What Is Extraversion For? Integrating Trait and Motivational Perspectives and Identifying the Purpose of Extraversion

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the manifestation of extraversion (i.e., acting and being extraverted) in everyday behavior can be explained by intentional (functional) constructs, namely, goals. By using a model in which personality states serve as an outcome of specific, momentary goal pursuit, we were able to identify the function of extraversion states in everyday behavior. Using experience-sampling methodology, we asked participants to describe their state extraversion, goal pursuit, and state affect over 10 days. Results show that 18 selected goals predicted 74% of the variance in state extraversion; both within-person and between-person fluctuations in state extraversion were strongly associated with changes in momentary goal pursuit. We extended findings relating state extraversion and state positive affect, showing that the relationship between goals and positive affect was partially mediated by state extraversion.

Keywords

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the manifestation of extraversion (i.e., acting and being extraverted) in everyday behavior can be explained by intentional (functional) constructs, namely, goals. We examined whether the goals people pursue at any given moment can predict both between-person and within-person differences in extraverted behavior (Heller, Komar, & Lee, 2007; Zelenski, Santoro, & Whelan, 2011). Using experience-sampling methodology, we asked participants to report their momentary goal pursuit and state extraversion over 10 days.

This study is important for at least three reasons. First, it brings together two historically divergent research areas and two different psychological domains (traits and motivation) by suggesting that the manifestation in behavior of one of these domains (traits) serves the other (motivation). Specifically, we tested the hypothesis that traits have a functional role in facilitating goals; such a finding could bridge these divergent domains. Second, this study tested an emerging explanatory theory of traits, whole-trait theory (Fleeson, 2012). Whole-trait theory proposes that each of the Big Five traits has an underlying motivational, social-cognitive part. Specifically, this theory suggests that the underlying machinery of traits consists of goals, beliefs, expectancies, and other similar social-cognitive variables (e.g., Allport, 1937; Mischel & Shoda, 1995), thereby advancing traits from being purely descriptive concepts to being explanatory concepts. A prediction of this model is that variation in trait manifestation in behavior is associated with variation in goals. Third, by identifying what goals predict extraversion, this study can begin to improve understanding of the specific and core purposes of extraversion.

Traits and Motivational Perspectives

In recent decades, many trait theorists have emphasized the five-factor model, or Big Five model, of personality. The Big Five has increasingly been accepted as the dominant model of personality traits (encompassing extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). For more than two decades, support for the five-factor model, including longitudinal (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006) and cross-cultural (Saucier & Ostendorf, 1999) evidence, has increased.

A key strength of the Big Five is that factor analytic methods represent it as a hierarchy. At the top of the hierarchy are the two broad traits stability and plasticity (DeYoung, Quilty, & Peterson, 2007); below them are the Big Five, and at the bottom level are many smaller subcomponent traits (Widiger

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& Simonsen, 2005). This hierarchy can describe both general and specific traits of personality in an organized structure.

The fundamental weakness of the Big Five model is that it does not explain the function of personality traits—a weakness that is common to the trait approach. In this approach, traits are descriptive characteristics of people, but they do not have a clear purpose or process. Some theorists have proposed that traits are inherited physiological entities that cause behaviors, goals, and other adaptations (e.g., Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; McCrae & Costa, 2003). However, in its current form, the Big Five model does not explain why people differ on traits, how people's traits affect their behavior, or whether people act in trait-relevant ways for some reason other than just because that is who they are. The absence of function in the Big Five model is partly a result of its origin in factor analysis: Factor analysis is an atheoretical statistical method, in which there is no rationale for why items are grouped together into factors (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

In contrast, goals have a purposive quality. A goal can be defined as "a cognitive representation of a future object that the organism is committed to approach or avoid" (Elliot & Fryer, 2008, p. 244). In other words, goals represent future states and motivate actors to get to those desired states, whereas traits are traditionally treated as mere descriptions of the way individuals act, think, and feel (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Goals are by definition process-based units, whereas traits are by definition static descriptions. This distinction between goals and traits has led to two distinct research traditions—focusing on traits and motives—in psychology (Winter, John, Stewart, Klohnen, & Duncan, 1998).

