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Self-Employment, Personal Values, and Varieties of Happiness–Unhappiness

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This study compares personal values and forms of happiness between self-employed workers and those employed in an organization. Values are examined through Schwartz's (1999) established model, and happiness is measured in terms of personal flourishing and both job-specific and general hedonic well-being. In two nationally representative samples, self-employed workers are found to value self-direction and stimulation in their lives to a significantly greater degree than do organizational employees, but not to differ in other types of value. Well-being differences are predicted to depend on whether or not workers supervise others, such that any well-being advantages of self-employment are expected to occur only for self-employed workers without subordinates. As predicted, job satisfaction in self-employment is found to exceed that of organizational workers primarily for those who do not supervise others. In respect of personal flourishing, self-employed workers report significantly greater accomplishment in their lives, and that difference is again found only for workers without supervisory responsibility. However, strain experienced in a job and context-free hedonic well-being are found to be similar between self- and organizational employment. Refinements are proposed to research methods and practical procedures.

Keywords: self-employment, happiness, well-being, flourishing, job satisfaction

Around 32 million people in the European Union are self-employed (European Commission, 2016), including more than 4.5 million in the United Kingdom (Office of National Statistics, 2017), as are around 15 million in the United States (Hipple, 2010).¹ However, as pointed out by Schonfeld and Mazzola (2015), psychological research into the causes and consequences of this nonstandard type of work has been extremely limited. Theories of work motivation, occupational choice, and career development can benefit from comparisons between individuals in the two roles, and additional psychological evidence is essential to assess claims about the benefits and costs of working for oneself.

In this underresearched area, the present article contributes to knowledge about three questions. First, do self-employed individuals differ from those in organizational employment by having distinctive personal values that may motivate them to work for themselves? Second, is the greater job satisfaction of self-employed workers restricted to those who have no supervisory responsibility? And third, if self-employed individuals experience greater well-being in their jobs, do mental health advantages extend more generally to happiness in their lives as a whole?

Self-employed workers hold positions that range widely from unskilled manual to managerial and professional. In comparison with organizational workers, they typically undertake more weekly hours on the job and are more likely to be male (e.g., European

Commission, 2016; Hipple, 2010). The majority have no staff—around two thirds in Europe (European Commission, 2016) and three quarters in the United States (see Footnote 1)—and only a minority would prefer to work for an organization—17% in D'Arcy and Gardiner's (2014) U.K. sample.

Self-employment levels are partly driven by demographic influences on labor force composition. For example, increases in life span and the lengthening of working lives can lead to more people working for themselves because self-employed individuals are on average older than those in organizational jobs (e.g., European Commission, 2016; Hipple, 2010). And as more women move into paid work, many (e.g., motivated by family commitments) seek flexible working hours and the possibility of self-employed income generation from home (e.g., Carr, 1996; Craig, Powell, & Cortis, 2012). Increases in the number of dual- or multi-earner families can also encourage self-employment by removing the need for one person's job to provide an income large enough to support an entire household.

Higher levels of self-employment are additionally promoted by commercial and technological developments. For example, the decline of manufacturing employment, expansion of the service sector, and Internet connectivity on a global scale have created new job possibilities which are often unlike traditional occupations.

Self-Employed Jobs and Psychological Health

Some disadvantages of self-employment are clear. Working for oneself rules out employer-provided sick pay, pension, holiday and other benefits. Self-employed workers on average earn less than

These analyses have not previously been presented in any form; data are publicly available at www.europeansocialsurvey.org. Ute Stephan's contribution to initial sampling discussions is much appreciated.

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¹ Steve Hipple has kindly made available detailed information about the years following his 2010 article.

those in organizational jobs (Green & Mostafa, 2012), and increased variability of income across time can create intermittently high levels of anxiety. Many new enterprises created by self-employed individuals are short-lived (e.g., European Commission, 2016).

Self-employed workers are widely thought to be under particularly high strain from commercial insecurity, a heavy decision-making burden and lack of employer-provided benefits. Schonfeld and Mazzola (2015) have described how people working for themselves can encounter difficult situations and experience negative feelings. They point out that many stressors in self-employment are similar to those in organizational jobs, and comparative studies have shown that the strain felt in self-employed and organizational work is often at a similar level (Andersson, 2008; Baron, Franklin, & Hmieleski, 2016; Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Tuttle & Garr, 2009) or significantly lower in self-employment (Baron et al., 2016; Hessels, Rietveld, & Van der Zwan, 2017; Tetrick, Slack, Da Silva, & Sinclair, 2000). Harmful influences from a job to home-life also appear overall not to differ between self- and organizational employment, although patterns vary between different family situations, self-employed roles, and the measures applied (König & Cesinger, 2015; Schieman, Whitestone, & Van Gundy, 2006).

Well-being comparisons between the two roles have most often been made in terms of job satisfaction, and research has found that self-employed workers as a whole report significantly greater satisfaction with their job than do those paid by an organization. This pattern has been observed in North America (e.g., Hundley, 2001; Katz, 1993; Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Tetrick et al., 2000), Finland (Hytti, Kautonen, & Akola, 2013), Sweden (Andersson, 2008), the United Kingdom (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998; Smeaton, 2003), and in research extending across a range of countries (Benz & Frey, 2008; Lange, 2012). Other studies have found that the greater job satisfaction of self-employed workers is largely accounted for by their raised level of job autonomy (Hytti et al., 2013; Warr & Inceoglu, in press), and possibly by reduced role ambiguity and conflict (Tetrick et al., 2000).

However, research into self-employment has failed to distinguish between workers who do and do not have responsibility for other people (Schjoedt, 2009; Schonfeld & Mazzola, 2015), and possible differences require investigation. In studies of workers in organizational (rather than self-) employment, the characteristics of a job and employees' job well-being have been shown to differ between workers who supervise others and those who do not. For instance, organizational workers in supervisory roles have more autonomy than nonmanagers and they report greater job satisfaction (e.g., Robie, Ryan, Schmieder, Parra, & Smith, 1998; Schjoedt, 2009; Tetrick et al., 2000). Given that organizational employees who supervise others have greater job satisfaction than do nonsupervisory organizational workers, job satisfaction in self-employment might also differ according to whether or not self-employed individuals supervise other workers. Implications of this possibility are considered below, and for the first time well-being comparisons between self-employed and organizational workers will be made between individuals differentiated by supervisory responsibility.

Varieties of Happiness

Although the research cited above indicates that self-employed workers are more satisfied in their jobs, no self-employment studies have examined hedonic happiness of a more general kind. Furthermore, an additional form of happiness, that of flourishing, has recently been emphasized by nonoccupational researchers and is considered here in self-employment for the first time.

Originating primarily in Aristotle's (384 BC to 322 BC) discussion of "eudaimonia"—a good, virtuous, or fulfilled life (e.g., Hughes, 2001)—the construct has been developed and modified by psychologists in terms of "flourishing" (e.g., Keyes, 2002; Seligman, 2011; Waterman, 1993). This has been treated in different ways by different authors, often without Aristotle's emphasis on virtuous behavior, and the definition and components of flourishing have been extensively debated (e.g., Huta & Waterman, 2014; Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; Waterman, 2008).

