HAPPINESS ORIENTATION AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF EMERGING ADULTS

By

TIMOTHY MICHAEL RARICK

B.S., University of Utah, 2006

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Family Studies and Human Services

College of Human Ecology

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

2008

Approved by:

Major Professor

Dr. Bronwyn Fees

ABSTRACT

Research has determined three main pathways or orientations to happiness: Meaning, Pleasure, and Engagement (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). Each has shown to have a substantial impact on an individual's satisfaction with life. These orientations to happiness and their impact on life satisfaction were investigated among 342 emerging adults between the ages of 18-25 attending college. Linear multiple regression was conducted to assess the relationship between Life satisfaction and the three orientations of happiness after identifying the variance explained by demographics factors and personality traits. Results indicated first that each orientation to happiness was empirically distinguishable and related among the emerging adult population. Secondly, both Meaning and Pleasure were significant predictors of Life Satisfaction beyond the variance explained by personality; however, Engagement was not. Congruent with previous personality studies (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Lynn & Steel, 2006), life satisfaction was positively correlated with extraversion and negatively correlated with neuroticism. These findings indicate a need to understand how happiness and life satisfaction are filtered through a cultural, developmental, and academic lens. Further studies are necessary to determine the attitudes and behaviors in other countries, other life stages, and emerging adults not attending college.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At several points in this process I was convinced that conducting research and writing a thesis was out of my zone of proximal academic development, and at each one of these points I had considered giving up. Dr. Bronwyn Fees however had different plans because she had the wisdom and patience to talk me out of such ridiculous notions. She has endured countless irrelevant and incoherent ramblings, unannounced office visits, inconvenient phone calls, and about 100 different research ideas all while patiently helping me grasp statistics and academic writing style. She deserves my sincerest gratitude, as does the rest of my committee: Dr. Jared Anderson and Dr. Clive Fullagar for their student centered approach to academics. All three individuals have helped me to think more critically about research, particularly mine, to really determine what I wanted to actually measure. I really felt that my committee really cared for my success as a professional and as a person. From a graduate student's perspective, it has been nice to be more than an obligation or just part of a job description.

Speaking of graduate students, Michael Anderson in Statistics and Jeremy Boyle in Marriage & Family Therapy have been more than charitable with their time in helping me understand what my data and results actually meant. Never at any time has either one of them complained about my frequent pestering. Nor have they ever asked for anything in return. These are the marks true friends and I will be ever appreciative for both their kindness and association.

Since I have begun my graduate work at Kansas State University, doors have opened for me right and left. I have had more opportunities to grow and excel than I have ever deserved or even imagined possible. The catalyst and instigator for almost all

these opportunities is the director of the School of Family Studies & Human Services, Dr. Bill Meredith. He is one of the most giving and genuine men I have ever come across. His contributions to my academic, professional, and personal growth have been immense.

There are three little people who have inspired me to finish this document and I know for a fact that they don't even know what a document is, let alone a thesis. Ever since my children Carter, Molly, and Naomi have come into my life I have had to step up "my game" and rightfully so; this includes my studies and, yes, even my thesis as they are integral parts of my success to both provide for and teach my children. When frustrated or discouraged during this process I need only to play with my children to be reminded that I was writing this thesis for more people that just myself.

Lastly and most importantly is another person who never had an actual part of the writing, research, collecting and analyzing data, or corrections of this document. She has been the driving force behind anything of worth that I have accomplished. She always has always believed in me while balancing that belief by giving me healthy doses of reality. During my tenure thus far as a graduate student I have had many tasks, responsibilities, and projects to complete many of which I have received much attention and praise for. All the while this dear woman has had the sacred responsibility of raising and nurturing our precious children during my aforementioned work. To be both ironic and truthful, my wife Jodi is a vital part of my happiness and life satisfaction. Jodi, my love, you are truly everything to me and do so much with little thought of reward or recognition. Words fall short in expressing my heart-felt gratitude. Thank you.

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

What role does happiness have in an individual's life? Many people believe that happiness is ultimately what makes life worth living and thus becomes the motivating force behind their behaviors (Brulde, 2007). Is happiness the primary source of obtaining a good life and if so is it universally sought after in the same manner? It can safely be assumed that most people -- regardless of race, culture, socioeconomic status, marital status, health and so forth -- strive for happiness throughout life. However, there are some cultures that do not view happiness as the purpose of life. For example, in some Asian cultures such as China, it is more important to follow the norms of society (i.e. productivity and economic power) rather than personal feelings (Grinde, 2002). Even so, happiness is worth scientific pursuit because it is a common goal and desire that many individuals share. People rate personal happiness as very important in their lives (Diener, Suh, Smith, & Shao, 1995). Happiness is also associated with success in different life domains and is related to positive mental health (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Since the mid-1980s researchers have examined not only how to characterize happiness but also how it is achieved, pursued, and the many factors that influence it (Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997; Peterson, et al., 2005, Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Happiness has been defined as "a mental state comprising many ingredients including: the presence of pleasant positive moods or emotions, the absence of unpleasant negative moods or emotions, and satisfaction, on reflection, with life in general or with at least some specific aspects of life" (Ott, 2006). The latter portion of the previous definition is what constitutes "life satisfaction." Life satisfaction differs from happiness

as happiness is rooted more in state and emotion where life satisfaction is a reflection that life has gone and/or is going in the direction one hopes (Diener, 1984; Pavot & Diener, 2003). Researchers generally operationalize subjective well-being as both a prevalence of positive affect over negative affect and a global satisfaction with life (Lu, 2006). Happiness is a fundamental and vital part of evaluating one's overall quality of life and is a term that is often used interchangeably with subjective well-being (Keyes, 2006b).

Three theoretical perspectives or orientations on happiness have been widely researched and their presence has been empirically supported: hedonic, eudemonia, and flow or engagement (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). The hedonic philosophy is based on the assumption that increased pleasure and decreased pain leads to happiness. Many studies in the literature on happiness draw from this hedonic perspective and in the modern Western society; this approach to happiness is widely endorsed and accepted (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). In contrast, eudemonic well-being is based on the premise that people feel good if they experience life purpose, challenge and growth. Happiness is achieved if a person becomes their personal best and then uses his or her skills and talents in the service of greater good (Peterson, et al., 2005). Lastly, optimal experience or flow theory has been explored as a third perspective or orientation to happiness (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003b). Csikszentmihalyi (1997), the author of flow theory, describes flow and its elements as an intrinsically motivated, task-focused state characterized by full concentration, a change in the awareness of time (e.g. time passing quickly), feelings of clarity and control, a merging of action and awareness, and a lack of self-consciousness.

