

Effect of personality on resilience in young adults: a comparative study

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the effect of personality on resilience in young adults and to also perform a comparative study. The big five personality traits along with resilience have been studied. The data has been collected from a sample of 100, where there were 50 males and 50 females within the age range 20-25 years. Results for comparative study using independent sample t-test showed that women are more conscientious and neurotic as compared to men whereas no significant difference was established on the basis of gender in extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and resilience. It was also found that all the sub-dimensions of personality are associated with resilience ranging from having a weak positive correlation to having a strong positive correlation.

Keywords: *Personality, Resilience, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience*

Personality is a fascinating topic to study. Many psychologists have been working on this concept of psychology and have given their own versions to clarify its meaning. Cognitive, biological, trait-based theories, furthermore humanistic and psychodynamic approaches have been used to study personality. All the individuals are different from one another. In life, various situations are encountered to which each human being acts differently. So, what makes an individual different from others? The solution might click in terms of physical appearance but the meaning of personality surpasses it. It is the collection of unique traits and eccentricity which differentiates humankind from one another. Attempts are made to predict the constellation of others personality traits by developing a sense of judgement and understanding the people around but this observation is rarely completely reliable as humans beings are changeable and their personalities are complex. Actions according to the situation are taken which makes an individual fluctuate from being simple to being complicated. Numerous social situations in which people participate tell a lot about them, for example whether they are shy or are extroverted. Personality starts to develop since childhood and factors like school, friends, parents, family members give a shape to who a person is. Efforts are put to define someone's personality by considering predictable and stable traits. So as to possess a concept about it numerous inventories have been created for example- the big five inventory. Raymond B. Cattell gave a Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)

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which leads to the development of five-factor model by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. It consists of five traits which are commonly called 'OCEAN.' These traits are Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. In this paper, an attempt to find a relationship between personality and resilience has been made. Resilience is the quality of bouncing back to the baseline functioning in the face of a threat, stress, traumatic event etc. It does not eliminate the difficulties from life but rather makes an individual mentally strong enough to deal with them. It is a growing topic and plenty of studies are being done on this. Psychologists believe that people who tend to attain high on resilience are better able to handle unwanted stressful situations and cope better after a catastrophe. People with different personalities have different levels of coping mechanisms. Considering the big five traits to predict the personality of an individual and relating each trait with resilience individually might give an idea of which trait affects the strength of coping. Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ) has been utilized during this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various articles have been studied which discuss the importance and relationship between the two variables.

The article "Resilience in relation to personality and intelligence" by *Oddgeir Friborg, Dag Barlaug, Monica Martinussen, Jan H. Rosenvinge, Odin Hjemdal* (2005) includes the usage of Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA), Big five personality inventory (OCEAN), social intelligence (TSIS) and cognitive abilities (Number series, Raven's advanced matrices, Vocabulary). The big five inventory distinguished the well-adjusted personalities and jeopardy personalities. It was found that there was a positive correlation between well-adjusted personality type and all the resilience factors. Emotional stability (personality factor) was most associated with personal strength (resilience factor). Social competence (resilience factor) was most related to extroversion and agreeableness (personality factors). Structured style (resilience factor) was most related to Conscientiousness (personality factor). It was unpredictably found that Social resources and Family cohesion (resilience factors) were also associated with personality. Furthermore, resilience and cognitive abilities were not related. Thus, the study concluded that well-adjusted personalities are more resilient.

The article "Relationship of resilience to personality, coping, and psychiatric symptoms in young adults" by *Laura Campbell-Sills, Sharon L. Cohan, Murray B. Stein* (2006) made use of NEO Five Factor Inventory, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale Brief Symptom Inventory and Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations. It was hypothesised that resilience is positively related with conscientiousness and extroversion, and negatively related with neuroticism. Results had supported the hypothesis. It was also seen that coping styles were associated with resilience. Emotion-oriented coping had an association with low resilience. They were positively related.

