

Goal Selection and Goal Pursuit: The Role of Self-Concordance and Implementation Intentions

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STATEMENT

The work contained in this thesis entitled “*Goal Selection and Goal Pursuit: The Role of Self-Concordance and Implementation Intentions*” has been carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Nachiketa Tripathi, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India. This work has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work contained in the thesis entitled “*Goal Selection and Goal Pursuit: The Role of Self-Concordance and Implementation Intentions*” by **Mr. Satwik Upadhyay** (Roll No. 176141011), a student in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was carried out under my supervision. The results embodied in the thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Dedicated

To

My Father

His patience gave me the opportunity to pursue my dreams

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I vividly recall my first day on campus, filled with a mixture of excitement and nervous anticipation. Now, as I write this acknowledgment, it's astonishing to see how quickly the years have passed. I was hopeful but unseasoned, propelled by a strong desire to reach my goals. This journey has been full of challenges and triumphs, and as I near its conclusion, I recognize that this accomplishment reflects not only my own efforts but also the unwavering support of many remarkable individuals.

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Goal Selection and Goal Pursuit: The Role of Self-Concordance and Implementation Intentions

Synopsis Report

Name of the Student	:	Satwik Upadhyay
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The history of research on theories about what people want to be in life and assumptions about the directions of human behaviour have involved goals (e.g., see Carver & Scheier, 1981; Sorrentino & Higgins, 1986; Locke & Latham, 1990; Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996; Higgins & Kruglanski, 2000). Goal striving has been a core component of the psychology of motivation since its inception. The content of what people want or why they choose something over others is found, in one form or another, in the work of pioneers such as William McDougall, William James and Sigmund Freud, finding the purpose, motives or meaning behind an individual's actions or behaviour. The psychology of motivation focuses on how needs, goals, and motives direct people to find the greatest expected value in choosing a course of action. Alternatively, the psychology of volition studies how people convert their goals and intentions into actions, especially after committing to a goal. Several researchers agree that committing to a goal (i.e., forming an intention) clearly differentiates goal-setting and goal-pursuit or goal-striving (Kuhl, 1984; Gollwitzer, 1993; Bargh, Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010). Together, these two traditions provide several insights into understanding goal-directed behaviour.

In certain situations, goals can be *assigned* by others, for instance, by teachers, assigned traditional work roles by birth in a family or society, friends and peer groups. In other cases, goals can be self-selected, interdependent or independent of others' influence. In this process of self-selecting one's goal, we observe unique phenomena. Some people are effective in selecting personal goals that are them, whereas some struggle. We see these struggles, in terms of career development goal choices or

orientation of goals, widely portrayed in popular mediums of films, songs and literature. Here, we see the protagonist stumble in and out of odd jobs and career choices till they finally find their calling or purpose, living a healthy, fulfilling life.

Role of Personality in Goal Setting

Seemingly, we all know of someone who generally falls as either of the two types of individuals. The first type is the people who choose their goals, work on them and find success. Then others stumble into many professions, trying odd jobs, starting something, and then losing interest till they find their true calling. The Popular media commonly illustrate the struggles of individuals trying to find their calling or life goals in contributing positively to society. There are cases in films where an individual happens to drop into a profession or career which turns out to be favourable for them. Alternatively, there are also instances of the strugglers in the popular media who consistently keep making the same wrong choices and are considered losers. It is interesting to note that some people can choose long-term goals with similar underlying potential to their self or choose careers that are just for them. For example, a person selects Goal A to pursue as per the goal's desirability and refers to it as Plan A. Individuals usually have a Plan B if Plan A is unattainable.

In some cases, the choice of Plan B has almost all the desirable qualities of Plan A and affords the same enjoyment, fulfilment or personal expression in the long term. Logically, conscious awareness of the desirable goal encourages a goal-consistent alternative in trade-offs within this goal-selection process. However, research finds that people's behaviour can also be driven by their implicit wishes and desires, which generally operate in the background of conscious thought (Bargh et al., 2001; Aarts, Custers, & Veltkamp, 2008; Bargh, Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010; Custers & Aarts, 2010; Aarts & Custers, 2012; Latham et al., 2023). In cases where information regarding the goal is unclear, they unconscious may select the goal based on positive associations of feeling good or avoiding something unpleasant, thereby becoming an affectively charged goal state. Huang and Bargh's (2014) framework of selfish goals refers to goals that can operate somewhat independently of conscious control, influencing behaviour in ways that prioritize the goal's completion, even at the potential expense of the individual's broader interests or ethical considerations. A pioneering behavioural psychologist and a Nobel laureate in economics, Daniel Kahneman (2011),

in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, characterizes modern thought into two parts: conscious control and automatic processing. Kahneman describes automatic processing as being fast, efficient and not requiring deliberate planning.

Finally, the personal characteristics that most strongly influence an individual's goal choice are perceived desirability and feasibility (Ajzen, 1985; Gollwitzer, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1990; Heckhausen, 1991). The desirability of the goal is the estimated attractiveness of a desired or intended result in the present or future (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). In contrast, the feasibility of the goal depends on the self-efficacy perceptions or judgments of their capabilities to perform the behaviour required to achieve the goal (Bandura, 1997). Thus, goal selection processes are influenced by a host of personal factors, such as beliefs about oneself and self-regulatory mechanisms, desirability, and the feasibility of a goal. They are also open to many kinds of social influence, some beneficial or detrimental (Kasser et al., 2004). Also, people can be aware or unaware of an active goal when making a goal choice. Therefore, it can be considered that selecting self-appropriate goals is an important skill, especially when the chosen goal can bring people to a future that might not be as enjoyable, growth-promoting, or personally expressive as it could have been (Waterman, 2013; Osin & Sheldon, 2019).

Being aware of the goal enables people to use conscious strategies to identify properties that are relevant to goal pursuit and assess their importance. Where such conscious strategies are needed to determine the possibility of achieving the goal (the feasibility), being unaware of the goal (the unconscious goal pursuit) is more concerned about the goal's desirability. The study of personal goal selection as a research area provides new avenues for understanding how people "grow themselves" in their lives compared to growing haphazardly (King, 2002). The present RQs are especially relevant in today's *haphazard* nature of personal growth in managerial careers, referred to as the *broken career ladder*, in other words, a demise of hierarchical career progression (Osterman, 1996; Sullivan, 1998).

Alternatively, some individuals might not be interested in climbing the ladder. A recent world values survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022) found that millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996, now between the ages of 28 and 43) and Generation Z (people born between 1997 and 2012, now between the ages of 12 and 27) placed less value on

work than they used to in the western economies such as Great Britain and the United States. While the majority in a developing country, such as India, do consider work as very important (64.7%) in 2022, the survey reports a drop in the importance of work from the 2017 data (76.9%). Coupled with the evidence of the world values survey, rapid technological innovations and a growing gig economy, one can suggest that many of us no longer see ourselves as defined by our work alone – rather, what happens outside work that is considered more important.

In years to come, we may need to embrace the reality of consistent changes in the environment and learn how to navigate through these moments of transition effectively. As a constant, goals influence all aspects of these transitions, such as decision-making from competing alternatives, learning about and rediscovering oneself and so on. Therefore, developing a complete theory of how people transition or change requires that we understand how individuals select their goals. Existing studies report that goal selection strategies may be framed as a value-based decision-making process. These values can be acquired as an inference or direct experience combined with undirected and directed selection choices (Kruglanski et al., 2002; Locke & Latham, 2002; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). However, goal generation and management research is in its early stages (Molinaro & Collins, 2023).

Determinants of Personal Goal Selection

How do people decide which goal or goals to choose for long-term pursuit? What kind of goals do they choose? The answers to such questions would have been a relatively easy task if everybody had the same process of choosing goals at any given point in time.

Although personal goal selections can be quite different among people, in certain situations, these different goal selections can converge on broad universal intentions (such as looking for autonomy or independence, aspiring for competence or achievement, or improving social skills or belongingness). Therefore, this desirability of the goal is in part influenced by the social norms or factors in the environment. Following this argument, the literature review of the present study, at the outset, differentiates between process-based and non-process-based theories of goal selection. Non-process theories adopt a relatively static view of individual factors that determine goal selection and focus more on the *content* of the goal as the inherent characteristic

that influences goal selection. On the other end, process-based goal selection theories explore the dynamic interaction (*structure of goals*) of several factors over time, such as the social context, environment and obstacles to different phases between goal selection and pursuit.

Researchers have also adapted implicit measures originally developed to measure other constructs and implicit motives. McClelland directly influenced Atkinson's (1957) model of need for achievement (nACH). Atkinson's theory split the achievement motive into a broad desire to approach success (hope for success) and a broad desire or motivational tendency to avoid failure (fear of failure). Several researchers believe that hope for success (HS) is strongly related to the self-concept compared to the fear of failure (FF) (Schmalt & Sokolowski, 2000; Sparfeldt & Rost, 2011). Other scholars consider ability or perceived competence to be a significant contributor to motivation for achievement (Brunstein & Heckhausen, 2008). However, the cognitive process of estimating one's won competence should be related to the formation of HS in demands to the task. This formation of HS takes the form of anticipatory emotions that serve to activate instrumental behaviour (Brunstein, 2018). Thus, goals are a cognitive representation of desired mental states, influencing our ways of thinking in various ways and are stored in memory. Goals are useful if they motivate behaviour to attain them.

Process Theories of Goal Striving

Process theories of motivation focus on *how* motivation occurs and the processes by which individuals make decisions about their behaviour, effort, and goals. Unlike content theories, which emphasize *what* motivates people (needs, desires), process theories are concerned with the cognitive mechanisms and decision-making strategies individuals use in motivational contexts.

Goal-Setting Theory

Lock and Latham's (1990, 2019) goal-setting theory discusses the types of goals and their influence on an individual's performance. The theory suggests that moderately difficult (challenging) and objectively set goals tend to bring out optimal performance in their pursuit rather than *do-your-best* type of goals. However, people do not perform better just because the goal is specific and challenging; optimal goal performance also depends on whether individuals perceive or possess the necessary skills and abilities

(self-efficacy). Additionally, the theory also identifies the conditions of high performance beyond the concepts of goal specificity, difficulty and self-efficacy. It specifies the mediating processes that can influence goals and performance. For instance, Locke (2001) suggests that a goal directs attention, effort and intensity of action towards goal-relevant performance. Further, goals also motivate people to discover new strategies for goal attainment (Seijts & Latham, 2005).

In defining moderators to goal striving, the goal-setting theory suggests the critical role of feedback in tracking goal progress and helps redefine individual strategy for goal attainment. In fact, goals and feedback work well together to increase goal performance compared to either of them alone. Goal commitment, which is duly influenced by goal value, incentives in the environment and perceptions of one's competence (self-efficacy), is also considered to improve goal performance. Since the theory suggests setting up moderately challenging goals, individual skill and knowledge are also important determinants of goal performance. Individuals cannot achieve goals if they do not know how. Finally, goal performance also depends on the support available to an individual from the environment (e.g., social support, facilities or money). New venues of research in goal setting analyze the influence of goal priming effects on outcomes relevant to non-conscious sources of work behaviour in organizations (e.g., Shantz & Latham, 2009; Chen et al., 2021).

Cybernetic Control Theory – The Role of Emotions in Goal-Striving

The theory, apart from highlighting the important role of emotions as feedback for prioritizing goal pursuit, also enumerates the hierarchical structure of goals in terms of *do* and *be* goals. In essence, the feedback from affective reactions prioritizes goals and helps manage multiple goal pursuits as a process of self-regulation. In a broader theory of self-regulation and goal pursuit, the *do* goals refer to actions or behaviours that individuals aim to perform. These goals are typically more concrete and focused on specific tasks or outcomes. They involve observable actions that can be measured and completed (for instance, exercising two times a week or completing a project report). *Be* goals, on the other hand, are linked to a particular state of being or identity. These goals are more abstract and reflect personal qualities, values, or attributes that an individual aspires to be (such as being a good friend, achieving something big, or being a responsible and helpful person).

Based on the above discussion, it can be assumed that the notion of implicit and explicit motives can often co-exist with personal emotions, values and qualities of a goal. However, discrepancies between the two types of motives increase the risk of adaptation and individual goal selection problems, which raises questions about – how people differ in their developmental potentials (motives, values and needs) when their motives are congruent to when they are not.

Finally, academic textbooks distinguish between content and process theories of motivation, and the present research acknowledges the distinction as well. However, this distinction is based on the notion that content theories divide needs or the *why* of motivation into different themes or categories. In contrast, process theories address the *how* of motivation in terms of regulation, adaptation and multiple decision-making processes. Kehr et al. (2018), however, consider this distinction in academic research as rather restrictive in discussing individual motivation. They contend that Maslow's content theory of motivation may be more indicative of a process based on moving up to a different need (prestige) after satisfaction of base-level needs (Hunger). The modern approaches to goal motivation propose combining content and process-related theories to create a comprehensive theory of motivation.

Within this integration of motivational systems, recent neuropsychological research advances the notion that motivational systems strongly influence personality in organizing responses to punishment and rewards, in turn, driving approach and avoidance behaviour to goal pursuit (Corr et al., 2013). Early meta-analytic research on the relationship between the Big Five traits and performance motivation suggests the 5-factor model of personality as an important source of performance motivation (Winter et al., 1998; Judge et al., 2002). The driving concern behind integrating personality and motivation approaches to types of goal selection and pursuit has been to understand how personal goals are related to life satisfaction and happiness in goal pursuit. Finally, the goal of the present research is to generate knowledge of how to optimize well-being in long-term goal-relevant behaviours.

Based on the above arguments of the pivotal role goals play in our own lives and the difficulties in selecting self-appropriate goals, the researcher raises a few questions for research on personal goal selection and pursuit –

RQ1: How do people decide which goal(s) to choose for long-term pursuit?

RQ2: Why is it so difficult to choose the right goals for oneself?

RQ3: What role do personality, goal and motive orientations taken together play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection?

RQ4: If goal selection is a skill, what is the process by which people's appropriate goal selections and choices can be improved?

RQ5: Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

RQ6: Does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices?

RQ7: What defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit?

Addressing such research questions can unfold answers to how individuals choose what goals to pursue in the first place. Should the orientation of skill choice be largely materialistic, market-driven over sustainable and self-affirming? How does one know whether they are on the right track? How can self-regulation strategies improve skill-fitting pursuit for oneself?

The present study aimed to examine personal goals of different intrinsic (such as learning, relationship and character goals) and extrinsic (such as grade/money, fame and appearance goals) contents and their desirable qualities through a measure of goal concordance. The examination of goal desirability was followed by an opportunity to select desirable goals and pursue them for three weeks to measure satisfaction with success on their goal progress. In addition, an intervention mechanism of self-concordance was tested during goal deliberation to examine individual differences in goal selection, if any. In continuation, once the goals were selected, the participants were invited to enhance their goal-striving actions with a choice of another exercise of implementation intentions. This enhancement of goal striving is designed to occur during the implementational mindset phase, where once individuals have decided to act, they become more sensitive to information that helps implement behaviours through their consistent actions.

Therefore, through a longitudinal design of Phase 1 (goal desirability) and Phase 2 (goal feasibility), the present study addresses several research questions in Phase 1,

such as: a) what defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit? b) What role do personality, goal and motive orientations play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection? c) If goal selection is a skill, how can people's appropriate goal selections and choices be improved? d) Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

While Phase 2 addresses the following research questions viz., what defines adaptive, conscious self-regulation for long-term pursuit? How can self-regulation strategies improve one's skill-fitting pursuits? After goal selection (the decisional phase), what process facilitates an improved goal pursuit (the post-decisional phase)? Moreover, does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices? Or do certain favourable individual strategies, when combined with concordant fit, enhance the quality of goal pursuit?

Phase 1 – Self-concordance as a measure of person-goal fit

Phase 1 of the present study employed a self-regulatory SCM mechanism and a goal-oriented approach to examine how individuals select personal goals for long-term pursuit. It tested the relationship between concordant goal selection and various factors, including intrinsic and extrinsic goals, value orientations, personality traits, implicit motives related to fear and hope, and the specific goals chosen for pursuit. The researcher hypothesised that there would be a consistent pattern of associations between self-concordance and various other variables, in line with previous findings. This study aimed to establish self-concordance as a significant indicator of a goal's desirability, influencing the subsequent selection of goals rooted in the deeper aspects of the self. Based on the previous findings, the present study hypothesised that intrinsic goals, which align with values such as personal growth, relationships, and community, promote healthier personal goal pursuit compared to extrinsic goals focused on fame, wealth, status, and appearance.

The researcher developed three broad categories of intrinsic and extrinsic goals, presenting them to participants as reference goals. Participants then assessed the desirability of these goal contents using the self-concordance measure, or Relative Autonomy Index (RAI). A self-concordance score (RAI) by person-mean-centring responses to 4 items that measure the quality of motivation (through Intrinsic and Extrinsic items) for goals and the relative autonomy in selecting them (through

Identified and Introjected items), The person-mean-centred scores of the external and introjected items were subtracted from the identified and intrinsic items which provided the researchers with the relative autonomy index (RAI) or the relative autonomy with which participant select their goals. In Phase 1, the RAI values ranged from -7.58 to +5.44 for intrinsic and extrinsic goal contents. These scores on RAI for each goal (four) were interpreted as follows - the higher scores represent a more autonomous sense of motivation, whereas a negative relationship suggests the degree of motivation for the goal (intrinsic or extrinsic motivation).

Phase 1 conducted an experimental (vignette) survey asking participants to rate their self-concordance (desirability) with each goal reference (four goals - two intrinsic and extrinsic goals) and, in the later part of the experimental condition, to select any two-goal references as their goals to pursue. Phase 2 of the study presented a longitudinal mechanism through a measure of three-week goal progress and satisfaction with goal pursuit on the goals selected in Phase 1, discussed later.

Participants in Phase 1 also responded to self-report measures of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS at Time 1), an adaptation of the Aspirations Index or Value Orientations Index (VOI), a Big Five Personality Traits (BFI), an implicit assessment motive components of hope of success and fear of failure through a Multi-Motive Grid (MMG) before finally selecting their goals for pursuit.

The results largely found that participants expect value-congruent goals to be more enjoyable and meaningful in comparison to goals not congruent with their values. In other words, this finding suggests that intrinsically oriented individuals expect to enjoy and benefit from selecting and pursuing intrinsic goals rather than extrinsic goals.

However, results also reveal a higher self-concordance for the extrinsic fame goal, in spite of extant research evidence that a choice and pursuit of extrinsic goals are not consistent with basic need satisfaction, psychological well-being and health in the long run (Sheldon et al., 2003; Niemiec *et al.*, 2009; Sheldon *et al.*, 2010).

Phase 1 of the present study successfully tested an assessment of goal desirability (*what* and *why*) in matching one's deeper developmental potentials with intrinsic goal contents. The findings of manipulating self-concordance assessment *before* and *after* goal selection also conform to the theoretical tenets of the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, which suggests goal selection processes to be part of a

deliberative mindset in judging the desirability of the goal. Meanwhile, considerable research on the goal setting approach and personal goals measure goal commitment or concordance in the implementational mindset phase, characterised by goal enactment (feasibility), *after* the goals have been selected.

A longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study advances the differences in the motivational and volitional aspects of goal selection and pursuit, respectively and answers the rest of the RQs to assess *how* individuals can effectively pursue their goals and provide implications to a long-term goal concordant pursuit in terms of goal progress and subjective well-being.

Phase 2 - Goal Concordance and Implementation Intentions

In Phase 2, a mixed sample of 202 participants from the initial 407 in Phase 1 were recruited to continue into the goal-pursuit stage of the research. Phase 2 consisted of two conditions: a) Participants (N=111) who consented to participate in the implementation intention exercise, and b) Participants (N=91) who did not participate in the implementation intention exercise, in continuation from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the study. At time T3, approximately three weeks after the implementation intentions exercise, a second Satisfaction with Life Scale score (at time T3) was recorded. The gap between recording the two SWLS scores was approximately 25 days.

Phase 2 of the present study found evidence for two different mindsets – a deliberative (pre-decisional) and implementational (post-decisional) mindset involved in goal selection of goal desirability phase and goal striving or the feasibility of pursuit phase. An analysis of self-concordance scores (RAI) of the Phase 2 participants (N=202) on the pair of goals selected at time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2) found self-concordance scores to go up from goals selected (GS1 and GS2) at the time (T1) to time (T2). Such an increase is attributed to the post-decisional cognitions regarding goal reference ratings.

Further, Phase 2 found that a selection of intrinsic goals for pursuit did not positively influence participants' perceptions of life satisfaction, even when controlling for the amount of goal progress made. The implementational Phase 2 was more concerned with achieving goals as an important predictor of satisfaction than the mere selection of intrinsic goals. It is possible that intrinsic goals, like personal growth or building relationships, are often more abstract and require sustained effort over time.

This complexity can make measurable progress difficult in the short term, as these goals don't always lend themselves to clear, quantifiable steps, potentially leading to perceptions of slow or minimal progress.

Theoretical Contribution

The present study presents empirical support for the theoretical distinction of two different motivational and volitional principles as presented by the Mindset Theory of Action Phases (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 2012). By examining the two different phases of goal selection and goal pursuit, the present study highlights the differences in the type of information individuals are most sensitive to in each stage. For instance, the present study finds that during the goal selection stage, individuals are more concerned with information that helps them form a judgment of a goal in terms of its desirability. In the goal-pursuit stage, individual satisfaction information from goal-striving processes was derived from the perceptions of goal progress rather than the desirable properties of the goal. Such findings support the deliberative and implementational mindset hypothesis and Crossing the Rubicon models of goal pursuit and afford novel avenues for the dynamics of personality expression.

Moreover, the present study finds that a measure of the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) is most strongly associated with autonomous motivation and inversely with controlled motivation, indicating its role as a key indicator of self-regulation and intrinsic drive. Similarly, RAI was positively associated with traits like cooperative, conscientious, and creative, as well as a significant predictor of selecting intrinsic goals by participants, reinforcing the central tenets of SDT that autonomy supports proactive goal-setting and positive personal traits. Conversely, the negative correlations of RAI with a pessimistic motive component and anxious trait imply that greater autonomy contributes to lower levels of negative emotional states. Overall, the RAI's pattern of associations suggests that individuals with high autonomy are generally more self-motivated and goal-oriented, exhibiting traits conducive to well-being and productivity.

Methodological Contribution

The present study tested a recently developed methodological innovation and a theoretical proposition that conducting self-concordance assessments prior to goal selection promotes more intrinsic goal choices (Sheldon et al., 2019). Before their

research, all SCM research studies followed the normal procedure of only soliciting self-concordance after the participants had selected their goals. The normal procedure of assessing self-concordance involved selecting goals first, after which the goal concordance was rated. In other words, self-concordance assesses the goal's desirability after the person has *crossed the Rubicon*; that is, once the goal selection is complete, individuals move from a deliberative (pre-decisional) to a goal-implementation mindset (post-decisional).

Considering the novel arguments for renewed testing of self-concordance assessment, the procedure of Phase 1 asks participants, at first, to rate the potential self-concordance of several reference goals provided by the researcher. Only after rating the self-concordance for these goal references are the participants asked to select the goals they wish to pursue. In this way, the self-concordance of goal reference is assessed during the deliberative (pre-decisional) stage of judging a goal's desirability and not when individuals are busy considering the goal's feasibility in a post-decisional mindset. Such assessment should positively influence selecting appropriate goals with access to more information in the pre-decisional mindset. This study's methodological innovation and consensus with previous research have significant theoretical implications for future self-concordance research, suggesting that RAI should be measured before finalising a goal.

Practical Implications

How do self-concordance interventions help in organisations? Motivational research has largely focused on the motivations during goal striving and not during the goal selection phase, where information about the goal can be assessed before committing to it. The present study finds that knowledge acquisition about a goal's desirability and feasibility can act as a critical source of information before a goal is selected. Some researchers consider that such information can enhance an individual's effectiveness in the early and difficult stages of a challenging performance goal in organisations (Seijts & Latham, 2005). Any degree of deceit in the true assessment of desirability and feasibility before selecting a challenging intrinsic (learning a skill) or outcome-based extrinsic goal (such as desire for money, high performance and status) can reduce the effectiveness of any self-regulation strategy during goal striving processes. In other words, focusing only on the outcomes or success of a goal can distract from recognizing

one's abilities and motivation. This distraction may result in an ineffective and disorganized search for appropriate strategies to achieve the goal. Instances of such behaviour are presented as ancient myths of *Sisyphus* – a cycle of futile effort without completion representing an eternal and meaningless toil.

Further, popular media, such as films and literature, highlights the importance of perseverance, the acceptance of continuous effort, and finding personal meaning in the process rather than the endpoint through struggles of unfinished goals or unrealised potentials. Therefore, setting goals can be seen as creating meaning in the face of such difficulties, and it must include information about an individual's ability, motivation, and level of autonomy before selecting a goal. Embracing the struggle, as *Sisyphus* does, transforms a seemingly futile existence into one imbued with significance through the act of striving itself. The specific practical implications of self-concordance and findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the present study are discussed next.

Performance Management and Professional Development

The present study hypothesised and tested goal desirability prior to goal selection for broad personal goals which require minimal prior learning and for which performance routines do not exist or where once effective strategies can suddenly cease to be so or which relocate the purpose or benefit of goals from one of intrinsic motivation to that of autonomy. Within this context, the present study finds that associations of self-concordance scores (RAI) with the nature of goals, individual traits, and motives prior to goal selection offer several advantages for goal-setting exercises in organisations. For instance, in organisational situations where primarily learning rather than an increase in motivation (e.g., effort or persistence) is required for an employee to be effective, setting a specific challenging goal in terms of performance outcomes is not likely to be concordant. Perhaps a specific high-learning goal should be set instead. For example, a goal concordance score can inform coaches and trainers in organisations to suggest that a trainee should consider setting a high learning goal rather than a high-performance outcome goal in terms of high scores in training exercises. Focusing only on high scores in training assessments, in this instance, can prevent trainees from focusing on the learning aspect of the training.

Additionally, the most important claim of the present study is that there are structures inside people (hopes, fears, motives, and aspirations) that determine their behaviour. The self-concordance assessment between different goal and value orientations in the present study can suggest individual differences in two ways: a) in the desire for intrinsic values, such as the ability to obtain social acceptance and support; b) in the desire for extrinsic values, such as the ability to obtain status, power, and the control of resources. Similar significant associations of goal concordance (RAI) score with personality traits and motives represent a profile harder to fake as a self-report measure in tapping the authentic part of the self. In essence, an RAI measures the discrepancy between the real and ideal self, between what one *thinks* one wants and what one really *feels* about what one thinks one wants. Such authenticity assessment before goal-setting or personality assessment exercises in organisations can help trainers and managers answer the difficult questions of triangulating the real selves of their trainees or employees in terms of – how we know who they are. It is quite obvious that time can tell many things about others in terms of their reputations; the results of the present research, however, find RAI scores to tap authentic value and goal orientations for a valid assessment instead of time. In training situations, such information can serve as a baseline assessment of matching training needs, regulation strategies and predicted outcomes. In contrast, in performance appraisal situations, such assessments can inform potential interests and orientations of employees and reduce bias in developing a profile of an employee for assessment.

Psychologists largely agree that personality assessments can measure occupational performance almost as well as measures of cognitive ability, and unlike cognitive ability measures, they do not discriminate (Hogan, 2005). The results of goal concordance in the present study did not find any differences between men and women. Based on the comprehensive framework of SDT that emphasises a universal psychological need satisfaction with goal concordance, the findings of the present study are based on comprehensively researched conceptual foundations. In addition, the present study finds that individuals' self-concordant ratings of reference goals predicted a choice of intrinsic goal by the participants in Phase 1, and implementation intentions exercises during the goal-striving process in Phase 2 work well with short-term and extrinsic goal orientations rather than intrinsic. Specifically, findings from Phase 2 of the study suggest that implementation intentions exercise actually impedes the

realisation of an autonomous and intrinsic goal as an external and controlling regulation. Alternatively, recent research maintains that implementation intentions do work in organisations and that they should be associated with everyday tasks to establish habits at work (Trenz & Keith, 2024). However, the present study does not find support for claims of enhanced success by combining self-concordance and implementation intentions in goal progress by previous research (Koestner et al., 2002).

Recent studies support the present claims of the self-concordance measure in increasing pro-environmental behaviours of employees (Unsworth & McNeil, 2017) and as a necessary condition for self-management training in organisations (Unsworth & Mason, 2016). Further, several studies report positive associations between self-concordant assessment of goals and perceived person-organisation fit (PO fit), suggesting that the fit between autonomous motives and work-related goals influences goal accomplishment and satisfaction (Downes et al., 2017). They also report that such associations of work goals with basic needs of autonomy may induce holistic perceptions of the organisation and promote an employee's assessment of compatibility with the organisation's values, leading to job satisfaction and goal realisation. In fact, a study by Greguras and Dierendorff (2010) found that goal self-concordance mediates the positive relationship between an employee's need for satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours. Finally, growing research suggests that the degree of employees' self-concordance in organisational human resource management (HRM) practices was associated with employee creativity (Han, 2011; Sheldon, Goffredi & Titova, 2024).

Redefining Talent Management

The present study finds that intrinsic learning goals can also be appropriate for work-from-home (WFH) employees, autonomous gig workers and seasoned managers. Although the study did not find any differences between employees and students, the common finding of the present study is that greater self-concordance scores are related to a choice of more intrinsic goals for both WFH employees and students. For example, those who operate in globally diverse organisations and flexible work arrangements can find it fruitful to focus on ways that grant them enough autonomy for their organisational tasks. This can be achieved by encouraging employees to autonomously and proactively shape their job tasks, relationships, and cognitive perceptions to align

with their skills and interests. By empowering employees to engage in autonomous work arrangements, managers can tap into their innovative potential and foster a learning and innovation culture within the organisation. Such arrangements, in turn, can lead to enhanced creativity, problem-solving, and innovative work behaviours among employees, ultimately benefiting the organisation's innovation outcomes. In addition, managers should adopt a tailored approach that considers the combined effect of goal self-concordance and different self-regulation strategies during task performance. For instance, managers can aid employees who perceive themselves as overqualified in establishing self-concordant goals aligned with organisational objectives. This approach offers opportunities for individuals to actively shape their work to better correspond with their skills and interests.

Educational Management and Career Development

Goal-setting exercises are not only a component of organisations but also encompass the learning and performance expectations set for students by instructors and teachers. For instance, goal orientation is an important variable critical to examining career development in adolescents, such that learning orientations are positively and directly associated with perceptions of self-efficacy and outcomes of success and indirectly with career exploration and aspirations among students (Creed et al., 2013). The present study supports previous findings by showing that RAI scores for a learning goal (intrinsic goal) negatively correlate with external pressures of controlled motivation and pessimism. These results are consistent with the need for competence under SDT, which is the reflection of one's beliefs about the ability to produce desired outcomes. Such an association is not surprising as competence is negatively related to perceived pressures and external regulation in students' motivational processes in classrooms (Wang et al., 2019).

Additionally, students can benefit when their goals are self-concordant, i.e., when their conscious goals fit (or express) their implicit motives and inclinations. In 2 phases, we randomly assigned participants to rate self-concordance with intrinsic and extrinsic goal references before or after goal selection. We found a significant difference in goal self-concordance scores between the participants in the two groups, suggesting that prompting participants to assess their goal concordance prior to goal

selection improved their goal choices in terms of higher self-concordant scores and more intrinsic or healthier goal selections.

Considering potential goal motivations helps individuals choose goals consistent with their underlying personality preferences, and such congruent goals feel like they would be interesting and meaningful to pursue rather than being a burden or a drag. Sheldon et al. (2003) suggest that such information is always available to us but may only appear when asked certain questions. Furthermore, most students do not find access to such information largely due to distractions, information overload, stress, deadlines, peer pressures or lack of opportunities in their environment. Interventions that can help individuals to make explicit their own latent emotional and motivational knowledge and better communicate with themselves can be very valuable for career aspirations and guidance.

Today's workforce is under pressure to achieve tangible results, focusing on "performance mode," which benefits motivation and output when routines are effective. However, rapidly evolving technologies and new ways of work arrangements and opportunities, such as work-from-home (WFH), gig work and the autonomous nature of work, require a focus on sources of both motivation and high ability for individuals and businesses. The findings of the present study suggest that intrinsic goals (learning) and extrinsic (performance goals) are markedly different. Intrinsic goals encourage creativity, exploration, personal growth and community participation, while extrinsic goals involve applying known skills to achieve specific objectives. The present research also finds that extrinsic goal pursuits (or performance goals) can benefit under established strategies such as implementation intentions, but intrinsic goals may be necessary for fostering innovation when strategies for goals are not yet clear. Therefore, the present study's findings on personal goal research can help teachers, mentors, instructors, and even organisations to enhance their effectiveness by understanding different goal and value orientations and aligning goal types with an individual's strategic needs.

Further clear demarcations between motivational and volitional processes in the findings of the present help identify intervention mechanisms that can improve performance on any goal type for students. Where self-concordance can improve a student's academic goal choices, implementational intentions can work well in

difficulties during learning and performance with the goal of developing habitual action. This study can guide instructors and teachers to design improvement and growth plans tailored to each of the two stages of goal processes.

The findings of the present research also establish connections with recent developments in goal-setting theories within the field of education. Recently, Locke and Latham (2019) identified two studies, an experimental study (Morisano et al., 2010) and a qualitative interview (Travers, 2013), reporting that students simply writing at length about their goals show improved performance. In conclusion, just as self-concordance assessment can help individuals understand what they really want amongst several goal choices, a combination of mindfulness meditation with self-concordance can be a powerful technique to discover oneself. The next section discusses the limitations of the present study and avenues for future research.

Limitations

From the perspective of positive psychology, pursuing doctoral research reflects a growth mindset that emphasises the journey rather than solely focusing on the outcome. While the present study provides insights into goal selection and pursuit processes, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalisability of the results.

1. The present study's generalisability is limited due to the use of a constrained set and the broad nature of intrinsic and extrinsic goal types as references for participants to choose their goals. Such a limited range of goals may not fully represent the diverse choices individuals encounter in real life. To really draw the autonomous and intrinsic nature of self-concordant goals, future studies can move away from researcher-assigned goal sets in controlled contexts but involve participants in building their personal goals based on their values and interests.
2. Phase 1 of the study used vignettes to examine the relationship between the choice of goal types and self-concordance. However, because vignettes require participants to respond to hypothetical scenarios, there are certain situations when those scenarios do not create the same context as would be encountered in approach-avoid goal framing in real life,

3. To maintain a limited length of the vignette questionnaire, some multidimensional constructs, such as a Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) and Value Orientations Index (VOI), are measured through a few items, four for RAI and six for VOI adapted from conventional eight and twelve items measure respectively. This results in less than conventional reliabilities (Cronbach Alphas and McDonald Omegas) on both measures and thus should be viewed with caution.
4. Although the present empirical research employs appropriate statistical techniques, such as Multi-categorical simple mediation analysis to capture the signal of the ratings of goal concordance to the goal selected by the participants, the use of more sophisticated statistical techniques of Multi-Level Modelling (MLM) and an Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling (ESEM) analysis was limited by the understanding of the researcher.
5. A qualitative measure that can capture the feelings associated with self-concordant goal selections and subsequent goal pursuit can augment the results of the quantitative study.

Future Research Avenues

1. Based on the results of the present study, self-concordance for intrinsic goals and implementation intentions exercise are not considered the optimal combination for goal pursuit by the participants. The differential results can be due to the researcher not having total control over the daily use of implementation intentions by the participants, following recent research that suggests the use of implementation intentions for everyday work to establish habits, especially at work (Trenz & Keith, 2024). Alternatively, future research can focus on a more broadly conceptualised goal-planning compared to implementation intentions in the goal-striving phase. Where implementation intentions focus on specific situations and possible actions, goal planning can allow for a broader range of behaviours necessary for goal realisation.

2. Although the present study utilised a semi-projective measure of a Multi-Motive Grid (MMG) to capture the implicit hope and fear components associated with the three motives (need for achievement, affiliation and power), future studies can utilise pure implicit motive measures such as Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) or Picture Story Exercise (PSE) to map deeper aspects of self.
3. The present research finds that goal concordance assessment (RAI) can theoretically link a goal-setting approach to the examination of challenging performance goals in organisations, such as sales targets, outcome-based business development plans and activities, and academic publication targets. Achieving effective performance on challenging goals also requires an initial learning stage in which individuals consider information about actions that are essential for effective performance (Seijts, Latham & Woodwark, 2013; Raveendran et al., 2023).
4. This exploration involves quickly learning through one's experiences and evaluating the highest potential for reward amongst available alternatives. The results of such exploration afford avenues for exploiting more alternatives as an adaptive learning process. However, a clear mechanism of how performance goals influence this adaptive learning process has not yet been discovered. The present study argues that the *learning* (intrinsic) aspects of a challenging performance (extrinsic) goal can be matched through self-concordance assessment to an individual's underlying goal and value orientations. Self-concordance assessments of exploration strategies can influence the relative attractiveness of different exploitation options in achieving the performance goal.
5. Finally, future studies can draw theoretical support from the ancient Indian knowledge treatise of *Mandukya Upanishad*, which suggests the importance of mindfulness meditation to the self-realisation of one's pure consciousness (*Turiya*). This aspect of self-realisation matches well with the tenets of the SCM, and future research can investigate whether mindfulness can facilitate the selection of self-concordant goals and their combined influence on an individual's goal progress and positive well-being.

Thus, Phases 1 and 2 of the current study presented a longitudinal measure of two distinct stages of self-regulated goal-directed behaviour. Theory and research on self-regulation are dominated by a social–cognitive perspective that emphasises post-decisional (i.e., volitional) control processes of goal maintenance in outcomes of success. In the present study, we focus on research on self-regulation that acknowledges the affective fundamentals of motivated action through the SCM and highlights the processes of goal selection as vital parts of self-regulation. From the SCM’s perspective of *motivational competence*, the cognitive and affective forces within individuals work together rather than oppose each other in self-regulation. Such positive combinations are what can render an effortless rather than effortful goal pursuit a hallmark of efficient human action. A precondition for such motive and self-congruent goal pursuits is that individuals have *insight* into their basic preferences and can select goals accordingly. In positive psychology, a long-term benefit might accrue with an alignment or adoption of a growth mindset that matches the underlying personality, values and motives of an individual with the universal basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfied by their goal choices, emphasizing the journey rather than sole focus on the outcome.

TABLE OF CONTENT

List of Tables	xxix
List of Figures	xxxii
List of Appendices	xxxiv
Chapter 1: Introduction & Literature Review	1-38
Chapter 2: Phase 1 Goal Desirability	39-142
Chapter 3: Phase 2 Goal Feasibility	143-168
Chapter 4: General Discussion	169-180
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Contributions, Limitations and Directions for Future Research	181-202
Bibliography	203-234
Appendices	235-356

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page no
Chapter 1		
1.1	A review of definitions and nature of a goal.	3-4
Chapter 2		
2.1	Sample characteristics for phase 1 of the study.	104
2.2	Goal references and goal content (N = 407).	105
2.3	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS (N = 407).	106
2.4	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS Questionnaire (N = 407).	106
2.5	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of VOI (N = 407).	107
2.6	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Short Form of Aspirations Index (VOI) (N = 407).	108
2.7	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Short Form of Aspirations Index (VOI) Questionnaire (N = 407).	108
2.8	Dimensions of Big Five personality factors	109
2.9	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion (N = 407).	110
2.10	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion (N = 407).	111
2.11	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Reserved (N = 407).	111
2.12	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism (N = 407).	112
2.13	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism (N = 407).	113
2.14	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Cooperative vs Antagonist (N = 407).	114
2.15	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs Lack of Direction (N = 407).	115
2.16	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs Lack of Direction (N = 407).	116
2.17	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientious vs Disorganised (N = 407).	117

Table No.	Title	Page no
2.18	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Neuroticism vs Emotional Stability (N = 407).	118
2.19	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Neuroticism vs Emotional Stability (N = 407).	119
2.20	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Anxious vs Calm (N = 407).	120
2.21	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience (N = 407).	121
2.22	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience (N = 407).	122
2.23	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Creative vs Conventional (N = 407).	123
2.24	Descriptions of statements and motive components of the Multi Motive Grid (MMG).	124
2.25	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Hope for Success (HS) and Fear of Failure (FF) components of motives (N = 407).	125
2.26	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Hope for Success (HS) and Fear of Failure (FF) components of motives (N = 407)	126
2.27	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Pessimistic and Optimistic Components of Motives (N = 407).	127
2.28	Final Coordinates.	128
2.29	Stress and Fit Measures for the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Solution.	129
2.30	Pairwise Distances* Between Motivation Types in the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Solution.	130
2.31	Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N = 407).	131
2.32	Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N=407).	132
2.33	Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Controlled and Autonomous Motivation (N = 407).	133
2.34	Inter-Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach Alphas of the Study Variables (N=407).	134-135
2.35	Self-concordant goal references (RAI means and standard deviations (N=407).	136
2.36	Self-concordant goals selected (RAI means and standard deviations (N=407).	136

Table No.	Title	Page no
2.37	Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of learning goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=86).	137
2.38	Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of relationship goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=85).	138
2.39	Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of character goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=19).	139
2.40	Inter-correlations, means, and standard deviations of grade/money goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=133).	140
2.41	Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of Fame goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=65).	141
2.42	Inter-Correlations, means and standard deviations of Appearance goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=19).	142
Chapter 3		
3.1	Sample characteristics for Phase 2 of the study.	161
3.2	Inter-correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach Alphas of the Study Variables (N=202).	162
3.3	Paired sample statistics and correlations (N=202).	163
3.4	Results of the paired sample test (N=202).	164
3.5	Simultaneous Regression Analysis Predicting SWLS at Time 3 (N=202).	165
3.6	Descriptive Statistics of variables in simultaneous regression (N=202).	166
3.7	Means and standard deviations of implementation intentions exercise with SWLS at Time 1 and Time 3 (N=202).	167
3.8	Intrinsic and extrinsic goals and means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of RAI scores in implementation intentions exercise conditions (N=202).	167
3.9	Sample characteristics and means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of RAI scores in implementation intentions exercise conditions (N=202).	168

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page no.
Chapter 1		
1.1	The organismic integration theory (OIT) taxonomy of regulatory styles after Ryan et al. (2022).	25
1.2	The self concordance model (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998,1999).	29
1.3	Mindset theory of action phases after Keller, Biebele & Gollwitzer (2019, pg. 25).	33
1.4	Conceptual framework depicting proposed longitudinal relationships among variables.	34
Chapter 2		
2.1	Proposed relationships and hypotheses development in Phase 1.	42
2.2	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS Questionnaire (N = 407).	62
2.3	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of VOI (N = 407).	65
2.4	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion (N = 407).	68
2.5	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism (N = 407).	70
2.6	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs lack of direction (N = 407).	71
2.7	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Neuroticism vs emotional stability (N = 407).	73
2.8	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience (N = 407).	74
2.9	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of HS vs FF components of motives (N = 407)	77
2.10	Results of multidimensional scaling of intrinsic and extrinsic goals.	81
2.11	Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N = 407).	83
2.12	Self-concordance scores (RAI) for goal references selected by the participants (N=407).	85

2.13	Estimated Marginal Means (EMMs) for self-concordance scores on intrinsic and extrinsic goal references (N=407).	92
2.14	Estimated Marginal Means between RAI scores for goal references and goals selected (N=407).	93
2.15	Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.	93
2.16	Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.	94
2.17	Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.	95
2.18	Estimated marginal means of control and experimental group on self-concordance for goals.	96
2.19	Self-concordance scores (RAI) for participants in the control and experimental group for all goals in the study	97
Chapter 3		
3.1	Proposed relationships and hypotheses development in Phase 2.	148
3.2	An interaction plot of implementation intention exercise with a pre-post measure of Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (N=202).	155
3.3	Estimated Marginal Means of RAI Scores for intrinsic and extrinsic goals vs implementation exercise (N=202).	156
Chapter 4		
4.1	The conceptualisation of Turiya (Pure consciousness) by Swami Sarvapriyananda based on <i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>	176

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix No.	Title	Page no
A	Phase 1- Questionnaires for Employees (Condition 1)	235-288
B	Phase 1- Questionnaires for Employees (Condition 2)	289-345
C	Phase 2-Questionnaire	346-353
D	About the Organisations	354-356

Chapter 1

“This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one’s potentialities.”

- Carl Rogers (1961, Ch. 3, p.32)

Introduction

Human lives are largely defined by the long and short-term goal choices they make. The choice and pursuit of these goals provide a sense of individual agency in our lives. Most people invest considerable time and effort in their long-term goal choices and strive to stay on developmental paths that help achieve them. Much of what individuals do every day, feel and think about themselves may revolve around the short-term goals they are trying to achieve and sometimes the goals they have achieved or missed. The word *goal* is defined in the extant literature in several different ways, such that personal goal research considers individuals to be completely dominated by them every day, even pursuing goals not in focal awareness (Emmons, 1989). Personal goals can be long-term (Bateman and Barry, 2012) or abstract (Freitas, Salovey and Liberman, 2001). Alternatively, most organisations define goals as concrete and short-term business goals, such as a 15% increase in revenue compared to the previous year. Also, these business goals, in turn, form a concrete basis of separate goals for an employee (e.g., 100 new customer sales per month), department (e.g., a 15% reduction in costs) or an organisational unit (e.g., expand market reach by 20%). All situations illustrated have one thing in common: having a goal directs an individual's behaviour purposefully towards something positive they desire in the future (Brandstätter & Hennecke, 2018). A goal brings structure, controls our behaviour and can influence individual life decisions. Such influence can shape major life decisions, such as choosing one's career path to mundane everyday choices (e.g., what to eat? Which book to read?) (Moskowitz & Grant, 2009; Aarts & Elliot, 2012).

Goals can also orient our behavioural responses to the social environment we are embedded in, for instance, whether the choice of goals opens up or closes opportunities in seeking out or avoiding certain experiences. A goal helps us gather our strength to persevere by suggesting several behavioural strategies for achieving it. The choice of one's goal, for instance, might relate to our specific competence or apply

standards to our behaviour in terms of succeeding or failing to develop the required competence to achieve the goal. A goal regulates attention, readiness to work and concentration thereby influencing personal growth and identity (Oysterman, 2015; Berkman, Livingstone & Kahn, 2017; Dominik & Cole, 2020), development and learning (Heckhausen, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Brandtstädter & Rothermund, 2002; Seijts, Latham & Woodwark, 2013) and emotional states (Carver & Scheier, 2013). Goals do not only integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes; they also facilitate an interactionist perspective of the relationship between individual and environment, following Lewin's (1944) influential behavioural formula as an indispensable condition for an informed psychological analysis.

- Behaviour (B) is a function of person factors (P) and environmental factors (E):

$$B = f(P, E).$$

While goals integrate affective, behavioural and cognitive processes of everyday life, their pursuit significantly depends on the characteristics of one's immediate environment (e.g., incentives).

This chapter concerns what there is to know about goals and ways of measuring them, and the discussion reflects my best personal judgment on the topic. Voltaire, a famous French writer, suggested that to have a serious discussion, first, we must define our terms. The first part of the chapter concerns definitions, nature and type of goals in psychological and organisational research, including some comments on motivation theory and personality. Next, the researcher raises pertinent research questions (RQs) in exploring personal goal research. The RQs lead to a discussion on the relevance of the present research. The succeeding section presents a literature review addressing the RQs, and the chapter concludes with a summary of key research gaps addressed by the present research and a plan for the thesis.

Defining Goals

Among the several reasons why people pursue goals, the most frequently cited consensus on the definition of a goal (refer to **Table 1.1**; see Austin & Vancouver, 1996) elucidates that the cognitive representations of the desired states can be broadly constructed as processes, events and outcomes. For instance, some people may pursue

goals for the outcome of an activity or event (e.g., status or popularity) or even the enjoyment of the activity that leads to goal achievement as well (activity incentive). Additionally, the reason for pursuing a goal is not only limited to the short-term or immediate responses to internal or external stimuli (for instance, searching for food when hungry or running away from a threat such as a dangerous animal) but also includes the ability to self-regulate for long-term plans or future desired states. Thus, a goal can also be considered a cognitive representation of future events and influences individuals to regulate their behaviours based on anticipated incentives.

Table 1.1. A review of definitions and nature of a goal.

Author & Year	Type of Research	Definition	The key attributes of a Goal
Dardenne, A., Van Lamsweerde, A., & Fickas, S. (1993).	Theory building	“a nonoperational objective to be achieved by the composite system.” (pg. 20)	Objective, tangible and defines measurable actions.
Austin, J.T., & Vancouver, J.B. (1996).	Literature Review	“goals as internal representations of desired states, where states are broadly construed as outcomes, events, or processes.” (pg. 338)	Cognitive representation of future events, activity incentive, goal orientation.
Fishbach, A., & Ferguson, M. J. (2007).	Conceptual study	“a cognitive representation of a desired endpoint that impacts evaluations, emotions and behaviors.” (pg. 491)	The structure of a goal in memory and the content of goal representations.
Schultheiss, O. C., & Brunstein, J. C. (1999).	Empirical study	“Internal representations of desired future states that guides individuals’ thoughts and actions and furnish their lives with meaning and purpose.” (pg. 3)	Negotiating social environment is a prerequisite for the development of the mental representation of goals and subsequent influence on thought and action.

Huang, J. Y., & Bargh, J. A. (2014).	Theoretical framework	“mental representations of desired end-states” (pg. 124)	Social-cognitive, short-term instrumental behaviours in the immediate environment.
Giessner, S. R., & van Knippenberg, D. (2008).	Conceptual Study	“Maximal goals can be defined as “ideal” goals which support abstract goals.” (pg. 17) “a minimal goal can be regarded as “the lowest goal whose end state will still produce satisfaction” (pg. 17)	They argue for the two time-bound characteristics (proximal-distal) of goals that determine the emotional value (valence) of the goal.
Locke, E. A., Shaw, K. N., Saari, L. M., & Latham, G. P. (1981).	Review research	“A goal is what an individual is trying to accomplish; it is the object or aim of an action.” (pg. 126)	Similar in meaning to purpose and intent, goal specificity and difficulty are the main dimensions of goal content.
Doran, G. T. (1981).	Systematic Review	Goals are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related.	Goals can be converted to short-term measurable objectives to accomplish something.

Role of Motivation in Personal Goal-Setting

The history of research on theories about what people want to be in life and assumptions about the directions of human behaviour have involved goals (e.g., see Carver & Scheier, 1981; Sorrentino & Higgins, 1986; Locke & Latham, 1990; Gollwitzer & Moskowitz, 1996; Higgins & Kruglanski, 2000). Goal striving has been a core component of the psychology of motivation since its inception. The content of what people want or why they choose something over others is found, in one form or another, in the work of pioneers such as William McDougall, William James and Sigmund Freud, finding the purpose, motives or meaning behind an individual's actions or behaviour. The psychology of motivation focuses on how needs, goals, and motives direct people to find the greatest expected value in choosing a course of action. Alternatively, the psychology of volition studies how people convert their goals and intentions into actions, especially after committing to a goal. Several researchers agree that committing to a goal (i.e., forming an intention) clearly differentiates goal-setting

and goal-pursuit or goal-striving (Kuhl, 1984; Gollwitzer, 1993; Bargh, Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010). Together, these two traditions provide several insights into understanding goal-directed behaviour.

In certain situations, goals can be *assigned* by others, for instance, by teachers, assigned traditional work roles by birth in a family or society, friends and peer groups. In other cases, goals can be self-selected, interdependent or independent of others' influence. In this process of self-selecting one's goal, we observe unique phenomena. Some people are effective in selecting personal goals that are them, whereas some struggle. We see these struggles, in terms of career development goal choices or orientation of goals, widely portrayed in popular mediums of films, songs and literature. Here, we see the protagonist stumble in and out of odd jobs and career choices till they finally find their calling or purpose, living a healthy, fulfilling life.

The traditional motivation theories devoted considerable attention to expectancy-value theories in idiographic or personal goal research (Sheldon, 2002; Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Emmons, 1989) to explain how people select motivational targets (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). To date, however, motivational theories have given scant attention to the goal selection issue, especially the selection of personal goals. The modern theories of personality and purposive behaviour suggest that long or short-term goal choices broadly define the life one lives or the course of actions one engages in. For some individuals, this choice is consistent with the goal. For others, making a goal choice entails considering trade-offs, activating a competing goal, or a choice of goal-inconsistent alternative.

Role of Personality in Goal Setting

Seemingly, we all know of someone who generally falls as either of the two types of individuals. The first type is the people who choose their goals, work on them and find success. Then others stumble into many professions, trying odd jobs, starting something, and then losing interest till they find their true calling. The popular media commonly illustrate the struggles of individuals trying to find their calling or life goals in contributing positively to society. There are cases in films where an individual happens to drop into a profession or career which turns out to be favourable for them. Alternatively, there are also instances of the strugglers in the popular media who consistently keep making the same wrong choices and are considered losers. It is

interesting to note that some people can choose long-term goals with similar underlying potential to their self or choose careers that are just for them. For example, a person selects Goal A to pursue as per the goal's desirability and refers to it as Plan A. Individuals usually have a Plan B if Plan A is unattainable.

In some cases, the choice of Plan B has almost all the desirable qualities of Plan A and affords the same enjoyment, fulfilment or personal expression in the long term. Logically, conscious awareness of the desirable goal encourages a goal-consistent alternative in trade-offs within this goal-selection process. However, research finds that people's behaviour can also be driven by their implicit wishes and desires, which generally operate in the background of conscious thought (Bargh et al., 2001; Aarts, Custers, & Velkamp, 2008; Bargh, Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2010; Custers & Aarts, 2010; Aarts & Custers, 2012; Latham et al., 2023). In cases where information regarding the goal is unclear, they unconscious may select the goal based on positive associations of feeling good or avoiding something unpleasant, thereby becoming an affectively charged goal state. Huang and Bargh's (2014) framework of selfish goals refers to goals that can operate somewhat independently of conscious control, influencing behaviour in ways that prioritise the goal's completion, even at the potential expense of the individual's broader interests or ethical considerations. A pioneering behavioural psychologist and a Nobel laureate in economics, Daniel Kahneman (2011), in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, characterises modern thought into two parts: conscious control and automatic processing. Kahneman describes automatic processing as being fast, efficient and not requiring deliberate planning.

Finally, the personal characteristics that most strongly influence an individual's goal choice are perceived desirability and feasibility (Ajzen, 1985; Gollwitzer, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1990; Heckhausen, 1991). The desirability of the goal is the estimated attractiveness of a desired or intended result in the present or future (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). In contrast, the feasibility of the goal depends on the self-efficacy perceptions or judgments of their capabilities to perform the behaviour required to achieve the goal (Bandura, 1997). Thus, goal selection processes are influenced by a host of personal factors, such as beliefs about oneself and self-regulatory mechanisms, desirability, and the feasibility of a goal. They are also open to many kinds of social influence, some beneficial or detrimental (Kasser et al., 2004). Also, people can be aware or unaware of an active goal when making a goal choice. Therefore, it can be

considered that selecting self-appropriate goals is an important skill, especially when the chosen goal can bring people to a future that might not be as enjoyable, growth-promoting, or personally expressive as it could have been (Waterman, 2013; Osin & Sheldon, 2019).

