
CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONAL STRIVINGS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH LIFE SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the applicability of broader thematic categories for coding personal strivings, and tested the relationship between both dimensions and contents of personal goals and life satisfaction. We also applied the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1963) to evaluate personal goals. These issues were explored on a Hungarian youth sample of 48 subjects (mean age 23.4). Participants generated 534 personal strivings and rated them along certain dimensions of Strivings Assessment Scales (Emmons, 1986), and two life satisfaction measures were used. Goals were grouped into broader thematic categories.

For goal contents, coding system was used successfully. There were significant differences between avoidant and approach goals, between intrapersonal and interpersonal, and Eriksonian and non-Eriksonian goals on some strivings dimensions. The proportion of generativity strivings had positive, while the proportion of uncoded strivings (reflecting goals about daily routine) had negative association with life satisfaction. Our findings underscore the importance of using qualitative and quantitative mix method in analysing personal strivings.

KEYWORDS: *personal strivings, life satisfaction, Erikson's theory, generativity.*

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INTRODUCTION

Personal goals

During the 1980's, research on motivation in personality psychology focused on the context of everyday life and experience, and studies emerged with an aim to reveal idiographic personal goals (King & Emmons, 2000), such as *current concerns* (Klinger, 1977), *personal projects* (Little, 1983), *life-tasks* (Cantor, 1990), *personal strivings* (Emmons, 1986), *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1984), *future goals* (Nurmi, 1989), or *developmental task* (Heckhausen, 1999).

Goals are *cognitive representations of desired states* construed as either outcomes, events, or processes (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Elliot, 2006; Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007), working as a proximal determinant of behavior (Elliot, 2006). Therefore, goals have a mediating function between specific behaviours and motivational dispositions of behaviors (Elliot, 2006; Elliot & Sheldon, 1997). On the basis of this special role, they are regarded as standards or reference points playing an important role in guiding action (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Powers, 1973). Personal strivings serve as a motivational organizing principle and have a very important role in *self-regulation*. After setting the goals, successful accomplishment may depend on *implementation plans* (Gollwitzer, 1999). Implementation intentions are subordinate to goals and specify possible ways of goal attainment. Goal implementations as self-regulation strategies define when, where and how a goal can be reached, so they define specific responses to certain situations (Gollwitzer, 1999). If there are no implementation plans to accomplish a goal, the expectable success is minimal.

Goals reflect *choices*. Chosen goals reflect *meaning* making process of an individual, reflecting themes, activities, outcomes, processes that give meaning to life (Emmons, 2005). However, not all goals provide meaning or contribute to meaningful life. There are goals which are important for daily life, though they do not contribute to the sense that life is meaningful. We may hypothesize that higher proportion of these trivial goals in one's goal-system indicates lower well-being of the individual. Personal goals are not stable; they are expected to change throughout the *developmental phases* of an individual. A new developmental phase has new tasks, challenges and role constraints, thus personal goals must be restructured to help adjustment. In a prospective study of Salmela-Aro, Aunola, and Nurmi (2007) university students were followed through a 10-year period. During this period strivings related to education, friends and travelling were replaced by strivings related to work, family, and health. Young adulthood is a period when young people have to face new tasks. According to Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory the normative crisis of young adulthood is *intimacy* that is a search for meaningful (intimate) relations with others and a search for a life partner. Though intimacy is a main developmental issue in young adulthood, it has

been proved that strivings for intimacy are equally salient across the life span (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Originally though, the issue of *identity* was related to late adolescence, nowadays the border between adolescence and young adulthood is vague, and seeking for identity may be a prominent life task in young adulthood as well. *Generativity* strivings - the issue for the middle-aged phase of life -, are often manifested in caring about the next generation (Emmons, 2003). However, they often reflect a desire for symbolic immortality as well (Emmons, Cheung, & Tehrani 1998; Emmons, 2003), a desire to create self-defining or creative works, or to leave public legacies (McAdams & de St. Aubins, 1992). At last, in Erikson's theory, *ego integrity* is the main issue for the last phase of life, which frequently takes a form of ego-transcendence or spirituality.

These affect-driven cognitive goals are the results of the transaction between the self and the social environment (e.g., family, friends, media and culture) (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1984). On the other hand, goals determine the interaction with social environment, and socio-historical context also influences goals or the goals' contents (Kring, Bangerter, Gomez, & Grob, 2008).

Recently, Sheldon and Kasser (1995, 2001) have proposed the idea of considering goals as measures of *personality integration*. In their model relationships among goals and their relations to the organismic needs are analyzed. Personality and the goal system is congruent if strivings help each other or help higher level goals to be fulfilled, and the goal-system is congruent if a person chooses goals autonomously, and goals are in service of intrinsic higher level goals (such as personality growth, intimacy, community). Recently, Sheldon and his colleagues (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) have been using the term of self-concordant goals, reflecting self-determined (intrinsic and identified) motivation behind the selection of goals.

As a conclusion, if goals have an important role in self-regulation and adjustment to new developmental phases, and also they reflect personality integration, we may hypothesize that goals have an important role in our well-being as well.

Goal dimensions and well-being

Following the conceptualization of personal goals, participants were asked to rate them on several dimensions (see below in method, measures section). Most of the dimensions applied (such as value, expectancy of success, commitment, instrumentality) are based on motivation studies (Emmons, 1991), while others were formed according to other lines of research (e.g., social support in accomplishing a goal). Properties of personal strivings, particularly the value of strivings, successfulness of past attainment, effort, expectancy of success, instrumentality, importance, ambivalence and conflict among strivings, have been linked with physical and subjective well-being (Emmons, 1986; Emmons, 1991 for a review; Emmons & King, 1988, 1989). Recent studies have revealed that

conflicts among strivings and facilitative relationships within the goal-system can be conceptualized as independent dimensions (Riediger & Freund, 2004, 2006). For example physical activity as a goal was pursued longer among those who perceived that physical activity and other goals facilitated each other (Riediger & Freund, 2004).

Content of goals and well-being

Emmons developed a coding system for classifying personal strivings into 12 thematic categories: approach-avoidance, intrapersonal/interpersonal, achievement, affiliation, intimacy, power, self-presentation, personal growth and health, autonomy, generativity, spirituality, self-defeating/maladaptive (Emmons, 2003, see below the definitions). Sheldon and Kasser (2001) added identity to these categories, while others used different types of groupings, for example education, friendship, travel, work, family, health (Salmelo-Aro, Anuola, & Nurmi, 2007), marriage, ideals/values, self-related, material, leisure, housing, social participation (Krings, Bangerter, Gomez, & Grob, 2008).

