DOES SELF-CONSTRUAL PLAY A ROLE ON THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN MEANING IN LIFE AND LIFE SATISFACTION?

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"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how"

Nietszche

Abstract

Relationship between meaning in life, life satisfaction and self-construal is investigated in the study. 923 participants from different ethnic backgrounds completed online surveys for meaning in life, life-satisfaction and self-construal. It is expected that both meaning in life and independent self-construal seperately would be positively correlated with life-satisfacion. Further, it is also expected that two levels of self-construal (independent and interdependent) would differently influence the relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction. Results of study showed that independent self-construal has positive association between meaning in life, additionally it also is positively correlated with life-satisfaction. Consistent with the hypothesis and past literature, having meaning in life is positively correlated with life-satisfaction. There is no significant relationship between interdependent self-construal and life-satisfaction. Independent self-construal did not strengthen the relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction. Study replicated findings between meaning in life and life-satisfaction with a greater sample. It added self-construal as another variable which was not combined with these constructs before.

Keywords: Self-construal, independent, interdependent, life-satisfaction, meaning in life, subjective well-being.

1. Introduction

Meaning in Life and Life-Satisfaction

Victor Frankl, known with his acclaimed work "Man's search of meaning", claimed that meaning is a fundamental need for people (1959). Depending on his witnesses to World War II, he stated that those who strive against obstacles and find meaning out of the adverse circumstances can survive and grow out of hardships. Striving against it makes trauma survivors realize their own strength and thus they can survive better, compared to others (Frankl, 1959).

Meaning in life gained much importance within time in psychology field. Positive psychology "the science of what makes a life worth to live" described by Peterson and colleagues (2008), approach meaning as one of the constructs necessary for well-being. There are many different approaches toward meaning in positive psychology. According to Ryff it is having purposes and goals in life (1989). According to Seligman it is "serving something bigger than the self" (Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005; Seligman, 2012). According to Reker and Wong it is "cognizance of order, coherence and purpose on one's existence, the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of fulfillment" (1988).

All these diverse approaches toward meaning in life come together on that; it has an impact on well-being (Reker &Wong, 1988; Steger, 2006; Seligman, 2005; 2012). The available evidence suggests that meaningful life also promotes better health (Ewart, 1991; Karoly, 1991). The human brain responds to stress in a more resilient way if an individual has goals in life. For individuals having compassionate life goals, the adrenal gland was found to be less responsive to possible stress factors (Abelson, 2014). On the other hand, absence of meaningfulness has been found to be related with pathological dysfunctions (Reker & Wong, 1988).

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as "the global experience of positive reactions to one's life and includes all of the lower-order components such as life satisfaction and hedonic level" (Diener, Diener& Diener, 1995). In the literature, there is much discussion going on while differentiating affect level (happiness) and cognitive level (life-satisfaction) of SWB (Diener & Emmons, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2001). SWB is proposed as a whole construct and happiness as a sub-construct of it (Seligman, 2012). As happiness refers to being in a condition of cheerfulness and pleasure, a happy person is described as a person experiencing more positive than negative affect (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). In addition to happiness, SWB includes a cognitive construct as well: Life- Satisfaction, which refers to cognitive judgmental aspects of SWB (Diener et.al, 1985).

Within time, individuals became much more interested in happiness, rather than life-satisfaction. Most posts on social media are to show how plausible our lives are (Berger& Buecher, 2012). However; hedonia, defined as pleasure, joy and positive affect (Deci& Ryan, 2008), only by itself is not enough for a fulfilled life and results in disappontments (Mauss, Tamir, Anderson & Savino, 2011).

Recent empirical analysis and scientific studies indicate an increase in the prevalence of depression, which is a sign of unsatisfied life. (Hidaka, 2012; Gillham, Reivich, Jaycox & Seligman, 1995). Moreover, according to World Health Organization reports there is rise in the prevalence of suicide (WHO, 2012). These statistics show that even though people have focused more on joy than any other century, this focus does not seem to bring straightforward results. So, is happiness absolutely what people only need? Can chasing for the joy and pleasure without any meaning behind be the ultimate goal in human life? One study showed that chasing for only happiness can actually make people unhappy (Mauss et.al, 2011). There is consensus on the findings that only pursuing pleasure is not enough to be fulfilled (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Because humans have both emotions and cognitions, only joy does not make them fulfilled. They need to have met cognitive needs as well, thus feel the life satisfaction (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013).