Being aware of the goal enables people to use conscious strategies to identify properties that are relevant to goal pursuit and assess their importance. Where such conscious strategies are needed to determine the possibility of achieving the goal (the feasibility), being unaware of the goal (the unconscious goal pursuit) is more concerned about the goal's desirability. Based on the above arguments of the pivotal role goals play in our own lives and the difficulties in selecting self-appropriate goals, the researcher raises a few questions for research on personal goal selection and pursuit –

RQ1: How do people decide which goal(s) to choose for long-term pursuit?

RQ2: Why is it so difficult to choose the right goals for oneself?

The study of personal goal selection as a research area provides new avenues for understanding how people "grow themselves" in their lives compared to growing haphazardly (King, 2002). The present RQs are especially relevant in today's *haphazard* nature of personal growth in managerial careers, referred to as the *broken career ladder*, in other words, a demise of hierarchical career progression (Osterman, 1996; Sullivan, 1998).

Previous research considers 'old' careers as a process of social reproduction, linking organisational behaviours with comparatively stable career patterns characteristic of kinds of firms or a particular firm (Gunz, 1989; Hassard, Morris & McCann, 2011). At the individual level, however, 'new' careers are expressed as a sequence of work role transitions, representing choices between opportunities presented to managers by organisations. Apparently, the 'new' arrangements of work have shifted responsibility from employer to employee in developing careers across organisations. The reality today is that career ladders are becoming smaller. As large organisations are becoming leaner and simplifying management structures (Child, 2015) or becoming boundaryless (Arthur, 2008), so are the internal paths for promotion. Instead of offering a potential path from the shop floor to the boardroom, many of the largest corporations have outsourced operational activities and effectively closed off many internal career paths. This broken ladder in career advancement is exacerbated further by a threefold

change in how we work. The next section discusses these changes and finds the relevance of RQs raised in the domain of goals and personal goal setting in organisations and for career development.

Relevance of the Present Research in Today's Context

Rapid Technological Disruption and the Rise of Automated Work

Recent researches in management and organisational behaviour predict a new industrial revolution driven by the 'new' ways of doing work, significantly influencing work and employment (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016; Brougham & Haar, 2020; Ashford, Caza & Reid, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic (referred to as the pandemic hereafter) further progressed autonomy in work, with employees working from home, change in communication patterns and increasing advances in technology at work. These advances are broadly categorised by researchers as STAARA (Healy, Nicholson & Parker, 2017; Brougham and Haar, 2020), referring to Smart Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Robotics, and Algorithms.

Consequently, seminal research by Frey and Osborne (2017) suggests that 47% of employment in the USA is in a high-risk category of jobs to be automated in the coming decades. These technological advances are not limited to developed economies; rather, a NASSCOM (2021) study anticipates a requirement of over one million engineers with advanced STAARA within the next 2-3 years. Additionally, the demand-supply gap for digital talent is poised to widen from the current 25 per cent to almost 30 per cent by 2028. The increasing demand, driven by the growth of STAARA capabilities, electric vehicles, semiconductors, and the expanding electronics sector, highlights a significant challenge in the employability of engineering graduates. With industries placing a higher value on skills in areas like cybersecurity, Information Technology, robotics, and data science, it is clear that traditional academic education by itself is not sufficient.

Autonomous Work and Gig Economy

This continuous technological disruption suggests that careers have been replaced with jobs, and jobs have increasingly been replaced with tasks. The 'new' ways work, eluded to early on in the introduction, refers to the context of the 'gig economy' and the emergence of gig workers. A gig economy work context consists of

short-term autonomous or freelance workers who either contract with several organisations or sell directly to the market (Kuhn, 2016; Petriglieri et al., 2018; Ashford et al., 2018). In a literature review of alternative work arrangements, Spreitzer, Cameron and Garrett (2017) define the gig worker as holding one or all three dimensions of flexibility in their jobs. First the flexibility in the employment relationship between the employee and the organisation. This flexibility emerges, for instance, in short or long-term contracts between the employee and an organisation on some task, as agency work or an employment relationship between three stakeholders – a client (an organisation), a staffing agency and the employee. Second, flexibility in the scheduling of work, where, for instance, full-time employees can hold side gigs (hustles) or monetize their hobbies and passions as a side project. Indeed, a recent Marketwatch study (2024) suggests that more than half of the American population (54%) engage in a side gig for additional income. Although the reasons for the adoption of such gigs in the US economy are mainly driven to combat rising inflation and lifestyle, the choices of gig work (whether full or part-time) vary among different individuals (Caza, Moss & Vough, 2018).

Third, flexibility in where the employee or a worker performs the work for an organisation. Examples of such work-from-home employees have become commonplace, especially after the pandemic (Kulik, 2022). Additionally, Spreitzer et al. (2017) differentiate between highly skilled workers who voluntarily choose independent work and low-skilled workers who feel dictated to piece together an income. While some gig economy workers enjoy significant control and flexibility in areas like contracts and scheduling, there are instances when others can be manipulated by algorithms that dictate their actions through incentives and penalties within the software they use (Weiner, Cram & Benlian, 2023; Wood et al., 2019; Spreitzer et al., 2017). This chapter focuses on the agenda of goal selection and pursuit of the present research primarily on individuals at the end of some of these dimensions—skilled workers with low levels of organisational attachment who work from home full-time and have at least a moderate level of control and flexibility over their work.

Evidently, for both students and new gig economy employees, the notion of a career has changed so much that we need to reorient all current and future generations about what life really looks like in the workforce today. While theoretical and empirical research documents these recent trends (Makridis & Han, 2021; Pichault & McKeown,

2019; Davis, 2016), we are only beginning to understand the psychological experience of workers in this new world of work and the ways they cope with its particular conditions and complexities (e.g., Caza et al., 2018; Petriglieri et al., 2018; Ashford, Caza & Reid, 2018). For graduates today, it is not a slow and steady climb upward. It can potentially be *zigzagging* (Debruyne & Strobbeleir, 2020) from one career and chapter in life to another.

Earlier theories of goal selection and pursuit are witnessing a surge in revisions to accommodate potential answers to important research questions raised in the present study (see Locke & Latham, 2019; Ryan et al., 2022; Molinaro & Collins, 2023; Buchanan, 2024). Now, with the new way of work gradually replacing doing work the ‘old’ way, in defined groups with stable membership in particular settings. Consequently, we have to adjust our thinking about key goal selection concepts, rethink taken-for-granted assumptions about traditional career structures and experiences and address new questions within these areas.

Individual Differences in Goal Orientations

Emerging autonomous work patterns have significant implications for future research in the domain of how people select goals. For example, it is imperative to understand both average levels of employee motivation and the between-individual variance in different contexts. This focus can present objective accounts for the variance in motivation within an individual over time as they struggle to maintain their motivations in between different chapters of life. It is in between these chapters is where we need information about ourselves and what we are made of, to choose what to pursue. This self-knowledge is critical to cultivating perseverance, forming conclusions about our values and interests, and thinking deeply about what we want out of life. However, we know very little about how successful individuals like Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, and Elon Musk got to who they are. It can be argued that people developing into who they are involves long-term desirable goal choices formed in their teenage years and linking behaviours to a feasible goal pursuit (Salmela-Aro, 2009; Salmela-Aro et al., 2012).

Finally, some individuals might not be interested in climbing the ladder. A recent world values survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022) found that millennials (people born between 1981 and 1996, now between the ages of 28 and 43) and Generation Z (people

born between 1997 and 2012, now between the ages of 12 and 27) placed less value on work than they used to in the western economies such as Great Britain and the United States. While the majority in a developing country, such as India, do consider work as very important (64.7%) in 2022, the survey reports a drop in the importance of work from the 2017 data (76.9%). Coupled with the evidence of the world values survey, rapid technological innovations and a growing gig economy, one can suggest that many of us no longer see ourselves as defined by our work alone – rather, what happens outside work that is considered more important.

In years to come, we may need to embrace the reality of consistent changes in the environment and learn how to navigate through these moments of transition effectively. As a constant, goals influence all aspects of these transitions, such as decision-making from competing alternatives, learning about and rediscovering oneself and so on. Therefore, developing a complete theory of how people transition or change requires that we understand how individuals select their goals. Existing studies report that goal selection strategies may be framed as a value-based decision-making process. These values can be acquired as an inference or direct experience combined with undirected and directed selection choices (Kruglanski et al., 2002; Locke & Latham, 2002; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). However, goal generation and management research is in its early stages (Molinero & Collins, 2023). In this context, we ask the following research questions that can inform individuals about the skill-match or goal-fit pursuits dilemmas and may significantly predict life satisfaction and long-term well-being. Considering the above literature, the researcher has raised the following questions -

RQ3: What role do personality, goal and motive orientations taken together play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection?

RQ4: If goal selection is a skill, what is the process by which people's appropriate goal selections and choices can be improved?

Addressing such research questions can unfold answers to how individuals choose what goals to pursue in the first place. Should the orientation of skill choice be largely materialistic, market-driven over sustainable and self-affirming? How does one know whether they are on the right track? How can self-regulation strategies improve skill-fitting pursuit for oneself?

The next section(s) in the chapter introduces several theoretical approaches to goal selection and pursuit that answer some of the questions raised by the present research. The chapter also discusses competing viewpoints and theories in elaboration and summarises the analytical framework that guides the research strategy.

Determinants of Personal Goal Selection

How do people decide which goal or goals to choose for long-term pursuit? What kind of goals do they choose? The answers to such questions would have been a relatively easy task if everybody had the same process of choosing goals at any given point in time. As discussed in the introduction, what makes the process of personal goal selection intriguing and difficult is that there are tremendous individual differences in how people select their goals. Although personal goal selections can be quite different among people, in certain situations, these different goal selections can converge on broad universal intentions (such as looking for autonomy or independence, aspiring for competence or achievement, or improving social skills or belongingness). Therefore, this desirability of the goal is in part influenced by the social norms or factors in the environment. For instance, Salmela-Aro et al., (2012), through their life span model of motivation (Four C's model), suggest that the demands, challenges and opportunities individuals encounter at a developmental stage of their lives channel the kinds of personal goals they choose for themselves. Following this argument, the literature review of the present study, at the outset, differentiates between process-based and non-process-based theories of goal selection. Non-process theories adopt a relatively static view of individual factors that determine goal selection and focus more on the *content* of the goal as the inherent characteristic that influences goal selection. On the other end, process-based goal selection theories explore the dynamic interaction (*structure of goals*) of several factors over time, such as the social context, environment and obstacles to different phases between goal selection and pursuit.

Non-Process-Oriented Theories of Personal Goal Setting

Expectancy-Value Theories

The expectancy-value theory is a significant foundation for most contemporary research in understanding what motivates individuals towards a goal. The central claim of the theory is that both the desirability (value) and feasibility (expectancy) of a goal

choice determine the goal(s) people select and also the degree to which they commit to the goal. In reality, it is the commitment to the goal that separates it from wishes and expectations. Researchers widely agree that commitment ascribes a strong sense of determination and dedicated efforts to the intention of goal striving, and only people committed to the goals persist in their realisation (Locke & Latham, 1990; Brunstein, 1993; Oettingen, 2012). Consequently, several theories on the relationship between intention strength and commitment are based on the assumptions of expectancy-value theory. For instance, the influential theory of planned action by Azjen and Fishbein (1980) considers intention strength as pivotal for consistency between attitude and behaviour. Similarly, early proponents of the expectancy-value paradigm in motivational research considered external rewards (Vroom, 1964), task difficulty and a favourable opportunity to act (Atkinson, 1957) as important situational determinants of goal commitment. Research under the expectancy-value theories largely describes what determines the strength of our commitment to the goal.

Early formulations of incentive theories in motivational experiments (e.g., Thorndike, 1911; Tolman & Honzig, 1930; Hull, 1943; Olds & Milner, 1954; Skinner, 1963) demonstrated a role of positive affect or a desirable end-state of a goal. Further, it is such a positive value that forms an incentive for which an organism strives to achieve (Berridge, 2001). Later formulations of expectancy-value shifted focus from situational determinants towards cognitive determinants of a goal's value or desirability (e.g., self-determination theory by Deci & Ryan, 1985; achievement motivation by Heckhausen, 1977; self-efficacy theory by Bandura, 1997). Combining both personal and situational factors as antecedents of goal commitment in an organisational psychology model, Hollenbeck and Klein (1987) specify interactional determinants of both desirability and feasibility at the workplace. However, most expectancy-value theories do not clearly distinguish between personal and situational determinants of goal selection. For instance, people may perceive external or internal rewards differently depending on their personal preferences or values. Some may value extrinsic rewards more in comparison to others who may not.

Nevertheless, who does not value external rewards? By definition, a goal is something desirable and associated with an experience of positive affect or feeling. In summary, expectancy-value theories consider the positive feeling towards goals as the primary reason why they influence and guide human behaviour. While goals can

consciously acquire positive and desirable (e.g., through direct experiences of a goal's content or friends and family members' positive evaluations of a goal), researchers also suggest a different non-conscious route to infusing desirable qualities into a goal.

Rise of Non-Conscious Goal Pursuit, Implicit Motives

So far, expectancy-value theories have considered that goals largely acquire the property of being a desirable end-state by a conscious evaluative process. Several researchers, however, assume that goal-related concepts can even connect unconsciously with positive affect without conscious assessment (Bargh, 1990; Bargh et al., 2010; Custers & Aarts, 2005). Custers & Aarts's (2005) study demonstrated how implicitly conditioning (repeatedly pairing) words with positive affect to an activity made it more desirable for participants to pursue.

Experimental researches suggest that our unconscious mind may not only help us choose what we want but it may also provide enough motivation to achieve it. Using non-conscious activation of a goal or priming, Bargh et al. (2001) found that participants who were positively primed with a performance-related word (such as happy, good) group performed better on an intellectual task (word finding task) than control group participants who were not primed. Additionally, more than 2 minutes into the task, the two groups were told to discontinue the experiment. It was reported that primed group participants continued working on the task even after the instruction to stop. This experiment suggested how people become persistent in their goals just by paired activation of the mental representation on the achievement of a goal.

A decade later, Shantz and Latham (2011) conducted several field experiments in organisations to demonstrate the effects of goal achievement primes on employee's productivity and efficiency while they are working towards goal achievement. Their results reported that an achievement-related prime significantly increased the employee's performance, suggesting activation of an implicit need for achievement. Earlier, Bargh (1990) accounted for such non-conscious goal-directed behaviour through an automatic model to explain such goals and considered that repeated and consistent pairings of a goal with situational context could lead to the automatization of goal-directedness. Apart from conditioning automaticity, Carver and Scheier (1999) pointed out another type of automaticity in goal-directed behaviour that relates to primitive built-in behavioural tendencies or instincts. Such a conceptualisation brings

us closer to what McClelland et al. (1989) described as implicit motives, which directly guide behaviour through instincts and are largely biological.

Motive Congruence – Reducing the Conflicts between a Goal and Implicit Motives

Based on Murray's (1938) definition and categorisation of *psychogenic* needs, David McClelland (1980) distinguishes implicit motives from explicit motives by defining them as emotionally charged preferences for broadly three incentives – the need for achievement (nACH), the need for affiliation (nAFF) and the need for power (nPOW). A person can be driven by an implicit motive of achievement and seek difficult goals as an incentive to fulfil the need. In other words, implicit motives are described as people's wishes, desires or classes of goals that they like to pursue (Winter *et al.*, 1998). The types of goals that researchers typically study are the "big three" motives: affiliation, achievement, and power. Affiliation-motivated people seek to build and maintain relationships with others (McClelland, 1980). Achievement-motivated people seek experiences related to improving their performance and are concerned about doing well at challenging tasks with a moderate probability of success (Atkinson, 1957; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). Power-motivated people seek to impact others and maintain reputation and prestige (Winter, 1973).

McClelland (1958, 1985) has long argued that one cannot ask people directly for their implicit motives because they are, by definition, non-conscious and not accessible through introspection. Researchers have, therefore, developed other methods to measure individual differences in implicit motives. A prominent measurement approach with a long history is picture-and story-based measures building on the basic principles of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Morgan & Murray, 1935). Respondents write stories in an open format in picture-based tests in response to pictures showing ambiguous social scenes. The story then gets evaluated by expert coders into a motivational category (e.g., affiliation, achievement, and power). This open-ended answer format has been called *operant* to distinguish it from the respondent immediate choice behaviour in questionnaires (McClelland et al., 1989). Researchers have developed various implicit motive tests based on this core principle (e.g. Heckhausen, 1963; Kuhl & Scheffer, 2001; McClelland et al., 1958; Pang, 2006; Pang & Schultheiss, 2005; Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2001; Smith, 1992; Winter, 1994).

Researchers have also adapted implicit measures originally developed to measure other constructs and implicit motives. McClelland directly influenced Atkinson's (1957) model of need for achievement (nACH). Atkinson's theory split the achievement motive into a broad desire to approach success (hope for success) and a broad desire or motivational tendency to avoid failure (fear of failure). Several researchers believe that hope for success (HS) is strongly related to the self-concept compared to the fear of failure (FF) (Schmalt & Sokolowski, 2000; Sparfeldt & Rost, 2011). Other scholars consider ability or perceived competence to be a significant contributor to motivation for achievement (Brunstein & Heckhausen, 2008). However, the cognitive process of estimating one's won competence should be related to the formation of HS in demands to the task. This formation of HS takes the form of anticipatory emotions that serve to activate instrumental behaviour (Brunstein, 2018). Thus, goals are a cognitive representation of desired mental states, influencing our ways of thinking in various ways and are stored in memory. Goals are useful if they motivate behaviour to attain them. Based on the discussion above, the researcher raised the following RQ -

RQ5: Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

The next section reviews process theories of goal-setting that suggest how goals can influence performance and well-being.

Process Theories of Goal Striving

Process theories of motivation focus on *how* motivation occurs and the processes by which individuals make decisions about their behaviour, effort, and goals. Unlike content theories, which emphasise *what* motivates people (needs, desires), process theories are concerned with the cognitive mechanisms and decision-making strategies individuals use in motivational contexts.

Goal-Setting Theory

Lock and Latham's (1990, 2019) goal-setting theory discusses the types of goals and their influence on an individual's performance. The theory suggests that moderately difficult (challenging) and objectively set goals tend to bring out optimal performance in their pursuit rather than *do-your-best* type of goals. However, people do not perform

better just because the goal is specific and challenging; optimal goal performance also depends on whether individuals perceive or possess the necessary skills and abilities (self-efficacy). Additionally, the theory also identifies the conditions of high performance beyond the concepts of goal specificity, difficulty and self-efficacy. It specifies the mediating processes that can influence goals and performance. For instance, Locke (2001) suggests that a goal directs attention, effort and intensity of action towards goal-relevant performance. Further, goals also motivate people to discover new strategies for goal attainment (Seijts & Latham, 2005).

In defining moderators to goal striving, the goal-setting theory suggests the critical role of feedback in tracking goal progress and helps redefine individual strategy for goal attainment. In fact, goals and feedback work well together to increase goal performance compared to either of them alone. Goal commitment, which is duly influenced by goal value, incentives in the environment and perceptions of one's competence (self-efficacy), is also considered to improve goal performance. Since the theory suggests setting up moderately challenging goals, individual skill and knowledge are also important determinants of goal performance. Individuals cannot achieve goals if they do not know how. Finally, goal performance also depends on the support available to an individual from the environment (e.g., social support, facilities or money). A comprehensive and popular theory of goal striving in organisations for nearly 50 years provides answers to short-term goal striving in organisations and directs how to set goals and reward their employees for achieving goals. As discussed previously, new venues of research in goal setting analyse the influence of goal priming effects on outcomes relevant to non-conscious sources of work behaviour in organisations (e.g., Shantz & Latham, 2009; Chen et al., 2021).

Cybernetic Control Theory – The Role of Emotions in Goal Striving

Following earlier discussions on how goals influence behaviour in terms of the effort and intensity we exert in achieving them, goals also determine how we feel. This feeling regarding a goal is especially important not only for goal achievement but also for general satisfaction and well-being in the long run. A discrepancy in pursuing goals that do not feel compatible with one's emotions may reduce commitment to goal pursuit and compromise well-being. Carver and Scheier (1998, 2013) proposed a theory of goal pursuit based on the cybernetic control theory, suggesting that individuals who

experience positive emotions during goal pursuit are more likely to become complacent and distracted with other goals. In contrast, individuals experiencing negative emotions during goal pursuit increase their goal efforts.

The theory, apart from highlighting the important role of emotions as feedback for prioritising goal pursuit, also enumerates the hierarchical structure of goals in terms of *do* and *be* goals. In essence, the feedback from affective reactions prioritises goals and helps manage multiple goal pursuits as a process of self-regulation. In a broader theory of self-regulation and goal pursuit, the *do* goals refer to actions or behaviours that individuals aim to perform. These goals are typically more concrete and focused on specific tasks or outcomes. They involve observable actions that can be measured and completed (for instance, exercising two times a week or completing a project report). *Be* goals, on the other hand, are linked to a particular state of being or identity. These goals are more abstract and reflect personal qualities, values, or attributes that an individual aspires to be (such as being a good friend, achieving something big, or being a responsible and helpful person).

Based on the above discussion, it can be assumed that the notion of implicit and explicit motives can often co-exist with personal emotions, values and qualities of a goal. However, discrepancies between the two types of motives increase the risk of adaptation and individual goal selection problems, which raises questions about – how people differ in their developmental potentials (motives, values and needs) when their motives are congruent to when they are not. Considering the above literature, the researcher has raised the following question -

RQ6: Does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices?

The next sections discuss the research gaps in goal selection theories and propose the study's framework for addressing such gaps.

Research Gaps in Goal Selection and Goal Pursuit Research

Most people have a strong desire to actively shape their own lives, investing time and effort into pursuing long-term goals. These goals, which we deem essential, drive us to stay on developmental paths that we believe will lead to success. In the face of challenges or competing priorities, we remain committed to these goals. The striving

for long-term goals provides us with a sense of personal agency in our lives. The review of literature on the several theories that determine the feasibility and desirability of a goal might not list all the factors that may determine personal goal pursuit.

The psychological concept of individual agency has been linked with goals, perceived control, self-efficacy, persistence, mastery, autonomy, and self-regulation. Each of these constructs captures one or more specific aspects of motivation and action (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Bandura, 2006; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2019). Most of these constructs concern the expectancy for action outcomes (e.g., perceptions of control), the emotions associated with goal striving (e.g., activity enjoyment), goal outcomes (e.g., goal attainment), or the characteristics of motivational behaviour (e.g., self-regulation). The life span development perspective considers individual agency as critical for motivation and action in selecting and pursuing long-term goals. It is this kind of life course– with an embedded long-term agency–that we focus on in the present research.

The research questions (RQs) of the present study are synonymous with the concerns of developmental psychologists and also overlap with the interests of social psychology. These interests include the classic issues revolving around the interaction of person and situation, the relative influence of internal and external variables, and the causes of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural change. That is not to say that social psychology holds answers to all the developmentalist's concerns, but rather, the present research notes a convergence of interests. Further, a long history of goal research still grapples with the individual difficulty in not knowing what they want to pursue, evidenced by popular stories in literature and films about people who struggle to find out who they are and what makes them happy (Sheldon, 2014). Where most personal goal research focuses on the process and outcomes of goal striving, this is generally done once the goal has been selected. The first tradition is the psychology of motivation, which focuses on how needs, goals, and motives direct people to find the greatest expected value in choosing a course of action. Alternatively, the psychology of volition studies how people convert their goals and intentions into actions, especially after committing to a goal. For instance, factors of feeling self-efficacy in pursuit of goals (Bandura, 1997), making plans (Wilensky, 1983), and forming intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999) have largely been studied as predictors of goal outcomes such as goal attainment or goal progress, health and well-being. Together, these two traditions provide several

insights into understanding purposive behaviour. However, the question of how individuals select their goals before striving for them has received less attention and is still more of a black box.

Further, it is easy to think about the distant future, particularly if only periodically and fleetingly. It is much harder to stay on course and persist in pursuing long-term work goals. The question we address in this research is why and how people stay motivated in their work when goal accomplishment is life's work or largely a function of who they want to be. A goal an individual chooses to pursue not only has implications for life satisfaction but can also provide answers to how we know who we are. Goal selection then plays an important role in self-discovery, and this self-discovery can be a life-long process as it occurs not only in youths (via vocational choices and skilling) but also among middle and elderly adults (via mid-life crises or career shifts and ego-integrity strivings, respectively) (Sheldon et al., 2015). Such issues bring us to the concept of goal selection, especially goal-fit selection. In essence, goal-fit selections have implications for a fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961) or unlocking what people can become (Koole, 2019). These implications are critical as individual long-term efforts may bring them to non-optimal outcomes in the future that are not as growth-promoting, enjoyable and personally expressive.

The Potential Value of Personal Goal Research in Understanding Self-Regulation

A useful starting point in understanding goal strivings is to understand what goals mean to people, how they think about their choices, and how negative events influence individual goal pursuits. Goal-striving literature discusses and identifies several properties of goals and the way people represent them under self-regulation strategies during goal-striving. These self-regulation strategies are helpful in clarifying obstacles to goal progress and individual efforts to manage it (Aspinwall, 2001; Austin & Vancouver, 1996). This idiographic approach to self-regulation in goal striving has generally been applied after the goal has been selected or in response to adverse events as stressors or obstacles to goal achievement, regardless of a goal's origin. However, given the haphazard and autonomous nature of personal strivings and work, discussed at the beginning of the introduction, most researches focus on the static or short-term frameworks of goal setting, and a significant gap exists in understanding how personal goals evolve across the lifespan and especially in response to rediscovering oneself or

due to major life transitions (e.g., parenthood, retirement or career changes). A lifespan may mean many things in psychological research, such as days, months, or years, and it depends especially on how long-term timelines are defined in each study.

Sheldon (2014) considers that the desirability of a goal refers to a wide variety of characteristics, including individual basic traits and dispositions, psychological needs and motives, as well as changes in the individual's goal choices in terms of evolving intellectual needs. While selecting goals for themselves, people can be unaware of such characteristics in goal desirability or have problems taking them into deliberation during the goal selection process. Whereas Kahneman's (2011) 'System 2' involves conscious, verbal deliberation and is largely responsible for long-term goal selection and planning, 'System 1' is the domain of automatic and imagistic cognition. In current parlance, in judging a goal's desirability, individuals may miss appropriate goal-relevant information from System 1 (non-conscious, automatic) while deliberating goal feasibility through System 2 (conscious, deliberate), leading to non-optimal goal choices and consequent difficulties in regulating goal pursuit.

Therefore, considering the domain of personal goal selection and pursuit while the role of cognition is well-researched, less attention has been given to how emotions influence the selection of personal goals. Further, there is limited research on how individuals prioritise between conflicting short-term and long-term goals. For example, how do people resolve trade-offs between immediate desires and long-term aspirations, between what they do and what they want to be, and what are the mechanisms that influence these decisions? Additionally, although goals and well-being are often linked, it is not clear how an individual's current well-being status impacts the type of goals they select. Does well-being act more as an outcome of goal pursuit, or does it play a significant role in shaping the kinds of goals people feel drawn to?

Finally, academic textbooks distinguish between content and process theories of motivation, and the present chapter acknowledges the distinction as well. However, this distinction is based on the notion that content theories divide needs or the *why* of motivation into different themes or categories. In contrast, process theories address the *how* of motivation in terms of regulation, adaptation and multiple decision-making processes. Kehr et al. (2018), however, consider this distinction in academic research as rather restrictive in discussing individual motivation. They contend that Maslow's

content theory of motivation may be more indicative of a process based on moving up to a different need (prestige) after satisfaction of base-level needs (hunger). The modern approaches to goal motivation propose combining content and process-related theories to create a comprehensive theory of motivation.

Within this integration of motivational systems, recent neuropsychological research advances the notion that motivational systems strongly influence personality in organising responses to punishment and rewards, in turn, driving approach and avoidance behaviour to goal pursuit (Corr et al., 2013). Early meta-analytic research on the relationship between the Big Five traits and performance motivation suggests the 5-factor model of personality as an important source of performance motivation (Winter et al., 1998; Judge et al., 2002). The driving concern behind integrating personality and motivation approaches to types of goal selection and pursuit has been to understand how personal goals are related to life satisfaction and happiness in goal pursuit. Finally, the goal of the present research is to generate knowledge of how to optimise well-being in long-term goal-relevant behaviours. Considering the above literature, the researcher has raised the central question to the thesis -

RQ7: What defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit?

The succeeding sections discuss these shortcomings in research in developing a self-deterministic theoretical framework for desirable and optimal goal selections and the feasibility of goal pursuit to address the research questions raised at the beginning of the present study.

Self-Determination Theory

As a modern classical theory, the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017) is based on decades of theoretical and empirical work on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. As a broad psychological framework centring on human motivation, personality and well-being, SDT emphasises the idea that fulfilling some universal needs drives motivation, learning, and personal development. At its core, SDT is based on an organismic-dialectical meta-theory which views humans as active, growth-oriented beings who naturally strive toward integration with their social environments (Deci & Ryan, 2004). This broad meta-theory consists of two fundamental components – first, the active

nature of human beings as naturally curious, self-motivated, and oriented toward growth. They actively seek challenges and engage in behaviours that allow them to learn and improve. Second, a dialectical relationship exists between a person and their social environment, which either supports or thwarts the process of satisfying innate psychological needs.

Moreover, the theory is based on the assumption that people strive for three universal basic needs - autonomy, competence and relatedness (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Schuler et al., 2013). The need for autonomy concerns the need to be in control of one's actions and to act in harmony with one's values, analogous to the need for power (nPOW) in motive disposition theory (McClelland, Koestner & Weinberger, 1989). The need for competence represents the desire to master the immediate environment and the consequences of one's behaviour. This mastery differs from the conceptualisation of the need for achievement (nACH), which focuses on the desire to exceed standards of performance to feel pride in the achievement. The mastery experiences in SDT, however, imply a mastery over personal challenges. Finally, the need for relatedness involves concern, belongingness and reciprocal care for important others (Vansteenkiste et al., 2010). The basic needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are considered 'psychological nutrients' (pg. 229) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) for an individual's psychological well-being in the same way as the physical needs of hunger and thirst are essential for physical survival. SDT expands on this organismic meta-theory with six mini-theories, each focusing on different aspects of human motivation and development.

Six Mini Theories of SDT

Over the decades of research, the description of SDT has been built around six overlapping mini-theories containing a set of formal hypotheses (Vansteenkiste, Ryan & Soenens, 2020). These mini-theories have emerged over decades of converging evidence over time in SDT research (Ryan & Deci, 2019).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET)

CET (Deci & Ryan, 1980) focuses exclusively on how intrinsic motivation (the natural tendency to explore and learn) can be enhanced or undermined by social and environmental factors. Key factors that sustain intrinsic motivation through the

satisfaction of competence (one's perception of being able to perform a task) and autonomy (the perception of self-determined vs feeling controlled in doing something) needs. Events that include positive feedback (which supports competence) and contexts that support autonomy (where individuals have control over their actions) enhance intrinsic motivation. Conversely, controlling environments or external rewards may undermine intrinsic motivation by shifting focus to external factors, thereby inducing a corruption effect (Ryan & Deci, 1980; Dweck, 1986). In a recent meta-analysis of SDT research evidence, Ryan et al. (2024) reveal the concept of autonomy to be based on the theory of *personal causation* and *perceived locus of causality* (PLOC) developed by de Charms (1968). The intentional behaviour of an individual can vary between an internal PLOC, which refers to being an 'origin' (de Charms, 1968, pg. 272), i.e., whenever a person experiences themselves to be the locus of causality for their own behaviour. In contrast, an external PLOC feels more like a 'pawn' (de Charms, 1968, pg. 274), i.e., experiencing one's behaviour to be brought about by external forces.

Organismic Integration Theory (OIT)

Through OIT, the SDT addresses how external goals can go through a process of *internalisation* (Ryan & Deci, 2000) into the self by endorsing values and practices prevalent in their social contexts. This internalisation specifies a taxonomy of four regulatory styles or varied motives and consequently has implications for the quality of motivation, performance and wellness (see **Figure 1.1**). An external regulation does not correspond to what a person intends to do but is rather externally controlled through rewards (e.g.,) or punishments. In contrast, introjected regulation is slightly less driven by external control and more by internalised social pressures involving ego involvement and pride at one end and avoiding guilt and shame from self and others. Identified regulation integrates an external action into a person's goal and value systems, where they consider the reasons for performing certain actions as valuable and purposeful. Finally, integrated regulation is the most autonomous form of external motivation where outcomes of individual actions or behaviours are completely aligned with their needs and values. Gagne and Deci (2005) consider identified and integrated regulations of behaviour as representing autonomous motivation along with intrinsic motivation.

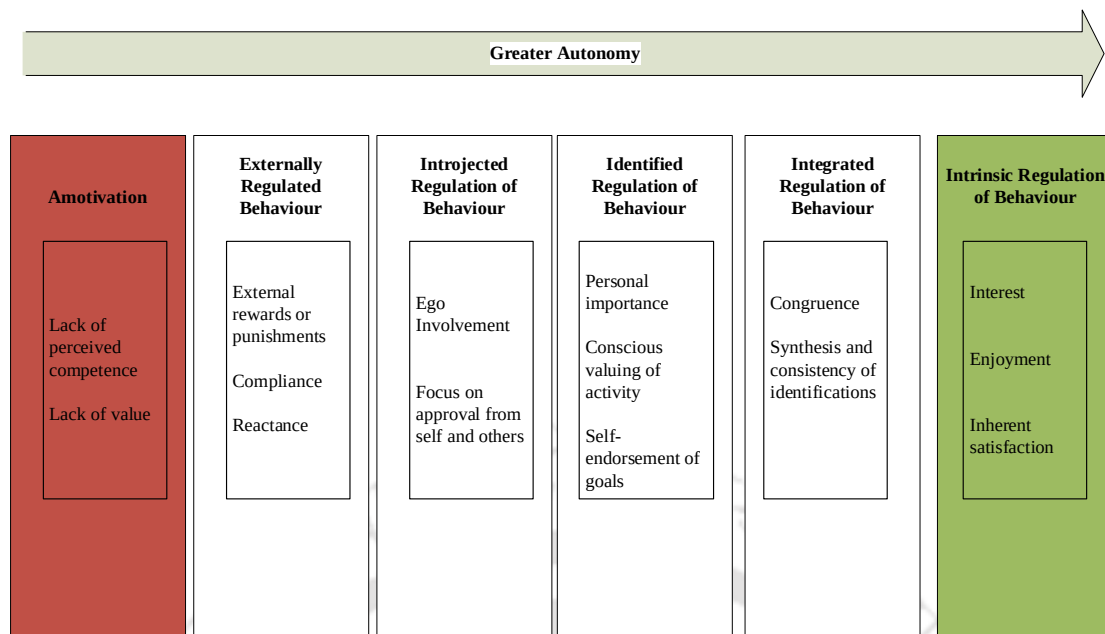


Figure 1.1 The organismic integration theory (OIT) taxonomy of regulatory styles after Ryan et al. (2022).

Causality Orientations Theory (COT)

The two mini theories of SDT discussed above relate to a comprehensive view of the quality of motivation. The COT addresses individual differences in motivational orientations and behavioural and well-being outcomes. COT focuses on the individual differences in people's tendencies to react to external events in three ways - autonomous, controlled and amotivated ways. A person driven by autonomous orientation tends to interpret events in their environment as informational, based on their interests and leads to a feeling of choice in their actions. In contrast, external or introjected controls, rewards, and pressures influence a controlled orientation. Whether a person is compliant or defiant towards external controls, controlled orientation largely concerns itself with what others are thinking, sanctioning or rewarding (Ryan et al., 2024). Finally, in amotivation, people experience a lack of control and a sense of incompetence, resulting in a lack of volitional drive to engage in any action or activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT)

BPNT (Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2019) is a broad theory of wellness that proposes universal importance for satisfying the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Satisfying such needs has significant implications for human flourishing,

where positive psychological need satisfaction outcomes lead to wellness and vitality, and frustrations in need satisfaction can lead to violence and psychopathology (Ryan et al., 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2019; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). BPNT argues that satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness have significant cross-cultural implications (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Reeve, Ryan & Deci, 2018). These universal needs are considered under BPNT as *etic universals* (objective observations, outside of culture accounts), yet the SDT confirms that these basic needs are not *emic universals* (subjective and culture-specific). In other words, even though SDT contends that the basic need for autonomy is a universal phenomenon, how it is valued and supported may differ considerably across cultures (e.g., Marbell & Grolnick, 2013; Cheng et al., 2016). Such conceptualisations have led an increasing number of researchers to study how different economic and cultural contexts support or thwart the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs (e.g., Di Domenico & Fourier, 2014; DeHaan, Hirai & Ryan, 2016).

Goal Contents Theory (GCT)

Developed from BPNT, the GCT (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2010; Bradshaw, 2023; Bradshaw et al., 2023) claims the content of goals matters for individual well-being, especially when goal contents relate to the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. In essence, different life goals and aspirations of people depend on several factors, such as inputs from people around them (family) and economic and cultural factors, and such life goals shape everyday behaviours and attitudes (Deci & Ryan, 2019). Decades of SDT research provide evidence for how different life goals can influence well-being through a varied satisfaction of basic psychological needs. So what goal contents are responsible for need satisfaction leading to well-being in pursuit? Earlier, Kasser and Ryan's (1993, 1996) study on this topic led people to rate the importance of two sets of goals, one with extrinsic aspirations of becoming wealthy, possessing an attractive image and becoming popular or famous. The other set involved goal content dominated by intrinsic aspirations of personal growth, affiliation or close relationships, health and contributions to the community.

Research analysis suggests that pursuing intrinsic goal contents leads to greater well-being, while an overemphasis on extrinsic goal contents can undermine well-being

and lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004; Sheldon & Krieger, 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2019). These extrinsic and intrinsic natures of goal contents are organised along two orthogonal dimensions, meaning that a person who is into creating wealth is also interested in creating an attractive image and popularity (Martela, Bradshaw, & Ryan, 2019). Earlier, Grouzet et al. (2005) found a diametrically opposite or antipodal relationship between the extrinsic and intrinsic goal contents, where people who focus more on the extrinsic aspirations are less likely to care about intrinsic values of close relationships, community, and personal growth.

Relationship Management Theory (RMT)

RMT (Ryan & Deci, 2017), a relatively recent mini-theory of SDT, focuses on the basic psychological need satisfaction in relationships through the need for relatedness. RMT emphasises the importance of mutual choice and autonomy in a relationship. For example, relationships based on mutual support, care, and genuine interest in each other's well-being foster relatedness satisfaction and support intrinsic motivation. Conversely, relationships motivated by control, obligation, or dependence can diminish well-being and motivation. Thus, a *mutuality of autonomy* supports the highest quality of dyadic relationships and helps explain the varied dynamics of relationships (Deci, La Guardia, Moller, Scheiner, & Ryan, 2006). For instance, RMT explains how objectification or dependence on perceived attraction disrupts relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and how autonomous or volitional actions enhance cooperation (e.g., Weinstein, Hodgins & Ryan, 2010) and helping behaviours (e.g., Weinstein, Hodgins & Ryan, 2010).

In totality, each of these mini-theories contributes to the broader framework of SDT by addressing specific aspects of motivation, personality and well-being. Together, they offer a comprehensive view of how motivation operates, from the deeply intrinsic level to more controlled or external forms of motivation and also on the individual differences in regulatory styles. Further, the mini-theories offer insights into the goal contents that are beneficial for pursuit in terms of well-being and happiness in the long run. Over thirty decades of research in SDT contend that an autonomously chosen intrinsic goal content promotes well-being. Such linkages between wellness and

intrinsic goal types address the RQ1 raised earlier in the introduction – How do people decide which goal(s) to choose for long-term pursuit?

The present research argues that people can do well in choosing intrinsic goal content for a long-term personal goal pursuit in comparison to extrinsic goal content. Moreover, the choice of autonomy in goal selection and intrinsic goal contents informs how individuals shape their aspirations to support their own experiences of happiness or create frustration and ill-being in goal pursuit. Finally, SDT, as a meta-theory with six mini-theories, highlights the importance of fostering environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness and informs how groups and institutions can frame goals to promote well-being, motivation, and optimal functioning in their pursuit. A study by Sheldon and Kreiger (2014) presented empirical evidence of associations between wellness and goal content by comparing lawyers with money-focused jobs to those in low-paying public service positions. They reported that those in high-paying jobs (money-focused extrinsic content) had lower well-being, more alcohol abuse, and negative emotions compared to people holding public service jobs (community-focused intrinsic content). Thus, in contrast to certain goal theories, which suggest that attainment of any valued goal is beneficial (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990), SDT argues that the content of goals matters for wellness, especially if goal contents relate to basic need satisfaction. Evidently, SDT as a meta-theory with its six mini-theories has been widely applied in education, health, sports, relationships, and work domains (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Considering the above literature, the researcher has raised the following question -

RQ8: What interventions can help individuals select the right goals and facilitate an improved goal pursuit?

Self-Concordance Model for Personal Goals

Based on the work of Sheldon and Elliot (1998, 1999) and influenced by earlier work on the SDT's (Deci & Ryan, 2000) relative autonomy continuum, the self-concordance model (SCM) (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon, 2008, 2009, 2014) presents a theoretical framework for examining goal motivations in the process of goal striving. The SCM is based on the premise that some goals are better for an individual's health, well-being and growth than other goals because they fit better into their underlying interests, needs, values and motives (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser & Deci, 1996).

Based on SDT, Sheldon and Kasser (1995) introduced the idea of ‘organismic congruence’ to capture the reasons for which an individual pursues a goal (autonomous or controlled regulation) and the content of one’s goals (intrinsic or extrinsic content). Through two cross-sectional studies, they found that people who pursued goals for autonomous reasons and whose pursuit involved intrinsic future selves scored higher on the indices of health and adjustment.

Therefore, it matters what goals people select for themselves. Because if people select the wrong goals, goals which are not compatible with their underlying potential they may end up wasting a lot of time and effort striving unsuccessfully. Further, even the success of achieving such goals might feel hollow or with feelings of ill-being in the long run. Early research suggests that self-concordant goals drive sustained efforts toward their achievement, and attainment of concordant goals drives higher levels of happiness and well-being as they satisfy their basic psychological needs (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999) (**Figure 1.2**). Further, the failure to select proper personal goals matching their personalities and capacities can stunt individual personality development and maturation (Sheldon, 2014).

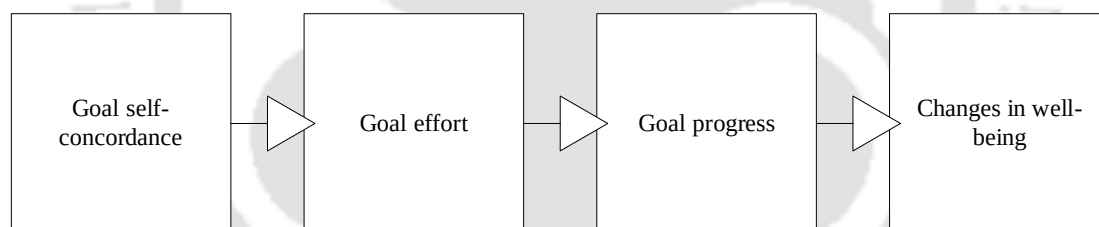


Figure 1.2 The self concordance model (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999)

Theoretical Pinnings of Self-Concordance

The SCM assumes that people have a natural tendency for growth and maturity as a part of their personality development. This striving for growth draws inferences from early seminal research in psychology and life span developmental concepts of differentiation and integration (e.g., Werner, 1957), assimilation and accommodation (e.g., Piaget, 1971) and the need to contribute positively to society and community (e.g., Erikson, 1963). In essence, the SCM adopts the Rogerian organismic perspective (e.g., Rogers, 1964) to life span personality development and also considers the importance of contextual factors that can fail to support an individual’s potential and talents. These

contextual factors include a lack of economic and educational resources as well as societal norms for self-expression of developmental potentials. At a personal level, a lack of mentors and supportive relationships may further derail one's potential for developing oneself (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The self-concordant model emphasises that people may choose goals consistent with various characteristics, including changing intellectual interests, implicit motives, dispositions, or psychological needs defined by SDT. According to the self-concordance model (SCM) (Sheldon et al., 2008; Sheldon et al., 2020), goals are defined as self-concordant goals when they are integrated with the self and pursued for intrinsic motivation. Thus, self-concordant goals represent an individual's self-defining values and enduring interests (Sheldon et al., 2002). As a model of optimal goal selection, self-concordant goals do not feel forced or external to one's self and result in the optimal functioning of an individual's developmental potential. The core proposition of the theory argues that individuals who pursue self-concordant goals will enjoy greater goal accomplishment and higher levels of well-being (Sheldon, 2014). Specifically, the model accounts for longitudinal increments in levels of well-being and personal growth, issues that have received scant attention from self-determination researchers. The model focuses on the idiographic personal goals that individuals set and pursue, devoting special attention to the perceived locus of causality that they have for those goals. As is shown, people sometimes fail to select goals that are appropriate to their actual needs, values, and interests, which can have profound costs for their adjustment and growth.

Empirical Support for SCM

Early reviews of goal self-concordance highlighted the significant role of self-concordant goals in the attainment of personal goals, promotion of well-being as well as self-management (Koestner, 2008). In a meta-analytic review, Koestner et al. (2008) report that individuals with high levels of goal self-concordance are twice as likely to achieve their goals compared to individuals with low levels of concordance. An empirical study by Gaudreau (2012) explored whether the positive or negative results from pursuing mastery and performance-approach goals are influenced by how much these goals are pursued for self-concordant reasons. The study found that both performance and mastery goals attainment were related to high levels of concordance

for performance and mastery, respectively. In contrast, individuals with low levels of self-concordance for both goals were positively associated with anxiety.

Additionally, Vanteenkiste et al. (2010) directly examined an endorsement of achievement goals to varied levels of underlying self-concordance. They found that autonomous reasons for pursuing a performance goal were significantly associated with greater adaptive self-regulation and subjective well-being. Consistent with previous research, McGregor et al. (2006) found that goals concordant with one's personality traits are a predictor for happiness in their pursuit. In fact, Sheldon (2014) developed a technique based on perceived locus of causality (PLOC; Ryan & Connell, 1989) for assessing the concordance of personal goals with several conscious and non-conscious features of personality. The PLOC assess the extent to which people deem their behaviours to be driven by autonomous (intrinsic motivation) or controlled (extrinsic motivation). The use of PLOC methodology also requires people to know how they feel about a goal's content and about pursuing it. Do they feel wholeheartedly invested, or do they feel reluctance or ambivalence towards them? A feeling of reluctance or ambivalence towards goal contents can be the output of an organismic valuing process (Sheldon, Arndt & Marko, 2003) that provides knowledge about whether the motivations for the goal pursuit are healthy or not. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the PLOC approach SCM utilises is a theoretically driven approach to examine the relationship between goal content and goal motivation.

The PLOC method of assessing self-concordance has been widely applied in the fields of education, sport, exercise, parenting, leisure, and health behaviour change, with similar results across these life domains (see Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste, Niemiec et al., 2010, for reviews). It has also recently been applied to the work domain to measure work motivation through *motivation at work scale* (MAWS) (Gagné et al., 2010; Tremblay et al., 2009). Extant research finds autonomous forms of motivation (identified and intrinsic), in general, to lead to more positive outcomes, such as better performance, more positive affect, more energy, better physical and mental health, more persistence and more cooperation than controlled forms of motivation (external and introjected; Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Recent research suggests self-concordant strategies to be a necessary condition for self-management (Unsworth & Mason, 2016) and suggests self-concordance

strategies should be combined with traditional goal-setting exercises, self-observations and rewards to maximise performance and creativity in organisations. More recently, Sheldon et al. (2020), in a study of both Western (U.S. students) and non-Western cultures (Russian students), found that a choice of self-concordant life goals bred optimism in interpreting positive goal outcomes with goal-optimism and happiness in goal pursuit. Further, new avenues in self-concordance research have emerged with Sheldon, Prentice and Osin's (2019) hypothesis that pre-rating one's self-concordance for a goal before a goal is selected should have a beneficial effect on people's goal choices.

Self Regulation during Goal Striving - The Rubicon Model of Action Phases

According to the *Rubicon* model and Mindset theory of action phases (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 2012), developing an intention for a goal ('I intend to achieve a goal X') does not automatically lead to its realisation or achievement. Rather a person has to indulge in a course of action starting with goal selection, goal actions and ending with evaluation of the outcomes of the actions towards goal realisation. Based on the work of Kurt Lewin (e.g., Lewin et al., 1944), who suggested that motivation in goal pursuit can only be understood by distinguishing between the processes of goal selection and goal striving. Accordingly, inspired by the necessity to distinguish between, the Rubicon model of action phases defines clear boundaries between motivational and volitional action phases (**Figure 1.3**). The two phases of motivation and volition differ, respectively, in the mindset required for goal deliberation and the mindset conducive to goal attainment.

The Rubicon model of action phases explains goal selection and goal striving in a single comprehensive framework with four consecutive and distinct phases of action separated by different tasks before an individual moves to the next phase. The starting point of the four phases involves a motivation pre-decisional phase, where individuals engage in a deliberative mindset. Here, individuals evaluate different goals, consider potential outcomes, and weigh the pros and cons of various goal choices. This phase involves a lot of cognitive processing, uncertainty, and indecision. This pre-decisional phase considers the potential desirability of a goal or outcome by reflecting on the short-term and long-term consequences of pursuing a goal, the positive or negative features of the goal and favourable opportunities in the environment. As the

process of deliberation culminates in the selection and commitment to a specific goal (goal intention), they *cross the Rubicon* and enter a new action phase, characterised by an implemental mindset focusing on goal enactment rather than deliberation.

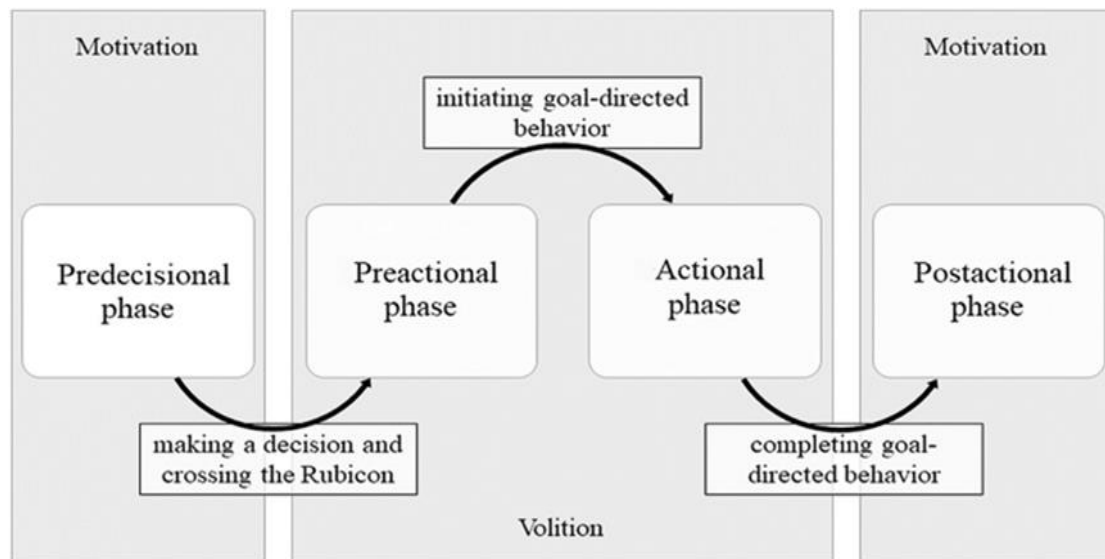


Figure 1.3 Mindset theory of action phases after Keller, Biebele & Gollwitzer (2019, pg. 25).

Crossing the Rubicon signals a termination of motivational deliberation (desirability) of a goal, and the individual moves to the second pre-actional (or post-decisional) phase. This phase is characterised by determining how to go about achieving the chosen goal. Gollwitzer (1993, 1999, 2014) considers that people in this phase ideally develop implementation intentions, which refers to elaborate plans that individuals develop specifying when, where and how to perform goal-directed behaviours. Implementation intentions largely involve initiation, execution and achievement (or termination) of actions in progress towards the goal. It also involves implementing *if-then* plans in obstacles to goal pursuit (Keller, Bieleke & Gollwitzer, 2019). The next volitional phase begins with the initiation of action and enactment of the plans for goal pursuit, marked by efforts exerted toward goal achievement. Once the goal-oriented actions are completed, individuals enter a final post-decisional motivational phase, marked by deliberations on the results of the actions for the goal. Such deliberation takes the shape of the questions an individual asks after completing goal-pursuit actions – have I succeeded in achieving the goal? Did the actions taken have positive consequences as anticipated in the deliberative phase (pre-actional phase)? A satisfactory answer to these questions (such as achievement of a desired goal

state) terminates goal pursuit. In situations where goal achievement has not been desirable, individuals may adjust goals and renew their attempts to achieve them (Keller, Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2020).

Considering the different nature of goal selection (desirability) and goal pursuit strategies (feasibility) and the previous discussion on the relevance of personal goal selection research, the researcher presents a conceptual framework depicting the hypothesised relationships between various concepts. The researcher suggests the need to conduct empirical studies using the framework proposed below (**Figure 1.4**).

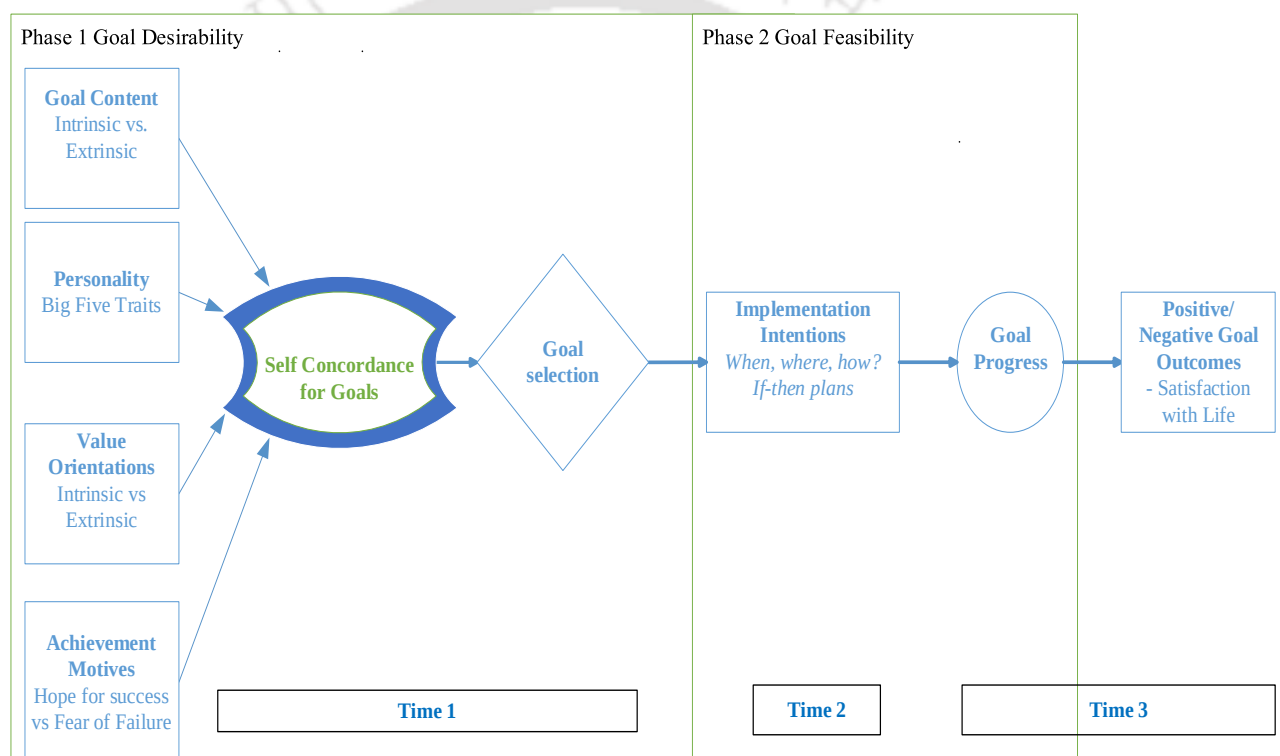


Figure 1.4 Conceptual framework depicting proposed longitudinal relationships among variables.

