



Causal Relationship of Personality Traits, Self-Consciousness and Life Satisfaction in Adults: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

This study is aimed to investigate the casual relationship of personality traits, self-consciousness and life satisfaction in adults. A total of 300 adults age range 18 to 38 years from Delhi NCR were selected and administered three standardized tools i.e., 10 item personality trait scale, self-consciousness scale and life satisfaction scale. Results reveal the significant negative relationship between extraversion trait and three domains of self-consciousness private self, public self and social anxiety. Another personality traits openness to experience is found positive association with three domains of self-consciousness. Conscientiousness is positively associated with public self and social anxiety only. Two personality traits extraversion and agreeableness were also positively associated with life satisfaction whereas, significant negative association between emotional stability and life satisfaction. In addition, two domains of personality extraversion and agreeableness, and life satisfaction are found significant difference among various age group participants. Overall study findings are discussed in light of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) such as Bhagwad Gita, triguna concept, yoga, dhyana and swaadhyay etc. Finally, study recommends the need of Indian Knowledge System based personality intervention and self-awareness training programmes to increase life satisfaction and self-consciousness.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Self-consciousness, life satisfaction, Adults, Indian Knowledge System

1. Introduction

Life satisfaction is the leading indicator of psychological well-being and quality of life in adults. Diener, et al (1985) noted that life satisfaction reflects an individual's cognitive performance, life circumstances and perceived fulfilment of the individual's personal goals and aspirations. Daily life stressors such as career demands, interpersonal relationships, social comparison, and identity formation are influenced by Life satisfaction. Personality traits are known as stable, persistent and consistent patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour. These behavioral pattern guide individuals to interact and react to environment consistently overtime and different situations. Personality traits are described by five factor models, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness, which have been found to be strong predictors of subjective well-being and life satisfaction (McCrae and Costa, 2003; Schmidt and Schultz, 2008). Neuroticism is associated with decreased life satisfaction. While, extraversion and conscientiousness are associated with wellbeing in increasing manner (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). Self-consciousness refers to refers to the awareness of oneself and the tendency to pay attention to one's self appearance, thoughts, feelings, and behaviour in social situations. Generally, self-consciousness consists with two ways, first is awareness about self-thoughts and feelings that is known as private self-consciousness. Second is concern about other's perception as public self-consciousness. Both plays a mediating role in psychological mechanism of personality traits that are expressed in daily life (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Private self-consciousness focus on inward attention to one's internal states, emotions, beliefs, and values. This leads to greater self-reflection and self-awareness. On the other hand, public self-consciousness draw attention to awareness of oneself that is seen by others. It focuses on observable aspects such as appearance, social behavior, and concern about evaluation in social contexts (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Private self-consciousness promotes self-reflection and personal growth. In contrast public self-consciousness increase social anxiety and self-evaluation negatively (Mor & Winquist, 2002).

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McCrae and Costa (2003) describe the five model of personality traits with different characteristics such as neuroticism indicates emotional instability and vulnerability to stress, extraversion is characterized sociability and positive affect, openness denotes curiosity and cognitive flexibility, agreeableness involves empathy and cooperation, and conscientiousness reflects self-discipline, organization, and goal-directed behavior. These traits shape individual's emotional reactions, coping styles and interpersonal functioning across the lifespan (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Life satisfaction is a cognitive and global assessment of one's overall well-being, based on self-selected criteria. Diener and colleagues (1985) stresses that life satisfaction is the judgement of an individual that life conditions meet his personal standards and aspirations. This is also affected by internal psychological factors and external life conditions such as health, relationships, work satisfaction, and socio-cultural context (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). Seligman (2011) states that life satisfaction balance between personal achievements, goals, and lived experiences. Individuals who aware about their internal states incline to develop qualities such as self-control, emotional balance, inner discipline, and acceptance. Studies suggest that life satisfaction is found positive and significant association with three personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and vice versa with neuroticism (Steel et al 2008). Self-consciousness also serves as a psychological mechanism for personality traits and life satisfaction. Neuroticism manifest heightened public self-consciousness, in contrast, self-awareness and personal growth are increased by private self-consciousness (Mor and Winquist, 2000). Leary & Kowalski (1995) argue that excessive public self-consciousness and social anxiety are directly correlated with poor mental health and life satisfaction because people evaluate themselves negatively.