Happiness is a common and valued pursuit across the lifespan. What makes a person happy may change over time, although some factors could be constant like the need to feel loved. Studies across the lifespan have provided evidence to suggest that the age of an individual influences personal happiness (Ivens, 2007; Sacker & Cable, 2005; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). However, very little has been done to examine happiness by age, particularly among individuals within the emerging adulthood period, that is, individuals 18 to 25 years (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is a conception of development that covers the period from the late teens through the twenties with an emphasis on ages 18-25 and is characterized by identity formation, focus on the individuals goals and desires along with increased independence and autonomy (Arnett, 2000, 2003). This includes the dominant group of students found on university campuses, as it is the traditional college age student. The transition to adulthood that most university students experience is marked mainly by individualistic character qualities such as accepting responsibility for one's self, becoming financially independent, and making independent decisions (Arnett, 2000, 2003). Other unique challenges that college students face are deadlines imposed by tests, projects, papers, and homework in general. This is also the time in life when identity formation is more prominent than ever (Arnett, 2004). This process is often difficult and if handled poorly, may negatively impact the student's happiness and well-being. For the college student in emerging adulthood, college is a time when the pursuit of immediate pleasure may overshadow and inhibit future happiness. What makes one happy at this time in life may be unique when compared to other points in the lifespan because of the developmental challenges faced by individuals during this time period.

Empirical evidence supports a strong relationship between personality and individual happiness (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Lynn & Steel, 2006; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Roberts & Mroczek, 2008). Personality traits are defined as the relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish individuals from one another (Roberts & Mroczek, 2008). Extraversion and neuroticism, two of the five NEO personality traits (Costa, McCrae, & Zonderman, 1987) have shown to be highly correlated with one's own satisfaction with life and happiness (Diener & Diener, 1996; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). It is therefore necessary to consider personality to fully understand factors that influence the emerging adult's level of happiness and satisfaction with life. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and the three orientations to happiness above and beyond the personality traits extroversion and neuroticism among individuals within the emerging adulthood developmental period, particularly those attending college. The results in this study will be compared and contrasted with research conducted by Peterson, Park, & Seligman (2005) due to the similarity in format and measurements.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Happiness & Life Satisfaction

Diener, Suh, & Oishi (1997) have proposed that "subjective well-being is a multidimensional construct consisting of three separate components: (1) the presence of positive affect; (2) the relative lack of negative affect, and (3) people's cognitive evaluations of their life circumstances" (p. 27). Some of this evaluation overlaps with one's life satisfaction. Life satisfaction and individual happiness are different but linked. Life satisfaction, pleasant emotions, and unpleasant emotions are separable, different components of happiness and unhappiness. Life satisfaction differs from the affective components of happiness in that it is based on a reflective judgment (Pavot & Diener, 2003). The origin of the word "happiness" in the English language comes from the word "hap" which means, "what just happens, chance, luck -- whether good or bad" (Griffin, 2007, p. 141). This gives light to the idea that happiness is a state of mind that can be influenced heavily by the current situation or environment in which one finds him or herself (Griffin, 2007). To illustrate consider the following: a person can be satisfied with their life in the midst of personal crisis because of his or her cognitive or psychological state, while another individual is happy only moment by moment, watching for the first sign of pain or trouble, after which happiness departs. Therefore happiness can be a temporary state, a feeling, or something more enduring similar to an attitude, the latter having a greater impact on the individual's life satisfaction.

Positive affect signifies pleasant moods and emotions, such as joy and affection, which in turn evokes happiness. Positive or pleasant emotions are part of happiness because they reflect a person's reactions to events that suggest to the person that life is

proceeding in a desirable way. Diener (2006) states the "major categories of positive or pleasant emotions include those of low arousal, moderate arousal (e.g., pleasure), and high arousal (e.g., euphoria). They include positive reactions to others (e.g., affection), positive reactions to activities (e.g., interest and engagement), and general positive moods (e.g., joy)" (p. 400). Conversely, negative affect includes moods and emotions that are unpleasant and illustrate negative responses experienced in reaction to events, circumstances, and their lives in general. Examples of reactions such as these can include sadness, anxiety, anger, stress, and so forth. Depressive states and loneliness are also keen indicators of what has been termed in literature as "ill-being" (Diener, 2006; Marne, Rode, Mooney, & Near , 2005). Research studies have demonstrated a link between health, well-being, and happiness among children, youth, and adults with the absence of problems, disease, and disorders (Keyes, 2006a). In a positive approach, measures were developed to assess health and happiness in terms of the presence of assets, strengths and positive affect (Keyes, 2006b).

Personality Traits and Happiness

Does biology influence an individual's happiness? Are there innate traits for happiness that people do not express but with which they were born? Researchers have explored the question whether certain people are hard-wired for happiness, or if it is an overall part of human nature itself (Grinde, 2002; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Watson, 2003). Although the results are slightly mixed, the general answers to both questions are yes. A personality-based approach holds that happiness is determined largely by personality factors (Costa, McCrae, & Zonderman, 1987; Diener & Diener, 1996; Ormel, 1983). When these factors are included with temperamental characteristics, they are

referred to as set-point variables and have been shown to be the major predictors of happiness, accounting for up to 50% of the variance in happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). This position called the "set-point perspective," suggests personality dispositions are the most potent influences on average levels of happiness. This perspective claims that individual differences in happiness are highly heritable, particularly with regard to positive and negative affect (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Tellegen et al., 1988). Thus it is suggested there is a genetic component to the individual variation in the propensity to enjoy life although it does not determine it (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Evolutionary psychologists hold a slightly different perspective on happiness asserting that over millions of years human beings have developed a desire, different than any other species, with a deep concern with life satisfaction and happiness (Grinde, 2002). This supports the proposition that was offered previously which is the commonality most individuals have in seeking out happiness to one extent or another. It may appear contradictive to assert that happiness is both a state and a trait, but it seems that one influences the other. Individual traits set the stage for the ones capacity to experience the state of happiness.

A study using a multi-nation population sample has provided evidence to suggest the significant impact that extroversion and neuroticism can have on life satisfaction and happiness (Lynn & Steel, 2006). In this study, data was collected from 30 different countries measuring individual and collective extraversion, neuroticism, and life satisfaction. The findings showed a significant interaction between the aforementioned personality traits and further demonstrated to be a strong predictor of life satisfaction. High levels of neuroticism lowered satisfaction with life and affect among all nations, but more so among nations with higher number of introverts than among nations higher in

extraverts. The researchers believe these findings further confirm that personality traits can be used to expand the fields understanding of national differences regarding happiness (Lynn & Steel, 2006). This data again can and should be viewed through a cultural lens as different personality types are viewed as more desirable in some cultures than others. In countries where individuals are considered to be predominantly introverted and collectivistic, that is to say less focused on the development of the individual or self, having a neurotic personality coupled with extraversion has shown to negatively impact individual happiness (Lynn & Steel, 2006).

