



Personality traits and subjective well-being: emotional stability, not extraversion, is probably the important predictor

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Abstract

In a panel study, the relationship between Emotional Stability (ES), Extraversion (E) and Subjective Well-Being (SWB) was tested against questionnaire data from 264 Norwegian folk high school students. After a careful reading of recent studies concerned with relationships between personality and subjective well-being, it was hypothesized that the effect from ES on SWB indicators (Life Satisfaction, presence of Positive Affect and absence of Negative Affect) is stronger than the corresponding effect from E. Moreover, it was anticipated that if ES was controlled for, the effect from E on SWB would decrease substantially. In several multiple regression analyses, it was found that, on average, the amount of SWB variance accounted for by ES was 34%, while similar figures for E were 1%. The results are discussed with reference to cultural values and traditions. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

More than 2000 years ago, Aristotle claimed that “It is contemplation alone that yields happiness” (cited in McGill, 1967, p. 18). Despite the popularity of paraphrasing Aristotle in current happiness research, his postulate about contemplation has had no impact on the literature. Contemplation is almost never mentioned as a correlate of happiness or subjective well-being (SWB). Reviews since the days of Wilson (1967) point to such factors as self-esteem, optimism and, not

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least, sociability and extraversion as the primary sources, or at least correlates, of SWB. Moreover, by many authors extraversion is held to be the cardinal trait of happiness and well-being (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Argyle & Martin, 1991; Baumeister, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener & Larsen, 1993; M.W. Eysenck, 1990; Hotard, McFatter, McWhirter & Stegall, 1989; Larsen & Ketalaar, 1989; Lu & Shih, 1997; Lu, Shih, Lin & Ju, 1997; Magnus, Diener, Fujita & Pavot, 1993; Myers & Diener, 1995; Pavot, Diener, Colvin & Sandvik, 1990; Rusting & Larsen, 1997). However, in a recent meta-analysis DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found that when personality traits were grouped according to the Five Factor Model, emotional stability (i.e. the positive pole of neuroticism) was the strongest predictor of both life satisfaction and happiness, although extraversion contributed somewhat in explaining the variance in positive affect. Similarly, studies in which both extraversion and emotional stability are included as independent variables reveal that the effect on satisfaction from emotional stability normally outweighs the effect from extraversion (David, Green, Martin & Suls, 1997; DeNeve & Cooper; Hotard et al.; Pavot, Fujita & Diener, 1997; Ryan & Frederick, 1997). In other words, unless emotional stability is controlled for, there is a need for care when researchers interpret the relationship between well-being and extraversion.

The purpose of this paper is to question the status that extraversion has attained as the cardinal subjective well-being trait, and to ask whether emotional stability may not actually be a more salient personality trait in predicting SWB. SWB is a broad category of phenomena including people's emotional responses, domain satisfaction and global judgment of life satisfaction (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Quite often, SWB is presented as a three-dimensional phenomenon, comprising perceived life satisfaction, presence of positive affect and absence of negative affect (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Argyle, 1996; Diener, 1984, 1994), and all three aspects will be employed in the current article.

Personality is regarded as one of the strongest predictors of subjective well-being (for reviews, see Argyle & Martin, 1991; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener, 1996; Diener & Lucas, 1999a). Among the personality traits, extraversion is the one that has received the most theoretical and empirical attention. Already a generation ago, Warner Wilson claimed that the happy person is extraverted (Wilson, 1967). Since Wilson's seminal review, a huge body of literature has reported significant associations between extraversion and well-being (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Argyle & Martin, 1991; Baumeister, 1991; Diener & Lucas; Emmons & Diener, 1985; Fujita, 1993; Larsen & Ketalaar, 1989, 1991; Lu et al., 1997; Pavot et al., 1990; Rusting & Larsen, 1997). However, a closer examination of these studies reveals that at least two issues remain ambiguous in the treatment of extraversion as the most dominant predictor of SWB.

