

Personality Traits as Predictors of Happiness: A Quantitative Approach

Shubhi Jain and Mahuya Deb

The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati

This study investigates whether personality traits can be the predictors for happiness of college students using quantitative analysis. Employing the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills and Argyle and the Big Five Personality Traits-44 assessment by John O.P. and Srivastava, the research aims to elucidate how different personality dimensions - agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience, and neuroticism predict levels of happiness. Data from a sample of 100 participants were evaluated using Pearson correlation coefficients through SPSS. The findings reveal that personality traits are positively related to happiness, with conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience are positively correlated with happiness, while neuroticism is negatively correlated. The results support the hypothesis that personality traits significantly impact happiness, with conscientiousness and extraversion showing the strongest positive relationships. These insights contribute to the understanding of how specific personality traits influence individual well-being and underscore the importance of considering personality factors in psychological assessments and interventions aimed at enhancing happiness.

Keywords: Happiness, Personality Traits, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience.

Happiness is the most meaningful and extremely important thing in this humanity as everybody strives for happiness. Many researchers gave various definitions for Happiness like: "what I feel here and now" by Daniel Kahneman (Mandel, 2018). Veenhoven (2001) defined Happiness as an overall admiration and appreciation of one's life as a whole". Courtney E. Ackerman defined Happiness as that state of consciousness which proceeds from accomplishing one's values. Happiness is a state, which means it is not an everlasting feature but a changeable state. The term Happiness is employed in the situations of emotional states, which contain all the positive and pleasant emotions ranging from enjoyment to intense joy (Edward F. Diener).

McCrae and Costa (1987) developed a theory that describes personality as the blend

or mix of five main dimensions, a view usually known as the Big Five factors model. These five traits include neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. The first dimension, which is extraversion, describes the traits of an individual who is sociable, joyful, active and alive. An individual who is high in this dimension would be expected to be talkative, dominant, and active whereas an individual who is more secluded, shy, numb and passive would score low in this dimension. Another element, agreeableness, measures a person's friendliness and compliance. A gentler, kind hearted, generous, good natured and trusting individual would be high in this element, whereas an individual who is more cranky, cruel, and doubtful would be low in this element. The third trait, neuroticism, describes an individual's encounter with negative emotions and

feelings. Those individuals high in neuroticism will be more emotional, dramatic, sensitive, disturbed and anxious whereas those individuals low in this criterion would be more peaceful, relaxed, self-controlled, and in control of their happiness and well-being. The fourth factor, conscientiousness, describes the level to which an individual will work hard, be dedicated, have order, be determined and be self-disciplined. Those individuals who score high on conscientiousness are driven, aspiring, accountable and responsible whereas individuals who are lazy, neglectful and irresponsible score low in this variable. Finally, openness refers to the level to which an individual is imaginative, aesthetic, expressive, artistic, creative, and has intellectual interests. Individuals who are imaginative, creative and prefer variety and unique things score high in this element, whereas individuals who are unimaginative, down to earth, and prefer routine score low in this variable. (Kirkpatrick, 2015).

Happiness in everyone's life is extremely important (Aliabadi, et al., 2019). Intercultural investigations on more than 9,000 students in 47 countries showed that happiness was amongst the most valued values than all other subjective values like health, love, relations or wealth (Kim-Prieto, et al., 2005). In addition, Paezi, et al. (2006) researched that people with high levels of happiness had reported high levels of academic achievement. Gatab, et al. (2011) conducted a study to see the connection between psychological health, quality of life and happiness, and found a positive connection between them. Aboalshamat, et al., (2018) found that students high on resilience and life satisfaction scored high levels of happiness too. The students who attained high levels of psychological health were found to be very happy and had a high level of quality of life. Further, in a study (Nezhad, et al., (2022) researcher found that there

was a strong connection between achievement motivation and happiness in undergraduate nursing students. They also suggested that few programs should be organized to improve the happiness of students. Ghahramani, et al., (2019) conducted a study on emotional intelligence and happiness of students and found that students who felt more happier in life scored high. It was also found that students who scored higher on extraversion were more happy than introverted students.

Personality traits affect how individuals communicate with each other and how they cope with stress and burnout (Kyaw et al., 2022). Personality traits also affect how we behave and adjust to life events, and can summarize, predict, and explain an individual's behavior (American Psychology Association, 2022). Personality traits is the mix-up of habitual and our day-to-day emotional patterns, cognitions and behaviors, that form up a different character of an individual's (Mathews, 2009). Understanding your identity and what makes you different from others, can lead to better life choices. Personality traits play a vital function in individuals' well-being and overall success (Bergmann, et al. 2017). This may be because personality traits are meaningful predictors of our behaviors and attitudes in life.

Moltafet, et al. (2010) observed that Intrinsic religious orientation and Extraversion were direct predictors of happiness, whereas happiness and Neuroticism had negative relation. Devvrat, et al., (2022) found that extroversion, introversion and social behavior were positively correlated with happiness. Pishva et al., (2011) also studied a direct relation between happiness and extraversion and an indirect relation of happiness with psychoticism and neuroticism. Many researchers have assessed the extent to which factors of the Big Five model probably are related to happiness.

