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Report

Affects and personality: A study with university students

Affects et personnalité : études sur des étudiants en université

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A B S T R A C T

Objective. – Analyze the relation between both these variables (affects and personality).
Method. – To evaluate the relation between affects and personality, 652 university students were evaluated, through questionnaires PANAS (affects) and ZKPQ-50-CC (personality).
Results. – The results showed how males presented higher levels of impulsiveness, activity, sociability and aggressiveness, and no differences in handling affects were found. Those people who used positive affects more showed higher levels of activity, sociability and impulsiveness. Personality influenced affects for three of its factors, Anxiety, Activity and Aggressiveness, and was a good predictor of affects. Anxiety also strongly influenced the prognosis of negative affects.
Conclusions. – We conclude that our research data provide evidence for a relation between both these study variables.

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R É S U M É

Objectif. – Analyser la relation entre ces deux variables (affects et personnalité).
Méthode. – Pour ce faire, 652 étudiants ont été évalués par le biais des questionnaires PANAS (affects) et ZKPQ-50-CC (personnalité).
Résultats. – Les résultats soulignent le fait que les hommes présentent des niveaux plus élevés d'impulsivité, d'activité, de sociabilité et d'agressivité ; il n'existe pas de différence ce qui concerne la gestion des affects. De même, les personnes qui utilisent plus les affects positifs se démarquent pour avoir des niveaux plus élevés d'activité, de sociabilité et d'impulsivité. Nous avons pu observer, d'une part, l'influence de la personnalité sur les affects, précisément sur trois de ses facteurs : Anxiété, Activité et Agressivité. D'autre part, que la personnalité est un bon prédicateur de ces affects. De plus, l'anxiété se révèle comme d'une grande influence sur le pronostic des affects négatifs.
Conclusions. – Nous pouvons affirmer que les données de la recherche nous apportent des preuves de la relation entre les deux variables en questions.

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1. Introduction

Affections, like life satisfaction and happiness, are characteristic concepts of positive psychology. Some authors [8,10] propone the

welfare as a subjective component of the concept of Quality of Life, which in turn would be form as cognitive aspects (life satisfaction) and affective (happiness), existing empirical evidence that cognitive and affective aspects of welfare are related [17]. The way a person live and express his/her emotions, can come mediated by his/hers personality, which can be defined as a series of individual characteristics and differences that distinguish one person from another.

Thus, the affects has been defined according to two orthogonal dimensions: a bipolarity positive affect/negative affect, supported on a hereditary base [29], upon which the positive affect occupies the pleasant emotions dimensions (motivation, energy, desire to belong, achievement or success), while the negative affect represents unease and unpleasant emotions (fears, inhibitions, insecurity, frustration and failure) [15,28]. Thus someone with highly positive affects is used to experiencing feelings of satisfaction, enthusiasm, energy, friendship, union, affirmation and confidence. They are related with extroversion, optimism and resilience. Someone with highly negative affects tends to experience lack of interest, boredom, sadness, guilt, embarrassment and envy. They can also feel temperamental sensitivity to negative stimuli: vegetative lability, stressors and unfavorable atmospheres [4,6].

On the other hand, personality can be defined as a series of individual characteristics and differences that distinguish someone from somebody else. Personality has been studied considerably in recent years and major contributions to this construct have been made, such as the five-factor model [16] or the alternative five model: neuroticism-anxiety, aggression-hostility, activity, sociability and non-socialized impulsive sensation seeking [30,31]; and a consistent basis in biological-evolutionary terms has been found.

Some authors have suggested that affects play a key role in interpersonal relations, which can be related with the individual's personality [7,13,24].

Our research objective was to focus on analyzing the relation of (positive and negative) affects and an individual's personality.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study sample was made up of 652 university students, 111 males (17.02%) and 541 females (82.98%), who voluntarily participated in the study. They all signed an informed consent and the ethical considerations of the Declaration of Helsinki were observed. The participants' age was 18–40 years, and the mean age was 20.73 years (SD = 3.811).

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) [28]

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) includes 20 items, 10 of which refer to positive affects (PA) and 10 to negative affects (NA), on two Likert-type scales. They all appear when answering the scale, and are valued from 0 (lack of emotion) to 5 (emotion is frequent present). This scale has an alpha of 0.90 for PA and of 0.87 for NA.

2.2.2. ZKPQ-50-CC (Aluja et al., 2006) [2]

ZKPQ-50-CC is a self-report scale that evaluates a subject's personality. It comprises 50 items and takes a dichotomic format (true-false). This instrument evaluates the various dimensions of personality following the alternative five model of Zuckerman et al. (1993): neuroticism-anxiety, impulsivity-sensation seeking, activity, sociability and aggression-hostility. ZKPQ-50-CC presents high internal consistency (alpha = 0.78) and adequate convergent validity.

2.3. Procedure

The participants had one hour to complete the above-described questionnaires and the informed consent. They were all informed that the collected information would remain anonymous and

confidential. The data collected in the present study were obtained from January to February 2016.

The statistical SPSS 22.0 software was used for the statistical data analysis. A descriptive analysis was done for each variable. Work was done in all cases with the lowest possible level of significance and differences with a value of $P < 0.05$ were considered significant. Contrasts were bilaterally considered. A conglomerate of means was established to obtain a cluster, which allowed us to classify participants into different groups according to their affects and personality. Finally, predictor equations of PA and NA were established according to personality, which was done by logistic regression following the forward stepwise regression procedure based on Wald statistics.

3. Results

The gender differences in affects and personality were analyzed (Table 1). Significant gender differences were found in personality (except for neuroticism-anxiety). However, gender had no influence on the expression of the affects measured by PANAS.

The personality test results showed how males obtained higher indices for the five factors that measured the test (anxiety, impulsiveness, activity, sociability and aggressiveness). It was noteworthy that when males obtained higher levels for NA, these differences were not significant. In this section, the participants with PANAS scores over 38 for PA and with scores under 16 for NA were characterized by a balance of extremely PA. However, those participants with PANAS scores below 25 for PA and with scores over 30 for NA showed an extremely negative balance [18]. It was here where 0.92% of males and 3.51% of females had extremely PA, while 4.50% of males and 7.20% of females had extremely NA. These are highly relevant findings for a non-clinical sample.

Table 2 presents the partial correlations between the scales of affects (PANAS) and personality (ZKPQ-50-CC). A relation between affects and all aspects of personality was found, except for NA with Activity and PA with Aggressiveness/Hostility.

Table 1
Gender results on the PANAS and ZKPQ-50-CC scales.

	Males %	Females %	F	Significant
PANAS				
Positive affects				
High	22.52	4.80	.376	.540
Low	77.47	95.19		
Negative affects				
High	18.01	17.37	.000	.940
Low	81.98	82.62		
ZKPQ-50-CC				
Anxiety				
High	13.51	11.64	1.169	.280
Average	15.31	22.18		
Low	71.17	66.17		
Impulsiveness				
High	–	–	18.767	.000
Average	54.05	24.95		
Low	45.94	75.04		
Activity				
High	36.93	24.58	29.901	.000
Average	37.83	18.66		
Low	25.22	56.74		
Sociability				
High	13.51	2.77	4.828	.028
Average	45.04	47.31		
Low	41.44	49.90		
Aggressiveness				
High	–	–	6.429	.011
Average	9.01	7.94		
Low	90.99	92.05		