First, the effect size of prediction from extraversion to SWB is normally quite small compared with the corresponding effect size from emotional stability. For instance, in a landmark article published in 1980, Costa and McCrae proposed a model relating positive and negative affect to the personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism respectively (Costa & McCrae, 1980). Within the framework of 1 year (four measures, 3 months apart) and likewise after 10 years, neuroticism correlated highly with negative affect, whereas extraversion correlated more moderately with positive affect. In both studies, the correlation coefficients were about 0.40 between neuroticism and negative affect and about 0.20 between extraversion and positive affect. Despite the fact that extraversion accounts for only about 4% of positive affect in a 10-year time span, and despite the fact that neuroticism predicts both positive and negative affect, the Costa and

McCrae study is no doubt the single most widely cited support for the hypothesis that extraversion predicts positive affect.

Suh, Diener and Fujita (1996), however, presented data showing that neuroticism, like extraversion, predicts *both* negative and positive affect. Contrary to common belief, correlations between *extraversion* and *negative* affect in this study were -0.40 and -0.39 (for two separate measures collected 2 years apart) and between *neuroticism* and *positive* affect -0.40 and -0.21 . The correlation between extraversion and positive affect was 0.41 (0.33) and between neuroticism and negative affect it was 0.69 (0.47) (Time-2 figures in parentheses). Furthermore, using the Affectometer (Kammann & Flett, 1983), Kammann and his colleagues did not find any relationship between extraversion and either positive or negative affect (Kammann, Farry & Herbison, 1984). They did, however, detect a correlation between neuroticism and both positive and negative affect. In a study among Norwegian university students, no relationship was found between extraversion and either SWB or positive affect (Wallentin, 1996). No measure of neuroticism was available in this investigation. In an Australian study, the relationship between extraversion and positive affect was 0.15 , while the correlation between neuroticism and negative affect was 0.32 (Headey & Wearing, 1989). Again, neuroticism explains more than 5 times as much variance in the affect measures as extraversion does. Using multiple regression, Brebner, Donaldson, Kirby and Ward (1995) found that for several measures of well-being and happiness, neuroticism (as measured from the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire) explained about three times as much variance than did extraversion. With regard to optimism, Brebner and his coworkers discovered that extraversion did not predict any of the Life Orientation Test (LOT, see Scheier & Carver, 1985) variance at all, while neuroticism accounted for about 22% of it. Finally, interaction studies conducted by McFatter (1994) makes the author conclude that "...the common claim that extraversion is related to measures of PA but not NA, whereas neuroticism is related to measures of NA but not PA, is probably misleading" (p. 577).

A second anomaly within the field relates to the problem of confounding variance. Because extraversion and emotional stability are normally found to be correlated, and particularly so within the Five Factor Model (FFM) approach (e.g. David et al., 1997; Diener, Smith & Fujita, 1995; Francis, Philipchalk & Brown, 1991; Lu et al., 1997; Magnus et al., 1993; Stelmack, 1981; Suh et al., 1996) it is challenging to sort out the unique contribution from extraversion in subjective well-being. Indeed, in studies controlling for emotional stability the effect of extraversion often attenuates or disappears altogether. Thus in two studies reported by Hotard et al. (1989), although initial analysis showed a significant regression coefficient from extraversion to SWB, that effect disappeared after emotional stability was introduced into the equation. Similarly, in a recent study by Pavot and colleagues it was shown that the relation between self-congruence (i.e. the discrepancy between the real-self and the ideal-self) and the four main traits other than emotional stability dropped to non-significance when emotional stability was controlled. Emotional stability, on the other hand, showed an extraordinarily large correlation with the congruence measures (Pavot et al., 1997). In the same study, emotional stability remained a significant predictor of SWB even after partialling out congruence (but not the other way around).

In a study conducted by David and collaborators (David et al., 1997), the zero-order correlations reported between positive affect and extraversion and neuroticism were 0.26 and -0.28 respectively. However, the standardized regression weights from the two traits were reduced to 0.03 (for extraversion) and -0.20 (for neuroticism) when both were treated as independent

variables in a multiple regression analysis. Positive mood was the dependent variable, and some other variables were also included as independent variables.

Finally, in a study by Ryan and Frederick (1997), the effect from extraversion to the authors' concept of subjective vitality disappeared when emotional stability was entered into the equation. Nevertheless, the authors retained extraversion for further analysis, and not emotional stability, although the data seem to show that emotional stability is much more important.