Human beings can be satisfied when their needs are met and their competencies are being used (Baumeister, 2013; Maslow, 1943). They are differentiated from other creatures with their nervous system, which gives them the ability of thinking, reasoning, reflection and awakening (Corballis, 2007; Wong, 2013). These additional competences bring additional needs and motivations. For instance, as a result of thinking ability; humans can question and thus, seek about the meaning in life and meaning of their existence (Baumeister et al., 2013; Emmons, 2003). Depending on these theoretical background, it can be suggested that humans' life-satisfaction depends on meeting their need of finding meaning and purpose in life. The rise in lack of life-satisfaction together, might be due to failure of using the mental capacity human beings have (Remes, Brayne, van der Linde, & Lafortune, 2016). Thus, questioning and finding meaning in their existence is essential for humans to survive (Baumeister, 1991). In order to meet the mental, psychological needs of humans, they have an urge to find meaning in life.

On the basis of evidence currently available, meaning in life is positively correlated with life-satisfaction (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988; Ryff, 1989; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005; King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006). All these studies base the evidence on the correlational measures, however there are some longitudinal studies finding evidence for the long-term effect of meaning on life satisfaction (Mascaro & Rosen,2006; 2008). Terman's gifted children study is a well-known longitudinal study that lasted almost life-long. His main objective was to examine gifted children's developmental course and their characteristics. Study continued with follow-ups after Terman. Follow-up studies demonstrated that among the gifted children, those having more meaning in

life reported being more satisfied with life later in the lfie (Terman &Oden, 1947). The importance of meaning in life is also reflected in writing paradigms in social psychology. In one study with Pennebaker's writing paradigm, young participants were asked to write about their life goals and their imaginary future self. The study aimed to measure if expressing the life goals would have an impact on physical and mental health. And they do, because it was found that those who were writing about their life goals were found to feel less upset and more happy and satisfied; moreover, those people also got less physical illness (King, 2001). Mascaro and Rosen (2008) designed a study in which they wanted to measure the longitudinal results of meaning in life on depression. They measured both meaning in life and depression, once a month for 3 times. The statistical analysis showed that as meaning in life increases, the depression levels people have decrease simultaneously (Mascaro & Rosen, 2008).

In a study conducted by Wong (1998), the factors related to personal meaning which contributes to life-satisfaction was investigated. He found different constructs from religion to self-transcendence relating with personal meaning. Even though there were many constructs affecting personal meaning, he found out that total personal meaning scores were correlated with life-satisfaction. This proved one more time, no matter what influences people's meaning in life, presence of the meaning leads to higher life-satisfaction (Wong, 1998).

Self-Construal:

Findings showed evidence for the difference on the levels of SWB across cultures (Ahuvia, 2001; Carter, 1991; Chang, 1996). Culture is mostly contextualized by collectivism vs. individualism dimension in psychology literature (Hofstede, 2011; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The primary distinction is that; individualist cultures highlight the "individual" whereas collective cultures highlight "society"(Hofstede, 2011). Individualist cultures perceive the behaviors as depending on the personal propensity, whereas collectivists value the behavior as

under external factors like societal rules, obligations and norms (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In collectivist societies, individual's views are seen as secondary because community values and norms are much more important (Kok, Goh, & Gan, 2015).

On the basis of individualism and collectivism difference, individualism is positively associated with life-satisfaction on societal level (Diener et.al, 1995; Diener& Diener, 2009). Differences are not only important on societal level but also on individual level. The differences on individual level are examined by *self-construal,* defined as perception of self in the society, on individual level (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Self-construal is a better investigation for individual level cultural orientation differences compared to individualistic vs. collectivistic dimension (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994).

Self-construal has been worked through by two levels: Independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995).Being independent and autonomous are core characteristics of independent self-construal.

Self-construal is an important factor for life-satisfaction. This hypothesis was tested by Suh, Diener and Updegraff (2008). They primed participants with self-construal conditions before the life-satisfaction evaluation. Participants were divided in 2 groups and they were either primed with independent self-construal context or interdependent self-construal context. As a next step, they filled a social appraisal form in which they indicate how their lives are evaluated by 3 important individuals in their life. As a third measure they reported their life satisfaction with the scale related. The results showed that no matter the culture is, priming condition influenced people's approach toward life-satisfaction. Those primed with interdependent self-construal evaluated their life-satisfaction based on social appraisal, on the

other hand independently primed subjects did not focus much on social appraisal while evaluating life-satisfaction. If a participant was primed with interdependent self-construal, that participant put more emphasis on social appraisal while evaluating the life satisfaction scores. This study has proven that use of information in life-satisfaction judgments are connected to self- construal (Suh et.al, 2008).

