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Happiness matters: Exploring the linkages between personality, personal happiness  
and work-related psychological health among priests and sisters in Italy

Leslie J Francis\*

University of Warwick, England, UK

Giuseppe Crea

Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, Italy

Author note:

\*Corresponding author:

Leslie J Francis

Warwick Religions & Education Research Unit

Centre for Education Studies

The University of Warwick

Coventry CV4 7AL United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)24 7652 2539

Fax: +44 (0)24 7657 2638

Email: [leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:leslie.francis@warwick.ac.uk)

**Abstract**

This study responds to the challenge posed by Rossetti's work to explore the antecedents and consequences of individual differences in happiness among priests and religious sisters. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was completed together with measures of personality and work-related psychological health by 95 priests and 61 religious sisters. Overall the data demonstrated high levels of personal happiness among priests and religious sisters, but also significant signs of vulnerability. Personality provided significant prediction of individual differences in both personal happiness and work-related psychological health. However, personal happiness provided additional protection against work-related emotional exhaustion and additional enhancement of work-related satisfaction. These findings suggest that acknowledging and affirming personal happiness may enhance the work-related psychological health of Catholic priests and religious sisters.

*Keywords:* Clergy, nuns, burnout, psychology, personality

## Introduction

In the title of his book, *Why priests are happy*, Rossetti (2011) poses an interesting and important question that is addressed through sensible empirical enquiry, drawing on techniques of psychological measurement and multivariate statistical modelling. The study covers a broad canvas involving both psychological and spiritual constructs relevant to the fields both of the psychology of religion and empirical theology. Inevitably studies concerned with a broad canvas need to trade off the benefits of breadth and depth as discussed, for example, by Loudon and Francis (2003) in their study of Catholic priests within Britain.

Rossetti's (2011) landmark study is not merely concerned with measuring happiness. It is also concerned with physical health and psychological wellness, as assessed by the Brief Symptom Inventory 18 (BSI-18: Derogatis, 2000), with burnout, as assessed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI: Maslach & Jackson, 1996), and with personality as assessed by 20 items from the IPIP-NEO, a publicly available personality inventory, mapping onto the constructs of extraversion and neuroticism as proposed by the Big Five Factor model of personality developed by Costa and McCrae (1985).

There are four important, but under discussed, issues raised by Rossetti's study. The first of these issues concerns the conceptualisation and measurement of happiness as a psychological construct. The second issue concerns theorising the nature of the personality constructs introduced to the study. The third issue concerns the connection between personality and personal happiness. The fourth issue concerns the connection between personal happiness and professional burnout. The aim of the present paper is to clarify these four issues and to explore the theoretical and empirical linkages drawing on new data provided by a sample of 156 Catholic priests and religious sisters serving in Italy.

### Measuring personal happiness

Rossetti (2011) operationalised happiness by two measures, one well established and the other constructed specifically within the context of Rossetti's own studies. The established measure was the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). These five items are: In most ways my life is close to my ideal; The conditions of my life are excellent; I am satisfied with my life; So far I have gotten the important things I want in life; If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing. The new measure was the two-item Priestly Happiness and Morale Scale. These two items are: My morale as a priest is good; Overall, I am happy as a priest. The first of these measures is described in the wider literature, as its name suggests, as a measure of satisfaction with life. The second of these measures seem akin to an index of professional satisfaction in ministry. The matter of interest concerns the connection between these two constructs and a broader psychological notion of personal happiness.

Two quite different approaches exist within the broad field of positive psychology for mapping and assessing the connection between wellbeing and personality or other constructs. One approach takes the view that many measures of wellbeing assess roughly the same underlying construct and that it is sensible to conduct meta analyses across different instruments in order to evaluate the basic connections between wellbeing and personality or wellbeing and other constructs (see, for example, DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). The other approach takes the view that each measure may provide its own distinct conceptualisation and operationalisation of wellbeing, and may as a consequence relate to personality and other constructs in distinctive ways. The view is taken, for example, by Lewis and Francis (in press) who document how two different measures of wellbeing relate to religiosity in different ways.

