

Optimal experiences in daily life and associated physiological patterns: understanding the autotelic personality

Results:

Objectives: The autotelic personality is associated with traits associated with positive mental and physical health outcomes. Furthermore, the autotelic personality was associated with a better functioning in daily life contexts. The aim of this study was to investigate whether autotelic personality characteristics are associated with experiential and physiological momentary responses to daily life contexts.

Methods: Sixty-seven female college students from the University of Minho, Portugal, used the Experience Sampling Method during a week, completing questionnaires and collecting saliva samples 8 times daily. We performed multi-level analyses to investigate the effects of autotelic personality characteristics on subjective experience and cortisol secretion.

Results: Autotelic students experienced lower negative affect and fatigue, and higher levels of engagement in daily life, than less autotelic students. In solitude, autotelic students did not experience heightened negative affect in solitude as their less autotelic individuals did. Although daily solitude was associated with heightened cortisol levels, we did not find a moderating effect of autotelic personality on cortisol levels in solitude.

Conclusions: Current results shed new clues about the assessment of the psychophysiology of the autotelic personality. Findings help clarify how daily contexts influence the affective and neuroendocrine responses of individuals, contributing for future health outcomes.

Discussion: We discuss future directions such as the inclusion of other physiological measures (e.g., salivary alpha-amylase) and the study of different moments in time to understand the effects of positive personality characteristics on processes such as adaptation and health outcomes.

Published Work:

Matias, G. P., & Freire, T. (2009). Experiência Ótima e Cortisol: A Psicofisiologia no Quotidiano. *Psychologica*, 50, 233-248.

Matias, G. P., & Freire, T. (2009). Cortisol awakening response and the autotelic personality: an exploratory study. *Psychology & Health*, 24(1), 71-419.

Matias, G. P., Nicolson, N. A., & Freire, T. (2010) Cortisol and the experience of being alone in daily life. *Psychology & Health*, 25(1), 137-376.

Matias, G.P., Nicolson, N. A., & Freire, T. (2011) Solitude and cortisol: Associations with state and trait affect in daily life. *Biological Psychology*, 86(3), 314-319. doi: 10.1016/j.biopsycho.2010.12.011

Os textos são da exclusiva responsabilidade dos autores
All texts are of the exclusive responsibility of the authors

Areas of interest:

Latent inhibition, implicit psi, paranormal belief, schizotypy, creativity, mental health

Researcher's Contacts:

Profª Teresa Freire
Escola de Psicologia
Universidade do Minho
Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga
Tel.: +351 253604235
Email: tfreire@psi.uminho.pt