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PSYC 3302 - POSITIVE PSYC

WK 5-1: RELIGION & HAPPINESS

Feb. 2 / 15

→ PRO-SOCIAL SPENDING

- sharing/giving has similar effects in young
ex. monkey puppet w/ toddlers
 - ↳ happiness highest when child gives own treat to puppet
- effects observed in much of world [overall: positively correlated]
 - ↳ experiments in Uganda, South Africa, India
- Self-Determination Theory as guide
 - ↳ we need to fulfill three fundamental needs:
 - Relatedness (close vs. distant others)
 - Competence (specific impact)
 - Autonomy (choice)
 - ↳ creates a motivation that is intrinsic when these needs are met

• Some physiological correlates

- 'reward' parts of brain
- cortisol and shame (when not giving) "indicator"

→ MONEY NOT GOOD FOR HAPPINESS

- less savoring = more wealth (correlational)
- materialism → negative affect

→ RELIGION + SWB

• Previous research:

- particular religion not important to SWB
- participation has been associated with SWB

- Diener et al. Religion Paradox

- Different forms of SWB
- different religious traditions / regions
- person-society fit (like with extraversion)

Study 1: USA

- representative, nationwide sample
- survey methods
- demographics, SWB, religious importance, circumstances

Results:

- religious importance ranged 44% to 88%
- difficult circumstances associated with religion

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- difficult circumstances associated with lower SWB (as expected), but religion seemed to help
- associations stronger at state level

Study 2

- Gallup World Poll (GWP) [not allowed to ask about religion in China]
- SWB (PA, NA, ladder)
- Religion important? Attendance (weekly basis)?
- Difficult circumstances (income, education, basic + safety needs)

Results:

- About 68% of world finds religion important daily
- Much variation across world (99% to 16%)
 - ↳ Canada at 45%; below mean, below U.S. (66%)

More GWP results:

- Difficult circumstances associated with more religion
- stronger at nation (vs. individual) level
- national circumstances seem to produce religiosity more than individual circumstances
- religiosity predicts lower evaluations (happiness)
 - ↳ e.g. Togo vs. Denmark
- BUT, this eliminated or reversed when controlling for circumstances
- Thus, religion seems to be helping with bad circumstances (turns from neg. correlation to positive correlation)
- Religion less important in good circumstances

— Possible mediators (between religiosity + SWB)

- social support
- respect
- meaning in life

Anomaly: meaning + purpose higher with religion even in good circumstances

↳ but without the SWB gain

- Person-environment (society) fit supported
- Religious people happier in religious societies
- Not much benefit of religion in some societies
- Different religions have similar results (few minor variations)

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PSYC 3302: POSITIVE PSYC
WK 5-2: HAPPINESS CHANGE

Feb. 4/15

- Religion Paradox: if religion is making people happy, why are many people dropping out
- Religion is most important for SWB in poor circumstances: poverty, mortality, education
- Religion contributes to SWB by: respect, social support + purpose
- ADAPTATION OR 'HEDONIC TREADMILL'
 - Hedonic (feel good/bad) + Treadmill (moving forward but not going anywhere)
 - potentially adapt to happiness
 - ↳ ex. in a room with a strong smell → adapt + don't notice it after a while
 - adjust expectations
- Brickman, Coates, + Janoff-Bulman (1978)
 - lotto winners, controls, accident victims (who became paraplegic)
 - ↳ not large sample (22, 58, 29), but huge impact
 - ↳ rated past, present + future happiness
 - ↳ rated pleasure from everyday experience (activities such as watching t.v, talking to a friend, buying clothes)
- Results: • study might contradict intuitions
 - [all very close scores; lotto winners happiest in present, least happy with mundane pleasures; accident victims were least happy in present but predicted the highest future happiness]
 - results often overstated
 - issues around remembered + predicted happiness
 - mundane pleasure + savouring study
 - people seem to adapt to even major events
- Lucas
 - Modern view of adaptation
 - 1. 'Set points' are not neutral (even under poor circumstances)
 - evidence that happiness is a common emotion
 - 2. Substantial individual differences in set points (recall strong personality + SWB links)
 - extraversion, agreeableness + neuroticism are somewhat heritable + stable and predict happiness

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3. Probably multiple set points
 - PA, NA, SWB, stability + trajectory differences
4. Happiness can change
 - conditions of countries + SWB; major events; efforts
ex. widowhood, unemployment, divorce, marriage
5. Individual differences in adaptation
 - ex. trajectories after marriage

→ INTENTIONAL HAPPINESS CHANGE

Lyubomirsky + Layous, 2013

- Happiness is nice (feels good; associated with health, career success, creativity ... etc)
 - There are relatively easy exercises that improve happiness
 - Often modeled on characteristics of happy people
- Some exercises:

- Gander, et al.; Table 1: Well-being project handout
 - Three good things (+ why; over time)
 - Three funny things (+ why)
 - Signature strengths in a new way
 - Counting (+ doing) kindness
 - Gift of time (with close others)
 - One door closes, another door opens

- Proposed 'Key' to Variation

- Person-Activity Fit

- Activity Features:

- Across:
- Dosage - frequency
 - Variety - may work against adaptation
 - Trigger
 - Social Support

- Between:
- Present vs. Future vs. Past
 - Other vs. Self-Oriented
 - Social vs. Reflective

- Person Features:

- Motivation + Effort
- Efficacy beliefs
- Baseline Affective State (already happy / less happy)
- Personality
- Social Support
- Demographics (age)