Within the broad family of wellbeing measures, measures of personal happiness occupy a distinctive territory, distinct from other related constructs like the Satisfaction with

Life Scale (SWLS) proposed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) or the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) proposed by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005). Among the instruments concerned with the conceptualisation and measurement of happiness, a particularly prominent place is occupied by the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) proposed and documented by Argyle and Crossland (1987) and Argyle, Martin, and Crossland (1989). This instrument is grounded in a clear conceptualisation of happiness and a broad research foundation in the psychology of happiness (see Argyle, 1987). Argyle and Crossland (1987) suggested that happiness comprises three components: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety. Working from this definition, they developed the Oxford Happiness Inventory by reversing the twenty-one items of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Hock, & Erbaugh, 1961) and adding eleven further items to cover aspects of subjective wellbeing not so far included. Three items were subsequently dropped, leading to a twenty-nine item scale.

Each of the 29 items in the Oxford Happiness Inventory invited respondents to select one of four options. The incremental steps in these options are defined as unhappy or mildly depressed, a low level of happiness, a high level of happiness, and manic. Argyle, Martin, and Crossland (1989) reported an internal reliability of .90 using alpha (Cronbach, 1951), and a 7-week test-retest reliability of .78. The concurrent validity of .43 was established against happiness ratings by friends. Construct validity was established against recognised measures of the three hypothesised components of happiness showing correlations of .32 with the positive affect scale of the Bradburn Balanced Affect measure (Bradburn, 1969), -.52 with the Beck Depression Inventory, and .57 with Argyle's life satisfaction index.

A potential disadvantage of the Oxford Happiness Inventory concerns the space that it occupies in a questionnaire. Although this instrument comprises only 29 items, each item is

supported by four response options, requiring 116 lines of text in the questionnaire. Two modifications of the Oxford Happiness Inventory have been proposed, retaining the basic conceptual structure, but streamlining the response categories. These modifications are known as the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) and the Oxford Happiness Measure (Elken, Francis, & Robbins, 2010). Functional equivalence has been assumed among this family of three instruments. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire may be particularly appropriate for inclusion within clergy surveys alongside other measures.

### **Measuring personality**

A real strength of Rossetti's study is the inclusion of personality variables. In this study, drawing on items from the IPIP-NEO, neuroticism was measured by the items: I often feel blue; I rarely get irritated; I dislike myself; I seldom feel blue; I am often down in the dumps; I feel comfortable with myself; I have frequent mood swings; I am not easily bothered by things; I panic easily; I am very pleased with myself. Extraversion was measured by the items: I feel comfortable around people; I have little say; I make friends easily; I keep in the background; I am skilled in handling social situations; I would describe myself as somewhat dull; I am the life of the party; I don't like to draw attention to myself; I know how to captivate people; I don't talk a lot.

These two personality constructs of neuroticism and extraversion may be worthy of greater attention. Extraversion and neuroticism as factors or dimensions of personality are core to the two most enduring models of personality currently employed in international research, the Big Five Factor model associated with Costa and McCrae (1985) and the Three Major Dimensions model associated with Eysenck and Eysenck (1991). The Big Five Factor model is rooted in the USA and the Three Major Dimensions model is rooted in the UK. More recently extraversion and neuroticism have both been operationalised by the Francis

Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales as a development of the Francis Psychological Type Scales (Francis, 2005).

It is the work of Eysenck and his associates that has given the most attention to the conceptualisation of neuroticism and extraversion through the development of a sequence of instruments, including the Maudsley Personality Inventory (Eysenck, 1959) and as refined through the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964), the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). Although the later revisions expanded the model to include a third dimension of personality (psychoticism), the original two dimensions (extraversion and neuroticism) remained core to the Eysenckian model.

Eysenck's notion of neuroticism builds a bridge between normal psychology and psychopathology. The Eysenckian argument is that neurotic disorders are not discontinuous with normal personality but continuous with normal personality. According to this theoretical approach the Eysenckian neuroticism scales may locate individuals on a personality continuum from emotional stability through emotional lability to neurotic disorder. A similar case is made regarding Eysenck's third dimension of personality (labelled psychoticism). The Eysenckian psychoticism scales may locate individuals on a continuum from tendermindedness through toughmindedness to psychotic disorder (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976). Eysenck's notion of extraversion is not linked to notions of psychopathy.