If long-standing, stable personality traits account in large part for the individual differences in happiness, then the influence of aging or age cohort may be irrelevant or negligible. Stability in the traits that underlie well-being may overshadow any changes in affect the aging process may bring about (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). One might be lead to believe that – compared to younger populations - older individuals might report lower levels because of declines in physical health and enduring deaths of close friends and loved ones (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). Research does not support this view as happiness seems to be unaffected by some of the adverse conditions that accompanies aging, and some theorists have suggested it even improves with age (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). What still needs to be determined is whether this increase in happiness is due to cohort effect or if an individuals happiness does in fact increase with age. However, while happiness could be stable across the life span, the particular orientations to happiness may change with age. It is hypothesized that there are differences in orientations to happiness by age because those in emerging adulthood may conceptualize what makes them happy differently than those older and/or younger. This is therefore one of the

purposes of this study: to ascertain if emerging adults' orientations to happiness is unique from what the literature on the aging population suggests.

In a study focused on adolescent's daily happiness, researchers found that "young people are much happier in the afternoons and evenings of weekdays, when they are free of requirements imposed by adults, and on weekends. But by the end of the weekend, on Sunday afternoons, their happiness decreases in anticipation of the school-day to come" (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003a). It may be that what brings happiness and contentment to an adolescent is much different than an adult or even an infant based upon the typical context or demands of the individual during that period in life. Data suggests that negative affect is at its peak during emerging adulthood while slowly decreasing throughout the lifespan (Lacey, Smith, & Ubel, 2006). Conversely, the same studies have found that positive affect highly correlates with age (Diener et al. 1985; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). This lends itself to the possibility that as happiness levels change over the lifespan, the sources and orientations to that happiness might change as well.

As noted previously, happiness is a common value amongst people in many countries. There are countries where the culture does not view happiness as the purpose of life. For example, in some Asian cultures following the norms of society rather than personal feelings (Grinde, 2002) is highly esteemed. However, according to the given criteria defining happiness, one could argue that the individuals in the aforementioned Asian cultures might actually be pursuing happiness by valuing the social norms within their culture and living by them. In the United States, the Declaration of Independence solemnly declared individuals to the "right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". So is happiness found in its pursuit or is it a state achieved when the pursuit is over? Is it

an overall contentment with life or derived from environmental influences and activities and evoke pleasure in the moment? It appears to largely depend on the individual's orientation to happiness. Three orientations to happiness predominate the research literature: hedonism, eudemonia, and optimal experience or flow theory (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Peterson, et al., 2005).

Hedonism

The doctrine of hedonism was articulated thousands of years ago by Aristuppus (435–366 BC) who championed immediate sensory gratification (Watson, 1895). Hedonism was elaborated by Epicurus (342–270 BC) into the edict of ethical hedonism, which holds that man's fundamental moral obligation is to maximize our experience of pleasure while minimizing pain, suggesting happiness is found in activities that coincide with such feelings. Wealth and material possessions are commonly pursued as sources of happiness and pleasure in our world. Yet the correlation between happiness and individual wealth may not be as strong as some theorists have thought. In longitudinal studies of a sample of almost 1,000 American adolescents conducted with the experience sampling method, researchers found a consistently low negative relationship between material possessions and happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). For instance, the reported happiness of teenagers showed a strong inverse relationship to the social class of the community in which teens live, to their parents' level of education and to their parent's occupational status. In other studies, data from cross-national comparisons provide evidence to suggest a positive correlation between the wealth of a country as measured by its gross national product and the self-reported happiness of its citizens (Inglehart, 1990). But this relationship is curious as the inhabitants of nations, such as Japan and Germany,

with more than twice the gross national product of Ireland, report much lower levels of happiness (Borooah, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Because the research methodology was correlational, researchers were not able to discern causation, only that a relationship exists. Despite these findings on wealth and happiness, the doctrine of hedonism – the pursuit of pleasure – is still active not only in Western societies but in the field of psychology as well (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999).

Eudemonia

In contrast to hedonism, the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, gave an alternate perspective on happiness by philosophizing that humankind does pursue fame, riches, health, and possessions because we think it will make us happy; however, we do value happiness itself separate from acquisition of things (Thomson, 1976). The ancient Greeks used the term "eudemonia" that is interpreted as being true to one's "daimon" or inner self and is the state of having an objectively valuable life. According to this view, true happiness entails selecting life goals which give purpose and meaning to his or her life in a manner that advances or realizes those life goals and personal potentials and can serve to facilitate such self-realization. In short, happiness from this perspective is identifying one's virtues, cultivating them, and living in accordance with them (Norton, 1976). Aristotle considered sensual pleasure according to the hedonistic view to be vulgar. Multiple theorists have advanced similar positions since Aristotle, most of which maintain eudemonic philosophical underpinnings (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1951). The premise that unites these more modern positions with eudemonia is the principle that people should develop what is best within themselves and then use their

skills and talents in the service of greater goods, particularly the welfare of other people or humankind as a whole.

Flow & Engagement

Seligman (2002) first proposed a life of engagement as another orientation to happiness but its origins in flow theory go further back. Csikszentmihalyi (1990), the author of flow theory, describes flow and its components as an intrinsically motivated, task-focused state characterized by full concentration, a change in the awareness of time (e.g. time passing quickly), feelings of clarity and control, a merging of action and awareness, and a lack of self-consciousness. The aftermath of the flow experience is invigorating. In his studies of eudemonia, Waterman (1993) initially compared the flow state with personal expressiveness, eudemonia, but then concluded from his data that flow represented a mixture of hedonic and eudemonic features. Other researchers have suggested instead that flow is distinct and is not the same as sensual pleasure (Peterson, et al., 2005). Individuals may describe flow as pleasing, but this is a post-activity observation while pleasure or joy is not immediately present during the activity itself. Flow and hedonism differ because pleasure occurs during the activity while the positive emotions of flow usually occur after the fact (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). With this in consideration, it seems that flow and pleasure may even be incompatible. This is due to flow being experienced when a person is engaging in an activity for the activity's sake, not for extrinsic or pleasurable reasons. There are also activities or behaviors that a person may not be incredibly interested in but they feel some satisfaction as it has an element of productivity. For example a person may not particularly like their job, but

they may experience flow as they accomplish a lot of work that needs to be done (interesting or not) their mood increases (Csikzentmihalyi, 1997).

Flow as shown to promote learning and development in students because experiences that are intrinsically rewarding motivate individuals to repeat an activity at increasingly higher levels of challenge (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). This interest in one's chosen activity also has significant ramifications for cognitive and intellectual development (Tomkins, 1962). Students who are interested in the subject they are studying achieve higher scores and subsequently higher grades (Anderman & Macher, 1994; Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). Probably most important of all is the possible impact flow experiences have on one's happiness and life satisfaction. Contrasting the two students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, one is unmotivated in their goals and hobbies while boredom is an ever-present state of mind; the other is interested in their personal improvement while pursuing hobbies with fervor so that boredom is rarity. By simply using logic or common sense the latter individual would likely report a better overall satisfaction with life. Flow may be experienced at any point in the life span and is not restricted to a particular age group. Although the activities that promote flow become more complex with time and as skill and cognition increase (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Researchers have examined this intuitive thinking in a study measuring interest levels in adolescence and its impact on their happiness (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003a). The results showed a clear difference between young people who experience chronic interest in their everyday lives versus those who experience boredom. What is more is that the interested or engaged adolescents were much more likely to view

themselves as effective agents in their world (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003a). An individual who views their world as unable to act but to be acted upon may have a negative self-image and this mindset further hinders, potentially, their happiness (Keyes, 2006a). As mentioned in the prior section, for an adolescent to perceive a sense of control in his or her life, he or she must feel as though they have relative freedom to practice their self-efficacy.