Whole-Trait Theory

An alternative to this view is the whole-trait theory (Fleeson, 2012), which proposes that traits do not have to be limited to only a descriptive part or only an explanatory part, but rather can be conceived of as wholes with both a descriptive part and an explanatory part. The descriptive part is the manifestations of the traits in behavior (states), and the explanatory part is the machinery that produces the manifestations of the traits in behavior. The explanatory part is akin to the potential or latent trait, and the descriptive part is akin to the actual trait. Theories of traits emphasize the descriptive part or the explanatory part, and whole-trait theory proposes joining both parts into the concept of a trait (Fleeson, 2012).

The descriptive part of traits: density distributions of personality states

Whole-trait theory characterizes the descriptive part of traits as *density distributions of states*. A *state* is an individual's personality in a given moment (Fleeson & Noftle, 2008). Personality states are measured in the same way as personality traits, using the same content (e.g., adjectives) and the same dimensions, but describe how much a person manifests those traits in

a given moment rather than in general. The accumulation of an individual's states over a reasonable period of time (e.g., 1 week) forms a distribution of states. The distribution for each state represents the number of occasions that the individual manifested the state at each level along the dimension's scale.

Several studies have revealed two key qualities of these distributions (Fleeson & Noftle, 2008). The first key quality is that the distributions are wide: The typical individual varies greatly along each state dimension as much as the typical individual varies in mood and more than individuals differ from each other in their states. For example, people have the capacity to behave in either an extraverted or an introverted manner in a given moment, even if they generally are introverts or extraverts. In fact, Fleeson and Gallagher (2009) showed that the distributions of extraversion states for even highly extraverted individuals and highly introverted individuals overlap quite a bit. Explaining this variability is an important job for trait theorists, and investigating this variability is an opportunity to discover the mechanisms underlying traits. The second key quality of density distributions of states is that different individuals' distributions are located in different areas along these dimensions (i.e., different people have different means), and these locations stay put week after week (with correlations around .8 to .9).

The explanatory part of traits

Whole traits also have an explanatory part. The explanatory part consists of the causal forces and mechanisms that produce states (and consequently, distributions of states). Thus, the explanatory part and the descriptive part are linked: The explanatory part is causally responsible for the descriptive part. Whole-trait theory's account of the explanatory part of traits evolved from the work of Allport (1937) and from work on the Cognitive-Affective Personality System (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), and hypothesizes that the explanatory part includes causes such as interpretations of situations (Fleeson, 2007), goals, and expectancies, morals, and beliefs. The explanatory part is hypothesized to be the result of genetics, learning, reasoning, and environment. These causes, including goals, are components of the explanatory part of traits, but not of the descriptive part of traits; rather, they cause the states that are the components of the descriptive part of traits. Thus, in this theory, goals and other social-cognitive variables are included in the definition of a trait, but only in the definition of the explanatory part of the trait—they are not included in the descriptive part of the trait, which consists only of the manifestation of the trait in behavior (i.e., states). When goals are the causal force to produce states, the states can be conceived of as instruments, means, or tools employed to achieve the goals; states are relegated to a support role.

On the basis of this theory, we hypothesized that variation in personality states (manifestations of traits) can be explained at least in part by goals, because goals are one of the components of the explanatory part of traits, such that the pursuit of

a goal increases the personality state that facilitates accomplishing that goal. For example, consider a person who is trying to have fun. To achieve this goal, this person increases his or her state spontaneity (a subcomponent of extraversion) because spontaneity will lead to fun. Thus, an individual's immediate states should be predictable from the individual's concurrent goals, and a person's variation in states across moments should be due to variation in goal pursuit across moments. At the between-person level, it should be possible to predict individuals' mean levels of states from the mean levels of their goals, and between-person differences in states should be due to between-person differences in habitual goals.

