

Re-Examining the General Positivity Model of Subjective Well-Being: The Discrepancy Between Specific and Global Domain Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT Three studies were conducted to examine the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction. Participants rated both global (e.g., education) and the corresponding, specific domain (e.g., professors, textbooks) satisfactions. In 3 studies, we found that individuals with higher life satisfaction evaluated global domain as a whole as more satisfying than those with lower life satisfaction, given the same level of satisfaction with specific domains. In Study 3, we also found that, given the same level of satisfaction during the previous 2 weeks, individuals with higher life satisfaction rated the global domains in general as more satisfying than those with lower life satisfaction. Overall, the association between global

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life satisfaction and evaluative enhancement of global domains was most consistent in “self” and “social relationships.” Finally, the effect of global life satisfaction on evaluative enhancement remained significant, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism.

Subjective well-being (SWB) research in the last 15 years revealed consistent and systematic individual differences between satisfied and dissatisfied people (see Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999 for a review). In numerous studies, global life satisfaction was associated with the frequency of positive emotions (e.g., Emmons & Diener, 1985), extraversion (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980), and self-esteem and optimism (e.g., Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). When asked to write as many positive events as they could recall in 3 minutes, happy people remembered more positive life events than did unhappy people (Seidlitz & Diener, 1993). In a lexical decision task, extraverts recognized positive words more quickly than did introverts (Rusting & Larsen, 1998). In a real-life decision task, happy high school seniors devalued their first-choice college, whereas unhappy seniors maintained their positive evaluation of their first-choice college after rejection (Lyubomirsky & Ross, 1999). Furthermore, a twin study showed that monozygotic twins reared apart were much more similar to each other in their self-reports of well-being than were dizygotic twins reared together, suggesting the genetic influence on SWB (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996).

The General Positivity Model of SWB

Based on these findings, several theorists (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996) argued that individual differences in well-being are mainly due to general personality dispositions associated with positive emotionality and negative emotionality. According to the general positivity model of SWB, happy people are predisposed to experiencing positive emotion compared to unhappy people, presumably because happy people choose to be in more pleasant situations, create more pleasant social environments, and are more sensitive to positive information than unhappy people.

Although the general positivity model presents a parsimonious explanation to individual differences in well-being, evidence for the role of general personality dispositions in processing specific stimuli is substantially weaker than evidence for the role of personality dispositions in the

general frequency of positive emotional experiences. For instance, Larsen and Ketelaar (1989) found that the correlation between extraversion and the intensity in which people felt positive emotions in imagining a positive situation was .25, and the correlation between neuroticism and the intensity with which people felt negative emotions in imagining a negative situation was .30. Similarly, Rusting (1999) found that the correlation between extraversion and positive words chosen in homophone, story completion, and free recall tasks ranged from .16 to .27, whereas the correlation between neuroticism and negative words chosen in these tasks ranged from .22 to .27. On the other hand, the correlations among global variables such as global life satisfaction, positive emotion, and optimism are substantially larger. For example, the correlations between global life satisfaction and positive emotions ranged from .42 to .62, whereas the correlation between global life satisfaction and optimism ranged from .52 to .60 (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). The general positivity model, however, does not assume the different patterns of correlations involving specific versus global stimuli. Therefore, although the general positivity model of SWB provides a useful framework in understanding individual differences in global well-being, it does not explain why the role of personality dispositions differs in evaluations involving specific and global stimuli.

The Judgment Model of SWB

The aforementioned discrepancy between specific and global well-being judgments is illuminating in light of the judgment model of SWB (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). According to this model, the basis of well-being judgments differs, depending on judgmental targets. Schwarz and Strack (1999) postulate that, because there is a vast amount of information relevant to global well-being judgments, global well-being judgments are made using judgmental heuristics. Specifically, they argue that global well-being judgments are based on either current affect or accessible information at the time of judgments. To the extent that favorable information tends to be more chronically accessible for happy than for unhappy people and that happy people tend to be in a more positive mood than unhappy people at any given time, their judgments of global well-being should be more positive than those of unhappy people. Thus, global well-being judgments should be consistent with their general self-knowledge, or self-concept, unless some aspect of their lives

that is not consistent with general self-knowledge is primed (see Strack, Martin, & Schwarz, 1988). On the other hand, because specific well-being judgments (e.g. satisfaction with textbooks) bear only a limited amount of information, specific well-being judgments are based on a more complete search of relevant information (see Wyer & Srull, 1989 for review). People do not have to rely on judgmental heuristics in the evaluation of specific domains, and therefore satisfaction judgments of specific domains are not necessarily consistent with general self-knowledge.

Interestingly, from the motivational perspective, Dunning and colleagues (Dunning, 1999; Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg, 1989) also arrived at a similar model of self-evaluation. Dunning et al. (1989), for instance, proposed that ambiguous judgment targets are more likely to be defined in an idiosyncratic way than are unambiguous targets, and, therefore, that people tend to inflate their self-evaluation in ambiguous aspects (e.g., getting along with others) compared with unambiguous aspects (e.g., musical skills). On the other hand, self-judgments on unambiguous traits are difficult to define in a self-serving fashion, and, therefore, they tend to be less favorable than self-judgments on ambiguous traits. Although there is a difference between the judgment model (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) and the motivated cognition model (Dunning, 1999) in the role of motivation, both models assume different processes involving both specific, unambiguous aspects and global, ambiguous aspects of life.

Integrating Personality Dispositions With Judgmental Processes

Implicit in the social cognitive models of SWB is that, because well-being judgments of global, ambiguous domains are based on general self-knowledge (e.g., "I am a happy person"), global well-being judgments should be consistent with general self-knowledge and should reflect stable personality characteristics associated with well-being, such as global life satisfaction, extraversion, and neuroticism, more closely than specific well-being judgments. In the previous research, however, the social-cognitive models of SWB were not examined with respect to individual differences (see Oishi, Schimmack, Diener, & Colcombe, 2000; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, in press, for exceptions). In this regard, the present investigation aims to incorporate the key feature of the general positivity model with the judgment model of SWB.