Moreover, Indian knowledge system related philosophical teaching components like Bhagvad Gita and Triguna are found strongly correlated with personality traits, self-consciousness and life satisfaction. The Bhagvad Gita presents a holistic understanding of human nature, self-regulation and well-being. The Bhagvad Gita also mentions that the traits are based on the Triguna framework, in which the three Guans, Sattva, Raja and Tamas, are mentioned. Sattva Guna is defined by balance, purity and wisdom. The quality of Rajas Guna is known as activity, desire and unrest. The third guna is identified as Tamas, manifested by inertia and ignorance. Radhakrishnan (1951) argued that triguna works as a personality trait, function and also determines how individuals think, act and live. These triguna qualities determine individual characteristics such as Sattva guna personality is emotionally stable, self-disciplined, clear and corresponds to lower levels of neuroticism, high conscientiousness and higher life satisfaction. By contrast, Rajas guna's dominance display an excessive drive and commitment to results and a maximum duration that equated to public self-consciousness and ego involvement. Rajas Guna leads the psychological turmoil of discontent. Similarly, Tamas Guna manifests itself as ignorance and lethargy and has also been found to be associated with poor self-awareness, emotional dysregulation and poor well-being (Das, 1991). The concept of self-consciousness strongly connects to ego self (Ahankara) and true self (Atman) that is mentioned in Gita. Outcomes of these concepts identified with ego, social roles and external validation lead to sufferings and instability (Bhagavad Gita, 3.27, 6.5).

Yoga and Dhyan (Meditation) are prescribed in the Bhagvad Gita in which regulation of mind, reducing ego and promotion of life satisfaction method are mentioned (Bhagvad Gita 6.10-15). Brown and Ryan (2003), Rose and Thomas (2010) demonstrated that yogic and meditative practices increase self-regulation, emotional stability and subjective wellbeing. Patanjali Yoga Sutra's key element Niyam describe d a practice of swaadhyay describe the closely focus on private self-consciousness (Yoga Sutra 2.44).

Existing researches on above mentioned variables use western construct and paradigms. However, Indian knowledge system offers psychological construct enriched with personality and life satisfaction. Traditional Indian thoughts also emphasize the self-awareness, balanced character and inner harmony to life satisfaction. These concepts are not fully captured by western model. *Sāmkhya* and *Yoga* traditions mention psychological disposition and traits with triguna that influence human behavior, cognition and wellbeing in holistic way (Khanna et al 2013). Despite this conceptual and empirical studies integrate the Indian Knowledge system construct and it has been seen that mainstream psychological measures are scare. To bridging the gap between theoretical and practical importance, the study of the objective is as followed:

- To assess the nature of personality traits, self-consciousness and life satisfaction in adults.
- To study the relationship between five personality traits, and life satisfaction in adults.
- To study the relationship between five personality traits, and domains of self-consciousness in adults.
- To investigate the age group differences among five personality traits on personality traits, self-consciousness and life satisfaction in adults.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design: This study used cross-sectional, correlational and between group design. Different age group scores are compared for taken variables. To find out the relationship among these variables correlational design and examine the significant difference between age groups, between group design is used.

2.2. Participants: University students from Delhi and NCR were selected. Initially, these students contacted and requested to participate in the study. Response rate of the participants are found 92 percent. And finally, a number of 300 male and female students participated. Selection of the participants completed by using a random sampling technique. All participants age group was 18 to 40 years. This age group represents early to middle adulthood. All participants were currently students of undergraduate or postgraduate courses. Data were collected from various universities from Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram public and private universities.

2.3. Tools: Three standard research tools including socio demographic information were used.

2.3.1. Personality Inventory: This scale is developed by Gosling, et al (2003). Scale has 10 items and each two items assess one personality trait out of five personality traits. Mentioned domains of personality inventory is extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. Responses are rated on seven-point rating scale. Previous studies reported a good psychometric property of the scale.

2.3.2. Self-consciousness scale: It is developed by Fenigstein et al (1975). This scale consists of 23 items and measures three areas in which 10 items are assigned for private self-consciousness, seven items for public self-consciousness and six items for social anxiety. Five rating point scale strongly agree to strongly disagree is used to take responses. Internal consistency is reported on domains ranged from 0.70 to 0.90 respectively.

2.3.3. Satisfaction with life scale (Diener, et al 1985). This scale consists of 5 items that assess an individual's satisfaction with their life as a whole. These items are rated on a seven-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This scale has good psychometric properties. Internal consistency of the scale is reported from 0.79 to 0.89 in different studies respectively.

