

## THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNALIZING PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND WELL-BEING IN ADOLESCENTS

### ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a period of transition and maturation between childhood and adult life, in which physical, psychological and social changes occur. It's important to know what are the factors that influence in this development in order to avoid or, if that's the case, act on those adolescents who suffer some disorder. It is also very important to know what are the factors that influence in the satisfaction with life of young people, with the aim of being able to improve it or maintain it, since it is fundamental for a good personal functioning.

The objective of this research is to study the relationship that exists between the variables of personality and social support in the development of internalizing psychopathology (anxiety and depression) and satisfaction with the life of adolescents. For this, it has been used a sample of 624 students whose age is between 13 and 19 years old from two institutes of Castellón and for the collection of data the procedure that has been carried out is the administration of five questionnaires to each student: Sociodemographic data questionnaire, JS-NEO-A (five personality factors), SENA (internalizing symptomatology in adolescents), SLSS (subjective well-being) and EASP-S (perceived social support). Once analyzed the data empirically through the statistical program SPSS the results show that personality is a very important factor that influences in the development of internalizing psychopathology, while social support influences to a lesser extent, since it is determined by the personality characteristics of each person.

Therefore, it is relevant to know what factors influence in this problem, in addition to personality and social support, for designing prevention strategies and personalized treatment and more in order to improve physical and mental well-being of adolescents.

**Keywords:** anxiety, depression, personality, well-being, social support.

## EL PAPEL DE LA PERSONALIDAD Y EL APOYO SOCIAL EN EL DESARROLLO DE PSICOPATOLOGÍA INTERNALIZANTE Y BIENESTAR EN ADOLESCENTES

### RESUMEN

La adolescencia es un período de transición y maduración entre la niñez y la edad adulta, en el cuál tienen lugar cambios físicos, psicológicos y sociales. Es importante conocer cuáles son los factores que influyen en ese desarrollo para poder evitar o, si es el caso, actuar en aquellos adolescentes que sufran algún trastorno. También es de gran relevancia conocer cuáles son los factores que influyen en la satisfacción con la vida de los jóvenes, con el objetivo de poder mejorarla o mantenerla, ya que es fundamental para un buen funcionamiento personal.

El objetivo de esta investigación es estudiar la relación que existe entre las variables de personalidad y apoyo social en el desarrollo de psicopatología internalizante (ansiedad y depresión) y satisfacción con la vida de los adolescentes. Para ello, se ha utilizado una muestra de 624 estudiantes cuya edad oscila entre los 13 y los 19 años procedentes de dos institutos de Castellón y para la recogida de datos el procedimiento que se ha llevado a cabo es la administración de cinco cuestionarios a cada estudiante: cuestionario de datos sociodemográficos, JS-NEO-A (Cinco Factores de personalidad), SENA (síntomatología internalizante en adolescentes), SLSS (satisfacción con la vida) y EASP-S (apoyo social percibido). Una vez analizados los datos empíricamente mediante el programa estadístico SPSS los resultados muestran que la personalidad es un factor muy importante que influye en el desarrollo de la psicopatología internalizante, mientras que el apoyo social influye en menor medida, puesto que está determinado por las características de personalidad de cada persona.

Por tanto, es relevante conocer qué factores influyen en esta problemática, además de la personalidad y el apoyo social, para diseñar estrategias de prevención y tratamiento personalizadas con el objetivo de mejorar el bienestar tanto físico y mental de los adolescentes.

**Palabras clave:** ansiedad, depresión, personalidad, bienestar, apoyo social.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition and maturation between childhood and adult life, in which physical, psychological and social changes occur (Alsinet, Perez & Agullo, 2003; Stassen, 1997). Sometimes, these changes can be stressful and trigger negative psychological effects, among them symptoms of anxiety and depression (Barra, Cerna, Kramm & Veliz, 2006), and other symptoms and internalizing disorders (Achenbach, 1996). Adolescents who suffer these symptoms are characterized by high levels of emotional distress and an important interference in their social and academic functioning (Gren-Landell et al., 2009; Campo, González, Sánchez, Rodríguez, Dallos, & Díaz, 2005). Thus, to know better what are the factors that intervene in the development of symptoms and depression and anxiety disorders are especially relevant to develop more effective personalized prevention and intervention strategies.

