# More Care Others and Closer Connections with Others Boost Happiness: Association between Selflessness, Flow and Happiness

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## Abstract

In contemporary China, the increasing number of young people, so-called "Indoorsy", "Buddhist" obsessively insisted and believed inflow can improve happiness. The main objective of this research was to explore the relationship between self-centeredness and authentic-durable happiness. Consequently, this study firstly investigated the links between selflessness, flow, and subjective authentic-durable happiness, and the mediator role of flow on the relationship. The research method was quantitative research by collecting questionnaires from a group of 289 employees. The statistics used in the data analysis were based on frequency, percentage, deviation, multiple regression analysis. The results confirm that selflessness was positive correlated to flow and subjective authentic-durable happiness. Moreover, mediation analysis reveals the significant mediating effect of flow to the links between selflessness and subjective authentic-durable happiness. These results indicate that individuals who are interdependent and connected with others. The natural and cosmic context is linked to greater currents and subjective authentic-durable happiness In summary, the finding may be beneficial to individuals who pursue to attain more happiness in practical life if they care more about others and closer connections with more others.

**Keywords:** Selflessness, Flow, Authentic-durable happiness

## Introduction

In contemporary Chinese society, a term known as "Self-centeredness," "Indoorsy," and "Buddha-like" is gaining a lot of attention under the influence of Western cultural values that individuals follow and individualist beliefs. With the expectation of capturing supremacy through self-centeredness by allowing yourself to be the center connecting the self-

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centeredness is closely linked to unstable and fluctuating happiness. But if we look closely, it can be seen that human selflessness will have positive consequences and will find fulfilling real manifest happiness (Dambrun & Ricard 2011). In addition, according to existential psychology theory, Self-structure is related to happiness, meanwhile, previous studies have shown that selflessness is positively correlated with authentic-durable happiness (Dambrun 2017; Deng et al. 2019; Hanley et. al. 2017). Much of this evidence also supports that flow is positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness (Collins et al. 2009; Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Seligman 2002). However, few studies have been done on the relationship between selflessness and subjective authentic-durable happiness through flow mediation mechanisms. According to this idea the main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between selflessness, flow, and authentic-durable happiness.

### 1.1 Selflessness

The self is also as concepts of the conception of self, reflects the identity perception that we have of our identity and different mental construct of the self. At the same time, self-structure not only determines our relationship with the world and others but indeed, it will lead to another effect on happiness as well. Therefore, selflessness will reflect the mental state of a person who has the qualities that do not primarily consider their own needs but see the importance of others as the main manifestation in what Dharma calls mercy, which is compassion. Others Kindness is to know how to help others, to have understanding and compassion for others, to know how to respect and respect others' dignity, that an selflessness person will value the feelings of others and will not use his own emotions to hurt. (Bachar et al. 2002). Concepts of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhist theories describe yourself as “big self,” “Self-transcendent,” and “selflessness.” Emphasizes the relationship between people, others, and things and takes into account one's maturity. Thus, the structure of self in Chinese traditional culture bears the greatest similarity with selflessness. The pursuit of the person's connection with the outside, as well as dealing with the whole thing, which resembles a little self-centeredness, concludes that the self-identity of Chinese culture is similar to being above one's self. Self-structure and characteristics are as close as selflessness and selflessness can be confirmed and benefit happiness (Hwang 2009; Joshanloo 2014) and well-being (Joshanloo 2014; Levenson et al. 2002.)

### 1.2 Happiness

From a philosophical point of view, there are two types of happiness: ideological happiness and self-sufficient happiness (Dambrun and Ricard 2011). Thus, there are two research perspectives on happiness: and Psychology, which focuses on life's purpose in pursuit. Ultimate happiness avoids the unpleasant, preferring the satisfaction of life (Carr 2011; Deiner 1984; Durkin and Joseph 2009; Haybron 2008; Joshanloo, 2014; Ryan and Deci 2001). Psychology Well-Being (PWB) is derived from ideal happiness, which refers to the positive and meaningful

emotional experiences produced by a person who is fully aware of his psychological potential and that an optimistic state is the essence of well-being (Carr 2011; Durkin and Joseph 2009). Psychological refers to the perception of stable quality of life.

