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## Eudemonism to Hedonism: A Historical Exploration of Global Behavioral Shifts

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This paper delves into the underlying causes of the global shift in behavioral preferences from eudemonism to hedonism.

**Research Gap:** Drawing on literature from various eras up to 15th century, followed by examining the transitions in behavioral paradigms from 16th to 19th century and beyond, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of this significant evolution in human thought and action.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research applies bibliometric analysis, systematic review and sociological analysis and seeks to uncover the driving factors behind the changing attitudes toward defining happiness and pursuing pleasure.

**The Main Findings:** Results confirmed a paradigm shift from eudemonic to hedonic values right after 15th century. Hedonism has ever since intensified globally.

**Theoretical / Practical Implications of the Findings:** Recently, literature shows a shift towards research and inquiry into eudemonism as a better route to human well-being. This realization demands further research to assist revitalizing of values which humanity was originally built upon. Current research sets a path for others to follow and highlights the direction of movement in realization and behavioral shift.

**Originality/Value:** By synthesizing diverse perspectives across history, the research offers insights into the broader societal, philosophical, and cultural shifts that have shaped contemporary behavioral norms.



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### 1. Introduction

Social behavioral shifts have always been a popular research area. One such shift under study by philosophers, historians, and social scientists is the transition from eudemonism to hedonism (Haybron, 2008). Two main theories of human well-being are the hedonic well-being theory of Epicurus and the eudaimonic well-being theory of Aristotle (Ryan, and Deci, 2013). Hedonic well-being emphasizes minimizing pain and maximizing pleasure (Thompson and Marks, 2008), while eudaimonic well-being centers on behaviors, contentment, and personal life experiences (Ryan, and Deci, 2013). Old religious scriptures, the ancient Greek philosophical tradition and in olden literature all point towards Eudemonism as primary human instinct (Martensen, 1891; Rizvi et al., 2021; Franz, 2021). This transition represents a fundamental shift in how individuals and societies perceive happiness, fulfillment, and the good life.

Human belief systems play a pivotal role in shaping the values that individuals hold dear, which in turn influence their actions and decisions (Hall, 2006; Sayer, 2011). Values are translated into actions which in

turn determine the life quality for humans in any society. Globally there has been observed a continuous decline in human compassion, contentment, satisfaction and peace (Handa, Pereira, and Holmqvist, 2023). We need to explore the causes of this decline in quality of life as well as general satisfaction in human society. If we explore the shifts in human values and examine the changes in belief systems especially related to common goals and communal attachments, we may be able to understand the environmental, social, cultural economic, spiritual and political reasons for the decline in human wellbeing.

When we explore the value shift towards hedonism, abandoning eudemonic historical values in human society we realize that humane guiding principles in societies have been compromised and thus this shift in human behavior resulted (Delle, Massimini, and Bassi, 2011). Common human heritage of eudemonism was enrooted in historical and spiritual traditions of human societies, which were but natural and thus were supported by thinkers like Aristotle along with others (Cook, 2013). On the contrary, Epicurus gave birth to the idea of hedonic short term pleasure seeking instead of long-term wellbeing (Austin, 2023). Our societies have thus seen a shift in human behavior where everyone is trying to attain immediate gratification, individual pleasures, material wealth instead of communal goals, overall wellbeing an long-term happiness. All this has been a result of technological advancements, industrialization and globalization (Laszlo, 1994). Understanding this transition through historical analysis provides valuable insights into the cultural, societal, and philosophical forces shaping human values and behaviors, shedding light on the challenges it poses to individual and societal well-being (Rogers et al., 2012). By comprehensively examining this evolution, researchers can contribute to a more holistic approach to well-being and fulfillment in the modern era.

By employing a combination of sociological analysis (Blumer, 1956), this paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between historical contexts, philosophical movements, and individual beliefs in shaping the trajectory of global behavioral change from eudemonism to hedonism. Exploring the transition from eudemonism to hedonism offers a rich tapestry of insights into the evolution of human values, the complexities of well-being, and the enduring quest for a life of purpose and contentment (French, 2022).

This study contributes by classifying significant literature sources, providing a chronological perspective on behavioral change, and underlining the connection between understanding behavior and improving quality of life. Bibliometric analysis introduces seven thematic clusters to explain the intersection of behaviors and values, including Theory of Wellbeing, Theory of Self-Determination, Self-Development Theory, Positive Psychology Theory, Contemporary Theory, Moral Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Dialogical Theory, and Social Exchange Theory. The research aims to explore the transition from eudemonism to hedonism through a systematic review spanning historical eras, unveiling societal influences on human values and well-being. The study sets the stage for future investigations into the causes and trends of global behavioral shifts.

The research aims to track the shift in global behavioral trends from eudemonism to hedonism across historical periods, explore the reasons driving this transition, and examine its impact on well-being and societies. The study also analyzes the publication trends, key authors, organizations, countries, famous works, emerging themes, and theoretical frameworks in this field. Key questions revolve around the evolution of happiness concepts, factors influencing hedonistic values, implications on well-being and society, and the landscape of research in changing behavioral trends.

Section 2 is literature review. It explores the significance of belief systems in creating value, the evolution of these systems, the factors leading to behavioral changes, and their consequences. Section 3 delves into the theoretical framework, while section 4 outlines the methodology. Sections 5 and 6 focus on bibliometric and sociological analysis, respectively. Section 7 presents the discussion, followed by section 8 which addresses the limitations, and section 9 concludes the research findings.

## **2. Literature Review**

## **2.1 Importance of belief systems in value creation and behavioral shift**

Belief systems, encompassing religious, cultural, philosophical, and ideological dimensions, are integral in shaping social well-being by providing a foundational framework for interpretation, values, and behaviors (Vlasceanu, Dyckovsky, and Coman, 2024). Belief systems mold individuals' perceptions of self and society, fostering cohesion and collaboration within communities (Johnson, Hill, and Cohen, 2011). Embracing diverse beliefs cultivates empathy and social harmony, as highlighted by Ibn Khaldun's concept of *Asabiyyah* (Butt, Shahzad and Zaka, 2023). Critiques of capitalism, such as Marx's, highlight how the pursuit of profit can prioritize material gain over holistic well-being (Vos, 2020).

