

## Effect of Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Hope on Well-Being among University Teachers

Noman Aftab<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Samina Rashid<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Syed Asghar Ali Shah<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Wah, Wah Cantt

Received: September 2, 2017

Accepted: November 3, 2017

### ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the effect of agreeableness, openness to experience, hope and well-being among university teachers. Data was collected from a sample of (N=440) university teachers comprising of (n=200) female and (n=240) male from universities of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock and Wah Cantt. Four scales were used including well-being scale, agreeableness scale, openness to experience scale and hope scale. Significant positive relationships of agreeableness, openness to experience and hope with well-being were found. Step-wise regression analysis revealed that agreeableness, openness to experience and hope were the significant predictors of well-being and hope was the strongest predictor of well-being among university teachers. Gender differences revealed that hope, well-being and openness to experience were more in male university teachers while agreeableness was more in female university teachers. The findings recommended that high traits of agreeableness and openness with high level of hope leads to high level of well-being. Also, female university teachers are more kind hearted while males are more creative and imaginative.

**KEYWORDS:** Agreeableness, openness to experience, hope, well-being.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A critical and demanding role is played by university teachers. A university teacher is an individual on whom the important activities of the university are dependent and without a teacher, university is a body without having soul. The personality of teacher, well-being of teacher, teaching efficiencies, attitudes and style of life assists the students to become good human beings thereby adding to create a society full of knowledge. Wellness of any program in the education system to a large extent is regulated by teachers. The achievement standard and quality of education of a university are related with the teaching quality and teacher's personality. Being good physically, psychologically and also with a balanced personality makes a teacher best. Because of the rapid progress in daily life, the teacher's life has become more and more tough and challenging.

The personality of the teacher makes an impact on the teacher's behavior in different ways, for example in interacting with the students, selection of learning practices and the methods of teaching. The teacher's personality can have an effective role on the process of teaching. Pupils learn from the personality of a teacher even though there is no formal interaction between them. The instructor whose personality facilitates, creates and keeps classroom a learning environment in which pupils feel comfortable and encouraged to analyze, is said to have an ideal teaching personality. So, understanding teacher's personality is very important.

Personality trait of agreeableness is an inclination to be kind, forgiving, trusting, generous, concerned, helping and trustworthy [1]. Agreeableness might influence well-being. Highly agreeable individuals compared with the disagreeable individuals, are inclined to be involved in actions such as collaborating with others, conveying sympathy and care for others, giving others a sense of respect and politeness [2]. Consequently, agreeable individuals inclined to be well loved by their companions [3] and are more fruitful in creating satisfying and stable intimate relations [4]. The well-being of agreeable individuals might be boosted by these positive social relationships. Agreeableness is positively associated with well-being [5]. It means high level of agreeableness will lead to higher level of well-being. In the meta-analysis, [6] it was determined that there is presence of an association between personality and well-being. Agreeableness trait was held to increase the probability of positive experiences in social and achievement circumstances which was directly associated with the teacher's well-being. Personality attributes of agreeableness and openness have been found to be related to well-being [7].

Another personality trait that can have an effect on well-being is openness to experience, which is a tendency to be artistic, curious, intuitive, intellectual, flexible and creative [8]. A teacher led by openness to experience tend to have more positive emotional state which leads to increased well-being. A significant relationship was found between

