2024

THE INTERSECTION OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT, PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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THE INTERSECTION OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT, PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

of

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted 3/15/2024 Date Approved 3/15/2024

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ABSTRACT

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Ché Malik Ashé

This study explores the interplay between family environment, parental bonding, personality traits, personality dysfunction, and life satisfaction among college undergraduates. Participants were comprised of college undergraduates (*N* = 736; 79% female) and we obtained measures of big five personality dimensions, parental bonding, family environment, personality dysfunction, and life satisfaction. Findings indicate that emotional stability is the strongest predictor of life satisfaction, while negative affect is strongly correlated with personality dysfunction. Paternal bonding and family environment were particularly influential in shaping personality traits, which in turn impacted life satisfaction. Additionally, personality dysfunction traits show a stronger correlation to parental care than parental control. These results highlight the complex dynamics between family environment, personality development, and life satisfaction. Implications for future directions are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Genetic makeup and lived experiences are commonly accepted to be among the guiding factors in personality development (Eysenck, 1967; Krueger et al., 2008). However, the research on how child-parent relationships influence the development of personality, particularly personality dysfunction is lacking in the 21st century (Widiger et al., 2019). There is also very research on how family and personality influences life satisfaction. Negative parental bonding (early loss, neglect, or abuse) has been shown to affect the way children represent relationships in their mind and how they interact with others which shapes their later social experiences (Russ et al., 2003; Heim & Nemeroff, 2001). The quality of social experiences, which is related to emotional stability, has also been found to be crucial factor in life satisfaction among adults (Conner et al., 1979).

Life Satisfaction

Life Satisfaction is a construct researchers use to assess the degree to which one positively views their overall quality of life (Cummins, 1996). This construct is multidimensional in that there are multiple variables that load into determining life satisfaction (Veenhooven, 1996). However, using the Big-Five personality traits: openness to experiences (openness; intellect and culture), conscientiousness (competence and self-discipline), extraversion (outgoingness), agreeableness (cooperativeness, social sensitivity), and neuroticism (emotional stability), researchers have been able to find strong associations between personality disposition and life satisfaction (Goldberg, 1990; Steel et al., 2008; Olaru et al., 2023). With many factors that loading into life satisfaction and it's worth nothing that researchers have found that differing age groups rate the significance of these factors differently. Most notably, adults place a higher significance

on employment/professional variables versus social/family (Durkheim, 1997), but adults also rate the quality of social interactions as more integral to life satisfaction rather than the amount (Conner et al., 1979). This is of interest to our current study because as we progress, we should find associations between family environment and personality with life satisfaction, but we'll want to make sure it is at the significant levels to make reliable claims. Khattab & Fenton (2009) conducted an analysis of an already completed study (Fenton & Dermott, 2006) of 1100 young adults between 20 and 34 years old. Participants were primarily interviewed about their patterns of employment and career formation, but other facets of life were evaluated to build a complete participant profile. During the reanalysis, researchers found that social and home variables were just as important as employment-related variables among young adults and that the influence of all variables is mediated by one's 'sense of life control', which is akin to conscientiousness and extraversion personality traits (Khattab & Fenton, 2009).

Personality and Life Satisfaction

Personality effects how you interact with the world constantly. How you encode of these interactions is essentially life satisfaction. Personality has been identified as one of the strongest correlates to life satisfaction (Robert & Roberts, 2020; Olaru et al., 2023) Olaru et al., (2023) found that among the big five personality traits, emotional stability had the strongest relationship to overall and domain-specific life satisfaction in adults. In that study, researchers wanted to examine whether the correlation between personality traits and life satisfaction differed in ages of an adult population. They also found that after emotional stability, conscientiousness was strongly correlated with work satisfaction and extraversion and agreeableness were significantly correlated to social satisfaction.

Parental Bonding and Personality Development

Parenting styles have been shown to influence children's emotional regulation with positive parental styles being associated with high levels of emotion regulation (Tani et al., 2018). Researchers of that study wanted to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles, emotional regulation strategies, and emotion dysfunction in adults. Using the Parental Bonding Inventory (PBI) they measured the perceived paternal and maternal care and overprotection levels in 50 men and 50 women (N = 100). They found that negative parenting styles was linked to increased emotional dysregulation. They also found that maternal care was negatively associated with expressive emotional suppression and emotion dysregulation and maternal overprotection was associated with some emotional dysregulation dimensions. Paternal care was negatively associated to emotional dysregulation but not association with positive emotion regulation strategies.

