



BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACETS AS PREDICTORS OF WORK-LIFE INTERACTION, WORK ENGAGEMENT, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationships between the facets of the Big Five personality model and work-life balance, occupational well-being, and life satisfaction in a sample of professionally active Romanian adults. A total of 82 participants (48 women, 58.54%; 34 men, 41.46%; Mage = 40.1 years, SD = 10.99) completed an online battery comprising the Big Five Inventory-2 Short Form (BFI-2-S), the Survey Work-Home Interaction Nijmegen (SWING), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). Spearman correlations, multiple linear regression, and a simple mediation model (SEM, ML estimator) were employed. Results indicated that Conscientiousness facets — particularly Productivity — were the strongest positive correlates of work engagement, while Neuroticism facets were consistently associated with higher negative work-life interference and lower life satisfaction. The Anxiety facet of Neuroticism was the strongest individual predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = -0.339$, $p = .008$), alongside work engagement ($\beta = .345$, $p = .002$). The mediation analysis revealed that negative work-life interference (NWH) did not significantly mediate the relationship between Anxiety and life satisfaction (indirect effect: $\beta = -0.058$, $p = .120$, 95% CI [-0.163, 0.003]), indicating a predominantly direct pathway. These findings have implications for personality-sensitive workplace interventions aimed at promoting employee well-being.

Keywords: Big Five facets, work-life balance, work engagement, life satisfaction, mediation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB) represents one of the most pressing challenges faced by professionally active adults in contemporary society. The acceleration of work pace, digitalisation, the blurring of temporal and spatial boundaries between professional and domestic spaces, and the growing complexity of simultaneously assumed social roles have transformed WLB from an academic topic into a problem with direct implications for psychological health, interpersonal relationship quality, and overall individual well-being.

Despite a considerable body of research dedicated to this domain, one question remains relatively underexplored in the literature: to what extent do stable personality

characteristics — the Big Five traits — shape the subjective experience of work-life balance? While organizational factors (workload, schedule flexibility, managerial support) and demographic variables (gender, family status, presence of children) have received substantial research attention, stable intrapersonal factors — particularly personality traits — have been investigated less systematically in relation to the multiple dimensions of work-life interaction.

Research at the facet level of personality offers a more granular perspective than that provided by broad trait dimensions alone. The Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2; Soto & John, 2017) organises each of the five major personality dimensions into three lower-order facets, permitting more precise predictions about which specific personality characteristics are most strongly associated with work-life outcomes. For example, within Neuroticism, the Anxiety facet may differentially predict work-life interference compared to Depression or Emotional Volatility, while within Conscientiousness, Productiveness may show stronger associations with work engagement than Organization or Responsibility.

The present study aims to contribute to filling this gap by investigating the relationships between BFI-2-S personality facets and work-life interaction (SWING), occupational well-being (UWES), and global life satisfaction (SWLS), in a sample of professionally active Romanian adults. By simultaneously employing these three instruments, the study adopts an integrative perspective on well-being, capturing the way personality is reflected at distinct levels of individual experience. Additionally, a mediation model is tested to examine whether negative work-life interference mediates the relationship between Neuroticism-Anxiety and life satisfaction.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationships between the facets of the Big Five personality model (BFI-2-S) and indicators of work-life balance (SWING), occupational well-being (UWES), and global life satisfaction (SWLS), in a sample of professionally active Romanian adults.

Specific objectives:

O1. Identify associations between Neuroticism facets (Anxiety, Depression, Emotional Volatility) and negative work-life interference (NWH, NHW), work engagement (UWES), and life satisfaction (SWLS).

O2. Examine relationships between Extraversion facets (Sociability, Assertiveness, Energy) and positive work-life interaction dimensions (PWH, PHW), UWES, and SWLS.

O3. Investigate associations between Conscientiousness facets (Organization, Productiveness, Responsibility) and the criterion variables SWING, UWES, and SWLS.

O4. Explore relationships between Agreeableness facets (Compassion, Respectfulness, Trust) and the criterion variables.

O5. Explore relationships between Openness to Experience facets (Imagination, Curiosity, Aesthetic Sensitivity) and the criterion variables.

O6. Test whether negative work-life interference (NWH) mediates the relationship between Anxiety and life satisfaction (SWLS).

2.2. HYPOTHESES

H1. Neuroticism facets (Anxiety, Depression, Emotional Volatility) will be positively associated with negative work-life interference (NWH, NHW) and negatively associated with occupational well-being (UWES) and life satisfaction (SWLS).