We also seek to extend the previous research on domain satisfaction by examining the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction. Although researchers have investigated the link between various domain satisfactions (e.g., financial satisfaction, marital satisfaction) and global life satisfaction (e.g., Emmons & Diener, 1985; Lance, Lautenschlager, Sloan, & Varca, 1989; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999; Scherpenzeel & Saris, 1996), the role of global life satisfaction and personality dispositions in the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction has never been examined to our knowledge. In other words, because domains were not sampled such that global domains had corresponding, specific domains, it was unclear to what extent personality dispositions and global life satisfaction might account for the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction. Our hypothesis is that satisfied individuals will evaluate global domains (e.g., social relationships) more favorably than corresponding, specific domains (e.g., friendships, roommates, family), compared to dissatisfied individuals. The general positivity model (e.g., Lykken & Tellegen, 1996) postulates that happy people view the world through rosy lenses (i.e., the Pollyanna Principle) and rate both specific and global domains favorably. Thus, the general positivity model does not assume any discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction. On the other hand, we assume that judgment processes involving specific and global domains are different, and that, given the same level of specific domain satisfaction, happy people tend to evaluate global domains more positively than do unhappy people.

The Present Studies

In three studies, we examined the role of global life satisfaction, extraversion, and neuroticism in evaluative enhancement of global domains by assessing five global domain satisfactions (e.g., education) and the corresponding, specific domain satisfactions (e.g., textbooks, lectures). Recently, Kurman and her colleagues (Kurman & Eshel, 1998; Kurman & Sriram, 1997) calculated the degree of self-enhancement by comparing a rating of a global domain (e.g., intelligence) with ratings of specific domains corresponding to the global domain (e.g., math, English). Using a regression analysis, Kurman and Eshel (1998) obtained a predicted score for a global domain from the average of specific domains. The differences between an actual rating of the global domain and the

predicted score (i.e., residuals) indicate the degree of enhancement or effacement. In the present research, we operationalized the residuals (i.e., the differences between observed global domain satisfaction and predicted global domain satisfaction based on the specific domain satisfactions) as indicators of evaluative enhancement and predicted these residuals from global life satisfaction, extraversion, and neuroticism. This procedure illuminates the degree of enhanced evaluation as well as the relative contribution of specific domain satisfaction and global life satisfaction in the evaluation of global domain satisfactions.

We measured five global domain satisfactions (“education,” “social relationships,” “recreation,” “self,” and “academic abilities”) that cover important life domains for most college students. Each global domain was measured by specific, lower level domains (e.g., “family,” “friends,” “romantic relationship,” and “roommate” for the social relationship domain). This procedure allowed us to measure each global domain in two ways: (a) directly assessing global domains (e.g., satisfaction with “social relationships”), and (b) taking the average of specific domain satisfactions (e.g., the average satisfaction of “family,” “friends,” “romantic relationship,” and “roommate” for the social relationship domain). If global life satisfaction accounted for global domain satisfactions above and beyond the average of the corresponding, specific domain satisfaction, this would indicate that global domain satisfaction is not a simple sum of the corresponding, specific domain satisfactions but consists of specific domain satisfactions and a global sense of well-being. The main goals of our investigation were (a) to advance our understanding of processes involving specific and global reports of well-being, and (b) to explicate the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction.

Study 1

METHOD

Participants

Ninety-seven students (47 males, 50 females) who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Illinois participated in this study.

Procedures and Materials

Participants completed the questionnaire package in a classroom in groups ranging from 6 to 12. They first completed the 50-item personality scale consisting of items from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1997). The IPIP was designed to assess the same five personality factors as the NEO-PI (Costa & McCrae, 1989). We used the neuroticism and extraversion scales in our analyses because these two constructs are believed to be associated with general negativity and positivity tendencies (see Watson & Clark, 1997, for a review). Each scale consisted of 10 items. Sample items for the neuroticism scale included "I often feel blue" and "I dislike myself." Sample items for the extraversion scale included "I feel comfortable around people" and "I make friends easily." Participants responded to each item on a 7-point scale (1 = *absolutely untrue of myself*, 4 = *somewhat true of myself*, 7 = *absolutely true of myself*). The internal consistency of the neuroticism scale was .88 ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.08$). The internal consistency of the extraversion scale was .92 ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.20$). The correlation between extraversion and neuroticism in this sample was $-.38$ ($p < .01$).

Next, the participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with 30 domains. Participants were asked how they felt "in general" and responded by using a 7-point scale (1 = *extremely dissatisfied*, 4 = *OK*, 7 = *extremely satisfied*). Five of the 30 domains reflected global domains: social relationships, recreation, self, academic abilities, and education. The remaining 25 domains were specific domains that were chosen to represent specific aspects of the five global domains. Specific domains corresponding to "social relationships" were "family," "friends," "romantic relationship," and "roommate." Specific domains corresponding to "recreation" were "sports you play," "parties," "hobbies," and "television/movies." Specific domains corresponding to "self" were "physical attractiveness," "abilities," "morality," "health," "self-discipline," and "role fulfillment." Specific domains corresponding to "academic abilities" were "math ability," "writing ability," "reading ability," "library skills," "study habits," and "test taking skills." Finally, specific domains corresponding to "education" were "grades," "lectures," "TA's," "professors," and "textbooks." The ratings for specific domains with each category were averaged to create the five specific domain satisfaction scores corresponding to the five global domains. Domains were presented in random order. The correlations among the 25 specific domain satisfactions ranged from $-.19$ to $.61$.