Nakao et al., (2000) also conducted a study to examine how various aspects of perceived parenting influenced personality expression. They found that parenting styles are largely determined by the parents' personality and answers to self-report questionnaires parental rearing are influenced by the inherited characteristics of the child, thus suggesting a stronger role in the genetic makeup of personality development. There is also evidence that personality is carried over from adolescence to adulthood (Caspi & Roberts, 2009) which provides further reliability when looking at personality development during childhood in an adult population.

Family Environment

Family environment is the social/emotional climate of family life and may be one of the environmental factors that contribute to personality development (Vento, 2022).

Though loosely researched, mother and father relationships have been found to influence different big five personality traits in their offspring. Bratko & Murusic (1997) examined the relationship between parent-offspring relationships and the big five personality domains as well as 30 other personality facet scales. In this study, father-offspring relationships were significant in influencing openness and conscientiousness, while mother-offspring relationships were only significant for emotional stability. Another study examined whether the child's temperament significantly predicted family environment or did family environment predict the child's temperament (Lundberg et al., 2000). They found that only family environment predicted temperament but Waheed et al., (2017) were able to find a significant correlation between parent and offspring personality traits and that family environment predicted personality traits in adolescents using a Pakistani sample (N = 80).

Personality Dysfunction

In a meta-analysis, 35 studies across 16 countries showed a strong association between parental rejection (opposite pole of parental care) and the children's negative personality disposition, or personality dysfunction, (Khaleque, 2017). As mentioned earlier, studies suggest that personality is carried over from childhood to adulthood so it makes sense that negative personality traits or personality dysfunction will have a continuity as well.

A comprehensive longitudinal study examined the association between parental style and risk for personality dysfunction in offspring during adulthood (Johnson et al., 2006). Families in their sample ($N = 593$) were assessed at four time points during the offspring's' life (childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood). Measures

included clinical diagnostic interviews of parents and offspring, parental behavior inventories, measures of childhood behavioral and emotional problems, and state records of parental supervision. Researchers found that negative parenting behavior was positively correlated with an elevated risk of personality disorder development in the offspring. Low parental affection was significantly associated with antisocial, borderline, dependent, narcissistic, paranoid, schizoid, and schizotypal personality PD symptoms which remained stable across the adulthood.

The Proposed Study

This study aims to examine the nuances of positive and negative family environments, parental bonding, and offspring personality to understand their individual and combined effects on life satisfaction.

One target the current study aims to focus on is the makeup of the parents' style of care, and how much that influenced positive and negative personality traits within their children. Previous studies have shown that certain big five traits favor maternal or paternal relationships, and some have negative associations to parenting styles (Bratko & Marusic, 1997; Nakao et. al., 2000). This study will attempt to replicate these findings to strengthen the research on this topic. I also hope to recreate the findings of Nakoa et al., (2000) of extraversion being negatively associated with parental overprotection. This study looks to examine the big five personality dimensions and personality dysfunction traits in relation to life satisfaction. I hope to find a clear trend in positive and negative associations between these traits, life satisfaction, and family environment. Mostly the goal of this study is to contribute to research on the topic of life satisfaction, personality development, and family environment (healthy vs. unhealthy). This type of research will

allow for medical and mental health professionals to craft the best tailored plan of action for their patients.

Hypotheses

1) Emotional Stability will be the strongest positively correlated big five trait (*openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability*) and Negative Affect will be the strongest negatively correlated personality dysfunction trait (*disinhibition, negative affect, psychoticism, antagonism, and detachment*) to life satisfaction.
2) Personality dysfunction traits will show a stronger correlation to parental control than to parental caring.
3) Family environment will be a positive predictor for life satisfaction when controlling for the big five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism).

METHOD

Participants

There were 736 total participants (587 females, 149 males) in this sample. Participants were college undergraduates from St. John's University. The mean age was 19.2 (*SD* = 1.4), ranging from 17-28. 68% of the sample self-identified as non-white.

Procedure

Data was sourced from Dr. McDermut's laboratory via St. John's University. All participants received informed consent and those who chose to participate in the study were presented with multiple questionnaires on Qualtrics.com. The assessments included Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling et al., 2003), an abbreviated 10-item version of the Personality Inventory Dysfunction (PID-5-BF; Krueger et al., 2013), Parental Bonding Instrument - Brief Current (PBI-BC; Klimidis et al., 1992), Family Environment Adjective Scale (FEA; Vento, 2022), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). Participants completed several other questionnaires but those were not the focus of the current study and will not be reported on. Participants also reported their demographics (age, ethnicity, relationship status) and psychiatric history (whether they had been in psychotherapy for a psychological problem or had taken psychiatric medicine for a psychiatric problem). After completion of the survey, participants received institutional credit towards their matriculation process.

