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ORIENTATIONS TO HAPPINESS SCALE: A PSYCHOMETRIC STUDY IN THE ROMANIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

The Orientations to Happiness (OTH) scale measures three pathways to happiness: pleasure, engagement, and meaning. This study aimed to adapt and validate both the full and short versions of the OTH scale for the Romanian population. A sample of 510 Romanian adults (mean age = 33.58 years; 88.13% female) participated in this study. Confirmatory factor analysis and exploratory structural equation modeling supported the scale's factorial structure. In the full version of the questionnaire, the pleasure (α = .76) and meaning (α = .76) subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability, whereas the engagement subscale showed questionable reliability (α = .65). In the short version, questionable reliability was found for pleasure (α = .66) and meaning (α = .72) subscales, while the engagement subscale exhibited poor reliability (α = .52). Strong correlations between the full and short versions of the scale were found for pleasure and meaning (for both, r = .89) and engagement (r = .88). To address the limitations regarding internal consistency, especially for the short version, latent variable modeling, which uses the latent variables instead of the observed total scores, could be considered. These findings provide support for testing orientations to happiness in Romania with OTH.

Keywords: orientations to happiness, factor structure, validity, engagement, pleasure, meaning, psychometric properties.

Happiness is a central focus of positive psychology, leading to the development of theoretical models that aim to understand and enhance well-being

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(e.g., Lyubomirsky, 2007; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2002). A well-recognized framework in this area is the Orientations to Happiness (OTH) model proposed by Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005). This model suggests that individuals seek happiness by following three unique pathways: pleasure, engagement, and meaning.

To empirically assess these orientations, the authors created the OTH scale, an 18-item measure that evaluates how individuals pursue happiness through each pathway. The scale includes three subscales—pleasure, engagement, and meaning—with each subscale consisting of six items (Peterson et al., 2005).

The pleasure subscale measures the extent to which individuals prioritize immediate gratification and sensory enjoyment in their pursuit of happiness, as reflected in items like "In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable" and "Life is short—eat dessert first." The engagement subscale assesses the degree to which individuals experience a state of "flow," involving deep concentration, enjoyment, and immersion in challenging activities, often accompanied by a diminished sense of self-awareness and a shifted perception of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The engagement subscale includes items such as "I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities" and "Whether at work or play, I am usually "in the zone" and not conscious of myself". Finally, the meaning subscale captures the pursuit of a purpose beyond oneself, emphasizing contributions to the greater good. This is represented by items such as "I have a responsibility to make the world a better place" and "I always consider whether my actions will benefit others" (Peterson et al., 2005).

The original validation study of the OTH scale, conducted primarily with Western populations, demonstrated strong psychometric properties, confirming a clear three-factor structure (Peterson et al., 2005). Each subscale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of the Cronbach's alpha values from Peterson et al. (2005) were misreported due to a transcription error. The correct values are: $\alpha = .82$ for pleasure, $\alpha = .72$ for engagement, and $\alpha = .82$ for meaning, supporting the scale's reliability.

Subsequent research has aimed to validate and adapt the OTH scale in various cultural contexts, including Western and non-Western populations, yielding similar factorial structures. For instance, Ruch et al. (2010) validated the three-factor model of the OTH in German-speaking countries with both paper-and-pencil ($N = 1,152$) and online ($N = 4,174$) samples. The OTH scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency for each factor: pleasure ($\alpha = .76$ for paper-and-pencil; $\alpha = .73$ for Internet), engagement ($\alpha = .64$; $\alpha = .63$), and meaning ($\alpha = .74$; $\alpha = .75$). Additionally, it demonstrated stability over six months, with test-retest correlations of at least .63.

