

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

<http://jhp.sagepub.com/>

Pathways From Personality to Happiness: Sense of Uniqueness as a Mediator

Selda Koydemir, Ömer Faruk Simsek and Meliksah Demir
Journal of Humanistic Psychology published online 29 August 2013
DOI: 10.1177/0022167813501226

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://jhp.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/07/02/0022167813501226>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



[Association for Humanistic Psychology](#)

Additional services and information for *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jhp.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jhp.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

>> [OnlineFirst Version of Record](#) - Aug 29, 2013

[What is This?](#)

Pathways From Personality to Happiness: Sense of Uniqueness as a Mediator

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

XX(X) 1–22

© The Author(s) 2013

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0022167813501226

jhp.sagepub.com



Selda Koydemir¹, Ömer Faruk Şimşek², and Melikşah Demir³

Abstract

Personal sense of uniqueness, a major construct in humanistic psychology, has been recently shown to be a robust correlate of happiness. Yet the antecedents of this experience are not known. To address this limitation, we focused on extraversion and openness to experience, the two traits referred to as plasticity in higher-order framework of personality, as predictors of uniqueness and happiness. In light of theory and past empirical research, we proposed that the two traits representing plasticity would promote a sense of uniqueness, which in turn influence happiness. This model was tested in a college sample ($N = 370$) by relying on structural equation modeling. Results showed that uniqueness mediated the associations of extraversion and openness to experience with happiness. This model was supported when the effects of neuroticism, a marker of vulnerability to psychopathology, on uniqueness was taken into account. The implications of the findings for future research were addressed and sense of uniqueness as an element of a good life was highlighted.

¹Middle East Technical University, Mersin 10, Turkey

²Istanbul Arel University, Istanbul, Turkey

³Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, USA

Corresponding Author:

Selda Koydemir, Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus, Kalkanlı, Guzelyurt, Mersin 10, Turkey.

Email: kselda@metu.edu.tr

Keywords

uniqueness, happiness, personality

The question of what makes people happy in life has been the subject of an increasing number of empirical studies over the past three decades, and various attempts have been made to define happiness and to explain its possible causes. Happiness is generally defined as a self-evaluation of one's life based on positive and negative emotional experiences (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001) and is considered a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that includes the states of pleasure and enjoyment (Bradburn, 1969; Myers, 1992).

Two distinct forms of happiness have been proposed by scholars: the hedonic approach and the eudaimonic approach (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2006). These approaches are conceptually distinct but related (McGregor & Little, 1998). Hedonic happiness has frequently been associated with the concept of subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Basically, the hedonic forms of well-being center on the pleasure principle and pain avoidance, whereas the eudaimonic approach is concerned with the extent to which an individual is actualizing and finding meaning in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It has been suggested that hedonic happiness does not cover all aspects of well-being, that eudaimonic well-being is more than pleasure, and that there is more to living well than the balance between positive and negative affect (Emmons, 2003; Waterman, 1993). Eudaimonic happiness is known to include factors such as autonomy, personal growth, self-actualization, self-acceptance, and purpose in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). In this study, happiness is conceptualized within a perspective similar to eudaimonic perspective.

Given that a thorough understanding of happiness requires the identification of its underlying internal processes, many studies demonstrated the effects of such processes including extraversion and neuroticism (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998), self-esteem (Diener & Diener, 1995), satisfaction of psychological needs (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000), personal goals (Riediger & Freund, 2004), sense of personal control (Ryff, 1989), and optimism (Diener, Tay, & Oishi, 2012). Although these variables explain a great deal of psychological mechanisms involved in one's experience of happiness, the question of what other less broad traits could possibly account for this experience leaves room for more empirical research. In the current investigation, we attempted to study personal sense of uniqueness as one such construct and its relationships with two broader personality traits as its antecedents

in predicting happiness—namely, extraversion and openness to experience. We propose that sense of uniqueness can partly account for individual differences in happiness.

Happiness, studied in the individual differences framework, mainly focused on two broad traits of extraversion and neuroticism, which have been found to explain a great deal of variance in many well-being outcomes (see Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008, for a review). In the current research, however, we construed a new link based on the premises of humanistic and positive psychologies. We believe that such a link would provide an alternative to the dominant perspective, which extensively focused on extraversion and neuroticism. We begin our discussion by presenting the construct of personal uniqueness and then move to its proposed relationships with happiness, extraversion, and openness to experience.

Personal Sense of Uniqueness and Happiness

Although it has been the subject of a relatively small number of empirical studies, personal uniqueness has been cited as an important experience in the literatures of both humanistic and positive psychologies. While Rogers (1961) argued that a sense of uniqueness is a necessary ingredient to achieve self-determination, Maslow (1954) stressed the importance of sense of uniqueness for self-actualization. Furthermore, Frankl (1985) discussed the essential role of sense of personal uniqueness for a happy and meaningful life.

In terms of empirical research, however, the concept of uniqueness has been approached from a limited perspective. One of the most popular theories of uniqueness is proposed by Snyder and Fromkin (1980). This theory is based on the idea that individuals feel unique when they perceive themselves to be different from others in the reference or larger group. The theory argues that perceiving oneself as highly similar or dissimilar to others is an unpleasant experience, and thus individuals are the happiest when they are moderately distinct from other people. However, this argument has not been validated in the well-being literature. In fact, there is evidence that neither the need for uniqueness nor moderate levels of distinctiveness are related to well-being (Law, 2005), despite the idea that establishing uniqueness based on differences from the reference group would be emotionally satisfying (Lynn & Snyder, 2002). Although the theory is relevant and applicable in some specific fields such as consumer research (Lynn & Harris, 1997; Lynn & Snyder, 2002), research indicated that the need for uniqueness could be related to psychopathology (Morrison & Bearden, 2007; Tepper, 1996).