Assessment Instruments

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The ten-item personality inventory questionnaire developed by Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann (2003) was used to assess participants' personality on the Big Five (Five-Factor) dimensions. Participants were

shown a pair of personality traits and asked to rate them on a Likert-scale measure. The following instructions were provided: “Please write the number next to each statement to indicate to which extent you agree or disagree with the statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.”. Ranges were from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). Each Big Five personality trait (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, emotional stability) had 2 items each with 1 item being reverse scored.

Personality Inventory for DSM-5 - Brief From (PID-5-BF). Upon their assessment of the psychometric constructs of the 25-item personality inventory of DSM-5-Brief Form (Krueger et al., 2013) Falkowski, McDermut, and Walton (2016) identified the ten items with the highest corrected scale correlations from the PID-5-BF. These items were then extracted and used as our measure of personality dysfunction. The following instructions were provided: “Please read each item carefully and select the number that best describes how much you were bothered by that problem during the past week.: Response choices and quantitative scoring were as follows: “very false or often false” (0), “sometimes or somewhat false” (1), “sometimes or somewhat true” (2), and “very true or often true” (3). The Disinhibition subscale score was calculated from the combined total of items 1 and 2. The Negative Affect subscale score was calculated from the total of items 3 and 4. The Detachment subscale was calculated from the total of items 5 and 6. The Attachment subscale score was calculated from the total of items 7 and 8. The Psychoticism subscale score was calculated from the total of items 9 and 10. The possible range of each subscale was from 0 - 6. All subscales were then summed together to create “PID-5-BF Total Score”, with a maximum score of 30. A reliability analysis showed the overall PID-5-BF

total score had good reliability, Cronbach's α = .846. The subscale for disinhibition had satisfactory reliability, Cronbach's α = .763. The subscale for negative affect had satisfactory reliability, Cronbach's α = .767. The subscale for Detachment showed uncertain reliability, Cronbach's α = .659. The subscale for Antagonism had good reliability, Cronbach's α = .839. And the subscale for Psychoticism had satisfactory reliability, Cronbach's α = .798.

Parental Bonding Instrument - Brief Current (PBI-BC). The Parental Bonding Instrument is an 8-item questionnaire developed by Klimidis et al. (1992) and was used to assess participants' perceived behavior of their parents throughout their first 16 years of life. The instrument assesses mother and father separately, through two dimensions: care and control (overprotection). The following instructions were provided: "This is a list of various attitudes and behaviors of parents. As you remember your (mother/father) in your first 16 years, click the bubble that is the most accurate rating next to each question". Response choices and quantitative scoring were as follows: "very unlike" (0), "somewhat unlike" (1), "somewhat like" (2), and "very like" (3). Of the eight items, four loaded into the care subscale with two being reverse scored and the remaining four items loaded into the control subscale with two items being reversed scored. Participants' responses were summed, and they were given a "Care" and "Controlling" score for each parent. The PBI-BS has good validity and reliability (Lizardi et al., 2005). Reliability analyses yielded a Pearson's correlation coefficient of .88 for "care" and .74 for control. Internal consistency was high for total parent care (*a* = .83) maternal (*a* = .80) and paternal (*a* = .78) scales.

Family Environment Adjective Scale (FEA). The Family Environment Adjective Scale is a modified version of The Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (MAACL: Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965) developed by Vento (2022). The FEA is a 6-item questionnaire used to assess the affective tone of participants' family environment. Participants were asked: "How would you describe the family environment of the household you grew up in?" and were given 6 different adjective responses to choose from (angry, happy, safe, understanding, sad, and fearful), on a 4-point Likert scale from *very unlike* to *very like*. These items load into two subscales, positive (happy, safe, understanding) and negative (angry, sad, fearful) family environment. Each subscale has scores ranging from 3-12. Scores for these scales showed a significant positive correlation ($r = .82$, $p < .001$). Internal consistency was high for positive family environment ($a = .82$) and negative family environment ($a = .84$). These two subscales were then combined by subtracting the negative family environment score from the positive family environment score to create an index of global family environment.

Global Family Environment Score. Negative and Positive Family environment were correlated at r = .82, indicating that participants who rated their family environment more negatively also tended to rate their family environment more positively. Thus, we created variable that represents the difference between Positive and Negative family environment variables, which we called Global Family Environment (GFE). High GFE above zero indicate ratings that were more positive than negative, and GFE below zero indicates family environments that were more negative.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLS). The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a short 5-item questionnaire developed by Diener et al. (1985) and was used to measure participants'

cognitive assessment of their own life satisfaction. Participants were asked: “Please rate how much you agree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number”. The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale. Participants' scores were summed, into a “Life Satisfaction” score.

