RESEARCH PAPER

Factors influencing personality traits of rural and urban college students

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Abstract: Personality is defined as the characteristics of behaviors, emotional patterns and cognitions that progress from environmental and biological factors. The present study was conducted in Dharwad with an objective to study the factors influencing personality factors of rural and urban college students. The total sample comprised of 215 science degree college students including 115 from urban and 100 from rural Dharwad in the age range of 18-21 years. General information schedule and socio economic status scale were used to gather the personal information and Socio-economic status of the students. Personality factors of the college students were assessed by using the Big Five Inventory (BFI), and intelligence was measured using Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices (APM). Results revealed that majority of the students had high level of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, average level of emotional stability and openness to experience. Both males and females scored better on agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience and most of them were in average range. Ordinal position had significant relationship with agreeableness and emotional stability. Intelligence was significantly related to extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience. Type of family had significant relationship with extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience. SES was significantly related to agreeableness factor. Locality was significantly related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. In conclusion, the results of this study indicated that various familial and personal factors play major role in deciding the personality of the college students.

Key words: College students, Intelligence, Personality factors

Introduction

Eysenck defined personality as a more or less stable and long-lasting organization of a person's temperament, character, physiology, and intellect that determines his particular adaption to the environment. Five broad characteristics, commonly referred to as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness are used to describe personality. Age, gender, exposure to the environment, sociocultural variables, birth order, early experiences, family influences, and a number of other factors all have an impact on one's personality (Rath and Das, 2015). Hence in this study, factors like age, gender, ordinal position, intelligence, type of family, socio economic status and locality were considered to study their influence on personality. Age differences in the big five trait domains such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience have been extensively studied in recent years. According to the research, extraversion and openness to experience exhibit flat patterns from emerging adulthood through middle age, whereas conscientiousness and agreeableness exhibit positive age trends (Allemand *et al.,* 2010 and Denissen *et al.,* 2010).Terman and Miles created the first psychological test that concentrated on personality differences between men and women in 1936. This test was created to demonstrate the underlying distinctions between qualities that are masculine and feminine. Women typically report more sensitivity to sentiments, aesthetics, and values, according to research from a variety of literatures. Men tend to be more extravert and receptive to new ideas (Arora, 2020). Adler was the first to hypothesize that birth order has an impact on personality.

According to several researches, first-born families typically perform better in terms of agreeableness. Older siblings were found to be more responsible and achievement oriented. Compared to their younger siblings, first-born children tend to be more self-confident, conscientious, socially dominant, empathic and altruistic, emotionally stable, and less open to new ideas (Bano and Alim, 2019).Intelligence has been viewed as the cognitive part of the construct of personality. There is evidence from earlier studies that personality traits are influenced by an individual's IQ. Additionally, for developing adults, this connection makes it easier to predict one's performance in both the professional and academic areas (Passer and Smith, 2013). Intelligence and personality correlations have been studied for at least a century. Generally, socially desirable personality factors, such as extraversion, conscientiousness and openness are associated with higher cognitive performance but neuroticism is negatively associated with intelligence (Anand and Ritu, 2017).The availability of family resources, the availability of parental time, energy, and attention, the quality of the relationship with parents, and the relationships with other family members who have an impact on the personality outcomes of younger siblings are all different in joint families compared to nuclear families, according to research.In fact, it is believed that larger families with a greater number of children and/or extended family members spread their resources thinly across more children. These restrict the frequency and quality of contact between the kids and their parents, and they could have an impact on the personality features of some emerging adults (Mahalakshmi *et al.,* 2015

and Khan and Nazir, 2008).The current and future health and personality results of the children are significantly influenced by household income. Discovering the theoretical and empirical relationships between family resources and the development of human personality in children has taken a significant amount of time and effort on the part of social scientists (Bakhtavar and Bayova, 2015 and Mahalakshmi *et al.,* 2015).Therefore, even in the absence of complementary child-centered interventions, enhancing home resources can have a considerable impact on children's behavioural and personality outcomes.

