

Study of Domains of Personality, Life Satisfaction, and Hope in Young Adults: A Review

Deepak Pandey¹, Dr. Neerja Pandey^{2*}

ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced world, understanding what contributes to a fulfilling life for young adults is more important than ever. This review examines the intricate connections between personality, life satisfaction, and hope, three critical factors that shape psychological well-being. Research consistently highlights that personality traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness positively influence life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985; Abdel-Khalek et al., 2022; Alvi et al., 2022), whereas neuroticism tends to have a negative impact (Crnković et al., 2023; Olaru et al., 2023). Additionally, resilience and psychological interventions have been shown to enhance these traits, fostering a greater sense of fulfillment (Ding et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2023). Hope emerges as a key link between personality and life satisfaction. Studies suggest that individuals with higher levels of extraversion and conscientiousness experience greater hope, which, in turn, strengthens their overall well-being (Halama, 2010; Mishra & Datta, 2019; Hutz et al., 2014). Cultural perspectives, particularly from India, emphasize the role of family dynamics, work environments, and social roles in shaping personality and psychological resilience (Mishra & Gupta, 2023; Thakur, 2018). Furthermore, hope serves as a protective factor against adversity, helping individuals maintain motivation and optimism in challenging situations (Bailey et al., 2007; Bronk et al., 2009; Veronese et al., 2023). By integrating global and Indian perspectives, this review offers a culturally relevant understanding of personality and well-being in young adults. The findings suggest that fostering resilience, self-efficacy, and positive personality traits can significantly enhance both hope and life satisfaction. Future research should focus on developing tailored psychological interventions that nurture these qualities, ultimately promoting a more fulfilling and enriched life for young adults.

Keywords: *Domains of Personality, Personality Traits, Life Satisfaction, Hope, Young adults*

The study of human personality, life satisfaction, and hope has been a focal point of psychological research for decades. Understanding how these constructs interact is crucial for comprehending overall well-being, especially in young adults who are at a critical developmental stage. Personality plays a significant role in shaping one's experiences, aspirations, and overall life contentment, while hope serves as a motivational force in achieving life goals. The interplay between personality domains and hope can

¹M.A. (Clinical Psychology), AIBAS, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, UP, India

²Assistant Professor Psychology, AIBAS, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, UP, India.

*Corresponding Author

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influence how individuals perceive and pursue satisfaction in various life domains, including career, relationships, and personal growth.

Young adulthood is a transitional period marked by significant psychological, social, and emotional changes. This phase lays the foundation for personal identity, career aspirations, and interpersonal relationships, making it a critical window for understanding the factors that promote well-being. Developing a stable sense of self and navigating life's uncertainties often require a balance between personality traits and a hopeful outlook. Research suggests that certain personality traits, such as emotional stability, openness, and conscientiousness, may enhance an individual's ability to experience life satisfaction and sustain hope even in the face of challenges (Chow et al., 2023). Conversely, traits such as neuroticism and introversion may hinder this process by fostering negative emotional states and reducing goal-directed behavior. Studies have shown that extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are positively linked to life satisfaction, while neuroticism is negatively associated with it (Lim & Chan, 2019). These findings highlight how personality traits can significantly influence an individual's capacity to maintain well-being and resilience across various life circumstances.

Exploring the interrelation between personality, life satisfaction, and hope can provide valuable insights into mental well-being, resilience, and goal achievement among young adults. Hope, often conceptualized as a cognitive-motivational construct, involves both agency (the motivation to pursue goals) and pathways (the perceived ability to generate routes to achieve those goals). When aligned with adaptive personality traits, hope can foster greater emotional regulation, problem-solving skills, and a positive outlook on life. Moreover, understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying these relationships can inform interventions aimed at enhancing well-being and resilience in young adults. By examining the complex dynamics between personality traits and hope, this study seeks to uncover the underlying psychological processes that contribute to life satisfaction and overall mental health during young adulthood.

Personality

Personality is a complex and dynamic construct that encompasses an individual's characteristic patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Allport (1937) defines personality as "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment." According to Larsen and Buss (2017), personality represents stable traits that influence how individuals perceive, react to, and interact with their surroundings. Personality is often studied using multidimensional assessments, which help identify its relationship with well-being indicators such as life satisfaction and hope (Snyder et al., 2002). These assessments have gained particular relevance in research on young adults, as personality traits shape developmental experiences, motivation, and psychological health during this critical phase of life (McCrae & Costa, 2008).