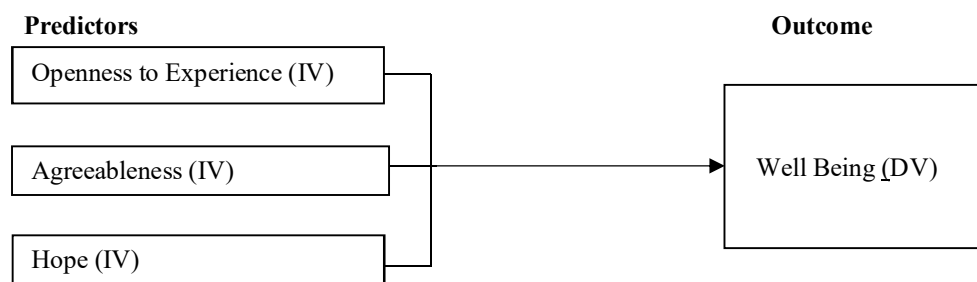
openness to experience and psychological well-being [9]. The investigators [10] have found that openness to experience has been related to well-being. Other researchers [11] have also found the same relationship. Openness to experience may well influence the overall well-being of university teachers regarding artistic self, social self, physical self, coping self and essential self. It has also been recognized that individuals having agreeable personality traits experience higher levels of well-being [12].

Hope is another factor that can influence well-being. Hopeful teachers are inclined to be healthier psychologically, having an optimistic viewpoint on their accomplishment and are gratified from their environment [13]. Hope [14] is the sense of achievement resulting from the collaboration among agency and pathways. The cognitive process with an inspirational element (agency) is hope. With the manifestation of inspiration to accomplish definite goal, the individual evaluates whether it is attainable and then advances with numerous means to achieve it (pathways). Hope is positively associated with well-being, self-esteem, meaning in life and life satisfaction [15, 16]. Findings of the studies [17] have shown that hope is a significant predictor of positive affect, life satisfaction and negative affect. Positive beliefs and assumptions about goals produce more positive feelings related to self as well as to life in general. Findings also indicated that hope and well-being significantly correlated with each other [18]. Individuals high in hope have reported to have a higher self-esteem, less depression, greatly optimistic and also they demonstrate a higher sense of well-being.

Well-being is persons' capability to compete so as to establish steadiness among their social benefits and life events [19]. Well-being is an integral consideration of taking advantage from mental health, life change and work environment. It's a person's struggle to understand their real potential to conquer the adversities in life. Well-being is the amalgamation of feeling good and functioning effectively [20]. In view of this explanation teachers with high well-being will account for feelings of happiness, accomplishment, contentment from life, good interpersonal relationships and positive mental health [21].

Because of the increasing importance of teacher's role in the process of teaching in recent times it is needed to explore the personality factors which can increase the well-being of teachers. So, the present study investigates the effect of agreeableness, openness to experience, and hope on well-being among university teachers. These traits are necessary for teachers as they can boost the well-being of the teachers and consequently the teaching process will be more effective. The well-being of the teachers will be increased by the increased level of personality attributes of agreeableness and openness to experience. Also, the high level of hope will also increase the well-being level of teachers. The variances in well-being at work might be accredited to personality. Less research, however, has focused on how personality attributes of agreeableness and openness to experience influence well-being, so this relationship will be investigated in the present study.

### Conceptual Framework



## 2. OBJECTIVES

1. The present study examined the effect of agreeableness, openness to experience and hope on well-being among university teachers.
2. To investigate how hope, openness to experience and agreeableness predicts well-being among university teachers.
3. To examine the gender differences on agreeableness, openness to experience, hope and well-being among university teachers.

### 2.1 Hypotheses

1. There is a positive relationship between agreeableness, openness to experience, hope and well-being among university teachers.

2. Agreeableness, openness to experience and hope predicts well-being among university teachers.
3. Hope, agreeableness, openness to experience and well-being will be more in male as compared to female university teachers.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The current study used a cross sectional design and for the purpose of data collection convenient sampling procedure was adopted. The effects of independent variables were tested by stepwise regression and gender differences were computed by t-test by using SPSS Version 23.

#### 3.2 Participants and procedure

A sample comprising of university teachers ( $N=440$ ) including ( $n=200$ ) female and ( $n=240$ ) male teachers had been gathered by using the convenient sampling procedure. The sample was collected from public and private sector universities of Islamabad, Wah Cantt and Attock. Age range of participants was 25-50 years. The education level of the teachers was MSc/BS (Hons), MS and PhD. The designations of the selected teachers were demonstrators, lecturers, assistant professors and associate professors. Inclusion criteria for experience was one year teaching.

