Reconciling Autonomy and Self-Enhancement: 
Is Consistency the Key to Well-Being?
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Universal Motivations?
Self-enhancement: The desire to see the self positively is a widespread and dominant motivation, and has been shown to exist cross-culturally (e.g., O’Mara et al., 2012).
Autonomy: feeling responsible for one’s life, that one’s choices and behaviors are self-made and consistent with one’s beliefs and values (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Relevant Research

The Present Study
Goal 1
Replicate previous research by finding support for a positive association between autonomy and approach oriented self-enhancement. (Lynch & O’Mara, 2012).

Goal 2
Examine whether self-enhancement results in greatest well-being when the strategy used is congruent with one’s level of autonomy (e.g., high autonomy and approach oriented self-enhancement).

Method
378 participants (169 women, 206 men, 3 did not specify gender) completed the following measures online (Time 1).

• Self-Enhancement: Self-Enhancement and Self-Protection Strategies Scale (Hepper et al., 2010)
• Autonomy: General Causality Orientations Scale (Deci & Ryan, 1985; as cited in Hodgins, Koestner, and Duncan, 1996)
• Psychological well-being: Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993), Subjective Well-Being Scale (Sevastos et al., 1992), Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), and Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977).

Results
Goal 1
Using a multi-level model, self-enhancement was regressed onto autonomy, and subscale scale. Successfully replicated previous findings—autonomous individuals engage in approach but not avoidance strategies of self-enhancement.

Goal 2
A multi-level model regressed well-being onto autonomy, condition, and well-being scale. Results indicated the autonomy by condition interaction did not significantly predict well-being, F(2, 95) = 2.14, p = 0.12.
Additionally, neither autonomy, F(1, 95) = 0.72, p = 0.49, nor condition, F(2, 95) = 0.72, p = 0.49, significantly predicted well-being.

Conclusions
The current research contributes to the debate over the universality of self-enhancement by identifying strategies that autonomous individuals use to self-enhance.
Future research should continue to investigate which strategies promote psychological well-being for autonomous individuals.

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