Chapter-1

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Subjective well-being - is a psychological construct in a relatively new field of positive psychology and for about half a century now there’s been an increasing scientific interest of researchers, especially psychologists and psychiatrists. The author Edward Diener who first began to explore the concept of subjective well-being, in one of his cited articles of a highly influential scientific journal Psychological Bulletin from 1984, proposed three components of subjective wellbeing: life satisfaction, pleasant emotions and unpleasant emotions (Diener, 1984.). In 1999 the same author and his co-workers added the fourth component to the explanation of subjective well-being: the pleasure gained from certain aspects of life such as job satisfaction, marriage, leisure activities and satisfaction with one’s health (Schimmack, 2008). Although in literature and everyday life, the term subjective well-being is often used as a synonym for happiness, this psychological construct is defined as a cognitive evaluation of life that is filled with pleasant emotions without the unpleasant ones, and which apart from the cognitive component includes the emotional component. Although these two components are separate, it turned out that they are usually poorly to moderately correlated (Rijavec et al., 2008, Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). This model of subjective well-being as described by Diener, is actually an extension of the construct of
Subjective well-being (SWB) encapsulates issues relating to young people more comprehensively by including young people's perspectives, levels of satisfaction along with social behaviors, mental health and focus on an individual's perspective. Further, given that young people have been constructed as lazy, apathetic, rebellious and other negative judgments (Wyn & White, 1997; Bourke, 2003) and are not well understood (Mathews et al., 2000; Glendinning et al., 2003), analyzing SWB can provide insight into young people's perspectives of their own lifestyles, ways of thinking and outlooks within their cultural context: "...accepting children as active members of society and not only as subjects for research leads unavoidably to the inclusion of children in any effort to study their well-being" (Ben-Arieh, 2005, p. 576). Focus on SWB allows examination of various problems and
experiences as integrated issues occurring in the daily lives of young residents. Studying wellbeing does not stigmatize young people, nor does it present them as products of their environments or create them as social actors able to negotiate the social world in any way they desire; rather it allows young people to situate their own experiences and lifestyles.

Happiness is being evaluated with subjective well-being concept in psychology (Hybron, 2000). Subjective well-being means evaluating own positive and negative affections and life satisfaction of individuals (Diener, 2001). If people experience positive feelings frequently and negative feelings rarely and highly satisfied from their lives, then they have a high level of subjective well-being. In the context of positive features, subjective well-being of children and adolescents can be thought. In psychology, happiness is expressed the terms of “subjective well being”. This term is a multidimensional construct. As adults’ subjective well-being, subjective well-being of children and adolescents has also three important factors which are life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions (Hybron, 2000).

**Definitions of Subjective Well Being**

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as a subjective evaluation of overall life satisfaction and the frequency with which one experiences positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) (Diener et al., 1999; Robbins &
Subjective well-being is the subjective measurement of the overall satisfaction with life (Camfield, 2003). In general it is assumed that individual satisfaction with life is a multidimensional concept. This multidimensional concept is believed to encompass not only material achievements but also other aspects of life, such as health, love, employment, and having children. Subjective well-being – when it is measured– refers to a person’s declared well-being and is based on a person’s answer to either a single question or a group of questions about his/her well-being (Rojas, 2003). Therefore subjective well-being can be regarded as an outcome measure by which to judge successful living (Diener & Suh, 2000).

SWB refers to the self-evaluation of life satisfaction (Robbins & Kliwer, 2000). Diener’s (e.g., Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999) model of SWB consists of both cognitive and affective components. Cognitive evaluations of SWB are assessed through global judgments of life satisfaction. Affective components (i.e., predominant moods and emotions) are assessed by evaluating the frequency of pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Thus, the model operationalizes SWB as consisting of three interrelated factors: global life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Lightsey, 1996; Robbins & Kliwer, 2000). While research has demonstrated that life satisfaction tends to be related empirically to positive and negative affect,
they are conceptually distinct constructs that should be examined independently, not in the aggregate (Lent, 2004).