The objective of the study in article "Gender Differences in Relationship between Resilience and Big Five Personality Traits in Japanese Adolescents" by *Shuhei Iimura, Kanako Taku* (2018) was to see the effect of gender with respect to personality and resilience. The results of this study showed males had lesser conscientiousness than females. Also, extraversion was found to be the foremost influential predictor of resilience in males whereas in females, neuroticism was the foremost important predictor. Multi-group path analyses showed that resilience was affected by neuroticism in females. Focussing on the other variables, no

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difference was found on the effect of any other variable across genders. The study concluded that it is necessary to consider the gender differences while understanding the link between personality traits and resilience.

Study in the article “The Relationship between Personality Traits and Psychological Resilience among the Caribbean Adolescents” by *Grace Fayombo* (2010) focussed on the relationship between big five personality traits and resilience. It was found that the personality traits (except neuroticism) and resilience had a statistically significant positive relationship, whereas a negative correlation was seen between resilience and neuroticism. Conscientiousness was found to be the best predictor of resilience. Openness to experience, neuroticism and agreeableness were also significant predictors but extroversion failed to significantly contributed to resilience.

In the article “Relations between personality and coping: A meta-analysis” by *Jennifer K. Connor-Smith, Celeste Flachsbart* (2007), big five personality traits were studied and correlated with the coping mechanism. It was seen that the specific strategies were being predicted by the personality traits. Extraversion contributed in predicting support seeking, whereas conscientiousness and extroversion together predicted cognitive restructuring and problem-solving.

The article “Resilience and Big Five personality traits: A meta-analysis” by *Atsushi Oshio, Kanako Taku, Mari Hirano, Gul Saeed* (2018), investigates the relationship between big five personality traits and resilience. Two types of resilience were studied, ego-resilience and psychological resilience. The size of the sample was 15,609. They also studied and included thirty studies. The results showed that neuroticism was negatively correlated with resilience whereas the other four dimensions were positively related to it. On the other hand, in terms of two types of resilience, Ego-resilience had a stronger indirect correlation with neuroticism and a stronger direct correlation with agreeableness and openness to experience as compared to the psychological resilience.

The study in article “The Relationship between Resilience and the Big Five Personality Traits in Emerging Adulthood” by *Ercan, H.* (2017), was conducted on undergraduate students. The sample size was 392. This study was conducted using a correlational descriptive method and a quantitative approach. Results showed a relationship between sub-dimensions of big five personality traits and sub-dimensions of resilience was established. The sub-dimensions of big five personality traits propounded statistically significant difference rooted on being non-resilient or resilient. It was also found that neuroticism, extroversion and conscientiousness did not have major impact on resilience altogether.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

The main hypotheses under consideration in this study are as follows:

1. Extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and resilience are higher in women than men.
2. Openness to experience is higher in men than women.
3. Resilience will increase as extraversion increases.
4. There exist no relationship between agreeableness and resilience.
5. Resilience will increase as conscientiousness increases.
6. Resilience will decrease as neuroticism increases.
7. There exist no relationship between openness to experience and resilience.

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Participants

There was a total of 100 participants (N=100) who took part in this study, where there were 50 males and 50 females. The age group of the sample was 20-25 years. Most of these participants were either students or had recently started working.

Design

The nature of the research governs the research method. For this study, descriptive type of research design was opted. The data collection was done quantitatively based on probability sampling. A questionnaire method was used along with studying various research journals. Later on, both primary and secondary data were combined.

1. Descriptive statistics was used to perform the comparative study on the basis of gender.
2. Independent samples t-test was used to see whether there was any significant difference on the basis of gender in each dimension.
3. Descriptive correlational study was used to see whether the variables correlated.

Material

First Questionnaire- The Big Five Personality Test to evaluate five utmost dimensions of personality. It consists of 50 items where each dimension was assessed by 10 items. It was operated on a five point likert scale, where 1= Disagree and 5= Agree. There were items in each dimension which were reverse scored.

Internal consistency reliability for each dimension was 0.79-0.86.

Test-Retest reliability for each dimension was 0.79-0.86.

