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An Investigation of the Big Five and Narrow Personality Traits in Relation to Life Satisfaction

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Hemali Rakesh Patel entitled "An Investigation of the Big Five and Narrow Personality Traits in Relation to Life Satisfaction." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

John W. Lounsbury, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Eric Sundstrom, Jacob J. Levy

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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An Investigation of the Big Five and Narrow Personality Traits in Relation to Life Satisfaction

A Thesis

Presented for the Master of Arts Degree

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville

Hemali Rakesh Patel

May 2011

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the relationship between personality and life satisfaction. I analyzed the Big Five traits, six narrow personality traits, and levels of life satisfaction in a sample of 5,932 individuals. A review of existing literature on other variables that contribute to life satisfaction was also conducted and used to measure against personality traits. The narrow traits added variance above and beyond the Big Five personality traits. All the Big Five traits and Optimism, Assertiveness, Intrinsic Motivation, and Tough-Mindedness were significantly and positively correlated with life satisfaction. Image Management was significantly and negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Results were discussed in terms of the relation of personality traits to life satisfaction and the amount narrow personality traits related to life satisfaction after controlling for the Big Five. Explanations were offered as to how these traits might have value in relation to life satisfaction.

Keywords: Big Five, Personality Traits, Life satisfaction, Narrow Traits, Subjective Well-being, Satisfaction

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is important because it is considered to be a central part of human welfare. Many believe that being satisfied with one's life is what matters the most. Life satisfaction is sought by many individuals and it is one's goal for one to be happy and have numerous pleasant experiences. There are many philosophers, such as Robert Nozick (1989), Robert Almeder (2000), and L. W. Sumner (1996), who also believe that happiness and life satisfaction are extremely important. Sumner goes further along this line of thought and places Life satisfaction at the center well-being as "authentic happiness" (Haybron, 2007). Happiness and life satisfaction have been used interchangeably often by many philosophical proponents of this view (Barrow, 1980, 1991; Benditt, 1974, 1978; Campbell, 1973; Montague, 1967; Rescher, 1972, 1980; Telfer, 1980; and Von Wright, 1963). Life satisfaction is widely regarded as a central aspect of well-being. High subjective well-being implies a high life satisfaction with a large quantity of pleasant experiences. (Schimmak, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004). Thus, past research has focused on investigating sources of life satisfaction such as demographics and genetics. To progress on this line of thought we look at personality traits. This study centers on the relationship between broad and narrow personality traits in relation to life satisfaction.

Definition and Measurement of Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction, as defined by Diener (1984), "is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: Life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect." In 1999, Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith also included other factors in this definition, such as the "desire to change one's life; satisfaction with past; satisfaction with future; and significant

other's views of one's life" (Buetell, 2006). In more recent research, the definition of life satisfaction has become more concise and is defined as a "contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances, or the fulfillment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole" (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001). Hence, satisfaction with life is a subjective assessment of one's overall quality of life.

Life satisfaction can be separated into a multitude of domains, yet it makes sense that a parsimonious view of these domains is needed with normal requirements of reliability and validity (Cummins 1996). Cummins, McCabe, Romeo, and Gullone (1994) and Cummins (1995; 1996) have provided a parsimonious view with both theoretical and empirical arguments for the use of seven domains. These domains are as follows: (1) material well-being, (2) health, (3) productivity, (4) intimacy, (5) safety, (6) community and (7) emotional well-being. I will also add one more domain (8) other – since there are other view about domains. However, in the end, all of the domains factor together as one unitary concept and thus Life satisfaction is studied as a gestalt (ex. Van Praag, Frijters, & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2003).

Individuals determine their Life satisfaction by comparing how their life is with what they had, what they expect to have, what others have and what one feels one deserves (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001). Greater Life satisfaction occurs when there are small inconsistencies between what one expects and what one receives, whereas greater life dissatisfaction occurs when there are large inconsistencies. While participants measure their own Life satisfaction through comparisons, researchers measure Life satisfaction of individuals through self-report. Self-report is the method of choice in the evaluation of life satisfaction. Self-report measures of life satisfaction typically require participants to designate the degree to which they are satisfied

with their lives. Researchers prefer multi-item scales of life satisfaction, because multi-item scales demonstrate greater overall validity and reliability, and they can better assess the different dimensions (i.e. work, family, health) of life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). In contrast, single item scales of life satisfaction are not able to assess the different dimensions of life satisfaction separately thus they are mainly used if a short survey is essential (*Ibid*). Multi-item scales also help to identify wording and measurement errors as well as assessment of internal consistency (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001).

There has been extensive research that has investigated the sources of life satisfaction. Most research has fallen into three categories namely, demographical factors (i.e., life circumstances, events, and the environment), genetic factors (i.e. nature versus nurture), and personality factors (individual traits).

Overview of Factors Related to Life Satisfaction

Demographic Factors

Life satisfaction has been investigated in relation to, sex, age, ethnicity, religion and economic class (Myers & Diener, 1995). Indicators such as sex and age account for a small portion of variance of subjective well-being (e.g., Haring, Stock, & Okun, 1984; Stock, Okun, Haring, & Witter, 1983; Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan, 1989). Using meta-analyses demographic variables such as age, sex, gender, marital status and ethnicity have been found to not contribute to happiness and subjective well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). Other meta-analyses have shown strong associations of health and socioeconomic status with subjective well-being. Okun and colleagues (1984) found that self-rated health obtain a stronger correlation with subjective

well-being than physician rated health. Health correlates with subjective well being with an *r* of .32 (Okun, Stock, Haring, & Witter, 1984) and composite socioeconomic status (which consists of education, occupation and income) correlates with subjective well-being with an *r* of .20 (Haring, Stock, & Okun,1984). Religion has also been shown to have significant associations with happiness and subjective well-being, and accounts for about 5% – 7% of the variation (Ellison, 1991). Diener, Sandvik, Seidliz and Diener (1993) reported the association between income and well-being to be $r = .13$ in the United States. On the other hand, Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001) found this correlation to be $r = .45$ in the slums of Calcutta. Similarly, Diener and Diener (1995) discovered that there is a stronger relationship between life satisfaction and financial satisfaction in poor than wealthy countries. Diener and Seligman (2004) concluded that "within-nation correlations generally do show small positive associations (~.15) between income and well-being, and the average reported well-being is higher in wealthy societies than in poor nations." Likewise, many other researchers found that factors such as socio-economic status, educational level, income, marital status, and religious commitment correlate weakly with subjective well-being and only explain about 3% of the variance in life satisfaction (Costa et al, 1987; Lykken& Tellegen, 1996; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). More recently, Lyubomirsky and colleagues (2005) report that there have been findings where these factors explain about 10% of the variance in life satisfaction. Bartels and colleagues (2010) concluded that stable characteristics (i.e. enduring dispositions) in an individual are more useful in predicting subjective well-being than demographic variables. Thus, while demographic variables have moderate correlations with subjective well-being, researchers should examine other possibilities that may account for the variance in subjective well-being and life satisfaction.

