

Personality and Interpersonal Skills in College Youth

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to find out the relationship between big five personality traits and interpersonal relations among college youth. The sample (N=80, Male=40, Female=40) was collected from both male and female students enrolled in various educational institutions in different districts of Kerala. The data was collected using the ten item personality inventory and the fundamental interpersonal relations orientation behavior scale. The results indicated that there is significant correlation between extroversion and interpersonal relations. Furthermore, there is significant gender difference in openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness, and interpersonal relations among college youth. Findings of this study could be implied in educational settings to develop students into a better personality and to enhance their interpersonal relations so that both their personal and professional life could be secured.

Keywords: *Personality, Big Five Factors, Interpersonal Relations, College Youth*

Personality is outlined as "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that create his characteristic behavior, thoughts and feelings" (Allport, 1961).

According to Allport (1961), the structural elements of personality are traits. Thus, personality traits are often significant in measuring individuality. In 1937, Allport classified personality traits as individual and common. Later, Cattell identified source traits and surface traits. He identified 16 source traits, which he considered as the basic structure of one's personality.

The Big Five Factors

In 1981, Goldberg, Paul Costa Jr and Robert McCrae confined Cattell's 16 traits into basic five factors. These are termed as 'The Big Five' factors - Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (OCEAN). Costa and McCrae suggested that these traits are the basics of personality and all other traits develop from these. On developing big five factors, Costa and McCrae suggested that these traits are fixed and stable. These are also internal dispositions of an individual.

Openness to experience shows how creative and imaginative one is. People who score high on this trait will usually be intelligent, creative, curious and sophisticated. Conscientiousness

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deals with those personalities who are organized, efficient, reliable, meticulous, persistent, decisive, analytical, and thrifty. Extraversion is the characteristic of being gregarious, talkative, optimistic and assertive in nature. They will be enthusiastic, energetic, confident, assertive, frank, daring and impetuous. Agreeableness refers to accommodating, lenient, understanding, natural and down-to-earth individuals. Neuroticism characterizes insecure, touchy, emotional, envious, gullible and meddlesome individuals. Those who are low on neuroticism are emotionally stable people. They will be unexcitable, unemotional, individualistic and autonomous personalities.

Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are those skills that are necessary to produce effects that are desirable on other people in social contexts (Honey, 1988). There are three main interpersonal needs. The need for inclusion which is the desire to form new relationships and the extent of contact and significance in others' lives, the need for control which is the desire for dominance and power to influence and persuade people, and the need for affection is the desire for emotional attachment with individuals and the degree of closeness with them.

Impact of Personality on Interpersonal Skills

In a study conducted by Mahoney and Stasson (2005), it was found that extraversion has a positive influence on relationships. In the same study, a positive correlation was found between neuroticism and wanted control and the same was negatively correlated with extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Building interpersonal relations is an effortful thing to do. Many can easily develop relations while some are incapable. Building interpersonal relations and interacting with people depend on many factors. One among them is personality, which is something more significant than other factors.

Rationale of the study

It is also important to know the relationship between personality and interpersonal relations. In most instances, personality is an important indicator how one interacts with others. Hence it is necessary to know the impact personality has on interpersonal skills.

Personality and interpersonal skills are necessary to be developed among college youth. Students are always exposed to several life experiences where it is necessary for them to interact with others, especially with their peers. They have to develop leadership abilities and want to co-operate with their peers in various aspects of their studies. So there is a need to develop personality and social skills.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between big five traits and interpersonal relations among college youth.
2. There is no significant gender difference in big five traits among college youth.
3. There is no significant gender difference in interpersonal relations among college youth.

Sample

The sample collected for this study include college students aged between 20 and 25, from various educational institutions in different districts of Kerala. Data was collected using

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purposive random sampling. 80 samples were collected, out of which 40 were men and 40 were women.

Instruments

Three measures were used for conducting this study.

1. Socio-Demographic Data Sheet

The socio-demographic data sheet was prepared to obtain details from the respondents like age, sex, education, designation, place of living and other such information.

2. Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

TIPI was developed by Gosling S.D., Rentfrow P.J., & Swann W.B., Jr. (2003). A 10 item measure of the big five dimensions, namely, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (OCEAN) are used. Each item consists of two descriptors, using the common stem, "I see myself as". Items are rated on a 7 point scale, ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). TIPI follows a reverse scoring pattern. It is mainly used when short measures are needed. The test retest correlations for TIPI are substantial (mean $r=0.72$).

3. Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B)

FIRO-B was created in the late 1950s by William Schutz. The theory was developed by Schutz to understand and predict how military teams can work together as a group. FIRO-B contains six scales with nine-item questions. The theory is based on the belief that when people get together in a group, there are three main interpersonal needs they will look to obtain – Inclusion, Control, and Affection or Openness. The test-retest reliability coefficients range from .71 to .85. Research results also support the validity of the instrument.

Procedure

The selected scales were administered on samples (N=80). The subjects were assured of the confidentiality of the data collected from them. Sample comprised of students from various colleges in different districts of Kerala. The collected data were consolidated and all those test profiles that had insufficient and incomplete responses were omitted. Pearson's product-moment correlation and independent sample t-test were used for statistical analysis of the data.

RESULTS

Table 1: Results of descriptive statistics and t-test on big five traits and interpersonal relations among male and female college students

Dependent variable	Male		Female		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Openness to experience	5.04	1.18	5.64	1.0	2.23*
Conscientiousness	4.6	1.19	5.09	1.19	1.65
Extraversion	3.91	1.62	5.14	1.5	3.28*
Agreeableness	3.83	1.45	4.94	1.45	3.21*

There is significant difference between males and females in openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness, and interpersonal relations. Gender has no much impact on conscientiousness and neuroticism.

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Table 2: Results of descriptive statistics and t-test on interpersonal relations among male and female college students

	Male		female		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Interpersonal Relations	18.54	10.58	24.71	10.6	2.42*

*Significant at 0.05 level

There is significant difference between males and females in interpersonal relations.

Table 3: Coefficients of correlations obtained between big five traits of personality and interpersonal relations

Personality Traits	Interpersonal Relations
Openness to experience	-1.13
Conscientiousness	0.19
Extraversion	0.27*
Agreeableness	.036
Neuroticism	-.069

*Significant at 0.05 level

There is significant correlation between extroversion and interpersonal relations. Hence, extroversion is a crucial predictor of enhanced interpersonal relations among college youth. All other big five traits are not significantly correlated with interpersonal relations.

DISCUSSION

Following conclusions are drawn from the study.

It was found that among college youth, women express openness to experience, extroversion, and agreeableness among the big five traits than their male counterparts. There is no significant gender difference in neuroticism and conscientiousness on the basis of gender. Furthermore, gender also has a significant impact on interpersonal relations among college youth. In addition to that, among the big five traits, only extroversion was found to be correlated with interpersonal relations. All other traits were not significantly correlated with interpersonal relations.

Implications

Findings of this study could be implied in educational settings to understand about the personality traits of students and to develop their personality. Moreover, the nature of interpersonal relations could also be found out among students. Development of both personality and interpersonal relations among college youth can help to improve and secure their personal as well as professional life.

Limitations and Scope for Further Research

The major limitations of this study are the less number of samples (N=80) and the confined geographical area from which data was collected, both affecting the generalisability of findings to the entire population. Hence, this study could be elaborated and conducted in different settings and on different populations. The sample size and number of variables could also be increased in further studies.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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