In a similar fashion, Chen et al. (2009) examined the psychometric characteristics of the OTH scale with a sample of 578 undergraduate students from Taiwan. A revised 17-item model with three factors was found to fit the data better than the original 18-item version of the OTH scale, as indicated by confirmatory

factor analysis. The internal consistency analysis revealed acceptable reliability for the meaning (α = .75) and pleasure (α = .74) subscales, whereas engagement had a marginally lower reliability (α = .66). Furthermore, the study revealed that, although pleasure had no significant impact on life satisfaction, meaning and engagement were strong predictors. Chen et al. (2009) attributed these results to cultural values in Taiwan, such as the emphasis on meaning and engagement over transient pleasure. This study underscores the cross-cultural applicability of the OTH while also highlighting culturally specific interpretations of happiness.

Although these studies underscore the three-factor structure of the OTH scale, it is worth noting that engagement orientation, which encompasses constructs such as flow and immersion, has often demonstrated lower reliability than pleasure and meaning in various cultural settings (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Ruch et al., 2010). This trend emphasizes that although the scale is broadly applicable, engagement might represent a particularly multifaceted construct, leading to lower levels of homogeneity. More specifically, unlike pleasure and meaning, engagement might be highly context-dependent and often influenced by the nature of the specific activity and the degree of alignment with an individual's interests or skills (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

To address the need for time-efficient psychometric tools, Ruch et al. (2014) developed a short version of the OTH scale, comprising 9 items. The psychometric properties were assessed through two studies conducted in German-speaking countries. In the first study (N = 1,336), results indicated that the short version retained a factor structure similar to the full version and demonstrated adequate internal consistency, with α = .63 for pleasure, α = .65 for engagement, and α = .71 for meaning. In the second study (N = 222), confirmatory factor analysis once again validated the three-factor structure, with internal consistency values of α = .68 for pleasure, α = .60 for engagement, and α = .75 for meaning. These findings indicate that the short form maintains reliability that is comparable to the full version while offering a more efficient tool for large-scale research.

Research has indicated that each orientation contributes uniquely to overall well-being and life satisfaction (e.g., Peterson et al., 2005; Vella-Brodrick et al., 2009). For instance, Peterson et al. (2005) identified positive relationships between all three orientations and life satisfaction, with engagement and meaning showing the strongest associations. Those who embraced all three pathways, referred to as experiencing a "Full Life," reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2005). Similarly, Vella-Brodrick et al. (2009) confirmed these findings in a cross-cultural study, highlighting that orientations toward meaning and engagement were strongly linked to higher life satisfaction, whereas pleasure played a less prominent role, especially within the Australian sample.

To date, the OTH scale has not been adapted for the Romanian population, highlighting a gap in the literature that this study addresses. Therefore, this study aims to adapt and validate the full and short versions of the OTH scale for use in the Romanian context. Specifically, we aim to explore whether the factor structure of both versions of the scale can be applied to a Romanian population. Furthermore, we aim to evaluate the scale's reliability by calculating the internal consistency for each version. Lastly, we will examine the concurrent validity of the scale by analyzing correlations between the OTH subscales and other relevant constructs, such as life satisfaction and symptoms of depression, stress, and anxiety.

Method

Participants

The sample included 510 Romanian adults with an average age of 33.58 years. Most participants were female (88.13%) and a substantial proportion had attained higher education (73.96%). Most respondents were unmarried (66.47%) and were primarily from urban areas (72.94%), with 81% living in cities.

Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the Babeș-Bolyai University. Permission to use and adapt the OTH was obtained from Professor Park, one of the original scale's co-authors (Peterson et al., 2005). The adaptation process adhered to Hambleton's (1996, 2004) guidelines for cross-cultural translation and validation.

Two bilingual experts independently translated the original scale into Romanian. The translations were analyzed, and inconsistencies were addressed to produce a combined version. Two additional bilingual experts who were blinded to the original scale conducted back-translations into English. The original scale was used to compare the back-translated versions for linguistic equivalence.

For the main study, participants were recruited using a combination of online and offline methods. Online recruitment was conducted primarily through Facebook, where we shared the survey announcement in various psychology and personal development groups, as well as in local groups focused on mental health and wellbeing. The announcement, presented as an appealing and easy-to-understand poster, outlined the study's purpose and benefits for the involvement, such as free access to one of the three personal development workshops. In addition, participants who were students at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences received

an extra 10 h course credit. To increase online visibility and reach a more diverse audience, we invested in paid promotion on Facebook.

