



Regulatory foci and the big five

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INTRODUCTION

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) distinguishes between two modes of self-regulation: (1) **promotion regulatory focus** - concerned with ideals, advancement, aspiration, growth, and accomplishment, (2) **prevention regulatory focus** - concerned with oughts, protection, safety, and responsibility (Higgins, Spiegel, 2004). Promotion focus serves nurturance needs and involves orientation to presence or absence of positive outcomes, whereas prevention focus serves security needs and involves orientation to presence or absence of negative outcomes. In achieving their goals, promotion focused people prefer to use eagerness means and they are risky biased, in contrast, prevention focused people prefer to use vigilance means and are conservative biased. According to theory, regulatory focus can be analyzed both as a situationally induced orientation and as a relatively stable, individual-difference variable. The latter is assumed to develop as an effect of the quality of interactions with caretakers in childhood (Keller, 2008). Even if the theory is right there is still the possibility that some innate, stable personality variables may account for individual mode of self-regulation (see: Manian, Strauman, Denney, 1998). Little is known however about personality correlates of regulatory foci.

HYPOTHESES

The present study explores the relations between regulatory focus and classic individual difference variables, represented by FFM personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It is hypothesized that

1. Promotion focus is related to and can be predicted by extraversion (E) and openness to experience (O).
2. Prevention focus is related to and can be predicted by neuroticism (N) and conscientiousness (C).

PARTICIPANTS

The sample comprised 86 participants, of whom 52 (60%) were women, with an average age of 21,8 (SD=1,37).

MEASURES

- NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae) - Polish adaptation by Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak & Śliwińska (1998)

Regulatory foci were measured by 2 independent inventories:

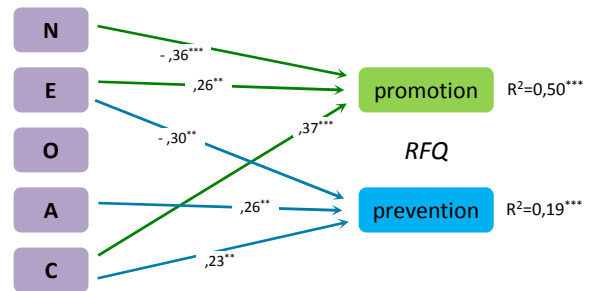
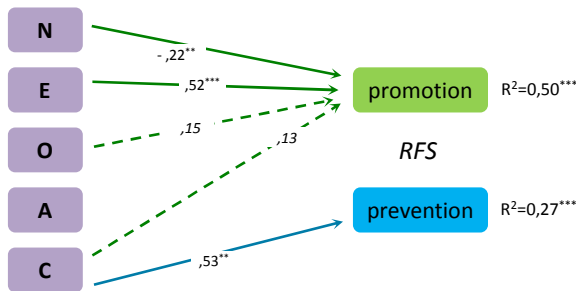
1. Regulatory Focus Scale (RFS) (Fellner, Holler, Kirchlner & Schabmann, 2007) - Polish adaptation by Bąk & Łąguna (in progress) with modification of scoring procedure: (1) promotion scale (items: 4, 6, 8) - $\alpha=0,68$; (2) prevention scale (items: 2, 3, 7) - $\alpha=0,63$
2. Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ) (Higgins et. al, 2001) - Polish adaptation by Drogosz with modification of scoring procedure (W. Bąk): (1) promotion scale (items: 1, 7, 9, 10) - $\alpha=0,60$; (2) prevention scale (items: 2, 4, 5, 6) - $\alpha=0,79$

CORRELATIONS among personality traits and regulatory foci

	prom_RFS	prev_RFS	prom_RFQ	prev_RFQ
promotion_RFS	-			
prevention_RFS	,329**	-		
promotion_RFQ	,415***	,253*	-	
prevention_RFQ	-,164	,216*	,041	-
Neuroticism	-,424***	-,238*	-,576***	,024
Extraversion	,699***	,076	,414***	-,272*
Openness	,371***	-,057	,232*	-,262*
Agreeableness	-,063	,209	-,038	,296**
Conscientiousness	,317**	,539***	,538**	,236*

*** p<0,001; ** p<0,01; * p<0,05

REGRESSION ANALYSES



*** p<0,001; ** p<0,01; * p<0,05

SUMMARY

- Regulatory foci are significantly related to dimensions of five factor model.
- Pattern of relations is close to what was postulated, though not all predictions are confirmed.
- Dispositional **promotion** focus is best predicted by **extraversion** and **neuroticism**, while the role of openness and conscientiousness is unclear and needs further verification.
- Dispositional **prevention** focus is best predicted by **conscientiousness**.
- The relations between extraversion, agreeableness and prevention focus are probably caused by specificity of RFQ prevention items - all of them refer to memories of social interactions with parents in childhood.
- Significant difference of pattern of results between RFS and RFQ raises the question about validity of these instruments. Do they measure the same constructs and which one is closer to Higgins' theory?

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