

Comparative Study

The Impact of Personality Traits on The Level of Homophobia Among College Going Students: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Homophobic attitudes and behaviours have always been a concern in the society. Due to lack of study, the causes and factors involved in such behaviours and attitudes were hard to understand and homosexual people were continuously facing the issues. The aim of the present study is to assess the relationship between different personality traits and the level of Homophobia among college going students, along with an analysis of difference between homophobia level and between personality traits of college going males and females. Psychological tools such as NEO- FFI and WAB Homophobia Scale were used. 85 males and females from Delhi-NCR college were taken as a sample for this research. Results were then analysed using correlation and t-test which demonstrated a negative correlation between personality traits and homophobia level. It also showed that there exists a significant difference among females and males in their ideations towards homosexuality, while there is no significant difference among males and females in personality traits. The investigation can advise the improvement regarding instructive mediations pointed toward lessening homophobia and regarding arrangements and projects pointed toward advancing incorporation and variety on school grounds to create effective intervention programs. However, since the study mainly focuses on general personality traits and homophobia and is limited to a certain age group and geographical area, an extended version can be done in future so that people of all age groups and other demographic details like socio-economic status, geographical areas, etc. with specific traits can be considered.

Keywords: *Homophobia, Personality, Homophobic Attitudes, Personality Traits*

Homophobia is a term used to describe the fear, hatred, or prejudice towards individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning). It can manifest in various forms, including discrimination, bullying, and violence. Homophobia is prevalent in many societies around the world, and it has significant negative impacts on the mental and physical health of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Personality traits, on the other hand, refer to the patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that distinguish individuals from one another. There are various models of personality traits, but the most widely accepted one is the Big Five model, which includes

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openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Personality traits have been linked to various social attitudes and behaviours, including prejudice and discrimination.

A comparative study on the impact of personality traits on the level of homophobia among college-going students is a critical area of research, given the prevalence of homophobia among this population. College students are in a unique developmental stage, where they are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood and are likely to be exposed to diverse cultures, ideas, and lifestyles. They are also at an age where they are more likely to develop and express their attitudes and beliefs about various social issues.

Understanding the impact of personality traits on homophobia among college students is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it helps to identify the factors that contribute to the development of homophobia among this population. Secondly, it helps to develop effective interventions and prevention programs to address homophobia among college students. Thirdly, it provides insights into the complex nature of attitudes and behaviours towards marginalized groups and highlights the need for greater understanding and tolerance.

Homophobia

Homophobia is a term used to describe the fear, hatred, or prejudice towards individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning). Homophobia can manifest in various forms, including discrimination, harassment, and violence. It can be overt, such as physical or verbal assault, or covert, such as exclusion or marginalization.

Forms of Homophobia

1. One form of homophobia is individual homophobia, which refers to the negative attitudes and behaviors towards LGBTQ+ individuals expressed by individuals. It can include overt acts of hostility, such as physical or verbal abuse, or more subtle forms of discrimination, such as exclusion or marginalization.
2. Another form of homophobia is institutional homophobia, which refers to the policies, practices, and norms of social institutions that discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals. Institutional homophobia can take many forms, including legal discrimination, such as the criminalization of homosexuality, or the denial of rights, such as the right to marry or adopt children.
3. A third form of homophobia is cultural homophobia, which refers to the negative attitudes and beliefs towards LGBTQ+ individuals that are embedded in cultural norms and values. Cultural homophobia can be perpetuated through media, religious teachings, and social norms. For example, the media may portray LGBTQ+ individuals as deviant or abnormal, while religious teachings may condemn homosexuality as a sin.
4. Homophobia can also manifest as microaggressions, which are subtle, everyday forms of discrimination that can be difficult to recognize. Microaggressions can include derogatory comments, invalidation of an individual's identity, or assumptions about an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

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Factors Responsible for Homophobia

Here are some of the key factors responsible for homophobia:

