

25 positive psychology relevant abstracts **november '16 newsletter**

(Abele, Hagmaier et al. 2016; Arnocky, Piché et al. 2016; Binder and Coad 2016; Diehl, Zauberman et al. 2016; Grinde 2016; Gustavson, Røysamb et al. 2016; Hagler, Hamby et al. 2016; Hajdu and Hajdu 2016; Jakubiak and Feeney 2016; Krause, Pargament et al. 2016; Lavy, Littman-Ovadia et al. 2016; Lolle and Andersen 2016; Malouff and Schutte 2016; Martela and Steger 2016; Meltzer and McNulty 2016; Moor and de Graaf 2016; Proyer, Gander et al. 2016; Reitz, Motti-Stefanidi et al. 2016; Schotanus-Dijkstra, Pieterse et al. 2016; Sobol-Kwapinska and Jankowski 2016; Stavrova and Luhmann 2016; Steca, Monzani et al. 2016; Wellenzohn, Proyer et al. 2016; Whitehead and Bates 2016; Yamaguchi, Masuchi et al. 2016)

Abele, A. E., T. Hagmaier, et al. (2016). **"Does career success make you happy? The mediating role of multiple subjective success evaluations."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1615-1633. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9662-4>

We hypothesize that career success assessed as objective career achievements (income and responsibility status) has an indirect positive association with life satisfaction that is channeled through multiple subjective success evaluations. These are based on (a) social comparisons (comparison with others, other-referent success evaluation) and (b) individual standards (satisfaction with career achievements, self-referent success evaluations). We tested our reasoning in a 2-year prospective study with N = 990 professionals. Controlling for gender, family status, and workload, the results of two mediation models that draw on all information from two measurement points supported our reasoning. We found indirect positive associations between career success and life satisfaction (H1) channeled through both other-referent (H2) and self-referent (H3) subjective success evaluation. In both mediation models, we found partial mediation, and the remaining direct path from career success to life satisfaction was negative. We conclude that career success has mixed effects on a person's life satisfaction: The net effect of positive indirect and negative direct effects is positive, but not large. We discuss the significance of these findings for theorizing about the influence of the work domain on life satisfaction as well as for conceptual issues in the analysis of mediators and moderators of the career success life satisfaction association.

Arnocky, S., T. Piché, et al. (2016). **"Altruism predicts mating success in humans."** *British Journal of Psychology*: n/a-n/a. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12208>

In order for non-kin altruism to evolve, altruists must receive fitness benefits for their actions that outweigh the costs. Several researchers have suggested that altruism is a costly signal of desirable qualities, such that it could have evolved by sexual selection. In two studies, we show that altruism is broadly linked with mating success. In Study 1, participants who scored higher on a self-report altruism measure reported they were more desirable to the opposite sex, as well as reported having more sex partners, more casual sex partners, and having sex more often within relationships. Sex moderated some of these relationships, such that altruism mattered more for men's number of lifetime and casual sex partners. In Study 2, participants who were willing to donate potential monetary winnings (in a modified dictator dilemma) reported having more lifetime sex partners, more casual sex partners, and more sex partners over the past year. Men who were willing to donate also reported having more lifetime dating partners. Furthermore, these patterns persisted, even when controlling for narcissism, Big Five personality traits, and socially desirable responding. These results suggest that altruists have higher mating success than non-altruists and support the hypothesis that altruism is a sexually selected costly signal of difficult-to-observe qualities. [And see the excellent discussion of this article in the BPS Digest - <https://digest.bps.org.uk/2016/07/22/altruistic-people-have-more-sex/-more-46>].

