

The Effects of Personality Traits on Coping with Stress and Alcohol Consumption

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It is speculated that daily alcohol consumption is a coping mechanism for stress for those with certain personality types. The current study is designed to replicate this finding.

Methods

Participants:

There were 20 working adults and college students (10 from Tennessee and 10 from Idaho). All were over the age of 21 and were not considered to be a recovering alcoholic.

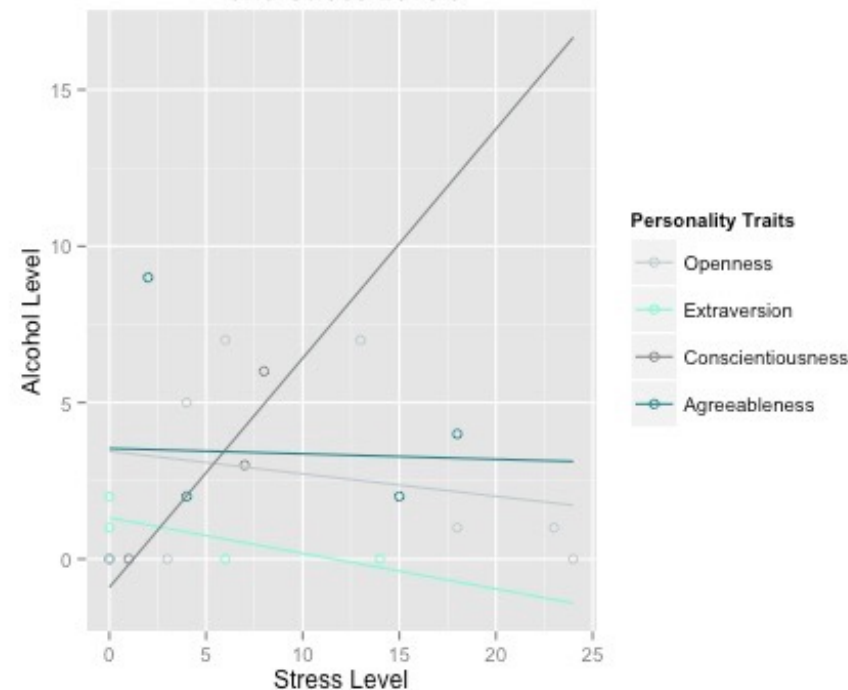
Materials/Procedure:

Participants completed the Big Five personality test, a 10 question survey about their drinking habits for the prior six months, a 21 question survey regarding stress levels and the Stroop test. Half of the participants completed the Stroop test at their own pace, while the other half completed it under 90 seconds in order to produce stress.

Design

All of the participants completed the surveys and questionnaires on paper, using a pencil. After the paper portion of the study was complete, the participants were administered the Stroop test. They were shown a total of 200 color words to read aloud. The first 100 color words written in the coordinating color (i.e. BROWN was written as "BROWN"). The second set of 100 color words were written in a different color than the word written (i.e. PURPLE was written as "PURPLE"). The errors were recored and labeled "Stroop Error".

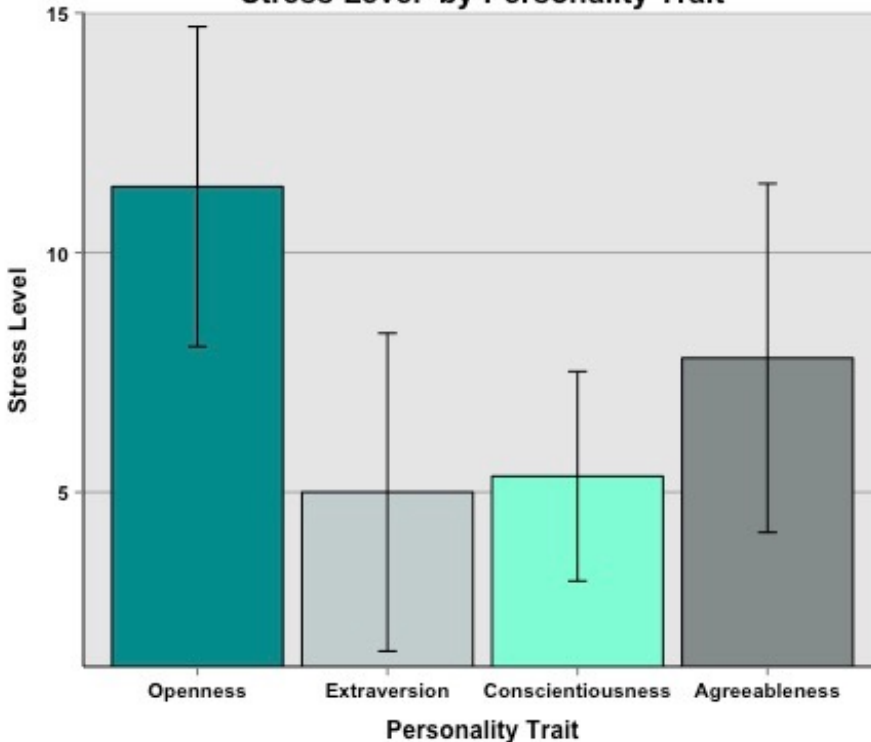
Alcohol Usage Predicted by Personality Traits and Stress Levels



Results

- Being under stress during the Big Five personality test is independent of Stroop errors, Chi-Square(2)=10.57, $p=0.103$.
- Stress Levels are not related to Personality Trait, $F(3,12) = 0.643$, $p = 0.602$, Alcohol Usage, $F(3,12) = 0.180$, $p = .0679$, or an interaction between stress and alcohol usage, $F(3,12) = 0.534$, $p = 0.668$
- Given, $R^2=0.1224$, $F(4,15)= 0.523$, $p= 0.7203$, alcohol usage cannot be predicted by personality traits or stress levels.

Stress Level by Personality Trait



Conclusion

- The findings indicate that personality traits do not determine alcohol usage or stress levels.
- Looking at the disbursement of alcohol usage and stress levels, when compared to personality traits, it looks as if there would be a relation. Those who are more agreeable had increased alcohol usage, while those who show openness have higher stress levels. However, that is not the case.
- Using regression analysis the hypothesis stating that alcohol is a coping mechanism for stress for certain personality types is rejected.

Alcohol Usage by Personality Trait

