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PERSONAL STANDS AND WELLBEING

Abstract: The Oxford Happiness Inventory and Multiple Lickert scale were deployed to get 2608 valid inputs on questions about attitudes, fears, media use and closeness of different social categories to the participants. Results confirm that happiness is affected by certain personal stands and characteristics of research participants such as those indicating openness to new experiences, being people loving, optimistic, positive, future and present focused, knowledge oriented, relaxed, creative, helping, just and empathetic.
Keywords: Happiness, Stands, Personality, Relationships, Society

1. INTRODUCTION

Different inquiries have been dealing with Happiness has been significant topic of substantial and ongoing scientific inquiries. Despite extensive focus of various researchers from different countries, happiness has not been the matter of scientific inquiry in Serbia. This may have been a mistake, because by conducting this kind of research it may be possible to direct individuals and society as a whole towards happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives. International researchers have grasped happiness, unhappiness, positive and negative affect, subjective well-being, and psychological well-being as areas to their interest. On this line, previous research endeavors have been exploring demographic, socio-economic and personality variables through prism of happiness. Previous research endeavors have established the most significant correlations between happiness on one side and extraversion and neuroticism on another side. Other personality traits such as openness to experience and agreeableness have also shown correlations to happiness.

In an early research done by Costa & McCrae [1] sociability and fear are found to correlate with happiness, being aspects of temperament. Negative Affect Scale, Positive Affect Scale and Affect Balance Scale are used in measurement to conclude that extraversion and neuroticism are correlated with the three measures of happiness such as hopelessness, personal security and Life Satisfaction Index. These researchers find 11 out to the 12 correlations statistically significant.

In more recent period, McCann [2] found more happy tweets in American states with lower levels of resident neuroticism. With intention to use Twitter as data source and previous findings about levels of Big Five personality traits in USA states, McCann combines analysis of over 10 million location tagged tweets to find higher strengths of correlations between happy twits and levels of neuroticism. However, levels of other personality traits such as openness, extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness showed no relation to state levels to the happiness of tweet content. In his untypical analysis McCann uses state socioeconomic status, white population percent, and urban population percent as statistical controls.

Another research inquiry by Furnham & Petrides [3] finds neuroticism negatively related to happiness and on the other hand openness and extraversion positively related to it. Measured of trait emotional intelligence, personality, happiness and cognitive ability were completed by participants in research of Furnham and Petrides. Cognitive ability was found unrelated to happiness. Interestingly, Furnham and Petrides highlighted that research inquiries in the past have been mainly examined relation of anxiety, depression , emotional disorders and traits, while happiness was neglected.

Spangler and Palrecha [4] combine measures of hedonic well being (pleasure and pain) and eudaimonic well-being (self-

actualization) on one side and extraversion, neuroticism and personal strivings on another. Researchers use a sample of 271 students. They conclude extraversion and neuroticism are related to hedonic factors of well being. Their examination could not find correlations with eudaimonic well-being. In conclusion authors argue that main problem is methodology they used. Research of well-being is confusing because of how hedonic and eudaimonic views are defined and measured, write Spangler and Palrecha.

Subjective experience of happiness or subjective well-being is examined by Lu, Shih, Lin and Ju [5] who summarized different approaches towards happiness research. In one concept, happiness is examined as a trait, which depends from personality in great extent meaning it is present in similar extent through life, write Lu, Shih, Lin and Ju. Other approach includes life events as important factors in determining levels of happiness. Again, it is shown that some life events relate to personalities of people that encounter them, write Headey and Wearing [6]. Study of Lu, Shih, Lin and Ju combined personality and life events model to research happiness in Taiwan. Through newly developed general measure of happiness to the Chinese people and participation of 494 residents Kaohsiung city in Taiwan these researchers have shown that social support was an important mediator, which had the strongest association with happiness.

Three measures on happiness and Five Factory Inventory were completed by 111 persons to conclude that extraversion and neuroticism best predicted scores on the Oxford Happiness Inventory, write Hayes and Joseph [7]. On the other hand, in this research conscientiousness was found to correlate with life satisfaction, which is claimed to be the most important contribution of this research inquiry. Personality was found to account for between 32 and56 % of variance in subjective well-being, write Hayes and Joseph.