In summary, there are several orientations to happiness proposed that may be experienced all across the life span; however, one may dominate at one point depending upon the tasks during that developmental period. Furthermore, happiness has shown to increase when we are in situations of relative freedom and able to engage in flow activities that stretch our skills and makes us feel alive and proud (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003b).

Emerging Adulthood

The life span is frequently divided into multiple stages by developmentalists based on the unique developmental tasks and challenges that arise as an individual progresses through his or her life. Commonly used phases or periods are infancy, preschool, childhood, school age, adolescence, adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood (Boyd & Bee, 2006). Prior to reaching official "adulthood" status but exiting adolescence, an individual is in what is currently termed as the "emerging adulthood" phase of the lifespan (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is a relatively new conception of development that covers the period from the late teens through the twenties with an emphasis on ages 18-25 (Arnett, 2000, 2003). These age boundaries were determined from a body of research suggesting that individuals in the United States believe being an

adult is marked mainly by individualistic character qualities such as accepting responsibility for one's self, becoming financially independent, and making independent decisions (Arnett, 2000, 2003).

Notice the trend in the language of "becoming" or "making," this seems to indicate that the individual has not yet fully achieved the capability of doing these tasks, hence the term emerging adulthood. For many people in the United States and other industrialized countries, the late teens through the twenties is a time when one gains an education for their desired career, searches for a companion or mate, and continues to develop and solidify their identity with their increased independence (Arnett, 2003; Erikson, 1968). Arnett (2004) proposed five features that make emerging adulthood distinct: "it is the age of identity explorations, the age of instability, the self-focused age, the age of feeling in-between, and the age of possibilities" (p. 8). Each of these "ages" will be explored to further understand their meaning and implications.

To fully comprehend the social construct of an "emerging adult" we need to briefly revisit the phase of life just completed – adolescence. There are many labels that our American society gives an adolescent yet it appears the most common label is "teen." A general, basic, yet widely used definition for adolescence as being the transition between childhood and adulthood marked by physical (puberty), cognitive, and psychological changes (Boyd & Bee, 2006). In addition to these changes there are also a variety of stressors that affect the manner in which their development progresses as well as their view the world. Some of these stressors include: fitting in with peers, autonomy, independence (or the lack thereof), growing up "too fast," and emotional validation (Selekman, 2005; Stober & Rambow, 2006). How adolescents experience life and the

kind of activities or behaviors in which they engage will not only profoundly affect how they view themselves and the world around them, but it also shapes critical decisions and patterns of behavior that will dramatically impact the kind of adult or person they become (Sacker & Cable, 2005).

Identity Development

One of the most important developmental tasks of any individual is the development of self-esteem and identity (Arnett, 2004; Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006; Palen & Coatsworth, 2007). Although identity development seems to be an ongoing process throughout a person's life, Erikson suggests two major developmental stages when development is the most volatile: early childhood & adolescence (Erikson, 1963). During these years the self-image is particularly fragile as the personal identity begins to form (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006). Erikson (1963) defined identity as "the organization of previous skills, relationships, and experiences in a way that helps an individual effectively cope with his or her future physiology, opportunities, and responsibilities" (p. 12). Emergent identities, including gender (e.g., male/female), class (e.g., working, middle, upper), race, and personal (e.g., artist, actor), become clear through a complex and constant interchange of one's own actions or behaviors, contextual factors that necessarily limit an individual's identity possibilities, and how society places meaning on one's actions and identity choices (Shmotkin, Berkovich, & Cohen, 2006). Acquiring an organized identity is connected with healthier social and psychological functioning and lower rates of problem behavior (Palen & Coatsworth, 2007).

The continuation of identity development is evident during the emerging adult developmental period as individuals try different experiences rather than settle into long-term adult roles gradually making their way toward more permanent choices in love and vocation as previously mentioned (Arnett, 2007). In American popular media, the notion that there is a "quarterlife crisis" can be misleading as it attempts to describe this period of individuals as they try to find their place in the world. It is a time of further identity development that can cause much anxiety, but there is another side of the story. Emerging adulthood has shown to be a period when self-esteem improves and happiness increases as the individual has shed many of the negative stressors of adolescence (Arnett, 2007). Many of the identity explorations of the emerging adult years are simply for fun, a kind of play, part of having a broad range of life experiences before moving on to adult life (Arnett, 2004). This is not to assume that becoming self-reliant is simple or pleasurable, it merely suggests that this rise in happiness could be a consequence of successful adaptation to the unique challenges. Many adolescents customarily move away from the constant supervision of their parents and are exercising their increased liberty through trying out different experiences and discovering new hobbies (Arnett, 2007). This exploration will not only greatly impact their continuing identity development but it can also set the tone for their habits in adulthood (Erikson, 1968).

Another distinction of emerging adulthood is instability. Emerging adults are building the path they will be taking into adulthood. The instability lies in their ideas or plans for their future which are subject to several revisions over the emerging adult years to come (Arnett, 2004). These revisions can prove to be both useful and detrimental depending on how they are handled. An emerging adult can learn something about

himself or herself with each revision, which can lead them toward a healthier identity development (Arnett, 2004; Palen & Coatsworth, 2007). On the other hand, these numerous revisions to their plan can be a source of great anxiety. If the individual is consistently making poor revision to their life's plan it can lead to a decrease in happiness and life satisfaction.

With identity development in full swing, increased autonomy, and constant attention to one's life goals, it is no wonder that emerging adulthood has been deemed as the most self-focused time of life. Many American youth leave home at age 18 or 19, to a life that is focused on becoming self-reliant thus a constant focus on self (both in a positive and negative manner). This focus aids in the development of skills for daily living and opportunities to better understand who they are and what they desire in life (Arnett, 2004). Individual happiness and how it is best achieved is also included in this self-focus (Palen & Coatsworth, 2007). Pleasure becomes a common path to happiness as emerging adults are seeking happiness and fulfillment (Arnett, 2004).

As mentioned previously, most individuals in this portion of the lifespan have more choices and autonomy than ever before as a consequence of newly found freedoms. Although different in their developmental phase, emerging adults are no different than children or older adults in that they are in the pursuit of happiness as well. From dozens of interviews Arnett (2004) discovered that many emerging adults state that they are happy when they are having a good time or having fun. Thus reflecting the hedonistic view that life is short so one should enjoy the pleasures it can provide. Not all emerging adults from these interviews gave this type of response: however, some indicated that they were happiest when helping others, especially those in their families (Arnett, 2004).