However, previous empirical research has shown that there are limitations and psychological (Kashdan et al. 2008; Zhang and Zuo 2007). For example, the Subjective Well-Being (SWB) only assessed a person's satisfaction, in addition, emotional experiences are quick and volatile. And overall life assessments cannot fully reflect the individual's life span, and life satisfaction assessments are influenced by perceptions (Rober, 2004; Zhang and Zuo 2007). Mental well-being is only measured by whether people are related to a person's self-awareness. And pay more attention to self-improvement and self-growth, although relatively stable and not easily affected by life circumstances, however, it is susceptible to cognitive influence on individual living conditions. And self-perception also fluctuates, in other words, SWB and PWB are based on impulses, and influencing situations can be unstable and short-lived, which does not reflect the sustained state and internal resources for happiness (Durkin and Joseph 2009).

Thus, propose two more concepts of happiness: unstable happiness and self-reliance (Dambrun 2012). The findings of previous studies have proven that both subjective fluctuating happiness scale and subjective authentic-durable happiness scale of true happiness have good structural validity and criterion validity, among others. On psychological criteria from an analysis of previous study (Dambrun et al. 2012; Deng et al. 2019). We find that true subjective happiness is not merely contentment. But also consider calm and assess the sustainable state of happiness (Dambrun et al. 2012; Sheldon et al. 2010).

In addition, previous studies have found that social culture emphasizes its influence on self-structural and the conceptualization and notion of happiness (Hitokoto and Uchida 2015; Joshanloo 2014). Religious beliefs based on traditional Chinese culture are contrary to self-exaltation (Chen 2006; Dambrun and Ricard 2011; Hwang 2009; Joshanloo 2014; Le and Levenson 2005), the traditional Chinese cultural concept of happiness is, therefore, more consistent with subjective authentic-durable happiness. Conservatives would have been happier (Seligman et al. 2005; Snyder and Lopez 2002).

### 1.3 Flow

Flow is an unconscious state of mind in which the individual is completely immersed in the event. Total involvement in the present while forgetting time and not thinking of anything else and so on (Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Csikszentmihalyi et al. 2003). There was a positive correlation with positive emotions (Rheinberg and Vollmeyer 2003). In addition, previous studies have shown several key aspects of the flow experience, such as self-delusion, "autotelic" nature, and feel in control (Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Vuorre and Metcalfe 2016).

Two types of models and measurement methods have been proposed for the investigation of flow. First, flow is similar to personality traits in that situations heighten the state of consciousness. The mind clings to different things. Second, flow is similar to the state of total assimilation. In which a person concentrates and becomes fully immersed in stimulating activities. It is also characteristic that the flow experience is an impulse that the state of mind clings to something. Most of their desires when a person is in a state of fluidity may feel spiritually free. Connecting to pressure and letting go creates feelings of contentment and happiness.

### 1.4 Selflessness and Subjective Authentic-Durable Happiness

Happiness is closely linked to oneself with both positive and negative self-effects (Dambrun 2012; Hanley 2017). Previous studies have shown that selflessness has some positive effects, such as harmony and compassion (Leary et al. 2008) and self-transcendence (Levenson 2005), connection with nature (Howell 2011), and social benefits. Behavioral positive relationships such as a feeling of cheerfulness can lead to relaxation and authentic-durable happiness. In recent years, psychology studies have gained attention and proved that selflessness has been significantly positively correlated with authentic-durable happiness (Dambrun 2016, 2017; Deng et al. 2019). Furthermore, according to the comparative theory of happiness, highly Selflessness individuals not only reflect their relationships with others as well as other events but also reflect their status and attitudes, and perceptions. Thus, from the psychological functioning of selflessness, such as interdependence and interconnection, which has many characteristics, including the social context. We can conclude that selflessness is positively correlated to subjective authentic-durable happiness.

In addition, when influenced by Chinese culture, the individual is affected by traditional cultures such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Encourage selflessness, be yourself, leave a small house to take care of everyone. Selflessness yourself for billions is happiness in Chinese culture that reflects the devotion and virtue that may be the foundation of defining happiness and a good life. In other words, caring for others and connecting with others can make happiness real and last forever (Lu et al. 2019). Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that selflessness is related to authentic-durable happiness in Chinese culture (Dambrun and Ricards 2011; Joshanloo 2014).