Independent self-construal eases the way for one to focus on own purposes in life, thus the meaning in life. Whereas, an individual with interdependent self-construal would be more influenced by the society. S/he might shape behaviors, opinions and purposes in parallel with the society because lives of individuals are apparently interconnected, relationships and others play significant role in one's life (Miramontes, 2011). It has proven with other studies that life-satisfaction benefits from self-construal in a way that independent self-construal promotes evaluation of life-satisfaction with independent terms, whereas interdependent self-construal promotes evaluation of life satisfaction with interdependent terms (Suh et.al, 2008). Moreover, Cross and colleagues found that low interdependent self-construal predicted psychological well-being better than high interdependent self-construal (Cross, Gore &Morris, 2003).

People are in need of having control in their life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). They perform better under conditions which provide free-will and independent environment. Consistent with this argument, in one study Malaysian youth appraised more for values and meaning in life, when they feel free-will. This research introduced a paradox in field; even though their culture is collective (interrelated-interdependent), youth was mostly intrigued by self-determination when it comes to meaning of their life (Kok et al., 2015).

Motivations based on self-determination theory was found to be different among people from different cultures (Walker &Wang, 2008). People having higher collectivism orientation seem to be more influenced by others' when it comes to motivation (Walker, 2009).

Given all these theoretical backgrounds with scientific evidences, it is aimed to find out the relationship among meaning in life, life satisfaction and self-construal in this paper. The hypotheses of this paper are;

I.   The more a person has meaning in life, the higher life satisfaction that person would have.

II. Individuals with higher independent self-construal are expected to have more meaning in their life.

III. It is expected that as people score higher on independent self-construal, the correlation between meaning in life and life satisfaction also will be positively higher for them.

In the literature there is evidence for the dual relationship of these constructs e.g life-satisfaction and meaning in life. However, there is no study focusing on the relationship of these three constructs.

2.Method

2.1 Design

This study is a correlational study depending on self-report surveys filled out online via Qualtrics. The battery of surveys included two languages: Turkish and English. This study intended to include multi-national participants to see the picture with a broadened view, therefore two different languages are added in the study.

Survey starts with consent form. After the consent, demographic information is taken from participants. In the current study, only answers of SCS, SWLS and MLQ were used. ASTI is included in questionnaire for a colleague's thesis study, for which data is collected collaboratively. However, results are not added to analysis of current study. Questionnaires are given in the following order: SCS, ASTI, SWLS and MLQ. Respondents were allowed to abort study whenever they wanted to. After completing the questionnaire, respondents are asked to indicate e-mail address if they would like to learn about overall results of study when results are obtained. If they have given their e-mail address, participants will be informed about overall results. Data has been collected within 6 weeks, after data collection necessary organization of data and analysis is conducted. In this study, SWLS is the dependent variable, MLQ and SCS are independent variables.

In order to make surveys equivalent for both languages, the translated versions of surveys to Turkish are researched. SWLS, MLQ had been used in many Turkish studies before and checked for reliability and validity, thus these surveys are taken from those studies. SCS has been used in Turkish in one study before, which had 6 additional questions. These questions are taken out from the survey in order to make the surveys within the study consistent with each other.

2.2 Sample

The study sample consisted of adults from different countries (N=65). Participants are recruited via snowball method (N=923). There were more Turkish participants in sample than other countries (58.6%). There were more women than men (76% vs. 24%). Education level of participants ranged between less than high-school to doctorate+ with a high range of baccalaureate (45.9%). There is 31.6% drop-out rate (N=292).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Self-Construal Scale

Individuals' self-construal orientation was measured with the Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994). This 24-item questionnaire consists of 12 items for Independent (IND) self-construal e.g "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects" and 12 items for Interdependent (INT) self-construal e.g "I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in". Responses are in Likert scales from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Lower-upper scores of independent and interdependent self-construal subscales are from 0-84. Both subscales showed high reliability scores, by cronbach alpha .74 for INT and .65 for IND. Reliability between two scales was low by Cronbach alpha .091.

