The Role of Motivational Persistence and Resilience Over the Well-being Changes Registered in Time[1]

Cristina Maria Bostan

Abstract: The present study investigates the interaction between personal characteristics that are considered nowadays strengths used to face difficult events or transition period. A number of 200 married or living together participants completed self-reports for common goals, motivational persistence, resilience and well-being. Results show that persistence and resilience do interact with each other at an individual level but also from a family concept perspective. Moreover, maintaining a positive outlook and family spirituality do have an impact over the intensity and direction of the relationship between long term purposes pursuing (LTPP) and recurrence of unattained purposes (RUP) and changes in well-being registered in time. Resiliency as a personal characteristic and family resilience show good psychometric qualities for this study. Although some of the results are descriptive, in-depth analyses of direction and intensity of the relationships lead the final conclusions to suggestions for further research and implications for psychological practice.

Keywords: motivational persistence, resilience, well-being, long term purposes pursuing, recurrence of unattained purposes

Motivational Persistence and Family Resilience – The Impact of the Interaction Over the Dynamic Changes in a Couple

The research is concentrating on how do partners of a married couple or living together define, pursue and attain common goals on long-term basis. In order to understand the complexity of the process that underlies the long-term changes in well-being, self-determination theory is used as a theoretical background and methods pertaining to those of self-concordance model are adapted. Additionally, goal oriented personality characteristics (motivational persistence) and dyadic dynamics and functionality (adjustment, communication, power, cohesion, solving

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problems and emotional dependency) are analyzed for their impact on individual well-being changes. In order to enhance control, efforts are made to standardize personal subjective measures through indicators like the following: behavioral, emotional, objective, reflexive, accidental, intentional, prevention or supportive that are usually used to identify success in attaining common goals.

The project approaches this topic by taking into consideration the self-concordance model (Sheldon and Elliot 1999), given the idea that the *self* is considered to be a relative stable mental construct that has the ability to take control over the organism and to enhance the intensity of personal well-being. There are several studies that show the difference between men and women in what concerns the goal congruency of gender roles (Diekman and Eagly 2008; Oettingen and Gollwitzer 2001) but there is little information about how defining common goal affects well-being of the partners, over time.

Motivational persistence is considered to be a stable characteristic of the conative system, the predisposition of a person to motivationally persist with effort in order to attain a personal goal, finding personal resources to overcome the encountered obstacles along the way (Constantin 2008).

Referring to the pursuing of a personal goal, researchers consider that in order to attain a goal and to get an adjusted level of change in well-being, there are some requirements that need to be taken into consideration: a) localization of the goal on an internalization continuum, thus understanding b) the capacity to actively bring sustained effort in the achievement of the goal, c) to satisfy one`s psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness in order to experience well-being (Sheldon and Elliot 1999).

The extended research of self-determination theory is also known for its practical use especially because it involves different aspects of the emotional dynamics and its relationship with well-being, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative perspectives. For example, authors show in their studies that there is a significant association between well-being and emotional willingness to rely on the support of others although it involves a negative aspect, the one of emotional dependency (Ryan et al. 2005). Moreover, recent research also pays attention to the 'darker side' of human existence, when psychological needs are not fulfilled, because "it can lead to defensive or self-protective accommodations (e.g. the development of controlling regulatory styles, compensatory motives or need substitutes and rigid behavior patterns)" (Bartholomew et al. 2011).

The history of the motivational persistence concept is one of controversy because of different paradigms of understanding and contradictory results for practice. For example, results of a study

(Haywood et al. 2008) show that for routine tasks motivation is good, meaning that someone will have a higher efficiency, but for learning tasks, that hold a high rate of complexity, motivation has a negative effect, it decreases performance.

Therefore, theoretical perspectives of this concept are absolutely necessary because motivation is also a regulatory human mechanism of all other psychological processes, being dynamic (Schultheiss and Wirth 2008). The paradigms used to explain the understanding of this concept make people aware that persistence has more than one side, being actually a multidimensional concept. Therefore, motivational persistence is considered to be a relatively stable characteristic of a person and defined as a person`s predisposition to motivationally persist, in order to attain his personal goal and the capacity to find personal resources in order to overcome possible obstacles along the way (Constantin 2008).

A study referring to personality dynamics and the complexity of persistence describes two criteria that are specific to persistence and that differentiate it from other concepts like performance and the direction of an activity (Feather 1962). As is can be seen below, the indicators for persistence are quantitative, there is no description for subjective experience of this concept.

a) The frequency a person tried to solve a task before they abandon and switch to a different task

b) Temporality – how long a person tries to solve a task

In the same study, the author reveals three types of studies for persistence: a) studies that concentrate their analyses over persistence as being a trait, meaning that it is stable over time; b) studies referring to the resistance of people when faced adversity and c) studies that see persistence as a motivational phenomenon, and investigate it on the one hand from the perspective of contextual factors and, on the other hand from the perspective of individual differences. For example, results of a study concerning the influence of motivation show that motivation is a good predictor for performance, but that there is need for introducing other relevant variables, because this influence is rather small (13%) (Bucur 2011). Motivational theories that refer to attained success or results attained by someone are usually drawing a personality profile in which perseverance is present, but also a realist attitude, the hope to have success and a high level for the ideal self (Jabeen and Khan 2013).