Developmental psychology literature, on the other hand, has focused on adolescent personal uniqueness, which has been perceived as a rather

negative construct. That is, adolescent uniqueness has been associated with feelings of loneliness, alienation, and vulnerability—concepts known to be predictive of risk-taking behaviors (Elkind, 1967; Goldberg, Millstein, & Halpern-Felsher, 2002). Besides, adolescent uniqueness is related to negative mental health outcomes such as depression and suicidal ideation (Aalsma, Lapsley, & Flannery, 2006). Again, this conceptualization of uniqueness contrasts with the way humanistic psychology conceives it.

Consistent with the arguments of humanistic approach and positive psychology, a recent conceptualization of uniqueness adopts a positive attitude, which is not based on the similarity–differentiation continuum but rather on the acknowledgment of self as having distinctive features with the feeling of worthiness (Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). The personal sense of uniqueness (SoU; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010) specifically refers to the feelings of being somewhat different, but worthy, which could be considered as an internal sense of self-worth. In this respect, SoU emphasizes a personal consideration of one's unique existence rather than focusing only on the individual's inclination to feel different from others as in the case of need for uniqueness or adolescent uniqueness. Such a conceptualization of SoU is in line with the propositions of Maslow (1954), who considered uniqueness as an inextricable component of experience in order to live an actualized life, and that of Rogers (1961), who stressed the importance of accepting one's noncontingent self-worth. Therefore, based on this conceptualization, uniqueness cannot be reduced to a simple feeling of being different from others (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2000, 2002) but could rather be accepted as an aspect of a positive human growth.

Is uniqueness compatible with different cultures? Do individuals in different cultures develop a sense of uniqueness similarly? Although a detailed account of these questions is beyond the scope of this study, it is essential to highlight a few key points. To start with, uniqueness, defined as the need to be different from others, has been considered to be a key personal experience in individualistic cultures in the construction of self (Kim & Markus, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). This definition of uniqueness is based on the similarity–difference polarity and might not be compatible with collectivistic cultures. As explained above, defining uniqueness in this way is not only inconsistent with the humanistic approach but also limits one's view such that the development of a sense of uniqueness in relation to others while appreciating and accepting one's unique existence is not taken into account (Rogers, 1961; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). Thus, the definition provided by Şimşek and his colleagues, one's unique existence in relation to others, might be compatible with all cultures. Thus, the definition provided by Şimşek and his colleagues, one's unique existence in relation to others, might be

cross-culturally relevant. In fact, there is some evidence that uniqueness might be a fundamental and universal human need (Vignoles et al., 2000; Vignoles et al., 2002; Vignoles, Chrysoschoou, & Breakwell, 2004). Although one might develop a sense of uniqueness in different ways consistent with the cultural expectations (Şimşek & Demir, in press; Vignoles et al., 2000), this process does not imply distinctiveness. Overall, we believe that uniqueness defined from a humanistic perspective is compatible with all cultures.

Past research provides some support for the positive contribution of SoU to a number of well-being indicators such as happiness, affect balance, hope, and resilience (Demir, Şimşek, & Procsal, 2012; Şimşek & Demir, in press; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). Though distinct, SoU was also related to self-esteem (Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010) and autonomy (Demir et al., 2012; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). These findings are highly plausible considering the structure of SoU, which consists of a positive human growth element. Besides, the importance of a sense of self-worth for positive cognitive and emotional evaluations of life has been consistently demonstrated by empirical research (Diener & Diener, 1995; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004), and self-acceptance has been stressed as a significant criterion for well-being (Ryff, 1989). Therefore, we hypothesized that SoU would be positively related to happiness.

Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Uniqueness, and Happiness

A critical question in the study of uniqueness concerns what broader personality traits would predispose one to develop a sense of personal uniqueness. In this study, besides seeking the link between SoU and happiness, we aimed at demonstrating the extent to which two personality traits, namely, extraversion and openness to experience predicted SoU, and testing the mediating role of SoU on the link between these traits and happiness. We now discuss the rationale behind our particular focus on these two personality traits.

Conception of personal sense of uniqueness as a personal strength should evoke a closely related construct: self-actualization. Both Maslow (1968, 1971) and Rogers (1961) assumed that self-actualization requires the person to acknowledge his/her unique characteristics, yet emphasizes the importance of being connected to others and to life. Self-actualizing people enjoy their uniqueness over a broad range of environments and activities. They are also original, inventive, uninhibited, and autonomous. For example, self-actualization maintains the importance of personal uniqueness (Maslow, 1955), and it can be argued that the characteristics of a self-actualized person could be found in individuals displaying higher levels of extraversion and

openness to experience. According to the Five Factor Model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990), whereas extraversion is a trait that encompasses a tendency for activity, sociability, energy, and expressiveness, openness to experience implies a tendency to be curious, imaginative, broad-minded, and open to a variety of novel ideas and experiences. People high on both extraversion and openness to experience are characterized by a high willingness to seek out personal growth and development (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997). Based on these definitions, we predicted that extraversion and openness to experience would be two basic traits that are highly relevant in predisposing individuals to develop a personal sense of uniqueness, which in turn would promote happiness.

There is indeed some preliminary evidence that among the Big Five, the most closely related traits to a personal sense of uniqueness were extraversion and openness to experience (Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010), suggesting that individuals with a tendency to socialize with others and those who are open to a variety of experiences are likely to have a higher sense of personal uniqueness. This finding supports the idea that SoU is a noncontingent sense of self-worth, which is based on internal locus of causality, and provides individuals with a greater freedom to choose their own ways of living rather than being dependent on others as reference points. This point also coincides with the propositions of Maslow and Rogers discussed above.

