An Overview of the Aspiration Index
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Table of Contents

General Introduction

The Aspiration Index[1] (AI) is a set of survey instruments that assesses individuals' goals. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the use of the AI in order to help researchers utilize the instrument.

Because the AI is neither copy-righted nor distributed through any for-profit institutions, researchers are welcome to use the AI without seeking prior permission from me; consider having read this document to be your permission. Similarly, researchers are welcome to translate the AI into other languages (although check below to see if a version already exists in your language of interest); if you would like assistance with the back-translation, I am happy to help.

Unlike many survey instruments that are standardized to include only certain items and certain rating dimensions, thereby reifying the instrument, versions of the AI have proliferated. This, in my mind, is both a strength and a weakness of the AI. In terms of weaknesses, this has meant that sometimes researchers use somewhat different items or different instructions for rating dimensions, which can lead to difficulty comparing results across studies. In terms of strengths, this means that the AI is a flexible tool that can be adapted for many different types of hypotheses and can be modified depending on the practical limitations impinging on the researcher.

What holds in common across various versions of the AI? First, the AI provides participants with a list of nomothetically-generated goals that vary in content. Second, the AI asks the participants to rate those goals on one or more dimensions. Third, the content of the goals assessed by the AI almost always includes some extrinsic goals (e.g., financial success) and some intrinsic goals (e.g., community feeling); indeed, many researchers would probably see the primary purpose of the AI as being the assessment of the relative priority that a person places on intrinsic vs. extrinsic goals (see below).

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[1] Ryan et al. (1999) used the name "Aspirations Index" rather than the original "Aspiration Index," and nowadays both names are used. Personally, I prefer the original name and would note that it was the name used in the vast majority of the early papers

Basic Format of the AI: Domains & Dimensions

The AI asks participants to rate goals from various *domains* (e.g*.*, financial success, spirituality) along various rating *dimensions (*e.g., importance, current attainment).

Domains. Four domains of aspirations were assessed in the first version of the AI: *Financial Success, Community feeling, Self-acceptance (*sometimes also called *Personal Growth)*, and *Affiliation* (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Three additional domains of *Physical Fitness (*sometimes called *Physical Health*)*, Social Recognition (*sometimes called *Popularity*)*,* and *Appealing Appearance* (sometimes called *Image*) were added by Kasser & Ryan (1996). An eighth domain of *Spiritual Understanding* (sometimes called *Spirituality*) was added by Kasser (1996). Three more domains (*Hedonism, Conformity*, and *Safety*) were added by Grouzet et al. (2005). I consider these 11 domains to be the "standard" or "established" ones. Here are the definitions of each domain as reported in Grouzet et al. (2005; Table 1):

Affiliation: To have satisfying relationships with family and friends
Community feeling: To improve the world through activism or generativity
Conformity: To fit in with other people
Financial success: To be wealthy and materially successful
Hedonism: To experience much sensual pleasure
Image: To look attractive in terms of body and clothing
Physical health: To feel healthy and free of illness
Popularity: To be famous, well-known, and admired
Safety: To ensure bodily integrity and safety
Self-acceptance: To feel competent and autonomous
Spirituality: To search for spiritual or religious understanding

Notably, a few other domains have also been assessed via the AI. For example, *Intellectual-Aesthetic Growth* and *Power* were assessed by Ryan et al. (1999), and *Savings* was assessed in the sample reported in Study 4 of Kasser et al. (2014; although the publication does not report any specific data regarding this domain).

More information regarding the specific items used to assess these domains will be reported in the sections of this document concerning versions of the AI.

Dimensions. In the first use of the AI (Kasser & Ryan, 1993), participants rated aspirations on two dimensions of *Importance* and *Chances (or Likelihood) of Attaining* the goal in the future. A third dimension, *Current Attainment* of the goal, was added by Ryan et al. (1999) and Kasser & Ryan (2001). A fourth dimension of *Action Taken* toward the goal was added by Sheldon & Krieger (2014). There is also a fifth rating dimension, *Motivation*, that was administered in the sample described in Study 2 of Brown & Kasser (2005), but data regarding that dimension have never been published (to my knowledge).