Self-determination theory mentions often how important is for a goal to be personally chosen and to really represent one's self, thus the person being motivated to achieve it (Vallerand, Fortier and Guay 1997; Grant 2008; Calvo et al. 2010). The theory is even more than an explanation for personal achievements, persistence, but also for

functionality and well-being, meaning that it is fundamental for the understanding of personal development, for what motivates him and what makes him happy (Deci and Ryan 2008; Gagne and Deci 2005).

Motivational persistence is one of the relatively stable personal characteristics and also represents a resource for a person. Very similar to this concept but more dynamic is family resilience. As a concept, family resilience is actually one of the strongest factors in a family system (Walsh 2012), being also the one that is sustained through the functionality of the communication processes, sharing values and behavioral transfer (DeHaan, Hawley and Deal 2002). For example, results of a longitudinal study regarding family activities show that adolescents that have lunch with their parents are happier, meaning that they have greater scores for well-being (Musick and Meier 2011).

Family resilience is a dynamic process through which not only instrumental activities but also the ones that are used for achieving personal goals can be sustained in time. It is an important cause for experiencing a greater level of well-being at a personal level. Moreover, in case of difficulties, family routine, rituals, and also traditions (Ward and Belanger 2010) can support in time the process of persisting in achieving goals and can easily facilitate surpassing periods of transitions, integrating them as a personal meaning. In other words, if motivational persistence represents a resistance resource in front of the obstacles, trying to achieve the goals, in the case of common goals it can be assumed that the process of resilience has an impact over the relationship between motivational persistence and well-being.

Regarding the psychological process of motivation and resiliency, results of studies converge. For example, in a study on academic performance of high school students, results show that there are no differences concerning their academic success, but there were identified four themes that contribute to the stimulations of student to have higher grades: 1) persistent and determined involvement from parents; 2) establishing rules and personal discipline; 3) parents focusing on affection, support, communication and modelling the child; 4) cohesion and resources from the community (Salley-Delois 2005). Moreover, resilience is seen as an ability that can be trained, especially in an educational setting, being also responsible for managing stress and pressure from school successfully (Martin and Marsh 2003). Persistence is described here as a predictor for resilience.

As an individual characteristic, resiliency is clearly a strategy, a protective factor which people use when they encounter major difficulties or critical incidents. In other words, resilience is not a personal trait, but more of a personal strategy that can be built through positive and adaptive

cultivation of other personal characteristics – emotions and personality traits.

Strategies to face adversities represent a resourceful component for a romantic relationship, in the sense that sometimes there are difficult situations that are approached as a dyad, not just individually. Partners use aspects that are strongly connected to how they understand the concept of „living together", society, common financial resources, relationship with the ones around them, values or principles that they respect. Actual tendencies of therapeutically interventions and describing intimate relationships have gone beyond emphasizing negative aspects (violence, unhealthy habits, deteriorated psychological background of one or both partners) to highlighting strengths of a relationship (engagement, involvement, the tendency to focus on solutions) (Schwartz and Nichols 2000). Early approaches of concepts similar to family resilience (Walsh 2003) state that this is one of the resources that families can use when facing hard times and this can also strengthen the relationship and bring new ways of dealing with critical events. Moreover, Walsh (Sixbey-Tucker 2005) describes resilience as interfering also in the process of relationship development over time.

The main idea is provocative because it brings more data for this motivation theory that is being studied for more than twenty years and supports the idea that people try to fulfill three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence (Ryan and Deci 2000). These are actually motivated actions and for which a person manages to sustain effort and invest pleasure (Ryan and Deci 2000). Moreover, satisfying one`s psychological need is also involved in the commitment process for attaining personal goals because it ensures a safe and trusted environment where one can evolve and on which one rely (Deci and Ryan 2008).

Evolution of Subjective Well-being in Couple in Regard to Common Goals

The majority of researchers tend to define and understand personal goals as psychological elements that affect the directions of well-being in time and describe them as following:

a) Self-concordance with one`s choices made for the future and a clear involvement of past experiences and parental style that the person grew up with, but also personal beliefs adopted in time (Sheldon and Elliot 1999). Moreover, this could be an important explanation because it clearly distinguishes between goals chosen independently, suggested by other people or established through social contexts. In other words, this perspective highlights an important aspect for practitioners – people invest different amounts of effort depending on the

goal. This could also be the explanation for giving up personal goals that someone choses or for the personal pace toward achieving that goal.

b) Localizing the concept on an abstract continuum that differentiates between daily tasks, personal striving, personal projects, personal plans, personal goals on short term and personal goals on long-terms (Heckhausen and Heckhausen 2008). This perspective is found on studies specific to personality psychology (Emmons and McAdams 1991). This perspective describes elements that are directed towards a goal as being typical activities that individuals do, suggesting the term of personal strivings. Localized at a middle point of an abstract continuum, strivings are more restrained than implicit motives and yet more extended and more stable than goals or specific plans. This concept is suggested in order to evaluate personal goals, the difference between them being that some of them represent values and the interest of the self and others do not, thus achieving them could determine the level of subjective well-being (Sheldon and Elliot 1999).

c) An economic perspective, through which personal goals can explain a large variety of human behaviors, can predict human behavior and can influence values, affective states, efficacy and efficiency of someone (Moskowitz and Grant 2009). Thus, this perspective explains goals as a motivational process that can direct thoughts and human behavior.