H2. Extraversion facets (Sociability, Assertiveness, Energy) will be negatively associated with negative interference dimensions (NWH, NHW) and positively associated with positive interference dimensions (PWH, PHW), UWES, and SWLS.

H3. Conscientiousness facets (Organization, Productiveness, Responsibility) will be negatively associated with negative interference dimensions (NWH, NHW) and positively associated with UWES and SWLS.

H4. Agreeableness facets (Compassion, Respectfulness, Trust) will be positively associated with positive interference dimensions (PWH, PHW), UWES, and SWLS.

H5. Openness to Experience facets (Imagination, Curiosity, Aesthetic Sensitivity) will show positive associations with UWES and SWLS.

H6. Negative work-life interference (NWH) will mediate the relationship between Anxiety and life satisfaction (SWLS).

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

The study included $N = 82$ professionally active Romanian adults (Mage = 40.1 years, $SD = 10.99$; range 19–62 years), recruited through convenience sampling via online social networks. Gender distribution was: 48 women (58.54%) and 34 men (41.46%). Professional domains represented included: MAI/Public Order/Military ($n = 25$), Health/Medical ($n = 17$), Technical/Engineering/Production ($n = 8$), Sales/Marketing/Services ($n = 5$), Education ($n = 5$), Economic/Financial ($n = 5$), and other domains ($n = 14$). Mean professional tenure was 17.52 years ($SD = 8.26$). Most participants worked full-time ($n = 72$; 87%). Regarding family status, 48 participants were married (58%), and 35 (42%) had at least one child.

3.2. Instruments

Big Five Inventory-2 Short Form (BFI-2-S; Soto & John, 2017) assesses the five personality factors — Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Neuroticism (N), and Openness to Experience (O) — through 30 items (6 per dimension), each dimension structured into three facets (2 items per facet). Responses are scored on a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Survey Work-Home Interaction Nijmegen (SWING; Geurts et al., 2005) measures bidirectional work-home interaction through 22 items organised into four subscales: negative work-home interference (NWH), negative home-work interference (NHW), positive work-home interference (PWH), and positive home-work interference (PHW). Items are scored on a Likert scale from 0 (Never) to 3 (Always). Internal consistency of subscales ranges between $\alpha = .77$ and $\alpha = .89$.

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale — short version (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006) assesses work engagement through 9 items distributed across three subscales: Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption, scored on a scale from 0 (Never) to 6 (Always/Daily). The scale was adapted and validated in Romania by Vîrgă et al. (2009). The total score is calculated as the mean of all 9 items.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) assesses global cognitive satisfaction with life through 5 items scored on a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). The scale was adapted in Romanian by Stevens et al. (2012). Total scores range from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction.

3.3. Procedure

Data were collected online through distribution of the questionnaire battery on social networking platforms, in compliance with research ethics principles (informed consent, confidentiality, GDPR compliance). Participation was voluntary and unremunerated. The study design is cross-sectional and quantitative-correlational. Distribution normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test, revealing significant departures from normality for all variables ($p < .05$), justifying the use of nonparametric tests. Statistical analyses included: descriptive statistics, Spearman correlations, multiple linear regressions, and a simple mediation model with ML estimator (SEM). All analyses were conducted using JASP (version 0.18).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Normality

Descriptive statistics for the 15 BFI-2-S facets are presented in Table 1. The highest means were recorded for A-Respectfulness ($M = 4.421$, $SD = 0.606$), C-Productiveness ($M = 4.317$, $SD = 0.714$), and C-Responsibility ($M = 4.213$, $SD = 0.604$), while the lowest values were observed for N-Depression ($M = 1.890$, $SD = 0.754$) and N-Emotional Volatility ($M = 2.488$, $SD = 0.906$), suggesting a psychologically healthy sample with low negative affectivity. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated significant departures from normality for all 15 facets ($p < .05$), supporting the use of Spearman correlations for all correlational analyses.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test for BFI-2-S Facets ($N = 82$)

Facet	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>p</i> SW
Extraversion					
E-Sociability	3.817	0.768	-0.427	0.099	< .001
E-Assertiveness	3.634	0.774	-0.566	0.372	< .001
E-Energy	3.970	0.787	-0.501	-0.353	< .001
Agreeableness					
A-Compassion	3.951	0.651	-0.332	-0.003	< .001
A-Respectfulness	4.421	0.606	-0.712	-0.503	< .001
A-Trust	3.750	0.746	-0.091	-0.680	< .001
Conscientiousness					