Specific-States-and-Functions Hypothesis

Identifying subcomponents of extraversion

We decided to test the idea that Big Five states are tools for accomplishing goals by using extraversion as a test case. Extraversion is one of the traits of the five-factor model, but it also has been a part of many other personality theories. Extraversion describes active people who are sociable, talkative, and assertive. The specific subcomponents of extraversion are debated. For example, McCrae and Costa (2003, p. 47) asserted that there are six facets of extraversion: gregariousness, assertiveness, warmth, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions (cf. DeYoung et al., 2007; Saucier & Ostendorf, 1999; Watson & Clark, 1997; Widiger & Simonsen, 2005). In order to identify goals, we first had to settle on a tentative list of subcomponents of extraversion. Members of our lab collated several lists of subcomponents and adjectives and, through extensive discussion, combined redundant ones. This procedure produced a list of subcomponents that should adequately represent most theories of extraversion: talkative, bold, spontaneous, sociable, dominant, and energetic.

Identifying goals

Testing our proposal required identifying the goals that the state of extraversion might facilitate: That is, if states are tools, what are they tools for? Because no one has previously identified a list of goals that Big Five states facilitate, we had to generate such a list for extraversion. We started by looking at the methods previously used to discover the goals that people pursue in their lives and that might be associated with broad traits: (a) listing goals and then using factor analysis to determine distinct goal groups (Roberts, O'Donnell, & Robins, 2004; Roberts & Robins, 2000); (b) theorizing broad goals (e.g., needs in self-determination theory: Deci & Ryan, 2008; life tasks: Cantor & Fleeson, 1991); and (c) listing goals freely and then categorizing them (Emmons & King, 1988; Little, Lecci, & Watkinson, 1992). After utilizing these methods, some researchers found that goals were correlated at the broad, person level and that there were moderate associations between some goals and the Big Five (Reisz & Ozer, 2011). Heller et al.

(2007) found that goals characterized at the abstract, broad level as either approach goals or avoidance goals predicted within-person variations in state extraversion and state neuroticism at around the .32 level.

Taking whole-trait theory into consideration, we proposed a different procedure and a different level of analysis for identifying goals. Instead of considering what large-scale goals people pursue in their lives, we proposed the specific-states-and-functions hypothesis: that identifying goals that will strongly predict extraversion states requires considering specific states and specific goals. We used the associated method we call the specific-states-and-functions identification procedure to generate lists of small-size goals specific to each subcomponent state. First, we focused on the specific, subcomponent level rather than the larger trait level because it may be easier to think of narrow subcomponents than of broad traits as means to accomplish goals. Instead of asking why people act in an extraverted manner, for example, we asked why people act sociably or dominantly. Second, we attempted to generate goals that are pursued for about the same amount of time as personality states last because our hypothesis was that the goals that produce subcomponent states and the resulting states will be of comparable size and abstraction. That is, in order to obtain strong predictive relationships, the goals have to match the states in terms of size and abstraction; small, concrete goals are the sort that match up to the Big Five states.

With these considerations in mind, we developed a list of goals toward which each extraversion subcomponent might be put to use in a given moment. We ultimately paired each subcomponent with three goals using the following means-end template: "I am intentionally [subcomponent, or means] in order to [goal, or end] in a given moment." For example, we generated one possible goal statement (i.e., state-goal pair) as follows: "I am intentionally sociable in order to connect with people in a given moment." By using personality states and momentary goals, we made it easier to comprehend and identify the potential connections between the trait concept and the goal concept. In total, we generated 18 sentences to test three candidate functions for each subcomponent state. Once we identified the goals with this procedure, we tested the empirical hypothesis that these 18 goals could predict overall state extraversion.