The targeted universities were approached personally for data collection. Informed consent was taken from the teachers. Confidentiality of the information was guaranteed by affirming to the teachers that the information taken from them will be used only for the purpose of research. After the informed consent taken from the teachers the questionnaires were administered. The teachers were thanked for their participation in the study.

#### 3.3 Instruments

Four scales were utilized for collection of data along with the consent form. The scales were (i) Well-being scale [22], (ii) Agreeableness scale [23], (iii) Openness to experience scale [23] and (iv) Hope scale [24]. All the scales were consisted of five point Likert response category.

### 4. RESULTS

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Alpha Coefficients and Correlations matrix for study variables ( $N=440$ )

Variables	k	$\alpha$	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Openness to experience	10	.67	36.12	4.34	-	.35**	.38**	.33**
2. Agreeableness	9	.71	36.04	4.81		-	.32**	.42**
3. Hope	4	.72	15.59	2.68			-	.66**
4. Well-being	7	.86	27.06	4.56				-

\*\* $p<.01$

Table 1 shows that all the scales are highly reliable. Also the correlations among all the studied variables are highly significant. Results depicted that well-being was positively and significantly correlated with openness to experience ( $r=.33$ ,  $p<.01$ ), agreeableness ( $r=.42$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and hope ( $r=.66$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

Table 2

Stepwise regression analysis for agreeableness, hope and openness to experience as predictor of well-being of university teachers ( $N=440$ )

	Predictor Variables	B	S.E.	$p$	$R^2$	F
Model 1	Constant	2.517	0.71	.000	.74	1226.93***
	Hope	1.5	0.043	.000		
Model 2	Constant	0.39	0.59	.051	.80	902.52***
	Agreeableness	0.35	0.027	.000		
	Hope	0.93	.060	.000		
Model 3	Constant	.027	.57	.000	.82	659.83***
	Agreeableness	.22	.034	.000		
	Hope	.78	.063	.000		
	Openness to experience	.20	.034	.000		

\*\*\* $p<.001$

Step-wise regression analysis was computed to observe the most significant predictor among agreeableness, hope and openness to experience for well-being of university teachers. Model 3 shows that hope ( $B=.78$ ,  $p<.001$ ) was the strongest predictor of well-being among university teachers.

**Table 3**  
**Difference between male and female university teachers on study variables (N=440)**

	Male Teachers ( <i>n</i> = 240)	Female Teachers ( <i>n</i> = 200)	95% CI				
Variable	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Openness to experience	32.97(8.99)	31.05(10.52)	2.06	.04	.090	3.74	0.19
Agreeableness	35.33(4.71)	36.76(4.71)	-2.61	.01	-2.61	-2.36	0.29
Hope	14.73(4.0)	13.20(4.66)	3.71	.000	.72	2.34	.35
Well-being	25.21(7.21)	23.46(8.10)	3.39	.017	.31	3.18	.22

