

## A Study of Personality Traits and Mental Health of Adolescents in Delhi NCR

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### ABSTRACT

Our thinking, feelings and behaviour as well as our unique individually contribute a lot to our mental health. The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between mental health and personality traits among adolescents and to find out the gender difference on personality traits and mental health among adolescents. A total of 100 participants were purposefully selected from Schools of Gurugram, India. Personality traits were measure by using PGI Health Questionnaire N-2 and mental health using student personal problem inventory. The correlation and independent t-test were used for analyzing the data. The result shows 1. That there is significant correlation between personality traits and mental health; 2. Independent t- test found that there is significant difference in terms of gender, female have good personality traits and mental health as compared to male adolescents. Early detection for indications of mental health problems and understanding factors contributing to stress among students would promote better understanding of mental health in future and findings suggest that should do more researches about students' mental health and personality characteristics.

**Keywords:** *Personality traits, Mental health, Adolescents.*

**P**ersonality is a concept to be used to recognize stability and consistency of behavior across different situations, uniqueness of the person and individual differences. The word personality has been derived from the Latin word Persona. 'At first this word was used for the mask worn by the actors (Roman and Greek) in ancient times, to indicate to the audiences whether they played the villain's or the hero's role in a drama. Thus the mask gave the actor his characteristic features. It is the combination of an individual thoughts, characteristics,

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behaviors, attitude, idea and habits and it can also be defined as the set of habitual behaviors, cognitions and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors and in other words it's an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns (Funder, 2004, p. 5). The study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One understands individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. The other understands how the various parts of a person come together as a whole.

Personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics that are the embodiment of an individual. They are your habitual patterns of behavior, temperament and emotion. Personality traits reflect people's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; they are more consistent and stable. People differ from one another in terms of where they stand on a set of basic trait dimensions that persist over time and across situations.

Personality traits is one of the main concentration of this research, the way we think, feel and behave and our unique individuality have significant contribution on our mental health as in our psychopathology. Some individuals are more prone to mental illness and psychopathology because of their characteristics and personality traits (Hampson & Friedman, 2008), whereas some others experience higher level of mental health because of their personality traits and characters (Cloninger, 1999, 2004; Seligman et al., 2005; Wood & Tarrier, 2010). Therefore, it seems that some individuals are more susceptible to mental illness, thereby threatening their mental health.

Another controversy in personality psychology addresses the nature and domain of personality. Do personality traits locate as some separate constructs that are either present or absent in individuals? Or they should be considered in a continuum? The answer to this question has grave theoretical and practical implications not only in personality psychology, but also in mental health. The purpose of this research is to explain and debate important role of personality traits in mental health in a comprehensive context and finally accentuate and propose prospective areas of personality regarding to both mental health.

The importance of personality to mental health entails accurate definition of both personality and mental health. According to World Health Organization (WHO) health is defined as —a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001b, and p1).

The term mental health literacy 'was first coined by Jorm et al. (1997) meaning knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention'(p.182). As it is said earlier, WHO has included mental well-being in the definition of health, WHO famously defines health as: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not 22 merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001). Menninger (1945) defined mental health as the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness.

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Psychological health (Rosenthal & Hooley, 2010), well-being (Josefsson et al., 2011), subjective well-being or happiness (Lucas & Diener, 2008; Ryan and Deci, 2001; Luhmann et al., 2012), Psychological well-being or eudaimonia (Cloninger & Zohar 2011; Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2011) mental hygiene (Barenbaum & Winter, 2008) and psychological wealth (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008) are terms and concepts in the realm of mental health each one points to psychological functioning and determines styles of behaving leading to healthy state. Therefore, personality which directs our ways of thinking, feeling and behaving is an undeniable construct in determining these healthy states.

Anand (1999) conducted a study on mental health of 370 students of IX, X, XI and XII grades. He reported no significant impact of gender and class on the mental health. However, Nanda (2001) studied the mental health of high school students. The sample consisted of 1579 students from 86 schools covering Cuttack district, Orissa. Mental Health Scale developed by Nanda (1989) along with the interview schedules for parents, teachers and head masters was administered. The results revealed that female students were found to have better mental health than male students. While comparing male and female students in urban, rural and ashram schools separately it was found that male and female students in urban and ashram schools had similar mental health, whereas female students had better mental health than male students in rural schools.

Indian council of medical research reported that about 12.8 per cent of children suffer from mental health problems in India. At least one in five children and adolescents may express a mental was previously stated that there was no one "official" definition health problem in any year and in the United States, it is estimated of mental health.

