

ABSTRACT

Garcia, Danilo (2011). *Adolescents' Happiness: The Role of the Affective Temperament Model on Memory and Apprehension of Events, Subjective Well-Being, and Psychological Well-Being*. Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Positive Psychology research suggests personality as a major determinant in adults and adolescents' happiness and well-being. Personality is probable a key element due to its relationship to individual differences in automatic emotional reactions and habits (i.e., factors concerning temperament). Personality in this framework, however, excludes characteristics of personality related to affective emotional traits. Moreover, positive attitudes toward the self (i.e., Psychological Well-Being; PWB) might help the individual to feel happy with life regardless of how her own temperament makes her feel and react to events. The aim of the present dissertation was to investigate differences among adolescents' happiness and well-being with respect to temperamental dispositions. The predictive nature of distinctive measures of well-being is also examined. In contrast to current conceptualizations, in the present dissertation temperament is suggested as an interaction of individuals positive (PA) and negative affect (NA). The interaction of the two temperamental dispositions was predicted to facilitate the individual to approach happiness and avoid unhappiness. The Affective Temperament model by Norlander, Bood & Archer (2002; originally called Affective Personalities) was used as a backdrop in four studies. The model yields four different temperaments: self-actualizing (high PA and low NA), high affective (high PA and high NA), low affective (low PA and low NA) and self-destructive (high PA and low NA). In contrast to adolescents with a self-destructive temperament, self-actualizing, high affective and low affective were expected to report higher life satisfaction (LS), higher PWB, to apprehend more positive than negative events (i.e., positivity bias), and to remember events congruent to their temperament, thus showing different tendencies of approach and prevention. **Study I** examined differences in LS, memory for events and life events relationship to LS. As predicted high affectives and low affectives reported higher LS than self-destructives, despite high levels of NA respectively low levels of PA. Consequentially, only self-destructive adolescents did not show positivity bias. Moreover, life events predicted only LS for adolescents with low PA. **Study II** examined differences in PWB and the relationship between life events and PWB, and PWB to LS. In concordance to Study I, all temperaments reported higher PWB than the self-destructive temperament and life events predicted PWB only for adolescents with low PA. Moreover, PWB's subscale of self-acceptance predicted LS for all temperaments. **Study III** aimed to investigate if temperaments' reaction to negative words was related to memory of words presented in a short story. Consistent with the predictions, high PA adolescents' reaction to negative words predicted the number of positive words they had in memory (i.e., promotion focus). In contrast, low affectives' reaction predicted the number of negative words in memory (i.e., prevention focus). Self-destructive lacked the ability to self-regulate their reaction to negative words. **Study IV** replicated the results from Study I and II: all temperaments reported higher LS and PWB than the self-destructive temperament. As in Study I, self-acceptance was related to LS for all temperaments. In conclusion, the interaction of the two affective temperamental dispositions probably does part of the work when adolescents create a more pleasant world for themselves. Hence, although at individual level an adolescent may not be blessed with the "right temperament": most adolescents are able and actually do achieve happy lives. Nevertheless, in regard to adolescents, the promotion of positive emotions should be in focus. It is plausible to suggest that a first step in this direction might be through self-acceptance. Implications and limitations of the present dissertation are discussed.

Key words: Adolescents, Affective Temperaments, Life Satisfaction, Negative Affect, Positive Affect, Psychological Well-Being, Regulatory Focus, Self-Regulation, Subjective Well-Being, Temperament.

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Adolescents' Happiness: The Role of the Affective Temperament Model on Memory and Apprehension of Events, Subjective Well-Being, and Psychological Well-Being

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Avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i psykologi, som vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid Göteborgs Universitet kommer att offentligen försvaras tisdagen den 15 mars 2011, kl. 10.00, sal F1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg.

Fakultetsopponent: Professor C. Robert Cloninger, Department of Psychiatry, Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

This doctoral dissertation is based on the following four studies which will be referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

Study I

Garcia, D., & Siddiqui, A. (2009a). Adolescents' affective temperaments: Life satisfaction, interpretation, and memory of events. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*, 155–167. DOI:10.1080/17439760802399349.¹

Study II

Garcia, D., & Siddiqui, A. (2009b). Adolescents' psychological well-being and memory for life events: Influences on life satisfaction with respect to temperamental dispositions. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 10*, 387–503. DOI:10.1007/s10902-008-9096-3.²

Study III

Garcia, D., Rosenberg, P., Erlandsson, A., & Siddiqui, A. (2010). On lions and adolescents: Affective temperaments and the influence of negative stimuli on memory. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 11*, 477–495. DOI: 10.1007/s10902-009-9153-6.³

Study IV

Garcia, D., & Siddiqui, A. (Under Editorial Evaluation). The affective temperaments and self-acceptance: Adolescents' life satisfaction and psychological well-being.



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