

Personality and Life-Satisfaction: A Hierarchical, Multi-Rater Perspective

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Abstract

Personality makes a substantial contribution to life-satisfaction, but it has been difficult to quantify the effect of personality. This article presents the results of five multi-rater datasets with self-ratings and informant ratings of personality and life-satisfaction to control for random and systematic measurement errors. Four datasets also included measures of domain satisfaction to predict variance that is not explained by personality traits. The data were analyzed with hierarchical confirmatory factor analysis. This method makes it possible to separate the total amount of explained variance into (a) variance explained by the Big Five, (b) variance explained by specific traits, and (c) variance explained by domains after controlling for effects of personality. The results show that the Big Five explain about one-third of the variance in life-satisfaction. The Depressiveness facet of Neuroticism consistently adds incrementally to the prediction of life satisfaction, but the amount varies considerably across datasets. The total amount of explained variance is about 50%. Personality explains more variance in students' life-satisfaction than their parents' life-satisfaction, presumably because students' lives are more similar. Domain satisfaction makes substantial contribution to the prediction of life-satisfaction accounting for 20% to 50% of the variance. The main personality predictor is the depressiveness facet of Neuroticism. It influences life-satisfaction because it lowers satisfaction with many important life domains. The results highlight the need to move beyond the Big Five as measures of personality in subjective wellbeing research.

Keywords: Personality; Depression; Big Five; Life-Satisfaction; Multi-Rater; Hierarchical Factor Analysis

Personality and Well-Being: A Hierarchical Perspective

Research on personality and happiness is nearly 100 years old (Hartmann, 1936), but lay dormant during the reign of behaviorism. Scientific investigation of this question resumed in the 1980s (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener, 1984). An influential scientific theory of happiness assumes that happiness is subjective, in that people can choose the criteria that are used to evaluate their lives (Diener, Lucas, Schimmack, & Helliwell, 2009; Diener, 1984). One implication of this theory is that people with different personality traits could all be happy as long as their personality matches their goals, aspirations, and ideals (Diener & Fujita, 1995). However, ample evidence shows that some personality traits predict higher SWB (Anglim et al., 2020).

According to Costa and McCrae (1980), personality can influence SWB independent of actual differences in lives because SWB is also influenced by people's feelings and feelings are influenced by personality dispositions. Specifically, Neuroticism is a disposition to experience more negative feelings (Negative Affect, NA) and Extraversion is a disposition to be more cheerful (Positive Affect, PA). Several studies suggest that PA and NA mediate most of the personality effects on SWB (Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002; Schimmack, Radhakrishnan et al., 2002; Schimmack, Schupp, & Wagner, 2008; Schimmack & Kim, 2020).

Costa and McCrae (1995) also proposed a hierarchical model of personality traits. In this model, the Big Five traits are relatively independent broad traits. These traits do not correspond directly to traits that are recognized in everyday trait terms. Rather, they were uncovered in exploratory factor analyses in which factors represent a higher level that is reflected in the shared variance among specific traits. For example, Neuroticism is a broad trait that is reflected in the shared variance among distinct negative affects like anger, sadness, fear, and guilt. The notion of

a hierarchy implies that specific traits below the Big Five have unique variance that is not captured by the Big Five factors. Costa and McCrae (1995) introduced the name facets for these traits and proposed six facets for each of the Big Five factors. Variance in a facet is a composite of variance in one or more Big Five traits and some additional variance. For example, Anger is a combination of high Neuroticism, low Agreeableness, and some specific factors unique to the disposition to experience more anger.

A few studies have examined the relationship of personality and wellbeing at the level of specific traits (Anglim et al., 2020, Røysamb, Nes, & Vittersø, 2014; Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004). The main finding in these studies that only two facets, specifically, the Depressiveness facet of Neuroticism and the Cheerfulness facet of Extraversion, incrementally add to the prediction of life-satisfaction. They also account for the contribution of these two Big Five factors to the prediction of life-satisfaction.

The result for Extraversion is consistent with the theory that affect is the key mediator of personality effects on life-satisfaction because cheerfulness is the disposition to have more positive affect. In contrast, assertiveness, friendliness, or sensation seeking do not imply higher levels of positive affect and empirical studies show that they do not predict higher or lower levels of life-satisfaction after taking their relationship with cheerfulness into account.

