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Doctoral Dissertation

Exploring the Impact of Minimalist Lifestyle on Individual Overall
Well-being: A Case Study from Shenzhen, China

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation investigates the intricate relationship between lifestyle, consumer habits, and their ultimate contribution to human well-being. The study addresses the gap in understanding how various lifestyles impact consumption behaviors and subsequently influence the well-being of individuals and society at large. The research is anchored in the contemporary discourse surrounding minimalist lifestyles, which have garnered substantial attention in recent years. By establishing a robust research model, this study verifies the positive impact of minimalist lifestyles on fostering sustainable consumption habits and, in turn, enhancing human well-being.

Owing to its positive impact on individual well-being, the concept of minimalism has garnered increasing attention from scholars worldwide. However, current research is primarily inferential and lacks empirical evidence. Additionally, studies conducted thus far have focused only on the general population in developed countries, presenting issues of incompleteness and generalizability. This study aimed to examine and validate scientific evidence of the positive impact of minimalism on individual well-being by developing a research model that explores the relationship between minimalist lifestyles and personal well-being. To this end, highly validated data from Chinese residents were analyzed using factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis.

The findings indicate that Chinese residents' minimalist lifestyle is influenced by three key factors: clutter removal, cautious shopping, and a high-cycle life. Furthermore, minimalism was found to impact personal well-being positively, with clutter removal being the most significant contributing factor. These

results suggest that minimalism can be an effective lifestyle choice that positively affects personal well-being and quality of life across different cultural and social contexts, albeit with variations in expression and concern. This research contributes to the Minimalist

Well-being Model, which comprehensively explains how minimalism is defined in relation to well-being. By promoting intentional consumption and sustainable habits, this dissertation underscores the potential for intentional lifestyles to shape both individual lives and the collective well-being of humanity. The findings not only provide design inspiration for businesses but also underscore the imperative of guiding society towards more sustainable and holistic lifestyles for the betterment of current and future generations.

In conclusion, this dissertation offers a comprehensive exploration of the impact of lifestyle on consumption habits and well-being, anchored in the context of minimalist lifestyles. The research model and findings contribute to the broader understanding of how lifestyle choices influence human behavior and societal progress. The study encourages a paradigm shift towards more sustainable and intentional lifestyles for the betterment of individuals and the environment.

Keywords: minimalist lifestyle; emotional; personal well-being; survey questionnaire; sustainable development;

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Contents

Abstract	I
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Background Introduction	1
1.2 Research Questions	7
1.3 Research Originality and Novelty	9
1.4 Thesis Structure	12
Chapter 2	18
Literature Review	18
2.1 Overview of Human lifestyle	18
2.1.1 History and Definition	18
2.1.2 Defining Lifestyle	19
2.1.3 The history of lifestyle research	21
2.2 The Interconnection of Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior	24
2.2.1 Defining Lifestyle from an Economic Perspective	24
2.2.2 The Influence of Lifestyle on Consumer Behavior	26
2.2.3 Lifestyle as a Determinant of Consumption Behavior	27
2.2.4 Lifestyle and Sustainable development	28
2.3 The Relationship Between Lifestyle and Sustainable Development ..	29
2.3.1 The Significance of Sustainable Lifestyles	30
2.3.2 The Role of Consumers in Sustainable Lifestyles	31
2.4 Overview of Well-being	33
2.4.1 Historical Development and Classification	33
2.4.2 Frameworks and Elements of Well-Being	36
2.4.3 Why Well-being Is Important?	41
2.5 Minimalism as an sustainable lifestyle	42

2.5.1 The Evolution of Minimalism: A Comprehensive Journey	42
2.5.2 Against accumulation and tidying elements in minimalist lifestyles	44
2.5.3 Minimalist consumption factors in minimalist lifestyles	45
2.5.4 Personal development and sustainable values in the minimalist lifestyle	47
Chapter 3 Research Model And Methodology	49
3.1 Chapter Introduction	49
3.2 Research model and structured questionnaire	51
Chapter 4 Data Collection	63
4.1 The locations where data were collected from	63
4.2 How to collected the data	66
4.3 Measures methods	73
Chapter 5 Data Analysis	78
5.1 Factor Analysis	78
5.2 Minimalism Factors in Chinese context	83
5.3 Personal well-being index in Chinese context	87
5.4 The associaion between minimalism and PWI	89
Chapter 6 Discussion	92
6.1 Association between minimalism and personal well-being	92
6.2 Current status of minimalist lifestyle in China	93
6.3 Reflection on the current status of minimalism in China and its future development	97
Chapter 7 Conclusion	100
References	105

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Research model about Minimalism and Personal Well-being	50
Figure 3.2 Minimalism Model (Kang et al., 2021)	53
Figure 3.3 Personal Well-being index model	57
(International well-being group, 2013)	57
Figure 3.4 Research model of the association between minimalism and PWI. 59	
Figure 4.1 The top 10 Provinces where population inflows to Shenzhen, China 2020 & The top 20 cities where population inflows to Shenzhen, China (Liang, 2020)	64
Figure 4.2 WENJUANXING website: https://www.wjx.cn	66
Figure 4.3 WENJUANXING Cooperative customers	67
Figure 5.1 Four Factors in Minimalism (Kang et al., 2021)	78
Figure 5.2 Mean Comparison Chart of Personal well-being	88
Figure 5.3 Association between minimalism and personal well-being.	90
Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.5$	90
Figure 5.4 Association between minimalism factors and PWI.	91
Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.5$	91

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Definitions of the concept of lifestyle.(Jensen, 2007).....	20
Table 2.2 Defining Lifestyle from an Economic Perspective.....	25
Table 3.1 Minimalist lifestyle Scale items (Kang et al., 2021).....	54
Table 3.2 Personal Well-being Index (Scale items).....	58
(International Well-being Group, 2013).....	58
Table 3.3 Questionnaire Items.....	61
Table 4.1 Reliability Analysis.....	69
Table 4.2 Validity Analysis.....	71
Table 4.3 Questionnaire items.....	73
Table 4.4 Demographic of valid respondents.....	75
Table 5.1 KMO value.....	79
Table 5.2 Factor analyses result.....	81
Table 5.3 Minimalism Factors in Chinese context.....	83
Table 5.4 Frequency of Minimalism result.....	85
Table 5.6 Descriptive of PWI data.....	87

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background Introduction

In recent decades, humanity has borne witness to a profound and unprecedented era of economic growth and an appreciable improvement in overall quality of life. These transformative changes have been propelled by the relentless march of societal progress and the rapid, often astonishing, advances in technological innovation. As nations surged forward in their pursuit of prosperity, the outcomes were manifest in improved living standards, enhanced access to education and healthcare, and the creation of novel opportunities for countless individuals worldwide.

However, it is imperative to pause amidst this wave of progress and take stock of the consequential cost that accompanies such unprecedented development. This cost is most starkly evident in the realm of environmental sustainability and the finite resources upon which our modern societies depend. Indeed, the wake of this progress is strewn with pressing global challenges, none more urgent than the ever-encroaching specter of environmental pollution, the alarming trajectory of climate change, and the sobering reality of resource depletion (Baumann, 2021).

Environmental pollution, in its various forms, has marred the natural beauty of our world and compromised the health of both ecosystems and the organisms that inhabit them. Climate change, driven by human activities, threatens to

disrupt weather patterns, melt polar ice caps, and inflict catastrophic consequences on societies across the globe. Meanwhile, the reckless consumption of finite resources casts an ominous shadow over the future, as it depletes essential reserves that underpin our modern way of life.

These challenges, as they continue to escalate, place an ever-heavier burden not only on our planet's delicate ecosystems but also on the intricate fabric of human societies. The consequences are dire and extend far beyond the realm of environmental concern, representing a formidable threat to the well-being and sustainable development of our species. Indeed, the pursuit of relentless growth has brought us to a crossroads, where our ability to continue progressing without regard for the environment is no longer tenable. It is incumbent upon us to navigate this complex terrain with wisdom and foresight, for the choices we make today will resonate profoundly in the shaping of our collective future.

In the contemporary global landscape, the paramount concerns of advancing sustainable development and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stand as universal imperatives that transcend geographical, cultural, and societal boundaries. The imperative to expedite and optimize global sustainable development has permeated the collective consciousness of humanity, galvanizing action on an unprecedented scale.

A pivotal milestone in this collective journey was reached in 2015 when the United Nations adopted a comprehensive framework consisting of 17 SDGs, meticulously designed to encompass the multifaceted dimensions of economic, social, and environmental progress. This landmark commitment reflects the international community's resolute dedication to ensuring the perpetuity of these goals and the concomitant addressal of multifarious challenges confronting our world ("Take action for the sustainable development goals," n.d.). Among this constellation of goals, the third SDG emerges as a radiant

lodestar, fundamentally committed to the noble pursuit of affording each and every denizen of our planet access to a life characterized by robust health, holistic well-being, and vitality. In parallel, the twelfth SDG embraces the mantle of advocating for responsible consumption and production, ardently striving to harmonize the trajectory of human advancement with ecological equilibrium.

The compass guiding our study firmly aligns with the overarching theme of advancing human well-being while fostering socially sustainable development. Our research, underpinned by empirical investigation and rigorous analysis, unfolds as an expedition into the uncharted territory of lifestyle choices and their far-reaching impact on our collective future. we aim to provide valuable contributions to the discourse surrounding sustainable development, aligning individual choices with global imperatives, and fostering a paradigm shift towards healthier, more sustainable lifestyles.

The global landscape has been profoundly reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented crisis that has left an indelible imprint on the environment, economies, and the collective fabric of societies worldwide (Bashir et al., 2020). This unprecedented disruption has unquestionably impeded the ongoing trajectory of global sustainable development, requiring a profound reevaluation of our approach to well-being, lifestyle, and sustainability.

Central to the pandemic response were widespread lockdown policies, necessitated to mitigate the spread of the virus. However, these measures came at a considerable cost, extending beyond their intended scope of public health. They precipitated a substantial decline in the physical and psychological health and well-being of individuals and communities (Greyling et al., 2020). The protracted periods of isolation, disruption of routines, and the pervasive

uncertainty took a toll on mental health, physical fitness, and overall quality of life.

In response to the crisis, the United Nations has articulated a compelling perspective on the transformative potential of this challenging juncture. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly altered the landscape of human existence, the United Nations suggests that it might serve as a pivotal moment—a turning point where we have the opportunity to seize the moment and recalibrate our course towards more sustainable lifestyles ("Sustainable Development Goals," n.d.). This perspective underscores the imperative to explore and embrace lifestyles that not only promote personal well-being but also align with the principles of sustainability and environmental harmony.

Indeed, as a direct consequence of the pandemic, many individuals found themselves spending more time within the confines of their homes. This shift in daily routines prompted a growing focus on the concept of simplification and organization within living spaces, with the aim of fostering a more peaceful and stress-free environment. This trend reflects a collective desire to create nurturing spaces that support holistic well-being, transcending the boundaries of the physical to encompass emotional and mental realms.

Furthermore, the pandemic-induced economic turbulence prompted a noticeable shift in consumer behavior. Faced with widespread economic uncertainty, many individuals recalibrated their spending patterns, opting for more budget-conscious and sustainable choices during this challenging period (Redman, 2020). This shift, driven by necessity and environmental awareness, has notably kindled an upsurge of interest in minimalist lifestyles, where conscious consumption and the pursuit of simplicity take precedence.

A substantial body of contemporary medical research has meticulously documented the detrimental consequences of chronic stress on mental health, forming a critical nexus within the field of health sciences (Brenner et al., 2015). These studies have underscored the far-reaching impacts of stress on an individual's overall well-being, with tangible manifestations observed across a spectrum of health complications. Among these are the compromised functionality of the immune system, an elevated susceptibility to heart diseases, the emergence of autoimmune disorders, and even an augmented risk of cancer. Such findings cast a stark and compelling spotlight on the pressing concern of well-being, particularly in the context of today's frenetic, fast-paced societal frameworks.

In response to these mounting health challenges, a paradigmatic shift towards minimalist lifestyles has begun to emerge as a compelling and pragmatic solution (Kang et al., 2021). This lifestyle ethos, anchored in the deliberate pursuit of fewer material possessions and the simplification of daily routines, demonstrates an intrinsic commitment to mitigating negative impacts on both the individual and the environment. At its core, minimalism is a conscious choice—a resolute prioritization of the essential facets of life while systematically dismantling the superfluous distractions that often inundate contemporary existence. Its overarching philosophy revolves around the profound credo of 'owning less, enjoying more.' In the cacophonous, consumer-driven milieu of modern society, the minimalist lifestyle is increasingly gaining recognition and popularity for its transformative potential.

However, it is imperative to note that despite the burgeoning interest in minimalist lifestyles and their perceived benefits for individual well-being and sustainability, the extant corpus of literature on this subject remains decidedly limited. Past investigations have predominantly focused on augmenting the definitional and characteristic features of minimalist lifestyles and have delved

into the economic and environmental ramifications and roles of minimalism. Regrettably, the potential impact of minimalism on personal well-being has not been subjected to exhaustive scrutiny. Consequently, a substantial research gap persists, particularly with regard to the prospective contributions of minimalist lifestyles to personal well-being. Empirical research, therefore, emerges as an imperative, tasked with meticulously probing the multifaceted effects of minimalist lifestyles on various facets of individual well-being, including but not limited to personal health, happiness, and overall life satisfaction. Such a research endeavor holds the potential to furnish individuals with valuable insights into the benefits and challenges intrinsic to minimalist lifestyles, thereby informing the formulation of policies and practices that foster sustainable and health-conscious living.

The ramifications of this research extend far beyond the individual realm, encompassing broader implications for the quality of human life and well-being. Moreover, it holds the potential to engender transformative effects on the stability and progress of human societies at large. By facilitating a deeper understanding of the interplay between minimalist lifestyles, individual well-being, and sustainable development, this research endeavors to forge a path towards a more harmonious and equitable world—a world characterized by enhanced happiness and resilience and underpinned by the ideals of global sustainable development.

1.2 Research Questions

As society increasingly focuses on sustainability issues, there is a growing demand for finding more sustainable ways of living. In this context, minimalism, as a sustainable lifestyle, has gradually gained attention and recognition.

Traditional lifestyles often emphasize material pursuits and short-term gratification. However, with the increasing severity of environmental problems, people are starting to reflect on the impact of excessive consumption on the planet. Minimalism advocates shifting attention to internal well-being and contentment rather than external material possessions. This lifestyle encourages reducing waste, owning fewer but more practical and high-quality items, thereby lessening the burden on the environment.

The core principles of minimalism are simplicity and focus, aiming for a simple yet profound life experience. By reducing unnecessary material desires, individuals pursue a higher quality of life while also helping to slow down resource consumption and environmental degradation. This sustainable lifestyle offers a more balanced and harmonious way of living, fostering a more coordinated relationship between individuals and the environment.

As minimalism gradually enters people's awareness, more and more individuals are embracing this sustainable lifestyle. From daily shopping habits to changes in home and work environments, minimalism has a positive and far-reaching impact on an individual level. Moreover, this lifestyle also promotes environmental awareness and the dissemination of sustainable development concepts on a societal level.

Although minimalism provides beneficial guidance on the path to sustainable

development, its practice and promotion still face various challenges. Different cultures and social backgrounds, economic conditions, and personal needs can influence people's acceptance of minimalism. Therefore, continuous education and awareness-raising are crucial in integrating minimalism into a broader social group.

Overall, as a sustainable way of life, minimalism holds significant value in achieving sustainable development goals. It continuously leads people towards a more environmentally friendly, balanced, and meaningful existence, contributing its unique strength to creating a more sustainable and brighter future.

In the context of sustainable development, this study aims to investigate the impact of minimalism on consumer behavior and personal well-being. The research seeks to address the following research questions:

MRQ: What is the relationship between a minimalist lifestyle and overall personal well-being?

SRQ1: How is the minimalist lifestyle defined and understood in developed and developing countries?

SRQ2: Does minimalism have an impact on an individual's overall well-being?

SRQ3: What elements of minimalism play a role in affecting an individual's overall well-being?

1.3 Research Originality and Novelty

This doctoral dissertation presents an in-depth exploration and discussion of the intricate interplay between Minimalist lifestyle choices and their ultimate impact on broader societal well-being. This study, aligned with the third and twelfth goals of the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals, seeks to foster sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) while promoting healthy lives and well-being across all age groups (Goal 3). The pursuit of sustainable development stands as a shared aspiration of humanity, necessitating the collective dedication of individuals worldwide. Recent years have witnessed a surge of interest from both researchers and residents in developing countries toward the minimalist lifestyle, an approach synonymous with sustainability that significantly influences consumption habits and individual well-being.

The promotion of active and healthy lifestyles, anchored in sustainable consumption practices, not only safeguards the well-being of present generations but also ensures the preservation of valuable resources for the benefit of future ones.

Current evidence underscores the favorable impact of adopting a minimalist lifestyle on emotional well-being. However, research on its broader connection to overall personal well-being remains in its formative stages. In their systematic literature review, Hook et al. (2021) propose the interchangeability of minimalism and voluntary simplicity as concepts. This review unveils a predilection for cross-sectional methodologies in analyzed research, with experimental investigations notably scarce. Nonetheless, various theories posit the existence of a promising relationship between voluntary simplicity and well-being. Kang et al. (2021) conceptualize minimalism and construct a scale to quantitatively assess minimalist lifestyles. Through empirical investigation,

they validate that minimalism amplifies positive emotions while concurrently mitigating depressive tendencies among individuals.

Despite the multitude of studies spotlighting the affirmative repercussions of minimalism on personal well-being and sustainable development, two primary limitations emerge.