### ***Mental Health and Wellbeing in Adolescence***

Mental health is an essential part of holistic wellbeing. The general well-being of adolescents has been the topic of considerable debate in recent years. Evidence has suggested that the current level of behavioral and emotional problems in teenagers is higher than in the past. Mental health is a way of describing social and emotional wellbeing. Good mental health is central to the adolescent's healthy development. It is associated with:

- Feeling happy and positive about yourself and enjoying life
- Healthy relationships with family and friends
- Participation in physical activity and eating a healthy diet
- the ability to relax and to get a good night's sleep
- Community participation and belonging.

### ***Risk and Protective Factors of Adolescent's Mental Health***

A mental health risk factor is an internal (e.g. temperament) or external (e.g. environment) condition that increases the likelihood of the development of a mental health problem. Alternatively, a mental health protective factor is an internal or external condition that mitigates against the development of mental health problems and helps to promote resiliency. While no single risk factor can predict the development of mental illness or any single protective factor assure immunity. Adolescent mental health is a concern for health

professionals as the 38 prevalence of mental health problems appears to peak in adolescence and early adulthood because of the biological and psychosocial transitions that are occurring in this age group.

Adolescence is a major transitional period between childhood and adulthood and many changes—physical, emotional and social—occur during this time. These changes can precipitate and perpetuate mental health difficulties in young people. Due to the amount of changes that occur in adolescence, younger and older adolescents are at quite distinct life stages and are biologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally distinct.

### ***Importance of Promoting Adolescent Mental Well-Being***

In the short term: Interrupting poor mental health as soon as possible in the childhood and adolescent years will reap instant rewards for young people. Those who are supported and have more positive mental health can learn better and are more likely to fulfill their social, academic and training potential. It is likely that intervening more effectively and imaginatively could significantly reduce adolescent mortality (through reducing suicide rates) and improve life experiences. If we can accurately assess mental health problems, and we know both how to intervene and also that intervention may work, then there is an ethical imperative to do something as soon as we can.

In the **longer-term**, enhancing health and educational outcomes will benefit young people in the shorter term, but will of course benefit all of us in the longer term as well. A significant proportion of young people with mental health problems will go on to be adults with not just ongoing mental health problems, but also range of other poor outcomes as well – difficulties with relationships, unstable employment histories, involvement in crime, and social exclusion. Research has shown that by age 28, people with continuing high levels of antisocial behavior have cost society up to 10 times more than those with no problems – these are the costs of public services such as extra educational provision, foster and residential care, and unemployment benefits, quite apart from the personal costs to the individual .

### ***Relationship between personality and mental health***

We realized definition of personality and mental health. The question is that how their relationship is shaped? Personality is a significant predictor of mental health (Cloninger et al., 1997; Gestsdóttir and Lerner, 2007; Davydov et al., 2010), including positive mental health/wellbeing (Cloninger and Zohar, 2011; Josefsson et al., 2011; Butkovic et al., 2012). Healthy personality development is related to several aspects of well-being and there is a need for integrating the contributions of personality to well-being on current approaches to mental health (Seligman, 2008; Cloninger, 2012; Vaillant, 2012). Many studies have shown the effect of personality, personality traits, and personality dimensions in mental health (e.g., Josefsson et al., 2011; Cloninger & Zohar, 2011; Cloninger, 1999; Cloninger, 2004; Cloninger, 2006; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Aboaja, Duggan, & Park, 2011; Chan & Joseph, 2000; Herero & Extremera, 2010; Wood & Tarrrier, 2010; Joseph & Wood, 2010). A

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cumulating body of research suggests that there are variables such as personality traits that predispose individuals to experience specific life events (Luhmann et al., 2012).

### ***Significance Of The Study***

Personality traits and mental health can be observed in each adolescent and the intensity or weakness of these traits is different in individuals and these differences are responsible for mental states to be healthy or unhealthy. School Mental Health has been a major mental health movement which covers up the large population of adolescent, but has not been effectively implemented in school and educational institutions. Child Mental Health Policy and School Mental Health programs have provided excellent opportunity to enhance mental health program for adolescents. The focus is rightly on school based mental health program, which will prevent illness and possibly promote positive mental health. It also ensures that it will reduce behavior disorders in adolescents and prevent adult psychopathology. Effectiveness of mental health intervention programs will surely help in addressing mental health disorders among adolescents. In order to achieve desired outcomes one should embrace all those services that contribute to the mental health care of adolescents.

The present study is a positive step in the direction of ascertaining mental health of the adolescents. Knowledge of the same would help to facilitate the interventional programs for enriching the developmental process of adolescents.

