

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG BOYS AND GIRLS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract

The current study was an attempt to see the gender difference of personality traits of secondary school students. The sample comprised of 900 (461 boys and 439 girls) students selected from different secondary schools especially from class IX and X from Giridih District of Jharkhand State. Accidental or Incidental sampling technique was used to collect the data. The investigator has used a NEO Five-Factor Inventory in the present study which is a standardized inventory developed by Paul T. Costa, Jr and Robert R. McCrae (1992). This Inventory has five dimensions which are Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C). In the present study all the dimensions are compared separately. Statistical techniques like Mean, SD and t test were used to analyze the data. It was found that Secondary School boys and girls differ significantly only on the openness dimension of Personality Traits and they score same on the other dimensions. This means there is no difference between Secondary School boys and girls on Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness dimensions as well as total of Personality Traits.

Key Words- Personality traits, Secondary school students, Gender.

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Introduction

Gender differences are evident in almost every part of our action and speech. There are gender-specific personality traits which affect how children learn. In the 1960's and 1970's and even into the 1980's, it was fashionable to assume that gender differences in personality were "socially constructed." Back then, many psychologists thought that if we raised children differently -- if we raised Johnny to play with dolls and Sally to play with trucks - then many of these gender differences would vanish. However, cross-cultural studies over the past 30 years have provided little support for this hypothesis. On the contrary, a report from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that gender differences in personality were

remarkably robust across all cultures studied, including China, sub-Saharan Africa, Malaysia, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Peru, the United States, and Europe (including specific studies in Croatia, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Yugoslavia and Western Russia) (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001).

Personality Traits are broad, enduring, relatively stable characteristics used to assess and explain behavior. Traits account for the fact that, under similar circumstances, one person behaves differently from another. It is part of the nature of traits that although they can change, they cannot change too much or too quickly. Their stability suggests that the behavior they describe will be relatively consistent from situation to the similar situation; their breadth implies that similar behavior will be manifested in different situations (Hirschberg). **Woodworth (1965)** defined a personality trait as some particular quality of behavior such as cheerfulness, self-reliance, which characterizes the individuals in a wide range of his activities and is fairly consistent over a period of time.

According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, (1994) personality traits are “enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts.”

The term personality trait is well defined by **Louw, Van Ede & Louw (1998)** as relative constant characteristics of a person that is responsible for the consistency of his or her behavior.

According to 'Wikipedia', Secondary School is an educational institution where the second stage of the three schooling periods, known as secondary education and usually compulsory up to a specified age takes place. It follows elementary or primary education, and is sometimes followed by university (tertiary) education. In India Standards, IX to X referred as secondary school level.

Reviews of the Study

Feingold (1994) conducted four meta-analyses to examine gender differences in personality in the literature (1958-1992) and in normative data for well-known personality inventories (1940-1992). Males were found to be more assertive and had slightly higher self-esteem than females. Females were higher than males in extraversion, anxiety, trust, and, especially, tender-mindedness (e.g., nurturance). There were no noteworthy sex differences in social anxiety, impulsiveness, activity, ideas (e.g., reflectiveness), locus of control, and orderliness. Gender differences in personality traits were generally constant across ages, years of data collection, educational levels, and nations.

Costa, Terracciano & McCrae (2001) investigated gender differences across specific aspects of these broad Five Factor Model (FFM) domains, finding that men scored higher in some facets of Openness, such as Openness to Ideas, while women scored higher in others such as Openness to Aesthetics and Feelings. Men scored higher in some facets of Extraversion such as Excitement Seeking while women scored higher in other Extraversion facets such as Warmth. Comparisons at the aggregate level of Extraversion and Openness are thus less meaningful. Men and women appear to differ little on either specific aspects of Conscientiousness (encompassing such qualities as diligence, self-discipline, orderliness, and goal-orientation) or the sub-dimensions it comprises. Women score higher on the Five Factor Model (FFM) traits of Neuroticism and Agreeableness.

Martin et al. (2006) found that major traits like extraversion, neuroticism, and agreeableness have shown fewer consistent associations with academic achievement than conscientiousness and openness. Few studies have reported a negative association between neuroticism and academic performance, but most studies have reported non-significant results.

