



PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COMPLEXION AS PREDICTORS OF SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate personality traits and complexion as predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates. Three hundred (300) participants were employed in the study. They all consist of students from five faculties of Nnamdi Azikiwe University who were randomly sampled. Their age ranged from 16-30, with a mean age of 23.1 and standard deviation of .82. Two instruments adopted for the study namely; Brief Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) which consists of 4 items developed by (Lyubomirsky & Lepper 1999) and Ten Items Personality Inventory (TIPI) that consists of 10 items developed by Gosling et al, (2003). The study adopted predictive research design, while multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The first hypothesis which stated that personality traits will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates was accepted (Openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and extroversion). The finding implies that openness to experience ($B=.067$, t , 1.367, $Sig<.289$). Also, conscientiousness ($B= .103$, t , 1.706, $Sig<.089$) extraversion ($B=.075$, t , 1.180, $Sig<.239$), agreeableness ($B= 0.13$, t , .221, $sig<.825$), neuroticism ($B = -.82$, t , -1.314, $sig<.190$) respectively. The second hypotheses which stated that complexion will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates, is also accepted at ($B= -.010$, t , -.010, $sig<.992$). It was recommended that Government should ensure there are Guidance and Counseling offices in schools to properly address the fears of undergraduates pertaining to their personality and complexion in order to deter factors that tamper with their subjective happiness.

Keywords: *Personality traits, complexion, subjective happiness, undergraduates*

Introduction

Happiness is a mental state of well-being characterized by positive emotions that ranged from contentment to profound delight. Happiness is said to be associated with the three basic elements of subjective well-being such as frequent and repeated positive affect, elevated life satisfaction and uncommon negative affect (Diener et al, 2017). Carvalho et al (2012) argued that people usually define happiness as experiencing a positive affecting state such as pleasure, or contented with life as a whole or partially. Empirically happiness has been found to lead to a number of positive outcomes; and those adolescents who experience high levels of happiness show less emotional and behavioral problems. Few people have ever doubted that happiness is very important. In fact, starting at least with the Ancient Greeks, the concept has been subject of unremitting debate. Surely this would not have been the case if people generally felt it did not matter.

Subjective happiness or in some cases called Subjective well-being (SWB) can be defined as an overall evaluation of one's own life and affective feelings regarding emotional experience (Diener et al, 2017). Therefore, it has two components: cognitive component of life satisfaction or contentedness and affective component (positive vs. negative affect) of emotional experience, which make individuals feel productive and able to cope with life stressors to achieve well-being (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Delvaux et al, 2015). Presumably, when constructing life satisfaction judgments, people consider the various events and circumstances in their lives (e.g., their income, their social relationships, their health, and the various positive and negative life events that have occurred), weight these circumstances by importance, and then aggregate to derive an overall evaluation. If this intuitive model of how subjective happiness judgments are made is correct, then one might expect the objective circumstances in one's life to be the primary determinant of his or her subjective happiness. Furthermore, people's behaviors are often guided by their beliefs about what external circumstances will make them happy (Gilbert, 2006).

Before addressing the role that personality plays in subjective happiness judgments, it is important to define the construct itself. As noted above, I start with the idea that subjective happiness reflects a person's overall evaluation of the quality of life as a whole (Diener et al, 1999). Researchers who study subjective happiness acknowledge that such evaluations can be assessed in a variety of ways. For instance, Diener (1994) noted that there are least two ways to evaluate subjective happiness. First, one can simply ask respondents to think about the features of their lives and to provide an overall rating of their satisfaction with these conditions. Measures of life satisfaction or domain satisfaction assess this more cognitive approach to the evaluation of well-being. Alternatively, if one's life is going well, it is reasonable to assume that that person would experience frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions; and thus, it is possible to use respondents' typical levels of affective experience as an indicator of how well their lives are going (De Leersnyder et al, 2015).

Personality traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to and thinking about the environment and about oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of personal and social context. An individual's personality has been found to predict how that person reacts to other people, how he articulates and solves problems and how he is affected by stressful events in his environment. Trait theorists in Psychology using factor analysis identified five personality traits they called the big five personality traits these are: agreeableness, neuroticism, and extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. These five traits have been linked to various characters of individuals and have been associated with mental health as well as happiness and life satisfaction.

