

Big five personality traits and well-being: Evidence from university students of India

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Abstract: *Agreeableness amongst individuals is known to form a significant personality dimension impacting well-being. The Agreeableness trait and extraversion, and Neuroticism are given the main focus here as a prognosticator of the emotional element of well-being amongst Indian Students. Centered upon Big Five (B5) Personality test and SWB, Students (N=320) were rendered with questionnaires. Utilizing correlation, multiple regression analysis, in addition to structural equation modeling, the outcomes were examined. The Outcomes exhibited that the Neuroticism trait directly links to Negative Emotions (NE), while Extraversion is directly related to Positive Emotions (PE). Especially, Agreeableness is related to positive-negative emotions together with balance emotions.*

Keywords: *Personality traits, Big Five Traits, Subjective Well-being (SWB), Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous companies in India, to augment productivity, are endeavoring to integrate holistic well-being in their strategies. This strategy encompasses Emotional Well-Being (EWB), as per a recent 'Well-Being Study' by Willis Towers Watsons (2018). Sixty-one percent of companies have undergone at least one action to enhance part of workers' well-being in 2018, yet, most do not correctly devise a decent well-being strategy, which rises to be a concern. This state intends to interpret all-round well-being into ameliorated productivity in addition to financial performance. EWB is concerned with the person's ability to identify, comprehend and accept how they feel.

Past research has established a clear fact that the relationship between Extraversion and Neuroticism is strong on well-being; therefore, in this research, the emphasis is mainly on the added impact of Agreeableness on well-being. The Agreeableness was hypothesized to encompass a positive association with Well-Being centered on past research work. However, the past researches show very insufficient evidence on the association of Agreeableness and EWB. The test was conducted on finding whether enhancing Agreeableness would provide feasible enlightenment for augmenting in balance PE (affect balance). Agreeableness is vital because, after extraversion and Neuroticism, the next component that is directly linked with the PE component of well-being is Agreeableness (Lucas 2018). Organizations today are

examining into EWB aspect for augmenting the productivity of employees. These research findings may help out in designing better well-being strategies in organizations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive research has revealed that there could be a strong association between well-being and personality traits (Diener 1999). Researchers have verged upon realizing that factors, which have the strongest association with SWB, are stable personality traits (Lucas, R. E. 2018; Steel, Schmidt & Shultz, 2008; Diener 1999). Recent researches have specified that the personality qualities' impact on SWB is much more significant. It is established to be as much as '4' times as preceding studies have indicated (Steel, Schmidt & Shultz, 2008). Based on B5 factors, the personality traits design was refined over the past two decades (McCrae & Costa, 2003; McCrae & Costa, 1999; Goldberg, 1990). Today it is considered a standard framework to study multiple personality traits in addition to sub-traits. The strongest prognosticator of SWB is established to be extraversion in addition to Neuroticism. In addition to this, among B5 traits, Agreeableness and conscientiousness come next in order of importance (Lucas 2018). Openness is not dependably related to well-being as it both increases the positive and negative effects (McCrae & Costa, 1991).

Albeit numerous personality traits are established to be connected with well-being (Deneve & Cooper, 1998), much of the focused area of research has been extraversion together with Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae 1980). Examining the impact of personality traits on well-being, depending only on extraversion factors along with Neuroticism, is an oversimplification (Deneve & Cooper 1998). Relatively overlooked Agreeableness was positively related to happiness (Lucas 2018; Deneve & Cooper 1998; Costa & McCrae 1980). For example, Lucas mentions comprehensive studies by Steel (2008) that show that Agreeableness and conscientiousness correlated .20 with well-being gauges (Lucas, 2018). Additionally, various other studies found a significant correlation between Agreeableness and well-being (Deneve & Cooper, 1998).

2.1 Personality Trait of Agreeableness and Well-Being

The agreeableness trait has been studied quite extensively. Despite this, Agreeableness was primarily overlooked concerning well-being (McCrae, 1990), especially on PE and NE. For understanding the association between Agreeableness and emotions, investigators have continuously called for more research (Matsumoto, 2006). The association between personality traits, like Agreeableness and emotion regulation, is also found in previous research. One such instance is the relation between Agreeableness and PE (Matsumoto, 2006).

Agreeableness was identified as having instrumental effects on well-being. This indicated that well-being has an impact on positive experiences in social and achievement situations (Deneve & Cooper 1998). Because Agreeableness enhances relationship quality, Agreeableness brings higher life satisfaction and better quality of life (McCrae and Costa, 1991). This is how it brings an instrumental effect on well-being. Control of emotional experiences was found related to Agreeableness (Haas, Omura, Constable, and Canli, 2007). Some recent researchers have recognized that emotions, which involve relationships, are strongly tied up with Agreeableness (Graziano & Tobin 2009). Agreeable individuals 'often regulate their NE, which results in upholding social cohesion. All this may lead an agreeable individual to create a less negative effect when dealing with the conflict circumstances.