The participants then completed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS consists of five statements, such as "I am satisfied with my life" and "The conditions of my life are excellent." Respondents rated each statement on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*,

5 = *slightly agree*, 6 = *agree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The internal consistency of the SWLS in this sample was .87 ($M = 22.05$, $SD = 6.43$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of both global and the average of specific domain satisfaction in each of the five global domains. For instance, the average of the specific self domain satisfactions (i.e., the average of satisfactions with “physical attractiveness,” “abilities,” “moralities,” “health,” “self-discipline,” and “role fulfillment”) was 4.72, whereas satisfaction with “self” was 5.13. As predicted, paired t tests revealed that the global ratings were higher than the corresponding specific domain satisfaction in all but “social relationships.”

Before testing our central hypotheses, we examined whether the degree to which specific domain satisfaction was associated with the corresponding global domain satisfaction differed across sex, through a series of regression analyses that included interaction terms between sex and the specific domain satisfaction in all three studies. Out of the 25 analyses across three studies, there were two significant sex-by-specific-domain satisfaction interactions: one in social relationships satisfaction ($\beta = 1.15$, $t = 1.99$, $p = .05$) in Study 1, and the other in satisfaction with academic abilities ($\beta = .97$, $t = 2.37$, $p < .05$) in Study 2. These interactions were not replicated, however, in two other studies. In other words, in 23 out of the 25 analyses there was no sex difference in the degree to which the specific domain satisfaction was associated with the corresponding global domain satisfaction. Therefore, in the following analyses, we did not include sex.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Global and Specific Domain Satisfactions in Study 1

Domains	Global	Specific	t -value
	M (SD)	M (SD)	
Education	5.23 (1.21)	3.81 (.86)	14.28**
Social Relationships	4.91 (1.39)	4.96 (.99)	-.05
Recreation	4.94 (1.22)	4.73 (.91)	1.95
Self	5.13 (1.30)	4.72 (.85)	3.65**
Academic Abilities	5.02 (1.25)	4.32 (.92)	6.66**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Next, we tested our central hypothesis in a series of hierarchical regression analyses for each of the five domains (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). First, we predicted the global domain satisfaction (e.g., “social relationships”) from the mean of the corresponding specific domain satisfaction score (e.g., the mean of “family,” “friends,” “romantic relationship,” and “roommate” for the social relationship domain). Next, we added the SWLS score to the equation (Step 2). As outlined by Cohen and Cohen (1983), *R* square change at Step 2, along with *F*-value change, provides information on the unique variance explained by global life satisfaction. Likewise, by predicting global domain satisfaction from the SWLS at Step 1, and from mean specific domain satisfaction at Step 2, we obtained the unique variance associated with the specific domain satisfactions. The total variance, minus unique variance attributed to each variable, may be considered as the variance accounted for commonly by the SWLS and specific domain satisfactions.

Unique Contribution of Global Life Satisfaction

In the case of “social relationships,” satisfaction was predicted from the average of the specific social relationship domain satisfactions and global life satisfaction (i.e., the SWLS). Table 2 shows that 11.45% of the variance in satisfaction with “social relationships” was uniquely accounted for by the average of the specific social relationship domain

Table 2
Variance of Global Domain Satisfactions Accounted for Uniquely by Global Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Mean Specific Domain Satisfaction in Study 1

	<u>Total Variance (%)</u>	<u>Unique Variance (%)</u>		<u>Shared Variance (%)</u>
Global Domain		Specific Domain	SWLS	
Social Relationships	31.13	11.45 (<i>F</i> = 15.63**)	4.35 (<i>F</i> = 5.94*)	15.33
Recreation	34.58	22.79 (<i>F</i> = 32.75**)	2.46 (<i>F</i> = 3.56)	9.33
Self	43.67	2.78 (<i>F</i> = 4.64*)	16.43 (<i>F</i> = 27.41**)	24.46
Academic Abilities	35.53	21.71 (<i>F</i> = 31.66**)	2.27 (<i>F</i> = 3.31)	11.55
Education	41.02	17.88 (<i>F</i> = 28.50**)	4.48 (<i>F</i> = 7.14**)	18.66

Note. * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. Numbers in this table indicate percentage of the global domain satisfactions explained uniquely by mean specific domain satisfaction and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) respectively, and explained commonly by these two variables.

satisfactions, whereas 4.35% was uniquely accounted for by global life satisfaction. Consistent with our hypothesis, therefore, global life satisfaction explained satisfaction with social relationships, above and beyond the specific domain satisfaction. Similarly, Table 2 indicates that global life satisfaction accounted for 16.43% of the variance in satisfaction with “self,” and 4.48% of the variance in satisfaction with “education,” above and beyond the respective average domain satisfactions.

Differences in the Evaluation of Global Domain Satisfaction

To illustrate the role of global life satisfaction on the evaluation of global domains, we computed estimated global domain satisfaction scores based on the obtained regression equation for individuals with high and low SWLS (1 *SD* above or below mean) in each of the five global domains (see Figure 1). For example, a person with low SWLS whose average social relationship domain satisfaction was 5 would rate satisfaction with “social relationships” as 4.59, whereas a person with high SWLS, whose average domain satisfaction was also 5, would rate satisfaction with “social relationships” as 5.27. Similarly, with the same average self domain satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction with “physical attractiveness,” “abilities,” “morality,” “health,” “self-discipline,” and “role fulfillment” of 5), an individual with low life satisfaction underestimated satisfaction with “self” (4.55), whereas an individual with high life satisfaction overestimated satisfaction with “self” (5.89). Likewise, a similar difference between people with low and high life satisfaction emerged in the evaluation of “education” (5.74 vs. 6.33), given the same specific domain satisfaction score (see Figure 1).

