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# **CORRELATES OF SELF-MONITORING**

A relationship between self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

**Master of Applied Psychology**

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by

**DANIELLE LEE SMITH**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is an initial attempt to investigate the relationships between self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing.

A research model made up of two parts was developed to explore these relationships. Figure 1, explored the direct relationship between the criterion variable self-monitoring in relation to the predictor variable flourishing. Figure 2, investigated the direct relationship between the criterion variable self-monitoring and the mediator variable coping methods; (i) social support, (ii) escape-avoidance, (iii) planful-problem solving. This study proposed the existence of a direct relationship between the mediator variable coping methods and the predictor variable flourishing. Finally, this study proposed that the direct relationship displayed in Figure 1 of the model will be mediated by coping methods.

Data from two hundred and two surveys were included in the data analysis. This analysis found that predictions within Figure 1 and 2 of the theoretical model were partially supported. The most significant finding supported the prediction that there exists a direct relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, and coping methods mediate this relationship.

This study had two major purposes: to investigate whether there exists a direct positive relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing; and to investigate whether coping methods will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and

flourishing.

This study was designed to challenge previous research that has suggested high self-monitoring individuals are less likely to flourish compared to low self-monitoring individuals (Day and Schleicher, 2006). This present study reasons that high self-monitors will experience greater flourishing because they use more effective coping methods and in doing so supporting findings from Leone (2006), who suggested high self-monitoring individuals are less likely to languish.

This study used a method of self-report to investigate university employees' self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing behaviour. Two hundred and twenty academic and non-academic staff completed an online survey that was sent to 1568 university employees.

Major implications that can be drawn from this research are the findings that have supported the existence of direct positive relationships between factors of self-monitoring and flourishing. Furthermore, mediating relationships that have indicated coping methods do mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. Findings suggest that individuals who self-monitor are more likely to flourish because they cope more effectively, supporting the theory that high self-monitors will experience less languishing than individuals who do not engage in self-monitoring behaviour. This present study demonstrates value to all workplaces interested in increasing flourishing and positive emotions at work.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Organisation's and the nature of work itself are constantly changing, and in accordance with these changes to the workplace, employees' attitudes and beliefs must also continue to change (Amerasinghe, 2014). The purpose of this research was to understand employees' subjective perception of their personal self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing behaviour within a tertiary workplace in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is important because it will provide researchers and employers with awareness of factors that may ultimately contribute to organisational success, and the individual well-being of employees.

Employees' self-reported perceptions of their ability to adapt to various personal and social situations, often referred to as self-monitoring in the literature (Synder, 1974), are of interest due to the various consequences of engaging in such behaviour. Self-monitoring in this study refers to the tendency to observe, control and express his or her behaviour, by adapting to various situations, based on the cues between individuals (Synder, 1974). The consequences of self-monitoring are investigated in this study in relation to health, identified as flourishing, a gold standard method of measuring well-being (Seligman, 2011; Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012). Flourishing is also investigated by this study as the opposite of languishing, defined as low levels of wellbeing, stagnation, feeling hollow and feelings of emptiness (Hefferon, 2013). Research on flourishing has contributed to greater workplace productivity in recent years (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

Self-monitoring was investigated in this study as a variable related to an individual's ability to overcome languishing and achieve flourishing within the

workplace, through effective coping. Social support seeking, escape-avoidance, and planful-problem solving coping methods were investigated, as mediating variables. Flourishing was also investigated as the criterion variable. In this study, social support coping methods are identified as adaptive, used to reduce psychological distress, through support from social relations (Taylor, 2011). Escape-avoidance coping is identified as a maladaptive method to avoid stress (Ryan, 2013), and planful-problem solving is acknowledged as an adaptive method to overcome stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Ryan, 2013). Social support and planful-problem solving coping are identified as adaptive and positive because they are effective methods to deal with stress. As positive emotions are necessary for flourishing and positive organisational change (Avey, Wernsing & Luthans, 2008), these coping methods are of interest within this study.

### **Purpose of this Research**

Positive psychology is "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in the workplace" (Luthans & Church, 2002, p. 59) and is valued because positive psychological states within an organisation result in positive outcomes (Gatto, 2016), such as a competitive edge (Gatto, 2016; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Organisations consider positive organisational behaviour a competitive advantage (Memari, Valikhani, Aghababae & Davali, 2013). Memari et al. (2013) discuss how relying on the variables related to

positive psychology has been found to contribute to the promotion of social and human capital and improved organisational performance.

It has been acknowledged by Leone (2006) that there remains much to be discovered on the impact of individual differences within the study of self-monitoring in relation to the workplace. Leone (2006) also identifies how there has been "little, if any, attention paid to potential relationships between self-monitoring and phenomena of longstanding interest in industrial/ organisational psychology" (p. 649). Thus, the first goal of this research was to investigate self-monitoring and the direct relationship this variable shares with the positive psychological state flourishing.

Findings from Day and Schleicher (2006) have suggested high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to experience languishing than low self-monitors because of greater role stress. This research proposes that this is unlikely because high self-monitors will use effective coping to achieve flourishing. Thus, the second goal of this research was to investigate the following coping methods; (i) seeking social support, (ii) escape-avoidance, (iii) planful-problem solving as mediating variables, mediating the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, and to support findings from Leone (2006) who suggested that high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to overcome workplace languishing.

This chapter offers detailed explanations of the key variables identified within this study. It also presents and tests an original theoretical model, followed by hypotheses and associated rationales.

## **Self-monitoring**

The original definition of the concept self-monitoring, as discussed by Snyder (1974), is a personality trait that includes an individual's tendency to control, observe, and express her or his behaviour, by adapting to various situations based on cues between individuals. This suggests subtle changes within social interactions are used by self-monitors to determine how to alter their behaviour to behave in an appropriate manner. Snyder explains how individuals who do not self-monitor are those who do not change their behaviour based on cues between individuals if it does not support their internal attitudes and affective states (Snyder, 1987).

There exists a spectrum of self-monitoring, with high and low at opposite ends. Individuals who effectively self-monitor are labelled high self-monitors, and individuals who do not are low self-monitors (Snyder, 1979). Snyder (1974) found that peers rated high self-monitoring individuals as being able to learn, behave, and adapt in ways more socially appropriate in new situations. High self-monitors were also found to be individuals who have good self-control of their emotional expression, and can effectively use this ability to create the impressions they want. Individuals found to display high self-monitoring tendencies were better than low self-monitors at expressing and communicating their emotions intentionally, through both their facial and vocal expressions. Snyder (1979) explains how high self-monitors are more intelligent because of more effective self-observational power.

### **Self-monitoring in the workplace**

Self-monitoring is important while working in socially dynamic work environments because it provides more support for individuals from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, enabling the organisation to function. Co-workers high in self-monitoring tendencies have been found to produce more positive impressions and have a greater ability to get along with associates compared to low self-monitors (Flynn, Chatman & Spataro, 2001). Individuals who effectively self-monitor can achieve more, gain more respect from others, and display behaviour that has been previously associated with confidence and generosity, contributing to greater self-esteem than low self-monitors (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah & Ames, 2006). Flynn and Ames (2006) found that self-monitors influenced group members more effectively and were also seen as more valuable contributors.

### **Flourishing**

The concept of flourishing comes from the field of positive psychology (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). Dodge, Daly, Huyton and Sanders (2012) explain how Keyes' (2002; 2005) research was the first to coin the term 'flourishing', labelling it as the opposite of 'languishing'.

What it means to flourish is to live within a range of human functioning which is optimal, connoting goodness, growth, resilience and generativity. Within the field

of positive psychology, flourishing is concerned with the idea of happiness and well-being. Fredrickson and Branigan (2005) explain how flourishing requires development and occurs over the course of a lifetime. The Mental Health Foundation of Aotearoa, New Zealand, defines flourishing as a term that is used to describe a state that is sustainable in relation to mental wellbeing or positive mental health (Blissett, 2011). Furthermore, this term has been used as a population measure of mental wellbeing in several international studies and individuals who experience flourishing have happier and more meaningful lives and experience better physical health and social outcomes (Blissett, 2011). Flourishing research identifies how it is a basic human need that one strives to achieve and therefore a fundamental process (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi & Biswas-Diener, 2010). Individuals who flourish have been found to cope more effectively with stress of a chronic nature and other negative experiences (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). Benefits of flourishing not only affect the individual but they extend beyond, having implications for societies and communities as well (Diener et al, 2010).

### **Link Between Self, Self-monitoring, and Flourishing**

Psychologists, philosophers, and individuals concerned with health have examined the link between the self and well-being, with Seligman (2000) naming this relationship “Positive Psychology”. Flourishing within positive psychology refers to optimal human functioning and comprises four parts; resilience, growth, goodness,

and generativity (Fredrickson, 2005). Psychologists have also noted how positive emotional states increase the likelihood of survival in both diseased and healthy populations (Chida & Steptoe, 2008). Psychologists have also noted how, within the workplace, studies conclude that happiness precedes outcomes of importance and is an indicator of thriving, productive, and fulfilling work (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005).