Not all goals have an equal contribution to well-being. *Affiliative* (Emmons, 1991), *intimacy* (Igreja, Zuroff, Koestner, Saltaris, Brouillette, & Lalonde, 2000; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001), *spirituality* (Emmons et al., 1998) and *generativity* goals (McAdams, De St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; Ackerman, Zuroff, & Moskowitz, 2000) are consistently related to well-being (Emmons, 1991). *Proportion of intrapersonal and interpersonal goals* also corresponds to well-being measures, higher proportion of intrapersonal goals indicate lower life satisfaction reported by the individual (Little, 1993). Salmela-Aro, Pennanen and Nurmi (2001) found that intrapersonal goals are regarded more important by the individual; though accomplishing them is more difficult compared to interpersonal goals. Little (1993) defined intrapersonal strivings as self-relevant aspects of one's life, and found that the proportion of intrapersonal strivings in the individuals' personal projects was associated with the amount of stress, difficulty and challenge during the pursuit of strivings.

A new index was used by Reidiger and Freund (2006); *more similar the goals* are in one's goal-system, and the more important they are for the person, the probability to accomplish them is higher.

Orientation of goals. Recently, making a distinction between the orientations of goals by means of the approach-avoidance perspective has been emphasized. Goals can be construed as either trying to achieve (approach goals, promotion-focused goals), or trying to avoid something (avoidance goals or prevention-focused goals) (Elliot, 2006; Higgins, 1997; Leonardelli, Lakin, & Arkin, 2007). Both are adaptive, while approach goals direct attention to hopes, desires and positive outcomes, avoidant goals direct attention to obligations, tasks, and make the individual avoid negative outcomes and feelings. On the other hand, if avoidant

goals are overrepresented or maladaptive (Forsyth, Eifert, & Barrios, 2006) in their nature (e.g., my striving is to be loved by everyone), they are associated with maladjustment, e.g., physical symptoms (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998; Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006). In a recent study, Tamir and Diener (2008) investigated the relationship between avoidant goals and well-being on the basis of two theoretical frameworks; (1) activity theories and (2) telic theories of well-being. Activity theories focus on the process and progress in accomplishing goals. It can be hypothesized that progress of approach goals is easier to monitor, and that makes the pursuit of these goals more manageable. On the contrary, perception of the progress of avoidant goals is slower (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998; Elliot, Sheldon & Church, 1997). Cognitive and affective correlates may also differ in case of avoidant and approach goals. When setting an approach goal, the individual focuses on possible positive outcomes and monitors the signs of these. When setting an avoidant goal, the emotional value of the goal is negative and thus, danger or threat signs are monitored to a greater extent during the pursuit of goals. Though it is worth mentioning that failure of approach goals – or lack of positive outcomes (see Higgins, 1987) – also leads to negative emotions (particularly sadness and guilt).

Another important fact is that culture may moderate the relationship between avoidant goals and well-being. Significant and inverse relationship between avoidant goals and well-being in “individualized western” cultures are much more relevant than in so-called “collectivistic” cultures (Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001).

STUDY

Consistent with earlier findings, regarding the relationship between life satisfaction and striving dimensions, we hypothesized that value of strivings, successfulness of past attainment, effort, expectancy of success, instrumentality, importance, ambivalence and conflict would be associated with life satisfaction measures. Besides conflict, recent studies (e.g., Reidiger & Freund, 2004) have emphasized the role of facilitation among goals, and have highlighted conflict and support measures among strivings to be independent indices and independent correlates of well-being. Based on Gollwitzer’s (1999) theory about implementation intentions we used clarity and difficulty dimensions as well, and expected them to correlate significantly with life satisfaction measures.

In accordance with other former studies on avoidant goals (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998; Elliot et al., 1997), we hypothesized that the proportion of avoidant goals in an individual’s goal-system would correspond to lower life satisfaction. On the other hand, we intended to test whether avoidant goals are rated in a different way on certain dimensions compared to approach goals. We expected avoidant goals to be rated lower on the value dimension than approach goals, and based on the summary of Tamir and Diener (2008) we hypothesized that

commitment towards avoidant goals and clarity would also be lower. On the other hand, ratings of difficulty would be higher because monitoring the speed of progress is more difficult in cases of avoidant goals. In relation with these, perception of past attainment of certain strivings would be lower as well.

On the basis of Little's (1993) work we expected that higher proportion of intrapersonal goals in one's goal-system indicates lower life satisfaction scores of the individual. Our aim was to test whether intrapersonal goals would be rated in a different manner on specific dimensions compared to interpersonal goals. Salmela-Aro, Pennanen, and Nurmi (2001) found that intrapersonal goals are more important, though accomplishing them is more difficult, therefore we expected intrapersonal goals to be rated as more important, as having higher values and to be more difficult to accomplish in comparison with interpersonal goals. In case, it is more difficult to accomplish them, past attainment should be evaluated lower. If intrapersonal strivings reflect self-relevant aspects of one's life (Little, 1993), success of intrapersonal strivings are expected to be rated as more dependant on internal than external factors compared to interpersonal strivings.

On the basis of Erikson's (1963) psychosocial stage model, we hypothesized that Eriksonian strivings reflecting the four main issues or crisis in adulthood (identity, intimacy, generativity, transcendence) would be rated higher on several dimensions (value, commitment, effort, importance, instrumentality). Also, we expected Eriksonian goals to be rated as more internal on the causal attribution dimension compared to the non-Eriksonian strivings. Based on the theory, suggesting that during young adulthood the main theme is to establish intimate relationships, we expected that from the four developmental tasks – identity, intimacy, generativity and ego-transcendence (defined here as spirituality) – intimacy strivings would be the most prevalent.

We expected to find different relationships between goal characteristics and the two well-being measures. According to Emmons' (1986) results life satisfaction (measured by SWLS) was associated with value, importance, clarity, past attainment of strivings and conflict among them. Based on results of Emmons (1986) and Emmons and Kings (1988), positive and negative affect was related to ambivalence, past attainment, difficulty of strivings, so we expected an association between those strivings' variables and scores on Campbell scale. High interdependency of strivings (instrumentality - to what extent does trying to succeed in the striving change the chances of success in other strivings), may have a very important effect on experienced affect, so we expected a significant correlation between instrumentality and Campbell's scale scores.