d) Researchers more interested in a cognitive approach adopt a practical definition for personal goals that describes the dependence type of relationship between them (Fishbach and Ferguson 2007). More specific, they try to understand what goals are, their characteristics as operations and how they interact with each other. The authors emphasize the part of goals as cognitive mental representations that has an impact over evaluation processes, affective processes, over behaviors and over the unconscious behavior that can activate and influence a person. In other words, authors support the idea that a personal goal has a relationship with mental representations regarding the other person and that this could influence human behavior unconsciously, sabotaging its intentions and efficient plans for the future. Moreover, the relationship that a persons has with someone could activate a mental representation that could be an irrational belief, leading thus to dysfunctional behaviors or to the formation of a new goal. Thus, personal goals, like cognitive mental

representations are involved deeply in the structure and the content of how someone interprets different experiences and how they feel about them.

e) Linguistic and historical perspectives refer to clarifying the lack of consensus at a definitional level (Elliot and Fryer 2008). Etymologically, the word goal has the meaning of direction, limit / boarder or specific end. Also, at a historical level, the concept of goal brings the idea of giving meaning to someone`s life and actions. Finally, the mentioned authors suggest taking into consideration five characteristics for defining personal goals: a) they are focused on an object (ex. entity, experience, characteristic); b) are used to guide behavior or to direct it; c) they are directed towards the future; d) they are internally represented and e) they can be represented on an avoidance-approach continuum – choice or commitment for pursuing and achieving goals. Even if there is an infinite number of cognitive representations, they become goals when someone has decided to follow them, to pursue them, to direct their efforts toward achieving them. All the other representations are objects that are desired to be approached or avoided, wishes, fantasies or possible goals.

Although there is a clear tendency in the literature to reject the idea of understanding goals as internal representations of a desired state (Austin and Vancouver 1996), this perspective is the only one that connects the self from an unconscious level to a conscious one, meaning that it gives a practical explanation regarding the failure to complete some of the chosen goals or why for some goals there is need for more effort and how this determines a smaller level of well-being that can become sources of energy and make positive states to be more intense. Personal goals understood as internal representations can facilitate the connection between personality factors, the stable structure of a person`s behavioral tendencies and their actions from the present. This type of perspective facilitates the process of observing the changes registered due to stable predisposition of someone. Other authors suggest that through meta-analytical studies can be observed the strong connection between types of personalities and well-being, meaning that some traits (e.g. extraversion) predict the stability of well-being in time (Steel, Schmidt, and Shultz 2008). Moreover, there is even a stronger connection between the two variables also because, at an operational level, much of the traits are differentiated by affective states (e.g. anxiety, anger).

In the same time, even if there are more levels to consider – biological, genetic, sociological, economical or psychological, personal goals

are often used in daily life at an individual level and at a dyad or group levels. In a romantic relationship, most people come with a new perspective that involves both partners, thus defining a new system with two levels. Plans made for the future are something common that influences well-being at an individual level, as well as at a dyad level. In this context, the distinction between the two of them is necessary, doubled by an update at a theoretical and empirical level that includes not only personal factors but also aspects present in the dynamic of couple relationships like solving problems, communication patterns, negotiation process and family strategies used to transit the couple from a stage to another that could be described by emotional or affective tension. Pursuing personal goals and social relationships can be investigated more clearly at an individual level and studies show that these factors influence each other in a complex manner (Fitzimons and Finkel 2010).

Most of the people live their lives and make decisions hoping that things will bring positive states and they wish to have their lives as closest as possible to their own ideals; thus practitioners are used to suggest a set of good practices in making them aware of the interdependence of this factors that contribute or not to subjective well-being (Sheldon and Hoon 2006; Mehl et al. 2010). Most of the researchers suggest that pursuing goals is very important in order to experience a high level of well-being (Moberly and Watkins 2010; Hofer and Chasiotis 2003) and others suggest that social relatedness has an even greater impact over well-being because partners have the tendency to try and solve each other`s problems (Gere and MacDonald in press; Gere et al. 2013).

Common goals are pursued even in social contexts. People pursue their personal goals being in the company of others and those that are in a couple relationship pursue their common goals. Couple relationship facilitates pursuing common goals in the boarders of that relationship but they also influence following individual goals and the level of congruence or conflict between these has an impact over the quality and the process of achieving them (Fitzimons and Finkel 2010). Studies show that the presence of others influences one`s choice of starting to pursue a goal, meaning that they can be stimulated or inhibited in the presence of others, thus influencing also the rhythm of how these are pursued. Moreover, the presence of others can quickly activate a goal and thus fulfilling it without even being conscious about it (Fitzsimons and Bargh 2003). Results from these data also show that the presence of other people could influence the efficacy of goal pursuing (Finkel et al. 2006).

At a theoretical level, literature takes into consideration the indices of congruence between personal goals of the partners of a couple, concluding that pursuing goals affects the quality of the relationship, meaning that the level of cohesion and intimacy has an impact over

individual well-being (Gere 2012). Moreover, results also suggest that if someone is involved in very close relationships and if that person considers that a goal is difficult to attain, the other person will also have similar evaluation about the difficulty of the goal (Shah 2003).

