - might be less beneficial for well-being in collectivist cultural contexts.

7.2.2 External motivational influences

7.2.2.1 Family as a motivational influence

Ecuador

Identification with/subjugation to close family wishes

Subjugation to the close family’s wishes – one of the core features of Latin collectivist self-construal (Schwartz (2007) - was evident in a number of utterances:

'It's the best university. My father studied here. He's been always saying that it's the best one to study in Ecuador, in Quito, the best. We talked about it and we said that I should study here. My sister, also.' (Male# 4.2, Catolica)

The participant's identification with the opinion of his father is suggestive of inclusive autonomy. It is his father who determined that the university was the best in Ecuador and the son reiterates this opinion in the first sentence of the excerpt as something emanating from him. Furthermore, the separation between 'I' and 'we' becomes blurred as in 'we said that I should study here'.

Similar merging of 'I' and 'we' appears in different exchanges:

'My older brother finished this university too, in business though, and has a very good job now. Very good, with all the benefits. It is a business job and he lives in Cuenca. But we always [inaudible] about psychology for me...it was always interesting to me.' (Female#3.1, Catolica)

'I don't know. In my family, we thought it would be good to get education here...You need more education to improve your life, get more money. It's better for your future and helps the family.' (Female, 1.3, Central)

The second participant clearly identifies with the wishes of the family and thinks that she should study because '*in my family, we thought*' so. Still, in this case, identifying with the family is accomplished in the context of somewhat introjected motivation. On one hand, it is an autonomous decision in the sense that the student fully endorses the view of her parents. On the other hand, however, this decision does not stem from completely intrinsic motivation because certain external materialistic aspects are attached to it. Education, the student says, will 'improve your life' and it 'helps your family'.

Repayment of parent's sacrifices

A desire to repay many sacrifices that the family endured for the benefit of a child is expressed in some of the exchanges:

'My parents pay for my education and they've made many sacrifices to help me with the difficulties. I study hard to pay them back, even if it's boring...My father, he works everyday in his business, on weekends, too...I don't want to waste my time.' (Female #3.3, Catolica)

And again:

'I owe it to my mother to succeed in my education. She has never had an easy life but we've been okay, taken care of...My two sisters and I. They are still in school and I hope that they'll go to university, as well...My mother, she couldn't have gone, yet we can...because of her.' (Female, # 2.3, Central).

Similarly, a desire to compensate for the mother's past sacrifices motivates a student from a different focus group:

Researcher: 'Is it partially to pay them back?'

Of course, it's one of the main reasons that we study (Male, #1.1, Central).

Researcher: 'Is it an important reason?'

'What?...yes, to help them if they might need help. In the future...My mother has had difficult life since she was young...My father, he had abandoned us before my younger brother was born, and she was the one taking care of the family...my mother.' (Male, #1.1, Central).

Interestingly the student not only says that 'repaying' was one of the main reasons for studying but also identifies it as a reason for all the other students. It is, as he states, 'one of the main reasons that we study'. The sentence was uttered without consultation with the other classmates, and the student's confidence in his opinion provides an insight into the cultural sanctioning that is exerted by the collectivist self-construal. The student did not have to consult with the other students because 'paying back' parents' sacrifices and obliging their wishes were 'obvious' reasons for studying at South American universities.

Making the family proud

Also, the issues of meeting expectations - proving one's value to one's parents and making them proud - come through in some exchanges:

'I want to make them proud through my achievement. I don't work but it is like my job right now.' (Male, # 4.4, Catolica).

'My parents, they have helped me throughout the way, not only money...of course, money, yet not only...You need to show that you can finish.' (Female, # 4.1, Catolica)

'Yes, sure, it's also about proving what I'm capable of, not for people, for family.' (Female # 4.5, Catolica)

'My parents have always had a lot of expectations about me because I was doing well in school...in all subjects.' (Male # 3.5, Catolica)

'When I get a degree, it will be a success for all of us, not only me. Everybody contributed.' (Female # 1.2, Central)

A sense of pride or of making people proud is apparent. These elements of pride or shame attached to a learner's performance in schooling are reminiscent of the Asian self-construal (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Such a motivational orientation might help explain the more pronounced positive correlations between inclusive autonomy and well-being in the collectivist culture found in the quantitative component of the study (Table 6.7).

Respect

Finally, the issue of respect is also addressed directly by some of the Ecuadorian participants. *Respeto*, just as *familismo* is an integral part of South American self-construal and thus has a potential for generating inclusive autonomy (Moore, 1970; Santisteban et al., 2002; Schwartz, 2007):

'You need to respect your elders...not only parents but other members of the family, too. The whole family helps in my studying, in different ways,...they pay for it, yes, but it's not only that, in different ways they help me...it's necessary to listen to that, them, not to disappoint.' (Female # 1.6, Central)

'Studying is my responsibility, it's for me, but it is also showing respect to my parents and others, my older sister, who wanted me to study here...I try harder because of that too.' (Female # 4.3, Catolica)

Intergenerational relations: following an example set by others

Responses suggested that inclusive motivation does not have to be limited to endorsing views of parents. Extended family can also be a part of this process:

'Yes, we made this decision together. My grandfather was very important about it, too. He's an architect. Now, he's fighting with a prostate cancer but my parents always discuss with him important things...About everything.' (Female # 2.5, Central)

Again, in this conversation, by stating that *'we made this decision together'* the participant does not distinguish between herself and her family, although the family context grows wider. Furthermore, the student compares her own acquiescence to the wishes of parents with the respect that those parents had shown for the grandfather. It appears – in this exchange, at least – that collectivist construal nurtures autonomous subjugation to family by inculcating the continuity of conduct across generations.

Researcher: 'What if you have your own family in the future and you're old. Will you want them to study as a way to help...in some ways?'

'Yes.' (Male # 3.6, Catolica)

'Yes...of course.' (Female # 3.2, Catolica)

'The family comes first because they gave everything to help me. The grandparents, too.' (Female 1.3, Central)

Providing an example to siblings

For some of the Ecuadorian students, the issue of family also means providing an example for younger siblings:

'I am the oldest, the only one studying at university for now. You want to prove, show to the family that you can succeed with your grades and intelligence.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

'I don't think that in my family we can afford to put everybody through a paid university...My parents, they let me know about that. So you choose something with a lot of...like not wasting this opportunity.' (Female # 2.3, Catolica)

In some ways, the issue of providing an example for younger siblings mirrors the students' parents' attitude to their own parents, previously described. In both cases, the behaviour is intended to give guidance on the culturally sanctioned conduct.

Extended family

Family as a context for educational motivation can even include cousins:

'Some of them did, yeah...My cousin – from my mother side – he's finishing his degree this year. In industrial psychology. He was coming to our house many times, because he's from Guayaquil, and he and my parents, they talked to us about it, explaining things.' (Female # 2.1, Central)

Still, however, it is not clear of what importance the opinion of the cousin would have been, had the parents not stood behind it. The cousin might only serve here to provide the context, but it is still the opinion of the parents that truly counts for this student.

Indeed, this interpretation gains strength in light of some other statements. Participants do talk about members of their extended family, but it is mostly the opinions of parents, siblings and, occasionally, grandparents that constitute a foundation for internalization:

'My parents had different ideas about us – about my sister and me – than my father's brother had about his children. They live in the Costa [coastal area in Ecuador] and they finished with bachillero [high school diploma] only...There, people can get a job with such education only, because of many rural and farming areas, but not here.' (Female # 4.6, Catolica)

And again:

'Yes, later on, if I have more possibilities - like more money...Because of my education I can help them. That's why you study, so it's better for everybody in the family.' (Female # 2.4, Central)

Researcher: 'Like cousins and uncles, too?'

'No...for me it's only my parents and two brothers.' (Female # 2.4, Central)

Researcher: 'You?'

'The same, only the close family.' (Female # 2.5, Central)

The Ecuadorian samples: differences between Universidad Central and Universidad Catolica

Although there was a considerable similarity between the Ecuadorian university samples' responses in terms of subjugation to family wishes, making family proud and repaying for sacrifices, the students from Universidad Catolica were more concerned with those motivational factors. This quantitative difference (strength of motivational influences) between the universities rather than qualitative difference (type of motivational influences) became clear to me when I compared the transcripts from both Ecuadorian universities in terms of this theme. Overall, the aspects related to family influences – be they concerned with subjugation or repayment for sacrifices – were more universally acknowledged in the case of Universidad Catolica. For instance, the following attitudes surfaced only in the focus groups with the students from Universidad Central:

'They don't have much to do with my studying...It is for my future.' (Male # 1.4, Central).

'In high school, maybe, when you were afraid and so, but not now, now I'm studying only for myself and that's why it's important.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

'I need to take care for myself and to have more opportunities after I graduate...My family, they have their own lives to worry about.' (Female # 2.6, Central)

There are some reasons to believe that students from Universidad Catolica might differ, in general, from students from Universidad Central in terms of family as a motivational factor. Since Universidad Catolica charges a substantial tuition fee from its students, those students greatly depend on their parents for financial assistance. On the other

hand, however, Universidad Central is a tuition-free university, subsidized by the government, which means that it might be feasible for some students to complete their studies while relying only on their part-time employment. Consequently, since the level of financial help and assistance given students must be greater in the case of Universidad Catolica, so might be the level of gratitude and obligation that those students have for their parents. It is, however, a conjuncture uncorroborated by the statistical data. As Table 6.4 and Table 6.5 show, the differences between the Ecuadorian universities were not statistically significant both in terms of the individual and inclusive RAI.

Summary of the Ecuadorian interviews

Subjugation to family wishes or *familismo*, a sense of paying back, and *respeto* were often endorsed to such a degree that the demands of others appeared to have become indistinguishable from the participants' own desires. Although it is difficult to determine precisely whether complete inclusive autonomy takes place in those cases, the merging of the students' and parents' perspectives suggests such a possibility. In this context, the collected data confirm the findings from the previous research studies that were discussed in depth in the Literature Review Chapter. These data also correspond to the results from the quantitative data analysis. In this context, the validity of the Ecuadorians' low scores for individual autonomy (Table 6.4) – compared to the UK sample - is also corroborated.

Furthermore, the collected focus group data provide insights into the familial influences on the Ecuadorian participants that were difficult to establish from the previous studies. Many of the earlier studies as well as the quantitative component of this study relied on the questionnaires that did not distinguish between different types of potential familial influences (Levesque et al., 2004; Isiksal, 2010). Both the Self-Determination

Questionnaire and the Academic Motivation Scale solicit information from participants which serves as a basis for calculating their overall level of autonomy (self-determination) without differentiating between, for example, the relative influence of parents and cousins.

Obtaining such data is crucial, especially in collectivist societies. As the excerpts from the focus group transcripts indicate, Ecuadorian students are not devoid of their own sense of direction. They choose whom to follow and identify with. In other words, the high level of identification and forming inclusive autonomy are conscious and selective processes even in the context of family. This identification and allowing for the internal and external to be merged appear to be limited to close family members: parents and, possibly, siblings and grandparents. Cousins and aunts or uncles, on the other hand, though important in a sense of respect and emotional connection, do not possess their own sufficient power to influence students' educational decisions.

In this sense, the collected focus group data address important cross-cultural issues, often neglected in quantitative studies. As Triandis (1994) stresses, in collectivist cultures, one of the most crucial characteristics of an individual is his or her in-group. Collectivist cultures emphasize a 'we' versus 'they' distinction. The emphasis on 'collective welfare, harmony, and duties typically applies only to the in-group and usually does not extend to out-groups' (Kim et al., 1994, p. 32). Although, on the surface this 'we' versus 'they' distinction can be construed to mean mainly a 'family' versus 'strangers' distinction, the present study shows that collectivist individuals from a collectivist culture also attach different motivational values to different family members.

In a broad generalization, this relatively strict adherence to a 'we' versus 'they' distinction – with varying degrees of strength within the extended family context – reflects

the concept of collectivist self as a socially molded phenomenon. As Cousins (1989, p. 129) writes, 'from a sociocentric perspective, however, the question "Who am I?" standing alone, represents an unnatural sundering of person from social matrix and must therefore be supplemented by context.' In collectivist or interdependent cultures, Markus and Kitayama (1991, p. 228) argue, 'the self is viewed not as a hedged closure but as an open field...the self is an open entity that is given shape by the social context.' Furthermore, 'what is focal and objectified in an interdependent self...is not the inner self, but the *relationship* of the person to other actors' (p. 227) In light of these excerpts, it appears possible that the gradation of adherence to familial influences relates to the gradation of strength in 'the relationships of the person to other actors.'

Of course, the arguments presented above necessitate further substantiation by future research, which is crucial due to the potential for controversy surrounding the collectivist concept of a person. Presenting the collectivist self as a 'situation-bound' entity (Cousins, 1989, p. 130) or 'an open field' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 228) poses the danger of negative stereotyping. Interpreted along those lines, collectivist individuals might come across as unprincipled or opportunistic human beings who lack inner convictions (Kim et al., 1994). It is important to challenge this notion, but this can only be done by research that focuses specifically on the socio-psychological components of the self.

Finally, the qualitative data collected in this part of the thesis demonstrate - similar to the findings from the quantitative study - that a genuine, autonomous endorsement of important others as a motivational factor in educational choices does not mean that these choices are followed due to intrinsic enjoyment of learning. For example, a participant can

autonomously share his or her parents' opinion that education will lead to greater financial rewards, as in the previously cited quotation:

'In my family, we thought it would be good to get my education here... You need more education to improve your life, get more money.'

Here, a genuine, self-endorsed identification with the wishes of the family is not mirrored by intrinsic identification with or internalization of learning for learning's sake. Although externality is not felt any more in the form of pressure coming from parents, it is still felt in a different sense: as striving towards financial rewards.

In this context, SDT's research on goals and aspirations becomes relevant. As Vansteenkiste et al. (2006, p. 23) write, 'the concept of goal content (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) is quite different from the concept of goal motive (autonomous vs. controlled), which represents the reasons why people are pursuing the particular goal contents.' Therefore, although intrinsic goal content is often associated with autonomous goal motive – especially, since 'on average, the pursuit of intrinsic goals tends to be correlated with having autonomous motives (Vansteenkiste et al. 2006, p. 23) – these are independent variables that 'predict independent variance in well-being and adjustment' (p. 23).

It is because of these last aspects of 'well-being and adjustment' that the data collected in relation to the dissonance between goal content and goal motive are important for the present study. In accordance with SDT, the Ecuadorian students who are autonomous in their behaviour – due to individual autonomy or 'autonomous interdependence' (Deci and Ryan, 1991) – but who are, nevertheless, engaged in pursuing extrinsically directed academic goals (money, career) would be likely to attain lower levels of subjective well-being than students who are autonomous in their behaviour as well as intrinsic in their goal pursuit (enjoyment of learning). This is because 'both regulatory styles and the goal contents

have independent effects on well-being and adjustment' (Vansteenkiste et al. (2006, p. 25). In a sense, in terms of attaining the highest levels of well-being, autonomy or the lack of extrinsic quality needs to apply to both the content and the context of academic pursuit (Sheldon and Kasser, 1995; Sheldon et al., 2004; Vansteenkiste et al. (2006).

It is possible therefore that the higher levels of reported subjective well-being found among the UK participants - compared to their Ecuadorian counterparts - are also attributable to a higher dissonance between academic goal contents and academic goal contexts in the Ecuadorian samples. Indeed, as this first part of the focus group data analysis demonstrates, there is a considerable lack of emphasis on the intrinsic enjoyment of learning (goal content), even though inclusive autonomous motivation (autonomous goal context) is readily evident.

The UK

Parents as a motivational influence

One of the prominent themes emerging from the UK sample is the idea of parents or family being supportive of the participants' educational choices.

In general terms, the following exchange reveals a prevalent attitude among some participants:

Researcher: 'What about you?'

'Yeah, my parents didn't have anything to do with my studies...In terms of pressure.'
(Male # 1.1)

Researcher: 'No?'

'You know they liked me to go to university, but it was my expectation not theirs.' (Male # 1.1)

Helping students find their own motivation sources

In specific terms, one of the ways in which parents function in the context of this theme is to provide students with opportunities that can serve as motivational factors in the future:

'Oh, gosh...well, I think that my parents were very influential in my decision to study. My mum works in education so I had a lot of memories with going with her, and helping her. I knew that it was the area that I always wanted to go into. I wouldn't say that I had pushy parents, but you know I was always encouraged to do my best in school. So I would say they were responsive for me going to uni[sic.] to get my degree, but I don't think they had much influence on me choosing to do so...It was more personal.' (Female # 1.3)

As the student says, her parents did not have much influence on her choosing to study. Their influence comes mostly from encouraging and being 'responsive' to the student's own decisions. The role of the parent can also be, as in this example, related to providing a child with a context to develop interests and to make her own educational decisions. Still, the final decision resides with the student and is defined as 'more personal'.

Providing an example to the students

An influence also comes from an example that parents gave to participants in terms of work ethics and a drive to succeed. Again, this is different from the more direct pressure and expectations seen in the Ecuadorian samples:

'My parents always supported me throughout the school, always encouraged me to do the best and try hard...Well, they might have been an influence on me because of this, giving me a drive to succeed, to carry on.' (Female # 2.1)

'My dad is very career-driven so I think he influenced my career choices in some way, my work ethics, whereas my mum, she always had a job but she was more about family, she had a job but not career-driven.' (Female # 1.4)

The same or similar words appear time and again in these exchanges and they point to the student as the main decision maker in terms of educational choices: going to university was 'my choice, my thing,' and 'I was the only one putting pressure on myself'. The exchanges

are peppered with personal pronouns and, as a result, a very distinct picture of a student emerges. This picture differs from that depicted by the Ecuadorian participants, where the division between ‘me’ and ‘my family’ is much more blurred.

‘Pressuring’ participants to find their own happiness

The parents reportedly also insist that the students find their own way, even if this differs from what they – as parents – would ideally want them to do.

‘My parents were quite the opposite. Do something that you enjoy, like my mother she did English degree.’ (Female # 1.6)

Researcher: ‘So follow your heart rather than money?’

‘Yes, do something that you enjoy and you’ll do well...They were keen on it, yes.’ (Female # 1.6)

‘But I think I put a pressure on myself to get a degree, it hasn’t come from my parents. Of course, they were very supportive...in a sense of helping me in finding my own way.’ (Female # 2.3)

Researcher: ‘Both of them?’

