EXPLORING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND EMPLOYEE-UNEMPLOYED HAPPINESS: PRELIMINARY STUDY

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Abstract

Happiness has been decreasing regularly in Türkiye in recent years. This decline become more evident in new economic conditions. Therefore, whether or not you employed in a job having income may be determining factor in happiness level in these conditions. In this study, the role of personality traits in happiness was examined between those who are employed (earning income) and those who are unemployed persons in Turkey. The study was conducted in 2023 via a web-based form. The short form of Oxford Happiness Scale and the Big Five Personality Test were used in the study. The study included those who employed in an income-generating job (n=258, 73.9%) and those who could not find a job as they wanted to work (n=91, 26.1%). Aid volunteers, students, retirees, housewives, etc. are not included in the unemployed group. The participants were between the ages of 18-77 (mean=31.69, n=1192) and 167 were women (47.9%) and 182 were men (52.1%). In the study, first, participants were grouped as unhappy and happy groups according to the happiness scale total score average (mean = 3.61, s = 0.51). The participants below the average were defined as the unhappy (n = 159, 45.6%) and above the average as the happy group (n=190, 54.4%). According to the results, there is a difference between the five-factor total scores of the happy and unhappy groups in both the unemployed group and the employed group. Total score averages of the happy group are higher than the unhappy group in all five factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Intellect / Imagination). However, the results differ when happy and unhappy groups are predicted by logistic regression analysis using personality factor scores and socio-demographic characteristics. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability factor scores distinguished happy and unhappy groups in employees. On the other hand, among the unemployed, happy, and unhappy groups were distinguished by Agreeableness and Emotional Stability factor scores. Extraversion and Intellect / Imagination factors did not contribute to prediction in both groups. Conscientiousness differs in distinguishing happy and unhappy groups between employed and unemployed people. The results are discussed and implications for future research are provided accordingly.

Keywords: Happiness, personality, employed, unemployed.

1. Introduction

Happiness has been relatively neglected because phenomena such as anxiety and depression (in which unhappiness is at the forefront) are examined more intensively. However, although happiness is a relatively new phenomenon in the field of psychology, it is a subject that is being studied more and more every day and today it constitutes one of the main topics of positive psychology (Furnham, & Christoforou, 2007; Pishva, Ghalehban, Moradi, & Hoseini, 2011; San Martin, Perles, & Canto, 2010; Stewart, Watson, Clark, Ebmeier, & Deary, 2010). Happiness appears to be related to many variables such as the immune system, coping with stress, self-esteem, personal control, and longevity (Momeni, Kalali, Anvari, Raoofi, & Zarrineh, 2011; Salary, & Shaieri, 2013). Happiness, which includes the frequency and intensity of positive emotions, contributes to the improvement of physical and mental health, and increases overall success, business performance and income (Barak, & Achiron, 2009; Diener, 2000; Momeni, Kalali, Anvari, Raoofi, & Zarrineh, 2011; Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2009).

Research trying to explain the causes and consequences of happiness reveals that personality traits are the most important predictors of the phenomenon (Furnham, & Christoforou, 2007; Galea, Ciarrocchi, Piedmont, & Wicks, 2007; Lü, Wang, Liu, & Zhang, 2014; McCrae, & Costa, 1991; Salary, & Shaieri, 2013). Although different personality models are used to examine the relationship between

happiness and personality traits, it is understood that there is consistency in the research findings and the most widely used and accepted approach is the Five Factor Personality Model (Aziz, Mustaffa, Samah, & Yusof, 2014; Furnham, & Cheng, 1997; Furnham, & Cheng, 1999; Furnham, & Christoforou, 2007; Mayungbo, 2016).

When the Five-Factor Personality Model is used, happiness is seen to be positively related to the factors of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Development, and negatively to the Emotional Stability factor (Aziz, Mustaffa, Samah, & Yusof, 2014; Goldsmith, 2016; Hayes, & Joseph, 2003; Thingujam, 2015; Ziapour, Khatony, Jafari, & Kianipour, 2018). However, among the factors, Emotional Stability and Extraversion factors stand out as strong predictors of happiness (Cheng, & Furnham, 2001; Costa, & McCrae, 1980; DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998; Furnham, & Christoforou, 2007; Hayes, & Joseph, 2003; Tkach, & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Warner, & Vroman, 2011).

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study were those who worked in an income-generating job (n=258, 73.9%) and those who could not find a job as they wanted to work (n=91, 26.1%). Aid volunteers, students, retirees, housewives, etc. are not included in the unemployed group. The participants were between the ages of 18-77 (mean=31.69, n=1192) and 167 were women (47.9%) and 182 were men (52.1%).

2.2. Materials

In this study, short form of Oxford Happiness Scale and the Big Five Personality Test were applied. The short form of Oxford Happiness Scale was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) and translated into Turkish by Dogan and Cötok (2011). Scale consisted of 7 items was administered as a 5-point Likert-type. Items 1 and 7 of this scale are reverse scored. The Big Five Personality Test consists of 50 5-point Likert-type items, 24 of which are reverse scored, and is evaluated with five factors: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Intellect / Imagination (Goldberg, 1992; Tatar, 2017).

