



Aspirations and life satisfaction in Japan: The big five personality makes clear[☆]



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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the relationship between two types of aspirations: intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations hypothesized by Self-determination Theory, and life satisfaction in Japan. A total of 474 Japanese undergraduates (286 males, 184 females, and 4 unknown; $M_{\text{age}} = 18.88$, $SD = 1.10$) participated in a survey. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the Aspiration Index had the same hypothesized factor structure as that found in previous studies. Path analysis by structural equation modeling showed that intrinsic aspirations were positively correlated with life satisfaction, while extrinsic aspirations were negatively related. In addition, controlling for the effects of the Big Five personality traits provided a clearer relationship between aspirations, particularly extrinsic aspirations, and life satisfaction. Discussion describes concerning method to evaluate the relationship between aspirations and subjective well-being more accurately.

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1. Introduction

Most individuals have some kind of aspirations, and many of them hope to understand which aspirations are related to life satisfaction with in their country. Within the last two decades, the connection between aspirations and subjective well-being (SWB) has become a topic of interest among psychological researchers across nations (e.g., Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000).

One of the frameworks for understanding aspirations that has been widely researched is the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations, which was posited by the Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory claims that intrinsic aspirations lead to SWB and that extrinsic aspirations interfere with it, although the basic notion has been tested and requires additional evidence across cultures and nations (Ryan et al., 1999). Meanwhile, although it was not stated explicitly, accumulation of research concerning this topic provided a comprehensive hypothesis that extrinsic aspirations that interfere SWB were supported only in wealthy countries, not in poor countries. Therefore, if we conducted the same research design in Japan, which is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and where no report regarding this issue exists, we would obtain additional

evidence supporting the comprehensive hypothesis; that is, extrinsic aspirations were negatively correlated with SWB in Japan.

The present study first developed the Japanese version of the Aspiration Index, which is scale to assess aspirations within the Self-determination Theory, using a back translation procedure and validated the structure of the Aspiration Index in a Japanese sample. In addition to the initial investigation of a Japanese sample, the present study demonstrated the necessity to control for personality traits when investigating the relationship between aspirations and SWB in order to obtain clearer result. Although personality traits are known to be one of the most consistent predictors of SWB (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003), previous studies of this topic have not controlled for personality traits. In other words, previous results might have been distorted based on this consideration. Thus, the present study examined whether the Big Five personality traits would clarify the relationship between aspirations and SWB. Besides, although SWB includes several components (e.g., emotional responses, life satisfaction, and domain satisfaction) and has been measured by several indicators (e.g., happiness, positive mood, and low depression), the present study focused on life satisfaction, which is one of the main indicators of SWB (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).

1.1. Intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations

The Self-determination Theory distinguishes between two types of aspirations: intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. Intrinsic aspirations involve self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical fitness, while extrinsic aspirations include financial success, attractive

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appearance, and social recognition (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) developed the Aspiration Index to measure the aspirations that were hypothesized in Self-determination Theory. Studies focusing on the two types of aspirations have revealed that outcomes related to SWB are differentially associated with extrinsic and intrinsic aspirations (Kasser, 2002). In general, an emphasis on extrinsic aspirations has been found to be negatively associated with SWB, whereas placing higher value on intrinsic aspirations was positively associated with SWB (Kasser & Ryan, 2001). Hence, self-determination theorists have hypothesized that the pursuit of intrinsic rather than extrinsic aspirations is more likely to yield SWB.

The fundamental research studies that examined the psychological functions of intrinsic versus extrinsic aspirations and formed the basic premises of Self-determination Theory were conducted using U.S. samples (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). However, Ryan et al. (1999) expressed primary concern whether the constructs of the Aspiration Index had similar structures across cultures to support the theoretical hypothesis and whether the meanings of intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations were the same across cultures.

1.2. Cultural meanings of aspirations

The theoretical claim that intrinsic aspirations lead to higher levels of SWB and that extrinsic aspirations yield lower levels of SWB is not culturally restricted. This assumption, although highly generalized, continues to be tested in ongoing research. In a German sample, Schmuck, Kasser, and Ryan (2000) found that high ratings of the relative importance of intrinsic aspirations were significantly and positively correlated with SWB, whereas a focus on extrinsic aspirations was negatively associated with SWB. Kim, Kasser, and Lee (2003) reported that placing a higher value on intrinsic aspirations relative to extrinsic aspirations was associated with SWB in U.S. and Korean samples.