‘Absolutely. They, just like most people’s parents, they want me to do what makes me happy...If I chose something else, it would be fine.’ (Female # 2.3)

‘Expectation would be a big word...I think I was always expected to go as a next step...They didn’t pressure me to take any courses that I didn’t want to do so there was never any specific pressure about that, that angle...So there was more about encouraging me to do what I wanted to do.’ (Female # 1.2)

This time, apart from self-assertion – ‘what I wanted to do’ and ‘entirely my choice’ – the idea of self-fulfillment becomes prominent. Parents do insist, but they insist that the participants ‘do something that [they] enjoy, ‘find [their] own way’, ‘do what makes [them] happy, and ‘do what [they] wanted to do’. In other words, the pressure – if it can be called pressure – reveals itself, paradoxically, in insisting on not giving in to pressure. Rather, parents ‘demand’ that the students do what they ‘want to do’ and ‘enjoy doing’.

As the last two excerpts indicate, this insistence on self-direction includes also accepting the decision not to study. Again, this is a different attitude from that found in many parts of the Ecuadorian transcripts. Whereas there was a sense of ungratefulness and letting down the whole family attached to failing to pursue studying, here choosing not to study 'would be fine' with some parents.

Some observation needs to be addressed at this point. An overall analysis of this broad theme and of the excerpts describing British parents, in general, shows certain uniformity in attitudes. Almost all of the interviewed UK students appeared to have highly understanding and supportive parents. Clearly, this cannot be a universal case. Perhaps, having more focus groups would have revealed a greater diversity of opinions about parental influences, with some parents described as being less accommodating or tolerant. Looking back, it might be one of the limitations of the present study. On the other hand, it is also possible that the students whose parents were not as open and supportive of their educational choices were reluctant to speak up at length on this issue. This second explanation gains validity in light of the fact that some of the British focus group participants knew one another. Arguably, it might be easier for some people to open up in front of stranger than in the company people they know (Morgan, 1988). Again, these are potentially confounding influences that require further consideration.

Motivation to assert financial independence from parents

A sense of independence is also asserted by a conscious choice not to rely on parents in any way. Contrary to the South American context, for some of the British participants, reference to parents serves not as an opportunity for merging perspectives and genuine identification but as an opportunity to assert autonomy and individuality through opposition or

independence. Whereas in many Ecuadorian cases, inclusive autonomy was sought out by means of ‘autonomous interdependence’ and self-endorsement of family wishes, here individual autonomy was asserted, instead, by direct rejection of parental assistance.

‘Well, not so much about quitting, but financial support, a little. It takes so much to get here, and you work on a really low pay to get the experience you need. So you sacrifice many things to get here, and my parents always said that I could depend on them, like move back with them if I wanted, but I chose not to.’ (Male # 2.2)

‘I didn’t feel it was right to let them help me... with money. No, I wanted it to be my own journey from the beginning to end. In this sense, too.’ (Female # 1.5)

The sentiment expressed by those two students does not, of course, reflect a general attitude among Western students. Most of the other participants have depended economically on their parents in some ways at least; be it money or having a place to live. However, the decision of these two students provides a contrast with the Ecuadorian samples. In the South American context, relying on parents’ help was taken for granted, especially at Catolica University, and explained the desire to pay back after the completion of university studies. This link appears to be less prevalent in the UK.

Therefore, what emerges from the comparison of the two groups is that different importance is placed on asserting independence. This difference corroborates some earlier research on the cross-cultural salience of independence that showed that independence – but not necessarily autonomy – was less crucial to collectivist self-construal (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

Physical separation from parents and the motivation for self-discovery

This sense of self-actualization and individual growth as crucial motivational aspects in educational experience is also evident in other exchanges:

'I took two years out and for the first year I lived in Spain, so there was a lot of parting during this time. I got it out of my system so when I came back I didn't move away.' (Female # 1.2)

Researcher: 'Okay, so what did your parents think about that?'

'I was eighteen when I went to Spain, so they thought it was naïve, I guess. Bit concerned, probably. But when I did come back it was more of a relief for them.' (Female # 1.2)

'I did some traveling throughout Europe...My own money, working as a waitress here and there...I think I needed it before going back to school.' (Female # 2.4)

Postponing university or going away to 'find oneself' is not something that came up during the focus groups with the Ecuadorian students. In the context of the UK, learning experience extends beyond the bricks of the university and becomes a process of self-discovery. That is why, in terms of motivation for learning, not only are external players less important in forming decisions and affecting educational autonomy, but these decisions themselves might lack traditionally understood pragmatism and structure.

Furthermore, as an exchange with a different student demonstrates, parents might have little power over those choices, even if they consider them worrisome:

'I took a gap year...And I think, I know it now, that my parents took it quite hard, and I didn't appreciate it quite at the time...I think my parents spoke to their friends as if I were taking a year out...think my parents found this time difficult, they worried that it would be the end...not in a sense how it reflects on them. They worried that I wouldn't actually enjoy that.' (Female # 1.5)

In the case of the female student - where the wishes of parents clearly clashed with those of the student - it was still up to the student to decide what to do with her life. The parents 'took it hard' but all they did do was 'speak to their friends'. They would not even speak to the student herself.

Interestingly in the context of expectations of others as a motivational influence, the student did not think that her parents had taken her decision not to study as a negative

reflection on them as parents. They were unhappy but, ‘not in a sense how it reflects on them.’

This point, once again, provides an opportunity for a differentiation between collectivist and individualist cultures in terms of familiar pressures as a motivational factor. In the collectivist culture - as some of the previously quoted excerpts from the Ecuadorian transcripts indicate - a failure of child to succeed academically reflects negatively on both the child and the whole family. This cultural trait is most pronounced in Asian collectivist cultures but also marks its presence in South American culture (Sabogal et al., 1987). In contrast, in the individualist Western cultures, a conventionally defined academic failure is mostly associated with the child herself.

Summary of the British sample

Overall, the comparison of the Ecuadorian and British participants in terms of parental pressures reveals some significant differences. The participants from Universidad Central and, especially, Universidad Catolica appear more willing to include their parents as an important part of their motivational make-up. The possibility of inclusive autonomy is higher in the Ecuadorian samples as many of the students appeared genuinely to identify and self-endorse demands coming from their parents. Whether this reflects subjugation to family wishes, *familismo*, *respeto*, or the desire to make parents proud and repay their sacrifices, the Ecuadorian students often accept the external demands from their close family members to the point that those demands are not longer separable from the students’ own internal wishes.

On the other hand, the British participants acknowledged their parents’ wishes but they were insistent in pointing out that the decisions to begin and to continue studying were

entirely their own. The gratitude to parents and the recognition of their wishes are present, but the students do not feel obliged to follow them in their decision making process. Finding one's own way and asserting independence were paramount as espoused motivational factors, and the students tended to follow their parents' wishes only when those wishes coincided with their own, more independently created aspirations.

Such comparative findings only partially correspond to the data from the quantitative part of the thesis or the previous research studies. On one hand, these present focus group data pointing to the significance of *familismo* and *respecto* in the Ecuadorian samples coincide with the findings of the earlier research studies (Schwartz, 2007). These qualitative data also strengthen the quantitative results of the thesis in terms of providing additional support for the comparatively lower levels of individual autonomy among the Ecuadorian university students (Table 6.4).

On the other hand, however, the analysis of the Inclusive Academic Motivation scale showed that the differences in the actual means of the inclusive RAI were not statistically significant between the samples (Table 6.5). In other words, contrary to the qualitative data, the quantitative results do not demonstrate a higher net level of the genuine identification with or self-endorsement of parental wishes (inclusive autonomy or 'autonomous interdependence) among these South American students. Again, more research is needed to explore this theme further. Still, even at this stage, the discrepancy and the potentially new insights provided by the focus group approach bolster the argument for a greater utilization of qualitative techniques in SDT research.

Finally, reading through the transcripts from both cultural contexts brings up the issue of goal content versus goal contexts. As expected, there was a greater relationship

between the intrinsic content of the educational pursuit (studying due to the interest in or enjoyment of studying) and autonomous pursuit of studying (not feeling forced to study) in the British samples than in the Ecuadorian samples. As already explained in the discussion of the Ecuadorian focus groups' findings, dissonance between the two aspects – extrinsic interest and autonomous motivation – can lower the overall level of well-being. In accordance with SDT, this dissonance is less beneficial than having both intrinsic interest in studying and autonomous motivation to pursue studying (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Therefore, the British focus group participants' greater emphasis on the enjoyment of studying as a reason for pursuing it might explain the overall higher score on well-being in the UK sample in the quantitative component of the thesis (Table 6.3).

7.2.2.2 Societal pressures as motivational factors

Ecuador

It was often difficult to differentiate familiar demands from more general societal pressures. However, in the following analysis, I have attempted to identify certain societal influences and discuss their importance to participants' motivational orientation.

Duty

'That is the way. From high school, we continue and go to study at university...And it's not expensive at Central because it's paid by the government. It's easier, with money, for students to study at Central.' (Female # 2.1, Central)

'After 'bachilero' you need to carry on studying. In my class, almost everybody tried to get to university...It's not easy. Everybody tries...from my class. It's very important for your life. You need to study.' (Female # 1.5)

In those, as well as in some other exchanges, the source from which this duty as a source motivation emerges is not clearly defined. It is, however, well-understood by the students, and might relate to the collectivist context and its emphasis of fitting in (Triandis et al., 1984; Kim et al., 1994). Expressions such as ‘that is the way’, ‘you need to continue studying’, ‘it’s very important for your life’ and others have a quality of being embedded in the culture, especially a culture that is characterized by high *Uncertainty Avoidance* (Hofstede, 2001). As Hofstede argues, high *Uncertainty Avoidance* refers to the contexts in which individuals are risk-averse and prefer following rules or general principles of behaviour. Rules, accepted principles of behaviour, and cultural standards form a motivating context that permeates the social fabric and does not need explaining. In essence, the explanation, ‘that is the way’ seems sufficient.

On the other hand, however, it might be a financial consideration rather than the societal sense of duty that informs the participants’ conviction that they ‘need to carry on studying.’ From this perspective, saying that education is ‘very important for your life’ has an economic basis. Of course, this perception might also, at the same time, be ingrained in societal values, thus making distinguishing between individual financial considerations and overall social pressures difficult to achieve.

Simpatia

‘Sure, sometimes I think differently but you rather keep it to yourself...He thinks this and I think that... So what? We didn’t come here to fight.’ (Male # 3.5, Catolica)

‘Occasionally, it is boring. It is...But it’s not about having fun. The university... We try to behave well in the class and listen, do your studying, because it’s helping everyone to study.’ (Female # 1.3, Central)

‘The most important is that classes go normal and there is no stress or problems. The exams, they are stressful enough, so I don’t need problems in the class. Everybody needs to respect others and try to do best for their education.’ (Male # 3.4, Catolica)

'I think that a teacher and other students want to have a nice atmosphere in the classroom. That's why we study and that's what it is for me. It's like respect and it's friendlier this way.' (Female # 2.5, Central)

The previously explained cultural script of *simpatia* (Section 2.4.3.1) affects the learning process just as it does other areas of Ecuadorian life (Triandis et al., 1984; Schwartz, 2007). Indeed, in some ways, it goes against the principles associated with so-called quality learning in Western cultures (Wlodkowski, 1985). As those few excerpts indicate, defending one's opinion and asserting oneself become secondary to the overriding need to have 'no stress or problems' (Triandis et al., 1984, Sabogal et al., 1987). Even when '[you] think differently...you rather keep it to yourself.' It is possible that this cultural trait is partly responsible for the lower level of individual autonomy found in the Ecuadorian samples in the questionnaire-based component of the study (Table 6.4). *Simpatia* and, dependent on it, a need to 'have a nice atmosphere in the classroom' and ensuring that the learning context is 'more friendly' might serve as discouraging factors for a curious and self-motivated student. The strength of this tendency is also evident in other exchanges:

'Yeah, I study like everybody else...It's not about showing off.' (Male # 1.1, Central)

'People need to adjust, fit in with other people...In the class. No one is better.' (Female # 1.3, Central)

'Some topics are interesting and some...the same for everybody.' (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

'We get along, I mean in this group, the people here...And it's important, because most of the classes are taken together...It's not individual one-on-one setting, like in private tutoring in Spanish school for gringos...One student shouldn't take time away from other students because of his own issues...questions.' (Female # 1.5, Central)

This emphasis on 'getting along' that characterizes the South American cultural context as a whole and Ecuadorian society even more follows the principle of somewhat equitable sharing of time and resources. Standing out, which might be associated with

asserting autonomy is downplayed as a value (Triandis et al., 1984; Schwartz, 2007). Perhaps, it is the importance of the need to ‘get along’ and ‘not make waves’ that explains the relative quietness and passivity that I have encountered during my teaching experiences in Ecuador. These attributes may often be misread as indicative of boredom or even hostility, but might simply reveal a desire to have things go smoothly.

Finally, *simpatia* might lead some students to hide their interest in studies so they do not come off as ‘show-offs’ or ‘book-worms’. This is similar to choosing not to speak during classes - an issue discussed before - but also extends to the concept of independent learning. It is as if there was a danger of a student becoming an outsider if his or her passion for learning were to be revealed:

‘Yeah, I study like everybody else. It’s not about showing off. What for?’(Female # 2.6, Central)

‘You need to adjust to people, the majority... We are all studying together and nobody is better.’ (Female # 1.6, Central)

‘University is university, and life after classes is not about it. Not for talking about it.’ (Female 3.2, Catolica)

‘Sure, some pretend to be like great researchers already. A teacher pet and they don’t get along...I don’t care for it...It’s only school.’ (Male # 1.4, Central)

A genuine immersion in studying poses the danger of a student being labeled an antisocial person, which in itself is antithetical to the gregarious and outgoing South American way of living (Sabogal et al., 1987; Schwartz, 2007). Furthermore, since displaying passionate immersion in studies goes against the prevailing cultural attitude, such a student risks clashing with the culturally sanctioned preference for low Individualism (Hofstede, 2002).

Downplaying interest in studying and subscribing to the cultural script come, however, at a price. Consistent with SDT, such cultural diminishing of the value of intrinsic

motivation might impact negatively on overall well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Thus, the comparatively lower subjective well-being found in the Ecuadorian samples during the quantitative data analysis (Table 6.3) might be attributed to this downplaying of the value of intrinsic immersion in learning in the Ecuadorian academic environment. Since ‘social life and friends’ are important, the students are not going ‘to read and study all the time’. Those who are willing to do so risk placing themselves outside the cultural mainstream, which in itself might undermine well-being.

In this respect, Asian and South American collective cultures diverge. Although Asian students might be equally reticent in the classroom, due to their shyness or respect for a teacher, the Asian cultural script differs from the South American one in encouraging and rewarding academic achievement and dedication (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Again, this disparity and its potential impact on well-being reiterate the importance of conducting SDT research in diverse collectivist contexts.

Teachers and learning for exams

Teachers and their expectations as well as the perspective of facing exams play an important role in forming educational motivation for the Ecuadorian participants:

‘We learn together in the class so it’s good to listen carefully to a teacher. This way, you’ll not miss important parts that might come during the exams...’ (Male # 3.6, Catolica)

‘No...sometimes. But it’s disruptive. It’s better to listen, respectful, and for learning the material, too, what is important.’ (Female # 1.2, Central)

‘Why do it? They are assisting us the best they can. They are experts in the field and give knowledge...In books the things are often not clear and they need more explaining...I prefer when a teacher explains difficult or complicated parts because it’s clear then, and I can learn it more effectively for the exam.’ (Female # 1.6, Central)

Teachers, the student says, need to be listened to because they are ‘experts’ and the source of ‘knowledge’. The learning process becomes, again, a rather passive absorption of information. An extrinsic aspect is also reinforced by a repeated reference to the link between learning and exams. The fear and importance of exams were issues that regularly came up, substantiating thus their predominant role as an externally motivating factor.

Furthermore, indirectly, the importance of extrinsic factors is strengthened by deemphasizing the need for intrinsic learning. The student ‘prefers’ to have things explained to her because it simplifies learning and makes it ‘clear’. The very essence of independent self-discovery that is necessary for intrinsic and autonomous learning is downplayed, this time for the benefit of clarity and readiness for an exam.

Universities’ educational philosophy

The power of extrinsic factors also becomes clear when the students compare their program to that of Universidad de San Francisco. This private university is entirely founded by student tuition fees and does not receive any financial assistance from the state (Universidad de San Francisco website). It caters, therefore, to a well-off sector in the Ecuadorian society. Furthermore, it mirrors Western - mostly American - university principles in its methodology and curriculum. Many of the teachers come from Western Europe or the United States, and the university boasts of having the best stacked library in Ecuador. On the other hand, students and parents, who indirectly pay teachers’ salaries, have more power over the learning process than is the case in the state-subsided universities (El Comercio, September 12, 2010). Therefore, the participants’ views about the Western studying approach promoted at Universidad de San Francisco can be valuable in the context of comparing motivational orientations in individualist and collectivist contexts.

In general, arguments presented against Universidad de San Francisco reveal extrinsic motivational orientation of some of the participants:

'At Universidad de San Francisco, they have to choose their courses because they pay for everything...It's for the rich. It's very different...In here, the courses are assigned to you. It's less confusing, I guess, and the university makes sure that you finish your studies on time...But you can choose which professor to take if two people are teaching the same class.' (Female # 1.6, Central)

'They take and study different subjects that are not that important for a future job...my friend, she studies psychology there but also takes classes about English language and about philosophy. Ecology, too.' (Female # 2.1, Central)

'Yes, San Francisco is different. It's true. Parents pay so the students do whatever they want there. Central is better this way for studying...It gives more demanding education to students because they can't influence teachers and the university with their money and study what they want.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

'It's easy there.' (Female # 3.2, Catolica)

Researcher: 'What?'

'Exactly, at San Francisco, it is easy with exams...students and their parents are bosses there... Not like here. Here, you really have to study.' (Female # 3.2, Catolica)

Researcher: 'Is that true?'

'Yes, Central has better education. We are not wasting time in the class. Over here...It's not like discussing things all relaxed like at San Francisco, telling teachers what to do.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

'I have to work harder at this University.' (Female # 3.3, Catolica)

'Classrooms are bad and dirty, but education is serious and students respect teachers' teaching.' (Female # 1.5, Central)

These exchanges suggest that some students appreciate so-called 'serious education', which they identify with a top-down didactic approach. For instance, Universidad Central is better because, contrary to San Francisco, students cannot discuss 'things all relaxed' and they do not have to choose subjects themselves, which is 'confusing'. In essence, having to take charge of one's educational process is presented as a disadvantage, and it is considered

better if ‘the courses are assigned to you’. Indirectly, what emerges from these exchanges is a relative lack of intrinsic motivation (‘wasting time in the class’ by engaging in topic discussions) and the perception of difficulty associated with intrinsic motivation and expectation for personal agency (‘confusing’). There is a certain disinclination to learn for learning’s sake, and ‘study different subjects that are not that important for a future job.’

