

The Relationship between Personality Factors and Relationship Satisfaction of Roommates

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ABSTRACT

Students find it exhilarating to leave the comfort of their homes in pursuit of better educational or professional prospects. For many individuals, this shift from dependence to complete independence comes with an increased sense of responsibility to which they are not accustomed. Finding a compatible roommate is one of the primary challenges that students encounter. The previous pool of literature examines the factors that play a role in finding a suitable partner in intimate relationships. One of the most prevalent factors that determine Relationship Satisfaction in Intimate Relationships is Physical Attraction. *Sangrador, et.al.*, (2000) indicate that the Physical Attractiveness of the other person is the principal factor in interpersonal relationships, and is linked both to feelings and thoughts associated with love and to satisfaction with the relationship. However, research in the domain of platonic interpersonal relationships. Our research has highlighted four domains that significantly impact the formation and satisfaction of platonic interpersonal relationships, especially, roommate relationships namely, Warmth, Academic Competence, Competitiveness, and Social Potency. These variables entail sub-factors which are described in the paper. We created an online survey questionnaire named "Codee Compatibility Inventory- Roommates (CCI-R)," that assesses the aforementioned factors. The items of the questionnaire were derived from well-established questionnaires of BIG-5 and MPQ. Data from 159 pairs (N=318) of college students and the millennial workforce was gathered. The findings of this study show the relationship between the four prime personality domains and the satisfaction among roommates staying together.

Keywords: *Personality, Relational Satisfaction, Roommates, Compatibility*

Do you know about the rising co-living trends in India? India has one of the world's largest millennial populations, with a median age of 22. As projected in many reports, their number in India is around 426 million, or 34% of the entire Indian population. Of these 426 million, 68% of millennials, or 299 million individuals, live in leased housing. (*Sharma, 2022*)

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This young population is highly mobile, and it is constantly shifting from smaller towns/villages to larger cities in search of education and job opportunities. While this transition in life is thrilling and exciting, it also brings with it unexpected responsibilities and adjustments. It can be challenging to move to a new place, discover a good rental, decide on a rent amount, and manage all the home duties, especially for those who are living alone for the first time.

It is human nature to search for comfort, security and familiarity. When these needs are not addressed in healthy ways, they surface as various forms of mental illnesses. Individuals looking to share an apartment or room with someone they have never met before can turn these raw feelings of vulnerability into vibrant relationships that are supportive and enriching, or create their potential bond as roommates.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one of the basic human needs is to feel a sense of love and belongingness (*Maslow 1943*). This hierarchy level encompasses the need for friendship, intimacy, family, and love. Social creatures crave interaction with others. They have an innate drive to form and maintain significant interpersonal relationships. Debalina Datta (2016), found that social interaction has a significant role in improving the quality of life in all domains. According to David Mellor, if these needs are not met, it may lead to feelings of social isolation, alienation, and loneliness (*David Mellor 2008*). It is paramount to bond with roommates not just by living habits, but also in terms of Personality.

Finding a similar roommate or flatmate is a blessing. Individual differences in opinions, values, and attitudes stem from personality variations, which eventually affect one's interpersonal relationships. Waldo in 1984 they found that the use of positive college roommate communication skills was significantly associated with more positive overall psychological adjustment.

Sheley, & Whalen, (2005), concluded that frequent conflict with college roommates was a significant predictor of overall stress levels. Finally, Keup, 2007, Difficulty with college roommate relationships was among the greatest disappointments of the first year; and college roommate difficulties had a negative effect on overall satisfaction.

Gonzaga, G. C., Campos, B., & Bradbury, T. (2007) investigated “how personality and interpersonal processes combine to predict change in relationship quality.” This study showed that similarity and convergence in personality positively impact relationship quality.

Erikson's (1968) stage theory of psychosocial development asserts that young adults' primary objective is to experience intimacy and affection in relationships rather than isolation. Samsanovich (2021), determined the extent to which the aforementioned stage theory holds true in the 21st century. Using descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U Test on a sample of 25 participants, this study found that the Eriksonian model has a 52% validity rate.

In a fast-paced urban life, it is normal to experience feelings of isolation. Judith G. Gonyea (2018) explored the prevalence of depression among housing residents, particularly emphasizing the role of loneliness. The skyrocketing trends of coliving have now become instrumental in combating loneliness and depression. H.W. Jeurung (2020), found that favourable developments in community living have counterbalanced unfavourable effects of

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risk factors on the incidence of depression, resulting in a net reduction of depression incidence among young-old adults. Rook, K. S. (1987) indicated that companionship strongly predicted social satisfaction.

