

## 1. Background

### Cross-Cultural Studies on Wellbeing

- ✓ What “wellbeing” means and how it feels vary across cultures (e.g., Delle Fave et al., 2011)
- ✓ Different mechanisms to achieve wellbeing across cultures (e.g., Kang et al., 2003; Uchida et al., 2008)

### Issues Remain ...

- ? Non-western, “wellbeing”-like concepts have been overlooked
- ? The issue of Eurocentric wellbeing, and more broadly positive psychology, model (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008)

## 2. Literature Review

### *Ikigai* in Japan

- ❑ Roughly translated into “purpose in life” or “a life worth living” (Mathews, 1996)
- ❑ Different meaning from “happiness” in Japanese or *shiwase* (Kumano, in press)
- ❑ Predicts positive outcomes including longevity (Tanno et al., 2009)
- ❑ Attention from Western psychologists

*The notion of ikigai is a good reminder to positive psychologists in the United States that our science should not simply be an export business. There are lessons to be learned in all cultures about what makes life worth living, and no language has a monopoly on the vocabulary for describing the good life.* (C. Peterson, 2008)

## 4. Results

### *Keiken* (Valued Experience) Based Theory of *Ikigai*

“I think that *ikigai* is related to experience. If I have experienced different things, they would have become my *ikigai*. And [*ikigai*] is to cherish what I have experienced so far.”

### Experiential Processes toward *Ikigai*

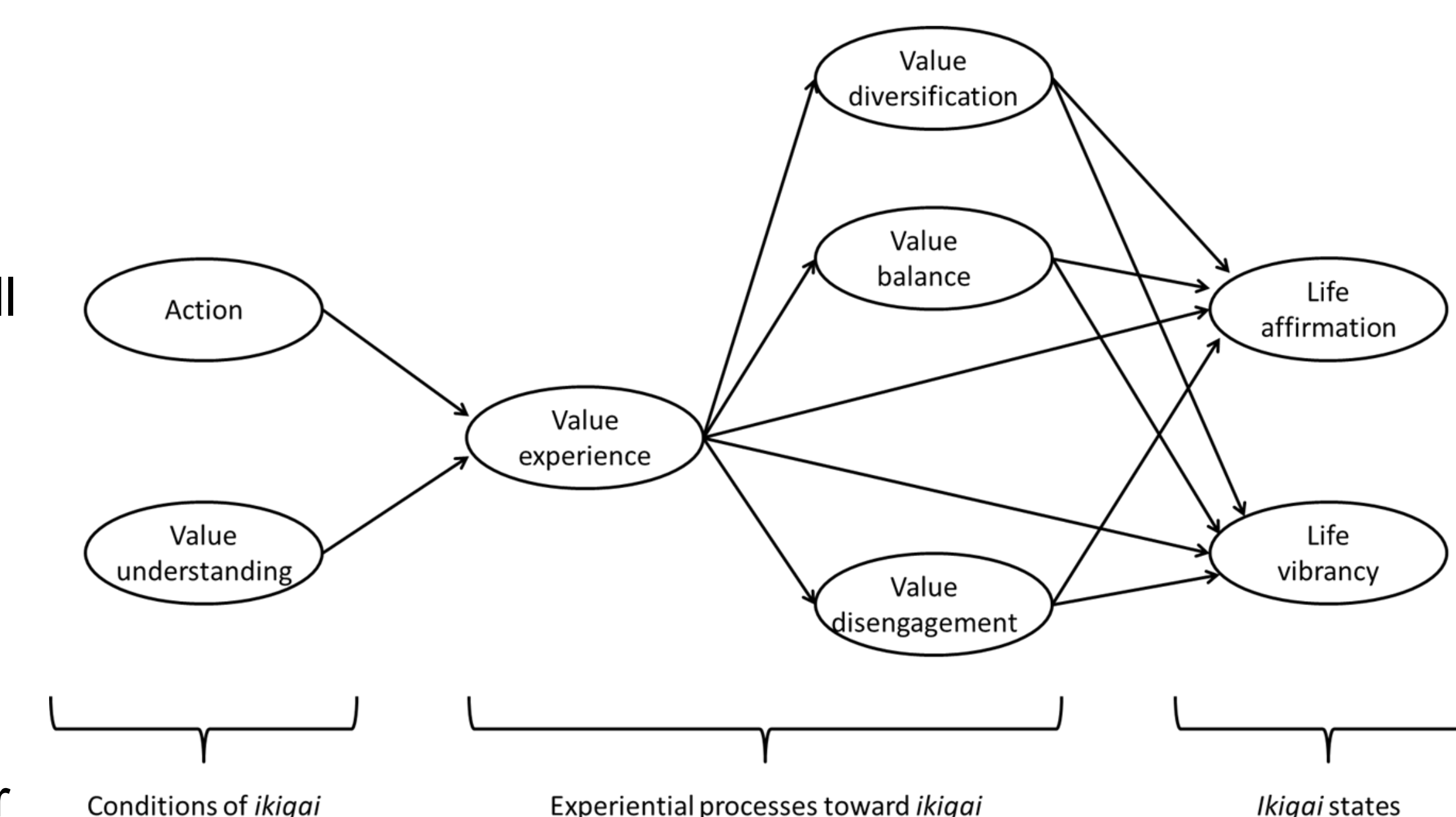
- ❑ Value experience: to engage with one of four experience values: enjoyment, effort, stimuli, and comfort
- ❑ Value diversification: to engage with multiple experience values at a time
- ❑ Value balance: to balance competing values (e.g., enjoyment vs. effort)
- ❑ Value disengagement: to take a break from overwhelming experiences to regain energy