Ghazi, Shahzada & Saif Ullah (2013) investigated relationship between student's personality traits and their academic achievement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Theoretical

framework of this study is based on Big Five Personality Traits Theory (Cattell's and Eysenck's 1973). The objective of the study was to find out different personality traits of secondary school students and to identify the relationship between personality traits and their overall academic achievement. Results of the study revealed that no significant relationship was found between the student's personality traits and their academic achievement.

Delimitations of the Study

- The present study was delimited to one district i.e. Giridih district of Jharkhand state. Therefore, one cannot generalize the findings of this study to all the institutions of India due to a number of differences in their condition and circumstances, and different Board affiliation.
- The present study is restricted to Secondary School students i.e. class IX and X only, due to limitations of time and resources.
- The present study was confined to 900 students including both Boys and Girls of Giridih district of Jharkhand.

Objective of the Study

To study the gender difference in various dimensions of Personality Traits of Secondary School Students.

Hypothesis of the Study

There exists no significant difference between various dimensions of Personality Traits among Boys and Girls at Secondary School level.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the present study comprised of 900 (461 boys and 439 girls) students selected from ten different types of secondary schools especially from class IX and X from Giridih District of Jharkhand State. Accidental or Incidental sampling technique being the most feasible was employed to collect the data.

Research Tool Used

The investigator has used a NEO Five-Factor Inventory in the present study which is a standardized inventory developed by Paul T. Costa, Jr and Robert R. McCrae (1992) and

published by Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. This Inventory has five dimensions which are Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness(C). In the present study all the dimensions are compared separately.

Statistical Techniques Employed

Analysis is done by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software (version 16.0). Statistical techniques used for data analysis is 't' test for comparing the means of girls and boys. The Mean, SD (standard deviation), SEM (standard error mean), degree of freedom (df) and t-values of the two groups are given in table and figure.

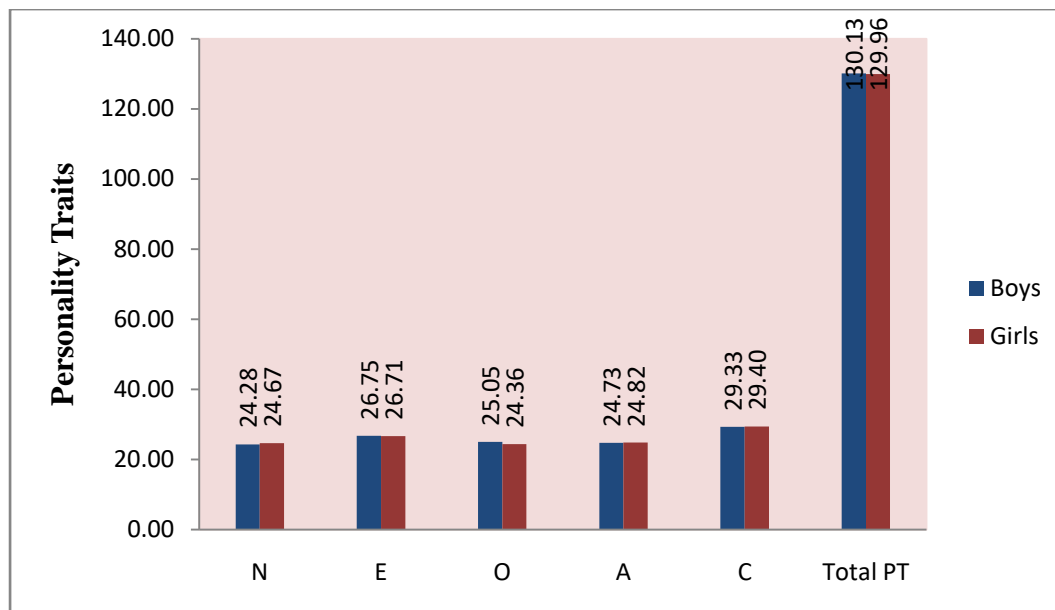
Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Table showing the comparison of Means of Personality Traits and its dimensions between Boys and Girls Students at Secondary School level

