

Personality Traits In Relation To Mental Well-Being among University Students

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between personality traits and mental well-being among students. A total of 200 post graduate participants aged 20-25 were randomly selected from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Personality traits were measured by HEXACO-PI-R by Lee & Ashton (2006) and mental well-being was measured by Warwick Edinburg mental well-being Scale by Tennant, Fishwick, Platt, Joseph, & Stewart-Brown, (2006). Correlation and independent t-test was used for analyzing the data. The result showed that there was significant correlation between mental well-being and personality traits and the value of $r=.220$ for overall students and the value of $r=.425$ for male students and for female students value of $r=.336$. Further, independent t-test found that there was significant difference of personality traits in terms of gender. Early detection for indications of mental health problems and understanding factors contributing to stress among students would promote better understanding of mental health in future and findings suggest that there should do more researches about students' mental health and personality traits.

Keywords: *Personality traits, Mental well-being and University students.*

Personality is one of those concepts that is familiar to everyone but is difficult to define, most people use the term, "personality" to identify the most obvious characteristics of a person, or to refer to that person's social skills. In this complex society pleasing personality is an important for him and it is for two different reasons persons desire to create favorable impression on others and his desire to judge accurately the personality of others. Personality traits are the unique set of characteristics and qualities that only you possess. While a lot of people might have similar personality traits, each person combines these traits in a different way, to create one unique, irreplaceable conglomeration of traits that make up their individual personality. According to Guilford (1959) a trait is any distinguishable relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from others.

The six factors are generally named Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), Extraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O). The personality-descriptive adjectives that typically belong to these six groups are as follows, Ashton & Lee, (2007) Honesty-Humility (H): sincere, honest, faithful, loyal,

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modest/unassuming versus sly, deceitful, greedy, pretentious, hypocritical, boastful, pompous. Emotionality (E): emotional, oversensitive, sentimental, fearful, anxious, vulnerable versus brave, tough, independent, self-assured, and stable. Extraversion (X): outgoing, lively, extraverted, sociable, talkative, cheerful, active versus shy, passive, withdrawn, introverted, quiet, and reserved. Agreeableness (A): patient, tolerant, peaceful, mild, agreeable, lenient, gentle versus ill-tempered, quarrelsome, stubborn, choleric. Conscientiousness (C): organized, disciplined, diligent, careful, thorough, precise versus sloppy, negligent, reckless, lazy, irresponsible, absent-minded. Openness to Experience (O): intellectual, creative, unconventional, innovative, ironic versus shallow, unimaginative, conventional.

Well-being is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well. Good living conditions (e.g., housing, employment) are fundamental to well-being. Tracking these conditions is important for public policy. However, many indicators that measure living conditions fail to measure what people think and feel about their lives, such as the quality of their relationships, their positive emotions and resilience, the realization of their potential, or their overall satisfaction with life—i.e., their “well-being.” (Diener, Seligman, 2004, Diener, 2009).

Mental well-being can be defined as: “a dynamic process, in which a person’s external circumstances interact with their psychological to satisfy – to a greater or lesser extent – their psychological needs and to give rise to positive feelings of happiness and satisfaction”. Mental well-being denotes a state of mental health, happiness, life satisfaction and quality of life. Although mental health is a crucial component of mental well-being, mental well-being is also determined by circumstances not related to mental health.

Mental health refers to an emotional and psychological state, which is an indispensable part of health. There is no health without mental health. Mental health determines how an individual is able to use his or her. Positive mental health or mental well-being has recently emerged as an important predictor of overall health and longevity (WHO, 2001 & Huppert, 2009). Mental well-being is more than the absence of mental illness or psychiatric pathology. It implies ‘feeling good’ and ‘functioning well’ and includes aspects such as optimism, happiness, self-esteem, resilience, agency autonomy and good relationships with others (WHO, 2001, HM Government, 2014), cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life. Mental health can be seen as an unstable continuum, where an individual's mental health may have many different possible values (Keyes & Corey, 2002). Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if the person does not have any diagnosed mental health condition. This definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. Some discussions are formulated in terms of contentment or happiness. (Graham & Michael, 2014). Positive psychology is increasingly prominent in mental health.

Packard et al. (2012) examined the interaction of personality traits with social deprivation in determining mental wellbeing and health behaviours. In a cross-sectional study, 666 subjects recruited from areas of high and low socioeconomic deprivation had personality traits and mental wellbeing assessed, and lifestyle behaviours quantified. Regression models (using deprivation as a moderating variable) assessed the extent to which personality traits and

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mental wellbeing predicted health behaviour. Deprived (vs. affluent) subjects exhibited similar levels of extraversion but higher levels of neuroticism and psychoticism, more hopelessness, less sense of coherence, lower self-esteem and lower self-efficacy (all $P < 0.001$). They ate less fruit and vegetables, smoked more and took less aerobic exercise (all $P < 0.001$). In the deprived group, personality traits were significantly more important predictors of mental wellbeing than in the least deprived group ($P < 0.01$ for interaction), and mental wellbeing and extraversion appeared more strongly related to good health behaviours.