In their test manual, Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) defined high scorers on the neuroticism scale as being anxious, worrying, moody, and frequently depressed individuals who are likely to sleep badly and to suffer from various psychosomatic disorders. They are seen as overly emotional, reacting too strongly to all sorts of stimuli, and finding it difficult to get back on an even keel after emotionally arousing experiences. Strong reactions interfere with their proper adjustment, making them react in irrational, sometimes rigid ways. Highly



neurotic individuals are worriers whose main characteristic is a constant preoccupation with things that might go wrong, and a strong reaction to these thoughts.

In the same test manual, Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) defined high scorers on the extraversion scale as being sociable individuals who like parties, have many friends, and need to have people to talk to. They do not like reading or studying alone. They crave excitement, take chances, often stick their necks out, act on the spur of the moment, and generally act impulsively. They are fond of practical jokes, tend to have a ready answer, and are carefree, easy-going and optimistic. They prefer to keep moving and to be doing things.

### **Personality and personal happiness**

Within the field of positive psychology personality variables are generally taken into account prior to wellbeing measures. In other words, the scientific interest is largely in exploring the extent to which personality predicts individual differences in wellbeing. Rossetti (2011), however, tended to employ the two measures of neuroticism and extraversion as control variables rather than as predictor variables in their own strength. It is of value however, to explore the extent to which the happiness of priests may be shaped by these fundamental aspects of personality. The theoretical framework for doing this is offered by Eysenck's own work.

During the 1980s Eysenck's (now classic) discussion of the psychology of happiness made the claim that happiness is located within the personality quadrant defined by stable extraversion. In one of his more popular writings, Eysenck made the simple claim:

Happiness is a thing called stable extraversion ... the positive affect in happiness seemed to be related to easy sociability, with a natural, pleasant interaction with other people, ... then it only makes sense that happiness can be associated with extraversion. Similarly, if worries and anxieties make up negative affect in

happiness, it can easily be seen that instability and neuroticism are also connected to unhappiness. (Eysenck, 1983, p.2)

Francis, Brown, Lester, and Philipchalk (1998) tested Eysenck's claim, using the Oxford Happiness Inventory together with the short form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised among 1,076 students drawn from Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA. Separate analyses on all four groups of students supported the claim. While not always specifically setting out to test Eysenck's claim, several other studies have also administered the Oxford Happiness Inventory alongside the Eysenckian measures of extraversion and neuroticism and reported similar findings, including studies based on: 131 undergraduates (Argyle & Lu, 1990), 101 students (Furnham & Brewin, 1990), 114 adults (Lu & Argyle, 1991), 95 student volunteers (Brebner, Donaldson, Kirby, & Ward, 1995), 145 women (Noor, 1996), 456 undergraduates (Francis, 1999), 120 students (Furnham & Cheng, 1999), 233 young people mainly recruited from the final year at school (Furnham & Cheng, 2000), 107 students (Chan & Joseph, 2000), 204 students (Cheng & Furnham, 2001), 244 adults (Hills & Argyle, 2001), 234 participants from schools and colleges (Cheng & Furnham, 2003), 870 students (Stewart, Ebmeier, & Deary, 2005), 438 pregnant women (Jayasvasti & Kanchanatawan, 2005), 120 adults (Furnham & Christoforou, 2007), 131 undergraduates (Robbins, Francis, & Edwards, 2010), three Australian samples of 1,002 secondary school students, 466 university students, and 494 adult churchgoers (Fisher & Francis, 2013), and among 284 Hebrew-speaking female undergraduate students (Francis, Yablon, & Robbins, 2014).