Facet	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>p</i> SW
C-Organization	4.146	0.855	-0.744	-0.564	< .001
C-Productiveness	4.317	0.714	-1.257	2.200	< .001
C-Responsibility	4.213	0.604	-0.536	-0.207	< .001
Neuroticism					
N-Anxiety	2.591	0.994	0.561	-0.203	< .001
N-Depression	1.890	0.754	0.628	0.182	< .001
N-Emotional Volatility	2.488	0.906	0.190	-0.675	.004
Openness to Experience					
O-Imagination	3.537	0.919	-0.159	-0.261	.003
O-Curiosity	3.573	0.699	-0.212	-0.278	.002
O-Aesthetic Sensitivity	3.988	0.753	-0.601	-0.177	< .001

Note. SW = Shapiro-Wilk test. All facets deviated significantly from normality ($p < .05$), justifying the use of Spearman correlations for all subsequent analyses.

4.2. Spearman Correlations

Spearman correlations between the 15 BFI-2-S facets and the criterion variables (SWING subscales, UWES subscales, SWLS) revealed a coherent pattern consistent with the theoretical framework.

Regarding Neuroticism facets, N-Anxiety presented significant positive associations with NWH ($\rho = .471, p < .001$) and NHW ($\rho = .260, p < .001$), and significant negative associations with UWES-Vigor ($\rho = -.413, p < .001$) and SWLS ($\rho = -.415, p < .001$). N-Depression showed similar associations, particularly with SWLS ($\rho = -.414, p < .001$) and NWH ($\rho = .334, p < .001$). N-Emotional Volatility was associated with NWH ($\rho = .288, p = .010$).

Regarding Conscientiousness facets, C-Productiveness showed the strongest and most consistent positive associations with all UWES subscales: Vigor ($\rho = .479, p < .001$), Dedication ($\rho = .383, p < .001$), Absorption ($\rho = .363, p < .001$), and UWES-Total ($\rho = .518, p < .001$). C-Responsibility and C-Organization were associated with reduced negative interference (NWH: $\rho = -.225$ and $\rho = -.220$, respectively) and higher engagement.

Extraversion facets showed positive associations with positive work-life interaction dimensions and work engagement. E-Energy in particular was associated with UWES-Vigor ($\rho = .400, p < .001$) and UWES-Dedication ($\rho = .337, p < .001$). Agreeableness facets showed mainly negative associations with negative interference subscales. Openness to Experience facets did not show significant associations with any criterion variable.

4.3. Multiple Linear Regression Analyses

Four multiple linear regression models were constructed to examine the contribution of personality facets to the variability of the criterion variables.

Table 2. Multiple linear regression — BFI-2-S facets as predictors of work engagement (UWES-Total), N = 82

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
(Intercept)	0.142	1.144	—	0.125	.901	[-2.136, 2.420]
C-Productiveness	0.683	0.190	.405	3.600	< .001	[0.305, 1.061]
C-Responsibility	0.322	0.211	.162	1.526	.131	[-0.098, 0.743]
N-Anxiety	-0.018	0.167	-.015	-0.105	.916	[-0.351, 0.316]
N-Depression	-0.367	0.187	-.230	-1.960	.054	[-0.740, 0.006]
N-Emotional Volatility	0.216	0.182	.163	1.188	.239	[-0.146, 0.578]

Note. $R^2 = .357$, $R^2_{adj} = .315$, $F(5, 76) = 8.453$, $p < .001$. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The first model ($R^2 = .357$, $F(5, 76) = 8.453$, $p < .001$) identified C-Productiveness as the only significant individual predictor of work engagement ($\beta = .405$, $t = 3.600$, $p < .001$). N-Depression showed a marginal trend ($\beta = -.230$, $p = .054$).

Table 3. Multiple linear regression — BFI-2-S facets and UWES as predictors of life satisfaction (SWLS), N = 82

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
(Intercept)	29.736	3.394	—	8.762	< .001	[22.976, 36.497]
C-Productiveness	-0.346	0.655	-.062	-0.528	.599	[-1.651, 0.960]
N-Anxiety	-1.352	0.498	-.339	-2.712	.008	[-2.344, -0.359]
N-Depression	-1.159	0.588	-.220	-1.969	.053	[-2.331, 0.014]
N-Emotional Volatility	0.005	0.579	.001	0.009	.993	[-1.149, 1.159]
UWES-Total	1.137	0.350	.345	3.246	.002	[0.439, 1.835]
E-Energy	0.340	0.600	.068	0.567	.572	[-0.855, 1.535]

Note. $R^2 = .452$, $R^2_{adj} = .408$, $F(6, 75) = 10.320$, $p < .001$. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The second model ($R^2 = .452$, $F(6, 75) = 10.32$, $p < .001$) explained 45.2% of the variance in SWLS. N-Anxiety ($\beta = -.339$, $t = -2.712$, $p = .008$) and UWES-Total ($\beta = .345$, $t = 3.246$, $p = .002$) were the only significant individual predictors.