METHOD

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

The mean age of the forty-eight participants was 23.4 (SD=3.40), ranged from 17 to 32 years. The proportion of the females in the sample is 60.4% (29 persons). Half of the sample (N=24) consisted of university students, other half of the sample has finished secondary or university education. Participants first generated their strivings' list, then rated them on striving dimensions, indicated the potential conflicts among them, and finally they filled out the two life satisfaction scales (see below in method section). Later, strivings were coded by research assistants into various content categories (as described in detail below).

MEASURES

Personal striving dimensions

After having their strivings listed, the subjects had to rate these strivings along certain dimensions. We used 11 dimensions in our study. The Striving Assessment Scale (Emmons, 1986) contains dimensions like the *value of the striving* (how happy would be the subject if he/she were successful in his/her striving and how unhappy would he/she be in the case of failure), *the commitment to the striving*, *the degree of effort*, *the importance*, *difficulty*, *clarity of the striving* (how obvious is for the subject, what is to be done for success), *causal attributions* associated with the striving (whether success is due to external or internal factors); degree of *ambivalence* in connection with the striving (how unhappy would be the subject, were he/she successful in the striving, for example, to what extent could a successful application to an university lead to sadness because of leaving the parental house), as well as *instrumentality* (to what extent does trying to succeed in the striving change the chances of success in other strivings). The subjects rate every striving on a 5-point scale (from 0 to 4) along the given dimensions. In addition, the subjects can be asked to rate *the success related to their strivings in the past* (on an 11-point scale: from 0%-100%).

An additional measurement method of exploring the subjects' striving-system is the preparation of a *Striving Instrumentality Matrix*. During this procedure each subject has to make, on the basis of - in this case- 15 strivings, a 15x15 matrix with the rows and columns containing the individual's 15 strivings. After that, the subjects are asked to compare each striving with all other strivings and decide whether the success in the given striving is helpful or harmful for achieving the other striving or it has no effect on it. This matrix can be useful by concluding whether or not the subjects' goal-system is of conflicting nature.

According to Emmons (1991), classical psychometric measures - e.g. reliability - are in case of this method less applicable - or to be precise, less relevant. The measurement method does not assume a homogeneous set of goals,

thus, with respect to certain measures, high values for internal coherence cannot be expected.

The stability of the goals: The stability of the Striving Assessment Scales dimensions was appropriate for a one-month (between 0.58 and 0.91) and also for a three-month interval (between 0.47 and 0.70). The most stable dimensions were the value and social desirability of the striving, while the least stable dimensions were the degree of effort and the striving impact (Emmons, 1986).

In a follow-up study, after one year the content of the listed strivings remained the same in 82 % of the cases for a student sample (Emmons, 1989). After 1.5 years 45 % of the strivings, after 3 years approximately 50 % of the listed strivings persisted (Emmons, 1989).

Coding the content of personal strivings

The insert of Emmons' book, published in the year of 2003, presents twelve categories of personal strivings (Emmons, 2003): 1) approach vs. avoidance, 2) intrapersonal vs. interpersonal, 3) achievement, 4) affiliation, 5) intimacy, 6) power, 7) personal growth and health, 8) self-presentation, 9) self-sufficiency/independence, 10) maladaptive/self-defeating, 11) generativity and 12) spiritual self-transcendence. In addition to these, Sheldon and Kasser (2001) worked out the category of identity together with facilities for coding the level of specification (abstract – concrete) of strivings. Compared to the earlier version (Emmons et al., 1998) the code system from 2003 was enriched by the category of inter- and intrapersonal strivings, in addition to the judgment of the specificity level. The emotionality/emotion regulation category, however, was removed. According to the striving coding manual (Emmons, 2003), categories are not exclusive: one striving can be classified occasionally into two categories. In contrast with this, in other studies (e.g., Simons, Christopher, Oliver, & Stanage, 2006) some categories were applied preclusively. The categories of approach vs. avoidance and of the intra- vs. interpersonal strivings are evidently adaptable for each strivings. Striving categories, their short description and sample items are presented in Table 1.

Finally, during the coding of the data an independent factor emerged, which we named 'fun'. The *fun factor* contains activities and things people perform for pleasure, joy and amusement or do for relaxation and rest mostly in their leisure time. These recreational activities can be active (e.g., 'Traveling a lot'; 'Visiting exotic places'; 'Living an eventful life'; 'Participating at parties'; 'Free fall') or passive (e.g., 'Reading a lot'). The answers classified to the fun category often involve physical or intellectual effort and the mobilization of abilities and skills. This type of goals includes physical exercise, creation, education and culture, as well as different forms of social entertainment. Using free time for these purposes may play an important role in the development of personality.