Turkish version of this scale is taken from a study which has translated relational-interdependent self-construal scale (RISCS) and conducted reliability and validity analysis before (Akin, Kayis & Satici, 2010). The RISCS has the same items with SCS by Singelis (1994) with 6 additional questions. In the current study, additional 6 questions were taken out from Turkish version of RISCS and used for SCS. This validated scale was preferred to use because the translation was conducted by professionals with the confirmation of reliability and validity. 6 additional questions were taken out in order to be consistent with all participants in the study.

Additional reliability analysis for Turkish sample is conducted. Analysis showed lower reliability scores within Turkish participants by Cronbach alpha .59. This will be discussed later in discussion.

2.3.2 Meaning in Life (MLQ)

The meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006, in press) consists of 10 questions and has two subscales as presence of meaning and search for meaning. For Turkish version, the adapted to version by Terzi, Tekinalp and Leuwerke (2011) used.

The presence subscale aims to measure how meaningful participants perceive their life; e.g. "I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful" (Steger, 2006). Search subscale measures to what extent and individual seeks to find meaning of own life, e.g. "I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful" (Steger, 2006). Items were 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Possible highest scores for subscales is 35 whereas lowest is 0. Both subscales showed high reliability by Cronbach alpha .87 for presence of meaning and by Cronbach alpha .86 for search for meaning.

2.3.3 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

SWLS is aimed to measure an individual's global life satisfaction e.g "I am satisfied with my life" (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). For Turkish version, Yetim's (1993) Turkish adapted version was used. This measure consists of 5 items and each item is 7-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7)). Possible highest score is 35 and lowest is 0 for this scale. SWLS showed high reliability for this sample by Cronbach alpha .85.

3. Results

Due to high attrition rates, attrition was analyzed in order to check if there is a specific pattern for participants who dropped out. However, when demographic characteristics are analyzed, no significant attrition pattern was found. Most participants dropped out in demographics or on the first questions of any scales.

The demographic details are given in Table 1. Correlations between variables are analyzed comparing possible group differences for demographic characteristics (e.g age, gender, employment status etc..). There was no statistically significant difference among groups for demographics.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Samples

	Frequency
Participants	927
Drop-Out	301
Complete Response	626
Outliers	9
Valid Response	**617**

Age
M= 32,79
SD=. 463
Min: 18
Max: 71

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	**467**	**75.6**
Male	**150**	**24.4**

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<High School	**11**	**1.8**
High School Graduate	**95**	**15.4**
Bachelor's	**283**	**45.9**
Master's Degree	**197**	**31.9**
>Doctorate +	**31**	**5**

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed Full Time	228	37
Employed Part Time	64	10.4
Retired	30	4.9
Student	207	33.5
Unemployed	88	14.3

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
None	205	33.2
Religious	412	66.8

Religious people are found to have more meaning in life (M= 26.54, SD= 6.15) compared to non-religious people (M=22.96, SD= 7.27), p<.001.

9 participants were found to be outliers. When the given responses are analyzed thoroughly, the responses had quiet similar patterns. These participants either scored for the highest or lowest for items. The analysis, aiming to test hypothesis is computed both with outlier participants and without outlier participants. There was no significant difference between results, since the number is very small compared to our original sample. Therefore, these participants were dropped out by the study while conducting analysis.

In order to check hypotheses, a hierarchical multiple regression was computed (enter-method). First, results of simple correlations are analyzed. As expected, there is a positive correlation between presence of meaning in life (M= 25.48, SD=6.51) and life satisfaction (M= 23.10, SD= 6.22), r= .47, p<.001(Table 2). These results confirm that, the more meaning a person senses in life, the more satisfied that person will feel with the life. On the other hand,

there is a negative significant correlation between search for meaning in life (*M*= 22.97, *SD*= 7.2), *r*= -.17, *p*<.001 and life-satisfaction.

Independent self-construal (M=63.08, SD=8.12) is positively correlated with presence of meaning (M= 25.48, SD=6.51), r=.33, p<.01 (Table 2). This means the as individuals feel more independent, they sense more meaning in life.

Table2. Pearson's Correlations

	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
SC-INT	58.65	9.02	1				
SC-IND	63.08	8.12	.048	1			
MLQ-S	22.97	7.22	.144**	-.006	1		
MLQ-P	25.48	6.51	.114**	.333**	-.191**	1	
SWLS	23.1	6.22	.050	.203**	-.171**	.470**	1

Note: SC-INT: Self-Construal Interdependent score, SC-IND: Self-Construal Independent Score, MLQ-S: Meaning in Life Search, MLQ-P: Meaning in Life Presence. ** *p*<.01

In order to see if independent self-construal strengthen the relationship between presence of meaning in life and life satisfaction, SCS-IND was added to model as a second step. However, there was no significant effect when SCS-IND was added to model. The results of the regression indicated the two predictors explained 22% of the variance (R^2=.22, $F(2,614)$=88.119, *p*<.01). It was found that presence of meaning in life significantly predicted life-satisfaction (β = .47, *p*<.001).