Emerging adulthood is an important phase of life in which students prepare themselves to enter into work life and marriage life. In view of this, the present study was conducted to study the factors influencing personality of urban and rural college students.

Material and methods

A correlational research design was employed to study the relationship between personal factors, familial factors and personality factors of rural and urban college students of 18-21 years in Dharwad taluk.

Sample

The sample of the current study was drawn randomly from the population of 1ˢᵗ, 2ⁿᵈ and 3ʳᵈ year students in the age group of 18-21 years pursuing science degree in different government as well as private degree colleges in Dharwad taluk of Northern Karnataka. There are a total of 12 science degree colleges in Dharwad city (urban) and 2 in rural area. Out of these four science degree colleges from urban area were selected randomly and two science degree colleges from rural area were selected for the study. Thus a total of six science degree colleges were selected for the study.The total study sample comprised of 215 students out of which 100 from rural colleges and 115 from urban colleges of Dharwad.

Tools used for the study

A general information schedule was used to gather the information about college student's age, gender,ordinal position, type of family and locality. The Big Five Inventory developed by John *et al.* (1991) was used to assess the personality factors

of the college students. This self-administrated test designed for the people with the age of 10 to 24 years old. It has 54 items which measures openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability. The items are scored on 5 point likert scale as strongly disagree, disagree a little, neither agree nor disagree, agree a little, strongly agree scoring as 1,2,3,4 and 5. Negative items are reverse scored. Also, Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices developed by Raven (1998) was utilized to measure intelligence of adolescents and adults. This test involved two sets of 48 items, with 12 items in Set I and 36 items in Set II. This test consisted of geometric analogy problems in which a matrix of geometric figures was presented with one entry missing, and the correct missing entry was selected from a set of answer choices. The scores were given to the college students with the help of scoring keys of advanced progressive matrices. The scores of SET II were used to convert to percentiles to group according to Intelligent Quotient (IQ) using age reference tables. Socio economic status (SES) of the family was assessed using the SES scale developed by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005). This scale consisted of 22 statements which assess caste, education, monthly per capita income from all sources, type of house and location, family possessions, member of children, number of earning members in family, possession of agricultural and non-agricultural land along with animals and social status of the family.

Results and discussion

With regard to age in rural area (Table 1), 49.00 per cent pertained to 18 to 19 years old and 51.00 per cent belonged to 20 to 21 years old. In urban area 51.30 per cent belonged to 18 to 19 years and 48.69 per cent belonged to 20 to 21 years age group. With respect to gender, 59.00 per cent were males and 41.00 per cent were females from rural area, while 46.09 per cent were males and 53.91 per cent were females from urban area. In rural area, most of the college students were second born (41%), 31.00 per cent and 28.00 per cent college students were first born and later born respectively. Likewise, in urban area, most of them were first born (41.74%), 35.65 per cent and 22.61 per cent were second born and later born respectively.With respect to socio economic status, in rural area, majority (67%) belonged to lower middle SES, 31.00 per cent belonged to upper middle

Table1. Demographic characteristics of the college students by personal and familial characteristics   N=215

Characteristics	Category	Rural (n=100)	Urban (n=115)	Total (N=215)
Age	18-19 years	49(49.00)	59(51.30)	108(50.23)
	20-21 years	51(51.00)	56(48.69)	107(49.77)
Gender	Male	59(59.00)	53(46.09)	112(52.09)
	Female	41(41.00)	62(53.91)	103(47.91)
Ordinal position	First born	31(31.00)	48(41.74)	79(36.74)
	Second born	41(41.00)	41(35.65)	82(38.14)
	Later born	28(28.00)	26(22.61)	54(25.12)
Socio economic status	Upper High	-	-	-
	High	1(1.00)	5(4.35)	6(2.79)
	Upper middle	31(31.00)	41(35.65)	72(33.49)
	Lower middle	67(67.00)	68(59.13)	135(62.79)
	Poor	1(1.00)	1(0.87)	2(0.93)
	Very poor or Below Poverty Line	-	-	-

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 2. Distribution of the college students based on personality traits   N=215