Flourishing is widely considered to involve bodily and/or mental activity which is in some way important or perhaps fundamental to the person. Thus, Seligman (2002) introduced the notion of "authentic happiness" deriving from the use of one's personal strengths and virtues to achieve goals that have intrinsic value beyond mere pleasure; he subsequently (Seligman, 2011) preferred the label *flourishing*, and parallel perspectives have used the terms *self-realization* (Waterman, 1993) and *self-validation* (Warr, 2007). In the absence of general agreement about the most appropriate definition of flourishing, different scholars have emphasized different elements, often moving beyond Aristotle's original concept of eudaimonia. Current models may be brought together in the following six aspects:

Component 1: Engagement in the World

Seligman (2011) and other researchers into flourishing emphasize involvement in issues beyond oneself. Short-term experiences of engagement have been analyzed in terms of "flow"—becoming psychologically immersed in a current activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)—and involvement in a personal project is central to the model of, for instance, McGregor and Little (1998). Extended engagement is sometimes viewed as "thriving," perhaps including a desire for new learning and personal development (e.g., Keyes, 2002; Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson, & Garnett, 2012). Effort-expenditure has long been viewed as contributing to happiness despite current strain, if that effort is directed at outcomes which are personally valued (e.g., Ferguson, 1966/1767).

Component 2: Experiencing Meaning or Purpose in Life

Within Aristotle's perspective is a second aspect of flourishing—the experience of personal meaning in activity perceived as worthwhile or virtuous (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013; Diener et al., 2010; Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006; McGregor & Little, 1998; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011; Warr, 2007; Waterman, 1993). Personal meaning derives from the contribution of mental or physical activity to a current set of goals or self-concept (e.g., Emmons, 2002) such that themes of intrinsic motivation, identity, or perceived self-worth are often part of psychological accounts in this area.

Component 3: Autonomous Self-Regulation

Several perspectives on flourishing include personal autonomy in thought and action. For example, Ryff (1989) and Ryff and Keyes (1995) have argued that self-actualization involves functioning which is internally controlled rather than determined by external pressures so that perceived freedom in decision making is often considered essential within the construct. More generally, autonomous self-regulation has long been central to models of positive mental health, especially in Western countries (e.g., Jahoda, 1958; Warr, 1987).

Component 4: Being Competent in Valued Respects

Some writers have drawn attention to a person's perceived effectiveness in personally important activities (e.g., Diener et al., 2010; Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011). This feature draws from notions of self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997) and environmental mastery (e.g., Jahoda, 1958)—a sense that in a number of desired respects one is able to lead an effective life.

Component 5: Having Vitality

Being “full of life” is present in several psychologists' models of flourishing. For Porath et al. (2012), people who are thriving report high levels of energy and liveliness, and for Keyes (2002), the opposite of flourishing is described as *languishing*.

Component 6: Having Positive Relations with Others

Some accounts of flourishing additionally include forms of social interaction. Social well-being is viewed by Keyes (2002) in terms of five dimensions—social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualization, and social acceptance—and some or all of these have been included in different models of flourishing (Diener et al., 2010; Huppert & So, 2013; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011).

In overview, a comprehensive account of happiness can be seen to extend beyond hedonic forms like job or life satisfaction into aspects of flourishing. Different theorists emphasize some flourishing elements more than others, and general agreement on content has yet to emerge. The importance here of the construct is that we know very little about flourishing in self-employment. This article presents hypotheses and findings for the first time.

As illustrated in the preceding text, psychologists' perspectives on flourishing have in part moved away from Aristotle's notion of eudaimonic virtue and fulfilment. The first three flourishing components (engagement, meaning, and autonomy) reflect Aristotle's thinking, but personal competence, vitality, and social relationships (Components 4, 5, and 6) lack a direct concern for activity that is potentially virtuous. It may therefore be conceptually and empirically helpful to separate eudaimonic types of flourishing (Components 1, 2, and 3) from those which are noneudaimonic (Components 4, 5, and 6). The two types will be distinguished in analyses that follow.

Possible Origins of Self-Employment Within the Person

Initially, the article addresses the question: why do some people work for themselves rather than becoming an employee

of an organization? Potential influences derive both from a person's national and local environment and from his or her own characteristics. Nation-level comparisons have revealed that self-employment increases in poor economic conditions and in high unemployment (Bögenhold & Staber, 1991; Hevenstone, 2010), but individual-level research has so far been limited to reports by self-employed workers without obtaining parallel information from others who are employed. Studies have emphasized a desire for independence (Dawson, Henley, & Latreille, 2014; Smeaton, 2003), but in some cases a transition into self-employment is motivated primarily by the need for a job of some kind in the absence of available employed positions. Self-employment undertaken for that reason is often referred to as arising from necessity rather than opportunity, and Finnish “necessity” self-employed workers were found by Kautonen and Palmroos (2010) to be less satisfied with their self-employed position than were opportunity workers. The proportion of self-employment arising from necessity is likely to depend on local economic conditions and was estimated to be around 10% in the study by Kautonen and Palmroos (2010).

More widely, comparisons are needed between self-employed and organizational workers in terms of specific preferences, often described by psychologists as personal values. Kluckhohn's (1951) definition of a value as a “conception, explicit or implicit, . . . of the desirable that influences the selection from available means, modes, and ends of action” has served as the basis of later accounts, such as a “conception of the desirable” (Schwartz, 1999) or a “preference for one state of affairs over others” (Hofstede, 1984). In some cases, values are within moral, religious or social codes, but they often primarily represent personal preferences (e.g., Rohan, 2000; Rokeach, 1973). Values can serve as motivational guides for self-regulation and can affect happiness or unhappiness by their impact on the priority and content of thoughts and actions. Research into job satisfaction among workers in organizational employment has shown that the value attached to job features can moderate correlations between those features and job well-being (e.g., Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Loher, Noe, Moeller, & Fitzgerald, 1985).

Research into the values of self-employed workers has been very limited and has focused almost entirely on the minority who are explicitly “entrepreneurs”—defined narrowly in terms of creating and expanding one or more companies. Individuals identified as members of the entrepreneurial subset have been found particularly to seek autonomy, self-direction, high financial rewards, and personal influence on their income; entrepreneurs are also more comfortable with competitive business activity and less concerned about personal security, conformity, and tradition (e.g., Beugelsdijk & Noorderhaven, 2005; Georgievski, Ascalon, & Stephan, 2011; Rahim, 1996; Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Current knowledge about values in self- and organizational employment derives only from entrepreneurs, and information is still required about the wider category of self-employed workers as a whole; many people in that category have no entrepreneurial, company-expanding aspirations. This article will for the first time investigate context-free values among self-employed people in general.

Examining values that are narrow-scope rather than context-free, Warr and Inceoglu (in press) found that self-employed workers in comparison with nonmanagerial employees more strongly preferred challenging aspects of a job, such as difficult goals and

interpersonal competition, but that the two groups did not differ in their preference for less demanding features, such as having a comfortable workplace or receiving social support. We can predict a replication of this variegated pattern for more wide-ranging values, such that in their lives as a whole self-employed individuals more strongly desire independence and self-determination but that other types of value are similar between the groups.

This possibility can be investigated in terms of Schwartz's (1999) established framework of value types. The framework's "basic values" (viewed as motivators and guides for action) range across, for instance, hedonism, benevolence, and conformity and include a preference for *self-direction*, which is defined as a desire for independent and innovative thought and action and for exploration of new possibilities. Such a value may be expected to be stronger in workers who move into self-employment. Other values in Schwartz's framework (listed in Table 2), can be important in many jobs, but for those additional preferences there appears to be no rationale for expecting differences between workers who are self-employed versus those in employing organizations. The article's first hypothesis thus differentiates between self-direction and other kinds of personal values. Hypothesis 1a predicts that people working for themselves will more strongly value self-direction in their lives, and Hypothesis 1b expects that all other values in Schwartz's model will not differ between self-employed and organizational workers.

Happiness in Self-Employment Versus Organizational Work

The article's other hypotheses concern possible differences between organizational and self-employed workers in the several forms of happiness introduced earlier. For instance, the present prediction that self-employed workers will more strongly value self-direction in their lives also points to greater job satisfaction in that group. Research by Warr and Inceoglu (in press) examined the closeness of fit between valued and actual job characteristics. Self-employed and organizational workers were found to experience very similar fit between valued and actual content in many respects, but workers in self-employment reported significantly better fit in features which require responses to challenging demands. Given that better fit between valued and actual content is in general linked to greater job satisfaction (e.g., Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005) and that challenging job features are more congruent with values held in self-employment, greater job well-being can be expected when working for oneself. Other support for that expectation has been presented above in terms of benefits from enhanced autonomy in self-employment (e.g., Hytti et al., 2013), permitting job activities to be adjusted to better fit with personal preferences and abilities. Research evidence and argument thus suggest that job satisfaction will in general be greater in self-employment than in organizational work, and a significant difference is expected here (Hypothesis 2a).

It is also predicted that greater job satisfaction will occur only for self-employed workers without supervisory responsibility and will not be found in separate comparisons between self-employed and organizational workers in supervisory positions. For workers without subordinates (the nonsupervisors), being self-employed is sharply different from being an organizational employee. In an organization, nonsupervisors are directed by managers and work

within policies and procedures that have been specified for them. On the other hand, self-employed nonsupervisors must actively create their own policies and must continuously initiate and regulate their own behavior.

That difference between self- and organizational employment is much less pronounced for workers who supervise other people. Self-employed workers who take on subordinate staff have probably been successful when previously working for themselves alone, and job issues that are particularly salient for them are likely to concern subordinate performance and morale. Supervision when self-employed brings with it multiple management demands that reduce autonomy and well-being. Not only must self-employed supervisors generate and sustain a personal income, they also have to bring in a stream of extra funds to pay for their staff and they must personally cope with problems of every kind. In dealing with this greater overload, supervisors in self-employment have no peer-level support or role models when, for instance, faced with troubling "paradoxes" of leadership. Without guidelines or current role models how can they, for instance, delegate control to subordinates while simultaneously retaining their own control or grant flexibility to individuals while also creating standard rules for everyone (Zhang, Waldman, Han, & Li, 2015)?

In contrast, supervisors in an employing organization have established routines and can draw upon guidance, support, and feedback from other managerial colleagues. For self-employed supervisors, the gains normally derived from supervisory discretion are thus likely to be lessened by a substantial workload in conjunction with a lack of colleague support. As a result, self-employed supervisors' job satisfaction and task autonomy are expected more to approach the lower levels experienced by nonsupervisors. Patterns of that kind in the present study will be described in the Results section.

In summary, jobs in self- and organizational employment contrast more sharply with each other for nonsupervisors than they do for supervisors, and self-employed supervisors are subject to additional overloading demands while lacking guidance and support from colleagues. Hypothesis 2b thus predicts that the significantly greater job satisfaction which is expected overall in self-employment relative to organizational employment (Hypothesis 2a) will be found in the subsample of nonsupervisors but that this difference in job satisfaction will not occur in separate comparisons between self-employed and organizational workers who supervise others.²

Other hypotheses extend beyond job satisfaction to more wide-ranging forms of happiness. In view of positive associations between job-related and more general hedonic well-being, the predictions of Hypothesis 2 might be extended to life beyond a job.³ Hypothesis 3a proposes that hedonic well-being which is context-free will be greater in the full sample of self-employed workers than among those in organizational jobs, and Hypothesis 3b distinguishes between supervisors and nonsupervisors to expect that greater context-free hedonic well-being in self-employment will

² This expected nondifference for supervisory workers is consistent with findings of significantly greater job satisfaction in entire samples of workers because overall samples typically contain a very large majority of nonsupervisors who dominate full-sample averages.

³ Correlations in the present research between job-specific and context-free well-being ranged from .25 to .39.

again occur among workers who do not supervise others but will not be found in separate analyses of those in supervisory positions.

Finally, the article examines different forms of personal flourishing. As summarized earlier, current models of this construct range across six principal elements—engagement in the world, having purpose, autonomous self-regulation, competence, vitality, and positive relations with others. Drawing on the distinction introduced earlier between eudaimonic and noneudaimonic forms of flourishing, significantly greater flourishing in self-employment than in organizational employment is predicted in the three eudaimonic elements (engagement in life, experienced purpose, and autonomy), whereas no full-sample differences are expected in the noneudaimonic forms: sense of competence, vitality, and positive relations with others (Hypothesis 4a). The latter are particularly influenced by health, demographic, and personality variables, so that job content is unlikely to be a significant determinant on its own. In parallel with expectations about hedonic well-being, Hypothesis 4b predicts that eudaimonic forms of flourishing will be greater in self-employment than in organizational jobs only for workers without supervisory responsibility.

Method

The European Social Survey

Hypotheses 1 through 4 were investigated through information gathered in the European Social Survey (ESS). This has been conducted every 2 years across Europe since 2001, investigating a wide range of issues in samples which are nationally representative within each country. More than 30 countries have been involved in the program, although not always in each round. The ESS has been administered eight times, and complete interview schedules and data from all countries involved are available for noncommercial use at www.europeansocialsurvey.org. In each administration, individuals aged 15 and above are selected by random probability sampling to yield a nationally representative sample, and interviews are conducted face-to-face, usually in a participant's home.

The experience and drivers of self-employment can vary between countries and cultures, in part linked to different legal frameworks, welfare provisions, and institutional and cultural characteristics. To avoid confounders in those respects, the present study focuses on data from a single country—the United Kingdom.