In this context, the question emerges whether promoting intrinsic motivation and autonomy in learning is, indeed, beneficial in all cultural contexts. Some of the Ecuadorian students’ expressed dislike of self-directed learning points to the less straightforward relationship between education autonomy and subjective well-being than SDT predicts (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Curriculum and methodology

External regulation also emerges from the discussion about curriculum that focuses on reading materials.

‘There is a list of books and what chapters from these books we need to study for all the classes and a final exam. It’s all clear... Articles, too. They’re given to us ahead of the time.’ (Female # 2.4, Central)

‘Yeah, because it’s difficult to study on your own in the library. It’s not like in the U.S, you can’t take books out. To your home. Here you can only make copies of pages.’ (Female # 4. 5, Catolica)

Researcher: ‘Really?’

‘Yes, in the library they have a copy service, you can make copies... but it costs money...I don’t want to spend extra money for readings that I might not need.’ (Female # 4. 5, Catolica)

...later

Researcher: ‘You can’t borrow books?’

‘Some you can. But it’s complicated.’ (Female # 4. 5, Catolica)

'Yes.' (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

'But we know from which books to study for the exam.' (Female # 4.5, Catolica)

'Well, sometimes they don't tell and it's from a different book...Should be that they tell you exactly which chapters need to be studied. Especially for a final exam...Quizzes, it's okay but a final has a lot of points.' (Male # 4.2, Catolica)

Researcher: 'Would you rather have more choice in subjects related to psychology?'

'Perhaps, but then it would take forever. The studying... the university knows what is the most important for studying psychology. There are a lot of different things, a variety of stuff to study in different years. All that is in the curriculum.' (Female # 1.5, Central)

Researcher: 'Do you have class discussion?'

'Sometimes.' (Female # 1.3, Central)

Researcher: 'Often. Every class?'

'No, no...Maybe sometimes.' (Female # 1.3, Central)

Researcher: 'Independent research essay?'

'Like an essay?...No.' (Female # 1.3, Central)

Researcher: 'No?'

'Sometimes...Usually research project.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

'People would copy things from the internet.' (Male # 1.1, Central) [laughter]

Although there is a complaint on the part of the students that they cannot take books out 'like in the US', still they see a benefit in it, because they get from their teachers chapters and pages they need to read. This way, 'it's all clear'.

This methodological approach might be viewed as deficient from the point of view of self-directed learning because it is conditioned and limited by the teacher (Knowles, 1980). Still, for externally motivated students, it means that they do not have to 'spend extra money for readings [they] might not need'. If anything, some of the students would prefer to

have their learning journey even more circumscribed and they wish that their teachers ‘tell [them] exactly which chapters need to be studied’.

Prestige

The issue of prestige as an indicator of external regulation also emerged. According to SDT, seeking prestige as a goal provides a very unstable sense of self-esteem and thus decreases subjective well-being in the long term (Kasser and Ahuvia, 2002; Deci and Ryan, 2007). In essence, depending on the evaluation of others cannot form a consistent foundation for happiness in the way that genuine enjoyment of the learning process can.

In the present study, one of the participants describes her mother as an ‘*economista*’ (economist), which brings up the issue of social convention. In Ecuador, in personal and professional conversations, people tend to refer to one another using professional titles. The list of professions that are mentioned is vast and includes; engineer, economist, psychologist, architect, *licenciada* (university completion without thesis), and, of course, doctor and professor:

‘My mother is an economist (economista). She pushes me to study. It would be really bad if I failed because she’s helped me so much.’ (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

Researcher: I see...By the way, do people refer to each other using professional titles?

‘What?’ (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

I explain.

‘At work, yes.’ (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

Researcher: ‘Really?...And in social situations?’

‘Well, yes, sometimes.’ (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

In a different focus group, I approach this issue directly, trying to find out what students thought about addressing one another using this vast array of professional titles:

'Sure, it's normal, especially if I don't know this person well.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

'It's okay. It's more serious and respectful this way.' (Female # 2.3, Central)

Me: Would you like to be addressed like that in the future?...Psychologist?

'Yes, of course...At work.' (Female # 2.3, Central)

'It's important, in the society. It's my position for the profession...as a psychologist, but not with friends, of course...only with strangers in the profession.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

Seeking prestige and social recognition play a part as a motivational factor for some students. This extrinsic type of motivation was also tested on the individual motivation scale (AMS) and might partly explain the lower autonomy means in both Ecuadorian samples (Table 6.4). Of course, seeking recognition is also desired in the Western context, but there appears to be a difference between the two cultures. It is, after all, uncommon in individualist societies to address individuals by educational or professional titles, apart from a medical doctor or a university professor. A prevalence of this practice in Ecuador might indicate a comparatively higher social value attached to formal educational attainment in collectivist contexts or, indeed, in less affluent societies and, in turn, greater importance of prestige as a motivational factor.

Career options

As was the case with prestige, SDT considers financial or career goals antithetical to enhancing autonomy, due to their undermining of intrinsic motivation, and thus sees them as aspects that decrease well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Therefore, before the qualitative data related to career choices are analyzed, it might be worthwhile to present some findings from the cross-cultural research on goals. Since this research addresses the links between autonomy and well-being, it is closely related to the topic of this thesis.

In essence, SDT proposes to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic goals. In line with the theory's framework, the distinction stems from the direct satisfaction of basic psychological needs versus having an 'outward' orientation (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). Accordingly, goals such as community contribution, personal growth, seeking enjoyment in learning and affiliation are seen as intrinsic because they directly 'nurture' our three basic needs; autonomy, competence and relatedness. On the other hand, goals such as fame, financial success and physical appearance are perceived as extrinsic. This latter group of goals is defined as extrinsic because they involve interpersonal comparisons and contingent approval (Kernis, 2003; Patrick et al., 2004). Furthermore, SDT postulates that - contrary to intrinsic goals - extrinsic goals correlate poorly with optimal functioning and subjective well-being (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). This postulate is another example of the theoretical consistency of Self-determination theory. The whole framework of the theory is based on the polarizing effect of the intrinsic versus extrinsic dichotomy.

Indeed, as with motivation in general, several empirical studies conducted in both individualist and collectivist cultures have confirmed the expected impact of goal content on well-being. People who display strong aspiration for extrinsic goals have greater problems with self-esteem, life satisfaction and self-actualization than intrinsically motivated people and they also suffer more often from anxiety and depression (e.g., Kasser and Ryan, 1993, 1996; Ryan et al., 1999; Sheldon and McGregor, 2000).

However, despite the preponderance of data pointing to the benefits of intrinsic goals, some issues still remain unresolved. In this context, it is worth again looking at the concepts of goal content and goal motive. As previously explained, goals can be intrinsic or extrinsic in terms of content, while goal motive refers to reasons for pursuing a given action,

and can be defined as autonomous or controlled (Deci and Ryan, 2000). One may, for example, work hard to earn money (extrinsic goal content) because of societal pressures to 'keep up with the Jones' (controlled motive) or because of the desire to help the community (autonomous motive). What is it then that makes all the difference as far as subjective well-being is concerned? Is it the goals' content, goals' motive or the combination of both?

Indeed, for some researchers, it is not the content of a given goal, but the motive for pursuing it that entirely explains the changes in the level of subjective well-being. As Srivastava et al. (2001) provocatively said, 'it's not the money, it's the motives' (p. 959). Sheldon et al. (2004) explain this perspective:

'In other words, these investigators claim that the so-called what (i.e., goal content) effects are entirely reducible to why (i.e., motive) effects. Thus, they would maintain that if one individual were strongly motivated on becoming very wealthy or famous and a second were focused primarily on developing meaningful relationships or growing as a person, the well-being of these individuals would be indistinguishable if both have the same level of autonomous motivation for pursuing their goals' (p. 476).

Yes, in general, intrinsic goals are more positively correlated with well-being, these researchers might concede. The reason for this lies, however, in the motivational context associated with those goals. Having autonomous motivation while pursuing extrinsic goals is not common and this fact can explain differences in subjective well-being. As Carver and Baird (1998) argue, the pursuit of extrinsic goals usually takes place in a controlled regulatory style, and it is precisely this controlling aspect and not the extrinsic content of a goal that lowers subjective well-being.

The research done in support of this view has been so far inconsistent. For example, Carver and Baird's own study (1998) demonstrated an independent effect of both content and motive, contradicting therefore their claim that the content effect is entirely reducible to

the motive effect. Such inconsistencies and methodological problems have prompted SDT proponents to try to reaffirm their original claim for the independent effect of goal content and goal motives on well-being. For instance, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) conducted a field experiment in which a reading activity on ecological issues was presented in terms of either saving money (extrinsic goal) or in terms of contribution to the community (intrinsic goal). Furthermore, the intrinsic-extrinsic goal framing was conducted in both autonomous and controlled regulatory systems. The analysis of the data revealed that both regulatory styles (autonomous and controlled) and the goal content (intrinsic or extrinsic) were independently correlated with well-being.

Therefore, at this stage of empirical research, the arguments of SDT appear more persuasive. Having intrinsic motive for pursuing an extrinsic goal might not lead to the same psychological benefits as having an intrinsic motive for pursuing an intrinsic goal. As Vansteenkiste and colleagues (2006) say, ‘the effect of intrinsic versus extrinsic goal framing could, in general, be only partially accounted for by autonomous motivation’ (p. 25). In essence, both goal content and goal motives independently predict subjective well-being and adjustment (Sheldon, 2004). Therefore, although an intrinsic motive/extrinsic goal combination is better than extrinsic motive/extrinsic goal combination, it is not as good as intrinsic motive/intrinsic goal combination.

Analyzed from the perspective of SDT’s theorizing, the Ecuadorian data from the focus groups in relation to career choices provide additional support for the lower levels of well-being among the South American compared to the British students found in the quantitative part of the study (Table 6.3). As with prestige, seeking validation through a career can be argued to provide a fleeting and unreliable boost to self-esteem and overall

well-being. It contrasts with intrinsic interest in learning which does not depend on external validation.

In the context of the present research, a future career as a motivating factor was present in a number of exchanges:

'Only some of the students can get into a good profession. It is the reason to keep studying hard things...Boring, not boring, it needs to be studied.' (Female # 3.3, Catolica)

'Interest is one thing, but you have to support yourself in the future...It's not easy in Ecuador.' (Male # 1.1, Central)

'Grades, they pay attention to it, of course, with good English...I want to get a scholarship and continue in the US, in Miami. My uncle has been living there for many years...It opens more opportunities for a better career, having more education. Graduate education from a different country, especially.' (Female # 3.1, Catolica)

'I was thinking about studying internal design but industrial psychology is better.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

Researcher: 'What do you mean better?'

'More better jobs with foreign companies or government. Higher salaries... I have to completd a postgraduate degree, first.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

Researcher: 'So psychology is good field to study? It's interesting?'

'Yeah, especially industrial psychology, it pays well. You can work in many places. You have to speak English well, though.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

'For a government job, you don't have to speak English.' (Female # 1.2, Central)

'Sometimes, you need. It's getting more important.' (Male # 1.4, Central)

'Part of it is interesting, especially clinical studies, but it's not about that. It's a university and, you have to learn...for your career.' (Female # 4.1, Catolica)

Researcher: 'What do you mean?'

'It's most essential to learn useful stuff or things to be used later in the profession.' (Female # 4.1, Catolica)

And in a different group:

Researcher: 'Do you know exactly, like in a detailed way, what your future job as a psychologist involves?'

'It depends who you work for.' (Female # 2.3, Central)

Researcher: 'But in terms of daily work, things?'

'Not yet, you get to know it towards the end of the curriculum.' (Female # 2.3, Central)

'There are more interesting things to study, like art or stuff, but psychology is better in terms of work possibilities... People think that business administration is the best because it's business... it's not true... With psychology, it is better, for now, and there are possibilities with different companies or universities... Universities do not pay that well, though.' (Male # 4.4, Católica)

The prospect of a rewarding job is a strong motivational factor in both Ecuadorian samples and discussing it runs through a number of exchanges. There is, however, less discussion about the details or responsibilities of this future employment than there is about the security and remuneration attached to it. Industrial psychology is pointed out as a good professional choice mostly because of its high employability and financial rewards. A question of whether psychology is interesting as a job is answered with 'yeah, especially industrial psychology, it pays well.' A different student admits that other subjects are more intrinsically interesting, but they are less marketable. Placing all those statements in the context of the research on goals, discussed above, provides a fresh interpretive approach to the quantitative data that demonstrated the lower levels of well-being among the Ecuadorian than among the UK students.

The students' statements also reiterate findings from the studies on economic underpinnings of motivation that show that students residing in poorer societies are more preoccupied with potential financial gains associated with a degree and less with the enjoyment of studying than are their counterparts from rich, individualist countries (Isiksal,

2010). The statements also support the argument of collectivism's negative effect on intrinsic motivation and, thus, indirectly on well-being. As Kim et al. (2003, p. 286) write in the discussion part of their research on goals '...conceiving of oneself as highly embedded in social roles and statuses, and pursuing aspirations designed to obtain rewards and praise are associated with lower well-being.'

Interestingly and in line with the discussion above, many of the Ecuadorian students did not have a clear idea of what their future job might involve. Of course, this is understandable given the unpredictability of the labour market and the fact that the reality often does not match expectations. Those factors might be even more pronounced in the case of the dire state of Ecuadorian economy (Ravallion et al., 1991; Gasparini, 2003; Ravallion, 2003). Still, the exchanges presented above and those during other focus groups with different Ecuadorian students indicate that those students often had little idea of what an ideal job would entail. This is something that they would 'get to know towards the end of the curriculum.'

Summary of the Ecuadorian focus group responses

An analysis of the introjected and external regulations from the Ecuadorian samples reveals a number of factors that are implicated in the formation of these two sub-types of extrinsic motivation. First, as far as introjected regulation is concerned, it is a sense of duty, which could be interpreted in terms of cultural or financial obligations, and the culturally sanctioned script *simpatia* that appeared most salient in distancing the students from pursuing intrinsic motivation.

That distancing is even more pronounced by the affirmation of external regulation, which in the Ecuadorian context relates to teachers' demands, exams, university policy,

prestige, and future career options. Both introjected factors and, especially, those representing external regulation are argued by SDT as factors thwarting optimal subjective well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In the context of their significant presence in the students' motivation orientation, they might be viewed as partially responsible for the comparatively lower levels of subjective well-being found in the Ecuadorian samples during the quantitative data analysis (Table 6.3).

This argument is especially important since the actual analysis of the statistical data in terms of introjected regulation and external regulation in the quantitative part of the study did not show statistically significant differences between the UK and Ecuadorian samples (Table 6.6). SDT argues that such differences should be present in the context of the statistically significant differences in well-being that were found in the quantitative study (Table 6.3). Therefore, it is possible that the Ecuadorian focus groups in discussing the issue of goal content and goal motive – and not the statistical data from the Ecuadorian samples - reveal the true extent of extrinsic motivational attitudes that negatively affect overall well-being.

From this perspective, arguments supporting conducting qualitative research related to SDT gain additional strength. Such research might provide an interpretation of well-being that purely quantitative methods cannot fully capture.

The UK

Social obligation

Social obligation that comes from being able to attend university is one of the ways in which introjected regulation manifested itself in the British samples. Some of the British students

felt that they needed to continue studying because not everyone had been given such an opportunity:

'Well, if you have opportunities to study, in terms of money and overall support, it would be a waste not to take advantage of it. I mean, not everybody gets this chance.' (Male # 1.1)

'There was almost an assumption, all around me, that I would go to university. And that I could do that...Not because I'm genius.' (Female # 1.3)[laughter]

'Yes, definitely, you get a feeling that it would be a waste to get a job at eighteen and work until retirement.' (Female # 2.4)

'Sure, I guess that I would have to go around explaining myself, had I not gone...but I think I could live with it, you know, if I...not, I did it for myself.' (Female # 1.4)

It is, of course, possible that the duty to study because not doing so 'would be a waste' can go hand in hand with intrinsic educational motivation. However, as the above comments indicate, even for some students born and brought up from individualist cultures the decision to study psychology is not solely motivated by the intrinsic interest in or the enjoyment of the topic.

Prestige

In the UK samples, external regulation manifested in seeking prestige was less tangible. There was less talk, for example, of fear of failing exams or being scolded or 'blacklisted' by a professor:

'No, it's not something that keeps me going. Not at this level.' (Male # 2.5)

'As you get older, you gain perspective on those things...You get tougher, I guess.' (Female # 2.1)

The issue of prestige also manifested itself in a somewhat muted manner with the UK participants.

'No, I don't think so...Not in a conscious way, perhaps on a subconscious level.' (Male # 2.2)

'I wouldn't have gone that far if...not, I don't think so. Anyway, educational psychology is not an obvious choice if you're seeking social recognition.' (Female # 1.6) [laughter]

It is difficult to determine what causes the lesser importance of prestige in the UK groups compared to the Ecuadorian samples. It might relate to the previously discussed higher economic well-being in Western societies as an aspect supportive of choices that reflect students' genuine interests rather than societal or financial aspirations (Isiksal, 2010). It could be the result of anti-elitism that 'dogs British thinking about education' (Economist online, July 1, 2004). It might also stem from a lesser role that professional prestige, in general, plays in individualist cultures versus collectivist cultures (Kim et al., 2003), or might reflect the high standing of psychology, in particular, in Ecuadorian culture. Since those two possibilities occurred to me only after the completion of all the focus groups, I did not have an opportunity to probe the participants further about this topic. It does appear, however, that the issue of prestige has something to do with the way in which professional attainment is manifest in the two countries. In Ecuador, underpaid university professors emphasize their status by formal attire and a formality of behaviour. This contrasts with a certain informality in clothing and behaviour that I encountered in the UK. Calling a professor by his or her first name might be an example here, and it clearly contrasts with the previously described Ecuadorian tendency to address one another in daily life by means of professional titles.

It is thus possible that overt or acknowledged pursuit of prestige plays a lesser role in the UK society than in Ecuador. In the South American context, where teachers are poorly paid, certainly in comparison to their Western counterparts (Cabrera and Espinosa, 2008),

prestige serves as an important – and possibly the only - compensatory value and needs to be explicitly acknowledged. Interestingly, professors from the entirely private Universidad de San Francisco, who are the only well-paid academics in Ecuador, display similar informality to that of Western professors (El Universo, April 27, 2009).