In typical AI spirit, authors have not always used the exact same instructions to assess these rating dimensions, nor have they always given participants the same number of rating options (i.e., 5 points, 7 points, 9 points), nor have they always used the exact same rating labels. Personally, I believe it is usually best to provide respondents with a 7 or 9 point rating scale, as doing so helps increase meaningful variability in responses. Indeed, I often begin the AI with instructions like the following (assuming I am assessing importance and likelihood dimensions):

> *This set of questions asks you about goals you may have for the future. Rate each item by circling how important each goal is to you. Then circle the chances that you will attain the goal. Try to use the entire scale when rating the items. That is, some of your answers will likely be at the lower end of the scale, some will be in the middle, and others will be at the higher end of the scale.*

Researchers often ask if they can assess ratings on only one dimension. My answer is that doing so is fine if only one dimension is relevant to the researchers' hypotheses. If researchers want to assess multiple rating dimensions for each domain, they can follow one of two approaches. The more economical approach is to begin the AI with a set of instructions that describes each of the rating dimensions (as above). Then, after one individual goal item is presented, respondents are asked to rate that goal item on all of the desired dimensions before moving on to the next goal item. The less economical approach, albeit the approach that may be better for certain hypotheses, is to have the participants first rate all of the goal items on one dimension, then go back and re-rate all of the goal items on the second dimension, and so forth.

Here are my recommendations for the instructions and rating labels to use for the five dimensions that have been assessed in past versions of the AI. I assume a 9-point scale throughout.

Importance: "*How important is this goal to you?*" Assessed on this scale: 1 = not at all; 3 = a little; 5 = moderate; 7 = very; 9 = extremely

Chances (Likelihood): "*What are the chances that you will attain this goal?*" Assessed on this scale: 1 = very low; 3 = low; 5 = moderate; 7 = high; 9 = very high.

Current Attainment: "*How much have you already achieved this goal thus far?*" Assessed on this scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = moderate; 9 = very much.

Action Taken: "*For each question, select a response that indicates how much you actually work on that goal in your life. Regardless of how important you said the goals were, to what extent do you find yourself trying to make each goal occur?*" Assessed on this scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = somewhat; 9 = very.

Motivation: *"What is motivating you to pursue this goal?"* Assessed on this scale: 1 = I feel completely forced or pressured; 3 = I feel somewhat forced or pressured; 5 = I feel both equally; 7 = I feel somewhat free to choose; 9 = I feel completely free to choose.

The Structure of Goals Assessed via the AI

Initially, Kasser & Ryan (1993) developed the AI as a means to assess four different goal domains and how important and likely to be attained respondents thought each type of goal was for them; the background research that inspired the choice of those goals and rating dimensions is reported on page 411 of that article.

While financial success was briefly described as an "extrinsic aspiration" near the end of Kasser & Ryan (1993), it was not until Kasser & Ryan (1996) that the terms *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* were explicitly used to describe two sorts of goals. Specifically, Kasser & Ryan (1996) suggested that goal contents for self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical fitness were intrinsic in that they "are expressive of desires congruent with actualizing and growth tendencies natural to humans" and "are likely to satisfy basic and inherent psychological needs" (pg. 280), whereas goal contents for financial success, social recognition, and appealing appearance were extrinsic in that they "depend on the contingent reactions of others" and are "typically engaged in as means to some other end" (pg. 280). Kasser & Ryan (1996) presented factors analyses of the AI using both importance and likelihood ratings in two samples (see Table 2 of that article) that provided strong evidence for this distinction; other studies have presented similar results (e.g., Schmuck et al., 2000 in Germany)

As noted above, Grouzet et al. (2005) assessed the seven domains from the Kasser & Ryan (1996) paper, plus four additional domains (see page 801 of that article for background research on why those goals were added). They did so in a sample of >1800 college students from 15 nations and provinces who rated the importance of the 11 goal contents. Several types of analyses were conducted to further confirm and expand the structure of the AI. First, Grouzet et al. (2005) demonstrated that the domains of the AI had strong internal reliability and measurement equivalence across the 15 nations and provinces assessed (see Table 3 of that paper; see also Ryan et al. 1999). Second, Table 4 of Grouzet et al. reports evidence demonstrating the relative compatibility of the intrinsic cluster of goals (which included community feeling, self-acceptance, affiliation, physical health, and safety) and the relative compatibility of the extrinsic cluster of goals (which included image, popularity, financial success, and conformity) in all 15 of the cultures. Third, a second dimension of aspiration content was revealed that is orthogonal to the intrinsic vs. extrinsic dimension (see Figures 2 and 3 of that paper). The discovery of this new dimension, termed *self-transcendence* vs. *physical self,* resulted in three important new ideas regarding the AI.

> 1. The discovery suggested that aspiration domains that had previously been categorized together as either intrinsic or extrinsic could be differentiated from each other in certain respects. Among intrinsic goals, community feeling has a more transcendent character relative to self-acceptance and affiliation, and physical health and safety have a more physical character relative to self-acceptance and affiliation. Among extrinsic goals, financial success has a more physical character relative to popularity and image, and conformity has a more transcendent character relative to

popularity and image. As such, properly described, community feeling is an "intrinsic, transcendent" goal, financial success is an "extrinsic, physical goal," conformity is an "extrinsic, transcendent" goal, etc.