The relationship between goals and the dyad is not unidirectional, researchers suggesting that people tend to evaluate the level of closeness with their partner or the level of intimacy also depending on whether this fulfills an instrumental role for reaching the goal (Fitzsimons and Fishbach 2010; Fitzsimons and Shah 2008), meaning that when a person fulfills daily tasks that can lead to the attainment the partner`s goal, they will feel more close with the partner. In other words, if one of the partners feels supported by the other in attaining their personal goals, they will want to spend more time together and they will feel involved and close. Thus, personal goals are involved in the quality of the relationship, researchers suggesting that the pursuit of the goals that are characterized on an approach-avoidance continuum could lead to different effects (Impett and Gordon 2008). Thus, the relationship benefits from the approach goals because they are evaluated positively and desirably. The avoidance goals are negatively evaluated and considered to overload the relationship and distress every person. The goals that are positively evaluated are those concentrating on receiving rewards, enhancing the level of intimacy in a relationship, and the goals that are negatively evaluated are those that need to be avoided (e.g. possible fight, violence) (Gable 2006). Other researches show that approach goals are those associated positively with involvement in a greater number of events, a greater relational satisfaction and a higher frequency in positive emotions and that, in the case of avoidance goals, people associate them with deep feelings of loneliness, low relational satisfaction, high anxiety, negative emotions and strong relational conflict (Impett et al. 2010).

Examining the effects that a partner has over goals, Gere (2012) resumes the beneficial effects that goals might have both on the individual level and on the relationship – the partners experience more positive emotions and a greater level of relational satisfaction. Moreover, goals that are centered on compassion can enhance the benefits for the other partner, especially if the partner dedicates in supporting the other. Goals that are associated with the self-image are negatively associated with the level of closeness between partners because this type of goals usually means that one of the partners feels the need to show competency and wants to make a good impression. This type of goals tend to lead to a hostile attitude from the other and thus to a low level of compassion.

Rusbult and Van Lange (2008) suggest the understanding of congruence between personal goals through the theory of interdependence, meaning that two people take a decision depending on

the interests of the other person. Thus, the higher the level of congruence between the interest of the partners, the lower the level of conflict. This case excludes the fact that there are couples that are searching for their common interest, looking to decide which goal will be pursued and to invest considerable effort to fulfill them. When the partner`s interests are not associated positively it is possible that a power process will be activated, thus leading to conflict. Moreover, it is also possible that one of the partners will cease to take power and turn toward personal goals that can make him experience positive emotions, thus spending less time with the partner.

This perspective takes into consideration the way personal goals are pursued in time, but excludes the future plans of the couple. This perspective is a different social dimension on which processes of communication, negotiation and solving problems rely. At a dyad level, relational dynamic is intense and has a more alert rhythm and Walsh (2012) describes some of the most important processes:

a) Communication process in the dyad is often the most important part because communication pattern, personal style in communicating and how we communicate do have an impact over the well-being state of the couple.

b) Family emotional process describe the complexity of patterns between partners, children and extended family. In order to face tension and anxiety, families use four mechanisms. One of them refers to emotional distance that could activate an even greater interpersonal distance between the partners. Conflict is the second mechanism that people use to face anxiety. Transferring the problem to one of the family members is another way of dealing with emotional reactivity but the problem is that members become more vulnerable into developing symptoms specific to dysfunctional behaviors. One of the partner`s dysfunction is another way to compensate the tension within couple, one of them developing negative behaviors and affective overload.

c) Emotional cease is used in order to deal with fusion or absence, thus members distance from each other and become emotional separate. A person who becomes more involved but is emotionally distant becomes more vulnerable to develop diseases, depression or impulsive behaviors. Although anxiety is low, the partners do not develop efficient methods of solving problems, thus leading to a superficial relationship.

The couple is defined often as a bipolar structure based on mutual dependence, a compact element for the society and also cognitively because they have to align their directions in order to find the common ones (Turliuc 2004). Marital relationships occupy a special status because people build and maintain a social reality (Custer 2009).

In the actual context, contemporaneous perspectives on marriage are based on the happiness that two partners share, but many clinical interviews have emphasized that happiness is not equally represented for the partners, meaning that there are different perceptions about aspects of their life, about the level of satisfaction with their marriage, the perception over the level of financial contribution or family well-being (Turliuc 2004). At a theoretical level they differ through evaluation methods used to explain these concepts. Thus, marital satisfaction represents the global feeling about marriage or marital happiness, marital adjustment being considered a goal of the partners and including the need to develop abilities like conflict management and understanding communication styles. Additionally, terms like marital disharmony, marital dissatisfaction, marital distress or marital dysfunction were used along the studies in order to describe low levels of happiness in couples, but they differ from marital dissolution which refers to separation or divorce (Lawrence et al. 2009).

Studies referring to young, middle and old couples demonstrated that satisfaction forms a classic curve in the shape of a 'U,' researchers showing that satisfaction and happiness goe into a decline after the first age of marriage until it reaches the middle age and it is maintained once people are aging (Stutzer and Frey 2006). The main reason for this type of relationship lies on motives like: the absence of children, household responsibilities that are not shared equally, personal and professional unbalance or raising a child with many problems. Other studies conclude that people that are married are happier, healthier, they live longer and they report a higher level of sexual satisfaction than those that are alone, divorced or living in cohabitation (Le Poire 2005). Moreover, the same study shows that it is less likely that they take moral risks, they have more healthy habits and they have more social support from the extended family and a greater social network.