Several researchers have reported controversial results regarding the effects of extrinsic aspirations by testing the theoretical claim. Ryan et al. (1999) conducted a cross-cultural study in U.S. and Russian samples and found that only the attainment of intrinsic aspirations predicted life satisfaction in the U.S. sample, and that both intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations enhanced life satisfaction in the Russian sample. Sabzehara, Ferguson, Sarafraz, and Mohammadi (2014) found that the likelihood and attainment of extrinsic aspirations were positively correlated with self-esteem in an Iranian sample. Similar results showing that extrinsic aspirations have a positive effect on SWB were found in a Chinese (Lekes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner, & Fang, 2010) and Hungarian sample (Martos & Kopp, 2012). Furthermore, Frost and Frost (2000) in a Romanian sample and Romero, Gómez-Fraguela, and Villar (2012) in a Spanish sample found that extrinsic aspirations were not significantly correlated with SWB.

A key perspective when considering the possible explanations for these different findings may be the sample's economic situations. For some of the samples, extrinsic aspirations might represent the means by which they can achieve more important intrinsic aspirations (e.g., contributing to society or helping people in need). Martos and Kopp (2012) indicated that life goals labeled as extrinsic or materialistic have a different meaning in Hungarian society. These participants might not be imbued with the pursuit of external rewards exclusively; but, might represent an inner striving for achievement and/or a type of work ethic. Grouzet et al. (2005) found that financial success was farther from hedonism and closer to safety and physical health goals in poorer than wealthier cultures. Similarly, the finding that financial success aspirations and intrinsic aspirations are closer in poorer than wealthier countries might reflect individuals' strivings in poorer nations to make enough money in order to ensure their basic welfare. The priority that people give to extrinsic aspirations compared to intrinsic aspirations increases in situations of existential, economic, and interpersonal threat (Grouzet et al., 2005). This discussion is reminiscent of Maslow's theory of human needs. Maslow (1943) hypothesized that there are at least five sets of needs arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency:

physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization and individuals are motivated by the desire to satisfy these needs. When a need is fairly well satisfied, the next higher need emerges. Compared to intrinsic aspirations, extrinsic aspirations are related to the lower level of need in Maslow's hierarchy. Therefore the role of extrinsic aspirations is more highly valued in a non-wealthy country where individuals try to satisfy a subordinate need according to Maslow's theory.

The finding that intrinsic aspirations were important for obtaining SWB is consistent with studies conducted in wealthy Western countries as well as poorer countries. The difference was the effect of extrinsic aspirations on SWB. While extrinsic aspirations were not related to SWB and were even detrimental to it in wealthy Western countries, they contributed to SWB, albeit to a lesser extent than intrinsic aspirations, in poorer countries. Myers (2000) suggested that income, which is one of the factors associated with extrinsic aspirations, is moderately related to SWB; however, increases in income beyond a base level fail to improve SWB. Cultural difference in the role of financial success (i.e., extrinsic aspiration) is a factor that cannot be ignored (Brdar, Rijavec, & Miljković, 2009).

A considerable amount of research testing the theoretical hypothesis regarding aspirations has been conducted worldwide. However, there are no reports of studies conducted in Japan, which is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. What would the results be in a Japanese sample? If our hypothesis is correct, we would obtain the result that extrinsic aspirations are negatively correlated with SWB, while intrinsic aspirations are positively correlated with SWB.

1.3. Personality traits, aspirations, and well-being

One of the considerable factors when testing the relationship between aspirations and SWB was personality traits. In a systematic review of the literature, DeNeve and Cooper (1998) concluded that personality traits determine the types of aspirations and having aspirations was related to SWB as well as personality traits. Roberts and Robins (2000) investigated the relationship between personality traits and major life aspirations. They found that economic (having a high-status career) and political influence (being influential in public affairs) aspirations, which are considered as extrinsic aspirations in Self-determination Theory, were positively correlated with the personality trait of extraversion. They also found a positive relationship between aspirations regarding social relationships, which are considered as intrinsic aspirations in Self-determination Theory, and the personality traits of agreeableness and neuroticism. Otero-López and Villardefrancos (2013) showed that materialism, which has been conceptualized as a personal value relating to a set of centrally held beliefs about the relevance of possessions and can be considered one of the features of extrinsic aspirations, was positively correlated with neuroticism and extraversion, and negatively correlated with openness and agreeableness. Visser and Pozzebon (2013) found that intrinsic aspirations were characterized by high agreeableness and conscientiousness, and extrinsic aspirations were associated with low agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. These results indicate a possible distortion effect of personality traits on the relationship between aspirations and SWB.