The Role of Extraversion and Neuroticism

The unique contribution of global life satisfaction might be, however, confounded with neuroticism and extraversion, which are believed to represent general negativity and positivity tendencies (e.g., Watson & Clark, 1997). Thus, we predicted global domain satisfactions from mean specific domain satisfaction, the SWLS, neuroticism, and extraversion, and examined whether the effect of global life satisfaction would remain, above and beyond neuroticism and extraversion. The regression analysis indicated that, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism, global life

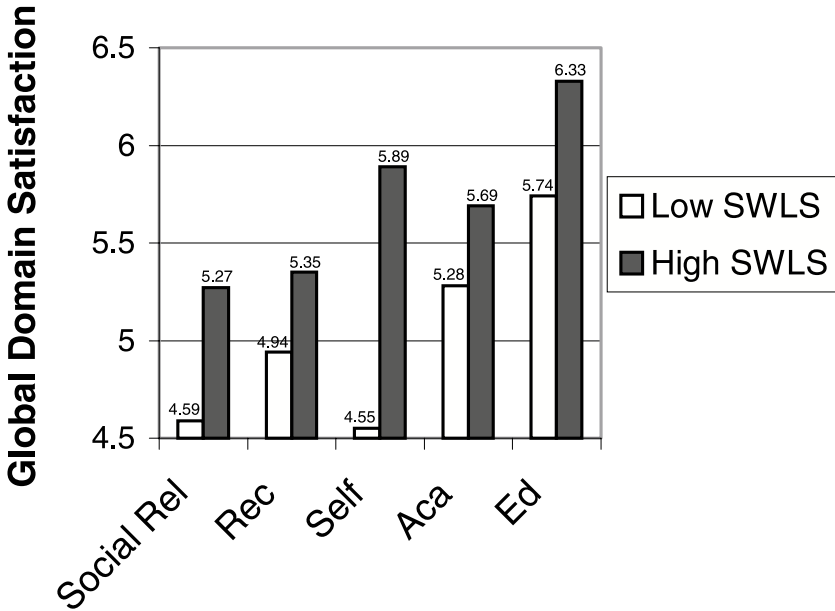


Figure 1

The evaluation of global domain satisfactions by persons with low and high life satisfaction, given the same specific domain satisfaction score of 5 in Study 1.

Note. Social Rel denotes relationship satisfaction. Rec denotes recreation satisfaction. Aca denotes academic abilities satisfaction. Ed denotes education satisfaction.

satisfaction accounted for satisfaction with social relationships ($\beta = .20, t = 2.07, p < .05$), and satisfaction with the self ($\beta = .40, t = 4.08, p < .01$), above and beyond the respective specific domain satisfaction. However, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism, global life satisfaction did not account for satisfaction with education ($\beta = .15, t = 1.40, ns$).

Summary of Study 1

Consistent with our hypothesis, global life satisfaction uniquely accounted for the evaluation of global domain satisfaction, above and beyond the respective mean specific domain satisfactions (see Table 2). As seen above, global life satisfaction is associated with an enhanced evaluation of global domain satisfaction. It is interesting to note that global life satisfaction was much more strongly associated with the enhanced evaluation in “the self” than in other domains. This is consistent

with the idea that general self-knowledge about life is most closely related to the self, and, therefore, the role of global life satisfaction should manifest itself most strongly in the area of the self. Finally, the effect of global life satisfaction on the enhanced evaluation of global domain satisfaction was evident, above and beyond neuroticism and extraversion, in the evaluations of “social relationships” and “self.”

Study 2

Study 1 provided initial support for our hypothesis that global life satisfaction is associated with the enhanced evaluation of global domain satisfaction. Because Study 1 used a long time frame (i.e., how satisfied are you with each of the following domains “in general”) and domain ratings were randomly presented, it might have led to a greater degree of reliance on judgmental heuristics. As described earlier, Schwarz and Strack (1999) argue that the top-down process should be more apparent in judgments of global domains than in specific domains. Similarly, Dunning et al. (1989) maintain that self-serving evaluations should occur in the evaluations of ambiguous domains to a larger extent than in concrete domains. To the extent that a shorter time frame (i.e., how satisfied were you with each of the following domains “during the last 2 weeks”) is more concrete than a long-term frame, this might reduce the impact that global life satisfaction might have on the evaluation of global domain satisfaction. Also, Strack et al. (1988) reported that question order changed the way in which subsequent questions were answered. For instance, when dating satisfaction was asked prior to global life satisfaction, the rating of global life satisfaction was different than when global life satisfaction was asked prior to dating satisfaction. To the extent that domain ratings were randomly presented in Study 1, the question-order effect was minimum. However, a systematic order of relevant questions (e.g., ratings of “social relationships,” followed by “friends,” “family,” “romantic relationship,” and “roommate”) may reduce the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfactions. In short, Study 2 was designed to examine whether a shorter time frame and a systematic order would reduce the degree of the enhanced evaluation of global domains observed in Study 1. Study 2, therefore, presents a more stringent test for our hypothesis.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 76 students (39 males, 37 females) enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Illinois.