### **Measuring work-related psychological health**

Two different approaches to conceptualising and assessing poor work-related psychological health, or burnout, among religious leaders have been employed in recent published research. The model of burnout proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1996) and

assessed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory has been employed in studies reported by Evers and Tomic (2003), Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, and Rodgerson (2004), Raj and Dean (2005), Miner (2007a, 2007b) and Doolittle (2007), Chandler (2009), Joseph, Corveleyn, Luyten, and de Witte (2010), Buys and Rothmann (2010), Parker and Martin (2011), Joseph, Luyten, Corveleyn, and de Witte (2011), Rossetti (2011), Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2013), Herrera, Pedrosa, Galindo, Suárez-Álvarez, Villardón, and García-Cueto (2014), and Crea and Francis (2015).

Another set of studies has employed a modified form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory especially shaped to reflect the experiences of religious leaders by Rutledge and Francis (2004). This modified form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory has been employed in studies reported by Francis and Rutledge (2000), Francis, Loudon, and Rutledge (2004), Francis and Turton (2004a, 2004b), Randall (2004, 2007), Rutledge (2006), Turton and Francis (2007), and Francis, Turton, and Loudon (2007).

The model of burnout proposed by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005) and assessed by the Francis Burnout Inventory has been employed among religious leaders in studies reported by Francis, Wulff and Robbins (2008), Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, and Castle (2009), Robbins and Francis (2010), Brewster, Francis, and Robbins (2011), Francis, Gubb, and Robbins (2012), Robbins, Francis, and Powell (2012), Barnard and Curry (2012), Randall (2013a, 2013b, 2015), Francis, Robbins, and Wulff (2013a; 2013b), Robbins and Francis (2014), Francis Laycock and Brewster (2015), Sterland (2015), and Francis and Crea (2015).

The differences between the two models of burnout proposed by the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Francis Burnout Inventory are not only matters of conceptual and scientific interest. The differences between the two models carry implications for understanding the psychological dynamics of burnout and for proposing intervention of a remedial or

preventative nature. Maslach conceptualises and measures burnout in terms of three component constructs which are described as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and low personal accomplishment. According to Maslach's conceptualisation the relationship among these three components is sequential. According to this model emotional exhaustion is the lead and primary indicator of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1996). Emotional exhaustion then leads to depersonalisation, and depersonalisation leads to the loss of the sense of accomplishment. The strength of this model is that it generates theories regarding the progressive development of the symptoms of burnout. The weakness is that the model does not offer clear insights into remedial or preventative strategies. It may just not be easy to remove the causes of emotional burnout with which religious leaders are routinely faced day-by-day, especially in a social context in which the work loads of clergy increase while the human resources are decreasing in view of falling vocations.

Francis conceptualises and measures burnout in terms of two component constructs which are described as emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry. According to Francis' conceptualisation the relationship between these two components is described as one of balanced affect. The two components are not related sequentially but are viewed as contemporaneous and orthogonal. The notion of balanced affect has its roots in the classic theories of Bradburn (1969). According to Bradburn's theories positive affect and negative affect are not opposite poles of a single continuum but independent psychological phenomena. In this sense it is reasonable and possible for an individual to record both high levels of positive affect and high levels of negative affect. Within the Francis Burnout Inventory, positive affect is operationalised in terms of the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale and negative affect is operationalised in terms of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry. In this sense it is reasonable and possible for individual religious leaders to record both high levels of satisfaction in ministry and high levels of emotional exhaustion in ministry.

According to Bradburn's theories high levels of positive affect are able to offset high levels of negative affect. The strength of the model is that it generates theories about how the problems of poor work-related psychological health or burnout among religious leaders may be addressed in terms of remedial and preventative strategies. Even when it may not be possible to reduce the causes of emotional exhaustion in ministry, it may be possible to explore ways of compensating for high levels of emotional exhaustion by maximising strategies for enhancing the sense of satisfaction in ministry.

### **Research question**

Against this background, the aims of the present study are

- to test the internal consistency reliability of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire among Catholic priests and religious sisters in Italy;
- to explore what insights can be generated into the personal happiness of Catholic priests and religious sisters by their responses to the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire;
- to explore how much variance in the personal happiness scores of Catholic priests and religious sisters can be explained by their personality as operationalised by the extraversion and emotionality scales of the Francis Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales;
- to explore how the personal happiness of Catholic priests and religious sisters may impact their work-related psychological health.