## **Coping**

Lazarus and Launier (1978) explored coping in terms of a process to manage stressors that have been appraised as exceeding or draining a person's resources, in the effort to manage internal and environmental demands. Ryan (2013) discussed how there exist two primary functions of coping methods; the first is to manage problems that cause stress to individuals, the second is to govern emotions related to these stressors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Planning, social and emotional support, humor, drugs, disengagement, acceptance, religion, and denial are all examples of different kinds of coping resources (Ryan, 2013). Ryan (2013) has identified several ways of categorising coping methods, however, most coping responses are considered to broadly encompass Lazarus and Folkman's (1980) emotion or problem focused coping. As discussed previously, Folkman and Lazarus (1980) have categorised coping into two distinct categories; Problem-focused and Emotion-focused, which were investigated in this study. Emotion-focused coping is a coping method focusing



on internal emotional states rather than external situations which trigger the emotional response. Problem-focused coping is generally viewed as a method of coping involving active planning and/or engaging in specific behaviours to overcome the problem causing distress (Ryan, 2013).

### **Seeking social support coping (emotion focused)**

Taylor (2011) discussed social support in terms of a multifaceted experience involving relationships and associations with others, which work as a buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress (Folkman and Lazarus, 1988). Social support offers daily protection against stress without apparent stressors (Folkman and Lazarus, 1988). Support can come from organisations, co-workers, neighbours, pets, friends and family (Ryan, 2013), and is viewed as an adaptive emotion focused method of coping.

### **Escape-avoidance coping (emotion focused)**

Escape-avoidance coping has been found to relate to high levels of psychological distress in careers. This method of coping serves to avoid rather than confront the problem causing stress and has shown a positive association with depression and a negative association with positive outcomes (Baqtayan, 2015).

### **Planful-problem solving coping (problem focused)**

Ryan (2013) describes this form of coping as an adaptive problem focused method of coping, involving actively engaging or planning a specific behaviour to

overcome the issue creating the stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) and related to positive career outcomes (Baqutayan, 2015).

### **Theoretical model**

The theoretical model used within this research has two parts as a means of illustrating the research objectives. In accordance with the first objective of this research, Figure 1 of this model proposes a direct relationship between the predictor variable self-monitoring and criterion variable flourishing. In accordance with the second objective of this research, Figure 2 of this model proposes a direct relationship between the predictor variable self-monitoring and the mediating variable coping methods; (i) seeking social support, (ii) escape- avoidance, and (iii) planful-problem solving. It also proposes a direct relationship between the mediating variable coping methods and the criterion variable flourishing. Finally, this model proposes that the direct relationship displayed in Figure 1 will be mediated by the three coping methods.

### Theoretical model



Figure 1. Direct Relationship

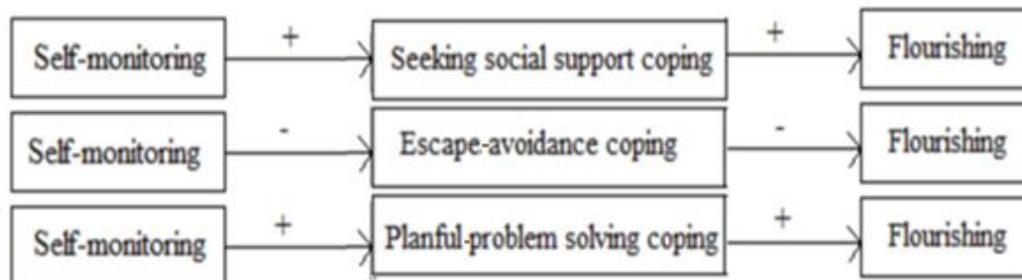


Figure 2. Mediating Relationship

### Direct Relationships

The following paragraphs discuss rationales associated to the theoretical model, providing explanations for the relationships proposed in this model and corresponding hypotheses.

#### **Self-monitoring as a predictor of flourishing.**

This study argues that self-monitoring will positively correlate with flourishing. This argument is based on the understanding that high self-monitoring individuals experience more positive outcomes and are therefore able to achieve greater esteem, a characteristic identified within the literature relating to

well-being (Dogan, Totan & Sapmaz, 2013). Thus, Figure 1 predicts a positive relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing.

**Hypothesis 1:** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with flourishing

**Self-monitoring as a predictor of seeking social support coping.**

This study argues that self-monitoring will positively correlate with seeking social support coping. The reasoning for this argument supports findings from Flynn, Chatman and Spataro (2001) who discovered high self-monitoring individuals are social. As seeking social support coping is a social method of coping, this study predicts there will be a positive correlation between self-monitoring and seeking social support coping. Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a positive relationship between self-monitoring and seeking social support coping.

**Hypothesis 2:** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with seeking social support coping

**Self-monitoring as a predictor of escape-avoidance coping.**

This study argues self-monitoring will negatively correlate with escape-avoidant coping. The reasoning behind this argument develops from the understanding that this form of coping has been found to positively relate to depression, high levels of psychological distress in careers, and negatively relate to positive outcomes (Baqtayan, 2015). As self-monitors have greater self-

observational power (Snyder, 1979), they will be able to recognise escape-avoidance coping is not related to positive outcomes and discontinue to use it. Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a negative relationship between self-monitoring and escape-avoidance coping.

**Hypothesis 3:** Self-monitoring will negatively correlate with escape-avoidance coping

### **Self-monitoring as a predictor of planful-problem solving coping.**

This study argues self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping. The reasoning for this argument supports findings from Snyder (1974) who found high self-monitoring individuals are good at learning and adapting. This study suggests because self-monitors are good learners and adapters they will recognise planful-problem solving is effective (Ryan, 2013) and favor this coping method. Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a positive relationship between high self-monitoring and planful-problem solving.

**Hypothesis 4:** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping

### **Seeking social support coping as a predictor of flourishing.**

This study argues seeking social support coping will positively correlate with flourishing. This argument is underpinned by the rationale that individuals who flourish, do so because they use seeking social support coping, which works as a

buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress, and is identified as an effective method of coping, offering daily protection against languishing (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a positive relationship between seeking social support coping and flourishing.

**Hypothesis 5:** Seeking social support will positively correlate with flourishing

**Escape-avoidance coping as a predictor of flourishing.**

This study argues escape-avoidance coping will negatively correlate with flourishing. The reasoning for this argument supports findings from Baqutayan (2015) who found escape-avoidance coping is associated with depression and negative outcomes. As flourishing is a sustainable state in relation to positive health outcomes (Blissett, 2011), the rationale that underpins the argument that escape-avoidance coping will negatively correlate with flourishing is that individuals using escape-avoidance coping will be languishing because they are unable to sustain positive health outcomes, and therefore, not be able to flourish because the method of coping they use is maladaptive. Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a negative relationship between escape-avoidance coping and flourishing.

**Hypothesis 6:** Escape-avoidance will negatively correlate with flourishing

**Planful-problem solving coping as a predictor of flourishing.**

This study argues planful-problem solving coping will positively correlate

with flourishing. The reasoning for this argument stems from findings which have identified individuals who use planful-problem solving methods of coping are more likely to experience positive organisational outcomes. Planful-problem solving coping has been identified as an effective method used to overcome languishing (Ryan, 2013). This study argues flourishing will result from using this effective coping method because it is associated to positive outcomes. Thus, Figure 2 (refer to page 10) predicts a positive relationship between planful problem solving and flourishing.

**Hypothesis 7:** Planful-problem solving will positively correlate with flourishing

### **Mediated Relationships**

The next three hypotheses relate to Figure 2 of the theoretical model (refer to page 10) and predict that the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing will be mediated by three types of coping; seeking social support, escape-avoidance, and planful problem solving.

#### **Seeking social support coping as a mediator.**

This study argues that seeking social support coping will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The reasoning for this argument is drawn from the understanding that flourishing is a positive outcome and seeking social support coping is a coping method used by self-monitors

to achieve this positive outcome. This reasoning supports findings from Folkman and Lazarus (1988) who have identified this method of coping as a buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress, and is an effective method of coping, offering daily protection against languishing. This reasoning also supports claims from Ryan (2013) who identifies seeking social support coping as an effective method of coping to achieve positive outcomes. Thus, as proposed in Figure 2 (refer to page 10), it is expected that

**Hypothesis 8:** Seeking social support will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing

**Escape-avoidance coping as a mediator.**

This study argues that escape-avoidance coping will negatively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. This argument is based on the understanding that escape-avoidance coping shows a positive association with career distress and depression (Baqtayan, 2015) related to organisational languishing. Therefore, self-monitors will not use this method of coping, allowing them to flourish because they are adaptive by nature (Synder, 1974). Thus, there will be a negatively mediated relationship, and as proposed in Figure 2 (refer to page 10) it is expected that

**Hypothesis 9:** Escape/avoidance will negatively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing



**Planful-problem solving coping as a mediator.**

This study argues planful-problem solving will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The reasoning for this argument stems from the understanding that planful-problem solving methods of coping result in a greater likelihood of experiencing career success (Baqtayan, 2015).