These considerations are also supported by the recent literature on higher-order personality. When the Big Five is considered within the higher-order framework (Digman, 1997; DeYoung, Peterson, & Higgins, 2002), extraversion and openness to experience are known to make up one of the higher-order factors, namely, plasticity (DeYoung, 2006). Plasticity refers to “the ability and tendency to explore and engage flexibly with novelty, in both behavior and cognition” (DeYoung, 2006, p. 1138). In fact, Digman (1997) and DeYoung (2006) speculated that plasticity may be similar to a trait that is highly focused on personal growth and even self-actualization.

Consequently, considering the conceptual definitions of happiness, SoU, extraversion, and openness to experience, we proposed that individuals with the characteristics of a plastic personality—who score high on extraversion and openness to experience—would experience greater personal sense of uniqueness and happiness and that the experience of uniqueness would mediate the effects of extraversion and openness to experience on happiness.

The Present Study

To test our arguments, we formulated a structural equation model in which extraversion and openness to experience directly predict SoU, which, in turn,

predicts happiness. The literature is consistent in showing that personality traits are the most robust predictors of happiness (Steel et al., 2008). Both extraversion and openness to experience are positive predictors of well-being outcomes, with extraversion being the most closely associated trait. However, we believe that our proposed model can provide an additional explanation by which these components contribute to one's happiness. Besides, among the Big Five, openness to experience has been the least studied in relation to happiness. Thus, the study may provide an important insight for this link by demonstrating a possible underlying mechanism.

Given that both personal sense of uniqueness and the personality traits used in this study are closely connected to a humanistic viewpoint, we used a measure of happiness that is based on a eudaimonic viewpoint. It has been argued that (Ryff, 1989) the well-known measures of subjective well-being, such as the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Carey, 1988) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), measure happiness in a hedonistic viewpoint and could be irrelevant to variables closely related to a eudaimonic framework. Indeed, Vittersø (2004) demonstrated that the common conceptualizations of subjective well-being are not related to self-actualization—a finding also shown by Steel and Ones (2002). Similarly, McGregor and Little (1998) reported that subjective well-being is not associated with the existential dimensions of mental health such as growth and purpose in life.

Şimşek (2009) proposed and operationalized (Şimşek & Kocayörük, 2013) a new model of happiness, ontological well-being (OWB), which is based on a eudaimonic perspective rather than a hedonistic one. Specifically, OWB conceptualizes one's life as a personal project in which the individual evaluates his/her life in a temporal perspective, including general evaluations of the past life, the present, and the future. Evaluation, in this model, refers to individuals' affective reactions to their life projects within a time perspective rather than merely assessing the frequency or intensity of emotional experiences within different time frames. In other words, the construct consists of affective judgments on the life project in its continuity: individuals' feelings when considering the completed (past), the ongoing (present), and the prospective (future) parts of their projects. The findings of Şimşek and Kocayörük (2013) showed that the scale designed to measure OWB accounted for unique variance in eudaimonic indicators such as purpose in life and personal growth above and beyond the scores on well-known measures of happiness including PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) and SWLS (Diener et al., 1985), which are limited in explaining additional variance in these eudaimonic indicators as well as other positive mental health variables above and beyond the scores on the OWB Scale.

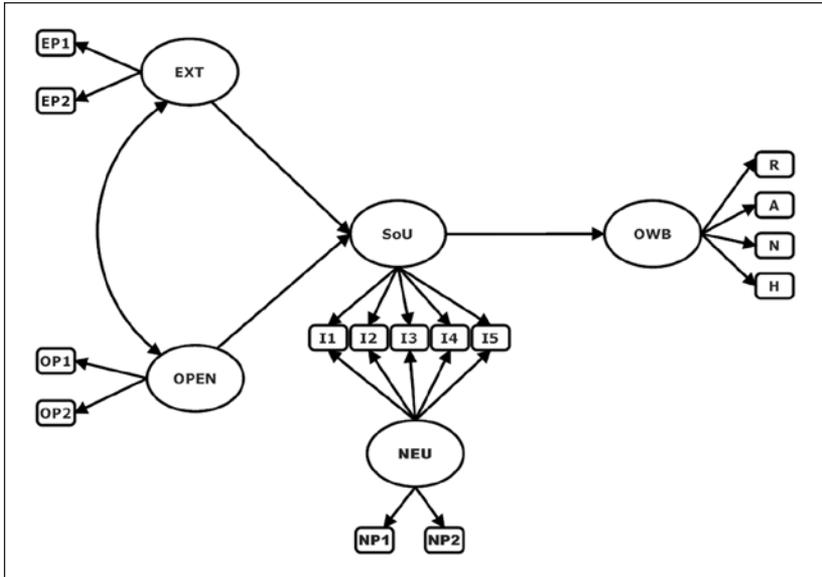


Figure 1. Proposed structural model with measured variables.

Note. EXT = Extraversion; OPEN = Openness to Experience; SoU = Sense of Uniqueness; OWB = Ontological Well-Being; EP1-EP2 = two parcels for the items of Extraversion subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; OP1-OP2 = two parcels for the items of Openness to Experience subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; NPI-NP2 = two parcels for the items of Neuroticism subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; I1-I5 = five items of the Sense of Uniqueness Scale; R = Regret; A = Activation; N = Nothingness; H = Hope.

Despite the fact that personal uniqueness occupies a large place in the arguments of humanistic writers such as Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1961), whether the scores on the Personal Sense of Uniqueness Scale (PSU; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010) used in this study are free from psychopathology has not yet been well established. In other words, although SoU is closely associated with many positive mental health variables, as discussed previously, research that employed other conceptualizations of uniqueness (e.g., need for uniqueness or adolescent uniqueness) showed that uniqueness is related to psychopathology. Given that one of the Big Five personality traits—neuroticism—is considered an important marker of the vulnerability to psychopathology (Ormel, Rosmalen, & Farmer, 2004), in the current study, we statistically controlled for the effects of this dimension on the items of the PSU Scale both in measurement and structural models (Figure 1). In sum, the general aim of the study was to test the mediator effect of personal sense of uniqueness on the relationship between extraversion and openness to experience, and happiness.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 370 college students attending a Southwestern university in the United States (79 men; $M_{age} = 19.04$, $SD = 2.80$; ranging = 18-29 years). The ethnic distribution of the sample was as follows: 71% European American, 16% Latino American, 4% Native American, 2% Asian American, and 7% mixed or other. Also, the majority of the participants were freshmen (89%).