Second Questionnaire- Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire to measure resilience. It consists of 12 items. It was measured on a five point likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. Scores ranging from 0-37 depict a developing level of resilience; 38-43 indicate an established level of resilience; 44-48 signifies a strong level of resilience; 49-60 indicate an exceptional level of resilience. Reliability for this measure was Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha= 0.76$

Participants

Participants were approached at random. They were provided with the questionnaires online through Google forms. They were ensured that each one of their data will be kept confidential and that they can also choose to fill the questionnaires anonymously. The expected time-period for collecting the whole data was 2-3 weeks and it had been collected within the time-frame.

RESULTS

The results of the data collected from the overall sample using descriptive statistics are as follows.

Table No. 1 Descriptive Statistics on the overall data

	N	RANGE	MIN	MAX	MEAN	SD	VARIAN	(SKEWNE	KURTOSI
	Statistic								
AGE	100	7	18	25	21.79	1.387498	1.925152	0.432166	-0.03968
E	100	36	2	38	21.14	7.323713	53.63677	0.241909	0.086798
A	100	31	9	40	27.37	6.145796	37.77081	-0.55612	0.677448
C	100	33	4	37	23.64	6.36677	40.53576	0.041006	0.159934
N	100	32	3	35	19.16	6.97864	48.70141	-0.21928	-0.45942
O	100	26	12	38	25.91	4.968781	24.68879	0.069318	0.13822
R	100	33	27	60	42.88	6.529312	42.63192	-0.02749	0.3692

Again, with the help of descriptive statistics, whole data was studied to quantify all the facets of males and females individually.

Table No. 2 shows the results of male data in each dimension

	E	A	C	N	O	R
N	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	19.76	26.32	21.2	21.04	25.08	43.08
Median	19	26	22	21	25.5	43.08
Mode	19	24	22	21	26	43.08
SD	6.556096	5.51598	5.8064	6.006663	5.244394	6.662852
SE	0.9271	0.78007	0.8211	0.8494	0.7416	0.9422
Variance	42.9824	30.4261	33.71429	36.08	27.50367	44.3936
Skewness	0.288097	-0.4697	-0.24408	0.027647	-0.09307	-0.33152
Kurtosis	0.298732	1.0758	0.847307	-0.04693	0.145561	-0.45456
Range	31	27	30	28	26	30
Max	37	37	34	35	38	57
Min	6	10	4	7	12	27

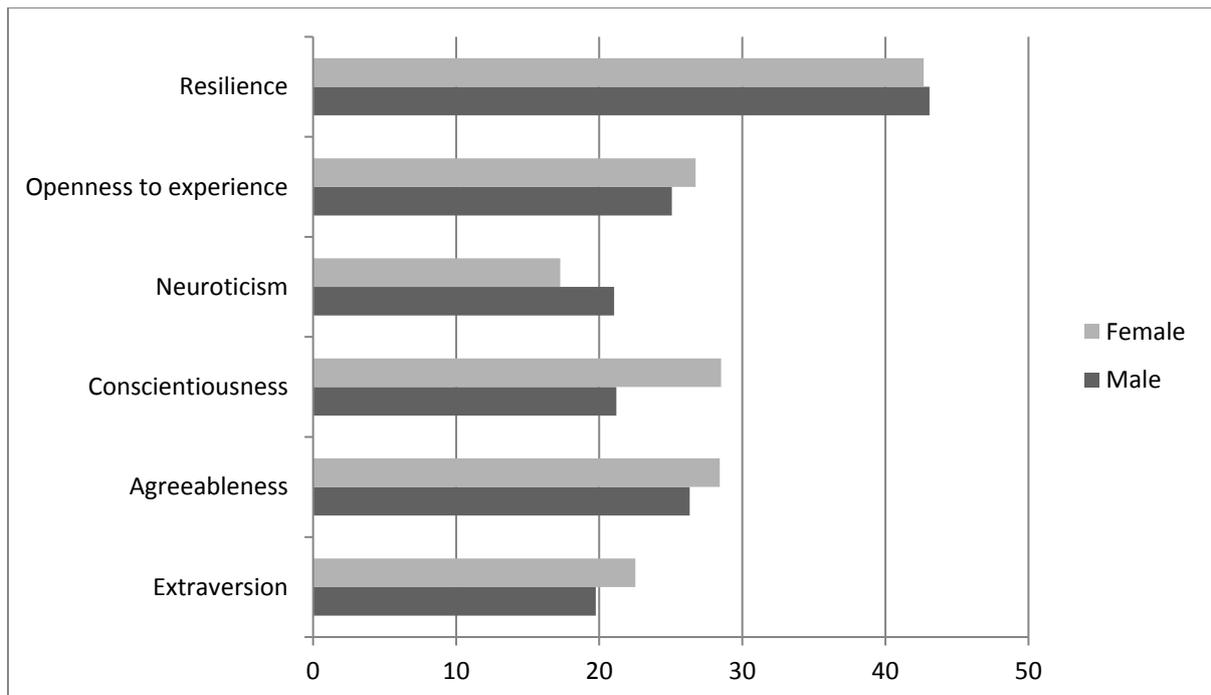
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Table No. 3 shows the results of female data in each dimension