Procedures and Materials

Participants completed a questionnaire packet in a classroom in groups of 6 to 12. They first completed the SWLS ($M = 20.51$, $SD = 6.91$, $\alpha = .87$), followed by the 50-item IPIP used in Study 1. The internal consistency of the neuroticism scale was .90 ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.20$). The internal consistency of the extraversion scale was also .90 ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.21$). The correlation between extraversion and neuroticism was $-.25$ ($p < .05$). Next, participants rated their satisfaction with the 30 domains used in Study 1. The correlations among the 25 specific domains ranged from $-.17$ to $.70$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of global and specific domain satisfactions. Consistent with Study 1, the global rating of “self” was higher than the specific rating. However, in other domains, the global ratings were not higher than specific ratings. In fact, in “education,” the specific rating was higher than the global rating.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Global and Specific Domain Satisfactions
in Study 2

Domains	Global	Specific	<i>t</i> -value
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Education	4.29 (1.31)	5.07 (.99)	-5.09**
Social Relationships	4.78 (1.60)	4.60 (1.01)	1.18
Recreation	4.49 (1.52)	4.43 (1.11)	-.64
Self	4.43 (1.50)	4.17 (1.06)	2.14*
Academic Abilities	3.89 (1.71)	4.13 (1.05)	-1.78

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Unique Contribution of Global Life Satisfaction

As in Study 1, we conducted a series of hierarchical regression analyses to obtain the unique variance attributed to global life satisfaction and mean domain satisfaction in each of the five global domains. As seen in Table 4, global life satisfaction uniquely explained variance in satisfaction with “social relationships” (5.56%) and “self” (8.94%), above and beyond the respective specific domain satisfactions.

Differences in the Evaluation of Global Domain Satisfaction

As in Study 1, based on the obtained regression equations, we computed estimated global domain satisfaction scores for individuals with high and low global life satisfaction (± 1 *SD* SWLS), whose average domain satisfaction was 5 in each global domain. An individual with low global life satisfaction, whose average self domain satisfaction was 5, underestimated satisfaction with “self” (4.45), whereas an individual with high global life satisfaction overestimated it (5.54). Similarly, with the same mean specific domain satisfaction, there was a large difference between people with low and high life satisfaction in the evaluation of “social relationships” (4.66 vs. 5.49).

Table 4
Variance of Global Domain Satisfactions Accounted for Uniquely by Global Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Mean Specific Domain Satisfaction in Study 2

Global Domain	Total Variance (%)	Unique Variance (%)		Shared Variance (%)
		Specific Domain	SWLS	
Social Relationships	43.27	20.24 ($F = 26.05^{**}$)	5.56 ($F = 7.16^{**}$)	17.47
Recreation	70.26	57.08 ($F = 138.19^{**}$)	1.00 ($F = 2.22$)	12.18
Self	55.84	14.96 ($F = 24.73^{**}$)	8.94 ($F = 14.78^{**}$)	31.94
Academic Abilities	60.30	39.26 ($F = 72.20^{**}$)	2.07 ($F = 3.80$)	18.97
Education	15.97	7.57 ($F = 6.49^*$)	2.30 ($F = 1.97$)	6.10

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Numbers in this table indicate percentage of the global domain satisfactions explained uniquely by mean specific domain satisfaction and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) respectively, and explained commonly by these two variables.

The Role of Extraversion and Neuroticism

As in Study 1, we examined whether the effects of global life satisfaction on the enhanced evaluation of “self” and “social relationships” would remain, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism. Specifically, we predicted global domain satisfactions from mean specific domain satisfaction, the SWLS, neuroticism, and extraversion. The regression analysis indicated that, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism, global life satisfaction accounted for satisfaction with “self” ($\beta = .21$, $t = 2.03$, $p < .05$) and satisfaction with “social relationships” ($\beta = .24$, $t = 2.06$, $p < .05$), above and beyond the corresponding specific domain satisfactions.

Summary of Study 2

In Study 2, we used a shorter time frame (i.e., “during the past 2 weeks”) than Study 1 and the domain ratings were made in a systematic order. We expected that these changes would reduce the degree of enhanced evaluation of global domains and make Study 2 a more stringent test for our hypothesis. As predicted, the unique variance associated with global life satisfaction did decrease in all but “social relationships” (see Tables 2 and 4). Nevertheless, replicating the findings from Study 1, global life satisfaction uniquely accounted for a significant portion of variance in the evaluation of “self” and “social relationships.” As can be seen by the estimated global domain satisfaction scores calculated above, people with high global life satisfaction differed substantially from those with low global life satisfaction in the way they rated their satisfaction with global domains, given the same level of the corresponding specific domain satisfactions. Hence, Study 2 provided additional support for our hypothesis that the enhanced evaluation of global domain satisfaction is characteristic of high SWB. Finally, replicating the findings from Study 1, the effect of global life satisfaction on the motivated evaluation of global domains remained significant, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism in “self” and “social relationships.”

Study 3

Study 3 was conducted to further examine the effects of global life satisfaction on the evaluation of global domains, using a shorter time

frame than Study 2 (i.e., “during the past week” as opposed to “during the past 2 weeks”) at two separate occasions. In addition, at Time 2, we also assessed domain satisfactions, using a long time frame (i.e., “in general”). The assessment of domain satisfactions using multiple time frames among the same participants allowed us to examine the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between the shorter time frame and the longer time frame.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 145 students (77 males, 67 females, 1 unknown sex) who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Illinois.

Procedure and Materials

At Time 1, participants in this study completed a questionnaire package in a classroom in groups of 6 to 12. They first completed the SWLS ($M = 22.38$, $SD = 6.44$, $\alpha = .86$), followed by the 50-item IPIP used in Study 1. The internal consistency of the neuroticism scale was .83 ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .99$). The internal consistency of the extraversion scale was also .90 ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.18$). The correlation between extraversion and neuroticism was $-.41$ ($p < .01$). Then, they rated their satisfaction with the same 30 domains “during the past week.” The correlations among the 25 specific domains ranged from $-.10$ to $.66$. At Time 2 (a week after Time 1), the participants rated their satisfaction with the same 30 domains “during the past week,” and rated their satisfaction with the same 30 domains “in general.” The correlations among the 25 specific domains “during the past week” ranged from $-.06$ to $.70$, whereas the correlations among the 25 specific domains “in general” ranged from $-.15$ to $.71$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of global and specific domain satisfactions for each of the five domains at Times 1 and 2. As predicted, the global ratings were higher than the specific ones in “education,” “recreation,” and “self” at Time 1. At Time 2, with the short time frame, the global ratings were higher than the specific ratings in “social relationships,” “recreation,” and “self.” Finally, at Time 2, with the long time frame, the global ratings were higher than the specific ratings in all but “recreation.” It is also interesting to note that domain satisfactions with

