



Murphy, David and Joseph, Stephen and Demetriou, Evangelia and Karimi Mofrad, Pegah (2017)  
Unconditional positive self-regard, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity: pathways to psychological well-being.  
Journal of Humanistic Psychology . ISSN 1552-650X

**Access from the University of Nottingham repository:**

[http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/39551/1/Murphy%20Joseph%20Demetriou%20%20Karimi-Mofrad%20%282017%29\\_UPSR\\_AI\\_and\\_Authenticity.pdf](http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/39551/1/Murphy%20Joseph%20Demetriou%20%20Karimi-Mofrad%20%282017%29_UPSR_AI_and_Authenticity.pdf)

**Copyright and reuse:**

The Nottingham ePrints service makes this work by researchers of the University of Nottingham available open access under the following conditions.

This article is made available under the University of Nottingham End User licence and may be reused according to the conditions of the licence. For more details see:  
[http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/end\\_user\\_agreement.pdf](http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/end_user_agreement.pdf)

**A note on versions:**

The version presented here may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the repository url above for details on accessing the published version and note that access may require a subscription.

For more information, please contact [eprints@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@nottingham.ac.uk)

Unconditional positive self-regard, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity: pathways to  
psychological well-being

David Murphy<sup>1</sup>, Stephen Joseph<sup>1</sup>, Evangelia Demetriou and Pegah Karimi Mofrad

<sup>1</sup> School of Education, University of Nottingham, England: UK

Corresponding author for this paper is; David Murphy, School of Education, University of  
Nottingham, United Kingdom.

Email: [david.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:david.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk)

[Murphy, D. Joseph, S. Demetriou, E., & Karimi Mofrad, P. (2017). Unconditional positive  
self-regard, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity: pathways to psychological wellbeing.  
*Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, ]

## Abstract

Unconditional positive self-regard (UPSR) is regarded by humanistic psychologists as an important determinant of well-being. However, until recently it has received little empirical attention. The current study aims to examine the association between unconditional positive self-regard and several key constructs consistent with the ideas of well-being within contemporary positive psychology. Study 1 is a confirmatory factor analysis of the UPSR scale. The statistically significant best fit for the data was a related two-factor model. Study 2 used the two-factors of the UPSR scale to explore the association with intrinsic aspirations. The study showed positive self-regard was statistically significantly positively correlated with the intrinsic aspirations total scale and with each of the separate scores for IA-importance and IA-chance. Unconditionality of regard was statistically significantly negatively correlated with IA-importance but was not statistically significantly correlated to either the IA-total or IA-chance scores. Study 3 considers the association between UPSR, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity. Unconditionality of regard was statistically significantly positively correlated with the authenticity scale score. Only IA-chance scores showed a statistically significant and positive correlation with authenticity. The remaining correlations between intrinsic aspirations and authenticity were not statistically significant. Results call for further empirical attention to UPSR within positive psychology research.

# Unconditional positive self-regard, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity: pathways to psychological wellbeing

## Introduction

In recent years there has been much interest in well-being and its determinants (e.g., Seligman, 2011; Huta, 2015). However, although of much contemporary interest, psychological theorising about the nature of well-being dates back to the humanistic psychologists, such as Carl Rogers. Rogers (1961) defined well-being as the fully functioning person as someone who was open to experience, able to live in the moment, trusting of their own judgements, free in making choices, and not governed by the values of others.

Studies in the psychology of well-being are concerned with describing, defining and delineating the path to psychological well-being. The current study aims to examine several key constructs that are consistent with the ideas of well-being from within contemporary humanistic psychology as influenced by the theoretical framework of Rogers (1959).

Rogers (1959) hypothesized that as infants develop, the inherent determination for survival leads to a learned need for positive regard. However, without exception caregivers' positive regard is only available inconsistently and is thus variable; at times it is consistent with the infant's valuing and at other times it is inconsistent with the infant's valuing. Hence, the infant might find that a behavior perceived as satisfying (such as hitting a sibling) leads to disapproval from a caregiver. The infant comes to learn that disapproval is not pleasurable and that even though behaviors that invoke some temporal sense of satisfaction, the urge to do it again will be either denied or distorted so as not to attract further withdrawal of positive regard from a care giver. The infant introjects the values from the caregiver and eventually comes to experience these values as their own. As a result the infant comes to learn that some

self-experiences are not acceptable to significant social others. All other experiences of this kind, or related self-experiences, subsequently become denied or distorted. When the infant behaves in accord with introjected values, as if they were their own, they are considered to be acting in a way that is consistent with a condition of worth (Standal, 1954). The infant is now no longer acting on their intrinsic, organismic valuing of experience. Gradually, distance from personal valuations and feelings are increased and a state of incongruence between organismic experience and self-concept arises (Rogers, 1959). Incongruence between self-concept and experience is considered to be the single source of maladjustment that accounts for the degree of subjective sense of well-being, or distress that a person experiences.

As the person develops a need for positive regard and internalises values from significant social others, they also, in denying or distorting their experience to fit the self-concept, become their own internal social other (Standal, 1954). The development of conditions of worth enables the satisfaction of the need for positive regard. This process can be termed positive self-regard and is used to describe the satisfaction of self-experiences that an individual has independently of the regard they receive from others.