Since the emergence of the field over five decades ago, the Subject happiness literature has progressed rapidly. First, as recent surveys show, psychologists and

other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing undergraduate's Subjective happiness. In addition, the methods by which empirical content is given to the concept of Subjective happiness have drastically improved and are expected to continue to do so as increasing use will be made of advances in information- and communication technology (ICT). As such, Subjective happiness research solicits increasing attention of politicians, government officials and the public alike.

Studies of young adults/undergraduates show that complexion and personal traits correlates highly with mental health and adjustment, including lower depression, lower anxiety, and higher life satisfaction. Personality trait and complexion also has positive associations with happiness, optimism, positive affect, wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity, and agreeableness, and a negative relationship with neuroticism. These findings show personality trait to be related to adaptive functioning, particularly in the face of failures, losses, and life stress. Importantly, the relationships between personality trait, complexion and psychological well-being are independent of those of self-esteem. Indeed, research suggests that personality trait may uniquely predict well-being more strongly than resilience. On this backdrop, this present study will investigate the personality traits and complexion as predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates (Jokela et al, 2015).

Several researches have been carried out in the area subjective happiness, mostly, using secondary school students as participants in this part of world. But little or nothing has been done in the area of subjective happiness using undergraduates. Therefore, this study seeks to close the gap in literature and identify whether personality traits and complexion are predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is anchored on Top Down Theory of Subjective Well-Being by Andrews and Withney (1974). This approach/theory emphasizes psychological factors as determinants of subjective well-being. This perspective believes that someone who is able to enjoy happiness reactions is because someone is judging himself as a happy person in daily activity and experience during his life time. The top down theory approach is used as a perspective in assessing the quality of life, while there is a theorist supporting this approach, discussing how to assess the quality of life by using perception, because of it, the researchers believed the objective factors cannot reveal the conditions of the quality of life of someone. The top down theory approach examining perception is revealing that anything seen can have different meanings and perceptions and has influence on the process of interpreting what has been seen. The ability in building perceptions of the quality of life is derived from how much prior experience and knowledge in assessing the situation and surrounding environment. This theory was taken

because it harmonises the three (3) variables of interest in the study which are psychological in nature.

Statement of the Problem

Several researches have been carried out in the area subjective happiness, mostly, using secondary school students as participants in this part of world. But little or nothing has been done in the area of subjective happiness using undergraduates. Therefore, this study seeks to close the gap in literature and identify whether personality traits and complexion are predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates. Furthermore, the increase rate of suicide among undergraduates (even in southern eastern universities) has raised a lot of concerns, hence, the investigation to determine if personality and complexion are predictors of subjective happiness as this has not been given much attention in this part of the world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether personality traits and complexion will predict subjective happiness among undergraduates. Specifically the study will look into the following:

1. To determine personality traits will predict subjective happiness among undergraduates
2. To determine Complexion will predict subjective happiness among undergraduates

Research Questions

- i. Will personality traits predict subjective happiness among undergraduates?
- ii. Will complexion predict subjective happiness among undergraduates?

Hypotheses

1. Personality Traits (Extroversion, Contentiousness Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates.
2. Complexion will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates.

Methods

Participants

The participants were two hundred and eighty two (282) students drawn from the population of the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. These students were selected from five faculties, which were randomly selected from the pool of faculties in Nnamdi Azikiwe University; Awka was also selected by simple random sampling using lucky drip. Hence, the researcher rapped pieces of paper written “A” and “B” which the “As” were picked namely; faculty of social sciences, Arts, Biological sciences, Education, Law respectively. The sample were made up of 113 males and 169 females with age range of 16—30 and arithmetic mean of 4.6235 and standard deviation of 1,32972. Data was collected through odd number letters of

the alphabet beginning with the first letter of departments of the five faculties of interest.

Instruments

Two instruments were employed for data collection namely; “Subjective Happiness scale” developed by (Lyubomirsky & Lepper 1999) and Big Five Personality Inventory (Big Five Inventory-10 --BFI-10) developed by Gosling et al (2003).

Subjective Happiness Scale:

The instrument used in the work is a 4 item subjective scale (SHS) developed by Lyubomirsky and pepper (1999) which measures subjective happiness, the 3 first three items are direct scored items which the fourth item is reversed scored on a 7 point likert response option format, for tem one the lowest which is 1=not a very happy person and the highest which is 7= a very happy person. For item 2 the lowest which is 1= less happy and the highest which is 7= more happy.

The instrument was validated in Nigerian by Umeaku (2019) using the sample from the University undergraduates with the reliability of $r = .71$ and concurrent validity was done with the openness domain of the BIG-FIVE Personality inventory by Gross and John (2003) at $r = .475$ ($p < 0.01$) significant level and the discriminant validity was done with the Domain D of the SCL 90 by Derogatis, Lipman and Covi (1977) at $r = -.293$ ($p < 0.05$) significant level.

The Ten item of personality Inventory (TIPI)

The Brief measure of personality questionnaires was developed by Gosling et al (2003) measures Big Five personality traits through ten questions about each trait. These personality traits are Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness. The instrument consists of 10 items such as Extroverted, Enthusiastic, Critical, Quarrelsome, Dependable, self-disciplined which measures the five basic personality traits. It also employs a response pattern such as Disagree strongly=1,

In the instrument, five (5) items are reversed (items,2,4,6,8 and 10) and are reversed during scoring.

Scoring of TIPI

1. Recode the reverse scored items.
2. Take the average of the two items (the standard item and the recoded reversed-scored item) that make up each trait.

For instance; using extraversion scale: a participant has scores of 5 on item 1(extraverted, enthusiastic) and 2 on item 6(reserved, quiet). First, recode the reversed-scored item (i.e item 6) replacing the 2 with a 6. Second, take the average

of the score for item 1 and the recorded score for item 6. So the TIPI extraversion scale would be $(5+6)/2=5$.

Each of the personality traits has a norm score for interpretation of the score obtained from the data. The norm value for male and female vary according to age. The reliability coefficients reported by Gosling et al (2003) are: Cronbach alpha internal consistent .92, and convergent validity .411. The result indicated that TIPI has construct validity at 627** validity of Research Instrument

Validity refers to the degree to which the instrument measures the concept that it is intended to measure. We have face validity which is when the questions on the research instrument have a logical link with the objective, content validity which is the assessment of the items of an instrument and we have construct validity which is a more sophisticated technique for establishing the validity of an instrument. It is based upon statistical procedures. It is determined by ascertaining the contribution of each construct to the total variance observed in a phenomenon. From the above, Construct and face validity will ($p < .001$) significant level. However, the instrument was validated in Nigeria by (Umeaku et al, 2021). Cronbach Alpha and split-half reliabilities were adopted as the standard tools for testing the hypotheses current validity, the five domains of TIPI concurred with the five domains of the forty-four-item Big-five personality Inventory at 271**, .419**, .436**, .163** and .251** ($p < .001$) significant level. On discriminant validity, the five domains of TIPI discriminant with Neuroticism domain of the SCL 90 except the Emotional stability domain at -.428**, -.243**, -.047, .447** and -.505** ($p < 0.01$) significant level.

Finally, on reliability, TIPI is reliable within the acceptable protocol with Cronbach Alpha of 0.71 and split-Half of 0.76, as validated for use in Nigeria by Umeaku, et al, (2021).

Data was collected from three hundred (282) participants drawn from the five faculties (that is, a total of 100 from each departments) namely; social sciences, Arts, education, biological sciences, law. The participants were selected from different departments that makes up each faculties using odd number letter of the alphabet, beginning each first letter name of the departments. That is (A—Z).

Numbering 1 to 26 letters of the alphabets), However, some faculties such as faculty of Arts, education consists of ten (10) departments and five (5) was invariably selected to participate. Consequently, faculties such as social sciences which consisted of five departments namely, mass communication, psychology, sociology, political science and Economics, three departments was invariably selected namely; Mass communication, sociology and Economics, hence Law was a department itself. Data was collected from each level of the departments.

