

# Work, Happiness, and Unhappiness



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**Peter Warr**

*Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield*



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**Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas**  
**(Virgil: *Georgics*, ii, 490)**

Translated as: Happy is the person who understands the  
causes of things  
(Motto of the University of Sheffield)



# Contents

Preface	xi
1 The Principal Concepts	1
Work and Its Implications	3
Perspectives on Happiness	7
Content and Structure of the Book	14
2 Well-Being and Self-Validation	19
Happiness as Well-Being	19
Measuring Happiness as Well-Being	30
Happiness as Self-Validation	38
Measuring Happiness as Self-Validation	44
Three Dimensions of Happiness: Pleasure, Arousal, and Self-Validation	46
Some Concepts Related to Happiness	49
3 Unemployment and Retirement: Role Preference and Other Influences	61
Unemployment and Unhappiness	62
Retirement and Happiness	71
Multiple Roles Across Time	77



4	The Vitamin Analogy	81
	Nine Primary Features of Any Environment	81
	The Primary Features in Employment, Unemployment, and Retirement	89
	Vitamins and Environmental Characteristics	95
	Environmental Features and Different Forms of Happiness	106
5	Constant Effects Beyond a Threshold	111
	Three Additional Features in Job Settings	112
	Job Feature 7: Availability of Money	115
	Job Feature 8: Physical Security	120
	Job Feature 9: Valued Social Position	124
	Job Feature 10: Supportive Supervision	128
	Job Feature 11: Career Outlook	133
	Job Feature 12: Equity	135
6	Control, Skill, and Goals	141
	Job Feature 1: Opportunity for Personal Control	141
	Job Feature 2: Opportunity for Skill Use	153
	Job Feature 3: Externally-Generated Goals	158
7	Variety, Clarity, and Social Contact	183
	Job Feature 4: Variety	183
	Job Feature 5: Environmental Clarity	188
	Job Feature 6: Contact With Others	193
8	Combinations, Measurement, Causes, and Work Profiles	203
	The Combination of Job Features	203
	Environmental Measures: Objective or Subjective?	214
	Environmental Changes Across Time	220
	Other Models of the Job Environment	232
	Profiling Psychologically Bad and Good Jobs	238
9	Social and Judgmental Influences	243
	Social Influences on Happiness	244
	Judgments in a Particular Situation	249

Self-Help Exercises	273
Baseline Happiness and Associated Mental Processes	276
10 Differences Between Sets of People	281
Cultural Differences	283
Demographic Differences	288
Occupational Differences	314
11 Personality, Genes, and Happiness	327
Personality, Values, and Motives	327
Personality and Happiness: Meanings and Associations	332
The Inheritance of Happiness	347
Combined Effects: Environment and Personality	349
Personality and Exposure to Environmental Features	351
12 Moderator Effects and Differential Salience	357
Explaining Dispositional Effects	357
Dispositional Moderators of Job–Happiness Associations	365
Personality and Judgment Processes	377
13 Person–Environment Fit and Work Values	383
Frameworks of Person–Environment Fit	384
P-E Fit, Wants, and the Vitamin Framework	393
Salience and Person–Environment Fit	394
Occupational Values	398
14 Some Consequences of Happiness	403
General Considerations	403
Job Performance	407
Associated Thoughts and Behaviors	421
Absence From Work	427
Staff Turnover	432
References	435
Author Index	491
Subject Index	513



## Preface

**I**n 1975 Penguin Books published *Work and Well-Being*, written by Toby Wall and myself. That examined how and why people feel good or bad about their life, with a particular emphasis on the settings of paid employment. It examined both traditional and novel themes that were important 30 years ago, and consolidated my interest in the issues that have been brought together in the present volume.

Paid work is a primary arena of human activity, in which many practical and moral questions demand attention. It has become the object of scientific study by energetic and creative psychologists in many parts of the world, and we now have available a substantial research base about happiness and unhappiness in work settings. Building on that knowledge, the book sets out a broad framework with wide applicability. The primary question asks “Why are some people at work happier or unhappier than others?”, but the answers and occupational examples can also be applied in other settings. The environmental and personal sources of happiness are similar in whatever role is examined.

The book has four main sections, although those are not numbered as such. First (in chaps. 1 and 2) we look at the nature and measurement of happiness. That construct has of course been pondered and written about for centuries, and the emphasis here is on recent explorations by research psychologists. I have long been troubled by the limitations of many psychologists’ focus on the narrow variable of job satisfaction or the inflated construct of work stress. We need to examine within a single framework a comprehensive range of experiences and to recognize that happiness has several different aspects.

With that in mind, chapters 1 and 2 present an account in terms of “happiness as well-being” and “happiness as self-validation.” The first of those has been studied much more frequently than the second, and the book draws attention to three axes for its measurement and three levels of scope. For example, we need to distinguish between more energized and more tranquil forms of well-being, and between broad happiness in general and more narrow happiness about a particular feature in, say, your job.

The book’s two main sections cover separately what can be identified as “environment-centered” and “person-centered” approaches to the study of happiness. In the first case (chaps. 4 to 8), the goal is to identify the principal aspects of an environment that influence people. A framework is presented for understanding similarities and differences between employment-related roles and the effects of those roles. The model has three main themes.

First, the environments of paid work, unemployment, and retirement can helpfully be described and investigated in terms of the same features. The beneficial or harmful consequences of particular environments may be attributed to the nature of those features as experienced in whatever role, and sources of happiness or unhappiness in any setting can be interpreted in the same terms. Using this specification, jobs can be profiled to show the elements that affect particular groups of individuals. In those terms, some jobs may be seen to have a content that is less psychologically desirable than, for example, some forms of unemployment.

The second theme develops an analogy with vitamins and physical health. Increases in an environmental feature are unlikely to have the same magnitude of increased impact as that feature’s level becomes ever greater. Instead, a leveling off at moderate levels is proposed, such that (like vitamins) a deficiency is harmful but benefits do not continue to accrue at very high levels. Furthermore, as with several vitamins, it is possible in some cases to “have too much of a good thing.”

Third, the book is written in the belief that much research into environmental characteristics has been excessively narrow. Traditional perspectives have focused on a limited set of undoubtedly important features (demands and control, for instance), to the exclusion of others that can substantially affect happiness or unhappiness. With that in mind, a broad framework is presented, extending across 12 characteristics that require attention. Job content may be studied either in those 12 terms or through more specific subcategories; for example, chapter 8 derives an expanded set of 26 influential features from the basic 12.

However, discussions with people about their jobs soon make it clear that there is no standard pattern of environmental impact. Apart from similar reactions at extreme levels of input, people differ widely in their experience in response to the same conditions. We therefore need person-centered approaches to complement the environment-centered emphasis of, for instance, the “vitamin” model described here. Chapters 9 to 13 develop approaches of that person-centered kind, comprising the book’s third section.

Those chapters explore the mental processes that take place in people’s assessment of their happiness or unhappiness, reviewing judgments made in the face of environmental features of the kinds introduced in the earlier chapters. Here we need to consider how people make mental comparisons with other individuals, other situations, and other times, as well as their assessments of personal salience and novelty. Variations between people in their application of those judgments ensure that happiness responses to a particular environment can be far from uniform.

Other person-centered issues are considered through an investigation of cultural and demographic differences. For instance, in what respects are men and women similar or different in their happiness? Personality patterns are also reviewed. It is clear that certain continuing traits are linked to people’s happiness, and that both traits and associated happiness arise in part from a person’s genetic makeup.

Separate consideration of environment-centered and person-centered themes leads naturally to what has been labeled “person–environment fit.” It is shown in several chapters that happiness or unhappiness in response to an environmental input depends crucially on the personal salience of that input—how much the feature matters to a particular person. Linked to that, broad happiness differences in terms of personality, gender and other attributes can be partly accounted for through variations in personal salience. One general perspective on salience is through the operation of “values,” which provide the basis for prioritizing some features over others. The exploration of work values thus becomes of central importance at the present stage of understanding in this area.

The final chapter contains the book’s fourth section, asking about the consequences of being happy or unhappy. Research into that issue is still limited. Although significant cross-sectional correlations with behavior are available, the underlying direction of causality is not always clear. Nevertheless, evidence is strong for the influence of happiness on several outcomes. Attention is directed here to job performance, certain mental and social processes, absence from work, and staff turnover.

The book has evolved over several years, and I am indebted to many people. Most generally, I thank the researchers in many countries who have laid the foundations for my own work. More locally, I am very grateful to colleagues in the Institute of Work Psychology at the University of Sheffield for their valued suggestions and helpful advice. Most particularly among those colleagues, my thanks go to Toby Wall for his continuing assistance in working through unresolved issues and clarifying conceptual ambiguities.

—Peter Warr

# 1

## The Principal Concepts

**T**his chapter introduces the two central concepts of the book. “Work” is commonly discussed in terms of paid employment, and that will be the main focus of the chapters which follow. “Happiness” has received centuries of attention from philosophers, poets, and other commentators. It is here viewed in terms that are primarily psychological, identifying three principal dimensions of people’s experience that need to be examined in organizations and in life as a whole. The framework developed in this first chapter is used throughout the book.

The book’s primary question is: Why are some people at work happier or unhappier than others? Among possible answers is one in terms of job titles. We might observe that people in jobs with a certain title tend to be more happy or less happy than others. Examining overall job satisfaction, Rose (2003) reported some British findings of that kind. The most satisfied individuals in national surveys worked, for instance, as gardeners, hairdressers, or care assistants. On the other hand, job dissatisfaction was greatest among, for example, bus drivers, postal workers, and assembly-line workers. In another British survey, chefs and members of the clergy emerged as among the most happy, with architects and secretaries scoring particularly poorly (City and Guilds Institute, 2005). Across seven national studies in the United States, most satisfied with their job were managers and administrators, and least satisfied were machine operators and laborers (Weaver, 1980).



However, findings from this kind of investigation depend in part on which measure of happiness is applied; as is elaborated later, satisfaction is only one of several indicators of happiness. Furthermore, the content of different people's job can vary markedly within the same title; a single average score for a job title as a whole can conceal wide diversity between job holders in their activities and experiences. Linked to that, results can depend on how broadly or narrowly a job category is defined. And in practical terms, the number of individuals in a research subsample with the same job title has sometimes been very small, perhaps less than 20, so that average scores as published can be unreliable estimates of general values.

However, the major limitation of statements about happiness linked to job titles is that they are unable to provide much by way of explanation. Even if we found reliable large-sample differences in average happiness between the holders of jobs with different titles, we would lack an understanding of their cause. What is it about jobs with a particular title that affects the happiness of those who work in them? To answer the book's question more informatively, we need to identify the factors that are important for any job title. By specifying key features of a work role that are linked in general to happiness or unhappiness (such as the nature of task demands, social contact, and so on), we can better understand any one job in relation to others. Happiness is expected to be greater if those desirable features are present, whatever job title is being considered.

A second answer to the book's question (beyond an account in terms of job title) is thus along these lines: People at work are happier if their jobs contain features that are generally desirable. However, this can only be partly accurate. Individuals are not all happy or unhappy to the same degree, even if their jobs have the same characteristics. There is something about people themselves that influences their happiness, not necessarily connected with their current environment. We need also to look at aspects of job holders as well as at the content of their jobs.