SWB has been defined as the ways people "evaluate their lives in positive terms" (Diener & Eunkook, 2000a, p. 3). Most commonly, SWB has comprised of two key dimensions: cognitive assessments or satisfaction and positive affect or feelings of happiness (Ryff, 1989; Headey, 1998; Cummins, 2000; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Triandis, 2000). Some add the concept of negative affect or what detracts from feeling happy (Diener et al., 1985a; Arthaud-Day et al., 2005). Ryff (1989) identified six components of SWB: self acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth (see also Triandis, 2000). Some have talked about well-being being related to opportunities resulting from one's social environment, such as inability to find employment, social marginalization and structures detracting from personal growth, self-esteem or achievement of goals (Munoz-Sastre, 1999; Cummins, 2000). Wellbeing has also been related to individual characteristics, such as age, gender, religion, marital status, friendships, residential mobility, income, education, work and leisure activities (Munoz-Sastre, 1999), and biological characteristics, including physical health, beauty, strengths, personality (extroversion or neuroticism), intelligence, sexual preference and assertiveness (Munoz-Sastre, 1999; Cummins, 2000). Many of these authors
have argued that happiness, values and acceptance are more important than social environments (Ryff, 1989; Meyers & Diener, 1995; Cummins, 2000; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). While clearly defined and extensively measured, the concept has not been well theorized (Diener, 1984; Ryff, 1989).

Subjective well-being (SWB) is unique in that it captures an individual’s self-perceived life satisfaction by examining their cognitive appraisal of their own life. Additionally, SWB captures a more complete picture of an individual’s emotional experiences than traditionally used measures of internalizing problems such as depression or anxiety. Few other outcome variables are able to capture not only negative emotional experiences but also positive ones as well. Additionally, SWB has been shown to be quite stable over time, making it more useful for research that seeks to examine the effects of various factors on long-term functioning as opposed to relatively brief mood or cognitive changes (Diener et al., 1999).

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as ‘a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life’ (Diener, Lucas, & Oshi, 2002). The cognitive element refers to what one thinks about his or her life satisfaction in global terms (life as a whole) and in domain terms (in specific areas of life such as work, relationships, etc.) The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect is considered positive when the emotions, moods
and feelings experienced are pleasant (e.g. joy, elation, affection etc.) Affect is deemed negative, though, when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are unpleasant (e.g. guilt, anger, shame etc.)

In defining the concept of subjective well-being, it’s unavoidable to mention the American author Warner Wilson who made a statement in 1967 that happy people are the ones who are young, healthy, well educated, well-paid, intelligent, and moderately religious, of modest aspirations, married and have built highly professional ethics (Wilson, 1967). Over the years, many of Wilson’s conclusions were inverted, and today they represent an essential prerequisite for the existence of subjective well-being.

Today, subjective well-being is observed as a broader phenomenon that includes emotional responses (affects, emotions), satisfaction with different aspects of life (family relations, leisure, hobbies, job, relationships with partners, etc.) and global satisfaction. Thus, Andrews and Robinson (1991) concluded that in order to measure the subjective well-being, it’s ultimately important to calculate what the person wants out of life in comparison to what they’ve achieved (Andrews & Robinson 1991). Carr (2004) presented a framework for conceptualizing the various components of SWB at two levels. First, the cognitive component, that is, the satisfaction with self, family, peer group, health, finances, work, and leisure. Second, the
affective component, that is, the positive affect: happiness, elation, ecstasy, pride, affection, joy, and contentment, and the negative affect: depression, sadness, envy, anger, stress, guilt or shame, and anxiety.

**Background**

Several terms recur in the literature and are used in various ways. We follow the basic distinction drawn by several researchers (Waterman, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2000) between eudaimonic and hedonic measures, with the former comprising a multifaceted measure of “flourishing”, and the latter happiness and satisfaction—which we suggest are distinct concepts. The umbrella term used to denote both the eudaimonic and hedonic measures is psychological and subjective well-being.