Offline recruitment involved distributing paper-based questionnaires in public spaces and workplaces to reach individuals who might not be active on social media. The survey required around 20 minutes to complete, and all participants provided informed consent. All the responses were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality.

Measures

Orientations to Happiness Scale (OTH; Peterson et al., 2005**)**: The OTH scale is a self-report measure consisting of 18 items that are equally distributed across three subscales: pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Every item receives a rating on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (Does not describe me at all) to 5 (Describes me very well). Example items include *"In choosing what to do, I always take into account whether it will be pleasurable"* (i.e., pleasure), *"I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities"* (i.e., engagement), and *"I have a responsibility to make the world a better place"* (i.e., meaning). The original scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency of the Cronbach's alpha values from Peterson et al. (2005) were misreported due to a transcription error. The correct values are: $\alpha = .82$ for pleasure, $\alpha = .72$ for engagement, and $\alpha = .82$ for meaning.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985**):** The SWLS is a 5-item scale that measures overall life satisfaction. Participants rate items like "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). In our study, we translated SWLS into Romanian using the back-translation method. In our sample, the SWLS demonstrated good internal consistency of $\alpha = 0.89$.

Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS; Lovibond, 1995**):** The DASS is a self-report instrument consisting of 42 items that assess three dimensions of emotional distress: depression, anxiety, and stress. Each of the three subscales contains 14 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (Did not apply to me at all) to 3 (Applied to me very much, or most of the time). Example items include "I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all" (i.e., depression), "I felt I was close to panic" (i.e., anxiety), and "I found it difficult to relax" (i.e., stress). In our study, internal consistencies were $\alpha = .87$ for depression, $\alpha = .86$ for anxiety, and $\alpha = .88$ for stress, indicating adequate reliability for this sample.

Data Analysis

All analyses were conducted in R software using RStudio (Posit team, 2023). The code is available in the online supplementary material. In the first step, data were imported into RStudio and screened. Specifically, we checked whether there were missing data, whether the values were within the acceptable range, and whether the univariate and multivariate assumptions were met. We checked the univariate assumptions by computing the skewness and kurtosis and tested the multivariate assumptions using the Henze-Zirkler test (Henze & Zirkler, 1990).

All structural equation modeling analyses were performed using the R package 'lavaan' (Rosseel et al., 2024). First, we tested the original OTH model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Kline, 2023). As the model did not fit the data well, we used Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling (ESEM) to assess whether the three-factor model was plausible and identify any items that did not load onto the theoretically proposed factors (Fischer & Karl, 2019). Based on the ESEM insights, we specified the three-factor model and tested it via CFA. Furthermore, the final model was achieved by computing modification indices and allowing some residuals of the items to correlate (Whittaker, 2012). Finally, the factor structure of the OTH short version was also estimated via CFA.

The statistical plausibility of the model was tested using the following classical fit indices: RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR. Acceptable values for these are RMSEA < .08, CFI and TLI > .90, and SRMR < .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum et al., 1996). Only items with loadings of .30 or higher were retained in the model (Hahs-Vaughn, 2016). The estimator used was Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (DWLS), which is appropriate for ordinal data and robust against normality violations (Li, 2016; Mîndrilã, 2010). For each subscale, Cronbach's alpha was computed to explore internal consistency (Peterson, 1994). The construct validity of the scale was tested by computing the correlation coefficients between the scale scores and SWLS and DASS.

Results

There were no missing data, and all variables had values within the acceptable range. Univariate normality assumptions were supported (unstandardized skewness varied between -0.93 and 0.44, and unstandardized kurtosis ranged from -0.88 to 0.48), whereas multivariate assumptions were not (Henze-Zirkler test = 1.07, $p < .001$).