Firstly, existing research predominantly delves into the nexus between minimalism and emotional well-being, with limited empirical inquiry into the broader association between minimalism and holistic well-being, encompassing critical dimensions such as happiness and life satisfaction – cornerstones of the human experience (Scoffham & Barnes, 2011). Consequently, a pressing imperative arises to probe how a minimalist lifestyle resonates across individuals' comprehensive well-being and life contentment, surpassing the boundaries of emotional realms. Secondly, extant scholarship primarily revolves around elucidating minimalism's essence, character traits, and influencing factors. However, it tends to lack comprehensive guidance on implementing minimalism effectively. Hence, future endeavors should be geared towards formulating strategies that facilitate seamless minimalist integration, measuring its tangible outcomes, and meticulously assessing its overarching impact.

Furthermore, these efforts should be attuned to potential disparities in minimalism adoption across diverse cultural, social, and economic contexts, thus catering to the multifaceted needs of various demographic segments. Aligned with the United Nations' call for collective action towards Sustainable Development Goals, this imperative remains unwavering irrespective of countries' varying economic development levels ('17 Goals to Transform Our World', n.d.-a).

Previous examinations of minimalism have predominantly centered around developed nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, and Japan (Kan et al., 2009; Kang et al., 2021; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Martin-Woodhead, 2021), inadvertently creating a void in comprehending minimalism's dynamics within developing economies. A recent report by the China Global Television Network (Yang, 2022) highlights the surging popularity of the minimalist lifestyle among young individuals in China. Notably, approximately one in ten young Chinese individuals presently display a substantial inclination towards adopting a "minimalist lifestyle." Experts anticipate a subsequent surge in this statistic, propelled by the widespread adoption of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic (Yang, 2022). Consequently, a rigorous exploration of minimalism's status in China and its intricate interplay with personal well-being and sustainable development emerges as a critical research trajectory. To address these discernible gaps, this study endeavors to scrutinize the current landscape of minimalist lifestyles within a representative cross-section of the general population in China, a developing nation. The overarching objective is to meticulously dissect and substantiate the correlations between minimalist lifestyles and personal well-being, identifying the specific facets of minimalism that tangibly bolster human welfare while simultaneously delving into the underlying mechanisms propelling these salutary effects.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis mainly includes the following seven main chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and context: Introduce the concept of minimalism and its relevance in the context of sustainable development and well-being. **Research problem:** Clearly state the research problem and the significance of studying the relationship between minimalism and personal well-being. **Objectives:** Outline the specific objectives of this study, including exploring the impact of minimalism on overall well-being, identifying the factors influencing well-being within a minimalist lifestyle, and investigating the current state of minimalism in a developing country like China.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, a comprehensive literature review is presented, encompassing the historical evolution and definition of human lifestyles, the academic progression of lifestyle research, and the intricate interplay between lifestyle and consumer behavior. Additionally, the review explores the connections between lifestyle choices and sustainable development, while also discussing methodologies for categorizing various types of lifestyles. Another integral segment of the literature review delves into the historical development and categorization of well-being, emphasizing its significance in human progress and development. The second part reviews the literature on well-being, and the review traces its historical progression and categorization. It outlines how well-being has evolved from a narrow focus on economic indicators to a more holistic approach, encompassing psychological, social, and environmental dimensions. The chapter emphasizes the importance of well-being in human development, reflecting on its contributions to individual fulfillment and societal progress. In summation, this chapter's literature review provides a

comprehensive understanding of the historical evolution and definition of human lifestyles, the academic landscape of lifestyle research, and the intricate connections between lifestyle, consumer behavior, and sustainable development. It also underscores the historical development and categorization of well-being, accentuating its critical role in human advancement. The insights garnered from this chapter lay the groundwork for the subsequent sections of the study, facilitating a deeper exploration of the intricate relationships between lifestyles, well-being, and sustainable development.

Define minimalism and its core principles: Present a comprehensive overview of minimalism, including its definition, characteristics, and underlying principles.

Minimalism and well-being: Review existing literature on the association between minimalism and emotional well-being and identify gaps in research on the relationship between minimalism and overall well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction. **Minimalism and sustainable development:** Examine previous studies that highlight the impact of minimalism on sustainable development and its potential to reduce environmental burden. **Minimalism in developing countries:** Explore the existing literature on minimalism in developed countries and the limited understanding of minimalism in developing countries, with a specific focus on China. **Theoretical frameworks:** Discuss relevant theoretical frameworks that underpin the relationship between minimalism and well-being.

Chapter 3 Research Model and Methodology

This chapter establishes the research model. Building on the comprehensive literature review conducted in Chapter 2, we delve into the well-defined concepts of minimalist lifestyle and overall personal well-being. These two key concepts have been thoroughly examined and understood in the previous chapter.

In this chapter, we take a crucial step by introducing a questionnaire designed specifically for this study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these questionnaires are rooted in the areas of minimalist lifestyle and overall personal well-being. Through a meticulous process, we constructed a research model that underpinned the entire study, providing a structured framework for our investigation. Ultimately, the content of this structured questionnaire became our outcome in Chapter 3, serving as an important tool for collecting empirical data that will inform subsequent chapters of this article.

Chapter 4 Data collection

Chapter 4 serves as an essential component of this thesis, as it offers a comprehensive account of our data collection process. In this chapter, we elucidate the rationale behind our selection of data collection sites, shedding light on the pivotal factors that guided our choices. Furthermore, we delve into the intricacies of how data was gathered, including our careful selection of data companies, and provide a fundamental overview of the collected data.

A critical aspect of this chapter is the rigorous assessment of the overall reliability and validity of the research model. We meticulously scrutinize the soundness and robustness of our model to ensure that it stands up to scrutiny. This process is integral to the research's credibility and the validity of our findings, and we provide a detailed account of the methodologies employed to achieve this verification. Through the lens of Chapter 4, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the data collection process, its underlying motivations, and the measures we have taken to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of our research model.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis

Chapter 5 introduces the choice of data analysis software, SPSS, as our analytical tool. Within this chapter, we embark on a comprehensive exploration of the data obtained in the context of minimalism in the Chinese setting.

To begin, we undertake a factor analysis tailored to the unique landscape of minimalism in China. This analysis yields a new factor that reflects the nuanced presentation of minimalism within the Chinese cultural context. Moreover, this chapter delves into the examination of responses from our sample of ordinary Chinese residents who participated in the minimalism questionnaire. We meticulously scrutinize the frequency distribution of responses to the minimalism questionnaire, providing a detailed analysis of the outcomes. Simultaneously, we evaluate the responses of our sample concerning the Personal Well-being Index (PWI). In this section, we present a tabulated summary of key statistics, including the average and standard deviation of the PWI questionnaire. This data analysis sheds light on the relationship between minimalism and personal well-being among Chinese residents.

Through the lens of Chapter 5, readers will gain insight into the intricate process of data analysis, the emergence of a new factor classification for minimalism in the Chinese context, and the compelling correlations between minimalism and personal well-being as revealed through statistical examination.

Chapter 6 Discussion

Chapter 6 serves as the platform for an in-depth discussion of the analysis results derived from our data sample. This section encompasses three key areas of inquiry. Firstly, we delve into the intricate relationship between minimalism and overall personal well-being, dissecting the factors and dynamics that underpin this influence. Through a thorough exploration of our findings, we

aim to shed light on why such a consequential relationship exists.

Secondly, we embark on an examination of the contextual factors that contribute to the prevalence of minimalism in the Chinese milieu. This discussion provides valuable insights into the cultural, societal, and economic influences that have given rise to the particular manifestation of minimalism within China.

Finally, Chapter 6 ventures into the realm of prediction and foresight. Here, we forecast the trajectory of minimalism in the present and its potential evolution in the future. This forward-looking analysis draws upon our research findings and contextual understanding to offer valuable insights into the ongoing development of the minimalist lifestyle within the Chinese context.

Through the lens of Chapter 6, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the implications of our analysis results, the intricate interplay between minimalism and personal well-being, the contextual factors shaping minimalism in China, and a nuanced outlook on the future of this lifestyle trend.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Chapter 7 In this section, we provide a comprehensive synthesis of the entire study's findings, offering a definitive response to the research question.

The core assertion of this study is that minimalism significantly contributes to the enhancement of personal well-being. As we answer the central research question, we also delve into a nuanced analysis of the broader implications arising from our research. Our findings extend their influence across various domains, presenting valuable insights for diverse fields. In the realm of business, our research underscores the potential for sustainable brands to thrive

by aligning with minimalist values, thereby reducing resource waste and fostering more responsible consumption patterns. From a perspective of social responsibility, our study advocates for the promotion of conscientious and sustainable consumption practices, aiming to mitigate the detrimental effects of excessive consumption on our environment and society. Furthermore, our research carries global implications. By advocating for minimalism and responsible consumption, we contribute to the broader cause of promoting social harmony and global peace. The ripple effect of these principles can transcend borders and cultures, fostering a more sustainable and harmonious world.

Chapter 7 encapsulates the essence of our study, emphasizing the transformative power of minimalism not only for personal well-being but also for a more sustainable, responsible, and peaceful world.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Human lifestyle

Human lifestyle is a complex and diverse phenomenon that encompasses various aspects of daily living, including habits, behaviors, cultural practices, and socioeconomic factors. It evolves over time and varies across different regions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Understanding human lifestyle is crucial for addressing social, economic, and health-related challenges and promoting overall well-being and sustainable development.

2.1.1 History and Definition

The concept of lifestyle is widely used in the media, sustainable development, and health research, originating from the Latin term "modus vivendi," referring to the way of life. However, it should be understood from the perspective of values and attitudes. Since ancient Greece, values and attitudes have been inherited from the older generation to the younger generation (Jensen, 2007). Human lifestyle is a complex and diverse phenomenon, encompassing various aspects of daily life, including habits, behaviors, cultural customs, and socio-economic factors. It evolves over time and varies across regions, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. Understanding human lifestyle is crucial for addressing social, economic, and health-related challenges and promoting overall well-being and sustainable development.

2.1.2 Defining Lifestyle

The term lifestyle is most commonly understood as the "distinctive patterns of individual or collective behavior" (Veal, 1993) and has been a subject of endless debates among scientists, representatives from different disciplines, businesses, politicians, and the media. These debates often focus on different dimensions and contexts as the behaviors discussed involve variable factors, such as the range of relationships between individuals and communities, consumer behavior, work and leisure, including work-life balance, values, and civic consciousness, and religious practices (Siciński, 2002; Agnew et al., 2020).

Researcher Jensen (2007) suggests that the broad definition of lifestyle should be analyzed at four different levels: global, structural or national, positional or subcultural, and individual (shown in Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Definitions of the concept of lifestyle.(Jensen, 2007)

1 – Global:
Lifestyle is the manifestation of a world consumption class (also called North and South or West and something opposite) regulated by the supply of goods and the amount of consumption
2 – Structural or national:
Lifestyle is the manifestation of nationalism, which is regulated, planned and influenced primarily by the government. Thus, a national lifestyle is patterns of action and expressions that differentiate one nation from another and at the same time connect those within the nation
3 – Positional or sub-cultural:
Lifestyle is the routine manifestation of subcultures, regulated and influenced by family (social class), friends (status groups, gender, generation) and different types of movements and networks. By this we can say that the lifestyle visually differentiates one subculture from another or from culture in the broader sense. Likewise, the lifestyle visually expresses a connection within the group
4a – Individual:
Lifestyle is the routinized manifestation of self-identity (not the broader sense of identity used by, e.g. Castells 1997), regulated by the project of self and influenced primarily by friends and the media (according to Giddens 1991, the project is influenced by group pressure, role models and socio-economic circumstances). Lifestyle is the visual expression that differentiates one individual from another. The lifestyle also indicates, reflexively, to the individual that the project of self is ongoing. When it comes to consumption it can be understood as follows: Lifestyle is a manifestation or expression of self-identity, and consumption is a method for maintaining this lifestyle. Consumption is not a lifestyle <i>per se</i>

4b – Individual:

A lifestyle is a pattern of repeated acts that are both dynamic and to some degree the individual is oblivious to, and which involves the use of artefacts. This lifestyle is grounded in beliefs about the world, and its constancy over time is guided by intentions to attain goals. In other words, a lifestyle is a set of habits that are directed by the same main goal. It is regulated by (social) feedback and by access to artefacts

2.1.3 The history of lifestyle research

A well-lived lifestyle is closely related to individual health and happiness, making lifestyle-oriented research significant in disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, economics, consumer behavior, and others. Philosophical contemplation on lifestyle and happiness dates back to the times of Plato and Aristotle (Fossheim, 2015). Subsequently, scholars from sociology, economics, literature, drama, rhetoric, and other disciplines have engaged in lifestyle-related research from different perspectives. They explored the interaction between individuals and society, the influence of class and status on lifestyle, the connection between lifestyle and consumer behavior, as well as human experience and life satisfaction, each contributing unique viewpoints.

In sociology, lifestyle research often focuses on the "interaction, influence, and relationship between individuals and society."

Some scholars argue that individuals construct society through their engagement in social activities, shaping their own lifestyle. On the other hand, some scholars propose that individuals need to construct their roles and meanings in social activities and find happiness through these life experiences. Others consider individual life inseparable from social life, viewing them as interconnected and mutually influential.

Western scholar Mead believes that human life is constructed by four elements: consciousness, social interaction, environment, and behavior, creating a system of meaning (Mead et al., 2015). Marx believed that real-life is social life, and individuals are social beings. Lifestyle is manifested in people's daily lives, including basic elements like clothing, food, housing, and transportation, as well as culture and customs (Marx, 2022). In his work "Sociology," David Popenoe pointed out that social life is composed of non-personal and individual factors (Popenoe, 2000). Non-personal factors consist of material environment, culture, society, economy, technology, population, etc., while individual factors consist of an individual's physiology, psychology, educational background, and others. People are at the core of society, and it is their creativity that drives social progress and development. Schütz believes that individuals can change society through their free will and constructiveness in everyday life (Sprondel & Grathoff, 1979). Garfinkel, starting from easily overlooked phenomena in daily life, revealed the behavior structure of individuals in everyday life practices and proposed Ethnomethodology, asserting that ordinary people are direct builders of society and can influence society through their actions (Heritage, 2013). He also believed that individuals, in constructing society, create their own reality in the process. Husserl emphasized the effects of life actions and their consequences for social functioning.

As social beings, people need to discover and construct meaning in their lives through interaction with society. The concept of the "lifeworld" was first introduced by Husserl in "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology," describing it as the "solely real, perceptually given, experientially lived world, the world of our everyday life" (Husserl, 1970). The "lifeworld" plays a role in the process of human socialization, and individuals construct their social roles in life (Bohman & Rehg, 2007). Bauman believed

that the fundamental research question of sociology is how sociology can guide and improve human life rationally (Bauman, 2000). Mid, through scientific exploration, studied individual actions from a societal perspective, revealing how individuals gain abilities such as self-awareness, purposeful behavior, morality, and faith from life actions (Morris, 1934).

The division of lifestyles, as proposed by sociologists, varies from different perspectives. Marx believed that material life is the basis of human real-life, and political life and spiritual life are higher-level manifestations. He pointed out three types of life: material life, spiritual life, and political life (Marx & Engels, 1975).

In conclusion, the concept of lifestyle should be understood from the perspective of values and attitudes. Human lifestyle is a complex and diverse phenomenon, covering various aspects of daily life. Researchers from different disciplines have engaged in lifestyle-related research, exploring its interactions with individual health, happiness, social dynamics, and society's progress. The lifeworld concept emphasizes the role of individuals in constructing their social roles and meaning in life. Defining lifestyle has been a topic of ongoing debate due to its multifaceted nature. It involves behaviors influenced by various factors, including individual relationships with the community, consumer behavior, work and leisure habits, and personal values and civic awareness. Understanding lifestyle is essential for addressing societal challenges and achieving sustainable development and well-being

2.2 The Interconnection of Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior

The concept of lifestyle has a deep-rooted connection with Western economics, as evident from the works of "the father of modern economics," Adam Smith. Before he wrote "The Wealth of Nations," Smith explored the relationship between human emotions in daily life and economics in his book "The Theory of Moral Sentiments." This association between lifestyle and economics has continued to influence research and understanding in modern times.

2.2.1 Defining Lifestyle from an Economic Perspective

From an economic standpoint, lifestyle can be defined in various ways, as shown in (Table 2.2). Economic research on lifestyle can be categorized into two main angles. The first angle equates lifestyle with consumption capacity and uses it as a criterion for judging social class. In this approach, lifestyle becomes an indicator of an individual or group's economic status and influence. The second angle views lifestyle as a factor influencing consumption behavior. It considers lifestyle as an environment in which consumption decisions occur, affecting the types of products and services individuals choose to consume. Overall, the goal of economic research on lifestyle is to understand consumption patterns and economic development rather than merely examining lifestyle itself.

Table 2.2 Defining Lifestyle from an Economic Perspective

Time	Author	Main Content
1963	Lazer	Lifestyle is the characteristic that a particular group or society as a whole exhibits in its daily life.
1971	Well & Tigert	Lifestyle refers to the attitudes, beliefs, expectations, prejudices and other characteristics that govern one's life practices, money and energy.
1974	Rlummer	Lifestyle is a description of the overall behavior of consumers, exploring the nature of consumption and behavior patterns.
1983	Hawkins, Best & Coney	The core question of lifestyle discussion is how people should live, work and leisure.
1994	Plngree & Hawkins	A lifestyle is a pattern of behavior established by a person under certain rules.
1996	Kotler	Everything in life is a psychological activity, including consumption activities, interests and opinions about things.
1999	Solomon	Lifestyle is the way individuals spend their time and money.
2001	Blackwell, Mniard & Engel	Lifestyle refers to the way people control time, money and other content in their daily life.

The concept of lifestyle is not limited to economic research; it has deep philosophical roots. Karl Marx, in "German Ideology," proposed the idea of lifestyle, closely tied to the center of historical materialism (Marx, 2022). In classic Marxist theory, lifestyle differentiates social classes, serving as a marker of distinctions between individuals in various economic strata.