Romero et al. (2012) implied a need to control for the effects of personality traits in order to investigate the relationship between SWB and aspirations beyond the effects of personality traits. In Romero et al.'s (2012) study, as extrinsic aspirations were strongly correlated with personality traits compared to intrinsic aspiration, the relationship between extrinsic aspiration and life satisfaction would change after the effect of personality traits was regulated. In addition, personality traits are also known to be one of the most consistent predictors of SWB (Diener & Lucas, 1999). The present study used the most well-known and studied personality traits in the field of psychology, the Big Five personality traits (Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & John, 1992): extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, and agreeableness as the control variables when testing the relationship between aspirations and SWB.

1.4. Summary of the objectives of this study

In light of the foregoing discussion, the present study set three objectives. The first objective was to confirm the factor structure of the Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996) in a Japanese sample. The second objective was to examine the theoretical assumption that intrinsic aspirations were positively correlated with SWB and that extrinsic aspirations were negatively correlated with SWB by measuring life satisfaction, which is one of the indicators of SWB. The third objective was to investigate the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction through controlling for the effect of the Big Five personality traits.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 474 Japanese undergraduates (286 males, 184 females, and 4 unknown; $M_{\text{age}} = 18.88$, $SD = 1.10$) from three universities in Japan participated in the survey. Two of the universities provide humanities programs where the students' academic level is rated as being between medium and relatively high. The other university is a science university where the students' academic level is medium. We used students with Japanese nationality only (responses from three international students including two Chinese and one French student were not used).

The survey was conducted during a psychology class lecture and took approximately 20 min to complete. The questionnaire and scales that were written in English were translated to Japanese under the supervision of a translation company. Translation of the Aspiration Index was performed using back-translation procedures with the developer of the instrument (Prof. Kasser), who granted permission to translate and use it. The translated Japanese version of the satisfaction with life scale was released for the public's use.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Aspirations

The Aspiration Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) consists of 32 items and has a high reliability and validity. The index includes the following seven categories: self-acceptance (e.g., you will be the one in charge of your life), affiliation (e.g., you will have good friends that you can count on), community feeling (e.g., you will donate time or money to charity), physical fitness (e.g., you will be physically healthy), financial success (e.g., you will have a lot of expensive possessions), attractive appearance (e.g., you will have people comment often about how attractive you look), and social recognition (e.g., your name will be known by many people). The respondents rated the items on a 5-point scale, based on personal importance, ranging from 1 = *not at all*, to 5 = *very important*. The internal consistency of the intrinsic aspirations in the present study was .92 and that of the extrinsic aspirations was .89.

The internal consistency of the 7 categories was .67 for self-acceptance, .85 for affiliation, .83 for community feeling, .73 for physical fitness, .77 for financial success, .78 for attractive appearance, and .87 for social recognition.

2.2.2. Life satisfaction

The satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Criffin, 1985) consists of five items (e.g., I am satisfied with my life) and measures life satisfaction on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The scale has high validity and reliability and is widely used in SWB research. The internal consistency of the scale in the present study was .83.

2.2.3. The Big Five personality traits

The short form of the Japanese Big Five Scale (Namikawa et al., 2012) consists of 29 items and has an adequate validity and reliability. The scale assesses the Big Five personality traits: extraversion (e.g., sociable), conscientiousness (e.g., organized), neuroticism (e.g., anxious), openness (e.g., curious), and agreeableness (e.g., warm). Items are rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency of each of the personality traits was .85 for extraversion, .76 for conscientiousness, .86 for neuroticism, .80 for openness, and .75 for agreeableness.

2.3. Ethical considerations

On the front sheet of the questionnaire, four statements were written: (1) there is no relationship between this survey and grade evaluations, (2) the privacy of those taking this survey will be protected, (3) participating in this survey is not mandatory, and (4) responding to this questionnaire is considered an agreement to participate in this study. There was no payment for participation in this study.