### **Method**

#### **Procedure**

In the context of programmes operated in Rome for Catholic priests and religious sisters (who were broadly engaged in religious ministry within the community) on the topic of personality and spirituality, participants were invited to complete a questionnaire covering issues relevant to the programme. Participation in the programme was voluntary and

responses to the questionnaire were confidential and anonymous. Full data were provided by 156 participants (61 women and 95 men). Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome.

### **Participants**

The mean age of the 61 religious sisters was 50.6 years ( $SD = 13.5$ ), with a range between 24 and 74. The mean age of the 95 priests was 55.8 years ( $SD = 15.0$ ) with a range between 27 and 86. Of the total participants 33 were non-graduates and 123 were graduates, among whom 20 held doctoral level qualifications.

### **Measures**

*Work-related psychological health* was assessed by the two scales reported by the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI: Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, & Castle, 2005). This 22-item instrument comprises the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS). Each item was assessed on a five-point scale: ranging from agree strongly (5) to disagree strongly (1).

*Emotionality and extraversion* were assessed by the Francis Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales (FPTETS) a development of the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005). This is a 50-item instrument comprising five sets of 10 forced-choice items related to emotionality and to each of the four components of psychological type theory: orientation (extraversion and introversion), perceiving process (sensing and intuition), judging process (thinking and feeling), and attitude toward the outer world (judging and perceiving). Participants were asked for each pair of characteristics to check the 'box next to that characteristic which is closer to the real you, even if both characteristics apply to you. Tick the characteristic that reflects the real you, even if other people see you differently'.

*Personal happiness* was assessed by the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002). This is a 29-item measure. Each item was assessed on a six-point scale:

strongly disagree (1), moderately disagree (2), slightly disagree (3), slightly agree (4), moderately agree (5), and strongly agree (6).

### Results

- insert tables 1 and 2 about here -

The first step in data analysis explored the scale properties of the five instruments employed in the present analyses: the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry, the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale, the Emotionality Scale, and the Extraversion Scale. All five instruments record alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) in excess of the threshold proposed by DeVellis (2003).

Table 2 examines in greater detail the properties of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire as the core instrument employed in the present study. The correlations between each individual item and the sum of the other 28 items demonstrate a good fit for 25 of the 29 items, but draw attention to four items with correlations below .30. The internal consistency reliability could be improved by the removal of these items, and as a consequence they will not be included in the following narrative.

In order to generate the item endorsement statistics, all three positive responses (values 4, 5 and 6) were summed to generate the category 'yes', and all three negative responses (values 1, 2 and 3) were summed to generate the category 'no'. The endorsement of the positive items demonstrate that at least four out of every five priests agree that life is good (93%); that they are always committed and involved (92%); that they often experience joy and elation (90%); that they are intensely interested in other people (90%); that they are very happy (89%); that they feel life is very rewarding (86%); that they usually have a good influence on events (85%); that they feel fully mentally alert (84%); that they feel they have a great deal of energy (83%); that they are well satisfied about everything in their life (82%); that they always have a cheerful effect on others (82%); and that they have very warm

feelings toward almost everyone (79%). Other positive indicators of happiness were endorsed by lower proportions of the priests and religious sisters: that they laugh a lot (74%); that they can fit in everything they want to do (71%); that they find most things amusing (65%); and that they feel able to take anything on (52%).

The negatively phrased items also drew attention to further ways in which priests and religious sisters are distanced from happiness: that they do not have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in their life (9%); that they do not think that the world is a good place (12%); that they do not have fun with other people (13%); that they do not feel particularly healthy (24%); that they are not particularly optimistic about the future (26%); that they feel that they are not especially in control of their life (26%); that they do not have particularly happy memories of the past (27%); that they find there is a gap between what they would like to do and what they have done (31%); and that they do not find it easy to make decisions (47%).

- insert tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 about here -

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix between sex, age, personal happiness, satisfaction in ministry, emotional exhaustion in ministry, emotionality, and extraversion. Drawing on this pattern of correlations, tables 4, 5 and 6 present three regression models designed to test three specific research questions.