2.2.2 The Influence of Lifestyle on Consumer Behavior

The term "lifestyle" was first introduced by the renowned German sociologist and philosopher Max Weber. In his work "Class, Status, and Power," Weber mentioned the concept of lifestyle, using the way of producing and acquiring products as a basis for "class" classification, and the way of consuming products, or lifestyle, for "status" and group classification (Sobel, 2013). Weber viewed lifestyle as synonymous with consumption patterns, believing that lifestyle is reflected in the specific modes of consumption. Veblen's work, "The Theory of the Leisure Class," also emphasizes defining lifestyle based on the mode of commodity consumption (Veblen, 2017). He considered the lifestyle of the "leisure class" as a symbol of social class differences. Similarly, Earl's "Lifestyle Economics: The Economics of Turbulent Worlds of Consumer Behavior" addresses the issue of lifestyle through investigating consumption patterns (Earl, 1986). Other researchers have also equated lifestyle with consumption patterns. Some see lifestyle as a person's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, prejudices, and other characteristics that govern their life practices, money, and energy (Wells & Tigert, 1971). It is considered as a description of overall consumer behavior, exploring the essence of consumption and behavior patterns (Plummer, 1974). Lifestyle can also be understood as the way individuals manage time, money, and other resources in their daily lives (Solomon et al., 2014).

2.2.3 Lifestyle as a Determinant of Consumption Behavior

Lifestyle plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior. Different lifestyles result in varying consumer demands, leading to different levels of engagement with products and services. Many scholars have conducted research on how lifestyle impacts consumer behavior. The Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (EBM) model, proposed by consumer behavior scholars, illustrates how lifestyle influences various stages of consumer decision-making (Engel et al., 1986). Another model, the overall model of consumer behavior, presents lifestyle as influenced by both external and internal factors. As a triggering condition for consumer behavior, lifestyle significantly influences various aspects of consumers' decision-making process.

In conclusion, the concept of lifestyle has deep connections with Western economics, as evidenced by Adam Smith's exploration of human emotions in daily life and their relation to economics. Consumer studies have extensively researched lifestyle, focusing on market segmentation, describing the characteristics of specific lifestyle groups, comparing different consumer lifestyles, and studying lifestyle trends. From an economic perspective, lifestyle is defined in various ways, either as a criterion for social class judgment or as a factor influencing consumption behavior. Philosophically, the concept of lifestyle has its roots in the works of Karl Marx and Max Weber, who saw it as an essential element in the differentiation of social classes. The term "lifestyle" was first introduced by Max Weber, who considered it synonymous with consumption patterns. Veblen and Earl also linked lifestyle to modes of commodity consumption. Lifestyle significantly influences consumer behavior, affecting their engagement and decision-making at various stages of the consumer process. As a result, understanding lifestyle has become crucial for

businesses seeking to align products with consumer expectations and effectively target specific groups of consumers (Kahle & Close, 2011).

2.2.4 Lifestyle and Sustainable development

The concepts of lifestyle and sustainable development are closely related, encompassing individual and societal ways of life and resource utilization while ensuring the well-being of present and future generations and the health of the planet (WCED, 1987). Research indicates that different households have varying impacts on the environment due to lifestyle differences, such as choices in living, transportation, and food consumption, which can have significant effects on the environment (Christensen, 1997). The negative consequences of human activities on the environment and civilization's development have garnered increasing attention and criticism, leading to severe consequences. Failing to take action and change existing lifestyles could result in irreversible changes to the environmental system, threatening the possibility of human survival in such an environment (Bouman et al., 2020). This has highlighted the need for sustainable living practices that adhere to the principles of sustainable development.

2.3 The Relationship Between Lifestyle and Sustainable Development

The concept of lifestyle and its constituent elements have gained increasing prominence in research projects centered around the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis on Goal 3, which aims to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages," and Goal 12, which seeks to "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns" (United Nations, 2019). As society grapples with escalating social, economic, and environmental disparities, research underscores the pivotal role of sustainable living, which revolves around the unwavering adherence to the principles of sustainable development.

Sustainable lifestyles are characterized by a conscious commitment to individual actions that embody persistence, altruism, and frugality, all while maintaining a delicate equilibrium with society, the economy, and the environment (Corral-Verdugo et al., 2010). These encompass a diverse array of activities, including conserving energy and water, recycling waste, embracing green consumption practices, and adopting responsible approaches to travel and tourism (Barr and Gilg, 2006; Prillwitz and Barr, 2011; de Oliveira and Sousa, 2020).

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that defining sustainable lifestyles is not without its challenges. The inherent complexities of this concept can pose obstacles, potentially constraining research design and reasoning. Hence, it is imperative to pursue an optimized approach to address these challenges and further our understanding of the intricate relationship between lifestyle choices and sustainable development (Hedlund-de Witt, 2012).

2.3.1 The Significance of Sustainable Lifestyles

Sustainable living practices are fundamental for achieving the goal of 'living well within the Earth's limits' (O'Neill et al., 2018; Vita et al., 2019). These practices encompass a wide array of activities that not only benefit the environment but also contribute to overall health and well-being (Światowy and Szalonka, 2018; Lubowiecki-Vikuk, et al., 2021). Sustainable living entails conserving energy and water, recycling waste, engaging in green consumption, and adopting responsible approaches to travel and tourism (Barr and Gilg, 2006; Prillwitz and Barr, 2011; de Oliveira and Sousa, 2020).

While there exists a diversity of perspectives and individual traits among people (Barr and Gilg, 2006), along with variations in happiness levels (Escobar-Tello, 2016; Onel et al., 2018), there is no one-size-fits-all sustainable lifestyle. However, there are common sustainable behaviors, such as sustainable consumption in clothing and food, as well as related trends and movements, such as anti-consumption, voluntary simplicity, collaborative consumption, and resistance behaviors. These practices manifest in various aspects of life, including household management, transportation, and leisure activities (Southerton et al., 2004; Black and Cherrier, 2010; do Paço and Laurett., 2019).

Moreover, active leisure activities that emphasize a connection with the natural world also play a significant role in enhancing personal well-being (Brymer, 2009). Examples of sustainable lifestyle practices within communities encompass cooperative purchasing groups, local trade exchanges, shared gaming spaces, carpooling initiatives, community agriculture exchanges, elderly community care programs, urban gardens, community childcare centers,

and public laundry facilities (Akenji and Chen, 2016). These practices not only contribute to individual well-being but also foster a sense of communal responsibility and environmental stewardship.

2.3.2 The Role of Consumers in Sustainable Lifestyles

As highlighted by Aydın and Ünal (2016), consumer lifestyle choices extend far beyond personal preferences; they wield a substantial influence on environmental awareness, attitudes, and responsible consumption. Consumers, in their choices and behaviors, hold the power to significantly impact the promotion of a "green economy." This is achieved through various pathways, including the pursuit of sufficiency, voluntary simplicity, and sustainable consumption practices, all of which contribute to environmentally friendly and responsible living (Binder and Blankenberg, 2017).

Moisander (2007) further elucidates the notion of "green consumers" as well-informed and socially responsible individuals who recognize the profound implications of their shopping choices on the broader community. These conscientious consumers are driven by a desire to effect positive changes in the social environment through sustainable and responsible consumption practices.

In summation, it is evident that lifestyle choices wield considerable influence on the environment and the trajectory of sustainable development. Embracing sustainable living practices and practicing responsible consumerism are indispensable endeavors in safeguarding the well-being of future generations and preserving the health of our planet. Sustainable living embodies a commitment to conscious individual actions characterized by persistence, altruism, and frugality, all while striking a harmonious balance with society,

the economy, and the environment. By adopting eco-friendly habits and embracing responsible consumer practices, individuals can make substantial contributions to the global endeavor aimed at achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

2.4 Overview of Well-being

2.4.1 Historical Development and Classification

What is well-being?

Well-being is the ultimate goal pursued by humanity. It represents the subjective feeling of pleasure individuals derive from their own sense of satisfaction and security. Beyond being a personal aspiration, it also serves as a fundamental objective for governments and policies, as noted by Kahn and Juster (2002). Over time, the definition of happiness has evolved, expanding from the mere contentment with basic needs to encompassing both material and spiritual aspects. A nation's focus on the well-being of its citizens has become a crucial factor in shaping the quality of public life and societal development. The ultimate aim of economic growth and governance is to enhance national welfare, improve living standards, and cultivate a sense of happiness among residents. This is exemplified by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages," with the goal of creating a sustainable future for humanity.

Historical Development of Well-being

The concept of well-being has evolved throughout history, influenced by shifting societal values and priorities. Its roots can be traced back to ancient philosophers like Aristotle and Plato, who emphasized the pursuit of eudaimonia—a state of flourishing and living a morally virtuous life. The term "well-being" itself can be traced to the 16th-century Italian concept of "benessere," as noted in the Oxford English Dictionary.

It wasn't until modern times that systematic measurement and research on well-being began. While each individual has their unique experiences and

perceptions of well-being, scholars from various disciplines have contributed extensive literature on the topic. However, a single, universally accepted definition remains elusive. The study of well-being has attracted scholars from diverse fields, including philosophy, economics, and sociology, but it owes much of its systematic study to psychology. In the 1990s, Seligman, the President of the American Psychological Association (APA), introduced the concept of positive psychology, leading to a surge in research on positive emotions such as happiness, subjective well-being, and love.

Interconnected Dimensions of Well-being

One's happiness can be described as circumstances that benefit the individual (Sumner, 2002). Different forms of well-being—psychological, physical, economic, or emotional—are often intertwined (Fletcher, 2016). For instance, improvements in physical health, such as reducing smoking addiction, can lead to enhanced emotional well-being (Yang & Ma, 2021). Even in adverse situations, like the COVID-19 pandemic, greater economic well-being (e.g., increased wealth) is frequently associated with improved emotional well-being.

Ethics and Well-being

Ethics plays a significant role in the concept of well-being, as determining the right course of action for an individual partly depends on whether it enhances or diminishes their quality of life (Fletcher, 2016). Welfarism posits that, aside from well-being, no other factors hold inherent value (Roger, 2017).

Defining Key Terms

While the words well-being, pleasure, and happiness are often used interchangeably in everyday speech, their definitions vary in specialized fields such as philosophy and psychology. Pleasure typically denotes a positive sensation and is generally considered a component of well-being. However, other elements like health, virtue, knowledge, or the fulfillment of desires can

also contribute (Haybron & Tiberius, 2015). Similarly, happiness can be perceived as either "the ratio of enjoyable to uncomfortable experiences for an individual" or as contentment with one's overall life (Haybron, 2011). This notion is commonly regarded as a component of well-being.

Theories of Well-being

The primary aim of well-being theories is to identify fundamental elements common to all manifestations of well-being. These theories can be categorized into hedonistic theories, desire theories, and objective list theories (Haybron, 2011; Roger, 2017; Tiberius, 2015). Both hedonistic and desire theories fall under subjective theories, arguing that an individual's well-being depends on their personal mental states and perspectives. In contrast, objective list theories acknowledge that certain factors can positively contribute to an individual's well-being regardless of their personal viewpoints on these factors.

In hedonistic theories, the focus is on mental experiences related to pleasure and pain. This perspective is exemplified in the writings of Jeremy Bentham, who suggests that the value of experiences is solely determined by their duration and the intensity of pleasure or pain they contain (Bentham, 1970). However, this viewpoint faces challenges from counterexamples, such as situations where intellectual or aesthetic pleasures outweigh sensory pleasures (Mill, 2016), raising questions about common intuition.

Desire theories propose that well-being is achieved by fulfilling desires—the more desires satisfied, the higher the well-being. However, some versions of desire theory encounter issues because not all desires are inherently beneficial. To address this, proponents argue that it's not the actual desires that matter, but the desires an individual would have if they had complete information (Roger, 2017).

Objective list theories assert that an individual's well-being depends on a range of fundamental objective goods, including both subjective factors like pleasure and pain balance and factors independent of an individual's attitudes, such as friendships or virtuous qualities (Haybron, 2011). However, objective list theories grapple with explaining how factors unaffected by an individual's preferences can determine their well-being, as well as the selection of these factors, which can appear arbitrary without a clear criterion (Roger, 2017; Tiberius, 2015).

2.4.2 Frameworks and Elements of Well-Being

Introduction to Well-being Models

The field of well-being has witnessed the development of numerous distinct models (McGregor et al., 2015) that offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of well-being. In this discussion, we will explore some prominent models that have contributed significantly to our understanding of well-being.

Causal Network Models and Well-Being

Philosopher Michael Bishop introduced a comprehensive causal network framework for well-being in his work, "The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-being" (Bishop, 2015). This framework posits that well-being is an outcome influenced by a multitude of factors, including emotions, beliefs, motivations, habits, and resources. These interconnected factors shed light on the dynamics of well-being, explaining how changes in well-being occur. Moreover, this conceptual approach has been effectively applied to comprehend ill-being, particularly in contexts such as

depression (Hakulinen et al., 2020) and the impact of digital technology (Nick, 2020). This network perspective has also found broader applications in the realm of mental health (Fried et al., 2016).

Diener's Tripartite Model: Understanding Subjective Well-Being

Diener's tripartite model of subjective well-being, introduced in 1984, remains a comprehensive and influential framework within psychology. It identifies three interconnected components of well-being: frequent experiences of positive affect, infrequent experiences of negative affect, and cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction (Tov & Diener, 2013). Subjective well-being is influenced by cognitive, affective, and contextual factors, collectively contributing to an individual's overall well-being (Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011). Diener and Suh emphasize that subjective well-being is closely tied to an individual's thoughts and feelings about their own life (Diener & Eunkook, 2000).

Ryff's Six-Factor Framework for Psychological Well-Being

Carol Ryff's multidimensional model of psychological well-being identifies six core factors essential to well-being: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others (David, 2014).

Corey Keyes' Perspective on Flourishing

Corey Keyes, in collaboration with Carol Ryff, presents a nuanced understanding of mental well-being, encompassing three dimensions: emotional or subjective well-being (also referred to as hedonic well-being), psychological well-being, and social well-being (collectively known as eudaimonic well-being) (Keyes, 2002). Emotional well-being focuses on the subjective experience of feeling well, while psychological and social well-being encompass competencies, abilities, and mental and social

functioning (Joshani, 2016). Keyes' model of mental well-being has garnered substantial empirical support across various cultural contexts (Joshani, 2016; Joshani & Lamers, 2016; Gallagher, Lopez, & Preacher, 2009).

Seligman's Positive Psychology and the Pursuit of the "Good Life"

Positive psychology places well-being at its core and is concerned with eudaimonia, often referred to as "the good life." It involves reflection on what contributes the most to a fulfilling and well-lived existence. While not offering a rigid definition, positive psychologists concur that authentic happiness and fulfillment are cultivated by leading a happy, engaged, and meaningful life. Martin Seligman identifies "the good life" as utilizing one's signature strengths daily to foster genuine happiness and abundant satisfaction (Seligman, 2009).

Personal Wellbeing Index from International Wellbeing Group (2013)

Introduction to the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI)

The Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) is a significant measure developed by Cummins, McCabe, Romeo, and Gullone in 1994, which builds upon the Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale (ComQol) (Cummins et al., 1994). Originally, the ComQol aimed to encompass both objective and subjective assessments of life quality and its developmental details have been extensively documented in prior publications (Cummins, 1991; Cummins, McCabe, & Romeo, 1994; Gullone & Cummins, 1999; Marriage & Cummins, 2004). The domains within the ComQol were initially identified through a review of domain names used in existing literature. A thorough three-phase process and empirical validation resulted in the creation of the seven broad domains comprising the scale (Cummins, 1997).

The transition from ComQol to PWI

However, in 2001, ComQol faced two notable flaws that led to its discontinuation. Firstly, despite multiple revisions, the objective scale failed to segment into the intended seven non-complex domains. Secondly, a flaw existed in the multiplication of domain importance and domain satisfaction, as highlighted by Trauer and Mackinnon (2001). Their influential study demonstrated the psychometric invalidity of such multiplicative composites. Consequently, the ComQol was abandoned, and Cummins (2002) provides a comprehensive explanation for this decision.

From the discontinuation of the ComQol, the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) emerged. This new scale retained only the questions related to satisfaction and six of the original seven domains. The original ComQol domain, which questioned "How satisfied are you with your own happiness?" was replaced with "How satisfied are you with your future security?" This change aimed to align with the principle of constructing PWI life-domain scales that are amenable to both objective and subjective measurement. Interestingly, despite its origin, this domain has proven to be psychometrically robust.

Differences Between PWI and ComQol

Another significant difference between the PWI and ComQol lies in the change in response scale format. The original 7-point Likert scale was replaced with an 11-point (0-10) End-Defined Response Scale, as described by Jones and Thurstone (1955). Several reasons underpinned this decision, as detailed in Cummins and Gullone (2000). The primary concern was to prevent psychometric confusion arising from the application of adjectival descriptors to a numerical interval scale. These descriptors did not represent equal psychometric intervals, thus offering misleading and redundant information. Additionally, the 11-point (0-10) scale was preferred for its ability to enhance respondents' discriminative capacity and its straightforwardness in

understanding.

The Personal Wellbeing Index Items, International Wellbeing Group (2013)

The core set of items forming the PWI comprise seven questions of satisfaction with specific life domains as follows:

Questions Domains

How satisfied are you with...?