Genetic Factors

Researchers have also looked at genetic factors related to life satisfaction. Research on identical and fraternal twins, for example, has shown that approximately 50% of current well-being variance may be accounted for by genetic influences (Tellegen, Lykken, Bouchard, Wilcox, Rich, & Segal, 1988; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Røysamb, Harris, Magnus, Vitterso, & Tambs, 2002). Within these studies the correlation for the monozygotic twins was substantial, while the correlation for the dizygotic twins was negligible. This suggested that the genetic effects upon well-being is non-additive, that is, the effects are comprised of interactions between genes (Røysamb, Tambs, Reichborn-Kjennerud, Neale, & Harris, 2003; Stubbe, Posthuma, Boomsma, & De Geus, 2005; Bartels & Boomsma, 2009). The unique environments of the twins explained the remaining variance in these studies. Another study on twins concluded that 38% of the variability in life satisfaction is heritable and the other 62% of the variance was accounted to unique environmental factors (Stubbe, Posthuma, Boomsma, & De Geus, 2005).

Overall twin studies based upon genetics consistently indicate that happiness is heritable, and accounts for around 40-50% of the variance in levels of well-being (Eid & Larson, 2008). Hence, genetic factors are not the only determinant of happiness, subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Genes along with the environment play important roles for subjective well-being. A variable that is a combination of both is personality. Thus, another class of variables that can be investigated are personality traits.

Personality Factors

Big five personality traits.

Personality traits are another set of variables that may account for subjective well-being and life satisfaction variance. One particular set of global dimensions used to examine personality is known as the Big Five personality traits. Lounsbury and Gibson (2009, p. 5) define the Big Five traits as:

"**Extraversion—**Tendency to be sociable, outgoing, expressive, talkative, gregarious, warmhearted, congenial, and affiliative; attentive to and energized by other people and social/interpersonal cues in the workplace.

Neuroticism (Emotional Stability) —This trait is the inverse of what others term Neuroticism; it reflects overall level of adjustment, resilience, and emotional stability; indicative of ability to function effectively under conditions or job pressure and stress.

Agreeableness—Disposition to be pleasant, amiable, equable, and cooperative; inclined to work harmoniously with others; will avoid disagreements, arguments, conflict in interactions with other people.

Conscientiousness—Being reliable, dependable, trustworthy, and rule-following; strives to honor commitments and do what one says one will do in a manner others can count on. In addition to this measure of Conscientiousness, we have two other related forms of Conscientiousness-one that includes orderliness, rule-following behavior, and preference for structure; while one other measure of Conscientiousness does not include orderliness and the other does not include rule-following behavior.

Openness—Prone to seek out and engage in new: ideas, procedures, techniques, and experiences; inclined toward organization innovation, acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) on the job, continuing education, professional development, travel,

cross-cultural activities, and temporary duty assignments."

Subjective well-being is comprised of both emotional and cognitive elements. Life satisfaction is defined to be the cognitive aspect of subjective well-being (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001). Both Extraversion and Neuroticism are strongly correlated to subjective well-being. They have been researched by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) who concluded that these two variables correlate strongly with life satisfaction: Extraversion at $r = .17$, and Neuroticism at $r = -.22$. Also, Hayes and Joseph (2003) found that the Neuroticism – emotional stability dimension is consistently associated with subjective well-being. Moreover, Costa and McCrae (1980) suggest that happiness is associated with greater Extraversion and lower Neuroticism. This is not to say, however, that Extraversion and Neuroticism are the only traits that have been shown to have significant effect on happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction.

Another Big Five personality trait that is associated with life satisfaction is Agreeableness. Agreeableness is a factor that deals with interpersonal relationships. It focuses on interpersonal behaviors such as cooperation. It has been found to be related to subjective well-being by helping to smooth the progress of more positive experiences in social situations, thus enhancing relationship quality (McCrae & Costa, 1991). DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found Agreeableness was strongly associated to life satisfaction with $r = .17$. This study, along with many others, has shown that along with Extraversion and Neuroticism, other dimensions of the Big Five are also related to life satisfaction. Furthering McCrae and Costa's findings, Blatny and colleagues (2004) concluded that Life satisfaction relates significantly with Agreeableness.

Similarly Conscientiousness is another Big Five personality trait that is associated with

life satisfaction. Conscientiousness describes task behavior and impulse control. Given that conscientious people set high goals for themselves and achieve more, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their lives. Conscientiousness relates to subjective well-being in that "it helps to smooth the progress of more positive experiences in achievement situations" (McCrae & Costa, 1991). DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found Conscientiousness to be positively and strongly associated with life satisfaction at $r = .21$. Furthering these findings Blatny and colleagues (2004) concluded that Life satisfaction relates significantly with Conscientiousness.

While Extraversion and Neuroticism were expected to be the strongest associations, DeNeve and Cooper (1998) established that correlations with subjective well-being ranged from $r = 0.11$ for Openness to $r = - 0.22$ for Neuroticism, with Extraversion at $r = 0.17$. Though they all were statistically significant, the values are still moderate and not much larger than other demographic characteristics.

The primary advantage of the Big Five personality model is its predictive ability for a multitude of experiences and behaviors with a relatively small number of personality dimensions. The Big Five traits dimensions are quite broad which can make it difficult to identify exactly which traits and facets of traits are related to life satisfaction. For example, when looking at Extraversion – is gregariousness more related to life satisfaction than Optimism or social hardiness? The generality of these Big Five traits may consequently lead to insignificant and spurious findings that vary from replication to replication and thus are unreliable (Cronbach, 1960). Many psychological researchers prefer the Big Five because it is the most parsimonious means by which to understand human personality and its relation to life satisfaction. Schneider et al. (1996) noted that the Big Five traits are used as a benchmark for determining the broad versus

narrow dilemma. Yet, using this model is limiting, due to the Big Five traits being broad to being with. Paunonen (1998) mentions the dangers of a potential decrease in predictive accuracy attributable to "the loss of trait-specific but criterion-valid variance" (p. 538) when specific traits are aggregated into the larger personality dimensions. Researchers may be disregarding the significant information that narrow traits provide when comparing data only with the Big Five traits. For instance, research has found that narrow traits are superior in predictive validity, while broad traits hinder psychological meaningfulness (Paunonen, Rothstein, & Jackson, 1999; Moon, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, & Maue, 2003). In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of personality traits in relation to life satisfaction, specific traits should be considered.

Narrow personality traits.

The Big Five personality factors have gained broad recognition as one method of a common categorization of personality traits, yet narrow personality traits may also be related to life satisfaction. There has been some discussion about how validity relationships can be improved by taking narrow personality traits into account in addition to the Big Five personality traits. Narrow personality traits address a more specific segment of behavior, consequently they are smaller in conceptual scope in comparison to the Big Five, and they may or may not be components of the Big Five personality traits. There have been various studies in which narrow personality traits have added variance beyond the Big Five traits (Logue, Lounsbury, Gupta, & Leong, 2007). In addition, a combination of the Big Five traits with narrow traits have been found to have higher levels of criterion – related validity than either the Big Five or the narrow traits by themselves (Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Gibson & Loveland, 2003). Thus, additional factors

may contribute equally or more heavily to subjective well-being and life satisfaction.