Material accumulation and instant pleasure are the result of hedonistic shift in the society (Giourgas, 2013). Where eudemonism respected traditions, human values and virtue (Waterman, 2008) hedonism was enough to risk any chances of long-term wellbeing (Roche, 2020). Sadly this is not an isolated shift but an evil affecting all human societies at large (Berry, 2023).

Demographics and social support along with other such factors impact individual wellbeing (Das et al. 2020). If we need to study the factors that impact the wellbeing at individual or communal level we need to study both hedonic and eudemonic approaches to psychology (Bhullar, Hine and Phillips, 2014) Because by doing so we will be able to shed light on various human experiences and in the long run societal wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

## **2.2 Tracing the evolution of behavioral shift:**

Human societies (especially before 15<sup>th</sup> century) historically and naturally were based on common human virtues like eudemonism, kindness, spiritual connections common benefit which eventually led to human betterment. Pursuit of excellence with respect to moral integrity was highlighted as core element for a fulfilled life by thinkers like Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle (Bellin, 2008).

16th century onwards till 19th century human societies started to drift away from eudemonism into the vast domain of hedonism. This spectrum over time deepened in hedonic attributes due to capitalism, secularism and colonialism which destroyed core human values of eudemonism and resulted in prioritization of immediate pleasure (Olson, 2014). The surge in wealth accumulation through colonial enterprises and celebrating material success fueled the transition towards hedonism, reshaping societal norms and ethical frameworks.

In the aftermath of 19th century, the influence of hedonistic values continued to gain momentum, driven by the proliferation of consumerism and the relentless pursuit of profit in a capitalist society. Keynes' 1930 observations hinted at a potential shift away from the obsession with material wealth accumulation, suggesting a reevaluation of societal values towards a more balanced approach (Keynes, 1930). Thus the subsequent time period experienced the complete shift towards hedonism, completely rejecting contemporary societal values (Hilton, 2009).

## **2.3 Cause exploration for the behavioral shift**

The transformation from traditional community-focused values to modern individualistic, capitalistic pursuits significantly changed societal dynamics and well-being. Scholars like Cohrs (Cohrs et al., 2013) note how traditional societies value community, relationships, and spiritual well-being, emphasizing virtues, wisdom, and contributions to the collective good. In contrast, (Rojas, 2014) highlights how capitalism prioritizes individual material pursuits and instant gratification, fostering a consumer culture that values consumption and external validation. This shift has raised concerns about the erosion of traditional social structures, as discussed by (Polanyi, 1944) in "The Great Transformation," who warns that unrestrained capitalism can disrupt social cohesion and foster hedonistic cultures that prioritize individual gain over collective well-being. Tuchman (Tuchman, 1987) further explores the impact of materialism and self-interest on societal dynamics, revealing how the pursuit of wealth and power can overshadow the pursuit of eudaimonia, contributing to social disintegration and moral decay.

Moral decay within the Catholic Church led to the loss of faith in the West (Tuchman, 1985), whose immoral conduct led to disillusionment among Europeans and prompted the rise of Protestant movements seeking religious reform. The pursuit of economic growth and profit in capitalism has further exacerbated societal issues, as argued by (Jackson, 2009), (Raworth, 2017), (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010), who highlight the negative impact of income inequality, short-term consumption, and profit maximization on societal well-being. (Klein, 2014) critiques capitalism for promoting environmental degradation through unsustainable exploitation, at the same time (Taylor, 2007) discusses the rise of individualism and consumer culture, which have led to a shift towards hedonism and materialism, prioritizing personal desires over communal well-being and ethical considerations. Easterlin (Easterlin and O'Connor, 2022) provide empirical evidence that increasing wealth does not guarantee greater well-being, challenging the notion that material accumulation leads to lasting happiness on both individual and societal levels.

No one can deny the influence of Eurocentrism on societal values and priorities (Lambropoulos, 2019). Modern definition of success is now completely based on materialistic success, which is purely hedonic in nature. This is taking us away from societal cohesion and fulfillment

Media and technological development have played a really negative role in destruction of eudemonic values by continuous bombardment of advertisements, social attractions, pleasures and self-indulgence opportunities (Bauman, 2007) and (Turkle, 2011).

#### **2.4 Implications of behavioral shift:**

The implications of this behavioral shift from eudemonism to hedonism has been studied from various angles by many researchers in our times. Immediate pleasure seeking habits lead to destruction of mental health and also possess the risk for substance abuse increase (Páez Gallego et al., 2020) and (de Lazari-Radek, 2024). This behavioral shift also leads to destruction of social cohesion and destroys social bonds which is harmful both for the environment and society (Fineman, 2012). On the contrary if eudemonic behaviors become common in a society, it experiences, personal growth of the people, strengthens the long-term goals and leads to overall welfare of the society (Ruini and Ryff, 2016). Individuals of this society engage in activities like benevolent communal actions, charity, altruism and volunteering etc. which strengthens these societies further (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). These people experience autonomy, growth, positive relations, purposeful life and long-term wellbeing (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Values which foster in eudemonic societies like trust, reciprocity and communal interest according to Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000) results in overall social wellbeing in the long run (Sortheix and Lönnqvist, 2014). In summary if we understand that our behaviors lead to development of societal dynamics which result in our personal and communal wellbeing we will understand how important it is to research on human values shaping a society (Zelenkovski, Prodanova, and Kocarev, 2024) and (Nazirova and Borbala, 2024).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

A structured lens for the analysis of data is provided by the theoretical framework in bibliometric and sociological analysis papers (Lim and Kumar, 2024). They help researchers establish a foundation for their study, guiding the selection of variables, methods, and interpretation of results, ultimately enhancing the rigor and credibility of their findings.

Human beliefs are the backbone of values and values result in actions, which in turn define a society (Hall, 2006; Sayer, 2011).

**Figure 1: Theoretical flowchart**



Idea presented in Figure 1 is supported by The Theory of Wellbeing, The Theory of Self-Determination (Ryan, 2009) Self-Development Theory (Saakvitne, Tennen, and Affleck, 1998), Positive Psychology Theory by (Hefferon and Boniwell, 2011) Contemporary Theory (Turner, 2012), Moral Theory (Timmons, 2012), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001), Dialogical Theory (Kent and Taylor, 2002), Social Exchange Theory (Cook and Emerson, 1987).