2.4. Procedure

This study is a part of Ph.D. work and research topic is already presented on Departmental Research Committee and approved by committee members. In this regard, informed consent was taken prior to data collection from university students. First, approval was obtained from university administrators and contact students. They were briefed about study purpose and assured them to confidentiality about their data. Prior to data collection, a list of students was created and followed it for randomization. Then, mentioned scales were administered. Paper pencil test format and clear instruction was provided for honest response. They were instructed as no right or wrong answers and they are free to take withdraw from anytime. Filled data was checked and coded it systematically and scored according to manual.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive scores of study variables on 300 participants. Five personality traits scores are reported as agreeableness mean score ($M = 9.13$, $SD = 2.46$), openness to experience ($M = 9.01$, $SD = 2.82$), conscientiousness ($M = 8.69$, $SD = 2.76$) and emotional stability ($M = 8.63$, $SD = 2.78$). These trait scores are labeled high score compare to extraversion. Extraversion demonstrated the lowest mean score among the personality dimensions ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 3.01$). Respective mean scores of life satisfaction ($M = 21.14$, $SD =$

4.67) suggested a moderate level of overall life satisfaction among participants. In terms of self-consciousness, all three domains are reported as higher level of private self-consciousness ($M = 31.45$, $SD = 6.56$) compared to public self-consciousness ($M = 24.80$, $SD = 5.12$). Social Anxiety also showed a moderate mean score ($M = 24.26$, $SD = 4.82$), and suggests a concern about social evaluation among respondents.

Table-1: Mean and SD of personality traits, life satisfaction and self consciousness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personality Traits					
Extraversion	300	2	14	6.88	3.008
Agreeableness	300	3	14	9.13	2.456
Conscientiousness	300	3	14	8.69	2.761
Emotional Stability	300	2	14	8.63	2.777
Openness to Experience	300	2	14	9.01	2.819
Life Satisfaction Scores	300	11	32	21.14	4.669
Self-Consciousness Scale					
Private Self	300	16	41	31.45	6.563
Public Self	300	12	33	24.80	5.123
Social Anxiety	300	13	33	24.26	4.823

3.2. Correlation Analysis

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients was performed to investigate the relationships among personality traits, self-consciousness domains, and life satisfaction scores (Table-2). A negative significant relationship is found between extraversion and private self-consciousness ($r = -0.17$, $p < .01$), public self-consciousness ($r = -0.17$, $p < .01$), and social anxiety ($r = -0.16$, $p < .01$). In addition, extraversion is found significant positive relationship with life satisfaction ($r = .27$, $p < .01$). Also, agreeableness is found significant positive relationship with life satisfaction ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). Moreover, positive significant relationship is found between conscientiousness and public self-consciousness ($r = .12$, $p < .05$), social anxiety ($r = .14$, $p < .05$). Openness and private self-consciousness ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), public self-consciousness ($r = .33$, $p < .01$), and social anxiety ($r = .25$, $p < .01$) are found positive significant relationship. Furthermore, a negative significant relationship is found between emotional stability and life satisfaction ($r = -0.11$, $p < .05$).

Table-2: Correlation Coefficient among domains of personality traits, self-consciousness and life satisfaction scores

	Private Self	Public Self	Social Anxiety	Life Satisfaction
Extraversion	-.170**	-.170**	-.155**	.274**
Agreeableness	.016	.058	.024	.119*
Conscientiousness	.107	.119*	.140*	.009
Emotional Stability	-.005	-.023	.012	-.113*
Openness to Experience	.275**	.328**	.250**	.046

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

3.3. Age variation in personality traits and life satisfaction

Table 3 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and F value of domains of personality traits in three age groups of adults first is emerging adulthood (18–25 years), second is young adulthood (26–35 years), and third is middle adulthood (36 years and above). A significant effect of age difference is found on extraversion, [$F(2, 297) = 3.85$, $p < .05$]. Young adults got highest mean score on extraversion ($M = 7.40$, $SD = 3.30$) compare to middle adults and emerging adults.

There is a significant effect of age is on Agreeableness [$F(2, 297) = 5.34, p < .01$]. Respective mean score suggests that emerging adult participants reported the highest agreeableness scores ($M = 9.62, SD = 2.44$), in compare to young and middle adults. This pattern indicates a gradual decline in agreeableness with increasing age in the present sample.

Table-3: Mean, SD and F values of domains of personality traits in terms of age group of adults

		N	Mean	SD	F-value
Extraversion	Emerging Adulthood	126	6.36	2.691	3.848*
	Young Adulthood	125	7.40	3.300	
	Middle Adulthood	49	6.92	2.820	
Agreeableness	Emerging Adulthood	126	9.62	2.442	5.344**
	Young Adulthood	125	8.92	2.358	
	Middle Adulthood	49	8.39	2.523	
Conscientiousness	Emerging Adulthood	126	8.95	2.410	1.537
	Young Adulthood	125	8.36	2.889	
	Middle Adulthood	49	8.84	3.210	
Emotional Stability	Emerging Adulthood	126	8.68	2.727	.508
	Young Adulthood	125	8.46	2.830	
	Middle Adulthood	49	8.92	2.798	
Openness to Experience	Emerging Adulthood	126	9.17	2.625	.887
	Young Adulthood	125	8.75	2.909	
	Middle Adulthood	49	9.24	3.065	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Age group differences in life satisfaction examined among three age groups of adults such as emerging adulthood young adulthood, middle adulthood. The effect of age group is found significant on life satisfaction [$F(2, 297) = 13.00, p < .01$]. Participants aged young adulthood participants reported the highest level of life satisfaction ($M = 22.34, SD = 4.82$), in compare to middle and emerging adulthood age group participants.