Therefore, a more comprehensive answer might be: People at work are happier if their jobs contain features that are generally desirable and if their own characteristics and mental processes encourage the presence of happiness. An answer of that kind is developed in this book.

In addition to paid work itself, other employment-related roles are here placed within a common framework. The environmental and personal factors that bear on job holders' happiness or unhappiness are also present to varying degrees in retirement and unemployment, and

investigations into those two roles are also examined. Furthermore, the identified factors are important beyond a formal employment relationship, so that much of the book's content is applicable to activities across a life space as a whole.

## WORK AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The term *work* is used in many different ways. The printout of its entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* runs to nearly 50 pages. Meanings set out there include "what a person has to do; occupation, employment, business, task, function," "action involving effort or exertion directed to a definite end, especially as a means of gaining one's livelihood; labor, toil," and "a particular act or piece of labor; a task, job."

The concept is of course wider than merely paid employment, also taking in many other activities. Examples include housework, voluntary work, schoolwork, repair and decorating ("do-it-yourself") work, and a large number of activities not explicitly identified through their titles as work. In its essence, work is an activity with a purpose beyond enjoyment of the activity itself. It can be arduous and/or tedious, involving effort and persistence beyond the point at which it is pleasurable. The term connotes difficulty and a need to labor or exert oneself against the environment; the objective is to achieve something that is physically and/or psychologically difficult. Linked to that, there is often a suggestion that work is obligatory, being required in some way; it is seen as an unavoidable aspect of living. Barringer's (2005) summary is that work is "quintessentially performative; an expressive act of doing or making; the purposeful exercise of body or mind; the overcoming of obstacles with a particular end in sight" (p. 26). In broad terms, it is also a precondition of existence, being essential for continued living.

Work is often seen as an undesirable burden. In the Bible's Book of Genesis, it was presented as the "wages of sin," such that it was only through labor ("in the sweat of thy face") "shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). In medieval times, work almost always involved hard physical labor, with obvious potential for exhaustion and bodily damage. Adam Smith (1723–1790) observed that repetitive work leads to people becoming "as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human being to become." By Victorian times, mechanization had taken over some of the load, but also added to pressures through the industrialization and intensification of production and the increased competition brought about by improved transportation.

In the 1960s and 1970s workforces were said to be substantially “alienated” from their jobs, and debilitating occupational stress has since then allegedly become widespread in certain countries. Some painful themes were described by Terkel (1972): “This book, being about work, is by its very nature about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is, above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations. To survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us” (p. xi). In a historical review, Thomas (1999) emphasized “the inescapable fact that, through the centuries, the lot of most of the human race has been hard toil for small reward” (p. xviii).

Yet work has long been recognized as desirable as well as a struggle. Denis Diderot (1713–1784) incorporated this ambivalence in his definition: “the daily occupation to which man is condemned by his need, and to which at the same time he owes his health, his subsistence, his peace of mind, his good sense and perhaps his virtue.” George Berkeley (1658–1753) concluded that “there can be no such thing as a happy life without labor”; and for Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) “work is good; it is truly a motive for life.” Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) saw work as one of two important foundations of psychological health (the other being love); and for Noel Coward (1899–1973) “work is much more fun than fun.” Thomas (1999) noted that work “absorbs our energies and preoccupies our thoughts. It involves us in close relations with other people and gives us our sense of identity. It provides us with the means of subsistence, and it makes possible all the pleasures and achievements of civilization” (p. v).

Linked to those and other positive views, individuals who are unemployed (“out of work”) overwhelmingly want to gain a job. Surveys have repeatedly indicated that most people would continue in a job even if they won a large sum of money, and that employed people generally report feeling positively about their work. For example, between 70% and 90% of workers in a wide range of countries say that they are satisfied with their job (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000; Weaver, 1980). (Precise conclusions depend on where the threshold is set for “satisfaction.”) Examining workers’ experiences through reports obtained on several occasions in the course of a day, Miner, Glomb, and Hulin (2005) found that positive job events occurred about four times as frequently as negative ones. Terkel (1972) continued the account excerpted earlier to recognize the favorable as well as

the negative features of work: "It is about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. Perhaps immortality, too, is part of the quest. To be remembered was the wish, spoken and unspoken, of the heroes and heroines of this book" (p. xi).

The fact that work has both negative and positive aspects has been central to discussion over the centuries. Martin Luther's (1483–1546) religious perspective included the view that people should diligently pursue the "calling" into which they had been born: "The human being is created to work as the bird is created to fly." Luther believed that God valued good work of any kind, including that which is hard and punishing: "Your work is a very sacred matter. God delights in it, and through it wants to bestow His blessing on you." John Calvin (1509–1564) emphasized that everyone, including the rich, must work, because that is the will of God and work is the way through which He is to be glorified. Calvin argued that potential gains should not be desired in terms of personal wealth; instead, hard work should be valued for its own sake, it was a duty, and it provided its own reward.

These ideas fed into the development of Protestantism, with its "emphasis on the moral duty of untiring activity, on work as an end in itself, on the evils of luxury and extravagance, on the necessity for foresight and thrift, and on the beneficial effects of moderation, self-discipline, and rational calculation" (Applebaum, 1992, p. 331). However, the unpleasantness of much work could not be ignored, and negative as well as positive emphases were retained in Victorian commentators' accounts of what were sometimes described as "instrumental" versus "expressive" features. In the former case, struggle through labor was recognized as necessary in order to meet the needs of individuals and society. However, in "expressive" terms, work could bring out the goodness in a person. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) wrote, "There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work," such that "a man perfects himself by working." For John Ruskin (1819–1900), work was the process through which human identity is formed. Embedded within these forms of Protestantism "was the notion that work tests, and displays, the moral fibre of the individual, by which he can earn a place for himself, not only on earth but also thereafter" (Barringer, 2005, p. 29).

Work, unpleasant or pleasant, is undoubtedly of great importance to us, with or without any religious connotations. As with other important aspects of life, it has been the target of humor as well as of serious observation. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) described it as "the

curse of the drinking classes,” inverting a traditional view of alcohol as the curse of the working classes, and the opinion of Alfred Polgar (1873–1955) was that “work is what you do so that some time you won’t have to do it any more.” Referring particularly to paid work in large organizations, Northcote Parkinson (1909–1993) proposed “Parkinson’s Law,” that “work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion,” and Laurence Peter (1919–1990) offered the “Peter Principle,” that “work is accomplished by those employees who have not yet reached their level of incompetence.”

The majority of adults spend much of their life in paid employment (“at work” or “working”), and that expenditure of time and effort is essential to earn money for oneself and one’s family. The personal value of work comes partly from the demands and opportunities inherent in a work role, exposing a person to goals, challenges, situations, and people not otherwise present in his or her life, but its importance derives also from consequences and indirect effects. For example, money from a job can purchase pleasures and access to other pleasures that themselves have no direct link to their origins in a person’s employment. Jobs also place people in different locations in society, exposing them to particular values, norms, and pressures. For example, the leisure activities and social networks of many professional employees are quite unlike those of many manual workers. Similarly, long-term unemployed people live their lives and interact with society in ways that contrast sharply with the activities and experiences of people in stable employment.

Jobs are thus a primary reflection, and also cause and effect, of a person’s place in society. They strongly influence the nature and quality of other environments to which a person is exposed, and factors operative in those correlated nonjob environments have effects far from their partial source in paid employment.

Paid employment is often identified as either full-time or part-time, in the first case taking an average of between 35 and 45 hours per week. Traveling to and from a place of full-time employment typically adds several hours per week, with jobs in large cities often requiring considerably more travel time (e.g., Williams, 2004). Part-time jobs of course vary in their duration, but 30 or 35 hours per week is often taken as their upper limit for statistical and survey purposes.

Recent years have seen changes in the content of jobs. For instance, expansion has occurred in technical, professional, and managerial work. That shift is particularly marked in larger organizations, and is commonly attributed to greater use of technology, more complex

working processes, more international competition and transfer of knowledge, and an increased emphasis on customer requirements. At the same time, there has been a general trend away from agriculture and production industries into service work. Developed countries have lost many jobs in farming, textiles, iron and steel, mining, and the wood industry. The principal growth sectors in those countries have been health and social work, business services, hotels and restaurants, education, and recreational services. Most developed countries now have approximately three-quarters of their jobs in service sectors.

## PERSPECTIVES ON HAPPINESS

The words *happiness* and *unhappiness* are avoided by most academic psychologists in their professional life. Instead, they have often used terms that are less widely familiar, such as *affect* or *well-being*. In addition, much of psychologists' thinking and empirical research exhibits a general bias in favor of negative states, such as anxiety, depression, or strain. Myers and Diener (1995) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) recorded negative and positive emphases in recent research studies in the ratio of 17 to 1 and 15 to 1, respectively. Examining reported correlates of job satisfaction, Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and de Chermont (2003) found that previous investigators had examined negative job attributes more than twice as often as positive attributes.

The use of happiness as an organizing construct, rather than affect, well-being, or similar notions, has four principal advantages. First, people are fascinated by the presence or absence of happiness, recognizing a strong personal relevance and wishing better to understand the experience. Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon, and Diener (2005) reported from a survey of college students in 47 countries that happiness was overwhelmingly rated as the most important of all personal values, above wealth, health, love, and similar others. Citizens' "inalienable right" to "the pursuit of happiness" has been affirmed in political documents in the United States since the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This enduring personal and political interest means that research into people in organizations and other settings is likely to have greater impact on the wider population if it is framed in terms of happiness or unhappiness, rather than through the more technical concepts that are usual in the academic world.

Second, apparently diverse variables can be brought together within a single framework. Happiness and unhappiness include many subordinate constructs, whose interrelationships can be more clearly

identified and analyzed as members of a single conceptual structure. Third, philosophical examination of happiness has pointed to themes that so far have remained largely outside psychologists' research and conceptualization. Those need to be incorporated in a more comprehensive account than is traditional, in order better to understand a construct that has so far been examined in too narrow a manner.

A fourth reason for using the term *happiness* in scientific research derives from its connotative rather than denotative meaning. The latter (a question of literal, representational, or dictionary meaning) is considered shortly. The connotative meaning of a term concerns its implied associations based on personal and sociocultural interpretations. These color a literal (denotative) meaning with emotional and value-laden possibilities.

Most terms employed by psychologists in this area have connotative meanings that tend to be either negative or passive. Thus, *strain* is a concept with clearly unpleasant connotations, and *well-being* tends to imply in many cases a sense of positivity that is desirable but inert. On the other hand, the connotative meaning of *happiness* emphasizes associations that are more active and energy-related. Not only are such implied themes essential to the concept, but they can also be important in scientific understanding of the experience and its consequences.

The term's denotative meaning derives in part from the Middle English *hap*, meaning "chance" or "luck," as also in *happenstance*, *perhaps*, *hapless*, and *mishap*. (A character in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* [c1592] believes that his life would have been better "had not our hap been bad," and elsewhere Shakespeare used "haply" to mean "by chance" and "good hap" as "good luck.") Current usage has moved away from that emphasis on fortunate events outside the self. Although the word's present meaning can include an element of chance, it rarely concerns something that is exclusively a matter of happenstance. Indeed, Western thinking is now likely to emphasize a person's own activities that may create happiness; in very broad terms, happiness may be described as a positive state that people seek. For that denotation, the *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests "the state of pleasurable content of mind, which results from success or the attainment of what is considered good."