Methods

Procedure

Partners of the same couple are asked to define 3 to 4 common projects (N=200) for a period of time of 12 months. Several interviews with both partners of the same couple are conducted in order to establish what a common goal means. A common goal means that both partners choose to

follow the same goal or plan that they both established. The study is quantitative and uses self-report for assessing personal characteristics. All the participants completed the self-report on paper.

Evaluation of personal characteristics and goal concordance is assessed in the first phase. In the following period, every 3 months, a monitoring phase occurs, when partners are asked about their goals, how far they feel they have achieved them, which are already attained or abandoned. An important aspect concerns the type of dyad, meaning that at this study participants are married or living together for at least 2 years and they do not have children.

Goal of the Study

Taking into consideration the theoretical background of the concepts but also that of personal goals, the present study focuses on designing a predictive model using moderation effect. Although until now the research tendency was to consider persistence as an effect (e.g. studies referring to performance), in the present study the main goal is to see how these concepts interact, especially because it is about personal resources that influence the direction of well-being in time. The present study seeks to approach differently the process of describing, attaining and pursuing common goals in time, meaning to emphasize the role of the personality factors involved in this process and especially their effect over changes in well-being experienced in time. More specifically, the study analyses in what way the interaction between motivational persistence and family resilience affects changes in well-being over time.

The directions of the study are the following:
- Analyzing the psychometric qualities of the instruments used in the study.
- Investigating the impact of individual characteristics - motivational persistence, dyad dynamics and family resilience over time in what concerns the changes of the well-being.
- Representing graphically the interaction between the two variables.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The main question of the study is understanding in what conditions persistence leads to changes in well-being over time. In other words, the assumption is that:
  a) There is a moderate significant relationship between motivational persistence and changes in well-being over time;

b) As the value of family resilience score increases, the relationship between motivational persistence and changes in well-being over time increases.

Instruments

Some of the most important measures that are used, besides the procedure of defining common goals, are the following:

The PMS is a 24-item scale that measures motivational persistence, understood as the predisposition of a person to invest effort in order to achieve a selected goal, finding the personal resources to overcome the obstacles, fatigue, stress and others distractors. The use of a five point Likert scale (from '*very low degree*' to '*very high degree*') provides insight for three key factors: 'long term purposes pursuing' (LTPP), 'current purposes pursuing' (CPP), and 'recurrence of unattained purposes' (RUP). The internal consistency of the scales on a Romanian representative sample (N=1,636) calculated for the equivalence of 15 to 24 item is as follows: for LTTP the consistency varies from .807 to .777, for CPP it varies between .742 to .777 and for RUP it varies between .736 for a 7-item factor and .759 alpha consistency coefficient for a 6-item solution (Constantin, Holman, and Hojbotă 2011).

The FRAS instrument with 54 items that are loaded into six factors measures the concept of family resilience, understood as the ability to recover from adversity stronger, more resourceful and also to forge transformative personal and relationship growth (Walsh 2012). Family resilience as measured here refers to the family ability to actively bounce back after experiencing a crisis or challenge, strengthen and more resourceful to meet the challenges of life (Sixbey-Tucker 2005). The six subscales are displayed on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and described below:

a) Family communication and problem solving (FCPS) refers to the family`s ability to convey information, feelings and facts clearly and openly while recognizing problems and carrying out solutions. The scale consists of 27 items with a satisfactory reliability index.

b) Utilizing social and economic resources (USER) refers to the external and internal norm allowing a family to carry out day-to-day tasks by identifying and utilizing resources (e.g. helpful family members, community systems, neighbors). The scale consists of 8 items with an alpha Cronbach above .80.

c) Maintaining a positive outlook (MPO) refers to the family ability to organize around a distressing event with the belief that

there is hope for the future and persevering to make the most out of their option. The scale consists of 6 items.

d) Family connectedness (FC) refers to the ability of family members to organize and bond together for support while still recognizing individual differences. There are 6 items for this scale and it has good reliability indices.

e) Family spirituality (FS) refers to use of a larger belief system to provide guiding system and help to define lives as meaningful and significant. The subscale consisted of 4 items.

f) Ability to make meaning of adversity (AMMA) refers to family members` ability to incorporate the adverse event into their lives while seeing their reactions as understandable in relation to the event. There are 3 items in this subscale.

The Brief Scale Resilience consists of 5 items adapted from the original version of 6 items (Smith, et al. 2008), it ranges on a five point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and is manly used in order to assess the ability to bounce back or recover from stress.

The 20-item *Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale* (PANAS) comprises two scales available for both positive and negative affect and are measured from 1 (very little extent) to 5 (very much) and shows good internal consistency, ranging from .86 to .90 for the positive affect scale and from .84 to .87 for the negative affect scale (Watson, Clark and Tellegen 1988). The instrument was chosen because of its international use, its fidelity and its validity (Crawford and Henry 2004) and, the most important reason, because it can be used for a chosen period of time, depending on the chosen design or practical psychological utility.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985) is a short 5-item scale that assesses global cognitive judgment about satisfaction with one`s life. In the present study this scale is used to finally compute a total score of well-being.

Several general questions were used in order to assess the common goals of the romantic partners: importance, value of the goal, commitment, anticipated effort, difficulty, clarity or impact of success.