This study proposes that due to capitalism, secularism, globalization, excessive use of technology and pursuit of instant gratification world has gradually shifted from natural eudemonic behaviors to hedonism which is killing human societies in worst ways possible. It is high time that we realized this subtle shift and its poisonous impacts. The only way to fight this evil is to understand the reasons for the shift and to counter them with value instilling in our youth via societal connections, compassion and societal engagement (Jalees et al., 2024). This planned and conscious effort can lead to development of social cohesion and collective wellbeing.

#### **4. Methodology**

Basic aim of the current study is to address the immediate and dire need to exploring the hedonic shift in human behavior around the globe. This study was done in stages. Stage 1 was the content analysis via literature review in order to see if and when this shift happened over time. A systematic review and bibliometric analysis was done for the purpose of pointing out the realization of this shift (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). This was to do the analysis of the global behavioral shift and its underlying reasons, shedding light on the complex interplay between individual values, societal trends, and cultural changes.

Sociological analysis was done in the second stage investigating how social structures, institutions, interactions impact society functions and its evolution (Blumer, 1956) into three time periods; before 15th century, 16th till 19th century and after 19th century till very recently to study the transition of human values from eudemonism to hedonism.

In stage three a descriptive analysis was done to study the evolution of hedonic shift and the factors which resulted in this shift on global level.

#### **5. Bibliometric Analysis**

This section covers the bibliometric review in order to do a systematic and structured literature review in order to identify the research gaps in specified field (Saunders and Rojon, 2011). This type of review leads to understanding comprehensive picture of the published work by doing the analysis on published work collectively (Zupic and Čater, 2015). In this study authors did co-author analysis, citation analysis, co-occurrence analysis and text-mining. Bibliometric coupling and citation analysis (Baker et al., 2015). were mainly employed in the analysis. Impact of publications with respect to authors, sources publication linages etc. was done along with citation analysis (Olmeda-Gómez and Perianes-Rodríguez, 2019).

##### **5.1 Research Methodology, Data Sources and Analysis Tools**

The following section discusses the methodology used for bibliometric analysis. Dimension.ai was used to collect data as per given strategy. Search for term “Values” resulted in two million nine hundred thirty-four thousand nineteen results. For “Values” AND “Eudemonic” = Six thousand five hundred and seventy-seven results appeared. For “Values” AND “Eudemonic” AND “Behavioural Shift” = twelve hundred and forty-four final results from Dimension.ai appeared, with years 1971 till 2024. Figure 2 shows the trend and Figure 3 shows the flow diagram of the search strategy respectively. Both point towards a significant growing trend of research towards the selected topic.

Figure 2: Trend of Publications (2015 till 2024)

