Correlative study between perceived emotions, level of wellbeing and personality traits at undergraduate students at psychology

Mihaela Chraif[a], & Mihai Aniţei[a]

Corresponding Author: Mihaela Chraif

[a]*University of Bucharest,Kogălniceanu 36-46 street,Bucharest,050107, Romania, +40768811012*

Abstract

The present correlative study investigates the possible relationships between personality traits, dimensions of well-being, positive and negative emotions and perceived stress among undergraduate students at psychology in Bucharest, Romania. The participants are a number of 69 undergraduate students at psychology, University of Bucharest, age between 19 and 34 years old (M=20.72; S.D.=2.67). Instruments are the following scales: Hexaco-PI-R Personality Inventory (Lee and Ashton, 2004), Ryff's Well Being Scale (Ryff, 1995), Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) and Mest-RO (Pitariu et al, 2006) the questionnaire which evaluates the intensity of emotions. Testing the hypotheses with Pearson correlation test, the results highlight that some of the correlations were statistically significant (p<.05). Hence, there were found correlations between: environmental control and positive relationships (r = .52; p <.01); personal development and goal of life (r = .33; p <.01); positive relationships and environmental controls (r = .52; p <.01); positive relationships and personal growth (r = .28; p <.05); the goal of life and self-acceptance (r = .33; p <.01); and more specified at "results" paragraph. Conclusions highlight the new directions of future studies and the importance personality traits in perceiving stress and well-being.

Keywords: Percieved stress; positive emotions; negative emotions; well-being; personality traits.

1. Introduction

Lyubomirsky, King & Diener (2005) reviewed several studies and concluded that people who register high levels of well-being may record more success in a variety of areas including health and longevity,

work and monthly income and social relations. Talking about personality traits, the five personality factors BFM is a model that was made on the basis of personality traits that could comprise the most numerous in the vocabulary of terms commonly (Goldberg, 1993). Hence, according to Goldberg (1993) following the application of factor analysis method, results were five major personality factors: neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeability. According to Hough & Schneider, (1996) the result was a robust taxonomy, comprehensive and meaningful to describe normal personality traits, explaining the variance in a wide range of human behaviors, as Costa & McCrae (1992) highlighted. Matsudaira & Kitamura (2006) find out in a study that immaturity is a risk factor for negative affectivity and for specific depression. Kammann, Farry & Herbison, (1984) conducted a study focused on the measurement of happiness in relationship with the well-being. Vasile (2012) was interested in studying impulsivity dynamics regarding the personality traits of the Romanian teachers. Libran (2006) conducted a study focused on the relationship between the personality traits and subjective well-being. Albu & Vasile (2011) were interested in School Evaluation focused on the study on success and anxiety. Lupu (2014) investigated the constitutive factors of personality in relationship with motor activity.

2. Problem Statement

Problem statement is relates with the objectives and the hypotheses and is focused on evidencing possible relationships between the personality traits, dimensions of well-being, perceived stress and positive and negative emotions among undergraduate students at psychology.

3. Research Questions

Research questions rise from the following hypotheses:
• There are statistically significant correlations between the personality traits measured with Hexaco-Pi-R inventory and the dimensions of the Well-being scale.
• There are statistically significant correlations between the personality traits measured with Hexaco-Pi-R inventory and the perceived stress scale.
• There are statistically significant correlations between the personality traits measured with Hexaco-Pi-R inventory and the positive and negative emotions.
• There are statistically significant correlations between the dimensions of the Well-being scale and the dimensions of the Perceived stress scale.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study follows the objectives:
• To highlight possible correlations between the personality traits and the dimensions of wellbeing.
• To highlight possible correlations between the dimensions of wellbeing and the positive and negative emotions.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Participants

The participants are a number of 59 undergraduate students at psychology, age between 19 and 34 years old (M=20.72; S.D.=2.67), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest.