The results for Neuroticism are less straightforward. Anxiety and anger are negative affects, but they do not directly predict life-satisfaction. One possible explanation for this could be that these negative affects are functional and transitory during the pursuit of goals. In contrast, sadness and depression are related to the loss and lack of meaningful goals. This may make depression the key negative affect related to life-satisfaction.

In sum, after four decades of empirical research, the existing evidence suggests that personality traits influence life-satisfaction foremost because they influence people's affective experiences and affective experiences contribute to people's life evaluations. At the level of the Big Five, Neuroticism and Extraversion are the strongest predictors because they are broad traits that influence people's affective experiences. However, at the facet level, Depressiveness and Cheerfulness are even stronger predictors of life-satisfaction. Other personality traits are less relevant because people can create lives that match their personality. In contrast, affective dispositions are more difficult to change.

Quantifying the Contribution of Personality Traits to Life-Satisfaction

Identifying specific personality predictors of life-satisfaction is valuable, but it is also important to quantify these effects. Although precise quantitative results that are common in the natural sciences are difficult or impossible to achieve in psychology, even imprecise estimates can be valuable. For example, twin studies in Western nations suggest that about 40% of the variance in life-satisfaction judgments is explained by genetic differences, whereas the remaining 60% are explained by environmental factors, including measurement error (Nes & Røysamb, 2017). These estimates depend on the population in which they are measured, but they do suggest that personality factors contribute substantially to life-satisfaction and may explain half of the variance in life-satisfaction in Western societies.

Other quantitative information comes from longitudinal studies that can separate stable variance from changing variance in life-satisfaction. A meta-analysis suggested that about 50% of the variance in life-satisfaction reflects the influence of stable factors (Anusic & Schimmack, 2016). As environmental factors can change over time, it is likely that this variance is caused by stable personality traits. Taken together, these results suggest that up to half of the variance in

life-satisfaction is caused by heritable and stable personality factors and the other half is caused by life-circumstances.

Another way to quantify effects of personality on life-satisfaction is to use personality measures as predictors of life-satisfaction. Several meta-analyses have provided estimates of the variance that the Big Five traits explain in life-satisfaction. The latest meta-analysis suggested that the Big Five explain about 30% of the variance in life-satisfaction with slight variation depending on the actual Big Five measure (Anglim et al., 2020). However, there are several problems with this estimate. One problem is that shared method variance inflates the estimate of explained variance. Another problem is that random and unshared error variance attenuates these estimates. One study addressed this problem by using multiple raters to measure personality and SWB. This study also suggested that about 35% of the variance in SWB was explained by the Big Five factors (Kim et al., 2020). Thus, even controlling for measurement error, the Big Five do not explain all of the stable personality variance in life-satisfaction.

One explanation for this is that additional variance is explained by specific traits, namely the Depressiveness and Cheerfulness facets. Anglim et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis also provided information about facets. However, the results varied dramatically by questionnaire. For the NEO, facets added little additional variance (5%). In contrast, for the IPIP, facets added 15%. Measurement error adds additional uncertainty about the amount of variance that is explained by these facets. Thus, it is unclear whether these two facets account for most of the personality variance in life-satisfaction.

A recent set of multi-rater studies used a large set of personality items to predict life-satisfaction. These studies suggested that personality explains 60-80% of the variance in life-satisfaction (Mõttus et al., 2024). However, the results of this study are difficult to compare to

previous studies because personality was assessed with single items that only partially map onto Costa and McCrae's facet model. Another problem of these studies was that subjective wellbeing was measured with a single item (i.e., "I am happy with my life") that was administered along with the other personality items. This may have changed the cognitive processes underlying responses to this item.

The goal of this article is to reconcile this finding with the evidence in previous studies and to examine potential moderator variables that may produce stronger or weaker effects of personality. For example, Schimmack, Radhakrishnan et al. (2002) found that personality is a stronger predictor of life-satisfaction in Western nations than in more traditional nations. One possible explanation for this is that life circumstances vary more in traditional nations, whereas social policies in Western nations reduce heterogeneity in life-circumstances. Even within Western nations, life-circumstances can vary across samples. For example, the lives of university students are more similar than the lives of older adults. Thus, personality may explain relatively more variance in student samples because there is less variance in life-circumstances of students.