Another common source of happiness for emerging adults is the companionship of others, more particularly that of the romantic sort. Formation and maintenance of romantic relationships are central to the lives of emerging adults (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004). Research findings suggest that supportive romantic relationships constitute an important part of the everyday lives of college students (Demir, 2008). Emerging adults are searching for a lifelong partner and this has the potential to shape the intensity and commitment of love relationships experienced during this time period. More importantly is the impact these relationships have on emerging adult's well-being (Arnett, 2000). A recent study involving emerging adults found a strong positive correlation between happiness and romantic relationships (Demir, 2008).

So to which orientation to happiness are individuals in the emerging adult period most inclined? Is there an orientation to happiness that will have a greater impact on one's satisfaction with life? To what degree is their satisfaction with life explained by these orientations to flow experiences, pleasure-focused experiences, and meaning? The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the orientations to happiness, personality traits (extroversion & neuroticism), and the overall life satisfaction of emerging adults.

Hypothesis 1: The three orientations to happiness will be empirically distinguishable within the emerging adulthood population.

Hypothesis 2: Emerging adults will report a stronger orientation to pleasure than meaning and engagement.

Hypothesis 3: Of the three orientations to happiness, each will contribute to life satisfaction; however, engagement will explain more of the variance in life satisfaction than meaning or pleasure orientations.

Hypothesis 4: Participants who report high levels of life satisfaction will also have higher levels of extraversion and lower levels of neuroticism.

CHAPTER III – METHODS

Participants

The sample for this study was drawn from a convenience sample of students enrolled in Family Studies and Human Services 110: Introduction to Human Development at Kansas State University. All students in the course (N = 395) were invited to participate however 92% actually participated (N = 363). While no students who participated were younger than 18, twelve students were over 25, two students did not report their age and seven students did not completely finish the survey and thus were removed from the study sample. Only data from participants who are 18 to 25 years, emerging adults, were analyzed adjusting the sample size to 86% of the students enrolled (n = 342). The mean age of the adjusted sample was 19.65 years (SD = 1.337). Of the 342 participants 50.9% were freshman (n = 174), 26.6% Sophomores (n = 91), 14.0% Juniors (n = 48), and 8.5% of the sample were Seniors (n = 29). Concerning ethnicity the sample consisted of 3 African American (.9%), 2 American Indian (.6%), 4 Asian (1.20%), 3 Latino (.9%), 1 Pacifica Islander (.3%), 6 Mixed Ethnicity (1.8%), 315 White (92.1%), and 8 classifying themselves as Other (2.3%). 150 of the 342 participants (43.9%) reported not being in a relationship, 41 reported to be casually dating someone (12.0%), 56 reported currently seriously dating someone (16.4%), 81 reported being in a committed relationship (23.7%), 9 reported being formally engaged (2.6%), and 5 participants reported being married (1.5%).

Measures

Dependent measure. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985*)* – The SWLS consists of five items, which measure the individual's evaluation of

satisfaction with life in general (e.g., ‘‘I am satisfied with my life,’’ and ‘‘If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing’’) (see Appendix A). Respondents select one of seven options (ranging from 1 = ‘‘strongly disagree’’ to 7 = ‘‘strongly agree’’) for each question. Responses were averaged to provide a total life satisfaction score for each participant. Research has established acceptable psychometric properties for the SWLS (Diener, 1994). The reliability of this scale in the current study was also obtained (α = .872) and considered acceptable for this study.

Independent measures. Demographic characteristics –Demographic characteristics were collected from each participant including: age, class ranking, relationship status, and ethnicity (refer to Appendix).

Orientations to Happiness (Peterson, et al., 2005) – The Orientations to Happiness measure (see Appendix) used in this study consisted of 18 items reflecting each of the three orientations that were initially drafted by Peterson, et al. (2005). Each item required a respondent to answer on a 5-point scale the degree to which the item applied (‘‘1 very much unlike me’’ through ‘‘5 very much like me’’). Statements referring to pleasure (e.g., “I love to do things that excite my senses”) and meaning (e.g., “My life serves a higher purpose”) resemble those used in previous research contrasting hedonic versus eudemonic orientations (cf. King and Napa, 1998; McGregor and Little, 1998). Items measuring engagement (e.g., “I am always very absorbed in what I do”) were based on Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) characterization of the flow state laid out previously in this study. Each factor or orientation has six questions that were determined to be appropriate based on their face validity by the authors (Peterson, et al., 2005). In this study using the Orientations to Happiness measure, results suggested that

the three orientations to happiness were distinguishable but related (Peterson, et al., 2005). It was hypothesized that these orientations would also be distinguishable among the emerging adults in this study.

The Revised NEO Personality Inventory, NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) – The Revised NEO Personality Inventory, or NEO PI-R, is a psychological personality inventory of the Five Factor Model: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. Additionally, the test measures six subordinate dimensions (known as 'facets') of each of the "Big Five" personality factors. This study focused on only two of the five identified factors – extraversion and neuroticism – as they have shown the strongest correlation with life satisfaction when compared to the other factors (Diener & Diener, 1996; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). Twelve extraversion and twelve neuroticism statements (e.g., "I like to have a lot of people around me" or "I am not a worrier") were offered to participants to which they responded the extent of agreement with the statement on a scale ranging from 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) for a total of twenty-four statements. To determine the respondent's level of neuroticism (M = 34.02, SD = 4.8) and extraversion (M = 40.9, SD = 3.9), a sum score of each set of twelve statements was calculated.

The NEO PI-R measure is not available for public domain. Copies of all other instruments may be found in the Appendix.

Procedure

Participants were introduced to the study by the researcher during one class session. The survey was placed on the Kansas State University Survey System, an

electronic survey system. Students were given access to the survey through a link via their campus email. Participants were given seven days to complete the survey. Students who completed the survey were offered extra credit by the instructor of the course. At the end of the survey the participants were directed to an online database, which recorded their name, completion date, and university id. The instructor of the course created this database; as he was the only one with access to the names in order to accurately distribute the extra credit earned. All responses were automatically downloaded into an Excel file, which was converted into an SPSS data file for analyses. Respondents remained confidential. The average completion time for the survey was 12 minutes with a range of 3 to 28 minutes. As stated previously, all students in the class were invited to participate, however, only data from those who met the age criteria for emerging adulthood (18-25) were included in the analysis. The protocol for this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Kansas State University (#4708).

