

NEUROTICISM, EXTRAVERSION, EMOTION REGULATION, NEGATIVE AFFECT AND POSITIVE AFFECT: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF REAPPRAISAL AND SUPPRESSION

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The associations between extraversion and positive affect and between neuroticism and negative affect are well documented (e.g., Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). However, it is still unclear why the extraversion-positive affect and neuroticism-negative affect relationships are so close. Based on the findings from emotion regulation research (e.g., John & Gross, 2004), the mediating roles of two emotion regulation strategies – reappraisal and suppression – between the two personality dimensions and positive and negative affect were examined in this study.

A thousand undergraduate students were recruited from four universities in China; 430 men, ages ranging from 16.42 to 24 years ($M = 20.59$, $SD = 1.24$). Participants completed a package of questionnaires including: the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Short Scale (EPQ-RS; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991), Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) and general dimension scales of Positive Affect and Negative Affect -Expanded Form (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994). The structural equation modeling technique was employed to test and modify the hypothetical mediation model, and bootstrap methods were used to test the significance levels of indirect effects. The results indicated that neuroticism and extraversion contributed to negative affect and positive affect indirectly through reappraisal beside the direct contribution respectively, and suppression had no mediating roles between neuroticism

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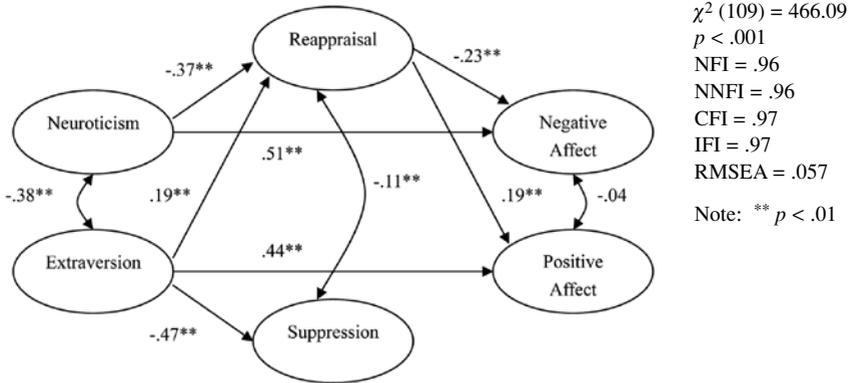


Figure 1. The final mediation model.

and negative affect or between extraversion and positive affect (see Figure 1). Furthermore, neuroticism and extraversion explained 22% of the variance in reappraisal, and neuroticism and reappraisal, and extraversion and reappraisal explained 42% and 28% of the variance in negative affect and positive affect, respectively.

These results suggest that individuals with different personality dimensions (i.e., extraversion and neuroticism) use emotion regulation strategies differently (i.e., reappraisal), which in turn influences the affect they experience. These results provide empirical evidence to support the proposition that the link between personality and affect is not simply a direct relationship but, rather both that extraversion contributes to positive affect and neuroticism contributes to negative affect through emotion regulation, one of important psychological processes. Though there is still a long way to fully clarify the mediating roles of emotion regulation, the findings of this pilot study provide a new insight for us to understand the extraversion-positive affect and neuroticism-negative affect relationships.

Keywords: personality, emotion regulation, affect, extroversion, neuroticism, reappraisal.

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