Hierarchical Confirmatory Factor Analysis

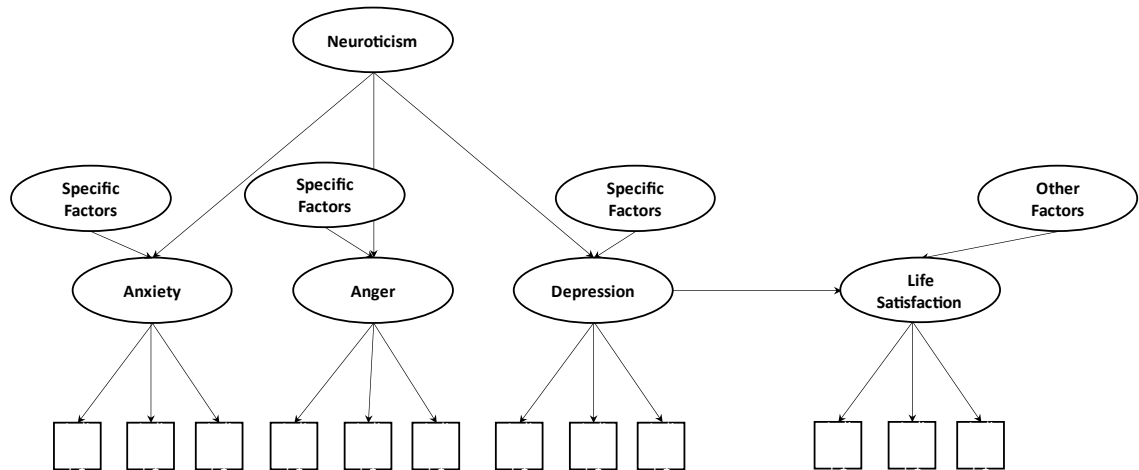
I analyzed five multi-rater datasets using the same statistical approach. The data were obtained from Möttus et al. (2024) and Schimmack and Kim (2020). The statistical method was a hierarchical structural equation model (Yung, Thissen, & McLeod, 1999). Structural equation modeling makes it possible to separate variance components in observed measures. The most common application of SEM is to separate variance that is shared among observed variables from variance that is unique to a specific observed variable under the assumption that the unique variance is measurement error. With multi-rater data, this measurement model is used using ratings by different raters. The variance shared among raters is assumed to be valid variance and

the variance unique to a specific rater is assumed to be error variance (Biesanz & West, 2002; Payne & Schimmack, 2024; Zou et al., 2013).

In a hierarchical model, the latent variables or factors that represent the shared variance among observers are related to each other by high-order latent variables. These latent variables represent broad personality dispositions that influence several specific traits. For example, Neuroticism is a broad disposition to experience several specific negative affects more often such as anxiety, anger, and sadness. At this level, the unique variance in specific traits is no longer error variance. Rather it reflects specific dispositions that are not shared with other specific traits. For example, some people may have a specific disposition to experience more anxiety, but not anger or depression. A common mistake is to ignore these specific variances and to treat them like error variance. In contrast, a hierarchical model uses this variance to examine incremental predictive validity. For the depressiveness facet of Neuroticism to add to the prediction of life-satisfaction over the influence of Neuroticism, the specific disposition to experience depression has to add to the prediction of life-satisfaction. This basic assumption of a hierarchical model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Hierarchical Model of Neuroticism with Influence of Life-Satisfaction from the Depressiveness Facet.