1. **Upbringing and socialization:** The family and social environment in which an individual grows up can significantly shape their attitudes and beliefs about LGBTQ+ people. For example, children who are raised in families or communities that promote traditional gender roles or view homosexuality as deviant or immoral may internalize these beliefs and develop negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals.
2. **Cultural and religious beliefs:** Cultural and religious beliefs can also contribute to the development of homophobia. Some religious doctrines or cultural norms view homosexuality as a sin or as unnatural, leading individuals to internalize these beliefs and develop negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people.
3. **Lack of exposure or understanding:** Some individuals may exhibit homophobia simply because they lack exposure or understanding of LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, if an individual has never met an openly LGBTQ+ person or has had limited exposure to LGBTQ+ people in their community or social circle, they may be more likely to hold negative attitudes towards them.
4. **Fear of the unfamiliar:** Fear of the unfamiliar or the unknown can also contribute to the development of homophobia. Some individuals may feel uncomfortable or threatened by people who are different from themselves, including LGBTQ+ individuals.
5. **Misinformation and stereotypes:** Misinformation and stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people can also contribute to the development of homophobia. For example, some individuals may believe that all gay men are promiscuous or that transgender individuals are mentally ill, leading to negative attitudes and discrimination.
6. **Personal insecurities:** Personal insecurities, such as fear of one's own sexual orientation or gender identity, can also contribute to the development of homophobia. Some individuals may feel threatened by LGBTQ+ individuals because they represent a challenge to their own identity or sense of self.
7. **Political and legal factors:** Finally, political and legal factors can also contribute to the development of homophobia. In some countries or regions where laws criminalize homosexuality or where LGBTQ+ individuals are not protected under anti-discrimination laws; homophobia may be more prevalent and socially acceptable.

It is important to note that these factors do not operate in isolation and can interact with one another in complex ways. For example, an individual's cultural or religious beliefs may reinforce negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people, while personal insecurities or a lack of exposure may exacerbate these attitudes. It is also important to recognize that homophobia can have serious negative consequences, including discrimination, harassment, and violence towards LGBTQ+ individuals.

Personality Traits

Personality traits refer to stable patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that are consistent over time and across situations. Personality traits can be classified into different dimensions, with the most widely recognized being the Big Five personality traits. These traits have been extensively studied in the field of psychology and are considered to be the most robust and reliable dimensions of personality.

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Types of Personality Traits

According to Five Factor Model there are five main types of personality traits known as Big Five Personality Traits. These are: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness, and Neuroticism. NEO-FFI is based on this model only.

1. Agreeableness is a measure of an individual's tendencies with respect to social harmony. This trait reflects how well the individual gets along with others, how cooperative or skeptical they are, and how they might interact within a team.
2. Conscientiousness is a measure of how careful, deliberate, self-disciplined, and organized an individual is. Conscientiousness is often predictive of employee productivity, particularly in lower-level positions.
3. Extraversion is a measure of how sociable, outgoing, and energetic an individual is. Individuals who score lower on the extraversion scale are considered to be more introverted, or more deliberate, quiet, low key, and independent. Some types of positions are better suited for individuals who fall on one side of the spectrum or the other.
4. Openness also known as openness to experience measures the extent to which an individual is imaginative and creative, as opposed to down-to-earth and conventional.
5. Neuroticism is a personality trait characterized by sadness, moodiness, and emotional instability. Individuals who are high in neuroticism tend to experience mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and sadness. Those low in this personality trait tend to be more stable and emotionally resilient.

The relevance of personality traits to homophobia lies in the fact that personality traits can influence attitudes and behaviours towards others. Individuals with certain personality traits may be more likely to exhibit homophobic attitudes and behaviours, while those with different traits may be less likely to do so. The Big Five personality traits can potentially impact homophobia in several ways. Openness is characterized by a willingness to experience new ideas and sensations, while conscientiousness is characterized by being responsible, reliable, and organized. Extraversion is characterized by a preference for social interaction, while agreeableness is characterized by being cooperative, empathetic, and kind. Finally, neuroticism is characterized by negative emotions such as anxiety and depression.

Previous research has explored the link between the Big Five personality traits and homophobia. The Big Five personality traits have been found to potentially impact homophobia in various ways. Openness and extraversion are negatively associated with homophobia, while neuroticism is positively associated with it. Agreeableness is negatively associated with homophobia, but the relationship between conscientiousness and homophobia is less clear. However, it is important to note that personality traits are not deterministic, and other factors such as upbringing and cultural norms can also impact attitudes and behaviours towards others. The context in which homophobia is exhibited is also essential to consider.