The ESS comprises “core” questions, which are repeated in every round, and “rotating” modules, each of which occurs only in certain rounds. (Items from the two sets are intermingled and indistinguishable in use.) The core section mainly covers issues of politics, mass media, and social trust but also asks about personal values and near its end obtains demographic and occupational

information. The rotating module of particular interest here asks about personal and social well-being (Huppert et al., 2009); this was included for the first time in 2006 (ESS Round 3) and again (with a few minor amendments) in 2012 (ESS Round 6). The present hypotheses can thus be tested in Rounds 3 and 6 through that module and elements of the core questionnaire. The ESS's interview schedule does not request information about job responsibility in terms of managerial grade and function, but a single item (examined here) asks in overall terms whether or not an interviewee has “any responsibility for supervising the work of other employees.”

Sample Characteristics

The present analyses are focused on interviewees who report that they were in paid work in the last 7 days, excluding those who are retired or not employed. The numbers of self-employed and organizationally paid employees are shown in Table 1, covering a total of 2,304 individuals. In comparison with those in organizational employment, self-employed workers were on average significantly ($p < .001$) older: means of 47.16 versus 41.75 years in Round 3 and 48.63 versus 43.13 years in Round 6. A significantly higher proportion of self-employed interviewees were male (70% vs. 30% female in Round 3, and 67% vs. 33% in Round 6; $p < .001$ in both cases), whereas proportions in organizational employment were more similar to each other: 49% men and 51% women in Round 3 and 42% men and 58% women in Round 6 (both nonsignificant in each round). The two groups had extremely similar profiles of highest educational achievement, with self-employed workers holding slightly fewer qualifications in Round 3 and slightly more in Round 6.

Although in full-sample analyses the self-employed and organizational groups worked a similar number of weekly hours (means of 37 and 39 in Round 3 and 36 and 37 in Round 6), self-employed individuals who supervised others worked substantially longer than their employed counterparts (47 vs. 43 hours in Round 3 and 45 vs. 41 in Round 6; $p < .001$ in both cases). For workers without subordinates, the self-employed and organizationally paid groups did not differ in hours worked (35 vs. 34 and 32 vs. 33 hours in the two rounds; both nonsignificant).

Measuring Personal Values in the ESS

The ESS records context-free values through the Portrait Values Questionnaire created by Schwartz (2001). This briefly describes 21 separate individuals and asks respondents in each case “how much the person in the description is like you.” Six response options (RO) are provided, ranging from *very much like me* to *not like me at all*.

Table 1
Interviewees Classified by Survey Round, Type of Employment, and Supervisory Responsibility

| Employment category | Round 3 | | | Round 6 | | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| | All | Supervising | Nonsupervising | All | Supervising | Nonsupervising |
| Organizationally employed | 1,098 | 508 | 590 | 879 | 364 | 515 |
| Self-employed | 157 | 50 | 107 | 170 | 55 | 115 |
| Total | 1,255 | 558 | 697 | 1,049 | 419 | 630 |

Table 2
Context-Free Values in Schwartz's (1999) Framework: Organizational Versus Self-Employed Workers in the United Kingdom Rounds 3 and 6

| | Round 3: Entire sample | | | | | | Round 6: Entire sample | | | | | | Round 3: Sub-samples | | | | | | Round 6: Sub-samples | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------|----------------|-----------------------|------|------|------------------------|------|------|-----------------------|---------------|------|------------------------|------|----------------|-----------------------|------|------|------------------------|------|------|-----------------------|----------------|------|--|
| | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | |
| | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | |
| Basic value | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-direction (independent thought, action, creativity) | 4.55 | .90 | 4.85*** | .79 | 4.72 | .85 | 4.94** | .88 | 4.62 | .66 | 4.87** | .81 | 4.49 | .93 | 4.83*** | .79 | 4.84 | .83 | 4.93 | .77 | 4.63 | .86 | 4.94*** | .93 | |
| Stimulation (challenge, excitement, and novelty in life) | 3.79 | 1.13 | 3.83* | 1.09 | 3.78 | 1.16 | 3.94* | 1.60 | 3.83 | 1.11 | 3.87 | 1.19 | 3.75 | 1.15 | 3.82* | 1.04 | 3.91 | 1.18 | 3.94 | 1.10 | 3.69 | 1.14 | 3.93* | 1.19 | |
| Power (social status, prestige, authority) | 3.26 | 1.01 | 3.20 | .95 | 3.37 | 1.03 | 3.36 | 1.11 | 3.34 | 1.01 | 3.33 | 1.08 | 3.19 | .90 | 3.14 | .88 | 3.45 | .97 | 3.56 | 1.13 | 3.32 | 1.07 | 3.27 | 1.09 | |
| Achievement (personal success and competence) | 3.93 | 1.11 | 3.83 | 1.13 | 4.10 | 1.12 | 4.19 | 1.14 | 4.01 | 1.11 | 3.96 | 1.16 | 3.85 | 1.18 | 3.77 | 1.12 | 4.25 | 1.11 | 4.23 | 1.21 | 4.00 | 1.11 | 4.17 | 1.11 | |
| Hedonism (personal pleasure and gratification) | 4.05 | 1.08 | 3.95 | 1.01 | 4.01 | 1.08 | 3.86 | 1.20 | 4.08 | 1.05 | 4.00 | 1.09 | 4.02 | 1.11 | 3.93 | .98 | 4.06 | 1.12 | 3.73 | 1.40 | 3.97 | 1.10 | 3.92 | 1.23 | |
| Universalism (protecting welfare of all and of nature) | 4.73 | .77 | 4.83 | .66 | 4.86 | .71 | 4.84 | .74 | 4.69 | .77 | 4.84 | .58 | 4.76 | .78 | 4.83 | .69 | 4.89 | .70 | 4.73 | .70 | 4.83 | .71 | 4.89 | .75 | |
| Benevolence (enhancing welfare of personal contacts) | 4.92 | .75 | 4.86 | .71 | 5.16 | .69 | 5.13 | .75 | 4.91 | .75 | 4.96 | .77 | 4.92 | .74 | 4.82 | .68 | 5.17 | .71 | 5.07 | .70 | 5.15 | .69 | 5.15 | .78 | |
| Tradition (respect for traditional approaches) | 3.96 | 1.02 | 4.18 | .96 | 4.26 | .98 | 4.21 | 1.03 | 3.89 | .99 | 4.37* | 1.01 | 4.03 | 1.04 | 4.09 | .92 | 4.26 | .99 | 4.40 | .96 | 4.25 | .98 | 4.12 | 1.05 | |
| Conformity (not violating social expectations) | 3.79 | 1.14 | 3.89 | 1.19 | 4.07 | 1.10 | 4.06 | 1.18 | 3.71 | 1.13 | 4.06 | 1.21 | 3.87 | 1.45 | 3.81 | 1.79 | 4.04 | 1.13 | 4.07 | 1.20 | 4.09 | 1.09 | 4.06 | 1.18 | |
| Security (safety, stability of society, self, and relationships) | 4.52 | .99 | 4.51 | 1.05 | 4.76 | .93 | 4.71 | 1.02 | 4.41 | 1.01 | 4.50 | .97 | 4.62* | .96 | 4.38 | 1.08 | 4.71 | .91 | 4.69 | 1.09 | 4.80 | .94 | 4.71 | .99 | |

Note. Significance levels control for age, gender, and highest educational achievement. Significantly higher scores of a pair are presented in bold font. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The questionnaire extends across the 10 basic values identified in previous studies (e.g., Schwartz, 1999); they are listed in Table 2, together with some associated goals. For example, items representing the personal value of *self-direction* are “It is important to him/her to make his or her own decisions about what he or she does. He or she likes to be free and not depend on others” and “Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He or she likes to do things in an original way.” (Gender-appropriate questionnaires are provided separately for male and female interviewees.) For the value labeled as *stimulation*, items are “He or she likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He or she thinks it is important to do lots of things in life” and “He or she looks for adventure and likes to take risks. He or she wants to have an exciting life.”