Cheng & Furnham (2014) examined the associations between parental socio-economic conditions, childhood intelligence, adult personality traits, social status and mental well-being. This study explored a longitudinal data set of 5,090 adults examining the associations between parental social status indicators (measured at birth), childhood intelligence, personality traits, educational achievement and occupational prestige in relation to mental well-being. Correlational analysis showed that parental social status indicators and childhood intelligence were significantly associated with all of the big five personality traits. Parental social status indicators, childhood intelligence, personality traits, education and occupation were all significant correlates of mental well-being. All the five personality traits were significant predictors of mental well-being after taking into account the effects of family social status, childhood intelligence, own education achievement and current occupational prestige.

Kumari & Sharma (2015) investigated the Self- Esteem and Personality traits as the predictors of mental well being. The results indicated that Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness to experience came out as significant predictors of Mental Well-Being. These are the findings which give us guidelines for the further exploration of the research in this area.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship of personality traits and mental well-being among overall students.
2. To find out the relationship of personality traits and mental well-being among male and female students.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant relationship of personality traits and mental well-being among overall students.
2. There will be significant relationship of personality traits and mental well-being among male and female students.
3. It is expected that personality traits will differ significantly among male and female students.
4. It is expected that mental well-being will differ significantly among male and female students.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The present study consists of 200 post-graduate students both male ($n=100$) and female ($n=100$). The age range of the participants was 20-25 years, randomly taken from faculty of Arts, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh.

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Instruments Used

1. **HEXACO-PI-R Inventory**

Based on lexical approach HEXACO PI-R is developed by Lee and Ashton (2006) comprised of 60 statements majoring six dimensions of personality viz. Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience. All the statements are to be answered on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The psychometric properties of the scale were found to be sound.

2. **Mental Well-Being Scale**

Mental well-being was assessed by the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale developed by Tennant, Fishwick, Platt, Joseph & Stewart-Brown (2006). It is a 14 positively worded item scale with five response categories. It covers most aspects of positive mental health (positive thoughts and feelings) including both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. Scores range between 14 and 70 and higher scores indicate higher levels of well-being. Test-retest reliability at one week was 0.83 ($p < 0.01$).

Procedure

In order to collect the data, random sampling technique was used; the questionnaires were distributed individually to the subjects. A good rapport was established with the respondents before requesting them to fill up the questionnaires. The subjects were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were requested to extend their cooperation. Each respondent on an average took 10 to 15 minutes to fill up the questionnaire. Finally, the questionnaires were collected from all the respondents, scoring done and statistical analysis was carried out.

Statistical analysis

For finding the relationship that is personality traits and mental well-being Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was computed. Also independent sample t-test was used to find significant gender difference on the variables of the study.

RESULTS

Table 1: shows Correlation between personality traits and mental well-being among overall students.

Variables		N	r
Overall Personality Trait		100	.220*
Overall Mental Well-being		100	

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis was done to measure the relationship between personality traits and mental well-being. The analysis was done using SPSS version 16.0. Table-1 shows the correlation between personality traits mental well-being. The correlation between personality traits and mental well-being among overall students was found .220* ($p < 0.05$) which shows significant relationship between personality traits and mental well-being.

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Table 2: shows Correlation between personality traits and mental well-being among male and female students.

Variables	N	r
Mental Well-being Male	100	.425**
Personality traits		
Mental Well-being Female	100	.336**
Personality traits		

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 further represents the relationship between personality traits and mental well-being among male and female students. The correlation between personality traits and mental well-being among male students is .425** ($p < 0.01$) which shows significant relationship between personality traits and mental well-being. Similarly the relationship was found among female students is .336** which is significant at 0.01 level.

Table 3: shows Correlations between personality traits (dimension wise) and mental well-being among male and female students.

