Goal Types and Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-being: A Longitudinal Study

Emily Winakur, M.S. Ed., Meghan B. Owenz, M.A., & Blaine J. Fowers, Ph.D.
University of Miami, Department of Educational and Psychological Studies

Abstract
Goal researchers have focused much of their attention on goal types. In his account of eudaimonia, Aristotle (1999) made an important, but only recently studied distinction between goal pursuit in which the means and ends can be separated (instrumental) and goal pursuit in which the means and ends are inseparable (constitutive). Previous research supported the Aristotelian prediction that instrumental goal pursuit would be associated with hedonic well-being and constitutive goal pursuit would be related to eudaimonic well-being (Fowers, Mollica, & Procacci, 2010). The purpose of this study was to examine these relationships in a short-term longitudinal study. A sample of 165 undergraduate students from two large southeastern universities generated six goals and completed a set of goal and well-being questionnaires at Time 1 and progress and well-being measures 2 months later. The results for the instrumental goal pursuit-hedonic well-being pathway had a very good model fit, indicating that instrumental goal pursuit predicts hedonic well-being over time. The model for the constitutive goal pursuit-eudaimonic well-being pathway also fit the data reasonably well, but the path from goal progress to eudaimonic well-being was not statistically significant. Instrumental goal pursuit and goal progress predicted hedonic well-being. Constitutive goal pursuit predicted goal progress, but goal progress was not related to eudaimonic well-being at the follow-up.

Method

- **Participants:**
  - Sample: 165 undergraduate students

- **Procedure**
  - Set of self-administered goal questionnaires completed in an online portal at Time 1. Goal progress and well-being were assessed 2 months later on the online portal.

- **Measurement**
  - Ss provided 6 personal goals
  - **Instrumental Goal Orientation Scale:** (Fowers et al., 2010)
  - **Constitutive Goal Orientation Scale:** (Fowers et al., 2010)
  - **Instrumental Activity:** Fun and Efficacy Scales (McGregor & Little, 1998)
  - **Constitutive Activity:** Integrity Scale (McGregor & Little, 1998), Personal Expression Scale (Waterman, 1993)
  - **Eudaimonic Well-being:** Subscales from the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989) and the Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones & Crandall, 1986)
  - **Hedonic Well-being:** Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and the Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969)
  - Goal Progress: 2 items assessing perceived progress.

Results

- **SEM Results: Constitutive Goal Pursuit**
  - Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 68.50$, df = 34, $p < .001$; TLI = .929; CFI = .956; RMSEA = .079; Standardized RMR = .096
  - All path coefficients were in the predicted direction and were statistically significant except the Goal Progress and Eudaimonic Well-being Time 2 path.

- **SEM Results: Instrumental Goal Pursuit**
  - Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 41.61$, df = 36, $p = .24$; TLI = .982; CFI = .988; RMSEA = .031; Standardized RMR = .057
  - All path coefficients were in the predicted direction and were statistically significant except the Instrumental Goal to Instrumental Activity path.

Conclusions

- **Research Questions:**
  - Does instrumental goal pursuit predict goal progress and hedonic well-being over time?
  - Does constitutive goal pursuit predict goal progress and eudaimonic well-being over time?

- **Results**
  - Instrumental goal pursuit predicted goal progress and Hedonic Well-being over a 2 month period.
  - Instrumental Goal Orientation was not related to Instrumental Activity.
  - Constitutive goal pursuit predicted goal progress, but goal progress was not related to Time 2 Eudaimonic Well-being.
  - Time 1 and Time 2 Hedonic Well-being were correlated .81, and Time 1 and Time 2 Eudaimonic Well-being were correlated .73.

- **Conclusions**
  - The two forms of goal pursuit were predictive of goal progress, indicating that the forms of goal pursuit are precursors to goal progress.
  - Goal progress was related to Hedonic Well-being, but not Eudaimonic Well-being at Time 2, suggesting that Hedonic Well-being may be fostered more by the perception of progress in goal pursuit than Eudaimonic Well-being.
  - The stability of the latent well-being variables was very strong over a 2-month period, which supports the use of a latent variable approach to well-being measurement.