The data were gathered online. The study was announced via the department's online research participation system, and psychology students who wanted to participate in the study were provided with a link to the survey after signing up for the study. To ensure anonymity, there was no connection between the sign-ups for the study and the survey. Participants had to agree to an informed consent prior to completing the survey, and the order of the questionnaires was counterbalanced. Completion of the survey lasted approximately 40 minutes, and participants received extra credit for their psychology classes.

Measures

Sense of Uniqueness. Feelings of uniqueness were measured with the Personal Sense of Uniqueness Scale (PSU; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). PSU consists of five items (e.g., "As people get to know me more, they begin to recognize my special features") rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Şimşek and Yalınçetin (2010) reported evidence for acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$). They also reported that the scale was positively correlated with life-satisfaction and negatively related to anxiety and depression. The internal consistency of the scale in the current study was .83.

Extraversion and Openness to Experience. Three subscales of the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999) were used to assess extraversion, openness to experience, and neuroticism. BFI is designed to assess extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. In this inventory, extraversion is measured with 8 items (e.g., "outgoing," "sociable"), openness to experience with 10 items (e.g., "is curious about a lot of things," "is original, comes with new ideas"), and neuroticism with 8 items (e.g., "can be moody," "worries a lot") rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 5 = *agree strongly*). John and Srivastava (1999) reported

that the scales showed good convergent validity with Trait Descriptive Adjectives and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory. In the present investigation, the reliabilities of extraversion and neuroticism were .83, and openness to experience was .78.

Happiness. Ontological Well-Being Scale (OWB; Şimşek & Kocayörük, 2013) was used to measure happiness. OWB consists of 24 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). The scale has been shown to have four subscales, regret, activation, nothingness, and hope. The Regret subscale (7 items) assesses participants' feelings regarding the completed part of their life projects (the past). Nothingness (6 items) and Activation (5 items) subscales measures feelings toward ongoing life projects (the present). Finally, the Hope subscale (6 items) taps into feelings about one's future life projects (the future). The original scale had good internal consistencies ranging from .78 to .90, and the test-retest reliability of the OWB Scale, conducted over a 2-week interval, showed sufficient consistency of the scores over time (ranging from .72 to .92). OWB correlated positively ($r = .57$) with positive affect subscale, negatively ($r = -.55$) with negative affect subscale of PANAS (Watson et al., 1988), and positively with The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985; $r = .55$). In the present investigation, the reliabilities of the subscales ranged from .84 (Nothingness) to .95 (Hope). The alpha coefficient for the entire scale was .94.

Results

Analytic Strategy

We tested the proposed model using a two-stage approach, according to which measurement model should be tested before the test of the structural model. Neuroticism was defined as a control variable by adding paths from neuroticism latent variable to the items of PSU Scale, whereas the covariance of neuroticism with other latent variables was constrained to be zero (Johnson, Rosen, & Djurdjevic, 2011; Williams & Anderson, 1994). Additionally, the variance of neuroticism was set to 1.00 in order to achieve identification. This procedure was used both in the tests of measurement and structural models.

Test of the Measurement Model

Each latent variable in the measurement model was created using multiple indicators. For the personality dimensions of extraversion, neuroticism, and

openness to experience, two parcels were created for each rather than using their composite scores. Although there are different kinds of item parceling, the method used in this study creates relatively equivalent indicators by spreading “better” and “worse” items across the different parcels (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). To create parcels as indicators for these latent variables, items were rank ordered by the size of the item–total correlations and summing sets of items to obtain equivalent indicators for those constructs. Since the PSU Scale has only five items, we used these items as indicators of the SoU latent construct. Finally, the happiness latent construct was defined using the scores of the four factors of the OWB Scale.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables are shown in Table 1. Skewness values of all indicators were less than 2, with most of them being less than 1, and kurtosis values less than 4, indicating that there was no significant violation of normality in the data.

A test of the measurement model resulted in a relatively acceptable fit with the following goodness of fit statistics: $\chi^2(79, N = 370) = 362.46, p < .05$; goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) = .88, normed fit index (NFI) = .92, comparative fit index (CFI) = .94, incremental fit index (IFI) = .94, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .099 (90% confidence interval [CI] for RMSEA = 0.088, 0.11). An inspection of the modification indexes produced by the LISREL 8.50 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001), however, indicated that adding a covariance between two factors of OWB latent construct, Regret and Nothingness, would result in a better fit to the data. Such a modification is strongly supported on a theoretical basis given that as the levels of dissatisfaction with the past life project (Regret) increases, the levels of experiencing negative existential feelings such as aimlessness, emptiness, or feeling lost (Nothingness) would also increase. Indeed, adding the covariance between these two indicators increased the fit of the model to the data, $\chi^2(78, N = 370) = 283.32, p < .05$; GFI = .91, NFI = .94, CFI = .95, IFI = .95, RMSEA = .084 (90% CI for RMSEA = 0.074, 0.095), which is evident by the chi-square difference test (79.14, 1; $p < .01$). Although the RMSEA value did not fall under well-known cutoffs (from .05 to .08), all other goodness of fit statistics yielded acceptable fit, and thus were deemed to support the fit of the model to the data.