OTH-18

The original OTH-18 model did not receive support from the data, as indicated by SEA = 0.106, CFI = 0.915, TLI = 0.901, and SRMR = 0.091. Thus, the ESEM was used to test the plausibility of the three-factor model. When done so, the fit indices for the three-factor model were good: RMSEA = 0.069, CFI = 0.960, TLI = 0.958, and SRMR = 0.067. The loadings and cross-loadings are listed in Table 1 . The majority of items were loaded on the expected factor as per the original model. However, a few items, namely items 1, 4, 8, and 17, were not correctly loaded. These items were either loaded on an incorrect factor (see Table 1) or had loadings lower than .30. Therefore, these items were excluded when re-estimating the model via CFA. Upon re-estimation, the loading of item 10 was below .30 and was discarded from the model. Finally, based on the modification indices, the final model was estimated, allowing the residuals of items 3 and 15 and items 2 and 12 to correlate. As a result, the final model had acceptable fit indices: RMSEA = 0.076, CFI = 0.970, TLI = 0.961, and SRMR = 0.067. The strongest correlation was between Or meaning and Or engagement (r = .59), while the weakest correlation was between Or meaning and Or pleasure (r = .39). Standardized loadings were .54 or higher (see Fig. 1) .

Table 1. Loadings on the factors based on ESEM

Items	Or Pleasure	Or Meaning	Or Engagement
OTH_3	**0.62**	0.03	0.10
OTH_8*	**0.43**	-0.04	0.48
OTH_13	**0.58**	0.03	0.08
OTH_15	**0.61**	-0.12	0.16
OTH_16	**0.62**	0.18	-0.10
OTH_18	**0.58**	0.03	-0.05
OTH_1*	0.06	0.18	**0.18**
OTH_4*	0.20	0.52	**-0.01**
OTH_6	0.08	-0.00	**0.57**
OTH_7	0.03	0.15	**0.53**
OTH_9	0.30	0.04	**0.46**
OTH_10	-0.17	0.03	**0.56**
OTH_2	0.08	**0.64**	0.01
OTH_5	-0.10	**0.41**	0.31
OTH_11	0.00	**0.61**	0.15
OTH_12	0.04	**0.67**	-0.04
OTH_14	-0.06	**0.58**	0.08
OTH_17*	0.36	**0.19**	-0.06

Note: Items that loaded on their theoretically expected factor. Or – orientation.