The concept of conditions of worth and positive self-regard are supported by empirical studies in the field of contingent self-worth (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003; Croker & Wolfe, 2001). Emergent in the literature on contingent self-worth is the notion of implicit self-worth (Bos, Huijding, Muris, Vogel, Beishcevel, 2010). The implicit self-worth is not related to psychological disturbance whereas global and contingent self-worth is thought to have both interactive and independent associations with psychopathology.

*Unconditional positive self-regard*

Inconsistent, conditional positive regard from care givers is associated with the development of psychological maladjustment. Unconditional positive regard, on the other hand, is associated with healthy development. When a person experiences unconditional positive self-regard they do not discriminate between any self-experiences as being more worthy or valid than any other self-experience. The extent to which a person does not discriminate between any self-experiences as more or less worthy refers directly to the extent one experiences *unconditionality* of self-regard. The unconditionality of positive self-regard can be thought of as a proxy of psychological well-being. The more unconditionally self-accepting a person is whatever their desires, intentions, motives and behaviors, the less distress will be experienced. Higher levels of unconditional self-regard will, hypothetically, be accompanied by a greater sense of psychological well-being.

The main determinant of fully functioning behaviour according to Rogers (1959) is unconditional positive self-regard. Despite the centrality of unconditional positive self-regard to humanistic theories and therapies, little research has yet investigated its relationship to well-being. Two recent studies however have shown evidence that unconditional positive regard is related to higher levels of well-being. In the first, it was found that over time unconditional positive self-regard predicted changes in perceived posttraumatic growth and actual increase in wellbeing (Flanagan, Paterson, Hume, & Joseph, 2015). In the second, the association between unconditional positive self-regard and posttraumatic growth was found to be partially mediated by intrinsic aspirations (Murphy, Demetriou, & Joseph, 2015). Building on these two studies, further work is needed to understand the relation of unconditional positive self-regard to other variables also thought to be associated with psychological well-being. As already mentioned, Rogers used the term fully functioning to refer to what we now consider to be psychological well-being. Expressed in the language of contemporary psychological concepts, to be fully functioning is to be authentic (Joseph,

2016), to live according to one's intrinsic values/goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1993), and to be self-determining and not reliant on the views or values of others to guide behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In this paper we report three studies to develop an understanding of unconditional positive self-regard. In the first study we examine the construct of unconditional positive self-regard and the association between unconditionality and positive regard. Having established the two separate dimensions of unconditionality and positive regard in the second and third studies we examine their associations with authenticity and intrinsic values.

## Study 1

### Introduction

The concept of unconditional positive self-regard was originally proposed by Standal (1954) and later by Rogers (1959) as an indicator of psychological well-being. To assess unconditional positive self-regard, Patterson and Joseph (2006) developed a 12-item scale. After carrying out principal components analysis on data collected, Patterson and Joseph (2006) determined a scale of unconditional positive self-regard. As predicted, their results showed identified two factors. One factor indicated the level of positive self-regard and the second factor indicated unconditionality of regard. The study carried out by Patterson and Joseph (2006) was exploratory and as yet no confirmatory factor analytic study has been carried out to test the factor structure of the 12-item unconditional positive self-regard scale. The aim of this study was to conduct confirmatory factor analysis of the unconditional positive self-regard scale.

### Method

#### *Design*

In this study we carried out a confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL v 9.10 (student edition) to test the factor structure of the unconditional positive self-regard scale. Where exploratory factor analysis was used by Patterson and Joseph (2006) to determine the likely factors structure of items relating the concept of unconditional positive self-regard their study was not able to test the probability of whether the data fit the two-factor structure they proposed. Accordingly, a confirmatory factor analysis is required to test the probability that the two-factor structure can be confirmed by the data. In confirmatory factor analysis the data must fit and not significantly differ from the proposed or hypothesized model. Based on the theory of unconditional positive self-regard a related two-factor model, where the two related factors are self-regard and unconditionality, was proposed. In order to test the model provided the best fit for the data of two further models were also proposed and tested. These were a one-factor model with UPSR as a single factor; and the unrelated two-factor model with self-regard and unconditionality as unrelated factors.

### *Participants*

Data were collected from 239 participants with a mean age of 30.9 years. Participants included 109 men (45.6%) and 130 women (54.4%). Of these 137 were Caucasian (53.7%), 56 (27.2%) were Asian, 19 (7.9%) were mixed ethnic origin and 17 (7.1%) identified as Black African/African Caribbean. The participants completed the UPSR Scale as part of postgraduate student research dissertation studies and were collated here into one sample for the purpose of the confirmatory factor analysis.

### **Results**

The statistical fit for the two-factor related, two-factor unrelated and one-factor models were tested using the maximum likelihood estimation method of confirmatory factor