It is also found that anger, along with the negative effect in the circumstances involving frustration, is even better controlled by agreeable people (Graziano, Campbell & Hair, 1996). Agreeableness helps minimize the negative impact arising due to conflict and increasing satisfaction (Kinnunen et al., 2003). In addition to this, anger and aggression were inversely allied with Agreeableness (Martin, Watson and Wan 2000). Furthermore, agreeable individuals are established to be less vulnerable to hostile thoughts. This kind of individuals quickly dissociates Hostile thoughts and aggression from themselves (Meier, Robinson, & Wilkowski, 2006). In line with Scott & Robinson (2007), Agreeableness may come out to be a significant component in the Negative Emotions self-regulation. McCrae and Costa (1991) recommended Agreeableness plays an instrumental role in well-being, i.e., increases in PE and reduction in NE. The missing link of Agreeableness is its effect on balance emotions, which subtracts PE and NE.

2.2 Hypothesis Building

Most research on the relationships between emotional elements of SWB through B5 factors has concentrated on Extraversion together with Neuroticism. Literature mentioned in the study (Lucas, 2018; Steel, 2008; Deneve & Cooper, 1998; McCrae & Costa, 1991) clearly emphasized examining the relationship between Agreeableness and Emotions. It is critical to re-examine the association between fundamental factors of personality and emotions and the impact of Agreeableness on PE and NE. The current study intends to examine the association between Agreeableness and the EWB by controlling extraversion and Neuroticism.

H1: *Agreeableness significantly increases positive emotions and reduces negative emotions subsequent to controlling for Extraversion and Neuroticism*

As it is entrenched in past research, the association between Neuroticism on well-being is vital; hence, in this research, the emphasis is on probing the added Agreeableness's effect on well-being. Based on earlier research work, Agreeableness was hypothesized to have a positive association with Well-Being. But there was not enough evidence in the precedent researches on the association between Agreeableness and EWB. Nonetheless, Agreeableness was anticipated to have a positive relation to Well-Being. This is grounded on the positive correlations found in previous studies (Deneve and cooper, 1998).

H2: *Agreeableness significantly impacts the well-being of individuals.*

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling

The sample encompassed 320 voluntary respondents (210 males and 110 females) as of Indian University. They all were around 19–25 years of age and unmarried. All partakers were studying in their graduation at University and they all had a good comprehension of English. Respondents were given two weeks to finish the survey. A proper follow-up was performed until all the questions were completed.

3.2 Instruments

The B5 factor inventory (McCrae & Costa, 1999), also called a NEO-FFI- English version, was employed to gauge the B5 personality's dimensions. It is a sixty-item version of the NEO PI-R (180-items) that renders a general and swift evaluation of five traits of personality: a)

Openness, b) Conscientiousness, c) Extraversion, d) Agreeableness as well as e) Neuroticism. These are the B5 traits. The scale is '5' point Likert scale (5PLS) ranging from "Strongly Disagrees" to "Strongly Agree". It encompasses items such as "I am outgoing and Sociable, I am inclined to be disorganized" in addition to "I am inclined to be lazy" et cetera. Cronbach's alpha was established to be satisfactory ($\alpha = .70$).

The scales of Positives and Negatives Experience (SPANE) were employed to gauge SWB (Diener & Diener, 2009), which is centered upon Ed Diener's theory of SWB. Here, happiness is more of PE than NE. There are twelve-item in the SPANE questionnaire where PE is gauged utilizing '6' items. Cronbach's alpha was established to be acceptable ($\alpha = .70$).

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The mean of Openness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, along with Agreeableness are established to be high in males. As stated by the mean, Neuroticism in males ($M=49.49$, $SD=23.38$) is inclined to be below Neuroticism in females (50.17 , $SD=23.17$). Global findings are as well on the same lines. In a worldwide study involving forty-nine Nations, men scored considerably below women in Neuroticism (Schmitt et al., 2007). The relationship between personality traits and SWB was established centered upon correlation analysis (Table 1). Extraversion and Agreeableness were set to encompass considerable correlation with PE and balance emotions (affect balance). Correlation between Neuroticism correlated was found to be significant ($r = .11$). There is a positive alliance between openness and PE ($r = .25$) and affects balance ($r = .19$). Agreeableness was found to positively affect positive affect ($r = .25$) and a negative correlation with negative effect ($r = -.19$) and aimed to influence balance agreeableness correlated positively ($r = .25$).