The proposed framework takes into account the deliberative and implementational mindset gaps in research by understanding the longitudinal mechanisms of 1) goal desirability, i.e., the relationship between different goal contents, traits, value orientations, and achievement motives to goal concordance; 2) goal feasibility, i.e., implementational strategy to goal progress; 3) subsequent positive and negative goal outcomes influencing life satisfaction.

Rationale

Much research in the last two decades supports the idea that people can choose goals not only on the basis of their conscious decisions but also without (Bargh & Morsella, 2009; Bargh, 2022). Considerable research also supports the notion that people often operate in a state of '*ignorant conscious self*' (Sheldon, 2014, pg. 2) and maybe the perceptions of free will are all but illusory (Wegner, 2002). Also, people often lack accurate self-awareness when predicting how current events will impact their future emotions, specifically in terms of intensity and duration (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). As goals are cognitive representations of a desired state stored in memory, they are susceptible to cognitive reconstruction processes. Clore and Robinson (2012) observed that over time, the cognitive beliefs of people about the desired state (how they should feel) generally replace the true experience of the emotions attached to the desired state (how they really feel). As a memory, an individual's true past emotions may not only become less accessible over time but can be replaced by beliefs.

Moreover, this discrepancy between beliefs and real feelings of a goal's desirability can create problems in selecting appropriate goals for oneself. Such findings point to similar identity discrepancies in personality (between real and ideal self), which is what stops individuals from becoming fully functioning individuals (Rogers, 1961). Similarly, Kahneman (2011) addressed such difficulties of reflective consciousness in his dual process theory of System 1 (non-conscious, thinking fast) and System 2 (conscious, thinking slow).

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, individuals can differ in their ability to select goals that reflect their true selves, such as choosing between money or passion or a career in the arts or sciences. Many pursue unfulfilling goals for years, often unaware of better-fit alternatives. Therefore, selecting self-appropriate goals is a skill, especially relevant in today's autonomous and gig work environment, driven by rapid technological disruptions resulting in a continuous upgrade of existing individual skills and learning.

The present study addresses such difficulties in personal goal selection (desirability) through the self-concordance strategy, which helps align daily tasks with a person's identity, values and goals, based on self-determination theory. To further enhance goal alignment and pursuit, we employ an influential self-management

exercise of implementation intentions to support goal-relevant behaviours to future actions and well-being. Although several other influential strategies, such as mental contrasting (Oettingen et al., 2009; Oettingen, Mayer & Brinkmann, 2010) and mindfulness (Shapiro et al., 2006; Creswell, 2017), also address such issues. Mental contrasting strategies are part of implementation intentions exercises used to facilitate goal striving (Oettingen, Honig & Gollwitzer, 2000; Oettingen & Reininger, 2016). Similarly, recent mindfulness research combines self-concordance and mindfulness strategy for setting better goals (Smyth et al., 2020). The present study addresses Osin and Sheldon's (2019) recent test of a new temporal arrangement of self-concordance intervention, which opens new avenues of research in personal goal selection research.

Key Research Gaps in the Literature

Although the literature review captures the research gaps while formulating the research questions, a few key research gaps and the research questions have been collated and are presented below.

- The understanding of how the value (desirability) of a goal interacts with expectancy (feasibility) is not clear. Most research focuses either on one of the factors in goal research leading to less clarity on how individuals select goals that are both desirable and feasible. Where most personal goal research focuses on the process and outcomes of goal striving, this is generally done once the goal has been selected (Grund, Fries & Rheinberg, 2018). The question of how individuals select their goals before striving for them has received less attention and is still more of a black box.
- Popular approaches to goal setting and pursuit assume that the attainment of any valued goal is beneficial (e.g., Locke & Latham, 1990). However, the desirability of a goal can also include a wide variety of characteristics, including individual basic traits and dispositions, psychological needs and motives, as well as changes in the individual's goal choices in terms of evolving intellectual needs. While selecting goals for themselves, people can be unaware of such characteristics in goal desirability or have problems in taking them into deliberation during the goal selection process. For instance, modern research

suggests that the content of the goal (in terms of intrinsic or extrinsic aspirations) differentially influences wellness (Bradshaw et al., 2023).

- Most research assesses goals in a static or short-term framework. A significant gap exists in understanding how personal goals evolve across the lifespan, especially in response to major life transitions (e.g., broken ladders in the new career choices and changes). Further, there is limited research on how individuals prioritise between conflicting short and long-term goals. For example, how do people resolve trade-offs between immediate desires and long-term aspirations, and what are the mechanisms that influence these decisions?
- Although previous research finds low or no correspondence between implicit desires and explicit motives in a comprehensive theory of goal pursuit, goal researchers have paid little attention to the advantages of using previous implicit and explicit motive measures simultaneously.
- Similarly, as deliberative (motivational qualities) and implemental (volitional qualities) mindsets differ, less attention is paid to self-regulating mechanisms that help in deducing goal desirability and more on regulation during goal striving.
- Selecting the right goals for oneself is a skill. A majority of research on goals and goal setting researches are based on using questionnaires that show or prove the achievement of a goal. Less research attention is paid to measuring goal motivations beyond ego-involved goal motivation in the achievement of a goal (Hulleman et al., 2010).

The following research questions have been formulated to address these gaps.

- How do people decide which goal(s) to choose for long-term pursuit?
- Why is it so difficult to choose the right goals for oneself?
- If goal selection is a skill, what is the process by which people's appropriate goal selections and choices can be improved?

- What role do personality, goal and motive orientations taken together play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection?
- Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?
- Does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices?
- What defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit?
- What interventions can help individuals select the right goals and facilitate an improved goal pursuit?

Plan of the Thesis

The thesis has been organised into five chapters.

Chapter 1 deals with the challenges and relevance of personal goal selection and goal pursuit research. The chapter defines terms, theoretical approaches and research gaps by understanding the longitudinal mechanisms of goal desirability, goal feasibility, and subsequent positive and negative goal outcomes influencing life satisfaction.

Chapter 2 presents Phase 1 (goal desirability) of the study, which includes a survey experiment (vignette) conducted by the researcher to address a few research questions raised.

Chapter 3 describes Phase 2 (goal feasibility) of the present study, which is a survey study conducted to advance goal pursuit after Phase 1 and to find answers to the rest of the research questions.

Chapter 4 deals with a general discussion related to the findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Chapter 5 summarises the key findings of the research work and draws conclusions, contributions and practical implications of the research. The chapter also cites potential limitations and explores directions for future research.

Chapter 2

“Insight is the smallest unit of truth that is actionable”.

- Kunal Shah, *Core Human Motivations*.

Insights are valuable for their ability to distil complex information into simple, actionable truths that can drive effective action. In any context, from business to personal life decision-making, insights can act as a catalyst for change and improvement by clearly understanding what needs to be done and why it matters. The power of such insights drives personal decision-making in terms of aspirations, goals, choices, or being in or out of *touch* with oneself (Sheldon, Gunz and Schachtman, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter 1, goals are cognitive representations of desired mental states and play a significant role in determining our lives' processes, events and outcomes. The domain of personal goal research has spanned over fifty years and has become a rich tradition within personality (Klinger, 1977; Little, 1983; Kuhl, 1984; Emmons, 1989; Brunstein, 1993; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon, 2004, 2014) and motivation psychology (Lewin et al., 1944; Atkinson, 1957; Heckhausen, 1977; McClelland, 1985; Locke & Latham, 1990; Bandura, 2006; Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2010; Latham et al., 2023). Previous psychological research has examined several goals, from specific goals defined by a business or laboratory setting to inadequate and abstract personal goals. Similarly, individuals can pursue goals depending on what others are doing or out of their own volition, whereas some goal pursuits may be thrust upon them. Regardless of a goal's origin, Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Ryan & Deci, 2000), a broad framework of human motivation and personality, proposes that goals that afford basic needs satisfaction (autonomy, competence and relatedness) influence intrinsic motivation and wellness in goal pursuit and achievement.

Chapter 1 discussed that goals integrate individuals with their environment and regulate their thinking, emotions and behaviour. Further, goal selection processes are influenced by a host of personal factors, such as beliefs about oneself and self-regulatory mechanisms, desirability, and the feasibility of a goal. Within this context,

several personality researchers identify a motivational cluelessness when deciding which goals to pursue (Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2015). Dual process theories of cognition (Stanovich & West, 2000; Kahneman & Frederick, 2005; Kahneman, 2011; Evans & Stanovich, 2013) suggest reasons for such incongruence by distinguishing between two independent and seldom interacting processes– System 1 and 2. Considerable research on System 1 (implicit, non-conscious and *fast*) and System 2 (explicit, conscious and *slow*) processes suggests a mismatch in a goal's content if the people do not know their preferences or potentials (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989; Schultheiss et al., 2008). Living life as a *stranger to oneself* (Kahneman, 2011, p. 390) is widely illustrated in popular media stories and films of people struggling to choose the right goals for themselves, to persist in goal efforts or give up during critical junctures and to find value and satisfaction in goal achievement.

Consequently, previous research suggests that achieving motive-congruent goals is more beneficial for individual well-being than incongruent ones (Brunstein et al., 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Huppert, 2009; Müller & Rothermund, 2018). Modern personality and motivation researchers largely utilise measures that tap deeper personality processes, such as enduring interests and values within the personality that provide insight into organismic growth and well-being. A review of theories in Chapter 1 provides directions for addressing a few research questions viz., a) How do people decide which goal(s) to choose for long-term pursuit?; and b) Why is it so difficult to choose the right goals for oneself?

A self-deterministic approach proposes that individuals can select personal goals based on relative autonomy and intrinsic goal aspirations in a person/goal fit for well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). The concept of intrinsic aspirations represents goals of inherent worth, such as goals involving personal growth, intimacy, and community (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). Kasser (2002) considered such intrinsic aspirations to be naturally prioritised as they directly satisfy the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Previously, the ability to select goals that provide an outlet for personal growth and positive feelings, such as satisfaction is part of an organismic valuing process to unlock one's full potential or in becoming oneself (Rogers, 1964; Sheldon, Houser & Marko, 2003; Sheldon, 2014). It is at this juncture that individuals are mostly ignorant that extrinsic values such as wealth, status

and fame only indirectly satisfy basic psychological needs but also that the long-term pursuit of such goals comes at the cost of health and wellness (see corruption effect, Dweck, 1989; Sheldon et al., 2004; Pueschel et al., 2011; Hofer & Busch, 2017). The present study develops hypotheses prioritising intrinsic goal content or aspirations over extrinsic ones in influencing an enhanced satisfaction of basic psychological needs and more autonomous self-regulation.

As discussed before, incongruent goal selections are commonplace, a practice exacerbated by popular consumption-based social media culture's emphasis on fame or becoming famous based on excesses of materialism and capitalism, which creates difficult conditions to live according to or identify one's intrinsic values. Moreover, a growing autonomous and gig work environment, rapid technological disruptions, and a need for continuous upgrade of existing individual skills and learning increases the need to make consistent optimal goal choices. To navigate through such intra- and interpersonal factors in goal selection, the literature review in Chapter 1 finds support for a self-concordance framework based on SDT that taps into deeper personality processes and promotes self-insight, meaningfulness and personal autonomy for healthy goal pursuit (Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2015; Downes et al., 2017; Sheldon, Prentice & Osin, 2019; Hope et al., 2019).

Phase 1 of the present study is based on the postulate of a self-determined goal motivation that affords to get in touch with the deeper and more stable aspects of themselves to select the goals that express their true desires, interests, values and potentials. In the current chapter, Phase 1 addresses a primary research question viz., a) What defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit? A few nested research questions centred around it viz., b) What role do personality, goal and motive orientations play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection? c) If goal selection is a skill, how can people's appropriate goal selections and choices be improved? d) Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

Based on the perceived locus of causality (PLOC, Ryan & Connell, 1989), Sheldon (2014) began using the term self-concordant to represent goals in tune with individuals' aspirations for growth, maturity and other personality processes. Wrong goals, here, would be a goal choice that does not represent such potentials or tendencies driven by low goal self-determination goal motivation. Such instances are evidenced

by Kuhl and Kazen (1994), who suggest that individuals can easily attach *false self-inscriptions* to a goal as their idea to pursue where, in fact, they may actually be suggested by authority. The SDT, as a macro framework of motivation and personality, focuses on both the quality of motivation (why) and content (what) of goals on subjective well-being. In addition, considering the desirability of a goal, the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) distinctively matches personal goals and other aspects of personality to an individual's goal (Sheldon et al., 2019). We hypothesise that self-concordant goal selection reduces the difficulties in choosing the right goals for oneself, leading to enhanced satisfaction and goal progress. **Figure 2.1** presents a conceptual framework of Phase 1 of the study, and the next section discusses the development of hypotheses through a brief literature review.

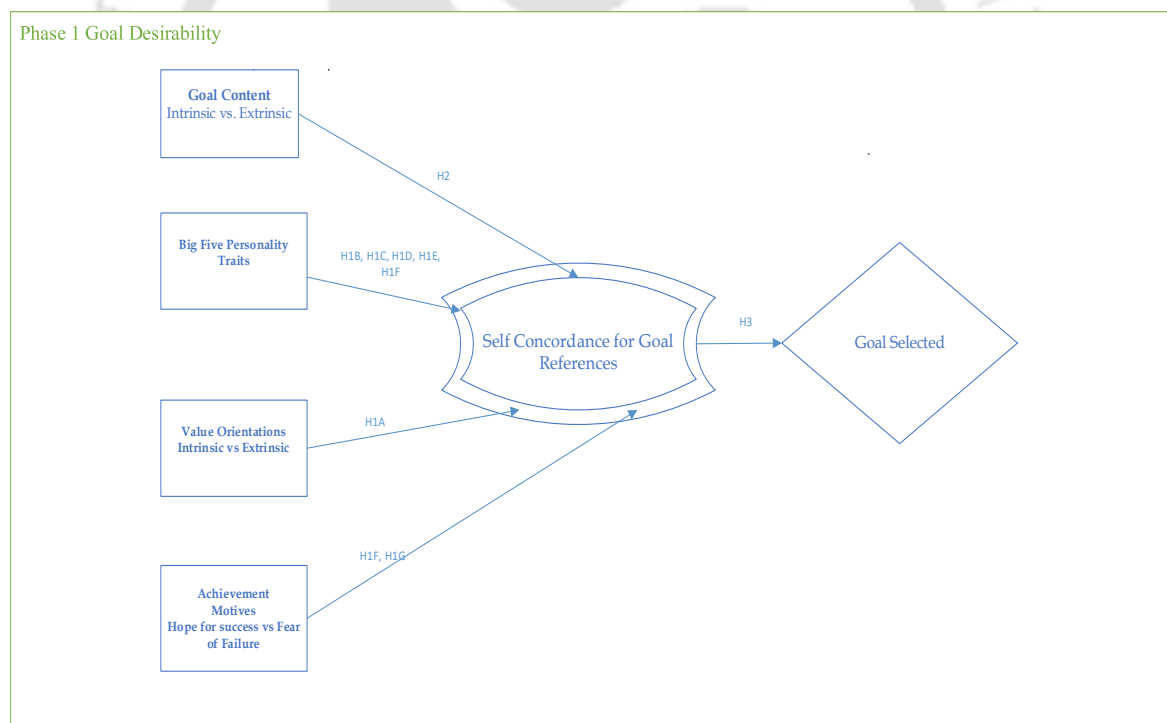


Figure 2.1 Proposed relationships and hypotheses development in Phase 1

Phase 1 – Goal Desirability

A Brief Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Self-Concordance Model (SCM)

Based on SDT, the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) proposes that people are often ignorant of the content of goals (what) they *should* want for personal growth and wellness (Sheldon, 2014). Considerable research on this motivational cluelessness has identified limitations in conscious processes regarding what is important (Bos & Dijksterhuis, 2012), unawareness of the core processes underlying feelings, desires, wishes and choices (Hofree & Winkielman, 2012) and false self-inscriptions (Kuhl & Kazen, 1994). Additionally, it examines how the self infiltrates the memory of goal choice as one's own even when not (Kuhl, 2000). Further, considerable research conceptualises an influence of an implicit self depicted in non-conscious processes (Bargh et al., 2001; Locke & Latham, 2019) and primed goal-setting research (Chen et al., 2021; Latham et al., 2023), which points to two distinct entities within individuals. Dual process cognition theorists, such as Kahneman (2011), have provided evidence for a deeper non-conscious aspect of self (System 1) and a shallow, bounded, explicit conscious awareness of self (System 2).

Sheldon (2014) considers that this deeper, implicit self informs the shallow consciousness of the truth of its desires, wishes and choices for selecting self-appropriate goals. However, being authentic or *true to oneself* may be consciously difficult, and one may be prone to incongruent social influences, values, and beliefs when selecting what goals to pursue (Sheldon, 2014). For instance, individuals can be shy, afraid of what others might think and may lack self-ownership and support from others in following their authentic choices. SDT suggests that behaviours largely based on social influences and not determined based on a feeling of self-ownership (determinism) are likely not to satisfy psychological needs or long-term potentials. Therefore, the *feelings* of being self-determined for an outcome that an individual prefers organismically for growth, happiness and well-being (Sheldon, 2014).

Self-concordance as a measure of goal/fit and sustained effort

In moving from *being true to oneself* to *becoming oneself*, SCM hypothesises that some goals better represent an individual's deeper, implicit preferences and potentials than other goals (Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008; Sheldon & Schöler, 2011; Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon, Prentice and Halusic, 2015; Sheldon et al., 2019). SCM ratings employ the qualities of being true to oneself, as deduced from PLOC ratings of SDT, to match the deeper aspects of an individual's personality, such as values, interests, motives, and traits, through the choice of goal contents. The idea of self-concordance is not to categorise goals but to present a successful technique for assessing the agreement of personal goals with conscious and non-conscious aspects of the personality. Therefore, goals can be concordant and non (dis) concordant regarding how they match an individual's implicit long-term potential and the perceived relative autonomy in pursuing them. Research evidence supports the goal fit assessment of SCM ratings as self-concordant goals and their benefits (Sheldon et al., 2007; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008; Sheldon & Schöler, 2011; Milyavskaya et al., 2014; Sheldon, Prentice & Halusic, 2015; Werner et al., 2016; Sheldon et al., 2017; Downes et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2019; Sheldon et al., 2020). Through several experimental studies, Milyavskaya et al. (2014) found that domain need satisfaction is the outcome of self-concordant goals, and individuals can differ in terms of their domain preferences as long as the goals are concordant with their implicit desires.

Research has found that self-concordant goals receive sustained efforts and are thus largely attained than not (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon, Houser & Marko, 2001). Recently, Werner et al. (2016) reported that it is the subjective ease of automatic pursuit, rather than effort, that makes self-concordant feel easier and attainable. Similarly, Unsworth and Mason (2016) consider self-concordance assessment a necessary condition for self-management in today's autonomous working conditions in organisations.

Self-concordance as a measure of personal insight and autonomy

Thus, SCM enhances goal/fit and sustained effort, and as a technique, promotes self-insight and autonomy in helping make the right choices, which are positive for an individual's personal growth and help them become the best version of themselves.

Such an idea comes close to reducing the discrepancy between an individual's real and ideal self as an organismic valuing process to becoming fully functioning in their lives characterised by enduring happiness, creativity and well-being in the long-term (Rogers, 1962, 1964; Hofmann & Wilson, 2010). The framework can present insights into how we determine that individuals truly know themselves or if they are confused in their pursuit of goals. The key may lie in assessing the interaction between the quality of motivation and the level of self-determinism (freedom) in pursuing their long-term goals and subsequent happiness or wellness in pursuit. An accurate self-insight for pursuing goals was suggested by Burton (2008), where participants instructed to follow their gut feelings in a goal-setting exercise reported greater self-concordance for goals compared to participants told to be more rational before setting goals. Self-concordance is also positively associated with trait mindfulness (Sheldon, 2004) and proactive personality (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2010; Bateman & Crant, 1993).

Present Study

Self-concordant research finds similarities to a separate line of research on motive congruence, which matches explicit personality processes (Schultheiss & Brunstein, 1999; Schultheiss, 2008; Schultheiss et al., 2011; Job & Brandstätter, 2009; Langan-Fox, Canty & Sankey, 2010; Müller & Rothermund, 2018) to an implicit motivational system (McClelland, 1985; McClelland, Koestner & Weinberger, 1989; Heckhausen, 1991). Motive-congruence researchers assess motivational congruence by examining referential competence, which refers to differences in individuals' speed and accuracy in verbally naming non-verbal information (Schultheiss & Brunstein, 1999). In other words, as a predictor of motive congruence, referential competence measures how quickly and precisely the non-verbal symbolic information is converted into verbal codes (conscious) for motive congruent goal selection (Schultheiss, 2008). Also, several research studies have tested such competence through experimental manipulation, suggesting that conscious and non-conscious symbolic information can be aligned through different strategies (Schultheiss et al., 2011; Job & Brandstätter, 2009; Langan-Fox et al., 2010). For instance, Schultheiss et al. (2011) asked participants in an experimental group to vividly imagine goal achievement and feelings associated with the experience. They found that participants in the experimental group reported greater explicit/implicit motive congruence compared to participants in the

control group. Similarly, Müller and Rothermund's (2018) experimental manipulation of goal properties (achievement or power motive) found evidence for motive congruence to boost implicit self-regulation of agency motives.

Sheldon (2014), however, contends that experimental manipulation of this referential competence through goals as reference points in determining implicit preferences has been scarce. Only recently, Sheldon et al. (2019) provided experimental evidence in matching concordance to a list of candidate goals (goal references) to actual goals selected for pursuit. They report evidence for the timing of self-concordance as a critical factor in selecting self-concordant goals. These recent additions to considerable research in SCM also reveal a theoretical difference in mindsets during a pre-decisional (motivational) goal deliberation phase and a post-decisional (volitional) implementational phase, illustrating different processes of goal selection (desirability) and goal pursuit (feasibility). Using Sheldon et al.'s (2019) experimental evidence as a starting point, the present study explores self-concordance in terms of 'what' (value orientation, goal content, personality traits and implicit evaluations of fear and success) and the why (through SDT's PLOC methodology) factors regarding a goal's desirability, for its selection and pursuit. Phase 1 of the longitudinal study hypothesises that the choice of SCM-based strategy answers the difficulty in selecting the right goals for oneself and defines a self-appropriate goal selection method for long-term pursuit. In addition, Phase 2 (Chapter 3) presents a longitudinal analysis to capture the "crossing the Rubicon" from deliberation to decision, as addressed by the action phases model of goal pursuit (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 2012).

The choice of the SCM approach to address the RQs of Phase 1 of the study has a threefold relevance viz.; first, it focuses on both work-from-home employees and the student population and takes into account the longitudinal nature of assessment rather than separate cross-sectional studies to understand the relationship between motivational and volitional processes. Although an organisation's survival may require short-term results in business, ideally, employees also pursue courses of action that can secure long-term value (e.g., Porter, 1992; Marginson & McAulay, 2007; Bateman & Barry, 2012). Second, the study answers the calls of a wider range of time spans in the study of goals (Locke & Latham, 1990; 2019) in adopting a longitudinal design to assess goal selection and pursuit. Although weeks is a considerable time in goal-setting

research, the present study aims to understand the psychological experience of long-term goal pursuit and provide evidence for establishing a relatively new theoretical foundation of SCM for more research in the idiographic personal goal research domain. Third, the study of implicit/explicit motives under SCM addresses the RQ raised earlier by the researcher in analysing whether people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires. Furthermore, experimental manipulation (timing) of self-concordance intervention answers how people's appropriate goal selections and choices can be improved. The next section discusses the theoretical and methodological innovation in the present study through a brief literature review and hypotheses development of the variables involved based on the SCM framework.

Values

Rokeach (1968, 1973) considered values as enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally preferable or desirable over other modes of conduct or desired end-states. These values function as standards guiding behaviour and decision-making processes in individuals and societies (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). The concept of a value system is also central to Rokeach's theory on the nature of human values. It refers to an individual's organised set of values ranked by importance. This hierarchy, in turn, influences how an individual behaves, prioritises goals, and resolves conflicts. For instance, preferred modes of behaviour, such as being honest, responsible, or courageous, are considered as the means to achieve desired outcomes and are called instrumental values.

Similarly, terminal values relate to end-states of existence, such as happiness, freedom, or equality, representing goals or objectives individuals strive to achieve in life. Considerable research in the SDT framework focused on values' essential role in understanding the quality of motivation and satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Hope et al., 2018; Sheldon et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2022). Previously, Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) proposed that pursuing some values over others is more conducive to flourishing and satisfaction in life. Specifically, they contrasted two types of life aspirations, viz., a) intrinsic motivation characterised by the pursuit of personal growth, close relationships, and contribution to the community, which are considered to be basic needs satisfying in and out of themselves. In contrast, b) extrinsic life aspirations are

characterised as a means to an end, such as striving for wealth, fame or physical appearance, and do not directly satisfy basic psychological needs.

Considerable research supports Kasser and Ryan's (1993, 1996) finding that intrinsic life aspirations are associated with lower symptoms of anxiety, depression, and physical symptoms, increased vitality and self-actualisation (Niemic et al., 2009; Kasser et al., 2014; Murphy et al., 2020; Bradshaw et al., 2023). Discussed earlier in Chapter 1, SDT's goal contents theory (GCT, Ryan & Deci, 2017) proposed that intrinsic aspirations not only help in autonomous self-regulation but also lead to greater levels of subjective well-being by directly satisfying basic psychological needs. Similarly, we know from early research hypotheses that some goals are generally more organismically congruent than others, irrespective of an individual's personality (Kasser, 2002).

The researcher formulates the following hypotheses based on the previous literature review, indicating a probable link between intrinsic values, aspirations and goal self-concordance.

Hypothesis 1a: *A value orientation index will be associated with greater self-concordance for an intrinsic goal reference and less for an extrinsic goal reference (a matching hypothesis).*

Personality Traits – Big Five

As SDT puts human experience and consciousness at the forefront, individuals can be differentiated on the basis of how they appraise their environment (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). Some people are more sensitive to environmental controls around them and feel more often controlled compared to others. These control-oriented people seek clues from the environment to tell them what is expected of them and feel pressured into initiating and regulating certain behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 1985). They rely on environmental controls, such as deadlines, to regulate their behaviour and are hypothesised to be more likely to select jobs based on extrinsic aspirations of status and pay. Later, Sheldon and Kasser (1995) found that individuals who perceived being controlled in their goals were more reliant on external cues and control and were less open to experience. Sheldon and Prentice (2019) recently argued for a renewed focus on a grand theory of personality, proposing SDT as a foundational framework for

personality researchers. Sensing individual differences in how people perceive self-determined aspects of behaviour, Prentice et al. (2019) suggest that manifestations of personality traits can be seen as tools to satisfy basic psychological needs. In addition, they provide a theoretical framework for demonstrating that SDT constructs may be integrated within the whole trait theory (WTT). This integration leads to a key proposition that basic psychological needs can (partially) explain traits. Based on the postulates of the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT; Deci & Ryan, 2012, 2014), the Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), and the Causality Orientations Theory (COT; Deci & Ryan, 2012, 2014), Prentice et al. (2019) suggested three propositions for integrative research viz., a) Big Five traits will be correlated with need satisfaction, b) autonomy to have positive correlations with conscientiousness and extraversion, and negative correlation with neuroticism; and c) autonomy to have positive correlations with openness to experience and extraversion.

Further, recent meta-analytic research finds evidence for negative correlations for neuroticism with all three universal basic needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) and positive correlations with extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Vukasović Hlupić et al., 2023). Based on the above arguments and evidence, the researcher has formulated the following hypotheses –

Hypothesis 1b – *Openness vs closedness to experience will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references, respectively.*

Hypothesis 1c – *Conscientiousness vs lack of direction will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references, respectively.*

Hypothesis 1d – *Extraversion vs introversion will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references (matching hypothesis), respectively.*

Hypothesis 1e – *Agreeableness vs antagonism will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references (matching hypothesis), respectively.*

Hypothesis 1f – *Neuroticism vs emotional stability will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references (matching hypothesis), respectively.*

Implicit Motive Dispositions - Hope of Success and Fear of Failure

Sheldon and Kasser (1995) have argued that striving for concordant goals is a fundamental aspect of personality integration. Further, the SCM does not propose that pursuing extrinsically motivated goals equates to conflict within the personality. Self-concordant goals represent a quality of goal striving that satisfies an individual's basic psychological needs rather than goal conflicts. However, conflict may arise whenever there is a mismatch between expectations from others in terms of extrinsic goals of status and success and the intrinsic content of one's personal goals and when the person internalises the extrinsic goals and expectations of others (Kelly, Mansell & Wood, 2015). Such goal conflicts are largely entwined in extant research with the approach and avoidance dimensions of motivations (Elliot, 1999; Gable, 2006; Thrash & Hurst, 2008; Elliot & Murayama, 2008) through Motive Dispositional Theory's (MDT) concept of hope for success (HS) and fear of failure (FF) dispositions (McClelland et al., 1953; McClelland, 1975, 1985).

McClelland's (1985) conceptualisation of the hope and fear components of implicit motives relate to *achievement* motive (nACH) in terms of HS and FF; hope for closeness and fear of rejection relate to *affiliation* motive (nAFF), and hope of power and fear of weakness are related to the *power* motive (nPOW). In a review of the relationship between implicit motives and basic needs satisfaction, Schüler et al. (2019) explain how McClelland's conceptualisation suggests individual differences in emotions, cognitions and behaviour in responses to similar motive-relevant conditions. They further illustrate that individuals may avoid social gatherings, even if they would genuinely enjoy being part of them because they anticipate negative judgments from others. For instance, they might skip a party because they assume no one will talk to them or be seen as uninteresting. This expectancy of non-liking and rejection can fuel

their feelings (anxiety), cognitions (over-analyzing, worry) and behaviours (being clumsy, inhibited, awkward or over-compensating, people-pleasing).

However, where SDT postulates a natural tendency for human beings to strive for personal growth through an organismic valuing process, Schüller et al. (2019) suggest that the FF component that avoids satisfaction of basic needs contradicts the concept of this innate positive tendency. Further, they find it astonishing that SDT research has not conceptualised avoiding undesirable outcomes as an innate basic need to avoid for human and personal growth. Subsequently, SDT research theoretically considers how different forms of regulation can influence approach and avoidance behaviour. Previously, Sheldon (2011) linked the approach component to basic need satisfaction and the avoidance component to the basic need to avoid need thwarting as two forms of basic needs. Need thwarting is “the perception that needs satisfactions are being obstructed or actively frustrated within a given context” (Bartholomew et al., 2011, pg. 5).

Recently, several studies have identified fear and anxiety as consequences of basic need dissatisfaction as obstructions in demeaning, controlling environments and how basic need thwarting within such environments have an independent influence on well-being (Bartholomew et al., 2011; Rocchi et al., 2017; Laurin et al., 2015; Yu, et al., 2016; Schüller, Brandstätter & Sheldon, 2013; Schüller et al., 2019). This growing research has gained momentum through semi-projective measures, such as the Multi-Motive Grid (MMG) (Sokolowski et al., 2000) and the Operant Multi-Motive Test (OMT, Kuhl, 2013). Such measures distinctly identify between implicit motives' hope and fear components and simultaneously capture all three motives (achievement, affiliation and power). Based on the above arguments, the researcher has formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1g – *Hope (approach) will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references (matching hypothesis).*

Hypothesis 1h – *Fear (avoidance) will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references (matching hypothesis).*

Self-Concordance and Rubicon Models of Goal Pursuit

Sheldon et al. (2019) recently provide empirical evidence for a primary theoretical and methodological innovation in assessing goal self-concordance. Before their research, all SCM research studies followed the normal procedure of only soliciting self-concordance after the participants had selected their goals. The normal procedure of assessing self-concordance involved selecting goals first, after which the goal concordance was rated. In other words, self-concordance assesses the goal's desirability after the person has *Crossed the Rubicon*; that is, once the goal selection is complete, individuals move from a deliberative (pre-decisional) to a goal-implementation mindset (post-decisional) (Mindset Theory of Action Phases, Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 2012). Sheldon et al. (2019) hypothesised that self-concordance as an assessment for personal insight and appropriate goal selection has a significant potential to be assessed during the pre-decisional (deliberative) mindset and not implementation. Such a distinction is critical as *Crossing the Rubicon* signals a termination of a goal's motivational deliberation (desirability), and an implementation mindset is characterised by determining how to achieve the chosen goal (Gollwitzer, 1993; 1999).

Considering Sheldon et al.'s (2019) novel arguments for renewed testing of self-concordance assessment, the procedure of Phase 1 asks participants to first, rate the potential self-concordance of several reference goals provided by the researcher. Only after rating the self-concordance for these goal references are the participants asked to select the goals they wish to pursue. In this way, the self-concordance of goal reference is assessed during the deliberative (pre-decisional) stage of judging a goal's desirability and not when individuals are busy considering the goal's feasibility in a post-decisional mindset. Such assessment should positively influence selecting appropriate goals with access to more information in the pre-decisional mindset (Sheldon et al., 2019). As discussed in Chapter 1, self-concordance measures the extent to which a goal feels enjoyable and valued rather than pressured or forced. Access to such information can be readily difficult, constrained by situations, or simply not present when selecting

goals. The Perceived Locus of Causality (PLOC) methodology in SCM bypasses such problems of remembering (what to want) directly by tapping how individuals *feel* (System 1, fast) about what they *think* (System 2, slow) they want. Therefore, the SCM model assumes that such feelings can serve as a reliable signal of goal fit with an individual's underlying developmental potentials (such as values, traits, motives and goal contents) during the pre-decisional phase of goal selection. In other words, self-concordance ratings for goal references should mediate (act as a signal) the influence of goal, value orientations and personality traits on the goals selected by the participants. Therefore, in Phase 1 of the present study, the researcher assumes that such signals, based on the deeper aspects of personality systems, can act as a reliable source of information for selecting personal goals that are enjoyable (based on intrinsic contents, Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996), growth-inducing and personally expressive (self-determined) in a long-term pursuit.

Based on the above rationale and the assumptions of SDT that some goals are more orgasmically congruent than others, the researcher has formulated the following hypotheses –

Hypothesis 2 - *Intrinsic goal references will be rated higher in self-concordance than extrinsic goal references.*

Hypothesis 3 - *Rated self-concordance for goal references will predict the participant's goal selection.*

Hypothesis 4a – *Self-concordance ratings of goal reference will mediate the influence of goal content on the goal selected by the participant.*

Hypothesis 4b - *Self-concordance ratings of goal reference will mediate the influence of motives and value orientations on the goal selected by the participant.*

Hypothesis 5 - *Self-concordance ratings of goals, or prompting participants to consider the motivation for potential goals before goal selection, improves self-concordant goal selection compared to self-concordance ratings after goal selection.*

Age and Gender¹ Differences in Self-concordance

Considering the concept of self-concordance, few researchers have identified developmental differences in goal concordance. Using experience sampling, Carstensen et al. (2000) reported that positive emotions remain stable across the adult lifespan, whereas negative emotions decline in older adults. This Paradox of Well-Being suggests that emotion regulation improves with ageing (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Charles & Carstensen, 2010), and subjective well-being (SWB) also improves the older we get (Hansen & Blekesaune, 2022). Previously, Kunzmann, Little, and Smith (2000), controlling for functional health, found that age was positively related to positive emotions and negatively related to negative emotions. Thus, with ageing and changes in physical, cognitive, and emotion regulation abilities, it is likely that older adults may adapt to their goals systematically, and these shifts can influence judgments of satisfaction with life. Sheldon and Kasser (2001), consistent with Erikson's (1963) notions of psychosocial development, found that personal goal strivings in older adults listed more personal strivings involving more generativity and ego integrity contents and fewer aspirations related to identity and intimacy than young adults.

Similarly, Sheldon and Elliot (1999) hypothesised that older adults will show higher goal concordance levels than young adults. Later, Chen et al. (2012) supported this prediction based on a cross-sectional study. They found higher levels of goal concordance and lesser aspirations based on external reasons among older adults than young adults. Considering the arguments, the researcher expects to find similar results: *older adults will show greater self-concordance for goal references than younger adults.*

Additionally, previous self-concordance research on adolescents suggests that adolescent girls show greater goal engagement with goal progress and that low goal progress is associated with lower educational aspirations compared to boys (Vasalampi et al., 2009). Recent research reiterates the previous finding of goal engagement to well-being, where Hansen and Blekesaune (2022) found that women show a less beneficial development in negative affect than men but a more beneficial development in engagement. However, considerable self-concordance research does not suggest any

¹ The word 'gender' throughout the manuscript specifically denotes the biological sex (of male or female) assigned at birth.

influence of gender in autonomous motivation, self-concordance and implementation intentions research (Koestner et al., 2008; Niemiec et al., 2009). Some researchers found higher mean self-concordance scores associated with females than males (Burke & Linley, 2007). Recent research further reveals a stronger concordance for women than men in self-report measures (Rattel et al., 2020). Although existing SCM research diminishes the influence of gender, given the universal nature of basic needs satisfaction under SDT, the researcher does not formulate specific hypotheses. Instead, a simple comparison will be made to determine whether female participants exhibit greater self-concordance for goal references compared to male participants.

Method

Sample

Phase 1 of the present study employed a convenience sample of 407 participants comprised of junior and middle-level employees ($N = 176$) who are either a) permanent work-from-home (WFH) employees and b) employees with flexible work roles of (WFH) and regular workplace hours. All employee participants worked across six organisations (located in metropolitan cities of India) in the age range of 26-47 years with an average age of 29.7 years ($SD = 6.4$ years). Most employees were recruited through HR and operation managers of the respective organisations. Some employee participants were recruited through professional networks based on their interest in the topic of the study. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Student participants constituted the remainder of the sample ($N = 231$), with ages ranging from 19 to 25 years. The student sample was recruited from a) a renowned engineering and technological institute and b) a private university and management school situated in the city of Guwahati, Assam, India. The voluntary recruitment of students was initiated by a small presentation before or after classes with consent from the instructors of respective classes. Further, only after informed consent were the participants randomly assigned to the phase 1 conditions of the study.

The total sample ($N=407$) consisted of female ($n=165$) and male ($n=242$) participants. The sample was randomly divided into one of the two experimental

conditions. **Table 2.1** highlights the conditions of participants for Phase 1. All participants voluntarily took part in the study on optimal goal selection without receiving any monetary compensation for their participation.

Missing Value Analysis

The percentage of missing values (for quantitative variables) in both the employee and student samples was less than 1%. The missing values varied from 0% to 1% for all scale items. Over the total sample, the missing values were distributed at random and completely random at the scale level. The researcher used multiple imputation method (Rubin, 1978) to replace the missing values for each scale item. Each missing value was replaced by its calculated pooled mean. For the demographic data of employees, except for the salary information, the missing values reported were less than 2%. More than 15% of missing values were reported in salary data, and the variable was dropped after further analysis. In the student sample, less than 1% of demographic information was missing.

Common Method Bias

Harman's Single-Factor test (HSF) was conducted for the overall sample to assess the threat of common method variance in the data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). An unrotated principal components analysis (PCA) of all the variables involved in the sample revealed 20 factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining 69.39% per cent of the total variance. The first largest factor accounted for only 14% of variance, indicating no common pattern of variance in the sample. Although the HSF is a diagnostic technique measuring the extent to which common method variance (CMV) may be a problem, the method does not statistically control or partial out method effects (Podsakoff et al., 2024). By using two different sources of respondents (students and employees) for the dependent variable, the researcher aimed to reduce the common method bias and social desirability effects to the extent possible (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

Procedure

As discussed in Chapter 1, the study follows a paradigm of possible selves as mental representations of personalised goals (Markus & Duvolo, 1989; Sheldon, 2014;

Sheldon et al., 2019). Therefore, the present study used an experimental vignette methodology, which allows the researcher to construct scenarios that accurately reflect the constructs being tested (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). This approach ensures that any differences observed among participants can be directly attributed to the objective value of the described scenarios (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). In this experimental Phase 1, two question booklets were developed, each representing one of the two experimental conditions: self-concordance ratings of goals either before or after goal selection. The experimental conditions were manipulated through the creation of appropriate scenarios, as described below.

Scenario for setting the context for employee questionnaire

The following description was provided in each questionnaire booklet to set the context for the study.

“We invite you to consider your future personal goals (for instance, “who you might be 20 years from now”). Below are six possible selves that could come true for you or be the potential aspects of the desirable life you may be living. First, please read through the list. Try to imagine yourself having and being each of these possible selves.”

A choice of six possible selves (through goal references, **Table 2.2**) was presented to the employees participating in the study.

Scenario snippet for completing a self-concordant assessment **before** making goal selections (experimental condition).

*“In order to reach possible selves, we have to make goals and take (or not take) certain actions along the way. These actions may or may not be enjoyable in real life. Please consider **how would it feel** to take the following actions to reach each of your possible future selves.”*

“Now, please select any three of the six possible goals (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider being in the future.”

Scenario snippet for completing a self-concordant assessment **after** making goal selections (control condition).

“Now, please select any three of the six possible selves (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider being in the future”.

*“In order to reach possible selves, we have to take (or not take) certain actions along the way. These actions may or may not be enjoyable in real life. Please consider **how will it feel** to take the following actions to reach each of your chosen future possible selves.”*

Recently, Bakker et al. (2020) found that some individuals can proactively manage their own cognitive and affective resources to engage and grow throughout life. Moreover, people who are proactive tend to look for ways to improve themselves. Although the study does not directly measure proactivity through self-reports, the voluntary participation of individuals indicates their active engagement in selecting appropriate goals for achieving personal growth. The data collection method tapped into this proactive nature of the participants through a verbal presentation on the nature and purpose of the study (for details, please refer to Appendix A and B). Further, only after informed consent were the participants randomly assigned to the conditions of the vignette survey. The random assignment was carried out using a lottery method for simple random sampling into two groups. The lottery method, a random allocation technique, is employed to address random assignment problems, ensuring that tasks are assigned to participants fairly or optimally (Budish et al., 2013). The constraints to the random assignments in students involved getting approval from the instructors of the class to permit 15 minutes (usually at the end of the class and sometimes during transitions between classes) for the presentation and distribution of questionnaire booklets.

Measures

1. Goal references – For the purpose of the study, six goal contents for different demographics were created – three intrinsic goal contents and three extrinsic goal contents (**Table 2.2**).

A choice of goal references was scored as either intrinsic (1) or extrinsic (0) goal content. The individual content of goals nested with intrinsic and extrinsic goal choices was not scored. Similarly, a Goal Selection Score (GSS) as a dependent variable was calculated for the two goals selected with values ranging from no intrinsic goals

selected (0) or at least one intrinsic goal selected (1) to a maximum of two intrinsic goals selected (2). **Tables (2.35 and 2.36)** present the means and standard deviations of each goal reference and the goals selected, discussed in the hypothesis testing section. The next section discusses the procedure of exploratory factor analysis to assess the underlying factor structure of the other measures in the study.

The present study follows three steps for exploratory factor analysis – a) assessment of data suitability for factor analysis, b) factor extraction, and c) factor rotation and interpretation. Further, also presented is the detailed scrutiny of all the items across all the measures in their meaning and context which revealed that they are not culture-sensitive.

2. Well-being - Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Contemporary research describes a three-component structure to Subjective Well-Being (SWB) – positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985; Arthaud-Day et al., 2005). Diener (1985) conceptualises the life satisfaction component as an evaluative judgement and suggests that although life satisfaction correlates with the affective aspects of SWB, it forms a separate assessment from other types of well-being (Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996). He conceptualised the structure of SWB as consisting of two main components: the affective or emotional component and the judgmental or cognitive component. Extant research, however, has largely neglected the cognitive or judgmental component compared to affective components, which have received considerable attention.

Scholars have also questioned the value of life satisfaction measures in assessing SWB. As SWB derives from hedonistic traditions of psychology, assessing affective states (positive and negative affect) is more effective in capturing maximised pleasurable states (Kahneman et al., 1999; Diener & Fujita, 2005). Citing Experience-Sampling Methodology (ESM) as the best measure of SWB, this view contends that global life satisfaction judgments are prone to memory and integration errors regarding pleasant life moments. Furthermore, few scholars suggest that temperament, moods, and life-changing events directly influence perceptions of life satisfaction.

Another school of scholars, however, adopts a more holistic approach to observing the essence of SWB, which involves reflective global judgements of overall

life. Taking a eudaimonic approach, they contend that the influence of contextual factors such as transient mood states and temporal summations (present or past life events) are noise variables that do not eliminate the signal of life satisfaction judgments (Schimmack & Oishi, 2005).

Finally, Lucas *et al.* (1996) and Pavot and Diener (2008) suggest that life satisfaction judgments account for a greater degree of the explained variance than affective components of SWB (positive and negative affect). Further, these life satisfaction judgments are more likely to contain additional aspects of SWB, such as evaluations regarding the meaning and purpose of life.

From an initial sample of 48 items, Diener and colleagues (1985) developed and validated a measure of an individual's general sense of satisfaction with their life as a whole. The original pool of items was reduced to 10 items after factor analysis. Further elimination of redundancies results in items called the Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS). The study to test the scale's psychometric properties was conducted on two groups of participants ($N_1 = 1761$; $N_2 = 163$). Several subsequent studies additionally enhanced the scale's original psychometric properties. For instance, early studies report the coefficient alpha range from 0.79 to 0.89 (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Recent studies report coefficient alphas of 0.87 (Adler & Fagley, 2005) and 0.86 (Steger *et al.* 2006), indicating a high internal consistency. Similarly, several studies report high test-retest reliability of 0.84 (Pavot *et al.* 1991) and 0.80 (Steger *et al.* 2006), indicating moderate temporal stability of the scale.

The five scale items are arranged in a 7-point Likert response scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) to provide respondents with various response options. With all responses to five items keyed positively, a simple addition of responses yields a total score on the scale. The possible scores range from lowest (5) to highest (35), with a score of (20) representing the neutral point on the scale. Further, the range of possible scores and their descriptions are as follows –

Range Description

30-35 Highly satisfied (*Very high score*) -

25-29 Satisfied (*High score*) -

- 20-24 Slightly satisfied (*Average score*) -
- 15-19 Slightly below average score -
- 10-14 Dissatisfied -
- 5-9 Extremely dissatisfied - Individuals who score in this range are usually extremely unhappy with their current life.

Sample items include –

“In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.”

“The conditions of my life are excellent.”

“So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.”

Cultural Sensitivity

Robert Biswas-Diener and Ed Diener (2001) took responses on several measures of SWB on 83 individuals living in a slum in Kolkata, India. The study reports good psychometric properties with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80, and alphas range from 0.73 (item 1) to 0.76 (item 3) for individual items. Further, cross-cultural analysis of SWLS reveals a 'positivity bias' of highly acculturated Americans when evaluating global satisfaction. Meanwhile, Japanese-American students consistently scored between broad and narrow domains of satisfaction. Similarly, the study of life satisfaction in Kolkata slums naturally reported low global satisfaction scores, suggesting that Indian respondents do not rate global areas of satisfaction as higher than specific domain areas. This discrepancy may be because Indians evaluate broad and specific domains in a more even-handed way without solely focusing on their best domain areas as the Americans.

Factor Analysis

An important step in the suitability of the present data involves weighing the overall significance of the correlation matrix through Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. This measure provides the statistical probability that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among some of its components (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The results were significant, $\chi^2 = 300.970$ ($df = 6$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$), which indicates its suitability for factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA),

which indicates the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis, was 0.746. In this regard, data with MSA values above 0.6 are considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

The exploratory factor analysis of a SWLS questionnaire was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The reasoning for this is that the items would likely be related conceptually. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for the selection of “good” factor loadings on primary factors recommended by Howard (2016). Items were considered as satisfactory loaded items if a) they load onto their primary factor above .40; b) load onto alternative factors above .30; and c) demonstrate a difference of .20 between primary and alternative factors. By adopting this rule, the high cross-loaded items were eliminated. Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded one factor for the scale, which accounted for 54.289 per cent of the variation in the data.

Communalities ranged from .41 to .62 (see **Table 2.3**). For easy interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.4**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set. The Kaiser criterion combined with the examination of the Scree plot (see **Figure 2.2**) increases accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osbourne, 2014).

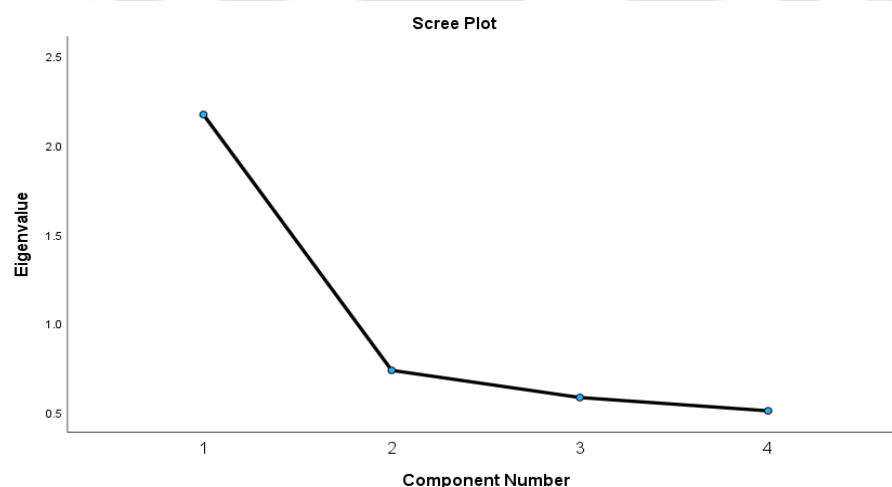


Figure 2.2 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS Questionnaire ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.4** and **Figure 2.2**, the results show that there is a single factor on which items were loading, explaining 54.28% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Satisfaction with Life)

Factor 1 contained four items (items W1, W2, W3, and W4), which appear to measure the judgment component of subjective well-being with regard to satisfaction with life (e.g. “In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.”, “I am satisfied with my life.”) and was named Satisfaction with Life. A follow-up reliability analysis found a satisfactory internal consistency of factor 1 ($\alpha = .71$).

3. Values Orientation Index (VOI) - Short Form of Aspirations Index

Kasser and Ryan (1996) developed a mini theory within the self-determination theory called the Goal Content Theory (GCT). The GCT examines the content of goals (whether intrinsic or extrinsic in content) pursued by individuals and how their pursuit relates to wellness. Within this pursuit, Kasser and Ryan (1996) developed the Aspiration Index, a self-report questionnaire to assess individuals' personal goals and aspirations. It measures individuals' relative importance on different intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Intrinsic aspirations refer to inherently fulfilling and satisfying goals, such as personal growth, close relationships, community involvement, and self-acceptance. Internal sources of motivation typically drive these goals and reflect one's authentic desires and values. Extrinsic aspirations, on the other hand, focus on external rewards, social status, and material possessions, such as wealth, fame, and physical attractiveness. These goals are often driven by societal pressures or the desire to meet external standards of success.

The Aspiration Index consists of a series of items that assess the extent to which individuals value various aspirations. Respondents rate the importance of each aspiration on a five-point Likert scale, with scores indicating the degree to which they consider each aspiration as important in their own lives (1 = Not at all important to 5 = Extremely important).

Sample items – “I aspire to” –

“To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.”

“To help people, especially those who need help.”

“Being known and admired by many people.”

The scale has been widely used in research to examine individuals' relative emphasis on intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations and how these orientations may impact their overall satisfaction and SWB. Researchers can gain insights into individuals' value systems, motivations, and well-being outcomes using the aspirations index (Kasser et al., 2014). The index explores the effects of values and goals on happiness and materialism, life satisfaction, interpersonal relationships and environmental attitudes. Together with GCT, the aspirations index provides valuable insights into the role of goal content and values that shape human behaviour and well-being.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural factors can influence an individual's values, aspirations, and the relative importance they place on the intrinsic or extrinsic nature of goal content. Consequently, it is essential to consider potential cultural variations in aspirations, values, and other underlying constructs when conducting measurements. Although Western scholars have developed the scale, some of the goals pursued by non-westerners may be absent in the items. Further, the scale does not include all sources of aspirations across different cultures and situations. However, Grouzet et al. (2005) investigated the structure of goal content across 15 cultures and a group of 1,854 students. They found two primary dimensions underlying the goal content – Intrinsic vs extrinsic and self-transcendent (or spiritual) vs materialism. These results were similar in wealthier and poorer countries, with slight cross-cultural differences.

Factor Analysis

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 278.624$ ($df = 15$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.665, which indicates its suitability for factor analysis (Hair et al. 2010).

The exploratory factor analysis of a short form of the Aspirations Index was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for the selection of “good” factor loadings on primary factors recommended by Howard (2016). Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 35.531 per cent of the variation in the data.

Communalities ranged from .40 to .74 (see **Table 2.5**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.6**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set. The Kaiser criterion combined with the examination of the Scree plot increases accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

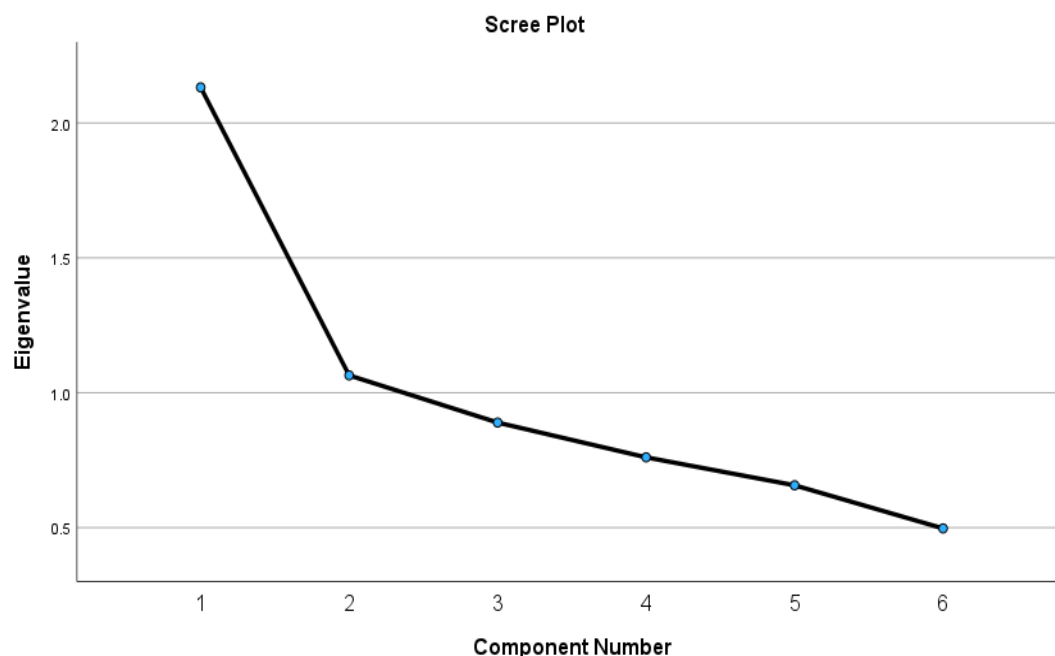


Figure 2.3 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of VOI ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.6** and **Figure 2.3**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explained 53.27% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Intrinsic Orientation)

Factor 1 contained four items, which measured the preferences for intrinsic contents of personal growth, affiliative and community orientations and was named Intrinsic Orientation. A follow-up reliability analysis found factor 1 with internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$).

