Social involvement and social well-being in attainment of millennial flourishing

Milenyum kuşağının gelişiminde sosyal katılım ve sosyal iyi oluş

Steven A. Taylor[1], Hulda Black[2], Leigh A. N. Donovan[2], Kimberly Judson[2]

Abstract

There have been recent calls for positioning human flourishing and well-being as foundations for business school curriculum. Despite these calls, specifically how to evolve educational practices toward a greater focus on flourishing and well-being as opposed to a focus on job training and other marketization emphases remains a conundrum for business educators. The current research empirically relates academic achievement, social involvement, and subjective well-being to the flourishing of a millennial cohort of university business students. Our results demonstrate that self-perceived flourishing goal achievement appears to fully mediate the direct effect from social involvement to social well-being. This implies that simply involving students in a greater number of social activities alone will likely not contribute to their well-being. Rather, our results show it is the congruence of social activities and behaviors with their flourishing-related goals as the most efficacious path to increasing student well-being in higher education. We are able to show that an emphasis on flourishing in higher education instead of the current and traditional method of focusing on value delivery and sales (i.e., marketization) appear reasonably achievable with the Millennial cohort. Results indicate that self-perceived flourishing goal achievement appears to fully mediate the direct relationship from social involvement to social well-being.

Keywords: Flourishing, well-being, social involvement, academic achievement

Özet

Son zamanlarda insan gelişimi ve iyi oluşunu işletme bölümlerinin müfredatının temeli olarak konumlandırılmasına yönelik talepler dile getirilmişir. Bu taleplere rağmen, eğitim uygulamalarının, iş eğitimi ve piyasalaştırma üzerine yapılan vurgunun aksine gelişim ve refah odaklı olmaya yoğunlaşacak şekilde nasıl evrileceği işletme eğitimcileri için belirsizliğini sürdürmektedir. Bu çalışma, ampirik olarak akademik başarı, sosyal katılım ve öznel iyi oluşun üniversite işletme öğrencilerinden oluşan milenyum kuşağının gelişimiyle ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Elde ettiğimiz sonuçlar, algılanan gelişim hedefini gerçekleştirme durumunun sosyal katılım ile sosyal iyi oluş arasındaki doğrudan ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu ise şu anlama gelmektedir: öğrencilerin daha fazla sayıda sosyal faaliyete dâhil edilmesinin tek başına onların iyi oluş düzeyine katkıda bulunma olasılığı düşüktür. Elde ettiğimiz sonuçlar, yükseköğrenim öğrencilerinin iyi oluşunu arttırmanın en etkili yolunun sosyal faaliyet ve davranışların gelişmeye ilişkin hedeflerle uyumluluğunun sağlanması olduğunu göstermektedir. Yükseköğrenimde hâlihazırda benimsenen geleneksel değer sağlama ve satışa odaklanma yönteminin yerine, gelişime yapılacak vurgunun milenyum kuşağıyla gerçeğe dönüştürülebileceği görülmektedir. Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlar, algılanan gelişim hedefini gerçekleştirmenin sosyal katılım ile sosyal refah arasındaki doğrudan ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gelişim, iyi oluş, sosyal katılım, akademik başarı

[1] Illinois State University Department of Marketing, staylor@ilstu.edu
[2] Illinois State University Department of Marketing

Introduction

The concepts of (long term, life) happiness, quality-of-life, well-being, and eudaimonia have emerged in recent years as important to the explanation of social psychology (Delle Fave, 2013a; Sirgy 2012). Kern, Waters, Adler and White (2014) and Judson and Taylor (2014) assert that these concepts are particularly important in relation to college students and the efforts of academic institutions of higher learning. Further, university education underlies many people's preparation for a career in business. Mackenzie, Son and Hollenhorst (2014) argue that today's educational focus on experiential education has developed independently from the larger theories and developments in psychology. This has led to recent calls for positioning human flourishing and well-being as foundations for business school curriculum (Grant, 2012; Judson & Taylor, 2014; McKenna & Biloslavo, 2011; Taylor & Judson, 2011;).

Despite these calls, specifically how to evolve educational practices toward a greater focus on flourishing and well-being, as opposed to a focus on job training and other marketization emphases, remains a conundrum for business educators. As educators, it is important to understand if mechanisms even exist to increase student flourishing and well-being. Given this, the purpose of this research is to examine the relationship of academic achievement, social involvement, flourishing and social well-being in a millennial cohort of current university business students. Results of this research could inform the design of business education communications in order to achieve these goals.