Furthermore, this method of coping has been identified as an effective method to overcome languishing (Ryan, 2013) and achieve positive outcomes (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), and supports findings from Synder (1974) who found high self-monitors more likely to use adaptive methods of coping. Thus, as predicted in Figure 2 (refer to page 10) it is expected that

**Hypothesis 10:** Planful-problem solving coping will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing

## Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Self-monitoring will positively correlate to flourishing

Hypothesis 2: Self-monitoring will positively correlate to seeking social support coping

Hypothesis 3: Self-monitoring will negatively correlate to escape-avoidance coping

Hypothesis 4: Self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping

Hypothesis 5: Seeking social support coping will positively correlate with flourishing

Hypothesis 6: Escape-avoidance will negatively correlate with flourishing

Hypothesis 7: Planful-problem solving will positively correlate with flourishing

Hypothesis 8: Seeking social support coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing

Hypothesis 9: Escape-avoidance coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing

Hypothesis 10: Planful-problem solving coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing

## CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

### Participants

Academic and non-academic staff (1568) at The University of Waikato received an email that contained an explanation concerning the nature of the study (Appendix A). There was a total of 221 responses, with a response rate of 14.09%. From these 221 responses, 202 were included in the study after data cleaning, as these respondents had completed more than 70% of the survey.

Table 1.  
*Demographics*

	N	%		
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	70	35.18		
Female	129	64.82		
Other	0			
TOTAL	199			
<b>Employment</b>				
Full-time	176	88.44		
Part-time	46	23.12		
TOTAL	199			
<b>Role</b>				
Academic	71	35.68		
General Staff	128	64.32		
TOTAL	199			
<b>Ethnicity (multiple choice)</b>				
European/ Pakeha	163	81.91		
Māori	23	11.56		
Asian	4	2.01		
Pacific peoples	4	2.01		
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	0	0.00		
Other Ethnicity	19	9.55		
TOTAL	213			
	N	Range	Mean	SD
Age	199	23-72	46.49	11.76

## **Procedure**

This study received ethical approval by the Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology at the University of Waikato. The Head of Human Resources at the University of Waikato, responsible for distribution of the survey, was personally approached and further communication was made via email. This official was informed about the nature of the study and from here an email (which contained a link to online survey) was forwarded to all university staff (see Appendix A). Participants who showed interest in this study continued (see Appendix B) via a webpage link included in the initial email.

The email sent to employees provided vital information regarding the nature of the study. This information informed employees of what the research was investigating along with information concerning how responses were going to be analysed. It also described how responses would be fully confidential and anonymous.

As a means of encouraging employees to participate, they were informed they could receive a summary of results obtained upon completion of the research. Employees were given two weeks to complete the survey from the time it was sent to them. After the two-week deadline had been reached, 221 employees had participated. No further responses were completed after this time.

## Measures

Data were gathered and collected through an anonymous survey questionnaire (see Appendix C) that included 41 items in total. Variables measured were; self-monitoring, seeking social support coping, escape-avoidance coping, planful-problem solving coping, and flourishing. The online survey (via Qualtrics) was developed and circulated via email to make it convenient for participants, thus encouraging them to participate. Responses were recorded on scales measuring the extent participants agreed with the statement.

### **Questionnaire part A: Self-monitoring.**

The measure used to assess self-monitoring was the Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) 13-item revised Self-Monitoring Scale (RSMS). Example items were, "*I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes*" and "*If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression*". During the analysis it was discovered that Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) 13-item scale had not been accurately replicated, and for this reason changes had to be made to data through the process of recoding to ensure that it would more closely measure what the original scale was measuring, and so analysis was possible. The original scale to measure high self-monitoring included a scale anchored; 5= *certainly, always true*; 4= *generally true*; 3= *somewhat true but with exception*; 2= *somewhat false, but with exception*; 1= *generally false*; 0= *certainly, always false* and

scores were reversed for questions four and six (negatively worded). In the questionnaire sent to participants in this study, the scaling was; 6= generally false; 5= somewhat false, but with exception; 4= somewhat true, but with exception; 3= generally true; 2= always true; 1= certainly. To correct the format error, it was decided that all scores of 2 (always true) would be recoded as, and combined with, scores of 1 (certainly), and each other point on the scale recoded as one number lower. Lastly, all items, apart from four and six, were reversed scored to achieve alignment with Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) study.

### **Questionnaire part B: Coping.**

The first version of Ways of Coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) contained 68 items that were derived from the theoretical framework outlined by Lazarus and his colleagues (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). For this study 14-items were used for the three coping strategies (seeking social support, escape-avoidance and planful problem solving) being investigated in this study.

Six items measured seeking social support coping, such as “*I talked to someone to find out more about the situation*” and “*I accepted sympathy and understanding from someone*”. Each response was measured on a scale anchored with 1= *not used* to 4 = *used a great deal*.

Eight items measured escape-avoidance coping, such as “*I hope for a miracle*” and “*I slept more than usual*”. Each response was measured on a scale anchored with 1= *not used* to 4 = *used a great deal*.

Six items measured planful-problem solving coping, such as “*I just concentrated on what I had to do next- the next step*” and “*I made a plan of action and followed it*”. Each response was measured on a scale anchored with 1= *not used* to 4 = *used a great deal*.

### **Questionnaire part C: Flourishing.**

Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, and Biswas-Diener (2010) developed the eight-item Flourishing Scale to measure social-psychological prosperity. Eight items measured flourishing, such as, “*I lead a purposeful and meaningful life*” and “*My social relationships are supportive and rewarding*”. Each item response was measured on a scale anchored with 1= *Strongly agree* to 7= *Strongly disagree*. However, these flourishing scores were reversed and re-coded to make sure that high scores were equal to high flourishing and low scores were equal to low flourishing.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS**

This chapter describes the findings of this study from the following analyses: reliability, factor analyses; descriptive statistics; correlations of all major variables; and finally, mediation analyses to test mediated relationships proposed in the theoretical model.

### **Data analysis**

Data cleaning was the first process that took place. Data remained in the study if a participant had completed 70% of the survey; if not all data from that participant were removed, resulting in the removal of the data for 19 participants. Re-coding and reverse coding of section A (self-monitoring) and section C (flourishing) was completed.

### **Reliability, Skewness, and Kurtosis**

An analysis was conducted to measure reliability and the internal consistency of the different scales used within the study. Scale values that produced a Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher were deemed as reliable (Field, 2013). Kurtosis and skewness within the distribution were examined. Kurtosis provided information relating to the shape of the distribution while skewness measured the symmetry of distribution. Kline's (2011) recommendations include kurtosis values between -8 and +8 and skewness values between -3 and +3 are considered acceptable for moving forward with further analyses without the need to conduct transformations.



## Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA), using the principal axis factoring extraction method, accompanied with direct oblimin and scree test as the rotation method, was used to determine the factor structure underlying all variables; self-monitoring, social support coping, escape-avoidance coping, planful-problem solving coping and flourishing, to ensure that they were sound and to determine the number of latent factors for each. The minimum threshold for significant factor loadings was set at .40 (Field, 2013)

**Self-monitoring.** An EFA on self-monitoring extracted three factors with an eigenvalue  $>1$ , factor one (4.99), factor two (2.25) and factor three (1.03) (see Appendix D, Figure 1).

*Sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others (factor one).* This factor accounted for 34.83% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all six items were significant and ranged from .63 to .82. The Cronbach's alpha was (.87).

*Readiness to change (factor two).* This factor accounted for 13.76% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all five items were significant and ranged from .67 to .73. The Cronbach's alpha was (.83).

*Resistance to change (factor three).* This factor accounted for 4.34% of the total variance. The factor loadings for both items were .72. The Cronbach's alpha was (.68).

**Social support seeking coping.** An EFA on social support seeking coping

extracted two factors with an eigenvalue  $>1.$ , factor one (2.56) and factor two (29).

This was verified within the associated scree plot (see Appendix D, Figure 2).

*Social emotion coping (factor one).* This factor accounted for 34.47% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all three items were significant and ranged from .60 to .83. The Cronbach's alpha was (.72).

*Social knowledge coping (factor two).* This factor accounted for 12.96% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all three items were significant and ranged from .49 to .79. The Cronbach's alpha was (.66).

**Escape-avoidance coping.** An EFA on escape-avoidance coping extracted two factors with an eigenvalue  $>1.$ , factor one (3.18) and factor two (1.03). Factor one extracted accounted for 33.15% of the total variance and factor two extracted for 5.74% of the total variance. However, the scree plot (see Appendix D, Figure 3) suggests there is only one substantial factor. In addition, the two factors obtained were inter-correlated ( $r=.65$ ), suggesting considerable overlap between the two factors. Thus, the analysis was re-run and one factor was specified in the extraction phase. Two items (*I slept more than usual* and *I refused to believe it had happened*) fell below the minimum factor loading threshold of .40, so they were removed. The remaining six factor loading items were significant and ranged from .57 to .72. The Cronbach's alpha was (.79).