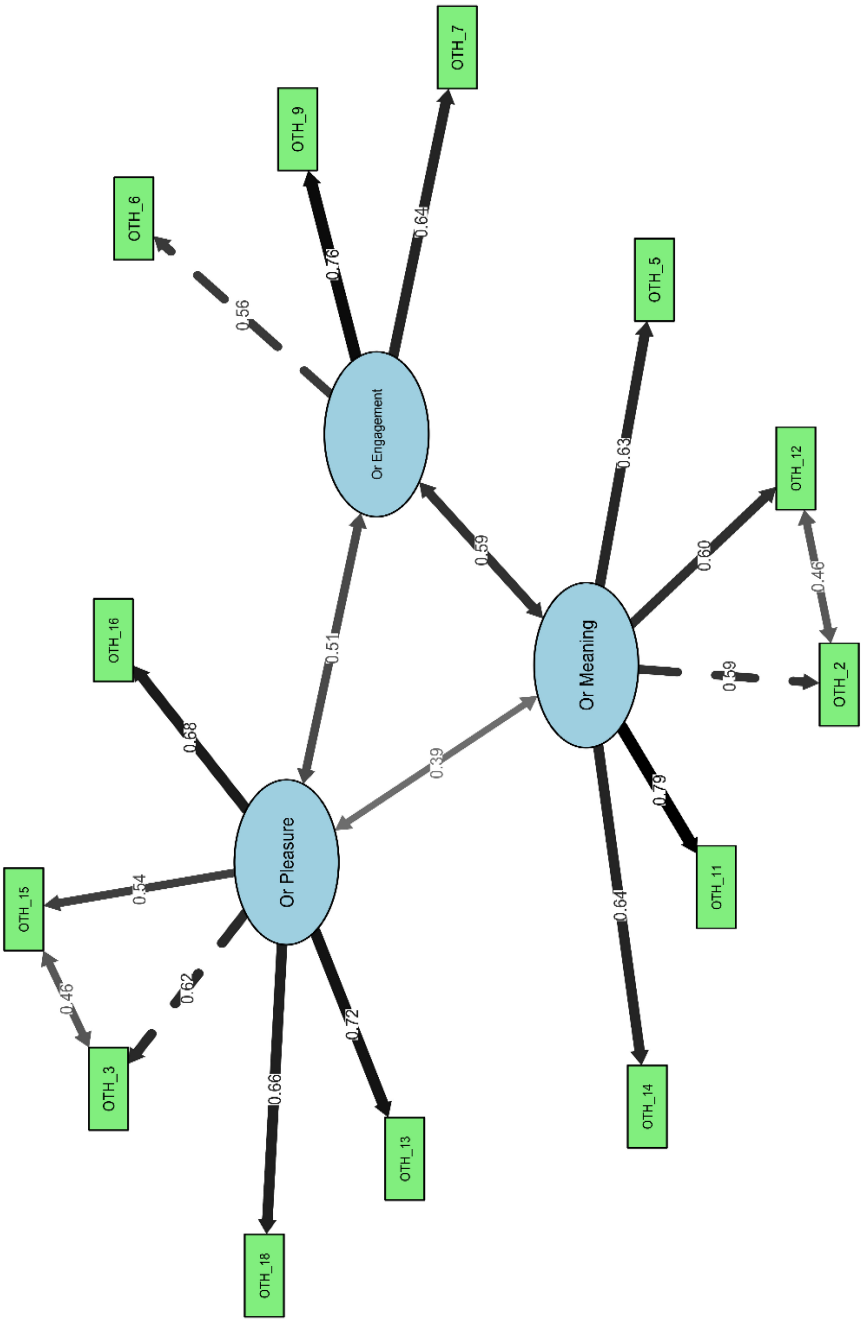
OTH_7
OTH_9
OTH_6
0.64
0.76
0.56
Or Engagement
OTH_5
0.63
OTH_12
0.60
0.46
0.59
OTH_2
0.59
Or Meaning
OTH_16
0.51
0.68
0.39
Or Pleasure
OTH_15
0.54
0.79
OTH_11
0.46
0.62
0.64
OTH_3
0.66
0.72
OTH_14
OTH_13
OTH_18

Figure 1.

The internal consistency of the scales was acceptable, according to Cronbach's alpha: α = .76 (Or meaning), α = .76 (Or pleasure), and α = .65 (Or engagement). Regarding validity (see Table 2), Or was significantly correlated with the DASS scores for depression (*r* = -.13) and SWLS (*r* = .29). Or pleasure was positively correlated with DASS anxiety (*r* = .19) and DASS stress (*r* = .15). Finally, Or engagement was positively correlated with DASS anxiety (*r* = .11) and SWLS (*r* = .20). The remaining correlation coefficients were not significant (*p* > .05).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation confidences

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Or Meaning	21.68	4.39									
2. Or Pleasure	20.04	4.68	.35**								
3. Or Engagement	18.95	3.71	.48**	.45**							
4. DASS dep	5.39	5.10	-.13**	.06	-.06						
5. DASS anx	5.56	5.06	.05	.19**	.11*	.63**					
6. DASS stress	7.93	5.51	-.01	.15**	.05	.70**	.73**				
7. SWLS tot	23.78	6.57	.29**	.07	.20**	-.55**	-.28**	-.37**			
8. Ple short	10.98	2.50	.30**	**.89****	.35**	.05	.17**	.16**	.08		
9. Eng short	9.30	2.31	.35**	.33**	**.88****	-.04	.12**	.08	.15**	.26**	
10. Mea short	10.85	2.71	**.89****	.31**	.46**	-.20**	.03	-.07	.33**	.27**	.34**

Note: Or - orientation; DASS - Depression Anxiety Stress Scales; dep - depression; Ple - Orientation *through meaning*; Eng - Orientation t*hrough meaning*, Mea - orientation through meaning

OTH-9 (short version)

Based on the CFA analysis, the OTH-9 model had acceptable fit indices: RMSEA = 0.063, CFI = 0.980, TLI = 0.970, and SRMR = 0.053. The strongest correlation was between Or meaning and Or engagement (*r* = .53), while the weakest correlation was between Or meaning and Or pleasure (*r* = .39). The factor loadings varied between .48 (HOS 10) and .81 (HOS 3) (see Fig. 2).