Association of extraversion with positive affect

One area of agreement among most researchers is that extraversion is related to positive affect (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Lucas, Le, and Dyrenforth (2008) showed that extraverts have higher positive affect than introverts across different situations. Fleeson, Malanos, and Achille (2002) and Heller et al. (2007) showed that the relationship between extraversion and positive affect holds up even within individuals, such that people experience more positive affect when they act in an extraverted manner than when they act in an introverted manner. In an experimental setting, when asked to act in an extraverted

way, both extraverts and introverts experienced an increase in positive affect, a finding that demonstrates causality (McNiel, Lowman, & Fleeson, 2010; Zelenski et al., 2011). In the study reported here, we built on this link between extraversion and positive affect. We predicted that our selected goals would predict state positive affect, but that this effect would be mediated by state extraversion. Positive affect can be viewed as a proxy for goal achievement—people pursuing our hypothesized goals should show increases in state extraversion, and increases in state extraversion should lead to increased positive affect.

Method

Participants

Forty-seven participants enrolled in this study to fulfill a course requirement; subsequently, 1 participant dropped out of the study, and 1 participant did not complete a sufficient number of reports.

Procedure

Information session. At the start of the study, participants attended a session in which they received training in using a personal digital assistant (PDA) and completed questionnaires. At the end of the session, participants could withdraw from the study for partial course credit.

Experience-sampling methodology. Following the information session, participants completed reports about their momentary behavior five times a day for 10 days using loaned PDAs. Each report included questions about their state extraversion, momentary goals, and state affect during the previous 30 min. During the 10 days, participants were asked to come by the lab two separate times so that we could download the data from their PDAs. At the end of the 10 days, participants returned the PDAs and completed a final questionnaire that was not used for this article. The participants' response rate was within a satisfactory range for experience-sampling studies. Data were painstakingly cleaned (McCabe, Mack, & Fleeson, 2011) to eliminate incorrectly completed reports. The mean number of reports completed (out of 50 possible) was 30.75 (61.5%), and the median was 30 (60%); the number of reports completed ranged from 11 to 45.

Measures

State extraversion. We measured state extraversion by asking participants questions about each of the six subcomponents of extraversion. Each subcomponent was matched with two adjectives that have been associated with extraversion in the published literature on the Big Five (Goldberg, 1992; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996)[1]—talkative: *talkative, verbal*; bold: *bold, daring*; spontaneous: *spontaneous, playful*; sociable: *sociable,*

outgoing; dominant: *dominant, assertive*; energetic: *energetic, vigorous*. These adjectives were presented in questions such as, "How talkative were you in the last 30 minutes?" Participants responded to each question on a 6-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 6 = *very*), and had the additional option of responding "not applicable." The responses to these 12 items were averaged to create an overall measure of state extraversion.

State positive affect. State positive affect was measured by asking participants how well each of 10 adjectives from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) described their current mood (e.g., "How excited did you feel in the last 30 minutes?"). Participants responded to each question on a 6-point scale (1 = *never*, 6 = *all the time*), and had the additional option of responding "not applicable." Responses to these items were averaged to create an overall measure of state positive affect.

Goal items. Participants also rated the extent to which they were trying to accomplish 18 goals at that moment (e.g., "How much were you trying to have fun in the last 30 minutes?"—see Table 1). Responses were made on a 6-point scale (1 = *never*, 6 = *all the time*), with the additional option "not applicable." Overall, ratings for these goals were correlated with each other (most correlations were between .40 and .50). The one goal that did not predict extraversion—trying to get things done—showed some discriminant validity by correlating to the other goals only weakly (most correlations were below .10).

Discriminant validity. To test the discriminant validity of the 18 goal items and six subcomponents of extraversion, we asked an independent sample of 147 participants to indicate whether each item was a goal or a trait. Responses indicated that the trait items indeed referred to traits (93.7%), and the goal items referred to goals (73.3%; ps < .001).

Results

Between-person and within-person variance in extraversion

The first questions we addressed were the degree to which participants differed from each other in their manifestation of extraversion (between-person variation) and the degree to which each person changed his or her manifestation of extraversion (within-person variation). An unconditioned multilevel model revealed that the variance in overall extraversion across people was .21 and the variance within individuals was .81. Thus, within-person variability was 80% of the total variability (1.02), whereas between-person variability was 20% of the total variability. As in past research (Fleeson & Noftle, 2008), the differences in behavior across participants were substantially smaller than the differences within each individual over time.