2. The current study

From the literature just reviewed, one gleans at least two unsettling points about the relationship between subjective well-being and personality traits. First, the actual strength of zero-order correlations between extraversion and well-being, including subcomponents such as positive and negative affect, deserves further clarification. Since the impression has become widespread that extraversion is the strongest and most important well-being trait, there is an urgent requirement for closer inspection of its actual effect size in the relationship between the two variables. As Cohen has noted (Cohen, 1992), too much concern has been directed toward statistical results, with their accompanying *P* values, and too little toward the more interesting issue of the effect size of the psychological phenomenon under study.

Closely related to effect size is the question of confounding variance. It is well known that if the theory of regression is not to be violated, researchers attempting to define predictors should be certain they have covered all substantive issues related to the dependent variables (e.g. Cohen & Cohen, 1983). At a minimum, both extraversion and emotional stability should be included in the regression equation.

2.1. Hypotheses

The first hypothesis is that the association between emotional stability and indicators of SWB is substantially stronger than the association between extraversion and indicators of well-being. The second hypothesis is that the association between extraversion and SWB will be substantially reduced, when emotional stability is controlled for in a multiple regression analysis.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

A panel survey produced questionnaire data collected at two different time points, the first in August 1995 and the second in May 1996. At Time 1 (T1; August 1995) the data were from 264 students attending a Norwegian folk high school. At the follow up at Time 2 (T2; May 1996) 225 of the subjects were still participating in the study. A folk high school offers two-semester courses in which students enjoy the freedom to work on whatever topics and questions they and the staff choose. There is no set curriculum in the system, and there are no formal examinations. The schools are open to everyone, although usually the minimum age for admission is 17 years. The mean

age of the students in the current study was 19 years, with a range of 16–25 years and a standard deviation of 1.1.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Overall life satisfaction

Satisfaction with life was assessed by means of a five-item inventory developed by Diener and coworkers, the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; see Pavot & Diener, 1993). Examples of the items in this inventory are: *In most ways my life is close to my ideal*, and *I am satisfied with my life*. The SWLS was measured on a scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree'). Cronbach's alphas for the scale were 0.83, and 0.83 at T1 and T2, respectively. The autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.62 ($P < 0.001$).

3.2.2. Global affect

Global affect was measured with questions about how often, in percentage of their waking time, the subjects felt the following affective states: *joy*, *satisfaction*, *happiness* (for positive affect), and *frustration*, *faintheartedness* and *worry* (the negative affect). The global affect scales varied from 0 ('0% of waking time') to 10 ('100% of waking time'). The positive and negative affect items were supposed to reflect separate though correlated factors. For the positive affect scale, Cronbach's alphas were 0.81 and 0.83 at T1 and T2, respectively. The autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.52 ($P < 0.001$). For the negative affect scale, Cronbach's alphas were 0.77 and 0.80 at T1 and T2, respectively, and the autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.55 ($P < 0.001$).

3.2.3. SWB

A composite variable was computed to account for the tripartite concept of SWB. The SWB variable was calculated according to the formula: $SWB = SWLS + POSAFF - NEGAF$. The indicator variables were transformed into z-scores before the SWB variable was calculated. For the SWB variable, the Cronbach's alphas were 0.85 (T1) and 0.87 (T2) while the autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.66.

3.2.4. Personality

To assess personality traits, the Norwegian Big Five Inventory (Engvik, 1993) was administered. This inventory measures the five personality dimensions of extraversion, emotional stability, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness. However, only the former two are analyzed here.

In the questionnaire, 60 items in total were presented as bipolar adjective scales, each scale having a seven-point rating. Polar opposite adjectives were alternately presented at the lowest and highest ends of the scale. The emotional stability inventory consists of 12 adjective scales such as, in the author's translation from Norwegian, *Worried* — *Not worried*; *Contented* — *Discontented* and *Confident* — *Hesitant*. Cronbach's alphas for the 12 items were 0.80 and 0.83 at T1 and T2, respectively, and the autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.72 ($P < 0.001$). The extraversion items of the inventory consist of such adjective scales as, in the author's translation, *Not social* — *Social*; *Outgoing* — *Withdrawn* and *Bold* — *Not Bold*. Cronbach's alphas were 0.77 and 0.80 at T1 and T2, respectively, and the autocorrelation from T1 to T2 was 0.73 ($P < 0.001$).

