Less is More: Unveiling the Links between Minimalism, Well-being, Psychological Need Satisfaction, and Individual Differences

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Abstract

In a world increasingly driven by consumption, minimalism stands out as a lifestyle of simplicity, mindfulness, and intentional choices. In the past few years, the trend of minimalism has become increasingly popular. However, there is a knowledge gap in understanding whether individual differences may play a role in living a minimalist lifestyle, and the potential benefits of this lifestyle. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge the gap by exploring the predictors of minimalism, its associated benefits on well-being and psychological need satisfaction. Furthermore, it sought to determine whether age and financial security moderate the relationship between minimalism and well-being. A group of 537 participants (M_{age} = 43) from diverse backgrounds completed an online survey that measured their levels of financial security, minimalism, subjective and psychological well-being, psychological need satisfaction, and personality traits. Structural Equation Modeling was employed to analyze the data. The results suggested that individual differences in age, conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, level of education predicted minimalism. Additionally, we found that minimalism was positively associated with subjective well-being and four dimensions of psychological well-being, while its association with psychological need satisfaction was not significant. Furthermore, age and financial security did not moderate the relationship between minimalism and subjective and psychological well-being. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the potential benefits associated with living a minimalist lifestyle. Future longitudinal research could explore the temporal dynamics of these relationships, providing insight into the long-term benefits of embracing minimalism.

Keywords: minimalism, subjective and psychological well-being, psychological need satisfaction, individual differences

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In today's consumer-driven and materialistic society, the pursuit of happiness and well-being is often equated with the accumulation of possessions and wealth (Tatzel, 2003). This could be explained by the idea of the hedonic treadmill happiness, which suggests that people often adapt to increases in material wealth and possessions, leading to a constant desire for more to maintain a certain level of happiness (Brickman, 1971). For instance, individuals may experience a temporary surge in happiness following positive events like winning a lottery or acquiring new possessions such as a house or a car. However, research suggests that such boosts in happiness are short-lived and eventually return to a baseline level over time (Brickman et al., 1978; Kuhn et al., 2008; Roszkowski & Grable, 2006). If material wealth and possessions do not result in long-term happiness, what does? There is a growing movement that advocates for a different approach of living to achieve lasting happiness—one that emphasizes simplicity, mindfulness, and intentional choices (Kang et al., 2021). This movement is known as Minimalism.

Minimalism refers to a lifestyle that is focused on living fewer possessions or owning only what adds value and meaning to one's life. By reducing unnecessary clutter and excess in one's life, people can focus on prioritizing their values (Kang et al., 2021; Sasaki, 2017). Minimalism, a phenomenon originally rooted in Asia, has gained global prominence following the 2008 financial crisis. This trend has been embraced by Western societies, where it is viewed either as a new approach to consumption (Dopierała, 2017) or an adoption of a low-consumption lifestyle (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020). Currently, there are no universally established measures for minimalism. Kang et al. (2021) attempted to operationalize this concept by combining existing measurements of voluntary simplicity - a concept considered as a backdrop for minimalism (Hook et al., 2023). Their exploratory

factor analyses reveal four fundamental domains: (a) clutter removal, (b) cautious shopping, (c) longevity, (d) self-sufficiency.

It should be noted that minimalism shares similarities with voluntary simplicity (Herziger et al., 2017). The concept of voluntary simplicity was first introduced by Gregg (1936), who defined it as a way of life that involves limiting one's possessions and minimizing clutter with the aim of living intentionally in accordance with one's goals and values. Elgin and Mitchell (1977) further expanded on this definition, outlining five values associated with the voluntary simplicity lifestyle: (a) material simplicity - consuming only what is necessary for basic needs; (b) human scale - opting for smaller living spaces and working environments; (c) self-determination - striving for greater control over one's life; (d) ecological awareness - acknowledging resources limits and individual actions' impact on the society; (e) personal growth - an aspiration towards developing inner life through intellectual or spiritual pursuits. The two concepts, while slightly differing in philosophy and motivations, share core features such as a decreased emphasis on accumulating material possessions and an increased focus on personal meaningful goals and values. As the measurement tools for minimalism were adapted from the voluntary simplicity scale (Hook et al., 2023), the terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

Predictors of living a minimalist lifestyle

In the past few years, the trend of minimalism has become increasingly popular, yet no research has investigated what predicts who lives a minimalist lifestyle. Previous research has suggested a link between a minimalistic lifestyle and well-being (Hook et al., 2023); this link was discussed in detail in the next section. Understanding the predictive factors of this lifestyle can enhance our knowledge of how it can be better promoted based on individual differences. Therefore, the first aim of the present study was to fill this gap by examining the factors that may influence individuals towards living a minimalist lifestyle.

The first factor that may predict this lifestyle is *age*. As discussed previously, minimalism refers to a lifestyle that is focused on living with fewer possessions and prioritizing their values (Kang et al., 2021; Sasaki, 2017). This is in line with the idea of the lifespan theory of socioemotional selectivity which suggest that older adults perceive their remaining lifespan as limited and thus tend to prioritize more goals that offer emotional fulfillment and positivity rather than long-term achievements. This shift leads them to place greater value upon meaningful experiences such as nurturing intimate relationships with loved ones or relishing enjoyable moments in life (Carstensen, 1992; Carstensen et al., 1999). By reducing unnecessary clutter and excess in one's life, older adults can focus on promoting these emotionally meaningful goals. Thus, while no previous study has investigated this hypothesis before, older adults can be more likely to live a minimalist lifestyle compared to younger adults.

The second factor that may influence individuals towards living this lifestyle is *financial security.* Financial security refers to an individual's subjective perception of financial stability, which can be reflected in their ability to acquire material possessions to meet their basic needs (Poduska, 1992). According to the individual adaptability theory, people adapt their lifestyles in response to their living condition (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). Thus, in situations of financial insecurity, individuals may gravitate towards minimalism as a pragmatic approach to manage their limited resources effectively. Conversely, financially secure individuals may have less incentive to adopt a minimalist lifestyle since their financial resources allow them to comfortably acquire and maintain material goods. Therefore, financial security can be an underlying motivational factor that drives this lifestyle choice.

In addition to age and financial security, the role of individual differences in personality in the context of living a minimalist lifestyle is a topic worth exploring because personality traits may influence lifestyle choices, which in turn can impact well-being. For

instance, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extraversion were found to have impacts on healthy lifestyle behaviors (Wong et al., 2022); while healthy lifestyle behaviors undoubtedly have a positive effect on mental and physical well-being (Chaney et al., 2007; Headey et al., 2013; Xu et al., 2010). Thus, it is important to investigate the relationship between personality traits and a minimalist lifestyle. A broad concept of personality is characterized by the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which includes five personality traits: openness, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (John et al., 2012; Soto & John, 2017). Openness refers to a person's willingness to embrace new experiences, often characterized by imagination, curiosity, and emotional awareness. Neuroticism entails a disposition towards negativity and emotional instability, resulting in feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. Extraversion involves a strong inclination towards social interaction, with individuals displaying traits such as enthusiasm and assertiveness. Agreeableness encompasses traits like empathy, generosity, and trustworthiness, facilitating positive social relationships. Conscientiousness reflects a tendency towards self-discipline and responsibility, often associated with setting high standards and maintaining stability in relationships (John et al., 2012; Soto & John, 2017).