Binder, M. and A. Coad (2016). **"How satisfied are the self-employed? A life domain view."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1409-1433. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9650-8>

It is well-known in the literature that self-employment positively influences job satisfaction, but the effects on other life domains and overall life satisfaction are much less clear. Our study analyzes the welfare effects of self-employment apart from its monetary aspects, and focuses on the overall life satisfaction as well as different domain satisfactions of self-employed individuals in our German sample from 1997 to 2010. Using matching estimators to create an appropriate control group and differentiating between different types of self-employment, we find that voluntary self-employment brings with it positive benefits apart from work satisfaction, and leads to higher overall life satisfaction as well as increased health satisfaction, all of which increase in the first three years of self-employment. Being forced into self-employment to escape unemployment, however, confers no such benefits. Additionally, both types of self-employment lead to increasing dissatisfaction with one's leisure time.

Diehl, K., G. Zauberman, et al. (2016). **"How taking photos increases enjoyment of experiences."** *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 111(2): 119-140. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/psp/111/2/119/>

Experiences are vital to the lives and well-being of people; hence, understanding the factors that amplify or dampen enjoyment of experiences is important. One such factor is photo-taking, which has gone unexamined by prior research even as it has become ubiquitous. We identify engagement as a relevant process that influences whether photo-taking will increase or decrease enjoyment. Across 3 field and 6 lab experiments, we find that taking photos enhances enjoyment of positive experiences across a range of contexts and methodologies. This occurs when photo-taking increases engagement with the experience, which is less likely when the experience itself is already highly engaging, or when photo-taking interferes with the experience. As further evidence of an engagement-based process, we show that photo-taking directs greater visual attention to aspects of the experience one may want to photograph. Lastly, we also find that this greater engagement due to photo-taking results in worse evaluations of negative experiences.

Grinde, B. (2016). **"Why negative feelings are important when assessing well-being."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1741-1752. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9667-z>

Present knowledge on the human brain, and the evolutionary process that shaped it, allow for a biological model for what happiness is about. I shall discuss the assessment of happiness; arguing that based on this model, the focus should be on estimating negative affect. Feelings are a feature introduced by evolution for the purpose of evaluating behavioral options. They tend to be either positive or negative due to their role in directing behavior either toward opportunities or away from danger. Happiness can be construed as the net sum of positive and negative feelings. A salient point is that the evidence suggests the mammalian brain has a positive mood as a default setting, implying that people are reasonably happy as long as punishing circuits are inactive. Activation of negative feelings—particularly in the form of anxiety, depression and pain—is therefore likely to be the main cause of a substandard level of well-being. Consequently, instruments that probe negative affect may offer a

reasonable strategy, or at least important additional information, when evaluating happiness. These instruments may also provide a suitable foundation for policy making.

Gustavson, K., E. Røysamb, et al. (2016). **"Life satisfaction in close relationships: Findings from a longitudinal study."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(3): 1293-1311. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9643-7>

Life satisfaction (LS) is closely linked to romantic relationships. However, we lack knowledge on the nature of the longitudinal associations between LS and relationship quality, as well as on the longitudinal associations between two partners' LS—especially for persons in long-term relationships. Better understanding of such associations could possibly add to the existing knowledge on how to increase LS. The current study used data from 239 heterosexual couples to examine longitudinal associations between relationship quality and LS over a 3-year period. Associations between one partner's baseline LS and change in the other partner's LS from baseline to 3-year follow-up were also examined. Relationship quality predicted change in LS, and LS predicted change in relationship quality. The results also showed that one partner's LS predicted change in the other partner's LS over a 3-year period, even when controlling for both partners' baseline evaluation of relationship quality. The results suggest that a partner's general LS can increase both the couple's relationship quality and the other partner's LS over time. Further, the results also suggest that relationship quality can contribute to positive change of both partners' LS.

