Motivation & Emotion

Personality, motivation & emotion: Individual differences in happiness, arousal, and control

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2013

Individual differences in happiness, arousal, & control

Why do different people have different motivational and emotional states even in the same situation?

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 367-369)

Personality characteristics:
Individual differences in happiness, arousal, and control

Reading:
Reeve (2009)
Ch 13
(pp. 367-390)

Happiness
Extraversion & happiness
Neuroticism & suffering
Extraverts & neurotics

Arousal
Performance & emotion
Insufficient stimulation & underarousal
Excessive stimulation & overarousal
Credibility of the inverted-U hypothesis
Sensation seeking
Affect intensity

Control
Perceived control
Desire for control

Based on Reeve (2009, Figure 13.1, p. 369)

Outline – Individual Differences in Happiness, Arousal, and Control

- Happiness
  - Extraversion & happiness
  - Neuroticism & suffering
  - Extraverts & neurotics
- Arousal
  - Performance & emotion
  - Insufficient stimulation & underarousal
  - Excessive stimulation & overarousal
  - Credibility of the inverted-U hypothesis
  - Sensation seeking
  - Affect intensity

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 367)

Personality as typology

Based on Reeve (2009, Figure 13.2, p. 369)
Personality types vs. traits

- Relatively few people are at either end of a personality characteristic (most people are mid-way)
- Beware of typologies' oversimplification

For example:
Focus on "extraversion" (as a trait) rather than "introverts vs. extraverts" (as a typology).

The big 5 personality traits

The Big 5 according to the "NEO":
- Neuroticism
- Extraversion
- Openness to Experience
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

Tip: Remember as NEOC (rather than OCEAN because it conveys order of variance explained).

The big 5 personality traits

- The “Big 5” superordinate traits are well supported by a wide variety of research.
- Measures
  - NEO (Costa & McCrae, 1980s)
  - IPIP – freely available
- Some disagreement about the naming of these traits.

The big 5 personality traits: Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 (Authors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional control</td>
<td>Social adaptability</td>
<td>Inspiring intellect</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Will to achieve</td>
<td>Fiske (1948)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional stability</td>
<td>Surgency</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Norman (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionality</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Liveliness</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Orgatta (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Intellect</td>
<td>Friendly compliance</td>
<td>Will to achieve</td>
<td>Digeran (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Costa &amp; McCrae (1980)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AFFECT | POWER | INTELLECT | LOVE | WORK | Peabody & Goldberg (1989) |

Personality traits → motivation, emotion, and behaviour

- cause people to react differently to different situations, e.g., positively or negatively
- cause people to approach and avoid different situations
- determine choice and alteration of situations, e.g., approach, avoid, or modify situation

Based on Deckers (2010, pp. 210-212)
Are you happy?
Do you experience +ve emotion frequently?
How intense and deep is the happiness that you experience?
Do you feel vital and alive?

Are you unhappy?
Do you suffer emotionally?
How intensely do you experience negative emotions?
Is your typical day an emotional roller-coaster?

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 368-369)

Big 5 personality factors & happiness

Happy student profile:

- ↓ Neuroticism
- ↑ Extraversion
- ↑ Agreeableness
- ~ Conscientiousness
- ~ Openness

Neuroticism & happiness

Those with stronger neuroticism tend to experience more frequent and intense negative emotions and a stronger and more sensitive Behavioral Inhibition Systems (BIS).

Eagerness to avoid potentially punishing situations
Greater avoidance behaviour and emotional distress (than emotionally stable individuals)

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 372-373)

Extraversion & happiness

Extraversion

Those with stronger extraversion have a greater capacity to experience positive emotions and a stronger and more sensitive Behavioral Activating Systems (BAS).

Eagerness to approach potentially rewarding situations
Extraverts are more sociable than introverts
Extraverts exhibit greater social dominance than introverts
Extraverts are more venturesome than introverts

Based on Reeve (2009, Figure 13.2 Components of extraversion, p. 371)

Happiness and unhappiness are related, but separate, dimensions

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 370)
Happiness economics

- HE = Quantitative study of happiness, positive and negative affect, well-being, quality of life, life satisfaction and related concepts, typically combining economics with other fields such as psychology and sociology.

- The field has grown substantially since the late 20th century, for example by the development of methods, surveys and indices to measure happiness and related concepts.

- e.g., World Database of Happiness - http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/

Based on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness_economics

Happy Planet Index

- Environmental efficiency of supporting well-being (Ratio of happiness to resource consumption (sustainability))
- Countries shaded by their position in the HPI (2006)
- Highest-ranked countries are bright green
- Lowest are brown

Based on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_Planet_Index

Natural happiness and synthetic happiness

- Natural happiness: Occurs when you get what you want.
- Synthetic happiness: Occurs when you accept that you didn't get what you want.
- Synthetic happiness is as real as natural happiness
  e.g., in dating, you look to get what you want, in marriage, you find a way to like what you've got.

Easterlin paradox (1974)

- Within a given country people with higher incomes are more likely to report being happy.
- However, in international comparisons, the average reported level of happiness does not vary much with national income per person, at least for countries with income sufficient to meet basic needs.

Based on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness_economics

Why are we happy?