2. Grouzet et al. (2005) showed that two goal contents were neutral with regard to the intrinsic/extrinsic dimension and better understood as described along the new *Self-transcendence* vs. *physical self* dimension. Spirituality was a transcendent goal and hedonism was a physical goal, and neither appeared to be intrinsic or extrinsic in character.

3. It became clear that, just as has been shown in work on values (e.g., Schwartz, 1992), goal contents can be understood as having a circumplex structure (see Tables 4 & 5 and Figures 2 & 3 of Grouzet et al., 2005). That is, some goals are relatively compatible with each other (e.g., image and popularity; health and safety; affiliation and self-acceptance), some goals are in conflict with each other (e.g., spirituality vs. hedonism; financial success vs. community feeling), and other goals are orthogonal to each other (e.g., spirituality and affiliation; hedonism and popularity). This circumplex structure of the AI received substantial support across the 15 cultures assessed.

Uses of the AI

Probably the most common use of the AI over the years has been to assess individual differences in people's dispositional concern for different types of goals. That is, usually researchers have participants complete the AI as a means of indexing the extent to which a respondent is relatively focused on intrinsic or extrinsic goals, on financial success relative to other goals, etc.   These scores (see below) are then typically correlated with other variables like well-being, social behavior, ecological concern, academic performance, etc. Sometimes, particularly in developmental studies, the AI scores are correlated with other variables like parental style, socio-economic status of the family, etc.

While on this topic, I would note that researchers sometimes ask whether there is a "cut-off" for determining whether someone is more intrinsic than extrinsic, etc. The answer is that I do not conceptualize the AI in that manner. That is, scores reflecting the relative centrality of, for example, intrinsic vs. extrinsic goals to an individual are inherently continuous. Cut-offs, in contrast, are inherently categorical. Because I do not think of variables from the AI as reflecting categorical distinctions, I do not endorse the use of cut-off scores.

The second primary way that the AI has been used is as a dependent variable assessed after some sort of experimental intervention. For example, a researcher might want to see whether brief thoughts about something that causes them to feel insecure (vs. a neutral cognition) shifts individuals' orientation towards extrinsic goals (relative to intrinsic goals) or increases their concern for a particular type of goal (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Typically, one of the shorter versions of the AI is used in such methodological designs, but that is not necessary.   Other researchers have conducted more in-depth interventions designed to try to decrease materialism in participants (e.g., Kasser et al., 2014, Study 4); in such cases, longer versions of the AI are more appropriate.

Calculating Variables from the AI

As implied throughout this document, the flexibility of the AI means that there are numerous ways to calculate and analyze variables resulting from the scale. When researchers ask me what approach to use, my reply is that it depends on their hypotheses. I will now describe my preferred approaches.

For the current demonstration purposes, assume that a 33-item version of the AI has been given to respondents, in which 3 items each are used to index the 11 domains assessed by Grouzet et al. (2005; see above). Assume further that for each of the 33 items, respondents used a 9-point scale to rate the goals on 2 dimensions: importance and likelihood of attainment. Let us call the 3 importance ratings regarding the community feeling domain CFI1, CFI2, & CFI3, the 3 likelihood ratings for community feeling CFL1, CFL2, & CFL3, the 3 importance ratings regarding the financial success domain FSI1, FSI2, & FSI3, the 3 likelihood ratings for financial success FSL1, FSL2, & FSL3, and so on. Thus, the following 66 variables (11 domains X 3 items X 2 ratings) would constitute the variable set:

Affiliation: AFI1, AFI2, AFI3, AFL1, AFL2, AFL3
Community feeling: CFI1, CFI2, CFI3, CFL1, CFL2, CFL3
Conformity: CNI1, CNI2, CNI3, CNL1, CNL2, CNL3
Financial success: FSI1, FSI2, FSI3, FSL1, FSL2, FSL3
Hedonism: HDI1, HDI2, HDI3, HDL1, HDL2, HDL3
Image: IMI1, IMI2, IMI3, IML1, IML2, IML3
Physical health: PHI1, PHI2, PHI3, PHL1, PHL2, PHL3
Popularity: POI1, POI2, POI3, POL1, POL2, POL3
Safety: SFI1, SFI2, SFI3, SFL1, SFL2, SFL3
Self-acceptance: SAI1, SAI2, SAI3, SAL1, SAL2, SAL3
Spirituality: SPI1, SPI2, SPI3, SPL1, SPL2, SPL3

The typical starting point would be to create raw importance and likelihood scores for each of the 11 domains. This is done by taking the average of the relevant items for each domain. So, for example.