Factor 2 (Extrinsic Orientation)

Factor 2 contained two items, which appeared to measure preferences for external aspects of goals and was named Extrinsic Orientation. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated (Cronbach's $\alpha = .63$). **Table 2.7** presents the correlation between the two factors.

Sheldon et al. (2019) suggest that reliability estimation is quite complicated with VOI, even though it is a conventional measure with considerable research behind it. As the results of the VOI measure reflect two poles of a dimension (intrinsic/extrinsic), it is not unidimensional. As the VOI fits a bi-factor structure, it violates key assumptions of Cronbach's alpha reliability, and therefore, we consider using McDonald's Omega to remedy the violation (Dunn, Baguley & Brunsden, 2014; Hayes & Coutts, 2020). McDonald's Omega (ω) (McDonald, 1999) is a measure of internal consistency that's used to evaluate the reliability of multi-item measures (Hayes & Coutts, 2020). Using OMEGA Macro for SPSS beta 0.2 designed by Hayes and Coutts (2020), that calculates ω in two ways without relying on the estimation of loadings or error variances using CFA. The present study presents both omega and alpha values for reporting reliability (**Table 2.34** of bi-factor measures, such as VOI (value orientation) and RAI (self-concordance), respectively. The results suggest that the Macro produces estimates of ω that are nearly identical to when using CFA-based estimates of item loadings and error variances.

4. Personality - Big Five Personality Factors (BFI)

Personality is measured using the 44-item Big-5 Inventory developed by John and Srivastava (1999) over five dimensions and their correlated trait behaviours. The five dimensions are presented in **Table 2.8** as under –

Sample items include – “I describe myself as someone who is very talkative” (Extraversion); “I describe myself as someone who is relaxed, handle stress well” (Emotional stability); “I describe myself as someone who makes plans and follows through with them” (Conscientiousness); “I describe myself as who likes to reflect, play with interest” (Openness to Experience); “I describe myself as someone who has a forgiving nature” (Agreeableness). Responses are on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Cultural Sensitivity

Initial research on cross-cultural validity comes from Denissen et al. (2008), who reported the high cross-cultural applicability of the BFI. Further, their study reports no change in the factor structure of BFI across different age groups. Early research highlights the important implications of the five-factor model of personality as a meaningful taxonomy of studying individual differences in personnel psychology (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Mount et al., 1994). Rothman and Coetzer (2003) reported a strong relationship between the Big Five factors and job performance, especially task performance and creativity.

Previously, John and Srivastava (1999) noted the advantage of the Big Five structure of personality across different cultural settings, suggesting that almost everyone can understand the words that define the factors, and any disagreements to their meanings can be reconciled through their most common usage. To investigate whether the factor structure of the English BFI fully replicates across cultures and how Big Five traits are distributed worldwide, Schmitt et al. (2007) used the English BFI translated into 28 languages and administered to 17,837 individuals from 56 nations. They report high replicability and high levels of internal consistency across cultures. Based on the preceding arguments, we conclude that the Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a reliable measure of essential personality traits across various human cultures.

Factor Analysis

Extraversion vs. Introversion

Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 381.247$ ($df = 28$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy

(MSA) was 0.695, which is considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for selecting good factor loadings (Howard, 2016).

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 46.15 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .36 to .58 (see **Table 2.9**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.10**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set. The Kaiser criterion combined with the examination of the Scree plot increases accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

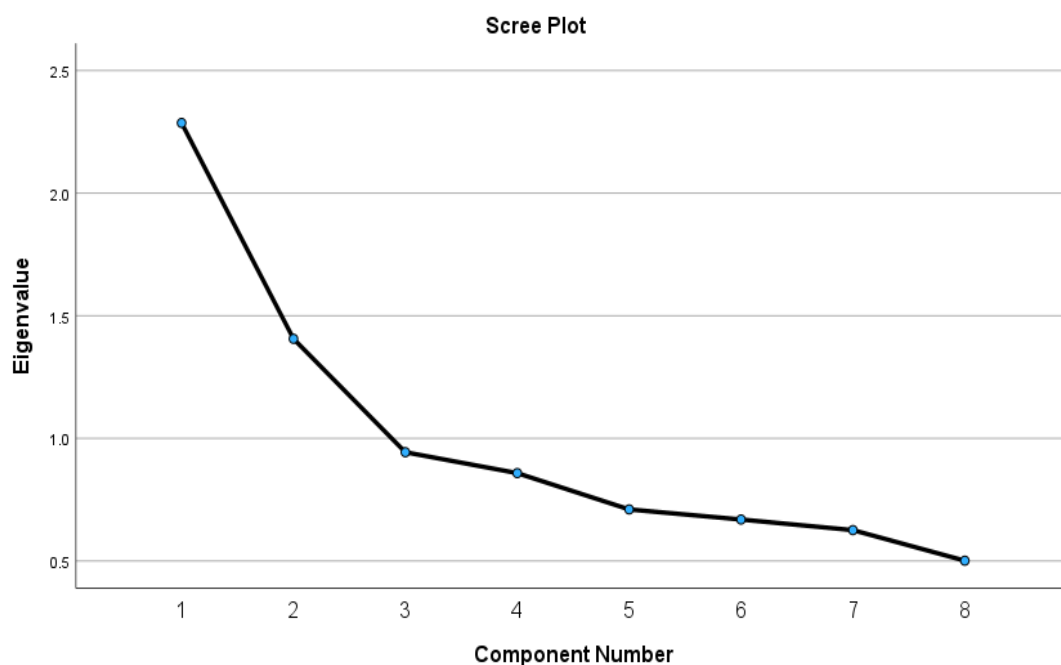


Figure 2.4 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.10** and **Figure 2.4**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explaining 46.15% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Outgoing)

Factor 1 contained four items, which describe an extroverted, sociable person and is named Outgoing. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated internal consistency ($\alpha = .63$).

Factor 2 (Reserved)

Factor 2 contained three items, which appeared to describe an intrinsic, reflective nature of personality and is named Reserved. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated Cronbach's reliability ($\alpha = .61$). **Table 2.11** presents the correlation between the two factors.

Agreeableness vs Antagonism

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 453.09$ ($df = 36$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.669, which is considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 to select good factor loadings (Howard, 2016). By adopting this rule, the high cross-loaded items were eliminated.

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 42.93 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .26 to .61 (see **Table 2.12**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.13**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set and is combined with the examination of the Scree plot to increase accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

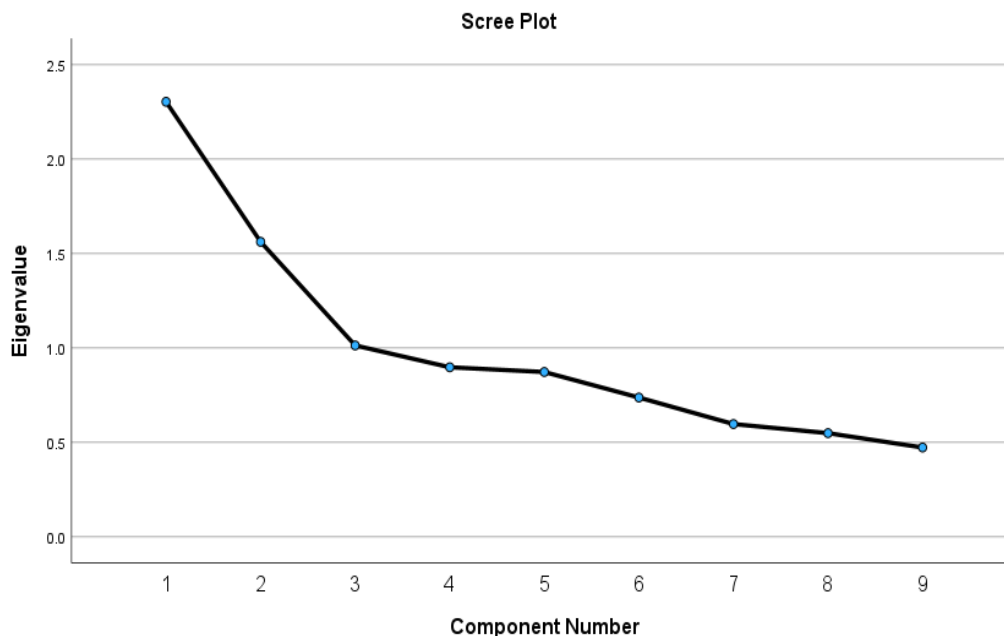


Figure 2.5 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As seen in **Table 2.13** and **Figure 2.5**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explain 42.93% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Cooperative)

Factor 1 contained five items, which describe a kind and caring personality and is named Cooperative. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated internal consistency ($\alpha = .48$).

Factor 2 (Antagonist)

Factor 2 contained four items, which appeared to describe a person who does not get along with others and may create conflicts and, thus, is named Antagonist. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated Cronbach's reliability ($\alpha = .68$). **Table 2.14** presents the correlation between the two factors.

Conscientiousness vs lack of direction

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 634.51$ ($df = 36$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.726, which is considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for selecting good factor loadings (Howard, 2016).

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 48.61 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .39 to .62 (see **Table 2.15**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.16**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970), with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 , is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set. When combined with the examination of the Scree plot, this approach increases the accuracy of selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

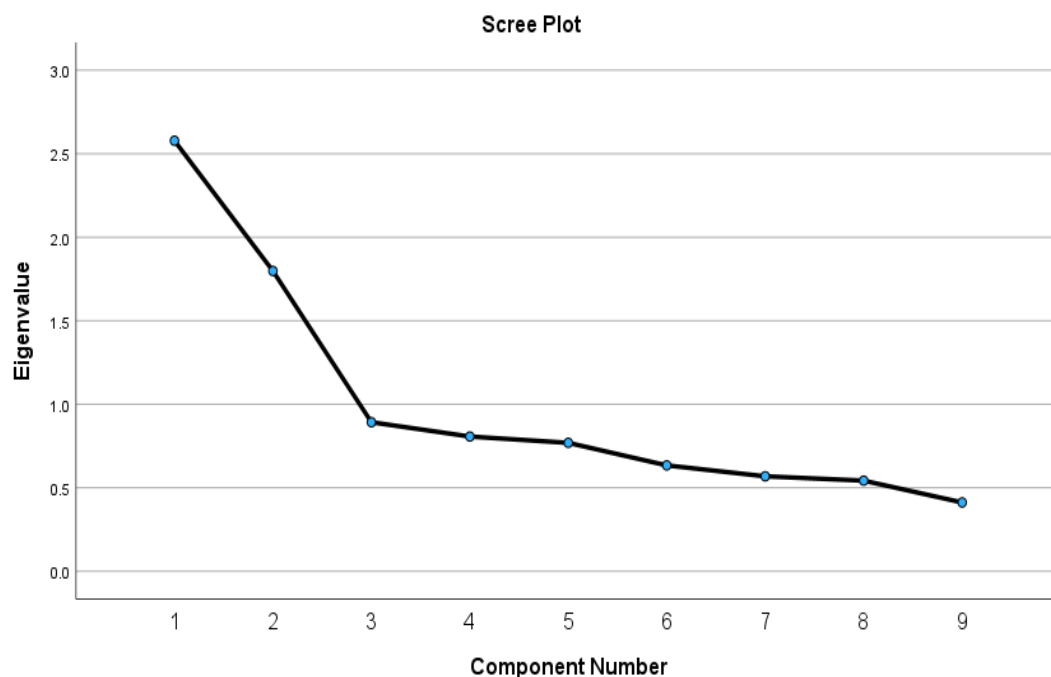


Figure 2.6 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs lack of direction ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.16** and **Figure 2.6**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explaining 48.61% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Conscientious)

Factor 1 contained five items, which describe a disciplined person named Conscientious. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated internal consistency ($\alpha = .74$).

Factor 2 (Disorganised)

Factor 2 contained four items, which appeared to describe a careless, disorganised characteristic of personality and is named Disorganised. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated Cronbach's reliability ($\alpha = .68$). **Table 2.17** presents the correlation between the two factors.

Neuroticism vs emotional stability

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 611.87$ ($df = 28$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.755, considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for selecting good factor loadings (Howard, 2016).

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 52.60 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .24 to .67 (see **Table 2.18**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.19**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set and is combined with the examination of the Scree plot to increase accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

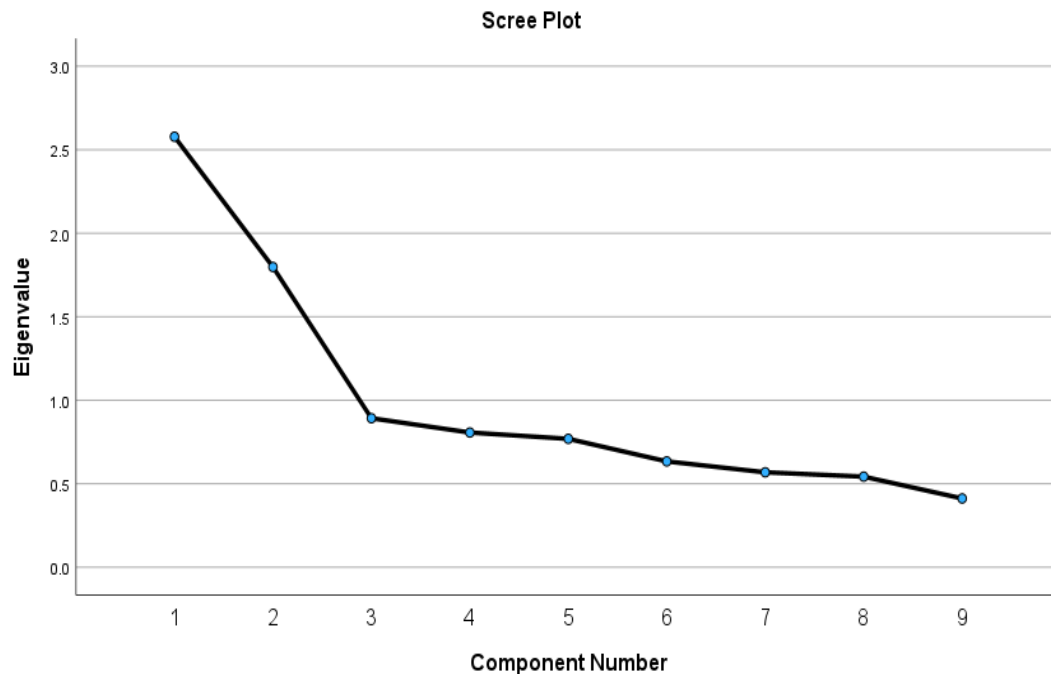


Figure 2.7 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of *Neuroticism vs emotional stability* ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.19** and **Figure 2.7**, the results show that the items loaded on two factors explained 52.60% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Anxious)

Factor 1 included five items that reflect behaviours associated with being bothered and worried, and this factor is called Anxious. A follow-up reliability analysis indicated an internal consistency of Cronbach's $\alpha = .67$.

Factor 2 (Calm)

Factor 2 comprises three items that characterise a level-headed individual who is not easily troubled, and this factor is named Calm. A follow-up reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .72$ for this factor. **Table 2.20** presents the correlations between the two factors.

Openness vs closedness to experience

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 695.31$ ($df = 45$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.827, considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 for selecting good factor loadings (Howard, 2016). Items were considered as satisfactory loaded items if - a) they load onto their primary factor above .40; b) load onto alternative factors above .30; and c) demonstrate a difference of .20 between primary and alternative factors. By adopting this rule, the high cross-loaded items were eliminated.

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 43.67 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .27 to .56 (see **Table 2.21**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.22**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix.

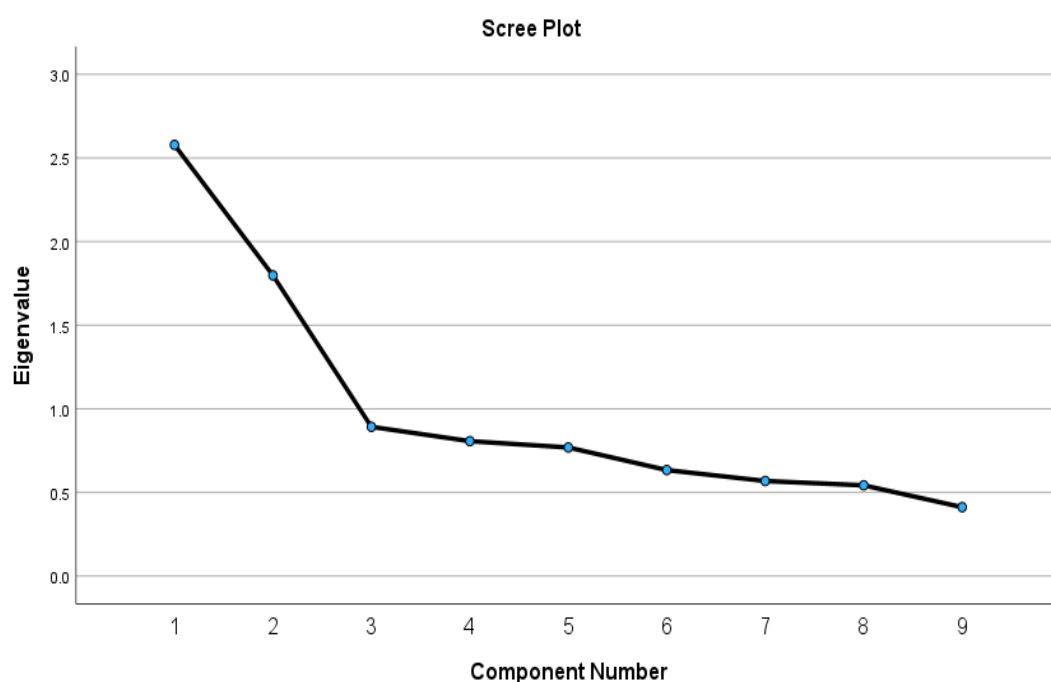


Figure 2.8 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.22** and **Figure 2.8**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explaining 43.67% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Creative)

Factor 1 contained eight items, which describe a curious, inventive and intrinsically driven behaviour and is named Creative. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$).

Factor 2 (Conventional)

Factor 2 contained two items, which describe a routine, habitual or extrinsically based norm behaviour and is named Conventional. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated Cronbach's reliability ($\alpha = .48$). **Table 2.23** presents the correlation between the two factors.

5. Motives – Multi Motive Grid (MMG)

The multi-motive grid (MMG) is a new diagnostic tool and a semi-projective measure which aims to use the advantage of both implicit and explicit measures simultaneously. Referring to the principle of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), MMG introduces a task in which participants must evaluate everyday situations displayed in pictures assumed to arouse implicit motives (e.g., rope climber, work group, people taking an exam, athletes playing tennis). However, in contrast to the TAT, participants in the MMG measure do not write entire stories about the pictures (to be scored by the researcher through an elaborate and time-consuming procedure) but instead respond to a set of statements (questions) along with the pictures. These statements represent emotional responses (e.g., “feeling confident to succeed at this task” for the achievement motive), needs (e.g., “hoping to get in touch with other people” for the affiliation motive) and instrumental acts (e.g., “trying to influence other people” for the power motive) which are typically generated in the picture story exercise. Participants rate the fit of the statements with the situations displayed in the pictures. The motive content of the pictures was ascertained by informing subjects) to rate the pictures on all three motives. For scoring, the mean of ratings for all pictures

was calculated (Schmalt et al., 1994). **Table 2.24** presents a description of the items on MMG.

Sokolowski et al. (2000) developed and tested the external validity of MMG over three separate studies in all three domains (achievement, affiliation, power) of motivational states. The MMG was analysed using a large sample ($N = 587$) by combining the different picture situations (a) with the set of statements (b), resulting in a grid consisting of $a \times b$ cells. Therefore, this measurement technique is also called the grid technique, as it provides a restricted response format. Furthermore, the MMG allows the hope and fear components of each motive to be assessed (achievement: hope of success and fear of failure; affiliation: hope of affiliation and fear of rejection; power: hope of power and fear of power) in detail and thereby directly addresses an important distinction made in research on motivation (Lewin, 1944; McClelland, 1985). Participants' answers are aggregated to form six motive scores (hope and fear components of the three motives). One indicator of a reliable test is the measure of its internal consistency. All six motives' alpha coefficients range from 0.78 to 0.90 (Sokolowski et al., 2000).

Recently, Schöler et al. (2015) contended that MMG shares variance with both implicit and explicit motive measures such as Personality Research Form (PRF) and Motive Enactment Test (MET). Furthermore, they suggest that the restricted response format of MMG shares more variance with explicit motive measures than other implicit motive measures (such as Picture-Story Exercise (PSE) and Operant Motive Test (OMT)).

Cultural Sensitivity

Schuler et al. (2015) suggest that the validity of MMG is still unclear due to a small number of studies, yet it is a big step towards improving implicit motive measurement. They contend that the restricted response format of MMG improves its objectivity and reliability and simplifies the scoring procedure, making it more attractive for use when measuring implicit motives in research. Kehr (2004) revealed moderate convergence with explicit motive measures in a field study of implicit motive discrepancies and volitional depletion among managers. In the terminology of McClelland (1980), MMG might be able to capture participants' response behaviour

(agreement/non-agreement) in clearly structured statements (situations), which can be interpreted as respondent rather than operant behaviour. Further, the pictures do not involve any significantly uncommon situations that can be attributed to specific cultures, locations and rituals.

Motives - Hope for Success (HS) vs Fear of Failure (FF)

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 3044.20$ ($df = 66$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$), and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.864, considered appropriate for factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 to select good factor loadings (Howard, 2016).

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 66.79 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .49 to .79 (see **Table 2.25**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.26**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set and is combined with the examination of the Scree plot to increase accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

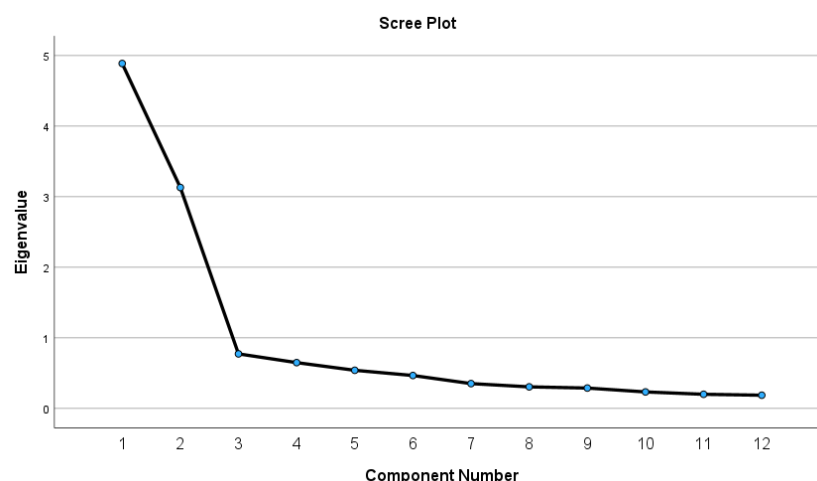


Figure 2.9 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of HS vs FF components of motives ($N = 407$).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.26** and **Figure 2.9**, the results showed that the items loaded on two factors explained 66.79% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Pessimistic)

Factor 1 consisted of six items that characterise a fearful orientation towards certain life situations, particularly focusing on rejection and weakness, and was named as Pessimistic. A follow-up reliability analysis indicated a high internal consistency of ($\alpha = .91$).

Factor 2 (Optimistic)

Factor 2 comprises six items that describe a hopeful orientation towards life situations, emphasising affiliation and self-confidence. It is called Optimistic. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated Cronbach's reliability of ($\alpha = .85$). Table 2.27 presents the correlation between the two factors.

6. Self-Concordance – Relative Autonomy Index (RAI)

Based on the work of Sheldon and Elliot (1999) and influenced by earlier work on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2000), an 8-item scale is adopted to measure the extent to which respondents perceive their performance goals to be concordant with their developmental potentials or autonomous motivation. The items assess four aspects of motivation based on their core values, interests and desires. Through 4-items, the participants are asked why they “might strive” for each candidate's goal in terms of external motivation, introjected motivation and intrinsic motivation. Sheldon and Elliot (1999) suggest creating a self-concordance score by person-mean-centring all items and subtracting the external and introjected items from the identified and intrinsic items. This provides us with the relative autonomy index (RAI) or the relative autonomy with which participant select their goals.

A recent study by Sheldon, Prentice, and Osin (2019) proposed that asking people what type of goals they value or enjoy is a good predictor of the desirability of the goal. In the same study, the research participants were asked to assess their self-concordance for the type of goals they wanted to pursue before choosing the final goals. Sheldon et al. (2019) hypothesised that engaging in the process of pre-rating one's self-

concordance before a goal is selected should have a beneficial effect on people's goal choices. One reason provided by the researchers is that pre-rating one's motivations for various alternatives to pursue provides a signal in terms of choosing goals that feel interesting over choosing goals that feel like a burden. In daily life, various distractions, influences, stressors or time constraints might hinder people from using self-concordance information. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that techniques that help individuals communicate with themselves and make an individual's latent emotional and motivational knowledge explicit can be valuable in selecting appropriate goals.

Similarly, Burton (2008) suggested that feelings made explicit through self-concordance assessments can help individuals understand what they want when deliberating over which goals to pursue. Further, the quality of one's motivations for choosing a goal can be measured through the degree of internal motivation associated with that goal. Effectively, whether a goal is freely chosen or feels forced or coerced serves as a strong predictor of an individual's preference for that particular goal.

Sheldon and Elliot (1999) suggest creating a self-concordance score by person-mean-centring (group-mean centring) all items and subtracting the external and introjected items from the identified and intrinsic items. This score provides us with the relative autonomy index (RAI) or the relative autonomy with which participant select their goals. Thus, the self-concordance measure is a relative autonomy index applied to peoples' personal goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2019). Most research reports that the RAI can range from -9 to +9, and higher scores represent a more autonomous sense of motivation, whereas negative scores indicate that the respondent's motivation is more controlled (introjected or external).

Cultural Sensitivity

In a study of self-concordance and subjective well-being across four cultures, Sheldon et al. (2004) found no significant differences in the levels of one's goal self-concordance in different cultural settings. For instance, self-concordance results were not different for a typical individualistic country such as the United States compared to several collectivistic cultural countries, such as China, Taiwan and South Korea (Sheldon, 2014). Further, even in varied cultural contexts, researchers find that goal

self-concordance or autonomous motivation is replicable across cultures and predict SWB because pursuing self-concordant goals leads to a series of positive psychological results (Kasser and Ryan 1993, 1996; Ryan et al., 1999; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon et al., 2017; Hope et al., 2019).

Multi-dimensional scaling of the self-concordance ratings as relative autonomy index (RAI)

Previously, Sheldon et al. (2017) answered many of the questions surrounding the meaning and measurement of RAI. Due to an increase in a wide variety of scales for measuring RAI, the autonomy continuum (for instance, the SDT website contains at least seven different RAI scales) and many researchers have developed their own items matching the context of the study (e.g., Roth et al., 2006; Assor et al., 2009; Chemolli & Gagne, 2014). To evaluate whether the self-concordance measure is an index of relative autonomy applied to the choice of one's goals, Sheldon et al. (2017) suggest performing a multidimensional scaling (MDS) along with conventional principal component analysis (PCA) to confirm the structure of value items in terms of two orthogonal or two poles of dimensions (intrinsic/extrinsic). MDS is a multivariate technique that plots data points in one or two dimensions to reveal the data set's structure (Hout, Papesh & Goldinger, 2013).

Extant research makes a distinction between models that implement *metric* versus *non-metric* exploratory algorithms for scaling the original proximities (similarity or dissimilarity in data) into the “disparities” that are used for comparison to the distances derived from the analysis (Giguère, 2006). Where metric MDS uses a linear function to map the proximities onto disparities, non-metric models use any positive monotonic function without the constraint of linearity (Hout et al. 2013). They also suggest the use of metric MDS for quantitative data on interval or ratio level values, but for qualitative data based on ordinal level values, a non-metric MDS is performed. Therefore, the present study utilises an exploratory non-metric multidimensional scaling analysis using PROXSCAL (Busing et al., 1997, Version 1.0) scaling procedure in IBM SPSS (Version 29).

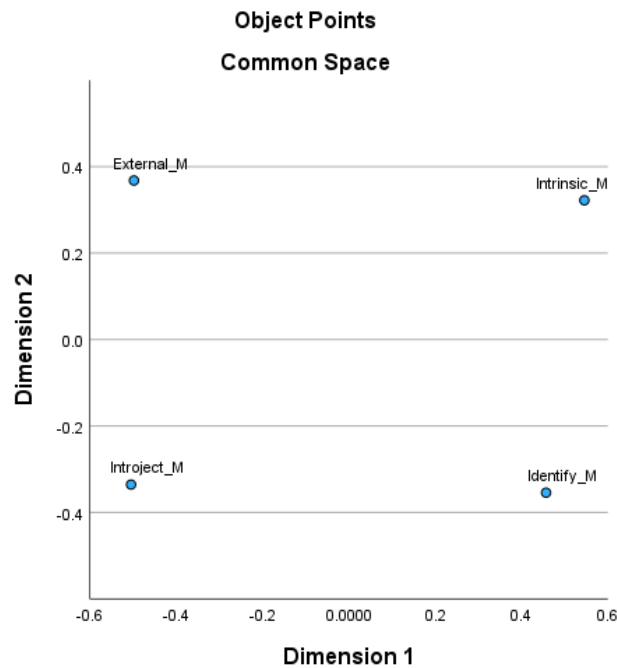


Figure 2.10 Results of multidimensional scaling of intrinsic and extrinsic goals.

Note – External_M = external regulation, Introject_M = introjected regulation, Intrinsic_M = intrinsic motivation, Identify_M = identified regulation.

The arrangement of the items across the two dimensions shows a distinction between motivations driven by enjoyment versus obligation (Dimension 2 – Motivation Strength) and internal versus external motivation sources (Dimension 1 - Autonomy). The final dimensions presented in **Table 2.28** provide the coordinates of each item (motivation types) on the extracted dimensions. Each coordinate reflects where an item falls in relation to the dimensions, which helps interpret patterns and relationships among the items. For instance, identified motivation is strongly correlated with Dimension 1 (Autonomy), and there is a moderate negative correlation with Dimension 2 (Motivation Strength). Similarly, intrinsic motivation correlates positively with both Dimension 1 and Dimension 2; the positive correlation is stronger for autonomy (Dimension 1) than motive strength (Dimension 2), respectively. Similar correlation patterns are observed for extrinsic and introjected items in association with Dimension 2 rather than Dimension 1. **Table 2.29** presents the fit measures for the MDS solution based on Kruskal's stress factors.

A two-dimensional MDS solution was evaluated using different stress and fit measures. The Normalized Raw Stress (0.00219) value is close to zero, suggesting a

better fit between the distances in the MDS configuration and the observed dissimilarities (Borg & Groenen, 2005). Stress-I (also known as Kruskal's Stress-1) and Stress-II (Kruskal's Stress-2) were 0.04681 (values below 0.01 are considered good) and 0.15168 (values below 0.2 are considered reasonable), respectively, further suggesting that the configuration provides an acceptable representation of the data (Borg & Groenen, 2005). The S-Stress value (0.00864) closer to zero confirms that the solution captured the structure of the data well, indicating an excellent fit. Additionally, the model accounted for 99.78% of the dispersion in the data, as indicated by the Dispersion Accounted For (D.A.F.). Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence (0.99) show a nearly perfect match between the predicted and observed configurations (Borg & Groenen, 2005). **Table 2.30** presents the pairwise distances between the two dimensions of motivation types that suggest the dissimilarities between them.

Factor Analysis

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides significant results, $\chi^2 = 120.34$ ($df = 6$, $p < 0.001$) ($N = 407$), and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was 0.563, which is close to a mediocre value for the suitability factor analysis (Hair *et al.* 2010). The exploratory factor analysis of BFI was conducted using the principal component analysis method of extraction, with the oblique rotation method being ProMax. The researcher adopted a cut-off rule of .40-.30-.20 to select good factor loadings (Howard, 2016).

Finally, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded two factors for the scale, which accounted for 67.24 per cent of the variation in the data. Communalities ranged from .59 to .71 (see **Table 2.31**). For ease of interpretation, factor loadings (see **Table 2.32**) are from the pattern matrix, though similar loadings were found in the structure matrix. The Kaiser criterion (Kaiser, 1970) with eigenvalues of ≥ 1 is used to interpret the number of factors in the data set and is combined with the examination of the Scree plot to increase accuracy in selecting the number of factors to retain (Osborne, 2014; Osborne & Costello, 2019).

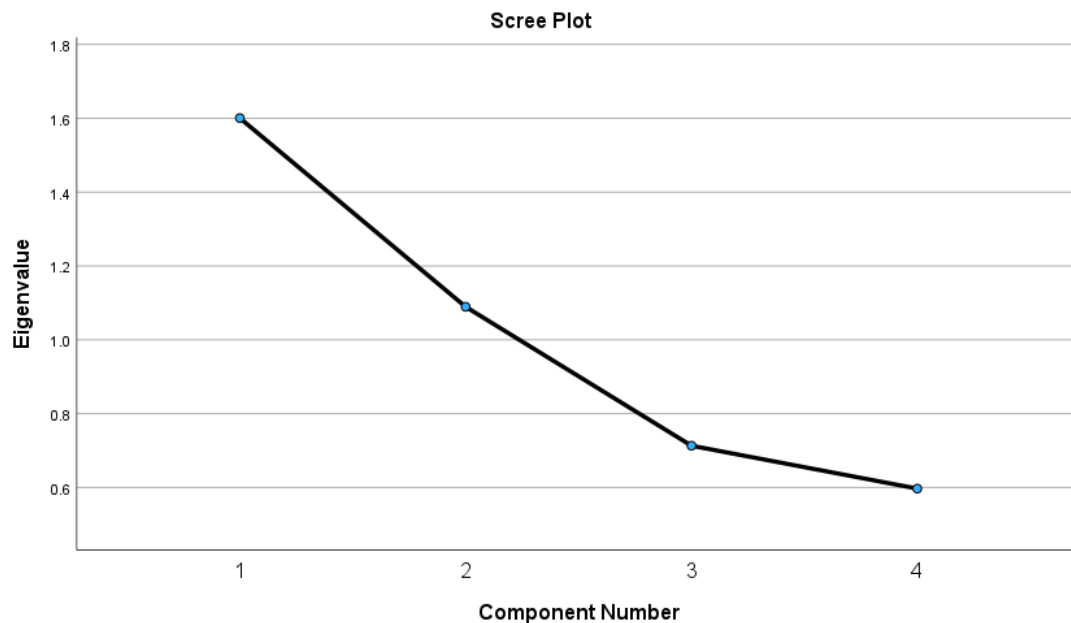


Figure 2.11 Scree Plot for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N = 407).

Loading Patterns

As can be seen in **Table 2.32** and **Figure 2.11**, the results indicate that the items loaded onto two factors, explaining 67.24% of the total variance.

Factor 1 (Controlled Motivation)

Factor 1 contained two items, which describe an external, controlled or obligatory reason for goal motivation and is named Controlled motivation. A follow-up reliability analysis estimated internal consistency of ($\alpha = .56$).

Factor 2 (Autonomous Motivation)

Factor 2 contained two items, which describe self-determined and internalised reasons for goal motivation and is named Autonomous Motivation. A follow-up reliability analysis of the factor was estimated Cronbach's reliability ($\alpha = .52$). **Table 2.33** presents the correlation between the two factors.

The results of factor analysis are presented as inter-correlations, means, standard deviations, Cronbach Alphas and McDonald's Omegas in **Table 2.34**.

Results

As suggested by the previous SCM research (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2019), the present study calculated an aggregate self-concordance score for an extrinsic and intrinsic goal by person-mean-centering all items and then subtracting the external and introjected items from the identified and intrinsic items. As discussed previously, the PCA and MDS analysis of self-concordance items for intrinsic and extrinsic goals in the present study supports recent evidence for the underlying dimensionality of these items (Sheldon et al., 2017). This procedure for computing self-concordance ratings as a dependent measure of a relative autonomy index (RAI) efficiently locates people on the autonomous and controlled motivation dimension. Much research reports that the RAI can range from -9 to +9, and higher scores represent a more autonomous sense of motivation, whereas negative scores indicate that the respondent's motivation is more controlled (introjected or external). The RAI score in the present study ranged from -7.78 to 5.44 for intrinsic and extrinsic goals.

Similarly, the present research follows the typical measurement practice for locating individuals on an underlying dimension (Grouzet et al., 2005; Sheldon et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2019). Following previous research, the present study formulates a relative value orientation (VOI) score or index similar to RAI by subtracting the extrinsic value items from the intrinsic value items after person-mean-centering the items to remove a common value strength factor (Kasser, 2002; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). The VOI score in the present study ranged from -7.56 to 8.63 for intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Refer to **Table 2.34** for the inter-correlations, means, standard deviation, Cronbach Alphas and McDonald's Omega of the measures of the dimensions with each other and other measures in the study.

The initial analysis reveals that the most frequent goal references selected by the participants were the grade/money (N=133), followed by a learning goal (N=86), then relationship (85) and fame (65). Character and appearance goals were the least popular, selected only by 19 participants each. **Figure 2.12** presents a bar chart displaying the self-concordance scores (RAI) for each goal reference selected by participants. Table 2.35 shows the means and standard deviations associated with the RAI scores for the selected goal references.

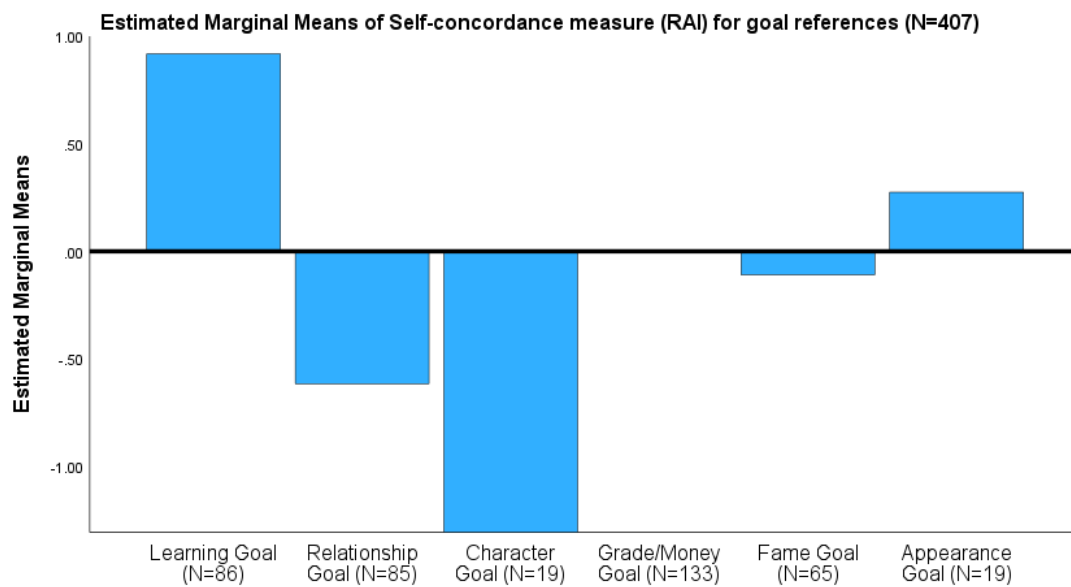


Figure 2.12 Self-concordance scores (RAI) for goal references selected by the participants (N=407).

There is a prevalent asymmetry to the results of the goal references selected such that even though participants have selected extrinsic goal contents (Grade/ Money and Fame) as most preferred, the RAI scores of extrinsic goal contents suggest a low (negative) self-concordance with the fame goal. In contrast, the RAI scores are higher for learning goals as the intrinsic goal content. Surprisingly, the grade/money extrinsic goal content suggested a near-zero mean ($M = .0008$, $SD = 2.98$). However, a high standard deviation (SD) indicates a wide spread of values around the mean, meaning that the individual scores within this group vary significantly, further supporting the possibility of both high positive and negative values balancing each other out.

The nature of RAI scores as an autonomy index can produce both positive and negative scores (e.g., indicating varying levels of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation). Then, it is possible to consider that people selecting the grade/money goal references are distributed around zero with both extremes represented. Similarly, a considerable number of participants selecting the grade/money goal here (N=133) should detect a non-zero mean if there were a substantial trend, but the fact that the mean is still near zero indicates a strong internal balance of positive and negative values for this goal. Such results make sense, as a high socio-economic status (money goal) and academic

achievement (grade goal) represent the underlying hyper-competitiveness in society and aspirations of a developing economy such as India. Furthermore, the students participating in the study were from the country's premier educational institutes, where there is intense competition for grades and job placements based on academic performance. The negative (low) RAI scores for an intrinsic goal content (relationship goal) find support in recent research where students consider high socio-economic status and academic achievement as instrumental to the development of social relationships in general (Berger & Archer, 2018). Such asymmetry, however, does not affect the hypothesis testing and the experimental manipulations of the present study, which will be detailed later in the test of Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing of Hypothesis 1A

To test Hypothesis 1A (*A value orientation index will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less for extrinsic goal references (a matching hypothesis)*), the researcher performed a correlational analysis to find whether value orientations are associated with both greater self-concordance scores (RAI) for two sets of intrinsic goals and lesser RAI scores for two sets of extrinsic goals. The results revealed that VOI scores significantly correlated with learning goal reference ($r, 86) = .24, p < .01$ (refer to **Table 2.37**) but show no significant correlations with other intrinsic goals such as relationship (refer to **Table 2.38**) and character goal references (refer to **Table 2.39**). For the extrinsic goals, the fame goal reference suggests a significant negative correlation ($r, 65) = -.21, p < .01$ (refer to **Table 2.41**) and no significant correlations with other extrinsic goals such as grade/money (refer to **Table 2.40**) and appearance (refer to **Table 2.42**). For a more efficient test Hypothesis 1A, a correlation between RAI and VOI scores suggested a significant positive direction, $r = .14, p < .001$, meaning that participants in the study expected value-congruent goals to be more meaningful compared to value non-congruent goals. Further, the significant correlations with both intrinsic (learning goal) and extrinsic goal (fame goal) in expected directions suggest that participants with extrinsic value orientations can benefit from pursuing goals extrinsic goals rather than pursuing intrinsic goals and vice versa.

Therefore, the present study finds partial support for a matching Hypothesis 1A.

Testing of Hypothesis 1B

To test Hypothesis 1b (*Openness vs closedness will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references*), similar correlational analyses were computed between two sets of intrinsic and extrinsic goals RAI and two aspects of Openness – creative and conventional. The creative and conventional aspects of openness to experience were both significantly correlated with RAI scores of a learning goal [$r(86) = .23, p < .05$ and $r(86) = -.27, p < .01$] respectively (refer to **Table 2.34**). Meanwhile, the RAI scores for intrinsic goals of relationship ($N=85$) (refer to **Table 2.38**) and character ($N=19$) (refer to **Table 2.39**) show no significant correlations with either component of openness. For extrinsic goals, the grade/money goal concordance significantly correlated with the creative component of Openness ($r, (133) = .24, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.40**) but not with the conventional component. Similarly, the fame goal concordance score suggested a significant positive correlation ($r, (65) = .21, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.41**) with the conventional aspect of Openness.

Further, the RAI significantly correlated with only the creative aspect (intrinsic) ($r = .18, p < .01$) and not the conventional aspect of openness. As discussed previously in EFA analysis (refer to **Table 2.22**), where the conventional aspect of openness to experience is a behaviour as a function of norms or what is dictated by the external environment (such as peers and family members), the creative aspect of Openness relates to a more intrinsic, individualistic function of behaviour. A significant relationship between the creative aspect of openness and RAI indicates the positive function of RAI assessment in tapping into intrinsic, innovative System 1 processes. Thus, the researcher finds a similar partial matching observed in the testing of Hypothesis 1A. The test of Hypothesis 1B finds openness (creative and conventional) to be significantly associated with greater self-concordance for one intrinsic goal reference (learning) and two extrinsic goal references (grade/money goal and fame goal). Therefore, the findings do not support Hypothesis 1B.

Testing of Hypothesis 1C

To test the matching of the two components of conscientiousness, namely conscientious and disorganized, with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal

references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references, the researcher conducted a correlational analysis between two sets of goal concordance scores (RAI) and two aspects of conscientiousness – conscientious and disorganized.

The results of the analysis suggest a significant association of RAI with the conscientious (intrinsic) aspect of conscientiousness personality traits ($r = .17, p < .001$) (refer to **Table 2.34**) and no association with the disorganized (extrinsic) aspect. Further, this significant relationship in a positive direction was only observed between the conscientious (intrinsic) aspect and an extrinsic reference grade/money goal concordance (Grade/Money goal RAI) ($r, (133) = .31, p < .001$) (refer to **Table 2.40**). The results of Hypothesis 1C (*Conscientiousness vs lack of direction will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references*) found no significant relationships between any other intrinsic and extrinsic goal references and conscientious and disorganized components of conscientiousness trait of personality. Based on the results, the researcher finds no support for matching in Hypothesis 1C.

Testing of Hypothesis 1D

Similar correlational analyses were performed to test Hypothesis 1D (*Extraversion vs introversion will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references*). A correlational analysis between the one intrinsic (reserved) and extrinsic (outgoing) component of the extraversion trait and the RAI score of each intrinsic goal reference (learning, relationship and character) and extrinsic goal reference (grade/money, fame and appearance) is computed. The analysis results (refer to **Tables 2.37 to 2.42**) suggest no significant relationship between extraversion trait and RAI scores for all but one intrinsic goal. The results reveal that only the extrinsic aspect of the extraversion trait of personality (outgoing) is associated with the RAI (self-concordance) for an intrinsic goal of the relationship ($r = .10, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.34**). Further, **Table 2.38** suggests that a significant relationship was only observed between the extraversion aspect and RAI score for an intrinsic relationship goal ($r (85) = .22, p < .05$). Such finding suggests that the extraversion traits are largely associated with greater self-concordance for an extrinsically motivated relationship goal and based on the results the Hypothesis 1D is not supported.

Testing of Hypothesis 1E

A correlational test of Hypothesis 1E (*Agreeableness vs antagonism will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goals and less self-concordance for extrinsic goals*) finds that the extrinsic aspect of agreeableness (antagonist) to be significantly correlated with the self-concordance score for an intrinsic character goal ($r(19) = .52, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.39**). This finding suggests that individuals who do not get along with others and may create conflicts positively respond to character goal alignment in their environment. Meanwhile, a similar extrinsic-intrinsic combination is observed in the significant positive relationship between an extrinsic grade/money goal and an intrinsic cooperative aspect of the agreeableness personality trait ($r(19) = .22, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.40**). The finding suggests that individuals generally tap into intrinsic values of cooperation to achieve their extrinsic materialistic and academic goals. However, the results found a significant relationship only between RAI and the intrinsic cooperative aspect of the agreeableness trait ($r = .19, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.34**). Based on the results, the findings do not support a matching hypothesis between agreeableness traits of personality and goal concordance scores for intrinsic and extrinsic reference goals and therefore, the findings do not support Hypothesis 1E.

Testing of Hypothesis 1F

A correlational test of Hypothesis 1F (*Neuroticism vs emotional stability will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goals and less self-concordance for extrinsic goals*) finds that the extrinsic aspect of neuroticism (anxious) was significantly negatively correlated with the RAI score ($r = -.11, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.34**), suggesting that higher self-concordance ratings for a goal reduce anxiety and vice versa. Further, the anxious (extrinsic) aspect of neuroticism is significantly associated with an external fame goal concordance rating ($r(65) = .22, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.41**), suggesting that individuals pursuing fame goals are more prone to anxiety and recent research supports such findings. For instance, Zsila et al. (2018) found that fame as an extrinsic goal can have negative consequences for mental health and well-being. Additionally, the intrinsic aspect of emotional stability (calm) suggests a significant negative association with an RAI score of external appearance goal ($r(65) = -.32, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.42**). Such a finding adds to the above discussion in suggesting that a focus on an external appearance goal reduces the function of remaining calm.

Previously, Sheldon (2014) suggested that neuroticism and materialistic goal associations do not promote need satisfaction, and taken together, such characteristics do not form the basis of an individual's goal-striving behaviour. Therefore, based on the results of the hypothesis testing and previous research, the researcher does not find support for a matching Hypothesis 1F

Testing of Hypothesis 1G

A correlational analysis tests the matching of Hypothesis 1G (*Hope or approach motives will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goals and less self-concordance for extrinsic goals*). The results of the analysis reveal that optimism as a motivational component of hope was significantly associated with greater RAI for extrinsic goals of grade/money ($r(133) = .24, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.40**), fame ($r(65) = .23, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.41**) and appearance ($r(19) = .40, p < .05$) (refer to **Table 2.42**). Further, the correlational analysis did not find any significant association between the optimism aspect of the hope motive and intrinsic goals of learning, relationship and character. However, the RAI score was significantly associated with optimism ($r = .18, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.34**), suggesting that optimism largely associates goal concordance with hope or wishful desires of materialistic external goals, such as looking good, being rich and famous rather than personal growth and improvement. Based on the analysis results, Hypothesis 1G is not supported.

Test of Hypothesis 1H

Similar to the analysis of the hope motive, a correlational analysis tests the matching of Hypothesis 1H (*Fear (avoidance) will be associated with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goals and less self-concordance for extrinsic goals*). The results of the analysis reveal that pessimism as a motivational component of fear motive was significantly negatively associated with greater RAI for one extrinsic goal reference of grade/money ($r(133) = -.29, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.40**) and one intrinsic goal reference of learning ($r(85) = -.44, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.37**). Further, the correlational analysis did not find any significant association between the pessimism aspect of fear motive and other goal references. Additionally, the RAI score was significantly negatively associated with pessimism ($r = -.80, p < .01$) (refer to **Table 2.34**), suggesting that a pessimistic motive based on fear and rejection can negatively

impact self-concordance for motive (to get higher grades/ to earn money) or need satisfying (to improve, learning) activities. However, based on the results of the analysis, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis, and Hypothesis 1H is not supported.

Test of Hypothesis 2

As can be observed from **Table 2.35**, the Grade/Money goal was the most frequently selected goal reference, followed by the Learning, Relationship and Fame goal. For an efficient test of Hypothesis 2, the learning and relationship goals taken together are considered intrinsic goals, and grade/money and fame goals are considered extrinsic. To test hypothesis H2 (*Intrinsic goal references will be rated higher in self-concordance than extrinsic goal references*), we conducted a within-subject MANOVA on self-concordant scores of the four goals with extrinsic and intrinsic goal types as the repeated measure factor with two levels. However, before conducting MANOVA, we tested the assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of covariance matrices through Levene's test statistic and Box's M test, respectively. Levene's test indicated no significant differences in variances across groups for all dependent variables, with $p > .05$. Additionally, Box's M test was not significant, Box's $M = 2.377$, $F(3, 5684) = .788$, $p = .500$, indicating that the covariance matrices were equal across groups. The results of MANOVA indicate a significant multivariate effect of goal type, Wilks' (λ) = .963, $F(1, 405) = 15.499$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$.

Additionally, the interaction between self-concordance scores and type of goal was significant: Wilks' (λ) = .980, $F(1, 405) = 8.275$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$. These findings suggest that the type of goal (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) significantly influences self-concordance scores, with intrinsic goals showing higher concordance than extrinsic goals. In other words, the participants rated the two intrinsic goals as more self-concordant on average than the two extrinsic goals. **Figure 2.13** graphically illustrates the greater self-concordance (RAI) scores for intrinsic goal references compared to extrinsic goal references. The findings of the study support the Hypothesis H2. The results suggest that although participants selected more extrinsic goal references than intrinsic ones, the intrinsic goal references were considered more concordant. Such findings are consistent with previous research on goals and aspirations that suggested that intrinsic goals are considered goals of inherent worth involving personal growth,

intimacy, and community (Ryan & Kasser, 1993, 1996). Kasser (2002) considered such intrinsic aspirations to be naturally prioritised as they directly satisfy the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

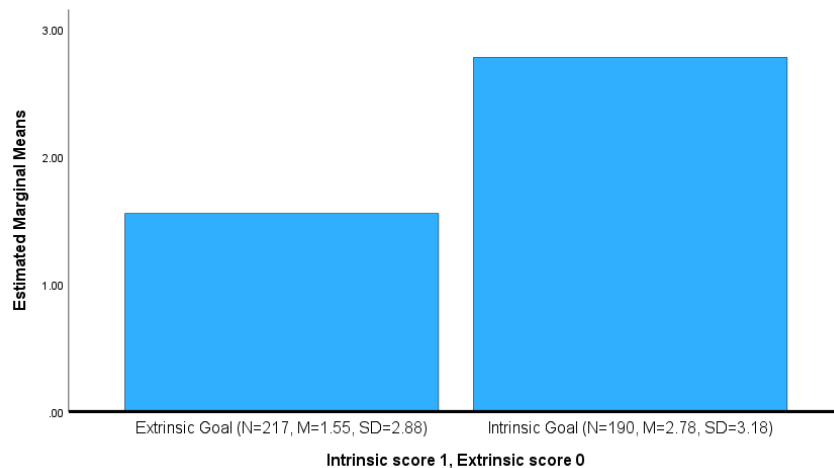


Figure 2.13 Estimated Marginal Means (EMMs) for self-concordance scores on intrinsic and extrinsic goal references (N=407).

Testing of Hypothesis 3

To test Hypothesis H3 (*Rated self-concordance for goal references will predict the participant's goal selection*), we computed a single goal-selection score (GSS) representing the number of designated intrinsic goals picked by the participants (with 0 = both extrinsic goals, 1 = at least one intrinsic goal, or 2 = both intrinsic goals). We then predicted this score from the self-concordance score (RAI) for goal references, finding a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.41, p < .001$) (refer to **Table 2.34**). These results of the analysis find support from previous studies in suggesting that the participants who expect to enjoy and identify with intrinsic goals (compared to extrinsic goals) are more likely to select intrinsic goals for pursuit (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001; Sheldon et al., 2019). To further support the correlational analysis, a univariate analysis (ANOVA) was conducted between the goals selected (Learning, Relationship, Character, Grade/Money, Fame and Appearance) and self-concordance reference scores (RAI) for the participants. **Table 2.36** presents the means and SD of the RAI goal reference scores and the types of goals selected by the participants, suggesting that rated self-concordance for goal references predicts goal selection. The findings of the analysis support hypothesis H3. Additionally, **Figure 2.14** presents the RAI scores for

the intrinsic and extrinsic goal contents selected for pursuit by the participants, reiterating similar findings from goal references. However, in the present analysis, a high number of intrinsic goal selections further lends support to the findings of hypothesis H3 – that high self-concordance ratings for intrinsic goals led to more intrinsic goals selected by the participants.

