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Personality dimensions among Iranian female high school students; a cross-sectional study

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ABSTRACT

personality dimensions has impact on students performance. Therefore, in the present study evaluated the personality dimensions among Iranian female high school students. In a cross –sectional study, personality dimensions were investigated among high schools female students in Ilam (Iran) during the academic year 2014-15. A multistage cluster random sampling was utilized to choose the participants. Data were collected by two demographic and NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was measured as an index of internal identicalness of the questionnaire to verify its reliability. A total 400 student were studied. The Mean \pm SD of the personality dimensions were 24.27 ± 7.47 , 16 ± 5.22 , 21.22 ± 4.27 , 23.9 ± 5.67 and 19.8 ± 5 for neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness personality dimensions respectively. There were significant relationship between all personality dimensions and students' average score for studying ($P= 000$). The results of this study demonstrate that about 20% of study participants have low flexibility, low agreeableness and low responsible personality.

Keywords: Agreeableness personality, Conscientiousness personality, Extraversion personality, Openness to experience personality, Neuroticism personality

INTRODUCTION

Personality is defined as individual differences among people in behavior patterns, cognition and emotion. Personality has several main components. NEO Personality Inventory as a psychological personality inventory has been revised several times (1-3). Today, a shortened version of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) is used widely. This instrument contains 60 items (12 items per domain) (4).

NEO-FFI is the one of the most common components of personality, which is including neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness components (5).

The psychologists proposed several affective factors on personality, including personal environment, cognition, emotions, motivations and behavioral science in various situations (6). However a study reported evidences for an association between NEO PI-R facets and polymorphism in the tyrosine hydroxylase gene, but also another study reported opposed results (7).

Researchers believed that the personality is a dynamic concept and structured of characteristics possessed by each person. Also, they believed that the personality is not stable until around the age of thirty (8).

Studies have been done on the impact of personality on people's lives (9, 10). A study evaluated the relationship between happiness and extraversion in both adults and children and reported the genetics as a main influence factor on happiness levels (8).

The particular combination of qualities in a person or place that makes them different from others the particular combination of qualities in a person or place that makes them different from others.

However, some researchers evaluated the personality disorders in children and adolescents, in some locations the personality dimensions have remained a doubtful issue (11, 12). With regard to impact of personality dimensions on children's outcome, the present study aimed to evaluate the personality dimensions among Iranian female high school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In a cross –sectional study, personality dimensions were evaluated among high school's female students in Ilam (Iran) during the academic year 2014-15. A multistage cluster random sampling was used to select the participants. First five high schools for girls were randomly chosen from schools in Ilam (Iran) as was previously described for other studies (13-16) The schools were randomly selected from all schools, one in the center of the city, two from the first circle of ring, and two schools in the suburbs. Consequently, 450 girl high school students were selected as the sample group of the research. Since all questionnaires with incomplete or chaotic information were eliminated from the research process. Finally, information from 400 questionnaires was analyzed.

Demographic information questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by the authors and assessed variables such as age, education level, and students' average score for studying.

The NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory questionnaire: This questionnaire contains 60 items (12 items per domain). The NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory questionnaire comprises Five-Factor Inventory including; neuroticism (items: 1,6,11,16,21,26,31,36,41,46,51,56), extraversion (items: 2,7,12,17,22,27,32,37,42,47,52,57), openness to experience (items: 3,8,13,18,23,28,33,38,43,48,53,58), agreeableness (items: 4, 9,14,19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44,49, 54, 59) and conscientiousness (items: 5,10,15,20,25,30,35,40,45,50,55,60) personality dimensions. In this questionnaire items are scored based on a five-point Likert scale (4: always, 3: frequently, 2: occasionally, 1: seldom, and 0: never). Although the questions are inversely scored.