Table 1
Definitions and sample items of striving categories

| Striving category | Short definitions and Sample items |
|--|--|
| Approach vs. avoidance | This category features that people either wish to approach, obtain, achieve or keep the object of the striving or wish to avoid, prevent or get rid of the object of the striving, respectively try 'not to do something'. E.g., Avoid discrimination; Not to cry in front of others; Don't procrastinate; Have no stress; Living without fear. |
| Intrapersonal vs. interpersonal | It describes whether the strivings refer to oneself or to others, as well as if they refer to one's emotional state (intrapersonal) or to the expression of emotions (interpersonal). E.g., Enhance my self-confidence (intra); Remain healthy (intra); Make a good impression on other people (inter). |
| Achievement | It is interpreted as the factor which refers to the achievement or accomplishment of a goal and involves performance, winning, success or competition. E.g., Start up my own venture; I would like to keep up very well with my work; To graduate successful the academy. |
| Affiliation | These strivings are defined as those in which the person desires to establish, maintain or repair interpersonal relations and seeks approval and acceptance from others. E.g., Establish normal relationship; Avoid being lonely; Spend more time with friends. |
| Intimacy | These strivings regard the interpersonal relations which involve positive affects like love, friendship, happiness, peace or tender behaviours. This type of goals were defined as seeking commitment and concern for another person, seeking a warm, close and communicative interrelationship with others, or desire to be loyal and responsible towards people and help significant others. E.g., Harmonious family life; Learn to express feelings of love towards my family and friends; See my loved ones pleased. |
| Power | Persons seek fame or public attention, want to dominate, influence, persuade, convince or control others, and arouse emotions in another people. This category is applied even if one compares himself and competes with others or gives help and support when none has asked for it. E.g., To become a great authority; Be the dominant sibling in my family of six. |
| Personal growth and health | Strivings related to the development, enhancement and extension of self-esteem or to the expansion and improvement of the self and all the goals which are connected to subjective well-being – whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual – and health, as well as achieving happiness or avoiding unhappiness, stress, anxiety and other negative emotions, in addition to avoiding illness. E.g., Improve my health; Learn new skills and apply old ones; Be opened to new things and people. |
| Self-presentation | Making a favourable impression on others, like appearing intelligent, interesting, socially and/or physically attractive and maintaining or improving one's image presented to others, as well as portraying a certain emotional state. E.g., Appear lovely to others; Impress others; Appear competent. |
| Self-sufficiency and independence | Intentions to be individual, separated and autonomous from others and seeking, establishing or maintaining independence, asserting oneself or doing what one thinks is right. E.g. Live separately from my parents; Make a secure existence; More independence in my work |
| Maladaptive/self-defeating | It reflects a lack of growth and adaptiveness. These answers comprise the desire to avoid taking chances or accepting challenges that could result in |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | positive changes. E.g., I wish everybody loved me; Avoid inducing bad feelings of others. |
| Generativity | It is related to goals of providing goods for the next generation, a positive and purposive interaction with the younger generation and a desire for symbolic immortality; leaving behind products that will outlive one's physical existence. E.g., Founding a family; Contribute to my community; Help to indigents. |
| Spirituality | This concerns religious practice or divine awareness, or seeking unity with cosmic orders and goal reflects a commitment to concerns that are superior to the individual. Self-transcendence means to extend one's self toward others and/or to an ultimate reality. E.g., Deepen my relationship with God; Make tolerance; Preserve my faith, confidence and trust. |
| Identity | These strivings refer to self-knowledge, self-understanding, self-integrity and personal autonomy or self-sufficiency and they involve seeking resolution of role conflicts and confusions. E.g., Enhance my self-confidence and my self-esteem; Manifest better my emotions; Get to know myself; Understand my emotions |
| Fun | It contains activities and things people perform for pleasure, joy and amusement or do for relaxation and rest mostly in their leisure time. E.g., Travelling a lot; Visiting exotic places; Participating at parties; Free fall. |

Strivings were coded by two research assistants into various content categories. Notably, particular strivings could be coded into more than one category. The coefficient kappa was computed for each content category. Kappa coefficients for content categories indicated eligible initial agreement between the two coders in our study (ranging from 0.53 to 0.89) except for the Power content (Cohen kappa was near 0). For this reason we excluded Power from various analysis. Disagreements were resolved through discussion. Afterwards, the proportion of each striving category in the person's striving-system was computed in case of each participant. These scores could range from 0 to 100.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction was measured by means of two scales; the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) and the 10-item Campbell Scale (Campbell et al., 1976). SWLS measures cognitive aspects of subjective well-being, cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999), while Campbell's scale is a semantic differential-like scale, participants rate their lives on 10 semantic differential items (e.g. enjoyable-miserable), and the sum score is an Index of General Affect (Diener, 1984). The reliability of both scales in our study were satisfactory (Chronbach- alpha for SWLS: 0.69, and for Campbell Scale: 0.74).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Means and standard deviations for striving dimensions and well-being measures are shown in Table 2. These measures did not correlate with age (range for correlational coefficients from -0.11 to +0.21 $p > 0.05$), except for the Diener life satisfaction score ($r = -0.30$, $p < 0.05$). There were sex differences only in case of three indices (commitment, effort, and casual attributions associated with the striving). Women scored higher on commitment ($M = 3.14$ (0.47), for men $M = 2.86$ (0.47), $t = 2.063$, $p < 0.01$), and effort ($M = 2.66$ (0.58), for men $M = 2.25$ (0.41) $t = 2.826$, $p < 0.01$) and scored lower on causal attribution ($M = 1.48$ (0.62), for men $M = 2.05$ (0.81); $t = 0.257$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of striving dimensions and life satisfaction scales used in the study

| Strivings' dimension | Mean (SD) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| value 1 | 3.47 (0.42) |
| value 2 | 2.92 (0.58) |
| Ambivalence | 0.12 (0.49) |
| Commitment | 3.03 (0.49) |
| Effort | 2.52 (1.09) |
| Importance | 3.19 (0.50) |
| Difficulty | 2.39 (0.81) |
| Clarity | 2.98 (0.67) |
| Causal attribution of success | 1.70 (0.75) |
| Instrumentality | 2.29 (1.42) |
| Probability of past success | 43.30 (31.72) |
| Life satisfaction (SWLS) | 19.08 (5.06) |
| Life satisfaction (Campbell) | 52.56 (5.85) |

Value 1: how happy would be the subject, if he/she were successful in his/her striving; Value 2: and how unhappy would he/she be in the case of failure; SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale

Participants listed 534 goals (average number of strivings was 11.13, SD: 2.93). Means and standard deviations (reflecting the proportion of a certain type of goal per person) of goal-content variables are shown in Table 3. Means represent the proportion of strivings in the whole sample, and at the individual level as well. The categories of approach vs. avoidance and the intra- vs. interpersonal are evidently adapted for each strivings. 8.21% of all goals were avoidant and 25.00% tapped interpersonal content.