The relationships among the latent variables are represented in Table 2. First, both extraversion and openness were moderately and positively correlated with happiness. The relationship of SoU with extraversion was positive but small, whereas its relationship with openness was moderate. Finally, SoU showed a strong relationship with OWB.

The results of the measurement model also showed that neuroticism did not add to the variance in the items of SoU already accounted for by the SoU

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Study Variables.

Indicators	EXT1	EXT2	OPI	OP2	NEU1	NEU2	UNI	UN2	UN3	UN4	UN5	REG	ACT	NOT	HOP
EXT1	—														
EXT2	.75**	—													
OPI	.13*	.19**	—												
OP2	.23**	.30**	.69**	—											
NEU1	-.32**	-.24**	-.14*	-.23**	—										
NEU2	-.28**	-.19**	-.06	-.13*	.75**	—									
UNI	.15**	.22**	.30**	.23**	-.19**	-.10	—								
UN2	.28**	.33**	.38**	.36**	-.28**	-.18**	.59**	—							
UN3	.25**	.28**	.31**	.33**	-.26**	-.25**	.36**	.61**	—						
UN4	.21**	.23**	.25**	.26**	-.24**	-.18**	.44**	.56**	.49**	—					
UN5	.18**	.24**	.30**	.24**	-.19**	-.16**	.37**	.55**	.43**	.55**	—				
REG	.26**	.29**	.08	.10	-.47**	-.34**	.28**	.40**	.34**	.33**	.27**	—			
ACT	.32**	.39**	.27**	.33**	-.51**	-.33**	.32**	.44**	.34**	.35**	.35**	.54**	—		
NOT	.22**	.25**	.06	.09	-.41**	-.33**	.21**	.27**	.34**	.26**	.21**	.64**	.47**	—	
HOP	.31**	.41**	.30**	.36**	-.43**	-.28**	.36**	.44**	.28**	.40**	.40**	.52**	.74**	.44**	—
M	12.63	13.68	18.35	17.10	11.07	12.33	4.33	4.02	3.95	3.87	3.76	28.8	18.76	23.97	25.07
SD	3.10	3.14	3.35	3.13	3.28	3.22	0.68	0.86	0.95	0.76	0.96	5.07	4.04	4.91	4.94

Note. N = 370. EXT1-EXT2 = two parcels for extraversion; OPI-OP2 = two parcels for openness to experience; NEU1-NEU2 = two parcels for neuroticism; UNI-UN5 = five items of the PSU Scale; REG = Regret; ACT = Activation; NOT = Nothingness; HOP = Hope.

**p < .01. *p < .05.

Table 2. Correlations Among Latent Variables.

Variable	Extraversion	Openness	Uniqueness	Happiness
Extraversion	—			
Openness	.26**	—		
Uniqueness	.39**	.55**	—	
Happiness	.48**	.43**	.65**	—
Neuroticism	-.23**	-.23**	-.29**	-.52**

Note. $N = 370$.

** $p < .01$.

latent variable itself. The paths from neuroticism to the items of the PSU Scale were all weak and not significant.

Test of the Structural Model

Test of the structural model proposed in Figure 1 resulted in a worse fit than the measurement model indicated by the following goodness of fit statistics: $\chi^2(80, N = 370) = 318.20, p < .05$; GFI = .90, NFI = .93, CFI = .95, IFI = .95, RMSEA = .090 (90% CI for RMSEA = 0.080, 0.10). An inspection of the modification indices suggested adding a path from extraversion to happiness, denoting a partial mediation situation for this link. Indeed, adding this path to the model increased the fit of model to the data (31.66, 1; $p < .01$) by the following statistics: $\chi^2(79, N = 370) = 286.54, p < .05$; GFI = .91, NFI = .94, CFI = .95, IFI = .95, RMSEA = .084 (90%CI for RMSEA = 0.074, 0.095). To check the mediator role of SoU on the relationship between openness to experience and happiness, a path denoting this link was added to the model, which failed to produce a better fit (3.22, 1; $p > .05$). This path, consistent with the chi-square difference test, was already nonsignificant ($\beta = .08, t = 1.28, p > .05$).

These results indicated that the relationship between openness to experience and happiness was fully mediated by SoU while it partially mediated the relationship between extraversion and happiness (Figure 2). LISREL estimates for the indirect effects of extraversion (0.13, $p < .01$) and openness to experience (0.24, $p < .01$) on OWB through SoU also supported the mediator role of SoU in the model.

It is worth noting here that an alternative model was tested against the proposed model. This model, in which neuroticism was used again as control variable, assumed that the relationship between OWB and Uniqueness was mediated by extraversion and openness to experience. Although there is a