Importance of Studying the Impact of Personality Traits on Homophobia among College Students

By studying the impact of personality traits on homophobia among college students, we can gain a better understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to the development of homophobia on campuses. This knowledge can then be used to develop more effective

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interventions and prevention programs that are tailored to the specific needs of college students.

In addition to designing more effective interventions and prevention programs, studying the impact of personality traits on homophobia among college students can also help to promote greater diversity and inclusion on campuses. By raising awareness of the impact of personality traits on attitudes and behaviours towards others, we can encourage individuals to reflect on their own biases and develop greater understanding and empathy towards those who are different from themselves.

Moreover, studying the impact of personality traits on homophobia can also help to create a safer and more welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ individuals on college campuses. By understanding the underlying factors that contribute to homophobia, we can work towards creating a more supportive environment for LGBTQ+ individuals, reducing the prevalence of harassment and discrimination.

In conclusion, homophobia remains a prevalent issue among college students, highlighting the urgent need for effective interventions and prevention programs. By studying the impact of personality traits on homophobia among college students, we can gain a better understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to the development of homophobia on campuses. This knowledge can then be used to develop more effective interventions and prevention programs that are tailored to the specific needs of college students, promoting greater diversity and inclusion on campuses and creating a safer and more welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ individuals.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To assess the impact of Personality Traits on the Level of Homophobia among college going students and it is a comparative study among males and females.

Objectives

- OB 1 - To identify the connectedness between Personality Traits on the Level of Homophobia among college going students.
- OB 2 - To study the difference in Personality Traits among male and female college going students.
- OB 3 - To analyze the difference in the level of Homophobia among college going students.

Hypotheses

- H1: There could be negative correlation ship between Personality Traits and the Level of Homophobia among college going students.
- H2: There is no significant difference in Personality Traits among college going male and female students.
- H3: There will be a difference in the level of Homophobia among college going male and female students.

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Participants

The sample consists of 170 individuals (85 males and 85 females) and the sampling design used is purposive sampling. The sample consists of students who are enrolled in a college.

Instruments

The data in this particular study has been obtained with the help of the scales named “NEO-FFI - Form S (Adult)”, “WAB Homophobia Scale”.

Procedure

In order to obtain data, college going students were contacted. The questionnaire was administered to 170 students (both males and females), and then the results were scored. Nobody was made to take part in the study against their will. Participants are informed that the answers and responses will be kept private. Before the information was examined, the answers that were either incomplete or provided insufficient information were discarded. There were no time limits on the surveys, and there was no right or wrong answer to any of the inquiries. After the participants received the instructions and were explained the study's goals, data was collected. Responses were gathered both face-to-face and using Google forms. Each participant's identity and details were kept private. The subjects volunteered to participate in the study and gave their consent. To comprehend the link between the variables, Pearson Correlation and T-Test techniques were used. The data was interpreted and analysed once they had been tabulated.

RESULTS

Table 4.1 Correlation between Personality Traits and Homophobia Scale

Correlations

		Personality Traits	Homophobia Scale
Personality Traits	Pearson Correlation	1	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.617
	N	170	170
Homophobia Scale	Pearson Correlation	-.039	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.617	
	N	170	170

Table 4.1 represents correlation between Personality Traits and Homophobia Scale among young adults. The correlation value is -.039 which shows a negative relationship which is not significant at 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$).