Table 1: Bivariate correlations between B5 and SWB

Bivariate correlations between Big Five and Subjective Well-Being							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Openness							
2. Conscientiousness	0.057						
3. Extraversion	.303*	.144*					
4. Agreeableness	* .359*	* .182*	* .261*				
5. Neuroticism	* .217*	-0.087	.021	.082			
6. Positive Emotions	* .250*	* .121*	* .242*	.252**	0.005		
7. Negative Emotions	-0.089	-0.12	-.113*	.194**	.116*	-0.5	
8. Affect Balance	* .190*	* .139*	* .200*	.255**	0.073	* .848*	-.882**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

**p<.01.								
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Multiple-Regression Analyses (MRA) stepwise technique was implemented for scrutinizing the variation on SWB (positive, negative affect along with affect balance) on account of personality traits (Table 2). The stepwise technique is employed for the integration of variables on the model. Gender was coded as 0 - men and 1 - women; as exhibited in Table 2, gender (b = .02) affects well-being; however, not significant. Nonetheless, when the extraversion along with Neuroticism dimensions were controlled (Table 2), openness (b=.02) together with Agreeableness (b=.02) turned into considerable. Conversely, when Extraversion and Neuroticism have controlled in the instance of NE, merely Agreeableness (-.03) stayed a notable predictor of NE. Lastly, when Extraversion together with Neuroticism was controlled to see the effect of remaining personality traits on Affect Balance, just Agreeableness (.05) turned out to be a vital predictor of balance emotions.

The final model as exhibited in Fig. 1 suited the data well ($\chi^2=80.002$, $df = 1$; $P = 0.000$). Here, Extraversion (path weight .14), Openness (path weight .15) and Agreeableness (path weight .15) were the B5 dimensions that significantly predicted PE. NE was significantly predicted by Neuroticism (path weight .13) and Agreeableness (path weight -.16). The finest predictor of well-being is Agreeableness. Agreeableness is the merely variable, which has predicted both PE and NE significantly. Hence, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 are fully supported. The result supports the assertion that Agreeableness significantly increases PE and reduces NE to control for extraversion and Neuroticism. Additionally, Agreeableness significantly impacts the well-being of individuals.