AFITOT = Raw importance of affiliation = Mean (AFI1, AFI2, AFI3)
AFLTOT = Raw likelihood of attainment of affiliation = Mean (AFL1, AFL2, AFL3)
CFITOT = Raw importance of community feeling = Mean (CFI1, CFI2, CFI3).
CFLTOT = Raw likelihood of attainment of community feeling = Mean (CFL1, CFL2, CFL3).
And so on.

Following this procedure will result in 22 raw variables (11 domains x 2 rating dimensions). These raw variables are the ingredients that will be used in further computations and statistical analyses.

At this point it is critical to note that almost all of the researchers using the AI insist on using not raw, but **relative** means of assessing goals. This approach has a long tradition in value theory (going back to Rokeach, 1973). In essence, the idea is that raw scores from the AI can tell us very little on their own about a person's orientation towards different types of goals. To understand why this is so, consider the following. Imagine two individuals who both complete the AI. Person A has raw scores of 5 for the importance of financial success, 6 for the importance of community feeling, and 6 for the importance of physical health. Person B has raw scores of 5 for the importance of financial success, 2 for the importance of community feeling, and 4 for the importance of physical health. Note that in both cases, the two individuals have the exact same raw importance score for financial success: 5. However, for Person A, that score of 5 is relatively low compared to her other scores --- community feeling and physical health are rated as more important to her than is financial success. In contrast, for Person B, the same score of 5 on financial success is relatively high compared to his other scores --- community feeling and physical health are rated as less important to him than is financial success. Thus, to understand each person's goal orientation, it is crucial to use statistical techniques or further calculation procedures in order to index the relative importance (or relative likelihood of attainment) of the goal contents.

Researchers have approached this problem in many ways over the years. Aspiration scores have been converted into z-scores for t-test comparisons, hierarchical regression analyses have been run, SEMs have been created with packets of variables, etc. In all of those cases, the analytic approach has been aimed at obtaining an operationalization of the relative importance (or likelihood, etc.) of some aspiration domain relative to other aspiration domains.

I have no objections to those approaches (although believe that the z-score + t-test approach is rather weak, as it implies that some cut-off exists between being extrinsic or intrinsic), and I believe that most of the ones that I've used and read have been appropriate. I believe, however, that an approach that relies on calculation (rather than statistics) is often simplest and most flexible for most research purposes. Here are the two calculation approaches that I recommend in most cases.

1. A single relative intrinsic vs. extrinsic score. For researchers who are interested in knowing the extent to which individuals focus on extrinsic goals relative to intrinsic goals, the simplest approach is to calculate a single score. When calculating this score for the importance rating dimension, this is typically called the REIVO score, for Relative Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Value Orientation score. Typically, researchers calculate this by summing the raw scores of the three primary extrinsic domains (FS, PO, & IM) and then subtracting the raw scores of the three primary intrinsic domains (i.e., CF, AF, & SA). So, using the variable names described above for calculating raw scores:

REIVO = FSITOT + POITOT + IMITOT - CFITOT - AFITOT - SAITOT

Positive scores on REIVO reflect caring about extrinsic goals relatively more than intrinsic goals, negative scores reflect caring about intrinsic goals relatively more than extrinsic goals, and scores around 0 reflect caring about intrinsic and extrinsic goals at approximately similar levels.

Some researchers may wish to have a high score reflect a more intrinsic value orientation. This would be a RIEVO score (i.e., Relative Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value Orientation score). This is calculated by summing the raw scores for the three primary intrinsic domains (CF, SA, & AF) and then subtracting the raw scores for the three primary extrinsic domains (i.e., FS, PO, & IM).

RIEVO = CFITOT + AFITOT + SAITOT - FSITOT - POITOT – IMITOT

Positive scores on RIEVO reflect caring about intrinsic goals relatively more than extrinsic goals, negative scores reflect caring about extrinsic goals relatively more than intrinsic goals, and scores around 0 reflect caring about intrinsic and extrinsic goals at approximately similar levels.

If a researcher wanted to create parallel scores for the relative likelihood of attaining extrinsic vs. intrinsic goals (a REILO), s/he would follow the procedures above, substituting in the likelihood ratings:

REILO = FSLTOT + POLTOT + IMLTOT - CFLTOT - AFLTOT - SALTOT

And so on for a RIELO score. Similar calculations could be conducted for the other rating dimensions (i.e., current attainment, etc.).

While there are other intrinsic domains than CF, AF, and SA, and while there are other extrinsic domains than FS, PO, & IM, these six are typically used in such RIEVO or REIVO calculations for two main reasons. First, these six domains are the best-established of the intrinsic and extrinsic types of aspirations. Second, using three domains from each type establishes a nice symmetry for calculation purposes. That said, a researcher could of course include the other intrinsic or extrinsic domains in the calculation if that fits his/her research purposes. So, for example, a researcher who wanted to have a relative intrinsic vs. extrinsic value orientation score for all of the domains identified in Grouzet et al. (2005) as intrinsic and extrinsic would calculate as follows:

RIEVO = CFITOT + AFITOT + SAITOT + SFTOT + PHTOT - FSITOT - POITOT – IMITOT - CNTOT

And so on.