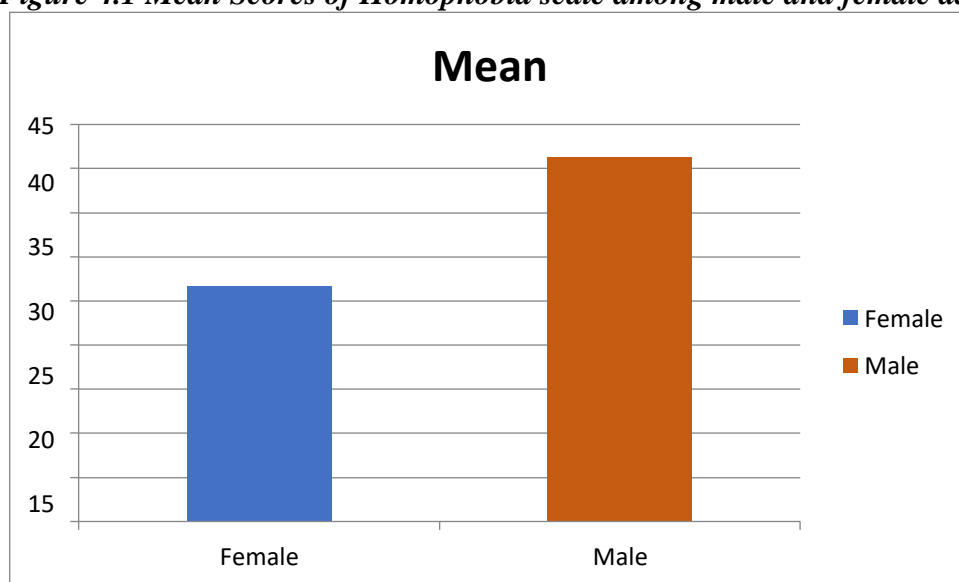
Table 4.2 Group statistics of Homophobia scale in female and male college students.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Homophobia Scale	Female	85	26.7143	13.64045
	Male	85	41.2857	18.47471

Table 4.2 shows N, Mean and Standard Deviation of Homophobia scale in female and male young adults.

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Figure 4.1 Mean Scores of Homophobia scale among male and female adults.



Note: Number of female adults = 85, number of male adults = 85, total N = 170

Table 4.3 t-value, df and Sig. (2-tailed) of Homophobia scale in female and male college students. (N=170)

Independent t-test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Homophobia Scale	-5.815	166	.000

Table 4.3 shows there exists a significant difference in Homophobia scale in female and male adults. (N=170) at 0.01 level.

Table 4.4 Group statistics of Personality traits in females and males in young adults.

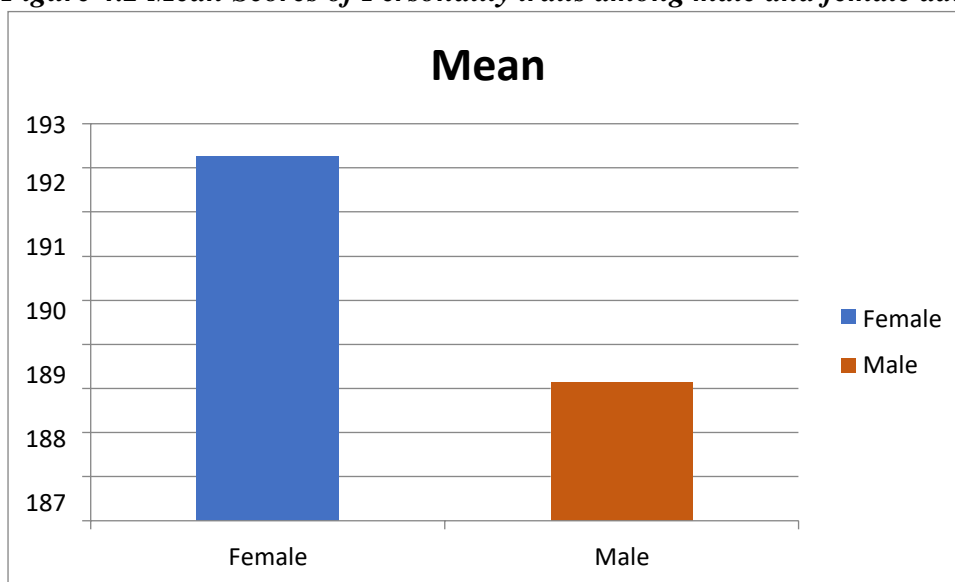
Group statistics

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personality	Female	85	192.2619	16.53847
	Male	85	187.1310	21.63820

Table 4.4 shows N, Mean and Standard Deviation of Personality traits in females and males in young adults.

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Figure 4.2 Mean Scores of Personality traits among male and female adults.



Note: Number of female adults = 85, number of male adults = 85, total N = 170

Table 4.5 t-value, df and Sig. (2-tailed) of Personality traits in females and males in young adults. (N=170)

t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Personality Traits	1.727	166	.086

Table 4.5 represents no significant difference in Personality traits in females and males in young adults. (N=170)

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study is to assess the impact of Personality Traits on the Level of Homophobia among college going students and it is a comparative study among males and females.