Table 1. Multilevel Modeling Results: Individual Goals as Predictors of Overall State Extraversion

Subcomponent of extraversion and associated candidate goals	b	SD
Talkative		
Trying to convey information to someone	0.28**	0.19**
Trying to entertain someone	0.45**	0.13**
Trying to enjoy someone's company	0.40**	0.10*
Bold		
Trying to make a positive impression on someone	0.40**	0.11*
Trying to stir things up	0.45**	0.19**
Trying to strive for something hard to get	0.14**	0.14*
Spontaneous		
Trying to have fun	0.43**	0.12**
Trying to avoid boredom	0.23**	0.23**
Trying to break out of your routine	0.33**	0.18**
Sociable		
Trying to avoid loneliness	0.32**	0.19**
Trying to make new friends	0.34**	0.12*
Trying to make others laugh	0.43**	0.11*
Dominant		
Trying to be a leader	0.43**	0.17**
Trying to get others to do what you want	0.38**	0.12*
Trying to get things done	−0.02	0.16**
Energetic		
Trying to connect with people	0.44**	0.13**
Trying to be the center of attention	0.45**	0.18**
Trying to be attractive or interesting	0.40**	0.11*

Note: The goals listed for each subcomponent of extraversion are the goals that we posited to be facilitated by that trait.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Bivariate predictions of extraversion from goals

We used multilevel modeling to test whether each goal predicted variation in state extraversion. In this analysis, we used only an overall measure of state extraversion as the outcome variable. The central claim of the specific-states-and-functions hypothesis was that the goals we selected would predict overall extraversion, and this hypothesis was strongly supported. Each of the 18 goals was tested separately. The unstandardized coefficients given in Table 1 are similar to beta weights, in that they indicate the degree to which each goal predicted changes in state extraversion for the average participant. Seventeen of the 18 goals significantly predicted state extraversion, and 10 of the 18 goals—including the goals of trying to entertain someone ($b = 0.45$, $p < .01$), trying to be the center of attention ($b = 0.45$, $p < .01$), and trying to stir things up ($b = 0.45$, $p < .01$)—had unstandardized regression weights of at least 0.40. When the average participant tried to entertain someone, tried

to become the center of attention, tried to stir things up, or pursued one of the other goals, he or she acted in a more extraverted way than on other occasions.

The fact that the standard deviations in Table 1 were significant shows that individuals differed from each other in their associations between state extraversion and each goal. In other words, different people used extraversion to different degrees to pursue the same goals.

Predicting variation in state extraversion

To determine how much of the variation in extraversion states over time and across individuals was due to variation in goal pursuit, we included all 18 goals as predictors in another multilevel model. Comparing the results from this model with the results of the unconditional multilevel model, the unexplained variation in overall state extraversion within individuals decreased from .81 to .22, and the unexplained variation between individuals decreased from .21 to .04. After we divided these values by the total variation from the unconditional model (1.02) in order to present variability in standardized terms, including the goals as predictors reduced the unexplained between-person variability from 20% to 4% and the unexplained within-person variability from 80% to 22%. This means that the 18 goals explained 74% of the variance in extraversion. In other words, goals explained why people sometimes manifested extraversion and sometimes manifested introversion, and why some people manifested extraversion more often than did others.

A substantial amount of variability in each of the six subcomponents of extraversion was also explained by the 18 goals (talkative: 55%; bold: 55%; spontaneous: 62%; sociable: 66%; dominant: 50%; energetic: 49%). These percentages show that the goals selected for this study were related more strongly to the spontaneous and sociable subcomponents of extraversion than to the other subcomponents. Therefore, it is possible that there are other goals, not included in this study, that are related to the other four subcomponents.

