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### **Authors**

Haasova S., Florack A. (University of Vienna); Keller J. (University of Ulm)

### **Abstract title**

How Experiences Impact Wellbeing: Frequency, Happiness Intensity and Self.

### **Abstract**

We examine how ordinary and extraordinary life experiences of positive and also negative nature impact subjective wellbeing. Recent findings argue that positive extraordinary, infrequent and uncommon, experiences bring more happiness than daily and frequent ordinary experiences, because they pertain more to ones self-definition (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014). However, associated happiness represents only one dimension of a particular experience type that has potential to impact subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999). We therefore go beyond happiness intensity and further assess the role of frequency, associated affect (Study 1,2,3) and self-definition (Study 2) related to occurrence of an experience (ordinary and extraordinary) in relation to subjective wellbeing. Furthermore, we investigated this pattern of relationships within both positive (Study 1, 2) and negative experiences (Study 3). We asked participants ( $N_1 = 198$ ;  $N_2 = 288$ ,  $N_3 = 144$ ) to write down one ordinary and one extraordinary experience, indicating how often such experiences occurred in their life, how much happiness/unhappiness and positive/negative affect it brought and to which extent it defined the self. Participants reported their subjective wellbeing on the Satisfaction with Life scale and PANAS or SPANE. We replicated previous findings, showing that extraordinary experiences of positive and negative nature occurred less frequently, but generated more intensity in terms of greater happiness (greater unhappiness in case of negative experiences) and self-definition. Nevertheless, across studies we found that frequency with which given experience occurs, but not happiness intensity and not self-definition of both experience types, whether positive or negative, was a primary predictor of life satisfaction and hedonic balance. In contrast to single instances, rather regular experiences of lower feelings intensity seem to have greater impact on subjective wellbeing. Additionally, positive and negative affect linked to daily positive and negative experiences of ordinary events was also an important predictor of life satisfaction and hedonic balance. Interestingly, experiencing positive extraordinary events very often seemed to diminish the positive impact of the ordinary ones. Generally, our findings seem to be consistent with the “frequency over intensity” account of subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 1991).