- Why are we happy? (Dan Gilbert, 2004, 21:20, TED talk)
  http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy.html
Arousal

- A person's arousal level is mostly a function of how stimulating the environment is.
- People engage in behaviour to ↑ or ↓ their level of arousal:
  - When underaroused, people seek out opportunities to ↑ their arousal levels, because ↑s in environmental stimulation are pleasurable and enhance performance whereas ↓s are aversive and undermine performance.
  - When overaroused, people seek out opportunities to ↓ their arousal levels, because ↑s in environmental stimulation are aversive and undermine performance whereas ↓s are pleasurable and enhance performance.

Performance & arousal

- Hebbian curve became popular in the 1950s.
- Increasing attention, interest, positive emotion.
- Increasing emotional distress, anxiety.

Insufficient stimulation & underarousal

- Sensory deprivation: An individual's sensory and emotional experience in a rigidly unchanging environment.
- Human beings harbour motives for counteracting insufficient stimulation and underarousal.

Insufficient stimulation & underarousal

- Heron's sensory deprivation study: The brain and nervous system prefer a continual and moderate level of arousal generated by environmental stimulation.
**Excessive stimulation & overarousal**

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 377)

Humans are motivated to counteract excessive stimulation and overarousal.

**Sensory isolation tanks**

- Sensory isolation tanks minimise external stimulation
- Relaxing
- Restorative
- Facilitate higher consciousness

"Over the last 25 years I have exhausted numerous addictions and relationships in pursuit of the very sensation - or state of being actually - that the floatation tank gave me in one hour. No drug-induced euphoria, no sexual or romantic high, no nicotine or food fix, nor any spiritual venture ever brought me as close to my desired destination as the float tank did. This illusively defined 'destination' became much clearer to me after floating in the tank. It's a truly remarkable and freeing experience."

- Annie C - http://www.samadhitank.com/

**Sensation seeking**

Personality characteristic related to arousal and reactivity.

Related to the extent to which a person's central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) requires change and variability.

**Sensation seeking & sensory deprivation**

- Zuckerman was a graduate student in sensory deprivation studies.
- Became interested in subjects who:
  - hated deprivation
  - couldn't tolerate low levels of stimulation
  - wanted new experiences

**Credibility of the inverted-U hypothesis**

- Neiss's criticism
  - Descriptive rather than explanatory
  - Does not apply to everyday affairs in which arousal level changes relatively little.
- Revelle, Amaral, & Turriff's experiment (1976)
  - The inverted-U hypothesis applies nicely to everyday sources of stimulation – e.g., caffeine and time pressure.
Sensation seeking

- Sensation seeking determines how a person reacts to a situation or event.
- Sensation seeking determines the situations and activities a person chooses.

Sensation seekers – Biological basis

- SSs have ↓ levels of monoamine oxidase (MAO) (enzyme that metabolises monoamines, such as serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine)
- SSs tend to have relatively ↑ levels of dopamine → their biochemistry favours approach over inhibition
- SSs tend to have relatively ↓ levels of serotonin → their biochemistry fails to inhibit them from risks and new experiences

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 379-381)

Who was the sensation seeker?

Steve Irwin  Princess Diana

Sensation Seeking Scale

(SSS; Zuckerman)

- Thrill and adventure seeking (action gamblers)
- Seek experiences outside the conventional lifestyle (travel, friends, art)
- Disinhibition: release of inhibitions, escape the pressures of daily life. (escape gamblers)
- Low tolerance for boredom, repetition and sameness.

SS and addiction

Sensation seeking is correlated with:

- Alcoholism
- Gambling

Perhaps SS is common in all addictions
Control

Perceived control
The extent to which an individual believes that he/she possesses the capacity needed to produce positive outcomes.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 384)

Desire for control
The extent to which individuals are motivated to establish control over the events in their lives.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 384)

Perceived control

In order to perceive that one has control over a given situation...

1. The self must be capable of obtaining the available desired outcome.

2. The situation in which one attempts to exercise control needs to be at least somewhat predictable and responsive.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 384)

Perceived control

Perceived control beliefs
High perceived control vs. Low perceived control

- Goal setting
- Task choice
- Effort
- Concentration
- Persistence in the face of difficulty
- Positive emotional states
- Problem-solving strategies
- Performance

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 384-385)

Self-confirming cycles of high and low engagement

Perceived control beliefs
High vs. Low

Actual outcomes
Engagement vs. disaffection

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 385-386)
Desire for control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspiration level</th>
<th>Response to challenge</th>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>Attributions for success and failure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High DC vs. Low DC</td>
<td>Select harder tasks; set goals more realistically</td>
<td>React with greater effort</td>
<td>Work at difficult tasks longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High DC benefit</td>
<td>Higher goals are achieved</td>
<td>Difficult tasks are completed</td>
<td>Difficult tasks are completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High DC liability</td>
<td>May attempt goals too difficult</td>
<td>May develop performance-inhibiting reactions</td>
<td>May invest too much effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13.7 Influence of desire for control during achievement-related performance (Burger, 1985)
Based on Reeve (2009, p. 387)

Summary
- Two personality characteristics related to happiness:
  - Extraversion → BAS → Happiness
  - Neuroticism → BIS → Unhappiness
- Two personality characteristics related to arousal:
  - Sensation seeking
  - Affect intensity
- Two personality characteristics related to control:
  - Perceived control
  - Desire for control

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 388-389)

References

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- This presentation was made using Open Office Impress.
- Free and open source software.
  - [http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html](http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html)