1. your standard of living? [Standard of Living]
2. your health? [Personal Health]
3. what you are achieving in life? [Achieving in Life]
4. your personal relationships? [Personal Relationships]
5. how safe you feel? [Personal Safety]
6. feeling part of your community? [Community-Connectedness]
7. your future security? [Future Security]

2.4.3 Why Well-being Is Important?

Emphasizing the significance of well-being cannot be overstated, as it exerts profound impacts on individuals and entire societies. At the individual level, happiness contributes to enhancing the quality of life, elevating life satisfaction, and promoting psychological well-being. Individuals with higher levels of happiness tend to demonstrate greater resilience when facing challenges and an overall higher sense of well-being. From a societal perspective, the collective well-being of a population directly influences productivity, social cohesion, and even economic growth. Nations that prioritize citizen well-being often report lower rates of mental health disorders, reduced crime rates, and higher levels of civic engagement. Well-being serves as a catalyst for positive social change, fostering an environment in which individuals can thrive and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

The intricate relationship between well-being and sustainable development underscores the interconnection between individual welfare and broader societal progress. Sustainable development aims to meet the needs of the present while safeguarding the needs of future generations. Well-being plays a pivotal role in this equation, as a healthy and content population is better equipped to make responsible decisions for the long-term well-being of the planet. By incorporating dimensions of well-being into sustainable development goals, policymakers can formulate comprehensive strategies to address environmental, economic, and social aspects holistically. Furthermore, pursuing sustainable practices can enhance individual well-being by promoting cleaner environments, safer communities, and increased access to basic resources. Ultimately, the pursuit of well-being and sustainable development forms a mutually supportive relationship, benefiting both humanity and the planet for a prosperous and harmonious future.

2.5 Minimalism as an sustainable lifestyle

2.5.1 The Evolution of Minimalism: A Comprehensive Journey

Within the realm of minimalist lifestyles, the landscape of prior research has often appeared fragmented, with each study standing as a solitary entity rather than a piece of a unified theoretical puzzle. Furthermore, the academic arena has not yet witnessed the systematic establishment of a precise definition for minimalist living. This absence can be attributed to the very nature of minimalist lifestyles themselves—they are not static, unchanging constructs but rather dynamic concepts that evolve in tandem with the constant ebb and flow of society's development.

The seeds of the initial minimalist lifestyle can be traced back to ancient Greek minimalist philosophy, a school of thought that championed simple living and the avoidance of excessive material wealth to prevent the needless squandering of resources (Gericke, 2014). However, the modern interpretation of minimalism, as we perceive it today, has its roots firmly planted in the mid-20th century. It was during the 1950s and 1960s that the minimalist art movement burst onto the scene, featuring artists like Donald Judd and Dan Flavin, who crafted sparse and simplistic artworks that resonated with a profound sense of minimalism. As architects and designers began to delve into minimalist principles in their creative endeavors, this aesthetic sensibility began its gradual permeation into various facets of life (Meyer, 1995).

As the 20th century drew to a close and the 21st century dawned, minimalism underwent a transformative shift, transitioning from a concept primarily associated with artistic expression to a full-fledged lifestyle choice. It was during this period that influential books like "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" and "Minimalists" emerged, championing the notion of simplifying and decluttering one's life. These literary works resonated with audiences and garnered significant acclaim (Fields & Nicodemus, 2017; Meissner, 2019). Moreover, the tumultuous financial crisis of 2008 served as an unexpected catalyst for the ascent of minimalism. People, faced with economic uncertainty, became acutely aware of their spending habits and shifted towards a less materialistic way of life in an attempt to weather the negative impacts of the crisis (Meissner, 2019).

The origins of the Asian minimalism movement trace back to traditional Japanese aesthetics and deeply-rooted cultural values (Shoji, 2017). In 2010, Japanese author Marie Kondo introduced the world to "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," a literary masterpiece that sold over seven million copies worldwide and currently reigns as the most influential work on minimalist living (Tan, 2017). This seminal book introduced concepts that ardently reject accumulation and clutter, sparking a global movement towards simplification. Another monumental work, Sasaki's (2017) best-selling book, "Goodbye, Things: The New Japanese Minimalism," documented his remarkable transformation from one minimalist to another. In "Danshari: Shin Katazukejutsu," Yamashita (2009) proposed the concept of 'Danshari' — a philosophy that encourages individuals to bid farewell to complicated possessions, restrain the impulse to acquire unnecessary items, remove life's excesses, and detach from material attachments in favor of focusing on genuine needs. In Yamashita's vision, 'Dan' and 'Sha' ultimately serve the grand 'Ri' — the return to the tranquility of the mind. According to Dillon (2011), this philosophy attained widespread popularity in Japan around 2010 and rapidly

spread across the globe in the ensuing years. These social movements laid the firm foundation for minimalism and have gradually evolved into the multifaceted minimalist lifestyle we recognize today.

This study provides a systematic review of the relevant literature on minimalist lifestyles, which can be broadly categorized into three main areas.

2.5.2 Against accumulation and tidying elements in minimalist lifestyles

Embarking on the path of adopting a minimalist lifestyle often commences with a pivotal step: tidying. This practice serves as a critical starting point, enabling individuals to assess their possessions with a discerning eye and distinguish what truly holds necessity and value. As supported by multiple sources (Dopierała, 2017; Rodriguez, 2018; Ugglä, 2019), the trajectory of minimalistic behavior frequently commences with the act of decluttering. This encompassing endeavor involves purging possessions, reconfiguring living spaces, altering consumption habits, and cultivating self-discipline to deter the future accumulation of items (Kasperek, 2016; Zalewska & Cobel-Tokarska, 2016). Moreover, this process necessitates a thoughtful evaluation of the utility of personal belongings, leading to decisions such as donating, selling, or exchanging items deemed nonessential, redundant, or purely sentimental (Dopierała, 2017).

Research underscores the manifold advantages of tidying for individuals embarking on the minimalist journey. For instance, Tolin et al. (2018) have established that tidying can alleviate stress and enhance overall well-being. It accomplishes this by fostering a profound sense of control over one's living

environment while mitigating the overwhelming presence of clutter. Similarly, findings from Lerner et al. (2019) revealed that tidying engenders positive emotional states while concurrently diminishing negative emotions, culminating in heightened life satisfaction and an enhanced sense of well-being.

However, it is imperative to recognize that while tidying constitutes a crucial facet, it alone is insufficient in reaping the complete benefits offered by minimalism; it serves as a prerequisite yet an incomplete stride toward the comprehensive embrace of a minimalist lifestyle. Howell et al. (2019) assert that minimalism encompasses not only the acts of decluttering and organizing one's possessions but also entails a fundamental shift in mindset and values concerning consumption and materialism. This holistic transformation encompasses the prioritization of experiences over material possessions, the reduction of waste and ecological footprints, and the fostering of social bonds and communal ties.

In essence, embracing minimalism transcends a mere physical decluttering; it represents a profound shift in one's approach to life, advocating for a deliberate and mindful existence that extends beyond the boundaries of material possessions.

2.5.3 Minimalist consumption factors in minimalist lifestyles

In academic discourse, the concept of a minimalist lifestyle shares a close bond with the notion of voluntary simplicity—a conscious choice to lead a straightforward existence, engage in introspection, and make conscientious decisions (Andrews & Holst, 1998; Elgin, 1981; Huneke, 2005). According to

Dopierała (2017), minimalism can be perceived as an evolution of voluntary simplicity, positioned as a counterbalance to consumerism, and sometimes even veering towards anti-consumption. However, an alternative perspective, advocated by Zalewska and Cobel-Tokarska (2016), portrays minimalist living as a reflection of personal ethics deeply embedded in consumption choices, characterizing it as a variant of ethical consumption. Hence, minimalism does not inherently oppose consumption but rather serves as a framework for thoughtful consumption guided by individual principles. Similarly, Boujbel and d'Astous (2012) and Huneke (2005) propose that minimalist consumption arises voluntarily, in the absence of economic constraints. Huneke (2005) perceives minimalism as a self-driven behavior that restrains the urge for consumption through sheer willpower.

In accordance with this perspective, this study aligns with the view that the compulsion to limit consumption due to financial constraints does not fully encompass the essence of minimalism. While anti-consumption and frugality may appear as visible outcomes of minimalist consumption, they do not encapsulate its true core. The pursuit of spiritual fulfillment through minimalist consumption need not inherently align with anti-consumption or frugality. Instead, the essence of minimalist consumption lies in the realization of self-worth, a distinguishing aspect that sets it apart from the behaviors of anti-consumption and frugality, which have fundamentally different motivations.

Hüttel et al. (2020) argue that minimalist consumption fosters a broader spiritual realm for individuals, exerting a profound impact on enhancing subjective well-being and life satisfaction among contemporary consumers. Furthermore, the findings of Lloyd and Pennington (2020) underscore that minimalist consumption nurtures an expanded mental sphere—a realm suffused with a subjective sense of tranquility. By exerting control over the physical

realm, minimalist consumption paves the way for an augmented psychological domain, representing an effective means to conserve intangible 'mental energy.' This holistic perspective on minimalism underscores its multifaceted nature, transcending mere economic or anti-consumption paradigms to encompass deeper dimensions of individual well-being and self-realization.

2.5.4 Personal development and sustainable values in the minimalist lifestyle

In an intriguing fashion, minimalism has experienced a remarkable resurgence in popularity, transcending diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and establishing itself as a burgeoning consumption trend (Kramarczyk & Oliver, 2020). At the core of this cultural shift lies the compelling drive for personal development, motivating individuals to transition from profligate to resource-conscious behaviors. Minimalists are deliberate in their choices, procuring only what genuinely fulfills their needs, thus effectively quelling impulsive buying tendencies and quashing negative emotions, including remorse and culpability (Gatersleben et al., 2019; Lorenzen, 2018). By electing to economize both in terms of monetary expenditure and time allocation, minimalists make a profound investment in self-enhancement, thereby enhancing their sense of control and resolve in shaping the trajectory of their lives (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Etzioni, 1998). This conscious approach serves as an antidote to the dual dilemma of 'material wealth' and 'time scarcity' that often burdens contemporary lives (Kasser, 2011).

But minimalism extends beyond the mere reclamation of temporal and spatial dimensions. It opens the doors to amplified comfort and leisure by reducing consumption and simplifying daily routines (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). In their quest to align with personal values, minimalists employ consumption

regulation as a means to advance communal well-being. The process of streamlining material possessions and embracing a modest lifestyle yields dividends in stress alleviation, the cultivation of serenity and organization, and the elevation of subjective well-being and overall life contentment (Kasser, 2011; McGouran & Prothero, 2016). Individuals attuned to ecological imperatives adopt conscientious consumption practices to protect the environment (Leonard-Barton, 1981). They actively engage in eco-conscious and sustainable personal initiatives, striving to forge harmony between humanity and the natural world, thereby contributing to the collective welfare of society (Peifer et al., 2020; Peyer et al., 2017; Shaw & Moraes, 2009). As posited by Chowdhury (2018) and Kasser (2011), minimalists derive a profound sense of pride from their prosocial and ecologically mindful minimalist conduct, fostering an upsurge in positive moral sentiments.

In summation, minimalism emerges as a way of life that places a premium on the quality of individual existence while remaining underpinned by a steadfast commitment to the sustainability of the external environment. This ethos radiates simplicity and pragmatism in its methodologies. From the meticulous evaluation of purchasing decisions to circumspect disposal behaviors, minimalists conscientiously navigate away from overconsumption and the wasteful use of resources. This lifestyle heralds a novel paradigm for sustainable living, aspiring to alleviate the burdens placed upon the Earth and circumvent avoidable waste within society. Through the alleviation of both material and spiritual encumbrances, individuals are poised to forge more purposeful and sustainable livelihoods. By according precedence to quality over quantity and adeptly discerning and satisfying their requisites, minimalists unfetter themselves from the yoke of needless possession and consumption. This minimalist and simplified way of life not only affords the creation of a heightened spiritual realm but also internal tranquility, enabling individuals to lead more intentional and fulfilling lives.

Chapter 3 Research Model And Methodology

This chapter is based on the integration, update and abridgment of the following publication:

- Fu, L., Zhang, Z., & Nagai, Y. (2023). Minimalism and personal well-being: a study of current trends in China. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 1-21.

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter outlines the design of our research model, which is constructed in alignment with our research questions. To begin, we address the Main Research Question (MRQ): "What is the relationship between a minimalist lifestyle and overall personal well-being?" To explore this question thoroughly, it is imperative to formulate a research model that investigates the correlation between minimalism and the overall well-being of individuals.

Subsequently, we delve into the Subsidiary Research Question 1 (SRQ1): "How is the minimalist lifestyle defined and understood in developed and developing countries?" Within the research landscape, there is a notable dearth of scientific literature on minimalism in developing countries. As such, we have chosen China, a representative of developing nations, as our focal point for data collection and analysis. By scrutinizing the minimalistic tendencies of ordinary Chinese residents, we aim to discern disparities between their minimalist lifestyle and that prevalent in developed nations.

Moving forward, we explore Subsidiary Research Question 2 (SRQ2): "Does minimalism have an impact on an individual's overall well-being?" To address this query, we have opted for the structural equation model as our analytical tool. This model will enable us to quantitatively assess whether a relationship exists between a minimalist lifestyle and an individual's overall well-being, as well as determine the extent of this influence.

Finally, we investigate Subsidiary Research Question 3 (SRQ3): "What elements of minimalism play a role in affecting an individual's overall well-being?" This research question delves deeper into the underlying factors within the minimalist lifestyle that exert an influence on personal well-being. We endeavor to unravel both the specific elements and their degree of impact in our quest to comprehensively understand this relationship.

In light of our pursuit to address the aforementioned research inquiries, our research model takes shape as follows:

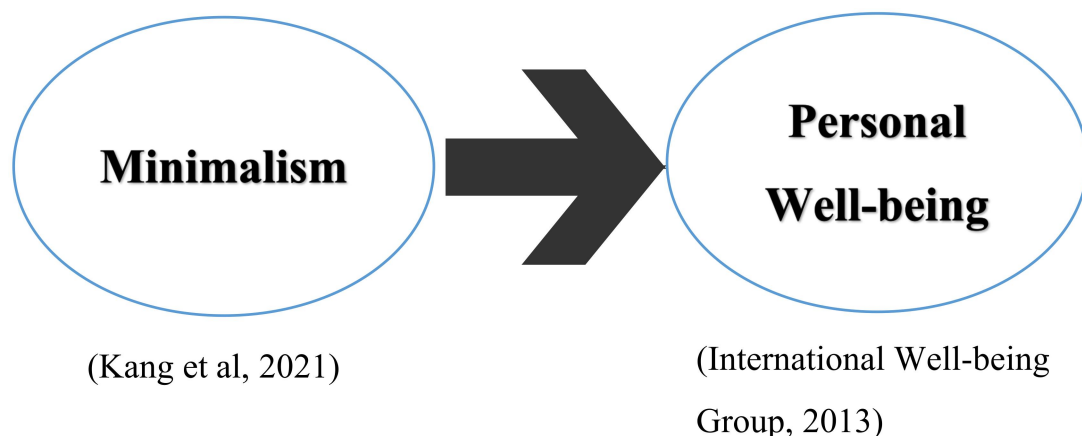


Figure 3.1 Research model about Minimalism and Personal Well-being

3.2 Research model and structured questionnaire

In our quest to construct a comprehensive research model, we meticulously selected the Minimalism Lifestyle Scale, developed by Kang et al. (2021), as our primary measurement tool. This scale has garnered recognition for its robustness and validity through previous applications in minimalist research within the United States. It effectively encapsulates the multifaceted nature of the minimalist lifestyle, comprising four distinct factors: Clutter Removal, Cautious Shopping, Longevity, and Self-sufficiency. Each factor covers various dimensions of minimalism, facilitating a thorough exploration of this lifestyle phenomenon.

Let's explain into each factor in greater detail:

Clutter Removal: This factor consists of three items specifically tailored to gauge participants' willingness and actions when it comes to decluttering and eliminating unnecessary possessions from their daily lives. It corresponds to the first category identified in our literature review, which pertains to the "Against accumulation and tidying element."

Cautious Shopping: Comprising four items, this factor probes into participants' capacity for restraint and rational decision-making in the context of shopping and consumption. It aligns with the second category in our literature review, representing "Minimalist consumption."

Longevity: The Longevity factor, comprised of three items, centers on participants' attention and behaviors concerning the lifespan and durability of products they use. This factor aligns seamlessly with the third subcategory,

emphasizing "Personal development and sustainable values." It underscores the idea that personal development involves considering the longevity of possessions and embracing sustainable values through the use of enduring items.

Self-sufficiency: The Self-sufficiency factor, encompassing three items, gauges participants' inclination and actions toward achieving self-sufficiency in both their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, it evaluates their commitment to resource recycling and environmental protection, in line with the principles of personal development and sustainable values. This factor captures the essence of reducing resource waste through self-sufficiency, aligning with the subcategory of "Personal development and sustainable values."

In summary, the factors of Longevity and Self-sufficiency are instrumental in quantitatively assessing the subcategory of "Personal development and sustainable values." They shed light on participants' behaviors and attitudes that reflect personal growth and a commitment to environmentally sustainable practices. By incorporating these factors into our research model, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of how minimalism impacts individuals across various dimensions of their lives.