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Global and Specific Domain Satisfactions
in Study 3

Domains	Global	Specific	<i>t</i> -value
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Time 1 "During the last week"			
Education	4.33 (1.32)	4.01 (1.07)	4.05**
Social Relationships	4.83 (1.58)	4.82 (1.11)	.07
Recreation	4.43 (1.54)	4.14 (1.21)	2.60**
Self	4.68 (1.35)	4.52 (1.03)	1.78
Academic Abilities	4.24 (1.64)	4.19 (1.10)	.57
Time 2 "During the last week"			
Education	4.19 (1.28)	4.13 (.93)	.74
Social Relationships	4.93 (1.35)	4.75 (.99)	2.24*
Recreation	4.43 (1.37)	4.21 (1.07)	2.10*
Self	4.69 (1.41)	4.51 (1.04)	2.12*
Academic Abilities	4.29 (1.60)	4.19 (.96)	1.02
Time 2 "In General"			
Education	5.03 (1.17)	4.29 (.94)	8.95**
Social Relationships	5.09 (1.37)	4.91 (1.02)	2.06*
Recreation	4.59 (1.24)	4.47 (1.03)	1.54
Self	4.98 (1.27)	4.70 (1.04)	3.33**
Academic Abilities	4.90 (1.41)	4.48 (1.04)	5.53**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

the long time frame were consistently higher than those with shorter time frames. To formally test this observation, we conducted a two-way ANOVA with the time frame ("during the last week" vs. "in general") and the level of ambiguity (global vs. specific) as within-subject variables for each domain. In all five domains there was a difference between the two time frames, with F values ranging from 6.84 ("social relationships") to 49.01 ("education"). In all five domains there was also at least marginal difference between global and specific ratings, with F values ranging from 3.71 ("recreation") to 28.71 ("education"). In short, the global domains were rated as more satisfying than the specific domains, and the ratings with the long time frame were higher than the ratings with the short time frame.

The Unique Variance Associated With Global Life Satisfaction

As in the previous two studies, we conducted a series of hierarchical regression analyses to obtain the unique variance associated with global life satisfaction and mean domain satisfaction for each global domain. As seen in Table 6, the unique contribution of global life satisfaction on the evaluation of global domain satisfaction in the short time frame at Time 1 was significant for “self” (7.39%) and “social relationships” (3.15%). The second panel of Table 6 shows that the unique contribution of global life satisfaction to the evaluation of global domains at Time 2 for the short time frame was significant for “self” (4.58%) and

Table 6
Variance of Global Domain Satisfaction Accounted for Uniquely
by Global Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Mean Specific Domain
Satisfaction in Study 3

Global Domain	Total Variance (%)		Unique Variance (%)		Shared Variance (%)	
		Specific Domain		SWLS		
<i>“During the Past Week” Time 1</i>						
Social Relationships	39.31	25.05 ($F = 55.31^{**}$)	3.15 ($F = 6.96^{**}$)		11.11	
Recreation	30.28	25.79 ($F = 49.56^{**}$)	1.92 ($F = 3.68$)		3.57	
Self	45.66	18.71 ($F = 46.14^{**}$)	7.39 ($F = 18.22^{**}$)		19.56	
Academic Abilities	61.54	54.86 ($F = 191.15^{**}$)	.49 ($F = 1.70$)		6.19	
Education	48.68	45.81 ($F = 119.61^{**}$)	.03 ($F = .08$)		2.84	
<i>“During the Past Week” Time 2</i>						
Social Relationships	47.33	36.50 ($F = 78.31^{**}$)	1.07 ($F = 2.29$)		9.76	
Recreation	32.05	25.72 ($F = 42.77^{**}$)	1.94 ($F = 3.23$)		4.39	
Self	49.05	25.78 ($F = 57.16^{**}$)	4.58 ($F = 10.15^{**}$)		18.69	
Academic Abilities	50.88	40.59 ($F = 93.38^{**}$)	.06 ($F = .14$)		10.23	
Education	41.24	30.17 ($F = 58.02^{**}$)	2.26 ($F = 4.34^*$)		8.81	
<i>“In General” Time 2</i>						
Social Relationships	47.97	23.81 ($F = 51.72^{**}$)	5.55 ($F = 12.06^{**}$)		18.61	
Recreation	51.07	45.18 ($F = 104.33^{**}$)	.93 ($F = 2.15$)		4.96	
Self	54.58	23.22 ($F = 57.79^{**}$)	8.76 ($F = 21.79^{**}$)		22.60	
Academic Abilities	64.35	53.19 ($F = 165.61^{**}$)	.32 ($F = 1.00$)		10.84	
Education	39.64	26.97 ($F = 50.48^{**}$)	1.51 ($F = 2.82^*$)		11.16	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Numbers in this table indicate percentage of the global domain satisfactions explained uniquely by mean specific domain satisfaction and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) respectively, and explained commonly by these two variables.

“education” (2.26%). Finally, the unique contribution of global life satisfaction at Time 2 for the long time frame was significant for “self” (8.76%) and “social relationships” (5.55%).