### ***Objectives:***

1. To assess the relationship between personality trait and mental health
2. To study the gender difference in the personality traits of adolescents in the age range 15 – 18 years
3. To study the gender difference in the mental health of adolescents in the age range 15 – 18 years

### ***Hypotheses***

1. There will be positive relationship between personality traits and mental health
2. There will be no significant difference between male and female adolescents in the age range 15-18 on personality traits
3. There will be no significant difference between male and female adolescents in the age range 15-18 on mental health

## **METHOD**

### ***Sample***

The sample of the present research consists of 100 adolescents comprising of 50 male and 50 female. The age range of the adolescents was 15-18 years and data was collected from Senior Secondary School of Gurugram. Purposive random sampling technique was used for selecting the subjects.

### ***Research Design***

The current study employed a descriptive correlation research design in order to explore the correlation ship of personality traits and mental health in adolescents and to compare the gender difference among adolescents on personality traits and mental health.

**Selection Of Tools**

The selection of tools for a study depends upon various considerations such as their availability, objectives of the study. The description of each tool is as follows:

**1. Student personal problem index** – used in the present research was developed by N.N Wig and R.N Nagpal (1971), was used to assess the presence of emotional difficulties as are typical to students. It consists of 25 YES‘ or No‘ responses items. Low score on test yields high and better mental health status whereas high score indicates low mental health status. The validity and reliability was fair.

**2. PGI Health Questionnaire N 2** – used in the present research was developed by Wig and Verma (1978). It consists of fifty items with Yes/No answers and a lie score of ten items. First 38 items which deals with physical health problems and remaining items deals with psychological problems. The scale measures neurosis components. If the respondents are illiterate, read to him/her each question slowly and record their responses. A high score need not always indicate neurosis; it shows a propensity to develop neurotic symptoms under stress. The scoring is easy, simple and objective. It has the added advantage of having a validated Hindi version suitable for vernacular speaking Indian clients. The test re-test reliability measure was .83 and it was validated with P.T.I., Hamilton's Anxiety Scale and P.E.N.

**RESULT**

*Table 1 showing relationship between personality traits and mental health in male and female adolescents*

Variable	Mental Health
Personality traits	.202*

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a positive relationship between personality traits and mental health in male and female adolescents as the value is .202 and significant at 0.05 level. If the personality traits are good than mental health will be good or if the, personality traits are bad than mental health will not be good. The result of present study result accepts the hypothesis -1 which states that there will be positive relationship between personality traits and mental health in male and female adolescents.

*Table 2 showing the comparison between male adolescents and female adolescents on personality traits*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	df	t	Sig
Personality traits	Male	50	5.16	.99	98	2.79	0.006
	Female	50	5.94	1.70			

The results displayed in table 2 clearly reveal that that there is a significant difference on personality traits between male and female adolescents (t = 2.790, p = 0.05). The female scored significantly higher score as the mean score is 5.94, whereas the mean of male adolescents is 5.16. Therefore, it can predicted from the table that females have good

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personality traits as compared to males and it lead to rejection of hypothesis -2 which states that male adolescents will have good personality traits.

*Table 3 showing the comparison between male and female adolescents on mental health*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	df	t	Sig
Mental Health	Male	50	7.60	1.14	98	2.137	0.55
	Female	50	7.90	1.03			

The results displayed in table 3 clearly reveal that that there is a significant difference on Mental health between male and female adolescents ( $t = 2.137, p = 0.05$ ). The female scored significantly higher score as the mean score is 7.90, whereas the mean of male adolescents is 7.60. Therefore, it can predicted from the table that females have good mental health as compared to males and it lead to rejection of hypothesis -3 which states that male will have better mental health.

## DISCUSSION

Personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics that are the embodiment of an individual and personality traits reflect people's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; they are more consistent and stable., whereas people differ from one another in terms of where they stand on a set of basic trait dimensions that persist over time and across situations. Mental health is the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness. It is the ability to maintain an even temper, an alert intelligence, socially considerate behavior and a happy disposition.

The present study was concerned with finding out the relationship between personality traits and mental health among adolescents in the age range of 15-18 years as well as to find out comparison between male and female adolescents on personality traits and mental health. We found very interesting results, on the basis of which we can justify the hypothesis.