Validation of happiness inventory and confirmatory evidence of previous research has been achieved by Furnham and Brewin [8] in a research that encompassed over 100 participants and confirmed positive correlation between happiness and extraversion and negative correlation between happiness and neuroticism. They conclude extraversion

accounts for about 30% to the variance in happiness. Probably neuroticism, economic circumstances and personal relationships account for the other 70%, write Furnham and Brewin.

Cheng and Furnham [9] examine causes of happiness and depression in population of adolescents. They include the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, Affect Balance Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, and Oxford Happiness Inventory in their research inquiry to find out self-esteem and relationship with parents had a predictive power on happiness and the opposite relationship with depression. On the other hand extraversion and neuroticism predicted happiness and depression through self-esteem, write Cheng and Furnham. Researcher also concluded that happiness and depression were far from identical or mirror images of one another and that leisure was the direct predictor of happiness but was not the predictor of depression.

According to above presented research findings the following questions related to some personality traits such as extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness are being posed in this inquiry.

Question 1. What is the relationship between stands about personal life philosophy and happiness?

Question 2. What is the relationship between stands about other people and happiness?

Question 3. What is the relationship between attitudes about society and happiness?

2. METHODS

The Attitude Examination Survey has been conducted by TNS Medium Gallup - Public Opinion, Market and Media Research Company from Belgrade in collaboration with the University of Megatrend in November of 2009. This annual survey consists of 366 questions placed into the following sections: Daily Activities, Attitudes and Statements, Satisfaction, Emotions and Values, Relationship with Others, Media, Society and Politics, Household and Demographics.

Interviewing was done by students of the Faculty for Culture and Media. They had an assignment to interview citizens as a part to their Media Analytics course. Students

conducted face-to-face surveys. The response rate to the interviews was 75%. An average interview lasted 25 min. The sample included cities such as Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis and rural areas. Coordinators to the research received 2966 inputs from the students. After filtering, multistage random sample of 2608 subjects was considered valid. This sample was representative for general Serbian population older than 15 years of age.

The sample is formed in three steps: first, sample points are randomly chosen without replacement, from the lists of voting stations, writes Branković [10]. Second: Statistical database of voting places is used as a source for selecting sample points. Selection is conducted randomly, with probability of selecting that is proportional to the share of a given sample point in the total number of adult population. Ten respondents in each sample point are chosen. In the second and third stages participants are chosen at random and systematically. The following procedure of choosing of participants was implemented: the interviewer would start from a initial point, randomly determined by local supervisor from maps and street lists. Going up from the given home number, interviewer enters every 2nd household (household is defined as all persons living in the flat or in a house). In the household, interviewer chooses individual older than 15 years of age whose birthday is closest to the day of discussion. If the chosen respondent is not available at the moment to the first visit, the interviewer schedules next appointment (on different time and day). In the case of denial, the interviewer would enter the next household.

Data came from several questionnaires/scales. Each participant was assured to the confidentiality to the investigation and subsequently received a booklet containing the following questionnaires which they were asked to complete.

Main personal background of survey participants was recorded, such

as age, gender, marital status, levels of income and education.

Participants also completed the 30-item Oxford Happiness Inventory created by Argyle, Martin, & Crossland [11] which is similar to the Beck Depression Inventory, showing test-retest reliability of (r = -.78) and a of between 0.64 and 0.87.

Multiple Lickert scale self-report inventory questions were employed to access attitudes, fears, media use and closeness of social categories to the participants.

SPSS was used to analyze data. The two main tools of this statistical software were employed. First, Pearson correlations were calculated to examine significance and strength of relationships between happiness and items of interest. After that, multiple regressions were used to examine these relationships in more detail and provide final conclusions

Given the fact that happiness levels were brought into relationship with answers to survey questions that measure some aspects of personality in a broader way, list of questions used in the survey is presented below.