CHAPTER IV – RESULTS

To investigate whether the three orientations to happiness are empirically distinguishable yet related within the emerging adulthood population (Hypothesis 1) a confirmatory factorial analysis was performed using Varimax rotation. This method was also previously utilized for the principal components analysis in creating the orientations to happiness measurement (Peterson, et al., 2005). The Varimax rotation provided strong support in discerning the orientations to happiness. As with the aforementioned study, three factors were identified (see Table 1). However, as Table 1 indicates, two items did not load on the same factor as compared to the original study analysis from which the measure was designed. These findings indicate that emerging adults appear to differ in their interpretations of these orientations as Meaning retained 7 items or statements, Pleasure 5 items, and Engagement 6 items (see Table 1). For example, in the original study the statement: "Regardless of what I am doing time passes very quickly" had a factor loading of 0.48 on Engagement while reporting only 0.23 on the Life of Meaning. Yet in this study that same statement had a much weaker loading on the Life of Engagement with 0.33 with a 0.32 factor loading on the Life of Meaning. This suggests that emerging adults may interpret this statement differently than individuals at other points in the life span.

Each orientation was analyzed for its reliability by determining an alpha rating: Life of Meaning (eudemonic) alpha = .794; Life of Pleasure (hedonic) alpha = .772. In spite of these fairly strong results for these two orientations, Life of Engagement (flow) resulted in an alpha of .590. This data suggests that the reliability for both Life of

Meaning and Life of Pleasure is acceptable, while the reliability for Life of Engagement was barely acceptable.

A one sample T-test was conducted comparing the means of Life of Meaning, Life of Pleasure, and Life of Engagement (Table 2). A statistically significant difference emerged between Life of Engagement and the other two orientations. Means for Life of Meaning and Life of Pleasure were virtually identical. While it is possible that participants were not oriented to a Life of Engagement, this result is most likely a consequence of the instrument's low reliability. According to these findings, hypothesis 2 was only partially confirmed as participants did report a strong orientation to pleasure; however, the mean for Meaning was nearly equivalent.

In order to determine the strength of the relationship between the three orientations to happiness and life satisfaction, a standard correlational analysis was first conducted. Table 3 indicates that Life Satisfaction has a significant positive correlation with a Life of Meaning (.421, $p < .01$) and Life of Pleasure (.211, $p < .01$). However, Life of Engagement was only slightly positively correlated with Life Satisfaction and this correlation was not significant (.105).

To examine the relationship between Life Satisfaction and Orientation to Happiness a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted entering variables in the following steps: demographics, personality factors, Orientations to Happiness (Table 4). The purpose of the order in which these variables were entered was to make the results more easily comparable to the Peterson et al., (2005). The overall regression was significant ($R^2 = .28$; $F(8, 341) = 16.20$, $p < .001$) and indicates the Orientations to Happiness explained significantly more variance in life satisfaction beyond that explained

by the personality factors extraversion and neuroticism (change in R^2 = .14**). However, there was a stronger relationship between Life Satisfaction and Meaning and Pleasure, not Engagement, that contributed to the difference with the highest Beta weight offered by Meaning, not Pleasure. Engagement is not a significant predictor of life satisfaction. Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed.

A review of the correlational table (Table 3) indicated a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and extraversion ($r = .172$, $p < .01$) as well as a significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and neuroticism ($r = -.324$, $p < .01$) suggesting individuals reporting high levels of neuroticism report lower levels of life satisfaction and high levels of extraversion are related to high levels of life satisfaction. Additionally, Table 4 indicates that neuroticism has a significant negative beta reinforcing the negative relationship with life satisfaction found in Table 3. Hypothesis 4 was supported.

The NEO PI-R measure is not available for public domain. Copies of all Tables and instruments are found in the Appendix.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

Previous research has suggested three possible orientations to happiness explained life satisfaction among individuals across the life span (Peterson, et al., 2005); however, because the time period known as emerging adulthood is characterized by a unique time of reflection on self, values, and identity, it is necessary to explore these orientations among the emerging adulthood population specifically (Arnett, 2000). Results suggest that these orientations are distinguishable among this population although several of the items loaded strongly on factors differently as compared to the results by Peterson et al (2005). This may be an indicator of the perspectives held uniquely to this developmental period or to the context within which they function. One possible reason for this confusion is that emerging adults who are oriented to Life of Meaning may view seeking out situations that challenge them as way to better themselves so they can better serve others, yet this is may not be unique to emerging adults. Another possible explanation is the low reliability or precision of the statements referring to Life of Engagement. It may be that emerging adults misinterpret or do not understand what the Life of Engagement statements are really asking.

Life of Engagement showed no relationship in explaining the variance in life satisfaction when compared to Life of Meaning and Life of Pleasure. It appears that many of the findings connected with an Engagement orientation to happiness have very little impact in this study. According to Table 5, life satisfaction is best explained by three components: Neuroticism, Life of Pleasure, and Life of Meaning. Of these three components it appears that Life of Meaning was the most influential in life satisfaction. This is not consistent with previous studies, which found Life of Engagement as the

strongest predictor of life satisfaction (Peterson, et al., 2005), likely due to the poor reliability of the measurement.

Across analyses Life of Meaning had a slightly stronger correlation and a slightly higher beta weight with life satisfaction than Life of Pleasure, although both were significant predictors of variance. Furthermore, the students in this study reported being equally oriented to both a Life of Meaning and Life of Pleasure suggesting that emerging adults in college are not primarily seeking pleasure as their main orientation to happiness but are seeking both. One possible explanation of why Life of Pleasure and Meaning are virtually identical may be due to the motivation and character behind emerging adults attending college. Many come to college wanting to better themselves in order to better serve others; this ideology is based in a Life of Meaning. Another possible explanation for why emerging adults in this study did not report Pleasure as the primary orientation to happiness is the difference between practice and belief. An individual may feel an obligation to better him or herself, serve others, and so forth, but actually doing those things is an entirely different matter. Emerging adults may actually believe in a meaning orientation to happiness but fall short in living it. This assumption is reinforced by the claim that emerging adulthood is a very idealistic time of life where goals are high but practicality is not (Arnett, 2004).

Students who reported high levels of life satisfaction did indeed report higher levels of extraversion and lower levels of neuroticism. This finding is consistent with findings in other personality and happiness studies (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Keyes, 2006a; Lynn & Steel, 2006; Roberts & Mroczek, 2008) which indicate that those who report high levels of neuroticism may be less satisfied with their life and that they view their

world as unable to act but to be acted upon. Conversely, individuals who are more extroverted seem to feel they are capable agents in the world and have more control over their situation (Keyes, 2006a). Furthermore, extraverted individuals desire to be around other people, college students, or the participants in this study, are in a setting where other individuals are often present, this may in turn have a positive impact on their well-being and life satisfaction.

Implications

Because this study was focused in the emerging adulthood population it inhibits the comparison of its results to the original study by Peterson, et al. (2005). However, there is much to be gained by linking the two studies together. The results in this research pertaining to a Life of Engagement on the survey suggests that the instrument did not measure Engagement or "flow" reliably between students; although students may understand and experience flow itself, the instruments or statements did not capture that well. Questions must be developed that truly capture the essence of flow for individuals during this period in their lives in order to assess emerging adults orientation to Engagement. College students do seek Meaning and Pleasure thus while the pleasure side is often more visible we have evidence that they also gain satisfaction from the challenges offered to them in their thinking while on campus. Perhaps further studies with college students employing experience sampling methodologies may give a better picture of what behaviors they most consistently participate in, thus giving light to their practice and belief.