To our knowledge, there is still no research conducted on the association between personality and minimalistic lifestyle. According to Gosling (2009), individuals with high scores in conscientiousness are typically more organized and have less clutter in their homes and workplaces. Thus, they may be drawn to minimalism as it aligns with their preference for organization and efficiency. They also may view minimalism as a way to streamline their lives, prioritize what truly matters, and avoid unnecessary distractions. On the other hand, individuals scoring high in neuroticism tend to struggle with letting go of possessions, perceiving material belongings as sources of comfort or security (Górnik-Durose, 2020; Tarka & Harnish, 2023), making it challenging for them to embrace minimalistic principles..

Interestingly, in one study, participants with untidy desks were perceived by others as less conscientious, more neurotic in the workplace (Horgan et al., 2019). Overall, there is a compelling rationale to suggest that conscientiousness and neuroticism can influence the tendency to embrace a minimalist lifestyle. This indicates a need to explore the relationships between these personality traits and minimalism.

The Relationship between Minimalism, Well-being and Psychological Need Satisfaction

There are many benefits associated with living a minimalist/ voluntary simplicity lifestyle, including improvements in health and *life satisfaction* (Hook et al., 2023). Life satisfaction refers to an individual's cognitive and affective assessments of their own life (Diener et al., 2009). Cross-sectional studies have shown that individuals, who live a minimalist lifestyle are more likely to be happier and less stressed than those whose lifestyle is not minimalistic. For instance, in an online survey conducted by Kang et al. (2021), it was found that minimalism led to increased flourishing and decreased levels of depression among individuals of various age groups residing in the United States. Similarly, Boujbel and d'Astous (2012) revealed a positive correlation between the adoption of voluntary simplicity and overall life satisfaction amongst Canadians ranging from 18 to 80 years of age with an average age of 40 years (see also: Brown & Kasser, 2005; Rich, Hanna, & Wright, 2017). Lloyd & Pennington (2020) also found that living with fewer possessions reduces the amount of *stress* that people experience in their everyday life. In their semi-structured interviews, participants expressed feeling uneasy or overwhelmed when surrounded by clutter, leading them to experience heightened anxiety levels. Upon embracing minimalism, many reported experiencing decreased stress and anxiety as they decluttered their living spaces. Several even discovered that owning excess items was a major contributing factor towards causing these negative emotions - something they only realized after transitioning into the minimalist lifestyle.

In contrast to the majority of the aforementioned research, which established a positive correlation between minimalism/voluntary simplicity and well-being, recent studies failed to identify any noteworthy link between minimalism and well-being (Matte et al., 2021; Oral & Thurner, 2019). The inconsistences in the outcomes may be attributed to studies concentrating primarily on the immediate impact of consumption habits, rather than analyzing how embracing a simpler lifestyle impacts overall well-being. Furthermore, there is no unanimous agreement regarding defining and operationalizing minimalism since each study designed its own scale or adopted different approaches; this highlights the absence of consensus on formulating and implementing minimalism conceptually. Notably, while most studies employed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) as a measure of well-being, it is important to recognize that relying solely on the life satisfaction scale may provide a limited perspective, as it primarily captures subjective well-being (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

Psychological well-being, another concept of well-being, has been overlooked in its relation to minimalism. While life satisfaction focuses on individuals' overall evaluation of their lives, psychological well-being delves deeper into aspects such as purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Understanding these distinctions is crucial because solely relying on measures of life satisfaction may overlook important dimensions of well-being. For instance, an individual may report high life satisfaction despite experiencing significant psychological distress or a lack of fulfillment in certain areas of life. Therefore, investigating psychological well-being alongside subjective well-being provides a more comprehensive understanding of individuals' overall well-being.

Furthermore, minimalism can be intrinsically linked to several dimensions of psychological well-being. For instance, Lloyd & Pennington (2020) have found that minimalism is associated with a greater sense of purpose in life, as individuals prioritize

meaningful experiences over material possessions. Additionally, embracing minimalism has been linked to personal growth, as it creates an environment for individuals to reflect on their own values, develop new insights, and learn and grow from these insights (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Beecher, 2007). Also, people reported that minimalism assisted in being more focused on the present moment, and self-accepting of their current circumstances (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020). Furthermore, minimalism fosters improved interpersonal connections, with individuals noting an increase in cherishing meaningful interactions with loved ones (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Jain et al., 2023). These findings underscore the importance of considering the multidimensional nature of psychological well-being when examining the impact of minimalism on individuals' lives.

Psychological need satisfaction plays a crucial role in individual well-being, as outlined by the self-determination theory, which posits that well-being universally depends on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomy reflects one's ability to freely choose behaviors, while competence refers to a sense of efficacy and belief in one's skills. Relatedness involves close relationships with others and a connection to the broader community. Satisfaction of these needs promotes both well-being and optimal psychological growth, while their thwarting can lead to psychopathology (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan et al., 1995). As psychological needs factors were found to be strongly positively linked to subjective and psychological well-being (Lataster et al., 2022), it is important examine their association with minimalism.

Applying the self-determination theory to minimalistic lifestyles, one may suggest that individuals who are self-sufficient, proficient in producing their own goods, and engage in resource-sharing are likely to have increased opportunities to fulfill these psychological needs. To date, only a few studies have tested this hypothesis. For instance, Rich et al. (2017)

discovered that people who practiced to a greater extent in simplifying behaviors reported fulfillment across all three psychological needs. However, this study had a disparity in participant gender, with 88% being female, and the measurement of voluntary simplicity did not reflect all dimensions of minimalism. Another study conducted by Lloyd & Pennington (2020) explored the relationship between minimalism and the three psychological needs through semi-structured interviews with 10 participants aged 24-52 years of age, who self-identify as minimalists. The study revealed that minimalism fosters the need for autonomy by liberating individuals from societal expectations and the monotony of routine. The participants also reported saving time on cleaning and organizing, particularly those with children. Minimalism enabled them to become more aware of their values and align their actions accordingly, like spending time with loved ones, being eco-friendly, buying ethically and sustainably, and choosing to engage in experiences rather than material things. In addition, minimalism allowed them to exert control and maintain order in their environment, reducing stress and anxiety, thus satisfying the need for competency. Furthermore, many participants also reported that minimalism creates mental space for reflection, fostering personal growth through insights gained from self-reflection on relationships with others or minimalistic practices like responsible spending habits and reducing environmental impact. This suggested a satisfaction of the need for relatedness. Nonetheless, the study's small sample size and homogeneity of participants from similar high socio-economic backgrounds raise concerns about its generalizability. Therefore, further research on the relationship between minimalism and psychological need satisfaction is warranted.

Kang et al. (2021) suggested that minimalism consists of four subdomains: (a) clutter removal, (b) cautious shopping, (c) longevity, and (d) self-sufficiency. Each subdomain reflects a different aspect of the minimalism concept. While the authors found a positive link between minimalism and well-being, they did not investigate whether certain subdomains of

minimalism are differentially associated with well-being. It is possible that some subdomains have a stronger link to well-being than others. To gain a deeper understanding of how different aspects of minimalism correlate with well-being outcomes, we aimed to examine these subdomains individually in relation to subjective/psychological well-being and psychological need satisfaction.