### 1.5 The mediator role of flow

Previous studies have confirmed the positive relationship between selflessness and authentic-durable happiness (Dambrun and Ricard 2011; Dambrun et al. 2012; Deng et al. 2019) and flow and happiness (Collins et al. 2009. Chou et al. 2016). In addition, previous studies have found that selflessness not only directly affects happiness but also affects happiness through other variables of experience (Darbrun 2016, 2017). Likewise, flow can mediate the effects of

supernatural experiences on happiness (Tsaur et al. 2013). Flow activity is conducive to happiness (Schiffer and Roberts 2017). Therefore, the current study will explore the correlating mechanisms between selflessness and flow and authentic-durable happiness, particularly the mediation of flow.

Additionally, previous studies have found that flow is linked to positive emotions (Chiang et al. 2011; Walker et al. 1998) and self-esteem (Han 1988) and life satisfaction (Rowe), and Kahn 1997. ; Han 1988) and successful coping (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Wells 1988). Meanwhile, previous studies have shown that happiness and flow are related (Csiksentmihalyi 2000) and subject well-being (Diener 1984) and psychological well-being (Asakawa 2004; Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter 2003; Wang, 2014), indicating that the higher-quality experience of flow individuals had higher positive stimuli and higher life satisfaction and happiness (Collins et al. 2009; Tian 2010; Tang 2011; Wang 2014). As mentioned above, well-being is related to happiness argues that happiness has three main components: happy living, full participation, and living. Meaningful, therefore, according to the positive emotions of flow, relationship between flow and happiness and subjective well-being, we can speculate that flow is associated with subjective authentic-durable happiness Seligman (2002).

There is also little research examining flow about personality unless experiential flow is studied through several activities (e.g. sports, school, and work). States are linked to feelings of control (Wenke et al. 2010; Chambon and Haggard 2012; Chambon et al. 2014; Sidarus et al. 2013; Stenner et al. 2014), self-awareness (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002). And has studied how people feel "flow" in highly knowledgeable and skilled jobs which people need to remember important expertise (Csikszentmihalyi 2000). In addition, suggested that cultures such as individualism and collectivism influence flow Lu's study (2017). Studies have suggested that culture such as individualism and collectivism affect the flow. At the same time, it is distinct that culture was link to the self (Tandon 2017). We assumed that the flow might be linked to selflessness. We can predict that selflessness or self-centers may be related to flow. Most studies examine the relationship between selflessness and flow.

According to the flow relationship and the selflessness, we view that individual selflessness will experience a high level of flow. And achieve even more authentic-durable happiness. Although previous studies have confirmed that selflessness doesn't just directly affect happiness. But also indirectly influenced through happiness through other variables such as harmony and social impact, benevolent affections and emotional stability (Caprara and Steca 2005; Dambrun and Ricard 2011; Dambrun et al. 2012; Deng et al. 2019; Hills and Argyle 2001; Leary et al. 2008; Weinstein and Ryan 2010). Few empirical studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between flow and sacrifice. In addition, previous studies have shown that flow can mediate the effects of supernatural experiences on happiness (Tsaur et al. 2013). It is predicted that the relationship between selflessness and subjective authentic-durable

happiness will mediate, at least in part, by trend.

## 2. Overview of the study and hypothesis

According to the above literature reviews, little empirical work has especially addressed relationship between selflessness, flow, and authentic-durable happiness. Thus, we hypothesized that selflessness induced enhancing flow emotion, further, leads to an optimal emotional experience subjective authentic-durable happiness. The present study will attempt to explore these relationship between selflessness and subjective authentic-durable happiness, and the mediating role of flow. Given that previous empirical studies on happiness always used SWB or PWB to assess, little subjective authentic-durable happiness scale used to measure happiness, but the flow study will measure using subjective authentic-durable happiness scale.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1 Population boundaries

Population boundaries were selected from a few companies through convenient sampling methods in Beijing. A total of 289 employees (129 men, 160 women, age range = 19-53 years, mean age = 27.6 years, SD = 6.6 years) volunteered to participate in the current study. The cohort answered the questionnaire and collect demographic information, including gender, age, and marital status.

### 3.2 Summary of research results

#### 3.2.1 Selflessness

The Selflessness questionnaire was originally from RISC (Cross et al. 2011) and MPS (DeCicco and Stroink 2007). The modified Chinese version of the questionnaire was developed and explored and was highly accurate and reliable (Deng. et al. 2019), which included 8 items, and items were assessed from 1 (strongly disagree with me) to 6 (strongly agree with me.), with higher scores reflecting a greater sense of selflessness. In this study the reliability of the scale is $\alpha = .787$.