Hagler, M., S. Hamby, et al. (2016). **"Working for well-being: Uncovering the protective benefits of work through mixed methods analysis."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1493-1510. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9654-4>

Previous research mostly defines the benefits of work as the absence of unemployment's negative outcomes or as benefits to employers, such as increased productivity. This study uses mixed methods to investigate the ways that work can enhance the well-being of the worker. Two hundred and two participants from a rural area participated in semi-structured qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Participants' qualitative discussions of work in the interviews were coded with grounded theory. The majority (74.8 %) of participants mentioned work at least once during the interview, which focused on prominent moments in their life stories, and 53.3 % of work mentions were positive. Two main themes encompassing the protective benefits of work arose: self-oriented benefits and other-oriented benefits. Each main theme was further divided into three subthemes. Self-oriented subthemes were autonomy, personal development, and empowerment; other-oriented subthemes were providing for dependents, generativity, and helping others. Participants spoke about how each of these benefits enhances their well-being and happiness. The empowerment subtheme was positively correlated with workplace integration and negatively correlated with financial strain. This study uncovered protective benefits of work that have not been addressed by previous scholarship. Qualitative data provided the flexibility to explore work-related domains for which quantitative scales do not currently exist. Work is one of the main activities of most adults, and the study of the psychological benefits of work can improve our understanding of adult well-being and happiness.

Hajdu, G. and T. Hajdu (2016). **"The impact of culture on well-being: Evidence from a natural experiment."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(3): 1089-1110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9633-9>

This paper examines the effect of culture on subjective well-being. By exploiting the natural experiment of migration we are able to separate the effect of culture (intrinsic cultural disposition, values, beliefs, norms) from other extrinsic institutional, economic and social factors. Using data from five rounds of the European Social Survey we find that holding constant the external environment (living in the same residence country) and controlling for the important socio-demographic attributes, immigrants from countries with high levels of life satisfaction report higher life satisfaction than immigrants from countries with low levels of life satisfaction. The effect of satisfaction in the birth country lasts across generations and is stronger for immigrants who are more attached to the culture of their birth country. Since any observed differences among the immigrants is their cultural background (their birth countries), the results can be interpreted as the effect of culture on life satisfaction. Our results suggest that besides economic and social variables, institutions and personal characteristics, cultural factors play an important role in satisfaction.

Jakubiak, B. K. and B. C. Feeney (2016). **"Daily goal progress is facilitated by spousal support and promotes psychological, physical, and relational well-being throughout adulthood."** *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 111(3): 317-340. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/psp/111/3/317/>

In 2 daily diary studies, we tested the consequences and precursors of daily goal progress throughout the adult life span. Attachment theory posits that exploration—including the pursuit of autonomous goals—promotes well-being across the life span and is facilitated by support from close others. For both young-adult newlyweds (Study 1) and married couples in late adulthood (Study 2), daily independent goal progress predicted same-day and next-day improvements in psychological, physical, and relational well-being. Specifically, when participants made more progress on their goals than usual on one day, they reported increases in positive affect, sleep quality, and relationship quality, and decreased physical symptoms, the following day (as well as concurrently). Additionally, spousal support (i.e., availability, encouragement, and noninterference) enabled same-day and next-day goal progress. Mediation analyses showed indirect links between spousal support and well-being through goal progress. Some effects were moderated by attachment orientation in the newlywed sample; individuals with greater insecure attachment benefited most from goal progress, and spousal support enabled goal progress most strongly for individuals with less anxious attachment. Overall, these results support and extend attachment theoretical propositions regarding the importance of the exploration system across the adult life span. They contribute to existing literature by demonstrating wide-ranging consequences of successful exploration for well-being and by providing evidence for the importance of both exploration and support for exploration into late adulthood.

Krause, N., K. I. Pargament, et al. (2016). **"Humility, stressful life events, and psychological well-being: Findings from the landmark spirituality and health survey."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 11(5): 499-510. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1127991>

A growing body of research suggests that people who are more humble tend to enjoy better physical and mental health than individuals who are less humble. The next step in moving this literature forward involves explaining and empirically demonstrating how the potentially beneficial effects of humility arise. The purpose of this study is to address this issue by seeing whether humility buffers the effects of stressful life events on four measures of well-being: happiness, life satisfaction, depressed affect, and generalized anxiety disorder. Data from a new nationwide survey (N = 3010) suggest that the magnitude of the negative relationship between stressful life events and all four measures of well-being is reduced among people who are more humble. The theoretical implications of these findings are discussed.