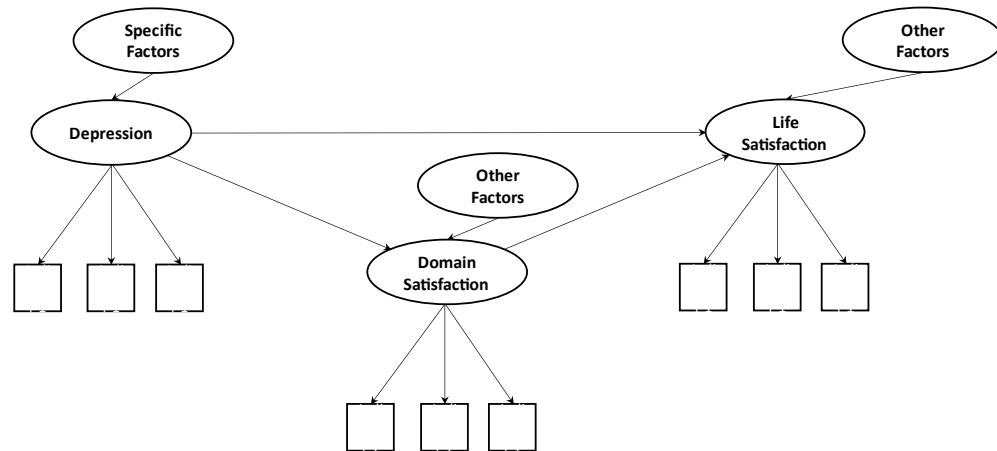
In Figure 1, the contribution of Depressiveness to life-satisfaction can be split into two independent effects that are both mediated by Depressiveness. One path starts with Neuroticism goes through Depressiveness and ends with life-satisfaction. The other path starts with the unique variance in Depressiveness that is caused by factors specific to Depressiveness and is not related to other traits. These factors also influence life-satisfaction and the effect is mediated by the Depressiveness facet. As the two causes (Neuroticism and Unique Depressiveness) are independent, the path coefficients can be squared to obtain the amount of variance that is explained by Depressiveness. This also means that we can split the amount of explained variance into the variance that is explained by the broad factor Neuroticism and the additional variance that is explained by Depressiveness above and beyond Neuroticism. In other words, the square of the indirect path from the Specific variance in Depressiveness to Life-Satisfaction estimates the incremental predictive validity of specific traits. As long as the Big Five factors and the unique

variances are independent, this variance decomposition can be generalized to any number of predictors.

When domain satisfaction ratings were available, the model in Figure 1 was extended to include domain satisfaction as a possible mediator of the personality effects on life-satisfaction (Figure 2). The model follows Brief et al.'s (1993) specification of top-down and bottom-up effects (Diener, 1984). Personality traits like Depressiveness are assumed to influence evaluations of life-domains. These effects are called top-down. Life-satisfaction judgments are constructed bottom-up by integrating information about satisfaction in important life domains (Schimmack et al., 2002). As a result, personality can have indirect effects on life-satisfaction because it influences satisfaction in life-domains that are used in life-satisfaction judgments. The model also allowed for direct effects. Direct effects may be due to the use of affect in judgments of life-satisfaction or due to unmeasured life domains (Payne & Schimmack, 2020).

Figure 2

Top-Down-Bottom-Up Model of Personality (Depressiveness) and Life-Satisfaction



The inclusion of these indirect effects of personality on life-satisfaction does not reduce the amount of variance that is explained by personality traits. Rather, the total effect is merely split into direct effects that are not mediated by domain satisfaction and indirect effects that are mediated by domains. Comparisons to a model with only personality predictors were used to ensure that the total effect in these models matched the total effect without domain satisfaction in the model. The model ensured that the unique variances in domain satisfaction were independent so that the variances in life-satisfaction explained by each domain could be added up to estimate how much domain satisfaction added to the prediction of life-satisfaction over and above the prediction by personality traits.

All models focused on Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Openness was excluded from the model because it consistently shows weak relationships with life-satisfaction.

Datasets

The data for Study 1 come from an online study of 300 dyads (participant pairs) who rated themselves and their partner. The data are analyzed with a sample size of $N = 600$ because similarity in personality is low and sampling errors are only slightly underestimated. The key results are so strong that these biases are practically irrelevant. Personality was measured with a set of 100 items that are intended to measure 100 specific traits (Henry & Möttus, 2022). However, item-content makes it possible to match some of these items to facets and factor analysis can be used to identify the Big Five. Furthermore, in multi-rater data a single item can be sufficient to measure constructs with high validity in latent variable models because latent variables remove random measurement error, rater specific errors, and shared method variance. The main problem is that latent variables based on two indicators (self and informant rating with a single item) can have large standard errors, especially in small samples. Another problem is low power to identify personality predictors with small effect sizes. These problems make it difficult to explore the data and build robust and replicable models. For this reason, the model was developed using the much larger dataset of Study 2. This model was then fitted to this dataset without modification. This study is reported first because it did not include measures of domain satisfaction. A notable aspect of this study was that subjective wellbeing was measured with a single item “I am happy with my life” that was administered along with the other personality items. Self-informant agreement for this item was slightly higher than in other studies, $r = .50$ (Schneider & Schimmack, 2009).

