

# **The Poor get poorer: Exploring a second-order moderation model of social cynicism, neuroticism, and loneliness on happiness with the factor score approach**

## **Abstract**

Exploring factors affecting happiness has been a central topic in psychology. While psychologists agreed that happiness is subject to a wide range of factors, how these factors interact with each other remain underexplored. Following the theory of how traits and emotions would affect subsequent well-being, as well as recent neuroimaging findings, the current study will examine how neuroticism and loneliness interact with social cynicism to affect one's subjective well-being. A regression model using the factor score approach was constructed to examine the three-way interaction. The second-order moderation model showed that social cynicism, neuroticism, and loneliness all exhibited direct negative effects on subjective well-being. Moreover, the negative impact on well-being was strengthened when social cynicism, neuroticism, and loneliness were all on high levels. The nature of how social cynicism, neuroticism, and loneliness affect happiness, as well as the benefits of using the factor score approach, were discussed.