At this writing, to my knowledge no researcher has ever calculated a parallel set of scores for the self-transcendence vs. physical self dimension, but the logic would be similar. For example, a Relative Self-Transcendence vs. Physical Self Value Orientation score (i.e., RSTPSVO score) would be calculated as follows:

RSTPSVO = CFITOT + CNITOT + SPITOT – FSITOT – HDITOT – SFITOT - PHITOT

2. Relative Centrality scores.

Sometimes researchers are interested in scores on a particular domain, rather than (or in addition to) a broad assessment of intrinsic vs. extrinsic domains. So, for example, maybe a researcher is only interested in how the relative importance individuals place on financial success aspirations is associated with other variables (e.g., Kasser et al., 2014). A different strategy is necessary here.

The first step is to calculate a grand mean for each subject on the rating dimension(s) of interest. So, continuing to use the assumptions and examples above, for importance ratings, the grand mean would be the average of the raw scores:

ASPITOT = Mean (AFITOT, CFITOT, CNITOT, FSITOT, HDITOT, IMITOT, PHITOT, POITOT, SAITOT, SFITOT, SPITOT)

High scores would reflect placing high importance on aspirations, regardless of domain.

And for likelihood ratings, the grand mean would be:

ASPLTOT = Mean (AFLTOT, CFLTOT, CNLTOT, FSLTOT, HDLTOT, IMLTOT, PHLTOT, POLTOT, SALTOT, SFLTOT, SPLTOT)

High scores would reflect believing aspirations are likely to be obtained, regardless of domain.

The second step is to calculate relative or mean-corrected scores for the domains of interest. So, a researcher interested in the relative importance of financial success goals would calculate a Mean-Corrected Financial Success Importance score by subtracting the grand mean from the raw domain score of FSI:

MCFSI = FSITOT – ASPITOT.

Positive scores on MCFSI would reflect a person who thinks that financial success is relatively more important than other goals in general, negative scores would reflect a person who thinks that financial success is relatively less important than other goals in general, and scores around 0 would reflect a person who places about as much importance on financial success as s/he does on other goals in general.

Similar scores could be calculated for any of the other combinations of domains and rating dimensions. So, for example, a researcher interested in the relative likelihood ratings of spirituality goals would calculate a Mean-Corrected Spirituality Likelihood score as follows:

MCSPL = SPLTOT – ASPLTOT.

And so on.

Full-length Versions of the AI: 7 domains

There are two full-length versions of the AI that assess 7 domains, that are used regularly in research, and that I can confidently recommend.

The **first 7 domain version** was used by Kasser & Ryan (1996) in the paper that first established the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction and that assessed 7 domains. The number in front of each item below reflects the order in which the item appeared in that study.

Opening Instructions: This first set of questions asks you about the future. Rate each item by circling how important it is to you that it happen in the future. Then circle the chances that it will happen in the future. IN THE FUTURE...

Affiliation – 5 items
9. You will have good friends that you can count on.
14. You will share your life with someone you love.
18. You will have people who care about you and are supportive.
30. You will know people that you can have fun with.
40. You will have a couple of good friends that you can talk to about personal things.

Attractive Appearance – 5 items
3. You will have people comment often about how attractive you look.
10. You will keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.
22. You will achieve the "look" you've been after.
28. You will successfully hide the signs of aging.
42. Your image will be one others find appealing.

Community Feeling – 5 items
6. You will donate time or money to charity.
19. You will work for the betterment of society.
27. You will work to make the world a better place.
32. You will help others improve their lives.
39. You will help people in need.

Financial Success – 4 items
4. You will have a lot of expensive possessions.
12. You will have a job that pays well.
25. You will have a job with high social status.
37. You will be financially successful.

Physical Fitness – 4 items
1. You will be physically healthy.
7. You will feel good about your level of physical fitness.
24. You will feel energetic and full of life.
31. You will be relatively free from sickness.

Self-acceptance – 4 items
8. You will be the one in charge of your life.
16. At the end of your life, you will look back on your life as meaningful and complete.
23. You will deal effectively with problems that come up in your life.
35. You will know and accept who you really are.

Social Recognition – 5 items
2. Your name will be known by many people.
5. You will be famous.
15. You will be admired by many people.
29. Your name will appear frequently in the media.
38. You will do something that brings you much recognition.

The following items were also administered by Kasser & Ryan (1996) but failed to load on their predicted factors. I recommend that they not be included, but you can if you want.