Cultivating mature interpersonal relationships is one of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of psychosocial developmental issues that college students face. In sum, for millions of young adults, developing meaningful interpersonal relationships is essential to their mental and physical health. Students' ability to form meaningful relationships with other students leads to gains in multiple dimensions of psychological well-being, including environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Bowman, 2010). Students' ability to develop quality friendships at college predicts decreases in both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviours. (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). Roommates have frequent contact, negotiate responsibilities, and adjust their living habits and environments such as noise level, sleep/waking hours, guests, study/work habits, etc. Students' roommates are typically the first non-family members with whom they live.

Despite the limited presence of college roommate relationship studies over several decades, no literature reviews summarize the empirical knowledge about the personality factors that have an impact on roommate satisfaction. Although many factors can determine compatibility, we have identified four factors namely, Warmth, Academic Competence, Competitiveness and Social Potency as personality variables that impact satisfaction among roommates. Each of these four variables has sub-variables that add to their effect on Roommate Relationship Satisfaction. The present study focuses on how these variables are correlated with relationship satisfaction among roommates. Two interpersonal traits, warmth and dominance, have been proposed as the primary components of social behaviour and as important determinants of relationship outcomes. (Tracey, 1994)

Interpersonal warmth is a "pleasant, contented, intimate feeling that occurs during favourable positive interactions with others. In its behavioural expression, it has been described as an "actively conveyed positive response to others". Diane Carlson Jones (1991) demonstrated that intimacy, self-disclosure, trust, and the affection and warmth associated with companionship are the most important contributors to friendship satisfaction among both males and females.

This domain has two sub-variables i.e., **Agreeableness and Introversion**.

Agreeableness is a personality facet that includes attributes such as trust, kindness, affection, and altruism. People who are high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative and trustworthy. They easily comply with others and have a high level of empathy for others. Tov, W.,(2014) explored the mechanisms by which extraversion and agreeableness affect satisfaction with social relationships. The effect of extraversion was mediated by greater levels of trust in others, whereas the effect of agreeableness was mediated by less frequent negative exchanges (e.g., criticism, perceived anger, and perceived neglect).

Introversion according to APA is "an orientation toward the internal private world of one's self and one's inner thoughts and feelings, rather than toward the outer world of people and things". Introversion is a broad personality trait and, like extraversion, exists on a continuum of attitudes and behaviours. Introverts are relatively more withdrawn, retiring, reserved, quiet, and deliberate; they may tend to mute or guard expressions of positive affect, adopt more sceptical views or positions, and prefer to work independently.

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The second broad domain that impacts relationship satisfaction among roommates is **Academic Competence**. The multidimensional characteristics of a learner – including skills, attitudes, and behaviours – that factor into their academic success. Academic skills are both the basic and complex skills (e.g., reading, writing, calculating, and critical thinking) needed to access and interact with content-specific knowledge. The quality of new college friendships predicts how well students adjust to interpersonal experiences at college, their feelings of attachment to a university, and their coping with academic demands (*Buote et al., 2007*).

Academic competence has two sub-categories including **Achievement and Conscientiousness**.

Achievement is a measure of success and accomplishment. It is the degree to which an individual has accomplished his or her goals. Achievement is described as a way of reflecting on the attempts to do something and the degree to which it provides a positive sense of accomplishment. *Wangshuai Wang (2017)* suggested that achievement goals were positively related to satisfaction in life.

Conscientiousness trait, which includes thoughtfulness, appropriate impulse control, and goal-directed behaviours, are typical of this personality trait. Highly conscientious people tend to be detailed oriented and organised. They are achievement-oriented, reliable, and prudent. John Kurtz (2003) examined self-other correlations for trait ratings using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory with 103 pairs of previously unacquainted female college roommates. They found that self-other correlations increased for all five NEO-FFI scores and agreement correlations for Conscientiousness were significantly higher than for Extraversion on both occasions. Better relationship quality was associated with higher other ratings of Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness and lower other ratings of Neuroticism after controlling for self-ratings on the same traits.

