

The Mediating Role of Social Connectivity in the Effect of Positive Personality and Alexithymia on Life Satisfaction: Analysis Based on Structural Equation Model

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Abstract : Background: Different levels of life satisfaction are associated with some individual differences. Understanding the mechanism between them will help to enhance an individual's well-being. On the one hand, traditional personality such as extraversion has been considered as the most stable and effective factor in predicting life satisfaction to the author's best knowledge. On the other, individual emotional difference, such as alexithymia (difficulties identifying and describing one's own feelings), is also closely related to life satisfaction. With the development of positive psychology, positive personalities such as virtues attract wide attention. And according to the broaden-and-build theory, social connectivity may mediate between emotion and life satisfaction. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the mediating role of social connectivity in the effect of positive personality and alexithymia on life satisfaction. Method: This study was conducted with 318 healthy Chinese college students whose age range from 18 to 30. Positive personality (including interpersonal, vitality, and cautiousness) was measured by the Chinese version of Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS). Alexithymia was measured by the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS), and life satisfaction was measured by Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). And social connectivity was measured by six items which have been used in previous studies. Each scale showed high reliability and validity. The mediating model was examined in Mplus 7.2 within a structural equation modeling (SEM) framework. Findings: The model fitted well and results revealed that both positive personality (95% confidence interval of indirect effect was [0.023, 0.097]) and alexithymia (95% confidence interval of indirect effect was [-0.270, -0.089]) predicted life satisfaction level significantly through social connectivity. Also, only positive personality significantly and directly predicted life satisfaction compared to alexithymia (95% confidence interval of direct effect was [0.109, 0.260]). Conclusion: Alexithymia predicts life satisfaction only through social connectivity, which emphasizes the importance of social bonding in enhancing the well-being of Chinese college students with alexithymia. And the positive personality can predict life satisfaction directly or through social connectivity, which provides implications for enhancing the well-being of Chinese college students by cultivating their virtue and positive psychological quality.

Keywords : alexithymia, life satisfaction, positive personality, social connectivity

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