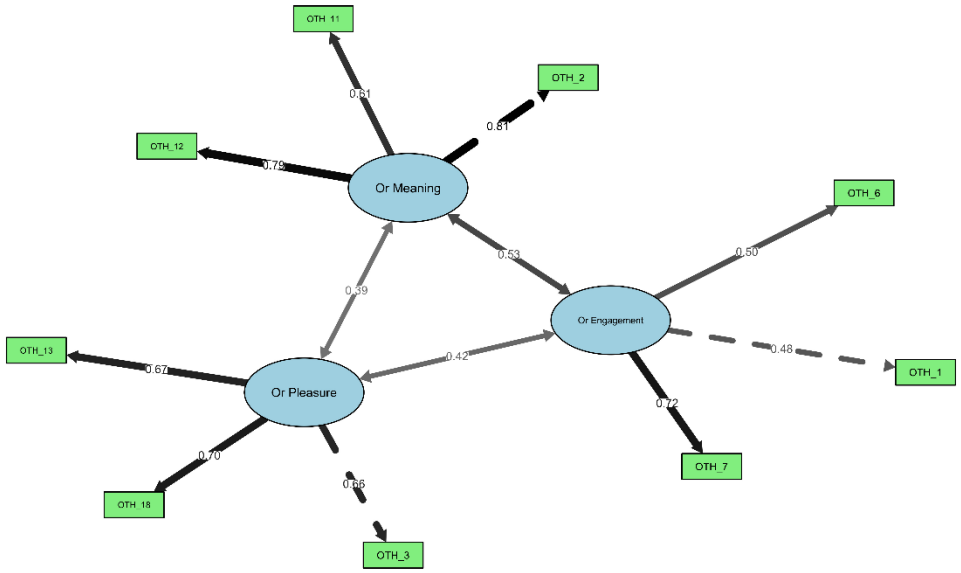

Figure 2.

Internal consistency was acceptable for Or pleasure (α = .66) and Or meaning (α = .72), whereas Or engagement had poor internal consistency (α = .52). Regarding validity (see Table 2), Or engagement was correlated with DASS scores for anxiety (r = .12, p < .05) and SWLS (r = .15, p < .05). Or pleasure was correlated with DASS anxiety (r = .17, p < .05) and DASS stress (r = .16, p < .05). Or meaning correlated with DASS scores for depression (r = -.20) and SWLS (r = .33). The remaining correlation coefficients were not significant (p > .05).

Discussion

This study aimed to adapt and validate the Orientations to Happiness (OTH) scale for the Romanian population. The initial findings indicate that the original 18-item OTH model (OTH-18) did not initially fit the data well. The fit indices indicated that the model required refinement, likely because several items did not perform as expected. Specifically, items 1, 4, 8, and 17 either had low factor loadings or were loaded onto factors other than those hypothesized in the original model. These discrepancies suggest that certain items may not adequately capture the constructs of pleasure, engagement, or meaning as intended, which could be attributed to cultural differences or subtle nuances in how these orientations to happiness are perceived in the Romanian context.

To address these issues, we employed exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM), which resulted in improved fit indices. However, further refinements were required, and additional problematic items were identified. For example, item 10 had a factor loading below .30 and was subsequently excluded from the model. After re-estimating the model and allowing for correlated residuals between specific item pairs (items 3 and 15; items 2 and 12), the final model achieved an acceptable fit (RMSEA = .076, CFI = .970, TLI = .961, and SRMR = .067).