Regression model one (table 4) tests the hypothesis that both emotionality and extraversion serve as significant predictors of personal happiness, after sex and age have been taken into account. These data support Eysenck's (1983) fundamental hypothesis that higher levels of personal happiness are associated with stable extraversion.

Regression model two (table 5) tests the hypothesis that personal happiness serves as a significant predictor of higher levels of satisfaction in ministry, after sex, age, emotionality and extraversion have been taken into account. The data support this hypothesis. Regression



model three (table 6) tests the hypothesis that personal happiness serves as a significant predictor of lower levels of emotional exhaustion in ministry, after sex, age, emotionality and extraversion have been taken into account. The data support this hypothesis. Crucially these data suggest that taking personal happiness seriously may lower levels of emotional exhaustion and enhance levels of satisfaction in ministry, leading to better work-related psychological health among Catholic priests and religious sisters.

### **Conclusion**

Rossetti (2011) introduced to the field of clergy studies the psychological notion of ‘happiness’. This study set out to build on and to develop Rossetti’s initiative by formulating four clear research questions and by exploring these questions both conceptually and empirically, drawing on new data generated by a survey conducted among 156 Catholic priests and religious sisters in Italy.

The first research question began by exploring the two measures of happiness employed by Rossetti and by arguing that neither of these measures actually capture the richness of the psychological construct of happiness. The first measure was the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). As the name of the instrument suggests, while the instrument belongs to the broad field of wellbeing, its focus is on satisfaction with life, rather than with happiness *per se*. The second measure was a two-item index concerned with the experience of priesthood. Here is a measure of work-related wellbeing rather than a measure of happiness *per se*. The first research question then proposed testing the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) to examine whether the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the psychological construct of happiness functioned with good internal consistency reliability among Catholic priests and religious sisters. The new data reported good qualities of internal consistency reliability.

The second research question explored the insights that can be generated into the personal happiness of priests and religious sisters by examining their responses to the 29 individual items of the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. Overall the new data confirmed that there were signs of high levels of personal happiness among priests and religious sisters. Yet at the same time the more detailed analysis of the psychological construct of happiness identified areas in which the personal happiness of priests and religious sisters was more vulnerable.

The third research question engaged with the broader research literature concerning the extent to which individual difference in personal happiness can be seen as a function of basic personality differences. Drawing on theory proposed by Eysenck (1983) and supported by a series of studies among other populations (see Fisher & Francis, 2013) the specific question was explored regarding how much variance in the personal happiness score of Catholic priests and religious sisters can be explained by their personality as operationalised by the extraversion and emotionality scales of the Francis Psychological Type and Emotional Temperament Scales. The new data confirmed that higher levels of personal happiness were associated with stable extraversion.

The fourth research question explored how the personal happiness of Catholic priests and religious sisters may impact their work-related psychological health. The specific model proposed suggested that the basic personality factors of emotionality and extraversion impact both personal happiness and work-related psychological health as operationalised by the balanced affect model operationalised within the Francis Burnout Inventory (Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, & Castle, 2005). The new data confirmed that stable extraversion predicted not only higher happiness scores, but also higher scores of satisfaction in ministry and lower scores of emotional exhaustion in ministry. Additionally, however, after taking emotionality and

extraversion into account, personal happiness accounted for significant additional variance in both satisfaction in ministry scores and emotional exhaustion in ministry scores.

It is this fourth research finding that offers new and original insight into the work-related psychological health of Catholic priests and religious sisters by demonstrating potential causal pathways from personality, through personal happiness, to work-related psychological health. The new finding suggests that psychological factors (personality and personal happiness) may be core to explaining individual differences in the work-related psychological health of Catholic priests and religious sisters. The important point, however, concerns the different status of the psychological constructs defined as personality variables and as personal happiness. Theory suggests that personality may be a fundamental human givenness (see Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976). Personal happiness, however, is a construct more open to influence and to modification. Those working with the personal and psychological development and formation of Catholic priests and religious sisters may be encouraged from these data to work on the promotion of personal happiness prior to trying to address the prevailing issues of low satisfaction in ministry and high emotional exhaustion. If ways can be found to enable Catholic priests and religious sisters to affirm higher levels of personal happiness, the model suggests that high levels of emotional exhaustion may subside, and low levels of satisfaction in ministry may rise.