This measurement scale is a comprehensive tool for assessing minimalist lifestyles and as show in the following:

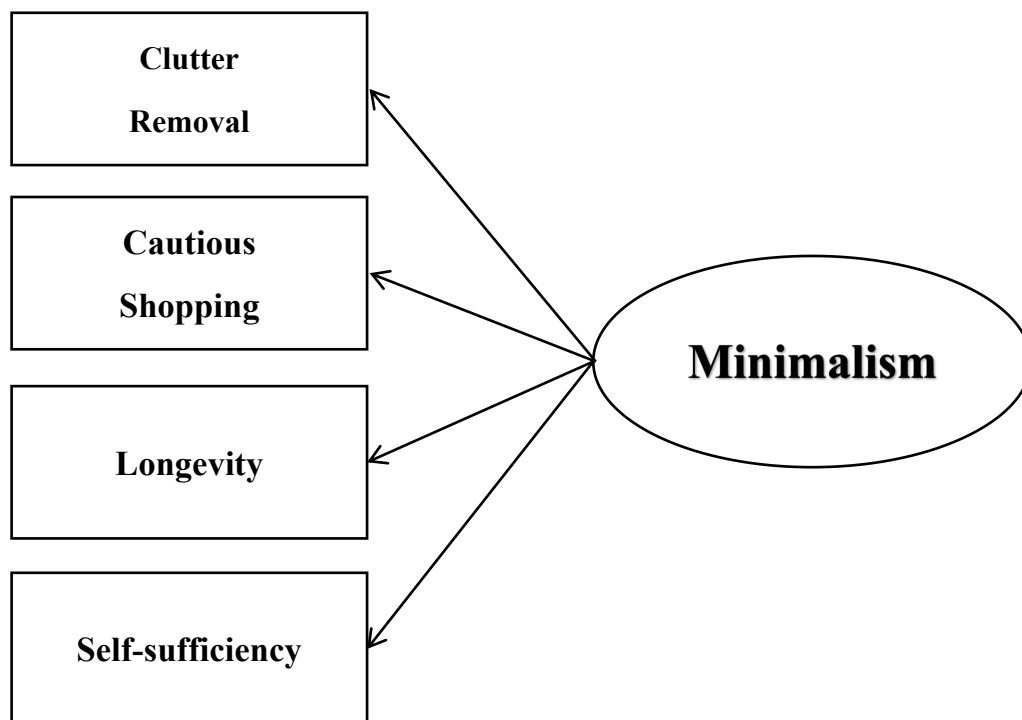


Figure 3.2 Minimalism Model (Kang et al., 2021)

Table 3.1 Minimalist lifestyle Scale items (Kang et al., 2021)

Minimalism items (Clutter Removal)	1. I try to avoid exterior clutter
	2. I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life
	3. I try to remove the clutter from my life
Minimalism items (Cautious Shopping)	4. I try to live a simple life and not buy unnecessary articles
	5. I do not do impulse buying
	6. When I shop, I decide to do so after seriously considering whether an article is necessary to me
	7. Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly
Minimalism items (Longevity)	8. I try to use articles I bought as long as possible
	9. I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used
	10. When I shop, seriously consider being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it
Minimalism items (Self-sufficiency)	11. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already
	12. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible
	13. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible

In our pursuit of a robust measurement tool for assessing individual well-being, we turned to the Personal Well-being Index (PWI), a widely recognized instrument developed and validated by the International Wellbeing Group in 2013. The PWI is renowned for its versatility, making it suitable for comprehensive evaluations within diverse research and policy contexts.

The PWI comprises seven essential items, each meticulously designed to gauge individuals' satisfaction across various dimensions of life. These dimensions encompass the critical aspects of well-being, including the standard of living, health, achievements in life, personal relationships, safety, community connectedness, and future security. Additionally, the PWI provides an optional item for participants to express their overall life satisfaction, ensuring a holistic assessment of subjective well-being.

One of the paramount strengths of the PWI lies in its robust psychometric properties. It boasts high internal consistency and test-retest reliability, affirming its ability to yield consistent and dependable results over time. Furthermore, the PWI has demonstrated its efficacy as a measure of subjective well-being in diverse cultural and demographic settings, retaining consistent factor structures and psychometric properties across these contexts.

Several noteworthy studies across different regions and populations have harnessed the power of the PWI to probe into the subjective well-being of various groups. For instance, Sayler et al. (2015) employed the PWI to explore the subjective well-being of gifted university students in the United States. In other studies, such as those conducted by Casas et al. (2014) in Algeria and Spain, and Gallardo-Peralta et al. (2019) with elderly individuals in Chile, the PWI served as a valuable tool for assessing subjective well-being.

In summary, the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) has firmly established itself as an effective and reliable measure of subjective well-being, enjoying widespread utilization across countries and populations worldwide. Its application extends to diverse age groups, making it a versatile resource for researchers and policymakers alike. By incorporating the PWI into our study, we aim to harness its well-established credibility to provide insights, inform intervention strategies, enhance the quality of life, and assess the well-being of individuals and populations within the unique context of our research. It is our contention that the PWI is ideally suited to fulfill the objectives of this study and contribute meaningfully to the policy discourse. Importantly, it should be noted that the questionnaire employed in our study was meticulously tailored to suit the specific nuances of our research objectives and context.

The items of the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) as been shown in the following:

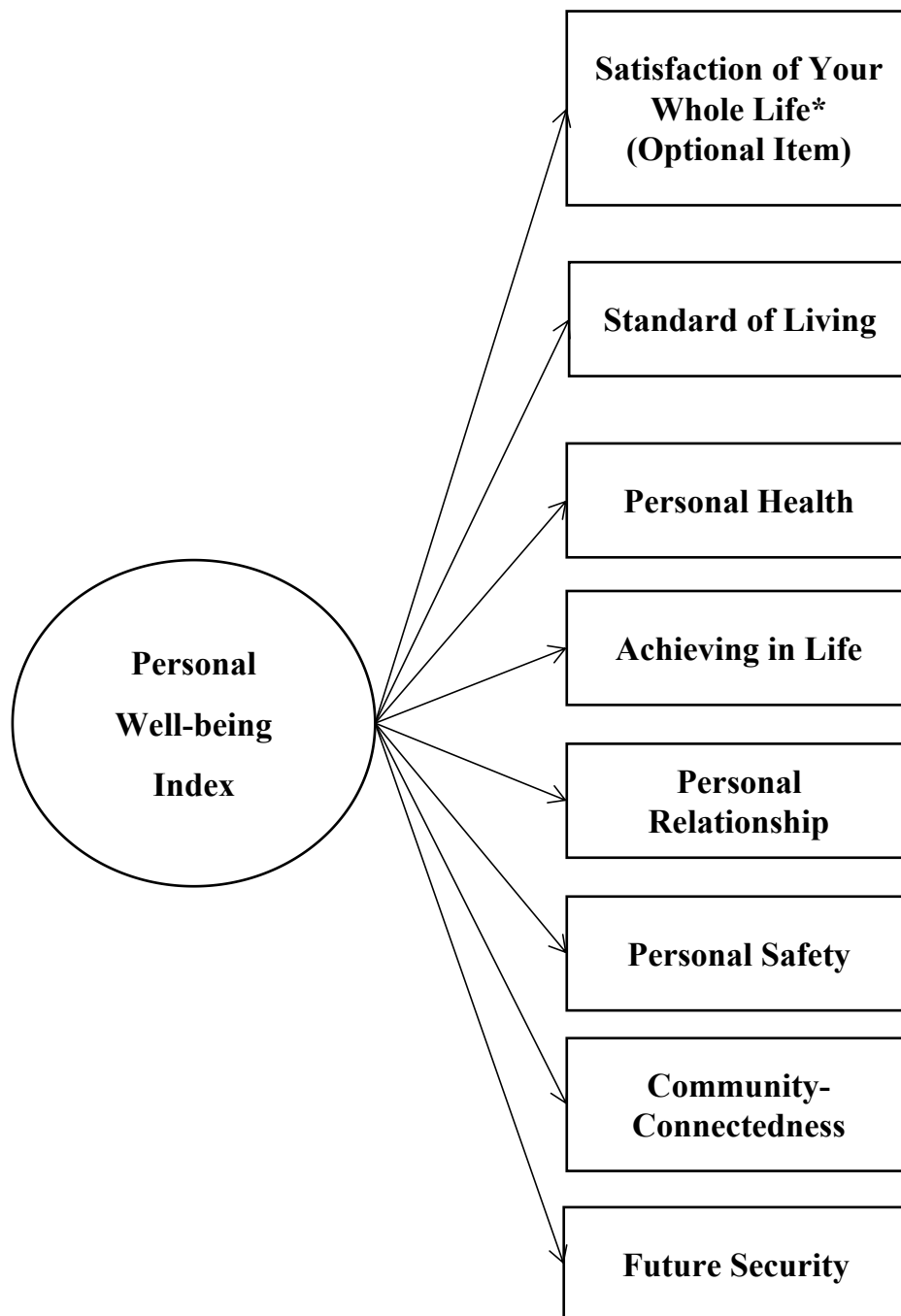


Figure 3.3 Personal Well-being index model
(International well-being group, 2013)

Table 3.2 Personal Well-being Index (Scale items)
(International Well-being Group, 2013)

Personal Well-being Index	1. Thinking about your life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?
	2. How satisfied are you with your standard of living?
	3. How satisfied are you with your health?
	4. How satisfied are you with what you are achieving in life?
	5. How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?
	6. How satisfied are you with how safe you feel?
	7. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?
	8. How satisfied are you with your future security?

Based on the above two scales of minimalism and personal well-being, we establish the following complete research model to describe the association between minimalism and PWI.

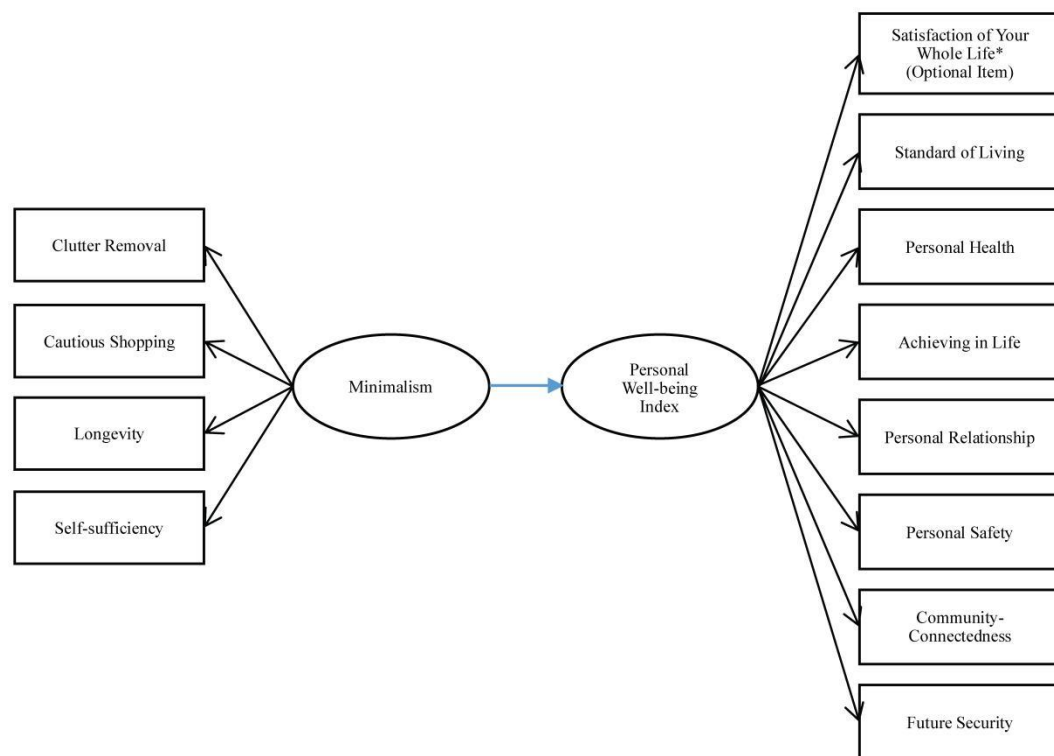


Figure 3.4 Research model of the association between minimalism and PWI.

The final and complete structured questionnaire items are introduced here, starting with demographic information of the general population, including variables such as gender, age, education level, income and occupation. Furthermore, our study sought to delve deeper into the intricate relationship between a minimalist lifestyle and personal well-being. To achieve this, we meticulously crafted a research model, as visually depicted in Figure 3.4. The primary objectives of this model were to elucidate the connection between adopting a minimalist lifestyle and an individual's overall sense of well-being, pinpoint the specific aspects of minimalism that positively influence human well-being, and delve into the underlying mechanisms that drive this relationship.

For the assessment of individuals' minimalist lifestyles, we relied on the Minimalist Lifestyle Scale, a meticulously developed instrument by Kang et al. (2021). This scale has proven its efficacy in measuring and analyzing the extent to which individuals embrace minimalist practices in their lives. By utilizing this scale, we gained valuable insights into the diverse facets of minimalism, ranging from decluttering behaviors to sustainable consumption practices.

Complementing our exploration of minimalist lifestyles, we turned to the Personal Well-being Index (PWI) as our instrument of choice for assessing personal happiness and overall well-being. The PWI is widely regarded as a gold standard in subjective well-being measurement, and its extensive usage in previous research attests to its reliability and validity. This index allows for the comprehensive evaluation of an individual's satisfaction across multiple domains of life, encompassing areas such as the standard of living, health, personal achievements, relationships, safety, community connectedness, and future security. Additionally, the PWI provides an optional item for participants to express their overall life satisfaction, providing a holistic view of their well-being.

By meticulously collecting demographic data and employing these well-established measurement tools, our study aspired to unravel the intricate tapestry of minimalism's impact on personal well-being. This methodological approach enables us to not only quantify the relationship between minimalism and well-being but also to explore the nuanced dimensions of minimalism that contribute positively to the quality of individuals' lives. Ultimately, our research strives to uncover the mechanisms that underlie the connection between minimalism and well-being, shedding light on the pathways through which embracing simplicity can enhance the human experience.

Table 3.3 Questionnaire Items

Question Items	
Demographics items	1. Your gender
	2. Your age
	3. Your employment
	4. Your highest level of education
	5. Your monthly income
	6. Your occupation type
PWI scale items	7. Thinking about your life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?
	8. How satisfied are you with your standard of living?
	9. How satisfied are you with your health?
	10. How satisfied are you with what you are achieving in life?
	11. How satisfied are your with your personal relationships?
	12. How satisfied are your with how safe you feel?
	13. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?
	14. How satisfied are you with your future security?
	15. I try to avoid exterior clutter
	16. I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life
Minimalism items (Clutter Removal)	17. I try to remove the clutter from my life
Minimalism items	18. I try to live a simple life and not buy unnecessary

(Cautious Shopping)	articles
	19. I do not do impulse buying
	20. When I shop, I decide to do so after seriously considering whether an article is necessary to me
	21. Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly
Minimalism items (Longevity)	22. I try to use articles I bought as long as possible
	23. I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used
	24. When I shop, seriously consider being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it
Minimalism items (Self-sufficiency)	25. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already
	26. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible
	27. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible

Chapter 4 Data Collection

4.1 The locations where data were collected from

In recent times, minimalist lifestyles have garnered escalating attention within China, particularly in the dynamic urban landscapes inhabited by the youth. This emergent trend finds its roots in the rapid tempo of contemporary city life and the pervasive ethos of consumerism, propelling numerous individuals to explore avenues for simplifying existence and mitigating stressors (Yang, 2022). Emblematic of this cultural shift, Shenzhen, a distinguished Chinese metropolis characterized by its economic affluence, brisk work pace, and multifaceted challenges faced by its inhabitants, has adeptly embraced this paradigm. As an immigrant hub exuding cultural diversity and inclusiveness, Shenzhen provides fertile soil for the cultivation and flourishing of minimalist lifestyles. Within this milieu, minimalism has gained substantial traction as an avenue through which individuals unburden themselves of both material and spiritual encumbrances, thereby privileging the cultivation of inner tranquility and the enhancement of life quality.

Shenzhen is known as the first immigrant city in China, the whole city has more than 10 million people, more than 8 million are immigrants from other places. In other words, locals only account for about 20% of Shenzhen's total population, and the rest are immigrants from other provinces. According to the statistics of 21 Data News Lab, in the past 40 years, Shenzhen's permanent population has increased from 314,100 to 13,438,800, an increase of 42 times. In the same period, the population growth in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou was between 1-2.5 times (Liang, 2020). Shenzhen, a typical immigrant city, is

highly inclusive and has a very high proportion of migrants. According to data released by the Shenzhen Bureau of Statistics, in 2019, Shenzhen had a permanent population of 13.4388 million, of which 8.491 million were non-registered, accounting for more than 63% (Liang, 2020).



Figure 4.1 The top 10 Provinces where population inflows to Shenzhen, China 2020 & The top 20 cities where population inflows to Shenzhen, China (Liang, 2020)

Building upon the rich tapestry of diversity and inclusiveness that defines the population of Shenzhen, coupled with the city's remarkable penchant for embracing novelty and its brisk pace of life, we embark on a pivotal journey. Shenzhen, often regarded as a pioneering metropolis at the forefront of China's rapid urban development, presents an ideal backdrop for our pioneering exploration into the realm of minimalist living conditions within the Chinese context. Our decision to initiate our study in Shenzhen is driven not only by its vibrant diversity but also by the city's reputation for leading the charge in embracing contemporary lifestyles. The fast-paced rhythm of life that characterizes Shenzhen mirrors the broader societal shifts occurring in China and beyond. This fast pace of life underscores the urgency of understanding how minimalism, with its emphasis on simplicity and purposeful living, fits into the lives of individuals in this bustling city. In essence, Shenzhen serves as the ideal starting point for our exploration into minimalist living conditions in China. It provides a dynamic, multifaceted, and forward-thinking backdrop against which we can observe how minimalism unfolds, adapts, and influences individuals' life.

4.2 How to collected the data

To ensure the impartiality, comprehensiveness, and representativeness of our data collection process, we opted to collaborate with data companies. In this study, we partnered with one of China's most renowned data collection firms, WENJUANXING. WENJUANXING boasts a remarkable track record, having served over 3 million enterprises and garnered the trust of 90% of domestic universities. It stands as the preferred online questionnaire survey platform for well-established brands across various industries, including industry giants like Huawei, Sony, and Volvo, as well as esteemed educational institutions such as Tongji University and Fudan University.

With a staggering daily participation rate exceeding 10 million users and a cumulative monthly reach of nearly 300 million users (as per their official website, <https://www.wjx.cn>), the platform operated by WENJUANXING, emerges as a reputable and dependable resource. Its extensive user base and widespread recognition make it an ideal choice for ensuring the robustness and effectiveness of our sample collection services for this research endeavor.