Figure 1: SEM Model

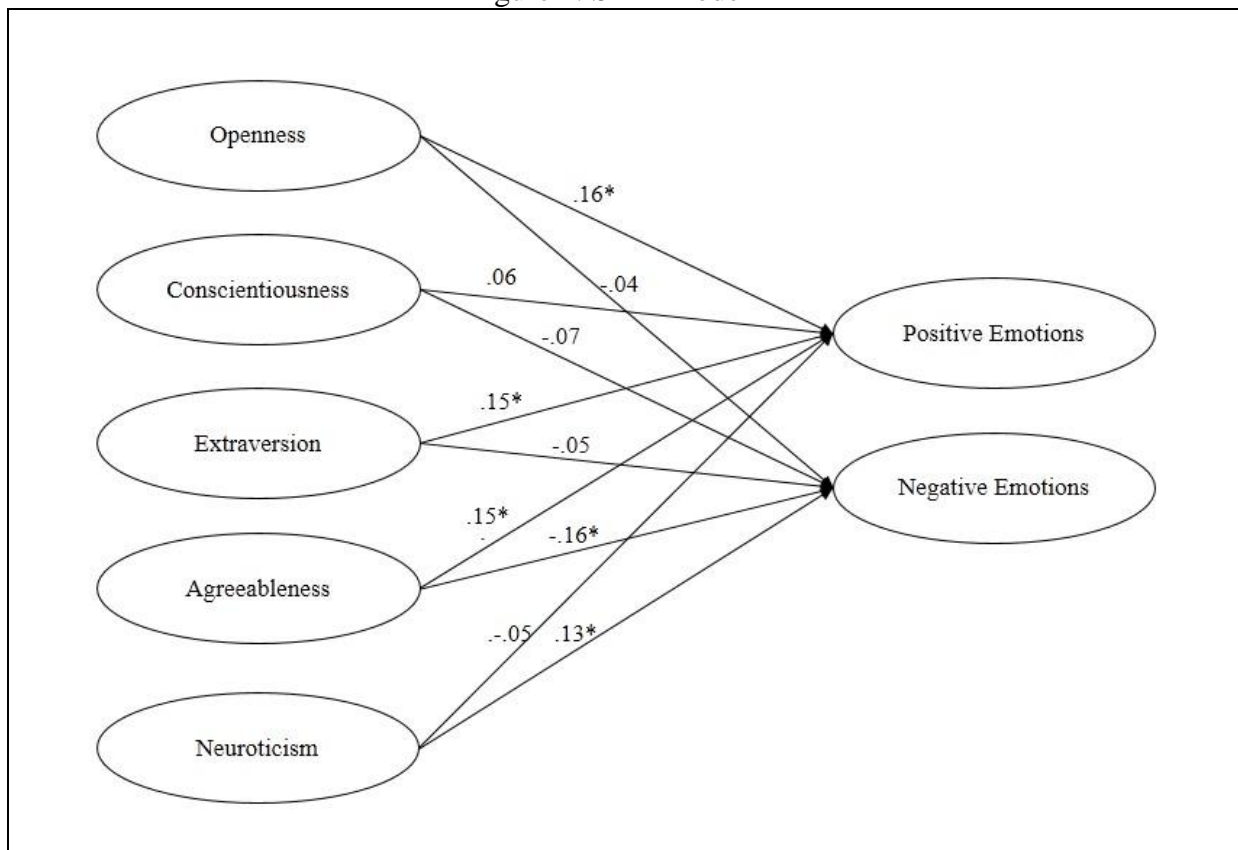


Fig 1 depicts the SEM of B5 personality traits associated with SWB. Note: N = 320. * $p < .05$. Standardized path coefficients are exhibited. The mathematical assessment to discover the correlations is exhibited in table 5 and 6.

5. DISCUSSION

This paper analyzed the relationship between extraversion, Neuroticism along with SWB. The analysis of outcomes has extended the overlooked area of Agreeableness to be a considerable predictor for well-being. Results have signified that personality significantly predicts SWB, especially its emotional component. Results also showed that the Neuroticism trait closely links to NE, while Extraversion is associated closely with PE (Lucas, 2018). Adding to this, Agreeableness is associated with PE and NE. From the viewpoint of the B5 Personality Traits, these results fully endorse the observations made by Matsumoto (2006) that the Agreeableness trait impacts emotions. As of the current study, it is evident that Agreeableness is the considerable prognosticator of positive effect, negative effect, balance emotions, and well-being. However, the present research further elucidates that we cannot ignore the value of the extraversion trait and neuroticism trait in predicting SWB. Instead, the results clearly emphasized that Agreeableness seems to be an essential variable for the forecast of PE and NE only when Extraversion and Neuroticism are controlled. Earlier various studies have stated the same phenomenon (Lucas, 2018; Deneve & Cooper, 1998; Steel, 2008; McCrae & Costa, 1991). The results also exhibited that Agreeableness is equally crucial for affecting balance emotions after controlling extraversion and Neuroticism.

It appears that there is a likely relationship between Agreeableness and SWB with the relations to cultural norms in addition to values. One possible cause of finding such relationships can well be Indian culture and its impact (Tanksale, 2015). Indian culture is collectivists naturally and Indians put immense value aimed at conformity to cultural norms. In Indian culture, people's life contentment and Self-pleasure are of lesser importance (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998). Individualistic cultures, such as the USA, put significance on the liberty of choice and individuals' requirements. In a collectivist culture, such as India, individuals' thoughts and feelings are meaningful only when there are thoughts and feelings of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

The overall effect of Agreeableness on well-being is confirmed by employing the SEM model wherein the overall design came significant. There are some notable findings made. It recommends that more severe research is a requirement on personality and well-being in Asian countries. The research signifies that there are intricate dynamics of personality and SWB intended for disparate cultures. The same ideas were shared by Suh (1998) in their cultural studies (Suh et al., 1998). Most research today has signified that Extraversion along with Neuroticism as only considerable predictors of SWB. According to our Study, Agreeableness is a significant factor subsequent to controlling aimed at Extraversion and Neuroticism. The relationship between Agreeableness and SWB is analyzed at a wide-ranging level athwart an assortment of cultures.

6. CONCLUSION

In India, personality plays a noteworthy part in SWB. Agreeableness amongst individuals is found to form a significant personality dimension affecting well-being. Organizations nowadays are scrutinizing the EWB aspect for augmenting the productivity of employees. Our study findings might aid in modeling better well-being strategies in organizations. The outcomes of this Agreeableness amongst individuals in SWB are estimated. The questionnaire is created by utilizing two critical gauges, B5 traits and SPANE. The mean and SD of these B5 traits for males as well as females are calculated. Conscientiousness, Openness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness are discovered to be high in males. As per mean, Neuroticism in males ($M=49.49$, $SD=23.38$) is inclined to be below Neuroticism in females (50.17 , $SD=23.17$). Regarding a worldwide study involving forty-nine Nations, men scored considerably below women in Neuroticism (Schmitt et al., 2007). Besides, extraversion and Agreeableness were significantly correlated with PE and balance emotions (affect balance). Although these outcomes are encouraging, the research had certain limitations. Firstly, the study is restricted to the age group's extent, and the sample is from Indian students. Secondly, there are inherent weaknesses in measures of correlation analysis and also regression analysis. Future researchers should measure the working population's perception of well-being and ascertain the effect of cultural dimensions on Agreeableness.

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