Results

1. Psychometric Qualities of the Instruments Used in the Study

Although Motivational Persistence Scale has proven to be reliable and stable loading into three factors, the reliability analysis showed a 2-item solution for the factor named 'long term purpose pursuing' with an alpha Cronbach coefficient of .553 and small correlation between the items

(r=.392). The other two factors are reliable, each of them having a satisfactory alpha Cronbach coefficient: a) the current purpose pursuing alpha Cronbach calculated for 3 items is .718 and b) the recurrence of unattained purposes with alpha Cronbach computed for 4 items is .615.

Regarding Family resilience scale, alpha Cronbach indices are good and only two subscales suffered modification in their final number of items, as following: a) Alpha for family communication and solving problems is .913; b) Alpha for utilizing social and economic resources is .809; c) Alpha for maintaining a positive outlook subscale is .686 and just 1 item was eliminated from the final solution; d) Alpha for family connectedness is .635 but only 3 items are in the final subscale; e) Alpha for family spirituality subscale is .729 and f) Alpha for ability to make meaning of adversity subscale is .639.

The Brief Scale of Resilience structure was analyzed in order to check whether it is just one factor or it is the case of multiple factors. Results show that items load into one factor, as it can be seen also in the graphic.

Graph 1. Cattel`s Criterium
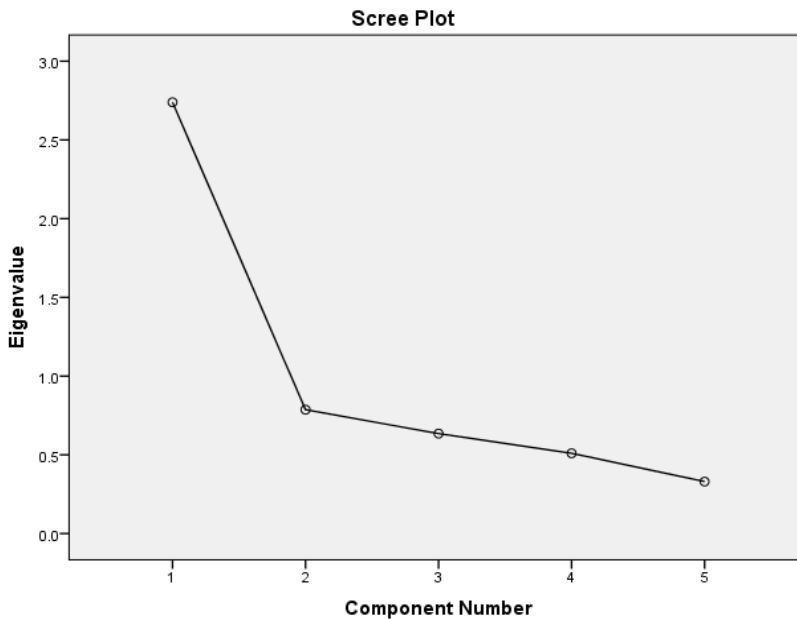
According to Field (2009) there are some conditions to consider when analyzing the factorial structure:

a) The significance values of correlations should be under 0.05 and the correlation coefficients should be smaller than 0.9 because of singularity problems in the data.
b) The determinant size should be greater than 0.00001, otherwise multicollinearity problems could arise.

The analysis assumed that there is just one factor, as presented in model of the instrument proposed (Smith et al. 2008). The correlation matrix of the scale fulfills these conditions, significance values are .001 and none of the items needs to be eliminated. The results are shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Factorial Structure Analysis for the Brief Scale of Resilience
Correlation Matrix for 5 items

		Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4
Correlation	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard time				
	I have a hard time making it through stressful events	.432			
	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event	.339	.389		
	I usually come through difficult times with little trouble	.362	.467	.532	
	I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life	.253	.558	.546	.434
Determinant	= .230				

Furthermore, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value is good and is greater than 0.5 (KMO =.753) meaning that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and thus the factor is reliable. Bartlett`s test is highly significant (p < 0.001) and therefore factor analysis is appropriate. The Eingenvalue of the factor is greater than 1 and it explains more than 54% of the total variance of the entire model matrix. Reliability analysis shows that the resilience scale is trustworthy, with a .779 alpha Cronbach coefficient.

2. Investigating the Impact of Individual Characteristics and the Interaction Between Motivational Persistence and Resilience

The main assumption is that personal characteristics like motivational persistence could be enhanced to have an impact over well-being through resilient concepts associated to personality or to family dynamics. In order to test that, moderation effects were verified through hierarchical linear models. First of all, correlations between motivational persistence subscales and well-being were tested. As seen below in Table 2,

relationships are significant but with small and medium correlation coefficients:

Table 2.
Correlations between motivational persistence and changes in well-being over time

Correlations between subscales of motivational persistence and changes in well-being in time