**Eudaimonic Measures**

The first category of measures we consider focuses on eudaimonia, or “human flourishing”. Based on Aristotelian philosophy, eudaimonic measures incorporate a more diverse set of principles than their hedonic counterparts, which focus more on pleasure. Sen (1996) wrote that “Aristotle saw “eudaimonia” as being constitutively diverse, leading to a heterogeneous view of fulfillment . . . proceeding . . . in the direction of a structured diversity of joys”. Ryff and Singer (1998) defined eudaimonia as ‘the idea of striving toward excellence based on one’s own unique potential’. The
measure has the advantage of incorporating process and outcome, giving it both instrumental and intrinsic importance. It also gives due recognition to the role of individual internal cognition in conditioning outcomes. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) found that external circumstances may account for just about 10% of variation between individuals in measures of life satisfaction, with most accounted for by “intentional activities”, i.e. aspects of functioning over which individuals have some control (cited in Huppert et al., 2006). In addition, this focus on process ties in with Frey & Stutzer’s (2007) arguments that individuals benefit from what they label “procedural utility” as well as outcomes; and that they should become “better able of advancing what constitutes their idea of the good life” (Frey & Stutzer, 2007). We argue for a two-pronged approach to measuring eudaimonia based on: (1) perception of meaning in life—defined by the individual based on his/her own unique potential; and (2) the ability to strive towards excellence in fulfilling this idea. To develop these concepts, we draw upon Steger’s Meaning in Life questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006) and on Deci and Ryan’s measures of the psychological needs associated with goal identification and pursuit, which in turn predict “optimal functioning” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001). This focus also ties in with Ryf and Singer’s (in press) assertion that purpose in life and personal growth are the two most eudaimonic aspects of well-being.
Hedonic Measures: Happiness and Life Satisfaction

Subjective perceptions of well-being have three components: a cognitive component (often described as life satisfaction), and positive and negative affect (Diener, 1984). The preponderance of positive over negative affect can be described as happiness (Bradburn, 1969). The extent to which happiness and unhappiness constitute a single dimension has been challenged, but most recent research has found that they are not independent: “most moments of experience can be adequately characterized by a single summary value on the Good/Bad dimension” (Kahneman, 1999). We argue for the separate measurement of life satisfaction and happiness, and that satisfaction consider both life overall and several distinct domains that are argued to be important.

The Importance of Subjective Well-Being

SWB is one measure of the quality of life of an individual and of societies. Philosophers have debated the nature of the good life for millennia, and one conclusion that has emerged from this debate is that the good life is happy (although philosophers often differ on the definition of happiness). We consider positive SWB to be necessary for the good life and good society, but not sufficient for it. It is hard to imagine that a dissatisfied and depressed culture would be an ideal society, no matter how desirable it is in other respects. A person or society that has high SWB, however, might still be
missing an ingredient such as fairness, which people might consider to be essential to a high quality of life. Diener and Suh (1998), working from the philosophical notion of utility, suggested that SWB is one of three major ways to assess the quality of life of societies, along with economic and social indicators. How people feel and think about their own lives is essential to understanding well-being in any society that grants importance not just to the opinions of experts or leaders, but to all people in the society. We therefore maintain that abundant SWB is a necessary, but not sufficient, characteristic of the good society and the good life. As such, the area of SWB is of fundamental importance to the behavioral sciences.

High SWB leads to benefits (Lyubomirsky et al., 2002), not the least of which include better health and perhaps even increased longevity (Danner et al., 2001). In a survey of college students from 17 countries, Diener (2000) found that happiness and life satisfaction were both rated well above neutral on importance (and more important than money) in every country, although there was also variation among cultures. Furthermore, respondents from all samples indicated that they thought about happiness from time to time. Thus, even those from relatively unhappy societies value happiness to some extent. Third, SWB represents a major way to assess quality of life in addition to economic and social indicators such as GNP and levels of health or crime (Diener & Suh, 1997).
Subjective well-being as a psychological construct

At the beginning of the 20th century, an empirical approach to the study of subjective well-being slowly started to expand, especially from the late 1940’s when the World Health Organization concluded that mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness (Gallagher, 2009). At that time, after World War II psychology was greatly influenced by the medical model focused on the alleviation of human problems and suffering, research and treatment of various mental illnesses. It was in some way understandable, especially because of the enormous psychological consequences of war.

