



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У НОВОМ САДУ
UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

TOP ACHIEVEMENTS 2021

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Published scientific paper - Positive Expectancies and Subjective Well-Being: A Prospective Study Among Undergraduates in Serbia

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The present longitudinal study had two main goals: (1) to investigate concurrent and prospective associations between positive expectancies and SWB; and (2) to examine whether the relationship between negative life events and SWB depends on positive expectations. Our main hypothesis was that both optimism and general self-efficacy will predict SWB, concurrently and longitudinally, as these two types of positive expectancies share common cognitive and motivational processes (e.g., both are goal-directed and future-oriented) and both have been shown to be strong predictors of well-being (e.g., Rand, 2018). We also expected the reciprocal link between positive expectancies and SWB, i.e., that higher well-being will be associated with higher levels of positive expectancies over time. In addition, we hypothesized that positive expectations would moderate the relationships between negative life events and SWB, such that the associations between negative life events and SWB would be weaker among individuals reporting higher levels of optimism and self-efficacy. A total of 367 undergraduate students from Serbia (Mage = 21.57 years) completed measures at three time points. The results of the path analysis showed that optimism was concurrently associated with all indicators of subjective well-being, whereas self-efficacy had consistent concurrent associations only with positive affect. Positive expectancies were generally weak prospective predictors of subjective well-being, with higher levels of optimism at Time 2 (6-month follow-up) predicting higher levels of life satisfaction at Time 3 (2-year follow-up), and higher levels of self-efficacy at Time 2 predicting a higher positive affect at Time 3. Some evidence of reverse causality was also found, with a higher positive affect at Time 1 and Time 2 predicting higher levels of both optimism and self-efficacy at later time points.



Positive expectancies did not moderate the relationship between negative life events and subjective well-being. Our results suggest that the findings of cross-sectional studies on the relationship between positive expectancies and subjective well-being cannot be generalized to longitudinal data and that the causal contribution of positive expectancies to subjective well-being might be overestimated.