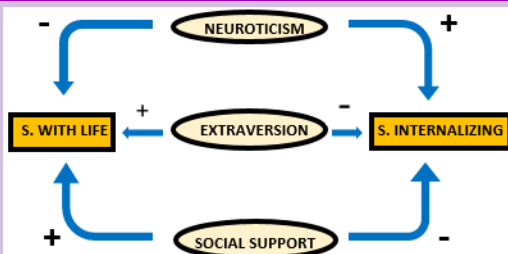
Personality is one of the most studied factors. The model most used at the moment to evaluate it is Costa and McCrae's model called "Big Five" of personality dimensions (1992, 1999), which proposes the dimensions of Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), openness to experience (O), Agreeableness (A) and Responsibility (R). In relation to internalizing symptoms such as depression and anxiety, the most relevant dimensions are the low emotional stability and, to a lesser extent, the introversion (Mervielde, De Clercq, De Fruyt, Van Leewen, 2005).

Another aspect that has been given a lot of attention is the social support networks (Barrón, 1992). Studies show a clear positive relationship between social support and well-being in children and adolescents (Pineda, 2010). In addition to being a protective factor for internalizing symptoms, social support favors subjective well-being and satisfaction with life, because it generates positive emotions, a sense of self-esteem and predictability in life and it works as a shock absorber of stress.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to study the relationship that exists between the variables of personality and social support in the development of internalizing psychopathology (anxiety and depression) and satisfaction with the life of adolescents

## HYPHOTESIS



## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The sample consisted of 624 students from Castellón who belong to the Boveral IES or Caminás IES. The age range is between 13 and 19 years (M = 15,02 and SD = 1,17). The questionnaires were administered in 2 sessions with prior informed consent to the parents or legal guardians.



N=311 N=313

### MEASURES

- **Sociodemographic data questionnaire** (age, sex, course).
- **JS-NEO-A** → Five personality factors (Ortet, et al., 2010).
- **SENA** → Internalizing symptomatology in adolescents (Fernández-Pinto, et al., 2015).
- **SLSS** → Subjective well-being (Huebner, 1991).
- **EASP-S** → Perceived social support (Landeta, & Calvete, 2002).

## RESULTS

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	TOTAL (N=624)		MEN (N=313)		WOMEN (N=311)		SIG.
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD	
Age	15.02	1.17	15.03	1.15	14.99	1.18	.632
Neuroticism	21.18	8.77	19.05	8.30	23.37	8.72	.000
Extraversion	32.41	7.66	31.42	7.46	33.40	7.74	.002
Openness	25.28	8.04	23.57	7.59	26.96	8.18	.000
Agreeableness	36.39	7.26	35.06	7.53	37.74	6.76	.000
Responsability	29.82	8.32	28.24	7.98	31.33	8.38	.000
Social Support	29.12	6.03	28.30	5.99	29.96	5.95	.001
Depression	9.85	9.38	8.07	8.10	11.90	10.31	.000
Anxiety	12.82	9.13	9.65	7.53	16.23	9.47	.000
S. with life	21.10	6.13	21.94	5.51	20.18	6.60	.000

### CORRELATIONS

	DEPRESSION	ANXIETY	S. WITH LIFE	SOCIAL SUPPORT
Neuroticism	.65***	.67***	-.43***	-.17***
Extraversion	-.20***	-.07	.23***	.44***
Openness	-.16***	.20***	-.01	-.06
Agreeableness	-.19***	-.02	.07	.24***
Responsability	-.19***	-.02	.27***	.28***
Social support	-.25***	-.10*	.37***	

### REGRESSIONS

	DEPRESSION		ANXIETY		S. WITH LIFE	
	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Age	.07***	.14**	.15***	.11*	.03**	-.09
Sex		.22***		.37***		.13**
Neuroticism	.39***	.61***	.37***	.67***	.23***	-.37***
Extraversion		-.07*		.02		.15***
Openness		.06		.05		.08
Agreeableness		.06		.14***		-.09*
Responsability		-.11**		.2		.22***
Social support	.01**	-.12	.00***	-.02	.07***	.30***

\* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* p < 0.001

## DISCUSSION

Present study shows the relevance of personality and social support on mental health. Specifically, our data indicated that personality is a very relevant factor in different aspects of people mental health, and shows a great influence in the development of internalizing psychopathology and satisfaction with life. On the other hand, social support alone has a relevant weight in the development of internalizing psychopathology, mainly depression, and satisfaction with life.

However, social support depends in part on the personality characteristics of young people, so when controlled by the personality, its weight decreases significantly. For example, social support presented an inverse correlation of .25 with depression, but when controlling by personality, it decreases to .12. This decrease, were less evident with satisfaction with life, suggesting that in this case social support is a key variable for happiness and mental well-being.

In short, taking into account the personality and social support of young people it's important to design prevention strategies and personalized treatment and more effective in order to improve their physical and mental well-being.

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