Career choices

As described in the earlier analysis, in respect to career choices, British participants tend to differ from their Ecuadorian counterparts. They also express a high level of uncertainty about obtaining an ideal employment, but have a clearer idea of what such an ideal employment would involve. The following exchange from one of the UK samples illustrates this situation:

‘My concern is that the system might get one day in the way of me doing what I really want to do. I’m coming to this field because I know that I love working with children in educational settings, my concern is that the way the profession is heading might, in some ways, mitigate how much I end up doing that.’ (Male # 1.1)

However, in the UK samples the pragmatic extrinsic aspect of increasing employability is also a motivating factor for continuing education. Extrinsic goals might be less pronounced in the richer individualist contexts (Kim et al., 1994; Isiksal, 2010) but they do exist. Furthermore, given the recent economic crisis and the competition for increasingly scarce professional jobs, those extrinsic goals might attain even greater importance in the future, narrowing thus the motivational divide between individualist and collectivist societies:

‘I think that would differentiate me from my friends...I think that would be a differentiation, so I’m sort of proud of those things. I think that in the society we’re gonna increasingly find that a level of academic differentiation will be important... We’re flooding our country with degrees as the bar gets lowered, if you like, having a much higher degree would be good in the future.’ (Male # 1.1)

Summary: the findings from both cultural contexts

Overall, it appears that both introjected regulation (e.g., duty) and external regulation (e.g., prestige) play a greater role in the motivational orientation of the Ecuadorian participants than they do in motivating the UK students. Issues like prestige, teachers' demands, and general societal pressures have more salience in the collectivist environment. Those findings coincide with the results from the previous cross-cultural research on goals and SDT-related research that have pointed to the importance of external factors in collectivist societies, especially those that are economically disadvantaged (Diener et al., 1995).

Furthermore, although both introjected regulation and external regulation are present in the Ecuadorian as well as the British contexts, they might be differently defined in those two cultures. A sense of duty, for example, is understood in the Ecuadorian context in relation to parents and various societal pressures, and is driven by a desire to 'fulfill expectations' and not let people down. In the British context, however, duty as a motivation to study is closer to a loosely defined social responsibility, and some students feel that they should study because 'not everyone was given such an opportunity'.

Such a differentiation within the two sub-types of human motivation points again to pronounced differences between the cultures. It relates to the previously discussed issues of collectivist vs. individualism as well as the different conceptualization of 'the self' (Cousins, 1989). As already explained (Section 2.2.1) equating collectivism with the notion of close connectivity among all individuals might be misleading (Kim et al., 1994). What distinguishes collectivist culture and societies are the very close connections among the in-group members and not necessarily a tightly wound tapestry of relationships in the wider society. Paradoxically, this sense of connection to a stranger might be stronger in

individualist societies, where the boundaries between in-group and out-group are not so firmly defined. For instance, the list of the most charitable nations is dominated by Western individualist democracies, both in terms of percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) and donation per citizen (GHA, 2010).

Furthermore, it is in the supposedly selfish individualist nations that the concept of a 'safety net' is most extensively developed. Western democracies – the UK among them - provide a much more comprehensive welfare system in terms of healthcare and retirement benefits than do Ecuador and other collectivist South American nations (Barr, 2004). Financial limitations notwithstanding, it is probably a strong belief in the commonality of human experience that drives many Western nations to extend benefits to whole populations. On the other hand, however, the lack of similarly universal plans in many collectivist nations might reinforce the divisions between 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', thus affecting indirectly the sense of social responsibility (Gasparini, 2003; Ravallion, 2010). In the absence of government support, family members need to assist one another, which, in turn, can lead to the formation of solely internal family loyalties.

A recent controversy over the Yasuni National Park in the Ecuadorian Amazon reinforces this argument. This park is home to both exotic species of animals and various indigenous populations. It is also rich in oil, so far unexplored. The President Correa, who enjoys high support from the country's citizens, has said that his government would soon authorize exploring the Yasuni region for oil unless it was paid by Western countries not to do so (El Comercio, May 11, 2010). Some Western nations have, indeed, expressed willingness to pay Ecuador if it forgoes destroying the Yasuni. Paradoxically, the often maligned Western democracies have shown greater interest in protecting the Ecuadorian

environment and the indigenous communities living there than the country's political elite and its citizens.

In essence, the focus on close family as well as on other relatives – a phenomenon prevalent in South America – might leave individuals with less energy or inclination to concern themselves with notions of societal responsibilities, which, after all, benefit mostly those with whom one is unrelated. In Western democracies, on the other hand, the concept of family is often truncated or supplemented by loyalties towards friends and work colleagues (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Consequently, the sense of responsibility for one's actions - which is prone to be limited to a biological family in the collectivist context - might be expanded to society at large in the case of individualist cultures.

Overall, therefore, not only are overall levels of introjected regulation and external regulation different in the two studies countries, but also these very categories might be differently defined in each cultural context. Once again, these findings illustrate the complexity inherent in cross-cultural study of such latent phenomena as motivation and autonomy.

7.2.2.3 Friends as motivational influences

Ecuador

Mention of friends occurred frequently during the focus groups conducted in Ecuador, yet the importance of those friends as an influence on motivation proved harder to judge:

'It's not like I follow my friends, it's not like this... We just happened to be interested in the same things and this university was the best choice... But it's nice to continue studying together.' (Female # 2.6, Central)

'My best friend from high school studies here, in business department, though... She hasn't been an influence on me to come to study here... I've made many new friends since I started and it's different than high school.' (Female # 3.1, Catolica)

'Sure, you want your friends to be with you, especially at the beginning when I don't know anybody...but I study for yourself, for my own future.' (Male 3.5, Catolica)

'I think that I'm more ambitious than most of my friends, my previous friends... Only very few of them went to university so I didn't want to follow those who didn't want to study more...Not everybody cares about studying.' (Female # 2.1, Central)

Overall, contrary to parents and extended family, friends do not play a large role as a motivational factor for the Ecuadorian university students. They appreciate having their friends around, but peer pressure does not inform their educational choices. As already discussed earlier in this chapter, such a situation might have to do with the fact that family pressures are so powerful that they leave little space for other influences. Even in the context of marital life, parental pressures play a very important role. Many marriages break down because a wife or a husband has not been accepted by the family. Talking to my many Ecuadorian friends I was struck in how many cases, both friendships and romantic involvements were terminated because they did not fit in with the familial context.

The relatively secondary role of friends might also reflect the fact that in South America the notion of family overlaps with the notion of friends to a greater degree than it does in individualist cultures (Marin and Marin, 1991; Kim et al., 1994). As a result, in South America, not only are actual friends potentially less important in terms of motivation, but also the social life itself is permeated with familial influences. To a large degree, friends come from family. Not surprisingly, I found out, talking to my Ecuadorian friends, that American TV shows – 'Seinfeld', among them – that focus solely on friends as a social context were not very successful in Ecuador.

The UK

In the UK groups, in contrast with the Ecuadorian students, the motivational influences of parents and friends are much more evenly matched.

'Yes, friends were important, more so than parents... You know, you are at this age when your peers...when it is all that matters.' (Female # 2.1)

'They played a role, definitely. In my case, a huge role...I don't think that I blindly followed them, but there is this thing of hoping to be accepted.' (Female # 1.3)

The importance of friends in a motivational sense also reveals a multifaceted nature of friendship. Friends do motivate, but they are first chosen by the participants themselves.

'I think at university, it's really a first time when you really can choose your friends, but at school it's just your year whereas at university it's ten thousand other people and you end up with people who are closest to you in many respects.' (Male # 1.1)

'I think I chose my friends because of our similarities. I chose friends that had similar aspirations.' (Female # 1.2)

'Well, you go from the situation that you are a friend with everybody in the class and then, gradually, you filter out and choose the people you had the most in common with.'(Female # 2.3)

It is as if the participants were first seeking to be motivated and only then chose some of their friends based on this criterion.

Friends can also motivate indirectly by instilling a passion for learning:

'Well, most friends I socialized with were from my school and not many of them went to university. But my best friend she did go to university...So while I was at home, she was at her university. I would get emails from her and visit her every other week...And she was so passionate about what she was doing. I got involved in her lectures...and she was studying biology not something that I was interested in studying...Well, she was talking incessantly about a lecture she was attending or a theory she heard about. I think that had a massive effect on me in choosing to go away...She did that more with her learning...social aspect...but it was mostly about enthusiasm she had for her subject.'(Female # 1.5)

In this case, the friend motivated the participant but, paradoxically, this initially extrinsic motivation generated by envy transformed into a genuine intrinsic motivation and discovery of passion for learning.

Finally, for some of the students, reaching adulthood meant also freeing themselves from the influence of friends:

'I'm just trying to think. I think that at school, when I was at school, I tried to go along with things. I didn't really think for myself and I wanted to fit in, just be a part of a group. It was only when I was eighteen that suddenly something clicked and I realized that I could think for myself...So, in a funny way, when they went away I was happy that I finally got some space...A freedom to figure out who I am rather than be clone of this group of people.' (Female # 2.4)

In a clear attempt to assert the individuality that characterizes Western cultural contexts, the student wrestled to define herself as a separate entity, governed only by internal drives. Therefore, friends served for her as a source of motivation for taking action, but this action, paradoxically, entailed freeing herself from those friends.

Summary: the findings from both cultural contexts

In each cultural group, the role of friends is limited in terms of direct motivational influences. In Ecuador, this might result from the reality of familial influences being so powerful that little space is left for other forms of external motivation. In the UK, friends are important in a social context but their function does not extend to directly informing the participants' educational pursuits. In some ways, such a compartmentalization of friendship in the Western context falls in line with the concept of individualism and its proxy: self-fulfillment. Although friends, just as parents, are important in the UK participants' lives, the need for autonomy requires self-assertion in educational contexts. In essence, there is a dualistic and almost contradictory aspect to 'friends as motivational drivers' in the case of some UK participants. Friends exert an influence on those participants by motivating them

into engaging in pursuits that, paradoxically, are meant to demonstrate a very independence from those friends. As one of the female students said, she wanted to show that she was more ‘than a clone of this group of people.’

- *Discussion of all the data related to external influences in the context of the research questions*

The data collected in this Section of the study relate to participants’ motivational influences and addresses the first and second question of the qualitative study:

Is individual or self-generated autonomy in the learning process less pronounced in some cultural contexts?

The data indicate that individual autonomy is more acknowledged in the British than in the Ecuadorian samples. There is a greater and more pronounced tendency among the British participants to identify educational choices with their own independent preferences and values. The Ecuadorian participants are, on the other hand, more inclined to listen to and follow the preferences of their parents and other family members. The lower level of individual autonomy in the Ecuadorian samples compared to the British samples is also reinforced by the greater tendency among the Ecuadorian participants to be influenced by such extrinsic motivational influences as prestige, career choices, and pressures coming from university professors. As argued by Ryan and Deci (2000), being motivated by fear of punishment, tangible rewards, sanctioning or financial considerations contributes to depressing individual autonomy.

Overall therefore, the collected qualitative data are consistent with the quantitative data from this study and with the findings of earlier research (e.g., Rudy et al., 2007). Furthermore, the present findings not only corroborate these quantitative data trends, but

also illuminate them by providing an in-depth analysis of the potential individual contributors to this cross-cultural disparity in levels of individual autonomy (Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

What is the importance of various external motivational influences in the two studied cultures?

The data related to this question build upon the information that was also relevant to the first question. The findings presented here are important because they had not previously been sufficiently illuminated by either the quantitative component or the mostly quantitative SDT-related research (Matsumoto, 1999).

Overall, the analysis of external motivational influences points to two conclusions. On the one hand, some of the influences differ between the Ecuadorian and British samples. For instance, providing a good example for a younger sibling was an important factor for the Ecuadorian students, but was not mentioned by British students. On the other hand, some of the motivational influences that the Ecuadorian and British participants do share have a different significance in each culture. For instance, prestige is important in the Ecuadorian context, but less so in the UK, while friends appear, surprisingly, more crucial to the British participants. All these data reinforce the argument that cultures might differ not only in terms of the importance that they ascribe to extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation in general, but also in the relative significance that they place on particular types of extrinsic motivation (Matsumoto, 1999; Chirkov et al., 2003).

7.2.3 Life satisfaction

Ecuador

The issue of life satisfaction came up directly in the context of financial matters and good family situation. Those two aspects appear to weigh heavily on the overall happiness of the Ecuadorian participants:

'Money is always a problem...If I had enough money, everything else would be fine.'
(Male # 1.4, Central)

'Yes, money...Quito is getting more expensive all the time and you can't have a good life without money. Not anymore.' (Female # 2.5, Central)

'I don't know... happy. For now, for me, it all depends if I can pay my bills. I don't worry about other things...Health, you know, I mean it is important but right now and in the future, getting a good job, it is most important.' (Male # 2.2, Central)

'I am happy, yes,... everything is good with my family. The school, too, is going okay. Maybe, there will be problems in the future, maybe tomorrow will be, but now it's okay.'
(Female # 3.1, Catolica)

'If everybody is doing well in my family then I don't complain about anything to anybody and I am happy...I feel happy.' (Male # 4.4, Catolica)

'Life is difficult for everyone, and it is not possible to be really happy.' (Female # 1.6, Central)

Overall, some students reveal a noticeable element of dissatisfaction with the way things are. These participants come across as not satisfied with their life. In a sense, the exchanges tend to validate the results from the quantitative data analysis (Table 6.3) and from other research studies that found Ecuadorians scoring comparatively low on well-being scales. As already discussed in the quantitative component of the study, economic features (poverty)

and cultural aspects (collectivism) might contribute to a relatively negative outlook on life that diminishes the overall level of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1995).

These findings - just as those from the quantitative component of the thesis – also need to be considered in the context of studies on well-being that were conducted in various South American countries. These studies consistently demonstrate that Ecuador scores lower on the measure of overall well-being than other similarly impoverished countries in the region (Latinobarometro, 2008). For instance, it has a much lower score than Venezuela, a country that is in the grip of unprecedented levels of violence and which is worse off economically than Ecuador (Latinobarometro, 2008). It is thus possible that some other socio-cultural features, apart from poverty and collectivism, contribute to Ecuadorians' comparatively low levels of life satisfaction. Discovering those features is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is a topic that should be investigated in future research.

The UK

The UK participants expressed a higher level of life satisfaction than their Ecuadorian counterparts, mirroring the results from the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, this life satisfaction is more positively related to their current educational experiences:

'Well, it's big question, of course. But I think that at this stage of my life I am basically satisfied with the way things are. Studying especially...It has lived up to my expectation.' (Male # 1.1)

'Yes, I would say so. Overall, certainly...I am pursuing my interests in a manner that I've always wanted to... still, I think that I'm still discovering myself, so this process, it's far from being done.' (Female # 2.3)

'I enjoy the learning process and the whole university experience...It's been a huge factor...but at the back of your mind, there is always this worry being employed in the field and chances for it, especially in light of what's happening out there.' (Female # 1.5)

- *Discussion of the data related to life satisfaction in the context of the research questions*

The data collected in relation to life satisfaction address the fifth question of the qualitative study:

Are there differences in the levels of subjective well-being between the individualist and collectivist culture?

The data also, indirectly, address the fourth question of the study:

Do subjective well-being and autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

Firstly, in terms of question 5, a comparison of the two cultural groups reinforces the findings derived from the quantitative data analysis in the present study and from some earlier research that correlated individualist self-construal and financial resources with higher well-being (Veenhoven, 1991; Diener and Diener, 1995; McMahon, 2006).

As the present data indicate, the participants from the wealthier, individualistic country (the UK) were more direct and emphatic in expressing their overall satisfaction with life than their Ecuadorian counterparts. Of course, it is difficult to compare statements related to subjective well-being in absolute terms. Well-being is a very elusive construct, whose expression is likely to be enmeshed in overall cultural values (Arrindell et al., 1997; Diener & Diener 1995; Kitayama et al., 2000, Oishi and Diener, 2001). For instance, in the case of Ecuador, a desire to fit in with others (*simpatia*) and ‘not showing off’ or demonstrating that one is better than others might lead to downplaying the level of individual happiness, and thus affect the accuracy of both quantitative and qualitative data (Triandis et al., 1984). Overall, however, these qualitative data reinforce the already substantial body of evidence that points to cross-cultural differences in well-being.

Furthermore and more centrally to the topic of this study, the present qualitative data in conjunction with the analyzed earlier qualitative data - also pointing to higher levels of individual autonomy among the British participants - can strengthen the argument that individual autonomy and subjective well-being are positively correlated in both collectivist and individualist cultures (question 4).

In this sense, the overall research data are consistent with the findings of earlier research (Rudy et al., 2007). The fact that these earlier statistical correlations find corroboration in the qualitative data increases the confidence about the positive relationship between the studied phenomena (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

7.2.4 Relating autonomous learning to life satisfaction

Ecuador

Overall, there is a sense that the university experience has a diminishing effect on overall happiness, but some students found it difficult to pinpoint to any specific aspect:

'Yeah, I wish it was different, better. We spend a lot of time over here, so, sure, it affects happiness... Well, I wish it would give me better learning, that I would get, learn better from it...But that's the same for everybody.' It is what it is (Male # 3.6, Catolica)

'The university makes me happier and less happy...at the same time. I don't know' (Female # 1.2, Central)

A few of the participants were more precise, and it appears that the lack of autonomy might be partly to blame for the reported low life satisfaction:

'Life satisfaction is connected with all that we do and, of course, it is connected to the university studies, too...They don't make it interesting, though, because it's all one way, like being fed food for a baby.' (Female # 4.6, Catolica)

'The two things go together. Always...Sure, many things make me happy or maybe happy...about studying here....It is better than in the past but not like in the West, yet, or

Europe where I talk to a professor like to a friend. That would be better...for being happy.’ (Female # 4.5, Catolica)

‘Happiness, no,...but satisfaction, you know, like in general, yes. I have my own ideas and learning and it’s not appreciated here. It’s by the book and very structured.’ (Male # 1.1, Central)

‘Yes, I would be happier if the university was more promoting... you know, more free. Learning is the most important thing in my life, so, yes, I would be happier.’ (Male # 2.2, Central)

Other participants reflect the clash between the internal need for autonomy and support for the culturally defined concept of proper education:

‘Different style can be more interesting, sure, maybe even better for your happiness, but then it wouldn’t be a proper way to go about it. It’s learning on a professional level...If you could combine both that would be nice, but I don’t think it’s possible.’ (Female # 2.5, Central)

‘I get my happiness elsewhere, from family, from my friends. University is not necessary for it because it has a different purpose. That’s why it’s organized the way it is.’ (Female # 3.3, Catolica)

If there is a yearning for greater self-determination – which SDT conceives of as a universal need (Ryan and Deci, 2000) – it is countered by some participants’ preference for top-down methodology. In a sense, for those participants, the learning process and happiness are connected, but it does not mean that the goal of learning lies in increasing individual happiness. Despite their relationship, the two are not meant to reinforce each other, since ‘true’ learning is not compatible with achieving happiness. Certainly, combining both ‘would be nice...[but it is not] possible’. Therefore, given the inevitable dichotomy, the level of happiness has to suffer for the benefit of attaining ‘true learning’.

