

More can mean less when it comes to being happier -- especially if you are neurotic

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New research from the University of Warwick suggests getting more money may not make you happier, especially if you are neurotic.

In a working paper, [economist](#) Dr Eugenio Proto, from the Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE) at the University of Warwick, looked at how [personality traits](#) can affect the way we feel about our [income](#) in terms of levels of life satisfaction.

He found evidence suggesting that neurotic people can view a pay rise or an increase in income as a failure if it is not as much as they expected.

Neuroticism is a fundamental personality trait in psychology and refers to a tendency to experience [negative emotional states](#). People with high levels of neuroticism have higher sensitivity to anger, hostility, or depression.

Dr Proto, who co-authored the paper with Aldo Rustichini from the University of Minnesota, said people who are on a high salary and have high levels of neuroticism are more likely to see a payrise as a failure.

He said: "Someone who has high levels of [neuroticism](#) will see an income increase as a measure of success. When they are on a lower income, a pay increase does satisfy them because they see that as an achievement. However, if they are already on a higher income they may not think the pay increase is as much as they were expecting. So they see this as a partial failure and it lowers their [life satisfaction](#)."

Dr Proto, who will be presenting the research at next month's ESRC Research Methods Festival, used data from the British Household Panel Survey and the German Socioeconomic Panel.

He added: "These results suggest that we see money more as a device to measure our successes or failures rather than as a means to achieve more comfort."

More information: The paper, Life Satisfaction, Household Income and Personality Traits, Eugenio Proto and Aldo Rustichini, is published as a CAGE working paper n.86

Provided by University of Warwick

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