

Big Five Personality Factors and Happiness

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Abstract:

31 College students with age group ranging from 21 to 30 years old administered McCrae and Costa's NEO-FFI Personality test and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills and Argyle. Association of Five Personality Factors with Happiness tested by using Pearson's product moment correlation. The r value between Neuroticism VS Happiness found to be ($r=-.36$, $p=0.05$); r value for Extraversion VS Happiness is ($r=.46$, $p=.01$) for Conscientiousness VS Happiness ($r=.41$, $p=0.02$); for Agreeableness VS Happiness ($r=.37$, $p=.04$); for Openness VS Happiness ($r=.34$, $p=.06$). In short personality factors Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are positively correlated with happiness. Neuroticism is adversely correlated with happiness and Openness is not associated with Happiness.

Key words: Five Personality Factors; Happiness; Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, NEO-FFI.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Success and Happiness, two ultimate desired goals of human being. Happiness is relative concept and varies from person to person. Authentic happiness is important. Scientists differentiate between two types of happiness; one is Hedonic Happiness and the other is Eudaimonic Happiness. Hedonic Happiness is measured by subjective well-being (SWB) while

Eudaimonic Happiness mainly covers freedom, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose of life, environmental mastery and autonomy concept of psychological well-being. Present OHQ mainly covers Eudaimonic view of happiness. Concept developed by Ryff and Keyes (2003).

Happiness is related to success and income (Diener and Biswas- 2002), favorable view of others (Cropanzano and Wright- 1999), social support (Everson Et al- 1998), self-control (Kobasa 1982), job satisfaction (Murphy- 1994).

Other demographic variables like age, gender, marital status, religion, educational level is also strongly correlated with happiness. Genetics and Personality are key factors linked with happiness, through present study relationship between five personality factors and happiness is verified.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Demographic variables, life experiences, job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, health and role of genetics mainly reveal the strong relationship between happiness.

Personality factors play most important role in happiness. Most of the studies between Personality VS Happiness claimed to have positive association between Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness with Happiness and Openness shows weak correlation with Happiness. Neuroticism is adversely correlated.

Deneve and Cooper (1998); Deiner and Lucas (1999); McCrae and Costa (1991); Watson and Clark (1992) reported small positive relationship with Agreeableness and low, weak correlation with Openness. Extraversion and Conscientiousness are strongly positively correlated with happiness on subjective well-being scale (SWB). Ryff (1997) assessed the five personality factors with psychological well-being scale (PWB). Their result showed that Neuroticism was inversely linked with PWB while Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness

showed consistent Positive correlation with PWB. Openness showed weak positive correlation to overall well-being.

Argyle and Lucas (1990); Furnham and Brewin (1990); Brebner and et al (1995); Francis and et al (1998) their findings reported positive relationship with Happiness and Extraversion. Extraverted people are outgoing and actively engaged in the world. Introversion is the opposite end of this dimension and is indicated by low score on the extraversion scale. As these people are very sociable they tend to show more happiness in their lives.

Gray (1982); Costa and McCrae (1980); Furnham and Petrides (2003); Spangler and Palrecha (2004) reported negative relationship between Happiness and Neuroticism. Neurotic people are always stressed. They are very moody and experience more sadness and depression along with anger and other such negative emotions. Therefore, these people experience less happiness.

3. METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Design:

It is purely correlational study. Relationship between Personality dimensions VS Happiness is assessed by Pearson's product moment correlation.

3.2 Operational definitions:

Extraversion: It is a cluster of six factors viz. Gregariousness (sociable), Assertiveness (forceful), Activity (energetic), Excitement-seeking (adventurous), Positive emotions (enthusiastic) and Warmth (outgoing).

Agreeableness: It is a cluster of six factors viz. Trust (forgiving), Straightforwardness (not demanding), Altruism (warm), Compliance (not stubborn), Modesty (not show-off) and Tender-mindedness (sympathetic).

Conscientiousness: It is a cluster of six factors viz. Competence (efficient), Order (organized), Dutifulness (not

careless), Achievement striving (thorough), Self-discipline (not lazy) and Deliberation (not impulsive).