Data Analytical Plan

A correlational analysis was run and Pearson’s *r* correlational values were used to examine the associations between all assessment measures combined. A linear regression model was created, to examine the predictive relationships between predictor variables: big five personality traits, positive family environment, negative family environment, and global family environment and life satisfaction (the dependent variable). The normality of data distribution was confirmed by a Shapiro-Wilk test ($w = .99$, $p = .29$)

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

The relationships among family environment, big five personality traits, personality dysfunction traits, and life satisfaction were evaluated first with correlational analyses. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and the correlations among, sample demographics (gender and age) family environment, and life satisfaction. Gender was coded 1 = male, and 2 = female. Table 2 shows a comparison of correlations between life satisfaction, family environment, and the big five personality dimensions. Global family environment was significantly positively related to life satisfaction ($r = .47$, $p < .01$), parental care ($r = .66$, $p < .01$) extraversion ($r = 0.19$, $p < .01$), agreeableness ($r = .12$, $p < .01$), emotional stability ($r = .37$, $p < .01$), conscientiousness ($r = 0.19$, $p < .01$) and negatively correlated with parental control ($r = .41$, $p = < .01$). Life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated to parental care ($r = .49$, $p = < .01$), extraversion (r = .25 , $p = < .01$),, conscientiousness, ($r = .31$, $p = < .01$), emotional stability ($r = .44$, $p = < .01$). Table 3 shows a comparison of life satisfaction, family environment and personality dysfunction dimensions. Life satisfaction was negatively correlated to all personality dysfunction traits: antagonism. Global family environment was found to have a significant negative correlation to all 5 personality dysfunction dimensions: detachment ($r = -.17$, $p = < .01$), detachment ($r = -.37$, $p = < .01$), disinhibition ($r = -.32$, $p = < .01$), negative affect ($r = -.37$, $p = < .01$) and psychoticism ($r = -.37$, $p = < .01$). When the Big Five traits where combined into one variable, Global family environment was found to be significantly correlated ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). When the negative personality disposition was combined to one variable, global family environment was found to have a significant

negative correlation (r = -.42, p < .01), life satisfaction also was significantly negatively correlated (r = -46., p = < .01). Hypothesis 1 was supported; emotional stability was the strongest correlated big five trait to life satisfaction. Negative affect, detachment, and psychoticism were the strongest negatively correlated personality dysfunction traits.

Table 1: Entire Sample Demographic, Parental Environment and Life Satisfaction

Note. gender 1 = male, 2 = female. ** = p < .01

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender					
2. Age	.03				
3. Life Satisfaction	-.06	-.03			
4. Parental Care	-.17**	-.03**	.43**		
5. Parental Control	.11*	.00	-.33**	-.48**	
8. Global Family Environment	-.12**	-.06	.47**	.57**	-.41**

Table 2: Life Satisfaction, Family Environment and Big Five Personality Dimensions: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Life Satisfaction								
2. Global Family	.47**							
3. Parental Care	.49**	.66**						
4. Parental Control	-.34**	-.41**	-.48**					
4. Extraversion	.25**	-.02	.23**	-.18**				
5. Agreeableness	.18	.39	.14**	-.16**	-.05			
6. Conscientiousness	.31**	.01	.19**	-.17**	.15**	.19**		
7. Emotional Stability	.44**	-.01	.32**	-.25**	.14**	.22*	.28**	
8. Openness	.22	.06	.13**	-.14**	.31**	.27**	.3**	.18**

Note. gender 1 = male, 2 = female. ** = $p < .01$

Table 3: Entire Sample Demographic, Life Satisfaction, and Personality Dysfunction Dimensions: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
1. Life Satisfaction									
2. Global Family	.47*								
3. Parental Care	.49*	.66*							
4. Parental Control	-.34*	-.41*	-.48*						
5. Antagonism	-.17*	-.32*	-.22*	.14*	-.17*				
7. Detachment	-.37*	-.25*	-.38*	.26*	-.37*	.35*			
8. Disinhibition	-.32*	-.21*	-.28*	.20*	-.32*	.42*	.36*		
9. Negative Affect	-.37*	-.32*	-.27*	.23*	-.37*	.16*	.44*	.35*	
10. Psychoticism	-.37*	-.35*	-.33*	.25*	-.37*	.30*	.41*	.42*	.49*

