

RESEARCH

I investigate the causes, consequences, and measurement of subjective well-being. I approach these questions from a personality-theory perspective, and I focus on four related questions. First, I investigate the associations between personality traits and well-being, focusing mostly on the relation between extraversion and positive affect. I use the results of these studies to develop theories about the functions of emotions and the mechanisms underlying personality traits. Second, I investigate more general questions regarding the causes and consequences of positive emotional well-being. For example, I have examined the extent to which factors such as age, gender, marital status, and unemployment affect well-being. This has led to what I think is a particularly exciting line of research on the extent to which people adapt to major life events. Third, in all of these projects I pay close attention to methodological and measurement issues, and I investigate ways to improve measures of personality and well-being. Finally, in recent years, Brent Donnellan and I have been instrumental in getting personality measures included in the very large panel studies that I have been using to investigate questions about well-being. Because of this opportunity, I have taken a greater interest in examining broader issues regarding personality development, and I have done so using large, representative samples.

The Associations Between Personality and Well-Being. I have published a number of review papers (including an article in the *Annual Review of Psychology*) discussing the associations between personality and emotion constructs. These reviews show that the trait of extraversion correlates moderately to strongly with positive affect. Much of my early research focused on identifying the mechanisms that can account for this relation. I published numerous first-authored papers in our top empirical journals on this topic. Specifically, I conducted a meta-analysis, followed by a series of papers examining the processes that might be responsible for these effects. Together, the empirical papers that I have written on the association between extraversion and positive affect have been cited 561 times (according to PsychInfo; Google Scholar cites are much higher) and have been mentioned in many textbooks. The reviews I have written have also been widely cited, including one chapter from the book *Well-Being*, which, according to Google Scholar, has been cited 893 times as of October, 2012.

Ultimately, this program of research should not only clarify the processes underlying extraverted behavior, but it should also help psychologists understand the functions of positive affect. Prominent affect theories suggest that positive emotions should affect the goals that people choose, the way people approach those goals, and the success with which they attain those goals. In support of these ideas, my colleagues and I published a paper examining the long-term effects of positive affect on income. We found that people who reported being happy at age 18 made more money in their jobs over 20 years later (Oishi et al., 2007). I have received three grants (two from the NIA) to investigate the effects of well-being on real-world outcomes.

Causes and Correlates of Subjective Well-Being. My second line of research examines factors beyond personality that contribute to stability and change in well-being. I have written a number of chapters and review articles on these topics, including one article published in *Psychological Bulletin*, which has now been cited over 1,500 times according to ISI, and over 4,500 times according to Google Scholar. I think that the most significant aspect of this line of research is my work on adaptation to life events, which has been my primary focus since tenure. The first paper in this line was one published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* that examines long-term changes in life satisfaction among people who had gotten married or become widowed. I showed that although on average people appear to adapt to these major life events, this apparent adaptation is somewhat illusory—some people react very positively to these events, whereas other people react very negatively. Overall, these individual differences cancel each other and make it look like adaptation has occurred. This paper was one of the first to show

that adaptation to major life events is not inevitable and complete as has been assumed in the past. Since its publication, this paper has been cited 335 times (ISI; 531 by Google), it was covered by news media around the world, and it won the “Best Publication Based on the GSOEP” award. I have since followed up this paper with a number of papers examining the effects of additional life events, along with an invited review paper in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. Based on this body of work, I received the 2010 Felix Buchel Prize for Excellence in Socio-Economic Panel Use. Previous winners of this award were very senior-level economists who had been working with the GSOEP for many years. In 2008, I received funding from NIA to continue this work and examine the effects of additional life events, along with various factors that might moderate reaction and adaptation to life events. Most recently, I co-authored a meta-analysis of adaptation effects in longitudinal studies (the first author on this paper was a graduate student from Germany, with whom I have worked over the past few years).