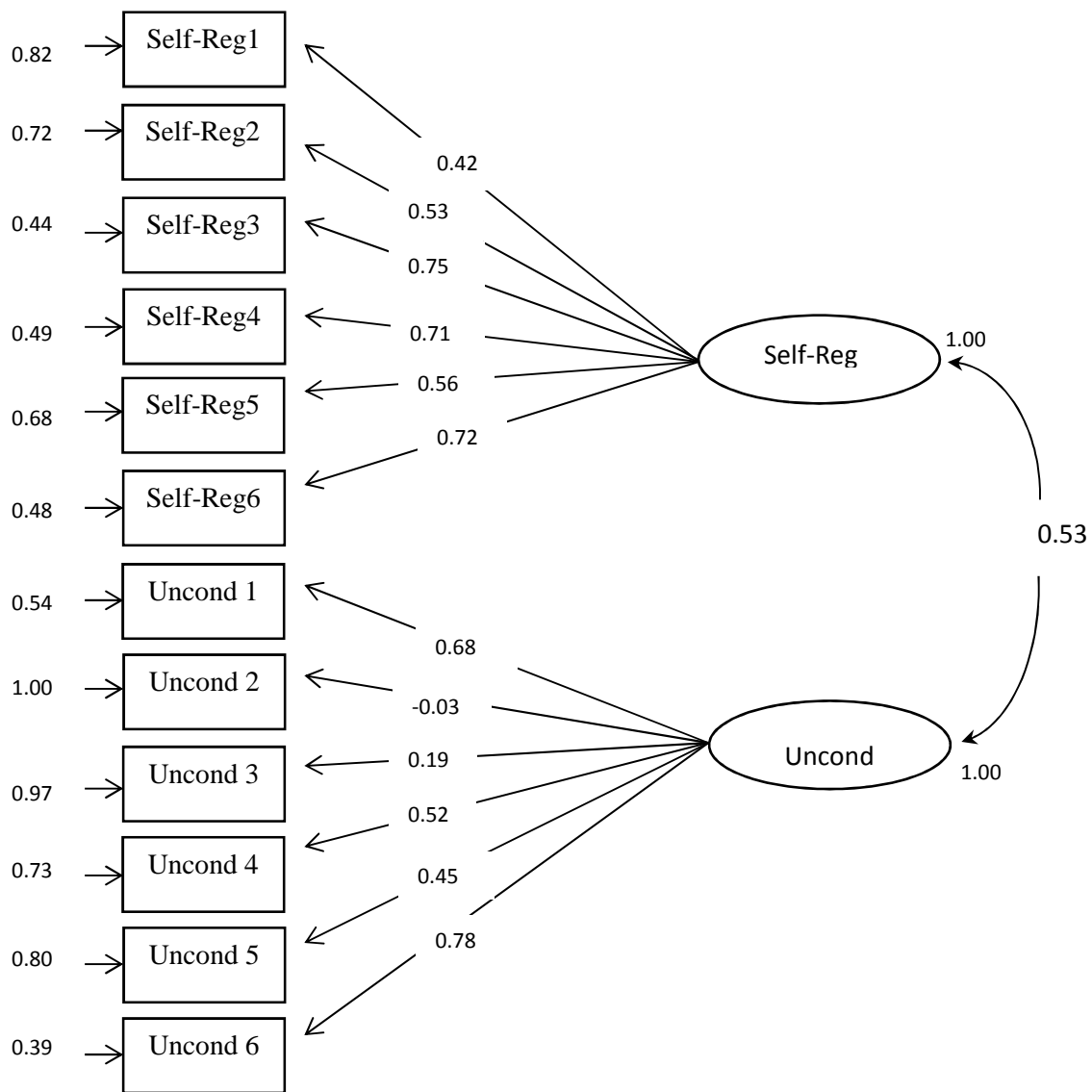
analysis on LISREL v9.10 (student version). The results for two goodness-of-fit indices are presented in Table 1 for the three models.

Table 1. Two goodness-of-fit measures for the three models

<i>Model</i>	$X^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
One-factor	204.11	54	0.0000	0.108
Unrelated two-factor	164.69	54	0.0000	0.091
Related two-factor	119.48	53	0.0000	0.072

Both of the measures suggest that the one-factor model was not a satisfactory fit, as chi-square is significant and the root mean square error of approximation was larger than 0.100. Chi-square for the unrelated two-factor model and related two-factor model suggested that neither model was a satisfactory fit. However, chi-square is not necessarily the best goodness-of-fit test for confirmatory factor analysis as it is more likely to be statistically significant the greater the number of participants entered into the model (Cramer, 2003). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is not so susceptible to this bias. A value of RMSEA below 0.100 suggests a good fit for the data (Loehlin, 2004). Both of the two-factor models provided a good fit for the data. However, the chi-square difference test shows the related two-factor model was a statistically significant better fit than the unrelated two-factor model ( $X^2 = 45.21$ ,  $df 1$   $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the related two-factor model was a statistically significant good fit for the data. Figure 1 shows the path diagram for the related two-factor model.

Figure 1 Path diagram for the related two-factor model



Chi-square 119.48, *df* 53,  $p < .00000$ , RMSEA 0.072

## Study 2

### Introduction

Now that the measure of unconditional positive self-regard has been confirmed further studies of the association between the two dimensions of unconditionality and positive self-regard and other variables can be conducted.

Unconditional positive self-regard represents the extent that an individual perceives none of their self-experience as being more worthy of positive regard than any other. The concept can be thought to represent a person's perceived degree of self-acceptance. If a person is accepting of their self-experiences then there is little need for the use of defence systems that become active when experience presents a threat to the satisfaction of the need for positive regard. In Rogers's (1959) theory of personality he suggested that two forms of psychological defence are used. These were distortion and denial. Distortion is used as a defence to transform experience that is not permissible into awareness because it does not fit with the existing self-concept. Experience is transformed into something that can be symbolized in a way that fits with the existing self-concept. Denial is used for the same reason except the experience is not symbolized in awareness. The experience is totally denied access to awareness.

Within Rogers's (1959) theory, defensive behavior results from conditions of worth. Conditions of worth develop through the introjection of values of significant others. When people have high conditions of worth they tend to act in line with the values and goals of others, to feel acceptable to them, and neglect their intrinsic valuing system. However, people will follow their intrinsic valuing system when they are able to accurately symbolise experience into awareness without distortion or denial.