Additionally, another multiple regression is computed via entering the variables in a reversed way (first SCS-IND and then ML-P) however none of the regression trials rwere found significant.

MLQ has two subscales. Therefore, multiple regression for search of meaning is conducted as well. However, search of meaning in life could not explain any difference for the model. There was no statistically significant difference for search of meaning for any variable.

An additional analysis of independent samples t-test for the differences between independent and interdependent self-construal on the presence of meaning is computed. Participants were separated into two groups, depending on their self-construal levels. Individuals scoring higher on independent self-construal are considered as independent oriented and individuals scoring higher on interdependent are considered as interdependent. There is a statistically significant difference in presence of meaning between SCS-IND (*M*=63.08, *SD*=8.12) and SCS-INT (*M*= 58,65 *SD*=9,04); t(593)=1.38 *r*= .028. These results suggest that presence of meaning differs according to levels of self-construal. Specifically, these results suggest that those more oriented in independent self-construal have more presence in life than those interdependent oriented.

Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Predicting Life Satisfaction (N=617)

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
MLQ Presence	.449.	.034	.470**	.432	.036	.452**
SCS IND				.040	.029	.052
R^2		.221			.223	
F for change in R^2		174.07			1.097	

** *p*<.01

4. Discussion

Aim of the study was to find the relationship between meaning in life, life-satisfaction and self-construal. Meaning in life and life satisfaction is positively correlated as expected. Consistent with the hypothesis, independent self-construal and having meaning in life is also positively correlated. However, independent self-construal did not strengthen the relationship between meaning in life and life-satisfaction.

There was no significant result depending on demographic characteristics except religion. It was found that the more religious a person is, the more meaning that person has in life. The reason for more religious people to feel more meaning in life might be feelings of being connected to a greater whole (Baumeister, 1991).

Presence of meaning found to be positively correlated with life-satisfaction however search for meaning has negative correlation with life-satisfaction. Depending on these results, it can be suggested presence and search of meaning has two different directions for life satisfaction. This might be explained with possible existential crisis people go through. Existential crisis usually leads deep questioning of existence. Thus, it usually creates stress and anxiety because the person gets away from the comfort zone and customary habits. However, when the individual senses presence of meaning at the end of journey, this results in higher life-satisfaction. It has been demonstrated with many studies that people develop after difficult times, where they struggle and get out of their comfort zone. Post-traumatic growth in trauma literature is one of the evidences for this situation (Park, Chmielewski, & Blank, 2010).

The findings further showed; independent ones have more meaning in life. Integrating with self might be a way to find meaning and roots of themselves. Hence, independent ones will try to understand their reason of existence with a more focused view. With this perspective

they can feel their function in life, their contribution to universe. On the other side, interdependent selves regard their own from a perspective of "us" rather than "me". As a consequence, individual estranges himself/ herself from own, as a result of caring more for others. Estranging to one's own makes a person more distant to own life thus, more distant to be oriented for one's meaning in life.

There might be several reasons for the failure of third hypothesis. The design of study is not strong enough, thus methodological weaknesses might cause the disconfirmation of hypothesis III, thus methodology should be improved.

Unexpectedly, Turkish participants scored higher both on independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal. When this finding has further investigated, it is considered that globalizing and innovations in recent century might be the reason why cultures are becoming more heterogenic. This heterogeneity results for self-construal was explained with a third self-construal in the literature by Cigdem Kagitcibasi (1989). It is stated that this value orientation is mostly seen in the developed urban areas of collectivist cultures. She proposed that autonomous-related individuals who do not carry the "material intergenerational interdependence", but has sense of related-self (Kagitcibasi & Berry, 1989). Therefore, these individuals are not strong in either side of the dimension. Since, our sample has a high proportion of Turkish people from urban areas our sample might be carrying autonomous-related construal.

In literature, the reasons for hypotheses to be failed are explained with various theories. One of them is called *"Hawthorne Effect"*. This theory indicates that participants, knowing they are a part of scientific study do not reflect reality, but they are participating in the study with bias. Thus, they don't answer questions in a natural way (Sedgwick, 2011). This effect

might have influenced our participants as well, knowing they participate to a positive clinical psychology study, they wanted to be more pleasant and plausible.