Background and Literature Review

MacKenzie et al. (2014) identify experiential education as the dominant psychological framework underlying educational practice today, which is based largely on self-determination (SDT; Deci and Ryan, 2002) and flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) theories. SDT is a theory of human motivation that identifies three main intrinsic needs fundamental to self-determination: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Competence refers to the capacity of a person to do the work well. Autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to make informed, moral decisions, and relatedness refers to an individual's desire to be connected (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Flow theory also focuses on motivation; flow is a state where the individual is completely immersed (in the zone) in the process of performing the activity (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi 1990). These theoretical foundations are consonant with our study.

Well-Being and Flourishing with Millennials

For this research, we empirically examined a model relating academic achievement and social involvement to a students' perceptions of flourishing and well-being. Powers (2008) asserts that social involvement and life satisfaction are particularly important for college students and the efforts of academic institutions of higher learning. Powers (2008) shows evidence that students' life satisfaction is positively related to their self-perceived social involvement and academic achievement. Further, the research appears to demonstrate social involvement as one's self-perceived level of participation in social activities. Life satisfaction in the study is based upon the Diener Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The current research builds upon Powers' (2008) exploratory work by employing Diener et al.'s (2010) updated scale designed to measure general flourishing in the form of social-psychological prosperity, which theoretically links to both self-determination and flow theories.

This research attempts to discern the relationship among key theoretical concepts, including flourishing and social well-being. Sirgy (2012) argues that the conceptual domains and antecedents of happiness are not the same as those of life satisfaction. He further distinguishes subjective well-being as an integrative framework that involves three major dimensions: (1) cognitive versus affective concepts of well-being, (2) concepts of well-being that focus on positive versus negative aspects of well-being, and (3) short-term versus long-term concepts of well-being. These distinctions are useful in that they imply a less parsimonious model to explain Millennial flourishing than considered by Powers (2008). We therefore expand on Powers' (2008) conceptualization by first adding a more sophisticated conceptualization and operationalization of social well-being as a multi-dimensional set of concepts to the explanatory model (Keyes 1998). Specifically, social well-being is modeled as a 2nd order latent construct based upon five multi-item dimensions proposed by Keyes (1998).

As previously stated, SDT and flow theories serve as the theoretical basis of our research model. SDT posits that the process and the content of the goal impacts performance and well-being. Specifically, intrinsic goals are associated with enhanced well-being, while extrinsic goals have little impact on well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Sheldon, Ryan, Deci and Kasser (2004) present evidence that both what goals people pursue (i.e., whether they strive for extrinsic versus intrinsic goal contents) and why people pursue goals (i.e., whether they strive for autonomous versus controlled motives) make significant independent contribution to psychological well-being. Likewise, eudaimonia, or flourishing, is viewed as living well and focuses on the quest for goals that are intrinsically driven and a process characterized by independence and mindfulness. Thus, we envision social participation and academic goal achievement as extrinsic goals, with flourishing and social well-being being intrinsic goals. Interestingly, Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2013) conduct a literature review of student engagement and well-being and identify two main approaches of school engagement research: one that examines students' behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement (North American approach), and another that examines study-related vigor, absorption, and dedication (European approach). The approach advocated herein may help reconcile these two perspectives in future research. Further, Klug and Maier (2014) present a meta-analysis of 85 studies revealing a significant association between successful goal striving and SWB. The strong relationship between self-being, flourishing and goals has implications for the current research. Kraut et al. (1998) positively relates social involvement with well-being; Boudreaux and Ozer (2013) relate goal striving to well-being; Ryan, Huta, and Deci (2013) relate eudaimonia, well-being, and goal striving within a SDT perspective. Consequently, while we expect significant inter-correlations between the concepts of interest in the current research, we also expect the ability to conceptually and operationally discriminate between extrinsic and intrinsic goals. This leads to our first research hypothesis:

H1: The concepts of self-perceived flourishing, social involvement, SWB, and academic achievement will be positively correlated within the Millennial cohort.

There further appears to be a growing understanding of specifically how these concepts form a causal order. Kim-Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon, and Diener (2013) present a model to understand and guide interventions, measurement, and life choices in the pursuit of well-being that appears germane to the current inquiry. These authors posit that one's perceptions of SWB represent a global assessment of life and its facets based on life events and circumstances, emotional reactions, recall of memories of emotions and global evaluative judgments regarding one's life (Kim-Prieto et al. 2013). This suggests

that SWB represents an achieved state of being, and therefore most likely represents the ultimate endogenous variable in the current research.

Goals also represent end states. Moskowitz (2012, p.1) defines goals as, "A goal is an end state that the organism has not yet attained (and is focused toward attaining in the future) and that the organism is committed to approach or avoid." Thus, goals reside in memory as mental representations that represent something to strive to attain or avoid, a standard, or an end state, that the individual will attempt to bring about by initiating responding.