Finally, a few of the participants believe that the university experience – be it methodology, curriculum or external pressures – is conducive to increasing happiness. For

those students gaining true knowledge and attaining higher levels of happiness are possible at the same time:

'Studying makes me happy because it's one of the best in Ecuador...I enjoy it. It's very good, the materials and the professors, all this provides a real learning that it is necessary at this level.' (Male # 4.2, Catolica)

'Yes, I'm happy as a student...I'm improving my life and also learning new things that are important and interesting...No, why... I wouldn't want any other system right now.' (Female # 1.3, Central)

Of course, questions remain about what it is exactly about the learning process that makes some students 'happy.' For some it might be a feeling of discovery inherent in self-motivated learning process (Knowles, 1980; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Levesque et al., 2004). For others, however, given Ecuadorian universities' preference for a top-down pedagogic approach, it might be a sense of education being rooted in authority and structure. Indeed, a phrase 'real learning' can mean different things to different people.

The UK

For many of the British participants, the university experience is positively related to their overall level of happiness:

'The university challenges you and, at this level, this challenge can be stimulating. Does it contribute to happiness? Yes, perhaps.' (Female # 2.6)

'Yes, the learning process itself measures up to what I expected and it definitely impacts on my happiness. Positively, most of the time.' (Female # 1.4)

'What you want, what you need for yourself, is to be given an opportunity to grow. I know that it sounds like a cliché, but that what it means to me...Yes, it affects your happiness, as it should.' (Male # 2.2)

'I don't think that at this stage of my life I wouldn't put up with learning approach that doesn't satisfy me or makes me happy... in terms of motivating me to keep at it.' (Female # 1.6)

Some of the previously analyzed excerpts also point to the positive relationship between educational autonomy and life satisfaction:

'But I think that at this point of my life I am basically satisfied with the way things are. Studying especially...It has lived up to my expectations.' (Male # 1.1)

'I am pursuing my interests in a manner that I've always wanted to.' (Female # 2.3)

'I enjoy the learning process and the whole university experience...It's been a huge factor.' (Female # 1.5)

It seems, therefore, that an opportunity for self-determination or autonomy in learning has a positive impact on the participants' life satisfaction. They need learning that is 'stimulating' and which gives them 'an opportunity to grow'. In essence, self-direction is a necessary component of learning experience because it is related to independence and self-realization that characterizes, to a greater degree, individualist Western cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). As one of the students says, he 'wouldn't put up with learning approach that doesn't satisfy [him] or makes [him] happy'.

Nevertheless, for some of the UK participants university experience is unrelated to their overall happiness. Of course, it is hard to judge the reliability of those statements since the students themselves find it hard to compartmentalize and differentiate different sources of their happiness or sadness.

'It's unrelated, most of the time. Of course, I might think about it differently when I look back at those years, sometime in future.' (Female # 1.2)

'It's difficult to distinguish, to pinpoint, what it is that, overall, is contributing to happiness...I wouldn't be able to say that.' (Male # 2.5)

- ***Discussion of the data in the context of the research questions***

The data collected in this part address the fourth question of the qualitative study:

Do subjective well-being and autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

The relationship between autonomous learning and life satisfaction is acknowledged in the transcripts from both cultural groups. In the Ecuadorian samples, this relationship is less straightforward. Some of the participants agree that having more educational autonomy would enhance their well-being, while others express their preference for the established top-down pedagogic approach. Furthermore, a few of the participants, who admitted that more autonomy in learning would increase their well-being, also articulated the belief that such a scenario would risk compromising the quality of learning. This is an important finding in the context of Self-determination theory. It appears that some collectivist students accept SDT's notion that autonomy is an essential need for achieving higher levels of subjective well-being. However, fostering this need - and, in turn, subjective well-being dependent on it - might clash, in their opinion, with obtaining what they consider to be 'true learning'.

In the case of the British participants, the relationship between autonomy and life satisfaction is less ambiguous. Students tended to affirm the importance and positive role of autonomy in enhancing life satisfaction. Furthermore, in most parts, they viewed the educational process as helping them in achieving both. It is thus possible that this overall satisfaction with the learning process partly explains the higher levels of well-being found among the British participants in the quantitative analysis (Table 6.3).

Interestingly, however, the data presented here, especially in the context of the Ecuadorian participants, appear to run counter to the previously suggested positive relationship between individual autonomy and subjective well-being in both collectivist and

individualist cultures. Such a positive correlation was found in the quantitative component of this study as well as in some earlier research (e.g., Rudy et al., 2007). The positive relationship between these variables also lies at the heart of SDT's stand that autonomy is universally beneficial to well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000). However, the fact that many Ecuadorian participants doubt that having greater autonomy in learning would increase their life satisfaction questions this assumption. Of course, the present findings need substantiation by future research, but they point to the importance of studying the SDT framework using qualitative tools (Matsumoto, 1999; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

7.2.5 Relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors

Ecuador

In the Ecuadorian samples, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors often tended to merge with each other:

'My mother has lived longer so necessarily she knows things I am not able to know... Yet... I listen to her advice, no not because I have to, I don't have to.' (Female 4.6, Catolica)

'There doesn't have to be a difference between what I think and what my family thinks... Why would there be any difference. They want what's the best me, always.' (Female # 1.2, Central)

'In my family, we don't fight because we have similar goals. Not only for the school, but generally.' (Male # 3.4, Catolica)

'That's the same thing. I don't look at life as a person who is alone... My family supports me and we're responsible for each other behaviour.' (Female # 4.5, Catolica)

'If you make something against the family wishes, there won't be any support for you when things go wrong... It's illogical anyway because we all have the same goals.' (Female # 2.4, Central)

Responses suggest that a common belief that 'what my family thinks is the best for me' leads to the formation of goals by the students which are congruent with family

expectations. Of course, as with the influence of parents discussed earlier in this chapter, it is difficult to determine how complete has been the inclusion of the external influences into the individual self. This merging appears to be necessary, however, in achieving psychological health, since without it a person feels ‘alone’. This sense of loneliness or being alone is an interesting aspect in the context of collectivist self-construal. SDT has always maintained that autonomy is a universal need and thus is crucial for healthy functioning in all cultures (Ryan and Deci, 2000). However, as the above exchanges demonstrate, in some contexts, asserting one universal need (autonomy) might undermine a different universal need: a need for relatedness (one of three universal needs identified by SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Of course, according to the dualistic concept of autonomy, this need does not have to clash with relatedness because those two notions represent two different and unrelated dimensions (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Still, how those psychological intricacies are perceived at the level of individual consciousness is debatable (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Once again, these few short exchanges reveal the complexity and elusiveness of the human psyche, and how this psyche can be imbued with cultural underpinnings.

Furthermore, as the last excerpt reveals, the merging of the two perspectives can also stem from a need for security and support. Individualism as a motivational orientation carries with itself a danger of a person being left alone and defenseless when ‘things go wrong’. It is possible that in the case of the Ecuadorian students, the pressure exerted by parents is of greater importance because rejecting it leaves a person not only alone but also defenseless. Loneliness and vulnerability might be a price to pay for asserting autonomy in

some collectivist families. In the British context, where, as one student cited earlier states, ‘my parents will support me no matter what I decide to do’, this risk is less tangible.

Moreover, it might be more than just the presumed unconditional support on the part of the parents that makes it easier for the British participants to differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Those students, contrary to their Ecuadorian counterparts, can ‘risk’ following their own path and do not have to worry to the same degree about what happens ‘when things go wrong’ because of the relative safety net that still exists in the UK (Barr, 2004). From this perspective, the subjection to family wishes - analyzed earlier in this chapter - as well as the merging of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, in general, might reflect both the cultural underpinning of collectivism and economic realities of Ecuador (Gasparini, 2003; Ravallion, 2010). Indeed, those two aspects – culture and economic reality – might be intertwined in complex ways in the process of exerting motivational influences on the Ecuadorian participants.

The UK

For the UK participants, there appears to be a much clearer distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation. These do not coincide most of the time, and given a choice, intrinsic motivation usually prevails:

‘I think it must be something that comes from you...Independently, in some ways, so there is no resentment later on.’ (Female # 2.6)

‘I create my own goals and aspirations...You look for counsel to your family, but it’s not about being forced into a certain direction. It wouldn’t work with me anyway.’ (Female # 2.3)

A sense of independence needs to be asserted and letting external factors merge excessively with internal drives might lead to ‘resentment later on.’ The very fact that external influences come from outside and reflect the views of others renders them less desirable.

The ‘foreign’ quality attached to external pressures might interfere with the creation of the students’ ‘own goals and aspiration.’

- ***Discussion of the qualitative data in the context of the research question***

Do subjective well-being and autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?

Consistent with the findings from the quantitative part of the study (Table 6.9) and some earlier research (e.g., Ivengar and Lepper, 1999), the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is less antagonistic in the Ecuadorian samples than is the case for the British students. In the former, both sub-types of human motivation can readily co-exist with each other and form an enlarged ‘inclusive self’. In the UK samples, however, the separation between the motivational orientations is more pronounced. This dichotomy between the extrinsic and intrinsic influences falls in line with the previously discussed issues of self-assertion, individuality and ‘finding my own way.’ In some ways, a clear and conscious differentiation between the two motivational orientations is a necessary prerequisite for establishing ‘self’ in Western individualist contexts (Cousins, 1989). The individualist self is forged partly in opposition to the external demands, even if those demands might reflect intrinsic needs. Therefore, a clear separation between ‘me’ and ‘they’ is essential in order to see what this ‘me’ consists of. On the other hand, in the collectivist culture the notion of ‘self’ is more inclusive and the separation between ‘me’ and ‘they’ is allowed to be blurred (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Importantly, however, especially in the context of the present study, the collected data point to the danger which assertion of individual autonomy poses for the subjective well-being of some Ecuadorian participants. The comments related to feeling ‘alone’ and not

having anybody ‘when things go wrong’, appear to suggest that in collectivist contexts which reward inter-dependence, asserting individual autonomy might be ‘risky’ and thus potentially detrimental to subjective well-being. Again, these conclusions from the qualitative findings are not consistent with the quantitative data in the present study, some earlier research (Rudy et al., 2007), and the SDT framework, in general. They support therefore an argument for conducting more qualitative and mixed methods research in a variety of cultural contexts (Matsumoto, 1999; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

7.2.6 Concluding synthesis of the qualitative data trends and final remarks about the qualitative study’s findings

Adding a qualitative component to the present study contributed to its greater comprehensiveness and complementarity. It also allowed for the triangulation of data, which, in turn, increased the reliability of the study’s findings (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Firstly, the qualitative component reaffirmed some of the findings from the quantitative data analysis and from an earlier similarly designed quantitative study (Rudy et al., 2007). Overall, the individualist samples were found to display higher levels of individual autonomy and subjective well-being than their collectivist counterparts. Such a consistency of data across various collectivist and individualist contexts that have been researched by means of both quantitative and qualitative methods increases confidence in their reliability (Matsumoto, 1999; Creswell, 2003; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009).

Furthermore, indirectly, the findings of the study’s qualitative component support SDT’s stand that autonomy is universally beneficial to well-being. The higher levels of both individual autonomy and subjective well-being in the UK groups point to the possibility of

the positive relationship between these variables. In this sense, again, the study is consistent with the quantitative component and some earlier research (Rudy et al., 2007).

Adding the qualitative component to the present research also allowed the identification of particular external motivational influences in both individualist and collectivist contexts. This is an independent contribution of the qualitative data, since previous, mostly quantitative approaches, did not provide enough information about these aspects (Matsumoto, 1999; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009). These are important data which might contribute to developing cross-cultural educational programs that take into account and better incorporate into the learning process those external motivational influences that are especially pertinent to students' educational experience.

Finally, some aspects of the qualitative data differed from previous findings in relation to SDT's principles. Many of the Ecuadorian participants were not sure if having more autonomy in learning would increase their subjective well-being, or pointed to the discrepancy between self-directed learning and 'true learning' rooted in authority. A few of the Ecuadorian participants also pointed to the risk of feeling 'alone' that they associated with asserting autonomy in their collectivist culture. Those findings, although very early and tentative, suggest that the relationship between autonomy and well-being might be more complex, especially in collectivist cultures, than SDT predicts (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999).

Overall, it is my belief that choosing a mixed methods approach in the present study allowed for a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the studied phenomena. In this way, the study has contributed to the important debate about cultural manifestations of the latent

phenomena and about providing the best learning contexts for students from both individualist and collectivist cultures.

7.3 Summary of the study's findings and its theoretical and methodological contribution

7.3.1 Relating the study's findings to the research questions

At this point, near the end of the thesis, the qualitative findings presented above need to be combined, once again, with the quantitative data discussed earlier in order to provide direct and concise answers to the study's main questions. These questions guided the overall research process and addressing them relates directly to the study's main contributions:

- *Is individual or self-generated autonomy in the learning process less pronounced in the collectivist cultural context?*

Both the qualitative and quantitative data indicate that entirely self-generated autonomy tends to be less pronounced in the collectivist cultural context. These findings support the view of some cross-cultural researchers that collectivist self-construal is less conducive to fostering independence and self-direction in learning (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Oishi, 2000). In line with previous research conducted in collectivist cultures, the collected data reiterate therefore the importance of close family members and socio-cultural obligations in determining students' motivational orientation (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999).

- *What is the importance of various external motivational influences in the two studied cultures?*

The qualitative data obtained in the study demonstrate significant differences between the British and Ecuadorian samples in terms of the main motivational influences

reported by students. Overall, in the case of Ecuador, close family members tend to play a more important and explicit role in influencing students' educational decisions. In their learning pursuits, Ecuadorian students are also more concerned than their British counterparts with prestige, future employment and monetary considerations as well as with exams and teachers' demands. These findings indicate that both collectivist self-construal and the disparity in economic conditions between the UK and Ecuador play a role in forming external motivational influences (Oishi, Diener, Lucas, and Suh, 1999). Finally, in contrast to close family members, friends are of similar or possibly even lesser importance to the Ecuadorian students than to the British students. This fact might reflect the reality that, in the collectivist context of Ecuador, the influences of family members are so powerful in the motivational area that they leave little room for others.

- *Do subjective well-being and individual or self-generated autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?*

The obtained research data show that entirely self-generated autonomy is conducive to subjective well-being in both the British and Ecuadorian cultural contexts. These findings support SDT's view that autonomy is a universal need that is beneficial to well-being regardless of the cultural context in which it is enacted (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In this way, the present findings contradict the claim of some cross-cultural researchers that autonomy is less essential in collectivist cultures because it clashes with the interdependence that is promoted and valued in these cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Iyengar and Lepper, 1999).

- *Do subjective well-being and inclusive autonomy relate similarly to each other in different cultural contexts?*

In contrast to individual or self-generated autonomy, inclusive autonomy correlated positively with subjective well-being only in the Ecuadorian context. Such a result points to the importance of cultural self-construal in determining correlations between subjective well-being and the form of autonomy that is generated through the full internalization of external influences. It is plausible, as was argued by Rudy et al. (2007), that this form of autonomy is beneficial in collectivist cultures because it corresponds to the orientation toward interdependence that is championed in these cultures. On the other hand, however, such an inclusive autonomy or the genuine incorporation of the views and demands of others into one's decision making process clashes with the individualism and self-assertion that define individualist self-construal (Rudy et al., 2007). Therefore, subscribing to inclusive autonomy places the 'inclusive' British student outside of the cultural mainstream, which, in turn, might negatively affect their subjective well-being.

- *Are there any differences in the levels of subjective well-being between the individualist and collectivist culture?*

Overall, the quantitative and qualitative data appear to indicate that the individualist sample (the UK) displays higher levels of subjective well-being than the collectivist samples (Ecuador). These findings coincide with previous research that demonstrated higher levels of well-being in individualistic societies (Veenhoven, 1991; Diener and Diener, 1995; McMahon, 2006). The present results need to be considered with caution, however. The UK and Ecuador differ from each other both

in terms of cultural self-construal and in terms of economic conditions. It is thus possible that, apart from the greater assertion of autonomy on the part of the British participants, the better economic situation in the UK contributed to the differences in subjective well-being between the samples.

7.3.2 The study's theoretical and methodological contributions

The present study has offered theoretical and methodological contributions to the area of research. Firstly, adding a qualitative component to the study allowed for a greater triangulation, comprehensiveness, and complementariness of the collected data (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, applying a mixed method approach enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research (Robson, 2002). It is thus hoped that, in the future, qualitative methods of data collection will play a more prominent part in SDT-related research.

Furthermore, the study employed the quantitative methodological approach proposed by Rudy et al. (2007) to different cultural contexts. By doing so, it provided an additional opportunity for an empirical study and validation of the relatively new concept of inclusive autonomy. In methodological terms, the present study addressed thus the theoretical writings of Kagitcibasi (2005) and her consideration of human autonomy along the dimensions of 'agency' and 'interpersonal distance'.

The methodological and theoretical implications of the study presented above (7.3.1) as well as the earlier summary of the study's main findings (7.3.2) are more expansively elaborated upon in the Conclusions and Implications chapter which follows.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Conclusions about research aims and questions

The present study found that educational autonomy could manifest itself in various ways in collectivist and individualist cultural contexts. Firstly, university students can display individual autonomy that is mostly self-generated and less dependent on the internalization of the influences of others. This form of autonomy appears to be more prevalent in the UK than in Ecuador. However, its smaller presence in the collectivist culture does not signify that it is less important for the emotional well-being of students brought up in this culture. In fact, the study found that individual autonomy was similarly positively correlated with well-being in both the UK and Ecuador.

Apart from individual autonomy, students can also display inclusive autonomy. This form of autonomy is created as the result of students' internalizing the expectation of their close family members into their 'enlarged self'. This internalization can be so complete that these expectations of others are no longer perceived as external in nature but are, instead, genuinely self-endorsed and assimilated to form an inclusive or relational version of autonomy. Although inclusive autonomy was present in the case of both British and Ecuadorian students, the benefits of this autonomy for subjective well-being were limited to the Ecuadorian samples. It is possible that family-centrism in the case of some British students placed those students outside of the prevalent cultural mainstream and undermined their well-being (Rudy et al., 2007).

The qualitative data revealed that family was more important for Ecuadorian students as a source of motivation than was the case for most British students. However, in regards to Ecuadorian students, this significant influence of family – especially in terms of forming

inclusive autonomy – was limited only to parents and, possibly, siblings and grandparents. Moreover, although familial influences, societal pressures and demands coming from friends were important for both Ecuadorian and British students, they had different motivational and behavioural consequences in those two cultural contexts. For British students, paying attention to external influences had not appeared to lessen their desire for self-assertion and independence.