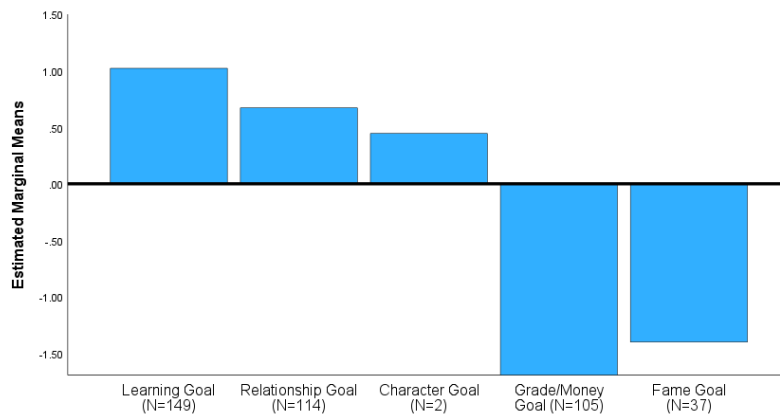


Figure 2.14 Estimated Marginal Means between RAI scores for goal references and goals selected (N=407).

Testing of Hypothesis 4A

Mediation Test

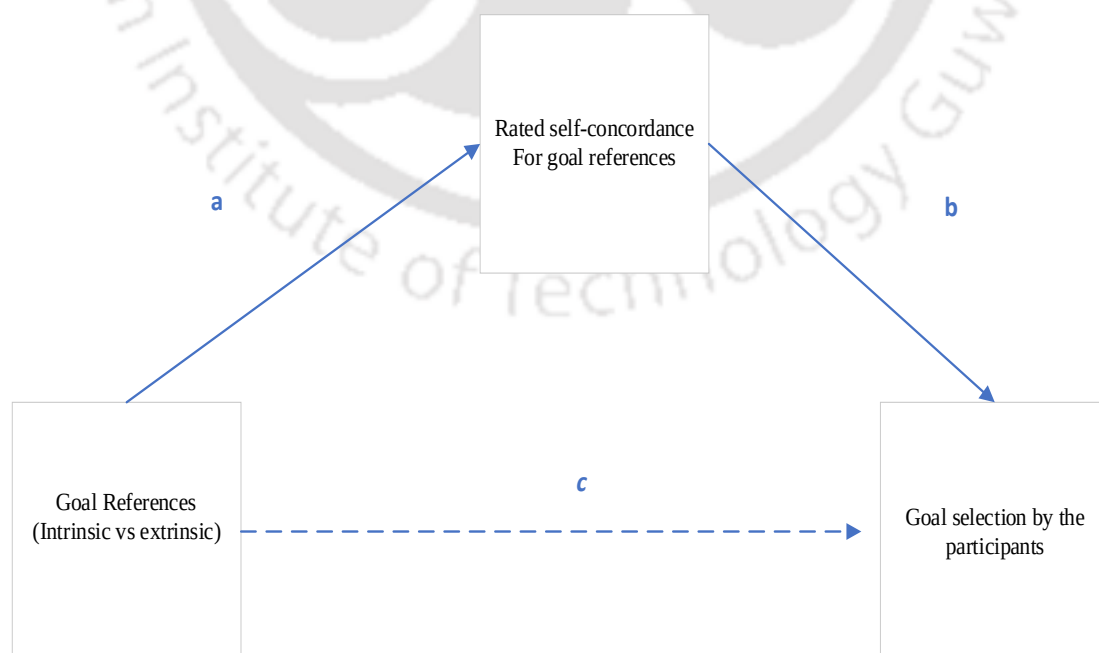


Figure 2.15 Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.

To test the mediation Hypothesis 4A (*Self-concordance ratings of goal reference will mediate the influence of goal content on the goal selected by the participant*) (**Figure 2.15**), the researchers the nested data structure of goal content and the need to account for both within-individual and between-individual variations in goal choices, a multi-categorical model is deemed to be appropriate. To investigate H4a (goal content factor), a multi-categorical simple mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) to investigate whether the ratings of self-concordance for goal references mediates the relationship between the goal type (whether intrinsic or extrinsic) and goal selection for pursuit. The sample consisted of 407 participants. The results of mediation analysis revealed that the self-concordance of goal references does not mediate the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic goal type and goal selection.

Specifically, the indirect effects for all comparisons of goal references (Learning Goal, Relationship Goal, Grade/Money Goal) were not significant, as their confidence intervals included zero. However, direct effects (Path C') were significant for the comparisons between learning and relationship goal ($p=.0004$) and between learning and grade/money goal ($p=.0012$), indicating differences in goal selection for these goal choices. Therefore, based on the result of the mediational analysis, hypothesis 4a is not supported.

Testing of Hypothesis 4B

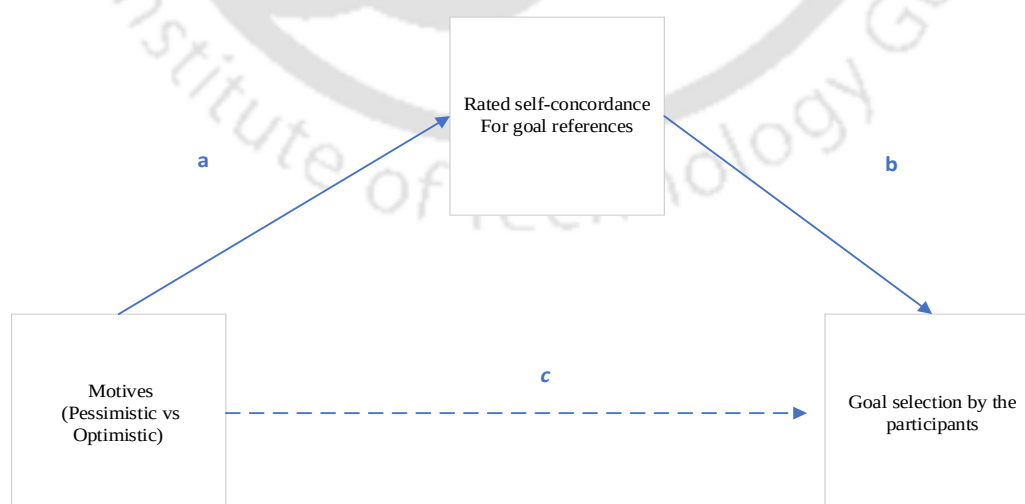


Figure 2.16 Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.

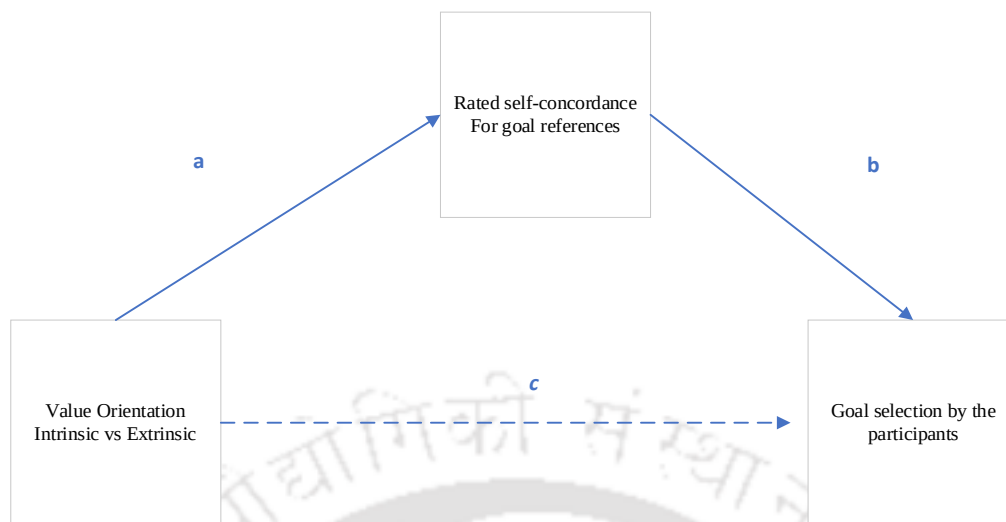


Figure 2.17 Conceptual framework depicting relationships among variables.

Similar to the test of previous mediation test, Hypothesis 4B (*Self-concordance ratings of goal reference will mediate the influence of motives and value orientations on the goal selected by the participant*) (**Figure 2.16, 2.17**), A simple mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) to investigate whether the self-concordance of goal references mediates the relationship between participant's value orientations and subsequent goal selections. The results of the mediation analysis revealed that the self-concordance of goals for goal references does not mediate the relationship between value orientations and goal selection. Specifically, the indirect effect was not significant (BootLLCI = .00, BootULCI = .01). The direct effect of RIVO on goal selection was also not significant ($b=.02, p=.39$). Additionally, the total effect of RIVO_C on GCSS was not significant ($b=.02, p=.34$). These results suggest that there is no significant direct or indirect effect of RIVO on goal selection mediated by the signal of self-concordance on goal references.

Similar results are obtained for optimistic (hope) and pessimistic (fear) components of motives on goal selection mediated by the signal of self-concordance on goal references. Therefore, based on the results of the mediational analysis, Hypothesis 4b is not supported.

Test of Hypothesis 5

To investigate Hypothesis H5 (*Prompting participants to consider the motivation for potential goals **before** goal selection improves the selection for more intrinsic goal choices compared to considering self-concordance **after** goal selection*), the research conducted a *t*-test to examine differences between assigned group conditions in terms of the timing of self-concordance assessment. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine differences, if any, in self-concordance ratings for goals between the control (*after*) and experimental (*before*) groups (refer to **Table 2.2** for participant assignment). Levene's test indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met, $F(1, 405) = 0.04, p = .840$. The *t*-test suggested a statistically significant difference between the groups, $t(405) = 3.55, p < .001$, with a mean difference of 1.05 (95% CI [0.47, 1.63]). Similarly, the experimental group participants ($N=204$) had higher concordance scores (RAI) for goals on average ($M = .527, SD = 2.99$) than the control group participants ($M = -.524, SD = 2.98$). **Figure 2.18** highlights the experimental test of the hypothesis that suggests that self-concordant assessment before goal selection promotes higher self-concordant goal selection and a significant correlation between RAI scores and intrinsic goal selections (goal selection score, GSS) suggests that high RAI scores lead to the selection of healthier intrinsic goals. Thus, the findings of the analysis support Hypothesis H5.

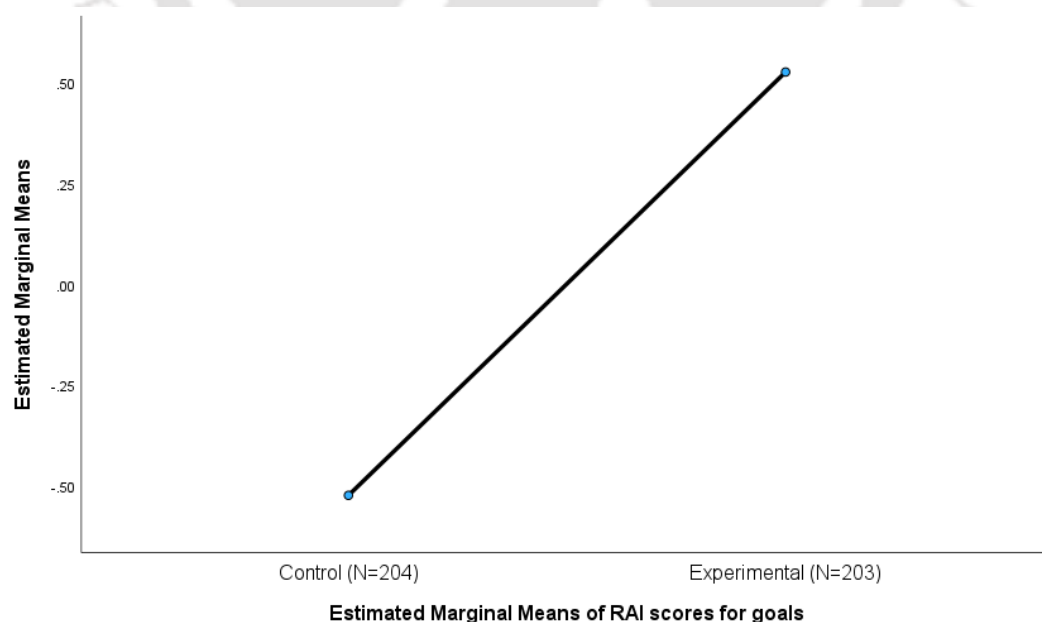


Figure 2.18 Estimated marginal means of control and experimental group on self-concordance for goals.

Additionally, One-way analysis of variance was conducted between the type of goals selected (learning, relationship, character, grade/money, fame and appearance) and self-concordance ratings (RAI). There was a statistically significant effect of selected goals on self-concordance, $F(5,401) = 4.23$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the Learning Goal group ($M = .92$, $SD = 3.06$) had significantly higher motivation scores than the Character Goal group ($M = -1.31$, $SD = 2.97$) and the Grade/Money Goal group ($M = -.11$, $SD = 2.78$). No other group comparisons reached significance.

Some goal contents act as goals selected for the participants in the control group ($N=204$), whereas for the participants in the experimental group ($N=203$), the goals act as references before goal selection. Thus, we have two RAI scores, one for goal references and another as goals selected within the experimental situations. **Figure 2.19** compares the two different RAI scores of the two groups for each goal depending on the timing of the self-concordance assessment.

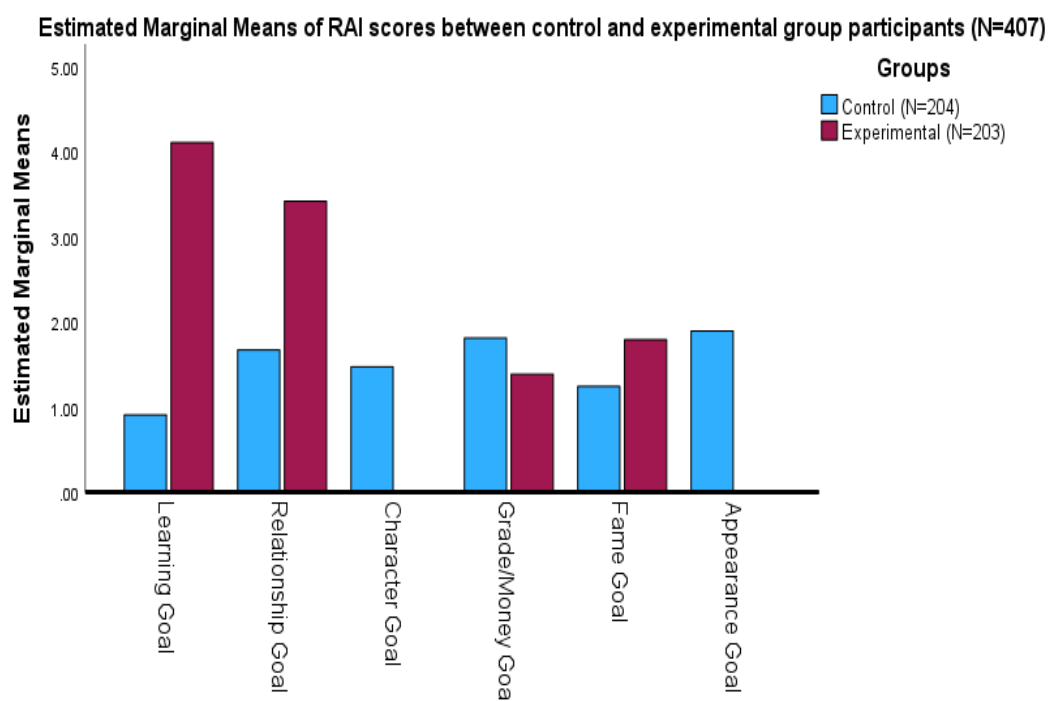


Figure 2.19 Self-concordance scores (RAI) for participants in the control and experimental group for all goals in the study ($N=407$).

The relationship presented in the figure supports the *t*-tests of the experimental manipulations such that RAI scores in the experimental group are higher for goals when compared to RAI scores in the control group. Together, the results of the Hypothesis 5 *t*-tests and **Figure 2.18** support the methodological and theoretical proposition that conducting self-concordance assessments prior to goal selection promotes more intrinsic goal choices.

Age and Gender Differences in Self-concordance

The ages of the participants in the study ranged from a minimum of 18 years and a maximum of 49 years. This range was divided by the researcher to create two different age groups such as a) Age Group 1- which consisted of participants between the ages of 18-25 years, and b) Age Group 2 – which consisted of participants between the ages of 26-50 years. Doing so created two separate age groups of young adults and older adults in separate stages of development. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of age groups (Group 1 – 18-25 years; Group 2 – 26-50 years) on the two self-concordance scores for goal references (T1) and goal-selected (T2). The multivariate effect for age group was significant, Wilks' (λ) = .930, $F(2, 404) = 15.188$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$, indicating that the age group significantly influences the self-concordance scores. As the multivariate effect is significant, we check the univariate tests (separate ANOVAs) to see which specific dependent variable (self-concordance for goal reference or goal selected) is significantly influenced by age group.

Univariate analysis revealed a significant effect of age groups on the self-concordance ratings of goal references, $F(1, 405) = 6.671$, $p = .010$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$. The result indicates that while the effect is statistically significant, it is small, suggesting that the independent variable explains only a small portion of the variance in the dependent variable. Following the significant multivariate test for age groups, post-hoc pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means revealed that the mean self-concordance ratings for goal references were higher for age group 2 (26-50 years) ($M = .384$, $SE = .207$) than age group 1 (18-25 years) ($M = .311$, $SE = .186$), $p = .013$; 95% CI [0.053, 0.675]. These results reveal that individuals in older age (26-50 years) show a higher self-concordance with goals compared to the younger age group (18-25 years). Such results are expected as individuals can develop more maturity through experiences

as they age, which furnish self-knowledge as a result of these experiences. Further, such results find support from correlational tests (refer to **Table 2.34**), which found satisfaction with life scores are modestly associated with both age ($r = .11, p < .05$) and a value orientation index (VOI; $r = .30, p < .001$), suggesting that life satisfaction is slightly higher in older participants and those who prefer intrinsic values.

The assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of covariance matrices were tested through Levene's test statistic and Box's M test, respectively. Levene's test indicated no significant differences in variances across groups for all dependent variables, with $p > .05$. Additionally, Box's M test was not significant, Box's $M = 3.99, F(3, 6713) = 1.30, p = .272$, indicating that the covariance matrices were equal across groups. Therefore, the assumptions for conducting MANOVA were met.

Similarly, for examining gender differences, if any, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of gender (male, female) on two self-concordance scores (RAI) of goal references and goal selected. The results, however, do not indicate a significant multivariate effect of gender on the combined self-concordance scores, Wilk's (Λ) = .992, $F(2, 404) = 1.697, p = .185, \eta^2 = .008$. Such results of the present study support similar earlier findings by Koestner et al. (2002), where gender did not approach a significant relationship with either self-concordance or implementation intentions.

The assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of covariance matrices were again tested through Levene's test statistic and Box's M test, respectively. Levene's test of equality of error variances indicated no significant differences in variances across groups for all dependent variables, with $p > .05$. Additionally, Box's M test was also not significant, Box's $M = 3.039, F(3, 77333) = 1.007, p = .388$, indicating that the covariance matrices were equal across groups. Therefore, the assumptions for conducting MANOVA were met.

Discussion

Researchers on the topic of personal goal selection and goal pursuit have long examined why and how individuals select their goals and the ways through which they achieve them. The choice and pursuit of goals is a fundamental aspect of human behaviour, driving individuals to achieve personal aspirations, fulfil obligations, and effectively navigate the complexities of everyday life. However, not all goals are pursued with equal motivations, nor are all goals equally likely to be achieved. The effectiveness of goal pursuit hinges on several psychological factors, such as the choice of the right goals for self-expression and strategies for dealing with obstructions and conflicts in pursuit of the goal. Such conflicts have been identified as a goal-striving process in research and have subsequently gathered momentum as remedial activities for individuals pursuing goals once selected.

The SDT, as a macro framework of motivation and personality, focuses on both the quality of motivation (why) and content (what) of goals on subjective well-being. In addition, considering the desirability of a goal, the self-concordance model (SCM) distinctively matches personal goals and individuals' deeper personality processes, such as underlying values, motives, and personality traits, to the content of goals they espouse. Such matching is hypothesised to reduce self-ascription errors, improve access to information about oneself, and enhance commitment and well-being in the pursuit of a desirable future state.

The partial support for Hypothesis 1A is consistent with previous research that associates greater self-concordance with the value orientations index (Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon et al., 2003; Sheldon et al., 2019). The test of Hypothesis 1A expected to observe the same pattern emerging in the present study where reference goals that represent intrinsic goal contents (such as learning, relationship or character goals) should be rated, on average, as more self-concordant than extrinsic goal contents (such as grade/money, fame or appearance goals). The results largely found that participants expect value-congruent goals to be more enjoyable and meaningful in comparison to goals not congruent with their values. In other words, this finding suggests that intrinsically oriented individuals expect to enjoy and benefit from selecting and pursuing intrinsic goals rather than extrinsic goals.

However, results also reveal a higher self-concordance for the extrinsic fame goal, in spite of extant research evidence that a choice and pursuit of extrinsic goals are not consistent with basic need satisfaction, psychological well-being and health in the long run (Sheldon et al., 2003; Niemiec *et al.*, 2009; Sheldon *et al.*, 2010).

Additionally, the findings of Hypothesis 1A indicate that a self-concordance assessment helps in identifying such intrinsic-extrinsic combinations under the framework of psychological threats. Psychological threats are experiences that lead individuals to feel unsafe or anxious and can occur due to various reasons, such as economic threats (poverty, financial losses), personal self-esteem, inclusion-exclusion in society threats, and threats of mortality (danger, survival), among others. Previously, Sheldon and Kasser (2008) provided experimental evidence that psychological threats can be the reason why individuals may choose extrinsic goals over intrinsic ones. One possible explanation for the incongruence suggests that when people are threatened, basic psychological needs for safety and security (Maslow, 1971) prompt individuals to focus on goals that enhance security – the extrinsic goals of money and materialistic status. In other words, under threat, individuals resort to the satisfaction of lower extrinsic level needs of safety and security than higher intrinsic needs of personal growth and actualisation.

The results of Phase 1 of the present study do not find support for similar congruent patterns of intrinsic vs extrinsic goal types with personality traits and motives. The inability of the findings to isolate a unique motivational core for the association of intrinsic vs extrinsic goals with different dimensions of personality traits and motives finds support from some sections of research (Baumert et al., 2017; Costantini, G., Sarauili, D., & Perugini, 2020). For instance, a set of goals influenced exclusively by the value orientation index and no other sets of personality and motive traits indicate an *emergence theory* of personality (Digman, 1990). According to this theory, personality is a complex system where traits are interconnected and do not operate in isolation. This view, supported by Baumert et al. (2017), suggests that personality traits influence behaviour as part of a larger, integrated system rather than acting independently.

Similarly, mediational tests to capture the signal of self-concordance for reference goals, values orientations, personality traits, and motives to personal goals

selected by the participants did not find any conclusive evidence. Although personality trait and motive theories do not postulate adaptive or orgasmically congruent dimensions, the present study did expect value orientation and hope and fear components of motives to signal or act as the underlying mechanisms for the selection of more concordant goals.

Finally, the results of the test of Hypotheses 2 to 5 support the primary theoretical and methodological innovation of Phase 1 of the present study. In particular, the SCM model proposes a new method of helping students or employees make better goal selections (Sheldon et al., 2019). Such a method involves asking participants to consider their motivations for choosing goals before the goal selection process selecting the goal in comparison to the usual method of assessing self-concordance after goal have been selected. The improved or better goal selection suggested by the new method entails the choice of more intrinsic goals, as previous research suggests that intrinsic goal pursuits are more beneficial for individuals in terms of goal commitment, achievement and well-being. In answering why such a method is beneficial, the SCM suggests that explicit reflections on one's motivations for pursuing various goal alternatives can tap into how they *feel* (Fast, System 1 processes) about what they *think* (Slow, System 2 processes) they want. Such information is crucial because, objectively, it can be quite hard to think about all aspects of one's personality systems, which can be further compounded by motivational cluelessness or ignorance under certain situational (over-loaded, supportive or thwarting contexts) and personal (stressed or distracted) constraints. In answering why such feelings can act as a reliable signal to select self-appropriate goals, Sheldon et al. (2019) suggest that the opportunity to rate potential goals among other alternatives can provide important inputs to an individual's improved decision-making and goal-valuing process.

Thus, self-concordant goal selection is congruent with an individual's underlying potential and expresses deeper and more stable aspects of personality, and such information is readily available to individuals in response to the right questions asked before goal selection. The results of the present study support such previous claims (Sheldon et al., 2019), and the findings inform System 1-System 2 goal conflicts and attitude behaviour inconsistency (Kahneman, 2011). The findings of the present study found that participants selected more intrinsic goals when randomly assigned to

rate self-concordance of goal references *before* goal selection than *after*. Further, the results also reveal that participants in the present study reported higher self-concordance scores for goals in the experimental group compared to the control group.

In conclusion, Phase 1 of the present study successfully tested an assessment of goal desirability (*what* and *why*) in matching one's deeper developmental potentials with intrinsic goal contents. The findings of manipulating self-concordance assessment *before* and *after* goal selection also conform to the theoretical tenets of the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, which suggests goal selection processes to be part of a deliberative mindset in judging the desirability of the goal. Meanwhile, considerable research on the goal setting approach and personal goals measure goal commitment or concordance in the implementational mindset phase, characterised by goal enactment (feasibility), *after* the goals have been selected.

A longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study advances the differences in the motivational and volitional aspects of goal selection and pursuit, respectively and answers the rest of the RQs to assess *how* individuals can effectively pursue their goals and provide implications to a long-term goal concordant pursuit in terms of goal progress and subjective well-being.

Table 2.1 Sample characteristics for phase 1 of the study.

Condition(s)	Employee (N)	Student (N)	Total (N)
Self-concordance assessment before goals are selected (Experimental group)	89	114	203
Self-concordance assessment after goal selection (Control group)	87	117	204
Participants			407

Table 2.2 Goal references and goal content (N = 407).

Type of goals	Goal content for employees	Goal content for students
Extrinsic	1. Being wealthy or rich (Money Goal).	1. Get higher grades than my peer group (Grade Goal).
	2. Being famous or idolized (Fame Goal).	2. Become better known and networked around the campus (Fame Goal).
	3. Being beautiful or handsome (Appearance Goal).	
Intrinsic	1. Being wise or mature (Learning Goal).	1. Learn as much as I can about what interests me (Learning Goal).
	2. Being generous or helpful (Relationship Goal).	2. Create or deepen personal relationships or friendships (Relationship Goal).
	3. Being loved or loving (Character goal).	

Table 2.3 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	.41
2	The conditions of my life are excellent.	.60
3	I am satisfied with my life.	.62
4	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	.52

Table 2.4 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of SWLS Questionnaire (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor 1
1	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	.64
2	The conditions of my life are excellent.	.77
3	I am satisfied with my life.	.78
4	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	.72
Eigenvalues		2.17
% of Variance		54.28
Cumulative % Variance		54.28

Table 2.5 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of VOI (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	I aspire - To help people, especially those who need help.	.407
2	I aspire - To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.	.630
3	I aspire - To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.	.515
4	I aspire - To achieve affluence and personal success.	.465
5	I aspire - To build and maintain close relationships.	.436
6	I aspire - Being known and admired by many people.	.743

Table 2.6 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Short Form of Aspirations Index (VOI) (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	I aspire - To help people, especially those who need help.	.67	.00
2	I aspire - To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.	.00	.74
3	I aspire - To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.	.73	.00
4	I aspire - To achieve affluence and personal success.	.64	.00
5	I aspire - To build and maintain close relationships.	.55	.00
6	I aspire - Being known and admired by many people.	.00	.89
Eigenvalues		2.13	1.06
% of Variance		35.53	17.73
Cumulative % Variance		35.53	53.27

***Factor 1** = Intrinsic Orientation, **Factor 2** = Extrinsic orientation

Table 2.7 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Short Form of Aspirations Index (VOI) Questionnaire (N = 407).

Factor	1	2
1 (Intrinsic Orientation)	1.000	.326
2 (Extrinsic Orientation)	.326	1.000

Table 2.8 Dimensions of Big Five personality factors.

Big Five Dimensions	Facet (correlated trait adjective)
Extraversion vs Introversion	Gregariousness (sociable) Assertiveness (forceful) Activity (energetic) Excitement-seeking (adventurous) Positive emotions (enthusiastic) Warmth (out-going)
Agreeableness vs Antagonism	Trust (forgiving) Straightforwardness (not demanding) Altruism (warm) Compliance (not stubborn) Modesty (not show-off) Tender-mindedness (sympathetic)
Conscientiousness vs lack of direction	Competence (efficient) Order (organised) Dutifulness (not careless) Achievement striving (thorough) Self-discipline (not lazy) Deliberation (not impulsive)
Neuroticism vs emotional stability	Anxiety (tense) Angry hostility (irritable) Depression (not contented) Self-consciousness (shy) Impulsiveness (moody) Vulnerability (not self-confident)
Openness vs closedness to experience	Ideas (curious) Fantasy (imaginative) Aesthetics (artistic) Actions (broad interests) Feelings (excitable) Values (unconventional)

Table 2.9 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is reserved	.500
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is full of energy	.528
4	I see myself as someone Who - Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.495
5	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be quiet	.582
6	I see myself as someone Who - Has an assertive personality	.383
7	I see myself as someone Who - Is sometimes shy, inhibited	.369
8	I see myself as someone Who - Is outgoing, sociable	.517

Table 2.10 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Introversion (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is reserved	.00	.71
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is full of energy	.73	.00
4	I see myself as someone Who - Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.68	.00
5	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be quiet	.00	.75
6	I see myself as someone Who - Has an assertive personality	.61	.00
7	I see myself as someone Who - Is sometimes shy, inhibited	.00	.60
8	I see myself as someone Who - Is outgoing, sociable	.69	.00
Eigenvalues		2.28	1.40
% of Variance		28.57	17.75
Cumulative % Variance		28.57	46.15
*Factor 1 = Outgoing, Factor 2 = Reserved			

Table 2.11 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Extraversion vs Reserved (N = 407).

Factor	1	2
1 (Outgoing)	1.000	-.201
2 (Reserved)	-.201	1.000

Table 2.12 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to find fault with others	.451
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is helpful and unselfish with others.	.292
3	I see myself as someone Who - Starts quarrel with others	.496
4	I see myself as someone Who - Has a forgiving nature	.380
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is generally trusting	.615
6	I see myself as someone Who - Can be cold and aloof	.260
7	I see myself as someone Who - Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.533
8	I see myself as someone Who - Is sometimes rude to others	.350
9	I see myself as someone Who - Likes to cooperate with others	.488

Table 2.13 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Agreeableness vs Antagonism (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to find fault with others	.00	.67
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is helpful and unselfish with others.	.53	.00
3	I see myself as someone Who - Starts quarrel with others	.00	.69
4	I see myself as someone Who - Has a forgiving nature	.56	.00
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is generally trusting	.78	.00
6	I see myself as someone Who - Can be cold and aloof	.00	.51
7	I see myself as someone Who - Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.72	.00
8	I see myself as someone Who - Is sometimes rude to others	.00	.58
9	I see myself as someone Who - Likes to cooperate with others	.69	.00
Eigenvalues		2.03	1.56
% of Variance		25.58	17.34
Cumulative % Variance		25.58	42.93

***Factor 1** = Cooperative, **Factor 2** = Antagonist

Table 2.14 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Cooperative vs Antagonist (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Cooperative)	1.000	-.091
2 (Antagonist)	-.091	1.000



Table 2.15 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs Lack of Direction (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	I see myself as someone Who - Does a thorough job	.393
2	I see myself as someone Who - Can be somewhat careless	.393
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is a reliable worker	.507
4	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be disorganised	.305
5	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be lazy	.627
6	I see myself as someone Who - Perseveres until the task is finished	.528
7	I see myself as someone Who - Does things efficiently	.586
8	I see myself as someone Who - Makes plans and follows through with them	.489
9	I see myself as someone Who - Is easily distracted	.547

Table 2.16 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientiousness vs Lack of Direction (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	I see myself as someone Who - Does a thorough job	.61	.00
2	I see myself as someone Who - Can be somewhat careless	.00	.62
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is a reliable worker	.71	.00
4	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be disorganised	.00	.55
5	I see myself as someone Who - Tends to be lazy	.00	.79
6	I see myself as someone Who - Perseveres until the task is finished	.71	.00
7	I see myself as someone Who - Does things efficiently	.76	.00
8	I see myself as someone Who - Makes plans and follows through with them	.70	.00
9	I see myself as someone Who - Is easily distracted	.00	.74
Eigenvalues		2.57	1.79
% of Variance		28.64	19.97
Cumulative % Variance		28.64	48.61

***Factor 1** = Conscientious, **Factor 2** = Disorganized

Table 2.17 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Conscientious vs Disorganised (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Conscientious)	1.000	-.108
2 (Disorganised)	-.108	1.000



Table 2.18 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Neuroticism vs Emotional Stability (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	I see myself as someone Who - Is depressed, blue	.249
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is relaxed, handles stress well	.612
3	I see myself as someone Who - Can be tense	.586
4	I see myself as someone Who - Worries a lot	.575
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	.638
6	I see myself as someone Who - Can be moody	.288
7	I see myself as someone Who - Remains calm in tense situations	.678
8	I see myself as someone Who - Gets nervous easily	.583

Table 2.19 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Neuroticism vs Emotional Stability (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	I see myself as someone Who - Is depressed, blue	.49	.00
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is relaxed, handles stress well	.00	.77
3	I see myself as someone Who - Can be tense	.78	.00
4	I see myself as someone Who - Worries a lot	.74	.00
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	.00	.80
6	I see myself as someone Who - Can be moody	.55	.00
7	I see myself as someone Who - Remains calm in tense situations	.00	.83
8	I see myself as someone Who - Gets nervous easily	.72	.00
Eigenvalues		2.66	1.54
% of Variance		33.35	19.25
Cumulative % Variance		33.35	52.60

***Factor 1 = Anxious, Factor 2 = Calm**

Table 2.20 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Anxious vs Calm (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Anxious)	1.000	-.268
2 (Calm)	-.268	1.000



Table 2.21 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	I see myself as someone Who - Is original, comes up with new ideas.	.279
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is curious about many different things.	.439
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.496
4	I see myself as someone Who - Has an active imagination	.531
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is inventive	.382
6	I see myself as someone Who - Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.492
7	I see myself as someone Who - Prefers work that is routine	.567
8	I see myself as someone Who - Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.444
9	I see myself as someone Who - Has a few artistic interests	.401
10	I see myself as someone Who - Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.336

Table 2.22 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Openness vs Closedness to Experience (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	I see myself as someone Who - Is original, comes up with new ideas	.45	.00
2	I see myself as someone Who - Is curious about many different things	.69	.00
3	I see myself as someone Who - Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.73	.00
4	I see myself as someone Who - Has an active imagination	.69	.00
5	I see myself as someone Who - Is inventive	.46	.00
6	I see myself as someone Who - Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.63	.00
7	I see myself as someone Who - Prefers work that is routine	.00	.78
8	I see myself as someone Who - Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.62	.00
9	I see myself as someone Who - Has a few artistic interests	.00	.58
10	I see myself as someone Who - Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.41	.00
Eigenvalues		3.22	1.14
% of Variance		32.27	11.40
Cumulative % Variance		32.27	43.67

***Factor 1** = Creative, **Factor 2** = Conventional

Table 2.23 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Creative vs Conventional (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Creative)	1.000	-.297
2 (Conventional)	-.297	1.000



Table 2.24 Descriptions of statements and motive components of the Multi Motive Grid (MMG).

Statements	Motive	Hope/Fear component
Feeling good about meeting other people	Affiliation (nAff)	Hope of affiliation (HA1)
Anticipating to lose my standing	Power (nPow)	Fear of power (status) (FP1)
Feeling confident to succeed at this task	Achievement (nAch)	Hope of success (HS1)
Being afraid of being rejected by others	Affiliation (nAff)	Fear of rejection (FR1)
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task.	Achievement (nAch)	Fear of failure (FF1)
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people.	Power (nPow)	Fear of Power (FP2)
Feeling good about one's competence.	Achievement (nAch)	Hope of success (HS2)
Being afraid of being boring to others.	Affiliation (nAff)	Fear of rejection (FR2)
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while.	Achievement (nAch)	Fear of failure (FF2)
Trying to influence other people.	Power (nPow)	Hope of power (HP1)
Hoping to get in touch with other people.	Affiliation (nAff)	Hope of affiliation (HA2)
Hoping to acquire a good standing.	Power (nPow)	Hope of power (HP2)

Table 2.25 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Hope for Success (HS) and Fear of Failure (FF) components of motives (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	Feeling confident to succeed at this task	.67
2	Feeling good about one's competence	.61
3	Trying to influence other people	.56
4	Hoping to acquire a good standing	.63
5	Feeling good about meeting other people	.59
6	Hoping to get in touch with other people	.74
7	Thinking about lacking abilities at this task	.71
8	Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while	.49
9	Being afraid of being rejected by others	.79
10	Being afraid of being boring to others	.77
11	Anticipating to lose my standing	.62
12	Being afraid of being overpowered by other people	.78

Table 2.26 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Hope for Success (HS) and Fear of Failure (FF) components of motives (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	Feeling confident to succeed at this task	.00	.83
2	Feeling good about one's competence	.00	.79
3	Trying to influence other people	.00	.55
4	Hoping to acquire a good standing	.00	.75
5	Feeling good about meeting other people	.00	.78
6	Hoping to get in touch with other people	.00	.82
7	Thinking about lacking abilities at this task	.82	.00
8	Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while	.64	.00
9	Being afraid of being rejected by others	.90	.00
10	Being afraid of being boring to others	.88	.00
11	Anticipating to lose my standing	.80	.00
12	Being afraid of being overpowered by other people	.89	.00
Eigenvalues		4.88	3.12
% of Variance		40.72	26.07
Cumulative % Variance		40.72	66.79

***Factor 1** = Pessimistic, **Factor 2** = Optimistic

Table 2.27 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Pessimistic and Optimistic Components of Motives (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Pessimistic)	1.000	-.199
2 (Optimistic)	-.199	1.000



Table 2.28 Final Coordinates.

Item No.	Items	Dimensions	
		1	2
1	Identified Motivation - Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.	.485	-.260
2	Introjected Motivation - Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.	-.542	-.256
3	External Motivation - Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn’t have this goal if you didn’t get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn’t av	-.563	.281
4	Intrinsic Motivation - Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary “reason” is your interest in the experience.	.620	.235

***Dimension 1** = Autonomy (controlled or autonomous), **Dimension 2** = Motivation Strength (intrinsic motivation vs extrinsic motivation)

Table 2.29 Stress and Fit Measures for the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Solution.

Measure	Value
Normalised Raw Stress	.00219
Stress-I	.04681
Stress-II	.15168
S-Stress	.00864
Dispersion Accounted For (D.A.F.)	.99781
Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence	.99890
Optimal Scaling Factor (Stress-I/II)	1.002
Optimal Scaling Factor (S-Stress)	0.993

Table 2.30 Pairwise Distances* Between Motivation Types in the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Solution.

Item	Identify	Introject	External	Intrinsic
Identify	.00			
Introject	0.96	.00		
External	1.19	0.70	.00	
Intrinsic	0.68	1.23	1.04	.00

***Note** - Distances represent dissimilarities between motivation types in the two-dimensional MDS space.

Table 2.31 Communalities for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N = 407).

Item No.	Items	Communalities
1	Identified Motivation - Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.	.708
2	Introjected Motivation - Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.	.717
3	External Motivation - Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn’t have this goal if you didn’t get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn’t av	.672
4	Intrinsic Motivation - Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary “reason” is your interest in the experience.	.593

Table 2.32 Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of self-concordance ratings (RAI) (N=407).

Item No.	Items	Factor	
		1	2
1	Identified Motivation - Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.	.00	.85
2	Introjected Motivation - Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.	.85	.00
3	External Motivation - Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn’t have this goal if you didn’t get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn’t av	.79	.00
4	Intrinsic Motivation - Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary “reason” is your interest in the experience.	.00	.72
Eigenvalues		1.60	1.08
% of Variance		40.01	27.23
Cumulative % Variance		40.01	67.24

***Factor 1** = Controlled Motivation, **Factor 2** = Autonomous Motivation

Table 2.33 Factor Correlations for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Controlled and Autonomous Motivation (N = 407).

<i>Factor</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
1 (Controlled Motivation)	1.000	-.180
2 (Autonomous Motivation)	-.180	1.000



Table 2.34 Inter-Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach Alphas of the Study Variables (N=407).

		Construct	Gender	Age (Years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Participant Data	Gender	--																						
	Age (Years)	-.06	--																					
Value Orientation	1. SWLS	.07	.10*	(.71)																				
	2. INO	.18**	.03	.24**	(.69)																			
	3. EXO	-.01	-.21**	.08	.32**	(.63)																		
	4 VOI [#]	.11*	.30**	.13**	.26**	-.68**	(.65) ^a	(.63)																
	5. Outgoing	-.01	.17**	.22**	.27**	.19**	.04	(.63)																
Personality Traits	6. Reserved	.09	-.25**	-.10*	.01	.03	-.07	-.15**	(.61)															
	7. Cooperative	.21**	.05	.14**	.49**	.14**	.12*	.33**	.09	(.48)														
	8. Antagonist	-.04	.10*	.03	-.05	.02	-.05	.00	.06	-.12*	(.68)													
	9. Conscientious	.04	.19**	.21**	.33**	.04	.14**	.38**	-.03	.50**	-.10*	(.74)												
	10. Disorganized	.10*	.01	-.06	.07	.05	-.01	-.01	.18**	.15**	.35**	-.11*	(.68)											
	11. Anxious	.26**	-.26**	-.19**	.01	.01	-.09*	-.14**	.27**	.08	.10*	-.16**	.32**	(.67)										

Table. (continued)

Quality of Motivation	Motives (Fear Hope)	12. Calm	-.05	-.15**	.09	.05	-.03	.03	.31**	.02	.11*	-.22**	.20**	-.37**	-.25**	(.72)									
		13. Creative	.13**	.11*	.10*	.33**	.11*	.06	.44**	.08	.48**	-.01	.45**	.08	.15**	.17**	(.76)								
		14. Conventional	.01	-.28**	.08	.06	.10*	-.05	.18**	.19**	.11*	-.11*	.17**	-.13**	.02	.35**	.28**	(.48)							
		15. Pessimistic	.13**	-.17**	.00	-.03	.14**	-.16**	-.05	.12*	-.09	.09	-.17**	.06	.23**	-.10*	-.09	-.05	(.91)						
		16. Optimistic	.08	.02	.04	.24**	.05	.05	.12*	.01	.26**	-.08	.20**	.00	.03	.07	.22**	.05	.24**	(.85)					
	SCM	17. Controlled	-.058	-.13**	-.13**	-.018	.12*	-.13**	-.06	.01	-.10*	.06	-.10*	.09	.20**	-.05	-.10*	-.025	.31**	-.04	(.56)				
		18. Autonomous	-.00	-.03	.02	.19**	.01	.07	.09	.15**	.22**	.04	.14**	.12*	.09	-.06	.20**	.02	-.07	.25**	-.19**	(.52)			
		19. RAI [#]	.02	.09	.10*	.13**	-.06	.14**	.10*	.06	.19**	-.01	.17**	.03	-.11*	-.05	.18**	.03	-.24**	.18**	-.80**	.71**	(.60) ^a		
	Goal Selection	20. GSS [#]	.10	.19**	.09	.04	-.15**	.17**	.08	.02	.08	.05	.12	.02	-.06	-.04	.13	-.09	-.11	.05	-.36**	.27**	.41**	--	
	Means			1.41	26.82	4.19	4.20	3.34	1.45	3.64	3.18	4.03	2.77	4.74	3.06	3.11	3.17	3.80	3.40	5.69	9.20	2.82	3.88	2.13	
SD			4.92	5.86	1.10	.58	.96	2.42	.73	.85	.65	.77	.89	.85	.79	.98	.60	.91	2.97	2.43	1.08	.90	3.02		

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$**

[#] **SWB** = Satisfaction with life score, **VOI** = Value Orientation Index, **INO** = Intrinsic Value Orientation, **EXO** = Extrinsic Value Orientation, **RAI** = Relative Autonomy Index, **GSS** = Goal Selection Score.

Bold figures in the parenthesis include Cronbach Alpha values and parenthesis values with ^a include McDonald's Omega values.

Table 2.35 Self-concordant goal references (RAI means and standard deviations (N=407)).

Goal type	N	Goals concordance	Means	SD
Intrinsic	86	Learning goal RAI	.91	3.06
Goals	85	Relationship goal RAI	-.61	3.14
	19	Character goal RAI	-1.30	2.96
Extrinsic	133	Grade/Money goal RAI	.0008	2.98
Goals	65	Fame goal RAI	-.10	2.77
	19	Appearance goal RAI	.27	2.63

Table 2.36 Self-concordant goals selected (RAI means and standard deviations (N=407)).

Goal type	N	Goals concordance	Means	SD
Intrinsic	149	Learning goal RAI	1.02	2.85
Goals	114	Relationship goal RAI	.67	2.82
	2	Character goal RAI	.44	.00
Extrinsic	105	Grade/Money goal RAI	-1.69	2.61
Goals	37	Fame goal RAI	-.14	2.99
	0	Appearance goal RAI	.00	.00

Table 2.37 Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of learning goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=86).

Learning Goal reference (N = 86)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Learning Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		.91(3.06)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	.06	1.00																	4.27(.57)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	-.22*	.34**	1.00																3.10(.98)
4 Learning Goal VOI	.24**	.21*	-.74**	1.00															.59 (2.35)
5 Outgoing	.08	.25*	.04	.25*	1.00														3.65(.83)
6 Reserved	-.09	.06	.08	-.08	-.26**	1.00													3.32(.82)
7 Cooperative	.18	.48**	.09	.24*	.41**	.12	1.00												4.17(.64)
8 Antagonist	-.05	-.14	.01	-.08	-.19*	.19*	-.32**	1.00											2.49(.86)
9 Conscientious	.11	.34**	-.11	.33**	.46**	-.15	.54**	-.39**	1.00										4.80(.97)
10 Disorganized	.04	.01	-.05	.03	-.19*	.15	-.09	.41**	-.43**	1.00									2.97(.93)
11 Anxious	-.15	-.02	.03	-.13	-.30**	.30**	-.16	.46**	-.53**	.62**	1.00								3.15(.89)
12 Calm	-.04	.08	-.04	.24*	.50**	-.10	.39**	-.31**	.56**	-.45**	-.67**	1.00							3.38(1.00)
13 Creative	.23*	.40**	-.06	.34**	.52**	.04	.40**	.01	.31**	.17	-.09	.16*	1.00						3.95(.57)
14 Conventional	-.27**	.04	.16	-.04	.30**	-.02	.12	-.09	.23**	-.13	-.08	.20*	.17	1.00					3.40(.89)
15 Pessimistic	-.44**	-.01	.19*	-.28**	-.19	.28**	-.11	.32*	-.27**	.31**	.49**	-.36**	-.10	.15	1.00				4.72(2.74)
16 Optimistic	.12	.30**	.04	.09	.22*	-.24*	.42**	-.20	.40**	-.17	-.27	.27**	.29**	.29**	-.17	1.00			9.32(2.27)
17 Controlled	-.86**	.00	.21*	-.19	-.07	.18*	-.12	.20**	-.13	.09	.27	-.07	-.06	.22*	.39**	-.18**	1.00		2.38(1.15)
18 Autonomous	.68**	.12	-.12	.19	.06	.07	.18	.19*	.03	.19*	.09	-.19*	.35**	-.20**	-.28**	-.03	-.20**	1.00	4.23(.80)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$**

#RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, **VOI** = Value Orientation Index

Table 2.38 Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of relationship goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=85).

Relationship Goal reference (N = 85)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Relationship Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		-.61(3.14)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	.11	1.00																	4.12(.61)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	.08	.44**	1.00																3.49(.90)
4 Relationship Goal VOI	.01	.17	-.65**	1.00															-.78(2.25)
5 Outgoing	.22*	.38**	.32**	-.05	1.00														3.61(.63)
6 Reserved	-.18	.05	.12	-.16	-.02	1.00													3.40(.80)
7 Cooperative	.12	.52**	.27*	.00	.47**	-.07	1.00												4.02(.64)
8 Antagonist	-.16	-.18	.15	-.32**	-.01	.19*	-.19*	1.00											2.84(.66)
9 Conscientious	-.03	.32**	.09	.03	.46**	.03	.41**	-.11	1.00										4.70(.84)
10 Disorganized	-.03	-.01	-.06	.06	-.08	.28**	.11	.24*	-.16	1.00									2.99(.79)
11 Anxious	-.15	.00	.06	-.14	-.10	.40**	.00	.17	.07	.25*	1.00								3.18(.77)
12 Calm	-.12	.02	.02	-.04	.28**	.24*	.17	-.06	.21*	-.10	-.22*	1.00							3.51(.83)
13 Creative	.08	.39**	.37**	-.11	.56**	.24*	.51**	-.08	.52**	.04	.21*	.21*	1.00						3.78(.63)
14 Conventional	.01	.16	.18	-.11	.43**	.21	.20	-.17	.49**	-.15	.16	.35**	.49**	1.00					3.70(.81)
15 Pessimistic	-.05	-.02	.21*	-.12	.02	.03	-.04	.12	-.03	.00	.20*	.02	.14	.03	1.00				5.93(2.76)
16 Optimistic	.10	.29**	.09	.14	.25**	-.09	.27**	-.32**	.22**	-.11	-.07	.12	.25**	.13	.29**	1.00			9.34(2.31)
17 Controlled	-.85**	-.01	-.03	.01	-.16	.25**	-.06	.17	.07	.13	.23**	.05	-.06	.03	.18	.01	1.00		2.83(1.08)
18 Autonomous	.76**	.19	.10	.04	.21*	-.01	.15	-.08	.04	.12	.02	-.16	.07	.05	.13	.20	-.31**	1.00	3.91(.85)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$** **#RAI** = Relative Autonomy Index, **VOI** = Value Orientation Index

Table 2.39 Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of character goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=19).

Character Goal reference (N = 19)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Character Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		- 1.30(2.96)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	-.01	1.00																	4.19(.49)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	.00	.14	1.00																2.73(1.28)
4 Character Goal VOI	-.03	.41*	-.77**	1.00															.80(3.18)
5 Outgoing	.20	.33	.09	-.01	1.00														3.72(.74)
6 Reserved	.19	.23	.32	-.10	.44*	1.00													2.56(1.01)
7 Cooperative	-.02	.41*	-.05	.33	.12	-.05	1.00												3.90(.61)
8 Antagonist	.52*	.20	.06	.11	.00	.02	.52*	1.00											3.39(.69)
9 Conscientious	.24	.23	.20	-.02	.49*	.33	.72**	.53*	1.00										4.75(1.04)
10 Disorganized	.27	.40*	.54**	-.21	.44*	.29	.45*	.50*	.65**	1.00									2.82(.89)
11 Anxious	-.29	-.16	-.28	.11	-.10	-.33	-.12	-.27	-.23	-.05	1.00								3.25(.67)
12 Calm	.01	-.06	-.77**	.49*	.17	-.30	-.07	-.07	-.23	-.37	.53**	1.00							3.07(1.03)
13 Creative	.26	.09	-.27	.07	-.19	-.41*	.10	.26	-.09	-.11	.25	.46*	1.00						3.80(.62)
14 Conventional	.11	.17	-.28	.36	-.40*	-.18	-.24	.16	-.42*	-.36	.01	.35	.42*	1.00					2.28(.67)
15 Pessimistic	-.18	-.16	-.09	-.11	-.07	.20	.08	-.26	.09	-.19	.25	.11	-.09	-.34	1.00				5.62(3.49)
16 Optimistic	.00	-.19	-.14	-.05	-.06	.08	.03	-.22	-.11	-.16	.36	.33	.16	-.13	.70**	1.00			9.18(2.60)
17 Controlled	-.75**	-.12	.19	-.31	-.16	.09	-.29	-.59**	-.35	-.25	.21	-.10	-.13	-.19	.32	.19	1.00		2.76(.93)
18 Autonomous	.79**	-.13	.17	-.32	.15	.37	-.30	.22	.03	.17	-.24	-.08	.27	-.02	.03	.18	-.18	1.00	3.50(1.00)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$**

#RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, **VOI** = Value Orientation Index

Table 2.40 Inter-correlations, means, and standard deviations of grade/money goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=133).

Grade/Money Goal Reference (N = 133)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Grade/Money Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		.0008(2.98)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	.22**	1.00																	4.15(.58)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	.04	.36**	1.00																3.40(.99)
4 Grade/Money VOI	.10	.22**	-.69**	1.00															.01(2.54)
5 Outgoing	.06	.28**	.27**	.02	1.00														3.63(.79)
6 Reserved	.19*	.02	-.09	-.01	-.31**	1.00													3.07(.85)
7 Cooperative	.22**	.49**	.14	.13	.28**	.12	1.00												3.93(.70)
8 Antagonist	.11	.04	.02	-.02	.05	-.02	.03	1.00											2.67(.65)
9 Conscientious	.31**	.34**	.11	.12	.35**	-.05	.51**	-.06	1.00										4.70(.89)
10 Disorganized	-.04	.12	.04	-.06	-.03	.14	.38**	.26**	-.10	1.00									3.12(.81)
11 Anxious	.05	.13	.05	-.05	-.13	.25**	.29**	-.06	-.04	.40**	1.00								3.06(.75)
12 Calm	-.02	.11	.07	-.01	.34**	.02	-.07	-.09	.16	-.38**	-.26**	1.00							3.08(.96)
13 Creative	.24**	.40**	.17*	.08	.45**	.08	.56**	-.03	.64**	.09	.17	.17*	1.00						3.76(.64)
14 Conventional	.14	.11	.06	-.01	.16*	.16*	.09	.06	.18*	-.17*	-.04	.43**	.35**	1.00					3.50(.88)
15 Pessimistic	-.29**	.01	.10	-.13	-.14	.08	-.16*	-.15*	-.26**	-.01	.16*	-.11	-.26**	-.17*	1.00				5.74(2.84)
16 Optimistic	.24**	.25**	.08	.02	.00	.02	.18*	-.06	.18*	.09	.19*	-.04	.20*	.02	.27**	1.00			8.96(2.42)
17 Controlled	-.75**	.00	.04	-.09	-.05	-.11	-.03	-.04	-.19*	.25**	.14	-.08	-.15*	-.13	.29**	.01	1.00		2.99(1.01)
18 Autonomous	.74**	.33**	.10	.06	.04	.17*	.30**	.12	.27**	.20*	.22*	-.12	.21**	.08	-.14	.37**	-.11	1.00	3.77(.98)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$**

#RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, **VOI** = Value Orientation Index

Table 2.41 Inter-correlations, means and standard deviations of Fame goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=65).