Note. * = $p < .001$

Table 4: Mean Comparisons of Males and Females Across Assessment Measures

Assessment Measures	Gender					
	Male (N= 149*)		Female (N=587*)		Total (N=736*)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Global Family	1.33	1.22	1.05	1.28	2.38	2.5
Parental Care	12.36	2.64	11.64	2.94	11.71	2.92
Parental Control	8.47	2.1	8.9	2.5	8.83	2.41
Life Satisfaction	21.07	7.15	21.33	7.23	42.4	14.38
Openness	9.9	2.68	10.67	2.79	20.57	5.47
Conscientiousness	9.8	2.46	10.55	2.39	20.35	4.85
Extraversion	7.3	2.64	7.82	2.61	9.91	5.25
Agreeableness	9.35	2.23	10.3	2.13	19.65	4.36
Emotional Stability	9.11	2.31	7.82	2.45	16.93	4.76
Big Five Total	9.1	1.5	9.43	1.5	9.35	1.55
Antagonism	3.13	1.89	2.72	1.87	5.85	7.74
Detachment	3.86	2.07	4	2.17	7.86	4.24
Disinhibition	3.6	1.87	3.07	1.87	6.67	3.74
Negative Affect	4.5	2.1	5.42	2.21	9.92	4.31
Psychoticism	4.01	2.08	4.43	2.16	8.44	4.24
Personality Dysfunction	3.76	1.25	3.9	1.17	3.91	1.19
Total	111.47	41.64	115.57	38.2	208.6	76.85

Family Environment

Table 3 shows the bivariate correlations that were assessed to examine the association between personality traits, parental bonding, family environment and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction and global family environment were significantly positively correlated with mother and father caring and negatively correlated with mother and father over-protection. Within the sample, as the levels of mother and father care increased so did life satisfaction and the global family environment. To test hypothesis 2, the big five and personality dysfunction traits were aggregated together, respectively, to form a big five variable and a personality dysfunction variable. Those variables were then evaluated against parental bonding, family environment, and life satisfaction variables to assess their effect as seen in table 3. When looking at the overall strength of the correlation between the personality dysfunction variable on parental care and control, hypothesis 2 was not found to be supported. The negative correlation between personality dysfunction and parental care is stronger than its positive correlation to parental control.

Table 5: Bivariate Correlations of Parental Bonding, Family Environment, and Life Satisfaction on Big Five Traits, Personality Dysfunction Traits, Life Satisfaction, and Global Family Environment

	Parental Bonding		Family Environment	Life Satisfaction
BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS	Care	Control	Global	Overall
Extraversion	**0.23**	**-.18**	**.19**	**.25**
Agreeableness	**.14**	**-.16**	**.12**	.18
Emotional Stability	**.32**	**-.25**	**.19**	**.44**
Openness	**.13**	**-.14**	.37	.23
Conscientiousness	**.19**	**-.18**	**.04**	.31
Big Five Agg	**.35**	**-.31**	**.32**	.48
Negative Affect	**-.27**	**.23**	**-.32**	**-.32**
Detachment	**-.38**	**.26**	**-.25**	**-.37**
Antagonism	**-.21**	**.14**	**-.32**	**-.38**
Disinhibition	**-.28**	**.20**	**-.21**	**-.17**
Psychoticism	**-.32**	**.25**	**-.35**	**-.37**
Dysfunction Agg	**-.42**	**.31**	**-.42**	**-.46**
Life Satisfaction	**-.43**	**-.33**	**.47**	
Global Family E	**.66**	**-.41**		

Note. Global Family = (Positive - Negative Family Environment). Agg = aggregate.
Correlation Coefficients in bold P = < .01

Predictors of Life Satisfaction

To test hypothesis 3, a linear regression model was utilized to investigate the relationship between family environment and life satisfaction while controlling for the big five personality traits. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normality of data distribution and test indicated normal distribution standards (t = 0.997, $p >$ .05). Overall, the model accounts for 35.8% of the variance in life satisfaction (F (8, 727) = 50.63, $p <$ .001). Among the predictor variables, global family, (B = 1.43, t = 9.86, $p <$ .001) conscientiousness (B = .41, t = 69.76, $p <$ .001), emotional stability (B = .81, t = 114.51 $p <$ .001), and extraversion (B = 1.68, t = 1.67 $p <$ .001) were found

to be significant predictors of life satisfaction. The results suggest that global family environment, emotional stability, and extraversion significantly predict life satisfaction.

Figures 1 through 4 examine the role and trends of significantly correlated Big Five traits and family environments on life satisfaction.