Figure 4.2 WENJUANXING website:<https://www.wjx.cn>

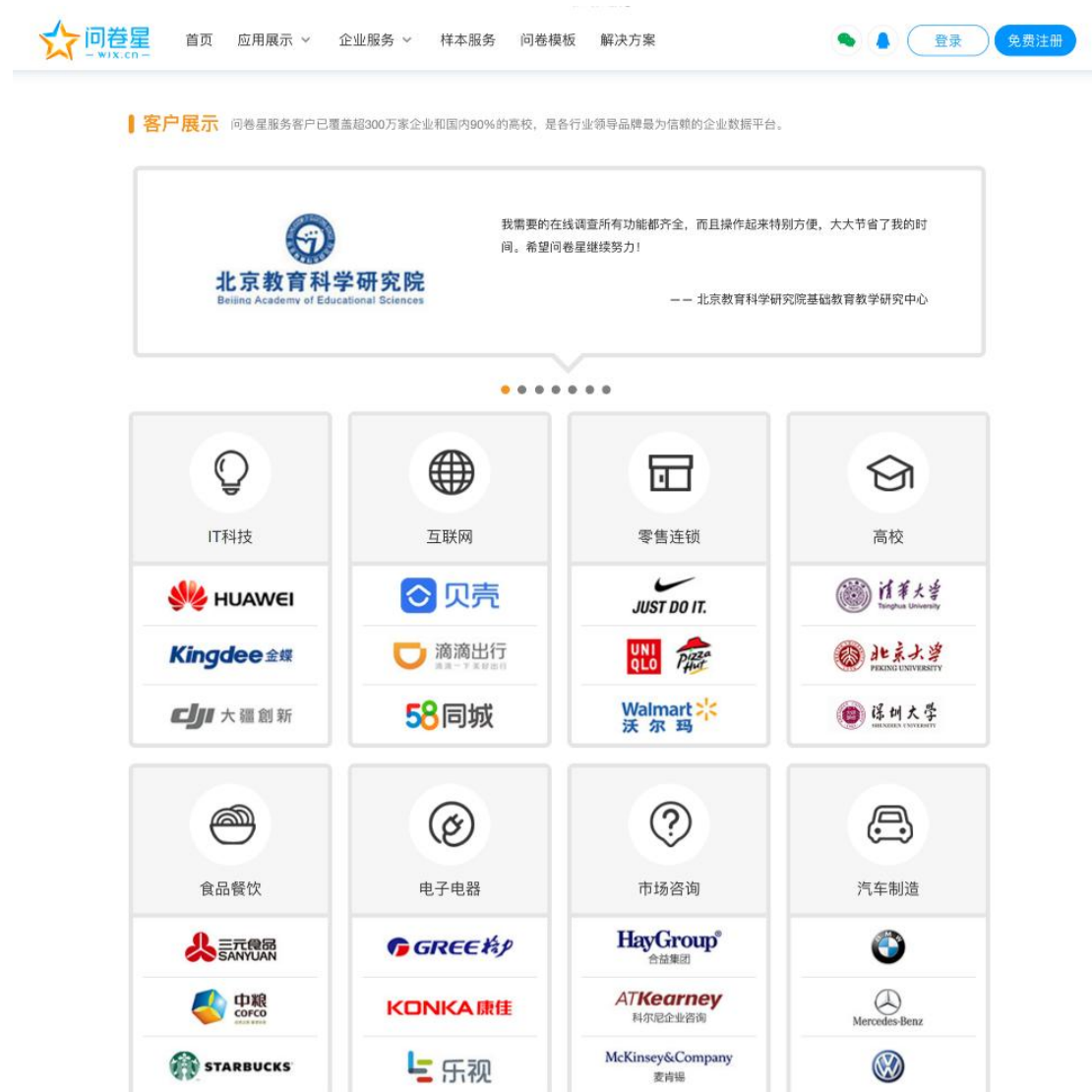


Figure 4.3 WENJUANXING Cooperative customers

Wenjuanxing Company was entrusted with the execution of the questionnaire survey the questionnaire items as shown in Table 3.3. Operationalizing the study's objectives, Wenjuanxing systematically extended online invitations to Shenzhen residents, facilitating their involvement in the survey. The data collection yielded a total of 622 questionnaires, with 97 deemed invalid or incomplete. The remaining corpus of 525 represented valid samples, comprising 323 female and 202 male participants. A judicious distribution

across diverse age brackets ensured comprehensive representation, with the 25–34 age group emerging as the most prolific contributors, accounting for a substantial 220 questionnaires. The ambit of analysis centered on this cohort of participants ($n = 525$), each of whom proactively endorsed an online informed consent form, thereby endorsing their willingness to participate and support the research. Notably, the data provisioning entity, WenJuanxing, also entered into informed consent agreements with the participants, further fortifying the ethical foundations of this study.

The overall reliability and validity of the questionnaire were analyzed. The standardized Cronbach's α coefficient was calculated to be 0.855, which exceeded the threshold of 0.8, indicating the high reliability of the research data. Furthermore, the Kaiser—Meyer— Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.891, which is above the recommended threshold of 0.8, indicating excellent suitability for information extraction (thereby also indicating good validity). These results demonstrated the high overall reliability and good validity of the questionnaire and research data. The following two tables are the results regarding the reliability and Validity of the questionnaire.(shows in table 4.1 and table 4.2)

Table 4.1 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha Reliability Analysis			
Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
7. Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances , how satisfied are you with your life as a whole ?	0.611	0.841	0.855
8.How satisfied are you with your standard of living?	0.632	0.840	
9.(How satisfied are your with your health?	0.552	0.844	
10. How satisfied are you with what your are achieving in life?	0.656	0.838	
11. How satisfied are your with your personal relationships?	0.643	0.839	
12. How satisfied are your with how safe you feel?	0.636	0.840	
13. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?	0.594	0.842	
14. How satisfied are you with your future security?	0.606	0.842	
15.I try to avoid exterior clutter.	0.239	0.855	
16.I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life.	0.252	0.855	
17.I try to remove the clutter from my life.	0.255	0.855	
18.I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary.	0.318	0.853	
19.I do not do impulse buying.	0.304	0.853	
20.When I shop , I decide to do so after serious consideration of whether an article is necessary to me or not.	0.357	0.852	
21.Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly.	0.427	0.850	
22. I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible.	0.237	0.855	
23.I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used.	0.202	0.856	

Cronbach's alpha Reliability Analysis			
Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
24.When I shop , I take a serious view of being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it.	0.267	0.854	
25. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already.	0.379	0.851	
26. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible.	0.406	0.851	
27.In the future , I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible.	0.146	0.857	

Table 4.2 Validity Analysis
Validity

Items	Factor loading				Communality
	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	
7. Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole ?	0.794	-0.041	0.105	-0.050	0.646
8.How satisfied are you with your standard of living?	0.795	-0.007	0.156	-0.066	0.660
9.How satisfied are your with your health?	0.683	0.147	-0.092	0.106	0.508
10. How satisfied are you with what your are achieving in life?	0.847	0.021	0.031	-0.042	0.721
11. How satisfied are your with your personal relationships?	0.802	0.007	-0.008	0.129	0.659
12. How satisfied are your with how safe you feel?	0.773	0.099	-0.010	0.095	0.617
13. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?	0.688	0.064	0.006	0.253	0.542
14. How satisfied are you with your future security?	0.780	0.016	0.021	0.043	0.612
15.I try to avoid exterior clutter.	0.109	-0.031	0.134	0.727	0.559
16.I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life.	0.066	0.269	0.045	0.623	0.466
17.I try to remove the clutter from my life.	0.056	0.204	0.198	0.573	0.412
18.I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary.	0.015	0.685	0.154	0.329	0.602
19.I do not do impulse buying.	0.002	0.841	0.166	0.065	0.739
20.When I shop, I decide to do so after serious consideration of whether an article is necessary to me or not	0.070	0.746	0.214	0.111	0.620
21.Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly.	0.156	0.754	0.255	0.058	0.661
22.I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible.	0.003	0.047	0.705	0.224	0.550
23.I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used.	-0.040	0.289	0.652	-0.049	0.513

Validity

Items	Factor loading				Communality
	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	
24. When I shop, I take a serious view of being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it.)	-0.026	0.400	0.570	0.111	0.498
25. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already.)	0.347	0.154	0.399	-0.116	0.317
26. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible.)	0.189	0.289	0.571	0.125	0.461
27. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible.)	-0.036	0.043	0.549	0.148	0.327
Eigen value(Unrotated)	5.512	3.751	1.241	1.186	-
% of Variance(Unrotated)	26.247%	17.862%	5.909%	5.645%	-
Cumulative % of Variance(Unrotated)	26.247%	44.110%	50.018%	55.664%	-
Eigen value(Rotated)	4.978	2.810	2.302	1.599	-
% of Variance(Rotated)	23.705%	13.382%	10.963%	7.614%	-
Cumulative % of Variance(Rotated)	23.705%	37.087%	48.050%	55.664%	-
KMO	0.891				-
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	4151.672				-
df	210				-
p value	0.000				-

Note: If the numbers in the table have color, the blue indicates that the absolute value of the load coefficient is greater than 0.4, and the red indicates that the common degree (common factor variance) is less than 0.4.

4.3 Measures methods

The study employed IBM SPSS data analysis software to analyze the sample data from Chinese general residents. In particular, descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the sociodemographic characteristics of the Chinese resident sample. Additionally, descriptive analyses were conducted for both minimalist lifestyle and personal well-being index (PWI) variables. Data were collected using questionnaires, which comprised 27 items, including six demographic questions, eight questions from the PWI scale, and 13 questions from the Minimalist Lifestyle Scale. The composition of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3 Questionnaire items

Question Items	
Demographics items	28. Your gender
	29. Your age
	30. Your employment
	31. Your highest level of education
	32. Your monthly income
	33. Your occupation type
PWI scale items	34. Thinking about your life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?
	35. How satisfied are you with your standard of living?
	36. How satisfied are you with your health?
	37. How satisfied are you with what you are achieving in life?
	38. How satisfied are your with your personal relationships?
	39. How satisfied are your with how safe you feel?
	40. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?
	41. How satisfied are you with your future security?
	42. I try to avoid exterior clutter
	43. I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life
Minimalism items (Clutter Removal)	44. I try to remove the clutter from my life
Minimalism items	45. I try to live a simple life and not buy unnecessary

(Cautious Shopping)	articles
	46. I do not do impulse buying
	47. When I shop, I decide to do so after seriously considering whether an article is necessary to me
	48. Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly
Minimalism items (Longevity)	49. I try to use articles I bought as long as possible
	50. I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used
	51. When I shop, seriously consider being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it
Minimalism items (Self-sufficiency)	52. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already
	53. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible
	54. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible

Demographic statistics

Wenjuanxing collected 622 samples, of which 97 were deemed invalid or contained missing data, resulting in a final sample size of 525. The participants' characteristics are listed in Table 4.4. It can be known that nearly 60% of the 525 population data collected this time are female and nearly 40% are male. Among them, 220 people aged 25-34 accounted for 41.9% of the total number, 130 people aged 18-24 accounted for 24.76%, and 152 people aged 35-44 accounted for 28.95%. In terms of educational level, 363 students have bachelor's degree, accounting for 69.1%. The number of people with monthly income of 5000-8000rmb was 157, accounting for 29.9%, and the number of people with monthly income of 8000-11000rmb was 148, accounting for 28.19%. These two income stages accounted for the highest proportion of 58.09% of the total data. 459 people were employed, accounting for 87.43% of full-time employment; In terms of occupation types, 156 people engaged in professional and technical personnel accounted for 30.29%, and 103 people engaged in clerical and associated personnel accounted for 19.62%.

Table 4.4 Demographic of valid respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	202	38.48%
Female	323	61.52%
Age (years)		
18–24	130	24.76%
25–34	220	41.9%
35–44	152	28.95%
45–54	19	3.62%
55–64	4	0.76%
>65	0	0%
Highest level of education		
Less than high school	39	7.43%
College degree	85	16.19%
Bachelor's degree	363	69.14%
Graduate degree	38	7.24%
Doctoral degree	0	0%
Monthly income (RMB)		
Less than 5,000	81	15.43%
5,000–8,000	157	29.9%
8,000–11,000	148	28.19%
11,000–15,000	89	16.95%
≥15,000	50	9.52%
Employment		
Employed or Self-employed full-time	459	87.43%
Employed or self-employed part-time	57	10.86%
Unemployed	8	1.52%
Retired or not working	1	0.19%
Your occupation type		
Persons in charge of Party organs, state organs, mass organizations and social organizations, enterprises and public institutions	33	6.29%
Professional and technical personnel	159	30.29%
Clerical and associated personnel	103	19.62%
Social production service and life service personnel	85	16.19%
Agricultural, forestry, animal husbandry,	4	0.76%

fishery production and supporting personnel		
Manufacturing and related personnel	83	15.81%
Inconvenient classification of other practitioners	58	11.05%

Structural Equation Modeling

The selection of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the analytical method for this study is underpinned by several compelling reasons and the inherent strengths it offers.

First and foremost, SEM is an ideal choice when dealing with complex and multidimensional research questions. Unlike traditional statistical methods, SEM allows for the simultaneous examination of relationships among multiple variables, both observed and latent, within a unified framework (Fan et al., 2016). This capability is invaluable when attempting to model intricate causal networks and understand the underlying structures governing phenomena, such as those encountered in social sciences, psychology, and business research (Kline, 2016).

Moreover, SEM facilitates the assessment of measurement error and enables the differentiation between measurement and structural models. This separation provides a clear advantage in enhancing the accuracy and validity of the results, as it helps in identifying and rectifying measurement inaccuracies and ensuring that the latent constructs under investigation are appropriately represented.

Furthermore, SEM permits the incorporation of latent variables, which are unobservable constructs that play a crucial role in many research contexts. By considering latent variables, SEM can uncover hidden patterns, relationships, and underlying mechanisms that would otherwise remain obscured in traditional statistical approaches.

Another notable advantage of SEM is its ability to assess both direct and indirect effects, allowing researchers to explore the complex interplay of variables and the mediation or moderation effects within a single analytical framework. This comprehensive approach enhances the depth and breadth of insights generated from the data.

In summary, Structural Equation Modeling is chosen for this study due to its unique ability to address complex, multidimensional research questions, its capacity to handle latent variables, its potential to disentangle measurement and structural models, and its capability to examine direct and indirect effects simultaneously. These advantages make SEM a powerful and versatile tool for researchers seeking a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and relationships

This study examined the association between minimalism and subjective personal well-being using SEM. However, SEM requires high-quality data, a sufficient sample size, and appropriate measurements and causal relationships. As such, poor data quality may result in inadequate fit or insufficient model indices. Therefore, this study first conducted a factor analysis to ensure a high-quality fit regarding SEM. Subsequently, SEM was used to analyze the data. AMOS software, which is commonly used for SEM analysis because of its user-friendly interface, reliability, and validity was employed to conduct the data analysis.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis

To commence our exploration, we first aim to tackle the overarching research question (MRQ): What precisely is the connection between embracing a minimalist lifestyle and one's holistic personal well-being? Simultaneously, we delve into the specific sub-research question (SRQ1): How is the concept of a minimalist lifestyle both defined and comprehended in regions ranging from developed to developing countries? For a closer examination of the minimalist lifestyle within the context of a developing nation, specifically in the Chinese context, this chapter conducts an in-depth analysis of the minimalist questionnaire's items.

5.1 Factor Analysis

The Minimalism Lifestyle Scale comprises four factors: Clutter Removal, Cautious Shopping, Longevity, and Self-sufficiency. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to confirm the validity and reliability and establish whether the data conformed to these four factors (Kang et al., 2021).

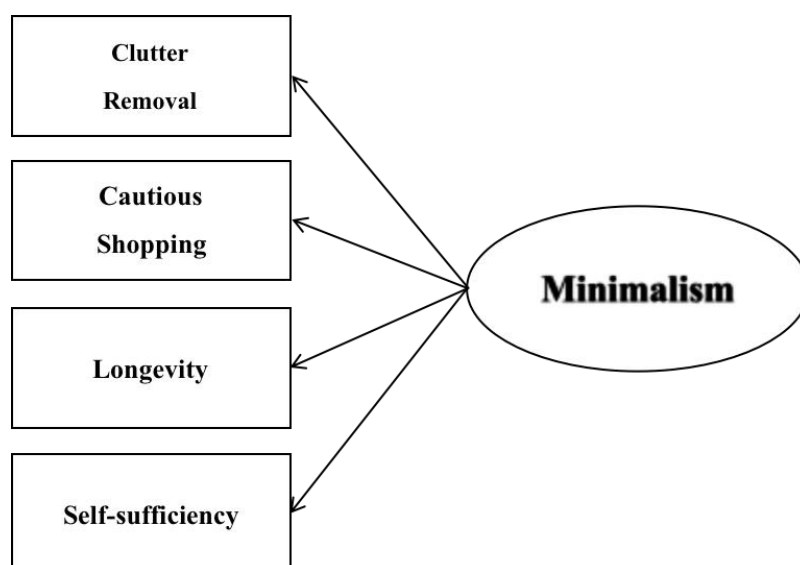


Figure 5.1 Four Factors in Minimalism (Kang et al., 2021)

As presented in Table 5.1, the KMO measure of minimalism was 0.875, which is significantly higher than the minimum requirement of 0.6 for factor analysis, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.05$) confirmed the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Table 5.1 KMO value

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
KMO		0.875
	Approx. Chi-Square	1655.678
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	78
	Sig.	0.000

Note: KMO stands for Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin, a measure used in statistical analysis to assess the suitability of data for factor analysis. The KMO test examines the degree of variance among variables and determines whether they are appropriate for performing factor analysis.