**Planful problem solving coping.** An EFA on planful problem solving coping extracted one factor with an eigenvalue  $> 1.$ , (3.46), that was verified within the associated scree plot (see Appendix D, Figure 4). The factor extracted accounted for

49.60% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all six items were significant and ranged from .60 to .80. EFA concluded that a single factor underlined the social knowledge coping factor used in this study. The Cronbach's alpha was (.85).

**Flourishing.** An EFA on planful problem solving coping extracted one factor with an eigenvalue  $> 1.$ , (4.70), that was verified within the associated scree plot (see Appendix D, Figure 5). The factor extracted accounted for 52.91% of the total variance. The factor loadings for all eight items were significant and ranged from .64 to .76. EFA concluded that a single factor underlined the social knowledge coping factor used in this study. The Cronbach's alpha was (.90).

## Descriptive Statistics

Table 2.

### *Descriptive statistics*

	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
SEBO	20.48	4.65	-.51	.62
Readiness to change	26.50	4.52	-.46	-.05
Resistance to change	8.0	1.73	-.75	-.07
Social emotion coping	7.32	2.29	.09	-.60
Social knowledge coping	6.34	2.07	.42	-.29
Escape avoidance coping	10.30	3.64	13	1.06
Planful-problem focused coping	14.83	4.25	.23	-.49
Flourishing	46.04	6.75	-1.08	2.02

*Note.* SEBO= Sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others

Ratings for impression management and sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, were made on a scale 1-6.

Ratings for social emotion focused coping, social knowledge seeking coping, escape avoidance coping and planful-problem focused coping, were made on a scale 1-4.

Ratings for flourishing were made on a scale 1-7.

## Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Product-Moment correlation was conducted to assess the strength of association between key variables under investigation in this study.

Table 3 presents Pearson Product-Movement correlation coefficients between all major variables. Significance levels of  $p < .01$  and  $p < .05$  are identified.

Table 3.

<i>Construct</i>	RSTC	RDTC	SEBO	SE	SK	EA	PP	FL
RSTC	--							
RDTC	.72**	--						
SEBO	.09	.38**	--					
SE	.00	.07	.14	--				
SK	.09	.18	.19**	.32**	--			
EA	-.15*	-.07	.04	.09	.02	--		
PP	.08	.23**	.21**	.05	.23**	-.15	--	
FL	.19**	.29**	.05	.12	.13	-.36**	.24**	--

*Note.* RSTC= Resistance to change; RDTC=Readiness to change; SEBO= Sensitivity to expressive behaviour of others; SE= Social Emotion Coping; SK= Social Knowledge Coping; EA= Escape Avoidance Coping; PP= Planful-Problem Focused Coping; F= Flourishing.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## Direct relationships

**Hypothesis 1.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with flourishing. The first prediction (Figure 1, p. 10) was that self-monitoring would be positively related to flourishing. The EFA of self-monitoring discovered three significant factors; sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others (SEBO), readiness

to change (RDTC), and resistance to change (RSTC). Factor one (SEBO) did not significantly correlate with flourishing ( $r = .05$ ), whereas factor two (RDTC) ( $r = .29^{**}$ ) and factor three (RSTC) ( $r = .19^{**}$ ) were significantly correlated with flourishing. Therefore, the hypothesis that self-monitoring will positively correlate to flourishing was partially supported.

**Hypothesis 2.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with seeking social support coping. The second prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) was that self-monitoring would positively relate with seeking social support coping. The EFA of seeking social support coping indicated that there are two significant factors, social emotion coping (SE) and social knowledge coping (SK). The seeking social support coping factor (SE) had no significant relationship with any self-monitoring factor (Table 3, p. 27). However, seeking social support coping factor two (SK) had a positive relationship with self-monitoring factor one (SEBO) ( $r = .19^{**}$ ) (Table 3, p. 27). Therefore, the hypothesis that self-monitoring will positively correlate to seeking social support coping was partially supported.

**Hypothesis 3.** Self-monitoring will negatively correlate with escape-avoidance coping. The third prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) of the theoretical model was a negative relationship between self-monitoring and escape-avoidance coping. There was only one significant negative relationship between self-monitoring and escape-avoidance coping and this was self-monitoring factor three (RSTC) ( $r = -.15^*$ ). The remaining self-monitoring factors indicated no significance (Table 3, p. 27). Therefore, the hypothesis that self-monitoring will negatively correlate with escape-

avoidance coping was partially supported.

**Hypothesis 4.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping. The fourth prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) of the theoretical model was a positive relationship between self-monitoring and planful-problem solving coping. This prediction was partially supported, as self-monitoring factor one (SEBO) ( $r=.21^{**}$ ), and factor two (RDTC) ( $r=.23^{**}$ ), had significant positive relationships (Table 3, p. 27). Therefore, the hypothesis that self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping was partially supported.

**Hypothesis 5.** Seeking social support coping will positively correlate with flourishing. The fifth prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) of the theoretical model was that seeking social support coping would have a direct significant positive relationship with flourishing. Neither social support seeking coping factor showed significance in the relationship with flourishing. Therefore, the hypothesis that seeking social support coping will positively correlate with flourishing was not supported.

**Hypothesis 6.** Escape-avoidance coping will negatively correlate with flourishing. The sixth prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) of the theoretical model, was that escape-avoidance coping would have a significant negative relationship with flourishing. This prediction was supported ( $r= -.36^{**}$ ) ( $p<.01$ ) (Table 3, p. 27). Therefore, the hypothesis that escape-avoidance will negatively correlate with flourishing was fully supported.

**Hypothesis 7.** Planful-problem solving will positively correlate with flourishing. The seventh prediction (Figure 2, p. 10) of the theoretical model was

that planful-problem solving would have a direct significant positive relationship with flourishing. This prediction was supported ( $r = .24^{**}$ ) ( $p < .01$ ) (Table 3, p. 27).

Therefore, the hypothesis that planful-problem solving will positively correlate with flourishing was fully supported.

### **Mediated Relationships**

Regression analyses were conducted to test the mediated relationship proposed in Figure 2 of the theoretical model, using a three-step approach by Baron and Kenny (1986). In this approach three regression equations are used. In the first equation, the mediating variable is regressed onto the predictor variable. The second equation involves regressing the criterion variable onto the predictor variable. The final equation involves regressing the criterion variable onto both the mediator and predictor variables simultaneously.

To conclude that mediation has occurred the following criteria were applied. First, relationships within equation one and two had to be significant. Secondly, the third equation, both the mediating and criterion variable must be significantly related. In equation three the relationship between both the predictor and criterion variable must indicate a significantly weaker relationship than in the second equation. For full mediation to have occurred, the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable becomes non-significant in the third equation. Partial mediation can be said to have occurred if the relationship between these two variables indicates a reduction but remains significant within the third equation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the case

of each mediated relationship explored, a Sobel test was carried out to test for the significance of the mediation effect.

**Hypothesis 8.** Seeking social support coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The first prediction within Figure 2 (p. 10) of the theoretical model, was that seeking social support coping would indicate a significant and positively mediated relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. As there were three factors discovered within self-monitoring and two within seeking social support coping, six mediation tests were run but none were significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that seeking social support coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, was not supported (refer Tables 4-9, pp. 31-34).

Table 4.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social emotion coping as a mediator of the relationship between resistance to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SE	RSTC	.00	.02	.99	.00
2	FL	RSTC	.19	2.76	.02	.04
3	FL	RSTC	.19	2.77	.01	
		SE	.12	1.77	.08	.05
Sobel test $z = 0.20, < .84$						

Note. RSTC = Resistance to Change, SE = Social Emotion Coping, and FL = Flourishing



Table 5.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social emotion coping as a mediator of the relationship between readiness to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SE	RDTC	.07	1.00	.32	.01
2	FL	RDTC	.29	4.32	.00	.09
3	FL	RDTC	.29	4.22	.00	
		SE	.10	1.51	.13	.10

Sobel test  $z = 0.83 < .40$

Note. RDTC = Readiness to Change, SE = Social Emotion Coping, and FL = Flourishing

Table 6.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social emotion coping as a mediator of the relationship between sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SE	SEBO	.14	1.94	.05	.02
2	FL	SEBO	.05	.64	.52	.00
3	FL	SEBO	.03	.41	.68	
		SE	.12	1.70	.10	.02

Sobel test  $z = 28, p < .20$

Note. SEBO = Sensitivity to Expressive Behaviour of Others, SE= Social Emotion Coping and FL = Flourishing

Table 7.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social knowledge coping as a mediator of the relationship between resistance to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SK	RSTC	.09	22	.22	.01
2	FL	RSTC	.19	2.76	.01	.04
3	FL	RSTC	.18	2.62	.01	
		SK	.12	1.67	.10	.05

Sobel test  $z = 0.99, p < .32$

Note. RSTC = Resistance to Change, SK = Social Knowledge Coping and FL = Flourishing

Table 8.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social knowledge coping as a mediator of the relationship between readiness to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SK	RDTC	.18	2.61	.01	.03
2	FL	RDTC	.29	4.32	.00	.09
3	FL	RDTC	.28	4.04	.00	
		SK	.08	18	.24	.09

Sobel test  $z = 1.08, p < .28$

Note. RDTC = Readiness to Change, SK = Social Knowledge Coping and FL = Flourishing

Table 9.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 8: Social knowledge coping as a mediator of the relationship between sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	SK	SEBO	.19	2.74	.01	.04
2	FL	SEBO	.05	.64	.52	.00
3	FL	SEBO	.02	.29	.77	
		SK	.13	1.78	.08	.02

Sobel test  $z = 1.49, p < .14$

Note. SEBO = Sensitivity to Expressive Behaviour of Others, SK = Social Knowledge Coping and FL = Flourishing

**Hypothesis 9.** Escape-Avoidance coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The second prediction within Figure 2 (p. 10) of the theoretical model, predicted escape-avoidance coping would negatively mediate relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. To test this hypothesis three mediation tests were run (refer Tables 10-12, pp. 35-36), with only one indicating that mediation had taken place ( $z = 1.94$ ) (Table 10). Therefore, the hypothesis that escape-avoidance coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, was partially supported.