Neuroticism: It is a cluster of six factors viz. Anxiety (tense), Angry hostility (irritable), Depression (not contented), Self-consciousness (shy), Impulsiveness (moody) and Vulnerability (not self-confident).

Openness: It is a cluster of six factors viz. Ideas (curious), Fantasy (imaginative), Aesthetics (artistic), Actions (wide interests), Feelings (excitable) and Values (unconventional).

Definition Happiness: Happiness has been defined as a combination of life satisfaction and frequency of positive and negative affect which is measured through SWB. Besides SWB components, items related to extraversion, kindness, humor, autonomy, self-efficacy, physical health and self-esteem components of eudaimonic happiness are included.

4. HYPOTHESIS:

- a) Personality Factors like Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are positively related with Happiness.
- b) Neuroticism is adversely correlated with Happiness.
- c) Openness is not correlated with Happiness.

5. TOOLS:

1. NEO-FFI by McCrae and Costa: The original NEO-FFI (1992) published by Costa and McCrae consist of 240 items which measure Big-Five Personality dimensions. The scale have shown substantial internal consistency, temporal stability and convergent and discriminant validity against spouse and peer rating (Costa and McCrae). The 60 item NEO-FFI is a shorter version of NEO-PI-R based on factor analysis of NEO-PI (Costa and McCrae). The NEO-FFI extensively used in many research to measure Big-Five Personality dimension. The reliabilities reported are adequate with a mean of .78 across the 5 factors. The NEO-FFI offers two form, form 'R' and form 'S' is

self-report version. Internal consistency values ranging from .68 to .86 for NEO-FFI ‘S’. Correlation value ranging from .76 to .90 for NEO-FFI form ‘R’

2. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Michael Argyle and Peter Hills (2002):

The test contains 29 questions and measures both subjective and psychological well-being. Validity: OHQ is correlated with well-being and Eysenck’s EPQ-R (Eysenck) ($r=.61$ between Extraversion and OHQ, Neuroticism= $-.59$ and Psychoticism= $-.17$; $P<.05$); Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale ($r=.81$) Rosenberg (1989); Life Orientation Test (LOT) Scheier and Carver ($r=.79$); Life Regard Index by Battisaand Almond (1973) ($r=.77$); Depression-Happiness Scale by Joseph and Lewis (1998) ($r=.90$, $p<.001$) Reliability: Equivalent form reliability ($r=.92$ and $r=.91$). Inter item correlation ranges from $-.04$ to $.65$. Overall items of OHI and OHQ were significantly related ($r=.80$, $p<.001$). In short OHQ is highly reliable, valid and extensively used in research work. Norms: Mean = 4; Standard Deviation = 1

Score interpretation is done on scale ranging from 1 to 6 where 1 is not happy and 6 is too happy. Score 1-2 Not Happy; Score 2-3 Somewhat Happy; Score 3-4 Not Particularly Happy; Score 4 Moderately Happy; Score 4-5 Rather Happy, Pretty Happy; Score 5-6 Very Happy; Score 6 Too Happy.

5.1 Sample: 31 college going students with age ranging from 21 to 30 years old were selected for the study.

MALE	09
FEMALE	22
TOTAL	31

5.2 Procedure: Set of questionnaire containing NEO-FFI and OHQ administered personally to 31 college going students.

5.3 Statistical Analysis: Descriptive Statistics for OHQ and NEO-FFI is calculated.

To see the correlation between NEO-FFI and Happiness are assessed by Pearson product moment correlation.

6. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION:

Happiness is a key aspect in human life. Two views of Happiness are Hedonic view and other is Eudaimonic view of Happiness. Hedonic view is mainly measured by Subjective well-being scale (SWB) while Eudaimonic view is assessed by Psychological well-being scale (PWB). Happiness depends upon many factors and it has direct link with health and success.