	E	A	C	N	O	R
N	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	22.52	28.42	28.52	17.28	26.74	42.68
Median	22	29	25	19	26	43
Mode	14	25	25	13	26	40
SD	7.786016	6.60578	6.002856	7.423185	4.579502	6.38378
SE	1.1011	0.9341	0.8489	1.0497	0.6476	0.9028
Variance	60.62204	43.3633	36.03429	55.10367	20.97184	40.75265
Skewness	0.08643	-0.80054	0.240017	-0.1172	0.498793	0.313346
Kurtosis	0.06346	0.87513	-0.92638	-0.92638	-0.32885	-0.0237
Range	36	31	22	22	18	29
Max	38	40	37	37	37	60
Min	2	9	15	15	19	31

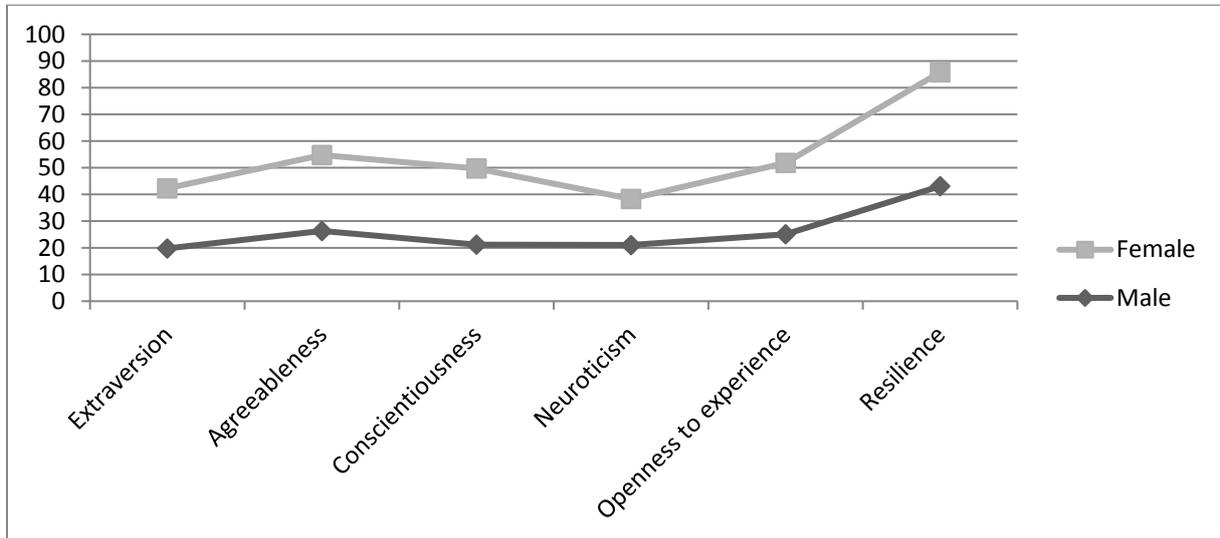
The mean data of males and females in each dimension is displayed in the form of graphs below:

The following bar graph shows the data of male and female sample using horizontal bars where the grey bar represents female data and the darker grey one represents male data



The scatter graph shows the mean values of the sample using coordinates. The female data is shown in grey and the male data is shown by the dark grey.