This conclusion is reinforced by Ryan et al.'s (2013) explication of eudaimonia in relation to SDT. Ryan et al. (2013, p. 120) explicitly relate SDT toward a formal theory of eudaimonia based on the Aristotelian perspective, defined as "as a character of persons that entails living in accordance with reason and moderation, and aiming toward excellence and the realization of a complete human life." Thus, eudaimonia in this view is not conceived as a mental state, a positive feeling, or a cognitive appraisal of satisfaction, rather, a way of living – as a goal. They conceive of eudaimonia as a way of living, and not a psychological end-state or outcome. Thus, it is a goal that should positively contribute to a state of well-being if the perception of achieving the goal (of achieving a eudaimonic lifestyle) is realized. Consequently, we envision both social well-being and flourishing in the current research to be of intrinsic goal nature, with social well-being goals being endogenous to flourishing goals in an academic setting. This perspective appears consonant with the goal hierarchy described by Bagozzi, Guran-Canli, and Priester (2002) which differentiates superordinate goals ("Why do I want to achieve that for which I strive?" from focal goals (What is it I strive for?"). In other words, we model self-perceptions of achieving flourishing goals as exogenous to perceptions of well-being.

This perspective also appears consistent with SDT as a basis for flourishing models. In brief, Ryan et al. (2013) begin by summarizing SDT as (1) focusing on intrinsic motivation, or the pursuit of an activity because of its inherent interest and enjoyability; (2) broadly claiming that there are intrinsic values built into human nature and these values are universal; and (3) based upon the basic psychological needs that are the foundation of personal growth (manifest in intrinsic motivation), integrity (manifest in integrative processes), and well-being. Ryan et al. (2013) assert that the obvious points of convergence between SDT and eudaimonic theory involve shared interests in intrinsic versus extrinsic life goals, the basis and universal human needs underlying wellness, the critical role of reflection and awareness, and the centrality of volition. Based upon these points of convergence, Ryan et al. (2013) propose a formal theory of eudaimonia suggesting that eudaimonic living can be characterized in terms of four motivational concepts: (1) pursuing intrinsic goals and values for their own sake, including personal growth, relationships, community, and health, rather than extrinsic goals and values such as wealth, fame, image, and power; (2) behaving in autonomous, volitional, or consensual ways, rather than heteronomous or controlled ways; (3) being mindful and acting with a sense of awareness; and (4) behaving in ways that satisfy basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. In this view, the first three points above positively affect psychological and physical wellness because they facilitate satisfaction of the basic, universal psychological needs. This helps explain why evidence suggests that people high in eudaimonic living tend to behave in more prosocial ways. This observation further strengthens our argument that flourishing is exogenous to social well-being in the current research.

SDT theory thus helps inform the hypothesized general causal ordering of exogenous concepts underlying the goal of individuals to seek to live a eudaimonic lifestyle. Specifically, Ryan et al. (2013) argue that the concept of intrinsic worth means more than simply that the values in question are inherent or natural to humans. An attribute has intrinsic value when it is a first-order value, defined as

(a) a value not reducible to other values (e.g., love), and (b) a value that does not exist for the sake of another value (e.g., wealth). Wealth, for example, as a second- or third-order value is associated with extrinsic aspirations. Therefore, Ryan et al. (2013) assert that a eudaimonic lifestyle will be focused on intrinsic values; non-eudaimonic lifestyles focus on second- and third-order values or motives. In terms of goal attainment, SDT suggests that these relationships are observed in the relationships between basic psychological needs and intrinsic/extrinsic aspirations and goals. Intrinsic goals are particularly good at satisfying the basic psychological needs of (1) autonomy (a sense of choice and volition in the regulation of behavior), (2) competence (concerns the sense of efficacy one has with respect to both internal and external environments), and (3) relatedness (refers to feeling connected to and cared about by others). Satisfaction of these three basic needs is positively associated with enhanced well-being. Consequently, SDT predicts that both what (goal outcomes) and why (relative autonomy underlying actions) are important to consider through goals and well-being. The research model presented herein well accommodates this perspective.

Ryan et al. (2013) continue by suggesting that eudaimonia is predictably associated with numerous outcomes, including varied aspects of psychological well-being, relationship quality, and one's impact on collective outcomes. In addition, both eudaimonic and non-eudaimonic activities can lead to SWB (e.g., academic performance). These authors also posit that psychological well-being (e.g., indicators of personal growth, environmental mastery, positive relationships, life purpose, self-acceptance, and autonomy) as outcomes of eudaimonic living.