The Potential Moderating Roles of Age and Financial Security in the Relationship between Minimalism and Well-being

This study did not only aim to investigate the benefits associated with minimalism but also sought to explore the factors that predict for whom a minimalist lifestyle is more beneficial. There were two factors that has been hypothesized previously as predictive factors of living this lifestyle, also considered as the moderators between the relationships between minimalism and well-being. The first factor to consider was *age*. As discussed previously, older adults were hypothesized to be more likely to live this lifestyle as it can promote their emotionally meaningful goals based on the idea of the lifespan theory of socioemotional selectivity (Carstensen, 1992; Carstensen et al., 1999). Perhaps, living a minimalist lifestyle may be more beneficial for older adults compared to younger adults? Studies involving university students showed mixed (Balderjahn et al., 2020; Bayat & Sezer, 2018) or insignificant results between minimalism and well-being (Seegebarth et al., 2016). On the other hand, a recent systematic review by Hook et al. (2023) found that the older the participants the stronger the link between minimalism and well-being when comparing three quantitative studies (M_{age} = 35, r = .13; M_{age} = 45, r = .32; M_{age} = 50, r = .50) (Boujbel & d'Astous, 2015, 2017). However, there were no older adult group comparison in these studies, making it challenging to conclude whether age plays a role in this relationship. Thus, while age may play a role, further research is needed to confirm this relationship.

Another factor to consider when examining the relationships between minimalism and well-being is *financial security*. Specifically, the connection between minimalism and well-being might be more pronounced for individuals with lower financial security in comparison to those with higher financial security, based on the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory posits that enhanced well-being results from fulfilling fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For individuals with lower financial security, minimalism can fulfill these needs by prioritizing meaningful experiences - intrinsic values over material possessions (Brown & Kasser, 2005; Hausen, 2019), thereby enhancing well-being. On the other hand, individuals with higher financial security may not experience the same level of benefit, as their financial stability already meets many of these needs.

To our knowledge, no previous study has investigated this hypothesis. A study by Boujbel & d'Astous (2012) suggested that income could potentially moderate the association between minimalism and well-being. Their study, which involved 344 self-identified voluntary simplifiers and 267 non-simplifiers, revealed that voluntary simplicity was positively linked to life satisfaction for individuals with lower incomes, but this link was not significant for participants with higher incomes. However, the study utilized a sample from Canada - a developed country with potentially high level of government income support, suggesting that even low-income individuals in this context may have met their basic needs, thereby having financial security. Therefore, research on the effect of subjective perception of financial security on the relationship between voluntary simplicity and well-being is necessary to deepen our understanding of how such a socioeconomic factor influence the adoption and outcomes of minimalist lifestyles.

The present study aims to fill the previously identified research gaps by investigating the association between minimalism and well-being across different age groups and levels of

financial security. Our investigation focuses on three primary research questions, each with corresponding hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What predicts who lives a minimalist lifestyle?

1.1 Does age and financial security predict levels of minimalism?

H1.1.1: Minimalism is positively associated with age.

H1.1.2: Minimalism is negatively associated with financial security.

1.2 Does any other sociodemographic variables (gender, education level, marital status, living condition) predict levels of minimalism?

Since this is an exploratory question, no specific hypotheses are formulated.

1.3 Are certain personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism) associated with higher levels of minimalism?

H1.3a: Conscientiousness is positively associated with minimalism.

H1.3b: Neuroticism is negatively associated with minimalism.

In addition, exploratory questions are posed regarding the roles of the other three personality traits—Agreeableness, Openness, and Extraversion—in influencing the inclination toward a minimalist lifestyle; therefore, no specific hypotheses are drawn.

Research Question 2: What are the relationships between minimalism and well-being, as well as psychological need satisfaction?

2.1 Is minimalism positively associated with subjective/psychological well-being, and psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness)?

H2.1a: Minimalism is positively associated with subjective well-being.

H2.1b: Minimalism is positively associated with psychological well-being.

H2.1c: Minimalism is positively associated all three levels of psychological need satisfaction (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness).

2.2 Are certain subdomains of minimalism (clutter removal, cautious shopping, longevity, self-sufficiency) differentially associated with subjective and psychological well-being, and psychological need satisfaction?

Since this is an exploratory question, no specific hypotheses are formulated.

Research Question 3: Does age and/or financial security moderate the association between minimalism and well-being?

H3.1: Age moderates the association between minimalism and well-being, with the relationship being stronger in the older adult group.

H3.2: Financial security moderates the association between minimalism and well-being, with the relationship being weaker with in the higher financial security group.

Method

Participants

The total number of participants included in the study is 537 (N = 623, before exclusion) with 415 females, 142 males and 11 other gender, M_{age} = 43 years, SD_{age} = 24 years, range 17 – 89 years. The exclusion criteria for this study were individuals who experience mobility issues or rely on others for their daily living activities (n = 28). In addition, those who did not select the correct answer in at least one of the two attention-check questions *"If you read the question, please click the 'agree' option"* were excluded from the analyses (n = 20). Moreover, those who completed the survey in less than 8 minutes (the expected time was 20 minutes) were excluded from the analyses (n = 38) as removing speeders can minimize low data quality stemming from repetitive response patterns or a lack of attention (Greszki et al., 2015). Among 537 participants, 527 completed 100% the survey, while 10 completed 76 to 88%. Detailed participant characteristics are listed in Table 1, covering gender, educational level, marital status, and living status.

Recruitment of younger adults was facilitated through the SONA system of the Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, which enlists first-year psychology students willing to participate for credit reimbursement. Older adults were recruited via the participants' data pool for older individuals at the Developmental Psychology Department. Additionally, convenience sampling was used via the researchers' social media networks, where members shared and encouraged others to participate. Moreover, flyers were distributed randomly in various cities across the Netherlands, including Breda, Tilburg, Utrecht, and Uden.

A prior power analysis was performed for a cross-sectional survey design to determine the minimum sample size. According to the G*Power analysis, to detect a medium correlation effect size of 0.20 with a power of 0.80 at a significance level of 0.05, a minimum sample size of 193 participants is needed for research questions 1 and 2; and a minimum sample size of 386 participants is needed for research question 3.

Table 1

Sample characteristics

		Total	
		n	%
Gender	Female	388	72.3
	Male	138	25.7
	Other	11	2.0
Marital status	Single	208	38.7
	Partner, not living together	76	14.2
	Partner, cohabitating/ married/registered	212	39.5
	Widow	16	3.0
	Divorced	25	4.7
Living status	Alone	107	19.9
	With 1 other person	130	24.2
	With 2 other people	116	21.6

	With 3 other people	81	15.1
	With 4 other people	56	10.4
	With >= 5 other people	47	8.8
Number of rooms in addition to kitchen & bathroom	0	12	2.2
	1	41	7.6
	2	36	6.7
	3	79	14.7
	4	108	20.1
	5	131	24.4
	6	69	12.8
	>=7	61	11.4
Education level	High School	223	41.5
	College or Associate's Degree	42	7.8
	Bachelor's Degree	162	30.2
	Master's Degree	59	11.0
	Doctorate or Professional Degree	31	5.8
	Other	20	3.7

Procedure and Study Design

The present study used a cross-sectional correlational design that relies on self-reported survey data. Each participant was asked to provide the demographic information about their age, gender, education, marital status, financial status and living condition. After that, they were instructed to complete all items from the five questionnaires that measured their levels of minimalism, subjective and psychological well-being, psychological need satisfaction, and personality traits.

All procedures in this study underwent review by the Ethics Review Board (ERB) of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Tilburg University for approval [TSB_RP_REMA15] on March 18th 2024. The submission covered ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining

confidentiality, managing data responsibly, and allowing withdrawal from the study. As this was an online survey study, participants faced no potential risks, as they could complete the questionnaire at their own pace and in their preferred environment. Participants were notified that the study was expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Data collection started on March 18th 2024, and continued until May 25th 2024.