Subsequently, a factor analysis was performed on the data. As presented in Table 5.2, three factors were extracted, and item 25 was removed because its factor loading was below 0.5. Items 15, 16, and 17 constitute the Clutter Removal factor, whereas items 18, 19, 20, and 21 belong to the Cautious Shopping factor. Items 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27 were grouped into one factor. According to the Minimalism Lifestyle Scale, items 22, 23, and 24 belong to the longevity factor, whereas items 25, 26, and 27 belong to the self-sufficiency factor.

However, in this factor analysis, items 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27 were grouped into one factor. This factor needed to be renamed, and through analysis, it was determined that items 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27 discussed the durability and recyclability of objects. First, we gave an overview of the longevity factor, which reflects individuals' tendencies to prioritize the long-term utilization of purchased items.

Specifically, individuals are inclined to persist in using old, functional items as long as possible and perceive longevity as crucial when engaging in shopping activities. Second, we have provided a summary of the self-sufficiency factor, which mainly expressed people's focus on longevity and practicality when shopping, aiming to be self-sufficient with existing possessions and hoping to maintain a self-sufficient lifestyle in the future. These two factors led to the conclusion of a new factor referred to as 'high-cycle life,' which considers the recyclability, durability, and long life of items during purchase and use. Finally, this factor was renamed the 'high-cycle life factor.'

Table 5.2 Factor analyses result

Factor loading (Rotated)				
Items	Factor loading			Communality
	Factor	Factor	Factor	
	1	2	3	
15. I try to avoid exterior clutter	-0.032	0.113	0.749	0.575
16. I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to my life's chief purpose	0.264	0.014	0.677	0.528
17. I try to remove the clutter from my life	0.177	0.211	0.584	0.417
18. I try to live a simple life and not buy unnecessary articles	0.673	0.163	0.341	0.597
19. I do not do impulse buying	0.842	0.176	0.073	0.744
20. When I shop, I decide to do so after seriously considering whether an article is necessary to me	0.748	0.227	0.123	0.626
21. Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly	0.759	0.276	0.084	0.659
22. I try to use articles I bought as long as possible	0.038	0.689	0.219	0.524
23. I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used	0.266	0.66	-0.044	0.509
24. When I shop, I seriously consider being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it	0.382	0.57	0.119	0.485

25. I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already	0.158	0.392	0.029	0.179
26. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible	0.261	0.627	0.126	0.477
27. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible	0.029	0.558	0.11	0.324

Note: If the numbers in the table have color, the blue indicates that the absolute value of the load coefficient is greater than 0.5, and the red indicates that the common degree (common factor variance) is less than 0.5.

In summary, the factor analysis results show that a minimalist lifestyle in Chinese context can be categorized into three factors: Clutter Removal, Cautious Shopping, and a high-cycle life (including longevity and self-sufficiency).

According to the above analysis, we have a new understanding of the situation of minimalism in the Chinese context. It contains three factors and the items of the questionnaire have also been slightly adjusted (shown in the table 5.3).

5.2 Minimalism Factors in Chinese context

Table 5.3 Minimalism Factors in Chinese context

Minimalism	Clutter Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I try to avoid exterior clutter ● I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to my life's chief purpose ● I try to remove the clutter from my life
	Cautious Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I try to live a simple life and not buy unnecessary articles ● I do not do impulse buying ● When I shop, I decide to do so after seriously considering whether an article is necessary to me ● Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly
	High-cycle life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I try to use articles I bought as long as possible ● I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used ● When I shop, I seriously consider being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it ● It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible ● In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible

To delve deeper into the choices made by ordinary Chinese residents regarding minimalist preferences, as illustrated in Table 5.4, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive analysis. Within the clutter removal factor, as indicated by Q15 ("I try to avoid exterior clutter"), the combination of "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses comprised over 80% of the data sample of Chinese residents. Similarly, in Q16 ("I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life"), "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses exceeded 70% of the sample. Q17 ("I try to remove the clutter from my life") revealed that the choices of "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" constituted 86% of the

sample.

Turning to the cautious shopping factors: In Q18 ("I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary"), "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses accounted for 70% of the sample. In Q19 ("I do not do impulse buying"), the selection of "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses surpassed 60% of the sample. Q20 ("When I shop, I decide to do so after serious consideration of whether an article is necessary to me or not") demonstrated that "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses were present in more than 70% of the samples. Additionally, in Q21 ("Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly"), the sample indicated over 60% agreement with the "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly Agree" options.

Concerning the High-cycle life factors: Q22 ("I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible") showed that "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses accounted for more than 80% of the sample. In Q23 ("I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used"), "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses comprised more than 70% of the sample. Q24 ("When I shop, I take a serious view of being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it") revealed that "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses were present in over 70% of the sample. Furthermore, in Q26 ("It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible"), "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses reached 68% in the sample. Finally, in Q27 ("In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible"), "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree" responses accounted for more than 80% of the sample.

From the responses of ordinary Chinese residents to the minimalist lifestyle questionnaire, it is evident that nearly 70% of the participants in this dataset consider themselves minimalists. Regarding minimalist behavior, over 70% of

the total dataset selected "4 Agree" and "5 Strongly agree." In terms of clutter removal factors, participants prioritize maintaining a clean and tidy environment. Regarding cautious shopping factors, more than 60% of participants avoid impulsive purchases. In high-cycle life factors, over 70% of participants opt for durable products and long-term use.

Table 5.4 Frequency of Minimalism result

Frequency result				
Items	Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	cumulative percentage(%)
15.I try to avoid exterior clutter.	1 (Strongly disagree)	5	0.95	0.95
	2 (Disagree)	8	1.52	2.48
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	50	9.52	12.00
	4 (Agree)	<u>401</u>	<u>76.38</u>	88.38
	5 (Strongly agree)	61	11.62	100.00
16.I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life.	1 (Strongly disagree)	9	1.71	1.71
	2 (Disagree)	32	6.10	7.81
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	98	18.67	26.48
	4 (Agree)	<u>299</u>	<u>56.95</u>	83.43
	5 (Strongly agree)	87	16.57	100.00
17.I try to remove the clutter from my life.	1 (Strongly disagree)	3	0.57	0.57
	2 (Disagree)	17	3.24	3.81
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	55	10.48	14.29
	4 (Agree)	<u>326</u>	<u>62.10</u>	76.38
	5 (Strongly agree)	124	23.62	100.00
18.I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary.	1 (Strongly disagree)	7	1.33	1.33
	2 (Disagree)	61	11.62	12.95
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	92	17.52	30.48
	4 (Agree)	<u>268</u>	<u>51.05</u>	81.52
	5 (Strongly agree)	97	18.48	100.00
19.I do not do impulse buying.	1 (Strongly disagree)	16	3.05	3.05
	2 (Disagree)	77	14.67	17.71
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	112	21.33	39.05
	4 (Agree)	<u>227</u>	<u>43.24</u>	82.29
	5 (Strongly agree)	93	17.71	100.00
20.When I shop, I	1 (Strongly disagree)	4	0.76	0.76

Frequency result

Items	Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	cumulative percentage(%)
decide to do so after serious consideration of whether an article is necessary to me or not.)	2 (Disagree)	43	8.19	8.95
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	90	17.14	26.10
	4 (Agree)	<u>280</u>	<u>53.33</u>	79.43
	5 (Strongly agree)	108	20.57	100.00
21. Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly.	1 (Strongly disagree)	16	3.05	3.05
	2 (Disagree)	82	15.62	18.67
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	100	19.05	37.71
	4 (Agree)	<u>233</u>	<u>44.38</u>	82.10
	5 (Strongly agree)	94	17.90	100.00
22. I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible.	1 (Strongly disagree)	3	0.57	0.57
	2 (Disagree)	17	3.24	3.81
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	57	10.86	14.67
	4 (Agree)	<u>288</u>	<u>54.86</u>	69.52
	5 (Strongly agree)	160	30.48	100.00
23. I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used.	1 (Strongly disagree)	6	1.14	1.14
	2 (Disagree)	48	9.14	10.29
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	90	17.14	27.43
	4 (Agree)	<u>261</u>	<u>49.71</u>	77.14
	5 (Strongly agree)	120	22.86	100.00
24. When I shop, I take a serious view of being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it.	1 (Strongly disagree)	4	0.76	0.76
	2 (Disagree)	49	9.33	10.10
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	99	18.86	28.95
	4 (Agree)	<u>269</u>	<u>51.24</u>	80.19
	5 (Strongly agree)	104	19.81	100.00
26. It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible.	1 (Strongly disagree)	5	0.95	0.95
	2 (Disagree)	37	7.05	8.00
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	126	24.00	32.00
	4 (Agree)	<u>273</u>	<u>52.00</u>	84.00
	5 (Strongly agree)	84	16.00	100.00
27. In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as much as possible.	1 (Strongly disagree)	7	1.33	1.33
	2 (Disagree)	36	6.86	8.19
	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	50	9.52	17.71
	4 (Agree)	<u>259</u>	<u>49.33</u>	67.05
	5 (Strongly agree)	173	32.95	100.00
Total		525	100.0	100.0

Frequency result

Items	Options	Frequency	Percent (%)	cumulative percentage(%)
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Note: If the numbers in the table have color, the blue indicates that The choice most chosen by participants for each question. Those with more than 50% will be underlined.

5.3 Personal well-being index in Chinese context

Table 5.6 Descriptive of PWI data

Descriptive of PWI

Items	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.	Median
7.Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances , how satisfied are you with your life as a whole ?	525	1.000	10.000	6.383	1.558	7.000
8.How satisfied are you with your standard of living?	525	1.000	10.000	6.949	1.705	7.000
9.How satisfied are your with your health?	525	1.000	10.000	8.484	2.115	9.000
10. How satisfied are you with what your are achieving in life?	525	1.000	10.000	7.669	1.854	8.000
11.How satisfied are your with your personal relationships?	525	1.000	10.000	8.425	2.113	9.000
12. How satisfied are your with how safe you feel?	525	1.000	10.000	8.070	2.421	9.000
13.How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?	525	1.000	10.000	8.402	2.321	9.000
14. How satisfied are you with your future security?	525	1.000	10.000	7.749	2.257	8.000

Descriptive analysis provides an overall insight into the data using measures such as the mean or median. From the table above, we can observe that in this data set consisting of responses from ordinary Chinese residents, the level of satisfaction was rated on a scale from 1 to 10 in questions related to personal well-being.

In total, there are 8 questions, and the average response from 525 participants exceeds 6 points. Specifically, the average satisfaction score for health status (Question 9) is 8.48, while personal relationship satisfaction (Question 11) averages 8.42, and community relationship satisfaction (Question 13) stands at 8.40. These three aspects show the highest levels of satisfaction. It can be seen that with the development of economy, Chinese residents in this sample data generally believe that their life satisfaction is above average.

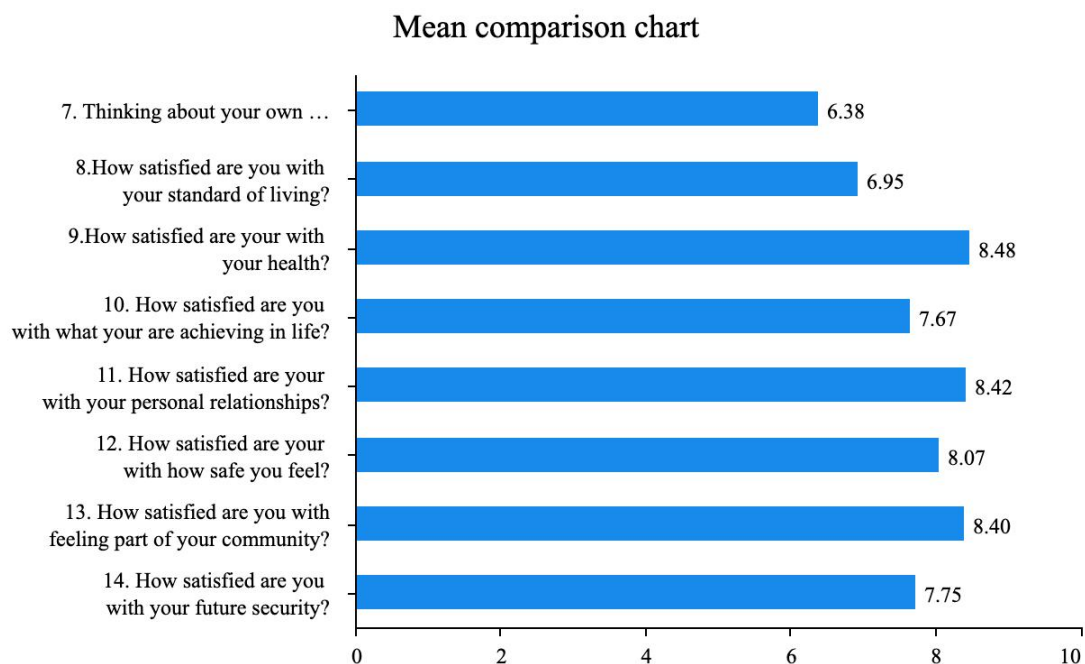


Figure 5.2 Mean Comparison Chart of Personal well-being

5.4 The associaion between minimalism and PWI

In addressing the research question, MRQ (Main Research Question): "What is the relationship between adopting a minimalist lifestyle and one's overall personal well-being?"

As well as the Subsidiary Research Questions:

SRQ2: "Does minimalism influence an individual's overall well-being?"

SRQ3: "Which specific aspects of minimalism contribute to an individual's overall well-being?"

This study employs structural equation modeling to scrutinize and understand the intricate connections between minimalism and personal well-being. The SEM result is shown in Figure 5.3. First, we used SEM to verify the reliability and validity of the research model. The χ^2/df ratio was found to be 2.597, less than 3, which indicates that the model fitting effect was good. The RMSEA value was 0.055 and less than 0.1; the GFI, CFI, and AGFI values were all greater than 0.9. Further, the NFI value was 0.894 and less than 0.9 but close to 0.9; the remaining indicators were within the standard range. Therefore, the model was well constructed, and the model results were reliable.

The research model significance probability value (p-value) was 0.002, which is less than 0.01, and z was 3.037, indicating a highly significant association between minimalism and subjective personal well-being. The standardized path coefficients were $0.184 > 0$. This finding implies that minimalism positively influences subjective personal well-being.

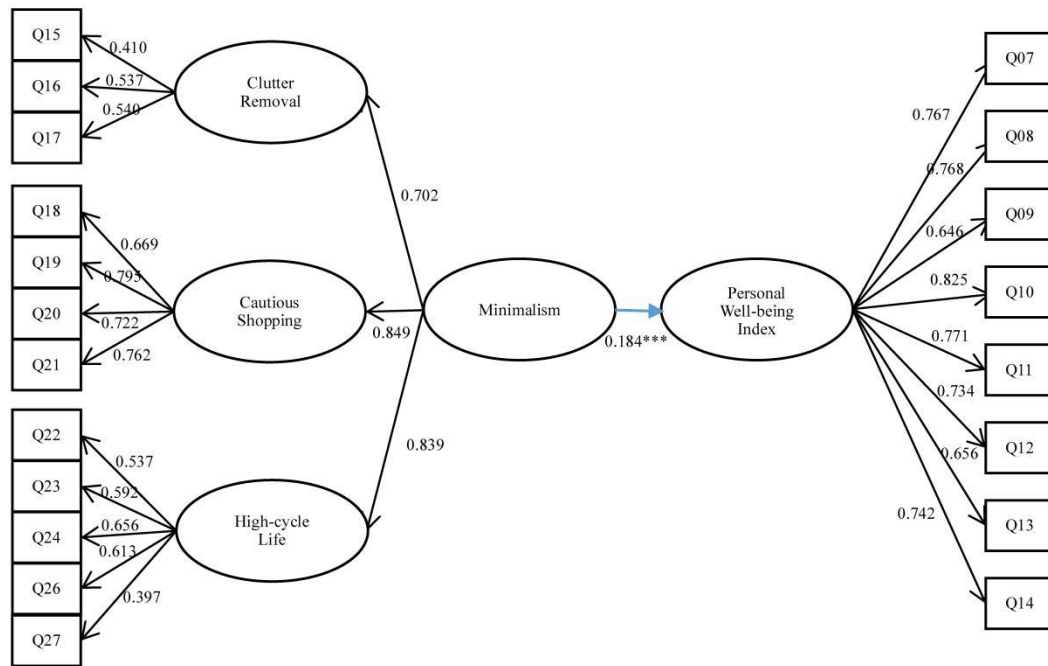


Figure 5.3 Association between minimalism and personal well-being.

Note: *p < 0.01; **p < 0.1; *p < 0.5.**

To further explore which factors of minimalism have a positive impact on subjective personal well-being, Research Model 2 was explored (Figure 5.4).

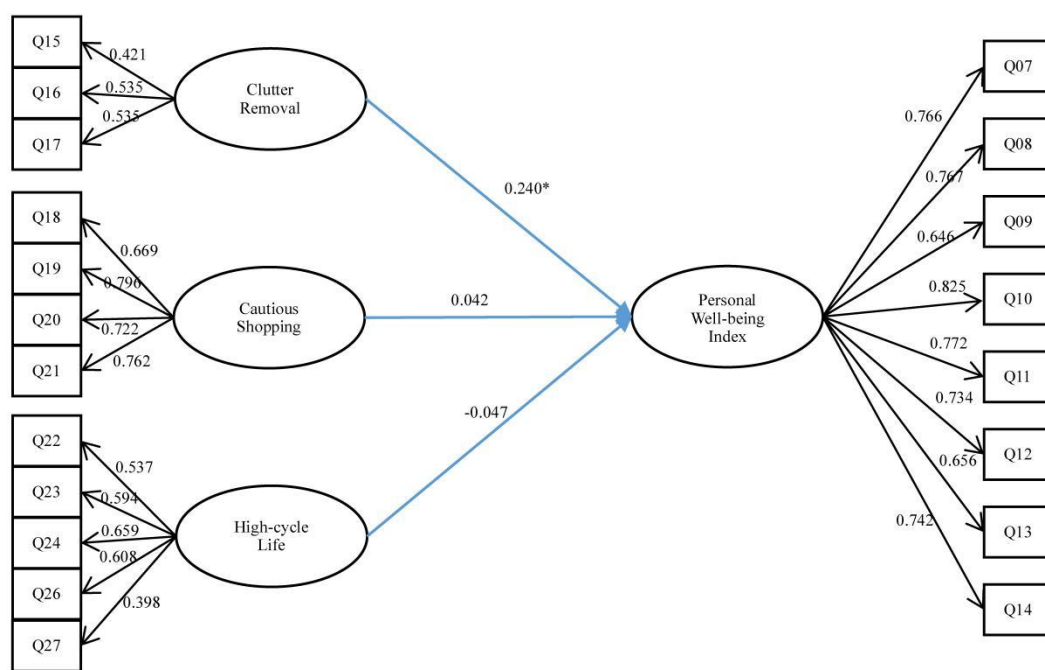


Figure 5.4 Association between minimalism factors and PWI.