Figure 1: Conscientiousness on Life Satisfaction

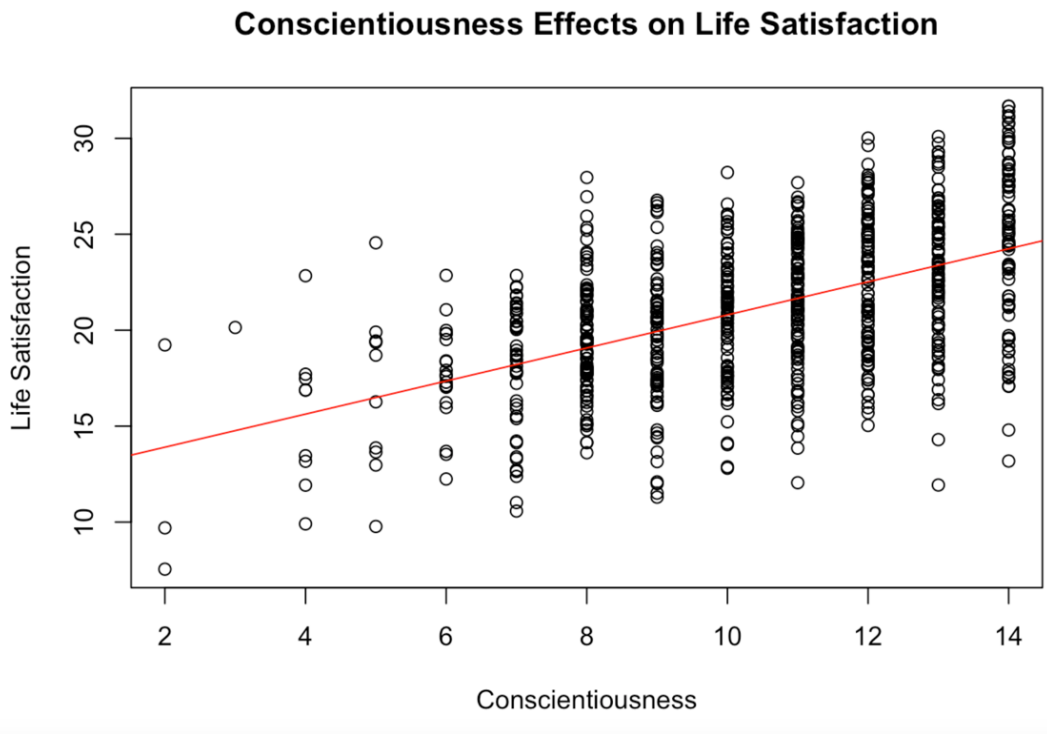


Figure 2: Extraversion on Life Satisfaction

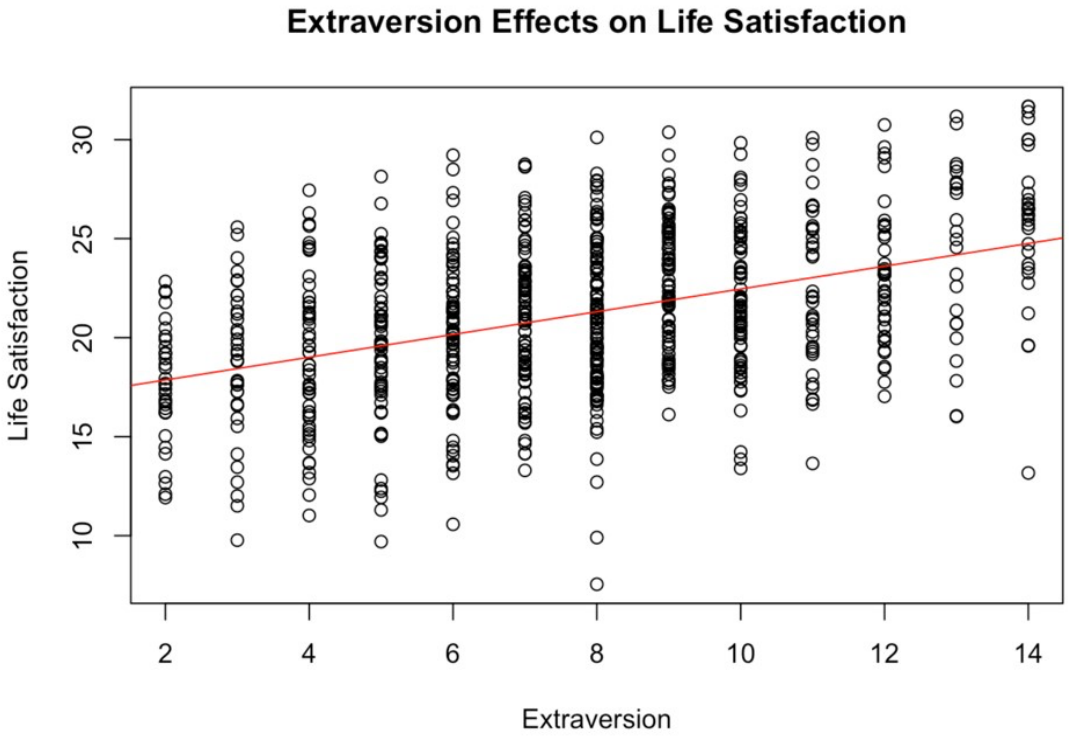