The humanistic psychology movement started in the 1950’s and 60’s with the most famous representatives being Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Emphasizing the human tendency towards personal growth, after World War II they were the first to write about, not as the previous authors, human weakness and disease, but about person's development through self actualization, the goals toward which one strives, and generally about the fundamental questions of human existence and the meaning of life. The impact of their teachings on the wider culture was very strong, but on psychology itself it had little impact because of the lack of empirical research (Rijavec et al., 2008). The reason for this relative failure within the profession also lies in the fact that this model of thinking promoted a philosophical outlook and it wasn’t considered scientific. In some postulates, it even got
close to religious interpretations, reaffirming existential concepts such as freedom, faith, hope, love, will, etc. (Milivojević, 1989). This interest emerged in large part as a reaction to long-term focus of psychological research on negative emotions and psychopathology, which has been prevalent in literature almost 17 times more than the studies examining positive states (Diener et al., 1999).

**Adolescents Subjective Well-Being**

The present research focuses on subjective well-being among adolescents. The period of adolescence, which spans ages 11–21, is divided roughly into early (ages 11–14), middle (ages 15–18), and late adolescence (ages 19–21) (Holmbeck et al., 1995). Adolescents undergo through multiple transitions during this period: the transition to puberty, and transitions involving parent–child relationships, school, peers, and cognitive and emotional abilities. These transitions shape maturity of cognition, emotion, and behavior.

The psychological effects of stressful life events during adolescence have been frequently studied within the psychological literature (Rudolph et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2003; Cole et al., 2006). One group that is particularly vulnerable to stress is urban youth, as urban adolescents not only experience more stressors than suburban or rural adolescents, but the types of stressors
they experience are also qualitatively different and generally more chronic (Guerra et al., 1995; Landis et al., 2007). Urban adolescents are often exposed to higher levels of uncontrollable stress (Self-Brown et al., 2004; Landis et al., 2007) including community violence, financial strain, housing evictions, pressure to join gangs, academic disparities, physical abuse, and separation from caregivers (Landis et al., 2007). While many researchers have examined the negative outcomes of this type of stress, fewer have examined what leads to positive outcomes. Policy makers, teachers, parents, researchers and many others in society are concerned about young people's wellbeing (Glover et al., 1998). Concerns for those in their late teens and early twenties commonly include mental health, emotional wellbeing, social support, participation and inclusion, financial wellbeing and health (such as suicide, obesity and social isolation) (White & Wyn, 2004).

Nowadays, studies of adolescents and children's subjective well-being are found to relate with demographic factors (age, gender and socio-economic level) and other internal-features (self-concept, extraversion, etc.). For example, it was found that an adolescent who has much internal locus of control and self-esteem has high levels of subjective well-being (Buccheri, Gesu and Samgo, 2000) In addition, in parallel with the adults’ subjective well-being, it was found that demographic factors have little effect on the adolescents’ subjective well-being (McGrath and Tschal, 2004).
Overall subjective well-being can be understood in terms of life satisfaction, contentment and hedonic level, while different aspects of subjective well-being including self-appraisals like job satisfaction, self-esteem and control belief (Veenhoven, 1991). By life satisfaction, Veenhoven means ‘the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a-whole favorable’ (Veenhoven, 1991). She uses the word happiness synonymously with life satisfaction. Well-being has been measured by a number of researchers using various instruments (Bowling, 1991; McDowell & Newell, 1996). These scale mostly concern personality disorders, distress and psychological well-being, and deal with areas such as happiness, life-satisfaction and morale.