Table 3 indicated the differences between male and female university teachers on openness to experience, agreeableness, hope and well-being. Table 3 illustrated that male ( $M=32.97$ ,  $SD=8.99$ ) scored high than females ( $M=31.05$ ,  $SD=10.52$ ,  $t(438)=2.06$ ,  $p=.04$ ) on variable of openness to experience. Females secured higher scores ( $M=36.76$ ,  $SD=4.71$ ,  $t(438)=-2.36$ ,  $p=.01$ ) than males ( $M=35.33$ ,  $SD=4.83$ ) on the domain of agreeableness. On Hope also the males ( $M=14.73$ ,  $SD=4$ ) scored more than the females ( $M=13.20$ ,  $SD=4.66$ ,  $t(438)=3.71$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Well-being score were significantly higher for males ( $M=23.46$ ,  $SD=8.10$ ) than females ( $M=25.21$ ,  $SD=7.21$ ,  $t(438)=2.39$ ,  $p=.017$ ).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the effect of hope, agreeableness and openness to experience on well-being among university teachers. The results of the current study supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between agreeableness, openness to experience, hope and well-being. These conclusions are in accordance with the previous literature [25] confirming that agreeableness is significantly and positively related to well-being. The results of another study [26] on university lecturers has also confirmed and supported the findings of the current study that the personality attributes of openness to experience and agreeableness correlated significantly and positively with well-being. The more the level of agreeableness the teachers will have more well-being. This finding confirms the presence of a link between agreeableness and well-being. Also as proposed, the personality traits of agreeableness and openness to experience positively predicted well-being is supported by the previous literature [25]. Furthermore, an increase in level of hope can increase the level of well-being in both the home and work environments and it has also in line with the earlier investigation [37]. Another study [27] has also confirmed the conclusions of present study that agreeableness and openness to experience were related to higher well-being level. Another research [28] also supports the assumption of the current study that a high openness and agreeableness personality traits were associated significantly with high level of well-being. Due to the nature of the environment of the academic world, there is a need of an agreeable and open for experience personality in dealing with students. Teachers with openness to experience personality trait are having more active insight, intellectual curiosity and having independent judgment and consequently they have an enhanced judgment on their self-well-being.

As anticipated, hope is positively related with well-being. A study on teachers [29] revealed that among hope and well-being a significant positive association was found. This relationship is consistent with the past research [30] which revealed that hope was positively related to well-being. Findings of the present investigation indicated that hope has positive and significant role in increasing the level of well-being. This is in line with conclusions of the previous investigations [39, 40]. Hopeful teachers have an inclination of a positive interpretation about the future. Consecutively, such beliefs permits them to have an optimistic view point regarding one's self that would be aiding in increasing the level of motivation among them. So, the hopeful teachers can be more expected to have success in their actions which permit them to achieve satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment and thereby increasing their well-being.

It was also hypothesized that agreeableness will be more among male university teachers as compared to female university teachers which has been partially supported. The findings of the present study revealed that agreeableness is more in female than male university teachers. In an investigation [31] it was found that significant differences on gender existed such that females scored higher than males on the domain of agreeableness. The reason of it might be that agreeableness trait could also be associated with differences in gender in the self-construal. Independent self-construal is intended to be shown by males, or a sense of self that's become independent from cognitive representations of others. Females have a more self-construal of interdependence in which the others are included in their sense of self [32]. This difference in gender may be related to behavioral and motivational differences, for instance, females have more affiliative and interrelated social groups [33]. Females, hence, might be more inspired than males to keep emotional and social bonds by portraying more the trait of agreeableness.

It was also hypothesized that openness to experience will be more in male university teachers. It has also been verified by the findings of the current study. Male teachers scored higher than females on openness to experience. The

current finding have also confirmed that the openness factor/trait among males is higher than females [34]. Our hypothesis regarding gender differences on openness to experience have also been in line with the previous study [35] that males are more open to experience than females. Another hypothesis was that hope and well-being will be more in male university teachers has also been supported by the findings of the current study and is consistent with the previous investigation [35] that males were significantly higher as compared to females on well-being. It has also been showed by the findings of the present study that on hope, male teachers scored more than female teachers and this is congruent with the previous investigation [36].

### 5.1 Limitations and implications

The current study also has limitations in some aspects. First, this study used a cross-sectional survey design which is limited in terms of establishing causal relationships among variables. A longitudinal study will be more useful in establishing causal relationships between the personality variables and psychological health outcomes like well-being. Secondly, there is the issue of social desirability due to self-reported nature of data. Using multiple methods to collect data may help to reduce the effect of subjectivity. Third limitation of this study is non-random sampling. For future research the sample size and variability should be increased to generalize more the findings. Some moderators may be added in the future study.