The current research consequently anticipates that measures of self-perceived goal achievement of flourishing-related goals will mediate the influence of social involvement on respondent SWB. As noted above, the measures of social participation in this study represent general self-perceptions of behaviors and personal resources directed toward social engagement. The literature appears relatively silent on this issue to date. Social participation will relate positively to measures of flourishing (i.e., self-perceptions of efforts to live life well), which in turn, should fully mediate the relationship between social participation and social well-being (i.e., the appraisal of one's circumstances and functioning in society; Keyes, 1998) in part because flourishing is an intrinsic goal that should be endogenous to social participation as an extrinsic goal. The congruence between one's social behaviors (participation) and their goals related to living life well (flourishing) should in turn be positively related to their self-perceptions of outcomes, i.e., efforts to live life well (social well-being). Social participation behaviors in and of themselves are not expected to directly influence measures of self-perceived well-being within the SDT framework because social participation appears to be more closely related to an extrinsic goal, whereas flourishing appears more closely related to an intrinsic goal. Within SDT, it is expected that when people achieve intrinsic goals (rather than extrinsic aspirations) they should experience greater well-being and less ill-being (Ryan et al., 2013). Therefore, the present study will test the following hypotheses regarding the research model.

H2: Subjective well-being (SWB) will be an endogenous (i.e., outcome) variable in the research model considered herein.

H3: Measures of flourishing-related goal achievement are exogenous and positively related to measures of social well-being within the Millennial cohort.

H4: Measures of flourishing fully mediate the influence of social participation on perceptions of social well-being.

Method

Participants & Procedure

The current research utilized a self-report survey including scales of the relevant constructs of interest from the literature. Students enrolled in Introduction to Marketing undergraduate courses at a large university in the Midwest of the United States were to participate in the research for extra credit in the course. Recognizing issues related to mediation analyses and cross sectional data (Maxwell, Cole & Mitchell, 2011), a two-part online self-survey was used to collect the data. Students were invited to complete the first half of the survey at the beginning of the semester. Students that opted to complete the first half were then invited to finish the second half at the end of the semester. Only students who completed both parts were given extra credit. A total of 232 respondents completed the entire survey. The sample was 49.6 % male and 50.4% female.

Measures

Social Well-being. The measures of social well-being included the five multi-item dimensions (33 items) identified by Keyes (1998), including social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence. Social well-being was operationalized within the current research as a second-order latent factors based on the five identified multi-item dimensions. All dimensions were measured using Likert scales.

Table 1. *Social well-being sample items (Keyes, 1998)*

Construct	Sample Items	Alpha
Social Integration 7 Items	1. You feel like you are an important part of your community 2. If you had something to say, you believe people in your community would listen to you	$\alpha = .898$
Social Acceptance 7 Items	1. You think that other people are unreliable (reverse item) 2. You believe that people are kind	$\alpha = .852$
Social Contribution 6 Items	1. Your behavior has some impact on other people in your community 2. You think that you have something valuable to give to the world	$\alpha = .756$
Social Actualization 7 Items	1. You think our society is a productive place for people to live in 2. You believe that society has stopped making progress	$\alpha = .812$
Social Coherence 6 Items	1. The world is too complex for you (reverse item) 2. Scientists are the only people who can understand how the world works (reverse item)	$\alpha = .689$

Flourishing. The measures of flourishing are based on Diener et al.'s (2010) Flourishing scale. The scale consisted of 8 items measured on a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items include: 1) I lead a purposeful and meaningful life; and 2) My social relationships are supportive and rewarding. Construct reliability for flourishing was α = .749.

    Social involvement. The social involvement scale was based on Powers (2008). The scale consisted of 8 items. Six items are measured on a 1-7 scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items for these include: 1) I often take part in group activities; and 2) I spend much of my time alone (reverse item). Further, two items asked respondents to estimate the number of hours per week spent in: 1) structured organizations (clubs, teams, Greek, etc.); and 2) casual social activities (going out with friends, actively socializing, etc.). These two items were measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 'less than 2 hours' to 'more than 6 hours.' Construct reliability for social involvement was α = .752.

    Academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured using the scale from Powers (2008). The scale consisted of 5 items measured on a 1-7 scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items include: 1) I typically get better than average grades in my classes; 2) I perform well in academics. Construct reliability was α = .914.

Results

Table 2 presents a correlation matrix of the latent factors from the confirmatory factor analysis of the obtained data. Construct reliability and variance extracted measures are included on the diagonal, supporting the general conclusion that the measures are reliable and valid.