Study 2

Study 2 uses a much larger dataset with Estonian participants ($N = 20,886$). The main difference to Study 1 was that the questionnaire did not include the item “often feel blue,” and included questions about satisfaction with three important life domains that often contribute to the prediction of life-satisfaction, namely “I am happy with my financial situation,” “I am happy with my job,” and “I am happy with my relationships.” It was still possible to model a depressiveness facet factor based on the items that loaded on this factor in Study 1. The model used a subset of the 100 personality items. Items were selected because they were needed to fit the Big Five factors and because they predicted life-satisfaction in Mõttus et al.’s (2024) regression model.

Study 3 uses the data from the Mississauga Family Study (Kim & Schimmack, 2020; Payne & Schimmack, 2020). The study is a family-study in which students and their biological parents provides self-ratings and informant ratings of each other. The data are analyzed separately with students, mothers, and fathers as targets. Personality was measured with a brief Big Five questionnaire with 3 items per factor. Additional items measured the depressiveness and cheerfulness facet with three items each. Life-satisfaction was measured with the first three items from Diener’s Satisfaction with Life Scale. Only the first three items are used because they have superior psychometric properties (Oishi, 2006). Domain satisfaction was measured with single items. This is not a problem in multi-rater studies that can correct for unreliability based on rater-agreement. Previous research suggested that the following domains may contribute to life-satisfaction, namely satisfaction with parents for students, satisfaction with academics for students and work for parents, satisfaction with romantic relationship, housing, and finances (Payne & Schimmack, 2020). Satisfaction with friendships, recreation, and health were also included in the model. In this study, life-satisfaction was assessed before questions about

personality or domain satisfaction to avoid context effects. The advantage of this study is that personality and life-satisfaction were measured with well-established items and that the study included a comprehensive set of important life domains.

Results

Big Five Factors and SWB

The complete results can be found on OSF (<https://osf.io/4tqwa/>). Table 1 shows the results for the Big Five factors. The results confirm previous results that Neuroticism is the strongest predictor of life-satisfaction. They also show that Agreeableness consistently has weak effects. The results for Extraversion are more surprising. Extraversion is often considered the second strongest predictor of life-satisfaction (Anglim et al., 2020), but here it is often a weak predictor. One reason is that Extraversion effects become weaker in studies that correct for shared method factors (Kim et al., 2020; McCrae & Costa, 1991; Schimmack et al., 2008). The main finding is that the amount of explained variance is below 50% in multi-rater studies. This confirms the results in previous studies using the same statistical model.

The results also suggest that study design is a moderator. The two studies that included the SWB measure along with personality items showed more explained variance than the studies in which Diener's life-satisfaction items were administered separately and before the personality items.

Table 1

Big Five Factors as Predictors of Life-Satisfaction

	N	E	A	C	R2
UK	-.63	.35	.11	.06	.47
Estonia	-.50	.08	.07	.24	.43
Mississauga					
Students	-.41	.16	.23	.23	.33
Mothers	-.46	.17	.06	.09	.25
Father	-.39	.08	.29	.27	.32
Average	-.42	.13	.19	.20	.29

Specific Personality Predictors of SWB

The results in Table 2 are inconsistent across datasets. In the UK, specific traits add 51% to the prediction of life-satisfaction. This means personality explains nearly all, $47 + 51 = 98\%$, of the variance in life-satisfaction. This finding is not replicated in the larger dataset in Estonia, where specific traits add only 21% additional explained variance. The Mississauga data also show more explained variance for students than for their parents, although the raters were the same. This suggests that personality effects are stronger in student samples than in samples of adults.

In datasets 1 and 2, additional personality traits explained 10 to 20% more variance. However, the specific items did not replicate across the two datasets. Thus, it is unclear whether

these results are method artifacts or whether personality effects of these traits vary across populations.