Figure 3: Emotional Stability Effects on Life Satisfaction

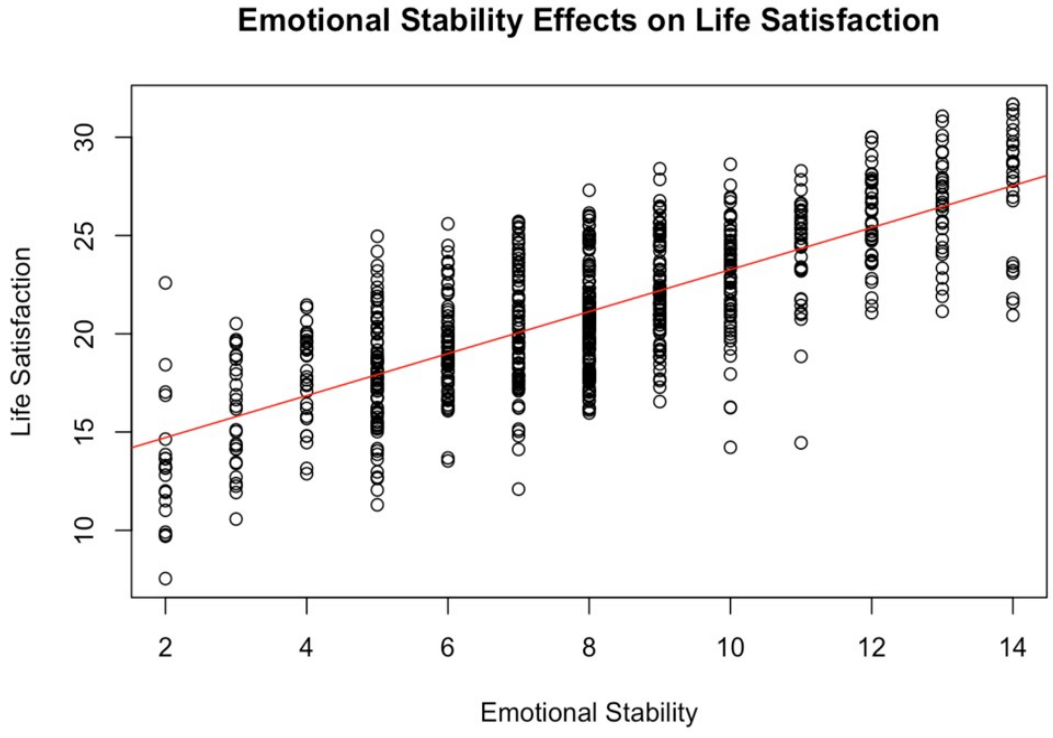
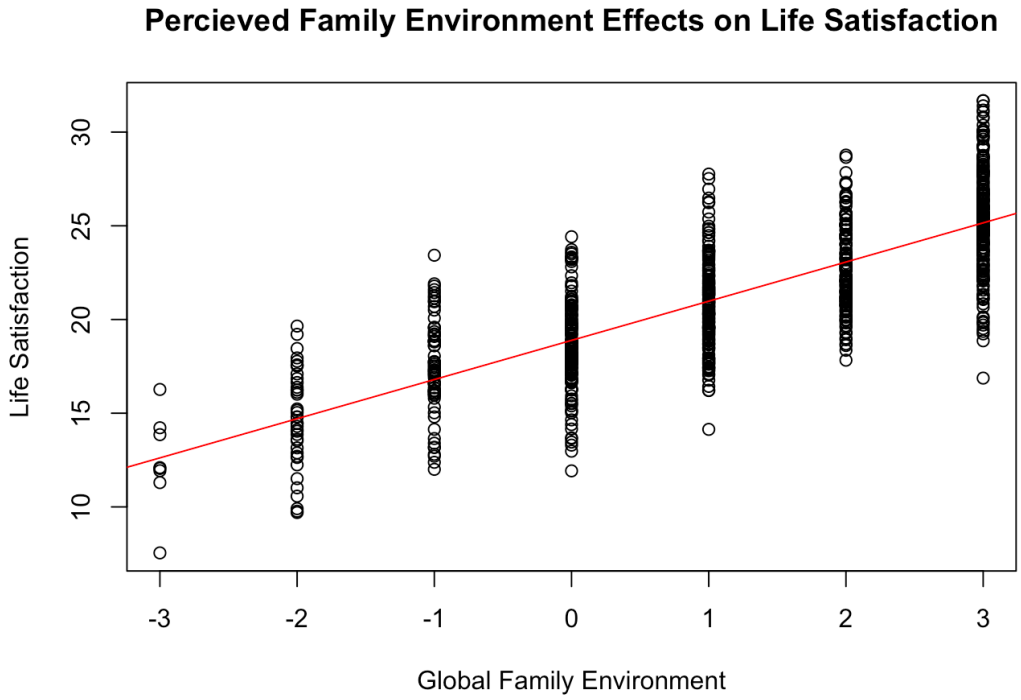