## Two Aspects of Happiness

Philosophical examinations of the concept have drawn attention to several uncertainties and ambiguities (e.g., den Uyl & Machan, 1983).

A commonly made philosophical distinction has been between accounts that are either subjective (experienced by a person himself or herself) or somehow independent of that person. Subjective forms of high or low happiness include the experience of pleasure or pain, and some theories (often labeled as “hedonism”) assert that happiness should be viewed entirely in those terms; being happy would then be described as a preponderance of positive feelings over negative ones.

Related terms within hedonic perspectives include delight, elation, exhilaration, joy, contentment, comfort, satisfaction, serenity, and bliss. Pleasurable experiences of that type involve positive feelings of some kind, and are here termed “happiness as well-being.” Subjective well-being was considered by Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999) to be “a broad category of phenomena that includes people’s emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction” (p. 277). The term “refers to people’s evaluations of their lives” (Diener & Lucas, 1999, p. 213). It was described by Røysamb, Tambs, Reichborn-Kjennerud, Neale, and Harris (2003) as “a general tendency to hold a positive life view” (p. 1143). For Keyes (2002), “Subjective well-being is individuals’ perceptions and evaluations of their own lives in terms of their affective states and their psychological and social functioning” (p. 208). Differences between more activated and less activated forms of well-being are considered in chapter 2.

However, philosophers’ consideration of happiness has suggested that happiness can be more than evaluations in terms of pleasure (e.g., Arneson, 1999). Some accounts argue that certain features independent of a person should be treated as constituents of happiness irrespective of a person’s feelings. For example, Parfit (1984) identified themes that could be viewed as (“objective”) elements of a particular person’s happiness whether or not he or she felt them to be positive. Parfit noted (without selecting from among them) that less subjective elements of happiness “might include moral goodness, rational activity, the development of one’s abilities, having children and being a good parent, knowledge, and the awareness of true beauty” (p. 499). In those terms, a person can be said to be happy, even if he or she does not experience positive feelings at the time. Although happiness is often a question of hedonic experience, “objective” philosophical accounts suggest that it can also occur without personal enjoyment.

This second form of happiness is thus conceptually distinct from pleasure. It often relates to standards that can exist independently of a person, addressing the notion that some actions or personal states



are more fitting or appropriate than others (Veenhoven, 1984). This idea has been explored by many writers, using different labels and with different aims, but it remains difficult to characterize in a precise manner. Constituent themes include a sense that one is using well one's attributes, is fulfilling oneself, is exploiting one's potential, is truly alive, is fully functioning, is enacting central human functions, is self-affirming, or that one somehow means something. Other themes are a sense of wholeness, self-realization, being authentic (as one "should be"), experiencing one's true nature, being true to oneself, or acting in some respect that is harmonious or morally desirable. Self-transcendence, going beyond one's everyday self, has also been cited. This second notion is here labeled "happiness as self-validation."

Ideas about this form of happiness have roots in the writing of early Greek philosophers. Much-discussed in that and later literature is "eudaimonia," in particular as articulated by Aristotle (384–322 BC). Although often translated as "happiness," Aristotle's account of eudaimonia was not a primarily hedonistic one, and an alternative translation is "human flourishing" (Cooper, 1975). His concern was for the attainment of one's true self, a fulfilled life, the proper functioning of a human being (e.g., Hughes, 2001). He viewed happiness (with an emphasis on long-term state, rather than short-term feelings) as based on virtuous behavior in seeking the greatest fulfilment in living of which a person is capable. In Aristotle's framework, virtue particularly arose through contemplation about relationships with other members of society. Eudaimonia thus derived from thoughts or actions that are appropriate, worthwhile, or fitting in relation to one's community. It was viewed in terms of personal attainments in respect of valued standards or obligations, not merely as experienced pleasure.

A happy person in Aristotle's model was one who has achieved what is worth desiring (or is fit to be desired), rather than one who has merely gained what it is that he or she desired (Telfer, 1980). Eudaimonia was thought to come from the gratification of only some desires, those that are appropriate or fitting, not from the gratification of any desire. In that framework, happiness as well-being may sometimes be a consequence of eudaimonia, but the two are conceptually distinct.

A similar theme occurs in Buddhist perspectives. Those associate true or genuine happiness with a sense of personal meaning and inner peace. That form of happiness is considered to derive from the cultivation of appropriate attitudes and from individual and interpersonal activities based on central human values (e.g., Dalai Lama & Cutler,

2003). By training oneself to emphasize tolerance, compassion, and harmony with one's context, a person may experience positive states of inner peace that are independent of pleasure in a hedonic sense. Buddhism argues that pleasure resulting from the achievement of goals cannot deliver true happiness. It describes how an "enlightened" person emphasizes the current potentialities of any situation, the interfusion of all things, and the uniqueness of the moment. Experiences in those respects may yield true contentment, whereas that positive state is not considered attainable through goal-related pleasure (Gaskins, 1999).

Happiness as self-validation thus invokes some standards of appropriateness or rightness. In some cases, a standard of worth is defined in terms external to the individual, perhaps based on a developed religious or ethical doctrine, being "objective" in the sense introduced above. Other standards arise from a person's own view of what is fitting for him or her, for example, in terms of a personal ideology, core values, or a vague awareness of "being how I should be." External and internal standards overlap with each other in several ways. For example, standards of worth that were initially independent of the person may become internalized, also providing benchmarks of a personally valued kind.

Associated with the conceptual separation between well-being and self-validation, happiness of the second kind may or may not be accompanied by experienced pleasure. In some cases, the two might be in opposition to each other. For example, altruistic behavior may be experienced as unpleasant, requiring unselfish activities that are unwanted but also contribute to a sense of personal validation through consistency with valued standards. Behaving in a way deemed to be fitting or morally desirable, a person may forego pleasures that would otherwise be attainable or perhaps enter situations that are threatening to the self; high self-validation is then accompanied by lower pleasure or even pain. In other cases, a person may be unsure about one or the other element. "I don't know whether I'm happy or not, but I've made the best of what I've got" or "I'm not really enjoying myself, but I wanted to make a contribution."

Both forms of happiness may be considered as short-term or long-term states. For example, subjective well-being may be examined in a single, short episode, perhaps as an immediate reaction to an input from the environment. Alternatively, one might ask about the nature of a happy life or about happiness across some other extended period of time.

The importance of self-validation as an aspect of happiness is particularly clear in long-term perspectives. Much philosophical discussion concerns an entire life, rather than examining current happiness in a short episode (which has tended to be psychologists' interest). For example, long-term retrospective appraisals (e.g., "has my life been a happy one?") do of course invoke happiness as well-being (avoidance of pain and a generally pleasurable existence), but issues of self-fulfilment are often also included. That is also seen in long-term anticipation of the future. For instance, in wishing a newborn child "a happy life," the hope is usually more than merely for pleasure and the absence of pain, although those are of course important (McFall, 1982).

Happiness as self-validation thus requires an evaluative conception of human life—the assertion that certain activities or experiences are in some way more appropriate than others. "These normative notions are not easily understood or operationalized" (Tiberius, 2004, p. 303), both for conceptual reasons and because of the difficulty of empirically tapping into complex mental processes. Psychologists' approaches to measurement are illustrated in chapter 2. Note that those have rarely used the term *self-validation*. That is adopted here as a broad descriptor to encompass many specific accounts of overlapping constructs; those have themselves been labeled in many different ways.

## Multiple Experiences of Happiness

Happiness may thus be viewed as an overarching concept with two principal aspects, well-being and self-validation. However, almost all research by psychologists inside or outside organizations has examined only the first of those, with very little attention to what is here termed self-validation. In part, this arises from the elusiveness of the second form of happiness and the difficulty of its definition and operationalization; verbal specifications tend to be abstract, and measures have usually been indirect and not always convincing.

In addition, there may be a hierarchical or sequential element in the two experiences, such that self-validation matters less to people lower down the experiential hierarchy or earlier in the sequence. Unless a person has achieved a certain level of well-being, avoiding substantial unhappiness of the first kind, self-validation may be of little personal concern (e.g., McGregor & Little, 1998). Many people are persistently occupied in seeking an acceptable level of pleasure or escaping from displeasure, and the first form of happiness may take priority for them.

For harassed people in difficult situations, the notion of happiness as self-validation may seem irrelevant.

The possibility of a hierarchy within happiness was central to Maslow's (e.g., 1968) account. He identified five classes of basic need, labeled as physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Earlier needs in that list were viewed as prepotent, being personally most significant until they became satisfied to some acceptable degree; only then did the higher ones (including aspects of what is here termed self-validation) come into play. The higher order needs were taken to be particularly important, but only after the others had been satisfied; before that, they were thought to be of limited impact. Such a possibility appears immediately plausible, although empirical research has been unable to confirm detailed predictions.

As noted earlier, a particular level of hedonic happiness can occur in conjunction with either high or low self-validation—or without a sense of self-validation at all. Similarly, high self-validation may or may not be accompanied by pleasure. Overall, however, self-validation seems more likely to be accompanied or followed by high (rather than low) well-being. That is because self-validating activity can itself give rise to well-being (you feel pleased because you have met a standard of worth), and/or because experiences of self-validation and well-being can both arise from the same activity.

A moderate positive association is thus expected in general between the two forms of happiness, with relatively stronger or weaker links occurring in particular situations. That association has been recorded by several investigators, although the measurement of self-validation has sometimes been uncertain. Measures of the two kinds of happiness (differing between the studies) examined by Sheldon, and Kasser (1995), Rothbard (2001), and Keyes, Schmotkin, and Ryff (2002) were intercorrelated on average by factors of +0.25, +0.33, and +0.34, respectively. Examining the statistical structure of self-report questionnaires in community samples, Compton, Smith, Cornish, and Qualls (1996) and Keyes et al. (2002) both found that indicators illustrating the two forms of happiness emerged as separate but partially overlapping factors. Quinn (2005) recorded experiences of "flow" in particular work situations (a specific form of self-validation; see chap. 2). Flow and enjoyment of a situation (here an example of happiness as well-being) were overall positively intercorrelated to a moderate degree.

Those findings illustrate that a person can have different experiences of happiness at about the same time. At any moment, a process

of selective mental attention leads to concentration on a particular theme, both in response to conscious direction and in reaction to environmental and other internal stimuli. Subsequent switches of attention lead to possibly different experiences, without necessarily negating the previous ones. For example, short-term happiness in a particular setting may contrast with a person's more extended level or experience in a different setting, but that short-term state does not itself deny the reality of other states. This phenomenological diversity is difficult to capture in empirical research. Although people have available for attention a wide variety of happiness-related experiences, only one can be conscious at any moment.

The important point at this stage is that any measure that is taken of happiness does not exclude the potential presence of different experiences; it is inevitably selective. Variability between several forms of happiness is of course constrained by their conceptual interdependence and their common sources in the environment and the person, but some differences in causes and consequences are to be expected. Research thus has to select certain processes for emphasis, recognizing that others have been excluded from consideration. A particular index provides only partial information about a person's happiness.

## CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Chapter 2 examines in more detail the nature and measurement of well-being and self-validation. As illustrated earlier, happiness varies in its scope, and degrees of abstractness are here treated at three levels, identified as "context-free," "domain-specific," and "facet-specific." In the first case, we are concerned with an overall evaluation of life as a whole; domain-specific happiness involves experiences related to one part of a life space, such as paid employment or the family; and facet-specific happiness is restricted to one aspect of a particular domain, such as income received (in the job domain) or relations with children (in the domain of family life).

Happiness as well-being has both affective and cognitive elements. Chapter 2 describes how those have different priority in different kinds of experience. With an affective emphasis we are particularly concerned with feelings and emotions, whereas more cognitive forms of happiness involve reflective judgments of, for instance, satisfaction. In both cases, subjective well-being is here viewed in terms of two principal dimensions—degree of psychological arousal or activation, and degree of pleasure. For example, high pleasure can be reflected

either in excited and energized well-being (with higher activation) or in terms of calm contentment or tranquility (with lower activation). Presenting pleasure and activation as orthogonal to each other, three axes of measurement are proposed in chapter 2, ranging from displeasure to pleasure, from anxiety to comfort, and from depression to enthusiasm. Subsequent chapters are organized around those three axes of subjective well-being.

Psychologists' measurement of that form of happiness is also covered in chapter 2, covering, for instance, life satisfaction, anxiety, depression, job satisfaction, job-related tension, burnout, and specific satisfactions with particular features of the environment. The measurement of self-validation is similarly reviewed in that chapter, examining a range of inventories about involvement in activities that are felt to be worthwhile, fitting, or that somehow meet standards beyond pleasure alone. Overlaps of happiness with related concepts, for example, emotion, strain, and mental health, are also examined.

In considering why some people are happier than others, the book is structured around perspectives that are either "environment-centered" or "person-centered." In the first case, studies of unhappiness or happiness have concentrated on possible influences from the settings in which a person is located, whereas person-centered perspectives have emphasized between-individual differences in demographic characteristics, personality, behavior, or ways of thinking.

An overall framework of environment-centered explanation is developed in chapters 4 to 8. Principal aspects of any environment are identified, and their relationships with different forms of happiness are reviewed. Addressing employment-related roles beyond merely a job, central themes are also considered (in chap. 3) in settings of unemployment or retirement from paid work. How does happiness or unhappiness vary between those settings, and what factors might influence their level in each?

The book argues against the idea that environmental features are related to happiness in a linear manner, such that a certain increment in an environmental characteristic is accompanied by a fixed increment in happiness at any level of that characteristic. Instead, the environment-happiness association is viewed as analogous to the relationship between vitamin intake and aspects of physical health. Vitamins are important for physical health up to but not beyond a certain level, after which there is no benefit from additional quantities. Furthermore, certain vitamins become harmful in very large quantities, so that in those cases the association between increased vitamin

intake and physical health becomes negative after a broad range of moderate amounts.

This analogy is presented in chapter 4, where a “vitamin” model envisages two classes of environmental input to happiness. In both cases, associations with happiness are treated as nonlinear, with their impact stabilizing across moderate levels. However, differences between the two kinds of input are proposed for very high amounts. In one case, a constant effect on happiness is expected across high input levels, and for other features a decrement in happiness is proposed at very high levels.

The identified “vitamins” are important in environments of any kind, for example unemployment and retirement as well as a paid job. Chapter 5 reviews the operation in job settings of six of the key features in jobs, those with an expected “constant effect” across high levels. Those are labeled as availability of money, physical security, valued social position, supportive supervision, career outlook, and equity. The six remaining characteristics in the vitamin framework are examined in chapters 6 and 7: opportunity for personal control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, and contact with others. In those “additional decrement” cases, very high levels of input are viewed as psychologically harmful, and the nonlinear expectation is for an inverted U pattern.

Environment-centered issues of a more general kind are examined in chapter 8. For example, possible combinations of different job features are reviewed, and methodological issues of measurement and causal interpretation are explored. Previous perspectives and empirical findings are then brought together to suggest a multiattribute account of environmental characteristics that range across bad and good jobs of all kinds. Including subcategories of those environmental characteristics (e.g., opportunity for new learning, or conflict between work and home), a rating procedure for profiling any job in terms of 26 happiness-related features is outlined. In that way, profiles may be constructed for the psychologically important features of current jobs or of anticipated jobs.

Chapters 3 to 8 together illustrate the substantial impact that environmental features have on unhappiness or happiness. However, their effects are not always uniform, and patterns vary between individuals. Themes of a person-centered kind are considered in chapters 9 to 13. First are processes of judgment that can intervene between an environmental input and the experience of happiness. Ten kinds of mental process that can vary between individuals and between situations are

introduced. Those involve mental comparisons with other people, with other situations and with other times, and also comparisons with an individual's own reference points such as personal salience, self-efficacy, and novelty or familiarity. Research into those judgments is reviewed in chapter 9. That chapter also examines studies of self-help exercises, which guide people to apply judgments of the kind outlined in seeking to enhance or maintain their level of happiness.

Chapter 10 explores differences between sets of people. For example, patterns of unhappiness or happiness in men and women and among younger and older workers are examined, as are similarities and differences between full-timers and part-timers and between more permanent and temporary staff. Other person-centered themes are explored in chapter 11, which reviews research findings about personality and happiness. The presentation is primarily organized in terms of the Big Five factors of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, but also covers, for instance, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, hardiness, core self-evaluations, and perfectionism.

In examining possible personality influences, chapter 11 draws attention to the overlap between several concepts that are widely applied in considering differences between people. It is shown that personality attributes are similar to values, interests, motives, and wants, in having a common focus on self-relevant evaluations. High or low scorers on inventories of each of those (however they are labeled) differ in the importance that they attach to particular targets. Chapter 12 explores how indicators of personal salience can moderate the association between environmental characteristics and happiness. Research from several areas is brought together to show that environmental features have a greater impact on unhappiness or happiness when they are of greater salience to an individual. Those themes are set within traditional perspectives on "person-environment fit" in chapter 13. Twelve types of occupational value are introduced there, which parallel the 12 environmental "vitamins" examined in earlier chapters. Those occupational values reflect differences in judgmental salience, as reviewed in previous chapters, and are proposed to moderate the impact of job characteristics on happiness, both at the individual level and between groups.

Chapter 14 reviews research into the consequences of unhappiness or happiness for people's behavior. Earlier chapters primarily concern the nature and the causes of those experiences, and this final chapter instead examines their possible effects. Evidence is brought together



about job performance, cognitive processes of perception, remembering and creativity, energy and persistence, interpersonal relationships, absence from work, and staff turnover. Particular attention is paid to possible directions of causality: from happiness to behavior, from behavior to happiness, in both directions, or due to the impact of additional variables. Significant associations are reviewed between the level of employees' well-being and, for instance, their job performance. Although a behavioral impact from happiness or unhappiness can be inferred, other causal influences are also considered.

These topics and research themes are of central importance to many areas of industrial-organizational, work, or occupational psychology. However, the book's concepts and theoretical frameworks are more widely applicable, in nonoccupational settings as well as in employment-related roles. Linked to that broad applicability, research findings from clinical and social psychology, and less often from sociology or economics, are incorporated throughout.

# 2

## Well-Being and Self-Validation

**H**ow can we specify and measure the forms of happiness introduced in chapter 1? Research has primarily examined happiness as well-being, and procedures are more established in that respect than for self-validation. In addition, the fact that happiness and unhappiness are strongly dependent on affective experiences suggests overlap with other feeling-based constructs, such as emotion, mood, or strain. Some similarities and differences will be considered later in this chapter.

### HAPPINESS AS WELL-BEING

Since the early days of psychology as a scientific discipline, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure has been identified as a fundamental dimension of conscious experience, often described in academic research as “psychological well-being” or “subjective well-being.” However, labeling variations have been common in this area. For instance, Ryff and her colleagues (e.g., Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997) used the term “subjective well-being” to refer to hedonic aspects of happiness (as here), but treated “psychological well-being” as a different concept, emphasizing instead what is here termed happiness as self-validation; their conceptualization is considered later. In contrast, “subjective” well-being and “psychological” well-being are treated as equivalent in the present

framework. For Cropanzano and Wright (1999, p. 253), Easterlin (2001, p. 465), Lyubomirsky (2001, p. 239), Seligman (2002, p. 261), and others, “well-being” was interchangeable with “happiness” as a whole, but in the present book well-being is examined as only one of two main components of the broader concept. Similarly, life satisfaction was said to “denote” overall happiness in Veenhoven’s (1984) framework, but that is only one component of well-being (itself one component of happiness) in the present book. It is clearly important to check each author’s definition of terms.

Two principal kinds of pleasurable feelings are suggested by dictionary definitions, which often refer to what Freedman (1978, pp. 30–31) described as “happiness as peace of mind and contentment” and “happiness as fun, excitement.” That general distinction was reflected in Hartman’s (1934) definition of happiness as a “state of well-being characterized by dominantly agreeable emotions ranging in value from mere contentment to positive felicity” (p. 202). In empirical research, this spread of feelings has sometimes been examined in terms of mental activation, in addition to the positive or negative direction of an experience. The framework set out in Figure 2.1 has been supported in many investigations (e.g., Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003; Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998; Reisenzein, 1994; Remington, Fabrigar, & Visser, 2000; Russell, 1980, 2003; Seo, Feldman Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004; van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000; Yik, Russell, & Feldman Barrett, 1999) that have pointed to the importance of two independent dimensions, labeled in Figure 2.1 as “pleasure” and “arousal.”

We may describe a person’s subjective well-being in terms of its location relative to those two dimensions (representing the content of feelings) and its distance from the midpoint of the figure (such that a more distant location indicates a greater intensity). A particular degree of displeasure or pleasure (the horizontal dimension) may be accompanied by low or high levels of mental arousal (the vertical dimension, sometimes described as ranging from “deactivation” to “activation”), and a particular quantity of mental arousal may be either pleasurable or unpleasurable to varying degrees. Experiences that can be viewed in terms of the two dimensions are illustrated around the outside of Figure 2.1. Those descriptors have slightly different meanings in different contexts, but broadly summarize possible combinations of pleasure and arousal. In general, subjective well-being is based more on a level of pleasure than on arousal (Feldman, 1995).