Extraversion and Neuroticism have shown the strongest relationship with Happiness. Costa and McCrae (1989) report that those high in extraversion tend to experience more positive feelings. Similarly, Cloninger (2013) showed that extraverts are observably happier than those who score lower on this variable. On the other hand, high levels of neuroticism have been associated negatively with happiness, which is unsurprising given that neuroticism describes one's tendency to feel negative emotions like depression and emotional instability (McCrae & Costa, 1989). Cloninger (2013) also reports that those scoring low on neuroticism aren't only happier but also report improved life satisfaction compared to those who are high on this variable. Albuquerque, Lima, Matos, & Figueiredo (2013) also reported that higher levels of extraversion have been linked to increased positive affect, accounting for feelings of happiness, enthusiasm, and activation. Also, low levels of depression are associated with high levels of extraversion (Senf & Liau, 2013). Contrarily, neuroticism was found to have a negative relationship with positive affect and a positive link to negative affect, which is the experience of negative feelings similar to anger, fear, and guilt (Albuquerque et al., 2013).

Objectives

The objective of this study are:

1. To examine the positive relations between overall Personality traits and level of happiness.
2. To analyze the positive relations between Conscientiousness and level of happiness.
3. To investigate the positive relations between Extraversion and level of happiness.
4. To assess the positive relations between Agreeableness and level of happiness

5. To determine the positive relations between Neuroticism and level of happiness.
6. To explore the positive relations between openness to experience and level of happiness.

Hypotheses

Here are six hypotheses based on the objective:

- H₁: Personality traits and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.
- H₂: Conscientiousness and individual levels of happiness have positive relations. .
- H₃: Extraversion and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.
- H₄: Agreeableness and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.
- H₅: Neuroticism and individual levels of happiness have negative relations
- H₆: Openness to experience and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.

Method

Sample

A total of 100 college students were selected via stratified random sampling. Participants' eligibility criteria were to be a college student and willingness to participate in the study.

Tools

The demographic data questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), and Big five Inventory were used in this study for data collection. A demographic data questionnaire was designed by the researchers through the review of the literature to examine the relevant demographic variables of participants. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed using face and content validity methods. This

questionnaire included questions about students' gender and age, academic year, and marital status.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: In this study, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) which was developed by Hills and Argyle was used to investigate students' happiness. The questionnaire contains 29 questions with a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The sum of the item scores in this questionnaire ranged from 0 to 87, with a higher score indicating greater happiness.

Big Five Personality Traits: To measure participants' personality, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) was used which was developed by John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Inventory consists of 44 items that measure five dimensions of personality: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. It is a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Results

H1: Personality traits and individual levels of happiness have positive relations

Table 1. Correlations

	Happiness	Personality	
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.296**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003
	N	100	100
Personality	Pearson Correlation	.296**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the first hypothesis, the mean happiness score among the sample was 117.13 with a standard deviation of 16.383,

while the mean personality score was 145.36 with a standard deviation of 12.962. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) for the connection between personality traits and happiness was found to be 0.296, with a p-value of 0.003 in a two-tailed test. This indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between personality traits and happiness, suggesting that individuals with higher scores on the measured personality traits tend to report higher levels of happiness. Given the sample size of 100, this correlation, although moderate, is meaningful and supports the hypothesis that personality traits are positively related to happiness is accepted.

H2: Conscientiousness and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.

Table 2. Correlations

	Happiness	Conscientiousness	
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	100	100
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second hypothesis posited that there is a positive relationship between conscientiousness and individual levels of happiness. The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean happiness score was 117.13 with a standard deviation of 16.383, and the mean conscientiousness score was 29.98 with a standard deviation of 4.671. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between conscientiousness and happiness was 0.461, with a p-value of 0.000 in a two-tailed test. This result indicates a statistically significant positive correlation, suggesting

that higher levels of conscientiousness are associated with greater happiness. Given the strong correlation and the low p-value, the hypothesis that conscientiousness is positively related to happiness is accepted.

H3: Extraversion and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.

Table 3. Correlations

	Extraversion	Happiness	
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	1	.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	100	100
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	.391**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The third hypothesis proposed a positive connection of extraversion and individual levels of happiness. With the mean happiness score at 117.13 and a standard deviation of 16.383, the mean extraversion score was 25.15 with a standard deviation of 4.858. The Pearson correlation coefficient between extraversion and happiness was 0.391, with a p-value of 0.000. This significant positive correlation suggests that individuals with higher levels of extraversion tend to experience greater happiness. The strong statistical significance supports the acceptance of the hypothesis that extraversion is positively interrelated to happiness.

H4: Agreeableness and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.

The fourth hypothesis anticipated a positive connection between agreeableness and individual levels of happiness. The mean happiness score was 117.13 with a standard deviation of 16.383, while the mean

agreeableness score was 33.73 with a standard deviation of 5.205. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the connection between agreeableness and happiness was 0.250, with a p-value of 0.012. This indicates a statistically significant, albeit moderate, positive correlation, suggesting that higher levels of agreeableness are associated with increased happiness. Given the significance of the result, the hypothesis that agreeableness positively relates to happiness is supported.