The present study has empirical value. In present times, the well-being of the employees is concerned a lot after the rise of positive psychology in common and positive organizational behavior in specific. The administrators or management of the organizations focuses only on the physical well-being which might damage the functioning of organizations in terms of general performance at work and satisfaction in job. The neglect in viewing the well-being of teachers might hinder the university's deliberate development. Therefore, the management should encourage and support teachers to demonstrate and develop appropriate traits of personality in necessitating increased well-being in teachers. Due to the nature of the environment of the academic world which needs the role of a pleasant personality in dealing with pupils, a high level of agreeableness ensures positive well-being of teachers. Kind heartedness, trust and affection are important fundamentals in behaviors which are pro-social and which are essential to be established by the teachers to increase their level of well-being.

The daily interaction of the teacher's with the pupil's require them to be able to show such personality traits which are suitable to the students. For instance, the students think their teachers to possess an active imagination in teaching, attentive to inner feelings, to be artistic and having insights (openness to experience). Hope strengthens one's positive emotions so as to enhance well-being from the physical, psychological and social aspects. Therefore, it is helpful to improve the well-being by enhancing hope of teachers. The hopeful viewpoint on the brittleness of life encourages to consider that our life has a great value.

### REFERENCES

- [1] McCrae RR & John OP. 1992. An introduction to the Five-Factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*. 60, 175-215.
- [2] Graziano WG & Tobin RM. 2009. Agreeableness. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of individual differences in social behavior*. New York, NY: Guilford. pp. 46-61.
- [3] Jensen-Campbell LA, Adams R, Perry DG, Workman KA & Furdella JQ. 2002. Agreeableness, extraversion, and peer relations in early adolescence: Winning friends and deflecting aggression. *Journal of Research in Personality*. 36, 224-251.
- [4] Robins RW, Caspi A & Moffitt TE. 2002. It's not just who you're with, it's who you are: Personality and relationship experiences across multiple relationships. *Journal of Personality*. 70, 925-964.
- [5] Grant S, Langan-Fox J & Anglim J. 2009. The big five traits as predictors of subjective and psychological well-being. *Psychological Reports*. 105, 205-231.
- [6] DeNeve KM & Cooper H. 1998. The happy personality: A meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*. 124, 197-229.
- [7] Anglim, J., & Grant, S. 2016. Predicting psychological and subjective well-being from personality: Incremental prediction from 30 facets over the Big 5. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17.

- [8] McCrae RR & Costa PT. 1987. Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 52, 81–90.
- [9] Naeem F. 2012. Psychological well-being and personality traits among students living in nuclear and joint family. (MSc thesis). Department of Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
- [10] Steel P, Schmidt J & Shultz J. 2008. Refining the relationship between personality and subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*. 134, 138–161.
- [11] Staudinger UM & Kunzmann U. 2005. Positive adult personality development: adjustment and/or growth? *Eur. Psychol*. 10:320–29.
- [12] Rezaeezhadmirdehi A. 2011. Comparison investigation of personality traits and mental health in artistic and normal people. *European Psychiatry*. 26(1), 1041. doi:10.1016/S0924-9338(11)72746-8.
- [13] Snyder CR & Sigmon DR. 2002. Hope theory: A member of the positive psychology family. In C. R. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.). *Handbook of positive psychology*. pp. 257–276. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [14] Snyder CR, Rand KL & Sigmon DR. Hope theory: A member of the positive psychology family. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.). *Handbook of positive psychology*. 2005. New York: Oxford University Press. pp: 257–312.
- [15] Halama P & Dedova M. 2007. Meaning in life and hope as predictors of positive mental health: Do they explain residual variance not predicted by personality traits? *Studia Psychologica*. 49, 191–200.
- [16] Mascaro N & Rosen DH. 2008. Assessment of existential meaning and its longitudinal relations with depressive symptoms. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*. 27, 576–599.
- [17] Demirli A, Turkmen M & Arik RS. 2015. Investigation of dispositional and state hope levels' relations with student subjective well-being. *Social Indicators Research*. 120(2), 601–613.
- [18] Park N. Strengths of character and well-being. 2004. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*. 23, 603–619.
- [19] Ryff CD. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 1989. 57(6), 1069.
- [20] Huppert FA. 2009. Psychological well-being: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being*. 1, 137–164.
- [21] Parkinson J. 2006. Establishing national mental health and well-being indicators for Scotland. *Journal of Public Mental Health*. 5(1), 42–48.
- [22] Tennant R., Hiller L, Fishwick R., Platt S, Joseph S, Weich S, Parkinson J, Secker S & Stewart-Brown S. 2007. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): development and UK validation. *Health & Quality of Life Outcomes*. 5(1), 63.
- [23] John OP & Srivastava S. 1999. The Big-Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.). *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*. Vol. 2, pp. 102–138. New York: Guilford Press.
- [24] Luthans F, Youssef CM & Avolio BJ. 2007. *Psychological capital, developing the human competitive edge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [25] Ziskis AS. 2010. The relationship between personality, gratitude, and psychological well-being (Doctoral dissertation). New Jersey Graduate Sc.
- [26] Marzuki AN. 2013. The Impact of Personality on Employee Well-Being. *European Scientific Journal*. 9(20), 43–52.