Personality traits	Levels			
	Low	Average	High	Total
Extroversion	3(1.40)	105(48.84)	107(49.77)	215(100.00)
Agreeableness	1(0.47)	53(24.65)	161(74.88)	215(100.00)
Conscientiousness	2(0.93)	57(26.51)	156(72.56)	215(100.00)
Emotional stability	7(3.26)	133(61.86)	75(34.88)	215(100.00)
Openness to experience	3(1.39)	120(55.81)	92(42.79)	215(100.00)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

SES and equal proportion of them (1% each) belonged to high and poor SES. On the other hand, in urban area, 59.13 per cent belonged to lower middle SES followed by upper middle SES (35.65%), high SES (4.35%) and poor SES (0.87%).

Table 2 reveals the personality factors of emerging adults. With respect to extroversion trait, nearly half of them (49.77%) belonged to high level followed by average (48.84%) and low (1.40%) level of extroversion, respectively. With respect to agreeableness, majority of them (74.88%) belonged to high level, 24.65 per cent belonged to average level and only 0.47 per cent belonged to low level of agreeableness. With regard to conscientiousness, majority of them (72.56%) belonged to high level followed by average (26.51%) and low (0.93%) level of conscientiousness respectively. Regarding emotional stability, more than half of them (61.86%) belonged to average level followed by high (34.88%) and low level (3.26%) of emotional stability respectively. Regarding openness to experience, more than half of them (55.81%) were in average level followed by high (42.79%) and low (1.39%) level of openness to experience.

The reason that the students who scored highly on agreeableness also have high levels of empathy, consideration, friendliness, generosity, and assistance, as well as an optimistic perspective on human nature. They frequently hold the opinion that the majority of people are decent, honest, and trust worthy and are less likely to experience social rejection. Students who score highly on extraversion exhibit attributes including as talkative, sociable, energetic, assertive, outgoing, comfortable with others and the ability to strike up conversations. The pupils that exhibit a typical level of emotional stability are indicative of the average patience of today's students. When put in stressful situations, they react with ordinary emotional responses. Averagely open pupils also have averagely wide interests, are inventive, perceptive, responsive to inner sensations, seek variety, and are intellectually curious. They also tend to be politically liberal and tolerant of diversity. Students who exhibit a high level of conscientiousness are typically also very dependable, driven, and diligent. A study conducted by Khan (2017), Khan (2020) and Anand and Ritu (2017) showed similar results where majority of the students had high level of extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience.

Table 3 revealed that student's age was significantly and positively (r=0.292) correlated with conscientiousness and openness to experience (r=0.183). This indicated that higher the age, students were better with respect to conscientiousness and openness to experience. Being a male was highly significant and positively correlated (r=0.379) with conscientiousness and openness to experience (r=0.257). This indicated that males were better on conscientiousness and openness to experience. Being a female was highly significant and positively correlated with agreeableness (r=0.526), conscientiousness (r=0.520), openness to experience (r=0.673) and significantly and positively correlated (r=0.310) with emotional stability. So, it can be implied that females were better on agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and emotional stability. Ordinal position was significantly and positively correlated (r=0.232) with agreeableness indicating that first born are better on agreeableness trait. IQ was highly significant and positively correlated with extroversion (r=0.275) and significantly and positively correlated with conscientiousness (r=0.249) and openness to experience (r=0.218) *i.e.* higher the IQ higher the chances of developing traits such as extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience.

Student's type of family was significantly and positively correlated (r=0.198) with emotional stability. The students who came from joint families were better with respect to emotional stability. Locality was highly significant and positively correlated with agreeableness (r=0.334), conscientiousness (r=0.432), openness to experience (r=0.448) and significantly

Table 3. Correlation between demographic variables, personal variables, familial variables, personality traits of rural college students

N=100

Variables	Personality traits				
	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience
Age	0.097	0.173	0.292*	0.040	0.183*
Male	1.000	0.167	0.379**	0.162	0.257*
female	1.000	0.526**	0.520**	0.310*	0.673**
Ordinal position	-0.077	0.232*	-0.006	-0.032	-0.044
IQ	0.275**	0.053	0.249*	0.194	0.218*
Type of family	0.087	0.000	-0.111	0.198*	-0.066
Socio economic status	-0.032	0.033	0.031	-0.122	-0.084
Locality(r_{pb})	1.000	0.334**(r_{pb})	0.432**(r_{pb})	0.230*(r_{pb})	0.448**(r_{pb})