Fame Goal reference (N = 65)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Fame Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		-.10(2.77)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	.02	1.00																	4.30(.60)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	.27*	.25*	1.00																3.53(.76)
4 Fame Goal VOI	-.21*	.38**	.61**	1.00															-.08(2.03)
5 Outgoing	-.03	.24*	.20	.01	1.00														3.65(.59)
6 Reserved	.18	-.15	-.08	-.10	.00	1.00													3.24(.79)
7 Cooperative	.18	.47**	.15	.06	.20	.13	1.00												4.11(.56)
8 Antagonist	.08	-.15	-.18	.11	.19	.07	-.20	1.00											2.90(.85)
9 Conscientious	.18	.39**	-.05	.16	.24*	-.02	.51**	-.02	1.00										4.74(.88)
10 Disorganized	.10	.00	-.04	.03	.05	.29**	-.01	.49**	.07	1.00									3.15(.89)
11 Anxious	.22*	-.05	.02	-.16	.02	.44**	.16	.02	-.07	.24*	1.00								3.13(.84)
12 Calm	.02	.10	.15	-.10	.21*	-.12	.18	-.39**	.05	-.51**	-.18	1.00							2.82(.95)
13 Creative	.03	.08	-.02	-.16	.37**	.22*	.41**	.13	.42**	.09	.43**	-.03	1.00						3.76(.50)
14 Conventional	.21*	-.04	-.10	.01	.11	.26*	.19	-.17	.10	-.10	.16	.29*	.14	1.00					3.30(.92)
15 Pessimistic	-.07	-.08	.03	-.01	.20	.20	-.12	.08	-.21*	-.10	.25*	.09	-.01	-.08	1.00				6.56(3.22)
16 Optimistic	.23*	.23*	-.08	.11	.01	.34**	.17	.05	.08	.08	.21*	.01	.13	-.13	.41**	1.00			9.25(2.76)
17 Controlled	-.80**	.09	.19	-.06	.10	-.10	-.14	-.01	-.08	-.11	.24*	-.02	-.03	-.28*	.24*	-.05	1.00		3.06(1.01)
18 Autonomous	.68**	.15	-.22	.27*	.08	.18	.13	.11	.20	.02	-.06	.00	.01	.01	.17	.33**	-.11	1.00	3.79(.83)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$** [#]RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, VOI = Value Orientation Index

Table 2.42 Inter-Correlations, means and standard deviations of Appearance goal reference self-concordance ratings with all other study variables (N=19).

Appearance Goal reference (N = 19)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Means (SD)
1 Appearance Goal (RAI [#])	1.00																		.27(2.63)
2 Intrinsic orientation (VOI [#])	.31	1.00																	4.22(.61)
3 Extrinsic orientation (VOI)	.13	.25	1.00																3.36(.77)
4 Appearance Goal VOI	.27	.66**	-.36	1.00															.25(2.23)
5 Outgoing	.34	.02	.45*	-.42*	1.00														3.68(.65)
6 Reserved	.30	.06	-.12	.33	.00	1.00													2.80(.68)
7 Cooperative	.37	.44*	.43*	.03	.60**	.07	1.00												4.00(.73)
8 Antagonist	.24	.43*	.31	.29	.36	.54**	.27	1.00											3.32(.73)
9 Conscientious	.01	.36	.43*	-.01	.28	-.20	.59**	-.01	1.00										5.01(.75)
10 Disorganized	.27	.34	.50*	.04	.62**	.22	.37	.67**	.06	1.00									3.34(.90)
11 Anxious	-.17	-.09	-.08	-.24	-.16	-.46*	.12	-.64**	.07	-.58**	1.00								2.86(.63)
12 Calm	-.32*	-.09	-.34	-.10	.04	-.09	.02	-.24	.05	-.29	.31	1.00							2.63(.96)
13 Creative	.15	.23	.60**	-.31	.62**	-.43**	.66**	.14	.51*	.40*	.02	-.03	1.00						3.55(.60)
14 Conventional	.02	.27	.06	.12	-.06	.46**	.02	.20	.04	-.01	.05	.40*	-.07	1.00					2.92(.71)
15 Pessimistic	-.27	-.11	.30	-.20	.23	.04	.10	.26	.10	.38	-.33	.08	.15	-.15	1.00				5.79(3.56)
16 Optimistic	.40*	.31	.55**	-.10	.71**	.17	.63**	.46*	.25	.54**	-.11	-.19	.50*	.03	.41*	1.00			9.64(2.48)
17 Controlled	-.84**	-.40*	.06	-.53*	-.02	-.27	-.11	-.25	.11	-.26	.32	.47*	-.01	.01	.39	-.15	1.00		2.78(1.19)
18 Autonomous	.38	-.09	.26	-.34	.50*	.06	.50*	-.06	.20	-.03	.32	.29	.23	.09	.11	.39*	.18	1.00	3.73(.77)

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$** [#]RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, VOI = Value Orientation Index

Chapter 3

Phase 2 – Goal Feasibility

In Chapter 2, Phase 1 of the longitudinal study addressed the RQs from an SCM approach based on the SDT framework that combines organismic, existential and humanistic perspectives of human behaviour by focusing on the quality and desirability of personal goals. Phase 1 of the study addressed the following RQs viz., - a) What defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit? A few nested research questions centred around it viz., b) What role do personality, goal and motive orientations play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection? c) If goal selection is a skill, how can people's appropriate goal selections and choices be improved? d) Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

A review of theories in Chapter 1 and findings of Phase 1 in Chapter 2 provides insights into goal selection processes, the cognitive functions of goals and the importance of specific characteristics of goals (intrinsic and extrinsic types) for self-appropriate goal selections. In other words, Phase 1 of the study primarily focused on the desirable aspects of the goal through a) The matching of individuals' explicit and implicit potentials, b) An intervention of considering such motivations before goal selection and finally, c) The effects of such interventions on congruent and healthier goal selections for pursuit. The focus of the longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study is to capture the mechanisms that can enhance goal progress and contribute to the state of well-being proposed in Phase 1 for subsequent goal pursuit. In other words, selecting the right goals for oneself is just one part of the story, and most theories of goal selection research share the same implicit assumption that if we have selected our goals, we will persist with the goal until its completion. In real life, however, things can be far more complicated. For instance, our goal pursuits are often interrupted by conflicting intentions, temptations, lack of discipline, or external circumstances and conditions. Such interruptions in goal pursuit can be common for both employees at work, in terms of role conflicts and work-family demands that emerge in light

of work-from-home arrangements and gig work, and students in universities in terms of maintaining engagement and managing temptations to disengage with goal pursuits. There can be several other challenges that can occur during goal pursuits and can influence different aspects of individual self-regulation during goal-striving. In a broader theory of self-regulation and goal pursuit, the *do* goals refer to actions or behaviours that individuals aim to perform. These goals are typically more concrete and focused on specific tasks or outcomes. They involve observable actions that can be measured and completed (for instance, exercising two times a week or completing a project report).

Phase 2 – Goal Feasibility

A brief literature review and hypotheses development

The two most influential theoretical approaches to self-regulation during goal striving are Kuhl's *Theory of Action Control* and *Personality Systems Interactions Theory* (1984, 2001) and the *Mindset Theory of Action Phases Model*, which includes the concept of Implementation Intentions (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 1993). As previously discussed in the literature review in Chapter 1, both self-regulation theories during goal striving focus on two different processes: goal selection and goal pursuit. Specifically, the two theories propose that goal selection processes differ from goal pursuit, as they are determined by an assessment of a goal's desirability and feasibility. In contrast, goal-pursuit processes are primarily guided by volitional principles, focusing on the feasibility of the goal and determining when and how to act to achieve the goal or implement a chosen course of action for goal attainment.

In light of the above argument, the present chapter addresses the following research questions - What defines a self-appropriate goal selection and adaptive self-regulation for long-term pursuit? How can self-regulation strategies improve one's skill-fitting pursuits? After goal selection (the decisional phase), what processes facilitate improved goal pursuit (the post-decisional phase)? Finally, does goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices? Or do certain favourable individual strategies, when combined with concordant fit, enhance the quality of goal pursuit?

To address the above research questions and consider the feasibility of goal pursuit, the researcher adopts the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, along with the Implementation Intentions exercise, as the predominant framework for assessing self-regulation in goal pursuit. The choice of Mindset Theory and Implementation Intentions (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 1993) over Kuhl's Theory of Action Control is made by the researcher on the basis of certain gaps discussed below.

Kuhl's theory of action control lists several strategies to persist in goal pursuit while dealing with two distinct stages of goal pursuit – a) In managing distractions and temptations during goal striving and b) In persisting or bouncing back after setbacks or failures in goal achievement. Additionally, the theory lists several strategies of action control, such as 1) Attentional and encoding control – defined by focusing on and storing beneficial aspects of goal pursuit and realization; 2) Control over the environment - by removing distractions from the immediate environment during goal striving; 3) Motivational control – defined by imagining positive incentives of one's goals; 4) emotional control - defined by adapting to beneficial emotional states for goal realization.

Further, the Theory of Action Control, combined with the Theory of Personality Systems Interaction (PSI), suggests that the effective use of action control strategies depends on individuals' personality dispositions. Specifically, the PSI focuses on the disposition of action orientation (prospective type) vs state orientation (failure type) as a measure of individual competence to regulate their emotions, i.e., the ability to enhance positive emotions and decrease negative ones when facing goal-striving difficulties. Within this context, Kuhl considers the concept of action or self-control as what sustains persistence or helps *power through* goal-striving activities, especially when focusing on goals is tough in the presence of distractions or obstacles. This exhaustive process is what leads to a gradual depletion of willpower, as individuals have limits to their information processing and self-control capacities (Baumeister et al., 1998).

However, considerable research studies have failed to measure or replicate this ego-depletion hypothesis or the limits of self-control empirically and under certain conditions. For instance, Muraven and Slessareva (2003) found that ego-depletion may not occur when individuals are rewarded for performing well on a second task, while Tice et al. (2007)

found that a positive mood can offset ego-depletion in individuals. Similarly, Job, Dweck and Walton (2010) suggested that holding an implicit theory of willpower can act as a nonlimited resource thwarting ego depletion. Further, the empirical test of the postulates of the SCM framework (Chapter 2) can form the basis of an implicit theory of willpower that offsets ego depletion in individuals and may not combine with Kuhl's influential goal-striving approach. Such findings and combinations raise the questions of robustness in the empirical measurement and replication of ego-depletion effects for the present study.

Implementation intentions, derived from the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, “precipitate the ‘automation’ of a specified behaviour” (p. 472, Brandstätter & Hennecke, 2018). Implementation intentions are cognitive associations between planned action and an opportunity, such that they require a minimal cognitive capacity to initiate behavioural actions when specific opportunities arise. Such automaticity in initiating a behaviour can take a universal *if, then* format (If X opportunity occurs, then I will do Y). Recent Neuroscience research supports the claims of automaticity of behaviour through implementation intentions by suggesting that implementation intentions automatise response control and improve inhibition control by retrieving verbally encoded stimulus-response mapping rules (“*If I reach home early (opportunity), then I will exercise (action), in order to stay fit (goal)*”) (De Pretto, Rochat & Spierer, 2017).

Apart from specifying cognitive correlates of implementation intentions, several studies provide experimental evidence for the effectiveness of such intentions in high rates of goal realisation (Gollwitzer, Bayer, & McCulloch, 2005; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Sheeran et al., 2006; Webb & Sheeran, 2007) Previous research also links a reduction in or overcoming ego depletion in forming implementation intentions to greater persistence and improved subsequent performance (Webb & Sheeran, 2003). In addition, implementation intentions find empirical support in several organisational contexts, such as training and Human Resource Development (HRD) initiatives (Baldwin et al., 2017); to establish habits at work, thereby increasing employee engagement and efficiency (Trenz & Keith, 2024); improving team performance (Thürmer, Weiber & Gollwitzer, 2015); the importance of goal implementation intentions to entrepreneurship (Van Gelderen et al., 2018).

Therefore, the researcher chooses the Mindset Theory of Action Phases and corresponding implementation intentions exercise as the conscious, controlled regulation of behaviour in combination with self-concordant goals as the automatic processes of behavioural regulation goal selection and pursuit. Additionally, the present combination of the two theoretical frameworks (the SCM and Implementation Intentions) informs extant research on two separate motivational and volitional principles of goal selection and goal striving, respectively.

Based on the previous literature review, the following hypotheses have been formulated for Phase 2 of the present study, indicating a probable link between concordant goal selection and implementation intentions –

Hypothesis 6 – *The self-concordance scores of participants will go up for goals selected at time 2 compared to goals selected by the participants at time 1.*

The above hypothesis derives from the findings of several SCM studies that reported self-concordance ratings of goals go up after they have been selected for pursuit (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001; Koestner et al., 2002; Burke & Linley, 2007; Sheldon, 2014; Downes et al., 2017; Sheldon et al., 2019). Some scholars consider that higher self-concordance ratings of goals once they have been selected indicate a different phase of mindset associated with enhancing commitment and reducing doubts over the goal choice (Sheldon et al., 2019). A longitudinal nature of the present study affords the possibility to test Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7 – *A selection of intrinsic goals will be positively associated with goal progress and satisfaction with life.*

Hypothesis 8 – *Implementation intentions enhance the association of self-concordance to goal progress and satisfaction with life, such that the relationship is stronger and positive when implementation intentions are involved.*

Figure 3.1 presents a conceptual framework of Phase 2 of the study, and the next section discusses the method and participants involved in the study.

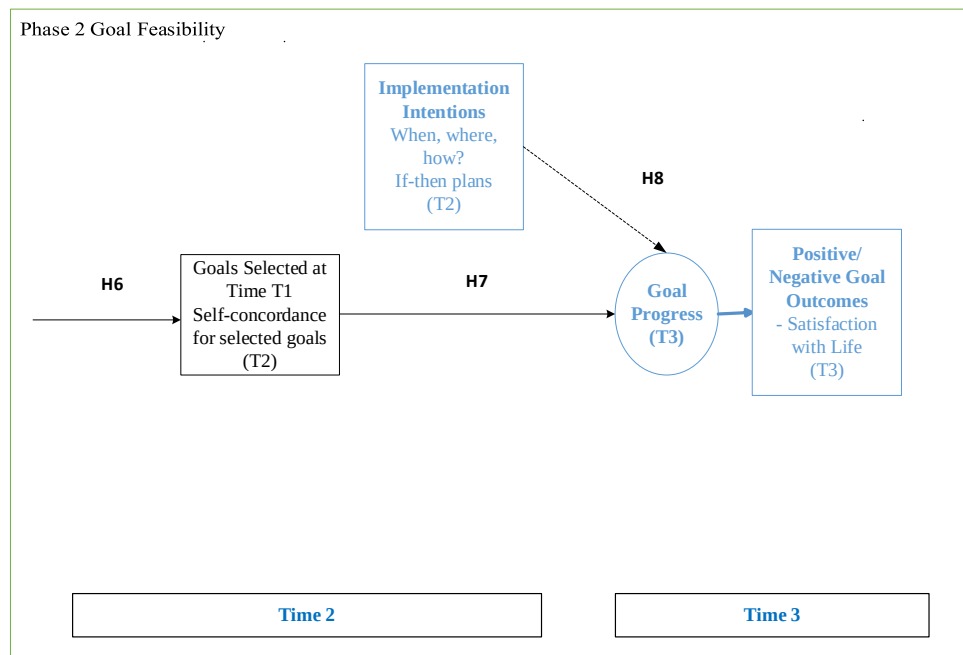


Figure 3.1 Proposed relationships and hypotheses development in Phase 2.

Method

Sample

Phase 2 of the study recruited a mixed sample of 202 participants out of the 407 participants in Phase 1, who continued to participate in the goal-pursuit stage of research. The mixed sample consisted of employees (N=100) and students (N=102), with (N=121) male and (N=81) female participants. Phase 2 consisted of two conditions: a) Participants (N=111) who consented to participate in the implementation intention exercise, and b) Participants (N=91) who did not participate in the implementation intention exercise, in continuation from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the study. **Table 3.1** lists the sample characteristics and implementation intentions exercise conditions.

Procedure

After selecting their goals at a time (T1) in Phase 1, participants were invited to engage in an implementation intentions exercise to analyse enhanced goal progress and test subsequent feelings of satisfaction with goal progress. An email correspondence was sent to all participants within a week of completing Phase 1 (N=407). The initial mail correspondence resulted in 205 participants agreeing to continue to Phase 2 of the study (a drop of approx. 49% in participation rate). The participants (N=205) in Phase 2 were provided with a simple paper-pencil exercise of implementation intentions at a time (T2).

Before the implementation intention exercise, the participants were presented with mixed information advocating **for** (“Some people suggest that making detailed plans regarding when, how and where you will act to progress on your goals is very helpful.”) and **against** the benefit of implementation plans for goal progress (“Alternatively, some people suggest that goal plans may constrain individuals or are not very helpful if you are clear about the goal you want to pursue.”). The details of the procedure for the implementation intentions exercise are presented below.

“Instructions - *Some people suggest that making detailed plans regarding when, how and where you will act to progress on your goals is very helpful. Implementation plans are conceptualized as when, where and how to implement the chosen goal. Alternatively, some people suggest that goal plans may constrain individuals or are not very helpful if you are clear about the goal you want to pursue.*

Based on the information above, please choose one of the two (yes/no) options for the question below –

Would you like to form implementation plans for achieving your two goal choices?

☐ Yes

☐ No.”

Participants who answered ‘yes’ were given the implementation planning exercise and were asked to report plans for when, where, and how to pursue the goal. Additionally,

they were also asked to report '*if-then*' contingencies for each goal in terms of two obstacles to goal pursuit and their solutions.

Participants who answered 'No' were asked to report their reasons for not forming implementation intentions for their goal pursuit. The choice of open-ended nature of the questions in Phase 2 prevents response bias in favour of implementation intentions and provides information regarding participant's intentions (Smith, Ntoumanis & Duda, 2010). For details on the implementation intentions exercise and the questionnaire for Phase 2 of the present research, please refer to **Appendix C**.

The implementation intentions exercise (T2) was followed by another rating of self-concordance for pursuing selected goals (T2). Three weeks after the implementation intentions exercise, the participants were requested to respond to a self-report assessment of goal progress and a second SWLS assessment (at T3). Out of 205 participants in Phase 2 only 202 participants responded to the complete assessment, with a loss of 3 participants who did not respond to complete Phase 2. Similar to the study by Koestner et al. (2002), Phase 2 of the present research assessed the use vs non-use of implementation intentions by the participants.

Independent Measures

Goal Selection Score (GSS) – For all participants (N=202), a Goal Selection Score (GSS) as an independent variable in Phase 2 of the study, is calculated for the two goals selected with values ranging from no intrinsic goals selected (0) or at least one intrinsic goal selected (1) to a maximum of two intrinsic goals selected (2).

Self-Concordance Scores (RAI) - Based on the work of Sheldon and Elliot (1999) and influenced by earlier work on the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2000), a 4-item scale is adapted to measure the extent to which respondents perceive their performance goals to be concordant with their developmental potentials or autonomous motivation. Using similar procedures in creating a person-mean-centring of an aggregate score (RAI) by subtracting the sum of extrinsic and introjected regulation items from the sum of intrinsic and identified items, the RAI scores ranged from -2.50 to +7.00.

Implementation Intentions Exercise - In the context of goal selection and goal pursuit, implementation intentions are specific plans that individuals create to facilitate the achievement of their goals. Implementation intentions are formulated as "*if-then*" statements that link situational cues with specific actions. Gollwitzer (1999) noted the difference between *goal intentions* and *implementation intentions*, suggesting that where the former induces an obligation through a sense of commitment to realise a goal, the latter is separate and subordinate to goal intentions. Specifically, implementation intentions suggest where, when and how of responses for goal progress.

Koestner *et al.* (2002), in a study and a separate meta-analysis, found a significant positive association between goal progress and the combination of self-concordance and implementation intentions. In a study of short-term goal pursuit among a sample of undergraduates (N = 106) attending McGill University, Canada, they asked students to list three goals for the weekend. The students were then randomly assigned to either an implementation intentions condition (involving a planning exercise) or a control condition. In both conditions, the students rated each of the three important weekend goals for self-concordance. Measuring goal progress and emotional changes at the end of the weekend, they confirmed a positive influence of both self-concordance and implementation intentions on goal progress but failed to find a direct benefit for implementation intentions.

Sample Items –

“Please report specific plans about *when, where and how* you will work towards any of your goals.

- When -
- Where -
- How –

Also, please specify any possible (*if*) obstacles/distractions and how will you *then* overcome them –

Obstacles –

Solutions – ”

Dependent Measures

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) - The most commonly used tool to measure life satisfaction is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Ed Diener and colleagues in 1985. A baseline measure of the Satisfaction with Life Scale score at time (T1) was taken from all participants during Phase 1 (N=407). At time T3, approximately three weeks after the implementation intentions exercise, a second Satisfaction with Life Scale score (at time T3) was recorded. The gap between recording the two SWLS scores was approximately 25 days.

Goal Progress - In a self-report measure of goal progress, the participants are asked to rate their goal progress through two questions using a 7-point Likert Scale. Individuals rated their progress from '1= no progress' to '7 =To a great extent'. The two-item measure had a Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha = .52$) in Phase 2 of the present study.

Refer to **Table 3.2** for inter-correlations, means, standard deviations and Cronbach Alphas of all the study variables.

Results

Hypothesis Testing

Testing of Hypothesis 6

To test Hypothesis 6 (*The self-concordance scores of participants will go up for goals selected at time 2 compared to goals selected by the participants at time 1*), a paired sample *t*-test was performed between the self-concordance scores (RAI) of the Phase 2 participants (N=202) on the pair of goals selected at time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2). The results of the analysis found self-concordance scores to go up from goals selected (GS1 and GS2) at time (T1) to goals selected (GS3 and GS4) at time (T2) (GS1, M = .60, SD = .492; GS3 M = 2.75, SD = 1.55) with $t(201) = 17.178$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.20$ 95% CI [1.02, 1.39] and (GS2 M = .79, SD = .410; GS4 M = 3.16, SD = 1.72) with $t(201) = 17.17$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.20$ 95% CI [1.02, 1.39] and $t(201) = 18.49$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.29$ 95% CI [1.11, 1.48], respectively. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 present the results of paired sample statistics and correlations and the results of paired sample *t*-test, respectively. The findings support Hypothesis H6, indicating that self-concordance for selected goals increases from the initial assessment to the assessment following goal selection, attributed to post-decisional cognition regarding goal reference ratings. **Table 3.3** presents the results of paired sample statistics and correlations, and **Table 3.4** shows the results of the paired sample *t*-test.

Testing of Hypothesis 7

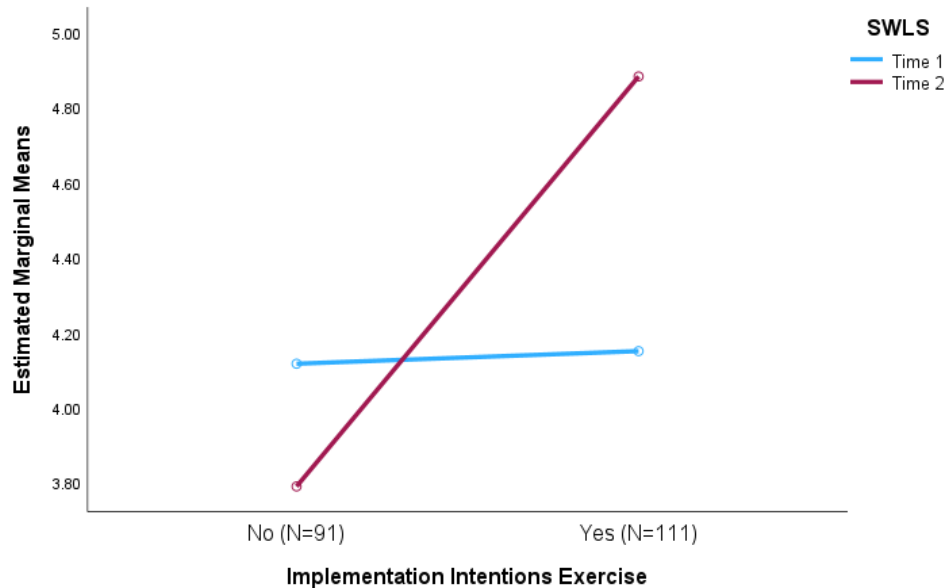
To investigate Hypothesis 7 (*that a selection of intrinsic goals will be positively associated with goal progress and satisfaction with life*), a simultaneous regression was conducted on the second SWLS measure (T3) using three variables: 1) First SWLS measure (T1) to capture changes in satisfaction with life scores; 2) The number of intrinsic goals chosen at (T1) in Phase 1 and, 3) Goal progress associated with the chosen goals in Phase 2.

In this analysis, the Time (T1) baseline SWLS score was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.519, p < 0.001$), representing the stability of the test-retest coefficient. The number of intrinsic goals selected was not significant ($\beta = 0.07, p = 0.41$), and Goal progress on goal 1 ($\beta = 0.183, p < 0.001$) [95% CI .09, 0.26] and goal 2 progress ($\beta = 0.276, p < 0.001$) [95% CI 0.18, 0.36] were respectively significant. The findings did not support Hypothesis H7, suggesting that selecting intrinsic goals for pursuit did not positively influence participants' perceptions of life satisfaction, even when controlling for the amount of goal progress made. Such results suggest that progress in achieving goals was more important for life satisfaction than the mere selection of intrinsic goals. **Tables 3.5** and **3.6** present the results of the simultaneous regression and descriptive statistics of the analysis, respectively.

Testing of Hypothesis 8

For the investigation of Hypothesis 8 (*Implementation intentions enhance the association of self-concordant goal choice to goal progress and SWB, such that the relationship is stronger and positive when implementation intentions are involved, regardless of goal progress*), a mixed method ANOVA (Split-plot ANOVA) was conducted with a 2×2 design (Implementation intention with two levels of yes or no and SLWS scores at time T1 and time T3) with progress on goal 1 (GP1) and progress on goal 2 (GP2) as covariates, incorporating both repeated measure effects and between-group effect. The results of the analysis indicated that both groups (Yes and No) combined show an increase in SLWS scores. Additionally, the pre-post SWLS were significantly different for participants who engaged in an implementation intentions exercise compared to those who did not. For the "No" group participants (N=91), the SWLS scores remained relatively stable between Time 1 and Time 2, with only a slight increase. However, for the "Yes" group participants (N=111), the SWLS scores increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2, indicating that participants who took part in the Implementation Intentions Exercise experienced a noticeable improvement in their life satisfaction over time. **Table 3.7** presents the means and standard deviations of the variables, and **Figure 3.2** presents an interaction plot of the implementation intentions exercise with the pre-post SWLS measure. The results partially support hypothesis 8 that implementation intentions are beneficial for enhancing overall SWB over time, regardless of the type of goals pursued and goal

progress. The finding indicates that the structure provided by implementation intentions can lead to an increase in life satisfaction by fostering consistent goal-directed behaviour.



*Note - Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Goal progress for Goal 1 = 3.79, Goal progress for Goal 2 = 4.11

Figure 3.2 An interaction plot of implementation intention exercise with a pre-post measure of Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (N=202).

Additionally, a Univariate Analysis (ANOVA) were conducted between RAI scores intrinsic (Learning, Relationship, Character goals scored as 1) and extrinsic (Grade/Money, Fame, Appearance goals scored as 0) goals selected and consent to implementation intentions exercise, respectively. The analysis was conducted to show the differential effects of the Implementation Intentions Exercise on intrinsic and extrinsic goals. **Table 3.8** and **Figure 3.3** present the results of the univariate analysis and suggest that for intrinsic goals, the "No" group had a higher positive outcome than the "Yes" group, indicating that implementation intentions might reduce the positive association of intrinsic goals with SWLS. Alternatively, for extrinsic goals, the "Yes" group showed slight improvement, while the "No" group had negative outcomes, suggesting that implementation intentions may have a neutral or slightly positive effect on extrinsic goal outcomes. Such findings are consistent with recent research on university students by Werner et al. (2016), where they found that pursuing highly concordant goals was

perceived as being more effortless than requiring more effort. Such previous findings support the reasons why participants with high self-concordant scores chose not to participate in the implementation intentions exercise in the present study.

Based on the results of the mixed method (Split-plot ANOVA) and univariate analysis (ANOVA), the present study finds a dual effect of implementation intentions, and the findings partially support Hypothesis 8. The result of mixed method analysis indicates that implementation intentions can effectively improve SWLS over time, possibly by fostering a structured approach to goal pursuit. However, the univariate analysis finds a differential impact of implementation intentions exercise based on goal type (intrinsic or extrinsic). Specifically, for intrinsic goals, implementation intentions might introduce external structuring that dilutes intrinsic motivation, potentially undermining the natural, self-driven association with SWLS. However, for extrinsic goals, implementation intentions may provide the necessary structure and planning, thereby slightly improving outcomes and SWLS.

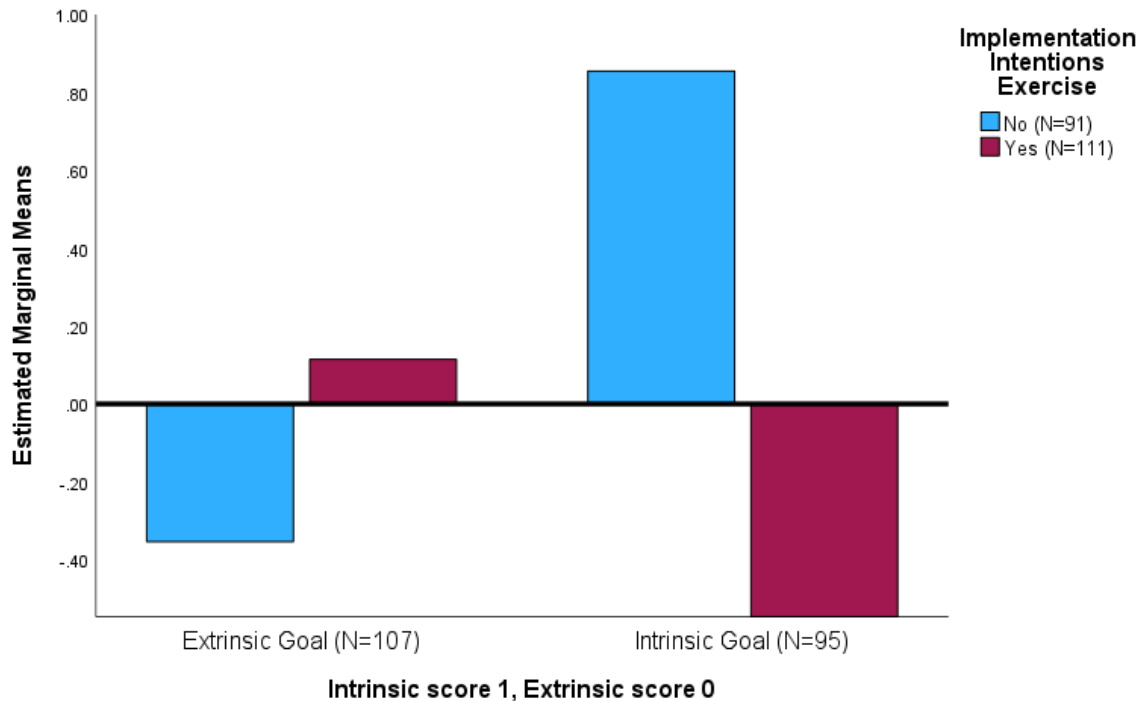


Figure 3.3 Estimated Marginal Means of RAI Scores for intrinsic and extrinsic goals vs implementation exercise (N=202).

Discussion

The longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study builds from the RQs left unanswered in Phase 1 of the study. Within psychology and organisational behaviour science, goal selection and pursuit behaviours are predominantly examined through parallel constraint satisfaction processes, particularly in the context of neural network models. These models describe how human cognitive systems integrate diverse inputs simultaneously, enabling individuals to form stable beliefs or make decisions that satisfy multiple constraints or influences (Kunda & Thagard, 1996; Read, Vanman & Miller, 1997; Glöckner & Hodges, 2010; Jekel, Glöckner & Bröder, 2018). In Phase 1 of the present study, different goal contents were examined, representing various constraints where each goal (node) corresponds to individual concepts (nodes) of self, values, personality, and motives. The links between these nodes indicate positive and negative associations with the goal.

In a measure of goal concordance, positive links between the nodes support an autonomous and intrinsically driven goal choice, while negative links indicate conflict for the goal choice. In other words, Phase 1 of the present research aimed to identify self-appropriate goals for individuals by integrating situational constraints and personal values. This approach sought to create a behavioural strategy that influences an optimal satisfaction of basic psychological needs in goal pursuit.

The longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study builds on the self-appropriate goals selected by the participants in Phase 1. It identifies the factors that can hinder goal pursuit or achievement and implements an intention exercise to mitigate these limiting factors. In doing so, Phase 2 of the present research addressed the following RQs - What defines a self-appropriate goal selection and adaptive self-regulation for long-term pursuit? How can self-regulation strategies improve one's skill-fitting pursuits? After goal selection (the decisional phase), what process facilitates an improved goal pursuit (post-decisional phase)? Finally, does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices? Or do some of the favourable individual strategies, combined with concordant fit, enhance the quality of goal pursuit? To address the above RQs, Phase 2 combines the

two theoretical frameworks, the SCM, based on SDT and Implementation Intentions, based on the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, to test three hypotheses.

The results of the present study on Hypothesis 6 find support in earlier research, indicating that self-concordant goal pursuit promotes commitment to the goal, increases effort, and predicts higher goal progress (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Koestner et al., 2002; Koestner et al., 2008). Although Hypothesis 6 does not measure goal commitment directly through a self-report, the hypothesis tests the findings obtained by all prior self-concordance research. For instance, extant SCM research has found that participants' goal concordance ratings increased after selecting their goals (Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2019). This increase from initial self-concordance ratings is largely attributed to the post-decisional mindset phase or the beginning of an implementational mindset. The implementational mindset is characterised by a post-decisional commitment enhancement to a goal and reduces dissonance-producing information. Such a mindset can take shape when an individual has finally selected a goal and, irrespective of its desirability in the pre-decisional phase, sets out to formulate plans for goal achievement. At this stage, when formulating plans and action strategies, we can observe goal commitment through increased self-concordance ratings.

Further, a reduction in cognitive dissonance related to the selected goal's desirability escalates commitment to pursuing the goal. Indeed, such escalations in goal commitment can be measured directly through self-reports, but the findings of hypothesis 6 suggest self-concordance ratings of a goal after it has been selected can also provide an indirect insight into goal commitment. Such findings also inform extant SCM research that elicited mean self-concordance ratings that are likely higher than they were initially, which continued the tradition of assessing goal concordance *after* the person has selected a goal. However, findings in Phase 1 successfully show that a *before* intervention of self-concordance helps select more concordant and healthier intrinsic goals. Thus, the present Phase 2 findings of Hypothesis 6 and earlier Phase 1 findings in Hypothesis 5 can provide an answer to why all prior SCM research persisted in assessing self-concordance ratings after goals have been selected. In addition, the findings of Hypothesis 6 also reveal the role of different motivational and volitional mindsets in pursuit of a goal.

The findings of Hypothesis 7 testing further reveal two distinctive mindsets at work during goal desirability and selection (Phase 1) and goal feasibility and pursuit (Phase 2). Specifically, the results of Phase 2 point to the dominance of the implementational mindset as satisfaction with life scores was more related to goal progress and less to the intrinsic nature of the goal selected. Since the SWLS is a cognitive evaluation rather than a feeling-based assessment, it can effectively capture the relationship between implementation intentions and action outcomes in terms of goal progress. This approach focuses on the effectiveness of action strategies, independent of whether the goals are perceived as intrinsically or extrinsically valuable. Such findings can also explain why people persist in doing something they may not like doing, such as persisting in odd jobs and career choices assigned by others. Such findings inform extant personal goal selection research to focus on the value of *feeling* what they want rather than what we *think* we want.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the present study generated a wealth of information on goal selection and pursuit. However, the results of Phase 2 are more focused on synthesising these pieces of information into a cohesive framework that is useful for research. The results of Hypothesis 8 raise mixed evidence for the combination of implementational plans with self-concordant goal selection. The findings suggest that while implementation intentions exercise can enhance overall SWLS, its impact on the association between goal choice (intrinsic or extrinsic) and SWLS is not uniformly positive. The present study found a positive influence of implementation intentions exercise with extrinsic goals or less self-concordant pursuits and a potentially detrimental influence for intrinsic goals, where excessive structuring might interfere with the intrinsic motivation driving positive outcomes. This nuanced outcome indicates that implementation intentions work best when aligning with the nature of the goal—acting as a beneficial aid for goals that need more external reinforcement but potentially dampening the impact of goals already driven by internal motivations. The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research, where Chatzisarantis and Hagger (2010) found that socializing goals that aligned less with intrinsic motivation (e.g., extrinsic tasks) benefited more from structured approaches like implementation intentions. Additionally, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) found that intrinsic goals led to higher SWB when pursued with an autonomy-supportive interpersonal context and without heavy external structuring, while extrinsic goals

benefited from added planning and external support. The findings of phase 2 imply that integrating implementation intentions into the goal-setting practices of SCM could be a valuable strategy for enhancing goal achievement and overall well-being for more controlled and extrinsic satisfaction based on outcomes. However, the present study also suggests that while implementation intentions are effective tools for structured goal attainment, their influence on satisfaction with life and goal progress depends on the nature of the goal and the individual's source of motivation. Where a controlling implementation intention exercise can enhance outcomes for extrinsically motivated goals, it may diminish the benefits of pursuing intrinsic goals due to a reduction in autonomy-supportive context. This combination entails a closer examination of individual states of goal selection and a more expansive approach to measuring goal pursuit. The findings of Phase 2 offer insights to learners, trainers and mindset contexts in examining optimal goal selections and well-being in goal pursuit. The next chapter discusses the relative importance of reconciliation and integration of the two perspectives of self-concordance and implementation intentions, respectively.

Table 3.1 Sample characteristics for Phase 2 of the study.

Condition - Implementation Intentions Exercise			
Participants	Yes	No	Total
Employee	N = 55	N = 45	100
Student	N = 56	N = 46	102
Total			202
Male	N = 74	N = 47	121
Female	N = 37	N = 44	81
Total			202

Table 3.2 Inter-correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach Alphas of the Study Variables (N=202).

		Construct	Gender	Age (Years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Participant Data	Gender		--								
	Age (Years)		-.10	--							
Self-concordance	1. #RAI for goal references	.04	-.02	--	(.57) ^a (.56)						
	2. #RAI for goals selected	-.05	-.10	.07	--	(.52) ^a (.53)					
	3. #SWLS (T1)	-.00	.02	.16*	.05	--	(.71)				
#SWB	4. #SWLS (T3)	-.08	.13	.01	.23**	.53**	--	(.78)			
Goal Progress	5. #GP1	.01	-.11	-.02	-.12	.04	.33**	--	(.52)		
	6. #GP2	-.00	-.08	.06	.01	.07	.41**	.27**	--	(.52)	
Means			1.40	27.28	2.53	2.21	4.13	4.38	3.79	4.11	
SD			4.91	6.00	2.01	2.13	1.11	1.16	1.45	1.33	

****Significant at $p < .01$, *Significant at $p < .05$**

RAI = Relative Autonomy Index, SWB = Satisfaction with life score, SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Score, T1 = Time 1, T3 = Time 3, GP = Goal Progress.

Bold figures in the parenthesis include Cronbach Alpha values and parenthesis values with ()^a include McDonald's Omega values.

Table 3.3 Paired sample statistics and correlations (N=202).

N = 202		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Correlation
Pair 1	Goal Selected at T2 (GS3)	2.75	1.55	.10	-.35**
	Goal Selected at T1 (GS1)	.60	.492	.03	
Pair 2	Self-concordance ratings for T2 (GS3)	2.60	1.30	.09	.04
	Self-concordance ratings for T1 (GS1)	1.84	2.90	.20	
Pair 3	Goal Selected T2 (GS4)	3.16	1.72	.120	-.14*
	Goal Selected T1 (GS2)	.79	.410	.029	
Pair 4	Self-concordance ratings for T2 (GS4)	2.71	2.84	.199	.016
	Self-concordance ratings for T1 (GS2)	3.25	2.89	.203	

****Significant at $p < .01$ *Significant at $p < .05$**

Table 3.4 Results of the paired sample test (N=202).

N = 202	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	<i>d</i>	95% Confidence Interval		<i>t</i>	df
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	2.15	1.78	.1	1.20	1.02	1.38	17.17**	201
GS3(T2) – GS1(T1)								
Pair 2	.75	3.13	.22	.242	.10	.38	3.44**	201
Self-concordance (RAI) ratings for GS3-GS1								
Pair 3	2.37	1.82	.12	1.29	1.11	1.48	18.49**	201
GS4-GS2								
Pair 4	-.53	4.02	.28	-.13	-.27	.00	-1.90	201
Self-concordance (RAI) ratings for GS4-GS2								

**Significant at $p < .01$ *Significant at $p < .05$

Table 3.5 Simultaneous Regression Analysis Predicting SWLS at Time 3 (N=202).

Predictor	B	SE	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI for B
(Constant)	0.33	0.31	—	1.03	0.30	[-0.300, 0.960]
Time 1 SWLS (SWLS1_mean)	0.51	0.05	0.49	9.46**	< 0.001	[0.410, 0.626]
Number of Intrinsic Goals (GCSS)	0.07	0.09	0.04	0.81	0.41	[-0.105, 0.253]
Goal Progress (Goal 1) (GP1)	0.18	0.04	0.22	4.24**	< 0.001	[0.098, 0.268]
Goal Progress (Goal 2) (GP2)	0.27	0.04	0.31	5.86**	< 0.001	[0.183, 0.369]

Table 3.6 Descriptive Statistics of variables in simultaneous regression (N=202).

Variable	N	Mean	SD
SWLS at Time 3 (T3)	202	4.33	1.16
SLWS at Time 1 (T1)	202	4.13	1.11
Number of Intrinsic goals selected (GSS)	202	1.20	0.66
Goal Progress (GP1)	202	3.79	1.45
Goal Progress (GP2)	202	4.11	1.33

Table 3.7 Means and standard deviations of implementation intentions exercise with SWLS at Time 1 and Time 3 (N=202).

Measure	Implementation Intentions Exercise	Mean	SD
SWLS (T1)	No (N=91)	4.06	1.08
	Yes (N=111)	4.19	1.13
SWLS (T3)	No (N=91)	3.65	.91
	Yes (N=111)	4.99	.98

Table 3.8 Intrinsic and extrinsic goals and means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of RAI scores in implementation intentions exercise conditions (N=202).

Implementation Intentions Exercise Conditions (N=202)			
Goals selected	Yes	No	Total
Extrinsic content	N = 60 [M=.11, SD=2.51]	N = 47 [M=-.35, SD=2.94]	107
Intrinsic contents	N = 51 [M=-.54, SD=2.89]	N = 44 [M=.85, SD=2.65]	95
Total			202

Table 3.9 Sample characteristics and means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of RAI scores in implementation intentions exercise conditions (N=202).

Implementation Intentions Exercise Conditions			
Participants	Yes	No	Total
Employee	N = 55 [M=1.70, SD=2.05]	N = 45 [M=2.01, SD=2.49]	100
Student	N = 56 [M=2.30, SD=1.80]	N = 46 [M=2.92, SD=2.10]	102
Total			202
Male	N = 74 [M=2.08, SD=1.79]	N = 47 [M=2.68, SD=2.29]	121
Female	N = 37 [M=1.85, SD=2.23]	N = 44 [M=2.25, SD=2.39]	81
Total			202

Chapter 4

General Discussion

Researchers on personal goal selection and pursuit have long examined why and how individuals choose specific goals and the methods they use to achieve them. The choice and pursuit of goals is a fundamental aspect of human behaviour, driving individuals to achieve personal aspirations, fulfil obligations, and effectively navigate the complexities of everyday life. However, not all goals are pursued with equal motivations, nor are all goals equally likely to be achieved. The effectiveness of goal pursuit hinges on several psychological factors, such as the choice of the right goals for self-expression and strategies for dealing with obstructions and conflicts in pursuit of the goal. Such conflicts have been identified as a goal-striving process in research and have subsequently gathered momentum as remedial activities for individuals pursuing goals once selected.

The aim of the study taken together in the two phases represents an attempt to provide a successful framework for both goal selection (desirability) and goal pursuit (feasibility). The present study also tests two interventions based on theoretical frameworks, offering insights into healthier goal selection and effective goal pursuit. In summary, through a longitudinal study, the researcher seeks to establish an upward spiral in goal pursuit by employing various interventions that address both the desirability and feasibility of goals. An upward spiral here is a metaphor for a continuous process of personal growth or advancement and is theoretically considered a part of an organismic valuing process in unlocking an individual's full potential or becoming a fully functioning individual (Rogers, 1962, 1964). In doing so, we find two different mechanisms of motivation and volition principles that apply to two separate stages of goal selection and goal pursuit. Where other theories of goal pursuit (e.g., goal-setting approaches, Locke, 2002; socio-cognitive theories, Bandura & Cervone, 1986) focus on either one of the two stages, the thrust of extant research has always been on the improvements in goal striving in outcomes or the *performance mode* of tangible results, irrespective of the nature and content of the goal choice.

The present study aimed to examine personal goals of different intrinsic (such as learning, relationship and character goals) and extrinsic (such as grade/money, fame and appearance goals) contents and their desirable qualities through a measure of goal concordance. The examination of goal desirability was followed by an opportunity to select desirable goals and pursue them for three weeks to measure satisfaction with success on their goal progress. Additionally, an intervention mechanism was tested during goal selection to examine potential differences in goal selection. Subsequently, once goals were selected, participants were invited to enhance their goal striving through an additional exercise focused on implementation intentions. This enhancement of goal striving is designed to occur during the implementational mindset phase, where once individuals have decided to act, they become more sensitive to information that helps implement behaviours through their consistent actions.

What defines a self-appropriate goal selection

The SDT, as a macro framework of motivation and personality, addresses both the quality of motivation (the "why") and the content (the "what") of goals in relation to subjective well-being. In addition, considering the desirability of a goal, the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) distinctively matches personal goals and individuals' deeper personality processes, such as underlying values, motives, and personality traits, to the content of goals they espouse. Such matching was hypothesised to reduce self-ascription errors, improve access to information about oneself, and enhance commitment and well-being in the pursuit of a desirable future state.

Phase 1 of the present study used a self-regulatory SCM mechanism and a goal-oriented approach to how people select personal goals for long-term pursuit and tested the relationship of a concordant goal selection with different types of goals (intrinsic and extrinsic), value orientations, personality traits, implicit motives components of fear and hope and finally the goals selected for pursuit. The researcher hypothesised to find a pattern of associations between self-concordance and other variables consistent with previous findings and establish self-concordance as a potent measure of a goal's desirability and subsequent selection of goals based on the deeper aspects of self. Based on the previous

findings, the present study also hypothesised that intrinsic goals endorsing intrinsic values of personal growth, relationship, and community are much healthier for personal goal pursuit than extrinsic goal achievements of fame, money, status, and appearance.

The partial support for a greater self-concordance for intrinsic goals with the Value Orientations Index (VOI, Hypothesis 1A) is consistent with previous research that intrinsically oriented individuals expect to enjoy and benefit from selecting and pursuing intrinsic goals rather than extrinsic goals (Sheldon et al., 2004; Sheldon et al., 2003; Sheldon et al., 2019).

The results of Phase 1 of the present study do not find support for similar congruent patterns of intrinsic vs extrinsic goal types with personality traits and motives. The inability of the study to isolate a unique motivational core for the association of intrinsic vs extrinsic goals with different dimensions of personality traits and motives finds support from some sections of research (Baumert et al., 2017; Costantini, Sarauili & Perugini, 2020). For instance, a set of goals influenced exclusively by the value orientation index and no other sets of personality and motive traits indicate an *emergence theory* of personality (Digman, 1990). According to this theory, personality is a complex system where traits are interconnected and do not operate in isolation. This view, supported by Baumert et al. (2017), suggests that personality traits are interconnected and influence behaviour as part of a larger, integrated system rather than acting independently. More implicit measures of personality (such as PSE) rather than explicit self-report-based measures can access the integrated personality processes.

Similarly, mediational tests to capture the signal of self-concordance for reference goals, values orientations, personality traits, and motives to personal goals selected by the participants did not find any conclusive evidence. Although personality trait and motive theories do not postulate adaptive or orgasmically congruent dimensions, the present study did expect value orientation and hope and fear components of motives to signal or act as the underlying mechanisms for the selection of more concordant goals. The researcher identified a structural equation modelling approach to the complexity of variables that

focuses on the non-linearity property between a large number of relationships for future research and limitations, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, the results of the tests of Hypotheses 2 to 5 support the primary theoretical and methodological innovation in the timing of the self-concordance assessment, established in Phase 1 of the present study. In particular, the SCM model proposes a new method of helping students or employees make better goal selections (Sheldon et al., 2019). This method involves asking participants to reflect on their motivations for choosing goals prior to the goal selection process, in contrast to the traditional approach of assessing self-concordance after goals have been selected.

In answering why such a method is beneficial, the SCM suggests that explicit reflections on one's motivations for pursuing various goal alternatives can tap into how they *feel* (Fast, System 1 processes) about what they *think* (Slow, System 2 processes) they want. Such information is crucial because, objectively, it can be quite hard to think about all aspects of one's personality systems, which can be further compounded by motivational cluelessness or ignorance under certain situational (over-loaded, supportive or thwarting contexts) and personal (stressed or distracted) constraints.

In conclusion, Phase 1 of the present study effectively assessed goal desirability (the "what" and "why") by aligning individuals' deeper developmental potentials with intrinsic goal content. The findings from manipulating the timing of the self-concordance assessment before and after goal selection align with the theoretical principles of the Mindset Theory of Action Phases, which suggest that goal selection processes are integral to a deliberative mindset for evaluating the desirability of goals. Meanwhile, considerable research on the goal-setting approach and personal goals measure goal commitment or concordance in the implementational mindset phase, characterised by goal enactment (feasibility), *after* the goals have been selected.

Amplifying small actions with big benefits – The role of Implementation Intentions

A longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study explores the differences in the motivational and volitional aspects of goal selection and pursuit, addressing how

individuals can effectively pursue their goals. It also provides implications for long-term goal-concordant pursuit in relation to goal progress and subjective well-being. The longitudinal Phase 2 of the present study builds on the self-appropriate goals selected by the participants in Phase 1. It identifies the factors that can hinder goal pursuit or achievement and implements an intention exercise to mitigate these limiting factors.

The results of the present study on Hypothesis 6 find support in earlier research, indicating that self-concordant goal pursuit promotes commitment to the goal, increases effort, and predicts higher goal progress (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Koestner et al., 2002; Koestner et al., 2008). Although Hypothesis 6 does not measure goal commitment directly through a self-report, the hypothesis tests the findings obtained by all prior self-concordance research. For instance, extant SCM research has found that participants' goal concordance ratings increased after selecting their goals (Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2019). This increase from initial self-concordance ratings is largely attributed to the post-decisional mindset phase or the beginning of an implementational mindset. The implementational mindset is characterised by a post-decisional commitment enhancement to a goal and reduces dissonance-producing information. Such a mindset can take shape when an individual has finally selected a goal and, irrespective of its desirability in the pre-decisional phase, sets out to formulate plans for goal achievement. At this stage, we can observe goal commitment for the goal selected through increased self-concordance ratings while formulating plans and action strategies in Phase 2.

Further, a reduction in cognitive dissonance related to the selected goal's desirability escalates commitment to pursuing the goal. Indeed, such escalations in goal commitment can be measured directly through self-reports, but the findings of hypothesis 6 suggest self-concordance ratings of a goal after it has been selected can also provide an indirect insight into goal commitment. Such findings also inform extant SCM research that elicited mean self-concordance ratings that are likely higher than they were initially, which continued the tradition of assessing goal concordance after the person has selected a goal. However, findings in Phase 1 successfully show that a before intervention of self-concordance helps select more concordant and healthier intrinsic goals. Thus, the present Phase 2 findings of Hypothesis 6 and earlier Phase 1 findings in Hypothesis 5 can provide

an answer to why all prior SCM research persisted in assessing self-concordance ratings after goals have been selected. In addition, the findings of Hypothesis 6 also reveal the role of different motivational and volitional mindsets in pursuit of a goal.

The findings of Hypothesis 7 testing further reveal two distinctive mindsets at work during goal desirability and selection (Phase 1) and goal feasibility and pursuit (Phase 2). Specifically, the results of Phase 2 point to the dominance of the implementational mindset as satisfaction with life scores was more related to goal progress and less to the intrinsic nature of the goal selected. Since the SWLS is a cognitive evaluation rather than a feeling-based assessment, it can effectively capture the relationship between implementation intentions and action outcomes in terms of goal progress. This approach focuses on the effectiveness of action strategies, independent of whether the goals are perceived as intrinsically or extrinsically valuable. Such findings can also explain why individuals may persist in activities they do not enjoy, such as continuing with odd jobs or career choices assigned by others.

The results of Phase 2, however, present mixed evidence regarding the combination of implementation plans with self-concordant goal selection. The findings suggest that while implementation intentions exercise can enhance overall SWLS, its impact on the association between goal choice (intrinsic or extrinsic) and SWLS is not uniformly positive. The present study found a positive influence of implementation intentions exercise with extrinsic goals or less self-concordant pursuits and a potentially detrimental influence for intrinsic goals, where excessive structuring might interfere with the intrinsic motivation driving positive outcomes. This nuanced outcome indicates that implementation intentions work best when aligning with the nature of the goal—acting as a beneficial aid for goals that need more external reinforcement but potentially dampening the impact of goals already driven by internal motivations. The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research, where Chatzisarantis and Hagger (2010) found that socialising goals that aligned less with intrinsic motivation (e.g., extrinsic tasks) benefited more from structured approaches like implementation intentions.

Additionally, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) found that intrinsic goals led to higher SWB when pursued with an autonomy-supportive interpersonal context and without heavy external structuring, while extrinsic goals benefited from added planning and external support. The findings of phase 2 imply that integrating implementation intentions into the goal-setting practices of SCM could be a valuable strategy for enhancing goal achievement and overall well-being for more controlled and extrinsic satisfaction based on outcomes. However, the present study also suggests that while implementation intentions are effective tools for structured goal attainment, their influence on satisfaction with life and goal progress depends on the nature of the goal and the individual's source of motivation. Where a controlling implementation intention exercise can enhance outcomes for extrinsically motivated goals, it may diminish the benefits of pursuing intrinsic goals due to a reduction in autonomy-supportive context. This combination entails a closer examination of individual states of goal selection and a more expansive approach to measuring goal pursuit. The findings of Phase 2 offer insights to learners, trainers and mindset contexts in examining optimal goal selections and well-being in goal pursuit.