The survey was available in both Dutch and English. Since not all questionnaires have a Dutch version, including the scales for minimalism, the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being, and the Basic Psychological Needs Scale, these scales were translated into Dutch and then back-translated into English by the research team members to ensure that the Dutch items reflect equivalent content to the English versions.

Materials

Minimalism

The Minimalism Scale is a self-report questionnaire developed by Kang et al. (2021) to measure the extent to which individuals live a minimalistic lifestyle. The scale consists of 13 items that assess four factors: clutter removal (item 1 to item 3, e.g., *"I try to avoid exterior clutter"*), cautious shopping (item 4 to item 7, e.g., *"I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary"*), longevity (item 8 to item 10, e.g., *"I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible"*), and self-sufficiency (item 11 to item 13, e.g., *"I want to be self-sufficient with what I have already"*). Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The mean scores per subscale were computed, where higher scores reflected higher levels of (related subscale of) minimalism. The authors found that the model fit was deemed satisfactory, with GFI = .95, CFI = .95, IFI = .95, NFI = .94, and RMSEA = .07; and the reliability of the scale was found to be good for the four subscales (αs = .82 to .85) and

adequate for the total score (α = .71) (Kang et al., 2021). Reliability ranged from α = .61 to α = .87 across the four subscales, and α = .81 for the total scale in the present study.

Financial security

In this study, two items were created to measure the concept of financial security. Item 1 assesses "What is the approximate amount of money you need per month to cover your living expenses comfortably (excluding fixed expenses for housing such as rent, power, gas, and insurances)?", while item 2 assesses "What is the approximate amount of money you have available per month from all sources (excluding fixed expenses for housing such as rent, power, gas, and insurances)?". The surplus income amount beyond basic needs were computed by subtracting Item 1 from Item 2, with higher amounts indicating a greater perception of financial security.

Personality

Personality was measured with the Big Five Inventory-2 Extra-Short Form (BFI-2-XS; Soto & John, 2017), consisting of 15 items which measure five personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. The BFI-2-XS required participants to provide ratings on a 5-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), in response to statements related to each item. Mean scores were calculated for each trait, where higher scores indicated greater levels of the respective trait. This scale has been particularly recommended for situations where assessment time or respondent fatigue are concerns, as it focuses solely on assessing personality at the domain level. This characteristic aligns well with the aim of the research question, making the BFI-2-XS a suitable tool for efficiently measuring personality traits in such contexts. The BFI-2-XS demonstrated strong psychometric properties, as found by high part-whole correlations averaging .90 between the BFI-2-XS domain scales and the corresponding full BFI-2 domain scales, satisfactory Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .50 to .72, and reliable retest

reliabilities averaging between .70 and .76. Additionally, analysis of the multidimensional structure revealed clear Big Five factors, indicating approximately 80% retention of reliability, self-peer agreement, and external validity compared to the full BFI-2 domain scales (Soto & John, 2017). Reliability ranged from α = .49 to α = .81 across the subscales in the present study.

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), a widely used instrument in positive psychology, developed by Diener et al. (1985). This scale includes five items. Participants indicated how much they disagreed or agreed with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The mean scores were computed, with higher scores indicating greater levels of life satisfaction. The SWB has demonstrated good convergent validity with other measures of life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1985). Furthermore, previous research found the internal consistency of the SWB ranging from α = .79 to α = .89, and test-retest reliabilities ranging from .82 to .87 (Pavot & Diener, 2008). The reliability of the scale was found to be good (α = .83) in the present study.

Psychological Well-being

Psychological well-being was measured with the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (PWB) (Ryff & Davidson, 2010; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The scale consists of 18 items that assesses six dimensions of psychological well-being: purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others. Each dimension is assessed using a set of items that individual rates on a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Mean scores were calculated for each dimension, with higher scores indicating greater levels of that particular dimension. Numerous studies support the relative validity and reliability of the 18-item version of the

PWB scale. Correlation coefficients between its subscales and the original 120-item version range from 0.70 to 0.89 (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Validation studies conducted with Canadian older adults (Clarke et al., 2001) and in countries such as Iran, Italy, and Sweden (Garcia et al., 2023; Khanjani et al., 2014; Sirigatti et al., 2009) further confirm its validity. Internal consistency ranged from α = .65 to α = .70 across six dimensions, were found to be higher compared to the original 120-item version (Lindfors et al., 2006). Reliability ranged from α = .57 to α = .76 across the subscales (except for the subscale of purpose in life with α = .13) in the present study.

Psychological Need Satisfaction

Psychological need satisfaction was measured with the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS) developed by Ryan & Deci (2000). This scale consists of 21 items measuring the three psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in general in one's life. Participants indicated how true each of the statements was for them using a 7-point scale that ranges from "not at all true" (1) to "very true" (7). The resulting subscale scores reflect the level of satisfaction with each psychological need. Higher average scores on the items related to each need indicate greater satisfaction with that specific need. The reliability and validity of the BPNS have been supported by several studies, even in the older adult's population (Yang et al., 2021). The previous research indicated that the scale had a good validity, with the internal consistency ranging from α = .81 to α = .85 across the three subscales scales. Reliability ranged from α = .75 to α = .80 across the subscales in the present study.

Statistical Analysis

The R 4.1.3 (R Core Team, 2022) and the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) were utilized to perform data processing and statistical analysis. To answer the research questions, Structural Equation modeling (SEM) was selected as the analytical method because it is

suitable for conducting simultaneous and robust examinations of relationships among multiple constructs (Kline, 2015). To deal with the missing data, the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) method were used. The analysis began by evaluating the model fit and factor loadings of each measurement model. The construct of minimalism was modelled based on higher order structure. Each of the four factors (clutter removal, cautious shopping, longevity, and self-sufficiency) was specified as a first-order factor, while minimalism itself was treated as a second-order factor. Each subscale of the correlates (e.g., SWB; PWB-purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others; BPNS-autonomy, competence, relatedness; BFI-extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) was modeled separately as a one factor model. Subsequently, the correlations between minimalism and these constructs was examined for each of them separately (e.g., a model including minimalism and purpose in life).

To address Research Question 1, associations between minimalism and socio-demographic variables, as well as the BFI-2-XS, were examined. Subsequently, the relationships between minimalism and subjective/psychological well-being, as well as psychological needs satisfaction, were assessed to answer Research Question 2. To investigate whether age or financial security moderates the association between minimalism and subjective/psychological well-being in Research Question 3, participants were categorized into two age groups: younger adulthood (≤ 40 years, n = 301) and older adulthood (≥ 65 years, n = 182). Additionally, they were divided into two financial security groups: higher financial security (surplus income > 200€, n = 260) and lower financial security (surplus income < 200€, n = 263). People who did not provide reports on age and financial security were excluded from the analysis. Subsequently, a multi-group model was employed. This was tested by comparing the model with the association being freely

estimated in age and financial security groups to one with the association being constrained to equality across groups, and subsequently tested with the chi-square difference test. Since the construct of minimalism has not been extensively studied, its measurement invariance between age and financial security groups were assessed to ensure that the operationalization of minimalism remains consistent across different groups.