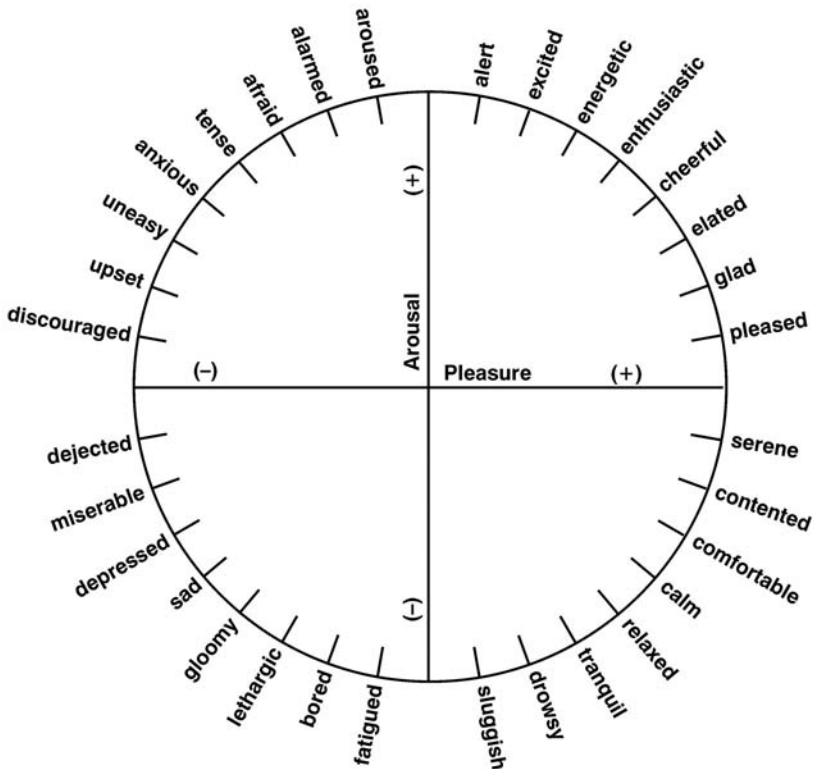


Figure 2.1. A two-dimensional view of subjective well-being.

### Axes of Subjective Well-Being

Within that framework, Figure 2.2 suggests three principal axes for the empirical measurement of this first form of happiness. In view of the central importance of displeasure or pleasure, the first axis is in terms of the horizontal dimension alone. The other two axes take account of mental arousal as well as pleasure, by running diagonally between opposite quadrants through the midpoint of the figure.

The two poles of the first (horizontal) axis reflect overall negative or positive experiences, from feeling bad to feeling good, without reference to a person's degree of psychological arousal. The second axis runs diagonally from anxiety to comfort. Feelings of anxiety combine low pleasure with high mental arousal, whereas comfort is illustrated as low-arousal pleasure. Employees in the lower right ("comfortable") quadrant have

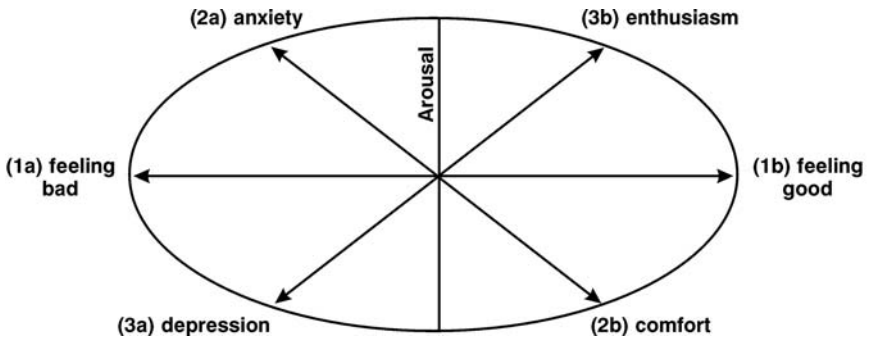


Figure 2.2. Three axes for the measurement of subjective well-being.

sometimes been described as having “resigned satisfaction” (Büssing, 1992; Grebner, Semmer, & Elfering, 2005); although they find acceptable their job or other situation, they have limited commitment, energy or aspirations.

Third is the axis from depression to enthusiasm. Feelings of depression and sadness (low pleasure and low mental arousal) are in the bottom left quadrant, and enthusiasm and positive feelings (being actively pleased) are at the top right. Those latter feelings are central to the model of “thriving” proposed by Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, and Grant (2005). This defines the positive state of thriving in terms of the joint experience of learning and vitality. “Vitality refers to the positive feelings of having energy available, reflecting feelings of aliveness” (p. 538). The notion of thriving is broader in some respects than subjective well-being, but is overlapping both in its nature and in some of its causes and consequences.

Note that although the dimensions of pleasure and arousal can be treated as orthogonal to each other, the three axes of well-being are expected to be intercorrelated through strong loadings on the core experience of pleasure. Self-reports on those measurement axes are indeed empirically associated with each other. For example, Warr (1990a) recorded a correlation of +0.66 between axes 2 and 3; similar values in other studies are cited throughout the book. The overarching involvement of pleasure suggested to Tellegen, Watson, and Clark (1999) that a hierarchical account might be appropriate. They envisaged activation-loaded states (on axes 2 and 3 of Fig. 2.2) to be accompanied by an overall, higher-level emphasis on feeling bad or feeling good (axis 1).

Despite the overlap between axes of subjective well-being, different associations exist with certain other variables. For example, a person’s

organizational level is linked in opposite ways with job-related anxiety and job-related depression. People in higher-level jobs report significantly *less* job-related depression than those in lower-level jobs, but also significantly *more* job-related anxiety (Mullarkey, Wall, Warr, Clegg, & Stride, 1999; Totterdell, Wall, Holman, Diamond, & Epitropaki, 2004; Warr, 1990a). This differential pattern of subjective well-being (both better and worse at higher organizational levels) may be interpreted in terms of the dimension of mental arousal; people in higher level positions experience greater arousal, on both the diagonal axes in Figure 2.2. Differences also exist in relation to certain job characteristics. For example, high job demands are more closely linked to unhappiness in terms of axis 2 (raised anxiety) than in terms of axis 3 (from depression to enthusiasm). Systematic differences also occur between people. For instance, women on average have significantly lower well-being than men on axes 2 and 3, but have similar average scores on the first axis. These and similar patterns are detailed throughout the book.

### **Environmental Threat or Deficit**

Although they are moderately intercorrelated, well-being axes 2 and 3 are likely to have different priorities with respect to either escape from danger or avoidance of deprivation. Low well-being in terms of anxiety (on axis 2) may arise more from a need to escape from or avoid threats and potential harm, whereas feelings of depression to enthusiasm (axis 3) might be more linked to a desire to move toward something that is wanted but currently lacking. This separation between the mental processes associated with either anxiety or depression has been explored by clinical psychologists more than by occupational researchers. It is extended here to examine different hedonic patterns associated with either low or high levels of specified job characteristics.

Feelings of anxiety and depression are highly intercorrelated in samples of both clinical patients and nonpatients (around +0.68 in research by Clark & Watson, 1991), but research has indicated that accompanying thought processes are partly distinct from each other. Anxiety-related thoughts primarily concern personal problems and threats, with perceptions of danger leading to aroused feelings of tension and fear and to increased autonomic activation. On the other hand, the thoughts of depressed individuals revolve more around loss and deprivation, triggering deactivated feelings of sadness, gloom, hopelessness, and physical weariness (Burns & Eidelson, 1998; Feldman, 1993).

Although many symptoms of anxiety and depression are not specific to only one of those conditions (reflecting the high empirical correlation between them), experienced anxiety is thus targeted mainly on thoughts of harm and danger, whereas depression is linked to cognitions of loss, deficit, and the absence of desired features (Clark, Beck, & Brown, 1989). In addition, anxiety is accompanied by raised psychological and psychosomatic arousal, toward the top of the vertical dimension in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, whereas depression involves low-arousal listlessness, at the bottom of those figures. The present concern is primarily with individuals who are not clinical patients, and those partly distinct reactions can also be envisaged in respect of job and other environmental characteristics. Consistent with observed links between perceived threat from the environment and feelings of anxiety (above), it may be that variation in the level of threat in the high range of a job feature (e.g., too many demands) is generally accompanied more by anxiety (i.e., low scores on well-being axis 2) than with depression (low well-being on axis 3). On the other hand, the absence of a desirable environmental feature (e.g., lack of an opportunity to use your skills) could be more linked to a low score on well-being axis 3 (from depression to enthusiasm) than on axis 2.

This possibility is supported by research in clinical populations in respect of “stressful life events.” For example, Finlay-Jones and Brown (1981) studied the recent life events reported by three groups of psychiatric patients—those diagnosed as suffering from depression, from anxiety, or from mixed depression and anxiety. In addition to the presence of several nondifferentiating events, severe loss in the previous 3 months (of people, resources, or envisaged possibilities) was particularly related to a diagnosis of depression, whereas a person’s perception of danger to the self was associated with the development of anxiety. Conversely, there was no association between perceived danger and the onset of depression, or between experienced loss and the development of anxiety. Similar findings with larger samples have been reported by Kendler, Hettema, Butera, Gardner, and Prescott (2003) and others, although several authors emphasize also the presence of inputs to negative affect that are nonspecific in those content terms. Those two different processes in job settings, either from the threat of harm or from the absence of what is desired, will be explored throughout chapters 5 to 7.

The presentation so far has mainly considered the absence or presence of an environmental feature. In addition, a person’s feelings are likely to be influenced by his or her movement relative to that feature

(Carver & Scheier, 1990, 1998; see also chap. 9). Consistent with the preceding argument, the two axes of well-being may be linked in different ways to movement toward or away from a target. Progress in getting closer to an absent desired feature is likely to be reflected primarily in increased well-being on axis 3 (a reduction in depression, moving toward activated positive feelings). On the other hand, success or failure in moving away from or reducing a harmful threat to the person is expected to show up mainly on axis 2 (from anxiety to comfort). "In this view, approach processes yield affective qualities of sadness or depression when progress is very poor; they yield such qualities as eagerness, happiness, or elation when progress is very high [i.e., along the present axis 3]. Avoidance processes yield anxiety or fear when progress is very poor; they yield relief, calmness, or contentment when progress is very high [here, along axis 2]" (Carver, 2003, p. 245, bracketed material added).

Unhappiness based on the presence of (or slow progress from) a negative, threatening feature may thus take the form of anxiety more than depression. On the other hand, unhappiness due to the absence of (or only slow progress toward) something desirable may be more a question of depression than anxiety. This possibility has rarely been considered in employment-related research, but it is examined throughout the book with respect to the well-being axes summarized in Figure 2.2.

### Three Levels of Scope

In addition to the dimensions of pleasure and arousal, subjective well-being also requires specification in terms of level or scope, the breadth of a life-space area to which feelings are directed. In general, a person who is happy in terms of subjective well-being is one who feels good about his or her life. However, his or her feelings might either have a broad focus or be more narrowly directed at a particular domain or part of that domain. We need to distinguish between experiences that have a comprehensive reference and those that are more limited in their scope.

How many different levels of scope should be addressed? Any decision about that is in part arbitrary, but a three-level approach is attractive. The broadest form of subjective well-being is in terms of life in general, overall and without restriction to a particular setting. Let us call that "context-free" well-being. Second, a medium-range focus is in terms of "domain-specific" well-being, directed at one segment of a



life space. Particular domains of well-being include one's job, family, health, leisure, or oneself (Diener et al., 1999; Headey, Holmström, & Wearing, 1984). Well-being that is job-related is the domain-specific form, which is of particular interest in this book. However, domain-specific well-being that is concerned with the self or with one's health will also receive attention. Third, we might examine "facet-specific" well-being, targeted at one particular aspect of a domain. For example, satisfaction with one's pay relates to a single facet within the job domain.