5.1.2. Instruments

Hexaco-PI-R Personality Inventory (Lee and Ashton, 2004) is composed from six personality factors: honesty, emotionality, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, grouped in 24 sub-dimensions (4 dimensions for each factor), with a total of 100 items. Each item has 5 answers from 1-strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree strong). The internal consistency coefficients reported by Lee & Ashton (2004) are: ".92 for the honesty factor, .90 for the emotionality factor, .92for the extraversion factor, .89 for the agreeableness factor, .89 and .90 for the conscientiousness factor and openness to experience factor" (Burtăverde, 2015; p.41).

Ryff's Well Being Scale (Ryff, 1995) is a questionnaire containing a number of 42 items structured on six dimensions: Autonomy, Control, Personal Growth, Positive relationships, Purpose of life and Self-acceptance.

Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) assess a number of 10 items. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient is α=0.791for the English version. Dumitrescu, Badiță, Dogaru, Toma, Perțeac & Duță (2014) presents for the Romanian version the overall Cronbach's alpha = .855, and the test–retest reliability coefficient was .72 Mihăilă (2015) evidence in a study that Alpha Crombach was .75 for the 4-items PPS version on Romanian population in organizational context.

Mest-RO (Pitariu et al, 2006) –questionnaire which evaluates the intensity of emotions experienced by the young undergraduate students at psychology. The questionnaire maintains the five positive and negative emotions of the STEM questionnaire (State-Trait Emotion Measurement), elaborated by Levine şi Xu (2005) apud (Pitariu et al, 2006): joy, anxiety, pride, sadness, vigilance, anger, affection, envy, content and guilt and shame.

5.3.3. Procedure

The instruments were applied with the acceptance of the participants, completing a consent certificate previously. The application lasted 45-50 min for the participants.

5.3.4. Experimental design

Dependent variables are the following: Honesty-Humility, Sincerity, Fairness, Greed-Avoidance, Modesty, Emotionality, Fearfulness, Anxiety, Dependence, Sentimentality, Extraversion, Social Self-Esteem, Social Boldness, Sociability, Liveliness, Forgiveness, Gentleness, Flexibility, Patience, Conscientiousness, Autonomy, Control, Personal Growth, positive relationship, the purpose of life, Self-acceptance, Organization, Diligence, Perfectionism, Prudence, and Openness to Experience, Aesthetic Appreciation, Inquisitiveness, Creativity, Unconventionality and Altruism, Autonomy, Control, Personal Growth, Positive relationships, Purpose of life and Self-acceptance, Perceived Stress, Positive emotions and Negative emotions.

6. Findings

Applying SPSS 15 we tested the Research Hypotheses. Some of the Hypotheses were confirmed using Pearson correlation test. Hence, statistically significant negative correlation were obtained between the following variables: honesty and dependence (-.243; r <.05); fear and self-esteem (r = -. 25, p <.05); fear and social boldness (r = -. 254, p <.01); fear and extroversion (r = -. 27; p <.05); forgiveness and social boldness (r = -. 32, p <.01); environmental control and extroversion (r = -. 25, p <.05); environmental control and quickness (r = -. 40, p <.01), total stress and social boldness (r = -. 30, p <.05); total stress and extroversion (r = -. 26, p <.05).