3. RESULTS

Significant positive correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: Z7/6 in relation to the statement „There is so much to be learned and I always try to increase my knowledge and learn something new" (r=.195, p<.000, n=2406), S1/21 in relation to the statement „I am primarily focused on future, as I have big plans and expectations without regard to past or what is happening in present time" (r=.146, p<.000, n=2406), S1/19 in relation to the statement „I am very stable and cool and it is almost impossible to shake me and make me angry" (r=.132, p<.000, n=2406), S1/7 in relation to the statement „I live in present time, while trying to make most out of every second of my life and not caring much about past or future" (r=.131, p<.000, n=2399), Z7/4 in relation to the statement „I cannot be satisfied no matter what I achieve, because I know I can get more and do better and I always work on it" (r=.130, p<.000, n=2407), Z7/2 in relation to the statement „My guiding principle is: never in a hurry to whatever destination it may be and never in a worry whatever the cause might be" (r=.108, p<.000, n=2407) and Z7/1 in relation to the statement „I always have so many ideas in my mind in terms of what should be done, so much that I do not have time to realize those ideas and it looks it to me as if day is too short" (r=.106, p<.000, n=2407).

Significant correlations have not been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and

the following variables: Z7/3 in relation to the statement „I tend to be moving at all times, because I don't feel comfortable being static", Z7/5 in relation to the statement „I have never had any big goals: I work as much as I can and hopefully there will always be enough assets to make a living", S1/15 in relation to the statement „There is God or some higher force that we must account to for good or bad that we are doing or for what we have done" and S1/16 in relation to the statement „While I am interested in past, tradition and historic figures I am not interested in present and future". Answers on questions relating to personal philosophy and happiness are presented on Figure 1.
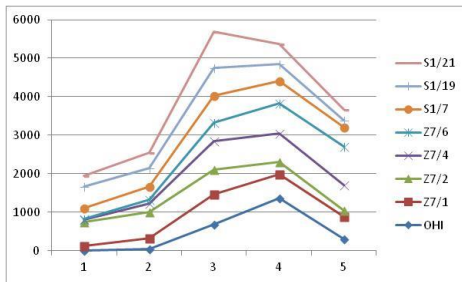
Figure 1 - Feeling of happiness

Figure. 1 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to certain kinds of personal philosophy stands. Survey answers on OHI, Z7/1, Z7/2, Z7/4, Z7/6, S1/7, S1/19 and S1/21 are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers is presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

Significant positive correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: S1/10 in relation to the statement „Man is often faced with envy and hatred of other people, but if he is people loving, good and just person, love always wins at the end" (r=.111, p<.000, n=2406), S1/14 in relation of statement „I love to help others" (r=.106, p<.000, n=2404), S1/8 in relation of statement „I am amongst persons who always fight for justice for myself and others until the end, without any regard for consequences" (r=.101, p<.000, n=2406).

Figure 2 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to stands in terms of relationship towards other people. Survey answers on OHI, S1/2, S1/8, S1/10 and S1/14 are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers

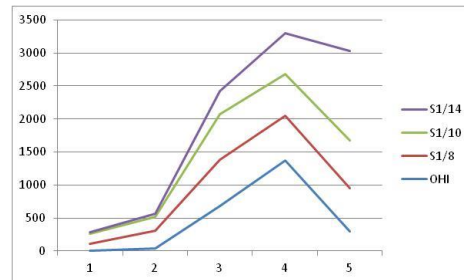are presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

Figure 2. Feeling of happiness

Significant negative correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: S1/17 in relation of statement „World is unjust no matter how much one seeks justice, because injustice always wins at the end" and feeling of happiness (r=-.183, p<.000, n=2405), S1/13 in relation of statement „People are evil by their nature, no matter how much somebody is trying to be good and people loving, when everything is accounted, hatred wins at the end, despite everything" (r=-.128, p<.000, n=2406), S1/18 in relation of statement „I look after myself and my own interests only" (r=-.103, p<.000, n=2406) and S1/5 in relation of statement „I think individual cannot fulfill justice, so I do not try to make it for myself or others" (r=-.100, p<.000, n=2406).
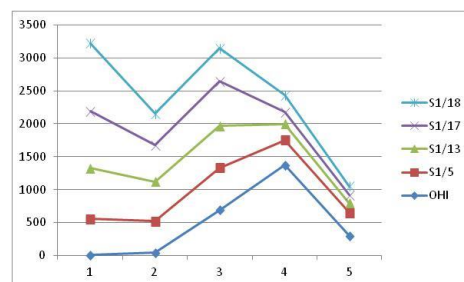

Figure. 3 - Feeling of happiness

Figure. 3 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to stands in terms of relationship towards other people. Survey answers on OHI, S1/18, S1/17, S1/13 and S1/5 are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers are presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