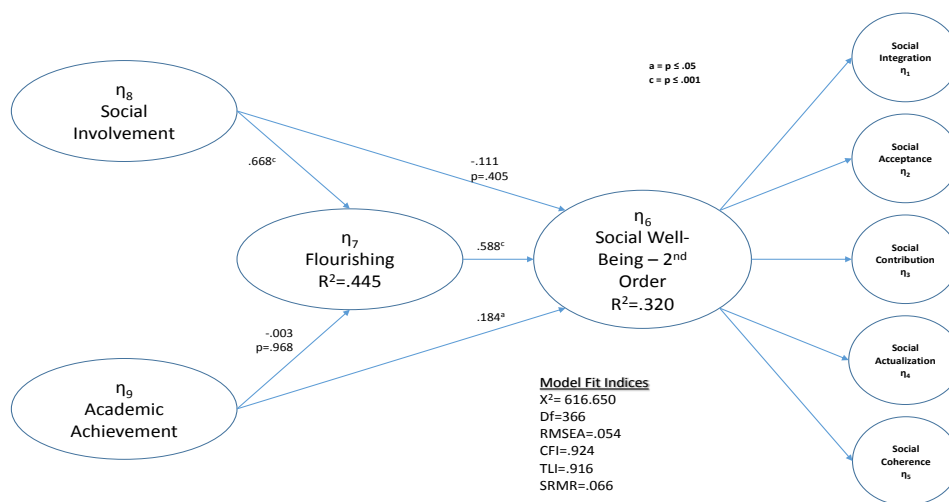**Table 2.** *Latent construct correlation matrix and validity measures*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Social Involvement	.7518 .5032								
2. Social Integration	.191	.8977 .6881							
3. Social Acceptance	.187	.374	.8517 .5361						
4. Social Contribution	.263	.524	.514	.7556 .5076					
5. Social Actualization	.228	.454	.445	.625	.8116 .5298				
6. Social Coherence	.177	.354	.347	.487	.422	.6875 ,5262			
7. Academic Achievement	.147	.138	.135	.190	.165	.128	.9137 .6824		
8. Marker Variable	.011	.074	.072	.101	.088	.068	.102	.9152 .6548	
9. Flourishing	.667	.328	.321	.451	.391	.304	.096	.031	.7492 .4993
10. 2nd-Order Well-Being	.309	.618	.605	.849	.736	.573	.224	.119	.531

 -Values on the diagonal represent construct reliability and variance extracted scores respectively.

Table 3. *Common method variance analyses*

	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
CFA	701.704	459	.940	.927	.048
Baseline Model	715.221	474	.941	.930	.047
Method-C Model	713.533	473	.941	.930	.047
Model-C vs Baseline	$\Delta\chi^2=1.688$	$\Delta df = 1$	Standard at p=.05 is 3.84		
Method-U Model	674.662	445	.944	.929	.047
Model-C vs Model-U	$\Delta\chi^2=38.871$	$\Delta df=28$	Standard at p=.05 is 41.34		
Method-R Model	678.861	473	.949	.940	.043
Model-U vs Model-R	$\Delta\chi^2=4.199$	$\Delta df=28$	Standard at p=.05 is 41.34		

Confirmatory factor analyses using structural equation analyses validated acceptable fit of latent variable measurement models in the obtained data using the MPlus 7.11 (see Table 3; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). We also assessed the possibility that our empirical estimates of relationships among variables might be contaminated by shared variance associated with the use of self-reports as a measurement model via the Comprehensive CFA Marker Technique proposed by Williams, Hartman and Cavazotte (2010). We used a four-item scale we constructed about ease of textbook purchase to ensure that the marker variable was unrelated to the substantive concepts. The results reported in Table 2 support the conclusion that that the latent variable inter-correlations we report are not biased by marker variable method effects. Specifically, equation 2 validates the overall reliability of measurement in our study: R_{Total} (.9743) = $R_{Substantive}$ (.9653) + R_{Method} (.0093) [1]