The clear limitations with the present study concern the low sample size ( $N = 156$ ), and as a consequence the failure to be able to distinguish clearly between the Catholic priests and the religious sisters, and the concentration solely on a sample recruited within Italy. The findings, however, may be of sufficient importance to justify the replication and extension of this original study.

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Table 1

*Scale properties*

	N Items	$\alpha$	M	SD
Oxford Happiness Questionnaire	29	.88	128.7	16.7
Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry	11	.85	22.7	6.7
Satisfaction in Ministry Scale	11	.88	44.0	6.2
Emotionality Scale	10	.71	3.5	2.3
Extraversion Scale	10	.74	5.1	2.5

Table 2

*The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: Item rest-of-test correlations and item endorsement*

	r	yes %	no %
I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am*	.26	28	72
I am intensely interested in other people	.43	90	10
I feel that life is very rewarding	.52	86	14
I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone	.61	79	21
I rarely wake up feeling rested*	.19	33	67
I am not particularly optimistic about the future*	.53	26	74
I find most things amusing	.54	65	35
I am always committed and involved	.36	92	8
Life is good	.62	93	7
I do not think that the world is a good place*	.30	12	88
I laugh a lot	.50	74	26
I am well satisfied about everything in my life	.67	82	18
I don't think I look attractive*	.26	29	71
There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done*	.42	31	69
I am very happy	.56	89	11
I find beauty in some things	.08	88	12
I always have a cheerful effect on others	.57	82	18
I can fit in everything I want to do	.43	71	29
I feel that I am not especially in control of my life*	.32	26	74
I feel able to take anything on	.44	52	48
I feel fully mentally alert	.65	84	16
I often experience joy and elation	.65	90	10
I do not find it easy to make decisions*	.40	47	53
I do not have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life*	.35	9	91
I feel I have a great deal of energy	.47	83	17
I usually have a good influence on events	.44	85	15
I do not have fun with other people*	.38	13	87
I don't feel particularly healthy*	.41	24	76
I do not have particularly happy memories of the past*	.34	27	73

\* These items are reverse coded to generate correlations

Table 3

*Correlation matrix*

	sex	age	Extr	Emot	SEEM	SMIS
Personal happiness (OHQ)	-.15	.05	.31***	-.45***	-.59***	.61***
Satisfaction in Ministry (SIMS)	-.11	.09	.05	-.39***	-.57***	
Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM)	.10	-.24**	-.15	.40***		
Emotionality (Emot)	.23**	-.10	-.09			
Extraversion (Extr)	.01	-.05				
Age	-.18*					

Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$



Table 4

*Regression model one: Personal happiness*

	$r^2$	increase			beta	$t$	$p <$
		$r^2$	$F$	$p <$			
Sex	.02	.02	3.42	NS	.07	.98	NS
Age	.03	.01	0.91	NS	-.09	-1.28	NS
Emotionality	.21	.19	35.74	.001	-.42	-5.84	.001
Extraversion	.29	.07	15.40	.001	.27	3.92	.001

Table 5

*Regression model two: Satisfaction in ministry*

	$r^2$	increase			beta	$t$	$p <$
		$r^2$	$F$	$p <$			
Sex	.01	.01	1.73	NS	-.03	-0.52	NS
Age	.02	.01	0.80	NS	.10	1.63	NS
Emotionality	.16	.14	25.31	.001	-.13	-1.87	NS
Extraversion	.16	.00	0.08	NS	-.14	-2.16	.05
Personal happiness	.42	.26	66.29	.001	.60	8.14	.001

Table 6

*Regression model three: Emotional exhaustion in ministry*

	$r^2$	increase			beta	$t$	$p <$
		$r^2$	$F$	$p <$			
Sex	.01	.01	1.45	NS	.06	1.00	NS
Age	.06	.05	8.27	.01	-.26	-4.17	.001
Emotionality	.20	.14	26.16	.001	.14	1.96	.05
Extraversion	.21	.02	2.86	NS	.03	0.45	NS
Personal happiness	.44	.22	59.36	.001	-.56	-7.71	.001