Lavy, S., H. Littman-Ovadia, et al. (2016). **"My better half: Strengths endorsement and deployment in married couples."** *Journal of Family Issues* 37(12): 1730-1745. <http://jfi.sagepub.com/content/37/12/1730.abstract>

Character strengths, representing positive attributes of individuals, have been linked with several positive psychological qualities, such as life satisfaction and well-being. However, the effects of character strengths and their deployment on married

couples, at the dyadic level, have not been studied to date. The present study focuses on married partners' strengths endorsement and on their opportunities to deploy their strengths in the relationship, and explores the associations between these variables and both partners' relationship satisfaction. The results reveal significant associations of strengths endorsement and deployment with relationship satisfaction, as expected. However, unexpectedly, men's idealization of their wives' character strengths was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. These findings hold theoretical and practical implications for couples and therapists, regarding dyadic effects of strengths endorsement and deployment, and their perception (*note: the authors suggest the negative idealization/relationship satisfaction link could be due to wife's low self-esteem causing her to underestimate her strengths & so cause her partner's estimate to appear idealized and/or it could be due to the husband not seeing his wife strengths with any accuracy & that leading to her not feeling understood*).

Lolle, H. L. and J. G. Andersen (2016). **"Measuring happiness and overall life satisfaction: A Danish survey experiment on the impact of language and translation problems."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1337-1350. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9646-4>

The paper addresses language and translation problems in the most typical measures of happiness and overall life satisfaction in international surveys using an experimental design. In the experiment, randomly selected groups of Danish university students answered questionnaires in English and Danish, respectively. We found significant differences in the answers on both indices. As such, it was confirmed that the term "happy" is not the same in English and Danish. In Danish the word is similar to the German word "glücklich" which seems to refer to something stronger than just being "happy". Perhaps more surprisingly, we also found a significant difference between the answers on "overall life satisfaction", indicating that the answers given in Danish are too high as compared to the English ones. The differences are large enough to argue that such simple tests should be conducted before ranking countries in terms of these two well-established indices of subjective well-being.

Malouff, J. M. and N. S. Schutte (2016). **"Can psychological interventions increase optimism? A meta-analysis."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology*: 1-11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1221122>

(Available in free full text) Greater optimism is related to better mental and physical health. A number of studies have investigated interventions intended to increase optimism. The aim of this meta-analysis was to consolidate effect sizes found in randomized controlled intervention studies of optimism training and to identify factors that may influence the effect of interventions. Twenty-nine studies, with a total of 3319 participants, met criteria for inclusion in the analysis. A significant meta-analytic effect size, $g = .41$, indicated that, across studies, interventions increased optimism. Moderator analyses showed that studies had significantly higher effect sizes if they used the Best Possible Self intervention, provided the intervention in person, used an active control, used separate positive and negative expectancy measures rather than a version of the LOT-R, had a final assessment within one day of the end of the intervention, and used completer analyses rather than intention-to-treat analyses. The results indicate that psychological interventions can increase optimism and that various factors may influence effect size.

Martela, F. and M. F. Steger (2016). **"The three meanings of meaning in life: Distinguishing coherence, purpose, and significance."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 11(5): 531-545. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137623>

Despite growing interest in meaning in life, many have voiced their concern over the conceptual refinement of the construct itself. Researchers seem to have two main ways to understand what meaning in life means: coherence and purpose, with a third way, significance, gaining increasing attention. Coherence means a sense of comprehensibility and one's life making sense. Purpose means a sense of core goals, aims, and direction in life. Significance is about a sense of life's inherent value and having a life worth living. Although some researchers have already noted this trichotomy, the present article provides the first comprehensible theoretical overview that aims to define and pinpoint the differences and connections between these three facets of meaning. By arguing that the time is ripe to move from indiscriminate understanding of meaning into looking at these three facets separately, the article points toward a new future for research on meaning in life.