To evaluate the model's fit, several indices were employed: a test for absolute fit with the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (values < 0.08 indicate acceptable fit), and examination of incremental fit indices such as Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) (values > 0.9 indicate acceptable fit) (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006). If these criteria were not met, residual correlations or cross-loadings would be added based on the modification indices and theoretical assumptions. The evaluation criteria for measurement invariance between age and financial security groups were: ΔCFI < .02 and ΔRMSEA < .03 for metric invariance (OECD, 2014), and ΔCFI < .01 and ΔRMSEA < .01 for scalar invariance (Rutkowski & Svetina, 2017).

Open Practices Statement

The data are accessible to the public through the Open Science Framework (OSF) and governed by the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License. The study was preregistered on May 7th 2024 at OSF website, aiming to earn the badges for Open Data and Preregistration. Further details regarding the Open Practices badges can be located at http://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/badges.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the mean (sub)scaled scores of minimalism, SWB, PWB, BPNS, BFI are shown in Table 1. The values of skewness and kurtosis were mostly below +/- 1, indicating that the data for all variables were approximately normally distributed. The

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities for Mean Scaled Variables

Var	*N*	*M*	*SD*	MIN	MICL	MICA	MILO	MISE	SWB	APWB	ENVI	PERS	POSI	PURP	SELF	APNS	COMP	RELA	EXTR	AGRE	CONS	NEGA	OPEN
MIN	537	3.60	0.53	(.81)																			
MICL	537	3.56	0.73	.63***	(.70)																		
MICA	537	3.35	0.87	.82***	.40***	(.81)																	
MILO	537	3.93	0.63	.64***	.23***	.41***	(.61)																
MISE	537	3.69	0.84	.57***	.12**	.20***	.24***	(.87)															
SWB	537	5.11	1.08	.17***	.20***	.15***	.03	.05	(.83)														
APWB	534	5.15	1.13	.20***	.14***	.17***	.16***	.06	.17***	(.58)													
ENVI	534	5.17	1.23	.13**	.23***	.13**	.01	-.03	.52***	.31***	(.71)												
PERS	534	5.84	0.93	.15***	.15**	.03	.08	.18***	.21***	.21***	.21***	(.58)											
POSI	534	5.53	1.13	.08	.09*	.06	.06	.01	.37***	.19***	.41***	.29***	(.57)										
PURP	534	5.30	1.01	-.06	.09*	-.10*	-.10*	-.03	.24***	.08	.23***	.28***	.22***	(.13)									
SELF	534	5.47	1.15	.11*	.15***	.09*	.01	.04	.66***	.32***	.51***	.33***	.48***	.26***	(.76)								
APNS	530	5.40	0.85	.08	.17***	.05	.02	-.01	.54***	.41***	.68***	.30***	.45***	.21***	.55***	(.76)							
COMP	530	5.11	0.98	.08	.21***	.03	.01	-.02	.52***	.32***	.60***	.38***	.47***	.32***	.66***	.67***	(.75)						
RELA	530	5.66	0.83	.07	.12**	.02	.08	.01	.44***	.26***	.43***	.33***	.67***	.24***	.51***	.58***	.61***	(.80)					
EXTR	529	3.19	0.83	-.01	.08	-.03	-.04	-.01	.33***	.28***	.40***	.23***	.42***	.12**	.37***	.42***	.50***	.51***	(.62)				
AGRE	529	3.96	0.66	.15***	.13**	.12**	.06	.08	.32***	.08	.27***	.21***	.44***	.22***	.34***	.25***	.33***	.44***	.21***	(.49)			
CONS	529	3.55	0.80	.21***	.37***	.19***	.03	-.04	.40***	.18***	.52***	.11**	.27***	.30***	.38***	.38***	.49***	.26***	.27***	.26***	(.57)		
NEGA	529	2.89	1.03	-.12**	-.17***	-.21***	.01	.09	-.43**	-.36***	-.65***	-.13**	-.32***	-.11*	-.51***	-.58***	-.53***	-.34***	-.37***	-.25***	-.42***	(.81)	
OPEN	529	3.67	0.82	.24***	.10*	.18***	.19***	.18***	.01	.28***	.07	.25***	.13**	.04	.06	.10*	.13**	.11*	.12**	.11**	.06	-.09*	(.62)

Note. Var = Variable; *N* = Sample size; *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; MIN = Minimalism; MICL = Clutter Removal; MICA = Cautious Shopping; MILO = Longevity; MISE = Self-sufficiency; SWB = Subjective Well-being; APWB = Autonomy-Psychological Well-being, ENVI = Environmental Mastery; PERS = Personal Growth; POSI = Positive Relationships with Others; PURP = Purpose in Life; SELF = Self-acceptance; APNS = Autonomy-Psychological Need Satisfaction; COM = Competence; RELA = Relatedness; EXTR = Extraversion; AGRE = Agreeableness; CONS = Conscientiousness; NEGA = Negativity; OPEN = Openness; On diagonal α = Cronbach's alpha reliability; * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. *** indicates $p < .001$.

Pearson's coefficients indicated that minimalism was significantly positively correlated with its four subscales (clutter removal, cautious shopping, longevity, and self-sufficiency), SWB, PWB- autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth and self-acceptance, BFI-agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness. On the other hand, minimalism was significantly negatively correlated with BFI-neuroticism.

Model Fit of Measurement Models

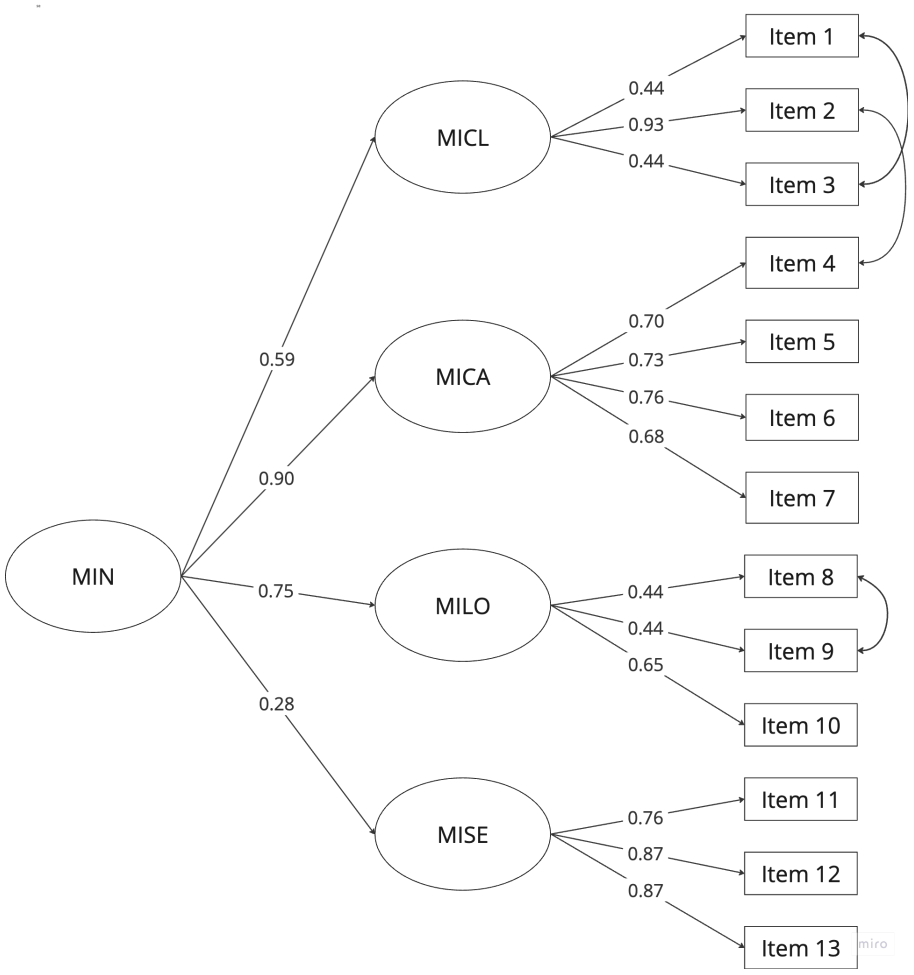
The minimalism higher order model did not fit the data as expected. The fit indices such as the CFI = .888, TLI = .857, RMSEA = .092 were not within the acceptable range of values (CFI & TLI > .9, RMSEA < .08 indicate acceptable fit), and only SRMR = .074 was acceptable (< .08), suggesting that the model may have some inadequacies and model modification was necessary. Based on the modification indices, high covariance values between item 1 (*I try to avoid exterior clutter*) and item 3 (*I try to remove the clutter from my life*), item 2 (*I try to avoid many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of my life*) and item 4 (*I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary*), item 8 (*I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible*) and item 9 (*I am the type of person who continues using something old as long as it can still be used*) were found. Since the content of these items are conceptually related and share similar themes such as avoiding clutter, minimizing possessions, and extending the use of items, and this is the first study investigating the minimalism model developed by Kang et al. (2021), adding the residual covariances between these items to the model allows for a more accurate representation of the underlying constructs and accounts for shared variance not captured by the latent factors alone. This adjustment improved the model fit significantly: the fit indices CFI = .945, TLI = .926, RMSEA = .066, SRMR = .052 were within the acceptable range of values.