Measuring Happiness in the ESS

Happiness items in the survey have been grouped here as hedonic well-being, which is either job-specific or context-free, and as different forms of flourishing; ESS flourishing questions are all context-free. Almost all items are repeated in identical form across Rounds 3 and 6, but a small number (indicated in the following text) are present only once. The full interview and scoring framework for both rounds are available on the ESS website.

Response formats differ across the questions, from agree to disagree, all to none, and satisfied to dissatisfied, as well as being in terms of yes or no and a small number of options specifically relating to a question’s content. The number of response alternatives also varies between questions (from two to 10), and a few items are constructed so that a high score indicates a low strength of response. Those scores have here been reversed so that a higher number always reflects a more positive response. For the derived multi-item scales, option ranges are cited in the following text, and for the few items included in only one of the rounds, the number of response options (ROs) is shown in tables.

Hedonic well-being. Job-specific hedonic well-being is recorded in the ESS through conventional single items about overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with the balance between job and nonjob life. Fisher, Matthews, and Gibbons (2016) have evaluated the reliability, validity, and research utility of many single-item measures in organizational research, including the present question about job satisfaction; this was placed in the authors’ most positive category. Additionally, in Round 3 only workers were asked whether they perceived their job as interesting and whether it was stressful.

For context-free hedonic well-being, eight items are present in both Rounds 3 and 6. Six of these cover feelings in the last week (of happiness, enjoyment, calmness, anxiety, depression, and sadness), and two ask about life in general (“How satisfied are you with life as a whole?” and “How happy are you?”). These context-free hedonic items have been widely used in other studies and their wording points to good content validity.

After reverse-scoring the three past-week negative items, responses to the context-free hedonic questions were submitted separately for each round to principal axis factoring with promax rotation. In both rounds, the same two factors were found with eigenvalues above 1.00, clearly separating the items about happiness in the last week from those which are more extended across

time. Mean item-scores were computed as indicators of those two factors, and alpha coefficients of internal reliability for happiness in the last week and happiness in general were .83 and .84 in Round 3 and .81 and .86 in Round 6. The scales were intercorrelated .50 and .52 in the two rounds.

Flourishing well-being. The ESS is unique among country-representative investigations in its broad coverage of personal flourishing. Responses to the flourishing questions that were asked in both rounds were (separately for each round) submitted to principal axis factoring with promax rotation, and yielded an identical four-factor solution in the two samples. Replicated factor allocations and suggested labels are as follows:

Factor A: Sense of accomplishment. “I feel what I do in life is valuable and worthwhile” (RO 1 through 5), “I feel accomplishment from what I do” (RO 1 through 5), and “I am absorbed in what I’m doing” (RO 1 through 4 in Round 3 and 0 through 10 in Round 6); scale α s = .64 and .66 in Rounds 3 and 6, respectively.

Factor B: Sense of self-worth. “In general I feel very positive about myself” (RO 1 through 5), “When things go wrong it takes a long time to get back to normal” (RO 1 through 5, reverse-scored), and “I am always optimistic about my future” (RO 1 through 5); scale α s = .66 and .67 in Rounds 3 and 6, respectively.

Factor C: Feelings of vitality. “In the past week I . . . had a lot of energy,” “could not get going” (reverse-scored), and “felt everything I did was an effort (reverse-scored; RO 1 through 4 in all cases); α s = .63 and .61.

Factor D: Positive social relations. “I feel people treat you with respect” (RO 0 through 6), “I feel close to people in the local area” (RO 1 through 5), and “I feel people in the local area help one another” (RO 0 through 6); α s = .72 and .73.

Some of these flourishing items have been applied by other researchers, but a number were specially devised for these rounds of the survey. They extend across elements of flourishing described in recent publications, and their validity is supported in some cases by findings from those publications and also by the presence of an identical factor structure in the two rounds of the ESS.

It was suggested earlier that flourishing themes in this area should be examined in two groups: flourishing that is eudaimonic as viewed by Aristotle and other early writers or flourishing that is noneudaimonic—additional elements suggested by psychologists. In those terms, the present Factors A and B (labeled as *sense of accomplishment* and *self-worth*) extend across themes that are eudaimonic, whereas items tapping vitality and social relationships (Factors C and D) are noneudaimonic. The single item covering autonomous self-regulation (“I am free to decide how to lead my life”) was found in both survey rounds to load evenly across the four factors; on the basis of its freedom-oriented content, this item is treated as an autonomous form of eudaimonic flourishing.

Job characteristics. The ESS contains only two questions about the content of a job, both concerned with task autonomy and both with ROs from 0 to 10: “To what extent are you allowed to decide how daily work is organized?” and “To what extent are you allowed to influence policy decisions about activities of the organization?”. A two-item autonomy scale was created, wherein alpha coefficients were .71 and .72 in Rounds 3 and 6, respectively.

Results

Hypothesis 1 concerns potential sources of self-employment in terms of the 10 basic values in Schwartz's (1999) model. These are set out in Table 2, with illustrative descriptors after each one. Comparisons between all organizationally employed and all self-employed workers in each round are presented to the left of the table, with separate analyses in subsequent columns for individuals who either supervise or do not supervise other workers. Statistical significance levels cited in all tables control for participants' age, gender, and highest educational achievement, and significantly higher scores of a pair are presented in bold font.

As predicted in Hypothesis 1a, self-employed workers as a whole in both rounds valued context-free self-direction to a significantly greater degree than did those employed by an organization. Also as predicted (Hypothesis 1b), the differences in eight other values were not significant. However, a significant difference (albeit less so; i.e., $p < .05$) was also found and replicated across rounds in context-free preferences for stimulation such that self-employed individuals as a whole tended to more value novelty and excitement in their lives.

Hypothesis 2a predicts that in full-sample analyses job satisfaction will be greater in self-employment than in organizational work. Consistent with that, the left-hand columns of Table 3 show that in both rounds self-employed individuals as a whole had significantly greater job satisfaction, and (when asked in Round 3 only) they found their job significantly more interesting than did organizational employees.

