



The Impact of Personality Traits on Happiness

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Abstract

There have been several factors established which predict one's happiness. Happiness is here defined as a composite of the cognitive appraisal of one's life combined with the positive and negative emotions that a person experiences. However, there still exists some variation left to be explained. The influence of certain personality traits on overall happiness remains somewhat unexamined. This study examined the predictive value of one's personality traits on one's overarching happiness. Findings of this study suggest that the personality traits of conscientiousness and extraversion were significant predictors of one's happiness. Clinical implications of these findings will be explored.



Introduction & Purpose

- There have been several factors established that can predict an individual's overall happiness. However, there still exists some variation left to be explained.
- This study aims to examine the interplay that a person's specific personality traits have on a person's life satisfaction.



Literature Review

- There have been many attempts to describe happiness, as such, a single definition does not exist
- Happiness has been operationally defined in several ways including:
 - Subjective well being (Deiner et al., 2002)
 - Experience of positive affect (Lyubomirsky, 2005), cognitive and judgmental process (Deiner et al., 1985)
 - A composite of one's own life satisfaction, access to coping resources, and total positive emotions (Cohn et al., 2009)



Literature Review

Cognitive Bases of Happiness

- Individualized, subjective cognitive appraisal of one's own life situation, rather than an objective life situation (Brickman et al., 1978)

Affective Bases of Happiness

- Total combined positive and negative affect that a person experiences (Diener et al., 1999)
- Ideally, the person will experience a net positive over negative affect across major domains
 - Work, Family, Leisure, Health, Finances, Self, & One's Group



Literature Review

Personality's Influence on Happiness

- Personality traits have been connected with a person's affective base of happiness as well (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999)
 - Extraversion correlated with greater positive affect (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991)
 - Neuroticism correlated with greater negative affect (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991)



Research Hypothesis

- Individual personality traits will predict happiness

Recruitment & Methods

- Participants were randomly recruited from across the U.S. through Mechanical Turk and surveys were administered through Qualtrics
- Instruments: Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWL), Flourishing Scale (FS), Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS), and Big Five Mini-Modular Markers (3M40)
- Sample included 91 participants:
 - 34 males & 57 females
 - 71% white



Results

- A linear regression was conducted to determine any moderating effects of personality on one's happiness and determined that certain personality traits were predictors of one's happiness
- Extraversion was a positive predictor of one's happiness, SWL $r=0.506$, $p=0.000$; SHS, $r=0.495$, $p=0.000$; FS, $r=0.483$; $p=0.000$
- Additionally, a conscientious personality was also positively correlated with happiness, SWL, $r=0.382$, $p=0.000$; SHS, $r=0.408$, $p=0.000$; FS $r=0.492$; $p=0.000$
- One's openness to experience also correlated with Satisfaction with Life, $r=-0.256$, $p=0.14$.
- It is also important to note that neuroticism negatively correlated with one's happiness SWL, $r=-0.214$, $p=0.041$; SHS, $r=-0.333$, $p=0.001$; FS, $r=-0.280$, $p=0.007$.



Discussion

- This study was able to demonstrate support for certain personality traits as predictors of happiness. These findings aligned with and built upon current research.
- However, further studies should be conducted to ensure that these correlations are not spurious.
- Notable limitations include the lack of demographic spread and overrepresentation of White individuals and females, which could have had an impact on results. Future studies should take steps to ensure a more representative sample to increase the generalizability of findings.



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