3.2.5. Procedure

Four folk high schools were included in the study, and for each school, all students enrolled in outdoor recreation or the music specialization were invited to participate in the study. They were briefed on the study and informed about their right to withdraw from the investigation at any time. Additionally, all students signed a declaration stating their agreement to participate. Anonymity and confidentiality regarding the information gathered from the study were guaranteed. All students agreed to participate in the first self-administered questionnaire. With drop-out during the school year and some students neglecting to complete the questionnaire during the second round of data gathering in May 1996, the number of participants was reduced to 225, or 85%, at T2. For further details on the data procedure, see Vittersø (1998).

4. Results

4.1. Correlation analysis

Table 1 shows the matrix of zero-order correlations among all composite variables in the study, with means and standard deviations. The table reveals that emotional stability is significantly associated with all the well-being measures at both T1 and T2, and the correlation coefficients between the overall SWB variable and emotional stability are 0.59 and 0.65 for T1 and T2, respectively. Extraversion is significantly correlated with life satisfaction, positive affect and overall well-being, but not with negative affect at T1 and T2. The correlation coefficients between the overall SWB variable and extraversion are 0.30 and 0.24 for T1 and T2, respectively. In other

Table 1
Zero-order correlations, means and standard deviation among study variables^a

	STAB1	EXT1	SWLS1	POAF1	NEAF1	SWB1 ^b	STAB2	EXT2	SWLS2	POAF2	NEAF2	SWB2 ^b
STAB1	0.000											
EXT1	0.317	1.000										
SWLS1	0.394	0.216	1.000									
POAF1	0.489	0.415	0.451	1.000								
NEAF1	-0.449	-0.046	-0.313	-0.298	1.000							
SWB1	0.588	0.299	0.786	0.770	-0.708	1.000						
STAB2	0.722	0.147	0.325	0.341	-0.395	0.468	1.000					
EXT2	0.195	0.728	0.149	0.308	0.019	0.193	0.233	1.000				
SWLS2	0.425	0.111	0.617	0.365	-0.392	0.609	0.474	0.138	1.000			
POAF2	0.355	0.236	0.327	0.519	-0.149	0.439	0.499	0.356	0.468	1.000		
NEAF2	-0.426	-0.057	-0.301	-0.228	0.547	-0.474	-0.559	-0.074	-0.538	-0.308	1.000	
SWB2	0.508	0.170	0.525	0.469	-0.458	0.642	0.646	0.239	0.845	0.749	-0.778	1.000
MEAN	4.33	4.74	24.24	6.0	2.50		4.60	4.91	25.47	6.38	2.16	
S.D.	0.86	0.84	5.17	1.79	1.59		0.87	0.73	4.78	1.67	1.41	

^a n, 264 (T1) and 224 (T2). All correlations of magnitude 0.13 or higher are significant at $P < 0.05$. STAB, Emotional stability; EXT, Extraversion; SWLS, Satisfaction with Life; POAF, Positive affect; NEAF, Negative affect; SWB, Subjective well-being (1-endings indicates T1 measurement, 2-endings indicated T2 measurement). S.D., Standard deviation.

^b This variable was computed based on the z -scores from SWLS, POAF, and NEAF. Means and S.D. are not calculated.

words, the average subjective well-being variance (i.e. the combination of T1 and T2 correlations) explained by emotional stability is 38%, while the similar figure for extraversion is 7%, thus the first hypothesis is clearly supported in these data.

Note that Table 1 also reveals that extraversion and emotional stability are positively correlated, hinting at a possible caveat in regard to confounding variables. For a more complete picture of the relationship between SWB and personality traits, both emotional stability and extraversion must be included in the estimate. Analyses taking account of these variables are outlined in the following section.

In a series of multiple regression analyses, the unique effects of emotional stability and extraversion (as independent variables) on the SWB variables (as dependent variables) were calculated. The result of these analyses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 clearly illustrates that emotional stability is a stronger predictor of SWB than is extraversion. When the effect of emotional stability is controlled for, little SWB variance is explained by extraversion, except for the positive affect variable. However, even for positive affect, emotional stability is a stronger predictor than is extraversion. For the overall subjective well-being variable, the variance explained by emotional stability (averaged on T1 and T2) is 34%, while the variance explained by extraversion is 1%.

To summarize the results bearing on Hypothesis 2, basically its assumptions are met, in that components of SWB are predicted by emotional stability and only to a small extent by extraversion.