Meltzer, A. L. and J. K. McNulty (2016). **"Who is having more and better sex? The big five as predictors of sex in marriage."** *Journal of Research in Personality* 63: 62-66. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0092656616300459>

Prior research has been somewhat inconsistent in demonstrating links between personality and sexual functioning. We pooled the data from three independent daily-diary studies of newlywed couples to examine the association between individuals' Big Five traits and the probability of sex on a given day; we also pooled the data from the two studies that assessed satisfaction with sex to examine the association between these traits and individuals' satisfaction with sex when it occurred. Couples with wives high in agreeableness engaged in more frequent sex. Husbands low in openness or neuroticism and wives low in neuroticism reported increased satisfaction with sex when it occurred. Partner personality was unrelated to satisfaction with sex when it occurred.

Moor, N. and P. M. de Graaf (2016). **"Temporary and long-term consequences of bereavement on happiness."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(3): 913-936. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9624-x>

(Available in free full text) In this article, we examine the temporary and long-term consequences of the death of a parent or child on happiness. According to set-point theory external conditions are expected to only have a short-term or limited influence on happiness. This directly contradicts the basic assumption of affective theories on happiness, which states that major life-events have a lasting influence on well-being. Moreover, we test whether the association between bereavement and happiness is equally strong across the life course. To test our hypotheses we make use of the fourth wave of the European Values Study. Our research findings demonstrate that people who lost their father, mother or child are more likely to feel unhappy than people without this experience. Ten years after the death of a parent or child we still find a significant difference in happiness between people who have and have not experienced this loss. The assumption of set-point theory, that major life events only have a temporary impact on SWB, is not supported by our data. Moreover, the association between bereavement and SWB strongly differs across the life-course. We might even conclude that the age at which the loss occurred is more decisive for the strength of the association between bereavement and SWB than the duration of the loss.

Proyer, R. T., F. Gander, et al. (2016). **"Nine beautiful things: A self-administered online positive psychology intervention on the beauty in nature, arts, and behaviors increases happiness and ameliorates depressive symptoms."** *Personality and Individual Differences* 94: 189-193. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886916300289>

We tested the effectiveness of a self-administered online positive psychology intervention which addressed the appreciation of beauty and excellence on happiness and depression directly after the intervention, after one week, and one, three, and six months. One hundred thirteen adults were randomly assigned to a "9 beautiful things" intervention (IG; $n = 59$), or a placebo control group ("early memories"; $n = 54$). Participants in the IG were asked to write down (a) three beautiful things in human behavior; (b) three things they experienced as beautiful in nature and/or the environment; and (c) three beautiful

things related to beauty in general that they observed. Findings show increased levels of happiness in the intervention group at post-test, after one week and one month, and amelioration of depressive symptoms at the post-test and one week after the intervention. The effect sizes were small to medium ($\eta^2 = .03$ to $.07$). Overall, this initial study provides support for the notion that the "9 beautiful things" intervention may be effective in increasing people's well-being—at least in a short term.

Reitz, A. K., F. Motti-Stefanidi, et al. (2016). **"Me, us, and them: Testing sociometer theory in a socially diverse real-life context."** *J Pers Soc Psychol* 110(6): 908-920. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26595714>

Although numerous studies have emphasized the role evaluations by others play for people's self-esteem, the perspective of others and the social diversity of real-life contexts have largely been ignored. In a large-scale longitudinal study, we examined the link between adolescents' self-esteem and their self- and peer-perceived popularity in socially diverse classrooms. First, we tested the competing directions of effects predicted by sociometer theory (i.e., peer-perceived popularity affects self-esteem, mediated by self-perceived popularity) and the self-broadcasting perspective (i.e., self-esteem affects peer-perceived popularity). Second, we examined differential effects of popularity in the own social group ("us") versus others ("them") by using immigrant status groups (i.e., immigrants versus host-nationals). We examined 1,057 13-year-old students in 3 annual waves. Cross-lagged analyses revealed that popularity among peers of the in-group but not among peers of the out-group prospectively predicted self-esteem, which was mediated by self-perceived popularity. Self-esteem in turn prospectively predicted self- but not peer-perceived popularity. In sum, the findings provide support for sociometer theory and a conscious sociometer mechanism but no support for the self-broadcasting perspective. The findings further demonstrate that the sociometer was more responsive to popularity in immigrant status in- than out-groups. In conclusion, the findings underscore the need to consider the perspective of others and their social group memberships to better understand the complexities of the link between self-esteem and popularity.