#### 3.2.2 Flow

Flow-Based on the Swedish language flow inclination questionnaire (SFPQ; Ullen et al. 2012), which consisted of three activities (work, entertainment, and other activities) and 21 items, participants were asked to rate a Likert scale of 5. Scores. (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). A higher score reflects a greater degree of effect. In this study, the reliability of the scale is $\alpha = .887$.

### 3.2.3 Happiness

In terms of happiness, respondents found that the Subjective authentic-durable happiness Scale (SA-DHS; Dambrun et al. 2012), which consisted of 16 items (13 items with positive words such as “happiness, bliss, overall well-being, peace of mind, serenity, fulfillment” alpha = 0.894 and 3 items with the negative words “dissatisfaction, feeling bad and unhappy”). Three items assessed persistent adversity and were not included in the mean scores in this study. Participants were required to identify normal happiness levels in their lives (within 1 month) on a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 (very low) to 6 (very high). Items were measured from 1 (very low) to 6 (very high). This study the reliability of the scale is $\alpha = .913$.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

We performed data analyzes to test the study's main hypothesis using SPSS 20.0 and Mplus7.0. First, we performed a correlation analysis of key variables. Second, we performed mediator analysis by structural equation modeling (SEM) and estimates the mediator effect of flow.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Analysis and correlation results

The results of variable and correlation analysis for the preliminary study variables are reported in Table 1. Table 1. Selflessness was significantly associated with subjective authentic-durable happiness. And found a significant correlation between selflessness and flow. In addition, selflessness was positively correlated with flow and subjective authentic-durable happiness. And surges are also positively linked to more intrinsic-permanent subjective. The results showed that highly selfless individuals were associated with greater flow and higher subjective

### 4.2. Mediation model

Assessment of meditation patterns by analyzing multiple groups. There were no significant differences between male and female cohorts for all pathways and limited variance ($\Delta x2 = 7.541$, $\Delta df = 6$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, we explored correlations in the final analysis covering gender and age all in control.

The results of the fit index of the model are shown in Table 2. The fit values were as follows: $\chi2/df = 2.775$, $p = 0.031$, CFI = 0.991, TLI = 0.971, RMSEA = 0.078. Appropriate to the information

Next, Table 3 shows the totals. The direct impact and the indirect consequence of selflessness on subjective authentic-durable happiness. Selfishness to subjective authentic-durable happiness was significant ($\beta = 0.606$, $p = 0.001$; 95% CI [0.554 0.785]). And subjective authentic-durable happiness ($\beta = .239$, $p = .000$; 95% CI [.148, .330]). Selflessness was linked to higher subjective authentic-durable happiness. And the flow has an intermediary effect

between the relationships (Figure 1).

## 5 Discussion of Results

This study has built a model of selflessness, flow, and subjective authentic-durable happiness. The results confirmed previous findings that selflessness was positively correlated with persistent subjective authentic-durable happiness. And expanding the mechanism of selflessness towards subjective authentic-durable happiness by demonstrating the role of flow as a medium. Especially Studies reveal that selflessness affects subjective authentic-durable happiness. Therefore, these findings enrich the literature on the relationship between selflessness and flow and subjective authentic-durable happiness.

First, research shows that positive selflessness is associated with enduring subjective authentic-durable happiness. The findings are generally based on previous studies. Selfishness was positively correlated with subjective authentic-durable happiness. It indicates that a person's empathy and a closer relationship with others increases or even increases happiness (Deng et al. 2019; Hanley et al. 2017). Highly selflessness individuals tend to have higher-than-normal well-being and authentic-durable happiness. The rationale for analyzing the mechanism of selflessness affecting well-being is as follows: (1) the individual's characteristics take precedence over the situation; (2) the person who directly experiences life events returns to a stable baseline determined by Personality (Headey and Wearing 1989) (3) influence of life satisfaction will influence other correlated factors (Lu et al. 2019). The results also showed that selfless psychological work and two key traits, such as sympathy, are natural links and others (Dambrun 2017; Dambrun and Ricard 2011). Often add more happiness in line with our theoretical framework. Selflessness is only associated with authentic-durable happiness.