Table 2

Facets as Predictors of Life-Satisfaction

	Depression	Cheerfulness	Other R2	Total R2
UK	-.44	.34	.21	.51
Estonia	-.18	.28	.10	.21
Mississauga				
Students	-.57	-.01	-	.33
Mothers	-.43	.10	-	.19
Father	-.24	.05	-	.06
Average	-.41	.05	-	.19

Domain Satisfaction and SWB

The UK sample did not include measures of domain satisfaction. In the Estonian sample, the unique variance in satisfaction with finances, $b = .35$, social relationships, $b = .34$, and work, $b = .15$ combined explained 26% of the variance in life-satisfaction. In the Mississauga sample, 9 domains explained 18% of the variance in students' life-satisfaction, 43% of the variance in mothers' life-satisfaction, and 52% of the variance in fathers' life-satisfaction. The larger

percentages of explained variance in parents' life-satisfaction mirror the smaller contribution of personality to parents' life-satisfaction.

I followed up on the differences between students and parents in the Mississauga study in the amount of explained variance by personality versus domains. Explained variance is a standardized effect size. If the relative proportions of personality and domain variance are due to a larger portion of domain variance, there should be more variance in parents' life-satisfaction. A comparison of the variances shows, indeed, less variance for students (Var = 0.336, SE = .044) than for mothers (Var = 0.660, SE = .068) and fathers (0.522, SE = 0.59). A formal test of differences in variances in a separate structural equation model that compared students' variance to parents' variance showed a significant difference, $z = 3.708$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

The contribution of internal and external factors to happiness has been debated for centuries. Modern scientific research on subjective well-being suggests that both factors matter, but their relative importance remained unclear. There can be no absolute answer to this question because effect sizes depend on the variability of internal and external causes. In Western societies, policies reduce variance in environmental influences on wellbeing. This implies that internal factors that are difficult to change account for a larger portion of the variance in wellbeing across individuals. The present results suggest that personality traits explain approximately half of the variance in life-satisfaction. The results also provide evidence that domain satisfaction adds to the prediction of life-satisfaction after controlling for personality effects. Thus, life-satisfaction is influenced by both personality traits and life-circumstances.

The results also provide further evidence for Costa and McCrae's (1980) hypothesis that personality effects are related to affective dispositions. The influence of Neuroticism is mediated

by Depression. The unique variance in Depressiveness adds to the prediction of life-satisfaction above and beyond Neuroticism. Moreover, most of these effects were mediated by domain satisfaction. This finding suggests that Depressiveness is linked to a general negative bias in evaluations of life-circumstances. The specific processes underlying this relationship are not clear and need to be examined in future research. To do so, it will be useful to integrate the large literature on depression with research on SWB. While high SWB is more than the absence of depression, high levels of depression do undermine the capacity to enjoy life and have high SWB. The finding also has implications for the measurement of affective experiences in SWB research. Diener (1984) included low levels of negative affect as an indicator of high SWB. The present results suggest that some negative affects are more detrimental to SWB than others (Payne & Schimmack, 2024). SWB researchers should therefore pay more attention to the measurement of negative affect and ensure that they measure depressive affect.

The results for Extraversion and Cheerfulness are less supportive of Costa and McCrae's theory. In the Mississauga family study, these personality traits added little to the prediction of life-satisfaction. This provides further evidence that the effect of Extraversion has been exaggerated in review articles and that the effect may be moderated by cultural or other factors. Given the theoretical importance of Extraversion, it would be premature to exclude Cheerfulness from future studies. Rather, Cheerfulness should be measured to further examine when it contributes to the prediction of life-satisfaction. It is also important to ensure that measures of trait and state positive affect are valid (Payne & Schimmack, 2024). Studies that measure the valence of state-affect often show strong relationships with life-satisfaction. The validity of personality measures of positive affect has received less attention. A good measure of dispositional cheerfulness should focus on the valence of affective experiences.

Research with Costa and McCrae's 30 facets suggests few facets that consistently add to the prediction of life-satisfaction. The present study also found no consistent predictors of life-satisfaction in the two samples that measured a broad set of additional traits. The high amount of explained variance also restricts the amount of variance that additional personality traits can predict. However, future studies need to search for additional predictors that contribute to life-satisfaction above and beyond Depressiveness and Cheerfulness.