Table-4: Mean, SD and F value life satisfaction in terms of age group of adults.

Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F-Value
Emerging Adulthood	126	19.59	4.107	13.003**
Young Adulthood	125	22.34	4.823	
Middle Adulthood	49	22.04	4.564	

Note: ** $p < .01$

4. Discussion

Personality is defined as a dynamic organization of individuals psychophysical system that determine characteristics behavior and thoughts. Previous studies reveal that personality traits influence the self-consciousness and life satisfaction. Study results suggest that out of five personality traits, extraversion is found significant positive relationship with life satisfaction and negatively correlated with two domains social anxiety and public self-consciousness. Studies conducted by Nedungotti et al (2023) demonstrate that extraversion is equivalent to Sattva guna affect life satisfaction. Other studies also confirms that extraverted individuals experience higher level of positive effects and social engagement and contribute to greater subjective wellbeing (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Costa & McCrae, 1980). Negative relationship with extraversion and self-consciousness domains confirms that extraverted individuals are less prone to self-focused attention and social evaluation. Fenigstein, Scheir and Buss (1975) argued that excessive fear of outward or inward self-attention

increase anxiety and wellbeing. Extravert individuals possess social confidence and outward orientation, it buffers maladaptive self-focus that decrease social anxiety and increase life satisfaction. Comparative analysis on different age group of adults also found significant on extraversion and agreeableness. There were three age group emerging, young and middle adulthood participants in which age group of middle adulthood participants manifested higher score in compare to other age group of adults. Robert, Walton & Viechtbauer (2006) proposed that adulthood do meaningful changes due to social roles and responsibilities.

Second personality traits agreeableness found significant positive relationship with life satisfaction. Agreeableness trait is characterized as empathy, cooperation, trust and supportive nature. Diener and Seligman (2002) reported that agreeableness a strong predictor of life satisfaction. Steel, Schmidt & Shultz (2008) argued that agreeableness trait-based individuals experience lower level of interpersonal conflict, greater social acceptance and reports enhance level of satisfaction with life. Although, age group-based analysis reveals that age group of 18-25 years shows higher agreeableness.

Another finding for conscientiousness that is a personality trait positively associated with two domains of self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety. John et al (1999) demonstrated that conscientiousness is known as positive outcome such as achievement and self-regulation. Increased level of conscientiousness promotes performance, social standard and evaluation. It means higher level of conscientiousness individuals indicate high expectations and standard towards external evaluation and potential failure. This situation is found direct connected with self-consciousness domains (Flett et al 2002).

Emotional stability a trait of big five personality model is revealed significant negative relationship with life satisfaction. Emotional stability represents neuroticism in which higher score of neuroticisms reduce life satisfaction. Similar findings are reported by Lucas and Diener (2008). Emotionally unstable person reflects stress reaction, negative effects and rumination. Despite presence of external success or social support, person with neuroticism do under estimate the satisfaction with life.

Openness to experience, fifth trait of personality model demonstrate the positive association with all domains of self-consciousness. Higher score of this trait suggests the introspective, reflective and emotionally sensitive personality could be the main reason of increased score of private self-awareness and social anxiety. This heightened self-awareness makes individuals more sensitive for social indicators and internal cues. A significant effect of age is found on life satisfaction. Mean score reveal that age group of young and middle adults reported higher level of life satisfaction in comparison to age group emerging adults. Blanch, Flawer & Oswald (2008), Diener (2009) argued that after early adulthood, individuals get financial stability make clear life goals and again emotional maturity. This development perception makes individuals mature and experience of satisfaction with life.

Conclusion

Personality traits contribute the significant role in shaping individuals' subjective wellbeing. This positive and negative significant relationships demonstrate the clear picture of self-consciousness and life satisfaction. Findings of personality traits that promote life satisfaction and domains of self-consciousness reflects importance of personality traits and psychological wellbeing. Study recommends the psychological intervention, and screening tools that could promote satisfaction with life and psychological wellbeing and reflect to personality traits.

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Disclosure of Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this research paper. The authors have no financial or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this study.

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