	LTPP	CPP	RUP
Changes in well-being in time	.153**	.319*	-.316*

Note *p < .01, **p < .05

Furthermore, moderation models were investigated between motivational persistence scale, individual resilience and family resilience concepts. To examine this, interaction models were computed in order to establish the impact of resilience concepts on the relationship between motivational persistence and changes in well-being. The results show that maintaining a positive outlook and family spirituality do have an impact over the relationship between long term purpose pursuing (LTPP) and changes in well-being in time. Also, there is a clear impact of resilience as a moderator in the relationship of recurrence of unattained purposes (RUP) and changes in well-being in time. Results are shown below in Table 3 for the interaction between long term purpose pursuing variable and maintaining a positive outlook variable from family resilience concepts.
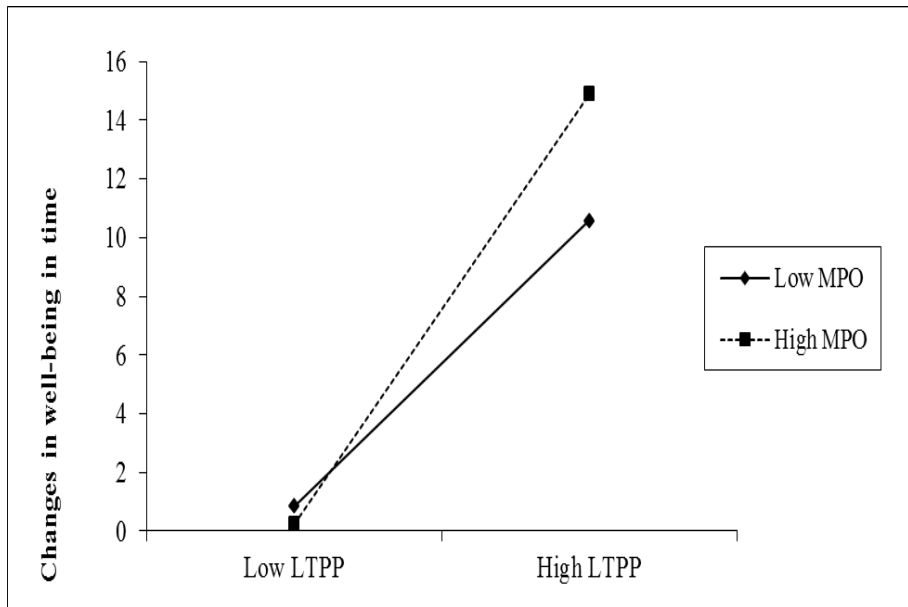
Table 3.
Beta and standardized Beta coefficients of moderating model between LTPP and MPO

Dependent variable: changes in well-being in time

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.19	2.09		-.257	.570
LTPP	.517	.202	.182	2.47	.011
MPO	-.758	.502	-.110	-1.26	.133
Moderating model	.448	.196	.171	2.14	.023

In conclusion, R^2 change for the interaction model was .025, statistically significant [F $(1,196)$ = 5.23; p=0.023]. This result indicates that maintaining a positive outlook moderates the relationship between long term purposes pursuing motivation. In other words, if members of a couple or family have the ability to face a distressing event then the relationship between motivational persistence and changes in well-being over time also increases. In order to see the directions of the effect an analysis of the lower and upper zone of the moderator was made. Results show that the correlation between motivational persistence (LTPP) and changes in well-being is higher when people have high scores on the maintaining a positive outlook variable (*r (114) = .326; p = .001*), meaning that the interaction of the two variables is visible on the upper zone of maintaining a positive outlook. On the lower zone, correlation is small, negative and not significant (*r (51) = -.182; p = .202*). Thus, family beliefs that are focused on the positive perspective also enhance hope for the persons and through pursuing into one`s goals. Moreover, people who believe that they have the means to solve major problems, that problems usually strengthen the family and that survival is the only option when they face adversities will also be more motivated in pursuing their long term purposes in order to experience greater levels of well-being. Interaction of the two variables can also be seen below in Graph 2.

Graph 2. Interaction effect between LTPP and MPO

Similar to this factor, family ability to be guided by a meaningful entity is also enhancing motivational persistence as it can be seen in Table 4. Although not all the subscales of the family resilience concept are moderating the relationship between motivation and changes in well-being, it clearly individualizes the concept to its most important strengths – persevering in positive belief about changes in the world and also meaningful experiences.

Moreover, these relationships are enhanced regarding long term purposes individual characteristic and not for the current purpose dimension, leading the conclusions also to suggest and consider the process of development in time. Further research should consider displaying the most important factors and determinants that people and psychologists should consider when pursuing common goals.

Table 4.
Beta and standardized Beta coefficients of moderating model between LTPP and FS

Dependent variable: changes in well-being in time

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-1.63	.969		-1.68	.094
LTPP	.520	.200	.183	2.59	.010
FS	-.040	.263	-.011	-.150	.881
Moderating model	-.526	.217	-.177	-2.42	.016

Concluding, R^2 change for the interaction model was .028, statistically significant [F $(1,196)$ = 5.85; p=0.016]. This result indicates that family spirituality moderates the relationship between long term purposes pursuing motivation and changes in well-being. This result indicates that family use of a larger belief system to provide guiding system and help to define lives as meaningful and significant could increase the relationship between motivational persistence and changes of well-being in time. In order to see the directions of the effects, an analysis of the lower and upper zone of the moderator was made.

Results show different types of effects, contradictory to the direction suggested in the study. In other words, results show that correlation between motivational persistence (LTPP) and changes in well-being is

bigger when people have low scores on the family spirituality (FS) variable (r $(69) = .382; p = .001$). Although contradictory, results could be further understood through control theories, meaning that the more people exert control, the more they feel happier. On the upper zone, correlation is small, negative and not significant ($r = (71) = -.038; p = .753$). The graphic representation can be seen below in Graph 3.