2.3. Procedure and data analysis

The study was conducted in 2023 via a web-based form. Groups were compared with ANOVA. In addition, happy and unhappy groups were predicted by binary logistic regression analysis.

2.4. Results

In the study, first, participants were grouped as unhappy and happy groups according to the happiness scale total score average (mean = 3.61, s = 0.51). The participants below the average were defined as the unhappy (n = 159, 45.6%) and above the average as the happy group (n=190, 54.4%).

Table 1. Comparison results of happy-unhappy groups with ANOVA.

Factors	Unemployed Group	n	M	s	F	Employed Group	n	M	s	F
Extraversion	Unhappy	55	2.97	0.62	4.67*	Unhappy	104	3.02	0.59	17.88***
	Happy	36	3.25	0.60		Happy	154	3.39	0.73	
	Total	91	3.08	0.63		Total	258	3.24	0.70	
Agreeableness	Unhappy	55	3.47	0.64	30.21***	Unhappy	104	3.50	0.61	58.32***
	Happy	36	4.18	0.55		Happy	154	4.09	0.61	
	Total	91	3.75	0.70		Total	258	3.85	0.68	
Conscientiousness	Unhappy	55	3.17	0.75	23.55***	Unhappy	104	3.37	0.63	72.18***
	Happy	36	3.93	0.68		Happy	154	4.10	0.71	
	Total	91	3.47	0.81		Total	258	3.81	0.77	
Emotional Stability	Unhappy	55	2.82	0.66	35.57***	Unhappy	104	2.85	0.61	85.94***
	Happy	36	3.65	0.64		Happy	154	3.62	0.69	
	Total	91	3.15	0.77		Total	258	3.31	0.76	
Intellect / Imagination	Unhappy	55	3.44	0.72	3.61*	Unhappy	104	3.34	0.59	33.06***
	Happy	36	3.71	0.58		Happy	154	3.80	0.65	
	Total	91	3.54	0.68		Total	258	3.62	0.66	

*p < 0.05; ***p < 0.001

In the unemployed group, the happy group total score averages are higher than the unhappy group in four of the five factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability). Only in the unemployed group, there is no difference between happy and unhappy groups in the Intellect / Imagination factor score. There is a difference between the five-factor total scores of the happy and unhappy groups in the employed group. Total score averages of the happy group are higher than the unhappy group in all five factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Intellect / Imagination) (Table 1).

However, the results differ when happy and unhappy groups are predicted by logistic regression analysis using personality factor scores and socio-demographic characteristics. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability factor scores distinguished happy and unhappy groups in employees. On the other hand, among the unemployed, happy, and unhappy groups were distinguished by Agreeableness and Emotional Stability factor scores. Extraversion and Intellect / Imagination factors did not contribute to prediction in both groups. Conscientiousness differs in distinguishing happy and unhappy groups between employed and unemployed people. The results are discussed and implications for future research are provided accordingly (Table 2).

Table 2. Binary logistic regression analysis result for predicting happy-unhappy groups.

Factors	Unemployed Group						Employed Group					
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Exp(B)
Extraversion	0.19	0.70	0.08	1	0.78	1.21	0.16	0.28	0.31	1	0.58	1.17
Agreeableness	2.54	0.79	10.49	1	0.00	12.70	0.67	0.35	3.61	1	0.05	1.95
Conscientiousness	0.77	0.58	1.79	1	0.18	2.17	0.98	0.28	12.32	1	0.00	2.68
Emotional Stability	2.20	0.62	12.69	1	0.00	9.00	1.55	0.27	34.06	1	0.00	4.70
Intellect / Imagination	-1.13	0.71	2.55	1	0.11	0.32	0.25	0.35	0.49	1	0.48	1.28
Constant	-16.56	4.07	16.58	1	0.00	0.00	-12.20	1.67	53.38	1	0.00	0.00

3. Discussion

In this study, personality traits were used to predict happy-unhappy groups in employed and unemployed groups. In the study conducted using the five-factor personality model, different results were obtained from those obtained in previous studies. According to the results of previous studies, all factors in the five-factor personality model contribute to the prediction of happiness. However, many studies emphasize that among the factors, Emotional Stability and Extraversion are the factors that contribute the most to the prediction of happiness (Cheng, & Furnham, 2001; Costa, & McCrae, 1980; DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998; Furnham, & Christoforou, 2007; Hayes, & Joseph, 2003; Tkach, & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Warner, & Vroman, 2011).

In this study, although the happy-unhappy groups differ in terms of factor total scores, the results of the binary logistic regression analysis are different. Agreeableness and emotional stability are predictive factors in the unemployed group, and Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability are predictive factors in the employed group. However, Extraversion and Intellect / Imagination factors do not contribute to either group. In this study, there is a need to repeat this research (and confirm the findings) due to reasons such as the difference between the numbers of employed and unemployed people and the small number of participants.

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