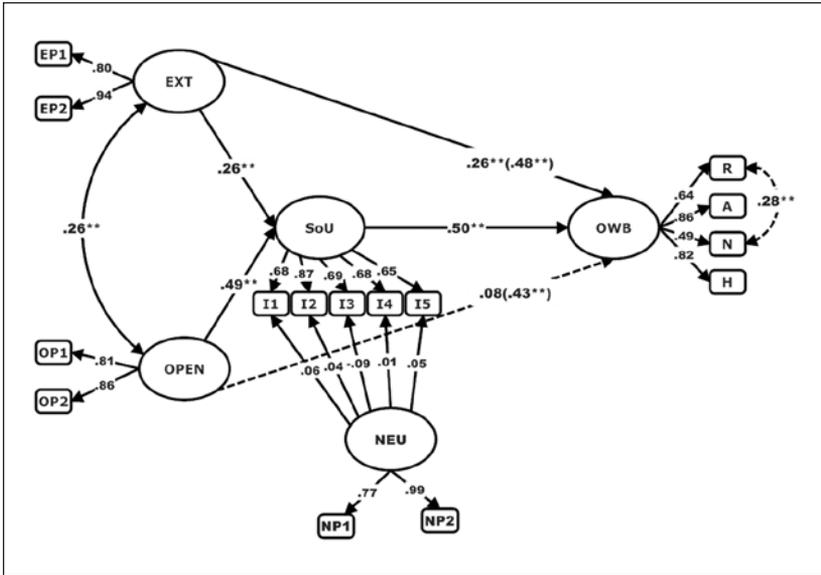


Figure 2. Standardized parameter estimates of the final model.
 Note. EXT = Extraversion; OPEN = Openness to experience; SoU = Sense of Uniqueness; OWB = Ontological Well-Being; EPI-EP2 = two parcels for the items of Extraversion subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; OPI-OP2 = two parcels for the items of Openness to Experience subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; NPI-NP2 = two parcels for the items of Neuroticism subfactor of the Big Five Inventory; I1-I5 = five items of the Sense of Uniqueness Scale; R = Regret; A = Activation; N = Nothingness; H = Hope. Error variances of the observed variables are not represented. The numbers in parentheses refer to the standardized coefficients in the measurement model in which only covariances among the latent variables were freely estimated. Dashed line refers to insignificant path in the final estimation. All factor loadings are significant at $p = .01$.
 ** $p < .01$.

more plausible model, in which the relationship between personality dimensions and uniqueness was mediated by OWB, it was impossible to compare this model with the proposed model since they have the same degrees of freedom. Thus, we chose to test this model in order to rule out the possibility of fit to data by statistical coincidence. The results showed that the model deteriorated model fit indicated by the following goodness of fit statistics: $\chi^2(78, N = 370) = 453.84, p < .05$; GFI = .86, NFI = .90, CFI = .92, IFI = .92, RMSEA = .11 (90% CI for RMSEA = 0.10, 0.12). The chi-square difference test (167.3, 1; $p < .01$) indicated that the difference between the models is statistically significant.

Discussion

Approaches to happiness in a eudaimonic perspective maintain that well-being is a process of fulfilling or realizing one's true nature and virtuous potentials, and living as one was inherently intended to live (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989). Eudaimonic happiness is concerned with the subjective experiences of engaging in the things that are meaningful to the individual (Norton, 1976; Telfer, 1980), and emphasizes the importance of realizing and advancing one's purpose in life (Norton, 1976). Eudemonia, thus, refers to the feelings that emerge when the individual is moving toward understanding his/her unique potential. This conceptualization is consistent with the concept of self-actualization discussed by Maslow (1954) and further emphasized by Rogers (1961).

In line with these theoretical approaches, in this study we proposed that an individual's sense of uniqueness would be highly relevant in one's well-being since this construct has strong roots in humanistic psychology. Personal sense of uniqueness, as conceptualized in the present study, emphasizes the acknowledgment of self as having distinct features with the feeling of worthiness. This idea is quite different from other conceptualizations such as adolescent uniqueness (Elkind, 1967) and need for uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). However, despite previous research evidence for the positive link between SoU and such well-being outcomes as life satisfaction and affect balance (Demir et al., 2012; Şimşek & Demir, in press; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010), we aimed at expanding this relationship by testing the mediator role of SoU on the relationship between extraversion and openness to experience, and happiness.

The findings generally supported our predictions. We found that SoU fully mediated the relationship between openness to experience and happiness, whereas it partially mediated the relationship between extraversion and happiness. These findings suggest that people high on extraversion and openness to experience are prone to feel higher levels of SoU. The findings also provided a useful insight for one possible mechanism by which these traits are related to happiness. For instance, although there are different explanations as to why extraversion is a good predictor of happiness including the role of pursuit of approach goals (Carver, 2001), reward sensitivity (Elliot & Thrash, 2002), and sociability (Pavot, Diener, & Fujita, 1990); not much is known about the underlying mechanisms through which openness to experience is positively related to happiness. Besides, openness to experience was theoretically proposed to induce both positive and negative affect (McCrae & Costa, 1991); however, it is not yet clear if and how it is associated with eudaimonic happiness. The finding that uniqueness fully mediated the relationship between openness to experience and happiness suggests that by predisposing

one to feel unique and worthy, openness can be highly relevant in one's happiness. Therefore, we provided a plausible explanation for the significance of openness in the experience of happiness.

Furthermore, the association of uniqueness with openness to experience was stronger than its relationship with extraversion. This finding makes sense since the characteristics of individuals who would be high in openness to experience are emphasized to a greater extent than those of extraverts in defining personal uniqueness. For example, in explaining psychological accounts of self-actualization Maslow (1954) identified being original and inventive as well as enjoyment of uniqueness over a broad range of activities as important characteristics of a self-actualized person. Besides, the fully functioning person was described by Rogers (1961) as possessing high openness to experience which helps one to continually develop and become. Given these common characteristics, self-actualization could be considered as a unifying framework for a healthy sense of uniqueness, openness to experience, and extraversion.

The current study notes an important point in demonstrating that uniqueness can be a healthy aspect of human growth and that it can indeed contribute to well-being as an individual difference variable. Thus, the study is believed to support the previous arguments of Şimşek and Yalınçetin (2010) and expand the studies that tested the validity of these arguments (Demir et al., 2012; Şimşek & Demir, in press; Şimşek & Yalınçetin, 2010). Sense of uniqueness has strong roots in positive human growth. We believe that within positive psychology approaches, sense of uniqueness can be considered one element of a good life, that is, eudaimonic experience of happiness, besides others such as self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, and purpose in life (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryff, 1989).