By 1996 there existed 137 personality traits that had been correlated with subjective well-being, and hence, Life satisfaction. Within the existing 137 personality traits, DeNeve and Cooper (1998) included the characteristics of repressive defensiveness (the tendency to avoid threatening information), trust, hardiness (the tendency to cope with stressful life situations in a positive manner), self-esteem, optimism, and locus of control-chance (the tendency to think that events happen by chance alone).

More recently, Lounsbury and Gibson (2009) identified specific narrow traits, that is, traits that do not necessarily fit into the Big Five traits; that are related to satisfaction. A sampling of these included six traits, namely Optimism, Work Drive, Assertiveness, Tough-Mindedness, Intrinsic Motivation, and Image Management. These traits were chosen because they were previously found to be related to career satisfaction (Lounsbury, Loveland, Sundstrom, Gibson, Drost, & Hamrick, 2003). Lounsbury and Gibson (2009, p. 5-7) define these traits as follows.

> "**Optimism** - Having an optimistic, hopeful disposition concerning prospects, plans, people, and the future, even in the face of difficulty and adversity; tendency to minimize problems and persist in the face of setbacks" (p. 6).
>
> "**Work Drive -** Disposition to work hard and for long hours, investment of one's time and energy into job and career, and being motivated to extend oneself, if necessary, to finish projects, meet deadlines, attain quotas, and achieve job success" (p. 7).
>
> "**Assertiveness** - Refers to a person's inclination to seize the initiative, take

charge of situations, speak up in meetings, bring influence to bear on other people, voice ideas and opinions that may not be well-received by others, defend one's actions and beliefs when challenged, and confront problems directly" (p. 5).

"**Tough / Tender-Mindedness -** Appraising information and making work decisions based on logic, facts, and data rather than feelings, values and sentiments. Those scoring in the tough-minded direction tend to be analytical, realistic, objective, and unsentimental when making judgments and drawing conclusions about what needs to be done. Those scoring more in the tender-minded direction tend to be sensitive, considerate, empathetic, and willing to use personal feelings and values as decision-criteria. Similar to Myers-Briggs Thinker-Feeler preference" (p. 7).

"**Intrinsic Motivation** - A person's disposition to be motivated by internal factors, such as challenge, meaning, autonomy, variety, and significance, as opposed to external factors, such as pay and earnings, benefits, status, and recognition" (Lounsbury, Loveland, Sundstrom, Gibson, Drost, & Hamrick 2003, p. 291).

"**Image Management -** Derived from the "Self-Monitoring" construct; reflects a person's disposition to monitor, observe, regulate, and enhance self-presentation to create a favorable impression on other people" (p. 6).

Narrow personality traits as major factors of life satisfaction.

Optimism.

One of the traits displaying the largest correlation with life satisfaction is Optimism,

which is defined as the cognitive disposition to expect favorable outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimism is an attributional style of an individual that internalizes positive events and exudes confidence about future events, while pessimism is an attributional style that externalizes positive events and internalizes negative expectations (Peterson & Steen, 2002; Seligman, 1998). There has been some empirical research that poses the question of whether Optimism and pessimism are independent constructs or if they are simply facets of Neuroticism and Extraversion (Boland & Cappeliez, 1997). Even if Optimism is considered a facet of Extraversion, locating the specific traits to which Life satisfaction can be attributed, will only increase the efficiency of creating or obtaining Life satisfaction. As a result of the optimistic attributional style, individuals are motivated towards their goals because they tend to build positive expectancies whereas pessimists have negative expectancies and are thus mired by self-doubt. Optimism is developed while pursuing personal goals and is different from hope in that Optimism includes external features like the input of other people. For example, an optimist's positive experiences that promote favorable views of the future may have multiple sources like the peers, or the self. An optimist's construal of negative situations relies on the separation of self from failure. Furthermore, Optimism is more general while self-efficacy is domain-specific. As for hope, unlike Optimism it does "account for the pathways created and utilized for goal accomplishment" (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). In addition, Optimism is unlike hope and self-esteem in that it includes emotional, cognitive and motivational components (Peterson, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). And lastly, the discriminant validity of Optimism and other well being measures like hope and self-efficacy has been supported through several empirical studies (Bryant & Cvengros, 2004; Carifio & Rhodes 2002; Lucas, Diener & Suh

1996). Thus, Optimism should not be seen as an amalgamation of previously studied variables, it has many differences, yet it does include parts and pieces of these other concepts.

Numerous studies have shown that Optimism correlates with life satisfaction in a broad range of ages and cultures. Research on students, parents, and senior citizens indicate that Optimism is a significant, positive predictor of life satisfaction (Extremera, Duran & Rey, 2009; Fotiadou, Barlow, Powell & Langton, 2008; Heo & Lee, 2010). Optimism is also highly related to life satisfaction in relation to an array of cultures: Korean (Cha, 2003), Irish (Nevin, Carr, Shevlin, Dooley & Breaden, 2005), Italian (Colombo, Balbo, & Baruffi, 2006), Lebanese (Ayyash-Abdo & Alamuddin, 2007), Chinese (Leung, Moneta, & McBride-Chang, 2005), Croatian (Brdar, Ingrid, Kashdan, & Todd, 2009), Turkish (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005) and many more. Finally, Optimism may be related to life satisfaction of individuals with different occupations like teachers (Chan, Kwok, & Yeung, 2004), and health issues like chronic illness (Dubey & Agarwal, 2004). Therefore, Optimism has been related to life satisfaction across ages, occupations, and cultures.

Work Drive.

The narrow trait of Work Drive has begun to gain attention, primarily due to its predictive ability regarding job and academic performance (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2002). Work Drive is a personality construct that is defined as the disposition of an individual to work extensive hours and "extend oneself for one's job" (Lounsbury, Gibson, & Hamrick, 2004), and when needed, to meet the demands of the job as well as to achieve job success. These definitions can be extended to academia, since academics are considered to be a student's job. The construct

of Work Drive has been studied in relation to job/academic performance. The stronger an individual's Work Drive, the better their performance is on the job or in school. Lounsbury and colleagues (2004) derived Work Drive from work ethic because they are defined in dissimilar ways. Work Drive is a construct that focuses and emphasizes working long hours in the workplace (in relation to academics this would mean studying for long hours), which includes putting in long hours each day for one's profession, working overtime and on weekends as well as taking work home to meet the demands of the job (job performance demands), which will help fulfill company (or school) goals and increase productivity. Work ethic on the other hand, is classically regarded as a "set of attitudes, beliefs, or values about the general importance of work for society and personal or moral character, the negative value of idleness and laziness, and the rewards of working hard – especially monetary outcomes and material prosperity" (Lounsbury, Gibson, & Hamrick, 2004, p. 428). There are many other constructs that may seem similar to Work Drive, yet they are different in their own ways. Some of these cognate constructs are work centrality, workaholism, and job involvement. Lounsbury and colleagues (2004) defined work centrality as a belief of the gradation of significance of work in one's life, workaholism as an individuals tendency to work excessively and be addicted to working, and job involvement as a motivating factor that suggests an individuals beliefs about a specific job. Thus, all three of these along with work ethic are different from the construct of Work Drive.