Results

Table 1: Summary table of mean, standard deviation, and descriptive statistics on Subjective Happiness (SH)

GENDER	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	4.6069	113	1.49381
Female	4.6346	169	1.21223
Total	4.6235	282	1.32972

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Study Variables: Personality trait and Complexion as predictors of Subjective Happiness (SH)

Model	Coefficients ^a				Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	
(Constant)	3.740	.587		6.367	.000
OP	.070	.066	.067	1.062	.289
CON	.129	.076	.103	1.706	.089
EX	.079	.067	.075	1.180	.239
AG	.015	.066	.013	.221	.825
NEU	-.097	.074	-.082	-1.314	.190
COMPLEXION	-.001	.085	-.001	-.010	.992

a. Dependent Variable: SHS

The results above shows that personality traits and complexion did not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates: openness to experience (B=.067, t, 1.367, Sig<.289). Also, conscientiousness (B= .103, t, 1.706, Sig<.089) extraversion (B=.075, t, 1.180, Sig<.239), agreeableness (B= 0.13, t, .221, sig<.825), neuroticism (B = -82, t, -1.314, sig<.190) respectively. The second hypotheses which stated that complexion will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates, is also accepted at (B= -.010, t, -.010, sig<.992).

Discussion

This study investigated the personality traits and complexion as predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates. The first hypothesis which states that Personality Traits (Extroversion, Contentiousness Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates was accepted, but was inconsistent with the certain results outside Africa and Nigeria in particular. According to Cummins and Wooden (2014), each person has a biologically determined level of Subjective happiness that is actively maintained and controlled within a narrow, positive range of values around a “set-point. According to empirical evidence by Cummins etal (2014), individual SWB set-points normally range between 70 and 90 points on a standard 0–100 point scale. Moreover, the distribution of set-points within this range is normal, thus yielding a theoretical population mean score of 80 points.

This estimation is reasonably corroborated by data obtained from the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index— an extant project that has tracked the SWB of the Australian population since 2001. Over the 31 surveys conducted to date, the mean population Subjective happiness from each survey has varied within less than a 3.0 percentage point range, from 73.9-76.7 points (Cummins et al, 2013), demonstrating remarkable stability. The discrepancy between this range and the mean set-point of 80 points for individuals is proposed to represent the degree of challenge within the population samples employed (Cummins et al, 2014). Conversely, this hypothesis agrees in great extent with another study conducted by Tomski (2018), focused on impact of Big-five personality traits on subjective happiness . Results showed or rather identified that only the personality trait conscientiousness was positively related to subjective happiness. Also, the result supported the findings of Soraya, et al, (2011) who conducted a research aims at studying the relationships between personality traits and subjective happiness among undergraduates. Results revealed personality traits were significantly related to subjective happiness. Stepwise regression analysis indicated personality characteristics accounted for 48 percent of variance in subject wellbeing.

The second hypothesis which states that Complexion will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates happiness among undergraduates was accepted, in dissonance with the work of Mustafa et al (2015) empirically conducted a survey examining on a study to examine the personality and complexion as predictors of subject happiness in undergraduates, the study highlights the importance of promoting positive mental health programs among undergraduates in Universities using intervention strategies enhancing hope, personality and subjective well-being in them. However, in this study, Contentiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness and Extraversion as well as Complexion were non significant in predicting subjective happiness among undergraduates, it has affected the overall outcome of the study. More importantly, the non significant prediction of subjective happiness by personality and complexion among the undergraduates was an indication of value system, environment and season as the focus or source of happiness can be dependent on academic grades and the likes.

Limitations of the Study

The sample size may be considered small since it focused on five faculties due to poor incentive which militated against the acquisition of further participants or faculties for the study. Consequently, some participants denied their consent to participate in the research.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Further studies should be made in order to create awareness of this limitation in the society and devise ways to curb the menace that interfere with subjective happiness. Furthermore, there is need to introduce regular undergraduate counseling and

personality assessment for all adolescents with a view to identifying those with low levels of subjective happiness and personality traits, so that adequate measures will be put in place to help uplift their positive self-image and prevent them from becoming depressed.

Conclusions

The current research re-affirms that personality and complexion is critical to the experience of subjective happiness among undergraduates. The study investigated the personality traits and complexion as predictors of subjective happiness among undergraduates. Two hypotheses were tested in the research and they include first, first hypothesis states that Personality Traits (Extroversion, Contentiousness Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates and the second hypothesis states that Complexion will not significantly predict subjective happiness among undergraduates were both accepted. With this, it can be deduced that the subjective happiness of the undergraduates could not really be determined by their personalities and complexions. This could be due to their more focus on academic grade and other cultural factors. With this it can be noted that a different population e.g (civil servants, market traders etc) with the same research study could produce a different result due to the changes in environment and primary focus in life.

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