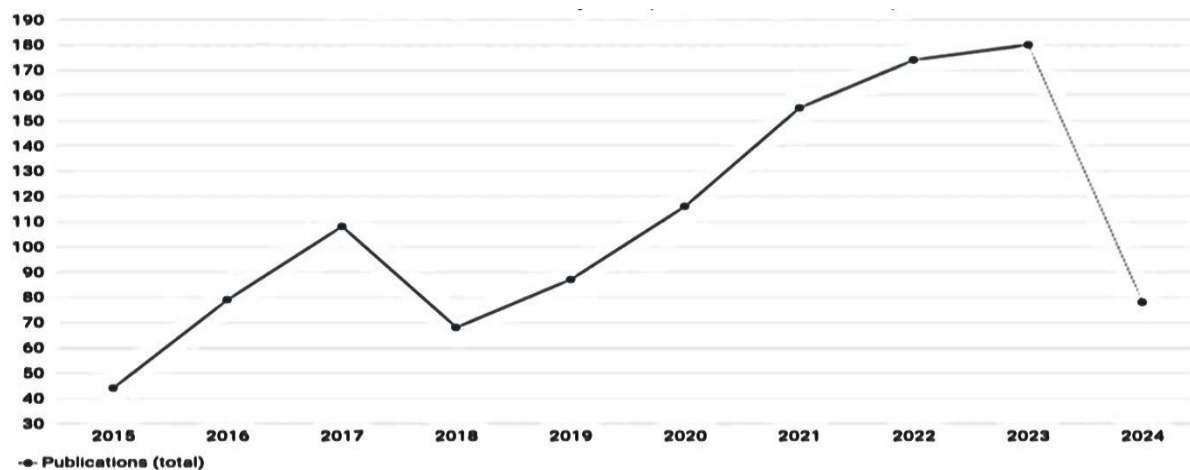


Figure 3: Flow diagram of the search strategy

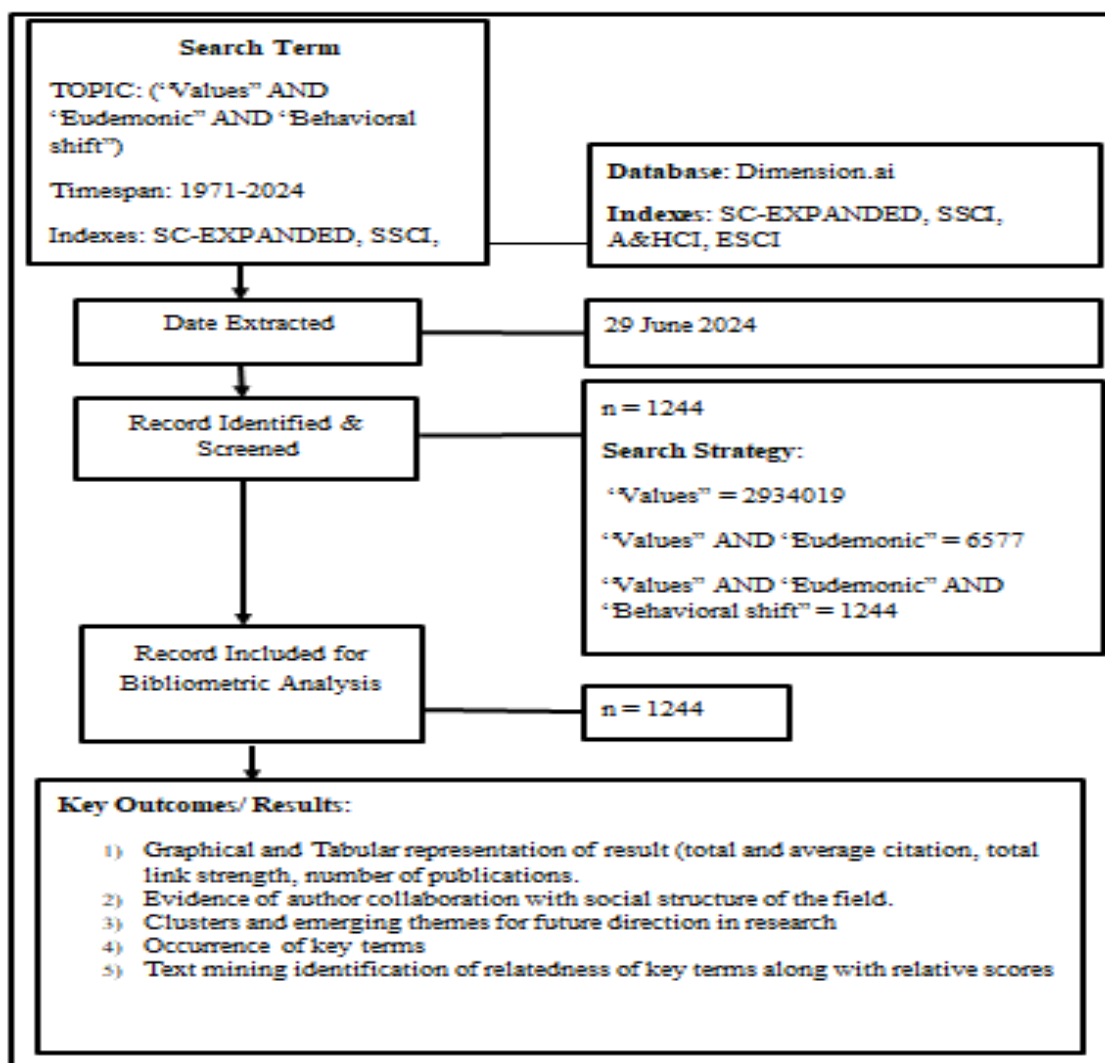


Table 1: Top Ten Authors, their Organizations and Countries

Name	Organization	Country	Publications	Citations	Citations mean
Ernst Thomas Bohlmeijer	University of Twente	Netherlands	6	226	37.67
Meg Aum Warren	Western Washington University	United States	5	19	3.80
Jacky Chau-Kiu Cheung	City University of Hong Kong	China	4	5	1.25
Christian Krekel	London School of Economics and Political Science	United Kingdom	4	34	8.50
Carena J Van Riper	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	United States	4	80	20.00
Edo Shonin	University of Derby	United Kingdom	4	337	84.25
William Van Gordon			4	337	84.25
Martin E P Seligman	University of Pennsylvania	United States	4	204	51.00
Ali Derakhshan	Golestan University	Iran	3	695	231.67
Rosa María Baños	University of Valencia	Spain	3	32	10.67

Source: Author's Compilation

Top ten authors as per bibliometric analysis are shown in Table 1. The data highlights the varying levels of research output and impact among the listed scholars. Data in Table 1 provides insights into the scholarly contributions and influence of these individuals in their respective fields.

## 5.2 Co-Authorship Analysis

Multiple linkages between seven prominent authors are evident from co-authorship analysis diagram created in *VOSviewer*. Each dot represents an author and each line represents a joint publication or co-authorship.

Figure 4: Co-Authorship Analysis<sup>1</sup>

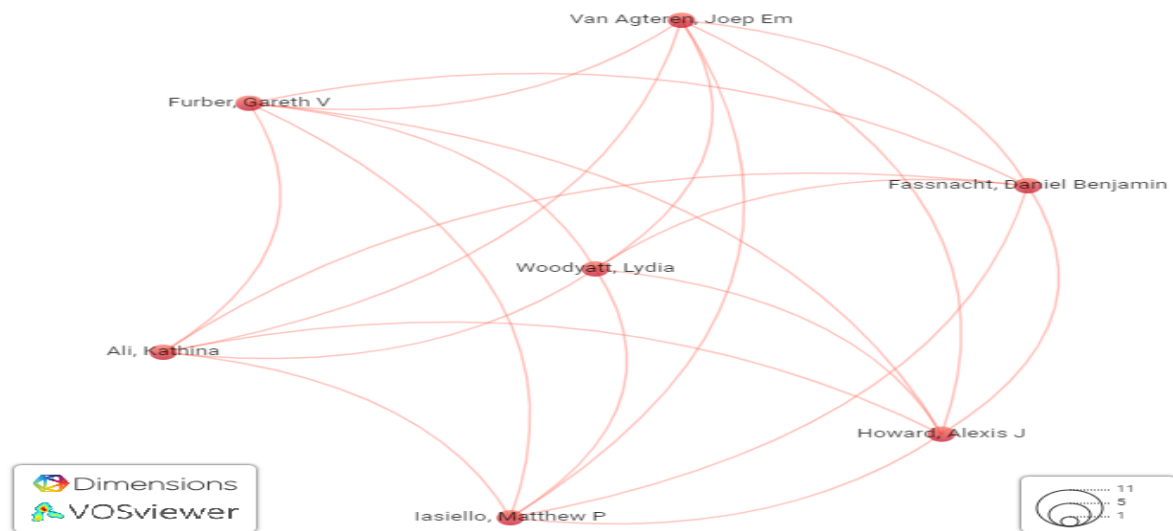


Figure 4 depicts a network graph representing co-authorship or collaboration relationships between researchers. Based on the number of connections, the top three most collaborative researchers are Ryff, Carol Diane, Cheung, Jacky Chau-Kiu and Bohlmeijer, Ernst Thomas respectively.

<sup>1</sup> Only showing most extensive set of connections, excluded papers with more than 25 authors

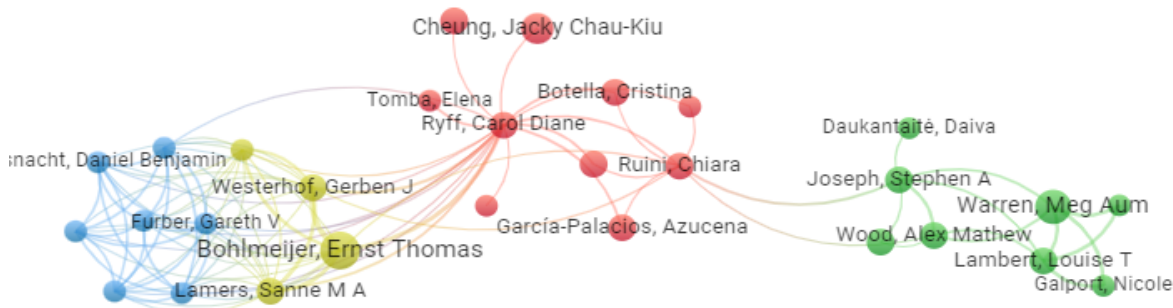


### 5.3 Citation Analysis

The network graph represents co-authorship relationships between researchers. Different colors of nodes likely indicate distinct research areas or affiliations. Figure 5 depicts these citation nodes. Citation analysis shows four different clusters of authors.