Work Drive has been found to be significantly related to job performance towards work in an organizational setting as well as being significantly related to academic performance in the classroom (Lounsbury, Gibson, Sundstrom, Wilburn & Loveland, 2004). Lounsbury and colleagues (2004) were successful in developing a reliable and valid Work Drive measure, which

was tested upon individuals in a multitude of jobs and work settings, including middle school students and high school students. In a validation study by Lounsbury and colleagues (2004), incremental validity was established for Work Drive as well as criterion-related validity in relation to overall performance for the jobs. Incremental validity was established for Work Drive above and beyond the Big Five personality traits and it was established for Work Drive above and beyond both the Big Five variables and cognitive aptitude. These results it signify "the importance of the Work Drive construct in terms of its significance and unique relationship with job performance beyond the personality constructs normally related to job performance" (Lounsbury et al., 2004).

Work Drive has already been shown to be a personality trait that is related to important outcome criteria for students, many of which can also affect Life satisfaction, including internet usage (Landers & Lounsbury, 2006), sense of identity (Lounsbury, Levy, Leong, & Gibson, 2007), self directed learning (Lounsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, & Smith, 2009), academic success (Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004), intention to withdraw from college (Lounsbury, Saudargas, & Gibson, 2004), academic performance (Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Gibson, & Loveland, 2003) course grades (Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Loveland, & Gibson, 2003), cognitive ability (Lounsbury, Welsh, Gibson, & Sundstrom, 2004), job performance (Loveland, Gibson, Lounsbury, & Huffstetler, 2005), and, most importantly for the purposes of this paper, Life satisfaction (Lounsbury, Gibson and Hamrick, 2004).

Assertiveness.

Assertiveness is a narrow personality trait that has been labeled as a component of the

Big Five factor Extraversion (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Understanding a broad trait like Extraversion involves comprehending the specific, narrower traits that make up the broad personality trait. Hence, locating the specific trait that is the closest in relating to life satisfaction may elucidate and lead to a better grasp of the influences that personality has on Life satisfaction (Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004).

When all the aspects of Extraversion are taken into consideration when related to life satisfaction, Assertiveness was found to have the largest bivariate correlation. When the six main facets were taken into consideration, positive emotion and Assertiveness were the only facets significantly related to life satisfaction (Herringer, 1998). Assertiveness has been found to be related to many different types of satisfaction for different occupational groups. Business majors, for example, tend to be more assertive and persistent and, thus, may speak up more often, be more willing to compete, take the initiative, and assume leadership roles – all of which may lead to positive outcomes which, in turn, lead to life satisfaction (Logue, Lounsbury, Gupta, & Leong, 2007). Social workers who were assertive were found to have higher job satisfaction (Rabin & Zelner, 1992). Moreover, Pearsall and Ellis (2006) found that Assertiveness in a critical team member lead to an overall positive effect on team performance and satisfaction.

Tough-Mindedness.

Tough-Mindedness has not been studied extensively, yet the research that has been done shows that it is related to life satisfaction among adults (Lounsbury, Gibson & Hamrick, 2004) and college, high school, and middle school students (Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Gibson, & Loveland, 2003; Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Loveland, & Gibson, 2003). It has also been found to be

related to career satisfaction (Logue, Lounsbury, Gupta, & Leong, 2007). One such career is the profession of Information technology (Lounsbury, Studham, Steel, Gibson, & Drost, 2009). Tough-Mindedness is a quality that has been proven important for IT professionals because they base their actions on logic, facts, and critical thinking. For example, Exforsys (2008) states that "the first trait which computer programmers should possess is an analytical mind". However, the narrow trait of Tough-Mindedness is still relatively new and more research needs to be conducted to verify the relationship between Tough-Mindedness and life satisfaction.

Tender-Mindedness is the exact opposite of Tough-Mindedness and has been labeled as a narrow personality trait that is a component of one of the Big Five factors, Agreeableness (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001, *p.529*). Tough-Mindedness has been found to be related to life satisfaction for a range of ages and certain other populations.

Intrinsic Motivation.

Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is important. It has positive consequences in settings where motivated performance leads to consequential outcomes. For example, intrinsic motivation can lead to higher levels of productivity for professional or salaried occupations. Or, if an individual is extrinsically motivated to get a raise at work, they will work hard to convince their supervisor that they deserve a raise, and the consequence of their extrinsic motivation would be getting that raise. Motivation can be thought of as directional energy and it can help with persistence, effort, and productivity. Motivation is one of the paramount concerns of leaders such as managers, teachers, coaches, and parents. There are two different types of motivation, which include different types of factors with very different experiences and consequences.

Individuals can be externally motivated through money, benefits, status, or prestige; or intrinsically motivated through autonomy, challenge (mastery), task variety, or meaning (Pink, 2009). Being externally pressured is familiar to everyone, yet the issue of whether people stand behind a behavior because of their values or interests: being intrinsically motivated, or if they do it for external reasons is significant in every culture (e.g. Johnson, 1993) and it represents a basic element by which individuals make sense of overall behavior, their own and others (Heider, 1958; Ryan & Connell, 1989). People will be internally motivated for activities that hold an intrinsic value or interest for them, that is, activities that are challenging or that have an appeal for novelty (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic or internal motivation has been considered by some researchers to be a narrow personality trait which has yet to be investigated extensively in relation to life satisfaction. Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) explored internal motivation and general well-being by examining individual differences between groups of individuals who place emphasis on intrinsic aspirations (goals such as challenge, personal growth) versus external aspirations (goals such as wealth and fame). They found that when placing strong importance on intrinsic aspirations, well-being indicators such as self-esteem and self-actualization were positively associated with intrinsic aspirations. These findings were replicated by Ryan, Chirkov, Little, Sheldon, Timoshina, and Deci (1999), in a Russian sample, showing that the effects of intrinsic motivation can be generalizable across cultures.

Image Management.

Image Management is a person's disposition to monitor, observe, regulate, and enhance

self-presentation to create a favorable impression on other people (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2009). People self-monitor constantly (Snyder, 1974). When one is at work, one has to monitor themselves around their co-workers, usually in a professional manner. While at the grocery store, an individual cannot for example, be aggressive and throw things off shelves, unless they wanted to be detained for destruction of property. Even at home, one has to monitor themselves around their family and friends; for example, around children one would want to screen their language.

What does self-monitoring have to do with life satisfaction? Individuals seek to fulfill personal needs, and motivations by engaging in behaviors that they believe will satisfy those needs (Cantor 1994), but they still have to monitor themselves while engaging in these behaviors. For example, if one feels the need to volunteer at a homeless shelter, one still has to monitor themselves while they are doing their volunteer work. Once the act to satisfy a need is complete, individuals feel more satisfied overall. There has been a limited amount of research conducted on Image Management and career satisfaction. As a case in point, Lounsbury, Loveland, Sundstrom, Gibson, Drost, and Hamrick (2003) found Image Management to be positively related to career and job satisfaction with individuals in the clerical, consultant, customer service, human resource, and management occupations.