The study is using two scales; one is NEO FFI given by Costa & McCrae, to assess personality traits and second is Homophobic Scale given by Wright, Adams, and Bernat to assess homophobic tendencies in an individual. Data is collected from 85 females and 85 males through a Google form and face-to-face meetings. NEO FFI is based on Big 5 factor theory of personality, the scale consists of five dimensions of personality, N = Neuroticism, E = Extraversion, O = Openness to Experience, A = Agreeableness, and C = Conscientiousness. The second scale used is Homophobia scale that consists a mixture of positive and negative items. It measures the nature of attitude of an individual towards homosexuality.

These are the two variables used in the study in which personality is an independent variable and homophobia is a dependent variable. To establish a relationship between independent and dependent variable SPSS tool is used. Pearson Correlation method is applied to determine the direction of the relationship which could be positive or negative. This is the objective of the study.

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There are three hypotheses in the study that can be accepted or rejected based on the analysis done using the above scales and research method.

Hypothesis 1 states that there will be a significant relationship between personality traits and homophobia among college going young adults. From the result section in table 1, it can be seen that the value of correlation coefficient is $-.039$ which is not significant at 0.05 level since the value of p is more than 0.05 level. This gives an interpretation that the relationship between personality traits and homophobia is negative in nature. Hence, it can be said that hypothesis 1 is not accepted. At the point when we say that the connection between personality traits and homophobia is pessimistic in nature, it intends that as the levels of specific character attributes increment, the degrees of homophobia will generally diminish. At the end of the day, there is a reverse connection between character qualities and homophobia.

For instance, investigations have discovered that people who score high on qualities, for example, receptiveness to experience, suitability, and profound security will generally have lower levels of homophobia. Then again, people who score high on attributes like neuroticism, dictatorship, and social strength will generally have more significant levels of homophobia.

It is essential to take note of that this doesn't be guaranteed to imply that all individuals who show these qualities will be either homophobic or non-homophobic, as there can be different variables that impact an individual's mentalities towards homosexuality. Nonetheless, research recommends that personality qualities can assume a part in forming one's perspectives towards homosexuality. It can be said that in order to understand the approach of an individual towards homosexuality, personality traits may play an important role. The attitude of college going young adults may vary with personality; people may have homophobic tendencies based on their personality traits. Although it is also subject to environmental factors but the temperamental factors may be considered as highly crucial. Research has demonstrated the way that if people who are having ideations of homophobia are reared in a conservative environment, then they are more likely to act upon it. Since the environment is enhancing the ideations and the personality is evolved in that sense.

One of the most broadly concentrated on character attributes corresponding to homophobia is receptiveness to encounter. Receptiveness to encounter alludes to a singular's ability to investigate novel thoughts, encounters, and points of view. Research has reliably found that people who score higher on proportions of transparency will generally have lower levels of homophobia (e.g., Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway, 2003; McCrae and Costa, 1987). One more character quality that has been viewed as adversely connected with homophobia is appropriateness. Pleasantness alludes to a singular's propensity to be helpful and compassionate towards others. People who score higher on proportions of appropriateness will generally have lower levels of homophobia (e.g., Whitley, 1999).

Hypothesis 2 states that there will be a significant difference between college going males and females in terms of the level of homophobia. In table 4.2, the mean and standard deviation are presented in males and females on the Homophobia Scale. The mean score among female is 26.7143 and standard deviation score is 13.64045 in the sample of 85 females on the Homophobia Scale. The mean score of male is 41.2857 and standard deviation score is 18.47471 in the sample of 85 males on the Homophobia Scale.

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Table 4.3 represents t-test scores of females in Homophobia Scale, the t-test value is -5.815 which is significant at 0.01 level. The value of sig. (2-tailed) is less than 0.01 which gives an interpretation that there exist a significant difference among females and males in their ideations towards homosexuality. Since the t-test value is significant at 0.01 level, it can be inferred that hypothesis 2 is verified and accepted.