Competitiveness also plays an important role in the level of satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Competitiveness is a measure of a person's desire to surpass others. A highly competitive person is more likely to see a situation as a competition, even when there is no explicit winner or loser. Competitiveness can motivate a person to work harder than they would have alone. People are more likely to be competitive when they measure their self-worth by comparing themselves to others.

The competitiveness domain has three sub-variables, **Extroversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience**.

Extraversion is characterized by sociability, talkativeness, and assertiveness. People high on extraversion traits are outgoing and tend to drive their energy through social situations. They are thrill-seeking and emotionally expressive. Colin G. et.al., (2013) suggest that two dimensions of the Big Five, Extraversion and Agreeableness, are strongly related to interpersonal behaviour. *Lepore, (1992)* 228, conducted a study on students (122 female), mostly undergraduates (93%), demonstrating that a supportive roommate relationship can exert a cross-domain buffering effect of social support. Jain and Singh (2019) found a positive relationship between extraversion and general relationship satisfaction.

Neuroticism is characterized by moodiness and emotional impulsiveness. Individuals high in neuroticism tend to experience distress, irritability, and sadness. They are emotionally less

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stable. A longitudinal study was conducted by *Scollon and Diener in 2006* to study individual differences in change in extraversion, neuroticism, work and relationship satisfaction. A sample of 1,130 individuals aged between 16 to 70 was studied. Respondents were assessed every 2 years from 1981 to 1989. It was found that relationship satisfaction was associated with decreases in neuroticism and increases in extraversion over time.

Openness is a characteristic that includes exploration and imagination. People high in this domain are enthused to learn new things and relish new experiences. A curiosity drives them about the world and other people. They are creative and abstract thinking is central to them. Kurtz and Sherker (2003), good relationship quality was associated with higher other ratings than self-ratings on Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness and lower other ratings than self-ratings on Neuroticism, in a study examining self-other correlations for trait ratings using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory with 103 pairs of previously unacquainted female college students. In addition, Barber (2015), found that Openness to experience was the most important personality dimension when correlated with roommate satisfaction.

The fourth domain is **Social Potency**, which refers to the degree to which individuals are socially dominant or submissive. **Social dominance** pertains to interpersonal power, and a desire to have an impact on others. People who are strong in this personality trait are described as forceful, decisive, fond of influencing others, and fond of leadership roles. According to the Interpersonal Complex Model, an individual who is warm and dominant invites warm and submissive responses from others, and an individual who is cold and submissive invites cold and dominant behaviours from others. (Ansell,2008)

Social submissiveness on the contrary means to comply which the demands of others even if you do not wish to. People who are highly submissive tend to give into other people's whims and desires in order to please them or be liked by them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Otuuchi, Adeniyi and Enyi (2021) examined the extent to which personality types can determine roommate relationships among undergraduates of Obafemi Awolowo University through a survey which was administered to 900 students. The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship existing between personality types (A and B) and roommate relationship satisfaction among undergraduates. The results also demonstrated that there was a negative and insignificant relationship between sex and roommate relationship satisfaction among undergraduates and a negative and significant relationship between age and roommate relationship satisfaction.

Aastha Jain and Sukhmani Singh (2019) conducted a study to find out the relationship between extraversion and general relationship satisfaction, using The Big Five Personality Test and Relationship Assessment Scale. The study was conducted on 100 subjects, out of which 40 were males and 60 were females. The sample was collected using snowball sampling, from different states of North India. Pearson's correlation was computed. A positive correlation of 0.596 was found, significant at 0.01 level. This may be attributed to the fact that extroverts are more enthusiastic, effective communicators and high on positive affect.

Taggart, Bannon and Hammett (2019) studied the association between personality traits, relationship satisfaction and communication. Statistical tests for descriptive analyses were conducted in SPSS Version 24. A total of 58 couples (N=58 couples (N 58 couples (N =

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116) participated in the study. The results showed that for individuals with lower-than-average levels of conscientiousness and neuroticism, the link was positive; for individuals with above-average levels of conscientiousness and neuroticism, the link was negative.

Gonzanga and his colleagues (2007) also suggested that all Big Five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience) significantly predicted greater relationship quality for both men and women.

Courtney Barber (2015), examined the relationship between personality similarity and roommate satisfaction. The results showed a significant negative correlation between roommate satisfaction and the absolute value of the difference between roommate personalities on Openness to Experience ($p = .009$). The four other dimensions of the Big Five Inventory did not show significance at a level of $p < 0.05$. An individual finds more satisfaction with their roommate if their personalities are similar with regards to the personality dimension: Openness to Experience.