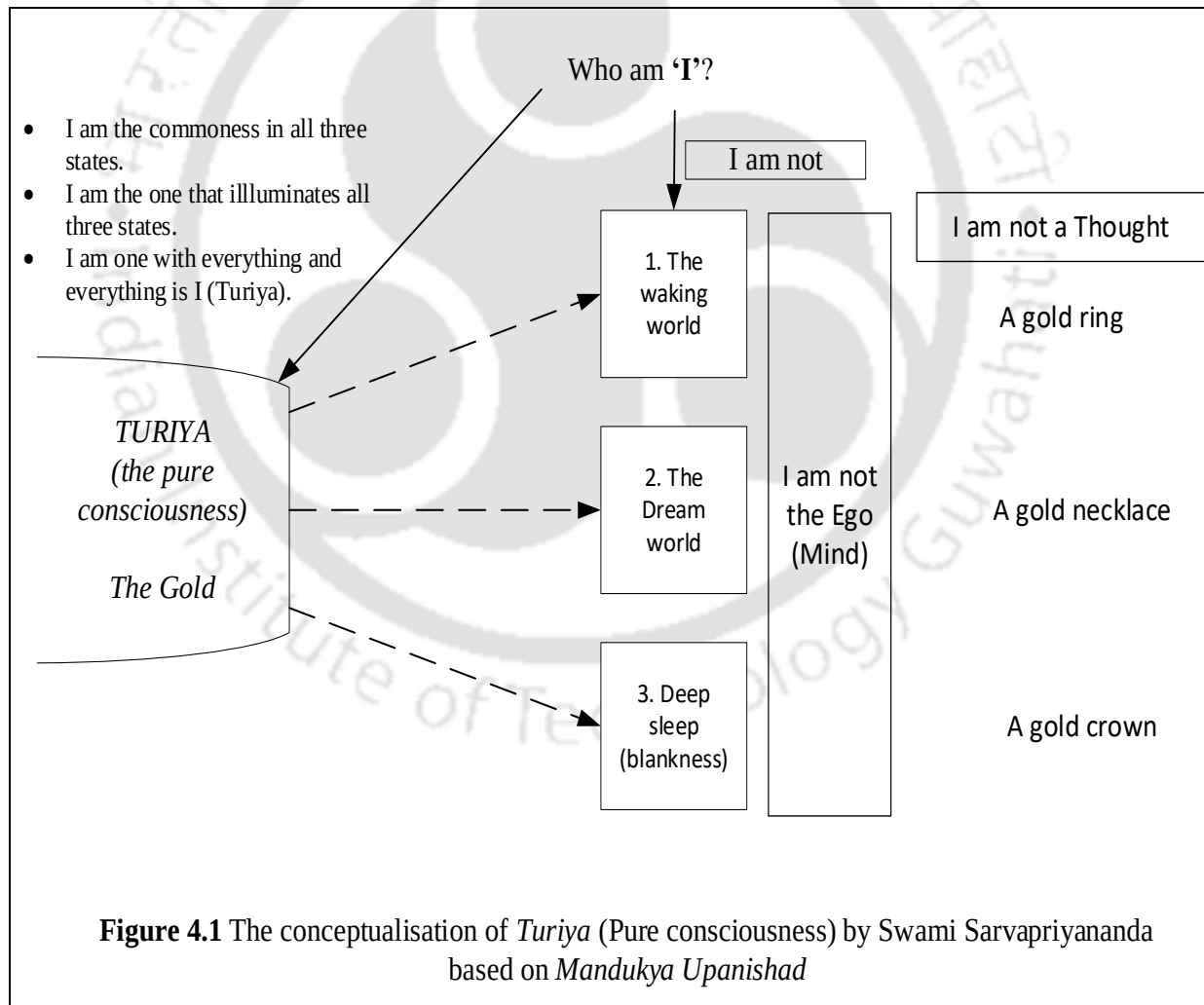
Finally, the discussion of the results finds theoretical support from the ancient Indian knowledge system of the *Mandukya Upanishad*, which suggests that implicit cognitive representations (the soul) are neither accessible nor observable; instead, they are inferred through and inform both conscious and subconscious states of existence.

The search for oneself – lesson from an ancient Indian knowledge system on consciousness

The Upanishads represent the highest philosophical teachings of the Vedas and are among the most ancient texts known to humanity. Traditionally, there are around 108 Upanishads, of which approximately ten are designated as principal Upanishads. These include *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prashna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Chhandogya*, and *Brihadaranyaka*. Indian philosopher *Adi Shankaracharya* selected these ten principal Upanishads around 1300 years ago for his commentaries and interpretations (Easwaran, 2007). As an influential spiritual guru, *Adi Shankaracharya's* commentaries on these Upanishads established them as central texts in ancient *Vedanta* philosophy and

contributed to the rise of the *Vedanta* movement worldwide. Among all the major Upanishads, the *Mandukya Upanishad* is the smallest, yet it is regarded as one of the most challenging. For individuals seeking liberation (*Moksha*) or spiritual enlightenment, the *Mandukya Upanishad* alone provides sufficient guidance and insight. The *Mandukya Upanishad* consists of just 12 verses, yet it explores profound themes related to the nature of reality and consciousness. As a part of *Atharvaveda*, the *Mandukya Upanishad* is revered for its directness and clarity in discussing the concept of 'who am I'.

Figure 4.1 presents a graphical description of the relationship informing individuals on the question of 'who am I' as described in the *Mandukya Upanishad* illustrated by the Swami Sarvapriyananda.



The *Mandukya Upanishad* is often studied alongside the *Mandukya Karika*, a commentary by *Gaudapada* (a prominent figure in the *Advaita-Vedanta* tradition). This commentary further explore the concepts and philosophy of non-duality (*Advaita*).

Adi Shankaracharya, one of the most influential philosophers in Hinduism, wrote a detailed commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad* and *Gaudapada's Karika*. Following the commentaries of such gurus, *Madhvacharya*, the proponent of the *Dvaita* (dualistic) school of *Vedanta*, also provided a commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. His perspective offers a different viewpoint, emphasising the distinction between the individual self and the ultimate reality. These commentaries offer deep insights into the philosophical and spiritual teachings of the *Mandukya Upanishad* (Swami Nikhilananda, 1952).

At its core, the *Mandukya Upanishad* explores the three states of consciousness: waking (*Jagrat*), dreaming (*Swapna*), and deep sleep (*Sushupti*), and introduces a fourth state, *Turiya*, which transcends these three states. The waking state involves direct interaction with the external world through our senses. The dreaming state involves the mind's projection of the internal world during sleep. The deep sleep state is characterised by a lack of distinct experiences, where the mind is at rest but not consciously aware. The *Turiya* state transcends the three states of consciousness. It represents pure consciousness and the realisation of non-dual reality. The *Mandukya Upanishad* promotes self-realisation by guiding individuals to understand and transcend the ordinary states of consciousness, ultimately realising the true nature of the self (*Atman* - Soul) and its unity with the ultimate reality (*Brahman*). It postulates certain ways by which individuals can –

1. **Understand Consciousness States:** Examining the waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states, the *Mandukya Upanishad* encourages individuals to recognise the commonness (YOU) as the perceiver of all three states and that our everyday experiences are fleeting and transient.
2. **Realise the Non-Duality:** The text emphasises that *Atman* (soul) and *Brahman* (ultimate reality) are one, which promotes the understanding that all distinctions between the three states are mere illusions. This realisation leads to the experience

of non-dual consciousness, which reminds us that our true essence is beyond material and mental confines and is rooted in an infinite and unchanging reality.

3. ***Turiya*** (Translated as - The Fourth State) lies beyond the above three states and is the state of pure consciousness or the ultimate reality. *Turiya* is described as non-dual, timeless, and formless, transcending waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states. It is the consciousness that illuminates the three temporary states. The *Turiya* state illuminates all reality in the same way that gold illuminates various ornaments, such as rings, necklaces, and crowns. Just as there can be no ornaments without gold, *Turiya* state sheds light on the three states of consciousness, representing the 'T' that is present in all three states, akin to gold's presence in all ornaments.

In Western philosophy, especially within Post-Enlightenment thought, mind and consciousness are often treated as synonymous or highly interconnected aspects of cognition. The *mind* is frequently viewed as a manifestation of conscious thought and self-awareness, an idea traceable back to thinkers like Descartes, who famously declared, "I think, therefore I am" (*Cogito, ergo sum*). For Descartes and his intellectual descendants, consciousness becomes a defining feature of the mind, an intrinsic aspect of human self-awareness and mental life.

In Indian philosophy, the mind (*manas*) and consciousness (*chit* or *chaitanya*) are often regarded as separate components within the broader framework of self. The *Advaita Vedanta* tradition, for instance, proposes a clear demarcation between the Mind (*Manas*), as the mental apparatus responsible for perception, emotions, and cognitive processing. The mind is active, constantly engaged with sensory data and thoughts, and is considered transient and mutable. Whereas, intellect (*Buddhi*) is often associated with higher-level reasoning and decision-making, distinct from the mind's sensory and emotional functions. Finally, consciousness (*Atman*) is seen as an independent, foundational entity that illuminates the mind. The mind is transient, while consciousness (*Atman* or *chit*) is constant and intrinsic to the nature of existence, a view that emphasises

consciousness as a pure witnessing presence, rather than a function or property of mental activity. The *Mandukya Upanishad* discusses this multilayered model (a three-part structure) of human cognition, distinguishing between the sensory mind, intellectual faculties, and the witnessing consciousness.

Research on the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) can gain valuable insights from the *Mandukya Upanishad*, especially regarding its exploration of consciousness, purpose, and alignment with one's true self. The key points of intersection between the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) and the *Mandukya Upanishad* are described below:

1. **An alignment with inner purpose:** The concept of self-concordance emphasises pursuing goals that align with intrinsic interests and authentic values, leading to higher motivation and well-being. The *Mandukya Upanishad* explores consciousness states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and *Turiya*- pure consciousness) to show how our awareness relates to a deeper understanding of self beyond superficial layers. Future research on the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) can incorporate the concept of *Turiya*, suggesting that a deeper alignment with one's goals may improve motivation, resilience, and satisfaction. This alignment, while challenging to measure, could play a crucial role in enhancing overall well-being.
2. **The Integration of Consciousness States:** The *Upanishad*'s depiction of different states of consciousness and their interconnectedness hints that self-alignment is complex and layered. In self-concordance research, considering how individuals experience and integrate these multiple layers of consciousness could yield insights into why some goals feel more meaningful than others. For instance, understanding how the dream state aligns with our subconscious impulses might explain why certain goals resonate on an unconscious level and how they contribute to a holistic sense of purpose.

3. **Ultimate Reality and Intrinsic Motivation:** In the *Mandukya Upanishad*, *Turiya* is often seen as the ultimate state, beyond the ego and connected to a pure universal consciousness. The SCM, based on the tenets of the SDT, theoretically links the ancient Indian knowledge system to the basic universal needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness —contributing to collective well-being or transcending the self. This aligns with self-concordance research on prosocial goals and higher forms of motivation, indicating a broader framework in which self-aligned goals not only benefit the individual but also foster a connection to a greater purpose.

In summary, the *Mandukya Upanishad* provides valuable insights into different states of consciousness and the goal of achieving unification. These concepts can inspire new questions in self-concordance research, such as: Does engaging with various layers of consciousness help individuals connect more deeply with their true goals? Do goals that benefit both oneself and others lead to greater fulfillment? By incorporating these ideas, self-concordance research could develop a more comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation and well-being.

Chapter 5

“If we have our own *why* in life, we shall get along with almost any *how*.”

— Friedrich Nietzsche (1889),

Twilight of the Idols,

Maxims and Arrows, No. 12.

Conclusion, Contributions, Limitations and Future Research Avenues

The present longitudinal research, conducted as a two-phase study, aims to provide a robust framework for understanding both goal selection (desirability) and goal pursuit (feasibility). The examination of goal selection and goal pursuit as two different stages of goal-directed behaviour is relevant in a rapidly evolving society, organisations and ways of doing work due to rapid technological disruptions (emergence of Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain, among many others) and subsequent rise of automated work. Further, a global pandemic changed the way organisations and people work, as observed by the rise of a gig economy, autonomous work culture and new ways of flexible work arrangements such as work-from-home (WFH), remote work, and virtual workspaces, among others. Additionally, the global expansion of consumerism, capitalism, and materialistic values in societies has fostered a culture where consumerism flourishes. The increasing availability and promotion of goods, coupled with technological advancements, has shaped societies that prioritise acquisition and ownership, often equating material wealth with success and happiness.

Consequently, materialistic values have become prevalent worldwide, reshaping individual identities, societal norms, and environmental practices, often with both positive and negative implications. Such rapid changes have also led to a reshaping of how individuals progress in their careers, where the ‘new’ careers are expressed as a sequence of work role transitions, representing choices between opportunities presented to managers by organisations. Apparently, the ‘new’ arrangements of work have shifted responsibility

from employer to employee in developing careers across organisations. The reality today is that career ladders are becoming smaller or largely broken.

Emerging autonomous work patterns have significant implications for future research in the domain of how people select goals. For example, it is imperative to understand both average levels of employee motivation and the between-individual variance in different contexts. This focus can present objective accounts for the variance in motivation within an individual over time as they struggle to maintain their motivations in between different chapters of life. It is in between these chapters is where we need information about ourselves and what we are made of, to choose what to pursue. This self-knowledge is critical to cultivating perseverance, forming conclusions about our values and interests, and thinking deeply about what we want out of life. In years to come, we may need to embrace the reality of consistent changes in the environment and learn how to navigate through these moments of transition effectively. As a constant, goals influence all aspects of these transitions, such as decision-making from competing alternatives, learning about and rediscovering oneself and so on. Therefore, to answer how people transition or change requires that we understand how individuals select their goals.

The personal characteristics that most strongly influence an individual's goal choice are perceived desirability and feasibility. The desirability of the goal is the estimated attractiveness of a desired or intended result in the present or future. In contrast, the feasibility of the goal depends on the self-efficacy perceptions or judgments of their capabilities to perform the behaviour required to achieve the goal. Thus, goal selection processes are influenced by a host of personal factors, and they are also open to many kinds of beneficial or detrimental social influences. Further, extant research reports that people can be aware or unaware of an active goal when making a goal choice and can ignore potential sources of information regarding a goal's desirability. The popular media commonly illustrate the struggles of individuals trying to find their calling or life goals or people who consistently keep making the same wrong choices for themselves. Therefore, it can be considered that selecting self-appropriate goals is an important skill, especially when the chosen goal can bring people to a future that might not be as enjoyable, growth-promoting, or personally expressive as it could have been. Similarly, individuals can differ

in their ability to select goals that reflect their true selves, such as choosing between money or passion or a career in the arts or sciences. Many pursue unfulfilling goals for years, often unaware of better-fit alternatives. Considerable research also supports the notion that people often operate in a state of '*ignorant conscious self*' or lack accurate self-awareness when predicting how current events will impact their future emotions, specifically in terms of intensity and duration.

Being aware of the goal enables people to use conscious strategies to identify properties that are relevant to goal pursuit and assess their importance. Where such conscious strategies are needed to determine the possibility of achieving the goal (the feasibility), being unaware of the goal (the unconscious goal pursuit) is more concerned about the goal's desirability.

The present research finds relevance in studying personal goal selection and pursuit. The study tests two interventions based on the theoretical frameworks of the Self-Concordance Model (SCM), based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Mindset Theory of Action Phases and Implementation Intentions in presenting insights for healthier goal selections and successful goal pursuit. In short, through a longitudinal study, the researcher is looking for an *upward spiral* to goal pursuit in association with different interventions by addressing both the desirability and feasibility of the goal. An upward spiral here is a metaphor for a continuous process of personal growth or advancement and is theoretically considered a part of an organismic valuing process in unlocking an individual's full potential or becoming a fully functioning individual (Rogers, 1962, 1964).

In doing so, we find two different mechanisms of motivation and volition principles that apply to two separate stages of goal selection and goal pursuit. Where other theories of goal pursuit (e.g., goal-setting approaches, Locke, 2002; socio-cognitive theories, Bandura & Cervone, 1986) focus on either one of the two stages, the thrust of extant goal research has always been on the improvements in goal striving as outcomes or the *performance mode* of tangible results, irrespective of the nature and content of the goal choice.

The present study aimed to examine personal goals of different intrinsic (such as learning, relationship and character goals) and extrinsic (such as grade/money, fame and appearance goals) contents and their desirable qualities through a measure of goal concordance. The examination of goal desirability was followed by an opportunity to select desirable goals and pursue them for three weeks to measure satisfaction with success on their goal progress. In addition, an intervention mechanism of self-concordance was tested during goal deliberation to examine individual differences in goal selection, if any. In continuation, once the goals were selected, the participants were invited to enhance their goal-striving actions with a choice of another exercise of implementation intentions. This enhancement of goal striving is designed to occur during the implementational mindset phase, where once individuals have decided to act, they become more sensitive to information that helps implement behaviours through their consistent actions.

Therefore, through a longitudinal design of Phase 1 (goal desirability) and Phase 2 (goal feasibility), the present study addresses several research questions in Phase 1, such as: a) what defines a self-appropriate goal selection for long-term pursuit? b) What role do personality, goal and motive orientations play in predicting this self-appropriate goal selection? c) If goal selection is a skill, how can people's appropriate goal selections and choices be improved? d) Do people benefit when their conscious goals fit their explicit and implicit desires?

While Phase 2 addresses the following research questions viz., what defines adaptive, conscious self-regulation for long-term pursuit? How can self-regulation strategies improve one's skill-fitting pursuits? After goal selection (the decisional phase), what process facilitates an improved goal pursuit (the post-decisional phase)? Moreover, does a goal-fit selection influence the conscious regulation of goal-pursuit practices? Or do certain favourable individual strategies, when combined with concordant fit, enhance the quality of goal pursuit?

Phase 1 – Self-concordance as a measure of person-goal fit

Considering the desirability of a goal, the Self-Concordance Model (SCM) distinctively matches personal goals and other aspects of personality to an individual's goal

(Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon et al., 2019). Phase 1 hypothesises that self-concordant goal selection reduces the difficulties in choosing the right goals for oneself, leading to enhanced satisfaction and goal progress. The Self-Concordance Model (SCM) proposes that people are often ignorant of the content of goals (what) they *should* want for personal growth and wellness (Sheldon, 2014). In moving from *being true to oneself* to *becoming oneself*, SCM hypothesises that some goals better represent an individual's deeper, implicit preferences and potentials than other goals (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci & Kasser et al., 2004; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008; Sheldon & Schuler, 2011; Sheldon, 2014; Sheldon, Prentice and Halusic, 2015; Sheldon et al., 2019). The idea of self-concordance is not to categorise goals but to present a successful technique for assessing the agreement of personal goals with conscious and non-conscious aspects of the personality. Therefore, goals can be concordant and discordant to the self in terms of how they match an individual's implicit long-term potential and the perceived relative autonomy in pursuing them.

Phase 1 of the present study employed a self-regulatory SCM mechanism and a goal-oriented approach to examine how individuals select personal goals for long-term pursuit. It tested the relationship between concordant goal selection and various factors, including intrinsic and extrinsic goals, value orientations, personality traits, implicit motives related to fear and hope, and the specific goals chosen for pursuit. The researcher hypothesised that there would be a consistent pattern of associations between self-concordance and various other variables, in line with previous findings. This study aimed to establish self-concordance as a significant indicator of a goal's desirability, influencing the subsequent selection of goals rooted in the deeper aspects of the self. Based on the previous findings, the present study hypothesised that intrinsic goals, which align with values such as personal growth, relationships, and community, promote healthier personal goal pursuit compared to extrinsic goals focused on fame, wealth, status, and appearance.

The researcher developed three broad categories of intrinsic and extrinsic goals, presenting them to participants as reference goals. Participants then assessed the desirability of these goal contents using the self-concordance measure, or Relative Autonomy Index (RAI). A self-concordance score (RAI) by person-mean-centring responses to 4 items that measure the quality of motivation (through Intrinsic and Extrinsic

items) for goals and the relative autonomy in selecting them (through Identified and Introjected items), The person-mean-centred scores of the external and introjected items were subtracted from the identified and intrinsic items which provided the researchers with the relative autonomy index (RAI) or the relative autonomy with which participant select their goals. In Phase 1, the RAI values ranged from -7.58 to +5.44 for intrinsic and extrinsic goal contents. These scores on RAI for each goal (four) were interpreted as follows - the higher scores represent a more autonomous sense of motivation, whereas a negative relationship suggests the degree of motivation for the goal (intrinsic or extrinsic motivation).

Phase 1 conducted an experimental (vignette) survey asking participants to rate their self-concordance (desirability) with each goal reference (four goals - two intrinsic and extrinsic goals) and, in the later part of the experimental condition, to select any two-goal references as their goals to pursue. Phase 2 of the study presented a longitudinal mechanism through a measure of three-week goal progress and satisfaction with goal pursuit on the goals selected in Phase 1, discussed later.

Participants in Phase 1 also responded to self-report measures of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS at Time 1), an adaptation of the Aspirations Index or Value Orientations Index (VOI), a Big Five Personality Traits (BFI), an implicit assessment motive components of hope of success and fear of failure through a Multi-Motive Grid (MMG) before finally selecting their goals for pursuit.

Relationship between goal self-concordance (RAI) and Value orientations (VOI)

A correlational analysis revealed that VOI scores significantly correlated with a learning goal reference but suggested no significant correlations with other intrinsic goals, such as relationship and character goal references. For the extrinsic goals, the fame goal reference suggested a significant negative correlation with RAI and no significant associations with other extrinsic goals such as grade/money and appearance. An efficient test of the relationship between RAI and VOI scores suggested a significant positive direction, meaning that participants expected value-congruent goals to be more meaningful compared to non-value-congruent goals. Further, the significant correlations with both

intrinsic (learning goal) and extrinsic goal (fame goal) in expected directions suggest that participants with extrinsic value orientations can benefit from pursuing goals extrinsic goals rather than pursuing intrinsic goals and vice versa. However, previous research suggests that such affective forecasting may overestimate the perceived emotional benefits of extrinsic outcomes. While outcomes of greater success, money, and status for extrinsically oriented people may provide short-term positive emotional changes, a long-term detriment in terms of emphasising extrinsic goals of appearance, fame and money can result in increased anxiety, stress and lowered happiness.

Relationship between goal self-concordance (RAI) and Big Five personality traits (BFI)

A similar analysis of the relationship between goal self-concordance (RAI) and Big Five personality traits (BFI) found mixed results with two components of openness (creative and conventional) to be significantly associated with greater self-concordance for one intrinsic goal reference (learning) and two extrinsic goal references (grade/money goal and fame goal).

To test the matching of the two components of conscientiousness, namely conscientious and disorganised, with greater self-concordance for intrinsic goal references and less self-concordance for extrinsic goal references, a correlational analysis found a significant association of RAI with the conscientious (intrinsic) aspect of conscientiousness personality traits and no association with the disorganised (extrinsic) aspect. Further, a significant positive relationship was observed only between the conscientious (intrinsic) aspect and an extrinsic reference grade/money goal concordance. The extrinsic aspect of the extraversion trait of personality (outgoing) was significantly associated with the RAI (self-concordance) for an intrinsic goal of the relationship. The analysis also found that the extraversion traits are largely associated with greater self-concordance for an extrinsically motivated relationship goal.

Meanwhile, a similar extrinsic-intrinsic combination is observed in the significant positive relationship between an extrinsic grade/money goal and an intrinsic cooperative aspect of the agreeableness personality trait. The finding suggests that individuals generally associate intrinsic values of cooperation in achieving their extrinsic materialistic and

academic goals. Further, a higher self-concordance rating for a goal was negatively related to the extrinsic aspect of neuroticism (anxious), suggesting that higher self-concordance ratings for a goal reduce anxiety and vice versa. The participants who reported pursuing fame (an extrinsic) goal reference associate a higher level of anxiety with the potential pursuit of the goal.

The present study did not find any conclusive pattern in associations between self-concordance for two sets of intrinsic goals and that traits can partially explain the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. However, neuroticism was negatively related to both self-concordance and value orientations.

Relationship between goal self-concordance and motive components of hope of success and fear of failure

An analysis of the relationship revealed that optimism as a motivational component of hope was significantly associated with greater RAI for extrinsic goals of grade/money and appearance. Further, the correlational analysis found no significant association between the optimistic aspect of the hope motive and intrinsic goals of learning, relationship and character. However, the RAI score was significantly associated with optimism, suggesting that optimism largely associates goal concordance with hopeful or wishful desires of materialistic external goals, such as looking good, being rich and famous, rather than personal growth and improvement.

Pessimism, as a motivational component of fear motive, was significantly negatively associated with greater RAI for one extrinsic goal reference of grade/money and one intrinsic goal reference of learning. Additionally, the RAI score was significantly negatively associated with pessimism, suggesting that a pessimistic motive based on fear and rejection can negatively impact self-concordance for motive (to get higher grades/ to earn money) or need satisfying (to improve learning) activities.

Intrinsic goal references are rated higher in self-concordance

The participants in the study most frequently selected the Grade/Money goal reference followed by the Learning, Relationship and Fame goal. With students forming

the majority of participants and considering the developing status of India, the selection of extrinsic goal references is not surprising. Here, the learning and relationship goals taken together are considered intrinsic goals, and grade/money and fame goals are considered extrinsic. A within-subject MANOVA on self-concordant scores of the four goals with extrinsic and intrinsic goal types as the repeated measure factor with two levels indicated a significant multivariate effect of goal type on RAI scores. The interaction effects between self-concordance scores and type of goal were also significant, suggesting that the type of goal (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) significantly influences self-concordance scores, with intrinsic goals showing higher concordance than extrinsic goals. In other words, the participants rated the two intrinsic goals as more self-concordant on average than the two extrinsic goals. According to SDT, intrinsic goals—those that are inherently satisfying to pursue (e.g., personal growth, health, and relationships)—tend to align closely with one's true values and needs, fostering autonomous motivation. The present study finds that the measure of self-concordance supports this alignment, as people feel that pursuing these goals is a genuine expression of themselves, increasing personal significance and fulfilment.

Goal concordance scores predict intrinsic goal selections

After computing a single goal-selection score (GSS) representing the number of designated intrinsic goals picked by the participants (with 0 = both extrinsic goals, 1 = at least one intrinsic goal, or 2 = both intrinsic goals), the self-concordance score (RAI) for goal references found a significant positive correlation with GSS. The results suggest that the participants who most expected to enjoy and identify with intrinsic goals (compared to extrinsic goals) were also more likely to select more intrinsic goals for pursuit. Higher goal concordance indicates that individuals are acting in ways that feel authentic and autonomous. When people are used to choosing goals that match their inner values and interests, they naturally gravitate toward intrinsic goals (e.g., self-development, meaningful relationships) that inherently feel self-endorsed, as opposed to extrinsic goals, which may feel externally pressured.

Considering one's motivations for potential goals before goal selection improves intrinsic goal selection

A test of experimental manipulations in self-concordance ratings for goals between the control (*after*) and experimental (*before*) groups suggested a statistically significant difference between the groups, where the experimental group participants had higher concordance scores (RAI) for goals on average than the control group participants. The present study found that self-concordant assessment before goal selection promoted higher self-concordant goal selections, and a significant correlation between RAI scores and intrinsic goal selections (through goal selection score, GSS) suggested that higher RAI scores lead to the selection of healthier intrinsic goals (learning goal) than an extrinsic outcome-based goal (get high grades or earn more money goal).

Goal Concordance and Implementation Intentions – a tenuous relationship

In Phase 2, a mixed sample of 202 participants from the initial 407 in Phase 1 were recruited to continue into the goal-pursuit stage of the research. Phase 2 consisted of two conditions: a) Participants (N=111) who consented to participate in the implementation intention exercise, and b) Participants (N=91) who did not participate in the implementation intention exercise, in continuation from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the study. At time T3, approximately three weeks after the implementation intentions exercise, a second Satisfaction with Life Scale score (at time T3) was recorded. The gap between recording the two SWLS scores was approximately 25 days.

Phase 2 of the present study found evidence for two different mindsets – a deliberative (pre-decisional) and implementational (post-decisional) mindset involved in goal selection of goal desirability phase and goal striving or the feasibility of pursuit phase. An analysis of self-concordance scores (RAI) of the Phase 2 participants (N=202) on the pair of goals selected at time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2) found self-concordance scores to go up from goals selected (GS1 and GS2) at the time (T1) to time (T2). Such an increase is attributed to the post-decisional cognitions regarding goal reference ratings.

Further, Phase 2 found that a selection of intrinsic goals for pursuit did not positively influence participants' perceptions of life satisfaction, even when controlling for the amount of goal progress made. The implementational Phase 2 was more concerned with achieving goals as an important predictor of satisfaction than the mere selection of intrinsic goals. It is possible that intrinsic goals, like personal growth or building relationships, are often more abstract and require sustained effort over time. This complexity can make measurable progress difficult in the short term, as these goals don't always lend themselves to clear, quantifiable steps, potentially leading to perceptions of slow or minimal progress.

Contributions and Implications

Theoretical Contribution

The present study presents empirical support for the theoretical distinction of two different motivational and volitional principles as presented by the Mindset Theory of Action Phases (Heckhausen & Gollwitzer, 1987; Gollwitzer, 2012). By examining the two different phases of goal selection and goal pursuit, the present study highlights the differences in the type of information individuals are most sensitive to in each stage. For instance, the present study finds that during the goal selection stage, individuals are more concerned with information that helps them form a judgment of a goal in terms of its desirability. In the goal-pursuit stage, individual satisfaction information from goal-striving processes was derived from the perceptions of goal progress rather than the desirable properties of the goal. Such findings support the deliberative and implementational mindset hypothesis and Crossing the Rubicon models of goal pursuit and afford novel avenues for the dynamics of personality expression.

Moreover, the present study finds that a measure of the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) is most strongly associated with autonomous motivation and inversely with controlled motivation, indicating its role as a key indicator of self-regulation and intrinsic drive. Similarly, RAI was positively associated with traits like cooperative, conscientious, and creative, as well as a significant predictor of selecting intrinsic goals by participants,

reinforcing the central tenets of SDT that autonomy supports proactive goal-setting and positive personal traits. Conversely, the negative correlations of RAI with a pessimistic motive component and anxious trait imply that greater autonomy contributes to lower levels of negative emotional states. Overall, the RAI's pattern of associations suggests that individuals with high autonomy are generally more self-motivated and goal-oriented, exhibiting traits conducive to well-being and productivity.

Methodological Contribution

The present study tested a recently developed methodological innovation and a theoretical proposition that conducting self-concordance assessments prior to goal selection promotes more intrinsic goal choices (Sheldon et al., 2019). Before their research, all SCM research studies followed the normal procedure of only soliciting self-concordance after the participants had selected their goals. The normal procedure of assessing self-concordance involved selecting goals first, after which the goal concordance was rated. In other words, self-concordance assesses the goal's desirability after the person has *crossed the Rubicon*; that is, once the goal selection is complete, individuals move from a deliberative (pre-decisional) to a goal-implementation mindset (post-decisional).

Considering the novel arguments for renewed testing of self-concordance assessment, the procedure of Phase 1 asks participants, at first, to rate the potential self-concordance of several reference goals provided by the researcher. Only after rating the self-concordance for these goal references are the participants asked to select the goals they wish to pursue. In this way, the self-concordance of goal reference is assessed during the deliberative (pre-decisional) stage of judging a goal's desirability and not when individuals are busy considering the goal's feasibility in a post-decisional mindset. Such assessment should positively influence selecting appropriate goals with access to more information in the pre-decisional mindset. This study's methodological innovation and consensus with previous research have significant theoretical implications for future self-concordance research, suggesting that RAI should be measured before finalising a goal.

Practical Implications

How do self-concordance interventions help in organisations? Motivational research has largely focused on the motivations during goal striving and not during the goal selection phase, where information about the goal can be assessed before committing to it. The present study finds that knowledge acquisition about a goal's desirability and feasibility can act as a critical source of information before a goal is selected. Some researchers consider that such information can enhance an individual's effectiveness in the early and difficult stages of a challenging performance goal in organisations (Seijts & Latham, 2005). Any degree of deceit in the true assessment of desirability and feasibility before selecting a challenging intrinsic (learning a skill) or outcome-based extrinsic goal (such as desire for money, high performance and status) can reduce the effectiveness of any self-regulation strategy during goal striving processes. In other words, focusing only on the outcomes or success of a goal can distract from recognising one's abilities and motivation. This distraction may result in an ineffective and disorganised search for appropriate strategies to achieve the goal. Instances of such behaviour are presented as ancient myths of *Sisyphus* – a cycle of futile effort without completion representing an eternal and meaningless toil.

Further, popular media, such as films and literature, highlights the importance of perseverance, the acceptance of continuous effort, and finding personal meaning in the process rather than the endpoint through struggles of unfinished goals or unrealised potentials. Therefore, setting goals can be seen as creating meaning in the face of such difficulties, and it must include information about an individual's ability, motivation, and level of autonomy before selecting a goal. Embracing the struggle, as *Sisyphus* does, transforms a seemingly futile existence into one imbued with significance through the act of striving itself. The specific practical implications of self-concordance and findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the present study are discussed next.

Performance Management and Professional Development

The present study hypothesised and tested goal desirability prior to goal selection for broad personal goals which require minimal prior learning and for which performance

routines do not exist or where once effective strategies can suddenly cease to be so or which relocate the purpose or benefit of goals from one of intrinsic motivation to that of autonomy. Within this context, the present study finds that associations of self-concordance scores (RAI) with the nature of goals, individual traits, and motives prior to goal selection offer several advantages for goal-setting exercises in organisations. For instance, in organisational situations where primarily learning rather than an increase in motivation (e.g., effort or persistence) is required for an employee to be effective, setting a specific challenging goal in terms of performance outcomes is not likely to be concordant. Perhaps a specific high-learning goal should be set instead. For example, a goal concordance score can inform coaches and trainers in organisations to suggest that a trainee should consider setting a high learning goal rather than a high-performance outcome goal in terms of high scores in training exercises. Focusing only on high scores in training assessments, in this instance, can prevent trainees from focusing on the learning aspect of the training.

Additionally, the most important claim of the present study is that there are structures inside people (hopes, fears, motives, and aspirations) that determine their behaviour. The self-concordance assessment between different goal and value orientations in the present study can suggest individual differences in two ways: a) in the desire for intrinsic values, such as the ability to obtain social acceptance and support; b) in the desire for extrinsic values, such as the ability to obtain status, power, and the control of resources. Similar significant associations of goal concordance (RAI) score with personality traits and motives represent a profile harder to fake as a self-report measure in tapping the authentic part of the self. In essence, an RAI measures the discrepancy between the real and ideal self, between what one *thinks* one wants and what one really *feels* about what one thinks one wants. Such authenticity assessment before goal-setting or personality assessment exercises in organisations can help trainers and managers answer the difficult questions of triangulating the real selves of their trainees or employees in terms of – how we know who they are. It is quite obvious that time can tell many things about others in terms of their reputations; the results of the present research, however, find RAI scores to tap authentic value and goal orientations for a valid assessment instead of time. In training situations, such information can serve as a baseline assessment of matching training needs, regulation strategies and predicted outcomes. In contrast, in performance appraisal situations, such

assessments can inform potential interests and orientations of employees and reduce bias in developing a profile of an employee for assessment.

Psychologists largely agree that personality assessments can measure occupational performance almost as well as measures of cognitive ability, and unlike cognitive ability measures, they do not discriminate (Hogan, 2005). The results of goal concordance in the present study did not find any differences between men and women. Based on the comprehensive framework of SDT that emphasises a universal psychological need satisfaction with goal concordance, the findings of the present study are based on comprehensively researched conceptual foundations. In addition, the present study finds that individuals' self-concordant ratings of reference goals predicted a choice of intrinsic goal by the participants in Phase 1, and implementation intentions exercises during the goal-striving process in Phase 2 work well with short-term and extrinsic goal orientations rather than intrinsic. Specifically, findings from Phase 2 of the study suggest that implementation intentions exercise actually impedes the realisation of an autonomous and intrinsic goal as an external and controlling regulation. Alternatively, recent research maintains that implementation intentions do work in organisations and that they should be associated with everyday tasks to establish habits at work (Trenz & Keith, 2024). However, the present study does not find support for claims of enhanced success by combining self-concordance and implementation intentions in goal progress by previous research (Koestner et al., 2002).

Recent studies support the present claims of the self-concordance measure in increasing pro-environmental behaviours of employees (Unsworth & McNeil, 2017) and as a necessary condition for self-management training in organisations (Unsworth & Mason, 2016). Further, several studies report positive associations between self-concordant assessment of goals and perceived person-organisation fit (PO fit), suggesting that the fit between autonomous motives and work-related goals influences goal accomplishment and satisfaction (Downes et al., 2017). They also report that such associations of work goals with basic needs of autonomy may induce holistic perceptions of the organisation and promote an employee's assessment of compatibility with the organisation's values, leading to job satisfaction and goal realisation. In fact, a study by Greguras and Dierendorff (2010)

found that goal self-concordance mediates the positive relationship between an employee's need for satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours. Finally, growing research suggests that the degree of employees' self-concordance in organisational human resource management (HRM) practices was associated with employee creativity (Hon, 2011; Sheldon, Goffredi & Titova, 2024).

Redefining Talent Management

The present study finds that intrinsic learning goals can also be appropriate for work-from-home (WFH) employees, autonomous gig workers and seasoned managers. Although the study did not find any differences between employees and students, the common finding of the present study is that greater self-concordance scores are related to a choice of more intrinsic goals for both WFH employees and students. For example, those who operate in globally diverse organisations and flexible work arrangements can find it fruitful to focus on ways that grant them enough autonomy for their organisational tasks. This can be achieved by encouraging employees to autonomously and proactively shape their job tasks, relationships, and cognitive perceptions to align with their skills and interests. By empowering employees to engage in autonomous work arrangements, managers can tap into their innovative potential and foster a learning and innovation culture within the organisation. Such arrangements, in turn, can lead to enhanced creativity, problem-solving, and innovative work behaviours among employees, ultimately benefiting the organisation's innovation outcomes. In addition, managers should adopt a tailored approach that considers the combined effect of goal self-concordance and different self-regulation strategies during task performance. For instance, managers can aid employees who perceive themselves as overqualified in establishing self-concordant goals aligned with organisational objectives. This approach offers opportunities for individuals to actively shape their work to better correspond with their skills and interests.

Educational Management and Career Development

Goal-setting exercises are not only a component of organisations but also encompass the learning and performance expectations set for students by instructors and teachers. For instance, goal orientation is an important variable critical to examining career

development in adolescents, such that learning orientations are positively and directly associated with perceptions of self-efficacy and outcomes of success and indirectly with career exploration and aspirations among students (Creed et al., 2013). The present study supports previous findings by showing that RAI scores for a learning goal (intrinsic goal) negatively correlate with external pressures of controlled motivation and pessimism. These results are consistent with the need for competence under SDT, which is the reflection of one's beliefs about the ability to produce desired outcomes. Such an association is not surprising as competence is negatively related to perceived pressures and external regulation in students' motivational processes in classrooms (Wang et al., 2019).

Additionally, students can benefit when their goals are self-concordant, i.e., when their conscious goals fit (or express) their implicit motives and inclinations. In 2 phases, we randomly assigned participants to rate self-concordance with intrinsic and extrinsic goal references before or after goal selection. We found a significant difference in goal self-concordance scores between the participants in the two groups, suggesting that prompting participants to assess their goal concordance prior to goal selection improved their goal choices in terms of higher self-concordant scores and more intrinsic or healthier goal selections.

Considering potential goal motivations helps individuals choose goals consistent with their underlying personality preferences, and such congruent goals feel like they would be interesting and meaningful to pursue rather than being a burden or a drag. Sheldon et al. (2003) suggest that such information is always available to us but may only appear when asked certain questions. Furthermore, most students do not find access to such information largely due to distractions, information overload, stress, deadlines, peer pressures or lack of opportunities in their environment. Interventions that can help individuals to make explicit their own latent emotional and motivational knowledge and better communicate with themselves can be very valuable for career aspirations and guidance.

Today's workforce is under pressure to achieve tangible results, focusing on "performance mode," which benefits motivation and output when routines are effective.

However, rapidly evolving technologies and new ways of work arrangements and opportunities, such as work-from-home (WFH), gig work and the autonomous nature of work, require a focus on sources of both motivation and high ability for individuals and businesses. The findings of the present study suggest that intrinsic goals (learning) and extrinsic (performance goals) are markedly different. Intrinsic goals encourage creativity, exploration, personal growth and community participation, while extrinsic goals involve applying known skills to achieve specific objectives. The present research also finds that extrinsic goal pursuits (or performance goals) can benefit under established strategies such as implementation intentions, but intrinsic goals may be necessary for fostering innovation when strategies for goals are not yet clear. Therefore, the present study's findings on personal goal research can help teachers, mentors, instructors, and even organisations to enhance their effectiveness by understanding different goal and value orientations and aligning goal types with an individual's strategic needs.

Further clear demarcations between motivational and volitional processes in the findings of the present help identify intervention mechanisms that can improve performance on any goal type for students. Where self-concordance can improve a student's academic goal choices, implementational intentions can work well in difficulties during learning and performance with the goal of developing habitual action. This study can guide instructors and teachers to design improvement and growth plans tailored to each of the two stages of goal processes.

The findings of the present research also establish connections with recent developments in goal-setting theories within the field of education. Recently, Locke and Latham (2019) identified two studies, an experimental study (Morisano et al., 2010) and a qualitative interview (Travers, 2013), reporting that students simply writing at length about their goals show improved performance. In conclusion, just as self-concordance assessment can help individuals understand what they really want amongst several goal choices, a combination of mindfulness meditation with self-concordance can be a powerful technique to discover oneself. The next section discusses the limitations of the present study and avenues for future research.

Limitations

From the perspective of positive psychology, pursuing doctoral research reflects a growth mindset that emphasises the journey rather than solely focusing on the outcome. While the present study provides insights into goal selection and pursuit processes, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalisability of the results.

1. The present study's generalisability is limited due to the use of a constrained set and the broad nature of intrinsic and extrinsic goal types as references for participants to choose their goals. Such a limited range of goals may not fully represent the diverse choices individuals encounter in real life. To really draw the autonomous and intrinsic nature of self-concordant goals, future studies can move away from researcher-assigned goal sets in controlled contexts but involve participants in building their personal goals based on their values and interests.
2. Phase 1 of the study used vignettes to examine the relationship between the choice of goal types and self-concordance. However, because vignettes require participants to respond to hypothetical scenarios, there are certain situations when those scenarios do not create the same context as would be encountered in approach-avoid goal framing in real life,
3. To maintain a limited length of the vignette questionnaire, some multidimensional constructs, such as a Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) and Value Orientations Index (VOI), are measured through a few items, four for RAI and six for VOI adapted from conventional eight and twelve items measure respectively. This results in less than conventional reliabilities (Cronbach Alphas and McDonald Omegas) on both measures and thus should be viewed with caution.
4. Although the present empirical research employs appropriate statistical techniques, such as Multi-categorical simple mediation analysis to capture the signal of the ratings of goal concordance to the goal selected by the participants, the use of more

sophisticated statistical techniques of Multi-Level Modelling (MLM) and an Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling (ESEM) analysis was limited by the understanding of the researcher.

5. A qualitative measure that can capture the feelings associated with self-concordant goal selections and subsequent goal pursuit can augment the results of the quantitative study.

Future Research Avenues

1. Based on the results of the present study, self-concordance for intrinsic goals and implementation intentions exercise are not considered the optimal combination for goal pursuit by the participants. The differential results can be due to the researcher not having total control over the daily use of implementation intentions by the participants, following recent research that suggests the use of implementation intentions for everyday work to establish habits, especially at work (Trenz & Keith, 2024). Alternatively, future research can focus on a more broadly conceptualised goal-planning compared to implementation intentions in the goal-striving phase. Where implementation intentions focus on specific situations and possible actions, goal planning can allow for a broader range of behaviours necessary for goal realisation.
2. Although the present study utilised a semi-projective measure of a Multi-Motive Grid (MMG) to capture the implicit hope and fear components associated with the three motives (need for achievement, affiliation and power), future studies can utilise pure implicit motive measures such as Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) or Picture Story Exercise (PSE) to map deeper aspects of self.
3. The present research finds that goal concordance assessment (RAI) can theoretically link a goal-setting approach to the examination of challenging performance goals in organisations, such as sales targets, outcome-based business development plans and activities, and academic publication targets. Achieving

effective performance on challenging goals also requires an initial learning stage in which individuals consider information about actions that are essential for effective performance (Seijts, Latham & Woodwark, 2013; Raveendran et al., 2023).

4. This exploration involves quickly learning through one's experiences and evaluating the highest potential for reward amongst available alternatives. The results of such exploration afford avenues for exploiting more alternatives as an adaptive learning process. However, a clear mechanism of how performance goals influence this adaptive learning process has not yet been discovered. The present study argues that the *learning* (intrinsic) aspects of a challenging performance (extrinsic) goal can be matched through self-concordance assessment to an individual's underlying goal and value orientations. Self-concordance assessments of exploration strategies can influence the relative attractiveness of different exploitation options in achieving the performance goal.
5. Finally, future studies can draw theoretical support from the ancient Indian knowledge treatise of *Mandukya Upanishad*, which suggests the importance of mindfulness meditation to the self-realisation of one's pure consciousness (*Turiya*). This aspect of self-realisation matches well with the tenets of the SCM, and future research can investigate whether mindfulness can facilitate the selection of self-concordant goals and their combined influence on an individual's goal progress and positive well-being.

Thus, Phases 1 and 2 of the current study presented a longitudinal measure of two distinct stages of self-regulated goal-directed behaviour. Theory and research on self-regulation are dominated by a social-cognitive perspective that emphasises post-decisional (i.e., volitional) control processes of goal maintenance in outcomes of success. In the present study, we focus on research on self-regulation that acknowledges the affective fundamentals of motivated action through the SCM and highlights the processes of goal selection as vital parts of self-regulation. From the SCM's perspective of *motivational competence*, the cognitive and affective forces within individuals work together rather than

oppose each other in self-regulation. Such positive combinations are what can render an effortless rather than effortful goal pursuit as a hallmark of efficient human action. A precondition for such motive and self-congruent goal pursuits is that individuals have *insight* into their basic preferences and can select goals accordingly. In positive psychology, a long-term benefit might accrue with an alignment or adoption of a growth mindset that matches the underlying personality, values and motives of an individual with the universal basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfied by their goal choices, emphasising the journey rather than sole focus on the outcome.



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Appendix A. (Phase 1) Questionnaires for Employees

Condition 1 - Self-concordance assessment before goals are selected (Experimental group)

SET

E/A

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Guwahati – 781039 (Assam) INDIA

I am a research scholar working at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), under the guidance of Professor Nachiketa Tripathi.

The area of my doctoral research at the Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati is motivation and goal selection, and I thank your participation in testing a framework that can help improve goal selection by individuals.

I request that you spare 10-15 mins to introspect the nature of your goals and your motivation by answering specific questions. **There is no right or wrong answer.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary and the identity of the organization and the employees will not be disclosed at any stage. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay

Research Scholar

Email: satwi176141011@iitg.ac.in

Personal Information

Name (optional):

Email (mandatory):

Gender(M/F/Others):

Designation:

Age (in years):

Qualifications:

Tenure (in years):

Total work experience (in years):

Salary/month: Please indicate your choice by putting [✓]

[] 30,000 to 40,000

[] 60,000 to 70, 000

[] 90,000 to 1,00,000

[] 40,000 to 50,000

[] 70,000 to 80,000

[] 1,00,000 and above

[] 50,000 to 60,000

[] 80,000 to 90,000

PLEASE READ THE BELOW SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING THE
FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
------------------------------	-----------------	------------------------------	---	---------------------------	--------------	---------------------------

W1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W3. I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The statements below describe certain future states or goals one can aspire to. Please read through the list of statements. Tick the box to the right that shows how the described values are important to you.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderate ly important	Importan t	Extremel y important
I aspire to					
G1. To help people, especially those who need help.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G2. To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G3 To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G4 To achieve affluence and personal success.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G5 To build and maintain close relationships.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

	1	2	3	4	5
G6 Being known and admired by many people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Presented here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please tick the box to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree
<u>I see myself as someone Who...</u>					
B1 Is talkative	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B2 Tends to find fault with others	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B3 Does a thorough job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B4 Is depressed, blue	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

B5 Is original, comes up with
new ideas.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B6 Is reserved

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B7 Is helpful and unselfish with
others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B8 Can be somewhat clueless

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B9 Is relaxed, handles stress well

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B10 Is curious about many
different things

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B11 Is full of energy

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B12 Starts quarrel with others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B13 Is a reliable worker

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B14 Can be tense

	1	2	3	4	5
B15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B17 Has a forgiving nature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B18 Tends to be disorganized	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B19 Worries a lot	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B20 Has an active imagination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B21 Tends to be quiet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B22 Is generally trusting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B23 Tends to be lazy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B25 Is inventive	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B26 Has an assertive personality	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B27 Can be cold and aloof	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B28 Perseveres until the task is finished	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B29 Can be moody	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B33 Does things efficiently	1	2	3	4	5
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B34 Remains calm in tense

situations

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B35 Prefers work that is routine

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B36 Is outgoing, sociable

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B37 Is sometimes rude to others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B38 Makes plans and follows
through with them

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B39 Gets nervous easily

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B40 Likes to reflect, play with
ideas

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B41 Has a few artistic interests

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B42 Likes to cooperate with others

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B43 Is easily distracted

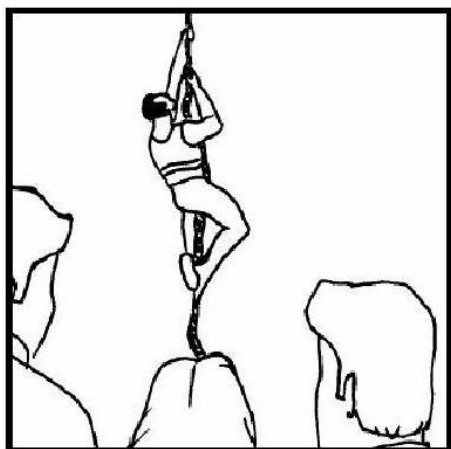
1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

On the following pages, you will see a set of pictures showing all kinds of everyday situations. We did not choose clear and detailed pictures because we want you to use your imagination in guessing what might be going on in these pictures.

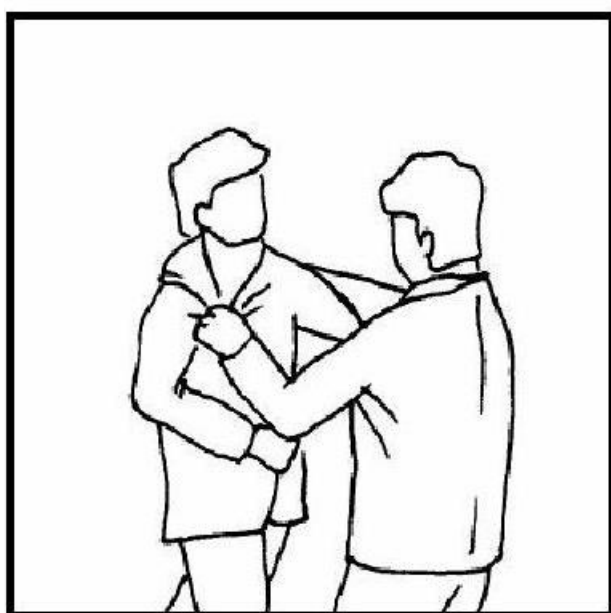
Please try to put yourself in the position of one of the persons who are shown in these pictures.

Below these pictures, you will also find a set of statements describing the way people could think and feel in this situation. **Please decide for each statement whether it describes the situation that you imagine. If it does, choose YES, if it does not, choose NO.** Please do not think about a single statement too long and try to follow your spontaneous impression.



P1. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P2. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

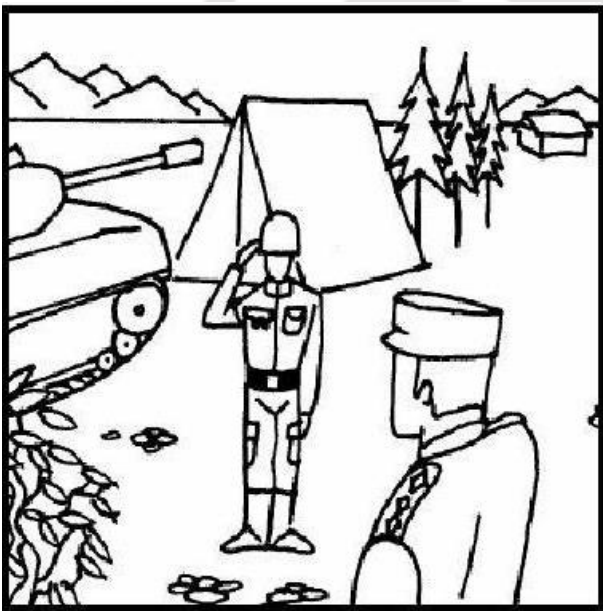
Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P3. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		

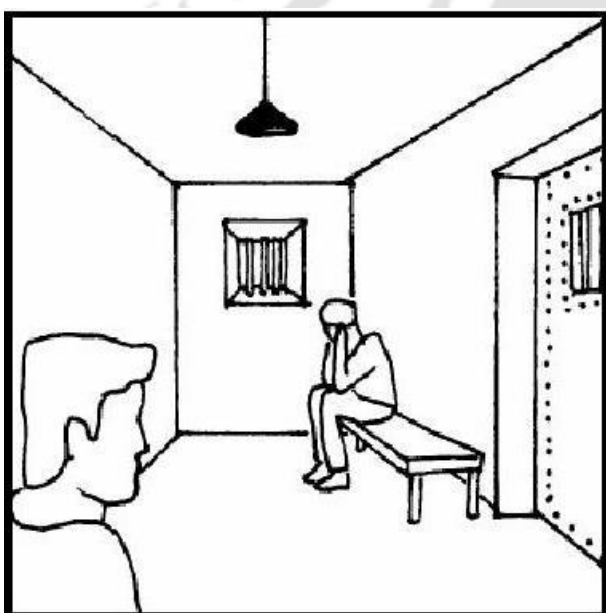
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P4. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		

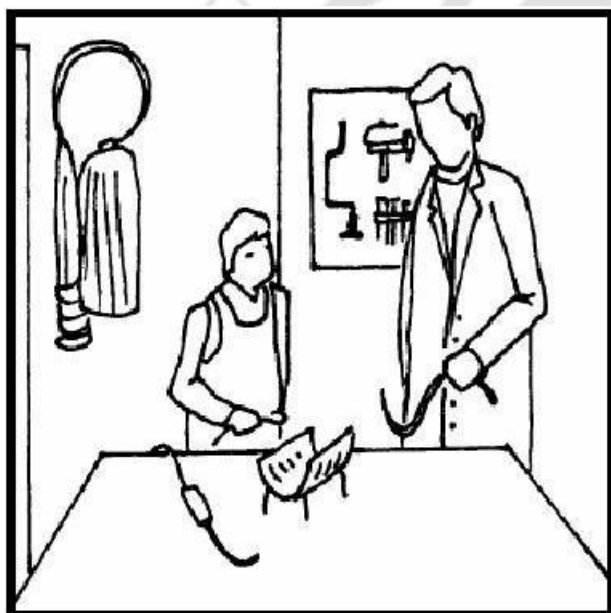
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P5. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		

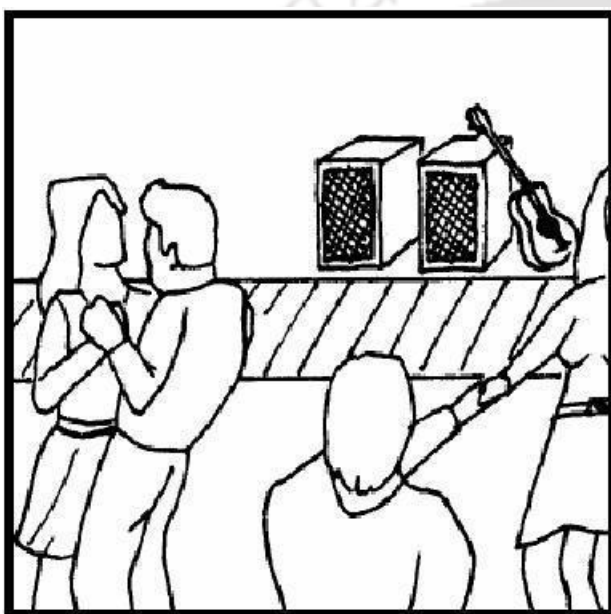
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P6. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		

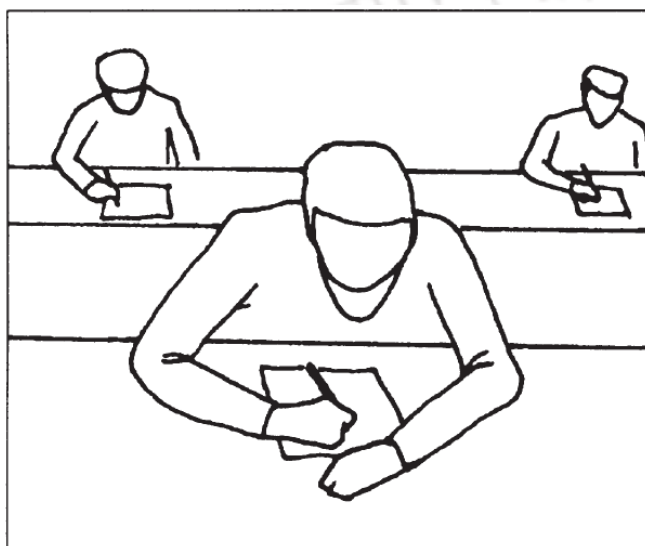
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P7. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		

Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P8. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		

Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P9. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		

Hoping to acquire a good standing		
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P10. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P11. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



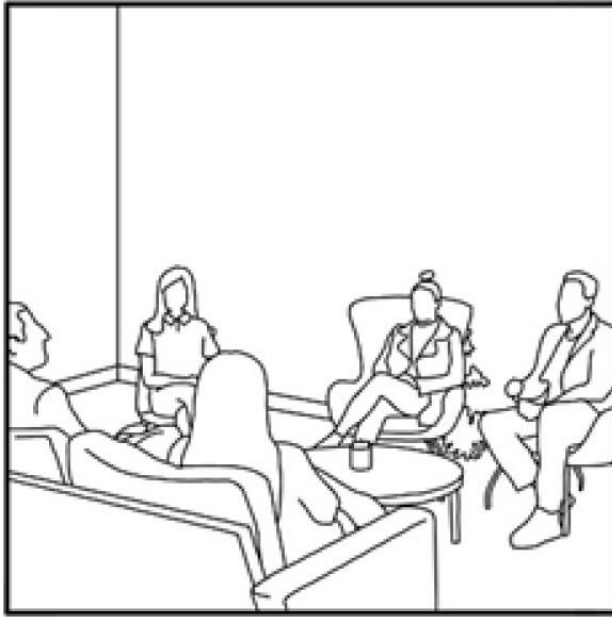
P12. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P13. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P14. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		

Instructions: We invite you to consider your future possible selves (for instance, “who you might be 20 years from now”). Below are six possible selves that could come true for you or be the potential aspects of the desirable life you may be living. First, please read through the list. Try to imagine yourself having and being each of these possible selves.