Graph 2. Interaction effect between LTPP and FS
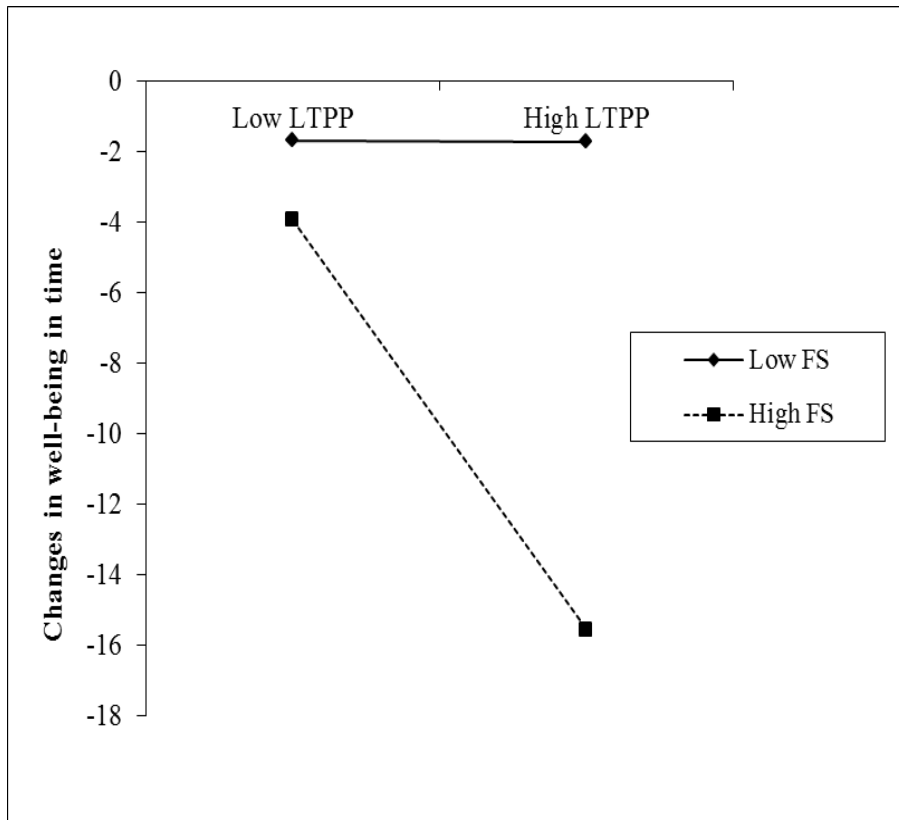
Moreover, resilience as a personal characteristic was investigated for its effects over the relationship between motivational persistence and changes of well-being in time. Results show that resilience has an impact over the relationship between recurrence of unattained purposes and changes in well-being. The analysis shows that R^2 change for the interaction model was .017, statistically significant [F $(1,196) = 3.84$; p=0.051]. This result indicates that resilience moderates the relationship between recurrence of unattained purposes and changes in well-being.

This result indicates that people who have the ability to face adversity and to bounce back could also enhance the intensity and direction between motivation and well-being. Indicators of the analysis can be seen below in Table 5.

Table 5.
Beta and standardized Beta coefficients of moderating model between RUP and Resilience

Dependent variable: changes in well-being in time

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.401	.958		1.43	.145
RUP	-.913	.200	-.303	-4.57	.001
Resilience	.462	.206	.149	2.24	.026
Moderating model	-.337	.172	-.130	-1.95	.051

In order to see the directions of the effects an analysis of the lower and upper zone of moderator was computed.

Results show different types of effects and suggest new interpretations. For example, the upper zone of the resilience scores suggests and impact over the relationship between changes in well-being and persistence by increasing the size of the correlation ($r (76) = -.515; p = .001$). Thus, meaning that if people engage in unattained purposes they will not experience big changes in well-being. The lower zone does not have an impact over the relationship between motivation and changes that occur in well-being over time ($r (57) = -.187; p = .163$).

The main purpose of the study was to describe the interaction between personal characteristics and how they can be enhanced in a social context, of couple or family in order to experience well-being. Although the results have the power to indicate the direction and the intensity of the impact of family resilience concepts, one of the most important limits of the study is that the variable changes in well-being over time cannot point to a positive or negative area for the participants. The results of the study show that resilience is an important predictor for experiencing changes in well-being over time but in a different direction than that pointed out by family studies (e.g. communication processes, clarity in communication, open emotional expression and collaborative problem solving) (Walsh 2003).

The investigation showed that belief about one`s abilities of handling problems, solving major problems, surviving more problems, feeling strong in facing big problems and having the strength to endure ones problems usually directs people in continuing to pursue goals and also to experience changes at an affective and emotional level, although we do not know if in a positive or negative way. Thus, depth analysis about whether people experience changes in well-being over time in a positive or negative way could be of much interest for practitioners especially because much of the literature is concerned also in dealing in a normal way with negative emotions (Dryden and Branch 2008).

Moreover, the direction and intensity regarding its effects pointed out new suggestions for study. In other words, concepts that concern self-control or empowerment could lead to a better understanding of the process of dealing with adversities because it enables people to have control over resources and sources affecting them. Other direction studies could investigate the relationship and intensity of it through belief systems deeper, given also the fact that maintaining a positive outlook does have a role between motivational persistence and changes in well-being over time.

Finally, results do suggest that family is a social context that can be explored in depth, especially because it can shape belief systems as well as distort the reality, thus being also a critical factor and a protective factor. Fostering resilience in order to face adversities in a positive way is also done through family support and involvement even in times of restrain.

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