Another contribution of the present study was providing preliminary evidence that the SoU might be free from psychopathology. Other conceptualizations of uniqueness such as need for uniqueness and adolescent uniqueness were shown to be associated with psychopathology as mentioned before. Neuroticism was shown for the first time in this research to fall short from adding additional variance in the items of SoU above and beyond the variance already captured by their respective latent variable. It is important to highlight that neuroticism does not mean pathology but is related to tendencies and vulnerabilities to develop pathology. That was the reason neuroticism was controlled for in this study. We believe that a more rigorous test of the independence of SoU from psychopathology should go beyond a measurement issue taken into consideration in the present research.

We hope that the present research would contribute to the efforts of explaining happiness in a way that is congruent with the propositions of

positive psychology. Past research linking personality to happiness did not provide a very strong theoretical background: the findings showing the stronger relations of extraversion and neuroticism with happiness were the only plausible reasons to posit such connections. In fact, research (Schutte & Ryff, 1997) showed that the correlations of extraversion and neuroticism with positive and negative affect, respectively, are the result of the overlap between these constructs. The conceptual overlap between extraversion and happiness (Steel et al., 2008) might explain why SoU partially mediated this association. Although plausible, it is important to note that the robust and strong association between extraversion and happiness in the literature was observed when happiness was assessed from a hedonistic tradition. Since this study assessed ontological well-being, which is based on a eudaimonic perspective, more research is needed to address whether a conceptual overlap between extraversion and OWB exists. In the present research, we attempted to demonstrate that this relationship could be much more congruent with the legacy of humanist psychology, which inspired many researchers to understand the dynamics behind the fully-functioning or self-actualizing personality.

One interesting claim arising from the current study could be approaching extraversion and openness to experience within the higher-order framework (DeYoung et al., 2002; Digman, 1997). That is, extraversion and openness to experience are known to make up one of the higher-order factors, namely, plasticity (DeYoung, 2006). Considering the conceptual definitions of happiness, SoU, extraversion, and openness to experience, individuals with the characteristics of a plastic personality—who score high on extraversion and openness to experience could be argued to experience greater personal sense of uniqueness and happiness. Findings of the present study are consistent with this reasoning and have the potential to inspire future studies to investigate SoU in relation to plasticity.

Our findings in the present research, however, should be interpreted with caution. First, the causal directions among the study variables in the present study are based on the theoretical considerations, and future research should use longitudinal or experimental research designs to ensure confidence in causal directions. Second, the results of the present research could not be generalized to other age groups since the participants were university students. Further research with diverse samples is needed to investigate whether the proposed model can be supported in different groups. Third, our findings were based on a convenience sample of American students, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultures. Indeed, this limitation has been recently highlighted as a major concern in the psychological literature (Arnett, 2008; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Thus, future research should investigate the generalizability of this model to other cultures to

establish confidence in the findings reported. Fourth, only one indicator of eudaimonic happiness was used in this study. Future research has the potential to expand the current study by employing multiple indicators psychological well-being. Finally, the measurement model used in the present study has some weaknesses given that only two indicators were used to represent personality dimensions. Moreover, since the SoU has only five items, we used these items as indicators. All of these limitations should be considered in future research so that the present model could be tested using more reliable latent constructs.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Aalsma, M., Lapsley, D. K., & Flannery, D. (2006). Personal fables, narcissism, and adolescent adjustment. *Psychology in the Schools, 43*, 481-491.
- Arnett, J. J. (2008). The neglected 95%: Why American psychology needs to become less American. *American Psychologist, 63*, 602-614.
- Bradburn, N. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Carver, C. S. (2001). Affect and the functional bases of behavior: On the dimensional structure of affective experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5*, 345-356.
- Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) professional manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Demir, M., Şimşek, Ö. F., & Procsal, A. (2012). I am so happy 'cause my best friend makes me feel unique: Friendship, personal sense of uniqueness and happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1007/s10902-012-9376-9
- DeNeve, K. M., & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: A meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 124*, 197-229.
- DeYoung, C. G. (2006). Higher-order factors of the Big Five in a multi-informant sample. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 1138-1151.
- DeYoung, C. G., Peterson, J. B., & Higgins, D. M. (2002). Higher-order factors of the Big Five predict conformity: Are there neuroses of health? *Personality and Individual Differences, 33*, 533-552.
- Diener, E., & Diener, M. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 653-663.

- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *49*, 71-75.
- Diener, E., & Lucas, R. E. (1999). Personality and subjective well-being. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 213-229). New York, NY: Russell-Sage.
- Diener, E., Suh, M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. E. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, *125*, 276-302.
- Diener, E., Tay, L., & Oishi, S. (2012). Rising income and the subjective well-being of nations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/a0030487
- Digman, J. M. (1997). Higher-order factors of the Big Five. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*, 1246-1256.
- Elliot, A. J., & Thrash, T. M. (2002). Approach-avoidance motivation in personality: Approach and avoidance temperaments and goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*, 804-818.
- Elkind, D. (1967). Egocentrism in adolescence. *Child Development*, *38*, 1025-1034.
- Emmons, R. (2003). Personal goals, life meaning, and virtue: Wellsprings of a positive life. In C. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 105-128). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Frankl, V. E. (1985). *Man's search for meaning*. New York, NY: Washington Square Press.
- Goldberg, J. H., Halpern-Felsher, B. L., & Millstein, S. G. (2002). Beyond invulnerability: The importance of benefits in adolescents' decision to drink alcohol. *Health Psychology*, *21*, 477-484.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative "description of personality": The Big-Five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*, 1216-1229.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *33*, 61-83.
- John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality theory and research* (pp. 102-138). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Johnson, R. E., Rosen, C. C., & Djurdjevic, E. (2011). Assessing the impact of common method variance on higher order multidimensional constructs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*, 744-761.
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (2001). *Lisrel 8: User's reference guide*. Chicago, IL: Scientific Software International.
- Kim, H., & Markus, H. R. (1999). Deviance or uniqueness, harmony or conformity? A cultural analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*, 785-800.
- Law, C. A. (2005). *Psychological well-being and uniqueness seeking behavior* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. Retrieved from <http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/836>

