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HOW PERCEIVED CULTURAL TIGHTNESS AND PREVENTION FOCUS CAN AFFECT SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

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Subjective well-being can be amplified by the match between individuals' characteristics and the prevailing culture in their environment, according to an interactionist perspective. Consistently, we tested the hypothesis that people's life satisfaction may increase when people perceive high cultural tightness (i.e., strict social norms and punishments for deviance) where they reside and they simultaneously have a high prevention focus (i.e., a regulatory focus on safety and the avoidance of undesirable outcomes by following the rules). We enrolled 472 participants residing in Italy in a study conducted with a cross-sectional design. The hypothesis was tested through a moderated multiple regression model. As predicted, prevention focus moderated the effect of cultural tightness perceived in one's place of residence on life satisfaction. More specifically, in a condition of high (vs. low) prevention focus, perceived cultural tightness was positively associated to life satisfaction. Notably, data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, a particular health threat that could possibly have increased the prevention focus of individuals, while tightening the social norms to survive the threat. Practical and research implications will be discussed.