This study is limited to the population of students in a highly rural Midwestern area. The study must be replicated in populations outside of the university setting

including emerging adults who go directly to employment, those who are unemployed or seeking employment and even across the world. Further research must also be conducted with other populations across the life span as to the reliability of the measure. It may be that other stages of the life span may also interpret the survey differently. By using the methodologies employed, it was assumed that each participant would align themselves with one or more orientations to happiness.

It is yet to be determined the level of understanding an emerging adult has of an abstract concept such as flow. There is no question that emerging adults have experienced flow as it has been reported in children as young as three years old (Rathunde & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005) thus further studies need to examine the presence of flow separately from other orientations. A refined measurement tool assessing the orientation Life of Engagement needs to be created specifically for emerging adults. Lastly, the cultural context in which this study was conducted is likely to play a crucial role in the results. These results may prove to be much different had this study been conducted in a country such as China that has historically emphasized industry, education, and productivity as an individuals' primary goal, not personal happiness (Grinde, 2002).

Limitations

Due to the convenience of the sample and the relative lack of ethnic, geographic, and scholastic diversity, the results of the study are limited in its generalizability. Also, the participants who completed the survey may have done so for the sole purpose to gain extra credit in the course they were taking which may cause participants to complete the survey without reading it carefully. Although data obtained from using the Internet is

increasingly common, it is often criticized because of the uniqueness of the respondents, that is, in order to participate; one needs to have access to a computer and the ability to use it. Finally, self-report can be a problem as respondents, intentionally or not, may answer what they believe and not what they actually do due to social desirability.

REFERENCES

Anderman, E., & Macher, M. (1994). Motivation and schooling in the middle grades. *Review of Educational Research, 64*(2), 287-309.

Aristotle. (1976). *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (J. A. K. Thomson, Trans.). New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 469-480.

Arnett, J. J. (2003). Conceptions of the transition to adulthood among emerging adults in American ethnic groups. *New Directions in Child and Adolescent Development, 100,* 63-75.

Arnett, J.J. (2004). *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Arnett, J. J. (2007). Emerging Adulthood: What is it and what is it good for? *Child Development Perspectives, 1(2),* 68-73.

Baltes, P. B., & Baltes, M. M. (1990). Psychological perspectives on successful aging: The model of selective optimization with compensation. In P. B. Baltes & M. M. Baltes (Eds.), *Successful aging: Perspectives from the behavioral sciences* (pp. 1-34). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Boyd, D., & Bee, H. (2006*). Lifespan Development* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education Company.

Brulde, B. (2007). Happiness and the good life. Introduction and conceptual framework. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 8,* 1-14.

Costa, P., & McRae, R. (1992). *NEO PI-R Professional Manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Costa, P. McRae, R., & Zonderman, A. (1987). Environmental and dispositional influences on well-being: Longitudinal follow-up of an American national sample. *British Journal of Psychology, 78*(3), 299-306.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement in Everyday Life*. The masterminds series. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). If we are so rich, why aren't we happy? *American Psychologist, 54*(10), 821-827.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Hunter, J. (2003a). The positive psychology of interested adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(1), 27-35.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Hunter, J. (2003b). Happiness in everyday life: The uses of experience sampling. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 4,* 185-199.

Demir, M. (2008). Sweetheart, you really make me happy: romantic relationship, quality and personality as predictors of happiness among emerging adults. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 9*, 257–277.

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95*, 542-575.

Diener, E. (1994). Assessing subjective well-being: Progress and opportunities. *Social Indicators Research, 31,* 103–157.

Diener, E. (2006). Guidelines for national indicators of subjective well-being and ill being. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7,* 397–404.

Diener, E., & Diener (1996). Most people are happy. *Psychological Science 7*, 181–185.

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, (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 Foundation.

Diener, E., Suh, E., Smith, H. L., & Shao, L. (1995). National differences in reported well-being: Why do they occur*? Social Indicators Research*, 34, 7–32.

Diener, E., Suh E., & Oishi S. (1997). Recent findings on subjective well-being. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology, 24,* 25–41.

Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and Society* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis.* New York, NY: Norton.

Galambos, N., Barker, E., & Krahn, H. (2006). Depression, self-esteem, and anger in emerging adulthood: seven-year trajectories. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(2), 350-365.

Griffin, J. (2007). What do happiness studies study? *Journal of Happiness Studies, 8,* 139-148.

Grinde, B. (2002). Happiness in the perspective of evolutionary psychology. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 3*(4), 331-354.

Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ivens, J. (2007). The development of a happiness measure for schoolchildren. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 23*(3), 221-239.

Joronen, K., & Åstedt-Kurki, P. (2005). Familial Contribution to Adolescent Subjective Well-Being. *International Journal for Nursing Practice, 11,* 125-133.

Kahneman, D., Diener, E., & Schwarz, N. (1999). *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology.* New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Keyes, C. (2006a). The subjective well-being of America's youth; toward a comprehensive assessment. *Adolescent & Family Health*, *4*(1), 3-11.

Keyes, C. (2006b). Subjective well-being in mental health and human development research worldwide. *Social Research Indicators, 77,* 1-10.

Keyes, C., Shmotkin, D., & Ryff, C. (2002). Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*(6), 1007-1022.

Lacey, H., Smith, D., & Ubel, P. (2006). Hope I die before I get old: Mispredicting happiness across the adult lifespan. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7*, 167–182.

Lu, L. (2006). "Cultural Fit": Individual and societal discrepancies in values, beliefs, and subjective well-being. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 146*(2), 203-221.

Lykken, D., & Tellegen, A. (1996). Happiness is a stochastic phenomenon. *Psychological Science, 7*(3), 186-189.

Lynn, M., & Steel, P. (2006). National differences in subjective well-being: The interactive effects of extraversion & neuroticism. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7,* 155–165.

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefit of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803–855.

Marne, L., Rode, J., Mooney, C., & Near, J. (2005). The subjective well-being construct: A test of its convergent, discriminant, and factorial validity. *Social Indicators Research, 74,* 445–476.

Mroczek, D., & Kolarz, C. (1998). The effect of age on positive and negative affect: A developmental perspective on happiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*(5), 1333-1349.

Norton, D. (1976). *Personal Destinies.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ott, J. (2006). The review of happiness: The science behind your smile. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7*(4), 517-522.

Palen, L., & Coatsworth L. J. (2007). Activity-based identity experiences and their relations to problem behavior and psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence, 30,* 721–737.

Pavot, W. & Diener, E. (2003). Well-being (Including life satisfaction). *Encyclopedia of psychological assessment, 2*, 1097-1101.

Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 6*, 25-41.