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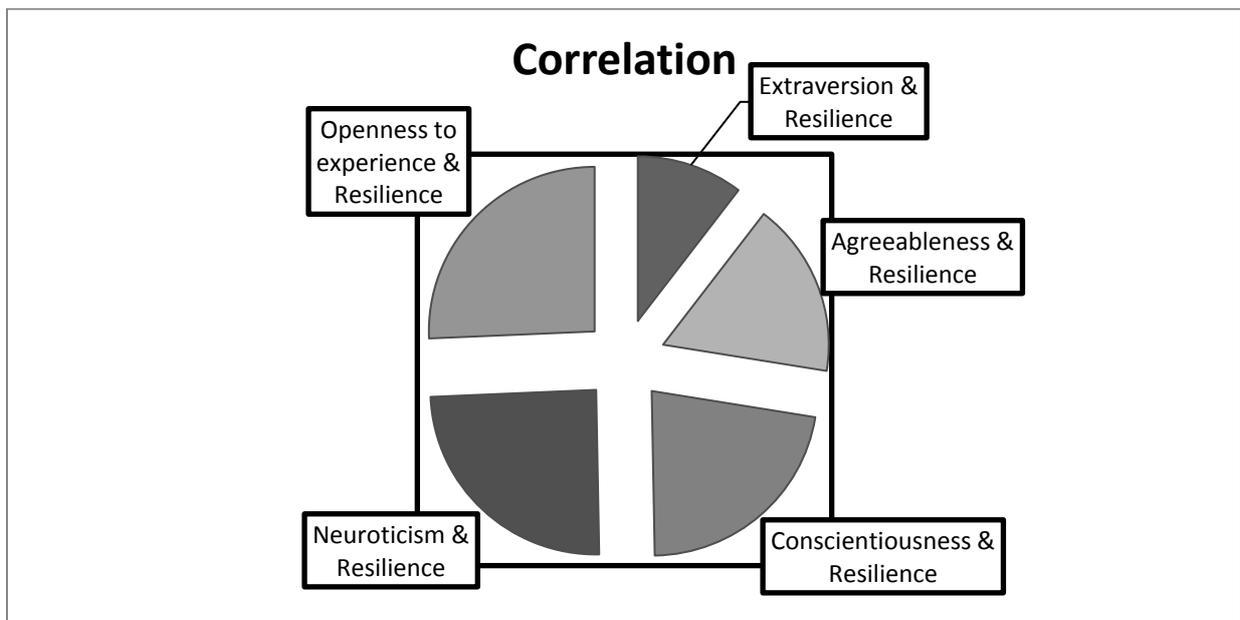


All the sub-dimensions of personality were correlated with resilience.

Table No. 4 shows the correlation between sub-dimensions of personality and resilience

	Resilience
Extraversion	0.163006
Agreeableness	0.2692
Conscientiousness	0.347633
Neuroticism	0.386149
Openness to experience	0.402861

The data occupied by correlating the dimensions is graphically represented using pie chart.



DISCUSSION

It is not easy to infer anyone's personality especially that of young adults. It is the time when most of them start devising their career pathways. Most of these individuals try and understand who they are, what they have, what they need and a lot more. During this process their mind-set takes a shape. This paper aims to focus on the effect of personality and resilience of young adults.

From the results it can be inferred that mean score in the dimension of extraversion was 19.76 for males and 22.52 for the females. Both means were compared using independent sample t-test where, $t = 1.9174$ ($p > 0.05$). It was measured to be not quite significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it fails to reject null hypothesis. It shows that both men and women seek self-fulfillment from sources in the community by being more social and participative.

Mean average score of males was 26.32 in the dimension of agreeableness whereas females score was 28.42. These mean values were compared to apply an independent sample t-test where, $t = 1.7255$. ($p > 0.05$). It was measured to be not quite significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it fails to reject null hypothesis. It shows that both men and women are typically polite and adjust their conduct to suit others.