2.4. Statistical analyses

All analyses were performed using SPSS 21.0 and Mplus Version 7. The arithmetic mean was used for each of the observed variables as scale scores. Among the 474 participants, 68 had missing data. The average number of missing responses was 2.16 ($SD = 0.58$; range = 1–8). The missing data were addressed by using the full information maximum likelihood method of Mplus Version 7. To evaluate and compare for model with structure equation modeling (SEM), we used the following indices: chi-square (χ^2), the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC).

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the aspirations, and factor loadings from confirmatory factor analysis of the aspirations index.

	n	M	SD	SE	95%CI	Results of CFA		
						FL	SE	95%CI
Intrinsic aspiration								
Self-acceptance	469	4.00	0.67	0.03	[3.94, 4.06]	.80	0.02	[.76, .84]
Affiliation	470	4.26	0.73	0.03	[4.19, 4.33]	.81	0.02	[.77, .85]
Community feeling	471	3.40	0.84	0.04	[3.32, 3.47]	.71	0.03	[.66, .77]
Physical fitness	473	4.15	0.68	0.03	[4.09, 4.21]	.80	0.02	[.76, .85]
Extrinsic aspiration								
Financial success	474	3.02	0.84	0.04	[2.95, 3.10]	.64	0.04	[.57, .71]
Attractive appearance	468	2.33	0.81	0.04	[2.26, 2.40]	.77	0.03	[.71, .84]
Social recognition	467	2.27	0.91	0.04	[2.19, 2.35]	.75	0.03	[.68, .81]

Note. CI = confidence interval. FL = factor loading.

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, and standard errors among the variables.

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	95%CI
1. Intrinsic aspirations	461	3.95	0.62	0.03	[3.89, 4.00]
2. Extrinsic aspirations	461	2.51	0.71	0.03	[2.44, 2.57]
3. Life satisfaction	473	3.90	1.17	0.05	[3.80, 4.01]
4. Extraversion	472	4.15	1.15	0.05	[4.04, 4.25]
5. Conscientiousness	473	4.46	0.88	0.04	[4.38, 4.54]
6. Neuroticism	474	4.96	1.15	0.05	[4.85, 5.06]
7. Openness	474	3.86	0.99	0.05	[3.77, 3.95]
8. Agreeableness	472	3.72	0.94	0.04	[3.63, 3.80]

Note. CI = confidence interval.

3. Results

3.1. Factor structure of the Aspiration Index and preliminary analyses

Table 1 shows the result of the confirmatory factor analysis using maximum-likelihood extraction with promax rotation for the seven subcategories based on the personal importance of the Aspiration Index, $\chi^2(13) = 69.428, p < .001, TLI = .931, CFI = .957, RMSEA = .096$ (90% CI = [.074, .118]), SRMR = .045. The analysis supported that the structure of the scale consisted of intrinsic aspirations (self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical fitness) and extrinsic aspirations (financial success, attractive appearance, and social recognition).

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and standard errors, and Table 3 shows the zero-order correlations for the intrinsic aspirations, extrinsic aspirations, life satisfaction, and the Big Five personality traits. In addition, Table 4 shows the zero-order correlations among the seven subcategories of aspirations and the other observed variables (life satisfaction and Big Five personality traits).

3.2. Structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction

We performed SEM with the maximum-likelihood method to investigate the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction. The upper values in Fig. 1 presents the results of the normal model, $\chi^2(51) = 160.449, p < .001, TLI = .940, CFI = .954, RMSEA = .067$ (90% CI = [.056, .079]), SRMR = .049, BIC = 14,272.127, which was hypothesized within Self-determination Theory. This model showed that intrinsic aspirations were positively correlated with life satisfaction, while extrinsic aspirations were negatively correlated.

Next, we controlled for the influence of the Big Five personality traits. The influence from the personality traits was hypothesized for each of the observed variables. The lower values in Fig. 1 present the results of the controlled model by the personality traits, $\chi^2(51) = 143.704, p < .001, TLI = .912, CFI = .965, RMSEA = .062$ (90% CI = [.050, .074]), SRMR = .030, BIC = 14195.130. These fit indices were improved compared to the original model (see BIC = 14272.127 for the

basic model). The controlled model yielded a clearer negative relationship between extrinsic aspirations and life satisfaction.

4. Discussion

The three primary objectives in this study were as follows. The first objective was to confirm the factor structure of the Aspiration Index developed by Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) in a Japanese sample. The second objective was to examine the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction, which is one of the indicators of SWB. The third objective was to confirm the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction through controlling for the effect of the Big Five personality traits.