Rathunde, K., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2005). Middle school students' motivation and quality of experience: A comparison of Montessori and traditional school environments. *American Journal of Education, 111*(3), 341-371.

Roberts, B., & Mroczek, D. (2008). Personality trait change in adulthood. *Association of*

Psychological Science, 17(1), 31-35.

Roisman, G. I., Masten, A. S., Coatsworth, J. D., & Tellegen, A. (2004). Salient and emerging developmental tasks in the transition to adulthood. *Child Development, 75*, 123–133.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 141-166.

Sacker, A., & Cable, N. (2005). Do adolescent leisure-time physical activities foster health and well-being in adulthood? Evidence from two British birth cohorts. *European Journal of Public Health, 16*(3), 331–335.

Selekman, M. (2005). *Pathways to Change: Brief Therapy with Difficult Adolescents*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Seligman, M. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Shmotkin, D., Berkovich, M., & Cohen, K. (2006). Combining happiness & suffering in a retrospective view of anchor periods in life: A differential approach to subjective well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 77,* 139–169.

Stober, J., & Rambow, A. (2006). Perfectionism in adolescent school students: relations with motivation, achievement, & well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences, 42,* 1379-1389.

Tellegen, A., Lykken, D., Bouchard, T., Wilcox, K.,. Segal, N., & Rich, S. (1988). Personality similarity in twins reared apart and together. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(6), 1031-1039.

Tomkins, S. (1962). *Affect Imagery Consciousness*. Polyglot, New York.

Waterman, A. (1993). Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*, 678–691.

Watson, D. (2003). Happiness is in your jeans. PsycCRITIQUES. 48(2), 242-244.

Watson, J. (1895). *Hedonistic Theories from Aristippus to Spencer*. Macmillan, New York.

APPENDIX

Table 1

Rotated Factor Matrix of Orientations to Happiness (n=342)

Life of Meaning	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Q2 My life serves a higher purpose.	**.799**	.039	-.020
Q4 I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities.	**.490**	.140	.286
Q5 In choosing what to do I always take into account whether it will benefit other people.	.**533**	.033	.179
Q11 I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.	**.735**	.038	-.047
Q12 My life has a lasting meaning.	**.784**	.147	.005
Q14 What I do matters to society.	**.718**	.092	.010
Q17 I have spent a lot of time thinking about what life means and how I fit into tits big picture.	**.502**	.038	.095
Life of Pleasure			
Q3 Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide.	.166	.**750**	.006
Q13 In choosing what to do I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable.	.071	**.700**	.052
Q15 I agree with this statement “Life is short eat desert first”.	.007	**.713**	-.190
Q16 I love to do things that excite my senses.	.241	**.664**	.135
Q18 For me the good life is the pleasurable life.	.018	**.713**	.144
Life of Engagement			
Q1 Regardless of what I am doing time passes very quickly.	.325	.013	**.331**

Q6 Whether at work or play I am usually "in a zone" and not conscious of myself.	-.046	.014	**.681**
Q7 I am always very absorbed in what I do.	.141	.115	**.701**
Q8 I go out of my way to feel euphoric.	-.048	.467	**.491**
Q9 In choosing what to do I always take into account whether I can lose myself in it.	.022	.382	**.465**
Q10 I am rarely distracted by what is going on around me.	.160	-.147	**.523**

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 2

One Sample T-test Statistics (n=342)

	M	*SD*	*t*
Meaning	3.72	.64	107.50*
Pleasure	3.71	.75	91.03*
Engagement	2.87	.54	98.74*

*p < .001 (2 tailed)

Table 3

Intercorrelations among measures (n = 342)

	Life Satisfaction	Meaning	Pleasure	Engagement	Neuroticism	Extraversion
Age	-.054	.088	-.034	-.011	-.014	-.041
Class standing	-.021	.067	-.053	-.040	-.024	-.066
Relationship	.100	.008	.032	.105	-.073	-.049
Life Satisfaction	-	.421**	.211**	.105	-.324**	.172**
Meaning		-	.226**	.255**	-.179**	.280**
Pleasure		.	-	.274**	.063	.368**
Engagement				-	.091	.239**
Neuroticism					-	.086
Extraversion						-

*p $\leq$ .05 (2-tailed); ** p $\leq$ 0.01 (2-tailed).

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression (n = 342)

	B	*SE B*	ß	
Step 1				
Age	.09	.08	-.10	
Year in School	.05	.10	.04	
Relationship	.10	.05	.11*	
			$F = 1.73$	$R^2 = .02$
Step 2				
Neuroticism	-.09	.01	-.34**	
Extraversion	.06	.02	.20**	
			$F = 12.54$	$\Delta R^2 = .14$**
Step 3				
Meaning	.64	.10	.34**	
Pleasure	.20	.08	.13**	
Engagement	.002	.11	.001	
			$F = 16.20$**	$\Delta R^2 = .12$**

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction; *p<.05; **p<.01 (2-tailed)

Demographic Questionnaire

What is your age in years? _____

According to your hours completed by Fall 2007, what is your year in school?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Ethnicity

African American

American Indian

Asian

Latino

Mixed ethnicity

Pacific Islander

White

Other _____

What is your current relationship status?

1 = I am not currently in a relationship.

2 = Casual dating: We are somewhat interested in each other romantically, and occasionally do dating kinds of things (either in a group or alone), but we are not really a couple.

3 = Serious dating: We are definitely interested in each other romantically, we both agree that we are a couple, other people see us as a couple, and we often do dating kinds of things, but we haven't committed to staying together in the future.

4 = Committed relationship: We are a couple and are committed to staying together in the future.

5 = Formally engaged to be married: We are currently engaged to be married.

6 = Married: We are legally married.

Orientations to Happiness Scale

Directions: All of the questions reflect statements that many people would find desirable, but we want you to answer only in terms of whether the statement describes how you actually live your life. Each item requires you to answer on a 5-point scale the degree to which the item applies to you (‘‘1 = very much unlike me’’ through ‘‘5 = very much like me’’). Please be honest and accurate!

-My life serves a higher purpose.

-In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will benefit other people.

-I have a responsibility to make the world a better place.

-My life has a lasting meaning.

-What I do matters to society.

-I have spent a lot of time thinking about what life means and how I fit into its big picture.

-Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide.

-I go out of my way to feel euphoric.

-In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable.

-I agree with this statement: ‘‘Life is short – eat dessert first.’’

-I love to do things that excite my senses.

-For me, the good life is the pleasurable life.

-Regardless of what I am doing, time passes very quickly.

-I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities.

-Whether at work or play, I am usually ‘‘in a zone’’ and not conscious of myself.

-I am always very absorbed in what I do.

-In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether I can lose myself in it.

-I am rarely distracted by what is going on around me.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Directions: Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1 -7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response. The 7-point scale is as follows:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = neither agree nor disagree

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

3. I am satisfied with my life.

4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

5. If I could live my life over, 1 would change almost nothing.

Not in public domain.