Intrinsic motivation reflects the organisms' need to engage in activities that interest them rather than for attaining a reward or to avoid a negative consequence (Ryan & Deci, 2000); thus they develop and expand their capabilities (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation energizes significant growth-oriented behaviours, such as seeking out new challenges, pursuing one's interests and exercising skills. Subsequently intrinsic motivation is frequently considered to be a fundamental contributor to self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). People that experience higher well-being act more in accord with their intrinsic aspirations and are likely to engage in fulfilling life goals that feel most personally rewarding or satisfying and less likely to seek fulfilment of goals that others consider more valuable (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). These goals are referred to in the literature as intrinsic aspirations and have been shown repeatedly to be associated with well-being (Kasser, 2002).

Within person-centered psychology intrinsic aspirations can be considered a measure of the organismic valuing. That is, the level of behaviour that is being guided by intrinsic aspirations can be thought to represent the extent a person acts in accord with their own valuing compared to that of other external demands. Research demonstrates that people who value more extrinsic goals experience less well-being than those who value more intrinsic goals (Ryan et al., 1999). Evidence in support of the intrinsic aspiration construct can be found when looking at behaviour within academic achievement (Gottfried et al., 2009), organizational psychology (Tremblay et al., 2009), eating behaviours (Jutta et al., 2009), reading literacy (Becker et al., 2010) and schizophrenia (Barch et al., 2008). Each shows that intrinsic aspiration is a factor associated with more satisfying achievements. In summary, people that act in line with their intrinsic valuing will exhibit less defensive behavior because they are more self-accepting and have fewer or less intense conditions of worth that require the defensive transformation of experience through denial or distortion.

The Aspirations Index has been used to assess the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic values and goals. Kasser and Ryan (1996) found that intrinsic goals were correlated with better psychological well-being and more self-acceptance. Extrinsic aspirations on the other hand were found not to be associated with well-being (Ryan et al., 1999). Intrinsic aspirations within the Aspiration Index are related to the underlying factors of self-acceptance, affiliation and community feeling. However, there is some uncertainty with regards to the concept of aspirations and how this is related to the concept of unconditional positive self-regard. For example, the notion of holding aspirations for one's own self might contradict the idea of unconditional acceptance of self-experiences and is counter intuitive to the idea of acceptance of self as one currently is. Aspirations might conceivably be related to conditionality as these could be indicative of self-discrepancy, that is, a discrepancy between self-concept and experience. The discrepancy in this instance would be between the self-concept and an ought-to-be-self. Further work is required to understand the connection between these variables and so we conducted an investigation to look at the correlation between the variables of unconditional positive self-regard and intrinsic aspirations.

## Method

### *Participants*

Data were collected from a subset of the sample used in Study 1. Questionnaires were completed by 199 respondents for a Master's Degree in Counselling Studies. Participants were 110 (55.3%) women and 89 (44.7%) were men with a mean age of 31.4 years (S.D. 11.3). The sample consisted of 121 (60.8%) identified as Caucasian, 51 (25.6%) were Asian, 15 (7.5%) mixed ethnicity and 12 (6%) identified as Black-African/African Caribbean.

### *Measures*

*Aspirations Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1993)*

The Aspirations Index (AI) scale was originally developed by Kasser and Ryan (1993) and adapted for use in this study. Intrinsic aspirations are spread over three domains; personal growth, relatedness and community service. 12-items were used in the analysis with 4-items from each domain. There are several approaches to scoring the intrinsic aspirations scale (Ryan et al., 1999); for the current study the total score for intrinsic aspiration was selected by adding together the importance of aspirations and the future expectation of attaining these aspirations. The scale is scored on a 5 point Likert scale. Scores range from 1-5 for each item and therefore provide a range of 24-120 for the total 12-item measure. The sample for Study 2 provided an intrinsic aspirations mean score of 56.02 (S.D. 5.90) and item mean score 4.31. Cronbach's alpha reliability was .85 for the intrinsic aspirations items.

#### *Unconditional Positive Self-Regard (USPR) Scale (Patterson & Joseph, 2006)*

A detailed explanation of the USPR scale is provided in Study 1. Items from the unconditional positive self-regard scale had a mean score of 45.64 (S.D. 5.0) and an item mean score 3.80. Cronbach's alpha reliability was .72 for the USPR scale.

### Results

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to explore the associations between each of the self-regard and unconditionality of regard subscales for USPR scale with intrinsic aspirations total score and the separate scores for importance and chance of achieving intrinsic aspirations. Table 2 shows that positive self-regard was statistically significantly positively correlated with the intrinsic aspirations total scale and with each of the separate scores for IA-importance and IA-chance. Unconditionality of regard was statistically significantly negatively correlated with IA-importance but was not statistically significantly correlated to either the IA-total or IA-chance scores.

Table 2. Inter-correlations, means and standard deviation for self-regard, unconditionality of regard, importance and chance of achieving intrinsic aspirations

	1	2	3	4	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Positive Self-Regard					4.0	.48
2. Unconditionality	.293**				3.1	.48
3. Intr'c Aspiration Total	.311**	-.092			4.0	.44
4. IA-Importance	.201**	-.226**	.860**		4.3	.45
5. IA-Chance	.337**	.038	.907**	.565**	3.7	.55

### *Regression analysis*

In this analysis we tested the interaction between self-regard and unconditionality of regard to predict intrinsic aspirations. Table 3 shows the results from the regression analysis. First, all variables were standardized using the z transformation facility in SPSS. A linear regression was conducted using the standardized intrinsic aspiration score entered as the dependent variable. Then, standardized positive self-regard and unconditionality of regard scores were entered into the regression as the predictor variables. Finally, an interaction term was created for the standardized self-regard and unconditionality of regard scores and this was entered into the model.