Table 3
The proportion of content categories of personal strivings

| Strivings' content | Mean (SD) |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Avoidant strivings | 8.21 (10.4) |
| Interpersonal strivings | 24.96 (13.67) |
| Achievement | 32.25 (16.03) |
| Affiliation | 9.62 (8.59) |
| Intimacy | 8.47 (8.12) |
| Power | 0.36 (1.75) |
| Personal growth/health | 25.57 (18.52) |
| Self-sufficiency | 4.92 (7.24) |
| Maladaptive | 2.71 (6.96) |
| Generativity | 5.29 (6.62) |
| Spirituality | 1.27 (4.04) |
| Identity | 5.04 (8.63) |
| Self-presentation | 5.64 (9.74) |
| Fun | 14.06 (12.74) |
| Uncoded | 9.17 (14.06) |

According to the striving coding manual (Emmons, 2003) the categories (achievement, affiliation, intimacy, power, personal growth/health, self-sufficiency, maladaptive, generative, spirituality, identity, self-presentation) do not certainly preclude each other: one striving can occasionally be classified into two categories. The most frequent contents were achievement (32.25 %) and personal growth/health (25.57%). The least frequent contents were power (0.36%) and spirituality (1.27%). Maladaptive strivings were also mentioned in small proportion (2.71%). About 5.00% of strivings had self-presentational content and an additional 5% represented self-sufficiency and independence strivings. The four Eriksonian coding categories – identity, intimacy, generativity and spirituality (ego-integrity) – accounted for 20.07% of all strivings, and intimacy strivings were the most prevalent among them, thus confirming our hypothesis.

We have also developed a new category – fun –, described as activities and things people perform for pleasure, joy and amusement or do for relaxation and rest, mostly in their leisure time. 14.06% of all strivings were coded into this category, and 4.15% of the category was related to traveling. Finally, 9.17% of strivings could not be coded, these strivings were very concrete (e.g. to buy contact lenses or win a lottery). T-test revealed that there were sex differences in the proportion of personal growth /health and maladaptive categories. Though in latter case only 14 maladaptive strivings were identified in the whole sample, almost all the maladaptive strivings were mentioned by women [the proportion for men $M=0.01$ ($SD=0.02$), and for women $M=0.04$ ($SD=0.09$)]. Higher proportion of personal growth/health categories was found among women [$M=0.23$ ($SD=0.18$)] than men [$M=0.14$; $SD=0.12$, $d=0.167$, $p<0.001$].

We coded material content (buy a car, a house or a flat, making money) and education content (finishing MA, learn languages) separately. 9.24% of all strivings were related to material possessions, while 11.39% related to education.

Table 4 shows the frequency of answer categories of striving dimensions. Generally, more than three fourth of goals listed by participants were important and valuable (evaluated with 3 or 4 on a scale range from 0 to 4), and more than 90.0% is not ambivalent at all. Participants usually find most of the goals, to which they are committed and expand energy and effort to accomplish, clear enough to accomplish them. Though half of the strivings were evaluated as difficult to achieve, the success of accomplishing the strivings were usually thought to be depending on internal factors (almost half of the strivings were evaluated 0 or 1 reflecting the internal end-point of a 5 point scale). According to the frequency of instrumentality scores, in case of at least half of the strivings success may change the chance of success in other strivings as well. Past attainment of success was measured on an 11-point scale (0-100%), 18.2 % of strivings had no past success (0%), while for more than half of strivings participants indicated at least 50% past success.

Table 4
The frequency of answer categories of strivings' dimensions

| Strivings' dimension | Frequency of answer categories (%) (N=534) | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| value 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 8.2 | 27.7 | 62.5 |
| value 2 | 1.5 | 9.6 | 19.7 | 30.9 | 28.4 |
| Ambivalence | 92.5 | 4.9 | 1.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Commitment | 0.7 | 5.4 | 18.5 | 38.2 | 37.1 |
| Effort | 6.0 | 9.7 | 29.6 | 35.8 | 18.9 |
| Importance | 0.7 | 4.5 | 14.6 | 32.2 | 47.9 |
| Difficulty | 12.4 | 13.1 | 20.0 | 25.1 | 29.4 |
| Clarity | 5.1 | 5.8 | 21.0 | 27.3 | 40.8 |
| Causal attribution of success | 23.8 | 18.0 | 38.0 | 12.5 | 7.7 |
| Instrumentality | 18.2 | 10.1 | 22.5 | 22.8 | 26.4 |

| Strivings' dimension | Frequency of answer categories (%) (N=534) | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
| Past attainment | 18.2 | 9.6 | 6.6 | 8.2 | 5.6 | 13.5 | 9.6 | 7.1 | 10.9 | 6.9 | 3.9 |

Value 1: how happy would be the subject, if he/she were successful in his/her striving; Value 2: and how unhappy would he/she be in the case of failure.

Amongst the strivings listed by participants, only 44 were avoidant (8.21%). We hypothesized that commitment for avoidant goals was lower than for approach goals, and our results confirm our hypothesis ($t=2.347$ $p<0.05$; see Table 5.). Since approach goals are related to positive, and avoidant goals to negative

emotions, we expected that approach goals would be evaluated higher on value dimensions, causing higher happiness in case of success, and causing higher sadness if a striving fails. Our results confirm our hypotheses (for happiness $t=2.803$, $p<0.01$), though the difference concerning sadness was just a tendency ($t=1.937$, $p<0.1$) (see Table 5).

Contrary to our hypothesis, approach and avoidant strivings do not differ in difficulty measures ($t=0.263$, $p>0.05$). We found differences on clarity dimension however, though it was only a tendency for avoidant goals to be less clear ($t=1.830$, $p<0.1$). We also expected past attainment of avoidant goals to be lower, but results contradict with this hypothesis, past attainment of avoidant goals was significantly higher ($t=2.316$, $p<0.05$).

Four hundred strivings turned out to be intrapersonal, while 134 were interpersonal. Between these categories, we found significant differences regarding value-sadness, clarity, difficulty and causal attribution and past attainment dimensions. Intrapersonal strivings were evaluated as clearer ($t=2.257$, $p<0.05$), and more difficult to accomplish ($t=2.492$, $p<0.05$), while intrapersonal strivings were evaluated as causing higher unhappiness if fulfillment fails ($t=3.027$, $p<0.01$). On causal attribution intrapersonal strivings were evaluated lower (lower score indicating more internal attribution, $t=3.373$, $p<0.01$). Past attainment of success for interpersonal striving was higher than for intrapersonal strivings ($t=5.047$, $p<0.001$). These results are congruent with our hypotheses. We found differences on importance dimension as well, though it was only a tendency for intrapersonal goals to be less important ($t=1.804$, $p<0.1$), contrary to our prediction. We hypothesized that interpersonal strivings would cause more happiness if succeeded, but the difference between intra- and interpersonal strivings was not significant ($t=0.168$, $p>0.05$; see Table 5).