11. You will teach others the things that you know.
13. You will exercise regularly.
17. You will avoid things bad for your health (such as smoking, excessive alcohol, etc.)
20. You will be married to one person for life.
21. You will be your own boss.
26. You will have good, open relationships with your children.
33. Your body shape and type will be fairly close to ideal.
34. You will buy things just because you want them.
36. You will eat healthfully and moderately.
41. You will be talked about years after your death.

The **second 7-domain version** was used by Niemiec et al. (2009) and later by Kasser et al. (2014, Study 2). It assessed the same 7 domains as Kasser & Ryan (1996). The main modifications were to clean up the wording of some items, to move the items out of the second person and into the first person, and to establish 5 items per domain. The item numbers below correspond to the order in which the items were administered.

Instructions: Everyone has long-term Goals or Aspirations. These are the things that individuals hope to accomplish over the course of their lives. In this section, you will find a number of life goals, presented one at a time, and we ask you three questions about each goal. (a) How important is this goal to you? (b) How likely is it that you will attain this goal in your future? and (c) How much have you already achieved this goal thus far?

Affiliation – 5 items
4. Life-goal: To have good friends that I can count on.
11. Life-goal: To share my life with someone I love.
18. Life-goal: To have committed, intimate relationships.
25. Life-goal: To feel that there are people who really love me, and whom I love.
32. Life-goal: To have deep enduring relationships.

Attractive Appearance – 5 items
5. Life-goal: To successfully hide the signs of aging.
12. Life-goal: To have people comment often about how attractive I look.
19. Life-goal: To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.
26. Life-goal: To achieve the "look" I've been after.
33. Life-goal: To have an image that others find appealing.

Community Feeling – 5 items
6. Life-goal: To work for the betterment of society.
13. Life-goal: To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.
20. Life-goal: To work to make the world a better place.
27. Life-goal: To help others improve their lives.
34. Life-goal: To help people in need.

Financial Success – 5 items
1. Life-goal: To be a very wealthy person.
8. Life-goal: To have many expensive possessions.
15. Life-goal: To be financially successful.
22. Life-goal: To be rich.
29. Life-goal: To have enough money to buy everything I want.

Physical Fitness – 5 items
7. Life-goal: To be physically healthy.
14. Life-goal: To feel good about my level of physical fitness.
21. Life-goal: To keep myself healthy and well.
28. Life-goal: To be relatively free from sickness.
35. Life-goal: To have a physically healthy life style.

Self-acceptance – 5 items
2. Life-goal: To grow and learn new things.
9. Life-goal: At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete.
16. Life-goal: To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.
23. Life-goal: To know and accept who I really am.
30. Life-goal: To gain increasing insight into why I do the things I do.

Social Recognition – 5 items
3. Life-goal: To have my name known by many people.
10. Life-goal: To be admired by many people.
17. Life-goal: To be famous.
24. Life-goal: To have my name appear frequently in the media.
31. Life-goal: To be admired by lots of different people.

Full Length Versions of the AI: 11 domains

The **first 11-domain version** of the AI was used by Grouzet et al. (2005) in 15 cultures. The number in front of each item reflects the order in which the item appeared in that study. Page 806 and Table 3 of that article present a bevy of statistics relevant to the reliability and validity of these scales cross-culturally.

Instructions: This set of questions asks you about goals you may have for the future. Rate each item by circling how important each goal is to you. Then circle the chances that you will attain the goal.   Try to use the entire scale when rating the items. That is, some of your answers will likely be at the lower end of the scale, some will be in the middle, and others will be at the higher end of the scale.

Affiliation – 5 items
8. People will show affection to me, and I will to them.
19. I will feel that there are people who really love me.
24. Someone in my life will accept me as I am, no matter what.
43. I will express my love for special people.
50. I will have a committed, intimate relationship.

Community Feeling – 3 items
6. I will assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.
21. The things I do will make other people's lives better.
47. I will help the world become a better place.

Conformity - 4 items
15. I will be polite and obedient
27. I will live up to the expectations of my society.
41. My desires and tastes will be similar to those of other people.
52. I will "fit in" with others.

Financial Success - 4 items
12. I will have many expensive possessions.
32. I will be financially successful.
42. I will have enough money to buy everything I want.
51. I will have a job that pays well.

Hedonism – 3 items
16. I will have a great sex life.
33. I will have a lot of excitement in my life.
48. I will experience a great deal of sensual pleasure.

Image – 5 items
3.   My image will be one others find appealing.
13. I will achieve the "look" I've been after.
30. People will often comment about how attractive I look.
39. I will successfully hide the signs of aging.
55. I will keep up with fashions in clothing and hair.