This means four separate clusters of dimensions or areas within behavioral shift exist where authors in each color belong to a specific area that have worked in the same direction and often referred each other.

**Figure 5: Citation Analysis**



### 5.4 Source Title Analysis

Table 2 shows the most prominent research journals in the area of behavioral shifts. These journals belong to various subjects. Psychology, sociology, behavioral sciences, happiness studies and multidisciplinary social science journals are included in the list.

**Table 2: Top ten Sources concerning number of publications, Citations, Citations Mean**

Name	Publications	Citations	Citations mean
Frontiers in Psychology	33	856	25.94
Behavioral and Brain Sciences	33	370	11.21
Journal of Happiness Studies	16	545	34.06
SSRN Electronic Journal	16	33	2.06
Current Psychology	13	273	21.00
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	12	141	11.75
International Handbooks of Quality-of-Life	11	324	29.45
The Journal of Positive Psychology	10	241	24.10
Sustainability	10	69	6.90
Cross-Cultural Advancements in Positive Psychology	9	99	11.00

Source: Authors Compilation

Journal of Happiness Studies, Frontiers in Psychology and International Handbooks of Quality-Of-Life are the top journals as per provided data number of publications, total citations, citations mean per journal.

### 5.5 Co-word analysis, thematic clusters

Co-word analysis and thematic clusters are essential in bibliometric analysis because researchers identify patterns, relationships, and main themes within a body of literature. Co-word analysis and thematic clusters provide valuable insights into research fields and guides future investigations. Seven different clusters and themes were identified based on analysis shown in table 3.



**Table 3: Thematic Clusters**

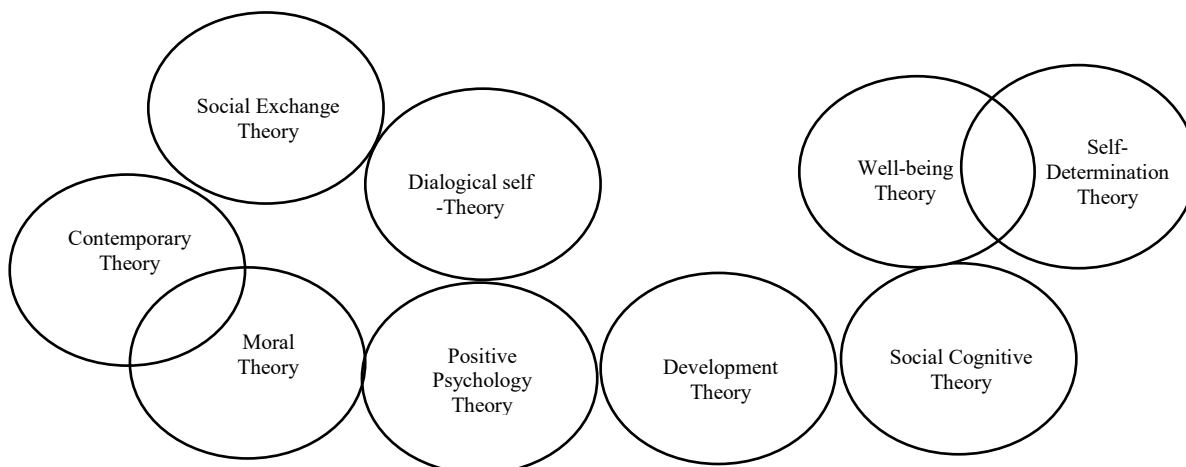
<b>Cluster 1: Well-being</b>	<b>Cluster 2: Development</b>	<b>Cluster 3: Positive Psychology</b>	<b>Cluster 4: Spiritual Development</b>	<b>Cluster 5: Social Cognition</b>	<b>Cluster 6: Self- Determination</b>	<b>Cluster 7: Social Exchange</b>
Decent society, existential anxiety, Therapy, global sustainability, Positivity, resiliency, SDGs, Sustainable future, acceptability, accessibility, care, enjoyment, global economy	Adult education, eudemonic motivation, eudemonic perspectives, green production, hedonic motivation, intergenerational learning, multidisciplinary perspectives, social well-being, planned behaviour	Altruism, Buddhist principle, control, emotional well-being, gratitude experience, mindfulness, self-acceptance, reliability, Basic psychological need, cosmopolitanism, neo-classical calling	Faith, religion, heaven, God, humanist, higher order gratitude, moral philosophy, uni-factorial gratitude, truth	Aggression, behavioural changes, compassionate care, happier life, mindful consumption, mental well-being, self-care, social cognition, social identity, justice intervention, psychological flexibility	Ecological behaviour, hedonism, imposter syndrome, interpersonal relationships, social learning, self-transcendence, spiritual endeavours, wider goals	Academic self-efficacy, behavioural intention, effective size, European society, hedonic need fulfilment, human interaction, workplace spirituality, social contribution

Source: Authors' Compilation

On the basis of the co-occurrence analysis of author keywords cluster analysis using VOS viewer was conducted. Cluster 1 (Well-being) developed based on the given keywords in Table 3 is related to two distinct theories (well-being theory and self-determination theory). Cluster 2 (Development) and the keywords were linked with development theory. Based on the keywords like altruism, gratitude and self-acceptance, Positive psychology theory emerged from cluster 3. Contemporary theory and moral theory were linked in Cluster 4(Spiritual development). Cluster 5, (Social Cognition) supported social cognition theory. Dialogical self-theory overlapped in cluster 6 (Self-Determination) and 7 (Social Exchange). Social exchange theory emerged from the merger of 6th and 7th cluster.

Thematic Venn diagram and thematic lens supported focus diversion towards behavioural shift. Figure 6 shows the Venn diagram of the theories and their interaction.