Even though previous studies demonstrated the association between variables before, this study confirmed its importance with a greater and multinational sample. The sample for recent study had participants from various ethnic backgrounds. Sample size of study was sufficient enough and participants from various ethnic backgrounds enabled study to draw a broader perspective. Thus, it added a new perspective to literature for the variables studied.

Findings of study should be considered on the basis of potential limitations. First of all, online surveys are prone to create some biases. When people participate online, it is not possible to check their attention, mood and motivation for the study. Lack of any of the mentioned factors might lead to a biased response.

Secondly, there might be a social desirability bias. As human beings, we are in need to be accepted from society and those around us. Therefore, when we report about own, we want to show ourselves in the most desirable way.

Thirdly; study sample was multicultural and included people from different SES. Wordings of questions could be over-arching for some people's intuitive understanding.

The self-construal scale showed different patterns of reliability depending on language thus sample. Turkish version was not found to be reliable within this sample. However, the version used in study was translated and validated before for Turkish, the translated version was found equivalent with English (Akin et.al, 2010). When the demographics of the sample from previous study is further investigated, it is seen that the study consists of students. Having a specific audience as a sample might show biased results. Understanding and perception of a student sample might be completely different than a heterogenic sample. Thus, while creating

samples for scientific studies sample characteristics should be considered well. Any possible specifications should be taken into account.

As a suggestion for future studies or follow-up; the methodology should be strengthened. Instead of using self-reports, these constructs should be experimentally studied. As in other studies in social psychology or clinical psychology, priming methods can be used in lab. Additionally, affect level of participants should be controlled in order to prevent any kind of confound variable. Affect is very likely to be a confounding variable in this study because life-satisfaction and happiness (affect) are components of SWB, so they have much in common which can be confused easily.

Moreover, if self-reports are being used in a study measuring these constructs, researchers should take into account cognizance and comprehension of the audience. Responses depend on participants' understanding and comprehension, thus it is important if they understand everything correctly. Questions and surveys should be checked in terms of any possible cultural sensitivities. For some cultures, the constructs might not mean strongly on average.

Education level, intellectuality, employment status and cultural factors are all important for one to be able to understand the given questions. Studies with questionnaires should consider that questions make sense for a more general target.

Life experiences might play a big role for meaning in life. Thus, future studies can check significant life events that participants experienced (trauma, loss, significant disorders). Additionally, self-construal might be changing due to situational differences. In order to have more reliable scores for SCS, participants might be checked on different times and situations.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the findings mentioned above, when an individual finds meaning in life and has independent self-construal s/he feels more satisfied. It is not only the happiness what people need. Happiness is an adjunct for life. When happiness becomes the ultimate goal, it results with disappointment because happiness is a thing which has limits, if an individual reach that limits it would not give satisfaction anymore. What is more important to human life, is a sense of satisfaction. Depending on the results of our study, it can be stated that satisfaction comes with the presence of meaning. Overall, individuals with higher emphasis of their own (independent self-construal), have more presence of meaning in life feel greater sense of life satisfaction.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener et.al, 1985)

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. 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 responding.

- 7 - Strongly agree

- 6 - Agree

- 5 - Slightly agree

- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree

- 3 - Slightly disagree

- 2 - Disagree

- 1 - Strongly disagree

    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, I would change almost nothing.

31 - 35 Extremely satisfied

26 - 30 Satisfied

21 - 25 Slightly satisfied

20   Neutral

15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied

10 - 14 Dissatisfied

5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied

Appendix B

Meaning in Life (MLQ)

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life feel important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and that there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

1. I understand my life's meaning.

2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.

3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose.

4. My life has a clear sense of purpose.

5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.

6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.

7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.

8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.

9. My life has no clear purpose.

10. I am searching for meaning in my life.

MLQ scoring: Presence = 1, 4, 5, 6, & 9-reverse-coded Search = 2, 3, 7, 8, & 10

Appendix C

Self-Construal Scale (SCS)

Interdependent Items

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me
4. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments
8. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/ career plans
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group
10. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group
11. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible
12. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument

Independent Items

13. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood
14. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me
16. I am comfortable with being singled our for praise or rewards
17. I am the same person at home that I am at school
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me
19. I act the same way no matter who I am with
20. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am
21. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects
23. My personal identity independent of other, is very important to me
24. I value being in good health above everything