Schotanus-Dijkstra, M., M. E. Pieterse, et al. (2016). **"What factors are associated with flourishing? Results from a large representative national sample."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1351-1370. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9647-3>

(Available in free full text) Flourishing is the ultimate end-state in psychology and a key-concept in the field of positive psychology research. Flourishers are those individuals with both high levels of hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being. Although many researchers have focused on one or another of these domains, only a few have investigated the comprehensive state of flourishing. The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of flourishing and its association with socio-demographics, personality traits and situational factors. This study used data from the second wave of the Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study-2 (NEMESIS-2), a national representative sample of adults in The Netherlands ($n = 5303$; 2010–2012). Findings were compared to having either high hedonic well-being or high eudaimonic well-being. Results showed that 37 % of the respondents were flourishers, mainly characterized by high levels of conscientiousness and extraversion and low levels of neuroticism. The situational factors of social support and positive life-events were significantly associated with flourishing when the analysis was controlled for socio-demographics and personality traits. Flourishing was most distinct from high hedonic well-being and showed parallelism with high eudaimonic well-being. More research is needed to establish a preferred flourishing instrument with validated cut-off points for flourishing and to understand the processes of situational factors that may underlie the promotion of flourishing. We recommend longitudinal designs and experience sampling studies to investigate the unique and modifiable predictors of flourishing. In addition, future research should include intervention studies that examine through which hedonic and eudaimonic pathways flourishing can be achieved.

Sobol-Kwapinska, M. and T. Jankowski (2016). **"Positive time: Balanced time perspective and positive orientation."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1511-1528. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9656-2>

The aim of the research presented in this article is to investigate the relationship between positive orientation and time perspective as outlined by Zimbardo and Boyd (*J Pers Soc Psychol* 77:1271–1288, 1999) and extended by an additional form of concentration on the present. The Polish version of the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory was used. A third type of present time perspective, namely active concentration on the present, was measured by the Carpe Diem Scale. One hundred and eighty five Polish people (non-students) participated in a survey to which a canonical-correlation analysis and a cluster analysis were applied. Positive orientation was correlated with a balanced temporal profile comprising a strong positive past orientation, moderate concentration on the future, poor fatalistic time perspective, poor concentration on the negative past and moderate active concentration on the present. Whereas a positive orientation is based on a general positive attitude towards life and self, a balanced time perspective reflects a general positive attitude towards time, in which an active concentration on the present plays an important role.

Stavrova, O. and M. Luhmann (2016). **"Social connectedness as a source and consequence of meaning in life."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 11(5): 470-479. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1117127>

Multiple studies have shown that the sense of belonging and connectedness contribute to meaning in life, but does meaning also influence social connectedness? The present research examines the reciprocal relationships between meaning and different types of connectedness: intimate, relational, and collective. Analyzing data from a nationally representative longitudinal study (Study 1) with cross-lagged panel models, we found that only collective connectedness was prospectively associated with meaning, whereas meaning was prospectively associated with all three types of connectedness, controlling for life satisfaction. The beneficial effect of meaning extended to behavioral indicators of collective and intimate connectedness (Study 2). Higher levels of meaning in life were prospectively associated with an increased likelihood of joining voluntary associations and getting married, and, for people high in marital satisfaction, with a decreased likelihood of marital separation. Together, these findings suggest that the relationship between social connectedness and meaning in life is bidirectional.