Methods and Measurement. My third area of research is in the methods and measures that personality and emotion researchers use. I have written a number of empirical and review papers on this topic, including a first-authored *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* paper that has been cited 505 times (ISI; 808 by Google). In 2005, I was selected from over 100 applicants to participate in a 3-year Positive Psychology Fellows program at the University of Pennsylvania. As part of this program, I was involved in a project to evaluate current measures of well-being and to develop a set of measures that can be used by governments to track national levels of well-being. This project resulted in a co-authored book that was published by Oxford University Press in 2009. This book extends our understanding of the processes that underlie well-being judgments, but it also has a very applied focus. One important goal of the project is to convince policy makers that well-being measures have utility in guiding policy decisions. Through this project, I also established ties with researchers from the CDC and have published one paper examining the psychometric properties of well-being measures in a representative sample (Kobau et al, 2010). This paper will guide future CDC surveys on well-being, and it will likely lead to further collaboration. For instance, I have been invited to serve on a “Healthy People 2020” subcommittee on the measurement of well-being. In addition, because of this work, I was selected as one of five primary speakers (the others included Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman, Richard Layard, and Andrew Steptoe) at a 2010 meeting sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the National Academies of Science that was focused on using well-being measures to guide policy. I was also appointed to a committee (funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) that will investigate and make recommendations about a core set of items that could be used by policy makers and medical researchers to evaluate subjective well-being. Finally, last year, Brent Donnellan and I received a 1.9 million dollar grant from NIA to compare global reports of evaluative well-being (e.g., typical life satisfaction questions) to more experiential, on-line measures (as assessed by experience sampling method or daily-diary studies). A major part of this five-year project is to add experiential measures of well-being to the German Socio-Economic Panel Study, which will not only allow us to investigate important measurement questions using extremely high quality data, but will also provide an important resource to other researchers.

Finally, I have become interested in promoting a methodology that is underused in many areas of psychology—the analysis of existing data. Together with Brent Donnellan and Kali Trezniewski, I co-edited a book that is designed to introduce the technique to psychologists. This book was published in 2010 by the American Psychological Association.

Personality Development. In my final line of research, I have focused on personality stability and personality development. I advised the GSOEP on what personality measures they should include in their large-scale panel study. They included my suggested measure in their sample of over 20,000 residents of Germany, and they recently conducted a follow-up using the

same measure. A year after their initial assessment, I wrote a proposal to include these same measures in a second large panel study, the British Household Panel Study. We have used these data (along with data from a third large panel study) to make important contributions to the understanding of personality development. In 2008, we published a paper in *Psychology and Aging* (Donnellan & Lucas, 2008) examining age differences in the Big Five in the GSOEP and BHPS, and in 2009, we published a paper in *Developmental Psychology* (Lucas & Donnellan, 2009) examining age differences in a sample from Australia. Recently, we used the longitudinal follow-up from the GSOEP to examine personality stability and change, and this paper published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* last year (Lucas & Donnellan, 2011). Together with Deborah Kashy and former student Portia Dyrenforth, Dr. Donnellan and I also published a *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* paper looking at spousal similarity in personality traits in all three of these samples (Dyrenforth et al., 2010). Specifically, we tested whether spousal similarity predicted relationship and life satisfaction. Although there has been considerable interest in this question, previous studies have investigated it using very small samples and weak methods. Given the strength of the methods that we used, I expect that our paper will be one of the most frequently cited papers in this area.

Together with my students, I have also looked more closely at stability and change in other constructs. With former student Brendan Baird, I recently published a paper that uses longitudinal data to examine changes in life satisfaction over the lifespan; and with former student Kim McAdams, we published a paper looking at changes in domain satisfaction over the lifespan. I have also become more interested in a particular model that can be used to isolate stable trait variance from autoregressive trait variance and state variance, and we have applied this model in a number of papers to examine the stability of personality and well-being constructs across long periods of time (e.g., Anusic et al., 2012; Donnellan et al., in press; Lucas & Donnellan, 2012).

Summary. In my 11 years at MSU, I have continued to publish papers in high quality journals and books. I have published two books (one co-authored and one edited) and I have two additional books under contract (one co-authored and one edited). I have published 59 peer reviewed journal articles and 25 book chapters. Both books, 41 of the 59 journal articles and 14 of the 25 book chapters were published since I was considered for promotion to Associate Professor (i.e., between 2006 and 2012, including in press). My work has also won awards and has attracted attention from researchers within and outside of psychology—according to ISI, my papers have been cited 3,957 times (H-Index = 21) and according to Google, my papers have been cited 12,775 times (H-Index = 36). Indeed, in a recently published paper in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, I was ranked 15th out of all Social and Personality Psychologists they investigated (totaling 611 individuals) in terms of the number of citations relative to career stage. In addition, during this time I have contributed quite a bit of professional service to the field. For three years, I served as an associate editor at the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, our top empirical journal. And for the last four years I have served as Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Research in Personality*. In addition, I have also been successful acquiring funding for my research. I have received three intramural research grants and seven extramural grants. The only years that I was not supported by federal funds were 2001 (my first semester at MSU) and 2004, even though federal funding is often hard to come by in my area of research.