Table 4. Multiple linear regression — BFI-2-S facets as predictors of negative work-home interference (NWH), N = 82

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
(Intercept)	1.348	0.509	—	2.650	.010	[0.335, 2.361]
N-Anxiety	0.100	0.114	.133	0.879	.382	[-0.127, 0.327]
N-Emotional Volatility	0.083	0.124	.100	0.666	.507	[-0.164, 0.330]
C-Organization	-0.197	0.096	-.225	-2.062	.043	[-0.388, -0.007]

Note. $R^2 = .117$, $R^2_{adj} = .083$, $F(3, 78) = 3.453$, $p = .020$. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The third model ($R^2 = .117$, $F(3, 78) = 3.453$, $p = .020$) identified C-Organization as the only significant predictor of negative work-home interference ($\beta = -.225$, $t = -2.062$, $p = .043$).

Table 5. Multiple linear regression — BFI-2-S facets as predictors of positive home-work interference (PHW), N = 82

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
(Intercept)	-0.047	0.580	—	-0.081	.935	[-1.202, 1.107]
C-Productiveness	0.157	0.136	.156	1.158	.250	[-0.113, 0.428]
E-Energy	0.132	0.121	.144	1.094	.277	[-0.108, 0.372]
A-Compassion	0.122	0.130	.110	0.940	.350	[-0.136, 0.380]

Note. $R = .325$, $R^2 = .105$, $R^2_{adj} = .071$, $F(3, 78) = 3.064$, $p = .033$. Although the overall model was statistically significant, no individual predictor reached significance ($p > .25$ for all). LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The fourth model ($R^2 = .105$, $F(3, 78) = 3.064$, $p = .033$) was globally significant, however none of the three individual predictors (C-Productiveness, E-Energy, A-Compassion) reached statistical significance individually ($p > .25$ for all).

4.4. Mediation Analysis

To examine whether negative work-home interference (NWH) mediates the relationship between N-Anxiety and life satisfaction (SWLS), a simple mediation model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM, ML estimator) in JASP.

Table 6. Mediation analysis — N-Anxiety → NWH → SWLS (N = 82)

Effect	Path	Std. B	SE	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI [LL, UL]
Total effect (c)	N-Anxiety → SWLS	-0.504	0.102	-4.922	< .001	[-0.682, -0.281]

Direct effect (c')	N-Anxiety → SWLS	-0.446	0.106	-4.223	< .001	[-0.626, -0.216]
Indirect effect (a×b)	N-Anxiety → NWH → SWLS	-0.058	0.038	-1.556	.120	[-0.163, 0.003]
Path a	N-Anxiety → NWH	0.250	0.138	1.815	.070	[-0.042, 0.507]
Path b	NWH → SWLS	-0.233	0.094	-2.473	.013	[-0.408, -0.029]

Note. Estimator: Maximum Likelihood (ML). Analysis conducted via SEM in JASP (version 0.18). The 95% CI of the indirect effect includes zero, indicating that negative work-home interference (NWH) does not significantly mediate the relationship between N-Anxiety and life satisfaction. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

The total effect of N-Anxiety on SWLS was significant ($\beta = -0.504$, $z = -4.922$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.682, -0.281]). The direct effect of N-Anxiety on SWLS remained significant after introducing the mediator ($\beta = -0.446$, $z = -4.223$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.626, -0.216]). Path b (NWH → SWLS) was statistically significant ($\beta = -0.233$, $z = -2.473$, $p = .013$). However, **the indirect effect** ($a \times b$) did not reach statistical significance ($\beta = -0.058$, $z = -1.556$, $p = .120$, 95% CI [-0.163, 0.003]). Since the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect includes zero, the mediating role of NWH in the relationship between N-Anxiety and life satisfaction is **not confirmed** in the present sample.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the associations between Big Five personality facets and work-life balance, occupational well-being, and life satisfaction in a sample of professionally active Romanian adults, using correlational analyses, multiple regression models, and a mediation analysis.