CHAPTER 2: EXAMINATION OF THE BIG FIVE AND NARROW PERSONALITY TRAITS IN RELATION TO LIFE SATISFACTION

Objectives

Historically, the Big Five have been shown to be strongly associated with life satisfaction. However, newer empirical studies have revealed that performance is not solely or

completely predicted by just the Big Five personality traits; rather, significant variance can also be accounted for by narrow personality traits. The purpose of the present study was threefold: to replicate previous findings regarding the Big Five traits, to assess whether narrow traits are significantly related to life satisfaction, and if narrow traits can account for additional unique variance in life satisfaction above and beyond the Big Five. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were addressed.

Hypotheses

As noted earlier, previous research has found the Big Five personality traits to be related to life satisfaction. (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder 2004, among others).

DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found Extraversion to be significantly correlated to life satisfaction. More specifically, Costa and McCrae (1980) suggest that happiness is associated with greater extraversion.

H1a: Extraversion will be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction.

Hayes and Joseph (2003) and DeNeve and Cooper (1998) also found Emotional Stability (Neuroticism) to consistently be associated with life satisfaction. In particular Costa and McCrae (1980) note that lower Neuroticism is associated with greater happiness and consequently, greater Life satisfaction.

H1b: Neuroticism will be significantly and negatively related to life satisfaction, or to put it another way, Emotional Stability (which is the inverse of Neuroticism) will be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction).

McCrae & Costa (1991) and Blatny and colleagues (2004) found a significant positive relationship between Agreeableness and life satisfaction.

H1c: Agreeableness (Teamwork) will be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction.

Studies by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) as well as Blatny and colleagues (2004) found Conscientiousness to be significantly related to life satisfaction.

H1d: Conscientiousness will be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction.

Finally, the study by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) also found Openness to be significantly associated with life satisfaction.

H1e: Openness will be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction.

As was pointed out earlier, Optimism has been observed to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction for various individuals around the world and there have been multiple studies of Optimism in relation to life satisfaction across a broad range of ages and cultures. Optimism has been found to be a positive predictor of life satisfaction; that is, the highest optimists have the highest levels of life satisfaction, the moderate optimists have a moderate level of life satisfaction and the low level optimists have a low level of life satisfaction (Harju & Bolen, 1998).

H2a: Optimism will be positively and significantly related to life satisfaction.

H2b: Optimism will be related to life satisfaction even after controlling for the Big Five

personality traits.

As discussed earlier, Work Drive has also been shown to add a significant amount of variance to life satisfaction. Work Drive in the recent past has been found to have a larger association with emotional resilience and job satisfaction than that of Assertiveness, but a weaker relationship with regards to Optimism (Lounsbury, Moffitt, Gibson, Drost, & Stevens, 2007).

H3a: Work Drive will be positively and significantly related to life satisfaction.

H3b: Work Drive will be related to life satisfaction even after controlling for the Big Five personality traits.

Lounsbury, Loveland and colleagues (2003) reported that Assertiveness, along with Optimism and Work Drive, was positively related to career and job satisfaction for individuals who had executive or business management positions. Therefore, if Assertiveness is a specific trait which relates highly to life satisfaction, researchers could pursue future research by investigating the roles of characteristics such as initiative and leadership as determinants of life satisfaction.

H4a: Assertiveness will be positively and significantly related to life satisfaction

H4b: Assertiveness will be related to life satisfaction even after controlling for the Big Five personality traits.

And finally, as discussed earlier, narrow personality traits have been found to account for significant levels of variance in life satisfaction.

H5: The set of narrow traits will add significantly to the prediction of life satisfaction above and beyond the Big Five.

Research Questions

In addition, I will be investigating three other narrow personality traits – Tough-Mindedness, Intrinsic Motivation and Image Management as non-directional research questions. Tough-Mindedness has been related to life satisfaction for a range of ages. It has also been related to career satisfaction (Logue, Lounsbury, Gupta, & Leong, 2007). In the case of IT professionals, Tough-Mindedness is significantly related to career satisfaction (Lounsbury, Studham, Steel, Gibson, Drost, 2009). Tough-Mindedness has not been studied extensively in relation to life satisfaction, thus the following research questions were investigated.

RQ1a. Is Tough-Mindedness related to life satisfaction?

RQ1b. If Tough-Mindedness is related to life satisfaction, will it still be related to life satisfaction if the Big Five traits are controlled for?

Another research question involves internal motivation. As noted earlier, Internal Motivation is a large factor in an individual's life, whether it is internal or external. This trait also has not been fully explored in relation to life satisfaction, therefore:

RQ2a. Is Intrinsic Motivation related to life satisfaction?

RQ2b. If Intrinsic Motivation is related to life satisfaction, will it still be correlated with life satisfaction if the Big Five traits are controlled for?

Finally, there has also been a limited amount of literature about Image Management. Previous studies by Lounsbury et al. (2003) found that Image Management to be significantly, positively related to career satisfaction and we aim to investigate its relationship to life satisfaction.

RQ3a. Is Image Management related to life satisfaction?

RQ3b. If Image Management is related to life satisfaction, will it still be significantly correlated with life satisfaction after the Big Five traits are controlled for?

Research Design

Overview

The data for this study represent a convenience sample from an archival database provided by *eCareerfit.com*. This data source was chosen for the reason that it contained an array of occupations and industries All data were originally collected via the Internet on persons receiving career transition services offered by a global strategic human resources company.

Participants

This is a non-random convenience sample which represents participants who took the assessment as a part of outplacement, career planning, and other career-related services offered by a career transitions company. A total of 10,284 individuals were included in the analysis from the time period under study (October 2005-January 2008), of which 59% were male and 41% were female. Age group relative frequencies were as follows: younger than 30: 9%; 30 to 39: 28%; 40 to 49: 37%, and 50 and older: 26%. Occupations included but were not limited to the following:

Accountant, 1.9%; Business-General, 2%; Clerical, 2.4%; Consultant, 9.1%; Customer Service, 2.8%; Engineering and Science, 3.9%; Executive, 4.1%; Financial Services, 4.5%; Human Resources, 6.4%; Information Technology, 12.8%; Manager, 15%; Manufacturing, 3.2%; Marketing, 5.4%; and Sales, 7%.

Measures

Personality traits.

Lounsbury and Gibson (2010) developed the personality measures used in this data set (for validity information, also see Lounsbury, Loveland, & Gibson, 2001; Lounsbury, Tatum, Chambers, Owens, & Gibson, 1999). A brief definition of each of the personality constructs examined in the present study was given earlier, below is a list of the traits along with the number of items in the scale.

Assertiveness: 8 items, Conscientiousness: 8 items, Emotional Resilience (the inverse of Neuroticism): 6 items, Extraversion: 7 items, Image Management: 6 items, Intrinsic Motivation: 6 items, Openness: 9 items, Optimism: 6 items, Teamwork (Agreeableness): 7 items, Tough-Mindedness: 8 items, and Work Drive: 7 items.

Life satisfaction.