- [27] Trzcinski E & Holst E. 2010. Gender Differences in Subjective Well-Being in and out of Management Positions. *Social Indicators Research*. Volume 107, Issue 3, pp 449–463.
- [28] Kokko K, Tolvanen A & Pulkkinen L. 2013. Associations between Personality Traits and Psychological Well-Being across time in Middle Adulthood. *Journal of Research in Personality*. 1-40.
- [29] Singh KA, Singh S Singh PA & Srivastava A. 2013. Hope and well-being among students of professional courses. *Indian Journal of Community Psychology*. 9(1), 109-119.
- [30] Azimi T. 2014. The role of psychological capitals in predicting mental health and well-being of female employees in education of dehdasht. *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences*. 4 (S4). 1297-1304.
- [31] Weisberg YJ, DeYoung CG & Hirsh JB. 2011. Gender differences in personality across the ten aspects of the Big Five. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2, 1–11
- [32] Markus H & Kitayama S. 1991. Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*. 98, 224-253.
- [33] Cross SE & Madson L. 1997. Models of the self: self-construal and gender. *Psychol. Bull.* 122, 5–37.
- [33] Shah Y. 2016. Personality Differences between Males and Females Based On Big Five Factors – An Empirical Study. *International Journal of Social Sciences*. Special Issue Volume 2 Issue 1, pp. 544-554.
- [34] Kawamoto T, Oshio S, Abe S, Tsubota Y, Hirashima T, Ito H & Tani I. 2015. Age and Gender Differences of Big Five Personality Traits in a Cross-Sectional Japanese Sample. *Japanese Journal of Developmental Psychology*. Vol. 26 Issue 2, p16, p107-122.
- [35] Schmitt DP, Alcalay L Allik J, Alves ICB, Anderson CA, Angelini AL & Youn, G. 2016. Psychological sex differences across cultures. Findings from the International Sexuality Description Project-2. Manuscript in preparation.
- [36] Ciarrocchi JW & Deneke E. 2004. Happiness and the varieties of religious experience: Religious support, practices, and spirituality as predictors of well-being. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*. Vol. 15, pp. 204-233.
- [37] Avey JB, Reichard RJ, Luthans F & Mhatre KH. 2011. Meta-analysis of the impact of positive psychological capital on employee's attitudes, behaviors and performance. *Human resource development quarterly*, 22 (2), 127-152.
- [39] George LK. 2010. Still happy after all these years: Research frontiers on subjective Wellbeing in Later Life. *J Gerontol Soc Sci*; 65 (3): 331-9.
- [40] Khosroshahi J, Hashemi Nasrabad T. 2011. The relationship between social anxiety, optimism, self-efficacy and psychological well-being of students, *J Urmia Med*; 23(2): 115-122.