Steca, P., D. Monzani, et al. (2016). **"The effects of short-term personal goals on subjective well-being."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1435-1450. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9651-7>

Several studies demonstrated that subjective well-being is associated with goal value and perceived progress but their validity is affected by methodological biases. Moreover, a few have analysed the influence of short-term goals. We aimed to analyse how the levels of and changes in short-term goals progress and value influence subsequent levels of and changes in subjective well-being. This study adopted a three-wave longitudinal design with one-month intervals. Four hundred nine participants (186 males; age 19–71) reported their subjective well-being and their two most important goals and rated each over time in terms of value and progress. A latent difference score model revealed that levels and increases in goal progress positively influenced subsequent levels of subjective well-being. Goal value increases led to decreases in negative affect. These findings provide insights on the promotion of subjective well-being. Given the importance of goal progress in promoting subjective well-being, we propose the implementation of goal-setting programmes that are aimed at fostering successful goal pursuit.

Wellenzohn, S., R. T. Proyer, et al. (2016). **"Humor-based online positive psychology interventions: A randomized placebo-controlled long-term trial."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 11(6): 584-594.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137624>

While correlational evidence exists that humor is positively associated with well-being, only few studies addressed causality. We tested the effects of five humor-based activities on happiness and depression in a placebo-controlled, self-administered online positive psychology intervention study (N = 632 adults). All of the five one-week interventions enhanced happiness, three for up to six months (i.e. three funny things, applying humor, and counting funny things), whereas there were only short-term effects on depression (all were effective directly after the intervention). Additionally, we tested the moderating role of indicators of a person x intervention-fit and identified early changes in well-being and preference (liking of the intervention) as the most potent indicators for changes six months after the intervention. Overall, we were able to replicate existing work, but also extend knowledge in the field by testing newly developed interventions for the first time. Findings are discussed with respect to the current literature.

Whitehead, R. and G. Bates (2016). **"The transformational processing of peak and nadir experiences and their relationship to eudaimonic and hedonic well-being."** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17(4): 1577-1598.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9660-6>

Transformational processing refers to the extent to which individuals openly explore, resolve, and personally grow from their life experiences so that these experiences become transformative. The present study explored whether the transformational processing of peak experiences (TP_{peak}) and of nadir experiences (TP_{nadir}) related to eudaimonic well-being (psychological well-being) and hedonic well-being (subjective well-being). A sample of 116 respondents (76 women, 40 men) provided detailed descriptions of a peak and nadir experience, and how these experiences had changed their lives. As predicted, transformational processing of peak experiences and of nadir experiences was significantly related to eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, but only the transformational processing of nadirs significantly reduced negative affect. TP_{nadir} and TP_{peak} did not differ in the strength of correlation with eudaimonic or hedonic well-being, and each made a unique contribution to eudaimonic well-being. However, only TP_{nadir} made a unique contribution to hedonic well-being. Findings suggest that increased hedonic well-being requires a focus on working through the most difficult times in life, but for eudaimonic well-being, a focus on working through extremely negative and positive life experiences is beneficial.

Yamaguchi, M., A. Masuchi, et al. (2016). **"Experiential purchases and prosocial spending promote happiness by enhancing social relationships."** *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 11(5): 480-488.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1117128>

(Available in free full text) Recent research on consumption and subjective well-being has revealed that experiential purchases and prosocial spending promote happiness by enhancing the purchasers' social relationships. This study (N = 1523) explored whether undergraduate students' consumption behaviors during summer break would be associated with their post-break happiness, and whether the consumption-happiness relationship would be mediated by a positive influence on their social relationships. The results showed that both experiential purchases and prosocial spending during summer break were associated with greater post-break happiness, but only when these purchases had a positive influence on the purchasers' social relationships. These effects remained significant after controlling for respondents' personality traits, financial standing, and sex. Moreover, both experiential purchases and prosocial spending were more likely to have a positive influence on social relationships than luxury purchases. These results are congruent with the recent exposition that experiential purchases and prosocial spending promote happiness by enhancing the purchasers' social relationships.