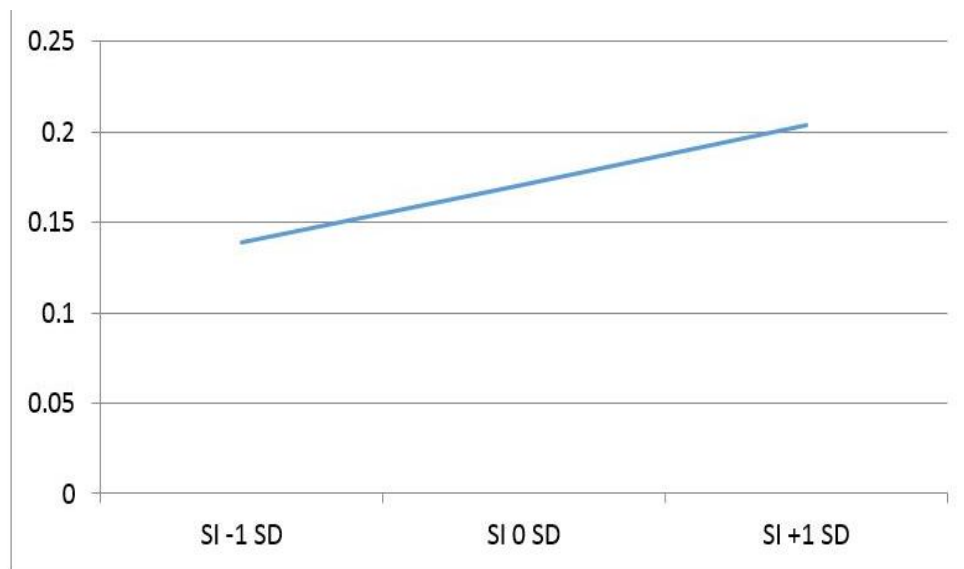**Figure 1.** *Results of empirical analyses*

The research hypotheses were assessed using MPlus 7.11. Figure 1 presents the results of empirical analyses, with model fit indices supporting interpretation of results. Readers will note that social well-being is modeled in the current study as a 2nd-order latent variable based on multi-item measures of the five dimensions identified by Keyes (1998). The model fit indices are reported in Figure 1 and support the conclusion that the data fits the hypothesized model.

A visual inspection of the results in Figure 1 support the conclusions that (as hypothesized) self-perceived flourishing goal achievement appears to fully mediate the direct relationship from social involvement to social well-being. We also employed a newer method to test for mediation. Zhao, Lynch and Chen (2010) argue that Baron and Kenny's (1986) widely-used mediation procedure has been superseded by more advanced methods of determining mediating effects. The more conclusive test for mediation is a statistically significant indirect effect in analyses (Hayes, 2013; McKinnon, 2008; Muthen, 2011). We ultimately employ Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Model to calculate indirect effects with bootstrapped (N=1,000) confidence intervals (see Table 3 and Figure 2). Based on an analysis of Model 4 and Model 74 in Hayes (2013), we identify an indirect effect from social involvement through flourishing to social well-being. To assess mediation we ran Model 4 and found a significant indirect effect of social involvement on social well-being through flourishing (β = .16, SE .04, LCI .093, UCI .25). Next, we ran model 74 to assess whether we had moderated mediation. While our results for moderated mediation are not statistically significant, Figure 2 demonstrates that the conditional indirect effect of social involvement on social well-being essentially gets stronger as at higher levels of social involvement. Thus, the greater the behaviors of social involvement, with this cohort, the greater the influence of that social behavior on social well-being through flourishing.

Table 4. *Conditional indirect effect of social involvement on well-being through flourishing at specific values of social involvement*

Social Involvement Upper CI	Indirect Effect	SE	Lower CI	
SI -1 SD below average	.1390	0.04	0.07	0.22
SI 0 SD average	.1712	0.04	0.10	0.26
SI +1 SD above avg	.2035	0.05	0.11	0.32

Figure 2. *Conditional indirect effect of social involvement on well-being via flourishing*

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship of academic achievement, social involvement, flourishing and social well-being in a millennial cohort of university business students. These results help educators to better understand the role of student flourishing in higher education. The results support the importance of flourishing in the Millennial cohort.

This study empirically demonstrates the potential to evolve educational practices by relating academic achievement, social involvement, and flourishing to the social well-being of a cohort of current undergraduate business students. The results of this study suggest that millennial students' self-perceived achievement of flourishing/eudaimonia-related goals, in concert with achieving their academic performance-related goals, explains about 1/3 of their self-perceived social well-being. In addition, we empirically demonstrate that flourishing–related goal achievement fully mediates the influence of social involvement on social well-being. While some educators may subscribe to the belief that social involvement (as a behavior) through academic activities is sufficient to engender social well-being (as a mental state), our findings do not support this belief. Social involvement appears to only contribute to an improved state of social well-being when an indirect effect with flourishing (as a goal) is present. In line with Powers' (2008) conclusion that social involvement and academic achievement account for variance in life satisfaction, our study shows how flourishing mediates the effect both social involvement and academic achievement have on social well-being.