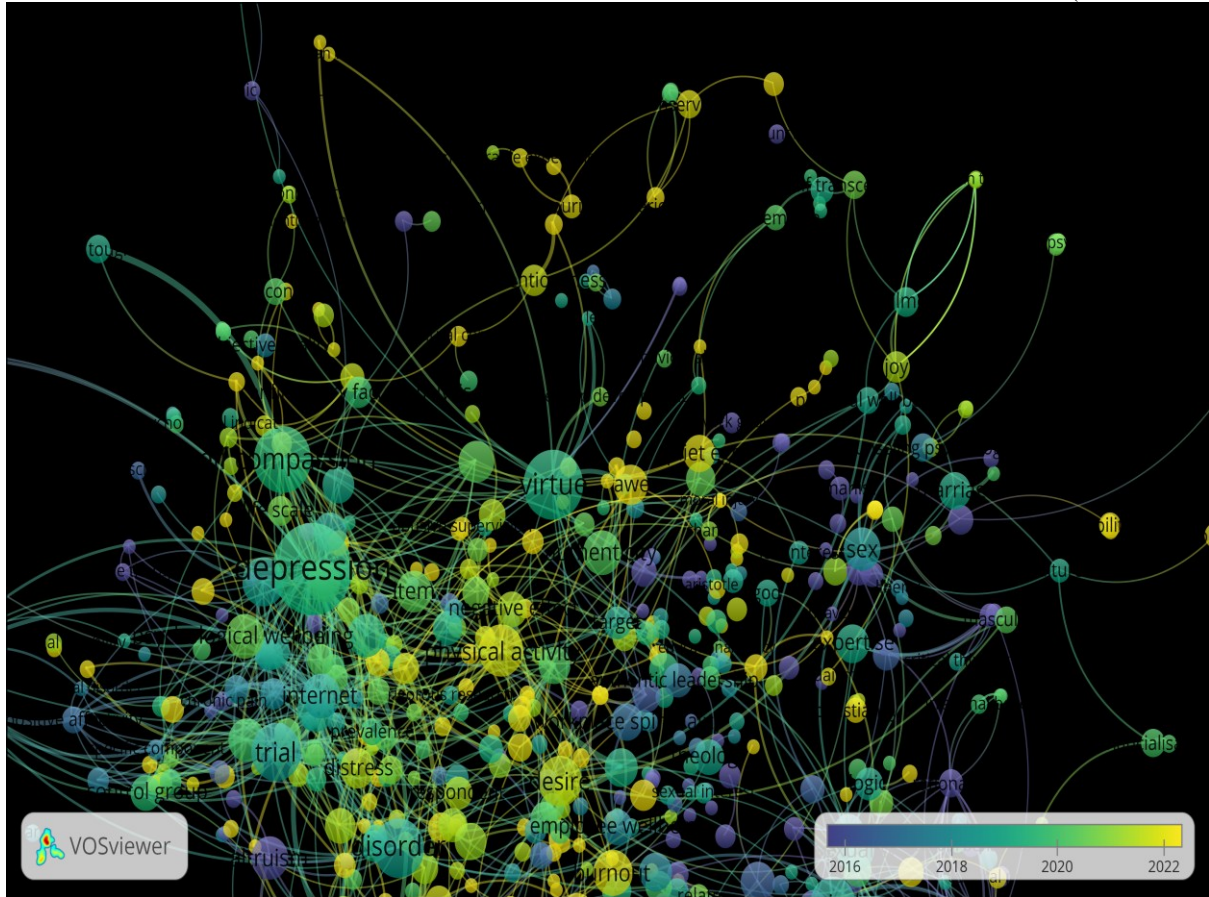
**Figure 6: Overlapping Theoretical lenses**



## 5.6 Co-occurrence Analysis

Co-occurrence analysis of author keywords was done using VOS viewer. Co-occurrence analysis identifies the frequency with which terms appear together in documents, revealing relationships and patterns in literature. It helps researchers understand prevailing themes and connections within a research field.

**Figure 7: VOSviewer visualization of a term co-occurrence network based on title and abstract fields (Full Counting)**



Keyword analysis involves identifying and analysing the frequently appearing key terms or phrases. It helps researchers understand the main topics, trends, and focus areas within a specific research field, providing valuable insights for further study and exploration. Figure 7 shows the Network analysis of the terms. Keyword analysis pointed towards a recent trend of increased research on eudemonism. There is a clear shift from words like rationale, existential psychology, crime, hedonism and consumerism etc., (Depicted in dark blue or purple colour, closer to 2015) towards words like memorable experience, conservation, rehabilitation, Judaism, Christianity, awe, quiet ego and eudemonic motive etc., (showed in yellow colour after 2022). Terms like “Eudaimonic”, “Eudaimonic behaviour”, and “Eudaimonia” in recent studies depict a trend towards more found and authentic human well-being based on values like virtue, moral functioning, humanist, authenticity etc., closer to natural human instincts and contrary rationalism and neo-classical economics beliefs (Zaman, 2019; Ramrattan and Szenberg, 2022).

## 6. Sociological Analysis

The term "sociological analysis" refers to the examination and interpretation of social phenomena. The sociology analysis entails examining social structures, institutions, interactions and patterns to comprehend the functioning and evolution of society (Blumer, 1956). Current study analyses writings of philosophers, researchers and prominent authors in different historical eras: pre-15th century, 16th to 19th century, and post-19th century up to the present, to investigate the shift of human values from eudemonism to hedonism.

Before the 15th century, numerous literary works and writings reflected the importance of human values and religion in shaping societal norms and governance. For instance, in the "Nicomachean Ethics" by Aristotle, written in the 4th century BCE, the philosopher emphasized cultivating virtues and the pursuit of eudaimonia as essential components of a fulfilling life. Aristotle's exploration of ethics and human values highlighted the intrinsic connection between moral character and the well-being of individuals within

society (Crisp, 2014). The earliest Latin translations of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, the *Ethica vetus* and *Ethica nova*, were analyzed in six commentaries by Parisian arts masters in the 13th century (Tracey, 2008). Robert Grosseteste later completed a full translation (Hill, 1976), leading to commentaries by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, who blended Aristotle's philosophy with Christian beliefs (Jordan, 1992).