In neuroticism dimension, subjects were divided into three groups: emotional stability, moderate stability and low stability. In extraversion dimension subjects were divided into three groups: introverted, moderate and extroverted personality. In openness to experience dimension subjects were divided into three groups: low, moderate and high flexibility. Participants in agreeableness dimension were divided into three groups: low, moderate and high agreeableness and in conscientiousness dimension participants were divided into three groups: low, moderate and high responsibility. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was measured as an index of internal identicalness of the questionnaire to verify its reliability. The obtained values were 0.77 for the whole test and 0.72, 0.83, 0.80, 0.79, 0.74 for the five subscales mentioned above.

RESULTS

A total 400 student was studied. The age of students ranged from 14 to 18 years with an average 14 ± 1.08 . Overall, 36% of the students were in 1st grade, 33% in 2nd grade, and 30% in 3rd grade of high school. The Mean \pm SD of the personality dimensions were 24.27 ± 7.47 , 16 ± 5.22 , 21.22 ± 4.27 , 23.9 ± 5.67 and 19.8 ± 5 for neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness personality dimensions respectively.

In all dimensions, subjects were divided into subgroups. The overall distribution of subgroups according personality dimensions is presented in table 1.

Tab1: The overall distribution of subgroups according to personality inventories

Personality dimensions	N	%
Neuroticism		
Emotional stability	84	21
Moderate stability	227	56.8
Low stability	89	22.2
Extraversion		
Introverted	52	13
Moderate	240	60
Extroverted	108	27
Openness to experience		
Low flexibility	85	21.3
Moderate flexibility	209	52.3
High flexibility	106	26.4
Agreeableness		
Low agreeableness	69	17.3
Moderate agreeableness	213	53.2
High agreeableness	118	29.5
Conscientiousness		
Low responsibility	64	16
Moderate responsibility	232	58
High responsibility	104	26

There are significant relationships between students' age and personality inventories. The results are presented in table 2.

Tab2: The relationships between students' age and personality inventories

Personality inventories	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value.
Neuroticism personality	1427.933	6	237.989	4.438	0.000
Extraversion personality	334.549	6	55.758	2.155	0.047
Openness to experience personality	275.329	6	45.888	2.439	0.025
Agreeableness personality	626.379	6	104.397	3.333	0.003
Conscientiousness personality	464.849	6	77.475	3.109	0.005

DISCUSSION

Personality inventory is considered as one of the main issues in human life, job performance and workplace behavior. Therefore, in the present study personality dimensions were evaluated among 400 Iranian female high school students during the academic year 2014-15 in Ilam, Western of Iran.

However, there are several studies on personality disorder in different population (17, 18), but also, to our knowledge, this is the first study ever to assess the personality dimensions in the Iranian female high school students aged less than 18 years.

Based the results of the present study, the neuroticism personality dimensions have the highest mean score of personality dimensions among the study population. Nevertheless, one of five students in present study population has low stability. The adolescent is a critical period in human life and this age group experience more personality problems in compared to adults' age group. An Iranian study, reported that 26.6% of Iranian female high school have borderline personality (19). Recently a China study, examined the personality inventory among 6,110 college students. Based the results of this study, females experience higher scores of cognitive symptoms and interpersonal sensitivity than men. The results reported the sex as an effective factor on a personality inventory (20)

Our finding revealed that in openness to experience personality inventories, 21% of all participants were low flexible. Moreover, the prevalences of low agreeableness and low responsive personality reported in 21% and 17% of participants respectively. Experts believed that the symptoms of borderline personality disorder are higher before the age 18 years (21), moreover, the highest prevalence of borderline personality disorder has been reported in younger than 40 years population (17).

There are numbers of different affecting factors on personality inventory, which may affect the way a person responds to situations.

Our finding revealed that there are significant relationships between students' age and personality inventories. Numerous studies support the inverse association between age and personality disorders (17, 22, 23).

In sum, about 20% of study participants have low flexibility, low agreeableness and low responsible personality. Considering the personality dimensions have an effect on student performance, we recommend the further epidemiological studies to gain a better understanding about personality dimensions and design a better educational program for students.

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