Table 5

Differences between avoidant and approach goals, and between intrapersonal and interpersonal goals on strivings' dimensions

| Strivings' dimension | Means (SD) of Avoidant goals (N=44) | Means (SD) of Approach goals (N=490) | t values (p) |
|----------------------|---|---|--------------|
| Commitment | 2.68 (1.12) | 3.09 (0.89) | 2.347* |
| Value 1 | 3.02 (1.23) | 3.55 (0.67) | 2.803** |
| Value 2 | 2.66 (1.14) | 2.98 (1.04) | 1.937+ |
| Clarity | 2.59 (1.30) | 2.96 (1.12) | 1.830+ |
| Difficulty | 2.41 (1.34) | 2.47 (1.36) | 0.263 (NS) |
| Past attainment | 53.86 (29.82) | 42.35 (3.17) | 2.316* |
| Strivings' dimension | Means (SD) of Intrapersonal goals (N=400) | Means (SD) of Interpersonal goals (N=134) | t values (p) |
| Value 1 | 3.50 (0.74) | 3.51 (0.75) | 0.168 (NS) |
| Value 2 | 2.87 (1.06) | 3.19 (0.97) | 3.027** |
| Clarity | 3.00 (1.11) | 2.74 (1.21) | 2.257* |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Importance | 3.18 (0.93) | 3.34 (0.85) | 1.804+ |
| Difficulty | 2.55 (1.37) | 2.21 (1.29) | 2.492* |
| Casual attribution | 1.53 (1.21) | 1.91 (1.11) | 3.373** |
| Past attainment | 39.38 (31.29) | 55.00 (30.20) | 5.047*** |

Value 1: how happy would be the subject, if he/she were successful in his/her striving;
Value 2: and how unhappy would he/she be in the case of failure; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$,
*** $p < 0.001$, + $p < 0.10$, NS: non-significant.

For further analysis we grouped strivings as reflecting any of Eriksonian categories (N=107 strivings) or none of them (N=427 strivings) (see Table 6). Eriksonian strivings were evaluated more important ($t=7.062$, $p < 0.001$) by the subjects, and commitment to Eriksonian strivings was higher than to non-Eriksonian ($t=5.093$, $p < 0.001$). Participants-rated Eriksonian strivings as they expended more effort in trying to accomplish them compared to non-Eriksonian strivings ($t=3.478$, $p < 0.01$). Though most of the strivings were evaluated as very valuable (happiness if the fulfilment of strivings would happen), there was a difference between Eriksonian and non-Eriksonian goals on this dimension ($t=3.358$, $p < 0.001$). The value of strivings was tested in another way as well, participants indicated their sadness if their strivings had not been fulfilled, on a five point scale (0-4 points, higher score reflects higher sadness). The group of Eriksonian strivings was reported to cause higher sadness in case of failure in the future ($t=3.891$, $p < 0.001$). Eriksonian goals were regarded less ambivalent ($t=2.227$, $p < 0.05$). Notably, for Eriksonian goals, clarity of the strivings (how obvious it is for the subject, what is to be done for success) proved to be significantly lower than for non-Eriksonian goals ($t=2.651$, $p < 0.001$). It is interesting however, that on difficulty measures the two groups of strivings did not differ significantly ($t=0.773$, $p > 0.05$). Causal attributions associated with the strivings (whether success is due to internal or external factors) were also tested, but the two groups of strivings did not differ significantly on this dimension ($t=0.337$, $p > 0.05$). Finally, past attainment of Eriksonian goals was evaluated higher than for non-Eriksonians ($t=2.249$, $p < 0.05$) and participants found that success of Eriksonian strivings changes the chances of success other strivings in higher degree (instrumentality) than non-Eriksonian strivings ($t=2.728$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 6
Differences between Eriksonian and non-Eriksonian goals on strivings' dimensions

| Strivings' dimension | Means (SD) of Eriksonian goals (N=107) | Means (SD) of Non-Eriksonian goals (N=427) | t value |
|----------------------|--|--|----------|
| value 1 | 3.69(0.61) | 3.46(0.77) | 3.358*** |
| value 2 | 3.30(1.00) | 2.86(1.04) | 3.891*** |
| Ambivalent | 0.06 (0.23) | 0.13(0.52) | 2.227* |
| Commitment | 3.45(0.73) | 2.96(0.93) | 5.093*** |
| Effort | 2.81(0.94) | 2.45 (1.11) | 3.478** |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Importance | 3.64(0.62) | 3.11(0.94) | 7.062*** |
| Difficulty | 2.55(1.33) | 2.44(1.37) | 0.773 (NS) |
| Clarity | 2.64(1.28) | 3.00(1.09) | 2.651*** |
| Causal attribution of success | 1.59(1.25) | 1.63(1.18) | 0.337 (NS) |
| Instrumentality | 2.63 (1.37) | 2.21 (1.43) | 2.728** |
| Past attainment | 49.44 (31.07) | 41.76 (31.73) | 2.249* |

Value 1: how happy would be the subject, if he/she were successful in his/her striving; Value 2: and how unhappy would he/she be in the case of failure; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, + $p < 0.10$, NS: non-significant.

Correlational analysis

Between-subject analysis

The scores of the two life satisfaction scales correlated with each other ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$). Diener's life satisfaction score correlated only with past attainment ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$; range for the other correlational coefficients from -0.15 to $+0.23$ $p > 0.05$), while scores on the Campbell scale had significant relationship with difficulty and clarity dimensions ($r = -0.39$, $p < 0.001$ and $r = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$, respectively), with instrumentality ($r = -0.29$, $p < 0.05$) and with past attainment ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$).

We also tested conflict measures' contribution to life satisfaction scores. In Striving Instrumentality Matrix three indicators were used – how many of strivings help each other, how many of them are in conflict with each other, and how many of them are independent from each other. All three indices (helping each other, conflict, not influencing each other) were independent of life satisfaction based on the result of correlational analysis (for Diener scale $r = 0.06$, $r = 0.03$, $r = -0.01$, $p < 0.05$, for Campbell scale $r = -0.03$, $r = 0.16$, -0.06 ; respectively).