The findings also show the hypothesis that flow is positively correlated with happiness. The findings revealed that flow had a positive effect that resulted in less self-focus and more external suggestive behaviors. (Csikszentmihalyi and Figurski 1982; Greenberg and Pyszczynski 1986; Ingram 1990). Previous studies have shown that flow experience is associated with happiness. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). flow's higher state creates intense concentration. Decreased self-awareness and have a more positive impact and had a slight negative effect. And was positively correlated with life satisfaction. Therefore, tides were also shown to be associated with happiness or well-being (Collins et al. 2009; Lu 2017). Increased happiness is permanently subjective.

Finally, the flow analysis revealed that flow acts as a mechanism by which selflessness affects subjective authentic-durable happiness. As expected, research shows that selflessness not only directly affects intrinsic permanence. But also indirectly influences to subjective authentic-durable happiness through the role of intermediary. In the beginning, the results indicated that flow was positively linked to subjective authentic-durable happiness In addition, the results

showed that flow means that when individuals are involved in life and learning activities he or they can be happier. The main characteristics of the flow line are engagement and concentration which is the highest experience when fully involved in the event (Demerouti et al. 2012).

### 5.1 Effects

Most important the current study provides additional support for the importance of expanding the selflessness. And investigating the role of mediators of flow mechanisms in this relationship. Especially the results prove that the tides may explain the mechanism of influence of selflessness on happiness. The findings also confirmed that if an individual cared for others and connected more with others, they would increase their happiness. Based on these findings, people will leave their inner circle. Social integration, these findings are consistent with previous studies that indicated that "One for All" (Lu et al. 2019).

### 5.2 Restrictions

However, this study had some limitations. First, the limitation in this study is its dependence on a few companies' convenience samples, so the generalization of the flow findings across diverse populations should be addressed with caution. In addition, today the Internet has influenced the structure of individual identity, especially for four-dimensional humans, future studies could expand the need for a sample to make clearer conclusions about the relationship of the variables examined. Second, although there is evidence that selflessness directly affects, cross-sectional design limits the ability to identify causal inferences, therefore further studies will use a longitudinal design or experimental design to explore the relationship between causal inferences selflessness happiness and subjective authentic-durable happiness. Third, all these variables may influence the variability of common methods, future research should examine the link between selflessness and flow and authentic-durable happiness according to current web cultures as linked. Against the self-structure, the mechanisms of selflessness on happiness are affected throughout the ecosystem.

## 6 Conclusions

The results of this study add to and expand the literature on how authentic-durable happiness. The results of the present study show that selflessness not only directly influences but also indirectly through the flow of happiness. In particular, these findings prove that the flow of traits can be explained. In addition, individuals value others more and have a closer relationship with others, greater individual flow, and more authentic-durable happiness, so the findings prompt a reminder that the individual may be "more inclusive." The real benefit of being happier is not only to take care of others and to have a closer relationship with others.

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest the authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations analyses of all Variables

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | M | SD | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Age | 1 | | | | | | | 27.648 | 6.623 | |
| 2.Selflessness | -.033 | 1 | | | | | | 4.012 | .684 | .787 |
| 3.Flow 1 | -.134* | .482** | 1 | | | | | 3.605 | .521 | .812 |
| 4.Flow 2 | -.024 | .507** | .704** | 1 | | | | 3.617 | .559 | .853 |
| 5.Flow 3 | -.079 | .431** | .556** | .736** | 1 | | | 3.700 | .623 | .878 |
| 6.Flow | -.088 | .535** | .839** | .922** | .882** | 1 | | 3.641 | .500 | .887 |
| 7. Happiness | -.081 | .606** | .588** | .551** | .478** | .608** | 1 | 4.115 | .781 | .913 |

Note: Flow 1 = The flow level for work time; Flow 2 = The flow level for other homework times; Flow 3 = The flow level for entertainment time. *p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Table 2 Goodness-of -Fit Indices of Models

| Models | $\chi 2$ | df | $\chi 2$/df | p | CFI | TLI | RMSEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| selflessness-flow-happiness | 8.326 | 3 | 2.775 | .031 | .991 | .971 | .078 |

Table 3 Selflessness on Subjective Authentic-Durable Happiness

| | Parameter estimate | | | Bias-corrected CI (95%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Unstandardized | Standardized | p | Lower | Upper |
| selflessness | | | | | |
| Direct effect | .367 | .538 | .000 | 0.251 | 0.516 |
| Indirect effect via flow | .239 | .046 | .000 | 0.148 | 0.330 |
| Total effects | .606 | .059 | .001 | 0.554 | 0.785 |