Significant correlations have not been

found between OHI and the following variables: S1/1 in relation of statement „Troubles of other people and injustices done to them hit me hard like they are done to me", S1/3 in relation of statement „I tend to mind my own business not caring much about troubles of other people, especially if they are not too close to me", S1/4 in relation of statement „It is not my business if other people love or hate each other, fight or make peace, because I mind my own business", S1/6 in relation of statement „Man is always faced with different misfortunes and unjust situations, but despite that justice always wins at the end", S1/9 in relation of statement „I have no nerves to talk with people who think differently about some important topics", S1/11 in relation of statement „I can listen to anyone and express my opinion, despite the fact our attitudes are extremely different", S1/12 in relation of statement „I am very nervous and I am easy to get out of tact when somebody make me crazy", S1/20 in relation of statement „I love being better than others", S1/22 in relation of statement „I feel well when others feel well". Answers on questions relating to relationship towards other people and happiness are presented on Figure 2.

Significant positive correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: Z3 in relation to the question „how much are you satisfied with current situation in the country" (r=.184, p<.000, n=2407), DP1/2 in relation to the statement „We need to execute speedy and deep reforms in order to overcome crisis and recover economy to the country despite some parts to the society would become poorer than they were before the reforms" (r=.157, p<.000, n=2407), DP1/1 in relation to the statement „Individual should take responsibility in his hands for himself and his family" (r=.118, p<.000, n=2407), DP1/7 in relation to the statement „Increasing expenditures for health would be overwhelming for the budget, therefore decreasing economic growth and endangering wages of labor" (r=.108, p<.000, n=2405), DP1/3 in relation to the statement „Increasing taxes for successful businessmen would disincentive both the most productive part of society and the foreign investors as well, therefore slowing down economic development, decreasing employment and decreasing development of

whole society" (r=.105, p<.000, n=2407) and DP1/5 in relation to the statement „Current labor laws are securing right amount of workers inclusion in decision making process about their wages, security of workplace and work conditions" (r=.104, p<.000, n=2407).

Significant correlations have not been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: DP1/4 in relation of statements 1: „Privatization needs to be limited only for companies that were owned by society, while public companies such as oil sector, telecommunications infrastructure and energy corporation should be owned by state in major percentage" and statement 2: „Complete privatization needs to be conducted, including public companies", DP1/6 in relation of statements 1: „State should ensure free education at all levels for those students that fulfill standards such as taking classes and passing exams" and statement 2: „Current education policies of state in terms of free education are the right measure in order not to be overwhelming for the budget and not to interfere with development to the country". Answers on questions relating to attitudes about society and happiness are presented on Figure 3.
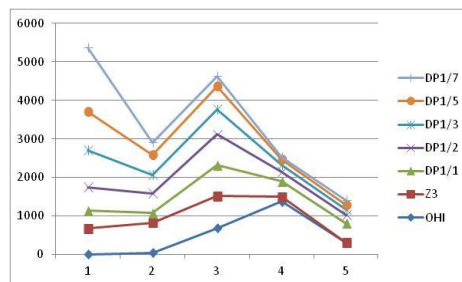

Figure 4 - Feeling of happiness

Figure. 4 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to some attitudes about society. Survey answers on OHI, Z3, DP1/1, DP1/2, DP1/3, DP1/5 and DP1/7 are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers are presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

4. CONCLUSION

All hypotheses of this research are confirmed. It may be possible to conclude that those open to new experiences, people loving,

optimistic, positive, future and present focused, knowledge oriented, relaxed, creative, helping, just and empathetic are happier than others. These research findings may pose as helpful hints or "recipes" for happiness on individual level.

This research is significant because it is the first of this kind in Serbia. Despite the fact that many international researchers drew conclusion on several different levels about happiness, Serbian colleagues used to neglect this topic.

Although results of this inquiry indicate relationship of happiness to personality traits, future research endeavors should use similar measurements to the ones used by international researchers in the past in order to draw parallels more accurately. In other words, limitation of this research may be in deployed measures which should be the same one used in previous inquiries.

At the same time, more research of online social networks posts should be done in order to see how positive and negative emotions fluctuate in different countries, through the day and in relation to weather parameters..

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