Extraversion as a mediator between goals and positive affect

Having found a correlation between the goals and extraversion, we next tested the efficacy of state extraversion in accomplishing the function of facilitating goal achievement. To do this, we used positive affect as a proxy outcome. Because some of the goals (e.g., trying to have fun, trying to connect with people) have positive affect as one of their intended outcomes, and it is known that extraversion states increase positive affect (e.g., McNiel et al., 2010), we tested whether manifesting extraversion states mediated the path from pursuing goals to experiencing positive affect.

To simplify this analysis, we selected the three goals with the highest bivariate correlations with positive affect (correlations not shown here): trying to convey information, trying to connect

with people, and trying to have fun. We entered the goals into a multilevel model to predict state positive affect. As shown in Figure 1, the three goals strongly predicted state positive affect (R^2 = 35%). Therefore, as people pursued these goals, they were happier. In addition, the goals strongly predicted state extraversion (R^2 = 62%). Finally, the three goals and state extraversion were jointly entered as predictors of positive affect. State extraversion predicted positive affect (b = 0.40, p = .001, unique R^2 = 8%) and partially mediated the relationship between pursuing the goals and state positive affect (unique R^2 = 3%). Note that even in a separate analysis controlling for all 18 goals, the unique coefficient for extraversion did not drop below 0.30. These results support the proposal that manifesting extraverted states helps bring about the desired outcome (positive affect) when participants pursue the goal of trying to have fun (and other goals).

Discussion

The results of this study support the specific-states-and-functions hypothesis of whole-trait theory (Fleeson, 2012). There was a strong relationship between momentary goals and state extraversion, and most of the variance in state extraversion (both within and between persons) was predicted by the goals. Thus, these findings are consistent with the hypothesis that extraversion has a purpose while also pointing to what that purpose is: Extraversion appears to facilitate people's goals to have fun, to connect with people, to entertain people, to stir things up, and to be a leader, among many others.

Our theoretical framework and results bridge two concepts that have been theoretically separate for decades—motivation and trait constructs. Since the days of Allport and Murray, researchers have debated which concept is central to personality. The specific-states-and-functions hypothesis puts traits and

motivation (goals) in a very different relationship than is traditional in personality theory. With the important exception of Denissen and Penke (2008), who reconceptualized traits as motivations, most theorists treat traits and goals (and other motivational concepts) as separate entities that describe different aspects of personality or different psychological modes. For example, McAdams and Olson (2010) put traits and goals on different levels of analysis. Other theorists have treated goals as distinct psychological entities that are influenced by individuals' traits standings (e.g., Little et al., 1992; Reisz & Ozer, 2011; Roberts & Robins, 2000), such that the causal direction goes from traits to goals. Winter et al. (1998) suggested the very novel hypothesis that goals provide the direction of behavior, whereas traits provide the style of the behavior. In our hypothesis, state manifestations of traits are put in the service of goals, as the means or tools by which goals are pursued and accomplished.

We were able to predict most of the variance in extraversion states largely by focusing on specific, concrete goals and states and then identifying commonsense, but surprisingly strong, connections between states and goals. The fact that these small and concrete goals predicted large amounts of variance in state extraversion supported our suggestion that it is the small, concrete, and immediate goals that Big Five states are tools for accomplishing. We have shown this for extraversion, and future research should test whether other small and concrete goals will predict large amounts of variance in other Big Five states.