Table 3. Regression model with self-regard, unconditionality and intrinsic aspirations combined score as dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	95% Confidence Interval for $\beta$		R <sup>2</sup> $\Delta$ Change
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		Lower	Upper	
1 (Constant)	-.023	.068		.000	-.133	.133	
Self-regard	.311	.068	.311	4.494**	.178	.445	.097**
2 (Constant)	.013	.066		.000	-.131	.131	.037**
Self-regard	.370	.070	.370**	5.318**	.233	.507	
Unconditionality	-.200	.070	-.200	-2.882**	-.338	-.063	
3 (Constant)	-.023	.068		-.344	-.158	.111	.009(ns)
Self-regard	.377	.070	.377**	5.416**	.240	.514	
Unconditionality	-.212	.070	-.212	-3.038**	-.350	-.074	
Interaction (SR x Unc)	.080	.057	.094	1.408	-.032	.193	



Only positive self-regard and not unconditionality of regard significantly predicted variance in intrinsic aspirations-total; the interaction between self-regard and unconditionality of regard did not predict changes in intrinsic aspirations-total scores.

## Discussion

In this study we partially supported the hypothesis that unconditional positive self-regard would be related to intrinsic aspirations. Unconditional positive self-regard is a measure that attempts to capture the extent to which a person perceives their experience through conditions of worth or is evaluating experiences through their organismic valuing. That is people that score highly on this scale would also be expected to score highly on measures that assess the extent a person is following their intrinsic aspirations. In this study the finding was supported. Importantly, positive self-regard was related to intrinsic aspirations-total score and both subscales for importance and chance of attaining intrinsic aspirations. However, unconditionality of self-regard provided some more interesting findings. Unconditionality of self-regard was not correlated to the intrinsic aspirations-total score or the intrinsic aspirations-chance subscale but was statistically negatively correlated with the intrinsic aspirations-importance subscale. That means people with high unconditionality of self-regard (free from conditions of worth) seem to find intrinsic aspirations as being of less importance.

There might be a number of explanations for this finding. One possible interpretation is relying on aspirations measured using the intrinsic aspirations index. In this scale aspirations are worded as future oriented and thereby require the participant to project themselves into a different view of themselves than what they currently experience, whereas, unconditionality of self-regard requires the respondent to consider themselves as they currently are. Consequently, intrinsic aspirations are possibly more indicative of a concept of

the self that is desired but does not represent the self as perceived currently; therefore intrinsic aspirations measured here might be more representative of a self-ideal or an ought-to-be-self. Both the concepts of a self-ideal, and ought-to-be-self, are more susceptible to being influenced by conditions of worth. Where the self-ideal, or ought-to-be-self, is widely discrepant to the current self-concept the person is in a state of incongruence and will experience low unconditionality of self-regard but might feel it is important to achieve their aspirations in the future.

### Study 3

#### Introduction

There appear to be two methods for assessing a state of well-being within Rogers's (1959) theory of personality. First is that the person is free from conditions of worth and thus experiences a high degree of unconditional positive self-regard. This idea was first proposed by Standaal (1954). The theory of a need for positive regard and a need for positive self-regard relates to the development of psychological maladjustment, readjustment and psychological maturity required for maintaining a state of well-being. It also relates directly to the therapist who provides a relationship climate in which the need for positive regard can be satisfied unconditionally. The second way to conceptualize psychological well-being within Rogers's (1959) theory is through the self-consistency approach. The second approach presents a model of incongruence that proposes psychological maladjustment arises due to the threat posed by self-experiences that are perceived as being inconsistent with the self-structure. A state of incongruence is associated with psychological maladjustment and feeling distressed whereas congruence is indicative of psychological well-being. Congruence refers to when self-experience is accurately represented and symbolized in awareness, without denial or distortion. When a person experiences being in a state of congruence, there is no need for the

defence system to become active. The person's experiences can be symbolized in awareness without there being a threat to the self-concept. Experiences and the self-concept are 'congruent' with one another. When someone is in a state of congruence, their outward behaviour is thought to be consistent with their inner experiencing. Rogers (1959) suggested that the person is outwardly being their inner feelings. In a state of congruence, experience, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are, metaphorically speaking, symmetrically aligned with each other. The person is in a state of balance, equilibrium – they are being authentic.

Authenticity is identified and quantified as a useful individual difference (Wood et al, 2006). Various approaches to counselling and clinical psychology use authenticity as a way to conceptualise psychological distress. The construct of authentic being sits at the intersection of person-centered (Rogers, 1959), psychodynamic (Horney, 1951; Winnicott, 1965), positive psychology (Joseph & Linley, 2005) and social psychological (Sheldon, 2004) perspectives. Wood et al (2008) offer a tripartite conceptualization of authenticity that includes self-alienation, authentic living and accepting external influence. Although their conceptualization can be understood in terms of a wide range of psychological theories, the influence of Rogers's (1959) theory of personality and behavior is central and reconceptualizes the notion of congruence. The construct of authenticity provides not only a more contemporary approach to well-being but also presents it as a relational construct that considers both intrapersonal, interpersonal and environmental relations.