Confirmatory factor analysis of the Aspiration Index revealed that it had the same structure as that found in prior studies (e.g., Kasser & Ryan, 1996). The Aspiration Index for this Japanese sample consisted of intrinsic aspirations and extrinsic aspirations. As reported in Table 3, there was a positive relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations. This correlation was more strongly positive compared to previous research (e.g., Ryan et al., 1999). A possible contributor to this finding might be the hierarchical structure of the aspirations. In some cases, extrinsic aspirations might be the foundation for achieving intrinsic aspirations. The satisfaction of part or all of an extrinsic aspiration allows people to evolve and pursue intrinsic aspirations. Additionally, achieving intrinsic aspirations might require some money or social status. The positive relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations might reflect the fact that extrinsic aspirations are the basis for pursuing intrinsic aspirations throughout life in Japan. Although there is controversy regarding the extent of the connection between intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations, we can conclude that the results of this study support the two separate factors on the Aspiration Index in this Japanese sample, which is consistent with previous studies.

The results of SEM showed a positive relationship between intrinsic aspirations and life satisfaction, consistent with the findings of previous studies, and a significant negative relationship between extrinsic aspirations and life satisfaction. These results were expected, in accordance with the theoretical premise, in that intrinsic aspirations contribute to life satisfaction and extrinsic aspirations undermine them. As Japan is one of the wealthiest countries, the Japanese people are satisfied with the economic aspects of their daily lives. Therefore, valuing extrinsic aspiration does not lead to fulfilling life satisfaction in Japan, as far as this survey is concerned. This finding agrees with the statement that the correlation between income and SWB is smaller in economically developed nations compared to developing nations (Diener et al., 1999, 2003). As Self-determination Theory proposed, valuing intrinsic aspirations, for example, placing emphasis on self-growth or self-understanding, intimate relationship with someone, contribution to their community, and keeping their health, helps Japanese individuals to realize life satisfaction. Pursuing intrinsic rather than extrinsic aspirations is an important contributor to SWB.

The effects of both intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations in the controlled model with Big Five personality traits statistically improved

Table 3
Correlations among the variables.

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Intrinsic aspirations	.40***						
2. Extrinsic aspirations		.11*					
3. Life satisfaction		-.06	.26***				
4. Extraversion			.17***	.07	.15**	.15***	.17***
5. Conscientiousness			.27***	-.01	.01	.26***	.02
6. Neuroticism				-.01	-.25***	.26***	.18***
7. Openness				-.03	-.18***	.38***	.13**
8. Agreeableness					-.10*	.11*	.21***
						-.15**	-.12**
							.19***

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

Table 4
Correlations between subcategories of aspirations and the other observed variables.^{a, **}

	Intrinsic aspirations				Extrinsic aspirations		
	Self-acceptance	Affiliation	Community feeling	Physical fitness	Financial success	Attractive appearance	Social recognition
Life satisfaction	.06	.09	.06	.07	-.11*	-.04	.01
Extraversion	.17***	.28***	.22***	.17***	.08	.13**	.19***
Conscientiousness	-.01	.06	.08	.06	-.08	.03	.02
Neuroticism	.12**	.14**	.14**	.13**	-.04	.09*	-.04
Openness	.14**	.08	.18***	.08	.15**	.17***	.31***
Agreeableness	.12**	.12*	.16***	.13**	-.02	.00	.07

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

compared to the basic model. This means that we measured these relationships more precisely by controlling for the personality traits. As presented in Table 4, extrinsic aspirations (i.e., financial success, attractive appearance, and social recognition) were positively correlated with openness which in turn was positively correlated with life satisfaction and basic psychological needs. Therefore, after controlling for the Big Five personality traits, the negative relationship between extrinsic aspirations and life satisfaction was more evident. In other words, the effect of personality traits was not controlled in previous studies, the relationship between extrinsic aspirations and SWB was overestimated toward a more positive direction as it was influenced by the effect of openness. Regardless of whether future studies are conducted in wealthy or poor countries, they should control for the effects of personality traits on SWB to obtain clearer results with fewer confounds regarding the role of extrinsic aspirations in SWB.