Table 10.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 9: Escape-avoidance coping as a mediator of the relationship between resistance to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	EA	RSTC	-.15	-2.12	.04	.02
2	FL	RSTC	.19	2.76	.01	.04
3	FL	RSTC	.14	2.16	.03	
		EA	-.33	-4.84	.00	.14

Sobel test  $z = 1.94, p < .05$

*Note.* RSTC = Resistance to Change, EA = Escape/avoidance coping, and FL = Flourishing

Table 11.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 9: Escape-avoidance coping as a mediator of the relationship between readiness to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	EA	RDTC	-.07	-.97	.33	.01
2	FL	RDTC	.29	4.32	.00	.09
3	FL	RDTC	.27	4.18	.00	
		EA	-.32	-5.04	.00	.19

Sobel test  $z = .95, p < .34$

*Note.* RDTC = Readiness to Change, EA = Escape/avoidance coping, and FL = Flourishing

Table 12.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 9: Escape-avoidance coping as a Mediator of the relationship between sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	EA	SEBO	.04	.57	.57	.00
2	FL	SEBO	.05	.64	.52	.00
3	FL	SEBO	.06	.86	.32	
		EA	-.35	-5.19	.00	.12

Sobel test  $z = .57, p < .57$

Note. SEBO = Sensitivity to Expressive Behaviour of Others, PP = Planful Problem Solving Coping, and FL = Flourishing

**Hypothesis 10.** Planful-problem solving coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The last prediction within Figure 2 (p. 10) of the theoretical model, explored the prediction that planful problem solving would positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. This prediction was partially supported by (Table 14, p. 38) ( $z = 2.07$ ), and (Table 15, p. 38) ( $z = 2.23$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis that planful-problem solving coping will mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, was partially supported.

Table 13.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 10: Planful problem solving coping as a mediator of the relationship between resistance to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	PP	RSTC	.08	11	.27	.01
2	FL	RSTC	.19	2.76	.01	.04
3	FL	RSTC	.18	2.56	.01	
		PP	.22	3.28	.00	.09

Sobel test  $z = 1.05, p < .29$

*Note.* RSTC= Resistance to Change, PP = Planful Problem Solving Coping, and FL = Flourishing

Table 14.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 10: Planful problem solving coping as a mediator of the relationship between readiness to change and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	PP	RDTC	.23	3.37	.00	.05
2	FL	RDTC	.29	4.32	.00	.09
3	FL	RDTC	.25	3.68	.00	
		PP	.18	2.63	.01	.12

Sobel test  $z = 2.07, p < .04$

*Note.* RDTC= Readiness to Change, PP = Planful Problem Solving Coping, and FL = Flourishing

Table 15.

*Mediated Regression Testing – Hypothesis 10: Planful problem solving coping as a mediator of the relationship between sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others and flourishing*

Equation	Criterion	Predictor	Beta	t	P	R <sup>2</sup>
1	PP	SEBO	.21	2.97	.00	.04
2	FL	SEBO	.05	.64	.52	.00
3	FL	SEBO	-.00	-.04	.96	
		PP	.24	3.37	.00	.06

Sobel test  $z = 2.23$ ,  $p < .03$

*Note.* SEBO = Sensitivity to Expressive Behaviour of Others, PP = Planful Problem Solving Coping, and FL = Flourishing

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

The theoretical model proposed in this study consisted of two parts (refer to page 10). Figure 1 focused on investigating the direct nature of the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. Figure 2 focused on investigating the direct relationship between self-monitoring and coping methods; (i) social support, (ii) escape-avoidance and (iii) planful-problem solving, the direct relationship of coping methods and flourishing, and finally, the mediating influence of these coping methods within the direct relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing, that is, how self-monitoring may indirectly influence flourishing through coping methods.

### Goals

Leone (2006) has identified that there has been "little, if any, attention paid to potential relationships between self-monitoring and phenomena of longstanding interest in industrial/ organisational psychology" (p. 649). Thus, the first goal of the present study was to investigate self-monitoring and the direct relationship this variable has with the positive psychological state, flourishing. It was discovered that there exist significant direct relationships between two of the three factors of self-monitoring and flourishing. The second goal was to challenge findings from Day and Schleicher (2006) who suggested high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to experience languishing. This goal was also accomplished. It was discovered that high self-monitors use effective coping to flourish, supporting findings from Leone (2006),



who suggested high self-monitoring individuals are less likely to languish.

## **Research findings**

**Hypothesis 1.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with flourishing. The first hypothesis was partially supported. Self-monitoring was discovered to have three factors (sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, readiness to change and resistance to change). The first factor, sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, was the only factor that did not show a significant positive relationship with flourishing. The rationale that high self-monitoring individuals will flourish because they experience more positive outcomes and achieve greater esteem, was supported. This supported findings from Dogan, Totan and Sapmaz (2013) who identify esteem as a characteristic related to well-being. A reason for the third self-monitoring factor not relating positively to flourishing is because of its covert nature, rather than being an outward action, it is an internal process. This suggests that regardless of whether an individual is sensitive to the expressive behaviour of others, unless they change their behavior overtly, they will not be able to flourish. An implication for the partial support of this hypothesis suggests individuals who are sensitive to the expressive behaviour of others and readily change their behaviour accordingly, will flourish the most significantly.

**Hypothesis 2.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with seeking social support coping. The second hypothesis was partially supported. Through

investigation of all factors it was discovered that a significant relationship did exist between factor one of self-monitoring, sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, and factor two of seeking social support coping, social knowledge coping. Therefore, there was only partial support for the argument that self-monitoring will positively correlate with seeking social support coping. Findings from Flynn, Chatman and Spataro (2001), who identify self-monitoring individuals as social, are supported. This finding may be the result of a social component within self-monitoring which enables self-monitors to use coping methods that involve social interaction. An implication that can be taken from this finding is that within the two seeking social support coping factors, the social knowledge coping factor is more effective to achieve flourishing. This would suggest that social knowledge coping contains more problem focused components, allowing more effective coping, consistent with findings from Ryan (2013) who reported that emotion focused methods of coping are not as effective as other forms of coping.

**Hypothesis 3.** Self-monitoring will negatively correlate with escape-avoidance coping. The third hypothesis was partially supported. There is partial support for the prediction that self-monitoring is negatively associated with escape-avoidance coping, as there was a significant relationship between factor three of self-monitoring, resistance to change and escape-avoidance coping. Findings from Baqutayan (2015), who suggested that escape-avoidant coping is related to high levels of psychological distress in careers and is negatively associated to positive outcomes,

were supported. Findings from Snyder (1979), who attributes self-monitors with greater self-observational power, were supported. The rationale that because self-monitors exhibit greater self-observation power they will be able to recognise that escape-avoidance coping is not related to positive outcomes and discontinue to use it, was supported. A reason for the hypothesis only being partially supported may be because self-monitors adapt in ways considered to be more socially appropriate, and although escape-avoidance coping is identified as maladaptive, this is dependent on context. If an organisation was built on escape-avoidance coping methods identified by Ryan (2013) as maladaptive, it may not be considered maladaptive by self-monitors to engage in such coping behaviour. This would be consistent with findings from Snyder (1974) who identified how self-monitors are known to adapt in ways considered more socially appropriate. An implication of this finding supports the idea that self-monitors are likely to participate in coping methods consistent with an organisations culture, to be socially accepted.

**Hypothesis 4.** Self-monitoring will positively correlate with planful-problem solving coping. The fourth hypothesis was partially supported. The hypothesis that there exists a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring and planful-problem solving coping was confirmed within findings which indicated a positive correlation between self-monitoring factor one, sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, and factor two, readiness to change and planful-problem solving coping. The rationale that self-monitors are good at learning and adapting and will

therefore be able to recognise planful-problem solving is effective, and favor this coping method, was supported. Findings from Synder (1974), who identifies self-monitors as good learners and adapters, were supported, as were findings from Ryan (2013) who identifies planful-problem solving as an adaptive method of coping. These findings suggest self-monitoring is concerned with an individual's ability to adapt within a given environment and planful-problem solving presents a capacity for individuals to flourish and adapt to their work environment effectively. An implication of these findings promotes the idea that flourishing can be achieved using planful problem solving coping methods.