As expected from their conceptual overlap, experiences at the three levels of abstractness (context-free, domain-specific, and facet-specific) are empirically interrelated. For example, Rice, Frone, and McFarlin (1992) reported correlations between (context-free) life satisfaction and (domain-specific) satisfactions with job, family, and leisure that averaged +0.46. The meta-analysis by Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005) yielded average uncorrected correlations between job satisfaction and context-free anxiety of -0.35 and with context-free depression of -0.37.

Nevertheless, subjective well-being at different levels of scope is influenced in part by different factors. For example, job-related well-being is more responsive to conditions and activities in the domain of employment than other domains, and context-free well-being is also significantly influenced by health, family, and community factors (e.g., Warr, 1987). Very narrow forms of (facet-specific) well-being are by definition targeted on a single feature (e.g., satisfaction with one's income), and are expected to be particularly closely correlated with characteristics of that feature. All levels also reflect people's dispositional characteristics, with happiness being somewhat stable across time and between situations (e.g., Dormann & Zapf, 2001; Heller, Judge, & Watson, 2002) and being significantly related to aspects of personality. Aspects of dispositional consistency are examined in chapters 9 to 13.

Links between well-being that is context-free and the domain-specific form targeted on paid employment have sometimes been examined respectively in terms of life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Some overlap between those two levels of abstractness is in part logically necessary, because feelings about a job are themselves one component of wider life satisfaction. The review by Tait, Padgett, and Baldwin (1989) revealed an average uncorrected intercorrelation across 57 data sets of +0.35. In later research, life satisfaction and job satisfaction have been found to be intercorrelated, for instance, at +0.49 (Rice et al., 1992), +0.42 (average of two occasions; Judge & Watanabe, 1993),

+0.29 (Adams, King, & King, 1996), +0.43 (Tepper, 2000), +0.46 (average of two occasions; Heller et al., 2002), and +0.30 (Rode, 2004). Heller et al. (2002) also measured this association across a period of six months (average  $r = +0.44$ ) and with another person's assessment of a target individual's job satisfaction or life satisfaction (average  $r = +0.33$  both concurrently and across time).

Reports of strain (rather than satisfaction) were studied by Gallie, White, Cheng, and Tomlinson (1998); the correlation between job-related and context-free strain was +0.38. For overall job satisfaction and context-free distress, Moyle (1995) reported a correlation of -0.48, and Payne, Wall, Borrill, and Carter (1999) obtained a value of -0.36. Many similar correlations between happiness at the domain-specific and happiness at the context-free levels have been published (e.g., Faragher et al., 2005). Warr (1990a) asked about context-free well-being after the exclusion of paid work ("in your life outside your job"), rather than about a life space including a job. He reported an average correlation of +0.46 between employees' nonjob well-being and their well-being in a job.

Across a period of more than 2 years, Headey et al. (1984) observed that changes in several domain-specific satisfactions (with friends, marriage, leisure, job, etc.) were significantly associated with changes in context-free well-being. Judge and Watanabe's (1993) results suggested a pattern of mutual influence: The two levels of happiness affected each other. However, the effect from life satisfaction to job satisfaction was greater than in the opposite direction. A person's overall well-being thus has a significant impact on his or her job-specific well-being, and job well-being also affects wider happiness. The latter process was illustrated by Judge and Ilies (2004) in terms of employees' mood at home in the evenings after work. Evening mood was found to be significantly predicted by mood during the day's job activities and by job satisfaction assessed during those activities.

The existence of different levels of abstractness illustrates again that, despite some consistency between levels, a person may in different ways be happy or unhappy to varying degrees at about the same time. For example, several dissimilar feelings about different aspects of one's job may coexist within a single overall well-being at the context-free level. Similarly, domain-specific well-being with respect to oneself or one's health may be high despite low satisfaction with one's job. Research to date has tended to examine merely one index on its own, without placing that in a framework of concurrent happiness at the same or different levels of abstractness. Multiple experiences may

be evaluatively consistent with each other, but ambivalence can also occur, when a person is both happy and unhappy in different respects at about the same time.

### **Affective or Cognitive Emphases**

Another difference between aspects of happiness as well-being has been studied through a varying emphasis on either affective or cognitive reactions. Subjective well-being necessarily involves affective (feeling) states, but in addition has sometimes been examined as a more cognitive outcome, deriving from reflective appraisal of oneself and one's position beyond merely the experience of negative or positive feelings. Cognitive elements are clearly present in typical measures of satisfaction. For example, Pavot and Diener (1993) referred to life satisfaction as "a judgmental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives" (p. 164). In those terms, a person "weighs the good against the bad, and arrives at a judgment of overall satisfaction" (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996, p. 616). All experiences of happiness are likely to draw to some extent on recollections and interpretations of previous activities and feelings, but judgments of satisfaction (more reflective than direct measures of affect) are particularly likely to involve cognitive processes of that kind.

In research into well-being at the context-free level, the two kinds of indicator (of affect and satisfaction with one's life) have been found to be factorially separate from each other (e.g., Diener, 1994; Diener et al., 1999). Their discriminant validity at that context-free level has also been demonstrated by lower correlations between the two kinds of measure than within either affect or life satisfaction (Lucas et al., 1996). However, statistical separation between more affective and more cognitive well-being at the domain-specific level of abstractness (e.g., in relation to paid work) has rarely been investigated. In respect of satisfaction with one's job, some instruments emphasize reflective appraisals, whereas others more directly assess employees' feelings. The observed level of association between job affect and job satisfaction may be expected to depend on that relative emphasis in the particular measure of satisfaction that has been applied.

Niklas and Dormann (2005) obtained information on three occasions within 4 weeks about current job satisfaction recorded in either a more affective or a more reflective manner. The average correlation between those two kinds of satisfaction measure with different emphasis was +0.38. As expected, the affective measure (indicating

TABLE 2.1  
Six Types of Happiness as Well-Being, Based on Breadth of Scope and  
Relative Emphasis

	<i>Broad Scope: Context-Free Well-Being</i>		<i>Moderate Scope: Domain-Specific Well-Being</i>		<i>Narrow Scope: Facet-Specific Well-Being</i>	
	<i>More Affective Emphasis</i>	<i>More Cognitive Emphasis</i>	<i>More Affective Emphasis</i>	<i>More Cognitive Emphasis</i>	<i>More Affective Emphasis</i>	<i>More Cognitive Emphasis</i>
Example indicator	Global affect	Life satisfaction	Feelings about one's job	Job satisfaction	Feelings about work colleagues	Satisfaction with pay in one's job
Type of well-being	1	2	3	4	5	6

Note. Examples of indicators at the domain-specific and facet-specific levels here concern the domain of paid work. Similar instruments are available in other domains.

feelings in a situation) was much less stable between different occasions (average  $r = +0.38$ ) than was the more cognitive assessment of satisfaction (mean  $r = +0.89$ ).

An overview of subjective well-being in terms of levels of scope and the relative emphasis of assessment is presented in Table 2.1. In addition to the three suggested levels of abstractness introduced above (shown in the top row), each possibility is viewed as either more affective or more cognitive in emphasis, yielding six approaches to measurement. The suggested affective-cognitive separation is in practice not a dichotomy, since both processes are involved in any particular experience. In that way, although Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) emphasized affect in their definition of happiness as “the frequent experience of positive emotions over time” (p. 806, type 1 in Table 2.1), they considered life satisfaction (type 2) to be a “defensible proxy” (p. 822) for that affect-based construct.

Illustrative indicators are also included in Table 2.1, with alternatives labeled as well-being types 1 to 6. Consistent with the book's primary concern, the domain-specific and facet-specific illustrations concern job settings. Alternatively, with respect to, for instance, the domain of self, one might instead consider indicators of self-esteem, assessed primarily either in terms of negative or positive feelings about oneself (type 3) or in terms of more cognitive satisfaction with one's attributes (type 4).

## MEASURING HAPPINESS AS WELL-BEING

Procedures for the measurement of this first, hedonic form of happiness typically involve self-reports, such that individuals describe a relevant mental state. Overall scale scores (averages or totals) thus usually summarize responses across themes identified by an investigator. In addition to self-reports, some research has obtained assessments of a person's well-being by a knowledgeable observer such as a spouse or friend, revealing moderate associations between responses made by oneself and the other rater. For example, self-other correlations of context-free well-being were typically in excess of +0.40 in studies by Lucas et al. (1996), and averaged +0.44 in research by Judge and Locke (1993). This section illustrates measurement approaches for each of the six types of subjective well-being summarized in Table 2.1.

### Context-Free Well-Being

Global affect (an example of well-being type 1 in Table 2.1) is usually studied through scales whose items cover a range of positive and negative states. For example, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ; Goldberg & Williams, 1988) asks people whether they have recently been feeling unhappy, nervous, hopeful, and so on. The scale is internally reliable (e.g., Mullarkey et al., 1999), and responses are meaningfully correlated with a range of other variables. (High scores in this case indicate unhappiness rather than happiness.) A 12-item context-free scale described by Warr, Butcher, Robertson, and Callinan (2006) covers feelings that are similar to those in the GHQ. However, response options there are in terms of "some of the time," "most of the time," and so on, rather than asking about current feelings in comparison with usual feelings (e.g., "much more than usual"), as is the case with the General Health Questionnaire.

Other investigators of type 1 well-being have obtained separate reports of positive and negative feelings, for example, in the factors of psychological well-being and psychological distress (i.e., positive and negative respectively) of the Mental Health Index of Veit and Ware (1983). In the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) created by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), positive items include alert, proud and inspired, and negative affect is covered by upset, hostile, jittery and similar terms (20 in total). Respondents in different studies may be requested to use differing time frames—the present moment, today, the past week, and so on. Other instruments of this kind, yielding

separate positive and negative scores, include that by Kehr (2003). This indexed positive affect in terms of elation and activation, and negative affect as depression and energy deficit.

Note that the PANAS and similar scales tap only certain kinds of positive or negative affect—high-arousal feelings in the two upper segments of Figure 2.2 (e.g., Cropanzano et al., 2003; Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998). This restricted coverage was later recognized by Tellegen et al. (1999). They indicated that, “to avoid terminological ambiguity, we have renamed the two factors Positive Activation and Negative Activation respectively, and use the abbreviations PA and NA in reference to these new labels” (p. 298). However, this renaming has been widely ignored by subsequent researchers.

More extended coverage along axes 2 and 3 is provided by Warr’s (1990a) scales, whose content explicitly ranges from negative to positive. These scales cover dimensions from anxiety to comfort and from depression to enthusiasm. In their context-free application, they ask about the frequency with which people have in the past few weeks felt anxious, relaxed, and so on (for anxiety to comfort) and gloomy, enthusiastic, and so on (for depression to enthusiasm). Negative items are reverse scored, so that higher values always indicate greater happiness.

A general point should be made here about inappropriate conclusions that have sometimes been drawn from factor analyses of positively evaluated and negatively evaluated items. It has often been found that sets of items that cover both of the evaluative directions tend to yield evaluatively opposite statistical factors (e.g., Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lucas et al., 1996; Veit & Ware, 1983). Items are likely to cluster in groups restricted to either positive or negative content, and on that basis it has sometimes been inferred that positive and negative affect should be treated as distinct from each other, for instance, through separate measures. However, this statistical bifurcation appears to be largely artifactual, caused by procedural factors and error patterns in the responses submitted to analysis, rather than representing the construct of subjective well-being itself.