In the present study, researcher found that there is a positive relationship between personality traits and mental health among adolescents in the age range of 15-18 years which is the first hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). The finding of present study is in line with previous studies done by other researchers. Okwaraji.E.F, Aguwa.N.E & Eze.S.C (2015) reported that personality traits were significantly associated with mental health. Haslam et al. reported that personality traits were significantly associated with subjective well-being. Furthermore Godwin and Friedman had argued that higher levels of neuroticism were significantly associated with mental health problems among the youths and young adults they studied. Amiri M, Abbasalipour.M et.al (2017) reported that there was positive significant correlation between neuroticism with somatic symptoms and depression. Habibi. Z, Sadeghi.H et.al (2013) reported a significant and positive 6 relationship between personality factors and dimensions of mental health test. Amir.G.H, Shayan.N et.al (2011) reported that there is a significant relationship and that there is no significant difference between mean mental health in the two groups of male and

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female respondents. Sadeghi. A, Azizi.S et al (2015) reported that there was relationship between personality characteristic of neurotic, openness, extraversion and being conscionable with mental health. Dr. Shirazi M, Dr.Ansari F.M et.al (2012 reported that there is significant correlation between mental health and personality characteristics; Garcia.D (2011) reported that Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Persistence, and Self-Directedness were strongly related to well-being. Gomez.V, Grob.A et al. (2009) argued that there is a strong relation between neuroticism and SWB. Solami.S (2011) reported that personality factors and emotional intelligence had significant correlations with psychological well-being. Hooker (2006) reported that personality had significant direct and indirect effects on mental health and significant indirect effects on physical health.

It is said when there is a healthy mind in a healthy body, there will be healthy thinking which in turn will employ healthy functioning and it will ultimately lead to the development of the whole mankind. This study also focuses on the significance of personality traits in today's life, which leads to better mental health.

### **CONCLUSION**

As Cloninger (2004) argued, much less is known about the relationship of personality to health as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being To summarize, in present study researcher found positive relationship between personality traits and mental health.. Females have good personality traits and mental health as compared to male adolescents. Considering the inter-correlation among the personality dimensions and mental health status findings, it could be said that the current changes are occurring in the society, person's life style, academic training as well as person's interest in adopting other culture or new things in the environment. Because now a day's both males and females enjoy equal rights. They share the same pattern of education as well as same pattern of treatment in the society. And now a day's even the small child in the family has been treated equally in spite of gender. So the variation in the present study occurred may be due to these factors. It is said when there is a healthy mind in a healthy body, there will be healthy thinking which in turn will employ healthy functioning and it will ultimately lead to the development of the whole mankind. This study also focuses on the significance of personality traits in today's life, which leads to better mental health.

After knowing the adolescents personality traits, the adolescents personality can be improved through changing family and school environment as these are the important factors in shaping one's personality. There are certain personality traits shown by the adolescents that help teachers for planning personality development course. This course helps in improving the adolescent's personality traits and it further helps in adolescent's life and education. As personality traits are important for the adolescent's education and better life, mental health is also equally important. No health without mental health. Mental health isn't only the absence of mental illness. The scope and importance of mental health range from the promotion of mental health to the care of the ill. Promotion of mental health can be attained by appropriate public health and social interventions. The schools should start conduction workshops and



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seminars for children, which will give insight to the adolescence about their health as total which includes mental, physical. A good mental health now a day is very important for the adolescents.

According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders are the single most common cause of disability in young people. In India, approximately 15%–20% of children and adolescents are suffering from some form of mental health issues. Furthermore, 70% of mental disorders onset prior to the age of 25, making the adolescent years a critical window in which mental health can be promoted, and mental health problems can be addressed.

If left untreated, mental disorders can impede all aspects of health, including emotional well-being and social development, leaving young people feeling socially isolated, stigmatized, and unable to optimize their social, vocational, and interpersonal contributions to society. Addressing mental health problems early in life can lead to decreases in emotional and behavioral problems, functional impairment, and contact with all forms of law enforcement. It can also lead to improvements in social and behavioral adjustment, learning outcomes, and school performance.

For all of these reasons, addressing youth mental health issues is one of the most important challenges facing our society today!

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

When a researcher begins a study, he or she plans the program trying his best to make it free of limitations and loopholes. However, hindsight is always wiser than foresight (Chauhan, 2015). Therefore, after the work is over, there is a feeling that something different, something additional would have made the work better. In the present research, researcher has included adolescents but the level of education is not considered though the level of education has great impact on personality traits and mental health. The present research was done only in urban areas of the country and the rural area was not taken into consideration, so the comparison between the rural and urban areas adolescents on personality traits and mental health can be done. Relationship of culture and personality traits and mental health is also a research topic to explore.

Furthermore the collection of data for this study was from only one state which may limit the generalization of the result beyond the study location; in future efforts should be made to carry out similar study across many locations in India. A cross-sectional study should be carried.

The comparison of family members and adolescents on personality traits and mental health as, if family members are stable and mentally healthy then it may show that adolescents would be healthy or vice-versa. The study of personality traits and mental health of teachers and students can be made to carry out further studies.

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A clear, comprehensive picture emerges when research findings covering various aspects of the phenomena are integrated. It is hoped that this humble work has some contribution. It is recommended that adolescent counseling and regular personality assessment in schools be introduced.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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