

Abstract

On top of the well established relationship between optimism and satisfaction, the present study attempted to examine whether flexibility would also play a role in predicting one's life satisfaction. Flexibility was conceptualized in terms of personality, cognitive, and behavioral variables, namely divergent thinking, explanatory flexibility, and coping flexibility. Two hundred Hong Kong college students completed a battery of questionnaire including personality measures, life satisfaction measures, and a set of self-designed scenarios assessing explanatory flexibility and coping flexibility. Results did not support the hypotheses, revealing that flexibility might not be a good predictor of one's general life satisfaction. Alternative explanations of the findings were discussed, including some methodological limitations and the problem in the operationalization of flexibility (variability or goodness-of-fit criteria). Future research may look into whether the predictive power of flexibility on life satisfaction will be stronger when considering some other constructs, like psychological resilience and coping self-efficacy.

Keywords: divergent thinking, explanatory flexibility, coping flexibility, life satisfaction.