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PERSONALITY AND EMOTIONAL SELF-EFFICACY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEXACO'S EMOTIONALITY, EXTRAVERSION AND CONSCIENTIOUSNESS WITH REGULATORY EMOTIONAL SELF-EFFICACY BELIEF

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influences of some personality traits, measured with the HEXACO model of personality, on the perceived ability to manage one's own affects. The results of the correlations and the linear regressions between the personality traits, measured by the HEXACO-60, and the perceived ability to manage affects, measured by the Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief scale, support the idea that extraversion is more related to expressing positive affects, whereas emotionality is more related to managing negative affects, and conscientiousness is slightly related to some aspects of self-regulation of positive and negative affects. The results obtained in this study for the HEXACO are similar to those displayed for FFM in previous studies regarding personality traits and positive and negative affects.

Keywords: Personality, Self-efficacy, Self-regulation, HEXACO, Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief Scale

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OSOBOWOŚĆ I SAMOFUNKCYJNOŚĆ EMOCJONALNA: RELACJA POMIĘDZY MODELEM OSOBOWOŚCI HEXACO, EKSTROWERSJĄ A ŚWIADOMOŚCIĄ WŁASNEJ SKUTECZNOŚCI REGULACJI EMOCJI

Abstrakt

Głównym celem przedstawionych badań jest sprawdzenie wpływów niektórych cech osobowości, mierzonych modelem osobowości HEXACO, na postrzeganą zdolność do radzenia sobie z własnymi wpływami. Wyniki korelacji i liniowych regresji między cechami osobowości mierzonymi przez HEXACO-60, a postrzeganą zdolnością do zarządzania afektami, mierzoną Regulacyjną Skalą Przekonania o Własnej Skuteczności, potwierdzają pogląd, że ekstrawersja jest bardziej związana z pozytywną ekspresją, podczas gdy emocjonalność jest bardziej związana z zarządzaniem negatywnymi afektami, a świadomość jest nieznacznie związana z niektórymi aspektami samoregulacji pozytywnych i negatywnych afektów. Wyniki uzyskane w tym badaniu dla HEXACO są zbliżone do tych prezentowanych dla FFM we wcześniejszych badaniach dotyczących cech osobowości oraz pozytywnych i negatywnych afektów.

Słowa kluczowe: Osobowość, poczucie własnej skuteczności, samoregulacja, HEXACO, Regulacyjna Skala Przekonania o Własnej Skuteczności

INTRODUCTION

During the last 20 years, research on personality and emotion has demonstrated the effect of personality traits (e.g. Five Factor Model, FFM; McCrae and Costa 1999) on positive and negative affects as well as on emotional management and self-regulation (DeNeve and Cooper 1998). In particular, research has focused on three personality traits that are considered the most powerful predictors of affects and emotional self-regulation, namely neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness.

Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between high levels of neuroticism and high levels of negative affects (Verduyn and Brans 2012) and low levels of emotional self-regulation (Kokkonen and Pulkkinen 2001). On the other hand, extraversion is related to high levels of both positive affects (Hermes et al. 2011; Watson and Clark 1997) and emotional self-regulation (Kokkonen and Pulkkinen 2001).

At the same time, other studies have investigated the presumed independency between neuroticism and extraversion (Buckingham, Charles and Beh 2001). Results didn't support the idea that neuroticism and extraversion are fully independent. Quite the opposite, they might be negatively correlated (Verduyn and Brans 2012; Watson and Clark 1992). Therefore, considering that: (a) neuroticism and extraversion are (negatively) related to each other; (b) neuroticism is correlated to negative affects and limited emotional regulation; and (c) extraversion is correlated to positive affects and good emotional regulation, it appears that they are two sides of the same coin. In fact, taken together, they are the strongest predictors of negative and positive affects (Verduyn and Brans 2012) and emotional self-regulation (Kokkonen and Pulkkinen 2001), as well as other psychological or health outcomes as quality of life (Pocnet et al. 2017), life satisfaction (Finch et al. 2012) and physical health (Charles et al. 2008; Finch et al. 2012).

Furthermore, conscientiousness is another personality trait that plays an important role in predicting emotional management (Ivcevic and Brackett 2014). People with high levels of conscientiousness are more organized, diligent and prudent. For this reason, they are more able to manage or to avoid stressors and to prepare for adversity (DeNeve and Cooper 1998).