### *Ikigai* States

- ❑ Life affirmation: the perception that one’s daily life is worth living
- ❑ Life vibrancy: the perception that one’s daily life is full of energy and motivation

### Conditions of *Ikigai*

- ❑ Action: one’s ability to act on opportunities for potentially valuable experiences without hesitation
- ❑ Value understanding: an understanding of what type(s) of experiences makes one’s current life worthier

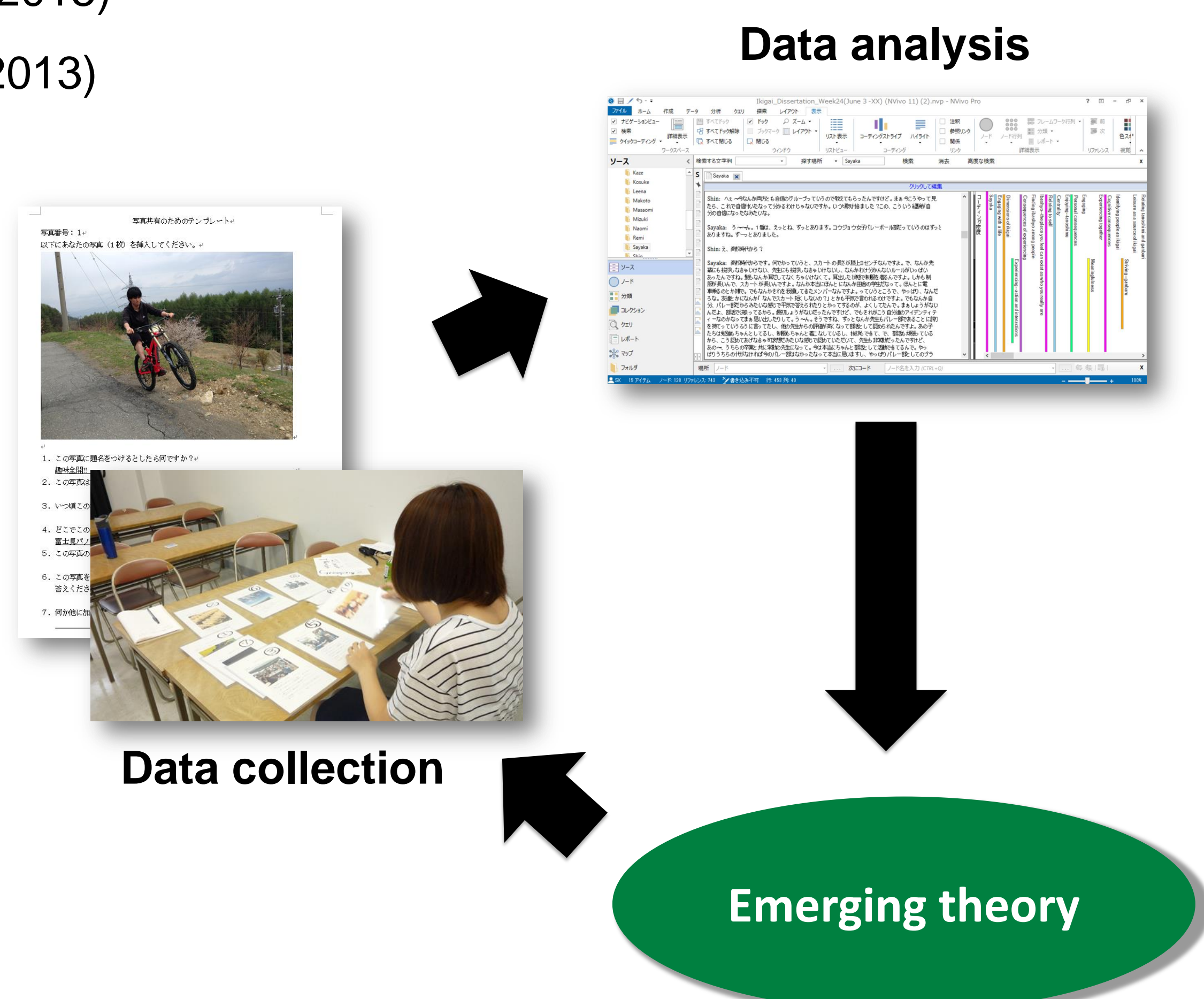


**Purpose: to inductively theorize *ikigai* among Japanese students**

## 3. Methods

### Overall Research Design: Sequential Mixed Methods (QUAL → QUAN)

- ❑ Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015)
- ❑ Photo-elicitation interviews (Tinkler, 2013)
  - ❑ Max 10 *ikigai* pictures
  - ❑ Grouping and ranking pictures
- ❑ Coding transcripts (106 mins avg.)
- ❑ Memo-writing and other analytic techniques
- ❑ Final data characteristics:
  - ✓ 27 Japanese university students
  - ✓ 243 pictures
  - ✓ 1,293-page transcripts
  - ✓ 496 codes
  - ✓ 136 memos



## 5. Discussion

- ❑ A mixture of **hedonic and eudaimonic values** as the core of *ikigai* pursuit (Huta & Ryan, 2010)
  - ❑ A diversity of, and balance among, hedonic and eudaimonic experiences
- ❑ The two *ikigai* states resemble some existing constructs
  - ❑ **Life affirmation and significance** within the tripartite model of meaning in life (Martela & Steger, 2016)
  - ❑ **Life vibrancy and subjective vitality** (Ryan & Frederick, 1997)
- ❑ However, our *ikigai* theory shifts attention **from psychological states of inner being to perceptions of one’s immediate life**

## 6. Future Research & Implications

### Future Research Directions

- ❑ **Quantitative test** of the current grounded theory
- ❑ **Cross-cultural applications** of our model
  - ❑ Does *ikigai* apply to non-Japanese people and cultures?
- ❑ **Intervention studies** to enhance people’s *ikigai* perception
  - ❑ Also to test causality in this theory

### Practical Implications

- ❑ Design campus recreation programs that are conducive to multiple experience values
- ❑ Experiential interventions for students with mental health issues
  - ❑ **From analyzing one’s mind to studying and changing one’s daily life**