A Scale consisting of 9 items measured life satisfaction and was adapted from Andrews and Withey (1976). Consistent with the procedure of constructing a scale by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976), this measure was constructed by identifying 8 items utilizing satisfaction with features of a person's life that factored with a universal satisfaction item in a factor analysis and produced an amalgamated 9-item scale with satisfactory internal consistency

reliability (alpha = .97). A 7-point response scale employing the following verbal anchors measured individual items: 1 = delighted, 2 = pleased, 3 = mostly satisfied, 4 = mixed/about equally satisfied and dissatisfied, 5 = mostly dissatisfied, 6 = unhappy and 7 = terrible, (alpha = .94).

Design

The experiment used a single–group, correlational design with one occasion of measurement and no comparison group. The independent variables were personality traits, i.e. the Big Five personality traits: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness, Neuroticism, and Narrow personality traits: Optimism, Work Drive, Assertiveness, Tough-Mindedness, Intrinsic Motivation and Image Management. The dependent variable was Life satisfaction.

Procedure

The participants were administered the self-report scales for Life satisfaction and the personality traits via the Internet. Their responses were then analyzed as follows.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Part I: Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to reflect the relationships between life satisfaction and all the personality traits; results are displayed in Table 1. Life satisfaction was

related to all of the Big Five personality traits as well as all of the narrow traits except for Work Drive.

Table 1

Correlations of Study Variables with Life Satisfaction

Trait	Life Satisfaction (*r*)
Agreeableness (Teamwork)	.18*
Conscientiousness	.16*
Emotional Stability	.49*
Extraversion	.26*
Openness	.12*
Assertiveness	.16*
Image Management	-.12*
Intrinsic Motivation	.18*
Optimism	.42*
Tough-Mindedness†	.07*
Work Drive	0.02

Note: N = 10,284, †n = 6040.
*$p < .001$.
Note: Small effect size, $r = 0.1 - 0.23$; medium, $r = 0.24 - 0.36$; large, $r = 0.37$ or larger (Cohen 1988, 1992).

Part II: Part Correlations

Part correlations were computed to investigate whether certain narrow personality traits were related to life satisfaction even after controlling for the Big Five personality traits; results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Part Correlations for Narrow Personality Traits After Controlling for Big Five Traits

Personality Traits	Part Correlation (*r*)
Optimism	.19*
Work Drive	-.08
Assertiveness	-.05
Tough-Mindedness	.04
Intrinsic Motivation	.12*
Image Management	-.04

N= 10,284.
*$p < .01$.

Part III: Hierarchical Regression

A two-step hierarchical regression was run, the Big Five first and then the narrow traits after, using Life satisfaction as the dependent variable. The Big Five were found to account for 21% of the variance in life satisfaction and the narrow traits then added 6.0% additional variance above and beyond the Big Five in predicting life satisfaction. Results are displayed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression of Personality Traits

			Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.458[a]	.210	.210	320.402	5	6034	.000
2	.519[b]	.270	.060	82.211	6	6028	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Agreeableness (Teamwork), Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness, Extraversion
b. Predictors: (Constant), Agreeableness (Teamwork), Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness, Extraversion, Intrinsic Motivation, Work Drive, Assertiveness, Optimism, Tough-Mindedness, Image Management
$p < .01$

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION

The main goal of this paper was to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and personality traits. Both the broad (Big Five) and narrow personality traits were examined in this study and a general discussion follows.

With respect to the Big Five personality traits being related to life satisfaction, all of the hypotheses (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, and 1e) were supported. Extraversion was found to have a strong association with life satisfaction. It had a stronger relationship with life satisfaction than the Big Five traits of Agreeableness (Teamwork), Conscientiousness, and Openness. Extraversion was also more strongly related to life satisfaction than most of the significant narrow personality traits as well - Intrinsic Motivation, Assertiveness, Image Management, and Tough-Mindedness. Interactions are a vital part of individual happiness because generally, relationships are a necessity. Extraverted individuals can be said to commonly gain pleasure from outside stimulus.

This outside stimulus usually consists of other people. They have also been said to regularly seek out what makes them happy and this is also usually other people. Extraverted individuals are known to be gregarious, warmhearted, and congenial, which increases the likelihood of other individuals in their society gravitating towards them. This gravitational pull enlarges their social circle and this circle becomes their support system, helping to energize and strengthen the individual's feeling of life satisfaction. Results are suggestive of extraverts having a higher likelihood of life satisfaction than introverts – who do spend time with other people, but may not be able to manage an 'overload' of stimulus which could consist of too many interactions. Results also propose that an extraverted individual in comparison to an introverted conscientious or open individual will still have a higher degree of life satisfaction – which is consistent with the theory of social interactions increasing happiness and life satisfaction (Furnham, 2005, p.286).

Buss (1996, p.192) noted, that personality traits "represent individual differences in the qualities or resources individuals can draw upon to solve adaptive problems." He suggests that the more emotionally stable one is, the more a "person may rely on steadiness of nerves, inner resilience, and the capacity to rally from setback", which allows an individual to focus on work, life, or family demands without performance being impaired by worrying or anxiety, thus increasing life satisfaction or one of its facets (work, family, etc). Emotional Stability was found to have the highest correlation with life satisfaction. An emotionally stable person stays consistent in regards to their mood. They are calm and in control of their emotions and thus are generally happier and not prone to paranoia and uncertainty. Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002, p.536) found that employees who are emotionally stable and extraverted seem to be

dispositionally happy at work. This may be because those individuals are more likely to accomplish satisfying outcomes at work for the reason that they may not be distrustful towards co-workers, instead they would seek out social interaction and maybe even collaboration. In the same vein, those who are more emotionally stable in their life are less likely to be indeterminate in their personal choices, work choices, etc. Results suggest that these characteristics of an emotionally stable individual aid in increasing their overall life satisfaction – more so than any other personality trait. Even considering that – there are other personality traits that are also related to life satisfaction – if not as strongly.

The Big Five trait of Agreeableness (Teamwork) was also significantly related to life satisfaction. An individual who is agreeable is pleasant, amiable, equable, and cooperative. An opposite of this type of individual could be a disputatious individual. There are certain points in time where it can be appropriate to be agreeable or more team focused. For example, when working on a common project a disagreeable individual may express an idea and expect it to be used as given – without any amendments to the idea, however, an agreeable individual may express an idea and expect it to be considered and if needed – amended. If the disagreeable person's idea is dismissed or corrected they may take it negatively or even personally – and may even argue and squander time, whereas an agreeable individual may work with their team to build upon their initial idea to make it more acceptable; increasing the teams overall performance and efficiency. A disagreeable individual might take rejection unfavorably versus an agreeable individual. Results suggest that an agreeable individual may generally be more satisfied with life because they may be more willing to embrace change and improve upon an idea while not wasting time, strength, or other resources in arguing with their team.

Continuing forward, Conscientiousness was found to be significantly and positively related to life satisfaction. Conscientiousness is the ability of an individual to be detail oriented, organized, orderly and decisive. Conscientious individuals decrease their stress levels by being organized in their lives and at work. Judge, Heller and Mount (2002, p.286) also suggest that these individuals are more satisfied with their jobs and perform better because of the rewards of high performance. That is, conscientious individuals are more motivated towards high performance. They usually approach their work or lives in the same thorough manner and achieve more satisfying outcomes by being attentive to details, good on follow through and organized – thus, increasing their overall life satisfaction.