Finally, both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that individual or entirely self-generated autonomy associated with intrinsic motivation is beneficial to subjective well-being in both individualist and collectivist cultural contexts. This is an important finding, highly supportive of the SDT framework (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Chirkov, 2009). It needs to be noted, however, that the qualitative data contributed some findings that pointed to a less straightforward relationship in the Ecuadorian collectivist context.

8.2 Theoretical implications and contributions

The findings of the study demonstrate that autonomy is a multi-faceted need and that it requires analysis which is sensitive to its various cultural manifestations. In line with Self-determination theory, the thesis showed that autonomy could be both individual (self-generated) and relational (inclusive) in nature (Deci and Ryan, 1991). In this regard, the study corroborates the theoretical writings of Kagitcibasi (2005) and her presentation of autonomy along two separate dimensions: interpersonal distance and agency. Along the same lines, the study addressed the theoretical confusion that has contributed to the dispute between SDT researchers and their opponents in regards to the cross-cultural importance of autonomy. As Rudy et al. (2007) argue, SDT researchers have focused on *the reasons for behaviour* whereas cross-cultural researchers have been preoccupied with *who is behaving*.

To put it differently, cross-cultural research concerns itself with interdependent versus independent self-construal, whereas Self-determination theory research analyzes autonomous versus controlled reasons for behaviour. In line with Rudy et al.'s (2007) research, the present thesis has attempted to provide a new perspective on the importance of autonomy by combining these two approaches.

The thesis also provided a methodological contribution by incorporating the revised version of Rudy et al.'s (2007) inclusive Academic Motivation Scale within the different and previously untested cultural context of Ecuador. In this way, the theoretical implications proposed by Rudy et al. (2007) in terms of culturally-mediated differences in the relationship between autonomy and well-being have gained additional substantiation.

Finally, employing a mixed methods approach in data collection allowed for new light to be shed on the field of research that has been dominated by quantitative studies. It is my belief that such a methodological choice has resulted in obtaining data that are rich as well as more reliable and trustworthy. Comparing quantitative findings with qualitative data in the same study – an approach hitherto uncommon in SDT-related research (Matsumoto, 1999; Ryan and Niemiec, 2009) – provided an opportunity for triangulation of data and their greater elaboration. This methodological approach also helped to mitigate problems of cross-cultural equivalence that might be present when scales and measurements developed in one culture are applied in a different culture (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004). Adding focus groups to the present study allowed the Ecuadorian and the British students to discuss the studied phenomena and the relationships between them on their own cultural terms.

8.3 Practical implications

Given the fact that real people and their time and effort were invested in the research, the question ‘to what ends?’ needs to be asked.

Practical implications of the study relate mostly to instructional design and the implementation of educational initiatives in cross-cultural contexts. In terms of the UK data, the thesis reaffirms that a self-determined and independent learning process that engages intrinsic motivation is preferred by university students. Indeed, it appears that SDT’s main principles unequivocally apply to this group of students, and the data mirror findings from earlier studies conducted in individualist societies (Rudy et al. 2007). Therefore, instructors are vindicated in continuing to develop and implement educational practices which give students plenty of opportunities for self-direction, self-assertion and which relate to students’ self-identified intrinsic needs. Such a student-centered approach appears not only beneficial for fostering well-being but is also identified by students as consistent with ‘true learning.’

The data are less straightforward in the case of Ecuadorian university students. The findings and their analysis show that autonomy is a universally beneficial value but its manifestation and emotional consequences are dependent on the cultural self-construal to which students subscribe. In contrast with their British counterparts, Ecuadorian students achieve benefits from autonomy when this autonomy is the result of genuine self-endorsement or internalization of the motivational influences of important others, mainly close family members.

Moreover, independence and self-direction in the learning process appear to be of lesser importance to Ecuadorian students than to British students. Ecuadorian students, to a large degree, prefer to be given precise guidance of what they need to read and from what books and what is important and worth studying. The lack of external guidance that might be associated with self-discovery, autonomy, and an intrinsic pursuit of interests can create confusion and a sense of abandonment on a part of Ecuadorian students, and thus hamper rather than increase their subjective well-being.

Furthermore, as the qualitative data indicate, social pressures such as duty, *simpatia* and *respeto*, amongst others, have considerable salience in the collectivist culture of Ecuador. Due to these factors, culturally-undifferentiated promotion of student-centered learning that insists on self-direction, self-assertion, class discussions, and independence in learning might not presently be appropriate for the Ecuadorian context. For example, insisting on self-assertion and defense of one's opinion in light of *simpatia* and the importance of family influences, or on active questioning of teachers in light of *respeto* might negatively affect students' participation and/or well-being. Instead, educational professionals and program developers, especially those coming to Ecuador from Western countries, need to take into consideration students' culturally-ingrained preference for some structure and authority.

Of course, this does not mean that a top-down pedagogical approach now reportedly prevalent in Ecuador should be maintained in an unchanged form. Such an approach would not fit Ecuadorian students' needs because - as both the quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate - those students, just as their British counterparts, want some degree of educational autonomy and prefer to be engaged in learning that relates to their intrinsic

interests. Therefore, in the context of Ecuador, a well-thought out compromise between student-centered and teacher-centered approaches should be sought.

Moreover, given the fact that both forms of educational autonomy correlated positively with well-being, it is possible that a gradual introduction of at least partially self-determined learning approaches will lead to their incremental embrace by even those students who are used to top-down pedagogy. Some of the Ecuadorian students agreed that more self-determined or autonomous learning would probably be 'better for feeling happy', but they also thought it was not what 'real learning is about.' A goal for educational practitioners should therefore be gradually to convince such students – through the introduction of culturally-adjusted instructional methodology – that more self-determined learning can lead to both greater well-being and true learning gains.

Finally, the already mentioned benefits of inclusive autonomy and the importance of family in guiding the learning process also have implications for educational practices in such collectivist cultures as Ecuador. Educators should recognize that emotional well-being of students is achieved not necessarily through asserting independence from familial motivational influences – as might be the case for individualist UK students - but, instead, through the integration of those influences into the student's 'enlarged self.' This is why, even at a university level, instructors need to show respect and understanding for students' motivational orientation that is based on fulfilling the wishes of parents or on providing an example for siblings. Contrary to some expectations, such motivational orientation does not have to be external in nature (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, Bao and Lam, 2008). In fact, it might reflect the emergence of inclusive or relational autonomy which tends to exert a

positive effect on subjective well-being of collectivist students (Iyengar and Lepper, 1999; Oishi, 1999).

Overall, therefore, in the case of Ecuador, the collected data suggest that the approach supporting the gradual enhancement of autonomy and self-expression within a teaching context that is still rooted in authority and that provides structure and direction for learning might best foster students' subjective well-being. Furthermore, this approach has to embrace both intrinsic as well as extrinsic (especially familial) bases for motivation.

In essence, a well-thought out compromise between the position of SDT's proponents and that of its cross-cultural critics needs to be sought. In Ecuador, finding this compromise is crucial, given a very low enrollment in institutions of higher education and very low university graduation rates (Giugale and Lopez, 2003). It is hoped that the present study's focus on educational motivation and subjective well-being may help to inform pedagogical approaches that can better address the country's educational challenges.

8.4 Limitations and further research

There are a number of limitations in the study that should be recognized and addressed in future research. Firstly, the cross-cultural nature of the research always leaves a possibility of a lack in equivalence (Embretson, 1983; Hui and Triandis, 1989; van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004). This issue was dealt with by using the well-established scales from previous cross-cultural research conducted in both individualist and collectivist cultures as well as by employing triangulation of methods in order to strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of data (Creswell, 2003, Nuzen et al., 2005; Gouveia et al., 2008).

The possibility of a lack of equivalence persists, however, and needs to be acknowledged. In the present study, this might arise as an outcome of both construct bias

and method bias (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004). In terms of construct bias, there needs to be recognition that autonomy and subjective well-being are complex phenomena that might be differently conceptualized in countries as different as the UK and Ecuador (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). In other words, the ‘universal (i.e. culture-independent) validity of the underlying psychological construct’ cannot be taken for granted (Triandis and Martin, 1983; van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004, p. 121).

The present study might also have been affected by method bias or, more precisely, administration bias (van de Vijver and Tanzer, 2004). The Ecuadorian students completed paper versions of the questionnaires, while the British students filled out the questionnaires on the internet. Furthermore, the focus groups in the UK were conducted in English, while the focus groups in Ecuador were conducted in Spanish. This last issue needs to be noted because, although I speak fluent Spanish, I still feel more comfortable conversing in English.

All those facts reinforce the need to conduct more research that employs various methods of data collection. Only a large body of evidence obtained through the process of comparison and triangulation can allow us to put forward more definite statements about the cross-cultural relationships between psychological phenomena.

A different limitation of the study is related to a relatively small number of participants, both in Ecuador and the UK, especially compared to some previous studies (e.g. Sheldon et al., 2004). It is possible that some of the statistically insignificant correlations obtained in the study will become significant once larger samples of university students are included in future research.

What also emerges as a limitation of the study is the lack of precise information regarding the gender and ethnicity of the samples. Based on the information available to me about the typical student populations in psychology departments in Ecuador and the UK, I assumed that the participants were predominately females of White ethnic origin (the UK) and females of Latin ethnicity (Ecuador) (Zinkiewicz and Trapp, 2004; HESA, 2011). Still, I did not collect exact statistical data, which might limit the generalizability of my findings, despite the fact the gender has not been shown to significantly affect correlations between the studied variables in previous research (Rudy et al., 2007).

Moreover, enrolling in future research students from different subject domains than psychology could also lead to different findings (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). It is plausible that psychology students' greater awareness of psychological theories of well-being and personal growth could have inclined some of them to provide 'correct answers', instead of authentic responses with which they genuinely identify (McCracken, 1988). These considerations necessarily constrain the legitimate generalizations of the collected data and provide a strong incentive for future research.

My experiences with the study lead also to some suggestions for future methodological approaches. Apart from quantitative or mixed methods approach, researchers might choose to address the issue of autonomy and well-being by means of experimental research conducted in both individualist and collectivist cultural contexts. Such research carries a promise of demonstrating causal relationships between the tested variables. It would also be worthwhile to conduct longitudinal studies in various cultures to investigate the change in the relationships between the variables throughout the adolescent and adult maturation process. Finally, developing new quantitative scales and comparing

them to the ones used so far can enhance the reliability of the data and their cross-cultural equivalence.

Overall, a lot remains to be known, but, as Chirkov et al., (2003, p.108) state, this knowledge needs to be pursued:

‘The study of internalization and relative autonomy within varied cultures may tell us much about what type of practices are most assimilable and conducive to well-being and what forms of socialization foster most integration for human beings, wherever they reside.’

APPENDIX 1: Pilot Study

The qualitative part

Objectives

A pilot study was conducted only in Ecuador because during my research preparation stage I was residing in this country. The pilot study had a number of specific objectives. First, I wanted to check if carrying out a focus group in Spanish would present for me any difficulties in terms of the language, cross-cultural communication and monitoring techniques. Second, I intended to see if Ecuadorian participants – less accustomed to focus group settings than Western participants (Sabogal et al., 1987; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002) – would feel comfortable, and if they would respond to my probing. Furthermore, I used this study to familiarize myself better with qualitative data analysis procedures. Finally, the pilot study was conducted to test the appropriateness of the focus group guide I had designed for this cross-cultural research.

Participants

The focus group was conducted in a very informal setting on the campus of Universidad Católica. I asked the Psychology Department secretary if I could talk to students. She told me to ask individual professors who were having classes at this time. I did this and was allowed to present my research to students in two different classrooms. At the end of my presentation I told them that I would be waiting in a lobby following their classes, and they might go there and talk to me if they were interested in participating in the pilot study. Eight students came to talk to me, of whom six agreed to participate (two of these students had already participated in the quantitative pilot study conducted during their classes and described later in this section). There were two men and four women in this group, all of

whom were undergraduate psychology students. I gave them the same information sheets and content forms that would be given later to the study's participants but informed them that their statements and responses would not be used in the thesis.

Procedure

The pilot study lasted about an hour and was recorded using a small electronic recording device. It took place on the university campus and during it the students were sitting around a table. The recording device was placed on a chair in front of me.

Findings

Moderating abilities

The collected data confirmed my expectations as far as my monitoring ability was concerned. I was able to follow all the discussions without getting lost and I did not encounter any substantial misunderstandings or confusion on my part, or on the part of the students. Looking forward, one issue that I recognized that I would need to work on was my tendency prematurely to assume that a given participant had finished answering a question. On a few occasions, I moved on to a next question before the participants had finished answering a previous issue. I recognized that I needed to be more patient with silences and pauses, which I had tended to take as a lack of interest in or the lack of information about the topic. Such pauses might signify, however, that participants needed more time to think about a given issue.

Participants' response

Overall, my impression was that the participants were eager to respond to my probing, and that they found the issues both interesting and worth talking about. This estimation was additionally validated by the comments that the participants made about their participation

in the pilot study. They told me that they had found the topic interesting, liked my monitoring approach and the format, and they thought that I had given them enough space and time to discuss the issues in greater depth. Furthermore, they considered none of the questions inappropriate in terms of personal or cultural sensibilities.

Revisions of the provisional tentative focus group guide

The qualitative part of the pilot study also provided an opportunity to refine the focus group guide. As the result of this group discussion, I decided to make some changes to the sequence of questions planned for the focus groups and also redeveloped the section designed for direct probing about well-being and autonomy. The students had appeared very willing to talk about external influences on their studying but had needed more direct prompting to discuss the relationship between autonomy and well-being.

Furthermore, I decided to split the questions related to subjective well-being and the questions related to the relationship between academic motivation and subjective well-being. Before this pilot study, I had combined those questions. Based on my experiences with this group of participants, I formed the view that it would be better to keep those questions separate for the purpose of future data analysis.

Finally, I decided to change time allocations for the different parts of the guide. For instance, a thorough discussion of family influences on studying decisions might require more time than I originally anticipated. The final version of my focus group guide is included in Appendix 9.

An opportunity to practise methods of qualitative data analysis

I also used the pilot focus group to familiarize myself with non-computerized methods of qualitative data analysis. I transcribed the focus group responses, which made me realize

how difficult and time consuming this process was. In terms of practical consequences, I made a decision to allocate a lot of time in my future research schedule to this process of transcribing focus groups.

Next, manually, using different pens, I marked those parts of the transcript that corresponded to, what I considered, the most frequent and important themes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Conducting this process required repeated readings of the text, but it allowed for a better identification of the areas that had generated the greatest response and interest among the participants.

The analysis of the transcript also revealed that teachers' influences had been a relatively minor influence on students' academic motivation. I hypothesized that the paucity of data in this area might have been the result of respondents' inherent lack of interest in this topic – its relatively minor contribution to motivational orientation - or it might be the result of some inadequacy on my part in eliciting information. To safeguard against the second possibility, I separated the issue of teachers' influences from the general question about societal influences.

The quantitative component of the study

Objectives

The quantitative component of the pilot study also had some specific objectives:

1. to determine if Ecuadorian participants might have any reservations about filling out a written questionnaire (Adoum, 2000; Sabogal et al., 1987);
2. to test the Spanish translations of the questionnaires. All the questionnaires were originally developed in English and, with the exception of the very popular SWLS, had been tested only twice in Latin America (Nunez et al., 2006); and

3. to establish whether potential participants could distinguish between the individual AMS and the inclusive AMS. These scales differ only in how the subject is defined ('I' versus 'We', for example). Apart from this, all the items are identical and are presented in the same order.

Participants

The quantitative pilot study was also conducted only in Ecuador because of the previously mentioned factors. Furthermore, in general, I was more concerned about the questionnaires' appropriateness for Spanish speaking students because they had been much more extensively tested and validated with English speaking populations (Fairchild et al., 2005).

This pilot was conducted with a group of psychology students in a classroom of one of the buildings of Universidad Catolica. They were all third year students, and, as already mentioned, two of these students participated later on, the same day, in the qualitative pilot study. I contacted the students and invited them to participate in the quantitative pilot study and, at the same time, I also asked them to participate in the qualitative pilot study. Indeed, this pilot study took place in one of the two classes that I had earlier described. I had eighteen copies of questionnaires and consent forms with me and eighteen students filled these out. This was probably a mistake on my part because many more students had offered to participate in this pilot study.

Findings

Filling out the questionnaires

The students had no problems or reservations about filling out the questionnaires or returning these to me. I asked them about the process of questionnaire completion directly, and they reported that the questionnaires had been easy to follow and that there had been

nothing culturally inappropriate about them. In respect to linguistic and structural correctness, I asked them to mark with an asterisk any items that were unclear or inappropriate. Only two items – 13 and 17 on the individual AMS – were marked by one student. Following the pilot, I reviewed those two items with several native Spanish speakers. All of them found those items clear, grammatically correct, and culturally appropriate. No changes were therefore made.

Distinguishing between the individual AMS and the inclusive AMS

Finally, the pilot demonstrated that the students had no difficulty in distinguishing the individual AMS from the inclusive AMS. After the pilot, I looked over the students' responses, without submitting them to statistical analysis. Even this visual inspection revealed conspicuous rating differences between the scales, supporting the view that these are distinct measurement instruments that relate to different underlying factors (Rudy et al., 2007).

Overall, both pilots were very useful exercises and their findings certainly assisted me in designing and conducting a sensitively attuned research study. Moreover, apart from providing practical insights, they strengthened my awareness of the complexity and time demands involved in this type of research.

APPENDIX 2: Individual Motivation Scales (the AMS)

1. The original Academic Motivation Scale
2. The abridged Individual Motivation Scale (English Version)
3. The abridged Individual Motivation Scale (Spanish Version)

The original Academic Motivation Scale

ACADEMIC MOTIVATION SCALE (AMS-C 28)

COLLEGE (CEGEP) VERSION

Robert J. Vallerand, Luc G. Pelletier, Marc R. Blais, Nathalie M. Brière, Caroline B. Senécal, Évelyne F. Vallières, 1992-1993 Educational and Psychological Measurement, vols. 52 and 53
Scale Description

This scale assesses the same 7 constructs as the Motivation scale toward College (CEGEP) studies. It contains 28 items assessed on a 7-point scale.

References

Vallerand, R.J., Blais, M.R., Brière, N.M., & Pelletier, L.G. (1989). Construction et validation de l'Échelle de Motivation en Éducation (EME). Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement, 21, 323-349.

WHY DO YOU GO TO COLLEGE (CEGEP) ?

Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you go to college (CEGEP).

Does not correspond at all	Corresponds a little	Corresponds moderately	Corresponds a lot	Corresponds exactly		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WHY DO YOU GO TO COLLEGE (CEGEP) ?