Next, we conducted analysis testing the relationship between the proportion of striving contents of an individual's goal-system and well-being measures. We excluded spirituality, power and maladaptive strivings from the analysis because of their low proportion. We hypothesized that proportion of avoidant goals, intimacy and intrapersonal strivings would have significant relationship with life satisfaction, our results however, did not confirm our hypotheses (avoidant goals and Diener scale $r = 0.06$; avoidant goals and Campbell scale $r = 0.01$; $p < 0.05$; intimacy strivings and Diener scale $r = 0.22$, intimacy strivings and Campbell scale $r = 0.01$ $r < 0.05$; intrapersonal strivings and Diener scale $r = 0.17$; intrapersonal strivings and Campbell scale $r = 0.15$).

Two correlational coefficients proved to be significant - individuals with a higher proportion of generativity strivings scored higher on Diener's life satisfaction scale ($r = 0.33$ $p < 0.05$), while individuals with a higher proportion of uncoded strivings scored lower ($r = -0.32$, $p < 0.05$).

The relationship between life satisfaction and similarity of goals was also tested on Eriksonian goals, though results did not confirm our hypothesis (for Diener scale $r=0.25$ $p>0.05$, and for Campbell scale $r=0.13$ $p>0.05$)

DISCUSSION

In this study we used a detailed personal strivings assessment (Emmons, 1986, 2003). Our aim was to test the applicability of thematic coding system developed by Emmons (2003) on a Hungarian youth sample in order to ensure the heterogeneity of individual goals. Concerning goal contents, coding system was used successfully, Cohen-kappas showed satisfactory inter-rater agreement, except for Power.

In earlier studies, nearly one-fifth of strivings were avoidant, (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997; Moffit & Singer, 1994), in our study only 8.00% belonged to that category. Participants reported lower commitment and lower value (lower happiness in case of success) for avoidant goals than approach goals, consistent with our hypothesis. Also, it is worth mentioning that success of avoidant goals were evaluated higher than that of approach goals. We suppose that achievement may make avoidant goals persist, and based on Ogilvie's (1987) findings we may hypothesize as well, that concerning successfulness there is a difference between more concrete avoidant goals (not to eat chips in the evenings) and more abstract ones (not to be unpolite).

All strivings were coded as intra- or interpersonal. Regarding this distinction we found significant differences on five dimensions. Intrapersonal goals were evaluated as being more valuable, clearer, more difficult, as success depends more on internal factors and finally, intrapersonal strivings had lower scores on past attainment of success compared to interpersonal strivings. It is worth mentioning that clarity and difficulty scores contradicted with each other. It would be logical, if someone had an idea about what to do for success (clarity), it would be less difficult for him or her to succeed in that striving, or vice versa. In the study of Emmons (1986), association between clarity and difficulty dimension was negative ($r=-0.29$), the more difficult is to accomplish something, the less clear ideas a person has about implementation. But our results concerning intra- and interpersonal strivings contradicted with this logic rule. In spite of that participants evaluated intrapersonal strivings clearer, they found it more difficult to accomplish them. Supposedly, clarity implies having an implementation plan, while difficulty dimension may be related to the perceived ability of accomplishing success or to the perceived ability of implementing the implementational plan. Clarity and difficulty dimensions need further investigation, possibly in relation with perceived self-efficacy.

Since our sample consisted of young people, it is not surprising that spirituality strivings were present only to a moderate extent. In the study of Sheldon and Kasser (2001) spirituality strivings were more prevalent in middle

aged or older participants. The most frequent content of personal strivings was achievement. The high proportion of strivings for achievement is evident, because half of the sample consisted of university students. In addition, individual achievement (and/or competition) is evaluated high in our culture. Based on our experience with this category it would be fruitful to complete the category description of Emmons with definitions used in other studies. Elliot (1999; Elliot & Trash, 2001) conceptualized achievement goals as specific goals, in which the desired outcome/event is feeling of competence. Competence based goals can be differentiated on the basis of resulting from mastery or performance. Performance goals are typically conceptualized in terms of the adoption of a normative standard for competence evaluation, whereas mastery goals are typically conceptualized in terms of the adoption of a task-based standard for competence evaluation (Elliot & Trash, 2001). This distinction highlights that in the background of performance goals (perform better than others; demonstration of competence) a self-presentation motive, while behind mastery goals a self-improvement motive (development of competence) is present (Elliot & Trash, 2001).

A great proportion of goals belonged to the domain of personal growth/health, we found this category too inclusive however, containing excessively heterogeneous goals. It includes for example strivings for maintaining physical health (having 3 trainings on a week), strivings for emotional health (having enough relaxation), strivings for personality development (avoid being inpatient) and strivings for psychological well-being (meaningful life) at the same time. We assume, this heterogeneity explains the lack of association between well-being measures and the proportion of this category in one's goal-system.

A new category emerged during the coding process, we labeled it as Fun. The *fun factor* contains activities and things people perform for pleasure, joy and amusement or do for relaxation and rest mostly in their leisure time. Using free time for these purposes may play an important role in the development of personality. In the future we plan to separate sensation-seeking strivings from other pleasure, joy or amusement strivings of this category.

There were gender differences in the proportion of maladaptive categories and personal growth/health categories. Almost all maladaptive strivings were mentioned by women. Though the sample size in our study was small, these differences reflect the well-known higher vulnerability to lower self-esteem (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Kling, Hude, Showers, & Buswell, 1999), to depressive (e.g., Kessler, 2003) and to anxiety disorders in case of women (e.g., Lewinsohn, Gotlib, Lewinsohn, Seeley, & Allen, 1998; Olf, Langeland, Draijer, & Gersons, 2007). The higher proportion of personal growth/health categories among women is consistent with findings suggesting higher health consciousness among them comparing to men (Fagerli & Wandel, 1999; Ostlin, Eckermannn, Mishra, Nkowane, & Wallstam, 2006). Women tend to engage in self-examination more frequently than men, and men more likely to delay reporting symptoms to a doctor (Evans, Brotherstone, Miles, & Wardle, 2005).

We applied the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1963) to evaluate personal goals. Identity, intimacy, generativity, and spirituality as four adult issues were expected to be observed in the goal system. Analyses of thematic content of strivings showed that these four Eriksonian strivings accounted for one-fifth of strivings, and young people were more concerned with intimacy, and less concerned with generativity, spirituality, and identity. This result is consistent with Erikson's theory; in young adulthood the main developmental theme is to establish intimate relationships. Whereas intimacy strivings are really prominent throughout the whole life (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001), the need to belong and being approved by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), reflected in affiliative strivings, are also extremely important (from an evolutionary point of view and concerning actual well-being as well). Almost one-fifth of strivings had affiliative and intimacy content, but contrary to our hypothesis and earlier findings (Igreja et al., 2000; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001) intimacy strivings did not have a significant association with life satisfaction.