In the dimension of conscientiousness, mean average scores were 21.2 and 28.52 of males and females respectively. These mean values were compared to apply an independent sample t test where, $t = 6.61977$ ($p < 0.05$). It was measured to be extremely significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. It shows that women are more diligent, honest and stickler for rules whereas men are casual when it involves diligence and abiding certain set of rules.

Neuroticism reflects the traits of being moody and feelings as frustration, anger, envy, jealousy, loneliness etc. Mean average of scores was found to be 21.04 and 17.28 for males and females respectively. On applying independent sample t-test, $t = 2.7843$ ($p < 0.05$). It was measured to be very significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that women are more emotionally unstable than men.

Mean average of scores for openness to experience for men was 25.08 and 26.74 for women. Results of independent sample t- test showed, $t = 1.6859$ ($p > 0.05$). It was measured to be not quite significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it fails to reject null hypothesis. It can be said that both men and women are open towards new experiences and opportunities. They also seek intellectual pursuits.

Resilience is the potential to emotionally or mentally manage with a catastrophe. Mean of the resilience values was found to be 43.08 and 42.68 of males and females respectively. Independent sample t-test was applied to the mean values. Results showed $t = 0.3065$ ($p > 0.05$). It was measured to be not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it fails to reject null hypothesis. It can be said that both men and women are almost equally resilient. They tend to cope with the crisis likewise.

The other fragment of this paper focuses on the correlation in order to see the association between variables. According to Evans (1996), absolute value for r:

$r = 0.00-0.19$ is considered to be "very weak"

$r = 0.20-0.39$ is considered to be "weak"

$r = 0.40-0.59$ is considered to be "moderate"

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$r = 0.60-0.79$ is considered to be “strong”

$r = 0.80-1.0$ is considered to be “very strong”

It was found that all of the sub-dimensions are positively associated with resilience. In the case of extraversion and resilience, r value was found to be 0.163006, which exhibits very weak positive correlation. Hence, the hypothesis that resilience will increase as extraversion increases is accepted. If seeking social stimulation uplifts the individual and makes them happy then during a crisis, it will help the individual to cope by gaining energy from engaging in a social interaction.

The calculated r value of agreeableness and resilience was found to be 0.2692, which shows a weak positive correlation. Hence, the hypothesis that there exist no relationship between agreeableness and resilience is rejected. It can be deduced that being warm, affable and considerate helps an individual to possess an optimistic view of the human fallibility.

Resulted r value for conscientiousness and resilience was 0.347633, exhibiting a weak positive correlation. Hence, the hypothesis that resilience will increase as conscientiousness increases is accepted. People who are more dutiful and hunt for achievement are more self-disciplined and this plays an important role for being resilience.

Neuroticism and resilience also showed a weak positive correlation with r value of 0.386149. Hence, the hypothesis that resilience will decrease as neuroticism increases is rejected. It might be the case that people get a motivated push by being in stressful situations which triggers worry, fear, anxiety and lots of other emotions just like during exams or interviews. This stress causes instability but also adds a push to the motivation for acting on things better. Overall effect of neuroticism in such cases results in positive outcomes.

There was a moderate positive correlation seen in between openness to experience and resilience with r value of 0.402861. Hence, the hypothesis that there exist no relationship between openness to experience and resilience is rejected. Being open-minded and having a curiosity to find out new things could be a good way to beat difficult times. Trying out new activities diminishes the negative thoughts and toughness in one's life.

CONCLUSION

Personality has always been a stimulating topic to review and comprehending its relation with resilience made it more intriguing. This paper provides a concept of how the personality of young adults affects their resilience. Through this paper, it may be concluded that all five sub-dimensions of personality affect the resilience of an individual. Resilience increases as all the facets increase.

Multiple hypotheses were synthesized for this research. Some of them were accepted and some were rejected. It was hypothesized that agreeableness and openness to experience do not affect resilience but, the results were opposite to what was supposed. It was also hypothesized that neuroticism will decrease as resilience increases but the results were found to be opposite.

Another attempt was to conduct a comparative study during this research. It was concluded that there was no significant difference in their extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and resilience. Moreover, women tend to be more conscientious and neurotic as compared to men.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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