Of particular importance is between-person variation in acquiescence response bias, shifting all assessments toward “agree” irrespective of their evaluative meaning. Statistically controlling for this bias has been shown to remove the directional separation and reveal bipolar axes of the kind shown in Figure 2.2. For example, Russell (1979) indexed individuals’ agreement bias as the sum of all responses irrespective of item direction. Analyses that controlled for that tendency revealed an item structure of the expected form. Warr (1990a) summarized other earlier

studies demonstrating that impact. Once the biasing effects of agreement response style had been offset by statistically controlling for the number of items checked or the positivity of responses, patterns of correlations were found in several studies to support a bipolar structure. That was also the case in research by Sevastos, Smith, and Cordery (1992).

With respect to the present framework, summarized in Figure 2.2 (p. 22), Warr (1990a) showed that well-being items extending all the way along either axis 2 or axis 3 emerged as separate factors after control for agreement acquiescence in that manner. The expected factorial distinction between anxiety–comfort and depression–enthusiasm was also obtained by carrying out separate analyses of items that were either all positive or all negative. In those evaluatively consistent conditions (restricted to entirely positive or negative material), acquiescence response bias cannot pull apart items that are differently evaluated, and the separate content-based factors of well-being were found to be clearly present.

Schmitt and Stults (1985) demonstrated the impact of a related artifactual process. Focusing on unintentional agreement with negative items, they showed that statistical separation between negative and positive items can arise from careless responding by even a small minority of individuals. Schmitt and Stults examined through simulated data sets the tendency to agree with some negative items when one in fact disagrees with them. When only 10% of respondents were careless in that fashion, a clearly definable negative factor was generated regardless of the substantive meaning of the items. That type of response error was identified as consistent with agreement acquiescence (described earlier), as a person accepts a statement that he or she in fact finds unacceptable.

Spector, van Katwyk, Brannick, and Chen (1997) also drew attention to the effect on observed factor structure of response unreliability, particularly to negative items (Schriesheim, Eisenback, & Hill, 1991). They too concluded that separate negative and positive factors were “artifacts of wording direction” (p. 660). Spector and colleagues examined the distribution of responses across a negative-to-positive response continuum. They showed that, rather than agreeing with one and disagreeing with the other, individuals may disagree with extreme items near to both poles of a continuum, because extreme responses in either direction tend to be contrary to their own more moderate position. “The result is that extreme items at opposite ends of a continuum have quite skewed distributions, with few people agreeing with them. ... This produces low correlations between extreme items with opposite wording

direction and high correlations between items with the same wording direction" (pp. 673–674). Spector et al. (1997) confirmed that a two-factor, evaluatively separated structure emerged from that process by analyzing sets of simulated data that incorporated the response tendency. Similar arguments have been presented by van Schuur and Kiers (1994).

Bipolarity in positive and negative responses may be masked in other ways. For example, Green, Goldman, and Salovey (1993) considered several biases due to random and nonrandom response error, demonstrating in research with students that when those forms of error are taken into account, a largely bipolar structure is found. González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006) drew attention to another source of statistical separation, showing that the presence of two distinct factors depends on an assumption of linearity in the relationships between item responses. They examined aspects of job-related burnout (discussed later) in three samples of employees, analyzing responses by nonparametric Mokken scaling as well as through conventional principal component procedures. In each sample the conventional approach gave rise to factors that were, as usual, evaluatively either positive or negative. However, the nonparametric analyses, which do not assume linearity of correlations, produced response dimensions extending from negative to positive, for example from feelings of exhaustion to vigor.

Subjective well-being can thus appropriately be viewed in terms of bipolar continua that extend between evaluatively opposite extremes (as can almost every other concept examined by psychologists), despite the fact that separate factors tend to be found in conventional statistical examination. The apparent separation of negative and positive content arises from one or more processes of agreement acquiescence, unreliable or unintended responding, consistent disagreement with both directions of extreme item, and an assumption of linearity in the relation between responses. The construct of well-being has both negative and positive elements, but those are opposite evaluations on a single continuum, not separate components.

The other category of context-free well-being shown in Table 2.1 (labeled as type 2) has a more reflective, cognitive emphasis than the affective aspects considered so far. For example, life satisfaction is often measured through the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). This asks for broad-ranging assessments through five items like "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing." More complex mental processing is required in these cases than when indicating directly one's current feelings (for instance, in measures of type 1 in the



table). The Satisfaction with Life Scale has been shown to be reliable internally and across time, and to be significantly responsive to changes in life circumstances (e.g., Pavot & Diener, 1993).

### **Domain-Specific Well-Being**

Job-related affect (one form of domain-specific well-being, type 3 in Table 2.1) has sometimes been investigated in terms of job “burnout” (Maslach, 1982; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The principal component of this has been defined as emotional exhaustion, which “refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one’s emotional resources” (Maslach, 1998, p. 69). Conventional questionnaire items emphasize tension, strain, anxiety, and fatigue arising from one’s work activities, primarily but not exclusively covering well-being axis 2 (from anxiety to comfort). Job-related emotional exhaustion measured in this way was found to be correlated with overall job satisfaction (described later) on average at  $-0.26$  in the meta-analysis by Lee and Ashforth (1996).

Also within well-being type 3 of Table 2.1, the two diagonal axes of Figure 2.2 (from anxiety to comfort and from depression to enthusiasm) are covered by Warr’s (1990a) scales (discussed earlier) when those are applied specifically to work (“Thinking of the past few weeks, how much of the time has your job made you feel...?”). The Job Affect Scale (Brief, Burke, George, Robinson, & Webster, 1988; Burke, Brief, George, Roberson, & Webster, 1989) also covers the four quadrants of Figures 2.1 and 2.2, with items about positive and negative feelings at work in the previous week. For example, employees describe how often they have felt excited, relaxed, sluggish, and nervous. As described in the previous section, although evaluatively distinct factors are often found, it is appropriate to view well-being themes in bipolar rather than separated terms. The statistical contrast between positive and negative items is an artifact arising from processes of response and data analysis.

Most frequently measured in the area of this book has been job satisfaction (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981). Both affective and cognitive themes were incorporated in Locke’s (1969) definition of job satisfaction as a “pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job” (p. 317). Feelings were more stressed by Cranny, Smith, and Stone (1992), whose account was in terms of “an affective (that is, emotional) reaction to one’s job” (p. 1).

Measures in this area have either addressed overall satisfaction or been directed at satisfaction with individual facets of a job. Overall job

satisfaction has sometimes been examined through a single question (e.g., “all things considered, how satisfied are you with your job in general”), but more often through multiple items. Those may request overall evaluations, as in the scale devised by Brayfield and Rothe (1951). This asks for disagree or agree responses to statements like “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job” and “I find real enjoyment in my work.” Alternatively, separate items can cover specific job features. For example, the scale developed by Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979) asks about a person’s degree of satisfaction with 15 work themes (physical conditions, your fellow workers, the freedom to use your own judgment, and so on), and an overall score is taken. Twenty job features of that kind are covered in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Internal reliability of established scales of this kind is high; Bruk-Lee, Goh, Khoury, and Spector (2005) reported an average reliability coefficient from 13 scales of +0.87.

Job satisfaction is sometimes described in terms of a relative emphasis on “intrinsic” or “extrinsic” features. For example, the scale of Warr et al. (1979; described earlier) also yields scores of those two kinds, focusing either on satisfaction with job content (e.g., with amount of responsibility or personal freedom of action) or with features extrinsic to task activities such as one’s rate of pay. Those two forms of job satisfaction are significantly intercorrelated, for example, at +0.72 in the source publication. The correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction scores from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was reported to average +0.60 by Weiss et al. (1967). (Consistent responding to intermingled intrinsic and extrinsic items in a single questionnaire does of course enhance this observed overlap.)

Those and similar instruments obtain evaluations of job features that require some reflective consideration about one’s situation, falling within type 4 of Table 2.1 (with a more cognitive emphasis). A more affective measure of job satisfaction (type 3) was proposed by Kunin (1955). This presents outlines of faces that range in appearance from unhappiness to happiness, and respondents are asked to choose the one that best reflects their current feeling. The original instrument contained a set of 11 male faces, but later versions have varied both in faces’ number (five or more) and gender (Dunham & Herman, 1975). More recently, asexual “smiley” faces have been used.

Other domain-specific aspects of happiness, at the same level of scope as job-related well-being, include self-related well-being. This has been indexed, for instance, through Rosenberg’s (1965) scale of self-esteem, which includes items such as *I feel I’m as good a person as*

*anybody*. Self-related well-being measured in that way is significantly associated with a person's happiness at the context-free level. For example, the average correlation with life satisfaction was +0.57 in research by Lucas et al. (1996); Watson, Suls, and Haig (2002) presented correlations averaging  $-0.70$  with context-free depression and  $-0.43$  with context-free anxiety; the mean correlation between self-esteem and context-free negative affect was  $-0.31$  in research by Chen, Gully, and Eden (2004); in the studies reviewed by Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), the average correlation of self-esteem with a variety of indicators of context-free happiness was +0.60.

Correlations between self-esteem (here viewed primarily as well-being in the self domain) and subsequent life satisfaction and job satisfaction (2 months later) were +0.50 and +0.40, respectively, in separate studies by Judge, Bono, Erez, and Locke (2005). In a meta-analysis of cross-sectional research, an average uncorrected correlation of +0.35 with job satisfaction was reported by Faragher et al. (2005). Another established scale of self-esteem is by Coopersmith (1967). This overlaps strongly with Rosenberg's measure; for example, the intercorrelation was +0.78 in research by Watson et al. (2002).

### **Facet-Specific Well-Being**

Facet-specific well-being (illustrated as types 5 and 6 in Table 2.1 on p. 29) has been measured in many ways, with separate scales that focus on particular targets. For example, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) covers satisfaction with five aspects of a job (the work itself, pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision, and coworkers). Employees indicate whether or not, for instance, their supervisor is tactful, praises good work, and so on. Separate scores are computed for each facet.

Satisfaction with one of those factors, the work itself, is usually taken to represent "intrinsic" satisfaction (see earlier discussion). Scores of that kind are more closely associated with overall job satisfaction than are "extrinsic" facet satisfactions. For example, Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, and Paul (1989) reported a correlation of +0.78 between satisfaction with the work itself and overall job satisfaction; on the other hand, that intercorrelation for the other four JDI facet satisfactions averaged only +0.38. Based on that and other published investigations, Lapierre, Spector, and Leck (2005) computed average correlations between job-facet satisfactions and overall job

satisfaction. Those average levels were +0.72 for satisfaction with the work itself, +0.43 for coworker satisfaction, +0.42 for satisfaction with promotion opportunities, +0.40 for supervisor satisfaction, and +0.27 for pay satisfaction.