*Significant at 5 per cent level   **Significant at 1 per cent level   Pb- point biserial

Table 4.Correlation between demographic variables, personal variables, familial variables, personality traits of urban college students
N=115

Variables	Personality traits				
	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience
Age	-0.172	0.000	0.199*	-0.057	0.258*
Male	1.000	0.446**	0.398**	0.338*	0.259
Female	1.000	0.083	0.469**	0.274*	0.422**
Ordinal position	-0.046	-0.064	-0.050	0.270**	-0.053
IQ	0.116	0.105	0.185*	0.007	0.272*
Type of family	0.210*	0.219*	-0.074	0.012	0.217*
Socio economic status	-0.055	0.201*	-0.119	-0.120	-0.017
Locality(r_{pb})	1.000	0.216*(r_{pb})	0.424**(r_{pb})	0.300**(r_{pb})	0.347**(r_{pb})

*Significant at 5 per cent level   **Significant at 1 per cent level, Pb- point biserial

and positively correlated with emotional stability (r=0.230). So it is evident from the results that rural college students were better regarding agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and emotional stability.

Table 4 revealed that student's age was significantly and positively correlated with conscientiousness (r=0.199) and openness to experience (r=0.258). This indicates that higher the age, better were students with respect to conscientiousness and openness to experience. Being a male was highly significant and positively correlated with agreeableness (r=0.466), conscientiousness (r=0.398) and significantly and positively correlated with emotional stability (r=0.338). It is indicated that males were better in agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability. Being a female was highly significant and positively correlated with conscientiousness (r=0.469), openness to experience (r=0.422) and significantly and positively correlated with emotional stability (r=0.274). This indicates that females in the present study are better regarding conscientiousness, openness to experience and emotional stability. Ordinal position was highly significant and positively correlated with emotional stability (r=0.270). This implies that first born are better with respect to emotional stability. IQ was significantly and positively correlated with conscientiousness (r=0.185) and openness to experience (r=0.272) *i.e.* higher the IQ higher will be conscientiousness and openness to experience traits on students.

Student's type of family was significantly and positively correlated with extroversion (r=0.210), agreeableness (r=0.219) and openness to experience (r=0.217). It implies that students from joint families were better on extroversion, agreeableness and openness to experience. Socio economic status was significantly and positively correlated with agreeableness (r= 0.201). In other words, higher the socio economic status of the students better was agreeableness in students. Locality was highly significant and positively correlated with conscientiousness (r=0.424), emotional stability (r=0.300), openness to experience (r=0.347) and significantly and positively correlated with agreeableness (r=0.216) *i.e.*urban college students were better with respect to conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience and agreeableness.

A study conducted by Harris *et al* (2016) showed similar results, where he also observed no difference in personality traits of old age participants except with conscientiousness trait of personality .This maybe because people exhibit distinctive patterns of development at all phases of life and these patterns appear to be the outcome of certain life experiences that are relevant to a person's stage of life. Aa positive shift in personality with growing older as life experiences are an important contributor to personality development in the first several decades of life. Despite varying reports and measures, the big five traits are found to be mildly to moderately consistent throughout a 20-year period from the age of 10 to the age of 30, indicating that these attributes remain positive over extended periods of time. With this positive change, neuroticism is reduced while conscientiousness and openness are elevated. So, rather than being static, inherent characteristics of people, traits are developmental constructs that are modified throughout time by their experiences in life.

Similar results and reasons were quoted by Ekinci *et al.* (2021), Hartmann and Ertl (2021), Wild and Alvarez (2020), Agbor (2021) *i.e.* girls were better on openness to experience personality trait than boys. The possible reason could be females have been persuade to depart from traditional qualities by educational surroundings and women's better social position. Modern higher education environments encourage the majority of female students to engage in advanced cognitive tasks and look for better employment possibilities. Through their experiences, female college students have developed intellectual curiosity and imagination, qualities that could be regarded as subgroups of the personality attribute openness to experience.