There are statistically significant positive correlations between the following variables: sincerity and modesty variables (r = .68; p <.05), honesty and modesty (r = .469; r <.05), avoidance-greed and honesty (r = .50; p < .05); avoidance-greed and gentily (r = .296; p <.05); modesty and honesty (r = .71; p <.05); modesty and forgiveness (r = .31, p <.05); honesty and sincerity (r = .68; p <.01); honesty and fairness (r = .46; p <.01); honesty and avoidance-greed (r = .53; p <.01); honesty and modesty (r = .71; p <.01); honesty and forgiveness (r = .37; p <.01); honesty and gentiles (r = .32; p <.01); fear and anxiety (r = .36; p <.01); fear and dependence (r = .29; p <.05); fear and sentimentality (r = .48; p <.01); fear and emotionality (r = .37; p <.01); sociability and self-esteem (r = .35; p <.01); sociability and social boldness (r = .58; p <.01); sociability and liveliness (r = .51; p <.01); sociability and social extroversion (r = .76; p <.01); forgiveness and honesty (r = .37; p <.01); forgiveness and patience (r = .39; p <.01); gentleness and patience (r = .27; p <.05); gentleness and flexibility (r = .24; p <.05); patience and quickness (r = .31; p <.05); agreeability and sincerity (r = .33, p <.05); agreeability and honesty (r = .34, p <.05); agreeability and forgiveness (r = .707, p <.01); agreeability and gentleness (r = .77, p <.05); agreeability and flexibility (r = .61, p <.05); organization and fairness (r = .27; p <.01); organization and modesty (r = .271, p <.05); organization and honesty (r = .31; p <.01); social organization and self-esteem (r = .34; p <.01); organization and extroversion (r = .24; p <.01); organization and patience (r = .34; p <.01); diligent and extroversion (r = .34; p <.01); diligent and patient (r = .24; p <.01); perfectionism and modesty (r = .25; p <.01); perfectionism and anxiety (r = .298, p <.01); Prudence and honesty (r = .241, p <.01); prudence and patience (r = .40; p <.01); consciousness and social self-esteem (r = .33; p <.01); consciousness and patience (r = .42; p <.01); consciousness and social honesty (r = .35; p <.01); consciousness and sincerity (r = .26; p <.01); Aesthetically appreciation and forgiveness (r = .28; p <.05); social self-acceptance and self-esteem (r = .37; p <.01); social self-acceptance and social boldness (r = .35; p <.01); self-acceptance and quickness (r = .34; p <.01); self-acceptance and extroversion (r = .41; p <.01); positive emotions and social self-esteem (r = .38; p <.01); positive emotions and social boldness (r = .39; p <.01); positive emotions and extroversion (r = .38; p <.01); total stress and sentimentality (r = .79; p <.01); total stress and fear (r = .59; p <.01); stress and anxiety total (r = .71; p <.01); total stress and dependence (r = .63; p <.01); total stress and emotionality (r = .88; p <.01); vivacity and self-acceptance (r = .34; p <.01); vivacity and non-conventionality (r = .26; p <.01); extroversion and self-acceptance (r = .41; p <.01); agreeability and aesthetic-appreciation (r = .31; p <.01); agreeability and curiosity (r = .28, p <.05); perfectionism and creativity (r = .42; p <.01); perfectionism and no conventionality (r = .337; p <.01); openness and perfectionism (r = .406, p <.01); curiosity and creativity (r = .35; p <.01); curiosity and openness (r = .47; p <.01); no conventionality and openness (r = .74; p <.01); autonomy and environmental controls (r = .34; p <.01); autonomy and self-acceptance (r = .32; p <.01); environmental control and personal growth (r = .30; p <.01); environmental control and positive relationships (r = .52; p <.01); personal development and goal of life (r = .33; p <.01); positive relationships and environmental controls (r = .52; p <.01); positive

relationships and personal growth (r = .28; p <.05); personal growth and goal of life (r = .33; p <.01); the goal of life and self-acceptance (r = .33; p <.01); self-acceptance and autonomy (r = .32; p <.01).

Analyzing the statistically significant correlations can be highlighted that there are correlations between personality traits, positive emotions, the dimensions of the well-being scale and perceived stress.

7. Conclusions

Some of the personality traits correlate significantly with the emotions and dimensions of wellbeing showing that the environmental control is correlated with personal growth and autonomy, positive emotions correlate with social self-esteem and extroversion, personal development, and the level of autonomy depend to the personality traits of the students. Furthermore, the perceived stress correlate statistically significant with the level of perceived anxiety, sentimentality and fear highlighting that the perceived stress in higher only by those participants to the study perceiving high level of fear, sentimentality and anxiety (p<.05). Based on these findings, future studies will focus on studying how counselling sessions succeed in order to optimize the level of wellbeing, perceived stress, anxiety and adaptation to the academic environment among undergraduate students.

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