Despite the large body of research, no one has used the HEXACO model of personality (Ashton and Lee 2007) for this kind of studies. In this study, we want to investigate the relationship between the three above-mentioned personality traits of the HEXACO model, namely emotionality (which is the counterpart of neuroticism of the Five Factor Model), extraversion and conscientiousness, and a particular kind of self-efficacy, which is associated with the domain of emotional regulation. Specifically, this kind of self-efficacy is called *Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief* and is related to the ability to manage negative emotions and to express positive emotions (Caprara et al. 2008).

1. AFFECTS AND NEUROTICISM/EMOTIONALITY, EXTRAVERSION AND CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

According to the definition of neuroticism by McCrae and Costa (2008), people with high levels of neuroticism are tense, anxious, less able to cope with frustration and deal with stress. Therefore, they are more susceptible to negative mood experiences. In most cases, they tend to view the world as a threatening place and life events as trying. As a results, neuroticism and negative affects are strongly correlated (Costa and McCrae 1980; Watson and Clark 1992; Watson et al. 1992). In the HEXACO model, the neuroticism trait is called *emotionality*, and its definition is quite different from the FFM one. It is still related to emotional stability like the FFM's neuroticism, but it also "includes sentimentality and sensitivity content at its positive pole and bravery and toughness content at its negative pole" (Lee and Ashton 2004, 332). People with high levels of emotionality are more fearful, anxious, worried and susceptible. By contrast, people with low levels of emotionality are calm, brave and less anxious. Moreover, emotionality is characterized by a strong interpersonal feature. One the one hand, low levels refer to independency, on the other hand, people with high levels are more interpersonally dependent.

Differently from neuroticism, extravert people are more prone to experience positive emotions and affects (Watson and Clark 1997). The FFM definition of extraversion is very similar to the HEXACO extraversion (Lee and Ashton 2004). Individuals with high levels of extraversion are more active, energetic, social and optimistic. They tend to share joy and pleasant moment with others. Because of this positive proneness, extraversion is closely related to positive affects (Hermes et al. 2011; Watson and Clark 1997).

Likewise, the definition of conscientiousness in the FFM is very similar to the definition given by Lee and Ashton (2004) in their HEXACO model. People with

high levels of conscientiousness are organized, precise, cautious and goal-oriented. Therefore, these people are more able to manage emotions and to self-regulate (DeNeve and Cooper 1998). This might be due to the fact that conscientious people are able to self-control and to organize their resources in order to prepare themselves for hardship (Steel, Schmidt and Shultz 2008). They can also delay gratification (Steel 2007). Conscientiousness is also related to different kind of self-efficacy (Caprara et al. 2011; Lee and Klein 2002). For this reason, it is reasonable to think that even the HEXACO's conscientiousness is positively correlated to the emotional self-efficacy belief we are interested in for our study.

2. REGULATORY EMOTIONAL SELF-EFFICACY BELIEF

Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief (RESE), (Caprara 2001; Caprara et al. 2008) refers to a particular kind of self-efficacy which is related to the perceived ability to manage one's own affects (Alessandri, Vecchione and Caprara 2015). Starting from the classical distinction between positive and negative affects (Watson and Tellegen 1985), Caprara and colleagues (2001; 2008) developed a scale to assess perceived self-efficacy in managing negative (NEG) and in expressing positive (POS) affects. The NEG scale is a second-order factor composed of two subscales which assess two different kind of negative affects: despondency-distress (DES) and anger-irritation (ANG).

Given the fact that RESE assesses a belief, it doesn't reflect the effective ability to self-regulate emotions. For this reason, correlations between RESE and measures of positive and negative affects and emotional states are in the range of about .30 (Caprara et al. 2008). However, it is well documented that RESE plays an important role in predicting emotional adjustment and lower levels of depressive symptoms (Bandura et al. 2003), as well as other important outcomes as self-esteem (Caprara et al. 2013a) and prosociality (Alessandri et al. 2009). Regarding the correlations with personality traits, Caprara and colleagues (2013) have demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between neuroticism (or trait emotional stability, as it is called in the Italian version of FFM; Caprara et al. 1993) and RESE.

3. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influences of some personality traits, measured with the HEXACO model of personality (Ashton and Lee 2007), on the perceived ability to manage one's own affects. To measure this perceived ability, we used the RESE scales (Caprara et al. 2008).