Differences in the Evaluation of Global Domain Satisfactions

To illustrate the effects of global life satisfaction on the evaluation of global domains, we computed, based on the obtained regression equations, the estimated global domain satisfaction scores for high and low SWLS ($\pm 1 SD$) whose average domain satisfaction was 5. At Time 1, an individual with low SWLS whose average social relationship domain satisfaction was 5 underestimated satisfaction with “social relationships” (4.67), whereas an individual with high SWLS overestimated it (5.27). Likewise, there was a notable difference between individuals with low and high life satisfaction in the global evaluation of “recreation” (4.79 vs. 5.23) and “self” (4.61 vs. 5.43). The difference was also evident at Time 2 using the short time frame (4.70 vs. 5.40 in “self,” 4.43 vs. 4.92 in “education,” and 4.74 vs. 5.14 in “recreation”) as well as using the long time frame (4.74 vs. 5.63 in “self,” 4.78 vs. 5.54 in “social relationships,” and 5.38 vs. 5.64 in “education”).

The Role of Extraversion and Neuroticism

As in the previous two studies, we examined whether the effects of global life satisfaction on the evaluation of global domains would remain significant, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism. At Time 1, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism, the effect of global life satisfaction remained significant for satisfaction with “self” ($\beta = .17$, $t = 2.17$, $p < .05$) but disappeared in the evaluation of “social relationships.” At Time 2, the effect of global life satisfaction remained marginally significant in the evaluation of the “self” for the short-term frame ($\beta = .15$, $t = 1.65$, $p = .10$) but disappeared for “education,” controlling for extraversion and neuroticism, using the short-term frame. At Time 2, the effect of global life satisfaction remained significant on the evaluation of “self” ($\beta = .23$, $t = 2.69$, $p < .01$) and “social relationships” ($\beta = .20$, $t = 2.22$, $p < .05$), controlling for extraversion and neuroticism using the long-term frame.

The Discrepancy Between the Short-Term Versus Long-Term Domain Satisfaction

So far, we have examined the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between global domain satisfaction and the corresponding, specific domain satisfactions. In Study 3, we also examined the role of global life satisfaction in the evaluation of the long-term domain satisfaction (domain satisfaction “in general”) in comparison with the short-term domain satisfactions at Times 1 and 2 (domain satisfaction “during the last week”). As shown earlier, domain satisfactions with the long time frame were higher than the domain satisfactions with the short time frame. We tested whether the discrepancy between the long-term and short-term domain satisfactions would be systematically related to global life satisfaction. Table 7 indicates the results from hierarchical regression analyses. In these analyses global domain satisfaction (e.g., satisfaction with social relationships “in general”) for the long time frame was predicted from global domain satisfactions for the short time frame at Times 1 and 2 (e.g., satisfaction with social relationships “during the last week”) and the SWLS. Table 7 shows that the discrepancy between global domain satisfaction for the long time frame and for the short time frame was uniquely accounted for by global life satisfaction in “social relationships,” “self,” and “education.”

Table 7
Variance of Long-Term (LT) Domain Satisfactions Accounted
for Uniquely by Global Life Satisfaction (SWLS) and Short-Term (ST)
Domain Satisfactions in Study 3

	Total Variance (%)	Unique Variance (%)	Shared Variance (%)	
Long-Term Domain Satisfaction		Short-Term Domain	SWLS	
Social Relationships	55.39	30.11 ($F = 35.44^{**}$)	6.46 ($F = 15.19^{**}$)	18.68
Recreation	38.84	33.28 ($F = 28.55^{**}$)	.43 ($F = .74$)	5.13
Self	70.66	38.05 ($F = 68.07^{**}$)	2.46 ($F = 8.81^{**}$)	30.15
Academic Abilities	49.26	39.06 ($F = 39.64^{**}$)	.46 ($F = .95$)	9.74
Education	31.28	18.23 ($F = 13.92^{**}$)	3.90 ($F = 5.96^*$)	9.15

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Numbers in this table indicate percentage of the domain satisfactions with the long time frame (i.e., general domain satisfaction) explained uniquely by the domain satisfaction with the shot time frame (i.e., domain satisfaction “during the last week”) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) respectively, and explained commonly by these two variables.

To illustrate the effect of global life satisfaction in the evaluation of long-term domain satisfaction, we computed, based on the obtained regression equations, the estimated long-term domain satisfactions for individuals with high and low global life satisfaction. In the case of “social relationships” in Table 7, an individual with low global life satisfaction whose satisfaction with social relationships “during the previous week” was 5 at both Times 1 and 2 rated satisfaction with social relationships “in general” as 4.72, whereas an individual with high global life satisfaction rated it as 5.54. Similarly, the difference between people with low and high life satisfaction was substantial in the long-term satisfaction judgments of “education” (5.13 vs. 5.63) and the “self” (4.32 vs. 4.83). Thus, consistent with the findings on global versus specific domain satisfaction judgments in the previous five analyses, individuals with high global life satisfaction evaluated long-term domain satisfaction with “self,” “social relationships,” and “education” more favorably than did people with low global life satisfaction, given the same level of satisfaction in these domains for the previous 2 weeks.

The Role of Extraversion and Neuroticism

As in the previous studies, we examined whether the effect of global life satisfaction in the enhanced evaluation of long-term domain satisfaction would remain significant, controlling for extraversion and neuroticism. The regression analyses revealed that the effect of global life satisfaction on long-term global domain satisfactions remained significant for satisfaction with “education” ($\beta = .26, t = 2.38, p < .05$) and “social relationships” ($\beta = .24, t = 2.88, p < .01$), and remained marginally significant for satisfaction with the “self” ($\beta = .12, t = 1.71, p = .09$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Most of the previous research on individual differences in SWB was investigated based on the general positivity model (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991; Rusting, 1999). In this model, happy people were believed to perceive everything more positively than unhappy people. Also, in this model, judgmental processes involving specific and global stimuli were not distinguished. The review of the literature, however, raises a question regarding these assumptions. Most notably, Schwarz and Strack (1999) reviewed the literature on social

judgments and outlined distinct judgmental processes involving specific and global reports of well-being. In the previous literature on social judgments, however, the possibility that global reports of well-being would reflect systematic individual differences was not examined. In the present investigation, therefore, we examined the role of global life satisfaction in the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfactions, based on the model that incorporated the judgment model (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) with the general positivity model of SWB (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980). Our hypothesis was that satisfied people would evaluate global domains more satisfying than dissatisfied people, given the same level of satisfaction with the corresponding, specific domains.

In support of our hypothesis, we found that global life satisfaction was associated with the degree of the enhanced evaluation of global domain satisfaction with “self,” “social relationships,” and “education” in Study 1. In Study 2, we used the shorter time frame and a systematic ordering of ratings. We again found that global life satisfaction was associated with the enhanced evaluation of “self” and “social relationships.” In Study 3, we used an even shorter time frame and, again, the systematic order of ratings. Nevertheless, we replicated the findings from Studies 1 and 2 in “self” and “social relationships” at Time 1, in “self” and “education” at Time 2 with the shorter time frame, and in “self” and “social relationships” at Time 2 with the longer time frame. Furthermore, conceptually replicating the findings on specific versus global domain satisfactions, we found in Study 3 that global life satisfaction was associated with an enhanced evaluation of long-term domain satisfaction over short-term domain satisfaction in “social relationships,” “education,” and “self.” Thus, it appears that people who report high life satisfaction are more likely to rate their satisfaction with life domains higher if the time frame is longer and if the domain is broader.

It is interesting to note that the link between global life satisfaction and enhanced evaluation of global domain was consistently present in the “self” and “social relationships,” whereas it was not consistently observed in “recreation,” “education,” and “academic abilities.” The difference in the effect of global life satisfaction across the five domains could be explained from the judgment model of SWB (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). General self-knowledge about life assessed by the Satisfaction with Life Scale may be more relevant to the self and important social relationships than other domains. It seems more natural, for instance, to reason that “My life is great, and, therefore, I must be satisfied with

myself and social relationships,” than to reason that “My life is great, and, therefore, I must be satisfied with education, recreation, and academic abilities.” In addition, there is a measurement-artifact explanation. That is, specific domains assessed in “recreation,” “education,” and “academic abilities” covered major facets of respective areas, whereas the specific domains in “self” and “social relationships” may have missed major facets. Because some of the important aspects of “self” and “social relationships” were not covered by the domains in the current investigation, it might have allowed for a greater degree of egocentric definition of “self” and “social relationships” (Dunning et al., 1989) or a greater degree of reliance on general self-knowledge (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Alternatively, however, it could be the case that “self” and “social relationships” are more important life domains than “education,” “recreation,” and “academic abilities,” and, therefore, may have induced the greater degree of enhanced evaluation (cf. Oishi, Diener, Suh, & Lucas, 1999; Tesser, 1988). These alternative explanations should be explored in the future with various degrees of coverage of specific domains and an assessment of their importance.

In three studies, we examined the discrepancy between specific and global domain satisfaction with different time frames. Because it is easier to generate specific exemplars of the target domains with the short time frame (e.g., Kahneman, 1999), we expected that evaluative enhancement would manifest itself more strongly in the evaluation of domains with the long time frame than with the short time frame. Indeed, evaluative enhancement was more prominent in Study 1 (“in general”) than Study 2 (“during the last 2 weeks”). Long-term domain satisfactions were also rated higher than the corresponding, short-term domain satisfactions in Study 3. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the two time frames was greater among people with high global life satisfaction than those with low global life satisfaction. Altogether, the time frame appears to be an important factor that influences the role of global life satisfaction in the evaluation of life domains.

Is Evaluative Enhancement Confounded With Extraversion and Neuroticism?

The previous research showed that extraversion and neuroticism are associated with general positivity and negativity (e.g., Watson & Clark, 1997, for a review). The previous research also demonstrated the strong

correlations between extraversion, neuroticism, and life satisfaction (e.g., Diener et al., 1999, for review). Thus, the tendency for individuals with high life satisfaction to engage in the enhanced evaluation of global domains may be due mainly to the confounded effects of extraversion and neuroticism. We found, however, that, in most analyses, the effects of global life satisfaction on the enhanced evaluation of global domains remained significant for “self” and “social relationships,” controlling for extraversion and neuroticism. Thus, evaluative enhancement found in this research exists beyond the effects of general positivity and negativity associated with extraversion and neuroticism. This further suggests that a sense of well-being is not just a reflection of general affective tendencies and specific domain satisfactions but also a reflection of cognitive, evaluative tendencies specific to well-being judgments. These tendencies could be best described as an implicit theory or belief about their lives (e.g., Ross, 1989). For instance, people who report high life satisfaction may have a belief that their lives are good, and this belief might play a crucial role in the enhanced evaluation of central life domains. In short, the effect of global life satisfaction and personality dispositions on processing of specific stimuli seems to be much more context-specific (cf. Mischel, 1999; Oishi, Schimmack, & Diener, in press) than the general positivity model might suggest.

CONCLUSION

The present research revealed a clear tendency for individuals with high SWB to engage in evaluative enhancement with regard to the “self” and “social relationships.” Once systematic individual differences in evaluative enhancement in global domains are documented, the next question should focus on the functional value of evaluative enhancement. For instance, does the relative enhancement of global self over specific self-aspects have any positive function in dealing with daily stress and setback? The explication of the function of the judgmental “enhancement” in real social contexts should pave a new avenue for a greater understanding of the nature, the assessment, and the theory of SWB. As demonstrated by the present investigation, such a direction can be taken by integrating the judgment model and the general positivity model of SWB.

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