Finally, Openness is a broad personality trait, which was positively, but weakly, related to life satisfaction. Motivational aspects of Openness such as need for variety, tolerance of ambiguity, and preference for complexity may be associated with better stress regulation (Williams, Rau, Cribbet, & Gunn, 2009). Also, people who are more open will be more open towards change innovation and novel ideas. They have a willingness to accept other people, ideas and experiences for what they are and not judge upon preconceived notions, which in turn can increase their life satisfaction. Past research by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) found Openness to be significantly associated with life satisfaction. The results from this study found Openness to have the weakest association with life satisfaction when compared to the other Big Five personality traits. Openness was also weaker in relation to life satisfaction when compared to most of the significant narrow personality traits - except for Image Management and Tough-Mindedness. Results suggest that while openness is moderately related to life satisfaction, other variables may have a larger relationship and also must be taken into consideration. Narrow

personality traits like Optimism appear to be more strongly associated with life satisfaction than Openness.

Concerning the hypotheses about the narrow personality traits being related to life satisfaction, hypotheses 2a – Optimism, and 4a – Assertiveness, were both supported. Hypothesis 3a – Work Drive was not supported. Discussion on these traits follows.

Optimism can sometimes be considered as a buffering agent and can lead to positive cognitive bias; "thus, the impact of negative events on subjective well-being is reduced by the prospect that the difficulties that are being experienced will not last" (Gullone & Cummins, 2002, p.29). Therefore, Optimism can appear to be more associated with life satisfaction than Openness. An optimistic individual may build positive expectancies by having a hopeful disposition concerning prospects, plans, people, and the future, even in the face of difficulty and adversity. They have a tendency to minimize problems, persist in the face of setbacks, and see the positive potential of plans. The qualities and characteristics stated prior allow optimistic individuals to live in a more positive state of mind and their sanguine perspective then spreads into other aspects of their lives; increasing life satisfaction. Optimism is a resource that an individual can draw upon to persist in trying to solve problems. "Optimism is related to adaptive management of critical life circumstances and personal goals. Such goals might involve, for instance, recovery from a serious disease or attainment of broader life goals, such as establishing a successful career and building a family" (Wroche & Scheier, 2003). Optimism was the trait most highly correlated with life satisfaction out of all the narrow traits. Surprisingly, all but one of the Big Five personality traits had a weaker relationship with life satisfaction than Optimism. The only personality trait to have a stronger relationship with life satisfaction than Optimism was

Emotional Stability. Signifying that while the Big Five personality traits account for a large portion of the variance in life satisfaction, there are other narrow personality traits that also account for a significant amount of variance and should be taken into account. Furthermore, when examining whether the narrow personality traits were still significantly associated with life satisfaction after the Big Five were controlled for – one trait did still correlate with life satisfaction – Optimism. "A review of the 30 facets assessed by the NEO-PI reveals that traits such as masculinity, femininity, self-esteem, and optimism are not directly included" (Wroche & Scheier, 2003). Thus, hypothesis 2b was supported, and is suggestive of Optimism being outside the realm of the Big Five personality traits.

Work Drive was the only personality trait that was not significantly related to life satisfaction. Past empirical research has linked Work Drive with career and academic satisfaction. Lounsbury and colleagues (2007) found Work Drive to have a larger association with emotional resilience and job satisfaction; thus, Work Drive was expected to display a strong relationship with life satisfaction. The contrary results lead to the conclusion that Work Drive may be a personality trait that is moderated by occupation. Work Drive has been found to be important in different facets of life satisfaction, yet overall there are other broad and narrow traits that have a superior relationship with life satisfaction.

Assertiveness was positively, although weakly, correlated to life satisfaction. High Assertiveness means that you seize the initiative more often, push for things, and probably end up with more good outcomes, like promotions, awards, memberships, leadership positions, etc. which lead to life satisfaction. Assertiveness was not found to be significantly associated with life satisfaction after the Big Five were controlled for, thus, hypothesis 4b was not supported.

The relationship between Assertiveness and life satisfaction was reduced once the Big Five personality traits were controlled. Results support prior research in that Assertiveness can be considered as a facet of Extraversion (Costa and McCrae, 1992), which explains the diminishing variance once the Big Five are controlled for.

The remaining narrow personality traits were examined as research questions and will be discussed later on in this section.

Finally, the narrow spectrum personality traits were found to add incremental variance above and beyond the Big Five personality traits, thus supporting hypotheses 5. As stated earlier Wroche and Scheier (2003) reviewed the 30 components assessed by Costa and McCrae's NEO-PI and found certain traits such as masculinity, femininity, self-esteem, and optimism, which were not directly included in the "super-traits". Therefore, even though certain narrow traits may be aggregated into the Big Five there are still some narrow personality traits that need to be individually included in the study of life satisfaction because they are different from the Big Five traits. Narrow personality traits do add significant incremental validity to life satisfaction (Logue, Lounsbury, Gupta, & Leong, 2007); therefore, they should be included when studying this variable.

Moving forward towards exploratory issues, the remaining three narrow personality traits were studied as research questions. The first of which examined Tough-Mindedness and its relation to life satisfaction. Tough-Mindedness is a narrow personality trait that emphasizes making decisions based on logic, facts, and data rather than feelings. This trait has also been linked strongly to career satisfaction and life satisfaction in the past (Lounsbury, Studham, Steel,

Gibson, Drost, 2009). The present study showed that Tough-Mindedness had a weak relationship with life satisfaction – and this relationship disappears when the Big Five personality traits are controlled. Results are suggestive of Tough-Mindedness being a component of one of the Big Five personality traits.

The next research question addresses Intrinsic Motivation and its association with life satisfaction. Intrinsic Motivation is positively, yet weakly, correlated with life satisfaction and continues to be so even when the Big Five are controlled. Results signify that Intrinsic Motivation may not be a facet of one of the Big Five traits. High Intrinsic Motivation suggests a disposition to be motivated by internal factors, such as challenge, meaning, autonomy, variety, and significance. As stated before, T. Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) found that when placing strong importance on intrinsic aspirations, well-being indicators such as self-esteem and self-actualization were positively associated with intrinsic aspirations. Thus, Intrinsic Motivation may be related to more well-being and, thus, a higher satisfaction with life. This suggests that individuals who are intrinsically motivated, like first line supervisors and judges (O*Net, 2010), will have a higher life satisfaction than individuals who are more extrinsically motivated, such as sales representatives, business managers, bankers and account executives (O*Net, 2010).