1. Being wealthy or rich.
2. Being wise or mature.
3. Being generous or helpful.
4. Being famous or idolized.
5. Being beautiful or handsome.
6. Being loved or loving.

In order to reach possible selves, we have to make goals and take (or not take) certain actions along the way. These actions may or may not be enjoyable in real life. Please consider *how would it feel to take the following actions to reach each of your possible selves.*

Please select your agreement and disagreement with (in the right column) each of the *five* reasons you might strive for your choice of possible future selves or goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for a possible future self -					
R1. <i>Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. <i>Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

R3. *There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.*

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it.*

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R5. *Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.*

Now, please select any *three* of the six possible goals (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider being in the future –

1. Being wealthy or rich.	2. Being wise or mature.	3. Being generous or helpful	4. Being famous or idolized	5. Being beautiful or handsome	6. Being loved or loving
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SG1.

SG2.

SG3.



Appendix A. (Phase 1) Questionnaires for Students

Condition 1 - Self-concordance assessment before goals are selected (Experimental group)

Phase 1 – SET S/A

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

I am a research scholar working at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), under the guidance of Professor Nachiketa Tripathi.

The area of my doctoral research at the Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati is motivation and goal selection, and I thank your participation in testing a framework that can help improve goal selection by individuals.

I request that you spare 10-15 mins to introspect the nature of your goals and your motivation by answering specific questions. **There is no right or wrong answer.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary, and all the information provided by the participants will be kept confidential and used only for research. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay,

Research Scholar

E-mail: satwi176141011@iitg.ac.in

Personal Information

Name (optional):

Email (mandatory):

Gender(M/F/Others):

Designation:

Age (in years):

Qualifications:

Specialization/Stream:

PLEASE READ THE BELOW SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
W1. In most ways, my	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
life is close to my							
ideal.							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
W2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W3. I am satisfied with my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The statements below describe certain future states that one can aspire to. Please read through the list of statements. Tick the box to the right that shows how the described values are important to you.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important
I aspire to					
G1 To help people, especially those who need help.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

G2 To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G3 To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G4 To achieve affluence and financial success.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G5 To build and maintain close relationships.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G6 Being known and admired by many people.

Presented here are several characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please tick the box to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree

<u>I see myself as someone Who...</u>	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree
B1 Is talkative	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B2 Tends to find fault with others	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B3 Does a thorough job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B4 Is depressed, blue	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B5 Is original, comes up with new ideas.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B6 Is reserved	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

	1	2	3	4	5
B7 Is helpful and unselfish with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B8 Can be somewhat clueless	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B9 Is relaxed, handles stress well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B10 Is curious about many different things	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B11 Is full of energy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B12 Starts quarrel with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B13 Is a reliable worker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B14 Can be tense	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B17 Has a forgiving nature 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B18 Tends to be disorganized 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B19 Worries a lot 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B20 Has an active imagination 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B21 Tends to be quiet 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B22 Is generally trusting 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B23 Tends to be lazy 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B24 Is emotionally stable, not
easily upset 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B25 Is inventive 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B26 Has an assertive personality

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B27 Can be cold and aloof

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B28 Perseveres until the task is finished

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B29 Can be moody

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B33 Does things efficiently

B34 Remains calm in tense situations

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

	1	2	3	4	5
B35 Prefers work that is routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B36 Is outgoing, sociable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B37 Is sometimes rude to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B38 Makes plans and follows through with them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B39 Gets nervous easily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B41 Has a few artistic interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B42 Likes to cooperate with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B43 Is easily distracted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B44 Is sophisticated in art,
music, or literature

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

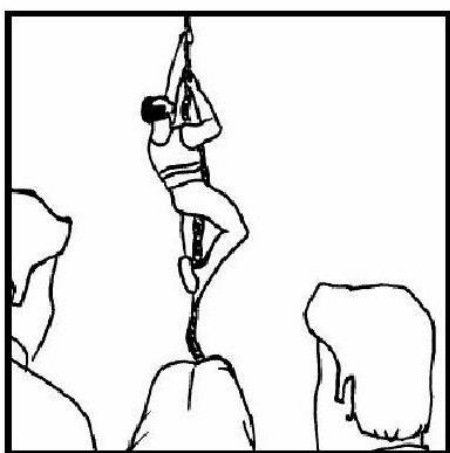
☐

Picture Imagination Task

On the following pages, you will see a set of pictures showing all kinds of everyday situations. We did not choose clear and detailed pictures because we want you to use your imagination to guess what might happen in these pictures.

Please try to put yourself in the position of one of the persons who are shown in these pictures.

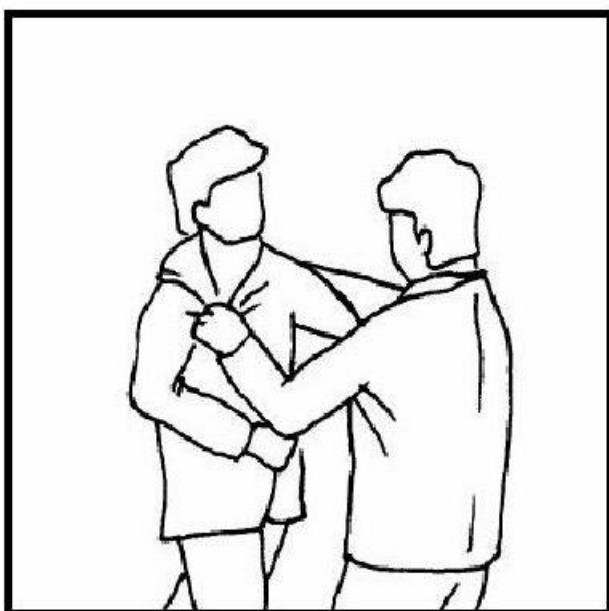
Below these pictures, you will also find statements describing how people could think and feel in this situation. Please decide for each statement whether it describes the situation that you imagine. If it does, choose YES; if it does not, choose NO. Please do not think about a single statement for too long, and try to follow your spontaneous impression.



P1. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
------------	----	-----

Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P2. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		

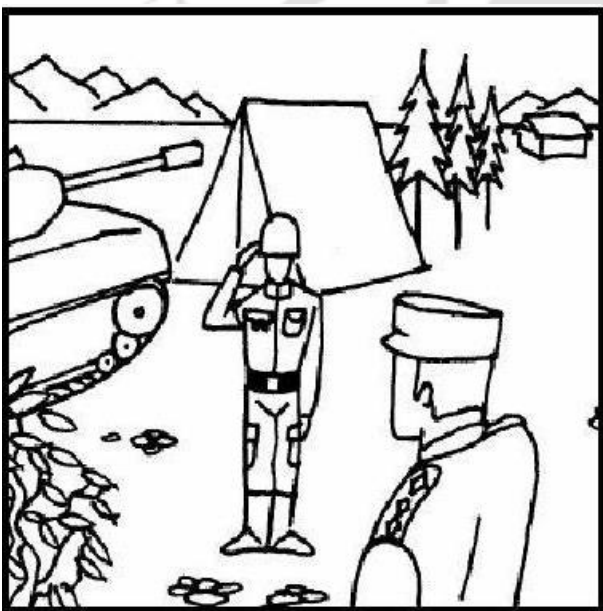
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P3. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		

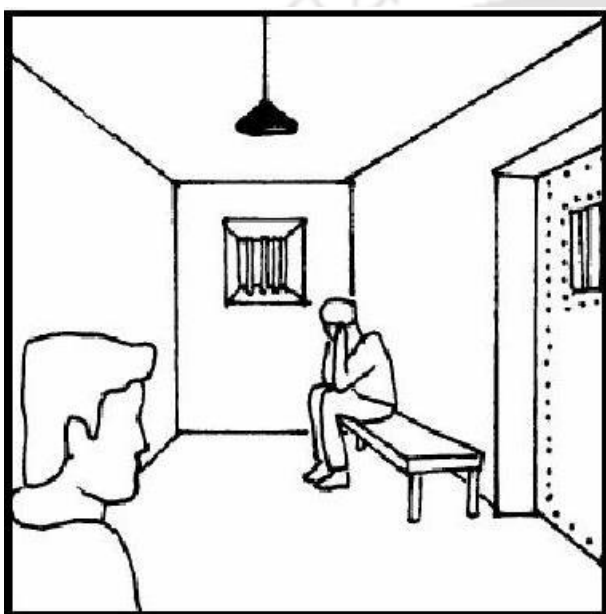
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P4. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		

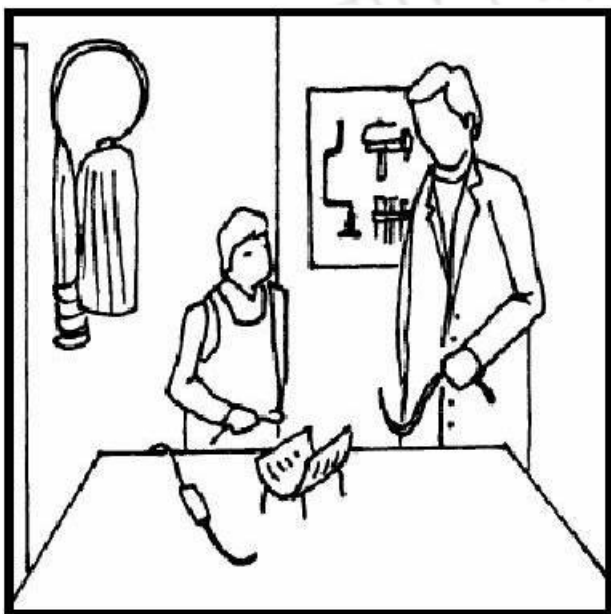
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P5. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		

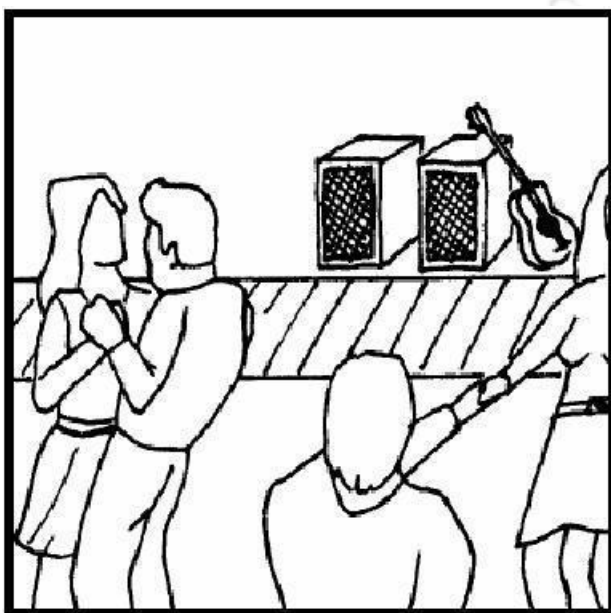
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P6. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		

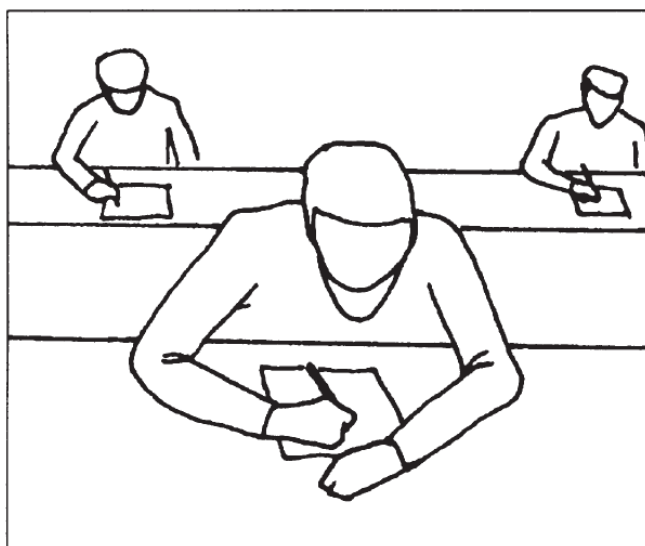
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P7. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		

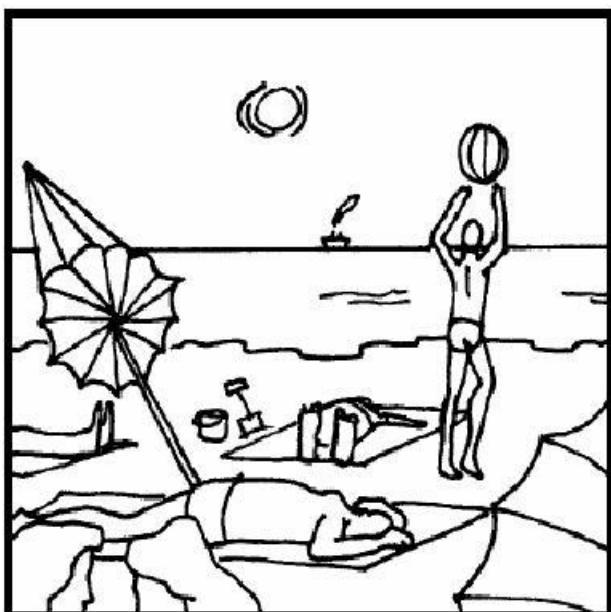
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P8. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		

Hoping to acquire a good standing		
-----------------------------------	--	--



P9. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P10. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P11. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



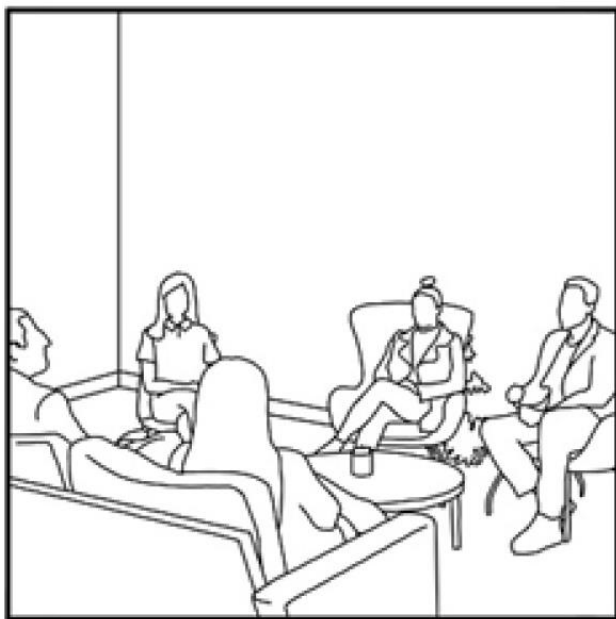
P12. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P13. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P14. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		

Section 5. The main purpose of the study

Instructions: We invite you to set two personal goals, and then commit to pursuing those goals over time! Research shows that setting clear personal goals can pay off for people. Below are four common types of goals which can be beneficial for people. Please read each goal carefully. Please take a few seconds to think about what it would be like to pursue any of the goals and how things might go.

-

G1. Get higher grades than my peer group.

G2. Create or deepen personal relationships or friendships.

G3. Become better known and networked around the campus.

G4. Learn as much as I can about what interests me.

Consider the possible motivation for pursuing each of the four goals. Please consider *how would it feel to take the following actions to reach each of your possible selves.*

Please select your agreement and disagreement with (in the right column) each of the *five* reasons you might strive for any of the abovementioned goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for a goal(s) -					
R1. <i>Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. <i>Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R3. <i>There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it.*

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

R5. *Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.*

Now, please select any *two* of the four goals (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider pursuing in the future –

1. Get higher grades than my peer group.
2. Create or deepen personal relationships or friendships.
3. Become better known and networked around the campus.
4. Learn as much as I can about what interests me.

SG1.

SG2.



Appendix B. (Phase 1) Questionnaires for Employees
Condition 2 - Self-concordance assessment after goal selection (Control group)

SET

E/B

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Guwahati – 781039 (Assam) INDIA

I am a research scholar working at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), under the guidance of Professor Nachiketa Tripathi.

The area of my doctoral research at the Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati is motivation and goal selection, and I thank your participation in testing a framework that can help improve goal selection by individuals.

I request that you spare 10-15 mins to introspect the nature of your goals and your motivation by answering specific questions. **There is no right or wrong answer.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary and the identity of the organization and the employees will not be disclosed at any stage. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay

Research Scholar

Email: satwi176141011@iitg.ac.in

Personal Information

Name (optional):

Email (mandatory):

Gender(M/F/Others):

Designation:

Age (in years):

Qualifications:

Tenure (in years):

Total work experience (in years):

Salary/month: Please indicate your choice by putting [✓]

[] 30,000 to 40,000

[] 60,000 to 70,000

[] 90,000 to 1,00,000

[] 40,000 to 50,000

[] 70,000 to 80,000

[] 1,00,000 and above

[] 50,000 to 60,000

[] 80,000 to 90,000

PLEASE READ THE BELOW SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING THE
FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
------------------------------	-----------------	------------------------------	---	---------------------------	--------------	---------------------------

W1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W3. I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The statements below describe certain future states or goals one can aspire to. Please read through the list of statements. Tick the box to the right that shows how the described values are important to you.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important

<u>I aspire to...</u>	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important
G1 To help people, especially those who need help.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G2 To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G3 To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G4 To achieve affluence and personal success.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G5 To build and maintain close relationships.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
G6 Being known and admired by many people.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

Presented here are several characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please tick the box to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree

<u>I see myself as someone Who...</u>	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree
B1 Is talkative	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B2 Tends to find fault with others	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B3 Does a thorough job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B4 Is depressed, blue	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B5 Is original, comes up with new ideas.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B6 Is reserved	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

B7 Is helpful and unselfish with others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B8 Can be somewhat clueless

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B9 Is relaxed, handles stress well

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B10 Is curious about many different things

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B11 Is full of energy

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B12 Starts quarrel with others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B13 Is a reliable worker

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B14 Can be tense

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B17 Has a forgiving nature

B18 Tends to be disorganized 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B19 Worries a lot 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B20 Has an active imagination 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B21 Tends to be quiet 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B22 Is generally trusting 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B23 Tends to be lazy 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B24 Is emotionally stable, not
easily upset 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B25 Is inventive 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B26 Has an assertive personality 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B27 Can be cold and aloof

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B28 Perseveres until the task is finished

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B29 Can be moody

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B33 Does things efficiently

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B34 Remains calm in tense situations

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B35 Prefers work that is routine

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

B36 Is outgoing, sociable

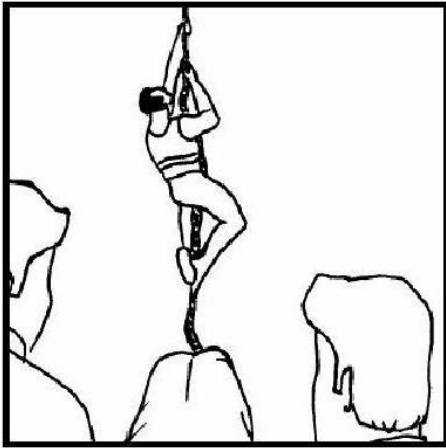
	1	2	3	4	5
B37 Is sometimes rude to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B38 Makes plans and follows through with them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B39 Gets nervous easily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B41 Has a few artistic interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B42 Likes to cooperate with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B43 Is easily distracted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	1	2	3	4	5
B44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

On the following pages, you will see a set of pictures showing all kinds of everyday situations. We did not choose clear and detailed pictures because we want you to use your imagination in guessing what might be going on in these pictures.

Please try to put yourself in the position of one of the persons who are shown in these pictures.

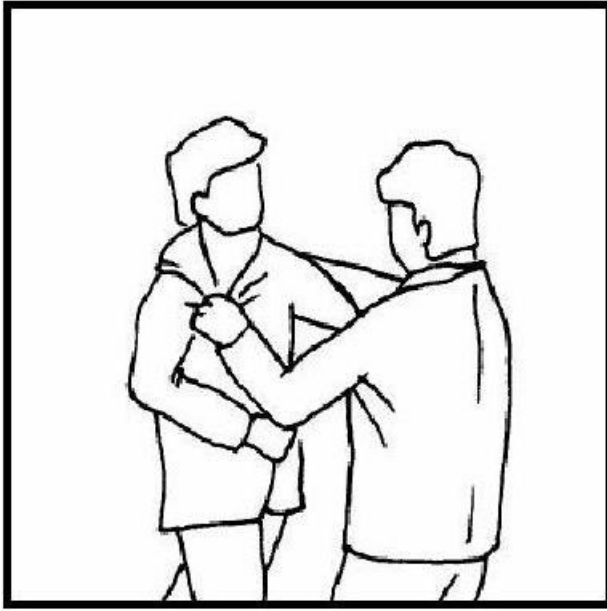
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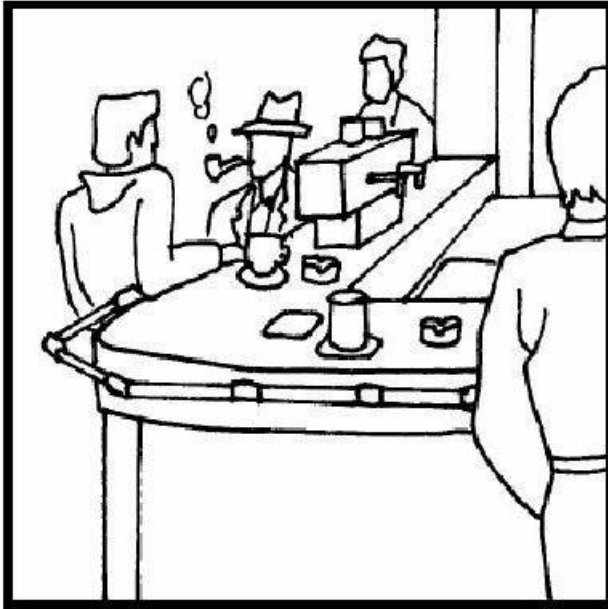
P1. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



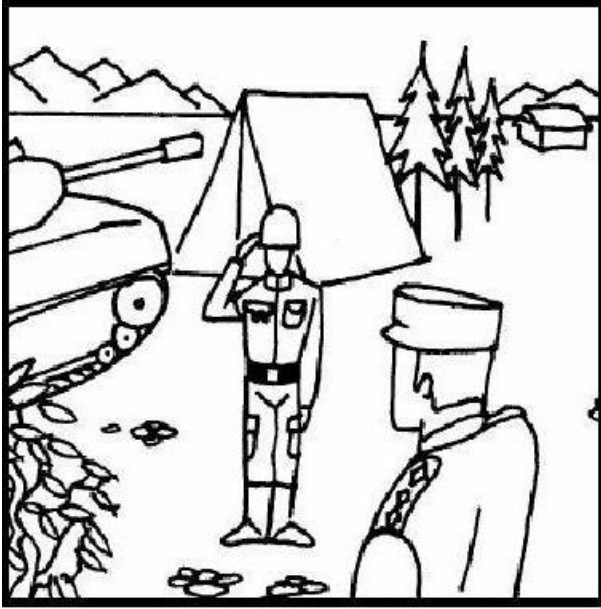
P2. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



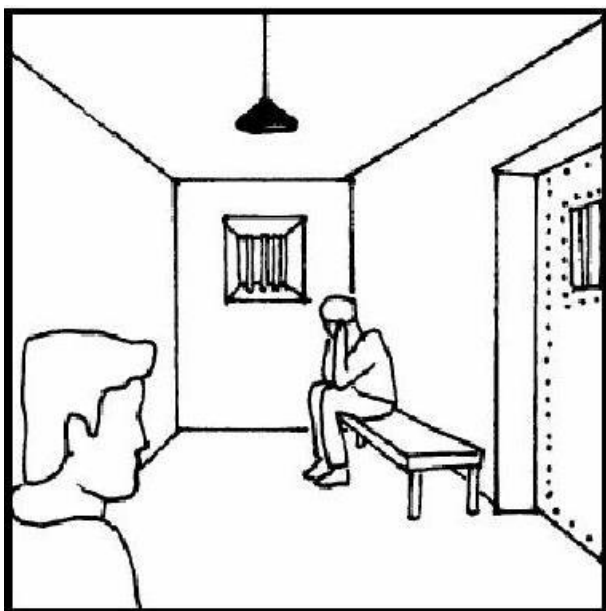
P3. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P4. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



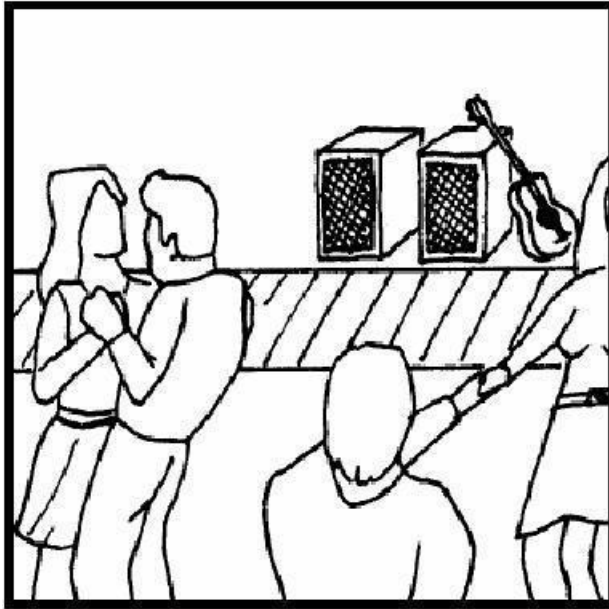
P5. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



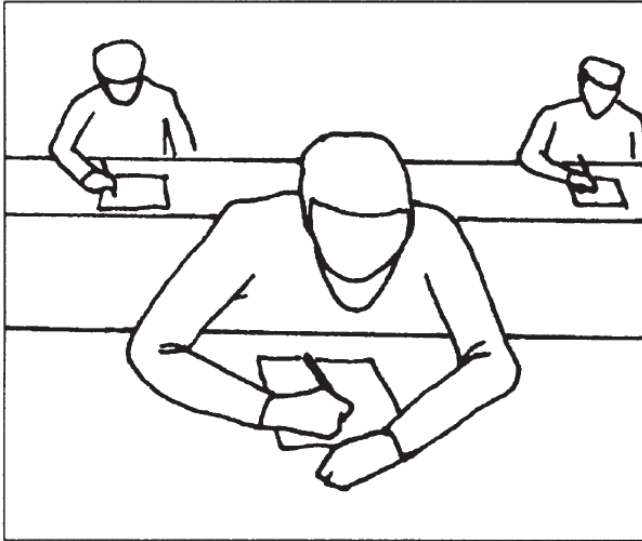
P6. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



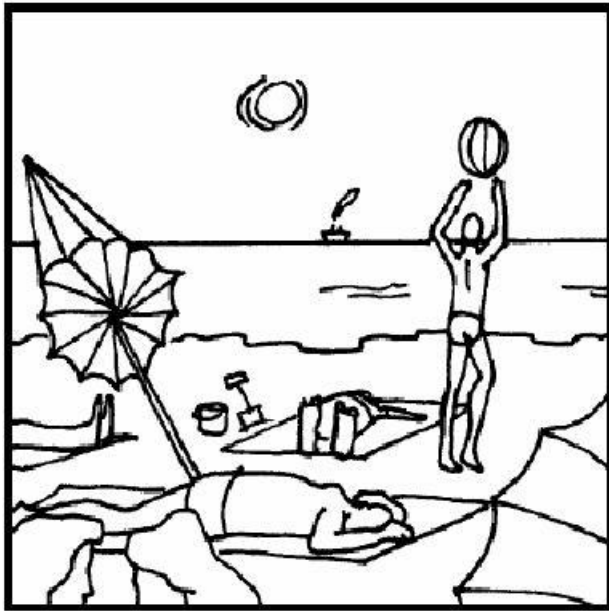
P7. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P8. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P9. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P10. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P11. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P12. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P13. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P14. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		

Instructions: We invite you to consider your future possible selves (for instance, “who you might be 20 years from now”). Below are six possible selves that could come true for you or be the potential aspects of the desirable life you may be living. First, please read through the list. Try to imagine yourself having and being each of these possible selves.

1. Being wealthy or rich.
2. Being wise or mature.
3. Being generous or helpful.
4. Being famous or idolized.
5. Being beautiful or handsome.
6. Being loved or loving.

In order to reach possible selves, we have to take (or not take) certain actions along the way. These actions may or may not be enjoyable in real life. Please consider *how will it feel* to take the following actions to reach each of your chosen future possible selves.

Now, please select any *three* of the six possible selves (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider being in the future –

SG1.

SG2.

SG3.

Please select your agreement and disagreement with (in the right column) each of the *five* reasons you might strive for three choices of possible future selves or goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for a possible future self (SG1) -					
R1. <i>Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. <i>Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R3. <i>There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.</i>	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

R4. Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R5. Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for a possible future self (SG2) -					
R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R2. *Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.*

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R3. *There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.*

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.*

R5. Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary “reason” is your interest in the experience.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for a possible future self (SG3) -	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

R3. *There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.*

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it.*

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

☐

R5. *Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.*

Appendix B. (Phase 1) Questionnaires for Students**Condition 2 - Self-concordance assessment after goal selection (Control group)****Phase 1 – SET S/B****Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati***Department of Humanities and Social Sciences*

Guwahati – 781039 (Assam) INDIA

I am a research scholar working at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), under the guidance of Professor Nachiketa Tripathi.

The area of my doctoral research at the Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati is motivation and goal selection, and I thank your participation in testing a framework that can help improve goal selection by individuals.

I request that you spare 10-15 mins to introspect the nature of your goals and your motivation by answering specific questions. **There is no right or wrong answer.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary and all the information provided by the participants will be kept confidential and used only for research. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay,

Research Scholar

E-mail: satwi176141011@iitg.ac.in

Personal Information

Name (optional):

Email (mandatory):

Gender(M/F/Others):

Designation:

Age (in years):

Qualifications:

Specialization/Stream:

PLEASE READ THE BELOW SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
W1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
W2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W3. I am satisfied with my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The statements below describe certain future states that one can aspire to. Please read through the list of statements. Tick the box to the right that shows how the described values are important to you.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Extremely important
I aspire to					
G1. To help people, especially those who need help.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

G2. To project an appealing and attractive image of oneself.

G3. To attain a certain level of self-understanding and personal growth.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G4. To achieve affluence and personal success.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G5. To build and maintain close relationships.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

G6. Being known and admired by many people.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Presented here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please tick the box to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree

<u>I see myself as someone Who...</u>	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Strongly agree
B1 Is talkative	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B2 Tends to find fault with others	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B3 Does a thorough job	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B4 Is depressed, blue	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B5 Is original, comes up with new ideas.	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B6 Is reserved	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B7 Is helpful and unselfish with others	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B8 Can be somewhat clueless	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
B9 Is relaxed, handles stress well	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

B10 Is curious about many different things

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B11 Is full of energy

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B12 Starts quarrel with others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B13 Is a reliable worker

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B14 Can be tense

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B17 Has a forgiving nature

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B18 Tends to be disorganized

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B19 Worries a lot

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B20 Has an active imagination

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B21 Tends to be quiet

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B22 Is generally trusting

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B23 Tends to be lazy

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B25 Is inventive

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B26 Has an assertive personality

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B27 Can be cold and aloof

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B28 Perseveres until the task is finished

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B29 Can be moody

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B33 Does things efficiently

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B34 Remains calm in tense situations

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B35 Prefers work that is routine

B36 Is outgoing, sociable

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B37 Is sometimes rude to others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B38 Makes plans and follows through with them

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B39 Gets nervous easily

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B41 Has a few artistic interests

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B42 Likes to cooperate with others

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B43 Is easily distracted

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B44 Is sophisticated in art,
music, or literature

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

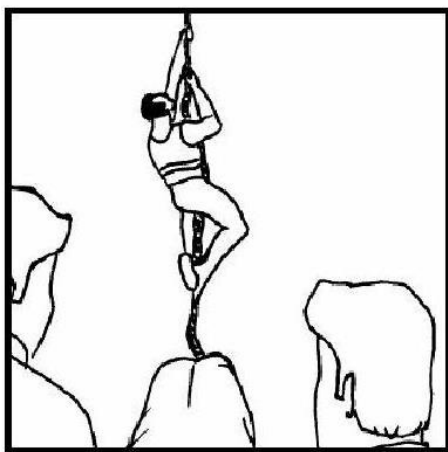
☐

Picture Imagination Task

On the following pages, you will see a set of pictures showing all kinds of everyday situations. We did not choose clear and detailed pictures because we want you to use your imagination in guessing what might be going on in these pictures.

Please try to put yourself in the position of one of the persons who are shown in these pictures.

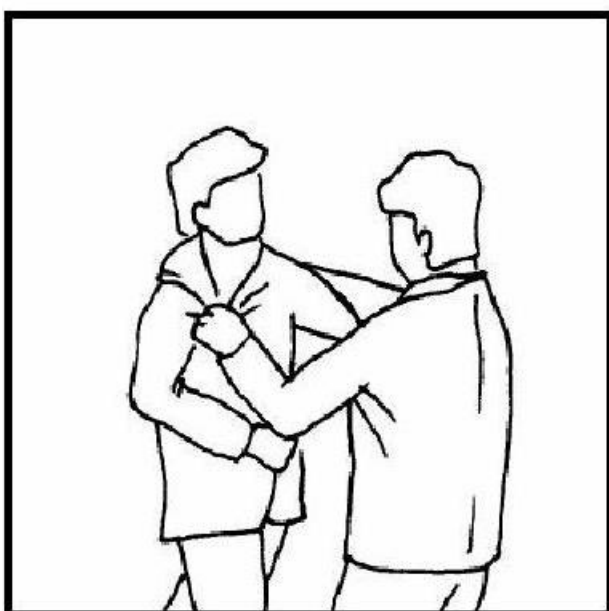
Below these pictures, you will also find a set of statements describing the way people could think and feel in this situation. Please decide for each statement whether it describes the situation that you imagine. If it does, choose YES, if it does not, choose NO. Please do not think about a single statement too long and try to follow your spontaneous impression.



P1. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people	☐	☐
Anticipating to lose my standing	☐	☐
Feeling confident to succeed at this task	☐	☐
Being afraid of being rejected by others	☐	☐

Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P2. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		

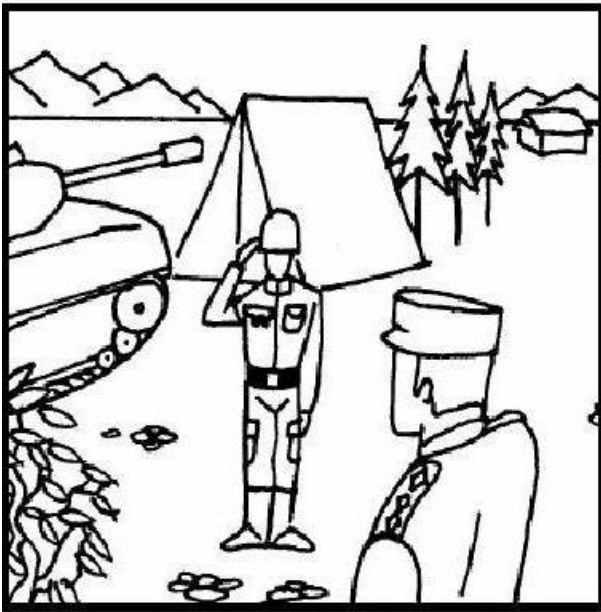
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P3. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		

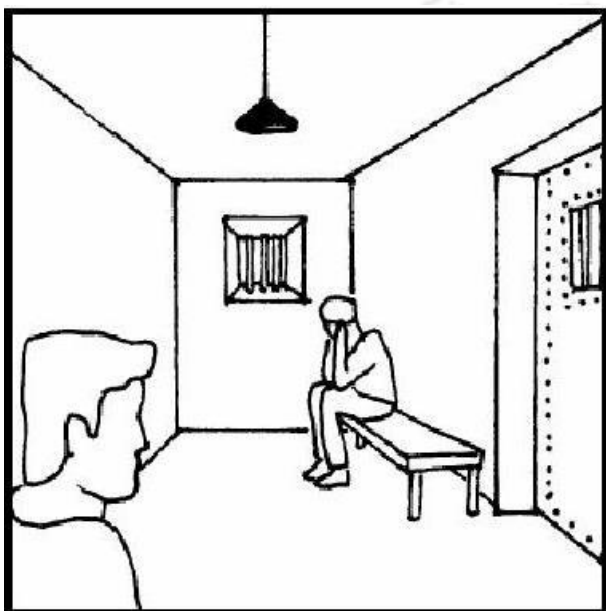
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P4. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		

Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P5. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		

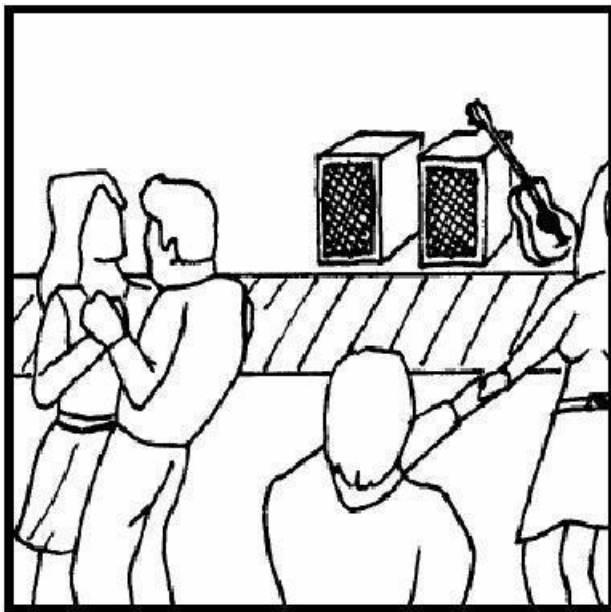
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P6. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		

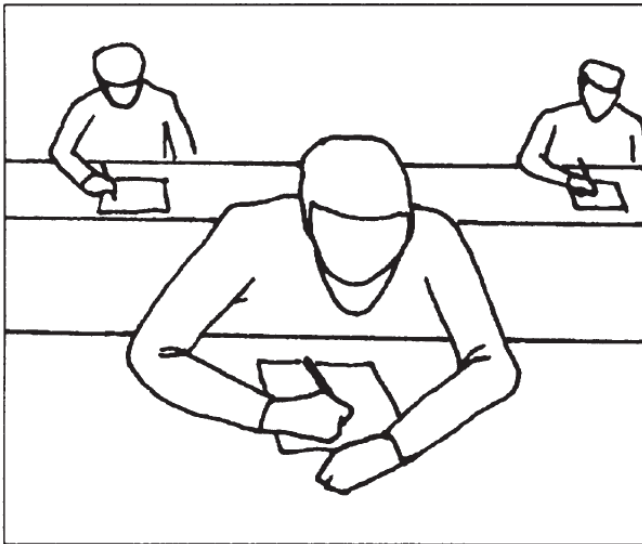
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P7. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		

Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P8. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		

Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P9. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		

Hoping to acquire a good standing		
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P10. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P11. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



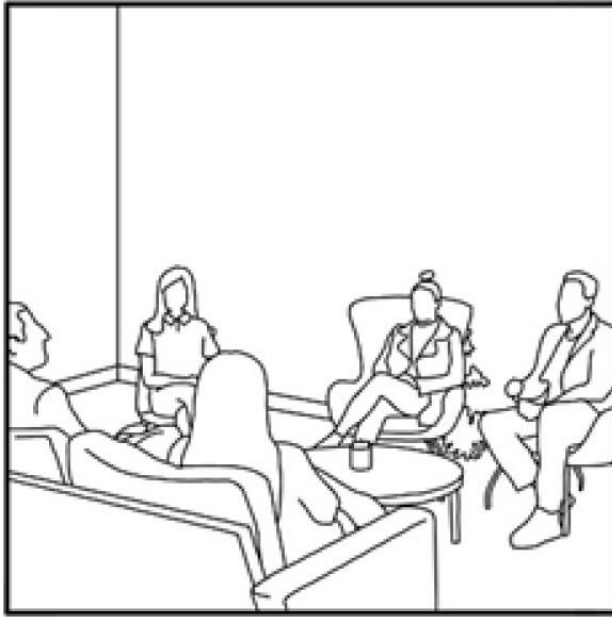
P12. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P13. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		



P14. Imagine what might be happening in this picture. Then tick whether each of the following statements describes the situation you imagine.

Statements	No	Yes
Feeling good about meeting other people		
Anticipating to lose my standing		
Feeling confident to succeed at this task		
Being afraid of being rejected by others		
Thinking about lacking abilities at this task		
Being afraid of being overpowered by other people		
Feeling good about one's competence		
Being afraid of being boring to others		
Wanting to postpone a difficult task for a while		
Trying to influence other people		
Hoping to get in touch with other people		
Hoping to acquire a good standing		

Section 5. The primary purpose of the study

Instructions: We invite you to set two personal goals, and then commit to pursuing those goals over time! Research shows that setting clear personal goals can pay off for people. Below are four common types of goals which can be beneficial for people. Please read each goal carefully. Please take a few seconds to think about what it would be like to pursue any of the goals and how things might go.

-

G1. Get higher grades than my peer group.

G2. Create or deepen personal relationships or friendships.

G3. Become better known and networked around the campus.

G4. Learn as much as I can about what interests me.

Consider the possible motivation for pursuing each of the four goals. Please consider *how will it feel* to take the following actions to reach each of your chosen future possible selves.

Now, please select any two of the four goals (indicating by number, e.g., 1) that you might consider pursuing in the future –

SG1.

SG2.

Consider the possible motivation for pursuing the two selected goals and consider **WHY** **will** you work on them?

Please select your agreement and disagreement with (in the right column) each of the *five* reasons you might strive for your choice of the two goals selected.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for SG1 -					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you "ought" to strive for that something.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R3. There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

R4. Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R5. Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
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Why you might strive **SG2** -

R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R2. Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

you “ought” to strive for that something.

R3. *There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.*

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.*

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

R5. *Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary “reason” is your interest in the experience.*

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

Appendix C. (Phase 2) Questionnaire
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Phase 2

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Thank you for your continued participation in a study introspecting the nature of your goals and your motivation. I request that you spare 10-15 minutes to answer specific questions. **There are no right or wrong answers.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary, and all the information provided by the participants will be kept confidential and used only for research. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay,

Research Scholar

Phase 2

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Section 1

Instructions

Some people suggest that making detailed plans regarding when, how and where you will act to progress on your goals is very helpful. Implementation plans are conceptualized as when, where and how to implement the chosen goal. Alternatively, some people suggest that goal plans may constrain individuals or are not very helpful if you are clear about the goal you want to pursue.

Based on the information above, please choose one of the two (yes/no) options for the question below –

Would you like to form implementation plans for pursuing your two goal choices?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If **Yes**, please report specific plans about *when, where and how* you will work towards any of your goals.

- When -
- Where -
- How –

Also, please specify any possible obstacles/distractions and how will you overcome them –

- Obstacles – 1.
2.
- Solutions – 1.
2.

If **No**, please specify your reasons (in the space below) for not forming any plans for progressing on your goals -

Section 2

Now please select your agreement and disagreement with (in the right column) *five* reasons for the pursuit of each of the two selected goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Why you might strive for the selected goal 1 -					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R2. Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you “ought” to strive for that something.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R3. There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐
R4. Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise,					
	1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R5. Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

Why you might strive for the selected goal 2 -

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R1. Because you believe that it is an important goal to have. Although this goal may once have been taught to you by others, now you endorse it freely and value it wholeheartedly.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

R2. Because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you did not. Rather than having this goal because someone else thinks you ought to, you feel that you "ought" to strive for that something.

R3. *There is no particular reason for the choice of the goal.*

1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐

R4. *Because somebody else wants you to or because the situation seems to compel it. Stated differently, you probably wouldn't have this goal if you didn't get some reward, praise, or approval for it or if you didn't avoid something negative by pursuing it.*

1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐

R5. *Because of the enjoyment or stimulation that goal provides you. While there may be many good reasons for the goal, the primary "reason" is your interest in the experience.*

1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐

Thank you for your ratings and your continued participation in the study. I will contact you after **3 weeks** to conclude the study.

Phase 3

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Thank you for your continued participation in a study introspecting the nature of your goals and your motivation. I request that you spare 10-15 minutes to answer specific questions to conclude with the study. **There are no right or wrong answers.** Therefore, please feel free to engage in candid self-analysis of your goals. **Your participation is voluntary, and all the information provided by the participants will be kept confidential and used only for research. The use of email addresses is limited to communicating the study results only.**

Thank you in advance.

Satwik Upadhyay,

Research Scholar

Section 1

Instructions

Below are two statements regarding goal progress on your two goal choices. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line succeeding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response that is closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Very little	Little	Average	Above average	Much	To a great extent

SGP1. Please rate the extent to which you made progress on the goal (SG1).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SGP2. Please rate the extent to which you made progress on the goal (SG2).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 2

PLEASE READ THE BELOW SECTION CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your response and choose a response closest to your thoughts. **Please note that there are no right or wrong answers**—only your answer matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
W1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W2. The conditions of my life are excellent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W3. I am satisfied with my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
W4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX D ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

Organisation A
Established on 14 January 1965 under the Food Corporations Act, 1964, this organisation is one of India's largest government-initiated entities and ranks among Asia's major supply chain management organisations. Initially headquartered in Chennai with its first district office in Thanjavur, it was founded to implement the National Food Policy, focusing on providing effective price support for farmers, ensuring the nationwide distribution of food grains through the Public Distribution System (PDS), and maintaining operational and buffer stocks to secure national food availability. The organisation operates through five zonal and 26 regional offices, annually procuring about 15–20% of India's wheat and 12–15% of its rice directly from farmers at Minimum Support Prices (MSP) set by the government. As of 2019, the workforce included 21,847 personnel.
Organisation B
The organisation was established in 1994 and is located on a 285-hectare campus on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River, approximately 20 km from Guwahati city, Assam, India. It serves around 8,434 students, supported by 456 faculty and 568 staff members. The institution offers a range of programmes, including Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) degrees in various engineering fields, Master of Technology (M.Tech), Master of Design (M.Des), Master of Science by Research (MS (R)), and Master of Arts (MA) in Development Studies and Liberal Arts, as well as doctoral programmes (Ph.D.) for advanced research. The organisation is recognised as a leading academic institution, having ranked among the top 100 world universities under 50 years of age by Times Higher Education in 2014, and maintaining its position in various global rankings. It achieved a rank of 32 globally in the 'Research Citations per Faculty' category and 364 overall in the QS World University Rankings 2024. It holds the 7th position among engineering institutions in India according to the NIRF rankings for 2023 and was ranked 2nd in the Government of India's 'Swachhata Ranking'. Additionally, it was the top-ranked university for IT developers in the Asia-Pacific region by HackerRank in 2019 and ranked 6th globally in

Sustainable Development Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023.
Organisation C
The organisation was established in 1992 in Guwahati, Assam, and comprises several educational entities. It serves approximately 2,500 students and employs around 150 faculty members, supported by additional administrative staff. The organisation offers a range of programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate courses include Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA), and Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com). At the postgraduate level, it provides Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Commerce (M.Com) programmes, along with other specialised courses in management and technology. Recognised for its contributions to higher education in the region, the organisation fosters a learning environment that emphasises practical knowledge, skill development, and personal growth. It is committed to preparing students for successful careers through industry-oriented training and innovative teaching methods integrated into its curriculum.
Organisation D
The organisation, founded in 2016, is a distributed HR technology company that focuses on transforming workplace dynamics through technology, enhancing the employee experience and organisational performance. It offers products that cover various aspects of the employee lifecycle, including hiring, onboarding, engagement, and retention, with a strong emphasis on remote and hybrid team environments. Based in Bengaluru, India, the organisation serves over 20,000 clients globally and has more than a million subscribers for its HR products. It employs over 200 staff members

in India and has a workforce exceeding 16,000 worldwide, with its head office in Santa Monica, USA.

Recognised for its commitment to employee well-being, the organisation maintains high satisfaction ratings on platforms like Glassdoor and shares insights through The Shape of Work, a podcast addressing emerging HR trends and workplace technology.

Organisation E

With head offices in both Massachusetts and Florida, Organisation E is a \$4 Billion global provider of workforce management, human capital management, and payroll solutions, empowering businesses to manage their people more effectively. It helps over ~80,000 Global customers such as PepsiCo, General Electrics, Amazon, IBM, Nestle and many more to streamline their HR processes, manage time and attendance, simplify payroll, and enhance employee engagement, enabling them to achieve better workforce productivity and a more positive employee experience.

It offers mobile and desktop solutions through platforms like UKG Pro and UKG Dimensions, designed for both employees and employers to ensure efficient workforce management, improve compliance, and foster workplace culture. The goal of UKG is to make work life more meaningful and empower organisations to thrive through better management of their workforce.

Organisation F

As an international company with offices in Germany and India, Organisation F is a digital company that supports small-scale farmers and agri-retailers all over the world. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, data analytics and scientific research, the organisation promotes sustainable practices and helps enhance farming productivity. Last year, the organisation addressed more than 50 million cultivation and crop-related queries from farmers and digitally connected more than 100,000 retailers by the use of two apps developed by the organisation F.

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Publications

Publications in Peer-Reviewed Journals:

1. Tripathi, N., **Upadhyay, S.**, & Das, H. (2022). Forced transition to technology: role of self-efficacy and big five personality variables in the adoption of technology. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 36(7), p. 1131-1151.
2. Dash, D., Farooq, R. and **Upadhyay, S.** (2022). Linking workplace ostracism and knowledge hoarding via organizational climate: a review and research agenda. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 15(1), p. 135-166.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-05-2021-0080>
3. Burkova, V. N., Butovskaya, M. L.,...Tripathi, N., **Upadhyay, S.**,... et al. (2022). Factors Associated with Highest Symptoms of Anxiety During COVID-19: Cross-Cultural Study of 23 Countries. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, p. 2472.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.805586>
4. Burkova, V. N., Butovskaya, M. L.,...Tripathi, N., **Upadhyay, S.**,... et al. (2021). Predictors of Anxiety in the COVID-19 Pandemic from a Global Perspective: Data from 23 Countries. *Sustainability*, 13(7), p. 4017.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13074017>
5. Burkova, V. N., Butovskaya, M. L.,...Tripathi, N., **Upadhyay, S.**,... et al. (2021). Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the Role of Empathy during COVID-19's First Wave. *Sustainability*, 13(13), p. 4000. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137431>
6. **Upadhyay, S.**, Farooq, R. and Tripathi, N. (2020). Jet without fuel: nosedive of Jet Airways. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, 18(4), p. 505-525.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-02-2020-0021>

Research Communicated:

1. **Upadhyay, S.** (2024), Ghosh, V., Raja, V., Narayanmurthy, G. and Moser, R. Organisational Resilience Reimagined: Navigating its evolution landscape and charting ethical implications for the future. *IEEE-Transactions on Engineering Management*, Revision 2 submitted.
2. Ghosh, V., **Upadhyay, S.**, Mukherjee, R. and Yang, L. (2024). The evolution of smart systems and future technologies in human resource management system: Novel implications for sustainable development goals. *Technovation* - under review.

Book Chapter

1. **Upadhyay, S.** (2024). *Organizational Resilience*. In Sengupta, S. (Eds.), *Being the Beacon of Hope: Creating New Pathways for Business and Society*, ahead-of-print, Orient Blackswan, Hyderabad.

Book Review

1. Tripathi, N., & **Upadhyay, S.** (2020). Urmi Nanda Biswas, Karin Allard, Anders Pousette and Annika Harenstam, Understanding Attractive Work in a Globalized World. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, 7(1), p. 144–150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2322093720914169>.

Workshop:

1. Completed an online “*Certificate course in Data Analytics with Python Programming*” conducted by iHUB Divya Sampark, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee from 31-Jul-2023 to 25-Aug-2023.
2. Completed a “*Certificate Program in People Analytics and Digital HR*” conducted by the Indian Institute of Management Indore (IIM – Indore) from October 2022 to January 2023.

3. Completed a Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) Course on “Foundations of Mixed Methods Research” during April 15-24, 2019, at the Indian Institute of Management, Indore.
4. Completed an INDAM 2022 workshop on “*Introduction to PLS-SEM Using SmartPLS*”, conducted By Prof. Christian M. Ringle, Hamburg University of Technology, Germany, on 21st March - 22nd March, 2022.