Table 4. Correlations

	Happiness	Agree- ableness	
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.250*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.012
	N	100	100
Agree- ableness	Pearson Correlation	.250*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	
	N	100	100

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

H5: Neuroticism and individual levels of happiness have negative relations.

Table 5. Correlations

	Happiness	Neuroticism	
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	100	100
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-.398**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The fifth hypothesis suggested a negative connection between neuroticism and individual levels of happiness. The mean

happiness score was 117.13 with a standard deviation of 16.383, while the mean neuroticism score was 22.46 with a standard deviation of 6.016. The Pearson correlation coefficient between neuroticism and happiness was -0.398, with a p-value of 0.000. This statistically significant negative correlation indicates that higher levels of neuroticism are associated with lower levels of happiness. The strong significance of this result supports the hypothesis that neuroticism negatively impacts happiness. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

H6: Openness to experience and individual levels of happiness have positive relations.

Table 6. Correlations

	Happiness	Openness to experience	
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	.208*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.038
	N	100	100
Openness to experience	Pearson Correlation	.208*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.038	
	N	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The sixth hypothesis proposed a positive connection between openness to experience and individual levels of happiness. The mean happiness score was 117.13 with a standard deviation of 16.383, while the mean openness to experience score was 34.04 with a standard deviation of 4.226. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between openness to experience and happiness was 0.208, with a p-value of 0.038. This result indicates a statistically significant but modest positive correlation, suggesting that higher levels of openness to experience are associated with slightly higher levels of happiness. The significance of the result

supports the hypothesis that openness to experience has a positive relationship with happiness. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights between personality traits and happiness. The findings generally support the hypotheses, revealing significant connections between levels of happiness and personality traits. Specifically, the positive relationships between conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience with happiness, and the negative relationship between happiness and neuroticism align with the existing literature on personality psychology. The significant positive correlation between conscientiousness and happiness ($r = 0.461$, $p = 0.000$) supports previous research indicating that conscientious individuals tend to experience higher levels of well-being. For instance, Roberts et al. (2017) found that conscientiousness is a strong predictor of life satisfaction, as conscientious individuals often engage in goal-directed behaviors that enhance their quality of life (Roberts et al., 2017). Similarly, the positive correlation between extraversion and happiness ($r = 0.391$, $p = 0.000$) is consistent with findings that extraverted individuals, who are generally more socially active and positive, report higher levels of happiness (Miller et al., 2019).

The study also found a modest positive correlation between openness to experience and happiness ($r = 0.208$, $p = 0.038$). While this correlation is weaker compared to conscientiousness and extraversion, it aligns with research suggesting that individuals high in openness are more likely to engage in experiences that contribute to their well-being (McCrae & Costa, 2016). Conversely, the negative correlation between neuroticism and happiness ($r = -0.398$, $p = 0.000$) confirms that higher levels of neuroticism,

associated with emotional instability and negative affect, are linked to lower levels of happiness, as supported by recent studies (Soto & John, 2017). The findings also suggest that agreeableness is positively related to happiness ($r = 0.250$, $p = 0.012$), though the correlation is less pronounced compared to other traits. This aligns with research indicating that agreeable individuals, who are generally more cooperative and empathetic, tend to experience greater happiness (Kurtz & Sherker, 2016). However, the relatively weaker correlation might suggest that while agreeableness contributes to happiness, it is not as strong a predictor as traits like conscientiousness or extraversion. Overall, this study's results are consistent with the broader body of literature, reinforcing the understanding that personality traits significantly impact happiness. These findings contribute to the ongoing discussion in personality psychology by providing empirical evidence that highlights the complex interplay between different personality dimensions and well-being. Future research could further explore these relationships and consider additional factors such as cultural differences and longitudinal effects to deepen the understanding of how personality influences happiness.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causality between personality traits and happiness. More robust evidence will be provided by Longitudinal studies on the directionality of these relationships. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce biases, such as social desirability or response styles, because of which accuracy of data has been affected. Additionally, the sample size, while adequate, may not fully represent the diversity of the population, because of which

generalizability of the findings is limited. Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs, incorporating multiple methods of data collection, and using more diverse samples to validate and expand upon these findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides empirical support for the positive relationship between certain personality traits and individual levels of happiness. The results affirm that conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness to experience are positively correlated with happiness, while neuroticism is negatively correlated. These findings align with the broader literature on personality psychology, particularly with the work of Miller et al. (2020), who found that traits such as extraversion and conscientiousness significantly enhance well-being by fostering positive social interactions and goal-directed behaviors. This study contributes to our understanding of how specific personality traits influence happiness and highlights the importance of personality in psychological well-being.

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Shubhi Jain, Research Scholar, The Assam Royal global university, Guwahati. Email: jshubhi97@gmail.com

Mahuya Deb, Assistant Professor, The Assam Royal global university, Guwahati. Email: mahuyadeb896@gmail.com