Haefel & Hames (2014), conducted a study on 103 pairs of randomly assigned first-year students CR (66 female pairs) at a private, midsized Midwestern university. They used dyadic data analysis techniques to demonstrate that cognitive vulnerability to depression can be “contagious” among College Roommates.

Bahns Crandall, Canevello, and Jennifer (2013) investigated how our personality traits affect our satisfaction with roommates. They identified the characteristics of the self, the partner, and of the relationship that predict desires to dissolve roommate relationships. A total of 115 college roommate dyads were taken as a sample. They measured personality, mental health, social/communication patterns, and academic achievement attitudes over the course of a semester, and then used multilevel modelling to estimate individual-level and relationship-level predictors of dissolution. They found that if there is positive competition among roommates then it affects positively but if negative competition is there it affects the relationship adversely.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to assess the Relationship between Personality Traits and the Satisfaction of Roommates.

Objectives

- To assess the relationship between Warmth and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.
- To assess the relationship between Academic Competence and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.
- To assess the relationship between Competitiveness and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.
- To assess the relationship between Social Potency and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between Warmth and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.

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- There will be a significant relationship between Academic Competence and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.
- There will be a significant relationship between Competitiveness and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.
- There will be a significant relationship between Social Potency and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.

Sample

The total number of participants in this study were 318 roommate pairs (N= 159) from universities in Delhi NCR.

Research Design

A quantitative, non-experimental design is used in the study. The statistical metric used was correlation analysis using SPSS (version 22.0) to assess the relationship between personality factors and satisfaction among individuals in a platonic relationship.

Measures

Codee Compatibility Inventory- Roommates (CCI-R)

Participants were given the "codee Compatibility Inventory-Roommates (CCI-R)," a self-made questionnaire. 109 items from four standardised questionnaires were taken to create the CCI-R and Relational Satisfaction scale. Relational satisfaction and CCI-R combined reliability have been established which is 0.788. The internal consistency of CCI-R is 0.733. The composition of CCI-R is explained below.

Composition of CCI-R

Name of the tool	Developed by	Variables
Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)	Auke Tellegen in 1982	Social Potency and Introversion
Big five personality Inventory	McCrae & Costa (1987)	Openness, Agreeableness, Extroversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness
Relationship Rating Form (RRF)	Davis & Mann,1987.	Relationship Satisfaction
McGill Friendship Questionnaire	Mendelson, M. J. & Aboud, F. (1999)	Relationship Satisfaction
Lifestyle questions	Author constructed	Lifestyle

Procedure

The aim of the study was to assess the Relationship between Personality Traits and the Satisfaction of Roommates. For this purpose, data from 159 pairs,318 individuals were gathered using a survey method. An informed consent, demographic sheet, and codee Compatibility Inventory- Roommates (CCI-R) were combined and prepared for circulation. A QR code scanner was also created for ease of data collection. It was ensured that the individuals who are residing as roommates fill out the form in pairs. The demographic sheet asked for preliminary information like name(optional), e-mail, contact details, and the number of roommates staying together. The instructions for filling out the questionnaires were given to the participants, and their queries were answered. There was no time constraint to fill out the form and the confidentiality of their responses was maintained.

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After the completion of the data collection process, the data was cleaned and analysed using correlation analysis.

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to assess the Relationship between Personality Factors and the Relationship Satisfaction of Roommates. The following figures and tables indicate the results of the present study through correlation analysis.

Table 1 The correlation between Personality Factors and Relationship Satisfaction of Roommates.

Variables	Pearson's Correlation	p
Warmth + Relationship Satisfaction	$r = 0.263$	Sig**
Academic Competence + Relationship Satisfaction	$r = 0.312$	Sig**
Competitiveness + Relationship Satisfaction	$r = 0.375$	Sig**
Social Potency + Relationship Satisfaction	$r = 0.366$	Sig**

Note. Significant at **0.01** levels. Sig** < 0.01)

Figure 1 Scatterplot Graph showing correlation between Warmth and Relationship Satisfaction.