Physical Health - 4 items
23. I will be in good physical shape.
31. I will feel good about my level of physical fitness.
40. I will be relatively free from sickness.
53. I will be physically healthy.

Popularity – 3 items
14. I will be admired by many people.
22. My name will be known by many different people.
37. Most everyone who knows me will like me.

Safety - 4 items
10. I will have few threats to my personal safety.
18. My basic needs for food, shelter and clothing will be met.
29. I will feel safe and secure.
34. I will not have to worry about bad things happening to me.

Self-acceptance – 7 items
2. I will be efficient.
7. I will choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.
20. I will feel free.
28. I will deal effectively with problems in my life.
38. I will feel good about my abilities.
45. I will overcome the challenges that life presents me.
46. I will have insight into why I do the things I do.

Spirituality – 5 items
4. I will find personal answers to universal spiritual questions (such as: Is there a supreme spiritual being? Is there life after death? What is the meaning of life?)
26. I will find satisfying religious and/or spiritual activities.
36. I will find religious or spiritual beliefs that help me make sense of the world.
44. I will find religious and/or spiritual beliefs that are growth-producing.
49. My life and actions will be in agreement with my religious/spiritual beliefs.

The following items were also administered to subjects in Grouzet et al. (2005) but failed to load on their predicted factors. I recommend that they not be included, but you can if you want.

1. There will always be someone around to take care of me.
5. I will be in control of my emotions.
9. I will feel energetic and full of life.
11. My life will be full of wine, lovers and song.
17. I will have developed a code of ethics and/or morals to guide my life.
25. I will follow my interests and curiosity where they take me.
35. I will produce something of lasting worth.
54. I will have plenty of time to be lazy.
56. My surroundings will be stable and relatively unchanging.
57. People will really respect me.

Another **11-domain version of the AI** was used in a sample of adolescents (age range 10-17 years) by Kasser et al. (2014, Study 4). It also has 11 domains.   Items were slightly modified in some cases to be more readable for this age group. Further, the domains are assessed with 3 items each. The number in front of each item reflects the order in which the item appeared in that study. There were 3 additional items that assessed "savings" aspirations for the purpose of this particular study, but I can't really recommend including those items in the future.   Also note that here we asked about "the past month" because we were interested in assessing changes in aspirations over time.

Instructions: This set of questions asks you about goals you may have for the future. Using the scale below, rate each item by filling in how important each goal has been to you in the past month. Try to use the entire scale when rating the items. That is, some of your answers will likely be at the lower end of the scale, some will be in the middle, and others will be at the higher end of the scale.

Affiliation
4. People will show affection to me, and I will to them.
11. I will feel that there are people who really love me.
15. Someone in my life will accept me as I am, no matter what.

Community Feeling
2. I will assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.
12. The things I do will make other people's lives better.
29. I will help the world become a better place.

Conformity
8. I will be polite and obedient.
26. The things I like will be similar to what other people like.
34. I will "fit in" with others.

Financial Success
5. I will have many expensive possessions.
27. I will have enough money to buy everything I want.
33. I will have a job that pays well.

Hedonism
7. I will do a lot of things just for the fun of it.
19. I will have a lot of excitement in my life.
30. I will experience a great deal of pleasure in my life.

Image
1. My image will be one that others find appealing.
18. People will often comment about how attractive I look.
36. I will keep up with fashions in clothing and hair.

Physical Health
14. I will be in good physical shape.
24. I will be relatively free from sickness.
35. I will be physically healthy.

Popularity
6. I will be admired by many people.
13. My name will be known by many different people.
22. Most everyone who knows me will like me.

Safety
10. My basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing will be met.
17. I will feel safe and secure.
20. I will not have to worry about bad things happening to me.

Self-Acceptance
3. I will choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.
23. I will feel good about my abilities.
28. I will overcome the challenges that life presents me.

Spirituality
16. I will find satisfying religious and/or spiritual activities.
21. I will find religious or spiritual beliefs that help me make sense of the world.
32. The way I live my life will be consistent with my religious/spiritual beliefs.

Short Versions of the AI

Sometimes researchers only have space in their research protocols for a short version of the AI. If that is the case, then here are my recommendations. Please note that I only recommend using these shortened versions if you are planning to create a summary score (e.g., REIVO, RIEVO) rather than if you are interested in the relative centrality of particular aspiration domains (i.e., a mean-corrected subscale score).

Sheldon et al. (2003) developed a 7-item measure. They administered these 3 *extrinsic* items:

Projecting an appealing and attractive image
Achieving affluence and financial success
Being known and admired by many people.

and these four *intrinsic* items:

Helping those who need help
Having close personal relationships
Feeling close to various people
Attaining self-understanding and personal growth.

