

Special Session Theme **S18**. The spatial economics of happiness, unhappiness and discontent: moving Beyond GDP to Reverse the Joyless Economy

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT (in process)

*Subjective wellbeing in spatial context;
the influence of psychological traits and personality types.*

It has long been known that personality traits (such as the Big Five) have a profound influence on how one reacts to context, be it spatial, temporal, situational or chronic. As personality types are combinations of traits their influence is of complementary interest. Many wellbeing studies conducted by geographers, economists and regional scientists omit trait (or types) as arguments in their models of wellbeing (voluntarily or involuntarily) and the implications of their omission or inclusion remain unclear.

This paper is in two parts. **Part 1** models the distribution of several measures of wellbeing from YOU Survey questions put to first year students on a university campus in New Zealand: see (Morrison et al., 2023, Liu et al., 2023). The same survey was applied to three separate cohorts of freshmen - in the year preceding COVID-19 (2019), during the breakout (2020) and the year after (2021).

I pool the three cohorts (n= 4000) and estimate three cross-sectional models of wellbeing: 1) without traits, 2) with traits and 3) with personality types. I test the effect of COVID-19 as an exogenous shock in the presence and absence of traits and types. Tests for heterogeneity by age, sex and ethnicity are conducted.

Part 2 retests the impact of COVID-19 including and excluding traits and types using a longitudinal panel sample that follows each of the three baseline YOU surveys for four years (two follow-up surveys per year). This design allows me to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of the *same* student with and without controls for traits and types.

The purpose of the paper is to assess the consequences of omitting or including measures of personality in models of wellbeing under separate environmental conditions.

References

- LIU, I., MORRISON, P. S. & ZENG, D. 2023. Wellbeing heterogeneity within and among university students. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 19, 215-244.
- MORRISON, P. S., LIU, I. & ZENG, D. 2023. Well-being and ill-being on campus. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 13, 64-93.