

A study on personality and happiness among college students

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ABSTRACT

Aim: According to *Allport (1961)*, “Personality is a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors.” Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one’s values. It is a state, not a trait; in other words, it isn’t a long-lasting, permanent feature or personality trait, but a more fleeting, changeable state (*Courtney E. Ackerman*). The aim of this research was to study the relationships between personality and happiness among college students across gender. Subjects completed Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised- Abbreviated, Subjective Happiness Inventory (General Happiness Scale). Data were analyzed using Mean, Standard deviation, Kruskal-Wallis test and Spearman rank correlation. **Result:** Result of the study shows that there is no relationship between personality traits and happiness. There is a significant difference in the level of psychoticism among college students across their gender. There is no significant difference in the level of neuroticism, extraversion and happiness among college students across their gender. Based on these results, personality does not provide any context in which happiness operates.

Keywords: *Happiness, Personality*

Personality is a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. (*Allport 1961*). The study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. The other is understanding how the various parts of a person come together as a whole. According to *John Locke (1632-1704)* and his followers, the development of personality was purely a question of ‘nurture’ or education. The newborn child would be like a clean slate (“*tabula rasa*”), which can be shaped as educators want it to be. American psychologists Randy Larsen and David Buss, “personality is a stable, organized collection of psychological traits and mechanisms in the human being that influences his or her interactions with and modifications to the psychological, social and physical environment surrounding them.”

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A study on personality and happiness among college students

“Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one’s values. It is a state, not a trait; in other words, it isn’t a long-lasting, permanent feature or personality trait, but a more fleeting, changeable state.” (*Courtney E. Ackerman*). The term happiness is used in the context of mental or emotional states, including positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. It is also used in the context of life satisfaction, subjective well-being, eudaimonia, flourishing and well-being. “Subjective well-being (SWB) is the scientific term for happiness and life satisfaction—thinking and feeling that your life is going well, not badly. Thus, happiness does not just feel good, but it is good for people and for those around them.” (*Edward F. Diener*)

Definition of Key terms

•**Happiness**- “Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one’s values. It is a state, not a trait; in other words, it isn’t a long-lasting, permanent feature or personality trait, but a more fleeting, changeable state.” (*Courtney E. Ackerman*).

•**Personality**- “Personality is a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person’s characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors.”. (*Allport 1961*).

Relevance of the study

This study was relevant because personality and happiness are related. There may be changes in personality traits depending on the level of happiness.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Pishva, N., Ghalehban M, Moradi, A. and Hoseini,L.(2011) conducted the study on personality and happiness. A homogeneous group of 150 adults (86 female, 64 male) recruited to participate in the study, from Kermanshah University of Medical Science. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire [EPQ (*Eysenck & Eysenck*, 1975)] and the Oxford Happiness Inventory [OHI (*Argyle et al.*, 1989)] were used to collect the data. Analysis of the data involved both descriptive and inferential statistics including frequency, standard deviation and regression analysis.

Momeni, M., Anvari,A.R.M., Kalali, S.N, Raoofi,Z. and Zarrineh,A. (2010) conducted the study on the effect of personality on happiness. Study was conducted on students from University of Tehran. Among distributed questionnaires, 57% of respondents were male and 41.9% of them were female. Noteworthy, 1.1% of respondents did not announce their gender. Big Five Personality Model (*Costa and McCare*, 1989) and Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), (*Argyle et al.*, 1989) were used to collect the data. To determine the validity of various variables in mentioned questionnaire, second-order confirmatory factor analysis were used for exogenous and endogenous variables.

Kirkpatrick,B., and Wanic,R. (2015) from the University of San Diego, conducted the study to assess the specific connection between personality, happiness, and happiness inducing behaviors (HIB) within individuals. The data were collected from 424 university students. There were 315 females and 109 males. A brief version of the Big 5 Personality Inventory (adapted from *Rammstedt & John*, 2007, (*Costa and McCare*, 1989), Differential Emotions Scale (*mDES*; *Fredrickson*, 2009 and *Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin*, 2003) were used to collect the data.

A study on personality and happiness among college students

Rationale

After reviewing of literature researcher found that there is no research related with personality and happiness among students so that researcher is trying to research on this topic. Researcher is hopeful of finding this valuable information so as to enable researcher and others to know some information about students.

METHODOLOGY

Problem

Is there any significant difference in the personality traits and happiness among college students across their gender?

Aim

To understand the personality traits and the level of happiness among college students across their gender.

Objectives

- To study the personality traits and happiness among college students.
- To study the relationship between personality traits and happiness among college students.
- To understand the differences in the personality traits and happiness among college students across their gender.

Variables

Independent Variable: Gender

Dependent Variable: Neuroticism, Psychoticism, Extraversion, Happiness.

Hypothesis

- There will be no significant difference in the level of neuroticism among college students across their gender.
- There will be no significant difference in the level of psychoticism among college students across their gender.
- There will be no significant difference in the level of extraversion among college students across their gender.
- There will be no significant difference in the level of happiness among college students across their gender.
- There will be no significant relationship between neuroticism and happiness among college students.
- There will be no significant relationship between psychoticism and happiness among college students.
- There will be no significant relationship between extraversion and happiness among college students.

Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature and used a correlational design if there is a relationship between personality traits and happiness among college students. The study also adopted a between-group research design to assess the difference in personality traits and happiness among college students across their gender.

A study on personality and happiness among college students

Research Sample

Purposive sampling method was used for the study. The sample distribution was uneven and comprised of 120 college students at age range 18 to 23 years, from different part of Kerala, out of which 77 were females and 43 were males.

The sample belongs to different gender, religious family type, area of residence.

Sampling criteria

Inclusion criteria

Willingness of participants through online.

Age limit 18 to 23 years.

Exclusion criteria

Age group other than 18 to 24 years.

Excluded those who have psychological problems, physical disabilities and other concerns in participation.

Tools

The following tools were administered Individually to collect required data.

1. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised-Abbreviated [EPQR-A (Francis et al,1992)]. This measures N, P, E & L, the lie scale.
2. Subjective Happiness Scale [SHS (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999)].
3. This scale assesses an individual's overall happiness as measured through self-evaluation.

Procedure

Purpose of the study was explained to the participants through online and their willingness to participate in the study was ascertained. The socio demographic data sheet, EPQR-A questionnaire (Francis et al,1992), Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper,1999) were given to the sample through online with proper instruction one after the other before the questionnaire. Responses were collected from the participants. The scoring for the two assessment was done and interpreted according to the manual.

Analysis of data

The collected data were analyzed using following statistical tests:

- Mean, Standard deviation
- Kruskal-Wallis Test
- Spearman's Rank Correlation

Ethical issues

- Data collected has been used only for the research purpose.
- Informed consent of each and every participant was acquired.
- Confidentiality and of the obtained information have maintained throughout the study.

RESULT

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the personality and happiness among college students. For this purpose, investigator formulated 7 hypotheses. Results are shown in the below given table.

A study on personality and happiness among college students

Table 1: Kruskal Wallis test on Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Happiness.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Sig.
Neuroticism	Male	43	59.33	.778
	Female	77		
	Total	120		
Psychoticism	Male	43	42.91	.000
	Female	77		
	Total	120		
Extraversion	Male	43	52.99	.071
	Female	77		
	Total	120		
Happiness	Male	43	62.91	.570
	Female	77		
	Total	120		

Table 1 shows the mean and significant values of psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Happiness among college students based on their gender. Significant value of Neuroticism is .778, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the hypothesis 1 accepted that there is no significant difference in the level of neuroticism among college students across their gender. Significant value of Extraversion is .071, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis 3 is accepted that there is no significant difference in the level of extraversion among college students across their gender. Significant value of Happiness is .570, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis 4 is accepted that there is no significant difference in the level of happiness among college students across their gender. Significant value of Psychoticism is .000, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected that there is a significant difference in the level of psychoticism among college students across their gender. Females have a higher level of psychoticism, neuroticism and extraversion compared to males.

Table 2: Correlation between Neuroticism, Psychoticism, Extraversion with Happiness

Variables	Values	N	P	E	H
Neuroticism	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.237	-.283	.111
	Sig 2-tailed	.	.009	.002	.229
	N	120	120	120	120
Psychoticism	Correlation coefficient	.237	1.000	-.099	-.017
	Sig 2-tailed	.002	.	.280	.850
	N	120	120	120	120
Happiness	Correlation coefficient	.111	-.017	-.130	1.000
	Sig 2-tailed	.229	.850	.157	.
	N	120	120	120	120

* N= Neuroticism, P=Psychoticism, E= Extraversion, H= Happiness

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient between psychoticism, neuroticism, extraversion and happiness. From this table, the correlation coefficient of neuroticism with happiness is .111, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, null hypothesis 5 is accepted that there is no correlation between neuroticism and happiness among college students

A study on personality and happiness among college students

across their gender. The correlation coefficient of psychoticism with happiness is $-.017$ which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, null hypothesis 6 is accepted that there is no correlation between psychoticism and happiness among college students across their gender. The correlation coefficient of extraversion with happiness is $-.130$, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. So, null hypothesis 7 is accepted that there is no correlation between psychoticism and happiness among college students across their gender.

Major Findings

- There is a significant difference in the level of psychoticism among college students across gender.
- There is no significant difference in the level of neuroticism & extraversion among college students across gender.
- There is a no relationship between personality traits and happiness among college students.
- Male have high level of happiness as compared to female, even though the number of male participants is less than females.

Limitations

1. Sample size was small.
2. Sample distribution is uneven.
3. The sample collection was restricted only to the state of Kerala.

Implications

Male counterparts have high level of happiness as compared to female, so we can use some intervention programs for females.

Scope for further study

1. Further research can be done on larger populations.
2. Qualitative research method can be used for improving the quality of the study.

CONCLUSION

The term 'personality' means the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems his characteristic's behavior and thought. The objective of the assessment is to study the relationship between personality traits which include psychoticism, neuroticism, extraversion and happiness among college students across their gender. The report is analyzed by Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised-Abbreviated and Subjective Happiness Inventory. The collected data was analyzed using following statistical methods like mean, standard deviations and Kruskal-Wallis test and spearman rank correlation. The research study was quantitative in nature and between group design was used to determine the personality traits among college students across their gender. The result of the study shows that there is no significant relationship between personality traits and happiness among college students across their gender.

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A study on personality and happiness among college students

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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