Neuroticism facets as risk factors across all well-being dimensions. Consistent with H1, Neuroticism facets — particularly N-Anxiety and N-Depression — showed systematic negative associations with life satisfaction and positive associations with negative work-life interference. These findings align with the broader literature identifying Neuroticism as the most robust personality-based vulnerability factor for subjective well-being (Anglim et al., 2020; Tang et al., 2023). At the facet level, N-Anxiety emerged as the most influential individual predictor of life satisfaction in the regression model ($\beta = -.339$, $p = .008$), suggesting that the cognitive-anticipatory dimension of negative emotionality — characterised by worry, tension, and threat appraisal — is particularly detrimental to global life evaluation. Notably, N-Anxiety did not significantly predict work engagement when controlling for other facets, suggesting that its effect on well-being operates more directly on life evaluation than through professional involvement.

Conscientiousness facets as protective resources. Consistent with H3, C-Productiveness emerged as the most powerful positive correlate of work engagement across all UWES subscales ($p = .518$ for UWES-Total, $p < .001$) and the only significant individual predictor in the regression model for UWES-Total ($\beta = .405$, $p < .001$). This finding is

congruent with the established literature linking Conscientiousness to goal-directed behaviour, self-discipline, and high performance standards (Li et al., 2024; Judge et al., 2002). C-Organization was the only significant predictor of negative work-home interference ($\beta = -.225$, $p = .043$), indicating that the systematic, structured approach to task management characteristic of highly organised individuals helps maintain clearer work-personal boundaries, thereby reducing work intrusion into the personal domain (Kang, Guzman & Malvaso, 2023).

Extraversion and Agreeableness facets. Partially consistent with H2 and H4, Extraversion facets — particularly E-Energy — showed positive associations with work engagement subscales at the bivariate level, while Agreeableness facets showed mainly negative associations with negative interference dimensions. However, these effects did not survive in the multivariate regression context, suggesting that their contributions are partially shared with other personality facets. The fourth regression model (PHW criterion) was globally significant ($F(3, 78) = 3.064$, $p = .033$) but no individual predictor reached significance, reflecting a cumulative but non-specific effect of C-Productiveness, E-Energy, and A-Compassion on positive home-work spillover.

Openness to Experience. Consistent with patterns observed across all analyses, Openness facets showed no significant associations with any criterion variable, replicating a pattern documented in the broader literature where Openness shows the least consistent relationships with occupational and well-being outcomes (McCrae & Costa, 1999).

Work engagement is an independent contributor to life satisfaction. UWES-Total remained a significant predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = .345$, $p = .002$) even when controlling for personality facets, indicating that work engagement contributes to global life evaluation independently of dispositional characteristics. This supports the eudaimonic well-being perspective according to which meaningful involvement in valued activities constitutes a fundamental source of life satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Mediation analysis. H6 was not confirmed. Although path b (NWH \rightarrow SWLS) was significant ($\beta = -0.233$, $p = .013$) and the total effect of N-Anxiety on SWLS was substantial ($\beta = -0.504$, $p < .001$), the indirect effect through NWH was not significant ($\beta = -0.058$, $p = .120$, 95% CI [-0.163, 0.003]). These results suggest that the relationship between Anxiety and life satisfaction is predominantly direct, operating through cognitive-evaluative mechanisms — such as negative rumination, pessimistic appraisal, and sustained negative affect — rather than through the concrete experience of work-life interference. This finding underscores the importance of intrapersonal mechanisms in explaining the Neuroticism–well-being link.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The present study contributes to the literature on personality and well-being by examining Big Five facets in relation to work-life balance, work engagement, and life satisfaction in a Romanian adult sample.

Key findings are: (1) **N-Anxiety** was the most consequential Neuroticism facet, functioning as a direct negative correlate of life satisfaction independently of work-life interference; (2) C-Productiveness was the strongest correlate of work engagement, while **C-Organization** specifically attenuated negative work-home interference; (3) **work**

engagement contributed to life satisfaction independently of personality; (4) the **mediation hypothesis** was not supported, pointing to a predominantly direct Anxiety–life satisfaction pathway.

Limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences. The convenience sample (N = 82) limits statistical power and generalizability. Exclusive reliance on self-report measures may introduce social desirability biases. The absence of organisational context variables represents a further limitation.

Future directions. Longitudinal designs, larger and more representative samples, and the inclusion of organisational moderators are recommended. Future research could examine whether interventions targeting anxiety regulation and conscientiousness-related skills differentially impact work-life balance and life satisfaction outcomes.

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