Similarly, in the Bible and Quran, which include texts dating back to centuries before the 15th century, numerous passages emphasize the importance of compassion, justice, humility, and love as guiding principles for human behavior. The teachings of both these scriptures underscored the significance of moral integrity, compassion for others, and the pursuit of spiritual well-being over material wealth (Reeves, 2004).

Moreover, works such as "The Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri, written in the 14th century, provide a rich tapestry of religious and moral themes interwoven with reflections on human values and redemption (see (Alighieri, 1962)). Dante's "*Journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise*" serves as a metaphorical exploration of the consequences of human actions and the transformative power of moral virtues (Wilkins, Bergin, and De Vito, 1965).

Furthermore, in the works of medieval theologians and philosophers such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, discussions on the relationship between faith, reason, and ethics abound. St. Augustine's "Confessions" and St. Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologica" delve into the complexities of human nature, the importance of virtues, and the pursuit of moral perfection through alignment with divine principles (O'Connell, 1996; Thomas, 1915).

Before the sixteenth century, both European and Muslim thought predominantly centered around religion (Zaman, 2009). However, Western historical developments led to the emergence of secular thinking, which marginalized and separated religion into distinct spheres. Muslims often struggle to comprehend these shifts due to inaccuracies in European accounts of this transition and the lack of easily accessible, referenced information in mainstream texts. In Europe social sciences emerged as a substitute for religion, seeking to address inquiries about humanity and society through reason, philosophy, and observation rather than faith. This secular approach contrasts sharply with Islamic and other religious perspectives. Tawney in 1926, in "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", argues that the secularization of political theory was a pivotal intellectual transformation that heralded the modern era (Tawney, 1926); (Wright, 1987).

*"A single theory which makes religion the basis for all human interests was replaced by a dualistic one, with separate compartments for the soul and flesh. The intellectual movement is gradual, and spokesmen for both sides exist very early and very late, but the overwhelming majority is on one side in the early period and on the other in the late period."* (Tawney, 1926)

In England around 1500 and 1550, the discussions on pressing social issues for example, Christian values and morality were frequently invoked. However, by the mid-17th century, particularly in the 1650s, economic matters, especially profit and loss without mentioning religion had become a norm. The transition to secular thought in Europe was considered the victory of reason (science) over superstition (religion). This portrayal can lead students to question their religious beliefs as they are presented as inferior and at odds with reason.

*"Age of Enlightenment: a term used to describe the trends in thought and letters in Europe and the American colonies during the 18th century prior to the French Revolution (1789- 1799). The phrase was frequently employed by writers of the period itself, convinced that they were emerging from centuries of darkness and ignorance into a new age enlightened by reason, science, and a respect for humanity. The period also often is referred to as the Age of Reason".* – (Internet Encarta as cited by (Zaman, 2015).

The erosion of faith in religious absolutes prompted Europeans to contemplate the origins of theory and realization that the Bible, traditionally seen as the infallible word of God, might not be a reliable source,

consensus alone could no longer serve as a reliable truth indicator. Hence, the necessity arose to establish criteria for distinguishing between credible knowledge and other forms of information. Hume articulated fundamental concepts that have since shaped and continue to govern Western perceptions of valid knowledge.

*“When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion”.*— [Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, 12, "Of the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy" in (Maia, 2015)]

From 16th till 19th century there was a paradigm shift from eudemonic school of thought to hedonic values. Almost all early secular philosophers recognized the necessity of a moral code for upholding societal order. Many believed the ideal moral framework closely resembled Christian ethics, leading some to describe "modernity" as a form of "secularized Christianity." Enlightenment thinkers aimed to derive this moral code from empirical observations and reason, similar to the methodology of science. They hoped that establishing a scientific basis for morality would result in a superior moral system and elevate humanity to a higher state. The Enlightenment project's success hinged on finding a rational foundation for morals, motivating prominent figures like Adam Smith, David Hume, Bentham, and John Stuart Mill to engage in this pursuit.

Hume laid the groundwork for a new secular moral philosophy, where he argued that

*“Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous.”* – [Hume- A Treatise on Human Nature (1739) in (Hume, 2000)]

His ethical theory was notable for being entirely secular, lacking references to divine will, a predetermined plan by God, or an afterlife. Hume contended that fundamental moral values are products of societal conventions. Building upon Hume's ideas, subsequent philosophers such as Claude-Henri Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, and their followers actively worked to establish an alternative moral system known as the "Religion of Humanity." (Raeder, 2002) offers a comprehensive exploration of these developments, highlighting how conventional narratives overlooked these developments.

As per the doctrine of humanity, the objective of human behavior is to attain happiness, deeming actions that generate pleasure as ethical and those that result in pain as unethical. To quote the eminent proponent of this belief, John Stuart Mill:

*“The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.”* – [Utilitarianism, ii, (1863) in (Mill, 2016)].

These beliefs were the initiation of hedonic behavior. The prevailing secular nature of contemporary social sciences and humanities scholarship has led to a notable absence of references to religion, potentially contributing to a societal shift towards hedonism also (Turner, 2011). While these disciplines play a critical role in shaping our understanding of human behavior and societal values, the exclusion of religious perspectives may limit the depth of analysis and overlook the historical influence of religious beliefs on shaping norms and values (Bellin, 2008). This oversight can lead to an overemphasis on hedonic pursuits, prioritizing immediate personal gratification over deeper moral and ethical considerations, potentially undermining traditional moral frameworks and cultivating virtuous qualities in society (Olson, 2014). Efforts to incorporate diverse perspectives, including religious insights, are crucial for providing a more

comprehensive understanding of human nature, values, and ethics in contemporary society (James et al., 2003).