Hypothesis 2b predicts that this greater job satisfaction in self-employment will occur only in workers without supervisory responsibility, and that no difference will be found in separate analyses of workers who supervise others. In support of this expectation, Table 3 reports that significantly greater satisfaction among self-employed workers occurred in both rounds for nonsupervisors. Also in support of the hypothesis, the table indicates that satisfaction with the balance between job and nonjob was as expected, with a significant full-sample advantage in self-employment but only among workers without supervisory responsibility. However, contrary to the hypothesis significantly greater job satisfaction was also found in Round 3 for self-employed workers who supervise others compared with organizational employees who also supervise others. In terms of replicated findings, Hypothesis 2b is largely but not completely supported.

The earlier introduction to Hypothesis 2b suggested that supervisors employed in organizations would be found to have greater job satisfaction than nonsupervisors in organizations, but that in self-employment additional demands on supervisors and their associated smaller gains from autonomy would reduce the difference in job satisfaction to nonsignificance. This pattern was present in both rounds of the survey. Among organizationally employed supervisors, job satisfaction was significantly greater than that of organizationally employed nonsupervisors ($p < .05$ in both cases; combined-sample $M_s = 7.21$ and 6.83), whereas for self-employed workers that difference in job satisfaction between supervisors and nonsupervisors was absent (combined-sample $M_s = 7.87$ and 7.92). A similar pattern was found in both rounds for job autonomy: significantly more autonomy ($p < .001$) for organizationally employed supervisors than for organizational nonsupervisors (combined-sample $M_s = 6.62$ and 4.88) but a nonsignificant

difference in autonomy between supervisors and nonsupervisors in self-employment (combined-sample $M_s = 9.05$ and 8.66).

Table 3 additionally includes findings for reported job stress. A single question was asked only in Round 3, and because of nonapplication in Round 6 formal predictions were not made. However, as found in previous research cited above, no difference in stress between self- and organizational employment was observed in the full sample or in supervisory subgroups. Also in the table is information of a kind not available elsewhere: self-employed and organizational workers were found to have similar household incomes and similar feelings about those incomes; self-employed workers, both supervisory and nonsupervisory, were significantly more likely to consider that they are paid appropriately for what they do; and among nonsupervisors only, satisfaction with standard of living was significantly greater in self-employment than in organizational jobs.

Examining Hypothesis 3, findings about context-free hedonic well-being are reported in Table 4, in terms of the two scales introduced earlier and two additional hedonic items that were included only in Round 3. These four indicators were moderately correlated with job satisfaction (.25, .26, .32, and .39, sequenced as in the table) so that self-employed workers (on average more satisfied with their jobs) might be expected also to experience greater context-free hedonic well-being than workers in organizations. However, that was infrequently the case. Table 4 shows that only in Round 3 did a full-sample difference in context-free hedonic well-being support Hypothesis 3a in two of the four measures ($p < .05$). It must be concluded that, contrary to prediction, the full-sample job-specific hedonic advantage of self-employment is not consistently repeated in context-free aspects. On that basis, Hypothesis 3b (requiring a full-group significant divergence) is not open to empirical test.

Table 5 reports patterns of flourishing well-being. In addition to the four factor scales described above, this table includes the item about personal autonomy and six questions loading within a single factor. Hypothesis 4a expects the full sample of self-employed workers to report greater flourishing in the three eudaimonic respects studied here—sense of accomplishment (Factor A), self-worth (Factor B), and autonomous self-regulation (the single item). Table 5 shows that scores on Factor A (sense of accomplishment) differed significantly between the full samples in both rounds, with a greater sense of accomplishment in self-employment than when working in an organization. Furthermore, as predicted by Hypothesis 4b this difference occurred in both rounds only for workers who did not supervise others. In addition, the table shows that, as predicted, a difference was also found for the three eudaimonic Factor A items included only in Round 6—sense of direction and feelings of interest and enthusiasm—both in full-sample comparisons (Hypothesis 4a) and only for self-employed workers without supervisory responsibility (Hypothesis 4b). However, contrary to Hypothesis 4a, self-employed workers did not consistently have significantly higher scores on the other two eudaimonic factors, the scale of self-worth and the single item about autonomy.

In respect of the noneudaimonic factors of vitality and positive social relations (Factors C and D), no differences were expected between self-employed and organizational workers, and consistent with that Table 5 shows that significant differences in vitality were absent and that no consistent pattern occurred in social relations. In addition, interviews in Round 6 obtained a rating of "your place in

Table 3
Job-Related Hedonic Well-Being and Feelings About Income: Organizational Versus Self-Employed Workers

| Aspect of job-related well-being or current income | Round 3: Entire sample | | | | Round 6: Entire sample | | | | Round 3: Subsamples | | | | Round 6: Subsamples | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | | | | | | | | | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | | | | | | | | | |
| How satisfied with job (RO 1-10) | 6.84 | 2.42 | 7.78*** | 1.97 | 7.28 | 2.05 | 8.02*** | 2.06 | 6.99 | 2.35 | 8.08** | 1.71 | 6.71 | 2.49 | 7.65*** | 2.07 | 7.47 | 1.80 | 7.67 | 2.10 | 7.15 | 2.20 | 8.19*** | 2.00 | |
| How satisfied with balance between time on job and time on other aspects (RO 1-10) | 5.94 | 2.36 | 6.64** | 2.32 | 6.66 | 2.18 | 7.27* | 2.39 | 5.67 | 2.40 | 6.13 | 2.41 | 6.18 | 2.31 | 6.88** | 2.25 | 6.49 | 2.15 | 6.63 | 2.60 | 6.79 | 2.20 | 7.58** | 2.17 | |
| Find job interesting, how much of the time (RO 1-6) | 4.18 | 1.45 | 4.68*** | 1.16 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 4.37 | 1.31 | 4.83** | 1.06 | 4.01 | 1.54 | 4.61*** | 1.20 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Find job stressful, how much of the time (RO 1-6) | 3.42 | 1.67 | 3.23 | 1.73 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.79 | 1.52 | 3.77 | 1.65 | 3.10 | 1.76 | 2.98 | 1.72 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Feelings about one's job | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Current income | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Household's net total income all sources (decile) | 8.37 | 2.06 | 8.42 | 2.31 | 6.40 | 2.70 | 6.23 | 2.84 | 8.92 | 1.82 | 8.97 | 2.19 | 7.85 | 2.13 | 8.19 | 2.33 | 7.28 | 2.36 | 6.86 | 2.54 | 5.74 | 2.74 | 5.88 | 2.94 | |
| Feeling about household's income nowadays (RO 1-4) | 3.30 | .72 | 3.37 | .72 | 3.13 | .79 | 3.18 | .77 | 3.36 | 1.64 | 3.40 | 1.60 | 3.26 | .74 | 3.36 | .69 | 3.30 | .74 | 3.32 | .81 | 3.02 | .82 | 3.09 | .75 | |
| Get paid appropriately considering efforts and achievements (RO 1-5) | 3.05 | 1.15 | 3.59*** | 1.04 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.05 | 1.16 | 3.54** | 1.10 | 3.04 | 1.15 | 3.61*** | 1.02 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Satisfied with standard of living (RO 0-10) | 7.19 | 1.73 | 7.43 | 1.81 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.37 | 1.66 | 7.48 | 1.78 | 7.03 | 1.77 | 7.41* | 1.83 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |

Note. The range of response option (RO) scores is shown after each item. Significance levels control for age, gender, and highest educational achievement. Significantly higher scores of a pair are presented in bold font.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

society,” and Table 5 shows that ratings by self-employed individuals as a whole were substantially higher than those of workers in organizational jobs and that this significant difference was again present only between individuals who do not supervise others.