Note: *p < 0.01; **p < 0.1; *p < 0.5.**

Research Model 2 was well constructed, the results were reliable, and the model fit index was up to standard (χ^2/df ratio = $2.6 < 3$, RMSEA = $0.055 < 0.10$, GFI = $0.922 > 0.9$, CFI = $0.933 > 0.9$, AGFI = $0.901 > 0.9$, NFI = 0.896 close to 9). The results showed that the clutter removal factor in minimalism had a significant positive association with subjective personal well-being. The p-value was $0.022 < 0.5$ (significance), $z = 2.293$, and the standardized path coefficient was $0.24 > 0$. Conversely, cautious shopping and a high-cycle life of minimalism were not associated with subjective personal well-being.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Association between minimalism and personal well-being

In this study, we verified the relationship between minimalism and overall personal well-being by using a research model. Based on the data analysis results and comparison with previous research, minimalism was found to promote prosperity at the emotional level and positively affect the alleviation of depression (Kang et al., 2021). In this study, we explored the impact of minimalism on people's well-being, not limited to their emotional levels. The results showed that minimalism has a significant positive impact on individual subjective well-being. More significantly, only the clutter elimination aspect of minimalism was beneficial for enhancing subjective (personal) well-being. Data analysis indicated that cautious shopping and using high-lifespan products did not have a significant impact on individual subjective well-being.

Kang et al. (2021) established the theoretical foundation for the relationship between minimalism and the enhancement of subjective well-being. In a study conducted in the United States, they first defined minimalism as a sustainable lifestyle and found it to be beneficial for people's emotional health. Many existing studies on minimalism have focused on developed countries as their research subjects, with only a few data analysis studies conducted in developing ones (Kan et al., 2009; Kang et al., 2021; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Martin-Woodhead, 2021). Therefore, this study shifted its research focus toward China, a representative developing country. Moreover, it fills the research gap on minimalist lifestyles in developing countries and demonstrates the positive effect of minimalist lifestyles on individuals' overall subjective well-being. Crucially, the articulation of minimalist principles exhibits nuanced

variances across diverse cultural and developmental landscapes. In the realm of China, minimalist ethos converges with the salient factor of clutter reduction, exuding a distinctive potency in nurturing well-being. A milieu characterized by simplicity and tidiness within living and working spaces bears the potential to kindle a cascade of affirmative emotions, profoundly elevating the overall sense of well-being (Howell et al., 2019; Lerner et al., 2019; Tolin et al., 2018). This phenomenon, in part, mirrors the meteoric progression in China's material standards of living. The juxtaposition of such factors manifests in a unique expression of minimalism, distinct from its semblance in developed counterparts like the United States and Japan.

6.2 Current status of minimalist lifestyle in China

However, the results of this study suggest that being cautious about consumption and purchasing long-term products may not significantly enhance overall happiness. Current economic data in China also help support this conclusion. First, China is presently not in a state of low desire. Through its reform and opening-up policy, China vigorously developed its economy and joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. With international exchange and trade, China's economy has experienced tremendous growth, and its standard of living has undergone significant changes. According to data published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2019), from 1952 to 2018, China's GDP increased from 67.91 billion yuan to 90.03 trillion yuan, an actual increase of 174 times. Moreover, GDP per capita increased from 119 yuan to 64,600 yuan, a real increase of 70 times. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on the GDP per capita of countries in the world in 2021, China's per capita GDP was 12,000 US, ranking it 60th in the world. Compared to developed countries, there is still considerable room for

improvement in China's per capita economic level, with a large gap remaining between Japan's per capita level of USD 39,000 and the United States' level of USD 69,000 (IMF, n.d.).

Currently, as the largest developing country, China has the world's second-largest economy, but its economic development is not balanced (Huang, 2017), which is similar to India and other countries. For example, despite India's high total economic output, the lifestyles and needs of most of its residents do not match those of developed countries, with a significant proportion of the population living in poverty. Therefore, a low per capita income means that ordinary residents desire to create wealth and improve their current living standards. Thus, China has not yet become a 'low desire society,' and it is not possible to do so. Currently, as the living standards of ordinary Chinese people continue to improve, their pursuit of quality goods is also increasing. Sales figures of shopping events such as the annual record-breaking 'Double Eleven' online shopping festival demonstrate the high enthusiasm of ordinary Chinese people for shopping and consumption (Pham, 2020). Hence, for the minimalist lifestyle of Chinese people, clutter removal plays a role in promoting happiness, while the other two factors may not be applicable to China's current society.

Notably, in the survey questions regarding the factors of cautious shopping and high-cycle life (longevity and self-sufficiency), the percentage of residents who chose 'agree' and 'most agree' was over 60% for all questions. Additionally, for some individual questions, the percentage was as high as 80%. This means most Shenzhen residents in China believe that they practice cautious shopping and purchase and use high-longevity products in their daily lives. Nonetheless, according to the data analysis results, these two factors did not have a positive effect on happiness. It must be investigated as to why this situation exists. From a practical perspective, people must have voluntarily chosen this lifestyle

because it could positively impact their lives. Nevertheless, the data analysis of this study did not produce relevant conclusions. By combining the data, we propose the following analysis. First, the three major factors of the minimalist lifestyle are clutter removal, caution shopping, and high-cycle life. Clutter removal is an objective factor that can be observed by third parties as it refers to environmental cleaning and the absence of clutter. However, caution shopping and a high-cycle life arise from subjective and objective perspectives. The survey respondents provided answers based on their subjective evaluations, and there may have been differences between subjective and objective evaluations. Participants may subjectively believe that they exercise caution while shopping and actively use environmentally friendly and high-longevity products.

Additionally, we conducted another analysis considering the current economic situation in China. As the economy develops rapidly, people's horizons widen, and their pursuit of quality goods increases. This is a natural human behavior that pursues a better life and material things. Against this backdrop, the minimalist lifestyle that has emerged is no longer about reducing consumption but more like a consumption upgrade. People choose better and higher-quality products to replace fast and cheap products, achieving cautious shopping and high-cycle life products. Simultaneously, owing to the relatively high price of these products, the consumption quality is increased, and the quantity is reduced, achieving the purpose of clutter removal. Ultimately, clutter removal promotes personal well-being.

The essence of minimalist living is the simplification of one's pursuit of material possessions, with greater emphasis placed on the enrichment of one's spiritual world. Currently, there is a social phenomenon in which pursuing a minimalist lifestyle has become a trend among young people in developed countries. As they are more easily influenced by new trends and the

development of a social culture, they are more willing to adopt new lifestyles. When the concept of minimalist living emerged, they became active responders and promoters of this lifestyle.

For example, in Japanese society, the concept of '*danshari*' was previously popular, where some people chose to give up numerous possessions to experience the consequent spiritual pleasure and satisfaction. Simultaneously, many businesses followed suit, guiding young consumers' shopping choices by incorporating the concept of minimalist living in their marketing strategies. By combining the concept of minimalist living with consumer goods, businesses can attract consumer attention and preferences for their products. Thus, consumers can derive more spiritual satisfaction from their purchases, and their pursuit of material possessions can be transformed into a new lifestyle, attitude, and pursuit of positive behaviors, such as health and environmental protection.

Furthermore, young people often engage in behaviors such as idol imitation during their active physical and mental development. If their idols were enthusiastic about the concept of minimalist living, this would have a significant impact on their fans and followers. Many young people pursue the lifestyle and attitude their idols are passionate about based on their admiration for them. Therefore, as the concept of minimalist living is popular in developed countries, many young people in China follow this trend. Nevertheless, this is not a minimalist lifestyle but a pursuit of culture.

The essence of minimalist living is the simplification of external material endeavors in favor of a more pronounced pursuit of spiritual fulfillment. A social phenomenon exists in which the pursuit of minimalist living has become a fashionable and popular lifestyle choice among young people in developed countries. Owing to the influence of new trends and social and cultural development, young people are more inclined to try new ways of living. Thus,

when the concept of minimalist living emerged, they became active responders and advocates.

6.3 Reflection on the current status of minimalism in China and its future development

To address these issues, we conducted a survey and discussion with eight participants willing to participate in a focus group (2 in the 18–24 age group, 4 in the 25–34 age group, and 2 in the 35–44 age group). We discussed how they began their minimalist lifestyle and drew valuable conclusions from this discussion.

First, we observed that the adoption of a minimalist lifestyle was influenced by social and cultural environments. Young people have been exposed to numerous articles and images that promote minimalism through social media or have been inspired by their idols. Consequently, they began to adopt a minimalist lifestyle, although their understanding and practice of minimalism may not be entirely accurate.

Second, we found that their adoption of a minimalist lifestyle resulted from their reflections on materialism and excessive consumption. They believe that owning more possessions does not necessarily lead to greater happiness but contributes to increased stress and anxiety. Hence, they began simplifying their lives by tidying up their living spaces.

Third, we found that many individuals could not make entirely rational consumption decisions. Some mentioned that they were also unwittingly caught

up in the consumption behavior of the current live-streaming industry in China. However, some participants noted that their understanding of cautious consumption was based only on comparative shopping rather than considering the practicality of the items. Participants aged 30–40 years mentioned that with an increase in income, they would choose high-quality items over cheaper ones when shopping.

Finally, before embarking on a minimalist lifestyle, individuals often face difficulties. They must give up possessions that they previously believed were important or change the habits to which they are accustomed. This process requires effort and courage, but many individuals believe it is worthwhile as they can better control their lives and reduce stress and anxiety.

In conclusion, we found that the pursuit of a minimalist lifestyle begins for some individuals as a simple trend-following behavior (influenced by society and culture). However, over time, some individuals may abandon this pursuit. Nevertheless, some have gradually come to understand the true meaning of a minimalist lifestyle through practice and reflection. Therefore, we should respect each individual's understanding and practice of minimalism while strengthening our understanding and exploration of minimalist philosophy. The minimalist lifestyle is not a fixed state, as it is influenced by multiple values and social cultures during economic and social development and is a concept that will continue to evolve with the development of society over time.

Developed countries such as Japan and the United States completed their national modernization construction considerably early. People achieved a high level of material prosperity at an early stage, making them well-suited to minimalist lifestyles. Currently, analysis reveals that China follows the same path as developed countries. The social circumstances in China during its economic development were similar to those in Japan and other developed

countries. Currently, young people in China are burdened with heavy debt owing to their early consumption of goods, including the purchase of houses and cars they can afford. Agence France-Presse (2017) discussed the problem of young Chinese people accumulating high levels of debt through this early consumption period. This behavior is similar to what occurred in Japan in the 1980s and ultimately led to a shift toward a more frugal and minimalist lifestyle.

As China's economy develops and faces issues such as a severe decline in birth rates, it appears to be confronting many of the same challenges and social transformations that Japan has experienced during its economic development. Consequently, China may transition toward a minimalist lifestyle similar to that of developed countries such as Japan.

Minimalism has gained popularity in recent years in response to the fast-paced consumerist culture that dominates modern societies. This trend is likely to continue, as people seek to simplify their lives and prioritize their experiences over material possessions. As technology advances and the world becomes more interconnected, the concept of minimalism is likely to continue to evolve. We may see new applications of minimalism in areas such as digital detoxification and the promotion of mindfulness in the workplace. Researchers should also explore how minimalism can be adapted to meet the needs of different cultures and lifestyles.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In summary, this study represents a significant advancement in our understanding of the complex relationship between minimalism and human well-being. Minimalism, as a distinctive way of life, has gained substantial recognition in developed nations, where it is embraced as a sustainable lifestyle choice characterized by a focus on personal growth, spiritual enrichment, and emotional resonance. This ethos has transcended geographical borders and found an audience in developing countries, with China being a prominent example. However, existing scholarly research has primarily explored the emotional benefits of minimalism in developed contexts, leaving a notable gap in understanding its implications in developing nations and its overall impact on personal well-being.

Against this backdrop, this study constructs a comprehensive research framework that serves as a guiding compass for navigating the intricate relationship between minimalism and individual well-being. Through a meticulous questionnaire survey, we empirically demonstrate the positive influence of a minimalist lifestyle on personal well-being within the context of developing nations.

Based on the thorough data analysis and the in-depth discussion and interpretation of the findings, we can now revisit the research questions we initially posed:

MRQ: What is the relationship between a minimalist lifestyle and overall personal well-being? It is evident from our analysis that adopting a minimalist lifestyle can significantly enhance personal well-being and exert a positive influence on one's overall sense of well-being.

SRQ1: How is the minimalist lifestyle defined and understood in developed and developing countries? Our comprehensive literature review has revealed that minimalism takes distinct forms in developed and developing countries. In developed nations, minimalism is characterized by four primary factors: 1. Clutter removal, 2. Cautious shopping, 3. Emphasis on longevity, and 4. Pursuit of self-sufficiency. Conversely, in developing countries like China, minimalism manifests as a lifestyle encompassing three key elements: 1. Clutter removal, 2. Thoughtful consumption practices, and 3. Embracing a high-cycle life.

SRQ2: Does minimalism have an impact on an individual's overall well-being? By constructing a research model and applying structural equation analysis techniques, our investigation substantiates that minimalism indeed exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on an individual's overall personal well-being.

SRQ3: What elements of minimalism play a role in affecting an individual's overall well-being? Further scrutiny through structural equation analysis elucidates that among the various elements of minimalism, the foremost contributor to enhancing overall personal well-being is the rigorous practice of clutter removal

A crucial revelation emerges from this research, highlighting the nuanced adaptation of minimalism as it encounters different cultural and developmental landscapes. In developing countries like China, minimalism thrives by emphasizing the meticulous organization of spaces and the deliberate elimination of clutter—an approach deeply resonant with enhancing personal well-being. This revelation underscores the adaptability of minimalism as a way of life that can coexist harmoniously with diverse cultural and social

backgrounds. Its core objective, however, remains the enhancement of individual life quality and holistic well-being. It's essential to recognize that this enhancement takes on dynamic dimensions, with the tenets of minimalism acquiring varying emphases and interpretations depending on the unique cultural, economic, and social contexts.

In terms of practical implications, the findings of this study have the potential to bring about transformative shifts in various domains. The realms of consumer goods, business strategies, and policy development can integrate the insights provided by this research to foster well-being-centric approaches that resonate with diverse populations worldwide.

Regarding practical implications, the findings of this study possess transformative potential across various domains. Within the business sphere, there are notable impacts:

Product Innovation: Minimalism encourages businesses to prioritize simplicity and durability in product design, fostering the creation of longer-lasting products that reduce resource consumption and waste.

Consumer Behavior: The minimalist philosophy fosters a shift in consumer behavior, emphasizing quality-focused consumption over quantity-driven choices. Business models are consequently reshaped, placing greater emphasis on product quality, customer satisfaction, and enduring relationships.

Brand Values: Many companies are integrating sustainability and minimalism into their brand identities, attracting consumers who value environmental and social responsibility, thereby influencing their purchase decisions.

Market Trends: Minimalism has engendered trends such as decluttering and downsizing, offering market opportunities for products and services aligned

with these lifestyle choices.

Beyond the business arena, minimalism exerts a profound societal impact:

Mental Health: Minimalism's focus on simplification and reduction of materialism positively affects individual mental health, alleviating stress, anxiety, and enhancing overall life satisfaction.

Social Responsibility: Minimalism encourages responsible consumption, curbing waste and overconsumption, thereby contributing to the reduction of environmental footprints and promoting a sense of social responsibility.

Reduced Inequality: By redirecting attention away from material wealth, minimalism has the potential to mitigate societal inequalities and encourage greater engagement with social issues and well-being.

On a global scale, minimalism also leaves its mark:

Environmental Sustainability: Minimalism's emphasis on reduced consumption and waste lends significant support to environmental sustainability, aiding in resource conservation, lower carbon footprints, and reduced pressure on global supply chains.

Global Consumption Patterns: Minimalism challenges the prevailing global consumer culture, which often prioritizes excessive consumption. By promoting mindful consumption, it can address resource scarcity and mitigate the adverse impacts of rampant consumerism on the planet.

Cultural Exchange: Minimalism transcends cultural boundaries and fosters mutual understanding and exchange between cultures, contributing to a more harmonious global society where individuals from diverse backgrounds find

common ground in shared values.

However, while this study marks a substantial milestone, the journey toward a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between minimalism and well-being remains an ongoing endeavor. It calls for continued exploration and refinement of nuanced quantitative models that account for the contextual intricacies inherent to different countries and demographics. This evolution holds the potential to facilitate the practical application of these findings across diverse sectors, such as business and design, unveiling deeper layers of the minimalist philosophy and its transformative impact on human well-being. In essence, this research extends beyond its current boundaries, evolving into a foundational cornerstone for future scholarship, guiding us toward a more holistic and enriched perspective on the synergy between minimalism and personal well-being.

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