		Honesty- Humility Male	Emotionality Male	Extraversion Male	Agreeableness Male	Conscientiousness Male	Openness to Experience Male
Mental Well- being Male	Pearson Correlation	.236*	-.123	.229*	.471**	.078	.349*
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mental Well- being Female	Pearson Correlation	.012	-.375**	.586**	.281**	.298**	.337**
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the relationship between mental well-being and personality traits and its dimensions honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience among male and female students. The correlation between honesty-humility and mental well-being among male students is .236* ($p < 0.05$) which shows significant relationship between honesty-humility and mental well-being. The correlation between emotionality and mental well-being among male was found -.123 which shows a negative and insignificant relationship between the two. The correlation between extraversion, agreeableness and mental well-being was found ($r = .229^*$ $p < 0.05$) ($r = .471^{**}$ $p < 0.01$) which shows significant relationship between extraversion, agreeableness and mental well-being. The relationship of conscientiousness and mental well-being was found insignificant that is .078 while the relationship between openness to experience and mental well-being is .349* which is significant at 0.05 levels. Similarly the relationship between honesty-humility and mental well-being was found among female students is .012 which is insignificant. The mental well-being was found negatively correlated with emotionality that is $-.375^{**}$ ($p < 0.01$). In addition, the correlation between extraversion, agreeableness,

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conscientiousness and openness to experience and mental well-being among female students was found ($r=.586^{**}$ $p<0.01$), ($r=.281^{**}$ $p< 0.01$), ($r=.298^{**}$ $p< 0.01$) and ($r=.337^{**}$ $p< 0.01$) respectively.

Table 4: shows the t value, Ns, Means and SDs of male and female students on variable personality traits.

Sample	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Sig
Male	100	197.76	10.67	2.70	.004
Female	100	192.72	15.29		

Table 4 shows that the mean personality traits score of male students is higher than the female students. The mean score of male is 197.76 and for the female student is 192.72. The SD of the male is found to be 10.67 and for the female it is 15.29. The 't' value obtained is 2.70 which is significant at 0.05 levels showing that male and female students differ with regard to personality traits, so the hypothesis H₃ is accepted.

Table 5: shows the t value, Ns, Means and SDs of male and female students on variable personality traits.

Sample	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Sig
Male	100	46.90	5.73	-.610	.000
Female	100	47.56	9.17		

Table 5 revealed that the mean mental well-being score of female students is higher than the male students. The mean score of male is 46.90 and for the female student is 47.56. The SD of the male is found to be 5.73 and for the female it is 9.17. The 't' value obtained is -.610 which is significant at 0.01 level showing that male and female students differ with respect to mental well-being, so the hypothesis H₄ is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The importance of maintaining good mental well-being is crucial for college and university students because they are the future of any developed and successful nation. Most of the youngsters face multiple problems laid down by society, family, school, colleges and university; reason may be anything but it may influence the mental well-being of surprising number of students.

Thus the present research aims to study personality traits in relation to mental well-being among university students. In this context the first objective of the present study was "to find out the relationship of personality traits and mental well-being among overall students". Findings of correlation analysis revealed that personality traits are positively correlated with mental well-being. We can say that personality traits of a person positively affect his or her mental well-being to do better in life. The findings of our study are somewhat consistent with the findings of Cheng & Furnham (2014). Similarly dimensions of personality traits were significantly and positively correlated with mental well-being like honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience among male and female students. Furthermore, the results of correlational analysis also revealed that emotionality is not positively correlated with mental well-being so we can say that person with emotional, oversensitive, sentimental, fearful, anxious, vulnerable versus brave, tough, independent, self-assured, and stable negatively affect the mental well-being of male and female students.

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Findings of t-test also revealed that male and female students differ significantly on personality traits. Furthermore results of t-test also explore that in terms of mean score male students scored higher than females on personality traits. The plausible explanation for the above gender difference on personality factors, may be due to female students scored higher on positive aspects of personality and total mental health more specifically on environmental competence one of the dimensions of mental health, which shows females have capability to take responsibility and adjust with situational demands, leads to good mental health condition.

Similarly male and female students also differ significantly with respects to mental well-being. The results of t-test also revealed that in terms of mean score female students scored higher than male students on mental well-being. Though both the group of students score average level of mental well-being, inspite of that difference emerged on total mental well-being this may be due to the fact that male students spent different life style, have tension of career and vocational field as compared to female students. This may be the reason male students score some degree lesser but not poor on total mental health than female counterpart.

Implications

Findings of the present study would be helpful for teachers, parents, educationist and psychologist to help university students by arranging facilities of counselling and intervention programs not only for students but also for parents to educate them how to handle family problems and helping youngsters at this crucial period of life, to overcome from these problems. This will automatically enhance mental well-being of students for good and enriched future life after entering the society, because they are expected to be elites of society.

Limitations of the study

As its clear that every research is simply a single step in that area, which provide some information and leads to certain limitations with suggestion. The present study included certain variables which can influence mental well-being. Secondly it comprises of only university students. Therefore, further studies in this area can be done cross cultural, including recent questionnaires and demographic variables.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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