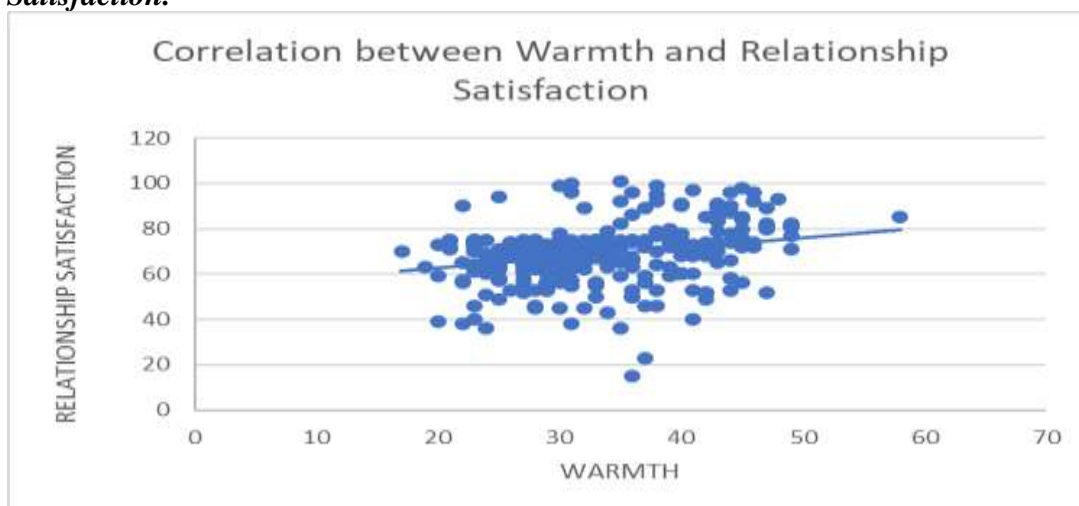


Figure 2 Scatterplot Graph showing correlation between Academic Competence and Relationship Satisfaction.

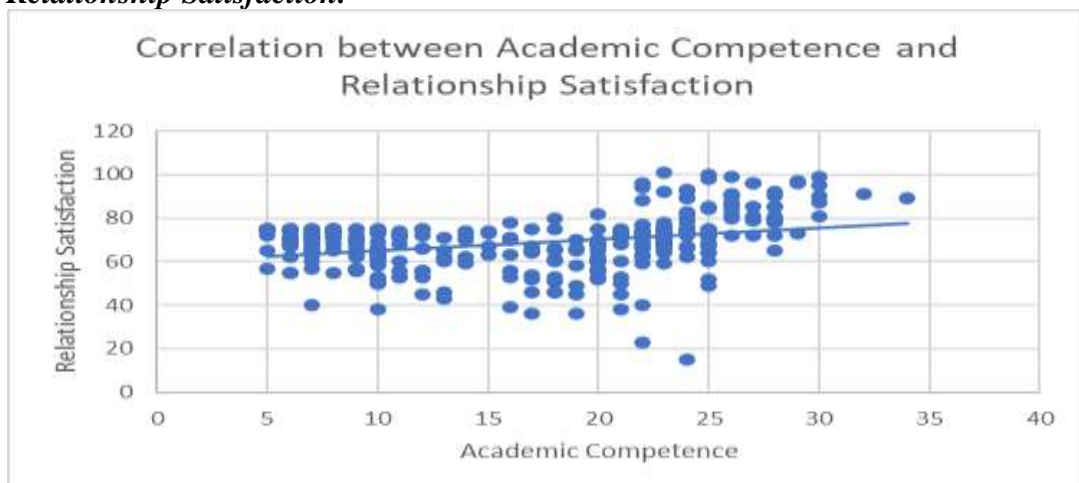


Figure 3 Scatterplot Graph showing correlation between Competitiveness and Relationship Satisfaction.