Positive self-regard has been shown to be significantly positively related to intrinsic aspirations. This finding supports the theoretical proposition that people who do not have to rely on their worth through the values of others are more likely to act in accord with their own values and follow their intrinsic aspirations. However, unconditionality of self-regard was negatively correlated with the importance of intrinsic aspirations. For this reason it is important to understand the association of these variables for guiding future research and

clinical intervention. Likewise, there is a need to understand more the relationships, at the construct level, the associations between unconditional positive self-regard and authenticity – as the two primary approaches to defining psychological well-being within Rogers’s (1959) theory of personality. This is important for the practice of person-centered therapists.

In this study we sought to explore the associations between unconditional positive self-regard, intrinsic aspirations and authenticity. Each of these variables needs to be understood in the unique way it contributes to a sense of psychological well-being.

## Method

### *Participants*

Data were collected using a questionnaire with a convenience sample of University students ( $N= 100$ ). Just over half of the students were ( $n = 53$ ) were undertaking counselling training courses at either postgraduate or undergraduate level. The respondents ( $n = 47$ ) were studying for programmes that did not contain any credits related to counselling. Fifty five were female (55%) and 45 (45%) were male; the mean age of respondents was 31.4 years (S.D. 8.1 years). The sample consisted of 22 (22%) identified as Caucasian, 51 (51%) were Asian, 15 (15%) mixed ethnicity and 12 (12%) identified as Black-African/African Caribbean.

### *Measures*

Participants completed the *Unconditional Positive self-Regard Scale* (Patterson & Joseph, 2006). Detailed explanation of this scale is presented above in study 1. For the present sample the scale showed reliability with Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .24$  which is surprisingly low. The Aspirations Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) measures the extent people are following

their intrinsic aspirations. The study used the measure in the same way described in Study 2. In the current study the scale showed good reliability with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ .

The third measure used in this study was the *Authenticity Scale* (Wood et al.). The AS is a 12-item self-report measure involving three components; (1) self-alienation, representing an inconsistent identity and the extent to which a person's self is incongruent with actual experiences and deeply held beliefs (e.g., 'I feel as if I don't know myself very well'); (2) accepting external influence, instead of self-directing (e.g., 'I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do'); and (3) authentic living, or behaving in ways consistent with beliefs and values (e.g., 'I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular').

Self-alienation and accepting external influence represent inauthenticity, whereas authentic living represents authenticity. Each item is rated in a 7-point scale (where 1 = "Does not describe me at all" and 7 = "Describes me very well") such that scores on each subscale have a possible range of 4 to 28. With items summed to indicate greater authenticity, higher scores indicating greater resistance to external influence, greater self-alienation and greater authentic behaviour. The current study showed reliability with Cronbach's  $\alpha = .58$ .

## Results

### *Correlation analyses*

Correlational analyses were carried out to test the association both of the self-regard and unconditionality of self-regard subscales, with intrinsic aspirations and authenticity. Intrinsic aspiration was scored as a total scale score, and separate correlations were calculated for the importance and chance of achieving aspirations indices. The results are reported in Table 3. Self-regard was statistically significantly positively correlated with the total score

for intrinsic aspirations and the IA-chances subscale but was not statistically significantly correlated with IA-importance subscale or the total score for authenticity. The unconditionality subscale was statistically significantly negatively correlated with both the total intrinsic aspiration scale and the IA-importance score but was not significantly correlated with IA-chance subscale. Unconditionality of regard was also statistically significantly positively correlated with the authenticity scale score. Finally, only the IA-chance score showed a significant and positive correlation with authenticity the remaining correlations between intrinsic aspirations and authenticity were not statistically significant.

### *Regression analyses*

Linear regression in SPSS using the Enter method was used to explore the interaction of self-regard and unconditionality of regard as a predictor of both authenticity and intrinsic aspirations. There were no significant interaction effects when using the total scores of authenticity and intrinsic aspirations. However, based on the correlations in Table 3 above and in Study 2, we explored the interaction effect of positive self-regard and unconditionality of self-regard on the importance subscale of intrinsic aspirations. Table 4 shows the  $\beta$  coefficients with intrinsic aspiration - importance subscale as the dependent variable. The interaction of positive self-regard and unconditionality of self-regard was a significant predictor of change in the importance of intrinsic aspirations.

Table 4. Correlation matrix for subscales of UPSR, Intrinsic Aspirations, and Authenticity total score.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Self-regard						3.9	.30
2. Unconditionality	.025					3.0	.42
3. IA Total	.325**	-.330**				3.8	.3
4. IA-Importance	.118	-.506**	.813**			4.1	.37
5. IA-Chance	.402**	-.115	.897**	.471**		3.5	.49
6. Authenticity Total	-.015	.400**	.060	-.179	.227*	6.6	.74

Table 5 Intrinsic Aspirations-importance score as dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95% Confidence Interval for $\beta$		R <sup>2</sup> $\Delta$ Change
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	Lower	Upper	
1 (Constant)		.100		.000	-.198	.198	
Self-regard	.118	.100	.118	1.181	-.081	.317	.014
2 (Constant)		.086		.000	-.171	.171	.259**
Self-regard	.131	.087	.131	1.517	-.041	.303	
Unconditionality	-.509	.087	-.509	-5.882**	-.681	-.337	
3 (Constant)	.006	.084		.078	-.159	.172	.051*
Self-regard	.064	.087	.064	.736	.109	.238	
Unconditionality	-.483	.084	-.483	-5.711**	-.650	-.315	
Interaction (SR x Unc)	-.260	.096	-.237	-2.698**	-.451	-.069	