- Little, T. D., Cunningham, W. A., Shahar, G., & Widaman, K. F. (2002). To parcel or not to parcel: Exploring the question, weighing the merits. *Structural Equation Modeling, 9*, 151-173.
- Lynn, M., & Harris, J. (1997). Individual differences in the pursuit of self-uniqueness through consumption. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 27*, 1861-1883.
- Lynn, M., & Snyder, C. R. (2002). Uniqueness seeking. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 395-410). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research, 46*, 137-155.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*, 224-253.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1991). Adding liebe und arbeit: The full Five-Factor model and well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 17*, 227-232.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand.
- Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature*. New York, NY: Viking Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1995). Deficiency motivation and growth motivation. In M. R. Jones (Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation* (Vol. 3, pp. 1-30). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- McGregor, I., & Little, B. R. (1998). Personal projects, happiness, and meaning: On doing well and being yourself. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 494-512.
- Morrison, T. G., & Bearden, A. (2007). Construction and validation of the Homopositivity Scale: An instrument measuring positive stereotypes about gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality, 52*, 63-89.
- Myers, D. G. (1992). *The pursuit of happiness*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Norton, D. L. (1976). *Personal destinies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ormel, J., Rosmalen, J., & Farmer, A. (2004). Neuroticism: A non-informative marker of vulnerability to psychopathology. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 39*, 906-912.
- Pavot, W., Diener, E., & Fujita, F. (1990). Extraversion and happiness. *Personality and Individual Differences, 11*, 1299-1306.
- Reis, H. T., Sheldon, K. M., Gable, S. L., Roscoe, J., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Daily well-being: The role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 419-435.
- Riediger, M., & Freund, A. M. (2004). Interference and facilitation among personal goals: Differential associations with subjective well-being and persistent goal pursuit. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*, 1511-1523.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. London, England: Constable.

- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141-166.
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069-1081.
- Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2006). Best news yet on the six-factor model of well-being. *Social Science Research*, 35, 1103-1119.
- Schimmack, U., Oishi, S., Furr, B. M., & Funder, D. C. (2004). Personality and life satisfaction: A facet level analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 1062-1075.
- Schmutte, P. S., & Ryff, C. D. (1997). Personality and well-being: Reexamining methods and meanings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 549-559.
- Singelis, T. M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self constructs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 580-591.
- Şimşek, Ö. F. (2009). Happiness revisited: Ontological well-being as a theory-based construct of subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10, 505-522.
- Şimşek, Ö. F., & Demir, M. (in press). A cross-cultural investigation into the relationships among parental support for basic psychological needs, sense of uniqueness and happiness self-determination theory and well-being. *Journal of Psychology*.
- Şimşek, Ö. F., & Kocayörük, E. (2013). Affective reactions to one's whole life: Preliminary development and validation of the Ontological Well-Being Scale. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14, 309-343. doi:10.1007/s10902-012-9333-7
- Şimşek, Ö. F., & Yalınçetin, B. (2010). I feel unique, therefore I am: The development and preliminary validation of the Personal Sense of Uniqueness (PSU) Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49, 576-581.
- Snyder, C. R., & Fromkin, H. L. (1980). *Uniqueness: The human pursuit of difference*. New York, NY: Plenum.
- Steel, P., & Ones, D. S. (2002). Personality and happiness: A national-level analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 767-781.
- Steel, P., Schmidt, J., & Shultz, J. (2008). Refining the relationship between personality and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134, 138-161.
- Telfer, E. (1980). *Happiness*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Tepper, K. (1996). Estimating model fit when data are not multivariate normal: An assessment of the generalizability of the consumers' need for uniqueness scale. In C. Droge & R. Calantone (Eds.), *AMA educator's proceedings* (Vol. 7, pp. 29-36). Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
- Vignoles, V. L., Chrysoschoou, X., & Breakwell, G. M. (2000). The distinctiveness principle: identity, meaning and the bounds of cultural relativity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4, 337-354.
- Vignoles, V. L., Chrysoschoou, X., & Breakwell, G. M. (2002). Evaluating models of identity motivation: Self-esteem is not the whole story. *Self and Identity*, 1, 201-218.

- Vignoles, V. L., Chrysoschoou, X., & Breakwell, G. M. (2004). Combining individuality and relatedness: Representations of the person among the Anglican clergy. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 43*, 113-132.
- Vittersø, J. (2004). Subjective well-being versus self-actualization: Using the flow-simplex to promote a conceptual clarification of subjective quality of life. *Social Indicators Research, 65*, 299-331.
- Waterman, A. S. (1993). Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*, 678-691.
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Carey, G. (1988). Positive and negative affectivity and their relation to anxiety and depressive disorders. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 97*, 346-353.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1994). An alternative approach to method effects by using latent-variable models: Applications in organizational behavior research. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 323-331.

Author Biographies



Selda Koydemir, PhD, is a full-time faculty at the Psychological Counseling Department of Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus. She obtained her PhD in psychological counseling from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Her current research interests include understanding personal, interpersonal, as well as cultural predictors of subjective well-being and happiness.



Ömer Faruk Şimşek is an associate professor at Istanbul Arel University, Department of Psychology. His main areas of research interest are subjective well-being and its relation to narrative processes, language use and mental health, personal sense of uniqueness, and self-consciousness. He is also interested in using advanced statistical analyses such as multitrait multimethod analyses and growth curve modeling.



Melikşah Demir received his BSc in psychology from Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey) and PhD in developmental psychology from Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan). He is currently an assistant professor of psychology at Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, Arizona). His research focuses on the role of close friendships and happiness among emerging adults in different cultures. His research also investigates the short- and long-term effectiveness of happiness interventions.