Identity strivings were mentioned in low proportion in spite of the trend nowadays, namely establishing identity throughout a long process without termination at the end of secondary school education. Adolescence has been prolonged to the age of mid-20s. Nonetheless, we suppose that some strivings which were coded as achievement strivings (e.g., finishing education, mastery strivings) may reflect identity-seeking processes as well.

Eriksonian strivings were evaluated higher on several dimensions (value, commitment, effort, importance, instrumentality, past attainment) than non-Eriksonian strivings. These results are in concordance with Erikson's psychosocial theory. Interestingly, Eriksonian strivings were rated as less clear, reflecting that it is not always obvious what is to be done for the success of achieving identity, intimacy, generativity or spirituality.

A new index was used by Reidiger and Freund (2006), stating that more similar the goals are in one's goal system, and more important they are for the person, the probability to accomplish them is higher. Based on this result, we expected higher life satisfaction in case of higher proportion of similar goals. We used Eriksonian goals for testing this assumption; our results however, did not confirm our hypothesis.

We also examined the association between strivings and well-being. With regard to well-being, distinction needs to be made between affective and cognitive dimensions (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1985). Depending on how each set of variables is measured, distinct relationships between goals and well-being were found. We used two measures for life satisfaction, a cognitive and an affective measure. The two scores correlated significantly ($r=0.51$), and the strength of correlation was similar to Diener's findings (Diener et al., 1985, Study 2). We found a significant relationship between cognitive life satisfaction measure

(Diener's life satisfaction scale) and past attainment, as well as a significant relationship between affective index of well-being (Campbell's scale) and four striving dimensions: difficulty, clarity, instrumentality and past attainment. It is interesting that the most affective dimensions of strivings (value, importance) had no significant relationship with life satisfaction measures. In earlier studies, conflicts in the striving system seemed to be associated with well-being measures (Emmons, 1986; Emmons & King, 1988), though our results did not confirm this association. Similarly, we did not find a positive correspondence between facilitatory relationships of strivings and well-being.

Taking former studies of avoidant goals into consideration (Elliot and Sheldon, 1998; Elliot et al., 1997), we hypothesized that the higher proportion of avoidant goals of an individual's goal-system would be associated with lower life satisfaction, but our results did not confirm our hypothesis. According to Elliot and his colleagues' findings (Elliot et al., 2001) culture may moderate the relationship between avoidant goals and well-being. For example, they found that in the US avoidant goals are negative predictors of well-being, while in Russia avoidant goals and well-being were independent from each other. Because of our small sample size, more studies are needed to clarify the relationship between the orientation of goals and well-being on Hungarian samples.

We also expected a significant relationship between the proportion of intimacy strivings and life satisfaction, and a relationship between the proportion of interpersonal strivings and life satisfaction, but the results did not confirm these hypothesis. Only the proportion of generativity strivings and uncoded strivings were significantly associated with a life satisfaction measure (with Diener's Scale). Generativity strivings were related to higher life satisfaction in the study of McAdams (McAdams et al., 1993) and were associated with positive affects in Ackerman's study as well (Ackerman et al., 2000). These results show that not all goals contribute to well-being equally. Taking into consideration that uncoded strivings had a negative relationship with life satisfaction, we may conclude that high proportion of superficial, daily routine goals (e.g., to buy contact lenses) does not contribute to well-being. Perhaps these goals weaken the sense of meaning of life or they do not let higher order goals to be formulated and followed.

Recently, a lot of health psychological studies on health behaviors (e.g., Gebhardt & Maes, 1998; Reidiger & Freund, 2004, 2006; Simons et al., 2001) and on certain illnesses (e.g., Hamilton, Karoly, & Zautra, 2005; Stein, Mann, & Hunt, 2007) used some kind of goal assessment. This way, research on personal goals can have very important practical consequences as well. To reveal the characteristics of goals in an ill population, to have a look into the alterations of the goal-system caused by an illness, might help to plan therapy as well as to re-establish identity through goals and related activities. It is well-known that shaping one's goals is frequently a conscious aim of therapy or at other occasions, a goal is shaped automatically through developmental processes supported by the therapeutical work. Perhaps the common in all therapies that clients seek meaning

of their life, narratives of seeking should be treated with deep attention (Frankl, 1969, 2004). Supporting health behaviors seems to be a very important task in the health system and in educational settings as well. We have the possibility to promote health behavior with a higher efficiency if we reveal which types of goals are connected to health behavior, how are these formed and what kinds of implementation plans are needed for success.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the sample size was small (N=48), therefore results of the correlational analysis have to be interpreted cautiously. Small sample size might also explain the lack of association between several goals' dimensions and well-being. Second, the present research does not allow the generalizability of results to people of other ages or of other socio-economic status. For example, in our research young adults were more concerned with intimacy, and less concerned with generativity, spirituality, and identity. In study of Sheldon and Kasser (2001) there was a significant relationship between age and generativity and spirituality strivings, so studies including older adults may find different frequency of the proportion of strivings' content categories. Half of our sample (N=24) consisted of university students, it may explain the highest proportion of achievement strivings.

Third, well-being measure was restricted to life satisfaction, and other facets – negative or positive emotions – were not measured. In Emmons studies (Emmons, 1986) different striving properties were found to be associated with different facets of subjective well-being, and he found that positive and negative affect had different strivings' correlates. We also need further research to reveal how these strivings contribute to psychological well-being conceptualized in different ways (see Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1998). In our study we used only one facet of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being has been associated of hedonic approach of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001), while psychological well-being is more than just being happy or satisfied with one's own life. Psychological well-being has been related to eudaimonic approach of well-being. Those who are well psychologically are trying to fulfill or realize their own true nature (Ryan & Deci, 2001). So we may hypothesize that Eriksonian strivings would be associated with psychological well-being more strongly than non-Eriksonian.

Finally, it would be fruitful in the future to complement the definition of Emmons' content categories with other relevant goal definitions (e.g., in case of achievement goals) or develop a more sophisticated system of content categories (with a special focus on the development of the category of personal health/growth).

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