

'Personality Vulnerabilities to Psychopathology: Relations between Trait Structure and Affective-Cognitive Processes' by Ryan Y. Hong & Sampo V. Paunonen Journal of Personality

In this paper Ryan Hong (Psychology) and Sampo Paunonen provide an account of how dispositional traits and affective-cognitive processes can be meaningfully integrated in the study of personality-psychopathology relations. This has implications in advancing current understanding on the development of psychopathology.

The present research examined the factors that put people at risk for developing psychopathology such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. These risk factors can be delineated from two perspectives: (a) dispositional traits and (b) affective-cognitive processes. The former constitutes relatively stable and distal risk factors whereas the latter represents proximal risk factors that are more intimately linked to psychopathology. This research suggests that affective-cognitive processes carry the influence of dispositional traits in the development of psychopathology.

For example, the dispositional trait of neuroticism is a broad-based risk factor for different forms of psychopathology such as mood and anxiety disorders. However, how neuroticism lead to these disorders is unclear and this is where affective-cognitive processes come in. The affective-cognitive processes that make someone depressed may involve a pessimistic outlook and a tendency to ruminate on problems. The affective-cognitive bases for anxiety may include being intolerant to uncertainty and being overly sensitive to one's own physical sensations. These researchers found that these presumably discrete processes are correlated with one another and part of the reason for that is due to their common links to neuroticism.

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