In the study by Taber and Alliger (1995), the correlation between overall job satisfaction and work-itself satisfaction was +0.59. Those researchers also examined feelings about the specific tasks undertaken in each person's job. Average rated enjoyment of those tasks (averaging 13 in a job) was correlated at +0.41 with an employee's satisfaction with the work itself and at +0.30 with overall job satisfaction. Published correlations between job-facet satisfactions and employees' life satisfaction were reviewed by Kinicki et al. (2002). Although the average correlation of life satisfaction with work-itself satisfaction was +0.27, that value for satisfaction with coworkers or with supervision was only +0.15 in each case.

Facet-specific well-being has also been examined in other domains. For example, the domain-specific concept of self-related well-being (described earlier) has sometimes been broken down into separate facets, such as social self-esteem or academic self-esteem. At that level of scope, Pierce and Gardner (2004) have focused on "organization-based self-esteem," defined as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (p. 593). They presented self-descriptive items to tap this facet-specific form of well-being.

In overview of this section about measurement, happiness as well-being has been studied at several levels of specificity and with an emphasis that is either more affective or more reflective. As illustrated in Table 2.1, it is convenient to think in terms of six overlapping forms of subjective well-being, and the measurement approaches outlined here cover all those possibilities. Although conventional statistical analyses have suggested that negative items might be treated as distinct from positive items, that apparent separation by evaluative content has been shown to arise artifactually from agreement biases and other sources of response error. It is preferable to treat subjective well-being as a bipolar construct extending from negative to positive, rather than in terms of two separately evaluated components.

Face validity and content validity of well-being scales are often very high, because items directly cover the topic of interest. Instruments' construct validity may be appraised in terms of factor structure and associations with relevant affective, behavioral, and environmental variables. Considerable information about validity in that sense is

presented in later chapters and in the many publications that are cited. As for criterion-related validity, associations might be examined with happiness-relevant cognitions and behaviors. Much supporting research of that kind is reviewed later, although it is not always clear on conceptual grounds what should serve as criteria in the validation of happiness measures.

In practice, issues of validity have rarely been explicitly addressed in this domain. Given the clear face validity of most measures, their conceptual closeness to happiness as a criterion, and their meaningful associations with other variables, instruments have been widely accepted as appropriate. However, in view of the many different measures that have been produced and the variations in perspective illustrated in Table 2.1, it would now be appropriate to investigate more systematically networks of overlapping happiness concepts and their measures. In particular, issues of convergent and discriminant validity deserve attention; how similar or different are measures in the scores they yield and in their associations with other variables?

## HAPPINESS AS SELFVALIDATION

Next, let us look at psychologists' examination of the second form of happiness. This has been interpreted in diverse ways, but a core theme (as outlined in chap. 1) is that happiness should not only be viewed in terms of pleasure. It also involves worthwhile activities or a realization of the self, somehow meeting a standard of fittingness in relation to what one should be. This second form of happiness is here referred to as "self-validation," although (as indicated in chap. 1) many different terms have been used in the research literature.

Self-validation involves feeling positive for reasons that are in some sense appropriate relative to certain standards. Some standards may be entirely personal to oneself, and others reflect external definitions of morality or religion (e.g., McFall, 1982). Conceptions of what is fitting may thus originate in part from social definitions of what is considered meaningful to people in a given society, so that the nature of appropriateness (and hence of self-validation) is in part specified by other people. Although a central core of valued human attributes and experiences is also involved, some variations may thus be expected between different societies or time periods. For example, a general difference between Western and Eastern cultures may be linked to a more collective (and less individualistic) emphasis in the East. Self-validation through meeting group obligations may thus be a more

significant form of happiness in some cultures than in others. This possibility is examined in chapter 10.

The second form of happiness has been examined by markedly fewer psychologists than have studied happiness as well-being. Researchers in this subfield have varied among themselves in the elements to be emphasized, and (as illustrated later) their measuring instruments reflect that divergence. Almost no research has examined self-validation in samples of job holders.

The construct here labeled as “self-validation” is central to Seligman’s (2002) notion of “authentic happiness.” He distinguished between a “pleasant life” and a “good life.” A pleasant life reflects the first form of happiness introduced earlier—positive states through the avoidance of pain and the experience of pleasure. However, authentic happiness (described as a life that is “good”) was considered to arise from the application of personal strengths and virtues. Seligman identified six principal virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, love and humanity, justice, temperance, and spirituality (later termed “transcendence”; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). These virtues embody standards independent of the person, inherent in the notion of self-validation.

Seligman explicitly disapproved of the narrowness of what he called “‘happiology’ or hedonics—the science of how we feel from moment to moment” (2002, p. 6). Furthermore, happiness “sometimes refers to feelings, but sometimes refers to activities in which nothing at all is felt” (Seligman, 2002, p. 261). That separation of happiness as well-being from other forms of happiness was further emphasized by Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005). In a study of people’s orientations (rather than their actual happiness), they suggested that being engaged in a valued activity (irrespective of current feelings of displeasure or pleasure) was itself one way of being happy.

That view has some similarity with the earlier arguments of Ferguson (1767/1966), who believed that happiness is not to be found in the satisfaction of desires but more in active engagement against adversity. “The mind, during the greater part of its existence, is employed in active exertions, not in merely attending to its own feelings of pleasure or pain” (p. 42). People seem most to be happy “when placed in the middle of difficulties, and obliged to employ the powers they possess” (p. 44). “The most animating occasions of human life are calls to danger and hardship, not invitations to safety and ease” (p. 45); happiness “is not the succession of mere animal pleasures...[and it is not] the state of repose” (p. 49). Instead,

Ferguson argued that happiness occurs within purposeful activity, whether that is experienced as pleasurable or painful.

Themes of that kind are present in the more recent concept of “thriving” in job settings, which has been emphasized by Spreitzer et al. (2005). This covers both a sense of vitality and the awareness of new learning and forward movement. The construct was presented as combining both hedonic and eudaimonic (see chap. 1) perspectives, emphasizing that individuals, in their role as employees as well as elsewhere, seek to realize their full potential as human beings. “Thriving focuses on the positive psychological experience of increased learning and vitality to develop oneself and grow at work” (p. 538).

McGregor and Little (1998) examined the second form of happiness in terms of personal “meaning.” Deriving from personal standards, that notion was viewed as “the extent to which participants appraise their personal projects as consistent with their values, commitments, and other important aspects of self-identity” (p. 496). “Meaning refers to feelings of connectedness, purpose, and growth” (p. 508). That theme was developed by King, Hicks, Krull, and Del Gaiso (2006) in terms of people’s experiences of meaning in life. “A life is meaningful when it is understood by the person living it to matter in some larger sense. Lives may be experienced as meaningful when they are felt to have significance beyond the trivial or momentary, to have purpose, or to have a coherence that transcends chaos” (p. 180).

Other psychologists have also focused on the characteristics of a person’s goals. For example, Sheldon and Kasser (1995) considered patterns of congruence, viewed as the degree to which goals are linked to each other and determined by the person himself or herself. Such “self-concordance” of goals was described by Sheldon and Elliott (1999) as “their consistency with the person’s developing interests and core values” (p. 482), arguing that their achievement does “not necessarily feel ‘good’ nor are they necessarily self-gratifying” (Sheldon & Elliott, 1999, p. 484). In longitudinal research with students, Sheldon and Houser-Marko (2001) found that the attainment of self-concordant goals of that kind was particularly beneficial for later personal adjustment and a sense of growth.

In these studies, standards of fittingness were self-set, in terms of people’s own aims and values; what is here described as “self-validation” was treated as the attainment of personally meaningful goals. Note that this particular view is individualistic and achievement-oriented, as are many other Western models of self-realization (Waterman, 1984). Alternative accounts of happiness as self-validation can of course be

more community-oriented, or linked to universal moral standards, or based on a belief in the value of contemplation or a willing acceptance of one's life condition. In that respect, Buddhism argues that hedonic happiness is ultimately unattainable, and that contentment should be sought through an openness to alternative perspectives and a recognition of the connectedness between all things.

From a Western perspective, self-determination was emphasized by Nix, Ryan, Manly, and Deci (1999). Undertaking salient, intrinsically motivated activities was said to yield "a special sense of being restorative or regenerative" (p. 267), together with a feeling of subjective vitality. The latter was construed by Ryan and Frederick (1997) as a positive feeling of aliveness, and was explicitly distinguished from hedonic happiness, although the two were viewed as sometimes intercorrelated. (See also the notion of "thriving," discussed earlier.) Waterman's (1993) perspective was in terms of "personal expressiveness," experienced when activities are characterized by intense involvement and a sense of special fit with what a person is meant to do. He argued that feelings of personal expressiveness were likely to derive from "self-realization through the fulfilment of personal potentials in the form of the development of one's skills and talents, the advancement of one's purposes in living, or both" (p. 679).

People's attainment of goals that are intrinsically important to them has sometimes been approached through themes of "psychological growth" or "self-actualization" (e.g., Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943; Schultz, 1977). For example, Maslow distinguished between "becoming" and "being." We were assumed to be in the process of moving toward our full potential, toward the actualization of what we might be. The state of self-actualization was described as an episode "in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable ways, and in which he [sic] is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes in these episodes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his Being, more fully human" (Maslow, 1968, p. 97). That broad conceptualization extends beyond what is meant here by happiness as self-validation, but it captures several central themes. Maslow's work was extremely popular in earlier decades, perhaps because many readers recognized the experiences he described, despite the fact that his accounts were diffuse and imprecise.



Herzberg's (1966) approach was similar, in terms of people's need "to realize the human potential for perfection" (p. 70). In particular, he emphasized the importance of attainments that are cognitive, arguing that people have strong needs to increase their knowledge, enhance understanding, and be creative. He pointed out that satisfaction of those needs is actively sought in jobs as well as elsewhere, but that attempts to overcome obstacles necessarily give rise from time to time to negative affect in the pursuit of personal growth.

Ryff (e.g., 1989) moved beyond happiness as pleasure to consider six additional dimensions of psychological functioning. Two of those are similar to themes considered earlier, identified as "personal growth" and "purpose in life." Personal growth was seen in terms of continued development, a sense that one's potential is being realized, and changes to oneself that reflect increasing self-knowledge. Purpose in life was taken to imply the presence of personal goals that contribute to a feeling that one's life is meaningful. In addition, Ryff explored four more dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance.

Self-reports on scales to assess these six themes are positively inter-correlated, and scores are located within a single higher-order factor. They are also significantly associated with parallel ratings of a target person made by knowledgeable other people, such as spouses (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997; mean  $r = +0.43$ ), and with measures of happiness as subjective well-being (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The constructs of personal growth and purpose in life would generally be accepted as falling within happiness as self-validation as treated here. However, the conceptual location of the other four themes is less certain. For instance, Ryan and Deci (2001, p. 147) pointed out that autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive interpersonal relations might better be viewed as features that foster happiness, rather than being defining attributes of that concept itself.

A common theme in characterizing self-validation is some involvement in activities that are important to the person. As pointed out earlier, perceived importance arises from external value standards as well as from consistency with one's own values and motives. A short-term form of consistency with personal motives has been emphasized by Csikszentmihalyi (e.g., 1997). He showed that many motivated activities yield a sense of "flow," in conditions where goals are clear and difficult, a person's skills match the level of challenge, and he or she is motivated to achieve success.