According to the above-mentioned studies, on the one hand neuroticism influences negatively subjective well-being and positive affects and on the other hand influences positively negative affects (Costa and McCrae, 1980). As previously explained, in this study we use the emotionality trait, which is the HEXACO's

counterpart of FFM's neuroticism. Their conceptualizations are quite different. High levels of emotionality refer to sentimentality, sensitivity and interpersonal dependency while low levels refer to bravery, toughness and interpersonal independency. Moreover, considering that who has high levels of emotionality is closer to other people, it is reasonable to think that people with high levels of emotionality need the support of others to regulate their own affects and are more prone to express positive affects to others. Whereas, people with low levels of emotionality are less interested in expressing positive affects and believe to be more able to manage negative affects by themselves. For these reasons, we hypothesis that:

Hypothesis 1a: the effect of emotionality on the perceived ability to manage negative affects (NEG) is negative and strong.

Hypothesis 1b: the effect of emotionality on the perceived ability to express positive affects (POS) is positive and medium.

Given the fact that FFM's extraversion is strongly related to positive affects and good feelings and negatively related to negative affects (Hermes et al. 2011; Watson and Clark 1997), we hypothesis that even for the HEXACO's extraversion we obtain similar results:

Hypothesis 2a: the effect of HEXACO's extraversion on the perceived ability to express positive affects (POS) is positive and strong.

Hypothesis 2b: the effect of HEXACO's extraversion on the perceived ability to manage negative affects (NEG) is positive and medium.

Similar hypotheses are formulated for conscientiousness. Considering that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness are more able to self-control and to organize their resources in order to prepare themselves for adversities (Steel et al. 2008), we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3a: the effect of HEXACO's conscientiousness on the perceived ability to manage negative affects (NEG) is positive and medium.

Hypothesis 3a: the effect of HEXACO's conscientiousness on the perceived ability to express positive affects (POS) is positive and strong.

4. METHOD

4.1. Participants

The participants were 413 Italian young adults belonging to different regions of Italy. They were aged between 18 and 26 ($M = 22,2$, $DS = 2.1$). 290 participants were females (70.2%) and 123 were males (29.8%). The majority of the sample had a high school degree (265, 64.2%), whereas 109 participants (26.4%) had a university degree.

4.2. Procedure

Participants were contacted online, via email, and completed the questionnaires in an on-line format. The web-site used for the data collection was LimeSurvey. The survey was completely anonymous, and the information is strictly confidential.

Regarding the statistical analysis, we computed Pearson's r coefficients and a series of linear regression in order to test the above-mentioned hypotheses. Internal consistency of the scales was computed by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

4.3. Measures

Responses were made for all the personality items using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All measures used were in the Italian version.

HEXACO-60. We used the 60 items version of the HEXACO-PI (Ashton and Lee 2009) in order to assess the personality factors according to the HEXACO model. It assesses Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), eXtraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C) and Openness to experience (O), with 10 items for each factor. In our study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were acceptable, ranging from .72 to .78.

RESE. The two components of the Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief, namely perceived self-efficacy in managing negative affects and perceived self-efficacy in expressing positive affects, were measured by means of the RESE scales (Caprara 2001; Caprara et al. 2008). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were acceptable, ranging from .78 to .89.

5. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the internal consistency of each scale, as well as the correlations between the constructs involved in our study. In general, the Cronbach's alphas were high, and skewness and kurtosis of each scale, even if not reported, were acceptable.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics.

	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
H	37.8	5.95	-0.518	0.274
E	34.0	5.54	-0.192	-0.062
X	33.2	5.99	-0.394	-0.100
A	30.6	5.50	-0.243	0.160
C	37.5	5.66	-0.292	-0.143
O	36.1	5.65	-0.513	0.305
DES	12.4	3.02	0.114	0.103
ANG	12.1	3.15	-0.005	-0.233
NEG	15.9	3.23	-0.442	-0.565
POS	24.5	5.43	0.032	0.230

Note. H = Honesty-Humility; E = Emotionality; X = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; O = Openness to experience; DES = self-efficacy belief in managing dependency-distress; ANG = self-efficacy belief in managing anger-irritation; NEG = self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects; POS = self-efficacy belief in expressing positive affects.

As expected, the majority of the personality dimensions correlate with the Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief, especially with the ANG (i.e. self-efficacy belief in managing anger-irritation) and NEG (i.e. self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects). It means that perceived self-efficacy in managing negative affects is related to all the dimensions of personality measured by the HEXACO.

On the basis of the correlations between the variables involved in this study, regression analyses were conducted to identify which subscales of the HEXACO can predict the Regulatory Emotional Self-Efficacy Belief.

Table 2

Pearson's *r* Correlation Matrix between HEXACO and RESE.