**Hypothesis 5.** Seeking social support will positively correlate with flourishing. The fifth hypothesis was not supported. Neither seeking social support coping (social emotion coping and social knowledge coping) related positively to flourishing. The rationale that individuals who flourish do so because they use seeking social support coping because it works as a buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress, was not supported. Findings from Folkman and Lazarus (1988) who identify seeking social support as an effective method of coping, offering daily protection against negative outcomes related to languishing, were not supported. A reason for this finding is because there is more than one method of coping to achieve flourishing. This finding suggests that by using the coping method seeking social support, an individual is not guaranteed to flourish because this method of coping is not effective enough to overcome sources of stress. An

implication of this finding is how seeking social support coping alone is not an effective enough tool to achieve flourishing because it does not eliminate sources of languishing. This study suggests a partnership of seeking social support coping and planful-problem solving methods of coping would result in a greater likelihood of flourishing.

**Hypothesis 6.** Escape-avoidance will negatively correlate with flourishing.

The sixth hypothesis was supported. A significant negative relationship was discovered, supporting the argument that escape-avoidance coping will negatively correlate with flourishing because individuals who use escape-avoidance coping will be languishing, as they are unable to sustain positive health outcomes. Baqtayan's (2015) findings that escape-avoidance coping is associated with depression and negative outcomes, and findings from Blissett (2011) who identified flourishing as a sustainable state in relation to positive health outcomes, were supported. A potential reason for this finding is the idea that escape-avoidance coping does not enable an individual to overcome or eliminate the source of languishing, it only avoids this source, only to have it return, not alleviating the problem in the long term. Findings from Ryan (2013) identified this method of coping as maladaptive, which is supported. The findings from this study suggest using planful methods of coping to overcome and/or eliminate sources of languishing, result in a higher chance of achieving flourishing.

**Hypothesis 7.** Planful-problem solving will positively correlate with flourishing. The seventh hypothesis was supported. Findings indicated the existence of a significant positive relationship between planful-problem solving coping and flourishing, supporting the reasoning that individuals who use planful-problem solving methods of coping are more likely to experience positive organisational outcomes. These findings also support Ryan (2013) who suggested planful-problem solving coping is an effective method to overcome languishing. This finding may result from stress sources related to languishing being overcome by a method of coping which effectively reduces/eliminates it, and not having it return in the future. This finding suggests it is important to deal with sources of stress directly through effective methods of coping so an individual can flourish.

**Hypothesis 8.** Seeking social support will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The eighth hypothesis was not supported as no self-monitoring factor significantly mediated the relationship between either seeking social support coping factor. Seeking social support coping does not positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The reasoning that flourishing is a positive outcome, and seeking social support coping is a coping method used by self-monitors to achieve this positive outcome, was not supported. Findings from Folkman and Lazarus (1988), who identified seeking social support coping as a buffer against the physiological and psychological effects of stress, were not supported. The rationale that this method of coping is effective,

offering daily protection against languishing, was not supported, and neither was the claim from Ryan (2013) suggesting positive outcomes result from seeking social support coping. A reason for this finding is the view that seeking social support coping alone does not ensure flourishing. This finding suggests that for self-monitors to achieve flourishing, they must not use seeking social support coping methods alone, and that more problem focused methods of coping are required.

**Hypothesis 9.** Escape-avoidance will negatively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The ninth hypothesis was partially supported. Escape-avoidance coping negatively mediated the relationship between self-monitoring factor three, resistance to change and flourishing. These findings were consistent with findings from Baqutayan (2015) who discovered escape-avoidance coping to be positively associated with characteristics of languishing such as career distress and depression. These findings also support previous findings from Synder (1974) who discovered high self-monitors use adaptive coping methods because they are adaptive by nature. These findings suggest that self-monitors may not always consider escape-avoidance coping to be maladaptive. These findings support the rationale that escape-avoidance coping could be a means of achieving flourishing if this form of coping was interpreted as situationally appropriate by self-monitors. Furthermore, if escape-avoidance methods of coping were part of an organisations coping culture, a self-monitoring individual may participate in this form of coping to be accepted, enabling them to flourish.

**Hypothesis 10.** Planful-problem solving coping will positively mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. The final hypothesis was partially supported. This supports the rationale that self-monitoring is a method to achieve flourishing and that self-monitoring individuals use planful-problem solving coping to achieve flourishing because it is adaptive. This supports Baqutayan (2015) who identifies planful-problem solving as a method of coping which results in a greater likelihood of experiencing career success, and partially supports findings by Ryan (2013) who identifies planful-problem solving coping as an effective method to overcome languishing, and achieve positive outcomes. Findings from Synder (1974) who discovered that high self-monitors are more likely to use adaptive methods of coping, were also supported. These findings suggest that planful problem solving is a very effective method to achieve flourishing, and are consistent with discoveries from Folkman and Lazarus (1985) who identify problem focused methods of coping, such as planful-problem solving coping, as a very effective method to overcome sources of stress. An implication of this finding is how flourishing can be achieved through planful-problem solving coping methods alone, and how self-monitoring increases flourishing.

### **Additional findings**

Aspects of the present study have supported claims offered by Seligman (2000) who investigated the link between the self and well-being and coined the phrase “positive psychology”, and claimed that the study of this concept can make



'normal' people "stronger and more productive" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 8). The present study further supported statements from Fredrickson (2005) who refers to the term flourishing as optimal human functioning, within the field of positive psychology. The hypotheses within this present study that predicted high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to flourish, due to more effective coping methods, were partially supported. The findings from the mediation analysis in hypothesis nine and ten were partially supported, supporting claims that high self-monitoring individuals are more likely to experience flourishing because they use effective methods of coping to overcome sources of stress. They also supported findings from Folkman and Lazarus (1985) who recognise planful-problem solving as adaptive and escape-avoidance as maladaptive methods of coping.

## **Practical Implications**

This research fulfilled its purpose to understand New Zealand tertiary employee's personal perceptions of self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing behaviour. It also provides employers, researchers, and others interested in these topics with relevant findings and analysis of these topics and related factors that are acknowledged to contribute to individual well-being and organisational success.

This present study accomplished the research objective; to contribute to existing positive psychology knowledge, defined in this present study as "the application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance

improvement in the workplace” (Luthans & Church, 2002, p.59). The present study was interested in flourishing because in recent years flourishing research has contributed to greater workplace productivity (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), and has been identified as a gold standard measure of well-being (Seligman, 2011; Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012).

### **Further implications**

The practical implications drawn from this research could help to create a competitive edge, and sustain a competitive advantage, through the development of interventions and workshops related to self-monitoring and coping. Interventions focusing on awareness of what aspects of self-monitoring positively relate to flourishing, as well as what coping methods are positively related to flourishing, are important because they could help employees understand how to flourish. Memari, Valikhani, Aghababae and Davali (2013) consider positive organisational behavior to be a competitive advantage. Furthermore, they discuss how relying on variables related to positive psychology contribute to the promotion of social and human capital and improved organisational performance. Thus, the present research highlights significant implications for employers and managers. The first implication is how aspects of self-monitoring do contribute to flourishing. The second implication is how methods of coping do contribute to flourishing. What this means for organisations is a great number of positive results can be achieved if management, owners, and stakeholders invested resources into these relevant aspects of employee

development. The present research demonstrates how organisational change, development, and transformation can result from changing and developing aspects of self, particularly employee's readiness to change. Individuals who need support with stress related workplace issues can benefit from this research through awareness of what self-monitoring behaviors and coping methods help overcome languishing and enable flourishing. The coping method planful-problem solving showed much potential as an effective method of coping due to its significant relationship with flourishing, and the significant mediating role it played between two of the three self-monitoring factors and flourishing.

### **Future Research Directions**

This research can be applied to the promotion of workplace flourishing. Through investigation of self-monitoring, coping, and flourishing this research allows many opportunities and possibilities for future study and developing organisations. It can contribute to a wide range of work related issues to promote productivity and growth. Workplaces can benefit through this research as it demonstrates how by increasing employee self-monitoring and focusing on effective coping methods, flourishing can be increased, particularly through promotion of the coping method, planful-problem solving.

This present study suggests and supports the argument that by developing self-monitoring an employee can produce positive outcomes through optimism, resulting in effective coping in response to stressors that enable flourishing. The

coping aspect within this present study suggests significant positive implications for employees struggling to flourish, demonstrated in the positive mediating relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing.

A future direction following this study may involve more thorough examination of the readiness and resistance to change factors of self-monitoring, more specifically, what are the reasons employees would be ready or resistant to change themselves (i.e. appearance, behaviour) and how do these changes relate to flourishing, well-being, and job performance? Furthermore, greater attention could be paid to the reasons why factor one of self-monitoring (sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others) did not share a significant relationship with flourishing. Was this due to the overt and covert nature of the self-monitor factors? This could be an interesting area for future research.

## **Limitations**

There exist several limitations in the present study. First, all data were obtained through a self-report method, therefore responses may have been influenced partially by common method of variance. Furthermore, as demonstrated within the results chapter, there were negative skews obtained for four variables, suggesting self-report as a measure may have elevated responses. However, the nature of all constructs required self-report measures.

Second, the individual responsible for distribution of the survey noted that all Waikato University employees were forwarded an email containing the link to the

study. However, the supervisors of this thesis noted they did not receive an email, causing ambiguity regarding number of emails sent.

Third, it was demonstrated within the demographics section that a very large percentage of participants were of European decent, calling into question the generalizability of the findings to other ethnic groups.

Fourth, only two items went into constructing factor three of self-monitoring (resistance to change). This is a limitation because generally three items are required. Thus, a higher  $r$  value was obtained when a Pearson correlation was run between all the variables.

Fifth, Cronbach's alpha loadings of self-monitoring factor three, resistance to change, and seeking social support coping factor two, social knowledge seeking coping, did not meet the Field (2013) minimum internal consistency threshold of .70. However, as the factor analyses produced these factors, they were retained even though the reliability was not ideal.

Lastly, due to the quantitative nature of the study, it is difficult to determine what individual differences may have influenced these outcomes, which a more qualitative analysis may have determined.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the present study found that factors of self-monitoring were significantly related to coping methods and flourishing. The self-monitoring factor

two, readiness to change, was significantly related to planful-problem solving coping and flourishing. Self-monitoring factor one, sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, was significantly related to the seeking social support coping factor two, social knowledge seeking coping and planful-problem focused coping. Also, a direct and significant positive relationship was discovered between the coping methods; social support seeking, planful-problem solving, and flourishing. Furthermore, a significant negative relationship between escape-avoidance coping and flourishing, was discovered. Findings also indicated that planful-problem solving coping positively mediates the relationship between self-monitoring and flourishing. A significant and positive relationship was found between planful-problem solving coping and self-monitoring factor one, sensitivity to the expressive behaviour of others, and factor two, readiness to change and flourishing. The rationale that high self-monitors are more likely to flourish because they use effective coping methods, was supported.

In terms of practical implications and further research, it would be valuable to focus more specifically on the potential of self-monitoring factor two, readiness to change, as it indicated the most potential as a variable relating to the reduction of languishing. Furthermore, the significant findings between coping methods and flourishing, specifically planful-problem solving and escape-avoidance coping, are practical implications beneficial to researchers and organisations. This research demonstrates how through development of employee's coping strategies more effective, productive, efficient, and positive workplaces can result. Workshops

focusing on effective coping methods to help employees achieve flourishing, contributing to a more positive and productive organisation, is a practical implication of this research for researchers, organisations, owners, and managers.

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## APPENDIX A

Dear Waikato University Employees

My name is Danielle Smith and I am working on my Master's thesis in Psychology, here at Waikato, supervised by Professor Michael O'Driscoll and Dr. Maree Roche from the School of Psychology. I would be very grateful if you would participate in my survey. This will take 10 minutes; the survey is interested in wellbeing and answering the question 'Does changing your behaviour increase wellbeing at work?' Through participation in this study, you not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerned with developing healthy workplaces, but you also help me complete my Masters project. This project has received ethical approval from the School of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please click the link below to get started and for more information:

<http://psychology.waikato.ac.nz/wellbeing.html>

It would be appreciated if you can complete the questionnaire and submit it by Monday the 2nd of May 2016.

Thank you very much for your time.

Danielle

## **APPENDIX B**

Dear Waikato University Employees

My name is Danielle Smith and I am working on my Master's thesis in Psychology, here at Waikato, supervised by Professor Michael O'Driscoll and Dr. Maree Roche from the School of Psychology. I would be very grateful if you would participate in my survey. This will take 10 minutes; the survey is interested in wellbeing and answering the question 'Does changing your behaviour increase well-being at work?' Through participation in this study, you not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerned with developing healthy workplaces, but you also help me complete my Masters project.

### **Ethics**

This project has received ethical approval from the School of Psychology Research and Ethics Committee.

### **Confidentiality**

Names are not required. All data obtained will be kept confidential and kept on the Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted.

### **Participation**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw prior to submitting the survey. If you wish to withdraw, please close your internet browser. Once the survey has been submitted, withdrawal will not be possible.

### **Questions about the research**



If you have any questions or would like a summary of the research findings, please contact me at

[danielle.lee.smith@hotmail.com](mailto:danielle.lee.smith@hotmail.com)

**Questions about your rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions and do not wish to contact me directly you can contact Rebecca Sargisson, Psychology Research and Ethics Committee. E-mail: [rebeccas@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:rebeccas@waikato.ac.nz)

[Click here to continue on to the Survey](#)

## APPENDIX C

### Employee Survey

Self-monitoring, coping and flourishing

**Section A:** Please select to what extent you agree with the following statements.

Q1A *In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behaviour if I feel that something else is called for.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q2A *I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q3A *When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q4A *I have trouble changing my behaviour to suit different people and different situations.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

*Q5A I have found that I can adjust my behaviour to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

*Q6A Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

*Q7A Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

*Q8A I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q9A *In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q10A *My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q11A *I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q12A *I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

Q13A *If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression.*

Certainly (1), Always true (2), Generally true (3), Somewhat true, but with exception (4), Somewhat false, but with exception (5), Generally false (6).

**Section B:** Please think about the most stressful work related situation you experienced recently, as you respond to each of the following statements. By “stressful” I mean a situation that was difficult or troubling for you, either because you felt distressed about what happened, or because you had to use considerable effort to deal with the situation. The situation will involve your work. Before responding to the statements, think about the details of this stressful situation, such as where it happened, who was involved, how you acted, and why it was important to you. It can be a situation you are still involved in, or could have already happened. As you respond to each of the statements below, please keep this stressful situation in mind.

Q1B *I talked to someone to find out more about the situation.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q2B *I accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q3B *I got professional help.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q4B *I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q5B *I asked advice from a relative or friend I respected.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q6B *I talked to someone about how I was feeling.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q7B *I hope for a miracle.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q8B *I slept more than usual.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q9B *I tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs, or medication, etc.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q10B *I generally avoided being with people.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q11B *I took it out on other people.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q12B *I refused to believe it had happened.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q13B *I wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q14B *I had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q15B *I just concentrated on what I had to do next- the next step.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q16B *I made a plan of action and followed it.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q17B *I changed something so things would turn out all right.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q18B *I drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q19B *I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

Q20B *I came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.*

Not Used (1), Used Somewhat (2), Used Quite A Bit (3), Used a Great Deal (4)

**Section C:** Please respond to the following 8 statements below, by indicating the extent with which you agree or disagree.

Q1C *I lead a purposeful and meaningful life*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

Q2C *My social relationships are supportive and rewarding*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

Q3C *I am engaged and interested in my daily activities*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

*Q4C I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

*Q5C I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

*Q6C I am a good person and live a good life*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

*Q7C I am optimistic about my future*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

*Q8C People respect me*

Strongly agree (1), Agree (2), Slightly agree (3), Neither agree nor disagree (4),  
Slightly disagree (5), Disagree (6), Strongly disagree (7)

## **Demographics**

The following demographics being collected are fully confidential and are purely to describe the sample. No individual will be able to be identified using this information.



**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender**

Male (1), Female (2), Other (3)

**Employment**

Full-time (1), Part-time (2)