Theoretical frameworks for understanding personality include psychoanalytic, trait, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, and social learning theories. Freud's (1923) psychoanalytic theory posits that personality consists of three structures: the id (instinctual desires), the ego (rational self), and the superego (moral consciousness). He also introduced defense mechanisms as strategies for managing internal conflicts. In contrast, trait theorists, such as McCrae and Costa (1997), propose that personality consists of stable characteristics that can be categorized into five broad dimensions—openness, conscientiousness,

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extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—known as the Big Five model. Research suggests that these traits significantly influence life satisfaction and emotional regulation, with high conscientiousness and low neuroticism being strongly associated with greater well-being (Steel et al., 2008).

Humanistic theories, developed by scholars like Rogers (1959) and Maslow (1968), emphasize self-actualization and personal growth as central aspects of personality. They argue that individuals are inherently driven toward fulfilling their potential, and psychological well-being is achieved through self-acceptance and meaningful goal-setting. Meanwhile, cognitive-behavioral perspectives, as outlined by Bandura (1986), highlight the role of thought patterns and learned behaviors in shaping personality. His social learning theory posits that individuals develop personality traits through observational learning, reinforcement, and self-efficacy beliefs. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how personality influences hope, resilience, and life satisfaction in young adults.

Expanding beyond traditional models like the Big Five, researchers have explored personality using broader assessments, such as the California Psychological Inventory, which measures 20 distinct personality dimensions (Gough & Bradley, 1996). Traits such as optimism, emotional stability, and resourcefulness are positively correlated with higher life satisfaction and hope, whereas anxiety and tough-mindedness can negatively impact coping mechanisms (Carver & Scheier, 2002). Since young adulthood is a formative period marked by major life transitions, examining how these personality traits interact with psychological well-being can offer valuable insights into personal development and mental health strategies.

Domains of Personality: Several theoretical models explain personality, but the Five-Factor Model (FFM) proposed by McCrae and Costa (1999) remains one of the most widely accepted frameworks. The five major domains include: Openness to Experience – Reflects creativity, curiosity, and willingness to explore new experiences; Conscientiousness – Encompasses organization, responsibility, and goal-directed behaviors; Extraversion – Characterized by sociability, energy, and positive emotions; Agreeableness – Involves compassion, cooperation, and trustworthiness; Neuroticism – Represents emotional instability, anxiety, and vulnerability to stress.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation of an individual's overall well-being and quality of life, based on personal standards and expectations (Diener et al., 1985). It is distinct from momentary emotions and reflects a long-term sense of fulfillment. Veenhoven (1996) defines life satisfaction as “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of their life-as-a-whole favorably,” while Diener (2000) describes it as “a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to their chosen criteria.” Various factors contribute to life satisfaction, including emotional well-being, psychological health, social relationships, physical health, career satisfaction, and personal growth (Myers & Diener, 1995; Pavot & Diener, 2008). Studies suggest that personality traits, particularly extraversion and emotional stability, positively influence life satisfaction, while neuroticism has a negative impact (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004). In an Indian context, Mishra & Gupta (2023) found that working women with strong social roles and a sense of agency reported higher life satisfaction, emphasizing the role of cultural and societal influences.

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Life satisfaction includes emotional well-being, which involves managing emotions effectively and fostering resilience (Fredrickson, 2001; Lyubomirsky, 2007); psychological health, which encompasses self-esteem, coping mechanisms, and a sense of purpose (Ryff, 1989); and social relationships, as strong interpersonal connections contribute significantly to happiness and satisfaction (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Other crucial factors include physical health, where regular exercise and a balanced lifestyle enhance overall well-being (Diener & Chan, 2011); career satisfaction, with fulfillment in work contributing positively to life satisfaction (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005); and personal growth, where continuous learning and goal achievement foster a deeper sense of fulfillment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Building meaningful relationships through active listening, empathy, and trust has been shown to enhance life satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging and social support (Reis & Gable, 2003). By understanding and strengthening these components, individuals can improve their overall well-being and cultivate a more satisfying and fulfilling life.

Hope

Hope is a motivational construct that drives individuals to set and pursue goals. One of the most prominent theories on hope is Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder, 1994), which suggests that hope consists of two key components: agency thinking (the motivation to pursue goals) and pathways thinking (the perceived ability to find routes to achieve goals).

Hope is a fundamental psychological construct that influences motivation, resilience, and overall well-being. Snyder et al. (1991) define hope as a "positive motivational state" consisting of agency (goal-directed determination) and pathways (strategic planning). Lopez et al. (2009) describe hope as a cognitive process enabling individuals to pursue and accomplish goals despite obstacles, while Scioli and Biller (2009) conceptualize it as a multidimensional force integrating cognitive, emotional, and social elements. Research by Gallagher and Lopez (2009), links hope to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, highlighting its significant role in psychological well-being.