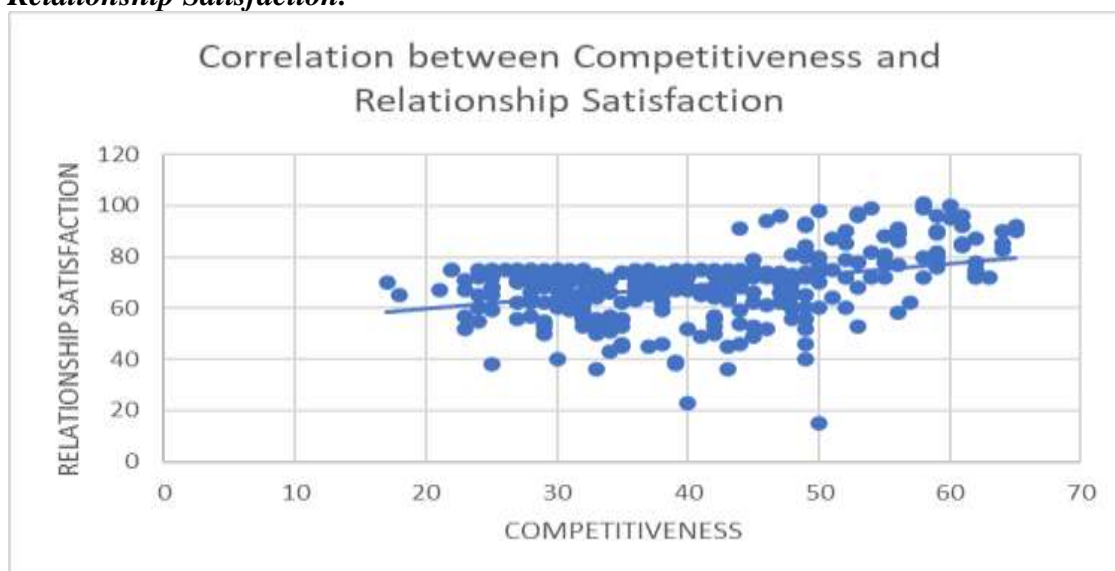
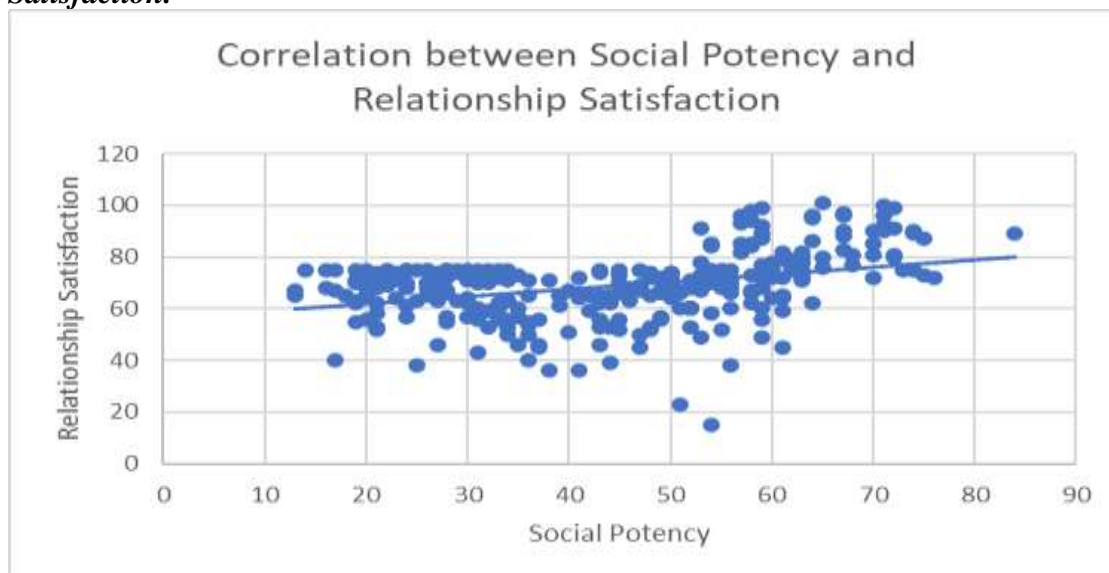


Figure 4 Scatterplot Graph showing correlation between Social Potency and Relationship Satisfaction.



DISCUSSION & INTERPRETATION

The research repository suggests that students tend to move thousands of miles from home for education and career opportunities, losing immediate access to their friends and families. In addition to adapting to the changing environment, finding a compatible roommate becomes a stressor. The aim of the current study was to determine the Relationship between Personality Factors and the Relationship Satisfaction of Roommates. The sample consisted of 318 college students as well as the millennial workforce who had been staying with their roommates for the past three months. The survey was conducted online using a self-constructed questionnaire named "Codee Compatibility Inventory-Roommates (CCI-R). The data collected were later analyzed through IBM- SPSS software, employing Correlation analysis to assess the relationship between the four identified personality variables and the relationship satisfaction for roommates staying together.