Factor loadings represent the strength of the relationship between each observed variable (indicator) and its corresponding latent variable (factor). Ideally, the value of a factor

loading should be greater than .4 for interpretation purposes (Stevens, 2001). The values of standardized loadings for this model are shown in Figure 1. In general, the item loadings on "clutter removal", "cautious shopping", and "longevity" on minimalism were all greater than .4, indicating moderate to strong relationships with these factors. The standardized factor loadings of "clutter removal", "cautious shopping", and "longevity" on the higher-order factor "minimalism were .59, .90, .75, indicating moderate to strong relationships with the higher order factor; while the factor loading of "self-sufficiency" of .28 on minimalism indicates its weak relationship with the higher order factor.

Figure 1

The Minimalism Higher-Order Model



Note. MIN = Minimalism; MICL = Clutter Removal; MICA = Cautious Shopping; MILO = Longevity; MISE = Self-sufficiency

Next, the measurement invariance of minimalism was assessed to ensure that the operationalization of minimalism remains consistent across age and financial security groups. The results are shown in Table 2. For age groups, the models with configural, metric, scalar, and strict invariance all had acceptable fit based on CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR indices. The model fit with metric invariance did not change substantially compared to the configural invariance fit (ΔCFI = .011 and ΔRMSEA = .002), indicating that metric invariance holds for both age groups. Similarly, for financial security groups, the models with configural, metric, scalar, and strict invariance all had acceptable fit based on CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR indices. The model fit with scalar invariance did not change substantially compared to the metric invariance fit (ΔCFI = .004 and ΔRMSEA = 0), indicating that scalar invariance holds for both financial security groups.

Table 2

Measurement Invariance across Age and Financial Security Groups

Model	Age						Financial Security				
	df	χ^2	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	χ^2	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Configural	116	250.230	.939	.917	.069	.060	258.113	.941	.920	.068	.056
Metric	128	285.584	.928	.912	.071	.070	279.297	.937	.923	.067	.064
Scalar	136	317.988	.917	.905	.074	.073	297.829	.933	.923	.067	.066
Strict	149	389.273	.890	.885	.082	.084	311.716	.931	.928	.065	.069

Note. df = Degrees of freedom; χ^2 = Chi-squared test; CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual.

Model fit for the measurement models of SWB and BPNS was found to be acceptable (see Table 3). Since each PWB and BFI measurement models contains only 3 items, these models had zero degrees of freedom, CFI = TLI = 1, and RMSEA = SRMR = 0. Notably, Purpose in Life had an extremely low reliability of .13 as reported in Table 1; thus, its measure was removed from the analysis.

Table 3

Measures of Model Fit

Model	df	χ^2	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
MIN	58	195.716	.945	.926	.066	.052
SWB	5	29.448	.978	.956	.095	.029
APNS	14	186.301	.818	.727	.146	.074
COMP	9	101.078	.893	.822	.134	.059
RELA	20	243.331	.841	.777	.139	.064

Note. MIN = Minimalism; SWB = Subjective Well-being; APNS = Autonomy-Psychological Need Satisfaction; COM = Competence; RELA = Relatedness; df = Degrees of freedom; χ^2 = Chi-squared test; CFI = Comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual.

Predictors of Living a Minimalist Lifestyle

The first hypothesis was that minimalism would be positively associated with age and conscientiousness, while negatively associated with financial security and neuroticism. In line with the hypothesis, the results indicated that individuals who were older (β = .26, p < .001), had more conscientious (β = .33, p < .001), and lower levels of neuroticism (β = -.23, p = .045) were more engaged in a minimalist lifestyle, compared to those who were younger, less conscientious and more neurotic. Additionally, exploratory results showed that individuals who had higher levels of agreeableness (β = .21, p = .003), openness (β = .31, p < .001), and education (β = .15, p = .008) were also more engaged in this lifestyle, compared to those with lower levels of these variables. Contrary to the hypothesis, no significant relationship between minimalism and financial security was found. Furthermore, no significant associations were found between minimalism and extraversion or other socio-demographic variables, including gender, marital status, the number of people living in the same house, and the number of rooms in the house (p > 0.05).

The relationships between Minimalism, Well-being, and Psychological Need Satisfaction

For the second hypothesis, minimalism was expected to be positively associated with SWB, all five dimensions of PWB, and all three levels of BPNS. The correlations between (subdomains of) minimalism with SWB, PWB, and BPNS dimensions are reported in Table 4. In line with our expectations, the findings suggest that individuals who were more engaged in minimalism exhibited greater levels of SWB ($\beta = .17$, $p = .002$), PWB-autonomy ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), environmental mastery ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), personal growth ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), and self-acceptance ($\beta = .13$, $p = .03$), compared to less engaged individuals. Contrary to the hypothesis, no significant relationships were found between minimalism and positive relationships with others, or any of the three levels of BPNS, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness ($p > 0.05$).

Four subdomains of minimalism (clutter removal, cautious shopping, longevity, self-sufficiency) were explored to identify their differential associations with SWB, PWB, and BPNS. This analysis involved testing equality constraints on correlations across subdomains and comparing the model fit against an unconstrained model. Chi-square difference tests indicated significant differences among minimalism subdomains in their associations with SWB, the PWB dimensions of environmental mastery and personal growth, and the BPNS dimension of competence (as indicated by bold values in Table 4). Specifically, clutter removal and cautious shopping showed stronger links with SWB and environmental mastery compared to other minimalism subdomains. Longevity and self-sufficiency showed stronger links with personal growth, compared to other minimalism subdomains. Furthermore, the link was only found in the subdomain of clutter removal with competence. On the other hand, no differences were found across subdomains for associations with PWB dimensions of autonomy, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance, nor with BPNS dimensions of autonomy and relatedness.

