



ELSEVIER

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

SCIENCE @ DIRECT®

Personality and Individual Differences 40 (2006) 557–567

PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

www.elsevier.com/locate/paid

Negative emotions make positive emotions more salient in well-being appraisal

Sheung-Tak Cheng *

Department of Applied Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong, 83 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Received 18 April 2005; accepted 9 August 2005

Available online 5 October 2005

Abstract

The extent to which positive affect is made more salient in forming judgments of global well-being when negative affect is common, after the effects of momentary mood and goal discrepancy are controlled, was investigated in a sample of Chinese university students ($N = 205$). Results showed that whereas goal discrepancy and positive affect were the strongest predictors of global well-being, affective contrast also enhanced global well-being in a way that offset the effects of negative affect, thus helping to maintain a positive sense of wellness when things are not going well. Although mood was strongly correlated with global well-being, its effect was not independent of long-term affect and goal discrepancy.

© 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Subjective well-being; Endowment; Contrast; Affect; Goal discrepancy

1. Introduction

In their seminal study of the quality of life of Americans, Andrews and Withey (1976) found that subjective well-being measures could be represented by three independent factors: (a) cognitive evaluations, referring to a group of measures which assessed the quality of life as a whole, such as global happiness or satisfaction, (b) positive affect (PA), and (c) negative affect (NA). They

* Tel.: +852 2788 8745; fax: +852 2788 8960.

E-mail address: tak.cheng@cityu.edu.hk

coined the term *affective evaluation* to refer to the joint affective and cognitive aspects of subjective well-being. More recently, Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999) articulated that subjective well-being consists of all three components so that one should be satisfied with life and blessed with high PA, while NA remains relatively low. The assumptions of the 3-factor model are (a) that subjective well-being results from both affective experiences and cognitive evaluations of life, and (b) that affective space consists of two independent dimensions—PA and NA (Bradburn, 1969; Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999).

However, conceptually whether the cognitive and the affective side of well-being are truly distinct is a question. It is difficult to imagine a person with high PA and low NA to be dissatisfied with life. For instance, the General Well-Being Schedule, which includes items on PA, NA, satisfying and interesting life, health worry and vitality, had an alpha coefficient of above .90 in university students (Andrews & Robinson, 1991). Lawrence and Liang (1988) found that items on the Affect Balance Scale and the Life Satisfaction Index A can be represented by a single, second-order factor, and that there was factor invariance between males and females, and between young–old and old–old. Although the factor loading for NA was different between African Americans and Caucasians, the overall model achieved acceptable fit indices for both ethnic groups. Whereas Lawrence and Liang’s sample was purely elderly people, similar results were reported by Stones and Kozma (1985) on a much broader age span. Thus, there is some evidence that the affective and the cognitive aspects of well-being are not as distinct as is commonly assumed and that this is true for different population subgroups. Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot (1991) have also observed that life satisfaction is a function of the preponderance of PA in daily life.

Given that the cognitive and the affective components of subjective well-being are not independent of each other, the nature of their interrelationship remains to be more fully investigated. Recently, Cheng (2004a) proposed that the relationship between these two components is not just linear, but multiplicative. He coined the term *well-being appraisal* (WBA) to refer broadly to the cognitive component of subjective well-being. His affective endowment–contrast theory argues that WBA is basically a direct function of the preponderance of PA over NA. However, the effect of PA on WBA depends on the level of NA so that the effect is stronger when NA is high than when NA is low. That is, when life is rough, an everyday positive experience (such as the sight of flowers) which may have little or no effect ordinarily would go a long way in maintaining our sense of well-being. On the contrary, when life is going well, the effect of adding more positive experiences may just be marginal.

Cheng (2004a) further suggested that NA is a basis against which the meaning of PA is evaluated, rather than the other way round, partly because we are biased to believe that positive events tend to recur and negative events tend not to (Pietromonaco & Markus, 1985; Pyszczynski, Holt, & Greenberg, 1987). Because positive events (and concomitant PA) are considered more typical of our lives than negative events (and concomitant NA), the former tends to be assimilated into our sense of well-being whereas the latter becomes the standard for comparison. This would predict a large effect for PA and a relatively small effect for NA on WBA, and a further enhancement of PA’s effect when NA is high. The result is positive WBA for most people (Diener et al., 1999).

The theory is written as $WBA = (PA - NA) + (NA \times PA)$. The former expression, $PA - NA$, represents the combined endowment effects of PA and NA, or commonly referred to as the affect balance (Bradburn, 1969), whereas the latter expression, $NA \times PA$, represents the contrast effect. As said, when NA is low, this product term is small and the effect on WBA is negligible. However

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات