PERSONALITY AS A MODERATING VARIABLE BETWEEN LOSS OF RELATIONSHIP AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Dissertation

by

AMANDA ARTELL SMITH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Major Subject: Counseling Psychology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Michael Duffy
Committee Members, Daniel Brossart
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ABSTRACT

Personality as a Moderating Variable Between Loss of Relationship and Subjective Well-Being in College Students.

(August, 2010)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Michael Duffy

This study examined the role of personality variables in the relationship between subjective well-being and loss of relationships through death or parental divorce. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of extraversion, neuroticism, and locus of control as moderating variables between loss of relationship and subjective well-being in college students. Given the prevalence of loss through either death or parental divorce in college students and potential long-term effects on subjective well-being, the current study attempted to further knowledge in this area. Thus, this study aimed to better understand how life events are moderated by personality in influencing an individual's subjective well-being.

This study predicted that individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship would have a lower subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship. This hypothesis was not supported by the data which found that

individuals who experienced a loss of relationship did not report lower levels of subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship.

Additionally, it was expected that individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism and who had an internal locus of control would have a lower subjective well-being. Again, these hypotheses were not supported, and the results indicated that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism also reported higher levels of positive affect and neuroticism was positively correlated with life satisfaction. Furthermore, individuals who reported higher levels of extraversion did not report lower levels of negative affect or life satisfaction.

Finally, this study hypothesized that a loss of relationship through death would result in lower levels of subjective well-being. However, the results of this study indicated that individuals with a loss of relationship through death did not report lower levels of subjective well-being when compared to individuals without a loss of relationship through death. The results of this study further the literature on loss of relationship through death and parental divorce and on subjective well-being. This study provides support for the subjective well-being research and provides contrasting findings in regards to personality variables. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also addressed.

DEDICATION

I would like to thank my parents, Robert and Linda, for the endless love, support, and encouragement they have given me throughout my life and throughout my journey in education. Without you, I would not be where I am today. From first grade to my Ph.D., you were always there, cheering me on. Your belief in me never wavered and you were always excited to see me succeed. Thank you for teaching me how to go after my dreams and believe in myself. You are the best parents and best friends I could have ever asked for, and I am grateful to you every day.

I would also like to thank my partner, Zack, for his love, support, and encouragement throughout my life and throughout my graduate career. You motivated me on a daily basis and never doubted my ability to reach my goals. You helped me to stay focused on the end result and helped me to laugh when that end result seemed so far away. From high school to my Ph.D., thank you for calling out endless amounts of note cards, calming me down when I was stressed out, and reminding me to have fun along the way. You are my best friend and my love, and I thank you for putting up with the long hours, late nights, and everything in between.

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I would like to thank Michael Duffy, my committee chair, for helping me develop and implement this research project. Your support and feedback were imperative in helping me to choose a research project that I was truly interested and invested in. Thank you for helping to calm me down when I was feeling anxious and for allowing me to really feel like this research project was my own.

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Finally, I would like to thank Martin for his assistance in the analyses and interpretation of my study's data. I am grateful for your statistical insight and teaching which was so important to my completing this project!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While many college students have experienced some type of loss either before or during the college experience, researchers have stated that loss in this population is under examined and under researched (Floerchinger, 1991). Two prominent types of loss that many college students have experienced are loss through death and loss through parental divorce. These losses have been hypothesized to have numerous negative influences on an individual including an increased risk for academic, emotional, and social problems, as well as lower levels of subjective well-being and higher levels of depression (Amato, 1999; Balk, 1996; Mack, 2001; Robinson & Marwit, 2006; Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006; Short, 2002).

The experience of loss through death is prevalent among college students. Within the past 12 months, 22-30% of college students have experienced the death of a family member or friend while within the past 24 months, the prevalence increases to 35-48% (Balk, 2001). Frazier et al. (2009) assessed the prevalence of traumatic events among college students both over the student's lifetime and within the previous two months. The researchers found that "the most common event reported at both time points was the unexpected death of a close friend or family member, which was reported by almost half of the sample at baseline" (p. 456). Although the number of students who have

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experienced loss through death is significant, researchers maintain that loss and grief in college is a hidden reality and that grieving college students are a hidden population (Balk, 1997; LaGrand, 1985).

Loss through parental divorce is also common among today's college students. During the 1960s, almost 90% of American children were raised with parents who were married (Buldoc, Caron, & Logue, 2007). Today, roughly half of marriages end in divorce which means that over one million children each year experience parental divorce (Buldoc et al., 2007). The majority of college students today have experienced loss through parental divorce with only 40% of college students having parents who are not divorced (Nielsen, 1999).

An individual's personality is thought to play a large role in how he responds to different situations, including situations of loss through divorce or death. Researchers have hypothesized that personality variables influence an individual's grieving positively or negatively (Meuser & Marwit, 2000). Two personality variables often researched within the loss literature are neuroticism and extraversion. Neuroticism is considered to be a less adaptive personality trait while extraversion is broadly considered to be a more adaptive personality trait (Robinson & Marwit, 2006). Another personality variable often researched within the literature on loss is that of locus of control. Locus of control is also considered to be either more adaptive (internal locus of control) or less adaptive (external locus of control) in various situations, including in situations of loss (Rubinstein, 2004; Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999; Stroebe et al., 1988; Fogas et al., 1992; Wiehe, 1985).

The current study explores how the loss of relationship through either death or divorce is related to an individual's subjective well-being and what role an individual's personality characteristics play in the relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to further explore the impact of loss of relationship through either death or divorce on subjective well-being. This study will explore what role the personality variables of extraversion, neuroticism, and locus of control have in the relationship between loss of relationship and subjective well-being. Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as an individual's evaluation, both cognitively and affectively, of her life (Diener, 2000). Neuroticism has been consistently correlated with negative affect while extraversion has been consistently correlated with positive affect (Diener, 2000). Because SWB measures overall life satisfaction as well as both positive and negative affect, it appears to be an appropriate measure to utilize in this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Loss of Relationship

The population of college students is unique in the sense that many developmental transitions are occurring. Balk (2001) maintains that establishing independent lives, forming intimate, long-term relationships, and developing an identity that is stable and focused are all developmental transitions and challenges that college students encounter. These developmental tasks can become even more challenging when an adolescent is also faced with the loss of a significant relationship. Understanding and attempting to cope with the relationship loss can be a difficult challenge for adolescents who are already going through a developmental transition. Loss of significant relationships through either death or parental divorce are two significant types of loss that college students frequently encounter.

As previously noted, loss of relationship through death is a prevalent experience for many college students. Balk (2001) found that 22-30% of college students have experienced the death of a family member or friend within the past year, while 35-48% of college students have experienced a loss of relationship through death within the past two years. In addition to loss through death, college students can face various other types of losses which can result in a grief response. While death is often considered the most traumatic loss and life changing event for an individual, LaGrand (1985) maintains that other loss and grief experiences can be just as intense and traumatic as the death of a loved one. Among the other types of losses that LaGrand has identified in college

students, parental divorce has been reported as an intense loss experience for college students. This study examined loss of relationship through death and through parental divorce.

Death. The loss of relationship through death is considered to be one of the most traumatic and difficult losses that an individual can encounter in her lifetime. Coping with death and grief is not generally considered to be a life transition that is encountered during adolescence (Balk, 1996). However, LaGrand (1985) found that one in four students reported the death of a loved one as the most recent major loss he or she has experienced, and Balk (1997) found that students reported his or her experience of grief to be more difficult and longer lasting than he or she anticipated.

Loss of relationship through death is often researched by looking at the relationship of the individual to the deceased such as the loss of a parent or sibling (Balk, 1991; Barnes & Prosen, 1985; Lawrence, Jeglic, Matthews, & Pepper, 2006; Lutzke, Ayers, Sandler, & Barr, 1997; Wolchik, Tein, Sandler, & Ayers, 2006). Lutzke and colleagues (1997) state that the death of a parent is one of the most stressful and life-altering events that can occur during childhood or adolescence. However, researchers maintain that other types of loss, including that of a sibling or a friend, are also prevalent during adolescence and can be extremely devastating as well as have a lasting impact on children and adolescents (Balk, 1991). Experiencing the death of a peer during adolescence has been estimated to effect anywhere from 36% to 87% of individuals (Oltjenbruns, 1996).

Given that a variety of relationships lost through death have been shown to have negative effects on children and adolescents that potentially last even into adulthood, this study did not limit the type of relationship lost through death. Individuals were asked if they had a loss and to report the relationship type lost through death (i.e., parent, sibling, grandparent, friend, etc.).

Divorce. Numerous authors discuss the relationship between parental divorce in childhood and resulting psychological distress in adolescence and adulthood (Amato, 1999; Amato & Keith, 1991; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998; Rodgers, Power, & Hope, 1997; Short, 2002; Storksen, Roysamb, Holmen, & Tambs, 2006; Storksen, Roysamb, Moum, & Tambs, 2005). Additionally, several authors discuss the relationship between parental divorce and resulting lower levels of life satisfaction and well-being in the adolescents and adults of divorced parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Mack, 2001; Storksen et al., 2006; Storksen et al., 2005).

Amato and Keith (1991) found that parental divorce is associated with several negative outcomes including decreased psychological, socioeconomic and family well-being along with higher levels of depression and lower life satisfaction in the children of divorced parents. Storksen et al. (2006) also found that even eight years after parental divorce, lower feelings of well-being were reported by adolescents. Additionally, they reported that one of the strongest effects of parental divorce found in the study were problems in academic performance. Considering that adolescents and adults whose parents divorced have been shown to have lower levels of life satisfaction and well-being as well as other negative outcomes such as academic problems, gathering

additional information on the effects of parental divorce on the population of college students seemed to be a relevant research question for this study.

Conversely, some researchers have found that college students who experienced parental divorce as a child did not report greater adjustment problems than college students whose parents were still married (McIntyre, Heron, McIntyre, Burton, & Engler, 2003; Grant, Smith, Sinclair, & Salts, 1993; Nelson, Hughes, Handal, Katz, & Searight, 1993; Weiner, Harlow, Adams, & Grebstein, 1995). Considering these mixed findings on the psychological and academic adjustment of individuals who have experienced parental divorce, it appears relevant to gathering further data on this population in order to better understand the influence of parental divorce on late adolescent and adult psychological adjustment and well-being.

Personality

Personality traits are considered to be patterns that are fundamental, enduring, and essentially resistant to change (Robinson & Marwit, 2006). Given the permanent and stable nature of personality traits, researchers have theorized that personality influences an individual's reactions to life events, including loss. However, limited research has been conducted on the role that personality variables play in the relationship between loss through death or loss through parental divorce and the resulting psychological outcomes. Fox (2001) looked at the impact of parental divorce on an individual's developing personality and found that the divorce itself does not appear to directly influence personality or the development of personality. However, he did not study the

role that an individual's personality characteristics play in how the individual reacts and subsequently adjusts to parental divorce.

Throughout the literature on loss of relationship through death and through parental divorce, the personality variables of neuroticism, extraversion, and locus of control appear to be some of the most frequently studied and hypothesized to influence an individual's reaction and adjustment to a loss (Robinson & Marwit, 2006; Middleton, Franzp, Raphael, Burnett, & Martinek, 1997; Stroebe, Stroebe, and Domittner, 1988; Meuser and Marwit, 2000; Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999; Rubinstein, 2004; Fogas, Wolchik, Braver, Freedom, & Bay, 1992; Wiehe, 1985). Therefore, this study will measure neuroticism, extraversion, and locus of control and explore personality as a moderating variable between loss of relationship and subjective well-being.

Neuroticism. Neuroticism has often been studied in the personality and bereavement risk factor literature and is generally accepted in personality assessment as a fundamental dimension (Robinson & Marwit, 2006). Neuroticism has been defined as "a proneness to experience unpleasant and disturbing emotions" (Wijngaards-de Meij et al., 2007, p. 499). "Dispositional tendencies toward anxiety, depression, guilt, low self-esteem, tension, irrationality, shyness, moodiness, and emotionality" characterize the personality trait of neuroticism (Robinson & Marwit, 2006, p. 678). Considered a less adaptive personality trait, researchers have theorized that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism may be more prone to developing psychological disorders (Cramer, 1991).

Previous research has exhibited a clear relationship between neuroticism and heightened bereavement distress (Robinson & Marwit, 2006). Another study revealed that among parents, spouses, and adult children who had experienced a loss of relationship through death, neuroticism was related to the core symptoms of bereavement distress (Middleton et al., 1997). Similarly, in a study of widowed adults, Stroebe et al. (1988) found that high levels of neuroticism were associated with high levels of grief related distress. Given these research findings on the relationship between neuroticism and psychological distress, it appears that further exploration of the role of neuroticism among college age students who have experienced loss would help to increase and support the current literature.

Extraversion. Extraversion is also generally accepted as a fundamental dimension of personality that researchers theorize influences grief intensity. Extraversion "consists of the tendency to be sociable, lively, active, assertive, sensation-seeking, carefree, dominant, and venturesome" (Robinson & Marwit, 2006, p. 679). Meuser and Marwit (2000) studied extraversion as a potential buffer against grief, but unlike neuroticism, it was not proven to be significant in determining grief intensity. While extraversion has not been shown to buffer against grief, research is limited on the influence of extraversion on resulting psychological outcomes from loss through death or parental divorce. One study found that extraverted individuals were more likely to seek help and support from others sooner than introverted individuals (Amirkhan, Risinger, & Swickert, 1995). Given that extraverts have been shown to be more likely to seek help and support from others, it appears that further exploration of the role of

extraversion within individuals who have experienced loss is warranted, especially among adolescents and college students where there has been limited identified research.

Locus of Control. Locus of control is a personality variable that is defined as "the extent to which a person conceives events occurring as contingent upon their own responsibility or those of others including luck or fate" (Wiehe, 1985, p. 19). Locus of control is often conceptualized as either being internal or external. Internal locus of control "reflects a belief that events are contingent on one's behavior; an external locus of control reflects a belief that events are due to factors outside the individual, such as the efforts of others, the nature of the task, luck, or fate" (Fogas et al., 1992, p. 590).

The locus of control concept was developed by Rotter from social learning theory (Rotter, 1975, 1989). Levenson (1974) expanded on the concept of locus of control by dividing external locus of control into two different types: chance and powerful others. The concept of chance differentiates individuals who believe that the world is unordered while the concept of powerful others differentiates individuals who believe that the world is an ordered place but that in control are powerful others (Levenson, 1974).

Locus of control has been researched within both loss of relationship through death and through parental divorce. Research has shown that an individual's belief about how controllable and predictable the world is can be changed by a traumatic loss (Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999). Further, Rubinstein (2004) found that the locus of control of bereaved parents was significantly more external than a non-bereaved control group. Rubinstein theorized that the bereaved group could have potentially been more internally

controlled before the loss but that the loss resulted in a more external locus of control orientation. Additionally, Stroebe and colleagues (1988) found that individuals with low internal locus of control were associated with higher levels of grief related distress.

Additionally, Fogas and colleagues (1992) found that locus of control mediated the relationship between divorce-related events which were negative and children's reported adjustment problems. The authors theorized that children who experienced loss through parental divorce might reevaluate the amount of control he or she has over the world after the divorce which might result in a more externally focused locus of control. Similarly, Wiehe (1985) found that children who experienced parental divorce had a locus of control orientation that was more external when compared to children whose parents were not divorced. Wiehe stated that as the child perceives the divorce as outside his or her control, the child may then begin to perceive other events in life as outside of her or his control.

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being (SWB) has been defined as referring to "people's multidimensional evaluations of their lives, including cognitive judgments of life satisfaction as well as affective evaluations of moods and emotions" (Eid & Diener, 2004, p. 245). The affective evaluation of an individual's moods and emotions is separated into positive and negative affect. The cognitive and affective components are measured separately but are considered to be elements of the larger construct of SWB (Diener, 1984). The concept of SWB is considered to be important because, instead of

experts evaluating the quality of another's life, SWB allows the individual to evaluate the quality of her own life (Diener, Tamir, & Scollon, 2006).

Subjective well-being is considered to be unique for several reasons according to Diener (1984). First, the concept of SWB stems from an individual's experience and is subjective. More objective conditions such as an individual's health or financial status are not included in the formal evaluation of SWB. These more objective conditions are seen as potential influences on an individual's SWB but not as an inherent aspect of SWB. Second, the SWB assessment is not merely the absence of negative factors but instead includes positive measures. Lastly, assessments of SWB generally evaluate an individual's life globally rather than looking at a specific domain. While it is possible to evaluate a specific domain such as work or family, more emphasis is usually placed on an integrated view of an individual's judgment of his or her life.

Research on SWB has shown that it is relatively stable over time (Diener, Lucas & Scollon, 2006). When an individual experiences a positive or negative life event, it is theorized that he or she adapts to that event and returns to a level of adaptation or a set point that is potentially determined biologically (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). However, several life events have been shown to result in an individual taking longer to adapt or to even have a more permanent effect on an individual's SWB. Diener (2000) asserts that there are conditions to which individuals do not completely adapt or habituate. The death of a spouse has been shown to be a situation in which an individual can adapt, but it often takes a greater period of time than other life events (Lucas, 2007; Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). One study found that while men and women who lost a

spouse eventually returned to a level of life satisfaction that was very close to the one before the death, it took approximately seven years for the individuals to reach this level of adaptation (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003). Other studies have also shown that the death of a child or a spouse results in slower adaptation and can take approximately ten years for an individual's life satisfaction and SWB to increase (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999).

In addition to a loss of relationship through death, another body of research has found divorce to be a negative life event that can have permanent effects on life satisfaction and overall SWB (Lucas, 2007). Similarly, parental divorce has also been shown to have a lasting negative impact on the child's SWB (Diener, Tamir, & Scollon, 2006; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). Researchers maintain that while it has been found consistently that parental divorce results in a negative effect on the well-being of the individual even as an adult, the negative effect varies in strength and is influenced by moderating variables (Gohm, Oishi, Darlington, & Diener, 1998).

In the current study, both the cognitive component of life satisfaction and the affective components of positive and negative affect were considered to measure the variable of subjective well-being. The cognitive and affective components of SWB are discussed in further detail.

Life Satisfaction. Life satisfaction is considered to be the cognitive component of SWB (Eid & Diener, 2004; Diener, 2000). Life satisfaction has been defined as a "global evaluation by the person of his or her life" (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996, p. 616). Although life satisfaction is considered to be a global judgment of one's life, research

has shown that when judging one's overall satisfaction with life, it is unlikely that an individual considers each and every separate life domain completely and systematically (Diener, Lucas, Oishi, & Suh, 2002). Instead, individuals seem to simplify this process and judge the information that appears to be the most salient.

Diener and colleagues (2002) found that when making life satisfaction judgments, individuals who were happy were more likely to consider the most positive domains in his life while individuals who were unhappy were more likely to consider the most negative domains in his life. While life satisfaction judgments are not likely to reflect every aspect of an individual's life, the cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction is considered to be a more stable trait than the affective evaluation and not entirely dependent on the individuals' moods and emotions. Whatever life domains an individual evaluates, she also makes a judgment of overall life satisfaction.

Positive and Negative Affect. Positive affect is considered to be one of the affective components of SWB. It is often defined simply as "experiencing many pleasant emotions and moods" (Diener, 2000, p. 34). Negative affect is the other affective component of SWB. Low levels of negative affect are defined as "experiencing few unpleasant emotions and moods" (Diener, 2000, p. 34). The affective evaluations of SWB are considered to be less stable traits than the cognitive component of SWB. In order to more accurately assess an individual's level of positive affect, a time frame is often used in the assessment (Eid & Diener, 2004). The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) which is used to assess both positive and negative affect in an

individual utilizes different time frame options in order to more accurately evaluate an individual's affective component of SWB (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

Researchers have found that personality variables are strongly correlated with SWB and have theorized that personality variables have a more permanent impact on overall SWB than the effects of positive or negative life events (Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). The personality variable of extraversion has been shown to have a strong and positive relationship with positive affect and with overall SWB while the personality variable of neuroticism has been shown to have a strong relationship with negative affect (Diener, 2000; Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002; Pavot, Diener, & Fujita, 1990; Eid & Diener, 2004). Researchers have theorized that individuals high on extraversion are more susceptible to experiencing positive affect while individuals high on neuroticism are more susceptible to experiencing negative affect (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).

Despite the already established strong influence of personality on SWB, exploring the role of life events together with personality variables should provide even more information on the influence of both life events and personality variables on SWB. Given the previously mentioned research on life events such as the death of a loved one or a divorce, Diener (2000) asserts that while personality is obviously influential on an individual's long-term well-being, circumstances definitely have an influence that can not be explained solely by personality characteristics. Continuing research on the

influence of both personality variables and various life events is needed in order to gain a better understanding of a person's overall well-being.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the personality variables extraversion, neuroticism, and locus of control as moderating variables between loss of relationship and subjective well-being in college students. Given the prevalence of relationship loss through either death or divorce in college students and the potential long-term effects these types of relationship loss have on an individual's subjective well-being, the current study appears worthwhile and may further the knowledge in this area. This study aimed to gain a better understanding of how life events are moderated by personality variables in influencing an individual's overall level of SWB.

Research Hypotheses

The following conceptual model will be examined through individual hypotheses of the relationships among the variables.

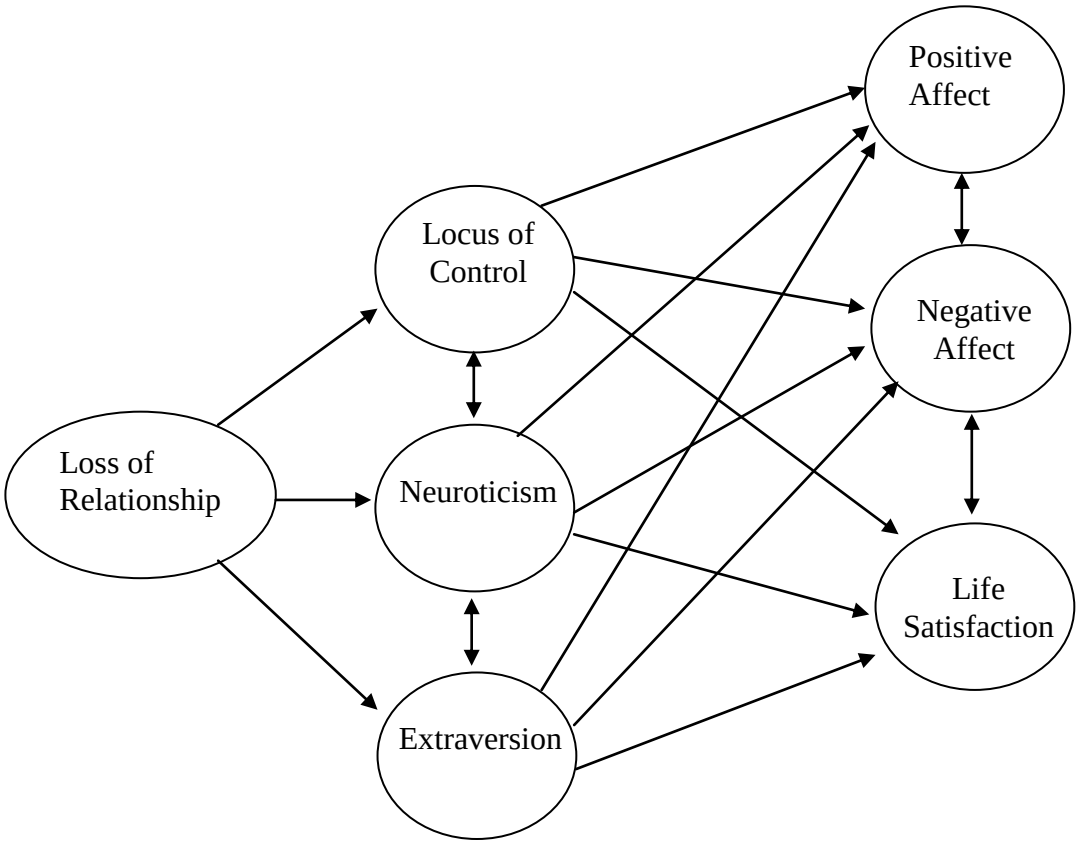


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report a Loss of Relationship but report lower levels of Neuroticism.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Extraversion will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report higher levels of Neuroticism but have not experienced a Loss of Relationship.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an Internal Locus of Control will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an External Locus of Control.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship through Death will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship through Death.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were 267 college students from the undergraduate student body at a large Southwestern university. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 (*M* = 20.79, *SD* = 2.31). The sample consisted of 166 females (62.2%) and 101 males (37.8%). Subjects' self-reported ethnicity was as follows: White/Caucasian (76.8%), Latino/Hispanic (10.5%), African-American (4.5%), Asian-American (4.5%) or Native American/American Indian (0.4%). The participants reported their marital status as: 93% single/never married; 3% married; and 4% partnered. The average GPA of the participants was 3.10 (SD = .48).

Participants were a convenience sample obtained from two undergraduate psychology courses at a large southwestern university. Permission was obtained from the professor of the two courses. As an incentive, participants were compensated with extra credit points in the course. The amount of extra credit was established by the professor. In one of the courses, measures were completed during the regular course time as an option to receive extra credit in the course. In the second course, the measures were completed outside of the regular course time as an option to receive extra credit in that course. No deception or coercion was used, resulting in minimal risks to participants in the study.

Measures

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was used to measure the personality variables of neuroticism and extraversion (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). The EPQ consists of 100 items with 23 items measuring extraversion and 24 items measuring neuroticism. The remaining 53 items compose the psychoticism and lie scales which were not utilized in this study.

Validation of the EPQ has occurred on both clinical and nonclinical samples and has been shown to have sufficient reliability. Alphas of .84 and .85 were shown for men and women for the neuroticism scale, while Alphas of .85 and .84 were shown for men and women for the extraversion scale (Robinson & Marwit, 2006). Test-retest reliability coefficients for one-month on a sample of 257 men and women were shown to be .86 for neuroticism and .89 for extraversion (Meuser & Marwit, 2000). The four scales of the EPQ were designed to be mutually independent which research has confirmed (Helmes, 1980). In the normative sample of 1,000, the scales of neuroticism and extraversion were negatively correlated at -.16 which supports the concept that neuroticism and extraversion are two distinct dimensions of personality (Meusuer & Marwit, 2000).

For this study, the 24 items of the neuroticism scale had an acceptable level of reliability coefficient (Cronbach α =.88). For the extraversion items, reliability analysis indicated that 8 of the 23 items had to be discarded from the succeeding analysis due to low inter-item correlations ($r<.25$). See Table 1 for the items that were discarded. The remaining items had a reliability coefficient of .84.

Table 1. Scale-Item Reliability Coefficients

Measures / Dimensions	Items Discarded	Cronbach α Coefficient
Neuroticism	None	.88
Extraversion	# 1, 6, 8, 14, 20, 13, 16, 17	.84
Locus of Control		
Internality	#4	.65
Power	#17	.72
Chance	#2, 7	.68
Well-being		
Life Satisfaction	None	.90
PANAS (Positive)	None	.87
PANAS (Negative)	None	.76
POMS Tension	None	.82
POMS Depression	None	.81
POMS Anger	None	.85
POMS Vigor	None	.87
POMS Fatigue	None	.88
POMS Confusion	# 4	.65

Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales. The I, P, and C scales were used to measure locus of control orientation (Levenson, 1974; Lefcourt, 1991). The extent to which an individual believes he or she has control over his or her own life is measured by Internality (I). The extent to which a person believes that other individuals control the events in his or her life is measured by Powerful Others (P). Finally, the extent that an individual believes that chance controls his or her experiences is measured by Chance (C) (Lefcourt, 1991). The I, P, and C scales are composed of eight items each measured with a Likert type format. These items are presented to the individual as one scale composed of 24 items (Levenson, 1974).

Lefcourt (1991) reported that the Kuder-Richardson reliabilities were .64 for I, .77 for P, and .78 for C. For one week, the test-restest reliability ranges between .60 and .79 and for seven weeks the test-retest reliability ranges between .66 and .73. The P and C subscales are correlated between .41 and .60. For the correlation of the P and C scales with I, the values range from -.25 to .19.

For this study, two of the items had to be discarded from the Internality scale (α=.65), one item was discarded from the Powerful Others scale (α=.72), and one item was discarded from the Chance scale (α=.68). These items were discarded due to low inter-item correlations ($r < .25$). Refer to Table 1 for the specific items that were discarded from the succeeding analyses.

Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale. The Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS) measures an individual's cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction with a temporal focus as a part of overall subjective well-being (Pavot, Diener, & Suh, 1998).

The TSWLS was developed from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) which contained only five items (Pavot, Diener, & Suh, 1998). The TSWLS consists of 15 items and has a temporal focus of past, present, and future. Each item was answered using a Likert type format with the Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The measure is scored by summing the scores on all 15 items to obtain a score ranging from 15 to 105 (Pavot, Diener, & Suh, 1998). However, for consistency purposes, mean scores were used for this study.

Pavot, Diener, and Suh (1998) report three different studies on the TSWLS. In the first study, the TSWLS was given to the same group on three different occasions and obtained mean scores of 63.61, 69.39, and 69.96 along with Alpha reliabilities of .92, .92, and .93. The test-retest reliability for occasion one and occasion two (4 weeks apart) was .83. The test-retest reliability for occasion two and occasion three (5 weeks apart) was .88, and the test-retest reliability for occasion one and occasion three (9 weeks apart) was .82. The TSWLS correlates with the original SWLS at a mean of .89.

The second study by Pavot, Diener, and Suh (1998) reports a mean score of 70.80, an Alpha reliability of .91 and a correlation of .74 between the TSWLS and the original SWLS. To look at the temporal aspect of the TSWLS, the scale was compared to the original Satisfaction with Life Scale which was correlated .72, .92, and .59 with past, present, and future time frames. This indicates that the original SWLS was most likely measuring present satisfaction levels. The final study by Pavot, Diener, and Suh (1998) reports mean scores of 72.89 and 74.28 along with an Alpha reliability of .93 at

occasion one and .91 at occasion two. The authors conclude that the TSWLS assesses global life satisfaction more completely by the addition of the temporal dimension.

For this study, the reliability coefficient of the 15 items was .90. None of the items were discarded due to low inter-item correlations.

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) measures an individual's affective self-evaluation as part of overall subjective well-being (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) are each measured with a 10-item scale which comprises the 20-item PANAS. The PANAS is composed of a list of 20 adjectives that describe different feelings and emotions and a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very slightly or not at all) to 5 (extremely). The researcher is given different time options from which to choose: present moment, today, past few days, week, past few weeks, past year, and general. Individuals taking the PANAS are asked to indicate to what extent she or he has felt each emotion within the specified time frame.

Watson and colleagues (1988) report that the Alpha reliabilities range from .86 to .90 for Positive Affect and from .84 to .87 for Negative Affect. The authors maintain that because of the high reliabilities, the different time options do not appear to affect the reliability. The NA and PA scales have low correlations which range from -.12 to -.23, with approximately 1 to 5% of the variance being shared between the two scales. The PANAS was given to approximately 101 undergraduate students for each of the seven time frames on two separate occasions to assess test-rest reliability and no significant differences were reported. Convergent validity for the PANAS was reported to range

from .89 to .95 with the discriminate correlations being low and ranging from -.02 to -.18 (Watson et al., 1988).

The authors maintain that the PANAS is an effective measure of PA and NA with strengths in high reliabilities and the brevity of the scale. The time options give a researcher the ability to look at more fluctuations in mood with the shorter-term time options (right now or today) or to look at more stable traits when using the longer-term time options (past year or general). The authors maintain that the measure is a reliable, valid, and efficient assessment of both positive and negative affect.

For this study, a shorter-term time option was given in that participants were asked to rate how they felt over the past week. The internal consistencies were .87 and .76 respectively for the positive item scales and the negative item scales of the PANAS.

Profile of Mood States. The Profile of Mood States (POMS) measures an individual's psychological distress or total mood disturbance (Curran, Andrykowski, & Studts, 1995; Glazer, 2009). The POMS Short Form (POMS-SF) consists of 30-items which assess six different mood states: Tension-Anxiety, Depression-Dejection, Anger-Hostility, Vigor-Activity, Fatigue-Inertia, and Confusion-Bewilderment (Curran et al., 1995; Glazer, 2009). Each of the 30-items is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from Not at All to Extremely (Berger & Motl, 2000). Additionally, a Total Mood Disturbance score is obtained by summing the Tension-Anxiety, Depression-Dejection, Anger-Hostility, Fatigue-Inertia, and Confusion-Bewilderment scores, which are the negative mood factors, and then subtracting the Vigor-Activity score, which is the positive mood factor (Glazer, 2009). The Total Mood Disturbance score then ranges

from -20 to 100, in which a higher score means that the individual had more negative moods with low vigor while a lower score means that the individual had fewer negative moods and high vigor (Glazer, 2009).

The POMS-SF was utilized in this study to use as a complement to the PANAS. While the POMS-SF assesses six dimensions of mood, the PANAS utilizes a two-dimensional approach in which positive affect and negative affect are conceptualized as single constructs (Lane and Terry, 2000). Lane and Terry (2000) maintain that negative moods should be considered independently and propose that depressed mood can influence how intense other mood dimensions are and how those other mood dimensions will interact. Given this argument, the current study will utilize both the POMS-SF and the PANAS in order to assess both positive and negative affect/mood.

Curran et al. (1995) researched comparisons among six groups consisting of five clinical samples (five different groups of individuals who were dealing with medical concerns) and one healthy adult group in order to compare the POMS-SF with the original POMS which consists of 65 items. The authors report that the internal consistency of the POMS-SF ranges from .76 to .95. The authors maintain that the POMS-SF is an acceptable if not superior alternative to the POMS.

For this study, one of the items had to be discarded from the Confusion subscale (α=.65). This item was discarded due to low inter-item correlations ($r < .25$). Refer to Table 1 for the specific item that was discarded from the succeeding analyses. No items had to be discarded from the other five subscales: Tension (α=.82), Depression (α=.81), Anger (α=.85), Vigor (α=.87), and Fatigue (α=.88).

Loss Questionnaire. A loss questionnaire developed by the author was included to obtain information on the participant's different types of loss. Individuals were asked if he or she had experienced a loss through death and what his or her relationship was to the individual who died. Age at the time of death, perceptions of his or her relationship with the person, and current feelings and attitudes towards various situations (i.e., funerals, death) were obtained. Additionally, individuals were asked if she or he had experienced a loss through parental divorce. Age at the time of the divorce, perceptions of his or her relationship with each parent, and current feelings and attitudes towards various situations (i.e., future marriage for self, current feelings toward divorce) were obtained.

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire developed by the author was included to obtain information of age, racial and ethnic identity, marital status, years of education, overall GPA, and gender for each participant.

Procedures

Participants were informed of the nature of the study and were read a consent statement (see Appendix A). Participants were informed that they would be compensated with extra credit in the course if they chose to participate in the study. Participants were informed that the assessments were confidential and were assured that the assessment materials would not include any names or other sources of information that could be used to identify them. The participants placed their name and student UIN only on a separate sign in sheet so that the professor could assign extra credit. This form

was separate from the assessment materials. Participants were also informed that their decision whether to participate in the study would not affect their standing in the course.

Upon explanation of the study, the participants completed the assessment instruments: the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), the Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales (I, P, C Scales), the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), the Profile of Mood States (POMS), the loss questionnaire, and the demographic questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The model and hypotheses of the study were analyzed through structural equation modeling. All data analyses were performed using SPSS or EQS 6.1. With a sample size of 267, the ratio of cases to observed variables is 13:1 and the ratio of cases to estimated parameters is 11:1. These ratios are considered adequate for structural equations modeling purposes.

Parcel scores were generated by randomly combining the individual item scores. Table 2 summarizes the parceling scheme of the manifest indicators that were subsequently used in the main SEM analysis.

Data Screening and SEM Assumptions

Prior to analysis, data was screened for both outliers and distributional normality. Univariate outliers were determined by generating the standardized values for each of the manifest scores. Using a cut-off of z=3.10, none of the values were considered outliers. The distributional normality of the variables was investigated by examining indices of skewness and kurtosis (see Table 3). The distributions of the different manifest scores were variably skewed. Of particular interest is the normalized value of Mardia's coefficient (10.12) which signifies a significant multivariate kurtosis. It was not necessary to transform the non-normally distributed variables because with the EQS 6.1 software, robust statistics are generated which have adjusted estimates to correct for the effects of violations to the normality assumption of SEM.

Table 2. Item Parcels in the Scales

Latent Variables	Manifest Indicators (mean scores)	Parcel Composition
Neuroticism	Parcel 1	Items 4, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23
	Parcel 2	Items 2, 3, 6, 8, 17, 19, 21, 24
	Parcel 3	Items 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 13
Extraversion	Parcel 1	Items 4, 9, 12, 17, 22, 23
	Parcel 2	Items 3, 10, 11, 15, 18
	Parcel 3	Items 2, 5, 7,19, 21
Locus of Control	Internality	All items (except # 2 & 4)
	Power	All items (except # 7)
	Chance	All items (except # 4)
Well-being (Life Satisfaction)	Parcel 1	Items 2, 5, 7, 8, 12
	Parcel 2	Items 1, 4, 6, 9, 15
	Parcel 3	Items 3, 10, 11, 13, 14
Well-being (Affect)	Positive Affect	All items
	Negative Affect	All items
	Tension	All items
	Depression	All items
	Anger	All items
	Vigor	All items
	Fatigue	All items (except #4)
	Confusion	

Inspection of the correlation matrix (see Table 4) of the variables reflected that there are no extremely high correlations (>.90) which signifies that multicollinearity is absent. The correlation matrix also suggests the factorability of R, or the factorability of the correlation matrix, showing that a substantial number of correlation coefficients are higher than .30. Factorability was further assessed by running a principal components analysis (PCA) of all the variables and their corresponding manifest indicators. PCAs were performed using a varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The PCA was performed to make sure that each of the manifest indicators distinctly loaded with their corresponding latent factors. The procedure identified the "internality" factor to be cross-loading with other factor components (see Table 5). As such, internality as a manifest indicator of locus of control was excluded from succeeding analyses. Positive affect and vigor were also not loading with the same component as all other expected indicators of well-being. As these factors were cross-loading, this implied that the items were problematic in the sense that they seemed to measure two or more variables at the same time. Including them in the analysis would lower the overall fit of the model, thus these two indicators were also excluded in the subsequent analyses.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Manifest Indicators

Latent Variables	Manifest Indicators	M	SD	Skewness	S.E.	Kurtosis	S.E
Neuroticism	Parcel 1	1.50	0.27	-0.02	0.15	-0.84	0.30
	Parcel 2	1.61	0.26	-0.41	0.15	-0.57	0.30
	Parcel 3	1.66	0.26	-0.63	0.15	-0.39	0.30
Extraversion	Parcel 1	1.32	0.26	0.52	0.15	-0.58	0.30
	Parcel 2	1.33	0.28	0.66	0.15	-0.46	0.30
	Parcel 3	1.36	0.28	0.36	0.15	-0.82	0.30
Locus of	Internality	4.60	0.59	-0.46	0.15	0.33	0.30
Control	Power	2.90	0.68	0.28	0.15	0.35	0.30
	Chance	2.69	0.67	0.42	0.15	0.48	0.30
Well-being	Parcel 1	5.20	1.04	-0.63	0.15	-0.11	0.30
(Life	Parcel 2	4.70	1.19	-0.24	0.15	-0.61	0.30
Satisfaction)							
	Parcel 3	5.09	1.09	-0.36	0.15	0.19	0.30
Well-being	Positive Affect	3.53	0.72	-0.42	0.15	-0.10	0.30
(Affect)	Negative Affect	1.99	0.57	0.79	0.15	0.22	0.30
	Tension	1.94	0.69	1.11	0.15	1.45	0.30
	Depression	1.57	0.64	1.53	0.15	2.28	0.30
	Anger	1.63	0.63	1.68	0.15	3.20	0.30
	Vigor	3.09	0.83	-0.10	0.15	-0.63	0.30
	Fatigue	2.32	0.84	0.84	0.15	0.49	0.30
	Confusion	1.93	0.48	1.06	0.15	2.37	0.30

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations of the Manifest Scores of the Latent Variables

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Neuroticism	1.59	0.24													
2	Extraversion	1.33	0.23	-.18*												
3	Internality	4.60	0.59	.21*	-.12											
4	Power	2.90	0.68	-.23*	.05	-.09										
5	Chance	2.68	0.67	-.26*	-.07	-.12*	.57*									
6	Satisfaction	73.77	15.43	.53*	-.27*	.21*	-.14*	-.18*								
7	Positive	3.53	0.72	.26*	-.31*	.06	-.10	-.05	.38*							
8	Negative	1.99	0.57	-.47*	.09	-.13*	.25*	.27*	-.32*	-.13*						
9	Tension	1.94	0.69	-.53*	.14*	-.13*	.24*	.25*	-.36*	-.09	.68*					
10	Depress	1.57	0.64	-.56*	.08	-.16*	.25*	.19*	-.44*	-.27*	.58*	.53*				
11	Anger	1.62	0.62	-.39*	.09	-.06	.18*	.08	-.19*	-.11	.44*	.38*	.46*			
12	Vigor	3.08	0.83	.25*	-.47*	.06	-.13*	-.10	.33*	.66*	-.21*	-.12*	-.23*	-.09		
13	Fatigue	2.32	0.84	-.45*	-.01	-.12*	.19*	.25*	-.33*	-.07	.37*	.46*	.51*	.36*	-.11	
14	Confusion	1.93	0.48	-.36*	-.09	-.10	.09	.19*	-.20*	.10	.44*	.51*	.49*	.40*	.14*	.49*

*p<.01

Table 5. Factor Loadings of the Manifest Indicators

	Component					
Manifest Indicators	1	2	3	4	5	6
Confusion	.823					.314
Negative	.749					
Anger	.728					
Tension	.724					
Depress	.649					
Fatigue	.600					
Satisfaction (parcel 3)		.960				
Satisfaction (parcel 2)		.871				
Satisfaction (parcel 1)		.827				
Extraversion (parcel 3)			.922			
Extraversion (parcel 1)			.879			
Extraversion (parcel 2)			.777			
Neuroticism (parcel 1)				.956		
Neuroticism (parcel 3)				.858		
Neuroticism (parcel 2)				.854		
Power					.892	
Chance					.882	
Positive Affect						.784
Vigor						.716
Internality				.318		-.489

Analysis of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship.

To test this hypothesis, the respondents were segregated into four categories of loss of relationship. The first group are those who indicated experiencing a loss of relationship through death and through parental divorce (n=56); the second group are those who experienced a loss of relationship through death but not through parental divorce (n=187); the third group are those who indicated that they had not experienced a loss of relationship through death but they had experienced a loss of relationship through parental divorce (n=5); finally, the fourth group are those who did not experience a loss of relationship through death or parental divorce (n=19). It can be noted that the sample sizes of the third and fourth groups are extremely small compared to the groups one and two. Only 19 individuals out of the 267 participants had not experienced any loss of relationship.

The mean scores of the subjective well-being indicators were compared across the four groups. Results from the analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that the four groups do not significantly differ from each other in terms of scores in the various indicators of subjective well-being (see Table 6). Therefore, these findings do not provide support for Hypothesis 1.

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of Subjective Well-Being Indicators

Subjective Well-Being Indicators	Groups*	*M*	*SD*
Negative Affect	1	2.04	.53
	2	1.96	.58
	3	2.42	.54
	4	2.00	.53
Tension	1	1.99	.57
	2	1.97	.63
	3	1.93	.72
	4	2.20	1.02
Depress	1	1.94	.59
	2	1.94	.69
	3	1.62	.66
	4	1.54	.62
Anger	1	1.48	.46
	2	1.78	.80
	3	1.57	.64
	4	1.60	.61
Fatigue	1	1.61	.59
	2	1.56	.33
	3	1.93	1.00
	4	1.63	.63
Confused	1	3.11	.92
	2	3.10	.81

Table 6. continued

Subjective Well-Being Indicators	Groups*	*M*	*SD*
	3	3.44	.93
	4	2.82	.77
Satisfaction	1	3.09	.83
	2	2.45	.83
	3	2.25	.82
	4	2.72	.87

*Group 1 = those who indicated experiencing loss of a loved one and at the same time having divorced parents (n=56); Group 2 = those who experienced loss of a loved one but not a divorce of parents (n=187); Group 3 = those who indicated that they did not experience loss of a loved one but they have divorced parents (n=5); Group 4 = those who did not experience both loss of a loved one and divorce of parents (n=19).

Table 7. Summary of ANOVA

Subjective Well-Being Indicators	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	*p*
Negative Affect	Between	1.24	3	.41	1.29	.28
	Within	83.27	261	.32		
	Total	84.51	264			
Tension	Between	.39	3	.13	.26	.85
	Within	127.83	263	.49		
	Total	128.22	266			
Depress	Between	1.22	3	.41	.99	.34
	Within	107.87	263	.41		
	Total	109.09	266			
Anger	Between	1.83	3	.61	1.56	.20
	Within	103.12	263	.39		
	Total	104.96	266			
Fatigue	Between	3.63	3	1.21	1.73	.16
	Within	184.08	263	.70		
	Total	187.70	266			
Confused	Between	.31	3	.10	.45	.72
	Within	61.11	263	.23		
	Total	61.43	266			
Satisfaction	Between	1278.73	3	426.24	1.81	.14
	Within	61782.66	263	234.91		
	Total	63061.39	266			

Hypothesis 2: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report a Loss of Relationship but report lower levels of Neuroticism.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Extraversion will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested through structural equation modeling. In particular, a hypothesized model was tested reflecting the framework of the study and the specific hypotheses. The hypothesized model is shown in Figure 2.

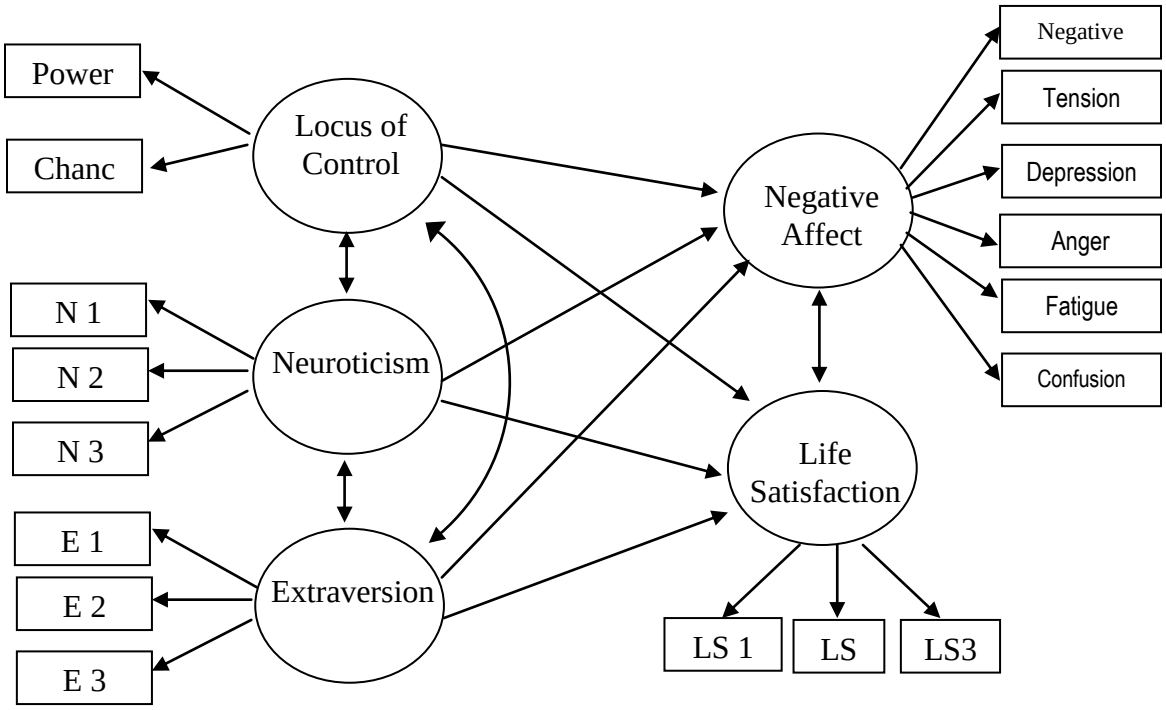


Figure 2. Hypothesized Model

Parameter Estimation and Model Evaluation

The hypothesized model was assessed by performing SEM using EQS 6.1 with the observed covariance matrix as the input (see Figure 3). Parameters were estimated using a maximum-likelihood (ML) procedure and the robust statistics were also generated considering the non-normality of some of the distributions of the variables.

It has been recommended that researchers should report multiple fit indices in SEM (Hu & Bentler, 1995). For this study, a combination of absolute and incremental fit indices was used to evaluate the structural model. Table 8 (adopted from Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullan, 2008) summarizes the fit indices used and their acceptable thresholds.

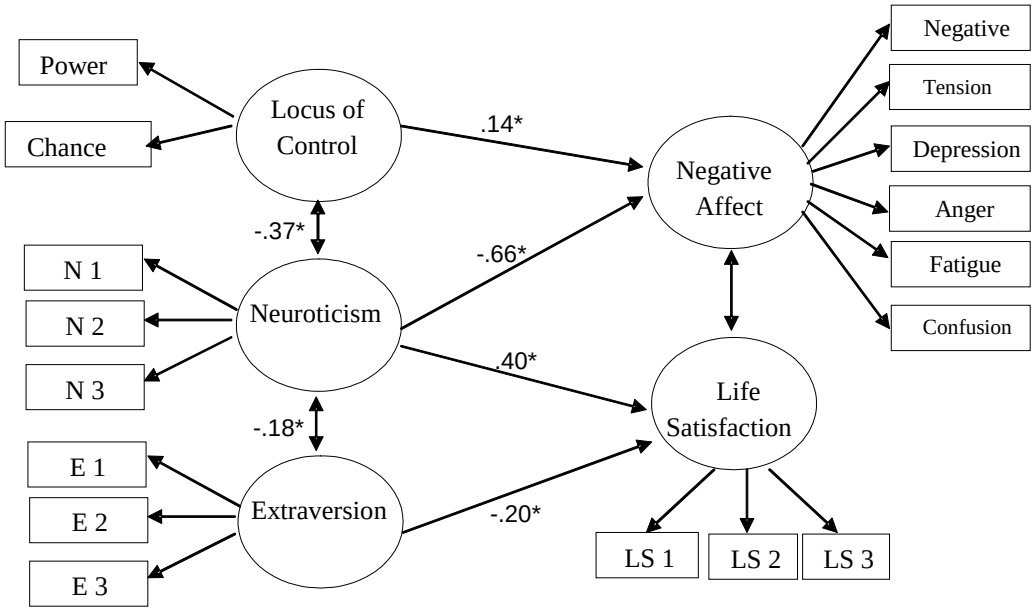
As indicated by the acceptable levels of the various fit indices, the hypothesized model had a good fit with the data. Except for the chi-square value, all other fit indices reflected adequate (NFI) and excellent levels of fit (NNFI, CFI, and RMSEA).

The model indicated that neuroticism is negatively correlated with locus of control and extraversion. The model also indicated that locus of control has a weak positive effect on negative affect while neuroticism has a strong negative effect on negative affect and a positive effect on life satisfaction. Additionally, extraversion was found to have a negative effect on life satisfaction. These findings do not support the hypothesized model or the research hypotheses.

Table 8

Fit Indices and Their Acceptable Thresholds

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold Levels
Absolute Fit Indices	
Chi-square χ^2	Low χ^2 relative to degrees of freedom with an insignificant p value (p>.05)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Values less than 0.08 is adequate, less than .o6 is good (Hu & Bentler, 1999),
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	At least .90 is adequate, values greater than 0.95 is excellent
Incremental Fit Indices	
Normed fit index (NFI)	At least .90 is adequate, values greater than 0.95 is excellent
Non-normed fit index (NNFI)	At least .90 is adequate, values greater than 0.95 is excellent (Hu & Bentler,
Comparative fit index (CFI)	At least .90 is adequate, values greater than 0.95 is excellent



χ^2 (109, N=248)=167.101, p<.001
NFI=.92, NNFI =.97
CFI=.97, RMSEA=.04, CI=.024, .055

Note: all paths are significant at p<.05

Figure 3. Standardized Parameter Estimates and Fit Indices

Hypothesis 2: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report a Loss of Relationship but report lower levels of Neuroticism.

The findings of the current study were actually the opposite of this hypothesis. The path coefficients indicate that higher neuroticism scores tend to predict negative affect (β=-.66). It appears that in this study, the higher neuroticism a person reported, the higher the tendency for the person to maintain positive affect. The same contrary finding is also observed in considering life satisfaction in that individuals reporting higher levels of neuroticism tended to report being more satisfied with life in general (β=.40).

Hypothesis 3: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Extraversion will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism.

The findings do not support the hypothesis. In the earlier section where the ANOVA was presented, the results indicated that the groups do not differ significantly from each other. In the SEM analysis, extraversion has a lower magnitude direct effect on negative affect and life satisfaction compared with the magnitude of neuroticism's direct effects.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report higher levels of Neuroticism but have not experienced a Loss of Relationship.

There was no support for Hypothesis 4 based on the ANOVA analysis presented earlier. Again, the findings indicated that the different groups do not differ in terms of

the various indicators of subjective well-being. It should be noted however that the non-significant differences may have been due to the extremely small sample size of respondents who had not experienced a loss of relationship.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an Internal Locus of Control will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an External Locus of Control.

Internality was not included as a manifest indicator of locus of control due to double loading issues (presented earlier). Therefore, in the SEM analysis, the latent variable locus of control includes only the chance and power manifest scores. Consequently, the findings did not test hypothesis 5.

If we consider the findings in the ANOVA, again it does not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship through Death will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship through Death.

In addressing this hypothesis, the same issue is faced as with the case of testing Hypothesis 4 due to the extremely small sample size of respondents who did not experience a loss of relationship through death. If we consider the results of the ANOVA, there was no support for the hypothesis. There were no indications of significant differences in subjective well-being scores between individuals who experienced loss of relationship through death compared with those who did not experience such a loss of relationship.

In summary, the findings of the study did not support the research hypotheses. The results did not indicate that respondents who have experienced loss of relationship either through death, parental divorce, or a combination of both losses differ in terms of overall subjective well-being. The participant's locus of control had no indications of affecting the levels of overall subjective well-being. In terms of the impact of the personality variables or neuroticism and extraversion, findings were contrary to expectations. For example, data indicated that participants who reported higher levels of neuroticism tended to be more satisfied with life in general compared to those who participants who reported higher levels of extraversion. However, it should be noted that across all the non-significant findings, a major constraint in the analysis was the extremely small sample size of respondents who had not experienced a loss of relationship. The majority of the sample reported experiencing a loss of relationship. Given the extremely small sample size of respondents who had not experienced a loss of relationship (n = 19), these respondents were excluded from the overall SEM model.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The current study had six primary hypotheses. The first hypothesis was to determine if individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship (through either death or parental divorce) would have a lower overall subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship. The second hypothesis was to explore the impact of neuroticism on subjective well-being by determining if individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship and who reported higher levels of neuroticism would have a lower overall subjective well-being than individuals who also reported experiencing a loss of relationship but reported lower levels of neuroticism. The third hypothesis was to explore the impact of extraversion on subjective well-being by determining if individuals who had a loss of relationship and who reported higher levels of extraversion would have higher levels of subjective well-being than individuals with a loss of relationship who reported higher levels of neuroticism.

The fourth hypothesis was to explore whether individuals who had a loss of relationship and who reported higher levels of neuroticism would have a lower overall subjective well-being than individuals who also had higher levels of neuroticism but had not experienced a loss of relationship. The fifth hypothesis was to determine if individuals who had a loss of relationship and who had an internal locus of control would have higher levels of subjective well-being than individuals with a loss of relationship who had an external locus of control. The sixth and final hypothesis was to look at specifically loss of relationship through death to determine if individuals who

had experienced a loss of relationship through death would have a lower overall subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through death. This chapter will include a discussion of and interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I stated that individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship.This study hypothesized that individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship through either death or through parental divorce would have an overall lower subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through either death or parental divorce. The results from this study did support the hypothesis. However, this could be due to the fact that the sample sizes were not balanced. In this study, there were 248 individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship through either death or parental divorce and only 19 individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through either death or parental divorce. The small sample size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship makes it difficult to compare the two samples in this study. The large number of respondents who had experienced a loss of relationship is reflective of previous research which discusses the prevalence of loss through either death or parental divorce within the college student population.

The respondents in this study were separated into four categories of loss of relationship. The first group was those who indicated a loss of relationship through death

and through parental divorce (n=56); the second was those who indicated a loss of relationship through death but not through parental divorce (n=187); the third was those who indicated loss of relationship through parental divorce but not through death (n=5); and the fourth was those who did not experience a loss of relationship through either death or parental divorce (n=19). The four groups were not found to differ significantly from each other. Again, given the small sample size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship, it is difficult to draw conclusions based on this sample.

However, while groups one and two did differ in sample size, they were the two largest groups. They were not found to differ from each other in terms of overall subjective well-being. The tentative conclusion could be drawn that individuals who experienced a loss of relationship through both death and parental divorce are not experiencing lower levels of subjective well-being than individuals who only experienced a loss of relationship through death. The impact of experiencing both a loss of relationship through death and through parental divorce does not appear to lower one's overall subjective well-being when compared to individuals who only experienced a loss of relationship through death. This supports research which found that college students who had experienced parental divorce as a child did not report greater adjustment problems when compared to college students whose parents were still married (McIntyre, Heron, McIntyre, Burton, & Engler, 2003; Grant, Smith, Sinclair, & Salts, 1993; Nelson, Hughes, Handal, Katz, & Searight, 1993; Weiner, Harlow, Adams, & Grebstein, 1995).

The results of this study support research which has found that subjective well-being is relatively stable over time and potentially determined biologically. It has been theorized that after a positive or negative life event, an individuals subjective-well being adapts and returns to his or her previous level of subjective well-being. The findings of this study support that theory. While loss of relationship through death or divorce has been theorized to have a more permanent effect on an individual's subjective well-being, this study did not measure subjective well-being before and after the loss of relationship. Additionally, the study did not look at specific types of loss of relationship through death such as the death of a spouse or child.

Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II stated that individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report a Loss of Relationship but report lower levels of Neuroticism. Previous research has indicated that neuroticism has an impact on an individual's subjective well-being. This study attempted to explore the impact that neuroticism had on individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship. It was hypothesized that individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship and who had higher levels of neuroticism would have lower subjective-well being than an individual who had experienced a loss of relationship but did not have higher levels of neuroticism. However, this hypothesis was not supported in this study, and the opposite was actually found. In the current study, individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism also reported a higher level of positive affect. Additionally, neuroticism was also positively

correlated with life satisfaction. In this study, individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism reported higher levels of overall subjective well-being compared to those who reported lower levels of neuroticism.

Previous literature found that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism reported higher levels of bereavement related distress (Stroebe, Stroebe, and Domittner, 1988; Middleton, Franzp, Raphael, Burnett, & Martinek, 1997; Robinson & Marwit, 2006). The results of the current study do not support the previous literature. However, the previous literature was looking specifically at bereavement related distress while the current study was looking at overall subjective well-being and did not specifically measure bereavement related distress. It may be the case that bereavement related distress is not comparable to overall levels of subjective well-being.

This study used the EPQ to measure the personality variable of neuroticism. The EPQ is based on Eysenck's theory of personality. Eysenck's theory of personality is "solidly grounded in the biological basis of personality" (Furnham, 2008, p. 203). Eysenck found that individuals with high levels of neuroticism become upset more easily and experienced greater levels of negative affect when faced with stressful situations that others might have considered mild (2008). This definition of neuroticism is reflected in the EPQ. Given this definition, it was expected to find that individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship would experience feeling more upset and would experience greater levels of negative affect. Again, this was not supported in the current study given that individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism also reported a higher level of positive affect and that neuroticism was also positively

correlated with life satisfaction. In this study, individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism reported higher levels of overall subjective well-being compared to those who reported lower levels of neuroticism. Again, these findings do not support the previous literature and should be interpreted with caution.

Hypothesis III

Hypothesis III stated that individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Extraversion will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism. Previous research has indicated that extraversion is a more adaptive personality trait than neuroticism and has an impact on an individual's subjective well-being. This study attempted to explore the impact that extraversion had on individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship. It was hypothesized that individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship and who had high levels of extraversion would have higher subjective-well being than an individual who had experienced a loss of relationship but had higher levels of neuroticism. However, this hypothesis was not supported in this study. In the current study, individuals who reported higher levels of extraversion did not report lower levels of negative affect or life satisfaction while individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism reported higher levels of positive affect and life satisfaction. Again, these results are contrary to what this current study expected to find.

Previous research has studied extraversion as a potential buffer against grief (Meuser and Marwit, 2000). However, extraversion was not found to be significant in

determining grief intensity. The findings of the current study support this previous research in that extraversion did not appear to be related to overall subjective well-being among individuals who had experienced a loss of relationship through either death or parental divorce.

Hypothesis IV

Hypothesis IV stated that individuals with a Loss of Relationship who report higher levels of Neuroticism will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who also report higher levels of Neuroticism but have not experienced a Loss of Relationship. This hypothesis attempted to explore the connection between neuroticism and loss of relationship and the impact of that relationship on subjective well-being. It was hypothesized that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism who had experienced a loss of relationship would report lower levels of subjective well-being than individuals who reported higher levels of neuroticism but had not experienced a loss of relationship. It was hypothesized that the combination of neuroticism and loss of relationship would result in lower levels of subjective well-being than high levels of neuroticism alone. However, this hypothesis was not supported in the current study in that the two groups did not differ in terms of overall subjective well-being. Again, these results should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size of individuals who had not experienced any loss of relationship.

Hypothesis V

Hypothesis V stated that individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an Internal Locus of Control will have higher levels of Subjective Well-Being than individuals with a Loss of Relationship who have an External Locus of Control. The fifth hypothesis was not tested in the current study due to double loading issues.

Hypothesis VI

Individuals who have experienced a Loss of Relationship through Death will have a lower overall Subjective Well-Being than individuals who have not experienced a Loss of Relationship through death. This hypothesis attempted to consider the loss of relationship specifically through death and hypothesized that a loss of relationship through death would result in lower levels of subjective well-being than individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through death. However, this hypothesis was not supported in the current study. Again, this is most likely due to the extremely small sample size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through death. The overwhelming majority of the sample had experienced a loss of relationship through death (n=243). In order to more accurately test the hypothesis, a larger sample size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship through death would be necessary.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the current study. The primary limitation is with regards to the sample composition, specifically regarding the number of individuals in the study who had not experienced a loss of relationship. The extremely small sample

size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship restricts the ability of the findings to be fully evaluated or generalized. The small sample size of individuals who had not experienced a loss of relationship may explain the difficulty the current study had in supporting some of the previous research literature and current hypotheses. Future studies would be better able to evaluate the proposed hypotheses by increasing the number of participants who had not experienced a loss of relationship. Additionally, the participants in the current study were all undergraduate students at a large Southwestern university. The current results may not be generalizable beyond a population of college students in a similar geographic location and of similar demographics and backgrounds.

Another limitation is that the study measured the variables of interest through participant self-reports of their personality variables and overall subjective well-being. The self-reported information may not be entirely representative of the individual's real world personality variables and subjective well-being and may reflect the participant's efforts to appear more socially desirable and to appear to be doing "better" than they really feel. Future studies would benefit from assessing individual's personality variables and overall subjective well-being before and after a loss of relationship.

A final limitation of the study is that loss was defined broadly by including both loss of relationship through death or through parental divorce. While both of these are types of losses that college students frequently encounter, both types of losses are different and encompass a different research base. Additionally, when considering both a loss of relationship through death or parental divorce, there were no timeline restrictions

in terms of how recent the losses had occurred. Future research would benefit from assessing loss of relationship through death and divorce separately as well as being more specific in terms of how recent the loss had occurred.

Suggestions for Future Research

As previously discussed regarding the limitations of the study, future research should include a larger number of participants overall, specifically a larger number of participants who have not experienced a loss of relationship through death. This would allow statistically significant differences to be detected and would allow the hypotheses to be fully explored.

Additionally, future studies should attempt to assess an individual's personality variables and overall subjective well-being before and after a loss of relationship. While this would be difficult to attain, it would allow for comparisons to be made within individual's who had experienced a loss of relationship to determine the impact the loss had on that individual's subjective well-being.

Future studies should also look at the impact of the different types of loss of relationship, death and parental divorce. While both of these are losses of relationship that many college students encounter, the implications and results of each loss are very different. By separating loss of relationship through death and parental divorce, more specific conclusions can be drawn about the impact of each of these types of losses. Additionally, when looking at loss of relationship through death, future studies could be more specific in looking at different types of relationships lost through death such as parent loss, sibling loss, partner loss, etc. As previously mentioned, also looking at a

more specific timeline in terms of the loss could be beneficial for gaining a better understanding of how long the impact of the loss affects an individual.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

The following statement was made to the students in the classes in which I administered my measures:

"My name is Amanda Smith, and I'm a doctoral student from the Counseling Psychology program here at A&M. I'm currently doing research for my dissertation and am here to ask you to complete the following questionnaires as part of my dissertation research. The questionnaires are completely anonymous. You will notice that there is no place to put your name, so please do not put your name on any of the forms. The questionnaires should take anywhere from 30 minutes to the entire class time. Please take your time filling out each of the questionnaires and please read each question carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know or to come talk to me after class. If for any reason you do not wish to participate in this research, you do not have to do so and choosing to not participate will not influence your standing in this class. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete my questionnaires, and again, if you have any questions, please let me know."

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