6.1 Descriptive Statistics: N, Mean, SD, on OHQ and NEO-FFI shown below:

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Happiness	31	3.0	5.9	4.745	.6271
Neuroticism	31	9	33	20.19	5.712
Extraversion	31	22	42	31.06	5.272
Conscientiousness	31	15	44	32.42	5.830
Openness	31	20	41	28.48	5.579
Agreeableness	31	19	40	28.71	6.430
Valid N (listwise)	31				

The table shows range and distinction of score on OHQ and Neo-FFI.

6.2 Interpretation: Personality factors are key indicators of Happiness. Most of the previous studies quoted positive links of Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness with Happiness and negative links with Neuroticism and weak positive correlation with Openness. Present study reveal the same trend. The obtained correlation with Extraversion VS Happiness ($r=.45$; $p<.05$); Openness VS Happiness ($r=.41$; $p<.06$); Conscientiousness VS Happiness ($r=.41$, $p<.02$); Agreeableness VS Happiness ($r=.37$, $p<.04$); Neuroticism VS Happiness ($r=-.36$, $p<.04$).

Extrovert people are gregarious, they enjoy social activity. They are dominated by positive emotionality, they engage in social activity and they are action oriented. Hence,

they are happier than introvert. Their enthusiastic and optimistic view leads to Happiness. Neurotic people are tense, anxious, moody, and more emotionally reactive to events than most of the people. They frequently experience negative emotions. Hence, they tend to be sad and depressed. Conscientious people live in discipline, self-control and are organized, competent, self-disciplined, deliberative, persistent and dutiful and have strong strivings for achievement. These people tend to be happy as they live a very organized and disciplined life. Openness with experience are the type of people who are imaginative and creative and those who are more conventional and down to earth. They prefer autonomy and have little bit of philosophical nature and having artistic talent. Thus, due to their independent nature O factor shows weak association with Happiness. Agreeableness reflects a person's concern with getting along and cooperating with others even if it means compromising their own interest. They have kind, helping and trusting nature. These type of people get happiness by satisfying others. Therefore, this factor is positively correlated to Happiness.

1. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

7.1 Conclusion: Personality traits like Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are positively related with Happiness. Neuroticism is adversely related with Happiness. Openness is marginally positively related with Happiness.

7.2 Limitations: Paper pencil test having some limitations. This study also has the same limitations. Due to limited data broad generalization has some restrictions.

7.3 Suggestions: Both type of happiness- Hedonic and Eudaimonic need to study separately using SWB scale and PWB scale and their association with personality traits. This

study is mostly based upon college going students. Need to extend to adult sample. Correlates of Happiness with gender and other demographic variable need to study separately. Happiness, optimism, success and personality these four variables need to study jointly.

APPENDIX

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Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills at Oxford University.

Instructions

Below are a number of statements about happiness. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each by entering a number in the blank after each statement, according to the following scale:

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

Please read the statements carefully, some of the questions are phrased positively and others negatively. Don't take too long over individual questions; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers (and no trick questions). The first answer that comes into your head is probably the right one for you. If you find some of the questions difficult, please give the answer that is true for you in general or for most of the time.

The Questionnaire

1. I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am. (R)

2. I am intensely interested in other people. _____
3. I feel that life is very rewarding. _____
4. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone. _____
5. I rarely wake up feeling rested. (R) _____
6. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R) _____
7. I find most things amusing. _____
8. I am always committed and involved. _____
9. Life is good. _____
10. I do not think that the world is a good place. (R) _____
11. I laugh a lot. _____
12. I am well satisfied about everything in my life. _____
13. I don't think I look attractive. (R) _____

14. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R) _____
15. I am very happy. _____
16. I find beauty in some things. _____
17. I always have a cheerful effect on others. _____
18. I can fit in (find time for) everything I want to. _____
19. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R) _____
20. I feel able to take anything on. _____
21. I feel fully mentally alert. _____
22. I often experience joy and elation. _____
23. I don't find it easy to make decisions. (R) _____
24. I don't have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. (R) _____
25. I feel I have a great deal of energy. _____
26. I usually have a good influence on events. _____
27. I don't have fun with other people. (R) _____
28. I don't feel particularly healthy. (R) _____
29. I don't have particularly happy memories of the past. (R) _____