It could depict that the level of homophobia may differ significantly among males and females. Gender here plays an important role towards homophobia; females and males may have different perspective towards homosexuality approach. It may be difficult to say who inclines more towards homophobia which shall be studied further. There may be some more factors that may contribute or influence their perspective.

At the point when we express that there exists a massive contrast among females and guys in their ideations towards homosexuality, it really intends that there are striking varieties in the mentalities and convictions that females and guys hold about homosexuality.

Research has reliably observed that guys will quite often be bound to hold negative mentalities towards homosexuality than females. For instance, studies have shown that guys are bound to communicate inconvenience, repugnance, and antagonism towards gay men than females (e.g., Herek, 2002).

There are a few factors that might add to this distinction in sexual orientation. One chance is that social standards and orientation job assumptions might shape how guys and females see and answer homosexuality. For example, conventional orientation jobs frequently accentuate the significance of male strength, sturdiness, and heterosexuality, which might make tension for guys to move away from anything related with womanliness or homosexuality.

Also, there might be social and natural factors that add to this distinction in sexual orientation. For instance, guys might be bound to be presented to homophobic mentalities and convictions from peers, relatives, or media than females, which could impact their own perspectives and convictions about homosexuality.

Lastly, hypothesis 3 states that there is no significant difference among males and females in terms of personality traits among college going young adults. In table 4.4 the mean scores and standard deviation scores are presented among females and males in Personality Scale. In females the mean score is 192.2619 and standard deviation score is 16.53847, the data is collected from a sample of 85 females. The mean score in males is 187.1310 and standard deviation score is 21.63820 in personality scale from a sample of 85 males.

At the point when we express that there is a massive contrast among guys and females in character qualities among school going youthful grown-ups, it truly intends that there are observable varieties in the character qualities that are more pervasive in guys versus females in this populace. Research has shown that there are a few predictable contrasts in character qualities among guys and females. For instance, females will generally score higher on proportions of pleasantness, good faith, and neuroticism, while guys will more often than not score higher on proportions of receptiveness and extraversion (e.g., Costa and McCrae, 1992; Feingold, 1994).

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Suitability alludes to a singular's propensity to be agreeable, compassionate, and kind towards others. Uprightness alludes to a singular's inclination to be mindful, coordinated, and self-trained. Neuroticism alludes to a singular's inclination to encounter gloomy feelings, like nervousness and dread. Receptiveness alludes to a singular's eagerness to investigate ground-breaking thoughts, encounters, and points of view. Extraversion alludes to a singular's inclination to search out friendly excitement and appreciate being around others.

It is essential to take note of that these distinctions in sexual orientation in character attributes are not outright, and there can be critical changeability inside sexes too. Also, ecological elements, for example, social standards and socialization rehearses, can impact the outflow of character qualities in the two guys and females.

From result table 4.5, it can be seen that the value of t-test is 1.727 in personality scale and the value of sig. (2-tailed) is .086 which is more than 0.01 or 0.05. The value of t-test is not significant at 0.01 or 0.05 level which depicts that there is no significant difference among males and females in personality traits. Hence, the hypothesis 3 is also accepted.

In conclusion, there are three hypotheses in this study that needs to be tested. From the result table 4.1 it can be said that the hypotheses 1 is rejected. From table 4.3 and table 4.5 , it can be seen that hypothesis 2 and 3 are accepted. Hence, the relationship between personality traits and level of homophobia is not significant. The difference between males and females in homophobia is significant at 0.01 level but the difference between males and females in personality traits is not significant.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess the impact of Personality Traits on the Level of Homophobia among college going students and it is a comparative study among males and females.

This focuses on three main objectives to determine relationship between personality traits and homophobia tendencies; and to determine difference between males and females in personality traits and homophobia tendencies.

The study consists of three hypotheses, from the discussion above it can be inferred that the hypotheses 1 is not accepted as the value of coefficient of correlation in table 4.1. This means that the relationship is not significant and the nature of relationship is negative. This depicts that personality traits and homophobia tendencies are negatively correlated. The difference between males and females in their personality traits is also not significant. The hypothesis 2 and 3 are accepted since the value of t-test is significant at 0.01 level among males and females in homophobia scale and the value of t-test in table 4.5 is not significant at 0.01 levels.

This may depict that gender may be an essential aspect in the enhancement of homosexuality as a concept.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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