The present results suggest that effects of personality on life-satisfaction are mediated by evaluations of important life domains. Depressiveness leads to negative evaluations of many life domains (e.g., romantic satisfaction, job satisfaction, health satisfaction). Although these effects on each domain are not that strong, they get amplified in overall life-satisfaction judgments because Depressiveness is a common factor. In contrast, domain-specific factors that contribute to satisfaction in a single domain cancel each other out. This makes Depressiveness such a strong predictor of satisfaction with life in general. The results provide little support for the hypothesis that people directly rely on memories of their past affective experiences because the effect of Depressiveness was fully mediated by domain satisfaction. However, future studies need to examine this question with measures of actual affective experiences rather than affective dispositions.

Mõttus et al.'s (2024) study suggested that previous studies underestimated the effect of personality because they did not control for unshared method variance and did not include specific traits that contribute to life satisfaction. The present results provide a different explanation. One possible reason for the high amount of explained variance may be the unusual assessment of life-satisfaction with an item that was administered with the other personality items. This may have changed how participants interpret the item and respond to it. Future

studies should directly compare how item context influences responses to life-satisfaction items. To ensure that people focus on important life domains that make up their lives, it is preferable to administer global life-satisfaction items separately and before other questions about personality or domain satisfaction.

The results also suggest that personality has a stronger influence on life-satisfaction of students than on the life-satisfaction of older adults. One possible explanation is that there is less variability in students' actual and ideal lives. This finding may also explain why psychologists overestimated the effects of personality and adaptation in the 1990s based on student samples (Suh, Diener, Fujita, 1996). Studies with adult samples in the 2000s revealed that life-events like marriage, divorce, and unemployment can have lasting effects on life-satisfaction, but these events are rare in student populations (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006).

The different amounts of explained variance for students and their parents underscore the importance that explained variance is a population effect size that can vary from population to population. It is also important to point out that these effect size estimates can underestimate the importance of life-events for individuals (Schimmack et al., 2008). The reason is that correlation coefficients are influenced by the frequency of events and the impact of these events on life-satisfaction. Small correlations can be observed for rare events with strong effects like unemployment or severe illnesses. In addition, the results were obtained within nations with relatively high living standards. Cross-national studies show that life-circumstances that vary little in these samples contribute to national differences in life-satisfaction and to variation in life-satisfaction with more variability in living conditions. In modern Western nations, welfare systems often buffer these effects and reduce variation in life-circumstances. Moreover, individuals are motivated to maximize life-satisfaction. Thus, the factors that explain most of the

variance are probably less likely to control. Consistent with this argument, mental health problems remain a major challenge in Western nations. The strong effect of Depression therefore does not mean that environmental factors do not matter. First, the onset of depressive episodes is often triggered by environmental stressors. Second, depressiveness has such a strong effect because many people fail to get the proper treatment. Investing in mental health may be more helpful to ensure high life-satisfaction in Western societies.

Limitations

A key challenge in personality research is to measure personality dispositions. Multi-rater studies are useful to remove some sources of measurement error, but rater agreement relies on observable behaviors. It is therefore difficult to distinguish the contribution of dispositions and situational factors to inter-rater agreement. Longitudinal studies are needed to separate state and trait variance. While there have been longitudinal studies of life-satisfaction (Schimmack & Lucas, 2010) and depression (), studies that examine depression and life-satisfaction over time are rare (Joshi, 2022). Using trait-state variance decomposition of this longitudinal study suggests that stable trait variance in depression explains about 16% of the variance in life-satisfaction. This estimate does not control for shared method factors. However, even this estimate suggests that less than 50% of the valid variance in life-satisfaction is explained by trait Depressiveness ($.16/.40 = 40\%$). The results also showed that state depressiveness was related to state life-satisfaction. Thus, it is possible that the present results overestimate the contribution of Depressiveness because responses to the personality items may have been influenced by recent experiences of depression. To address this concern, it is important to study depression and life-satisfaction over an extended period of time with multiple raters. Results of such a study, even if it were conducted, will not be available for years. In the meantime, researchers need to validate

personality measures to ensure that they are mostly measuring stable dispositions rather than past experiences. Studies can also include trait and state measures to examine discriminant validity and reduce measurement error in trait measures. Based on the existing evidence, I conclude that stable genetic differences in a disposition to experience more depressive affect explain 50 +/- 20% of the variance in life-satisfaction and that this trait accounts for most of the stable personality variance in life-satisfaction.

Conclusion

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