I've also done some unpublished work with the version of the AI used in Grouzet et al. (2005) to develop short versions of the AI for the 11 domains assessed in that study. The following recommendations are based on the items that loaded most strongly on their respective domains for importance ratings in the cross-cultural sample analyzed by Grouzet et al. (2005), further analyses conducted on samples from the state of Oregon, and a bit of intuition and experience.

If you can only ask **one item per domain**, I recommend the following:

*Affiliation***:** Someone in my life will accept me as I am, no matter what
*Community Feeling***:** I will help the world become a better place
*Conformity***:** I will be polite and obedient
*Financial Success***:** I will have a job that pays well
*Hedonism***:**   I will have a lot of excitement in my life
*Image***:** I will keep up with fashions in clothing and hair
*Physical Health***:** I will be in good physical shape
*Popularity***:** I will be admired by many people
*Safety***:** My basic needs for food, shelter and clothing will be met
*Self-Acceptance***:** I will deal effectively with problems in my life
*Spirituality***:** I will find religious or spiritual beliefs that help me make sense of the world

If you can add **a second item per domain**, I recommend the following:

*Affiliation***:** People will show affection to me, and I will to them
*Community Feeling***:** I will assist people who need it, asking nothing in return
*Conformity***:** I will "fit in" with others
*Financial Success***:** I will have enough money to buy everything I want
*Hedonism***:** I will experience a great deal of sensual pleasure
*Image***:** People will often comment about how attractive I look
*Physical Health***:** I will be physically healthy
*Popularity***:** My name will be known by many different people
*Safety***:** I will feel safe and secure
*Self-Acceptance***:** I will feel free
*Spirituality***:** I will find satisfying religious and/or spiritual activities

Versions of the AI in Languages other than English

The AI has been translated into at least 19 languages; perhaps there are others of which I am unaware. Unfortunately, the Bulgarian, Romanian, and German versions of the AI used in Grouzet et al. (2005) have been lost to time. There are, however, Romanian versions of earlier versions of the AI and a different German translation of the version of the AI that was used in Grouzet et al.

If you would like to receive a copy of the AI in one of the following languages, I have copies of the ones listed below that are marked with an *. If you translate the AI into a new language, please send me a copy and I will add it to my collection; I am happy to help with back-translation procedures, if you would like.

Bangla*: currently being used by Farzana & Subas at BRAC University, Dhaka
Chinese*: used in the Grouzet et al. (2005) study
Croatian: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Rijavec et al. (2006)
Dutch*: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Vansteenkiste et al. (2006), Duriez et al. (2007),
            & Van Hiel & Vansteenkiste (2009)
French*: used in the Grouzet et al. (2005) study
German*: based on Grouzet et al. (2005) – from Matthey & Kasser (2013)
Hungarian*: shortened from Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Martos et al. (2006)
Icelandic*: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Garðarsdóttir et al. (2009)
Indonesian*: based on Grouzet et al. (2005) – from Aulia (2019)
Japanese*: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Nishimura & Suzuki (2016)
Korean*: used in the Grouzet et al. (2005) study
Norwegian*: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) & Niemiec et al. (2009) – from Utvaer et al. (2014)
Persian*: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from SabzehAra et al. (2014)
Polish*:   based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Zawadzka et al. (2015, 2018)
Portuguese*: based on Grouzet et al. (2005) - from Nunez-Rodriguez et al. (2016)
Romanian: based on Kasser & Ryan (1993) – from Frost & Frost (2000)
Romanian: based on Kasser & Ryan (1996) – from Stevens et al. (2011)
Russian*: used in the Ryan et al. (1999) study
Spanish*: used in the Grouzet et al. (2005) study

Applications of the AI to Specific Areas of Life

The AI typically asks people to consider their own personal aspirations for life in general. Some researchers, however, have applied the AI to specific areas of life by asking about people's aspirations for their children, for work, and for exercise/physical activity.

Parents have been asked about their aspirations for their own children in Kasser et al. (1995); this study used the Kasser & Ryan (1993) version of the AI. Similarly, children have been asked to rate the "extent your parents think it is important for you to pursue these goals…" in Duriez et al. (2008) and Soenens et al. (2015). Both Dutch and English versions of these latter scales exist; they were based on Kasser & Ryan (1996).

Employees have been asked "How important are each of the following work values for you on your current job" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). The values were based on Kasser & Ryan (1996), although power aspirations were assessed and image aspirations were not. Dutch and English versions of this scale exist.

Finally, people were asked to "indicate to what extent these goals are important for you when **exercising**" in Sebire et al. (2008) and "for you when doing **sport or being physically active during leisure-time**" in Seghers et al. (2014). Many of the items were based on domains assessed in Kasser & Ryan (1996), but other types of domains were also added. Dutch and English versions of these scales exist.

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