A study carried out by Eswari *et al.* (2018), Arora (2020), Hartmann and Ertl (2021) and Wild and Alvarez (2020) showed similar results *i.e.* women were better in conscientiousness personality trait than men. This might be because women are more competent and capable of doing things. Also, this trait is linked with self-discipline, self-control and persistence. In general, women are more self-disciplined than men.

A study conducted by Heng *et al.* (2016) showed similar results *i.e.* first and middle born children had high level of

agreeableness than later born.This might be because first born and second born are privileged, but they were also burden with feelings of excessive nurturing and loving, acting as if they are surrogate moms to later born.Also, the results of the present study was on par with the findings of Bano and Alim (2019) and Hudek-Knezevic *et al.* (2016) where the first born were better in emotional stability than later born. This might be because first-born have a tendency for having high levels of optimism and self-confidence, which encourages them to express their emotions in order to relieve tension and helps them remain emotionally stable in stressful conditions.

The current study results are in line with the findings of Anand and Ritu (2017), Gurjar (2016) and Botzet *et al.* (2021) where students with higher intelligence were more extroverted. This might be because extroverted people are talkative, energetic, gregarious, assertiveness, outgoing, comfortable around people and starts conversations and self-estimated intelligence found to be positively related to extroversion. These qualities ease them to communicate and ask clarifications regarding their academics to mentors. Thus, extroversion and intellectual ability are correlated.

A study conducted by Bergold and Steinmayr (2018) and Gurjar (2016) showed similar results where students with high intelligence were better in conscientiousness.This might be because students that are highly conscientious might put forth more effort and work diligently, which might help them to reach their maximum cognitive potential. Students with high IQs who obtain outstanding grades may benefit from this, but those with high IQs but low conscientiousness may see a decline in their chances of doing well academically due to their reckless and sloppy working habits.

Similarly, the present study findings are on par with the findings of Voronina *et al.* (2016), Malykh (2017) and Botzet *et al.* (2021), Morales-Vives *et al.* (2020) where openness to experience moderated the relationship between intelligence with academic performance and creative thinking. This could be because intellect, educational aptitude and creativity are the attributes of openness to experience personality factor.

In both rural and urban area, nuclear family students were better in extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience. The possible reason could be in majority of the nuclear families both parents are in working status. So, their children might not get enough time for interaction within families. To fulfil this gap extroverts simply gain energy from engaging in social interaction. People who are high in extroversion need social stimulation to feel energized. They gain inspiration and excitement from discussing ideas with other people. Also children's tendency to be either open or closed to experience influenced mainly by environment. Thus, the environment and experiences influence openness personality trait of an individual (Sahu, 2019).

Conclusion

The study clearly indicated that majority of the college students were better on all the personality factors namely, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. This clearly implies the importance of transitional period the college students are frequently linked to an increase in favorable personality qualities as influenced by exposure to non-shared environments, such as pursuing further education, careers and moving out is a personal development milestone for the passage into adulthood. Prevalence of personality factors in the present study showed that a greater number of students fall on average category of emotional stability and openness to experience. Hence steps have to be taken to identify the difficulty of the college students experiencing to develop emotional stability and openness to experience. As shown in the study only older age group students were better on conscientiousness and openness to experience. So efforts have to be made to boost younger age group students to develop their conscientiousness and openness traits which help them to have goal directed behavior, creativity and educational aptitude in future.Eldest and second born children were better on agreeableness and emotional stability traits. This shows that later born children are in the need of supervision to develop positive personality traits. College students who were high in intelligence were also better on extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience than below average students. So, there is a need to improve their intellect, knowledge and skills which indirectly helps them to develop positive personality factors. Big five personality traits have predictive validity in relation to course grade. Frequent assessment of personality traits are also important to provide early intervention which can help them to score better in academics. This study will help out the parents, teachers, curriculum planners and policy makers to coordinate in an effective way so that the students can have a sound personality and better achievement in their lives.

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