The mechanisms of hope involve goal-setting, emotional regulation, and resilience. Rand and Cheavens (2009) emphasize that hopeful individuals engage in strategic thinking, visualizing success and identifying alternative pathways when encountering setbacks. Emotional regulation enables them to maintain optimism and persist through challenges (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Furthermore, Snyder et al. (2002) suggest that hope fosters motivation, encouraging individuals to set ambitious goals and persist toward achievement. Additionally, Reis and Gable (2003) highlight the role of social connections in reinforcing hope, as supportive relationships strengthen optimism and perseverance.

Cultivating hope requires strategies that enhance resilience and psychological well-being. Sheldon and Elliot (1999) stress the importance of setting realistic, incremental goals to sustain motivation. Practicing gratitude has been shown to enhance hope by shifting focus from adversity to positive experiences (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Neff (2011) underscores self-compassion as crucial for maintaining hope, reducing self-criticism, and fostering persistence. Social support also plays a vital role, as encouragement from others strengthens one's sense of purpose (Masten, 2001). Ultimately, hope is a dynamic resource that empowers individuals to overcome adversity, achieve personal and professional success, and sustain overall well-being.

Rationale for the Study

The present study aims to examine how different domains of personality relate to life satisfaction and hope in young adults aged 18 to 30, a crucial developmental phase characterized by identity exploration, career decisions, and evolving social relationships. Observations from self and others suggest that personality traits significantly shape how individuals navigate these challenges, influencing their sense of hope and overall life satisfaction. During this period, individuals encounter challenges that shape their psychological well-being, making hope and life satisfaction crucial factors in navigating this phase successfully. While previous research has established the importance of personality traits in influencing well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Hamid, 2020), a deeper understanding of how personality interacts with hope and life satisfaction remains limited—particularly in young adults. Recognizing this gap, the present study aims to explore the intricate relationships between these constructs, providing insights that could contribute to both psychological research and practical well-being interventions.

Personality plays a significant role in shaping an individual's outlook on life. Studies indicate that traits like extraversion and conscientiousness foster hope and enhance life satisfaction, while neuroticism tends to have the opposite effect (Halama, 2010; Mishra & Datta, 2019). Additionally, research by Bronk et al. (2009) emphasizes the role of purpose in sustaining hope, while Veronese et al. (2023) highlight resilience and agency as protective factors in adverse conditions. However, these studies often examine personality, hope, and life satisfaction separately, leaving a gap in understanding how they interact holistically in young adulthood. Furthermore, cultural factors shape these psychological experiences, as seen in Mishra & Gupta's (2023) research on Indian working women, where higher hope and life satisfaction were linked to social roles and personal agency. To address these gaps, this study adopts a comprehensive approach by utilizing the Multi-Dimensional Assessment of Personality series for personality evaluation, along with The Trait Hope Scale and The Satisfaction with Life Scale. Given the rapid social and economic changes influencing youth in India, this research aims to provide a culturally relevant perspective on the psychological mechanisms that drive hope and life satisfaction, offering insights that can inform mental health strategies, educational frameworks, and personal development programs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review is divided into three sections to help readers comprehend the complex connections among personality, life satisfaction, and hope. a) Personality and life satisfaction b) Personality and hope c) Life satisfaction and hope. This section offers a precise strategy for evaluating previous research and locating any gaps pertinent to the current investigation.

Personality and Life Satisfaction

Several studies have consistently demonstrated the significant role of personality traits in shaping life satisfaction. (Abdel-Khalek et al., 2022) and (Alvi et al., 2022) highlight that extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness positively correlate with life satisfaction, while neuroticism negatively affects it. Their findings align with (Diener et al., 1985), who emphasize that resilient individuals with self-confidence and extraversion exhibit higher well-being. The mediating role of resilience is further supported by (Crnković et al., 2023), who found that resilience fully mediates the effects of extraversion and conscientiousness on life satisfaction, suggesting that psychological interventions targeting resilience could enhance well-being. Similarly, (Ding et al., 2023) explore how lifestyle factors like sleep, exercise, and non-smoking interact with personality traits to influence life

satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of both internal and external factors. Expanding on this, (Kang et al., 2023) demonstrate how health conditions, particularly chronic illnesses like cancer, moderate the relationship between personality traits and life satisfaction, with agreeableness playing a crucial role in social support and adaptability. (Totuka, 2022) provides an Indian perspective, examining life satisfaction among teachers and finding no significant difference in satisfaction levels between private and government school educators, suggesting that personality traits may have a more universal influence regardless of workplace settings. Lastly, (Olaru et al., 2023) provide an intervention-based perspective, showing that targeted personality changes, particularly in emotional stability and conscientiousness, can lead to notable increases in life satisfaction. These studies collectively underscore the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the relationship between personality and life satisfaction, advocating for interventions that foster positive traits and resilience to enhance subjective well-being.

