



Self-Esteem Predicting Subjective Well Being beyond Big Five Factors of Personality



Aline da Silva Frost | Jean C. Natividade

Subjective Well-being (SWB) can be understood as a multidimensional construct formed by cognitive and affective components. The affective components include negative and positive affect, and the cognitive component referring to a judgement of one's own life, known as life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999; Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid, & Lucas, 2012). Among the factors that have been related to SWB, personality and self-esteem are some of the most prominent ones. Regarding personality, there are well supported theoretical linkages between the Big Five Factors of Personality (BFF) and SWB (Piers Steel, Joseph Schmidt, and Jonas Shultz, 2008). Firstly, people with certain traits may initiate life events that influence SWB; alternatively, trait influences mood, and then both mood and trait may influence SWB (McCrae and Costa 1991). Secondly, there seems to be an overlap between extraversion, neuroticism traits and SWB, not least because of the fact that the positive emotions facet of extraversion greatly correlates with positive affect, and neuroticism correlates with negative affect (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). Regarding self-esteem, which can be defined as a relatively stable evaluation of the subject about oneself, the links are not less telling. Self-esteem has been positively related to life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively to negative affect (Sonja Lyubomirsky, Chris Tkach And M. Robin Dimatteo, 2006). Meanwhile evidence has shown relation between both BFF and Self-Esteem and SWB, it is important to take into account the relationship of both conjointly.

Objective

Test the predictive power of Self-Esteem and the Big Five Factors of personality on Subjective Well-Being.

Method

We have applied an online questionnaire to 4,717 Brazilian adults, mean age of 27.8 years (SD = 9.16), 66% were women.

. Positive and Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; adapted to Portuguese by Zanon & Hutz, 2014). This scale consists of 40 items, 20 for each factor. The participant judges how accurately each adjective describes themselves on a scale of 1 to 5.

. Satisfaction With Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993; adapted to Portuguese by Hutz, Zanon & Bardagi, 2014). This is a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7.

. Bateria Fatorial de Personalidade (Nunes, Hutz & Nunes, 2010). This test is used to measure the Big Five Factors of Personality on Brazilian samples. It consists of 126 items on a 7 point Likert scale.

.Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965; adapted to Portuguese by Hutz, Zanon & Vazquez, 2014). This test consists of 10 items on a 4 point Likert scale

We ran hierarchical multiple linear regressions analyzes for each component of SWB (Life satisfaction, Positive affect, and Negative Affect) including Self-Esteem in the first block, and the BFF in the second block as predictors.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
self-esteem	4717	1	4	3.2	0.63
life satisfaction	4717	1	7	4.7	1.41
positive affect	4717	1	5	3.2	0.72
negative affect	4717	1	5	2.4	0.80
agreeableness	4618	1.92	7	5.2	0.78
extraversion	4618	1.08	7	4.6	0.10
conscientiousness	4618	1.73	7	5.3	0.87
neuroticism	4618	1	7	3.7	1.16
openness	4618	1	7	5.0	0.87

Table 2. Correlations among the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. self-esteem	-								
2. life satisfaction	.58**	-							
3. positive affect	.56**	.52**	-						
4. negative affect	-.56**	-.47**	-.40**	-					
5. extraversion	.39**	.30**	.43**	-.16**	-				
6. agreeableness	.27**	.24**	.09**	-.26**	.09**	-			
7. conscientious.	.37**	.26**	.36**	-.11**	.25**	.22**	-		
8. neuroticism	-.69**	-.46**	-.48**	.64**	-.25**	-.33**	-.29**	-	
9. openness	.05**	-.0001	.12**	.03*	.28**	-.15**	.07**	.06**	-
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).									
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).									