Dimensions	Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE M	df	Calculated t-value	Significance Level
Neuroticism	Boys	461	24.28	4.67	0.22	898	-1.29	Not Significant
	Girls	439	24.67	4.41	0.21			
Extraversion	Boys	461	26.75	4.95	0.23	898	0.15	Not Significant
	Girls	439	26.71	4.31	0.20			
Openness	Boys	461	25.05	4.42	0.21	898	2.52*	Significant
	Girls	439	24.36	3.74	0.18			
Agreeableness	Boys	461	24.73	4.32	0.20	898	-0.29	Not Significant
	Girls	439	24.82	4.61	0.22			
Conscientiousness	Boys	461	29.33	6.32	0.29	898	-0.19	Not Significant
	Girls	439	29.40	5.98	0.28			
Personality Traits	Boys	461	130.13	12.67	0.59	898	0.21	Not Significant
	Girls	439	129.96	12.38	0.59			

*Significant at 0.05 level.

Figure showing the comparison of Means of Personality Traits and its dimensions between Boys and Girls Students at Secondary School level



To make a comparison between Secondary School boys and Secondary School girls on the measure of Personality Traits, investigator calculated the mean and SD scores of both the groups and the 't' value was calculated. The Mean score on various dimensions of Personality Traits shown in the above table shows that boys and girls of Secondary School differ significantly only on Openness dimension of Personality Traits. The mean value of Secondary School boy's students on Openness dimension was 25.05 with SD 4.42 while the same value for Secondary School girl's students was 24.36 with SD 3.74. The value of 't' was found to be 2.52 which was significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

For other dimensions of Personality Traits that is Neuroticism the mean scores of boys and girls were found to be 24.28 and 24.67 with its SD 4.67 and 4.41 respectively. The 't' value calculated was -1.29 which was not significant at any level of confidence. On the Extraversion, the mean score for boys and girls are 26.75 and 26.71 with its calculated SD's 4.95 and 4.31. The 't' value was 0.15 which was not significant at any level of confidence. Going to the next dimension which is Agreeableness whose mean score for boys and girls are similar i.e. 24.73 and 24.82 with SD 4.32 and 4.61. The 't' value was found to be -0.29 which was also not significant.

Now, the last dimension of Personality Traits is Conscientiousness whose mean score for Secondary School boys was 29.33 with its SD 6.32 and means score for Secondary School girls was 29.40 with its SD 5.98. On applying 't' test the value found was -0.19 which was not significant at any level of confidence. Considering the total score on Personality Traits the boys students obtained slightly higher mean score 130.13 with SD 12.67 than that of girls

students 129.96 with SD 12.38. But this difference could not reach the significance level of 0.05 as the 't' value was 0.21.

Discussion on Findings

These findings show that Secondary School boys and girls differ significantly only on the Openness dimension of Personality Traits and they score same on the other dimensions. This means there was no difference between Secondary School boys and girls on Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness dimensions as well as total of Personality Traits. These findings are also clearly visible from the above figure. The reason for the differences in Openness dimension is that boys are given more freedom than girls in Indian society. So, they are more free and open to express their ideas, feelings, imaginations, ready for actions and independence of judgement in comparison to girls. A finding of Shamshada (1988) supports the present one who found no significant differences between boys and girls in neuroticism. Hence, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between various dimensions of Personality Traits among Boys and Girls at Secondary School level" is rejected on the Openness dimension and accepted for the other dimensions as well as on the total Personality Traits.

Educational Implications of the Findings

- The personality traits differences between boys and girls on the dimension of openness, which the result of present investigation have brought out, might be of some further help in understanding the two sexes in the context of their openness characteristics i.e., active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, actions, new ideas and values and dealing with them by applying suitable methods of guidance and counselling.
- There should be guidance programmes organized by the schools in which the guidance counsellors should guide the girl's students and help them in expressing their ideas, feelings, imaginations etc. and to come forward with new ideas.
- The findings of the study are likely to prove of immense importance to educational thinkers, teachers, psychologists, parents and others who are concerned with the sphere of education.

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