Our findings further support our previously stated suspicion and appear consistent with the emerging evidence related to student engagement (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Social involvement appears to only contribute to an improved state of social well-being when an indirect effect with flourishing (as a goal) is present. In line with Powers' (2008) conclusion that social involvement and academic achievement account for variance in life satisfaction, our study shows how flourishing mediates the effect that social involvement and academic achievement have on social well-being. However, it is worth noting that Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro's (2013) model identifies a non-

recursive nature in the engagement well-being and academic success relationships. Future research should explore these relationships more fully, particularly with longitudinal models.

This implies that simply involving/engaging these students in a greater number of social activities alone will likely not contribute their well-being. Rather, it is the congruence of social activities and behaviors with their flourishing-related goals that appears the most efficacious path to increasing student well-being with higher education. This conclusion appears to support the longer-term strategies to increase student engagement in higher education advocated by Taylor et al. (2011). The results of Taylor et al. (2011) further help explain the significant influence of self-perceived academic achievement on SWB. The goal maps reported by Taylor, Hunter, Melton and Goodwin (2011) from different samples of Millennial students clearly identified the prevalence of a credentialing goal orientation supporting perceived value largely associated with training-related education and addressing shorter-term utilitarian goal achievement. Thus, it is not surprising that students' possess strong extrinsic goals associated with grades. Students who perceive that they are successfully achieving their credentialing and grade goals perceive greater well-being while in college given the utilitarian nature of grade achievement, despite the growing evidence of diminishing educational quality (Arum & Roksa, 2011) and grade inflation (Judson & Taylor, 2014).

The findings reported herein further suggest that pedagogical marketing strategies aimed at value co-creation through the educational process should target Millennial goal structures. For example, social involvement demonstrating absorption, engagement, and participation (Neal, Uysal & Sirgy, 1995) does not in and of itself enhance social well-being. Rather, social well-being is comprised of multiple higher order dimensions including social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualization, and social acceptance (Keyes, 1998) which only enhance one's mental state when they align with goals of flourishing. Without appropriate goals, neither social involvement nor academic achievement enhances students' social well-being. In other words, students must (1) establish intrinsic goals to engage in self-discovery, develop their potential, find purpose and meaning in life, that (2) drive them becoming intensely involved in activities, invest effort, and seek enjoyment from these activities (Waterman et al., 2010) and (3) perceive their goals as being achieved in order for social well-being to increase. This helps make clear the troubling nature of Taylor et al.'s (2011) conclusions concerning the largely short-term, utilitarian goal structures of today's Millennial cohort. An activity such as Social Involvement alone (as a behavior) is not causal. In other words, we find no evidence that simply facilitating Social Involvement/engagement alone is a useful pedagogical objective in relation to student well-being. Educators within higher education will benefit greatly from a better understanding of the underlying social psychological processes, and their relationship to Flourishing goals, contributing to student well-being.

So, practically, how can educators encourage Millenials' to establish Flourishing goals as a means of achieving Social Well-Being? We would argue that this represents the true marketing communications challenge for universities today if mission stament goals such as "life-long learning" or true "personal growth" are to be most efficaciously fulfilled. Seligman (2002) maintains that happiness is the result of meeting three major needs for a pleasant life (pleasure), an engaged life (engagement), and a meaningful life (virtue). With this in mind, Social Well-Being and true happiness may require time for one to become engaged, understand their purpose in life, and ultimately serve a cause larger than one's self in order to objectively perceive their life as becoming or being meaningful. The *Purpose-in-Life* (PIL) measure has long been supported as a measure that captures a sense of purpose and meaning in life (e.g., Chamberlain & Zika, 1988; Dyck, 1987; Hicks & King, 2007; Melton & Schulenberg, 2008; Morgan & Farsides, 2009; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010) and

contributes to one's quality of life. The results from our study indicate that the process of setting a goal and moving toward achieving a meaningful life will enhance Social Well-Being. Thus, it truly is the process or journey toward Social Well-Being, rather than the destination, that enhances one's mental state.

"Mental health" includes both positive functioning in life (Social Involvement) and positive feelings in life (Social Well-Being) as a result of attaining positive goals in life (Flourishing), while the absence of mental health is languishing in life (Keyes, 2002). Consequently, we advocate universities embrace students' flourishing and well-being goals in the development of curricular objectives. Universities are strongly encouraged to facilitate students' present and future social well-being by actively committing to initiatives which facilitate more holistic flourishing than simply focusing on the development of greater intellectual development. A useful starting point for such faculty discussion might be the dimensions of intellectual, motivational, and moral maturing advocated by Taylor et al. (2011). Academic program and course-specific goals and objectives will benefit from broadening to explicitly include objectives such as the (1) discovery of students' talents and purposes in life vis-à-vis the course material, (2) the utility associated with establishment of long-term goals via critical thinking, and (3) participation in academic activities that will leave students with positive feelings of meaning and accomplishment beyond grade achievement.