Huebner and his colleagues (Huebner, 1991; Terry & Huebner, 1995; Huebner et al., 1999; McCullough et al., 2000) have concentrated on the construct of subjective well-being among children and adolescents. Drawing on the Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) and ratings of the measures of frequencies of positive and negative affect, they argue that subjective well-being among children and adolescents can be seen as a three-component construct: global life satisfaction, and positive and negative affect (Huebner, 1991; McCullough et al., 2000).
The School Well-being Model (Konu & Rimpelä, 2001). This model (Figure 1) divides well-being in the school context into four categories: school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfillment and health status. Important contexts with an influence on children's well-being outside school include home and the surrounding community. This study explored the associations of children's general subjective well-being with factors related to the school context (Figure 1). General subjective well-being was measured using an indicator (GSWI) (Konu et al., in preparation a) that is based on the Raitasalo modification of the Beck Depression Inventory (Raitasalo, 1995; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999). The GSWI focuses on perceived satisfaction in specific life domains.
Theoretical Models of Subjective Well-Being

There are several existing theoretical models that explain how SWB is derived. One is a temperament model (Costa & McCrae, 1980) that prioritizes the role of personality and its effect on dispositions (e.g., friendliness) and perceptions about life events. The model would suggest that people with positive temperaments are more likely to have positive dispositions and interpretations of life events, which lead to greater SWB. A second model, the process-participation model (Cantor & Sanderson, 1999) emphasizes the independent contributions of both social resources and personality in predicting SWB. In this model, high social resources and positive personality characteristics lead to more “active participation” in one’s life, which results in higher SWB. Both models have received empirical support suggesting that there are multiple mechanisms through which SWB may be attained.

When psychologists measure SWB, they are measuring how people think and feel about their lives. The three components of SWB, life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect, are independent factors that should be measured and studied separately (Andrews & Withey, 1976, Lucas et al., 1996). Thus, the presence of positive affect does not mean the absence of negative affect and vice versa. Before evaluating the correlates and predictors of SWB, it is worth noting the instruments used in measuring the components of SWB. Life satisfaction can be measured using a questionnaire
such as the 5 item satisfaction with life questionnaire (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Affectivity can be measured by for example, the PANAS [Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule] (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Both of the previous measures are examples of self-report measures. Other methods of assessment include the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) (Stone et al., 1999), informant reports from family and friends (Sandvik et al., 1993) and memory recall of positive versus negative life events (Seidlitz, Wyer & Diener, 1997). The ESM works like a pager which, at random intervals, signals the respondent to record their mood at the point when they are paged. These measurements are taken over a period of time such as a month or 6 weeks and are then averaged out to provide an indication of a person’s level of positive and negative affect. The self-report measures have raised some concerns to many positive psychologists, (e.g. Schwartz & Strack, 1991). They showed that SWB scores can be influenced by a number of factors such as situational factors, the type of scales that are used, the order in which the items are presented, and the mood of the respondent at the time when the measurement was taken. Most researchers recommend the use of a ‘multi-method battery to assess SWB wherever possible’ since a more accurate assessment of SWB can be achieved and the amount of response artifices can be minimized. In general, however, self-reported well being measures have shown convergence with
non-self report methods including some physiological measures (Lucas et al., 1996).

Personality appears to be one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of SWB. Explanations and support for the relationship between personality and SWB comes from a number of research studies and theories.

The dynamic equilibrium model (Headey & Waring, 1992): Although an event in one’s life can influence an individual’s SWB, the individual will eventually adapt to the change experienced and return to his or her biologically determined ‘set point’ or level of adaptation.

The ‘hedonic treadmill’ theory (Brickman & Campbell, 1971): Individuals adapt quickly to changes in their lifestyles and return to their baseline levels of happiness, a theory which is consistent to the dynamic equilibrium model. Exceptions to the adaptation rule include death of a loved one such as a spouse or child, where individuals adapt very little to their baseline level of happiness or not at all, and noise, where individuals almost never adapt (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999).