Limitations

There are two limitations to address. First, this study does not show that goals cause state extraversion. Rather, it shows only that goals are highly related to state extraversion. Further, the
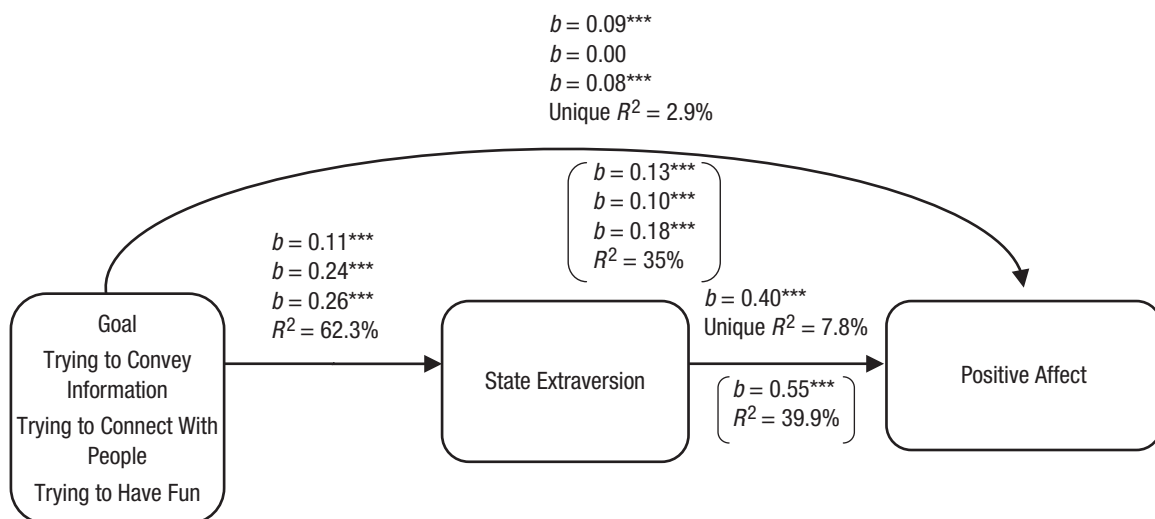
Fig. 1. State extraversion as a mediator linking goals to positive affect. The three goals with the strongest bivariate links to positive affect were included in the mediation model. Unstandardized coefficients from multilevel models are listed for the three goals separately, in order. Associations in parentheses are those predicting positive affect from goals without controlling for state extraversion or from state extraversion without controlling for goals. Asterisks indicate significant coefficients (***p < .001).

mediation analyses reflected only one potential path relating momentary goal pursuit, state extraversion, and state positive affect. Given that there are strong correlations among these constructs, the reverse explanation is also possible. Indeed, one could make a theoretical argument that changes in personality states lead individuals to pursue different kinds of goals from moment to moment, or that a cascading bidirectional influence exists. Similarly, it is possible that traits cause goals, and then goals cause states, such that goals serve as a mediator between traits and states. Future research should investigate if goals actually cause state extraversion.

Second, this study utilized self-report, and participants may have exhibited a positive response bias. In calculating state extraversion, we used only the positive extraversion adjectives because the negative adjectives were not reliable (see note 1). The reason for the lack of reliability is that participants commonly answered "not at all" for a positive adjective and for the corresponding negative adjective (e.g., neither dominant nor submissive), so the negative items were not measuring the opposite of the positive items as they were intended to do.

In addition, the goals we studied were primarily approach goals. Because most of the goals had a positive relationship to extraversion, one interpretation of the findings is that participants merely indicated high goal pursuit for all goals. Although this concern is important, there is evidence to suggest that participants did discriminate among the goals. One of the 18 goals was not related to extraversion (trying to get things done: $b = -0.02$, $p > .05$). This finding suggests that participants detected differences in how the various goals related to their behavior. Moreover, we ran analyses to check whether the state-goal relationships were still significant when controlling for positive affect, and nearly all goals (with the exceptions of trying to get things done and trying to strive for something hard to get) remained strongly significant predictors of state extraversion. Future studies should further examine the validity of the goal measures, for example, by evaluating whether participants discriminate among goals that are related to different personality traits.

Conclusions

This article explains a new theoretical conception of the relationship between traits and goals and provides strong evidence that momentary goals and personality states are related to each other. Manifestations of personality traits may be the means by which people achieve their goals. Extraversion specifically may be the means by which people try to have fun and connect with other people, among other goals. Our findings also show that in the process of pursuing these goals and increasing state extraversion, people's level of positive affect also increases.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interest with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

Note

1. The original study also included one negative adjective for each subcomponent, but data for these adjectives were removed from the analyses presented here because of low reliability. We address this issue in the Discussion.

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