Discussion

In a field underresearched by psychologists, this article contributes in several ways. Basic values—potential guides to action—of self-employed and organizational workers have been compared for the first time through a model that has been established on an international basis (Schwartz, 1999). A significant difference between self-employed and organizational workers was found in evaluations of personal independence and (less strongly) in evaluations of novelty and challenge in one’s life. However, as predicted, no differences were present in other values in the model.

In respect of well-being, previous research has investigated self-employed workers’ job satisfaction and aspects of strain but has not addressed other important themes. This article confirms a significant job-satisfaction advantage of self-employment over organizational employment but also reveals that this job-specific difference does not extend to hedonic well-being with a more general scope. The construct of flourishing well-being is introduced to this area, and workers who are self-employed are found to experience a stronger sense of accomplishment than do those employed in an organization—feeling more valuable and worthwhile and being more absorbed in their activities.

Why should self-employed workers report greater hedonic satisfaction than organizational workers in job-related terms but not in hedonic well-being that is context-free? Other research has pointed to the significant influence on self-employed job satisfaction of increased decision freedom at work (Hytti et al., 2013; Warr & Inceoglu, in press), but context-free happiness is a broad composite state influenced by events and conditions in many life settings and is therefore much less determined by degree of job autonomy and other variables that are confined within an occupation.⁴

However, if experiences in a job are unlikely to influence hedonic well-being which has a broad context-free scope, why is a significant difference present between self-employed and organizational workers in their context-free sense of accomplishment (flourishing Factor A)? It seems likely that some overlap with job-related well-being is responsible. As indicated earlier, job satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment were significantly intercorrelated (.46 and .40 in the two rounds), and it might be the case that reports of accomplishment in life as a whole are especially influenced by experiences at work. Examining this possibility, comparisons of sense of accomplishment in self-employed and organizational workers were again studied after controlling for demographic variables as previously, but in addition now also controlling for job satisfaction. After that job-related control, the difference between Factor A scores in the two sets of workers was in both rounds reduced to nonsignificance, suggesting that the accomplishment aspect of context-free flourishing might be substantially attributed to experiences in a job.

A particularly important innovation is the article’s distinction between workers who do and do not supervise others. In considering the nature of jobs with and without supervisory responsibility,

it was hypothesized that greater well-being in self-employment would be found only among nonsupervising workers. That expectation was largely confirmed, implying that overall statements in the scientific literature and popular press about the psychological advantages and disadvantages of self-employment need to be substantially qualified.

In methodological terms, the investigation also has uniquely positive aspects. The studied sample was randomly drawn to be representative of a nation rather than being restricted to a more limited group of perhaps atypical self-employed workers; and identical interview questions were asked of two separate samples so that interpretations could derive from findings replicated beyond a single data set. Furthermore, detailed information about samples, items, responses, and administration is publicly available on the ESS’s website.

Limitations and Future Developments

The European Social Survey covers a wide range of societal and political issues, and unsurprisingly it lacks detail about some themes that might be important to psychologists’ research into self-employment. For example, no information is gathered about how long a person has occupied a current job, so that the possible impact of learning and adaptation across time cannot be examined. In future cross-sectional studies of self-employment, it is important to ask about the length of a job-holder’s tenure and the nature of his or her previous and current work. In addition, longitudinal studies are particularly required. For instance, self-employed workers have been shown here to differ from organizational workers in a stronger preference for self-direction in their lives, but we have yet to learn whether valued personal independence predicts a transition from organizational into self-employment.

A linked requirement is for research into “necessity” versus “opportunity” self-employment (e.g., Carr, 1996; Smeaton, 2003). Did a person become self-employed primarily because that move was considered necessary in the absence of other available work, or was the transition more a matter of motivated personal choice in seeking new opportunities? Workers who are now self-employed but were previously unemployed appear particularly likely to have made the move because they needed to gain an income (i.e., necessity self-employment), and information about personal and contextual factors linked to one or the other option is important for the development of theory in this area. However, neither the ESS nor any other published large-scale data-source in this area provides relevant information, and this should now be obtained. For example, personal values such as self-direction and stimulation might be held more strongly by opportunity than by necessity self-employed workers.⁵

It is also essential to build on the measures applied here. Flourishing aspects of happiness were included in the 2006 ESS for the first time, and some items now require adjustment, for

⁴ The statistical procedure applied by those authors was used to examine the contribution of task autonomy to job satisfaction in this study, and regression findings were in both rounds identical to those reported previously.

⁵ This possibility was suggested by an anonymous reviewer.

Table 4
Context-Free Hedonic Well-Being: Organizational Versus Self-Employed Workers

| Aspect of context-free hedonic well-being | Round 3: Sub-samples | | | | | | | | | | | | Round 6: Sub-samples | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | Round 3: Entire sample | | | | Round 6: Entire sample | | | | Supervising others | | | | Nonsupervising | | | | Supervising others | | | | Nonsupervising | | | |
| | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | | Organizational workers | | Self-employed workers | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Long-term happiness (RO 0-10) | 7.36 | 1.63 | 7.63* | 1.58 | 7.39 | 1.70 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 7.47 | 1.58 | 7.60 | 1.67 | 7.26 | 1.66 | 7.64* | 1.54 | 7.52 | 1.63 | 7.27 | 1.54 | 7.29 | 1.75 | 7.57 | 1.85 |
| Last-week happiness (RO 1-4) | 3.18 | .50 | 3.22 | .49 | 3.23 | .50 | .57 | 3.20 | .50 | 3.18 | .57 | 3.16 | .51 | 3.23 | .47 | 3.26 | .48 | 3.16 | .54 | 3.21 | .51 | 3.24 | .58 | |
| Multi-item scales | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Additional questions asked in Round 3 only | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfied with how life has turned out so far (RO 0-10) | 7.33 | 1.68 | 7.57* | 1.66 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.44 | 1.63 | 7.88* | 1.32 | 7.23 | 1.72 | 7.43 | 1.79 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| On the whole life is close to how I would like it to be (RO 1-5) | 3.50 | .92 | 3.52 | .87 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.59 | .90 | 3.64 | .83 | 3.43 | .94 | 3.46 | .88 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |

Note. The range of response-option scores is shown as (RO) after each additional item. Significance levels control for age, gender, and highest educational achievement. Significantly higher scores of a pair are presented in bold font.
* $p < .05$.

instance to examine more systematically the six aspects of flourishing identified here. The flourishing scales' median alpha coefficient was only .66, and it would be appropriate to modify or add questions. A wider range of validation evidence would also be desirable, with particular attention paid to consistency between the conceptualization and operationalization of each construct. For example, questions in the ESS about the social-relations aspect of flourishing emphasize harmony with and between other people but do not directly explore a person's own social involvement. Future investigations of interpersonal flourishing could benefit from treating that more in terms of between-person interaction than is the case here.