## Discussion

Unconditional positive self-regard as a measure of psychological well-being, indicative of low conditions of worth and high positive self-regard, has been shown to have an acceptable factor structure for use as a two factor measure. Having confirmed the factor structure we now recommend that future research studies use the UPSR scale as a psychological measure of personality adjustment. Theoretically, people that score high on this measure can be considered to have developed a mature internal valuing system that is resilient to the influence of introjected values from others. The measure would be suitable for use in psychotherapy outcome studies researching personality change, particularly those studies researching the efficacy of person-centered and experiential therapies.

As the organismic valuing system matures it is more likely that a person will act in accord with and follow their intrinsic aspirations. This theoretical proposition has been partially supported by the current study. However, there is also some disagreement wherein people that seem to have higher levels of conditions of worth, characterised by low scores on the unconditionality of self-regard scale, also appear to rate intrinsic aspirations as being of high importance. This finding is counter intuitive. Above in Study 2 we raised the possible problem with the future orientation of the aspirations index. Completing the scale could require participants to imagine a self that does not yet exist. This then might unintentionally require participants to base their ratings of aspirations in terms of a self that they would like to be. Whereas, experiencing high unconditionality of self-regard points, at least theoretically, towards being self-accepting of the concept of self currently perceived. Thus highlighting an erroneous discrepancy between intrinsic aspirations and self-regard. Another explanation for this finding is that people have developed conditions of worth that demand self-acceptance. Hence they score high on positive self-regard but low on the unconditionality of self-regard. That is to say, their concept of self is that they 'must',

‘should’, or ‘ought’ to be self-accepting. This too might explain the unexpected finding reported here.

According to person-centered theory a mature intrinsic valuing system is considered to be a sign of psychological adjustment. It is also indicative of resilience to the introjection of values and is associated with positive self-regard. Likewise we explored the links between authenticity and unconditional positive self-regard and intrinsic aspirations. Authenticity is proposed as a measure of personality trait (Wood et al, 2008) and provides an alternative way to conceptualize the psychologically mature person. This finding was supported in Study 3 where high unconditionality of self-regard was strongly statistically significantly correlated with authenticity scale scores. These two approaches to measuring well-being are possibly assessing different components of the subjective experience of well-being and each has a unique contribution to make for developing understanding about various pathways to further enhancing well-being. For example, authenticity relates to intra- and inter-personal consistency as a pathway towards and a sign of greater wellbeing. Unconditional positive self-regard on the other hand offers a pathway to well-being by accounting for the development of maladjustment within the personality, readjustment and maintenance of well-being, whilst also providing a consistent explanation for the caregiver’s, parent’s, therapist’s, or any other significant social other’s role in the development of maladjustment, readjustment and maintenance of well-being. The theory for unconditional positive self-regard is also grounded in a theory of how therapy helps people and therefore provides consistency across developmental and practical domains.

There are some other possible explanations for the findings in the current study. Ryan et al. (1999) studied intrinsic aspirations of an American and Russian sample of college students. They found that Americans more than Russians associated the intrinsic over extrinsic aspirations with better well-being. The cultural differences in this sample might be

able explain how those values and goals identified as intrinsic for some might be extrinsic for others or that intrinsic aspirations cannot always be associated with better well-being. An alternative approach for identifying intrinsic aspirations would be to have each individual participant identify their own unique intrinsic aspirations rather than select them from a predefined list, as was done in the Ryan et al. (1999) study. However, this is unlikely to solve the issue entirely because intrinsic aspirations are currently measured by being future oriented and actually requiring participants to engage in imagining themselves as they would like to be.

### Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that for some people intrinsic aspirations might be considered a contra-indicator to unconditional positive self-regard. As such it may be that people with higher conditions of worth also have more future oriented aspirations. If this is the case there is an important implication for the practice of therapy. In therapy, expressions of intrinsic aspiration might be indicative of the client's struggle. Hence, rather than accepting all intrinsic aspirations as inherently suggestive of well-being for the client, it might be helpful to listen for and be attuned to the possibility that some future oriented intrinsic aspirations highlight a level of conditionality in self-regard, that is, a lack of self-acceptance of the self that one currently experiences. What might appear as figure in intrinsic aspiration might be set in the ground of conditional self-regard. Therapists will be most helpful to clients therefore when they respond with unconditional positive regard to each of these different experiences of the client.

Authenticity and unconditional positive self-regard might be related but independent factors that explain different pathways to well-being. The direction of a causal relation between authenticity and UPSR was not considered in the current study. However, because of

the connection of UPSR with conditions of worth and the likelihood that conditions of worth shape the way humans process their experiences (Hook & Murphy, In Press), it is reasonable to assume that UPSR has a causal effect on authenticity. For practice this implies that it would be most beneficial for clients when therapists maintain a goal for the experiencing of unconditional positive regard for the client in a bid to enhance client self-acceptance leading to greater authentic experiencing. One important factor for the experiencing of unconditional positive regard is the therapist's own unconditional positive self-regard. For this we suggest that all therapists pay constant attention to their own personal development and engage in activities then enable their positive self-regard to flourish and maximise their openness and availability to be present for their clients.