	HONE	EMOT	EXTR	AGRE	CONS	OPEN	DES	ANG	NEG	POS
H	(.77)	-0.013	0.009	0.207***	0.183***	0.069	0.044	0.149**	0.111*	-0.034
E		(.73)	-0.268***	-0.062	0.035	-0.022	-0.526***	-0.409***	-0.529***	0.064
X			(.78)	-0.000	0.152**	0.168***	0.479***	0.328***	0.456***	0.419***
A				(.72)	0.029	0.019	0.095	0.427***	0.300***	-0.038
C					(.73)	0.209***	0.140**	0.160**	0.171***	0.086
O						(.72)	0.178***	0.127*	0.172***	0.033
DES							(.82)	0.551***	0.875***	0.208***
ANG								(.78)	0.886***	0.038
NEG									(.85)	0.138***
POS										(.89)

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. H = Honesty-Humility; E = Emotionality; X = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; O = Openness to experience; DES = self-efficacy belief in managing despondency-distress; ANG = self-efficacy belief in managing anger-irritation; NEG = self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects; POS = self-efficacy belief in expressing positive affects. Cronbach's Alphas (in parentheses) are reported along the diagonal.

As reported in Table 3, high levels of Extraversion and Conscientiousness were significantly positively associated with high levels of self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects ($\beta = 0.285$, $p < 0.01$ and $\beta = 0.133$, $p < 0.01$ respectively), while low levels of Emotionality were significantly related to self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects ($\beta = -0.441$, $p < 0.01$).

High levels of Emotionality and Extraversion were significantly related to self-efficacy belief in expressing positive affects ($\beta = 0.110$, $p < 0.01$ and $\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.01$ respectively).

Table 3
Linear Regression.

	β	SE	p
NEG ($R^2 = 0.40$)			
Emotionality	-0.441	0.039	< .001
Extraversion	0.285	0.036	< .001
Conscientiousness	0.133	0.037	< .001
POS ($R^2 = 0.21$)			
Emotionality	0.110	0.027	< .001
Extraversion	0.252	0.025	< .001
Conscientiousness	0.004	0.026	0.851

Note. β = standardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; p = p values. NEG = self-efficacy belief in managing negative affects; POS = self-efficacy belief in expressing positive affects.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between the HEXACO personality traits and the domain-specific self-efficacy beliefs related to emotion regulation, namely regulatory emotional self-efficacy belief. Results support our hypotheses, demonstrating that the relationships between extraversion, emotionality, conscientiousness and some aspects of self-regulation related to positive and negative affects for the HEXACO are similar to those displayed for FFM.

Furthermore, given the strong interpersonal characteristic of these traits, it seems that who considers him/herself less able to regulate emotion, less extravert and positive (and consequently tends to interpret negative events as overwhelming, adverse and threatening), and who also tends to be less organized, and then less able to prepare in order to cope with stressors, needs, at the same time, the proximity of other people to regulate their emotion. In other words, who believes to be less able to manage emotion is less interpersonally independent and this fact could have negative effects of people's wellbeing and could damage the quality of the social/interpersonal relationships (Lopes et al. 2005).

In a perspective that tries to integrate the traits theory with a socio-cognitive view of personality, such as the one proposed by Caprara, Vecchione et al. (2013), and considering the *plasticity* of the personality traits proposed by Roberts, Wood, and Caspi (2008), the practical implication of this study refers to the possibility of change, or at least mitigate, the maladaptive effect of some traits (for example low levels of emotionality) intervening on self-efficacy beliefs. As Bandura (1997) suggests, the sense of self-efficacy could be modified and improved by different sources (mastery experience, vicarious experience, etc.) and it is much more changeable than personality traits. Consequently, conducting psychological or educational interventions aimed to improve the sense of self-efficacy in managing emotions for people with high level of emotionality and low levels of extraversion and conscientiousness could lead those individuals to manage emotions despite their maladaptive levels of personality traits.

Finally, the limits of this study regard the fact that it is a cross-sectional study and no outcome variables are included in, such as for example quality of interpersonal relationships, life satisfaction, quality of life, depression, etc. Future investigations on this topic, that are interested in using the HEXACO model for this kind of research, should implement studies with longitudinal design and analyze the mediating effect of regulatory emotional self-efficacy belief on the relationship between the HEXACO personality model and some outcome, as it has been already demonstrate in some FFM studies (Alessandri et al. 2018; Caprara et al. 2011; Caprara et al. 2013b).

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