We are not suggesting that movement in this direction will be easy for every university and/or faculty group. In an effort to evolve educational practices, university faculty and administrators should be rewarded when they facilitate the process by which students seek a meaningful life, not the attainment of a pleasant or engaged life (Seligman, 2002). Adopting the perspective advocated herein requires students and faculty and administrators alike adopt their own *long-term* goal-oriented perspective toward engaging in self-discovery, developing their potential, finding purpose and meaning in life, becoming intensely involved in activities, investing effort, and seeking enjoyment from these activities (Waterman et al., 2010). In other words, modeling a flourishing lifestyle is likely to be as important as advocating one.

Fortunately, the life-long learning orientation of many of today's universities appears consistent with the recommendation herein. These long-term goals look very different from the goals many students current have today to simply receive good grades and their diploma (Taylor et al., 2011). In addition, significant advances have occurred recently that will allow universities to empirically monitor their progress in changing the goal structures as advocated herein within all important stakeholder groups. For example, readers will find Taylor, Bagozzi, Gaither and Jamerson (2006) and Bagozzi, Sekerka, Hill and Sguera (2013) useful qualitative methods for this purpose.

Future Research

There are also a number of interesting future research implications from the reported study. The study of quality of life (Sirgy, 2012) and happiness (Delle Fave, 2013b) from social psychological perspectives has seen remarkable interest in recent years. One issue that is currently high on the agenda of scholars is to discriminate and appropriately associate in some causal order a plethora of concepts such as quality of life, happiness, well-being, flourishing, and eudaimonia (among others). We purposely chose to narrow the scope of our inquiry to a social psychological perspective to help contribute to this issue. Future research can first build on the results reported herein by incorporating emerging theory based on more finely tuned constitutive and operational definitions or relevant concepts. For example, Waterman et al. (2010) report a concept termed eudaimonic well-being, which they assert refers to the quality of life derived from the development of a person's best potentials and

their application in the fulfillment of personally expressive, self-concordant goals. These authors further argue that eudaimonic well-being was developed as both a complement and a contrast to subjective well-being.

Second, there are a variety of issues that scholars can considering addressing in this important domain of inquiry. One useful starting point may be to better explore the goal-directed nature of well-being. For example, Boudreaux and Ozer (2013) present evidence that individuals with less conflict are less successful in attaining their goals. Conversely, people who achieve goals successfully report greater levels of positive affect and life satisfaction. Future works needs to explore the nuances of the nature of conflict on SWB in academic motivation environments in terms of flourishing goals. Liberman and Forster (2012) relate goals to expectancy, value, and motivation. A better understanding of how flourishing goals contribute to these important concepts should shed greater light on how to achieve greater SWB in academic settings. Hortop, Wrosch and Gagne (2013) present evidence that individual's autonomous motivation and perceived control may need to work together to foster adaptive goal striving and emotional well-being. vanDellen, Shea, Davisson, Koval and Fitzsimmons (2014) present experimental evidence that depletion of self-regulatory resources alters cognition in ways that may excuse the well-documented decrease in behavioral pursuit that arises from resource depletion.

It would be very interesting to better understand how self-regulation generally applies to models of flourishing and well-being. Davern, Cummins & Stokes (2007) identifies potential affective and cognitive components of SWB that merit further exploration, particularly within from the perspective of dual process psychological models (Evans, 2009). Finally, the relationship between perceived value and well-being merit further consideration, particularly given the utilitarian nature of the Millennial cohort (Floyd, Harrington & Santiago, 2009; Newman, Bloom & Knobe, 2013). Boksberger and Melsen (2011) study the dominant evolvement of transaction-specific values from an individual customer's point-of –view. In the case of higher education, the nature of transaction-specific value (short-term) will focus on service quality, customer satisfaction, consumption values, perceived value, benefits, and sacrifices. Conversely, the nature of end-state (long-term) value will focus on quality of life and well-being. In summary, this study suggests that the positive evolution of educational practices requires a commitment to long-term goals of flourishing which will directly affect students' social well-being.

Limitations

We recognize two primary limitations of the research reported herein. First, the current study focuses primarily on social well-being. We recognize that advances have been made in our understanding of the more general concept of subjective well-being and leave to future research the implications of the reported work to more general measures of subjective well-being. Second, Nelson and Padilla-Walker (2013) note that there exists some evidence of differences between emerging adults that do or do not attend college, there is also diversity within the college cohort worth examining. We agree and do suggest caution in generalizing the results reported herein to a non-college millennial cohort.

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