### Conclusion

In this paper we have confirmed the two factor structure of the unconditional positive regard scale. This scale is now recommended for use in process outcome studies of psychotherapy. The scale is also a useful for research in the field of social psychology. Further work is required to understand the relationship between the concept of unconditional positive self-regard and intrinsic aspirations and the humanistic concept of authenticity. Developing our understanding of which aspects of personality function that are explained by unconditional positive self-regard and authenticity will be of use to those interested in psychotherapy, education, parenting or other human development relationships and processes.

Additionally, in this study we have furthered our understanding of the multifaceted nature of human wellbeing in the field of humanistic psychology. For example, being future oriented and accepting of one's current self-concept is an area for future research to explore.

The drive for change, for aspiring to growth, might need to be reconsidered in the light that aspirations have a complex relation with the unconditionality of self-regard.

#### References

- Barch, D. M., Yodkovik, N., Sypher-Locke, H., & Hanewinkel, M. (2008) Intrinsic motivation in schizophrenia: Relationships to cognitive function, depression, anxiety, and personality. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 117*(4), pp. 776-787.
- Becker, M., McElvany, N., & Kortenbruck, M. (2010) Intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation as predictors of reading literacy: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(4), pp. 773-785.
- Bos, A. E. R., Huijding, J., Muris, P., Vogel, L. R. R., & Biesheuvel, J. (2010). Global, contingent and implicit self-esteem and psychopathological symptoms in adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences, 48*, 311-316.
- Cramer, D. (2003). *Advanced quantitative data analysis*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Crocker, J., Luhtanen, R. K., Cooper, M. L., & Bouvrette, A. (2003). Contingencies of self-worth in college students: Theory and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 894–908.
- Crocker, J., & Wolfe, C. T. (2001). Contingencies of self-worth. *Psychological Review, 108*, 593–623.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985) *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. London: Plenum Press.

Flannagan, S., Patterson, T. G., Hume, I. R., & Joseph, S. (2015). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between unconditional positive self-regard and posttraumatic growth. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 14 (3), 191-200.

Gottfried, A. E., Marcoulides, G. A., Gottfried, A. W., & Oliver, P. H. (2009) A latent curve model of parental motivational practices and developmental decline in math and science academic intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(3), pp. 729-739.

Hook, L., & Murphy, D. (In Press). Related but not replaceable: A response to Warner's reworking of person-centered personality theory. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*.

Horney, K. (1951). *Neurosis and human growth*. London: Routledge.

Huta, V. (2015). The complementary roles of eudaimonia and hedonia and how they can be pursued in practice. In S. Joseph (Ed.), *Positive Psychology in Practice: Promoting human flourishing in work, health, education and everyday life (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* (pp. 159-182). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Joseph, S. (2016). *Authentic. How to be yourself and why it matters*. Piatkus Little-Brown: London.

Joseph, S., & Linley, P. A (2005) Positive Adjustment to Threatening Events: An Organismic Valuing Theory of Growth Through Adversity. *Review of General Psychology*, 9(3), pp. 262-280.

Joseph, S. & Murphy, D. (2013). Person-centered approach, positive psychology and relational helping: building bridges. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 53, 26-51.

Jutta, M., Silva, M. N., Vieira, P. N., Carraça, E. V., Andrade, A. M., Coutinho, S. R., Sardinha, L. B., & Teixeira, P. J. (2009) Motivational “spill-over” during weight control: Increased self-determination and exercise intrinsic motivation predict eating self-regulation. *Health Psychology, 28*(6), pp. 709-716.

Kasser, T. (2002). Sketches for a self-determination theory of values. In E. L. Deci, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research* (pp. 123-140). Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1993). A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*, 410-422.

Loehlin, J. C. (2004). *Latent variable models: An introduction to factor, path and structural analysis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Patterson, T. G., & Joseph, S. (2006). Development of a self-report measure of unconditional positive self-regard. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice, 79*, 557-590.

Rogers, C. R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of science. Vol. 3: Formulations of the person and social context* (pp.184-256). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person*. London: Constable.

Ryan, R. M., Chirkov, V. I., Little, T. D., Sheldon, K. M., Timoshina, E., & Deci, E. L. (1999). The American Dream in Russia: Extrinsic aspirations and well-being in two cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*, 1509-1524.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 68-78.

Ryan, R. M., Little, T. D., Sheldon, K. M., Timoshima, E., & Deci, E. L. (1999) The American Dream in Russia: Extrinsic Aspirations and Well-Being in Two Cultures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *25*(12), pp. 1509-1524.

Sansone, C. & Harackiewicz, J.M. (Eds.). (2000). *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: The Search for Optimal Motivation and Performance*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Standal, S. (1954). *The need for positive regard: A contribution to client-centered theory*. (Doctoral thesis). University of Chicago: Chicago.

Tremblay, M. A., Blanchard, C. M., Taylor, S., Pelletier, L. G., & Villeneuve, M. (2009) Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale: Its value for organizational psychology research. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, *41*(4), pp. 213-226.

Sheldon, K. M. (2004). Integrity (honesty/authenticity). In C. Peterson & M. E. P. Seligman (Eds.), *Character strengths and virtues* (pp. 249–272). New York: Oxford University Press.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment*. New York: International Universities Press.

Wood, A. M., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., Baliouis, M., & Joseph, S. (2008). The Authentic Personality: A Theoretical and Empirical Conceptualization and the Development of the Authenticity Scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *55*(3), 385-399.