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The objectives formulated for the purpose of this study are to assess the relationship between Warmth and Relational Satisfaction of roommates. To assess the relationship between Academic Competence and Relational Satisfaction of roommates. Moreover, to assess the relationship between Competitiveness and Relational Satisfaction of roommates. Finally, to assess the relationship between Social Potency and Relational Satisfaction of roommates.

Relational satisfaction is the subjective evaluation of one's quality of relationship with others. Personality refers to distinct ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving. Our personality traits are the root cause of innate differences across individuals, influencing how we interact with people and ultimately impacting our relationships with others. The four personality variables, Warmth, Academic Competence, Competitiveness, and Social Potency were identified as factors contributing to roommate satisfaction. The present study was conducted to determine the relationship between these variables and relational satisfaction among roommates.

Interpersonal Warmth encompasses genuine friendliness, affection, helpfulness, and trustworthiness. Those who score higher in measures of warmth tend to value nurturance over autonomy, view others as more trustworthy, and have a greater appreciation for and are more motivated to please others. The present study's findings fulfil our first hypothesis that there will be a significant relationship between Warmth and Relational Satisfaction of roommates. As evident in Table 1, there is a positive correlation of 0.263 between Warmth and Relationship Satisfaction. In line with our study's findings, Waldo & Fuhrman, 1981 conducted a study on 19 pairs of on-campus College Roommates at a large Mid-western university (94% female) roommates who rated themselves as having the highest level of trust and intimacy within their relationship rated themselves as having a significantly higher overall emotional adjustment.

With regard to the second hypothesis states that there will be a significant relationship between Academic Competence and the Relational Satisfaction of roommates. This hypothesis was accepted as a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.312$) was found between Academic Competence and Relationship Satisfaction among Roommates. This finding is consistent with previous research wherein, Waldo in 1986 found that positive roommate communication skills and higher-quality relationships with roommates were both associated with higher GPAs and greater retention.

The third hypothesis, which postulates that there will be a significant relationship between Competitiveness and Relational Satisfaction of roommates was accepted as significant. As illustrated in Table 1, Competitiveness has the highest positive correlation of 0.375 with Relationship Satisfaction among roommates staying together.

The finding is consistent with the previous research of Bahns (2013), which suggests that having a similar orientation toward competition can promote a more harmonious roommate relationship. This means that the more there is healthy competition among roommates the better will be the relational satisfaction among them.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis, that there will be a significant relationship between Social Potency and Relational Satisfaction of roommates was also accepted. As depicted in table 1, the correlation between Social Potency and Relationship Satisfaction was found to be 0.366.

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Kiesler in 1996, found that if the interactions between two people are complementary, their relationship tends to be more stable, more enduring, and more satisfying. This means that a socially dominant individual will be more compatible with a socially submissive individual.

CONCLUSION

Transitioning to adulthood involves independent living that brings excitement along with an unprecedented set of challenges. The aim of the present study is to investigate the Relationship between Personality Factors and the Relationship Satisfaction of Roommates. The findings of our research show that there was a significant correlation between the four identified personality variables (Warmth, Academic Competence, Competitiveness, and Social Potency) and the relationship satisfaction of roommates. It was seen that Competitiveness among all four factors was highly correlated with Relationship Satisfaction among roommates staying together.

The research is significant because it emphasizes the role of personality traits in fostering relationship satisfaction among roommate relationships in India. We believe these findings will interest the readers of your journal as they reveal the dynamics of platonic interpersonal relationships.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, the small sample size (n =318), limited the generalizability of the results. Future studies can employ a larger sample size.

Secondly, the present research relied on self-report tools to collect data and, therefore, could be limited by self-report biases such as social desirability.

Moreover, due to time restrictions, the participants were asked to fill out the survey form at their time of convenience, this hampered the control over confounding variables like the mood of the participant and other situational variables like an argument with a roommate.

Furthermore, to comprehend the identified personality variables and roommate relationship, we only used one approach, i.e., what is the correlation between personality factors and relationship satisfaction. Future studies are advised to use a variety of approaches to ensure platonic relationships are relationally fulfilled.

Future studies can be made gender-neutral by considering the equal representation of both genders in the sample size. In addition, the present study only focuses on quantitative data so it is recommended to have qualitative data to better understand why personality factors affect roommate relationships. Finally, future studies can conduct a comparison among students in different college years including, the first, second, and third years.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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