As noted in the Introduction section of this study, although the theoretical premise of Self-determination Theory states that intrinsic aspirations lead to SWB and extrinsic aspirations interfere with it, the relationship between extrinsic aspirations and SWB involves financial status. Extrinsic aspirations might perform well as a factor for satisfying basic psychological needs when people require financial stability. Therefore, the financial status of individuals and nations might regulate the effects of extrinsic aspirations on basic psychological needs as the situation demands. Future studies are needed to examine whether financial factors (e.g., annual income, subjective economic status) have the potential to regulate the effects of extrinsic aspirations on basic psychological needs and SWB to provide empirical evidence for their role.

This hypothesis implies that extrinsic aspirations are negatively related to SWB when people experience financial stability. In contrast, a positive relationship between extrinsic aspirations and SWB might be found when people feel that their financial stability is threatened.

4.1. Limitations

Several limitations of this study require consideration. Students from only three Japanese universities were sampled in this study. There are various types of universities in Japan with regard to their academic levels, educational policies, and the students' financial status. Another limitation of this study is the method of measurement used in the Aspiration Index. Although Kasser and Ryan (1996) recommended three measures of life aspirations: importance, chances, and attainment, we only focused on the importance of pursuing life aspirations. Future researchers should examine the extent to which these results are robust across different measures of life aspirations, such as chances and attainment, and across different samples in multiple cohorts. In addition, the cross-sectional design limits the conclusions of this study. Although the majority of studies in this field rely on cross-sectional data and correlation analyses, experimental and longitudinal studies are required to demonstrate the basic premise of Self-determination Theory.

4.2. Conclusion

The present study found that the structure of the Aspiration Index when used in a Japanese sample was the same (i.e., intrinsic aspirations

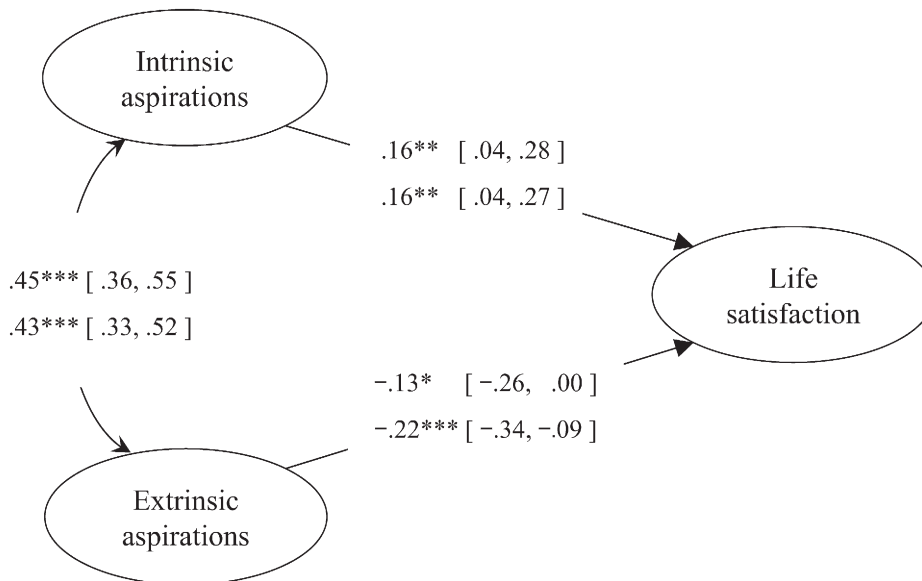


Fig. 1. The results of the hypothesized model and the controlled model. 95% confidence intervals are presented within brackets. Upper values correspond to the hypothesized model. Lower values represent the model controlling for the Big Five personality traits. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

and extrinsic aspirations) as that reported by Kasser and Ryan (1996). The findings regarding the function of intrinsic aspirations were consistent with the theoretical claim of Self-determination Theory in that intrinsic aspirations lead to life satisfaction, whereas extrinsic aspirations reduce life satisfaction. Although the relationship between aspirations, specifically extrinsic aspirations, and SWB remains controversial, the Japanese sample in this study showed results that were consistent with samples from the U.S. and other wealthy countries.

Confirming the function of extrinsic aspirations in the enhancement of life satisfaction requires additional testing. We propose adding variables that measure individuals' financial status to this model in future studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effect of extrinsic aspirations. We should also control for personality traits to increase the accuracy of the testing. The Big Five personality traits make the relationship between aspirations and life satisfaction clear.

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