Finally, the last research question addresses the relationship between Image Management and life satisfaction. This trait is significantly and negatively correlated with life satisfaction, that is, when one has to manage one's image less, one is more satisfied with life. Suggesting that those individuals who are more concerned with presenting themselves in an honest, authentic manner are more satisfied with their lives because they can truly be themselves rather than being someone they want others to approve of. This indicates that individuals who are disinclined to be

very concerned with their public image – individuals who are authentic in their portrayal of themselves – are more satisfied with life (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996; Goldman et al. 2006, Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Conversely, the more that one has to monitor their actions and regulate their self-presentation, the less satisfied with life they are (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996; Goldman, 2006). While, Lounsbury and colleagues (2003) found Image Management to be positively related to career satisfaction with individuals in a range of occupations the correlation appears to be moderated by type of occupation. Note that Image Management was correlated +.08 with career satisfaction for Business jobs, +.16 with job satisfaction for Clerical jobs and -.27 with career satisfaction for Customer Service jobs. There may also be some occupations not listed by Lounsbury and colleagues for which image management is positively related to career satisfaction. The second part of research question 3 investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and Image Management after the Big Five traits are controlled. The results show that Image Management is not significantly related to life satisfaction once the Big Five are controlled for, suggesting that the Image Management may be deemed as a constituent of one or more of the Big Five traits.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the criterion. Self reported Life satisfaction requires the participant to give an honest evaluation of his or her life satisfaction. This opens the possibility of participants thinking only about recent occurrences of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and may not take the whole into account. On the other hand, life satisfaction is frequently

measured via self-report, which has been validated as a reliable source.

Another issue with the criterion is that life satisfaction is multifaceted. Some individuals are satisfied at work while not at home and vice versa. Some are financially satisfied but not satisfied in career.

Also, other potentially important moderator or mediator variables were not examined, such as length of time on the job, amount of earnings, occupational status, stage in the life-career cycle, and marital status, among others.

One other limitation involves the participants, who were a non-random convenience sample. Using a non-random sample can lead to biased estimates for the population to which inferences are to be drawn since it is unrepresentative of the population.

Finally, an additional limitation of this study concerns the limited range of narrow traits investigated. Although the narrow personality traits accounted for an additional 6% variance, we did not take into account all possible narrow traits. Other narrow traits that could have been studied are Locus of Control, Need for Achievement, Depression, Anxiety, Self-Actualization, or some of the Myers-Briggs traits like Sensing-Intuitive, Thinking-Feeling, and Perceiving-Judging, among many others.

Directions for Future Research

There are many avenues in which future research may take place. First, future empirical studies could research other narrow personality traits that may add incremental variance above and beyond the Big Five in regards to life satisfaction. While we have discovered that there are

some narrow personality traits that will add incremental variance, this list is not exhaustive. These narrow personality traits add something that is unique in them and is not found within the Big Five traits; therefore, they should be included in future studies.

Secondly, as stated in the discussion section, the life satisfaction – Image Management relationship could be affected by career or career satisfaction. This could be expanded and a future study could investigate the impact of career or career satisfaction on certain life satisfaction – personality trait relationships.

Also, longitudinal data could help to understand how personality change as Life satisfaction changes over time. The data in the present study were taken at one point in time and thus cannot account for changes in the amount one has of a certain personality trait and its potential effects on life satisfaction. Studies with longitudinal data would also strengthen conclusions of the current study by moving beyond the correlational findings that that make it difficult to unravel causal relationships. For example, the finding that Optimism is strongly related to life satisfaction does not inform us on whether Optimism causes life satisfaction or if life satisfaction related to recent life events increases Optimism. It is difficult to determine the direction of potential causality.

Finally, the issue of how much variance in life satisfaction is accounted for by genetic, demographic, and personality variables merits further study using more refined methodological and statistical methods. A future empirical study might include all three of above types of variables – demographic, genetics, and personality – and thus shed light on how much each factor contributes to overall life satisfaction. An empirical study that includes all of these factors

could also distinguish which factors influence each other, or which could be moderators of the relationship between life satisfaction and another variable (e.g. is personality a moderator of the relationship between life satisfaction and genetics?).

Many of the questions raised in the present thesis can be answered by further empirical research. Potential directions for this research are offered so that, by building on the study reported here, future research can continue to explore the construct of life satisfaction and its manifold connections to other variables.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of this study support the notion that narrow personality traits, in addition to the Big Five personality traits, display multiple, significant relationships with life satisfaction. One of the unresolved questions to date is why are some individuals more satisfied than others? There may be significant variance that demographic factors and genetic factors contribute to life satisfaction yet, the present investigation has shown that a substantial amount of the explained variance in life satisfaction can be attributed to broad and narrow personality traits. When only looking at personality traits, people who are more: emotionally stable, optimistic, extraverted, internally motivated, agreeable, assertive, conscientious, open to new learning and experience, tough-minded, and inclined toward less image-management are more satisfied with their lives overall. The current study exemplifies the utility of using narrow personality traits in addition to broad personality traits (Big Five personality traits), genetic, and demographic factors, when measuring life satisfaction.

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APPENDIX

Inter-correlations of All Study Variables

		Agreeableness (Teamwork)	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism (Emotional Stability)	Extraversion	Openness	Assertiveness	Image Management	Intrinsic Motivation	Optimism	Tough - Mindedness	Work Drive	Life Satisfaction
Agreeableness (Teamwork)	Pearson Correlation	1	.104	.276	.392	.378	.337	-.056	.135	.271	-.113	.188	.184
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.104	1	.304	.103	.084	.096	-.283	.074	.163	.144	.231	.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Neuroticism (Emotional Stability)	Pearson Correlation	.276	.304	1	.340	.366	.394	-.210	.142	.609	.083	.227	.433
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286

Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.392	.103	.340	1	.363	.500	.038	.032	.474	-.238	.270	.265
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Openness	Pearson Correlation	.378	.084	.366	.363	1	.543	-.057	.070	.344	.062	.397	.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Assertiveness	Pearson Correlation	.337	.096	.394	.500	.543	1	.068	-.028	.384	-.048	.472	.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Image Management	Pearson Correlation	-.056	-.283	-.210	.038	-.057	.068	1	-.264	-.106	-.129	.026	-.117
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.008	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.135	.074	.142	.032	.070	-.028	-.264	1	.144	-.079	-.058	.184

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.004	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Optimism	Pearson Correlation	.271	.163	.609	.474	.344	.384	-.106	.144	1	-.083	.252	.435
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Tough - Mindedness	Pearson Correlation	-.113	.144	.083	-.238	.062	-.048	-.129	-.079	-.083	1	.090	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.015
	N	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6041	6040
Work Drive	Pearson Correlation	.188	.231	.227	.270	.397	.472	.026	-.058	.252	.090	1	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	10287	6041	10287	10286
Life Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.184	.159	.433	.265	.132	.164	-.117	.184	.435	.031	.038	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.015	.000	
	N	10286	10286	10286	10286	10286	10286	10286	10286	10286	6040	10286	10384

VITA

Hemali Patel was born in Ukiah, CA, to the parents of Rakesh and Damayanti Patel. She is the first of three children, Ami, and Kush. She attended Mason High School in Cincinnati, OH and completed high school abroad at Good Shepherd International School in Ootacamund, India where she was introduced to Psychology. She obtained a Bachelors of Science degree from the University of Louisville in May 2009 in Psychology. She accepted a graduate assistantship at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with the Student Success Center as an Academic Coach. Hemali graduated with a Masters of Arts degree in Experimental Psychology in May 2011. She will be continuing her education with a PhD in Industrial Organizational Psychology.