Personality and Hope

Research on personality and hope consistently demonstrates that personality traits significantly shape hope levels, often mediated by psychological factors like self-efficacy and motivation. Halama (2010) established that hope mediates the relationship between personality traits and life satisfaction, with extraversion and conscientiousness fostering hope, while neuroticism diminishes it. Mishra and Datta (2019) reinforced these findings, showing that extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness positively correlate with hope, whereas neuroticism negatively impacts it, emphasizing the role of assertiveness and emotional stability in maintaining hopeful attitudes. Similarly, Hutz et al. (2014) highlighted cross-cultural differences, where extraversion was a key predictor of hope and optimism across American and Brazilian samples, but cultural factors such as individualism and collectivism also shaped these associations. Expanding on these perspectives, Kananifar et al. (2024) examined hope in addiction recovery, finding that neuroticism and conscientiousness significantly predicted hope for recovery, but self-efficacy played an even stronger role, suggesting that interventions should integrate personality and self-efficacy assessments. In line with this, Moltafet (2020) demonstrated that academic motivation mediates the relationship between personality and hope, indicating that fostering intrinsic motivation can enhance hopeful outlooks, especially for individuals high in extraversion and conscientiousness. Moreover, Halama and Dědová (2007) provided further evidence that hope acts as a cognitive buffer, mitigating the negative impact of neuroticism on life satisfaction. Lastly, Snyder (2002) continues to serve as the foundation for these studies, defining hope as a combination of goal-directed planning (pathways) and motivation (agency), both of which are shaped by personality traits.

Life Satisfaction and Hope

Research on life satisfaction and hope consistently demonstrates their interconnectedness, influenced by various psychological and socio-cultural factors. Bailey et al. (2007) found that the agency component of hope was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction, emphasizing the role of efficacy expectations in well-being. Bronk et al. (2009) expanded on this by showing that a clear sense of purpose enhances life satisfaction across different life stages, with hope acting as a mediating factor. Hamid (2020) highlighted that psychological hardiness and hope significantly predict life satisfaction, with commitment, agency, and control being key contributors. In a cross-cultural context, Veronese et al. (2023) found that social and educational agency positively predicted life satisfaction among Palestinian children exposed to trauma, demonstrating hope's role as a resilience factor in adversity. Similarly, Raats et al. (2018) revealed a strong positive correlation between hope and life

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satisfaction among children from different socio-economic backgrounds, though SES did not moderate this relationship. Mishra and Gupta (2023) contributed an Indian perspective by showing that working women in joint families reported higher levels of hope and life satisfaction than their non-working counterparts, emphasizing the impact of social roles on psychological well-being. Lastly, Thakur (2018) explored the relationship between optimism, self-esteem, hope, and life satisfaction among Indian college students, reinforcing the importance of psychological capital in fostering well-being. These studies collectively underscore the vital role of hope in shaping life satisfaction, with various mediating factors such as purpose, agency, hardiness, and socio-cultural influences enhancing their dynamic relationship.

CONCLUSION

This review underscores the intricate connections among personality, life satisfaction, and hope in shaping young adults' well-being. Research consistently highlights that traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness positively influence life satisfaction, whereas neuroticism has a detrimental effect (Abdel-Khalek et al., 2022; Alvi et al., 2022). Resilience emerges as a crucial mediator, as Crnković et al. (2023) suggest, reinforcing its role in psychological adaptability. Similarly, hope is significantly shaped by personality, with extraversion and conscientiousness fostering optimism, while neuroticism weakens it (Halama, 2010; Mishra & Datta, 2019). These findings align with Snyder's (2002) theory, which positions hope as a key driver of goal-directed behavior and motivation. The reciprocal relationship between life satisfaction and hope further highlights their significance in well-being. Studies by Bailey et al. (2007) and Bronk et al. (2009) demonstrate that agency and purpose strengthen this connection, while socio-cultural factors influence its expression (Mishra & Gupta, 2023; Veronese et al., 2023). Given these insights, future research should adopt longitudinal approaches to deepen our understanding of these dynamics. Additionally, interventions aimed at enhancing resilience and fostering positive personality traits could be instrumental in promoting psychological well-being among young adults.

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Conflict of Interest

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