Although research evidence seems to support the theory of happiness having a genetic component, as well as the concept of adaptation, Diener et al
(1999) have suggested that these theories, whilst useful, provide an incomplete explanation of why and how individuals adapt. Also, whilst genes may predispose a person to behave in a certain way within certain contexts, a person’s level of SWB is not uncontrollable. After all, at best 50% of the variance in SWB can be explained by heritability and at worst (Lykken & Tellegen’s, 1996) 80% can be explained by heritability. This still leaves between 50% and 20% to a combination of volition (what the individual can do to improve their SWB) and circumstances (demographic and situational factors). Hence, whilst the power of the personality in influencing SWB is important in terms of predisposing an individual to behave in a certain way, one’s own efforts are also of importance. For example, what about the individual’s capacity to change the way they think about their life? For example, a neurotic individual could learn to be more optimistic by changing their explanatory thinking style. He or she could start doing various positive psychology exercises, such as attending to and recalling more of the pleasant aspects of life, practicing the savoring technique, and doing the three good things exercise. One could also spend more time doing the things that bring happiness.

The personality traits of extroversion and neuroticism have been granted the most theoretical and empirical attention, given that extroversion is strongly correlated with SWB and neuroticism is strongly correlated with
negative affect (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Watson & Clark, 1984; Diener & Lucas, 1999). According to Watson and Clark (1984), extroverts have a temperamental predisposition to experience positive affect, whereas neurotics are predisposed to experience negative affect. Their claim is consistent with Gray’s theory of the personality having one of two brain systems (Diener et al., 1992). People who are ‘approach’ orientated in their behaviour are sensitive to signs of reward and non-punishment and operate on the Behavioural Activation System (BAS). People who are more sensitive to signs of punishment and non-reward operate on the Behavioural Inhibition System (BIS). Extroverts can be seen as BAS controlled whilst neurotics can be seen as BIS controlled.

How one thinks about his or her life also plays a part in determining one’s SWB. In addition to extraversion, Diener et al (1999) also found that optimism (the expectation that more good things will happen in the future than bad), internal locus of control (the belief that one has control over his or her life) and self-esteem (defined by Baumeister et al (2003) as ‘how much value one places on themselves, their self-worth and their capabilities’) were personality traits that correlated significantly with SWB. The theory of dispositional optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985) states that one’s thoughts about one’s future affect one’s circumstances because by expecting to do well, one will work more effectively and persist more for the goals set,
therefore being more likely to achieve those goals and consequently achieve a greater sense of SWB. However, could it be that if one feels good about his or her life one is more likely to be more optimistic?

Many studies cite a rich and fulfilling social life and a network of close social support with family and friends as being strongly correlated with SWB. A study of the happiest 10% of college students showed that those found to engage in large amounts of social activity were the happiest (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Consistent with the conclusions from this study was the experiment conducted by Fleeson et al. (2002) where both extroverted and introverted college students were asked to record their activities and moods over a period of 3 weeks in a diary. The results showed that both groups were happiest when engaged in ‘extroverted’ activities. Both these studies support the theory that social participation is a strong predictor of life satisfaction. Indeed it is easy to see why extroverts have a predisposition to greater levels of SWB given their propensity to socialize more. However, this does not explain the findings of Diener et al. (1992) which showed that whether extroverts lived alone or with others, whether they had jobs which involved working with other people or not and whether they lived in rural or urban areas, extroverts were happier than introverts. This raises the question as to whether the social aspects of extraverts that lead to greater experiences of positive affect have been over emphasized. Having said this, there is more
empirical research that shows close social connections correlate with SWB than research that shows otherwise.

**Need for the study**

In the field of psychology, there has been a growing movement toward examining subjective well-being. A dearth of literature still exists within this area of research for adolescent population. Thus, this study is intended primarily exploratory in nature. Further, this study attempts to add knowledge on adolescents subjective well being. Because adolescents are in a transitional period hence, life events, personality and coping interact differently, which may lead to outcomes with regard to adolescent well being dimensions. Therefore, it is important to find what factors are related with adolescents’ subjective well-being. As a result, in this research, the effect of some demographic factors on adolescents’ subjective wellbeing is investigated so that appropriate strategies to improve well being can be recommended in developing a comprehensive intervention program for enhancing adolescents well being.