5. Discussion

This paper has examined the relationship between emotional stability, extraversion and subjective well-being among Norwegian folk high school students. The study it describes employed a longitudinal design, 8 months in duration, and analysis of results has shown that contrary to common belief, emotional stability is a much stronger predictor for SWB than is extraversion. However, the extraversion variable repeatedly provides a unique prediction of positive affect.

The finding that emotional stability is a stronger predictor of both negative and positive affect is not unique to this study. Similar findings have been disclosed in a series of recent studies. After

Table 2

Standardized regressions weights for Emotional Stability and Extraversion as predictors of Satisfaction With Life, Positive Affect, Negative Affect and overall Subjective Well-Being at T1 and T2^a

Variables	T1		T2	
	STAB	EXTRA	STAB	EXTRA
Satisfaction With Life	0.39**	0.13*	0.46**	0.03
Positive Affect	0.45**	0.25**	0.44**	0.25**
Negative Affect	−0.53**	0.11*	−0.57**	0.06
Subjective Well-Being	0.59**	0.11*	0.57**	0.09

^a n, 264 (T1) and 224 (T2). STAB, Emotional stability; EXTRA, Extraversion.

* $P < 0.05$.

** $P < 0.001$.

the emotional stability construct, or neuroticism, has been partialled out, the association between extraversion and well-being indicators diminishes or disappears entirely (Brebner et al., 1995; David et al., 1997; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Hotard et al., 1989; Pavot et al., 1997; Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Nevertheless, researchers keep treating extraversion as the primary well-being trait (e.g. Argyle, 1996; Argyle & Lu, 1990; Argyle & Martin, 1991; Baumeister, 1991; Lu & Shih, 1997; Lu et al., 1997; Myers & Diener, 1995; Pavot et al., 1990). Secondly, researchers persist in their belief that emotional stability is related to negative affect (but not to positive affect) and that extraversion is associated with positive affect (but not negative affect) (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989; Magnus et al., 1993; Rusting & Larsen, 1997; Schimmack & Diener, 1997).

From a sociological point of view, the resistance against assimilating a growing body of evidence that emotional stability is the important predictor of SWB is interesting. For example, in the Ryan and Frederick (1997) study, the effect from extraversion to the authors' concept of subjective vitality disappeared when emotional stability was entered into the equation. Nevertheless, the authors retained extraversion for further analysis, not emotional stability, which their own data strongly suggested was the more relevant construct. Similarly, in the abstract provided by David et al. (1997) it is claimed that "Extraversion predicted positive mood, whereas Neuroticism predicted positive and negative mood" (p. 149). However, as the results section of that article reveals, after neuroticism was included in the equation, extraversion no longer predicted positive mood. Again, for some reason the author fails to discuss the consequences of that finding.

Researcher hesitation to incorporate such unexpected observations in theory is in accordance with normal scientific behavior within a research paradigm. As Kuhn (1970) memorably demonstrated, researchers are inclined to continue arguing in accordance with internalized beliefs despite new observations repeatedly telling them a different story. Only when enough "anomalies" are provided and, more importantly, an alternative theory is able to account for the new observations are the new data taken seriously and adopted by the research community. Thus an important aim of the present argument is to urge researchers to "believe less" in their former theories about the relationship between personality traits and SWB and to galvanize work on a revised theory covering the relationship between traits and life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect.

It is not that extraversion is unimportant in this realm. It is important. Rather, the point being emphasized here is that emotional stability seems to be even more important and the strict distinction between emotional stability as the predictor of negative affect and extraversion as the sole predictor of positive affect is now outmoded. The relationship between affect and personality traits seems to be a subtler one than the traditional model can explain, and there is likely to be confounding in the relationships among extraversion, emotional stability and SWB.

In addition, it seems probable that the relationship between extraversion and SWB interacts with cultural norms and values. For example, in a study of well-being in a jail context, introverted prisoners reported higher levels of happiness than did the extraverted (reported in Diener & Lucas, 1999a). Moreover, Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh and Shao (2000) found that extraversion was correlated less strongly with pleasant affect in collectivistic nations than in individualistic nations, although the correlation was strong in both (cited in Diener & Lucas, 1999b). Similarly, in a cross-cultural study among college students in 41 nations, only six of the nations showed a correlation between extraversion and life satisfaction above 0.30. Among these six nations were

the USA and Australia (Vittersø, 1998). Also, among nuns in North America, studying extraversion turned out to be impossible (E. Diener, personal communication, July 19 2000). The concept and methods of measuring it simply did not make sense in that context. Note, however, that these were cloistered nuns; they could not leave the nunnery, so their lives were more restricted.