1. Because with only a high-school degree I would not find a high-paying job later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Because I think that a college (CEGEP) education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. For the intense feelings I experience when I am

- communicating my own ideas to others. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college (CEGEP) degree. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I once had good reasons for going to college (CEGEP); however, now I wonder whether I should continue. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. Because of the fact that when I succeed in college (CEGEP) I feel important. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. Because I want to have "the good life" later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Does not correspond at all	Corresponds a little	Corresponds moderately	Corresponds a lot	Corresponds exactly
1	2	3	4	5
			6	7

WHY DO YOU GO TO COLLEGE (CEGEP) ?

16. For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. For the pleasure that I experience when I feel completely absorbed by what certain authors have written. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I can't see why I go to college (CEGEP) and frankly, I couldn't care less. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. To show myself that I am an intelligent person. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. In order to have a better salary later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about

- many things that interest me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I don't know; I can't understand what I am doing in school. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. Because college (CEGEP) allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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KEY FOR AMS-28

2, 9, 16, 23 Intrinsic motivation - to know

6, 13, 20, 27 Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment

4, 11, 18, 25 Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation

3, 10, 17, 24 Extrinsic motivation - identified

7, 14, 21, 28 Extrinsic motivation - introjected

1, 8, 15, 22 Extrinsic motivation - external regulation

5, 12, 19, 26 Amotivation

The abridged Individual Motivation Scale (English Version)

Items removed from the original AMS-28:

Amotivation: # 5, 12, 19, 26

Intrinsic motivation to know: # 16

Intrinsic motivation to accomplish things: # 13

Intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation: # 18

Extrinsic motivation – identified: # 24

Extrinsic motivation – introjected: # 7

Extrinsic motivation - external regulation: # 1

This scale contains 18 items assessed on a 7-point scale.

Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you go to university.

Does not correspond at all	Corresponds a little	Corresponds moderately	Corresponds a lot	Corresponds exactly
1	2	3	4	5

WHY DO YOU GO TO UNIVERSITY?

1. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Because I think that a university education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Because of the fact that when I succeed in university I feel important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Because I want to have "the good life" later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. To show myself that I am an intelligent person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. In order to have a better salary later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Because university allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

KEY FOR AMS-18

# 1, 6, 15	Intrinsic motivation - to know
# 4, 12, 17	Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment
# 3, 8, 16	Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation
# 2, 7, 11	Extrinsic motivation - identified
# 9, 13, 18	Extrinsic motivation - introjected
# 5, 10, 14	Extrinsic motivation - external regulation

The abridged Individual Motivation Scale (Spanish Version)

Escala de Motivación Académica (Individual)

Utilizando la siguiente escala de 1 a 7, indique su acuerdo con cada una declaración.

7 – Completamente de acuerdo, 6–De acuerdo, 5–Más bien de acuerdo, 4 – Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo, 3 – Más bien en desacuerdo, 2 – En desacuerdo, 1–Completamente en desacuerdo

Porque usted va a la Universidad?

1.Porque para mí es un placer y una satisfacción aprender cosas nuevas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.Porque los estudios universitarios me ayudarán a preparar mejor la carrera que he elegido	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.Por los intensos momentos que vivo cuando comunico mis propias ideas a los demás	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.Por la satisfacción que siento cuando me supero en mis estudios	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.Para poder conseguir en el futuro un trabajo más prestigioso	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.Por el placer de descubrir cosas nuevas desconocidas para mí	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.Porque posiblemente me permitirá entrar en el mercado laboral dentro del campo que a mí me guste	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.Por el placer de leer autores interesantes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.Porque aprobar en la universidad me hace sentirme importante	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.Porque en el futuro quiero tener una “buena vida”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.Porque me ayudará a elegir mejor mi orientación profesional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.Por la satisfacción que siento cuando logro realizar actividades académicas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.Para demostrarme que soy una persona inteligente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.Para tener un sueldo mejor en el futuro	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.Porque mis estudios me permiten continuar aprendiendo un montón de cosas que me interesan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.Porque me gusta meterme de lleno cuando leo diferentes temas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.Porque la universidad me permite sentir la satisfacción personal en la búsqueda de la perfección dentro de mis estudios	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.Porque quiero demostrarme que soy capaz de tener éxito en mis Estudios	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX 3: Inclusive Academic Motivation Scales

1. The Inclusive Academic Motivation Scale (English Version)

2. The Inclusive Academic Motivation Scale (Spanish Version)

The Inclusive Academic Motivation Scale (English Version) **This scale contains 18 items assessed on a 7-point scale.**

Using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you go to university.

Does not correspond at all	Corresponds a little		Corresponds moderately		Corresponds a lot		Corresponds exactly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	7

WHY DO YOU GO TO UNIVERSITY?

1. Because, in my family, we experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Because, in my family, we think that a university education will help us better prepare for the career we have chosen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. For the intense feelings we experience, in my family, when we are communicating our own ideas to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. For the pleasure we experience, in my family while surpassing ourselves in our studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Because we believe, in my family that it will help us obtain a more prestigious job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. For the pleasure we experience, in my family, when we discover new things never seen before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Because we believe, in my family, that eventually we will enable me to enter the job market in a field that we like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. For the pleasure that we experience, in my family, when we read interesting authors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Because we believe, in my family that when we succeed in university we feel important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Because, in my family, we want to have "the good life" later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Because we believe, in my family that this will help us make a better choice regarding our career orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. For the satisfaction we feel, in my family, when we are in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. To show, ourselves, in my family that we are intelligent people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. In order to have, in my family, a better salary later on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. Because we believe, in my family, that our studies allow us to continue to learn about many things that interest us. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16. For the "high" feeling that we experience, in my family, while reading about various interesting subjects. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17. Because we believe, in my family, that university allows us to experience a personal satisfaction in our quest for excellence in our studies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. Because, in my family, we want to show ourselves that we can succeed in our studies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

The Inclusive Motivation Scale (Spanish Version)

Escala de Motivación Académica (Familia)

Utilizando la siguiente escala de 1 a 7, indique su acuerdo con cada una de las declaraciones.

7 – Completamente de acuerdo, 6–De acuerdo, 5–Más bien de acuerdo, 4 – Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo, 3 – Más bien en desacuerdo, 2 – En desacuerdo, 1–Completamente en desacuerdo

Porque usted va a la Universidad?

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Porque en mi familia es un placer y una satisfacción aprender cosas nuevas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Porque en mi familia pensamos que los estudios universitarios pueden ayudarnos a preparar mejor la carrera que hemos elegido | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. Por los momentos que en mi familia vivimos cuando comunicamos nuestras propias ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. Por la satisfacción que sentimos en mi familia cuando nos superamos en nuestros estudios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. Por que en mi familia pensamos conseguir en el futuro un trabajo más prestigioso | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. Por el placer que sentimos en mi familia al descubrir cosas nuevas desconocidas para nosotros | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. Por que en mi familia pensamos que nos permitirá entrar en el mercado laboral dentro del campo que nos guste | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. Por el placer que sentimos en mi familia cuando leemos autores interesantes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. Porque en mi familia aprobar la universidad nos hace sentir importante | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. Porque en mi familia queremos en el futuro tener una “buena vida” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. Porque pensamos en mi familia que nos ayudará a elegir mejor nuestra orientación profesional | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12. Por la satisfacción que sentimos en mi familia cuando logramos realizar actividades académicas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. Para demostrar que somos unas personas inteligentes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. Por que en mi familia pensamos que se puede tener un sueldo mejor en el futuro | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. Porque en mi familia pensamos que nuestros estudios nos permiten continuar aprendiendo un montón de cosas que nos interesan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16. Porque en mi familia nos gusta meternos de lleno cuando leemos diferentes temas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17. Porque pensamos en mi familia que la universidad nos permite sentir la satisfacción personal en la búsqueda de la perfección dentro de nuestros estudios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. Porque en mi familia queremos demostrar que somos capaces de tener éxito en estudios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

APPENDIX 4: The Satisfaction With Life Scale

1. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (English Version)

2. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Spanish Version)

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (English Version)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

By Ed Diener, Ph.D.

DIRECTIONS: Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree**
- 2 = Disagree**
- 3 = Slightly Disagree**
- 4 = Neither Agree or Disagree**
- 5 = Slightly Agree**
- 6 = Agree**
- 7 = Strongly Agree**

_____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

_____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

_____ 3. I am satisfied with life.

_____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

_____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Spanish Version)

El cuestionario de la satisfacción personal

Más abajo hay cinco afirmaciones con las que usted puede estar de acuerdo o en desacuerdo. Utilizando la siguiente escala de 1 a 7, indique su acuerdo con cada una poniendo el número apropiado en la línea anterior al número de cada afirmación. Por favor, responda a las preguntas abierta y sinceramente.

- 7 – Completamente de acuerdo**
- 6 – De acuerdo**
- 5 – Más bien de acuerdo**
- 4 – Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo**
- 3 – Más bien en desacuerdo**
- 2 – En desacuerdo**
- 1 – Completamente en desacuerdo**

- ___ **1. En la mayoría de las cosas, mi vida está cerca de mi ideal.**
- ___ **2. Las condiciones de vida son excelentes.**
- ___ **3. Estoy satisfecho con mi vida.**
- ___ **4. Hasta ahora, he conseguido las cosas que para mí son importantes en la vida.**
- ___ **5. Si volviese a nacer, no cambiaría casi nada de mi vida.**

APPENDIX 5: Specifics of focus group conduct

- My dress code was casual and neat. I had with me a written guide with questions, possible probes, and a timeline for the process to which I referred throughout the session, whenever necessary.
- The participants sat around a table in order to provide more comfortable atmosphere and to ensure that they could see one another (Morgan, 1988).
- The focus group commenced by emphasizing that all opinions would be valued and appreciated (**range**). The focus group's agenda and ground rules were then presented, among which were expectations of courtesy and respect towards all participants, one person speaking at a time, no side conversations among neighbours, and letting each person to participate. I again explained the issues related to the anonymity and confidentiality that had been described in the informed consent form. Participants were also reminded that an electronic recording device would be used and that all the interviews would be transcribed and coded to ensure participants' anonymity (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Additional consideration when conducting focus groups

1. Maintaining balance between formality and informality: Throughout the interviewing process, I paid attention to my own conduct. Some theorists stress the importance of making the respondent a collaborator (Elden, 1981; Reason & Rowan, 1981) and encourage forming some sort of relationship or 'connection' (Geertz, 1979; Stebbins, 1972). There is, however, a danger inherent in this approach. For

instance, in the context of Ecuador, forming a relationship with respondents might prove detrimental to the interviewing process. As explained in the Literature Review Chapter, the concept of *simpatia* exerts a powerful influence on social interaction in Ecuadorian culture. A tendency for harmony and for minimizing conflict that is ingrained in this cultural script might prompt respondents to seek ‘correct’ answers and to ‘serve up’ what they thought was wanted (McCracken 1988, p. 22). For this reason, I attempted to maintain a balance between formality and informality. Never did I suggest that I had some personal preferences towards a particular point of view. Instead, the goal was to ensure that respondents would feel at ease so they could provide answers that reflected their true convictions (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

2. Ordering of questions: The most important questions were placed early on. Primary questions (open-ended) introduced a particular topic, while secondary questions probed for more detail and depth. In general, I tried to adhere to the principles of good questioning. Questions should be mostly: easy to say, clear, short, open-ended, and one-dimensional (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pp. 40-42). Furthermore, they should sound conversational and be free from technical terms or jargon.
3. Specificity and Depth: In terms of data collection, I strove for specificity. In my approach, I followed Morton’s (1956) suggestions on directing the discussion toward participants’ concrete and detailed experiences or, in other words, on locating the specific bases for generalizations (**depth**). This form of conducting focus groups prevents the discussion from drifting into generalities. Furthermore, when describing their personal experiences, ‘participants naturally become highly involved in

discussions... and techniques for guaranteeing depth are seldom necessary' (Morgan, 1988, p. 55).

4. Pacing: I was concerned with discovering fully the complexity of respondents' attitudes. Therefore, I preferred to cover fewer issues in greater depth than a larger number of issues in a more superficial manner. Furthermore, while conscious of the importance of proper structure, I also remained aware of the fallacy of adhering to fixed questions (Morton, 1956). Some flexibility in the sequencing of questions is considered especially important in semi-structured group interview format that this research followed in order to support, rather than constrain, participant narratives.
5. Theoretical influences: The focus groups were designed to determine respondents' own views on the research topic. It was anticipated that through this approach two of the greatest strengths of focus groups would be utilized: discovering what participants think and why they think so (Krueger and Casey, 2000). In terms of design, the focus group applied *the funnel approach* as well as the *quantamensional design approach* (Gallup, 1947). The former suggests starting with broad questions and then gradually moving on to more narrow and specific questions. The *quantamensional design approach* measures, on the other hand, the intensity of respondents' views and attitudes. In this approach, the researcher moves from, for example: 'What do you think about the role of your close family on your decision to study?' (the degree of awareness) to 'How important is it for you to make your parents proud?' (intensity of attitudes).
6. Nondirective questioning: In general terms, my methodological approach followed the concept of asking questions in a general and nondirective manner. Over-

specifying issues and pointing respondents in certain directions undermine the whole idea of tapping into individual intellectual and emotional perspective (McCracken, 1988; Morgan, 1988). Therefore I limited my moderating technique to a non-directional probing. Never did I engage in any form of ‘active listening’ such as suggesting to respondents terms of answering questions or rephrasing their utterances. For example, during the focus group, I did not put forward my own interpretation of respondents’ attitudes.

7. Paying attention: I paid attention to nonverbal signs, topic avoidance and possible miscommunication (McCracken 1988; Creswell 2003), which might give an invaluable insight into the background and cultural context that qualitative research can prove so good at illuminating. Most importantly, I remained open to a reality that might be different from my own and listened for the unexpected information and startling discoveries (McCracken 1988).
8. Probing: Throughout the discussion, I employed the probing technique to elicit additional/clarifying information from participants, for example: ‘Would you explain further?’ ‘Tell us more what you mean’.
9. Encouraging participation: I used my moderating skills to ensure that all those who were willing to participate were given a chance to contribute to the discussion. In a tactful and kind manner, I tried to monitor dominant talkers as well as encourage participation from more recalcitrant respondents.
10. Ending the focus group: The focus group ended with ator asking final questions related to some possible omissions and the reliability of the gathered data: ‘Have we

missed anything important?', 'Is there something you would like to add to your previous statements?', 'Do you think that our discussion adequately reflects your views and beliefs?'

11. Full involvement: Most importantly, however, all the previously mentioned issues did not prevent me from full involvement in the interviewing process itself. Careful listening, paying close attention to the nuances of behaviour and speech, eye contact, and acknowledging respondents' participation are paramount (McCracken, 1988). I made sure that adhering to the above methodological aspects did not interfere with my genuine and spontaneous participation in the discussions.

APPENDIX 6: Information sheets and consent forms

1. Information sheet: Questionnaires (English Version)
2. Consent form: Questionnaires (English Version)
3. Information sheet: Questionnaires (Spanish Version)
4. Consent form: Questionnaires (Spanish Version)
5. Information sheet: Focus groups (English Version)
6. Consent form: Focus groups (English Version)
7. Information sheet: Focus groups (Spanish Version)
8. Consent form: Focus groups (Spanish Version)

Information sheet: Questionnaires (English Version)

Title of study: Motivational orientation and well-being

Researcher: Bogdan Bryja **Institute:** School of Education, University of Birmingham
I am a PhD student in the Department of Education and I am working on a thesis about the connection between motivation and well-being. That's why, I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Topic of this research study: The role of motivation in education has been the subject of many research studies. From the information collected by researchers so far, it appears that motivation plays an important role in contributing to well-being. We still do not know, however, what kind of motivation helps most in increasing well-being and if it applies to all cultures and societies.

Purpose of this research study: This study will look at academic motivation and well-being in Ecuador and the United Kingdom. I will study different kinds of motivational drives. The information from both countries will be compared and analyzed. I hope that thanks to your participation we can learn more about this important topic.

What would your participation involve: The package you have received contains this informed consent form as well as a reply slip, the AMS questionnaires and the SWLS questionnaire. The AMS scales intend to measure students' motivational orientation, and the SWLS evaluates students' overall well-being. Please, follow all the instructions written on those questionnaires. Together, the questionnaires take about 30-45 minutes to complete. Once you are done with the questionnaires, put them - together with the signed reply slip - in the pre-paid envelope and mail to me. When I have received the completed package, I will remove the reply slip from it and put it in a secure place. You will be identified only by a pseudonym written on your questionnaire. A key linking the pseudonyms back to the identities of the participants will be locked in a secure place. This way all the *data analysis* can be done in a confidential way.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal: You don't have to participate in the study. You may refuse to participate without giving any reason for this decision. Simply, do not send the package back to me, if you choose not to participate. Furthermore, even if you

agree to participate, you still can withdraw from the study at any time, in which case all your data will be removed.

Confidentiality: What would happen to any information that you provide: Your personal information will remain confidential. All your answers to the questionnaires' items will be combined with the answers of other students and analyzed. Only this combined and analyzed information will be then included in my thesis.

Available Sources of Information/Contact: Please feel free to contact me, Bogdan Bryja, through email: 

Thank you for your time

Consent form: Questionnaires (English Version)

Please, could you complete this reply slip and send it back in the prepaid envelope provided.

Yes, I am willing to take part in this research study. I have read the informed consent form and I understand that any information I give will remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of the research study. I also understand that despite giving this consent, I can withdraw from the study at any time and have my data removed.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Information sheet: Questionnaire (Spanish Version)

Motivación académica y satisfacción de la vida: Papel informativo para los cuestionarios

Introducción

Mi nombre es Bogdan Bryja, estudio para un doctorado en la escuela de educación, en la universidad de Birmingham, en Inglaterra. Quisiera invitarle a participar en mi estudio que analiza la motivación en la educación.

Cuál es el propósito de este estudio?

Nosotros queremos saber más acerca de las experiencias relacionadas con la educación de los estudiantes. Espero que esta investigación ayude a desarrollar nuevas ideas sobre la relación que existe entre la satisfacción personal y la motivación educativa.

Como estará involucrado en este estudio?

El sobre contiene este papel informativo, la autorización, dos cuestionarios de la motivación académica y el cuestionario de la satisfacción personal. Los primeros dos cuestionario evalúan la motivación educativa, el segundo cuestionario analiza la satisfacción con la vida. Yo deseo que complete los cuestionarios y la autorización respectiva. Esto tomara entre 20-25 minutos. También, usted puede retirar su nombre de esta investigación en cada momento sin explicar razones.

Que pasara con la información escrita en los cuestionarios?