**Ethnicity**

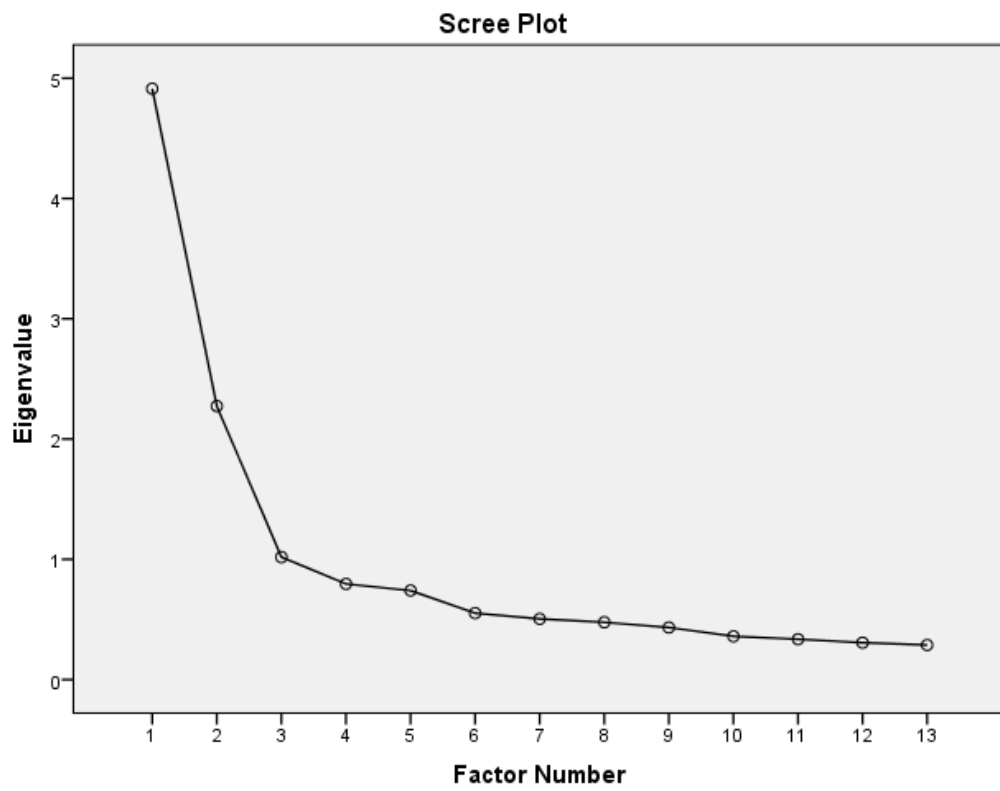
European/ Pakeha (1), Māori (2), Asian (3), Pacific peoples (4), Middle Eastern/Latin  
American/African (5), Other Ethnicity (6)

**Are you**

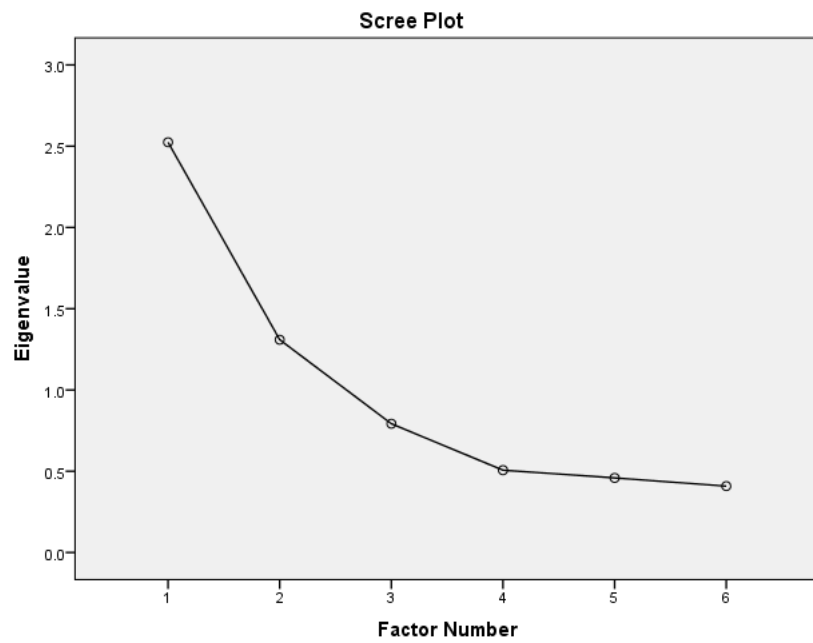
Academic staff (1), General staff (2)

Thank you for your time! If you wish to receive a summary of the results, please  
contact me: Danielle Smith, [danielle.lee.smith@hotmail.com](mailto:danielle.lee.smith@hotmail.com).

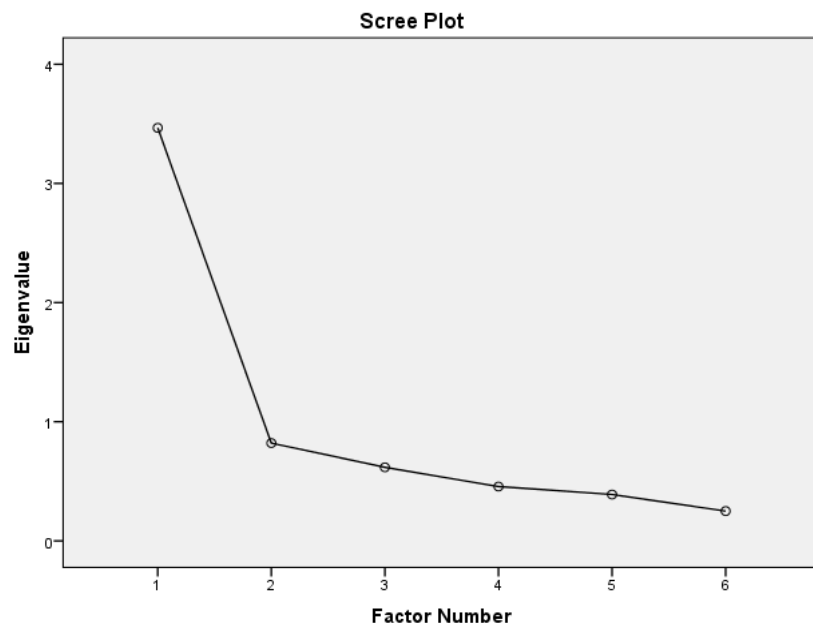
Have a wonderful day! ☺

**APPENDIX D****Scree Plots**

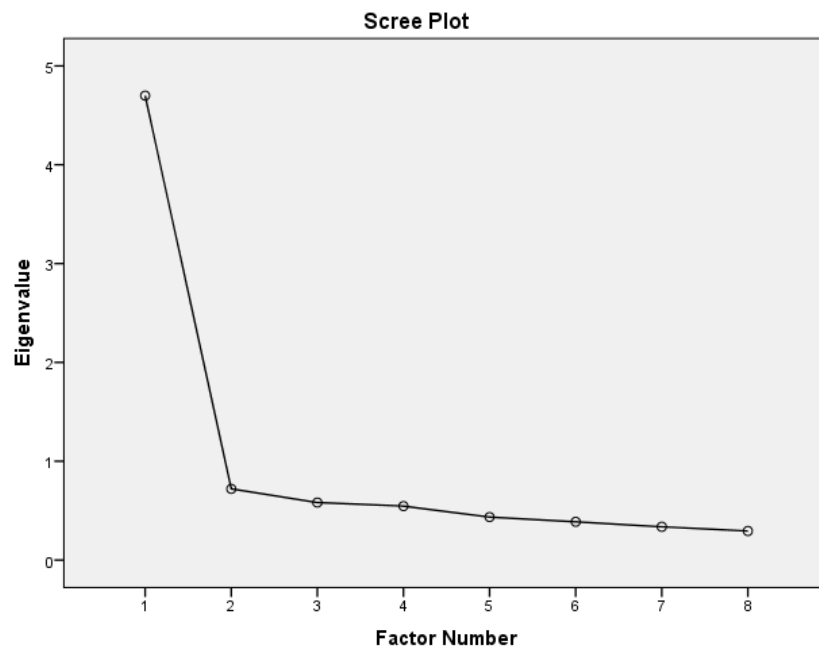
*Figure D1: Scree plot of Self-monitoring*



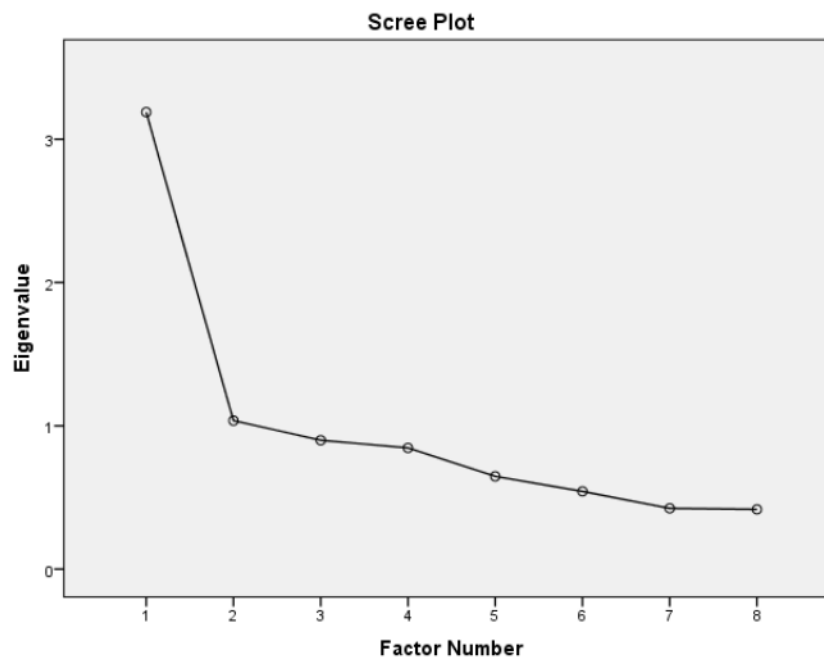
*Figure D2: Scree plot of Seeking Social Support Coping*



*Figure D3: Scree plot of Escape-Avoidance Coping*



*Figure D4: Scree plot of Planful Problem Solving Coping*



*Figure D5: Scree plot of Flourishing*