In short, one could argue that the relation between SWB and extraversion depends on a secondary effect deriving from the rewards of having a personality that fits with the common customs of the culture in which one lives. Interestingly, most studies of extraversion and SWB are undertaken in the USA, perhaps the most “extraverted” nation in the world. Social desirability and secondary benefits from being congruent with cultural values (cf. the congruent theory, Diener, Shao, Diener & Suh, 1996) might explain the prominence extraversion has attained in the thinking of American researchers. Highly activated pleasant affect may well characterize both modern lifestyles and extraverted personalities. On the other hand, where cultural norms reward a calm and controlled expression of affect, it may be that having an outgoing and lively personality is nothing but a drawback. It may be that in Norwegian culture the costs of being outgoing and sociable outweigh the benefits. Traditionally, at least, Norwegians have had a reputation for being introverted and relatively uninterested in associating with large groups of people. Of course, this line of thinking is mere speculation and can serve only as an ad hoc explanation of the findings reported above.

5.1. Caveats

Several caveats must be considered in interpreting these findings. First, the use of adolescents as subjects, although they were not college or university students, means there are limitations in the extent to which it is possible to generalize from the data. Young adults are still struggling with their identity, and personality development tends to continue till age 25 or 30 or even later (Costa & McCrae, 1994). Although several investigations have concluded that, in many respects, student samples do approximate to the normal population (McConville & Cooper, 1992; Suh et al., 1996; Wilson, LaFleur & Anderson, 1996) other studies indicate that such is not the case (Cummins, in press).

Secondly, as has already been discussed above, the results obtained in this study could be due in part to interaction effects between cultural norms and SWB. Even though the finding that the association between extraversion and SWB attenuates when emotional stability is controlled for seems to be well established across several nations (e.g. David et al., 1997; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Hotard et al., 1989; Pavot et al., 1997; Ryan & Frederick, 1997) the relationships obtained in this study, and two times at that, are unexpected and in need of replications before strong conclusions can be drawn.

A third warning pertains to the measurement of emotional stability and extraversion utilized in this particular study. The Norwegian version of the Five Factor Model (Engvik, 1993) is supposed to capture the five dimensions of extraversion agreeableness, conscientiousness emotional stability and openness to experience. Considering the strong consensus found among the different personality instrument (e.g. Briggs, 1992; McCrae & John, 1992), one would not expect the discrepancies between the Norwegian FFV and more commonly used inventories to be seriously large. However, there might be smaller differences between the different measurement instruments, and a

replication of these findings based on other personality inventories, like the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) would surely strengthen the argument advocated in this article.

Finally, the assumed direction of causality presented in the paper is based on the notion of a potential flow of causality. No absolute claims are made about perfect causal explanations, and the suggested causes are to be interpreted in relation to the context under consideration (e.g. Sobel, 1994). One could, for example, argue that (at least to some extent) the well-being indicators are causes and not effects of personality traits. Empirically, we are not in a position to favor either one of these models.

6. Conclusion

This study questions the dominance of extraversion as the cardinal well-being trait and it brings together evidence that emotional stability should more properly assume this role. Although emotional stability is not synonymous with contemplation, which Aristotle regarded as the indispensable road to happiness, it may be productive to re-evaluate the advantages to well-being generated by low-arousal-level pleasant feelings such as tranquillity and calmness. At least in cultures placing considerable value on dispositions of this kind, SWB may be more directly related to peace of mind than it is to typical extraversion facets such as risk-taking and assertiveness. Correspondingly, in these cultures psychological theories about the relationship between personality traits and SWB should develop to a more sophisticated state than the theory now holding way. With regard to the domain of SWB, and the subjective evaluations that the concept bears on, it now appears insufficient to account for it by claiming that extraversion predicts positive affect while neuroticism predicts negative affect. The evidence presented here suggests that the SWB concept relates more strongly to emotional stability than it does to the trait of extraversion.

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