Since the 19th century, the ideology of capital accumulation has experienced a significant surge, primarily fueled by the colonization and exploitation of wealth from non-Western regions by Western powers. As John M. Keynes stated in his paper *“Economic possibilities of our Grandchildren”*

*“The modern age opened; I think, with the accumulation of capital which began in the sixteenth century.”*  
– (Keynes, 1930)

He further wrote:

*“There are changes in other spheres too which we must expect to come. When the accumulation of wealth is no longer of high social importance, there will be great changes in the code of morals. We shall be able to rid ourselves of many of the pseudo-moral principles which have hag-ridden us for two hundred years, by which we have exalted some of the most distasteful of human qualities into the position of the highest virtues. We shall be able to afford to dare to assess the money-motive at its true value. The love of money as a possession -as distinguished from the love of money as a means to the enjoyments and realities of life - will be recognized for what it is, a somewhat disgusting morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the specialists in mental disease. All kinds of social customs and economic practices, affecting the distribution of wealth and of economic rewards and penalties, which we now maintain at all costs, however distasteful and unjust they may be in themselves, because they are tremendously useful in promoting the accumulation of capital, we shall then be free, at last, to discard.” - (Keynes, 1930)*

Since 1930s when Keynes wrote this guidance bible for next 100 years or so, world has seen the very “distasteful hedonism” to become the second nature of humans in societies. This era after 19th century marked the peak of capitalism and consumerism, with the relentless pursuit of profit and economic growth becoming the dominant ethos of society (Hilton, 2009). The accumulation of vast riches through colonial enterprises not only enriched Western nations but also laid the foundation for a global capitalist system that prioritized wealth accumulation above all else (Anievas and Nişancioğlu, 2015). As capitalism and consumerism thrived, a culture of hedonism emerged, wherein the pursuit of pleasure, material possessions, and instant gratification became elevated as virtuous ideals (Illouz, 2023). The relentless drive for capital accumulation and the embrace of hedonic values have, over time, transformed what were once viewed as ethical vices into celebrated virtues, perpetuating a cycle of individualistic pursuits and materialistic excess that continues to shape societal values and behaviors (Soper, 2023). But unfortunately, Keynes' prediction of a shift in societal values away from the obsession with wealth accumulation has not fully materialized, as hedonism - characterized by a focus on immediate pleasure and self-indulgence - has become pervasive. This hedonic mindset has led to economic, environmental, political, and social issues. To address these challenges, it is important to promote values such as empathy, responsibility, and sustainability, fostering a sense of community and stewardship to combat the negative impacts of hedonism and work toward a more eudemonic future. However, this research did find evidence in sociological analysis as well as bibliometric analysis that there is a realization and interest toward eudemonic value usage.

Presented sociological analysis illustrates a nuanced trajectory of societal values through distinct historical epochs. Before 15th century, religious influences predominantly shaped governance and moral frameworks. The period from 16th to 19th century witnessed a notable transition toward secular ideologies and the rise of capitalism, setting the stage for the prominence of hedonistic values. In the aftermath of the 19th century, the research unveils a reinforcement of hedonism, driven by consumerism and materialism, resulting in profound societal implications. However, recent realizations emphasize the urgent need to prioritize values like empathy and sustainability to counterbalance the pervasive influence of hedonism and steer societies towards a more balanced and eudemonic future.

## **7. Discussion**

The evolution of global behavioral trends from eudemonism to hedonism has been a topic of interest among researchers and philosophers alike. As discussed by the authors highlighted in the sociological analysis, this shift towards valuing immediate pleasure, materialistic pursuits, and self-gratification over long-term personal growth and community welfare has been a gradual process over different historical periods.

A gradual shift towards hedonistic values over time, aligns with the observations made by philosophers such as Epicurus (Konstan 2005) and (Bentham 1843), who emphasized the pursuit of pleasure as a fundamental aspect of human behavior. This transition is reflective of changing societal norms and values, where instant gratification and material wealth accumulation are increasingly prioritized over holistic well-being and communal welfare.

Rejection of religion and acceptance of science as alternate guidance principle, logical positivism, Eurocentrism, colonization, globalization, consumerism, advancements in technology and individualism all are key factors in causing the shift from eudemonism to hedonism (Tawney, 1926), (Keynes, 1930), (Burston, 1991), (Marcuse, 2007) and (Zaman, 2009). Influence of media and technology, advertisement, social pressure and economic race along with movement that supported individualism are also the causes of this shift (Fink 2003) and (Hays and Morales 2001).

People like (Huxley) 1863 and Lasch (2019) who have realized the dangers of this shift have given us the warning to be ready to face increased materialism, decreased life satisfaction, and weakened social cohesion due to hedonism. Disintegration of societies, loss of humanity and diminishing trust in institutions will eventually follow.

## **8. Limitations and Future Research**

Instead of utilizing dimensions.ai data, Web of Science or Scopus should have been preferred. The time period covered in the files did not directly reference material predating the 15th century. Including such material could enhance the bibliometric analysis of keyword occurrence across these historical periods, offering further evidence of behavioral and value shifts. Additionally, the literature review is not exhaustive. Future research could incorporate empirical studies using an experimental approach to observe changes in both values and behaviors over time concerning eudemonic and hedonic lifestyles.

## **9. Conclusion**

Research findings from both bibliometric analysis and sociological analysis have validated a significant shift in values from eudemonic to hedonic occurring post-15th century. This transition was a gradual process culminating in its zenith during the 19th century. More recently, there has been a noticeable resurgence in interest towards exploring eudemonism as a pathway to enhancing human well-being. This shift from eudemonic to hedonic values was attributed to various factors, including abandoning religion in Europe, the emergence of science as a new guiding principle, the influence of logical positivism, the prevalence of Eurocentrism, the impacts of colonialism, the forces of globalization, advancements in technology, and the pivotal role of media in shaping societal norms and values. This shift towards valuing immediate pleasure, materialistic pursuits, and self-gratification over long-term personal growth and community welfare has reshaped societal structures and individual well-being. During bibliometric analysis seven clusters emerged naming Well-being, Development, Positive Psychology, Spiritual Development, Social Cognition, Self-Determination and Social Exchange. Following nine theories appeared to be connected in thematic chart from these clusters; Theory of Wellbeing, Theory of Self-Determination, Self-Development Theory, Positive Psychology Theory, Contemporary Theory, Moral Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Dialogical Theory, and Social Exchange Theory.

Both systematic review and analysis showed that the rise of hedonism may offer temporary gratification; it also raises concerns about the long-term consequences on individual satisfaction, mental health, social connections, and community engagement. Moreover, the societal impact of prioritizing hedonistic values

includes potential weakening of social cohesion, widening economic disparities, and hindering sustainable development efforts.

Research pointed towards promotion of values such as empathy, responsibility, and sustainability as crucial to counteract the negative impacts of hedonism and work towards a more eudemonic future. A sense of community, stewardship, and collective well-being, can strive for a balanced society that values personal growth and community welfare over instant gratification and materialistic pursuits. Further research where these shifts can be quantified and especially qualitative and quantitative estimate of global losses due to behavioral shifts need to be done.

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