Table 4

Correlations between Minimalism, Well-being and Psychological Need Satisfaction

Var	MIN	χ^2 *diff*	MICL	MICA	MILO	MISE
SWB	.17**	**9.933***	.21***	.15**	.03	.03
APWB	.29***	7.285	.16**	.22***	.32***	.11
ENVI	.25***	**21.288*****	.32***	.20***	.10	-.01
PERS	.26***	**9.333***	.14*	.13*	.31***	.29***
POSI	.01	2.298	.07	.09	.09	-.01
SELF	.13*	4.421	.16**	.11*	-.01	.07
APNS	.08	6.836	.16**	.05	.02	-.01
COMP	.03	**13.927****	.16**	.02	-.04	-.09
RELA	.08	.18	.18***	.05	.14**	.06

Note. MIN = Minimalism; MICL = Clutter Removal; MICA = Cautious Shopping; MILO = Longevity; MISE = Self-sufficiency; SWB = Subjective Well-being; APWB = Autonomy-Psychological Well-being, ENVI = Environmental Mastery; PERS = Personal Growth; POSI = Positive Relationships with Others; SELF = Self-acceptance; APNS = Autonomy-Psychological Need Satisfaction; COM = Competence; RELA = Relatedness; χ^2 *diff* = Chi-squared test between free correlation and fixed correlation models; * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. *** indicates $p < .001$.

The roles of Age and Financial Security in the Association between Minimalism and Well-being

For the third hypothesis, we expected that age and financial security would moderate the association between minimalism and well-being, with the relationship being stronger in the older age group and weaker in the higher financial security group. Multi-group models were used to investigate this hypothesis by constraining the correlations to equality across age and financial security groups and comparing the model fit to a model without such constraints. The chi-square difference test suggested that the link between minimalism and well-being was not moderated by age or financial security ($p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that the associations between minimalism and well-being are equal across age and financial security groups, which is not in line with our hypothesis. The correlations between

minimalism and well-being dimensions across age and financial security groups are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlations between Minimalism and Well-being across Age and Financial Security Groups

Var	Age			Financial Security		
	Younger $n = 301$	Older $n = 182$	χ^2 *diff*	Lower $n = 263$	Higher $n = 260$	χ^2 *diff*
SWB	.07	.12	0.192	.07	.22**	1.772
APWB	.21**	.41***	1.945	.28**	.31**	0.025
ENVI	.20**	.13	0.301	.22*	.19*	0.106
PERS	.36***	.38**	0.023	.28**	.32**	0.084
POSI	.05	.03	0.038	.08	.13	0.095
SELF	.09	.10	0.008	.03	.17*	1.448

Note. SWB = Subjective Well-being; APWB = Autonomy-Psychological Well-being, ENVI = Environmental Mastery; PERS = Personal Growth; POSI = Positive Relationships with Others; PURP = Purpose in Life; SELF = Self-acceptance; χ^2 *diff* = Chi-squared test between free correlation and fixed correlation models; * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. *** indicates $p < .001$.

Discussion

The present study aimed to explore predictors of living a minimalist lifestyle, its associated benefits on well-being and psychological need satisfaction. Furthermore, it sought to determine whether age and financial security moderate the relationship between minimalism and well-being. In summary, the findings revealed that individual differences in age, conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, level of education predict who lives this lifestyle. Additionally, individuals who were more engaged in this lifestyle reported higher levels of subjective well-being and the psychological well-being dimensions of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance, compared to less engaged individuals. No significant associations were found between minimalism and the psychological well-being dimension of positive relationships with others, as well as all three

dimensions of basic psychological need satisfaction, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Interestingly, some subdomains of minimalism showed a stronger link to subjective well-being, the psychological well-being dimensions of environmental mastery and personal growth, and the psychological need satisfaction dimension of competence. Furthermore, the relationship between minimalism and well-being was found to be consistent across different age groups and levels of financial security. This discussion first delves into the findings and their implications for each hypothesis in detail. Subsequently, the major strengths and limitations of the study are presented, followed by suggestions for future research.

Predictors of Living a Minimalist Lifestyle

For the first hypothesis, we expected that minimalism would be positively associated with age and conscientiousness, while negatively associated with financial security and neuroticism. The results supported the hypothesis that individuals who were older, more conscientious and less neurotic were more likely to engage in minimalism, compared to those who were younger, less conscientious and more neurotic. These findings expand the lifespan theory of socioemotional selectivity by suggesting that as people age, they tend to prioritize emotionally meaningful goals (Carstensen, 1992; Carstensen et al., 1999); and minimalism serve as a strategy to concentrate on these goals. On the other hand, the younger the people, the less likely they see minimalism as a way to achieve their well-being. This can be explained by developmental and contextual factors. Younger adults are often in life stages where accumulating resources, establishing careers, and forming relationships are primary goals. The concept of minimalism, which involves reducing possessions and simplifying life, may not align with their immediate needs and societal expectations. This perspective aligns with the life course theory, which posits that different life stages have distinct priorities and challenges (Elder, 1998). However, it is important to note that the majority of our sample of

younger adults (40 years old or younger) consisted of psychology students, whereas our older adults (65 years old or older) came from diverse educational backgrounds. This limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should aim to include a more representative sample of younger adults from varied educational and professional backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between age and minimalism.

Also, the findings are consistent with existing studies suggesting that conscientious individuals, who have a preference for organization and a tidy environment (Gosling, 2009), may engage in minimalism to satisfy this preference. In contrast, individuals high in neuroticism, who often perceive material belongings as sources of comfort or security, may not view minimalism as a way to meet their needs (Górnik-Durose, 2020; Tarka & Harnish, 2023). These findings reinforce the idea that personality trait may play a crucial role in the adoption of a minimalist lifestyle.

Contrary to our hypothesis, the study found no significant relationship between minimalism and financial security. This finding suggests that the decision to live a minimalist lifestyle is not strongly influenced by one's financial situation, but rather by other factors such as age and personality traits. This result does not align with the idea that financial constraints drive minimalism, indicating that even those with higher financial security might engage in this lifestyle. For instance, they may choose to possess fewer but higher-quality goods in their environment. Not surprisingly, wealth was found to induce consumption shifts toward high quality goods (Struck, 2022).

Additionally, exploratory results showed that individuals who had higher levels of agreeableness, openness and education were also more engaged in this life style, compared to those who had lower levels of these variables. These results add new dimensions to the profile of minimalists. These results add new dimensions to the profile of minimalists by highlighting that higher levels of agreeableness, openness, and education can predict a greater

likelihood of engaging in minimalism. This expands our understanding beyond the previously established traits, suggesting that minimalists are not only conscientious and less neurotic but also more agreeable, open-minded, and educated. The findings contribute to the literature by suggesting that minimalism may appeal to those who value interpersonal harmony, curiosity, and intellectual engagement. Future research should explore how these traits interact with minimalism over time and whether they influence specific outcomes related to well-being. Additionally, it raises questions about the role of personality and education in the adoption and maintenance of minimalist practices, suggesting the need for longitudinal studies to investigate these dynamics further.

Moreover, exploratory results revealed no significant associations between minimalism and extraversion or other socio-demographic variables, including gender, living situation, and marital status. This indicates that these factors do not predict the inclination towards minimalism. However, considering that the majority of participants in this study were female (72.3%), it raises the question of whether gender differences might actually exist but were not detected due to the lack of a representative sample. Globally, women are responsible for the majority of consumer spending (Nagpal Chopra, 2014), which could suggest that women may be less likely than men to engage in minimalism. Therefore, future research should aim to balance gender representation and investigate potential gender differences in minimalism more comprehensively.