The elimination of certain items and the need for correlated residuals highlight potential weaknesses in the original structure of the OTH-18. Specifically, the fact that several items had cross-loadings or low factor loadings suggests that they may not have been entirely relevant for the Romanian context. The modifications we made allowed the model to better capture the underlying constructs, but they also point to areas where the scale could be further refined.

Regarding the correlated errors between certain item pairs, both pairs (items 3 and 15 engage with their respective constructs' for clarity and grammatical accuracy. For example, items 3 ("I become completely absorbed in what I am doing") and 15 ("I am frequently so interested in what I am doing that I lose track of time") both tap into the experience of flow, a key component of the engagement subscale (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Similarly, items 2 (i.e., "My life has a lasting meaning") and 12 (i.e., "I have a sense of direction and purpose in life") both assess perceptions of life's significance and purpose, which are core aspects of the meaning orientation. These shared aspects may have caused respondents to view items as interchangeable, contributing to the correlated errors.

The pleasure and meaning subscales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency within the Romanian population, with Cronbach's alpha values of .76 for both. In contrast, engagement subscale exhibited questionable internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$), a trend consistently observed across various adaptations of the original scale. For example, Ruch et al. (2010) reported $\alpha = .64$ and $\alpha = .63$ for the engagement subscale in paper-and-pencil and online samples, respectively, in German-speaking countries, whereas Chen et al. (2009) found $\alpha = .66$ in Taiwan. Similarly, the Ukrainian adaptation showed comparable reliability at $\alpha = .65$, alongside higher values for pleasure ($\alpha = .73$) and meaning ($\alpha = .80$) (Kryvenko & Petryk, 2019). Thus, although we found a low internal consistency for the engagement subscale, our results conform to prior research.

These findings may highlight the inherently multifaceted nature of engagement, which encompasses elements such as flow, absorption and immersion in activities, making it more challenging to fully capture it with a limited number of items. Unlike pleasure and meaning, which are relatively more unidimensional and consistently experienced across contexts, engagement is highly context-dependent and can vary significantly based on specific activities and individual differences in interests and skills (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The diverse aspects of engagement may not be strongly interrelated, leading

to lower internal consistency coefficients. Therefore, the lower reliability observed for the engagement subscale may be due to the complexity and multidimensionality of the engagement construct itself, rather than cultural differences per se.

Concurrent validity was demonstrated through the correlations between the OTH-18 subscales and external well-being measures, such as the SWLS. As expected, the meaning orientation showed a positive correlation with life satisfaction (r = .29), aligning with previous research on the significance of meaning in overall well-being (e.g., Seligman et al., 2005; Vella-Brodrick et al., 2009). This result reinforces the idea that seeking meaning is linked to greater life satisfaction.

Orientation toward pleasure exhibited a positive correlation with anxiety (r = .19) and stress (r = .15). This finding contrasts with the general trend in the literature, where most studies report no significant associations between orientation toward pleasure and negative emotions (e.g., Bubić & Erceg, 2018; Chan, 2013). One possible explanation is that individuals might use pleasure-seeking as a means to avoid confronting the underlying sources of their stress and anxiety, potentially amplifying these emotions over time (Chen & Zeng, 2023; Mathias et al., 2024). Supporting this, Yang et al. (2017) found that orientation toward pleasure was linked with Internet addictive behavior among a sample of Chinese adolescents, a behavior associated with negative psychological outcomes like depression and anxiety (Cao et al., 2011; Ko et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2015). This finding indicates that a strong focus on pleasure may be linked to maladaptive coping strategies that can intensify stress and anxiety. However, these explanations are speculative, and further research is required to investigate the underlying mechanisms involved.

To provide a more time-efficient measure, the 9-item short version of the OTH was developed. The OTH-9 exhibited strong fit indices, supporting its factor structure. The inter-subscale correlations showed moderate to strong relationships, particularly between engagement and meaning, followed by pleasure and meaning, and pleasure and engagement. These patterns mirror those from the original OTH scale (Peterson et al., 2005), indicating that the short version retains the conceptual integrity of the full version while effectively capturing the interrelated nature of the three orientations.