Figure 4: Perceived Family Environment Effects on Life Satisfaction



Note. Global Family Environment = Positive Family Environment – Negative Family Environment

Hypothesis 3 was supported. When controlling for the big five personality traits (openness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, and conscientiousness) global family environment was significantly correlated to life satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to examine how family environment, personality, and life satisfaction develop and influence each other. Our hypotheses were (1) Emotional stability will be the strongest positively correlated big five trait and negative affect will be the strongest negatively correlated personality dysfunction trait to life satisfaction, (2) personality dysfunction traits will show a stronger correlation to parental control than parental care, and (3) family environment will be a positive predictor for life satisfaction when controlling for the big five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). Hypotheses 1 and 3 were supported and hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Previous research has shown that parents' behavior towards their children affects the offspring's personality traits, particularly, positive parental interactions are associated with higher reported levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (Bratko & Marusic, 1997; Eisenberg et al., 2014, Moran et al., 2018). The results of hypothesis 1 in this study further support those claims as were able to replicate those exact findings. We then advanced these findings by comparing those traits to perceived life satisfaction which was found to have a significant positive correlation. These findings also support relatively new research in the field showing the link between personality expression and life satisfaction (Specht et al., 2012; Murakoshi et al., 2020).

When testing hypothesis 2, I found it surprising that personality dysfunction showed a stronger correlation to parental care than parental dysfunction. I assumed that negative parental interactions would have a stronger influence on personality dysfunction than positive parental interactions, but the results suggest otherwise. When studying

personality and family environment variables, the big five is almost always exclusively looked at (Bratko & Marusic, 1997; Murakoshi et al., 2020) so it felt necessary to introduce a new dimension of personality to the study. What we found suggest that positive parental interactions leave a lasting effect that works harder at mediating personality dysfunction development than negative parental interactions do at fostering the development.

When evaluating the global family environment variable and hypothesis 3, we were able to find that family environment is a significant predictor for life satisfaction even when controlling for big-five character trait expression. The implications of these findings suggest that family environment is crucial to one's overall outlook on life even in the absence of personality expression. We seek to add to further add to existing literature on family and life satisfaction to aid medical professionals in diagnoses and formulation of patient profiles.

Limitations

The data collected in this study was limited by the specifics of our sample. While the data agrees with most of the previous research, the validity of our conclusions are limited because the sample was comprised completely of college undergraduates. A particularly unique stage of life, it is hard to make generalizations about the population using only college students. In future a study using various samples with a wider age range should be employed.

Another limitation of the study is that we only had access to the perceived parental bonding of the offspring. I anticipate perceived vs observed parental variables could add

another dimension of possibilities for analyses and examinations, perhaps leading to a comparison of perceived vs observed personality in the offspring as well.

Lastly, our method of data collection may have been a limitation of this study. Lunderberg et al., (2000) found that self-report response measures may be influenced by the temperamental characteristics of the respondent, particularly when reporting on family environment and personality variables. I propose that future researchers strongly consider using interview measures and a longitudinal study design addition to self-report test to minimize possible confounding effects from unexpected variables.

Closing Remarks

The current study showed that family environment, parental bonding, big five personality traits, and personality dysfunction traits have a significant relationship to life satisfaction. Results indicate that parents play a crucial role in the development of personality which is significantly linked to life satisfaction. Negative family experiences (environment and overprotection) and positive family experiences were also found to have a significant relationship to the expression of personality dysfunction traits. However, big five personality traits, on average, have a stronger positive relation to family environment possibly mediating the effect between the negative traits though that was not fully examined in this study but should be in future research. Life satisfaction is unique in the sense that many different variables are constantly affecting one's evaluation of their life. This study found that family environment, big five, and personality dysfunction dimensions have a strong influence on each other and life satisfaction. Professionals seeking to understand the life dynamics of a client should be keen on evaluating these variables among the others that research on the topic suggest.

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