Cuando reciba los cuestionarios y la autorización con la información completa, yo voy a poner la autorización en un lugar seguro.

Su contribución al estudio quedara en total anónimo, por esta razón usted no pondrá su nombre en los cuestionarios. Las respuestas de todos los estudiantes serán analizadas por computadora para información estadística.

Derecho a retirarse de la participación

Usted no tiene que participar en el estudio y puede retirarse sin cualquiera justificación. Simplemente, no me mande el paquete. Además, si usted decidiría participar al inicio, también puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento, en cuyo caso toda la información previa que me mando será eliminada.

Información de contacto: por favor contácteme si tiene alguna sugerencia o pregunta, Bogdan Bryja email: [REDACTED]

Consent form: Questionnaires (Spanish Version)

Autorización

Yo deseo formar parte de este estudio. He leído el papel informativo y comprendo que cualquier información que yo proporcione será confidencial y será usada solo con el propósito de este estudio. También entiendo que puedo anular mi participación en cualquier momento. En este caso mi información será cancelada.

Nombre: _____

Firma: _____

Information sheet: Focus groups (English Version)

Title of study: Motivational orientation and well-being

Researcher: Bogdan Bryja **Institute:** School of Education, University of Birmingham
Hi, I am a PhD student in the School of Education and I am working on a thesis about the connection between motivation and well-being. That's why, I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Topic of this research study: The role of motivation in education has been the subject of many research studies. From the information collected by researchers so far, it appears that motivation plays an important role in contributing to well-being. We still do not know, however, what kind of motivation helps most in increasing well-being and if it applies to all cultures and societies.

Purpose of this research study: This study will look at academic motivation and well-being in Ecuador and the United Kingdom. I will study different kinds of motivational drives. The information from both countries will be compared and analyzed. I hope that thanks to your participation we can learn more about this important topic.

What would your participation involve: You will take part in a group discussion, where you and a few other people will be asked to share their opinions and feelings about issues related to my research study. This group discussion will be taped and then transcribed. It will take about 2 hours, and I will ensure that it is done in a friendly and relaxed manner. Of course, you are free to leave at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that might be uncomfortable to you. Furthermore, if you choose to, you will be given a copy of the resulting transcript, so that you can amend your contribution as appropriate. If you agree to participate, please, sign the reply slip and mail to me in the pre-paid envelope.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal: You don't have to participate in the study. You may refuse to participate without giving me any reason for this decision. Simply, do not send the package back to me, if you choose not to participate. Furthermore, even if you agree to participate, you still can withdraw from the study at any time, in which case all your data will be removed.

Confidentiality: What would happen to any information that you provide: Your personal information will remain confidential. Your reply slip will be locked in a secure place. The tape recording will be transcribed and all the real names will be replaced with fictional names to ensure complete anonymity. The recording will then be destroyed.

Available Sources of Information

Thank you for your time

Consent form: Focus groups (English Version)

Please, could you complete this reply slip and send it back in the prepaid envelope provided.

Yes, I am willing to take part in this research study. I have read the informed consent form and I understand that any information I give will remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of the research study. I also understand that despite giving this consent, I can withdraw from the study at any time and have my data removed.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Information sheet: Focus groups (Spanish version)

Motivación académica y satisfacción de la vida: Papel informativo para grupos focales

Mi nombre es Bogdan Bryja, estudio para un doctorado en la escuela de educación, en la universidad de Birmingham, en Inglaterra. Quisiera invitarle a participar en mi estudio que analiza la motivación en la educación.

Cuál es el propósito de este estudio?

Nosotros queremos saber más acerca de las experiencias relacionadas con la educación de los estudiantes. Espero que esta investigación ayude a desarrollar nuevas ideas sobre la relación que existe entre la satisfacción personal y la motivación educativa.

Qué incluirá su participación: Usted participará en grupo donde voy a preguntar a usted y otras personas sobre sus opiniones y sentimientos acerca de asuntos relacionados con mi estudio de investigación. Las discusiones dentro del grupo serán grabadas y después transcritas. Lo tomará aproximadamente 2 horas, y me aseguraré que la discusión se lleva a cabo en un ambiente amistoso y relajado. En cualquier momento, usted tiene el derecho de irse y no tiene que responder al pregunta que le siente que es incómoda. Además, si lo desea, se le dará una copia de la transcripción de la discusión, para que pueda modificar su contribución si lo considera necesario. Si usted aceptaría participar en el grupo, por favor, firme la hoja de respuesta y mándalo a mí en el sobre pre-pagado,

Derecho a retirarse de la participación: Usted no tiene que participar en el estudio y puede retirarse sin cualquiera justificación. Simplemente, no me mande el paquete. Además, si usted decidiría participar al inicio, también puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento, en cuyo caso toda la información previa que me mando será borrada.

Confidencialidad: Qué ocurriría con cualquier información que usted proporciona: Su información personal será confidencial. Su hoja de respuesta será cerrada en un lugar seguro. La grabación se transcribirá y todos los nombres reales serán reemplazados por los nombres ficticios para garantizar el anonimato completo. La grabación será destruida.

Información de contacto: por favor contácteme si tiene alguna sugerencia o pregunta, Bogdan Bryja email: [REDACTED]

Consent form: Focus groups (SpanishVersion)

Autorización

Yo deseo formar parte de este estudio. He leído el papel informativo y comprendo que cualquier información que yo proporcione será confidencial y será usada solo con el propósito de este estudio. También entiendo que puedo anular mi participación en cualquier momento. En este caso mi información será cancelada.

Nombre: _____

Firma: _____

APPENDIX 7: Email exchanges with the Department of Psychology

From: Bogdan Bryja
Sent: Thursday, March 04, 2010 4:57 PM

quantitative research

Dear Ms. Quarry,

My name is Bogdan Bryja and I am developing a PhD research project in the Department of Education (ID # 989589) under the supervision of Dr. Chris Corcoran. The topic of my thesis is academic motivational orientation and well-being of British and Ecuadorian university students.

I am planning to conduct a mixed methods research with students from Ecuador and the United Kingdom to find out how different kinds of motivational drives relate to subjective well-being. I have already received an approval from the University of Birmingham Ethical Committee for conducting this research (# ERN_09-997).

Currently, I am staying in Ecuador collecting quantitative data from Ecuadorian university students. I will be coming to Birmingham in September, 2010 and will stay there for two months in order to obtain comparative quantitative data from the University of Birmingham's university students. One of the groups that I am interested in researching are undergraduate psychology students. I wonder, therefore, whether it is possible to obtain permission to present my short questionnaires to some students in your departments. Overall, I would like to receive about one hundred responses (100) from psychology students. I intend to use three questionnaires: the individual Academic Motivation Scale, the inclusive Academic Motivation Scale, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). The AMS scales measure students' motivation, and the SWLS measures students' overall satisfaction with life. These are well validated scales that they have been used in a large number of previous research studies. All together, filling out these three questionnaires takes about 20 minutes.

I would really appreciate it, if I could be given an opportunity to distribute those questionnaires to your students. It would greatly assist me in my research. If you think that it is possible to approve my request, I have attached those three questionnaires to the email for your consideration.

Thank you for time and, please, let me know if you need some more information to consider this request.

Sincerely,
Bogdan Bryja

[Redacted]

Dear Ms. Quarry

My name is Bogdan Bryja, and a few days ago I discussed with you on the phone the possibility of forwarding my questionnaires to undergraduate psychology students. It is an entirely anonymous questionnaire set, and students do not have to provide any personal information in order to participate. Below, I attach a link on which students click and it takes them directly to the questionnaire page. These questionnaires are a part of my postgraduate research study. I am studying for a PhD student in the Department of Education, University of Birmingham, under the supervision of Dr. Chris Corcoran. My comparative research study focuses on Academic Motivation and Well-being and it looks at British and Ecuadorian students. Questionnaires that I intend to use in the study have been approved by the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee (Approval No: ERN_09-977). These three, short questionnaires have been widely used in educational psychology research.

Filling out the whole questionnaire package takes about 15-20 minutes. All a given student needs to do in order to begin is to click on the link below. When a student is done, she/he presses "Done" button and the information is electronically sent for analysis. Again, none of the questions is ethically inappropriate, and I will not know the identity of any of the participants. Of course, students' participation is entirely voluntary, but their responses would greatly help me in my PhD research.

[Redacted]

Thank you for all your help. Please, let me know if you might assist me with this request, and if there is any other information I need to provide you with.

Best Wishes

Bogdan Bryja, University of Birmingham Student ID Number: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Cc: Christina Chapman
Subject: RE: Online questionnaire

Christina,
Can you forward to our UG students please?

[REDACTED]

Thanks

Ms Jo Quarry
Operations Manager (School of Psychology)
College Graduate Support and Quality Manager
College of Life and Environmental Sciences
School of Psychology
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 4929
Fax: 0121 414 4234

[REDACTED]

From: Bogdan Bryja
Sent: Wednesday, July 07, 2010 2:58 PM
To: Jo Quarry
Subject: Focus group

Dear Ms. Quarry

My name is Bogdan Bryja, and you might remember me since you have greatly helped me with my PhD research by forwarding my online questionnaire to your undergraduate students. Their response was great and it will assist me in my work.

I wonder, however, if I could ask you for one more favour.

Since my research follows mixed methods approach - online questionnaire and then focus group - I would also like to have an opportunity to talk in-person with a couple of your Department's students (focus group). I realize that it is vacation time and few students are on the campus. Perhaps, however, some of them might still be willing to participate in this research by talking with me for about an hour.

If you think that you might be able to help me with this request, I would be truly grateful if you could forward the message below to your students. It describes the topic of the focus

group and provides my contact information for those who might want to participate.

Once again, I truly appreciate all your help! Please, let me know if you have any questions.

Regards
Bogdan Bryja

My name is Bogdan Bryja and I am developing a PhD research project in the Department of Education. My student ID number is # 989589. The topic of my thesis is Academic motivational orientation and well-being of British and Ecuadorian university students. I'm interested in studying how different kinds of motivational drives relate to subjective well-being. I would truly appreciate having an opportunity to conduct one-hour focus group with some of the students. All the personal data collected during this focus group will be kept confidential and the identity of the focus group participants will not be revealed in the research.

If you might be willing to help me with my research by participating in this anonymous focus group, please contact me by email: [REDACTED] or telephone: 0121 414 4816

APPENDIX 8: Coding of the participants

Below, there is a list of the participants for each focus group which also shows how these participants were coded and presented in the qualitative component of the thesis. For instance, one of the male students from Universidad Central who participated in the first focus group is described as (Male #1.1, Central) in the thesis.

All the participants from the Ecuadorian focus groups were born and brought up in Ecuador.

All the participants from the British focus groups were of white ethnic origin and listed English as their native language.

The list of the participants from the focus groups conducted in Ecuador and the UK.

Universidad Central 1

Male #1.1, Central
Female # 1.2, Central
Female # 1.3, Central
Male #1.4, Central
Female # 1.5, Central
Female # 1.6, Central

Universidad Central 2

Female #2.1, Central
Male #2.2, Central
Female #2.3, Central
Female #2.4, Central
Female #2.5, Central
Female #2.6, Central

Universidad Catolica 3

Female #3.1, Catolica
Female # 3.2, Catolica
Female #3.3, Catolica
Male #3.4, Catolica
Male #3.5, Catolica
Male #3.6, Catolica
Female #3.7, Catolica

Universidad Catolica 4

Female #4.1, Catolica
Male #4.2, Catolica

Female #4.3, Catolica
Male #4.4, Catolica
Female #4.5, Catolica
Female #4.6, Catolica

University of Birmingham 1

Male #1.1
Female #1.2
Female #1.3
Female #1.4
Female #1.5
Female #1.6

University of Birmingham 2

Female #2.1
Male #2.2
Female #2.3
Female #2.4
Male #2.5
Female #2.6

APPENDIX 9: Focus group guide

The role of close family: External motivation or Inclusive Autonomy (depending on the level of internalization of/genuine identification with close family's influences)

What do you think about the role of your close family on your decision to study?

(an initial open-ended question to introduce an important part of the discussion and to generate some, potentially, unexpected findings).



Focus: During the discussion and depending on the extent of participants' answers to the initial questions, I might probe for specific issues:

(Intensity of attitudes) How important is it for you:*

a) To make your parents proud? __X__ (mark if the issue was covered)

b) To “pay back” for all the help you received from them? Now, by studying hard, and later on, by being more able (because of this education) to help them financially? _____

c) To follow their intentions, demands, pressures? _____

d) To follow their educational steps, family traditions? (or, on the contrary, not to be like them in educational sense; first person in a family to receive higher education? _____

e) To prove something to them? – both in a sense of confirming their expectations of you or, on the contrary, proving that you can exceed those expectations? _____

f) To study because, otherwise, you would feel shame and a sense of disappointment in front of your close family? _____

*(These topics might arise directly from the general discussion. If they do not, however - because of time constraints - the researcher will probe only for some of those issues. Furthermore, the actual wording in this probing might differ. That's why, “How important is it for you to make your parents proud?” might change into, for example; “What about making your parents proud?” or “And making your parents proud?”)

Focus: I will also try to assess participants' level of Inclusive Autonomy (genuine identification with the influences of close family members). This level of Inclusive Autonomy might become clear through the process of answering the questions above. If it does not, however, I might inquire about it through direct questioning (the actual phrasing might differ).

- a) Do your parents' influences on your studying feel like pressure?
- b) Do you have the same opinion as your parents about what's best for your education?

The role of culture and society: External motivation

What do you think about the role of your society and culture on making your decision to study?

(an open-ended question to and to generate some, potentially, unexpected findings).

Depending on the extent of information  obtained from participants' answers, following probing questions might be introduced:

How important is it for you:*

- a) To pay back to and contribute to society through your education? _____
- b) To follow cultural beliefs and values in respect to education? _____
- c) To stand out/ succeed in society? (prestige, financial rewards) _____
- d) To study because it's a message I get from media, movies, books? _____
- e) To avoid monotonous work or physical labour? _____
- f) To avoid feeling shame in society? _____
- d) To belong to a certain societal group?(social class) _____
- e) To study, because it's the only way to escape poverty _____

- f) To respond to teachers' demands and expectations _____
- g) To make your teachers' proud _____
- h) To fulfill the requirements of the program _____

*(Because of time constraints, the researcher will probe for only some of these issues, and the actual wording in this probing might differ).

The role of friends: External motivation

How important were your friends in making your decision to study? (peer pressure)



Depending on the extent of information obtained from participants' answers, following probing questions might be introduced:

How important is it for you:

- a) To follow their educational choices? – because they constitute your value reference
 group?/ because you look up to some of them? _____
- b) To continue to be a part of the group? _____

c) To stand out or impress them? _____

*(Because of time constraints, the researcher will probe only for some of these issues, and the actual wording in this probing might differ).

Intrinsic motivation (individual autonomous learning)

How important were your personal motivational drives?/ Your decision to what to study was yours and reflected your own passions and interests? *(These questions will not be asked directly). Instead, following questions might be asked (the actual wording might differ):*



How important is it for you:

- a) To really enjoy the process of studying? *(intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation)* _____
- b) To learn new things for yourself? *(intrinsic motivation to know)* _____
- c) To experience a sense of accomplishment? *(intrinsic motivation to experience things)* _____

Subjective Well-being

How happy are you with the way your life is?

Possible probes, if needed:

- a) How close is it to your vision of happy life? _____
- b) Is it, more or less, what you've always wanted from life? _____
- c) Do you often feel down or depressed? _____

The last part of the focus group: Yes/No answers with some elaboration

Relationship between Academic Education and Well-being

Would you be as happy as you are, if you didn't study?

Some probes, if needed:

- a) Is it something that you need very much to feel happy? _____
- b) How important is your studying for your self-esteem? _____
- c) Do you think that studying gives your life a greater sense of purpose? _____

(For questions: **b** and **c**. Some research indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between well-being and self-esteem as well as between well-being and a sense of purpose in life).

APPENDIX 10: Definitions

Autonomy (SDT) - means to act volitionally, with a sense of choice, and by endorsing one's goals and actions. Autonomous behaviour can thus result from an action that is self-authored or from an action that is endorsed to a point that it feels as if emanating from oneself.

Cross-cultural studies - a specialization in anthropology, psychology and sociology that uses field data from many societies to examine the scope of human behaviour and to test hypotheses about human behaviour and culture.

Epistemology – is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge. It addresses the questions: What is knowledge? How is knowledge acquired? How we know what we know?

External regulation - is the least autonomous type of motivation. A given action is performed because of external demand or possible rewards.

Extrinsic motivation - extrinsic motivation takes place when an individual is, partially, prompted into action by some external factors such as teachers, parents, the prospects of financial security or professional career. It takes form of external, introjected or integrated regulation.

Generalizability - extent to which the findings of a study can be applied externally or more broadly outside of the study context.

Integrated regulation - is the most autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation and it reflects persons' beliefs or personal needs. Although it shares some features with intrinsic motivation, it is still classified as extrinsic because the goals that are trying to be achieved are for reasons extrinsic to the self, rather than the inherent enjoyment or interest in the task.

Integration (SDT) – this concept refers to further transformation of an internalized regulation to a point that it will emanate from a given individual's sense of self'.

Internalization (SDT) – this concept refers to people's 'taking in' a value or regulation but consciously accepting it into their own value system.

Interpretivist epistemology – takes the position that the researcher is a part of the research process, which means that the subject and the object are interfaced. The values of the researcher condition research findings because these findings are created through the researcher's interaction with their objects.

Intrinsic motivation – this type of motivation is synonymous with motivation emerging entirely from an individual and it reflects one's interests and desires (the inherent enjoyment or interest in the task).

Introjected regulation - describes engaging in a behaviour with which one is not fully identified. It can describe being motivated by ego or sense of guilt.

Organismic theory - in psychology, organismic theory refers to a set of concepts that stress the organization, unity, and integration of human beings expressed through each individual's inherent growth or developmental tendency.

Paradigm - a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated.

Perceived competence – refers to the feeling of being effective in dealing with the environment a person finds themselves in.

Positivist epistemology - makes the assumption that it is possible for researchers to separate themselves (subject) from what is to be reached (object). Positivists believe that knowledge remains uncontaminated by the act of observation through the rigour of methodology. They make a theory about the directly observable phenomenon and then test the theory in hope of providing generalizations. A prior hypothesis can be rejected or substantiated.

Relatedness – it is the universal want to interact, be connected to and experience caring for others.

Reliability - the extent to which a measurement approach or procedure gives the same answer whenever it is carried out.

Self-construal – this concept refers to the perceptions that individuals have about their thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to others.

Validity - the extent to which a measurement approach or procedure gives the correct answer (allowing the researcher to measure or evaluate an objective reality).

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