The short version's pleasure and meaning subscales exhibited acceptable internal consistency (α = .66 for pleasure and α = .72 for meaning), similar to the full version, making it suitable for contexts in which brevity is essential, such as large-scale surveys. However, the engagement subscale demonstrated poor internal consistency (α = .52), which is below the acceptable threshold (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This raises concerns about the reliability of the engagement measure in the short version. While Cronbach's alpha is influenced by both the number of items and the inter-item correlations, a smaller number of items requires higher inter-item correlations to achieve acceptable reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

To address this issue, we recommend using the scale in the framework of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), where both measurement and structural

models are jointly estimated (Kline, 2015). In our analysis, all three engagement items had acceptable factor loadings, with item 10 at .48, which was lower but still within the accepted range. Given these results, we recommend against using raw scores for the engagement subscale in the short version.

With regard to concurrent validity, the short version of the scale maintained the expected relationships with external well-being measures, thus confirming its usefulness. Notably, the meaning subscale continued to show a positive correlation with life satisfaction (r = .33), indicating that even in a reduced format, the scale effectively captures this relationship (e.g., Seligman et al., 2005; Vella-Brodrick et al., 2009). This result confirms the short version's capability to measure this essential dimension of happiness. In contrast, the pleasure subscale maintained positive correlations with anxiety (r = .17) and stress (r = .16), as observed in the full version.

The adaptation of the OTH scale offers a reliable and valid tool for measuring happiness within the Romanian context, significantly contributing to the field of positive psychology in Romania. This adaptation extends the theoretical applicability of the OTH model beyond Western cultures and confirms the validity of the concepts of pleasure, engagement, and meaning in different cultural settings. By demonstrating that these three orientations to happiness are relevant in Romania, the study supports the cross-cultural universality of these pathways while also highlighting potential nuances in how they are experienced across cultures.

In practical terms, the short version of OTH-9 provides a time-efficient tool for large-scale studies, particularly in contexts where brevity is essential. Although the engagement subscale shows lower reliability in the short version, the OTH-9 remains a useful measure for pleasure and meaning pathways. This underscores both the theoretical and practical significance of having a culturally adapted instrument that not only validates theoretical constructs but also meets the practical demands of research in the field of happiness and well-being, where time constraints and large sample sizes often necessitate the use of shorter scales.

Despite the valuable insights gained from adapting and validating the OTH scale in the Romanian context, several significant limitations undermine the study's robustness and generalizability, highlighting critical areas for future research.

First, the sample was predominantly female (88.13%), which may restrict the generalizability of the results to the broader Romanian population. This imbalance in the sample could affect the results because orientations toward happiness may vary according to gender. Therefore, future studies should strive to include a more gender-balanced sample to ensure the applicability of the OTH scale findings across genders.

Second, both versions of the engagement subscale demonstrated lower internal consistency, suggesting that caution is necessary when interpreting the engagement scores. Despite this, the scale remains an important instrument for evaluating orientations to happiness, particularly when used within a latent variable framework, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This approach allows

more accurate estimations and compensates for potential internal consistency limitations. Future research could focus on applying the scale in various cultural contexts and evaluating its use in different populations to better understand the nuances of engagement.

Finally, since we could not support the original model of the OTH using CFA, we opted for ESEM, an alternative to CFA that allows for cross-loadings, often resulting in improved goodness-of-fit indices. ESEM operates with more flexible assumptions than CFA (Fischer & Karl, 2019). Additionally, we excluded certain items based on the results from ESEM and the final CFA model. However, this approach should be regarded as exploratory, as we are proposing a potential version of the scale. Future studies will need to test whether the structure we provided holds in different populations. Until then, our results concerning OTH should be considered provisional.

Authors' Notes

Acknowledgements. For this study, we utilized the ChatGPT tool by OpenAI to assist with language optimization and text review. The use of AI did not influence data interpretation, and all analyses and conclusions were validated by the authors.

Ethical Statements. We confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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