The relationships between Minimalism, Well-being, and Psychological Need Satisfaction

For the second hypothesis, we expected minimalism to be positively associated with subjective/psychological well-being and psychological need satisfaction. The results partially supported the second hypothesis and are consistent with existing studies suggesting a positive correlation between minimalism and subjective well-being (Hook et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2021), as well as several the four psychological well-being dimensions of autonomy,

environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Beecher, 2007; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020). This implies potential benefits associated with living a minimalist lifestyle. However, this does not establish a causal relationship; in other words, we still do not know whether adopting this lifestyle leads to improved well-being. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to explore the causal effects of minimalism on well-being, providing a deeper understanding of whether and how this lifestyle can enhance psychological health. If minimalism have casual effect on well-being, promoting this lifestyle will be beneficial for improving mental health. For instances, minimalistic lifestyle can be a promising intervention for individual with hoarding disorder characterized in DSM-V by persistent difficulty in discarding possessions due to a perceived need to save them and the distress linked to discarding them (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Contrary to predictions based on the previous research (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Jain et al., 2023; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Rich et al., 2017), minimalism showed no significant associations with the psychological well-being dimension of positive relationships with others, nor with the components of basic psychological need satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness). This indicates that minimalism may not relate to all aspects of psychological well-being and need satisfaction. This can be explained by the possibility that minimalism, while beneficial for certain dimensions of well-being, might not directly impact social relationships or meet basic psychological needs as effectively. Since the study only measured these variables at one point in time, it is too early to conclude definitively about these associations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to explore these relationships over time.

Interestingly, the present study also provided more insight into the links between the subdomains of minimalism and well-being outcomes. We found that SWB and environmental mastery were more strongly linked to the minimalism subdomains of clutter removal and

cautious shopping than to the other two domains. Conversely, personal growth was more strongly linked to the subdomains of longevity and self-sufficiency. Surprisingly, while the overall link between minimalism and competence was not significant, the subdomain of clutter removal was correlated with competence. These findings underscore the heterogeneity within minimalism and its diverse relations to well-being. If future research can establish these causal relationships, we can guide more personalized and effective minimalism practices. For example, encouraging clutter removal and cautious shopping may be particularly effective in enhancing subjective well-being and environmental mastery, while promoting longevity and self-sufficiency could foster personal growth.

The roles of Age and Financial Security in the Association between Minimalism and Well-being

Finally, the third hypothesis, that age and financial security would moderate the relationship between minimalism and well-being, was not supported, as the associations remained consistent across different age groups and levels of financial security. These findings contrast with Hook et al. (2023), who suggested that age might influence the association between minimalism and well-being, and Boujbel & d'Astous (2012), who suggested that income-related factors could influence this association. This suggest that promoting this lifestyle can be broadly beneficial regardless of age or financial status. Since no prior research has investigated the moderating effect of age and financial security, this discovery contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay among minimalism, well-being, and individual difference factors.

However, it is important to keep in mind that while the study benefited from a large sample size, the distribution of participants skewed towards younger individuals (under 40 years) and older adults (over 65 years), with a smaller representation of middle-aged participants (9.7%). Therefore, we did not include the middle age group to investigate this

hypothesis. This uneven distribution limits the generalizability of findings across different age groups, particularly in understanding the nuanced effects of minimalism on well-being and the moderating role of age. Future studies should prioritize recruiting a more balanced sample across all age groups to allow for a comprehensive analysis of measurement invariances and age-related differences.

Major Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

To the author's knowledge, the present study appears to be the first study to comprehensively investigate the concept of minimalism and its relationship with well-being. By examining various dimensions of well-being, such as subjective well-being and psychological well-being, as well as psychological need satisfaction, the study provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of how minimalism relates to different aspects of life satisfaction and mental health. Previous studies have largely focused on the simpler relationships, such as in between minimalism with subjective well-being (Hook et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2021) or psychological need satisfaction (Lloyd & Pennington, 2020; Rich et al., 2017). This study bridges the gap by examining these constructs altogether, offering important insights into the potential benefits experienced by individuals who embrace minimalism. Additionally, the study takes into account a range of individual differences, including age, financial security, education, living situation, and personality traits. This approach allows for a more personalized understanding of minimalism, acknowledging that its level of engagement can vary significantly across different demographic and psychographic profiles. Also, the study's strength lies in its large sample size of 537 participants, which enhances statistical power and enable more reliable and robust analyses. This reduces the risk of type II errors (false negatives) and strengthens the overall validity and impact of the findings (Biau et al., 2008).

Despite its strengths, the present study has several limitations that require careful consideration. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, which restricts its capacity to establish causal relationships among variables. Cross-sectional studies offer a momentary view of relationships at a specific moment, thereby posing difficulties in discerning the direction of effects. To address these limitations, longitudinal studies utilizing methods such as Experience Sampling Method (ESM) could be beneficial. ESM involves collecting real-time data multiple times a day over an extended period (e.g., two weeks) (Hektner et al., 2007), capturing fluctuations in variables and contextual factors that may influence the practice of minimalism and its impact on well-being. This approach would enhance our understanding of the temporal dynamics and contextual influences underlying the relationships studied, offering valuable insights into the long-term benefits of embracing minimalism, and guiding for theory development and practical interventions.

Additionally, the present study utilized self-report measures, which can be subject to biases and subjective interpretations (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Future research could employ more objective measures to enhance the validity of the findings. For example, a new assessment of minimalism could be developed based on the Clutter Image Rating scale (Sagayadevan et al., 2016). This scale was designed to assess participants' perceptions of clutter in their living environments, thereby identifying hoarding behaviors. This scale comprises three sets of nine color photographs each, representing varying degrees of clutter in the living room, bedroom, and kitchen. Participants are instructed to choose the image that "most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room", with ratings ranging from 1 (indicating minimal clutter) to 9 (indicating maximal clutter). Adapting such a scale to measure minimalism more precisely would help provide a clearer, more objective understanding of the relationship between minimalism and well-being.

Another critical limitation concerns the reliability of the measurement models used in the study. As reported in Tables 1, several measurement constructs exhibited reliability values below the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Price et al., 2017). These findings raise concerns about the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instruments used to assess well-being, psychological need satisfaction and personality traits. This issue can be explained by the fact that many measurement models were just identified with only three items, limiting their reliability and potentially skewing the results. Future research should consider employing longer questionnaires to enhance the robustness and accuracy of findings in these domains.

Conclusions

The present study has shed light on the complex interplay between minimalism, well-being and psychological need satisfaction, while considering individual differences such as age, financial security, personality traits, and sociodemographic factors. Firstly, the study discovered that individual differences in age, conscientiousness, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, level of education predict who lives a minimalist lifestyle. Secondly, the study found the associated benefits of this lifestyle on subjective well-being and the psychological well-being dimensions of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and self-acceptance. Additionally, the study provided deeper insights into the links between the subdomains of minimalism and subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and psychological need satisfaction. It also found that the relationship between minimalism and well-being remained consistent across different age groups and levels of financial security.

These findings underscore the nuanced interplay between individual characteristics, lifestyle choices, and their implications for well-being within the context of minimalism. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, employing more comprehensive

measurement approaches and longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and further elucidate the mechanisms through which minimalism impacts quality of life.

"Less is more"

--- Chilon of Sparta---

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