Research should also examine the elements of flourishing in specific domains (e.g., within one's job) as well as in an overall life-space. The previous section pointed to the possibility that accomplishment felt in life as a whole derives in large part from job-related themes, and future studies should examine whether the forms of context-free flourishing that most differ between self-employed and organizational workers are those that most strongly correlate with hedonic well-being in a job.⁶

Importantly, this article shows that happiness comparisons between self-employed and employed workers depend on whether or not a worker has responsibility for other people. The single-item indicator of supervisory responsibility in the ESS now requires amendment to obtain details about a person's supervisory role. For instance, at present a junior-level team leader and a principal director in a multinational corporation must both be placed in the same ESS category of "supervisor" despite the fact that their activities and responsibilities are very different. Future research should obtain more detailed information about supervisory role and level.

The ESS's website contains responses from other nations' application of the interview questions described here, so that equivalent analyses are, in principle, possible in other countries. However, between-country comparisons need to be based on identified conditions in those countries which can underpin hypotheses about divergence or similarity. Legal, economic, and demographic influences on self-employment can differ substantially between countries, so it is essential first to identify the cultural features which may be predicted to yield specific patterns of findings.

In practical terms, official recommendations about starting up in a self-employed role tend to focus on a person's technical expertise and experience, emphasizing a "one size fits all" approach that encourages people to become self-employed without consideration of their psychological make-up. However, the present findings have suggested that this undifferentiated approach needs to be refined to distinguish in psychological terms between individuals. People with a stronger preference for self-direction have been shown here to be more likely than others to be self-employed, and research in the U.S. Army has found that particular value preferences

⁶ Correlations between job satisfaction and the present flourishing factors were in the two rounds .46 and .40 (accomplishment), .24 and .23 (self-worth), .25 and .23 (vitality), and .23 and .14 (social relations). Only the factor most correlated with job satisfaction (accomplishment) was found to differ between self- and organizational employment.

Table 5
Context-Free Flourishing Well-Being: Organizational Versus Self-Employed Workers

| Aspect of flourishing | Round 3: Entire sample | | | | | | Round 6: Entire sample | | | | | | Round 3: Subsamples | | | | | | Round 6: Subsamples | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | | Organizational workers | | | Self-employed workers | | |
| | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | | M | SD | |
| Multi-item scales | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Factor A: Sense of accomplishment | 3.43 | .57 | 3.62 ^{***} | .54 | 4.94 | .81 | 5.21 ^{***} | .80 | 3.55 | .54 | 3.68 | .65 | 3.34 | .59 | 3.60 ^{***} | .49 | 5.05 | .77 | 5.11 | .65 | 4.88 | .83 | 5.26 ^{***} | .86 |
| Factor B: Sense of self-worth | 3.64 | .67 | 3.74 | .63 | 3.70 | .65 | 3.84 [*] | .64 | 3.72 | .66 | 3.75 | .64 | 3.56 | .67 | 3.73 | .64 | 3.77 | .66 | 3.90 | .65 | 3.66 | .64 | 3.81 | .63 |
| Factor C: Feelings of vitality | 3.12 | .54 | 3.14 | .55 | 3.82 | .54 | 3.84 | .65 | 3.16 | .53 | 3.11 | .66 | 3.08 | .54 | 3.15 | .50 | 3.85 | .55 | 3.76 | .62 | 3.80 | .53 | 3.87 | .66 |
| Factor D: Positive social relations | 3.40 | .95 | 3.61 | .98 | 3.72 | .91 | 3.94 [*] | .88 | 3.41 | .94 | 3.71 [*] | .89 | 3.39 | .97 | 3.57 | 1.01 | 3.70 | .89 | 3.72 | .85 | 3.72 | .92 | 4.04 ^{**} | .88 |
| Cross-loading autonomy item | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Autonomous self-regulation: Free to decide how to live my life (RO 1-5R) | 3.96 | .87 | 4.04 | .84 | 4.10 | .79 | 4.21 | .84 | 3.99 | .88 | 4.08 | .75 | 3.94 | .87 | 4.03 | .87 | 4.05 | .84 | 4.09 | .87 | 4.13 | .75 | 4.27 | .82 |
| Additional questions asked in Round 3 only | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Factor C: Vitality | 2.14 | .69 | 2.03 | .57 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 2.14 | .68 | 2.02 | .69 | 2.14 | .70 | 2.04 | .57 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Felt tired, how often past week (RO 1-4) | 3.70 | 1.28 | 4.12 ^{***} | 1.31 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.77 | 1.30 | 4.14 ^{***} | 1.41 | 3.63 | 1.25 | 4.11 ^{***} | 1.16 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Factor D: Positive social relations | 3.70 | 1.28 | 4.12 ^{***} | 1.31 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.77 | 1.30 | 4.14 ^{***} | 1.41 | 3.63 | 1.25 | 4.11 ^{***} | 1.16 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Feel you get the recognition you deserve for what you do (RO 0-6) | 3.70 | 1.28 | 4.12 ^{***} | 1.31 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 3.77 | 1.30 | 4.14 ^{***} | 1.41 | 3.63 | 1.25 | 4.11 ^{***} | 1.16 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Additional questions asked in Round 6 only | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Factor A: Sense of accomplishment | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 6.88 | 1.62 | 7.41 ^{***} | 1.80 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.19 | 1.72 | 7.60 | 1.56 | 6.67 | 1.85 | 7.31 ^{***} | 1.91 |
| Have a sense of direction in your life (RO 0-10) | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Interested in what doing, how much of time (RO 0-10) | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.36 | 1.55 | 7.71 [*] | 1.52 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.56 | 1.42 | 7.51 | 1.41 | 7.21 | 1.62 | 7.81 ^{**} | 1.56 |
| Enthusiastic about what doing, how much time (RO 0-10) | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.14 | 1.61 | 7.42 [*] | 1.66 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 7.28 | 1.50 | 6.95 | 1.86 | 7.04 | 1.68 | 7.65 ^{**} | 1.52 |
| Factor D: Positive social relations | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked |
| Your place in society (RO 0-10) | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 5.51 | 1.50 | 6.01 ^{***} | 1.34 | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | Not asked | 5.71 | 1.45 | 6.02 | 1.25 | 5.37 | 1.51 | 6.00 ^{***} | 1.38 |

Note. The range of response option (RO) scores is shown after each additional item. Significance levels control for age, gender, and highest educational achievement. Significantly higher scores of a pair are presented in bold font.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

are related to better job performance (Van Iddekinge, Putka, & Campbell, 2011). Vocational guidance should therefore bring into discussion the importance of a person's values and more widely consider the types and levels of psychosocial benefit and harm that particular individuals can expect from self-employment. Discussion-based guidance and the provision of associated advice about personal values and linked characteristics could help prevent the substantial individual and family distress that can follow an unwise career decision.

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