Table 3. Two predictive models for Subjective Well-being

		life satisfaction				positive affect				negative affect			
		b	β	t	p	b	β	t	p	b	β	t	p
First model	variables												
	(constant)	0.46		5.24	<0.001	115		24.88	<0.001	4.71		91.30	<0.001
	self-esteem	130	0.58	48.23	<0.001	0.64	0.56	45.76	<0.001	-0.71	-0.55	-45.26	<0.001
	R2			0.335				0.312				0.307	
	ΔR2 adjusted			0.335				0.312				0.307	
Second Model	(constant)	0.72		2.94	0.003	154		12.84	<0.001	1.86		14.44	<0.001
	self-esteem	100	0.44	25.51	<0.001	0.35	0.30	18.04	<0.001	-0.35	-0.27	-16.76	<0.001
	openness	-0.06	-0.04	-3.08	0.002	0.02	0.02	1.96	0.051	-0.02	-0.02	-1.37	0.171
	extraversion	0.14	0.10	7.59	<0.001	0.17	0.23	17.74	<0.001	0.03	0.04	2.84	0.005
	neuroticism	-0.12	-0.10	-6.07	<0.001	-0.13	-0.20	-12.75	<0.001	0.23	0.49	31.47	<0.001
	conscientiousness	0.05	0.03	2.30	0.022	0.13	0.16	12.49	<0.001	0.13	0.14	11.66	<0.001
	agreeableness	0.11	0.06	4.78	<0.001	-0.10	-0.11	-8.59	<0.001	-0.06	-0.06	-4.85	<0.001
	R2			0.357				0.412				0.453	
	ΔR2 adjusted			0.022				0.100				0.146	

Discussion

Past studies have suggested that personality factors are among the most consistent predictors of SWB (Garcia & Erlandsson, 2011; Hayes & Joseph, 2003; Lucas & Diener, 2008; Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). For instance, in a meta-analysis conducted by Brajsa-Zganec, Ivanovic e Lipovcan (2011), the BFF accounted for 17% of Life Satisfaction variance, 37% of Positive Affect variance and 52% of Negative Affect variance (Woyciekoski, Natividade & Hutz, 2014). However, the present research has highlighted that when self-esteem is included in the models, the predictive power of the BFF for SWB is greatly reduced. Beyond the theoretical importance of this finding, we also suggest it may have practical relevance in interventions aiming to increase well-being.

References

. Brajsa-Zganec, A., Ivanovic, D., & Lipovcan, L. K. (2011). Personality traits and social desirability as predictors of subjective well-being. *Psihologijske Teme*, 20(2), 261-276.

. DeNeve, K. M., & Cooper, H. (1998). The happy personality: A meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(2),197-229.

. Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2), 276-302.

. Garcia, D., & Erlandsson, A. (2011). The relationship between personality and subjective well-being: Different association patterns when measuring the affective component in frequency and intensity. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12(6), 1023-1034

. Lucas, R. E., & Diener, E. (2008). Personality and subjective well-being. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality-theory and research* (pp. 795-814). New York: The Guilford Press.

. Luhmann, M., Hofmann, W., Eid, M., & Lucas, R. E. (2012). Subjective well-being and adaptation to life events: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 7, 592-615. doi: 10.1037/a0025948

. Lyubomirsky, S., Tkach, C., Di Matteo, M. (2006) What are the differences between happiness and self-esteem? *Soc Indic Res* 2006; 78: 363-404.

. Hayes, N., & Joseph, S. (2003). Big 5 Correlates of three measures of subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34(4), 723-727

. Hutz, C. S., Zanon, C., & Bardagi, M. (2014). Satisfação de Vida. In C. S. Hutz (Ed.), *Avaliação em Psicologia Positiva* (pp.43-48). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

. Hutz, C. S., Zanon, C., & Vazquez, A. N. (2014). Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg. In C. S. Hutz (Ed.), *Avaliação em Psicologia Positiva* (pp.43-48). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

. Hutz, C. S. & Zanon, C. (2014). Escala de Afetos Positivos e Afetos Negativos (Panos). In C. S. Hutz (Ed.), *Avaliação em Psicologia Positiva* (pp.43-48). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

. McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1991). Adding liebe und arbeit: The full five-factor model and well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(2), 227-232.

. Nunes, C. H. S., Hutz, C. S., & Nunes, M. O. (2010). Bateria fatorial de personalidade - manual técnico. Casa do Psicólogo: São Paulo.

. Pavot, W & Diener, E. (1993). Review of the Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Psychological Assessment*, 5: 164–172

. Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

. Steel, P., Schmidt, J., & Shultz, J. (2008). Refining the relationship between personality and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(1), 138-161.

. Woyciekoski, C., Natividade, J., Hutz, C. (2014). As Contribuições da Personalidade e dos Eventos de Vida para o Bem-Estar Subjetivo. *Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa*, 30(4)

CONTACT

L2PS – PUC-Rio
Rua Marquês de São Vicente, 225, Gávea
Rio de Janeiro- RJ – Brasil
www.l2ps.org