

PREVALENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS IN UNDERGRADUATE DENTAL STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES

To study the personality traits of undergraduate dental students with respect to gender.

METHODOLOGY

A Cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted at the College of Dentistry, Sharif Medical and Dental College, Lahore, over 5 months, from July to November 2021. Data was collected using the Ten Item Personality Inventory scale which was a pre-validated questionnaire.

RESULTS

There was a statistically significant association between gender and the personality of trait of emotional stability ($p=0.017$). There was a non-significant association between gender and the personality traits of extraversion ($p=0.273$), agreeableness ($p=0.416$), conscientiousness ($p=0.147$) and openness to experience ($p=0.184$).

CONCLUSION

The personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience were more prevalent in the females in comparison to the males.

KEYWORDS: Undergraduate Dental Students, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability

INTRODUCTION

Personality traits are crucial determinants of success in dental profession.¹ Personality comprises of a person's inherent characteristics altered by his environment and training.² The Big Five personality described by McCrae and John is a major personality theory that categorizes personality in terms of five main factors including extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experiences.³ The personality trait in which a person is likely to experience negative emotions is called.^{4,5} People with increased neuroticism have an inclination towards anxiety and often see minor difficulties as overwhelming situations. Extraversion is a personality trait usually characterized by high energy, talkativeness, excitability, and sociability; such people are often optimistic and have a wide social circle. Agreeableness refers to the ability of a person to put others needs above their own and a tendency toward cooperation, consideration, and kindness. Openness points to intellectual curiosity and willingness to embrace new things. People with high Openness are prone to having innovative ideas and are free from conservative beliefs.

Conscientiousness refers to being diligent, and achievement-oriented; people with high levels of conscientiousness tend to be well organized and plan their time very efficiently.⁶ Studies show that personality traits such as neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness have an important role in predicting the educational achievements and professional conduct of dental students.⁷ There is a significant difference in the way women and men think, feel and behave. The study of personality is particularly helpful in the examination of psychological differences between genders. Gender differences in personality traits are often characterized in terms of higher scores of a gender in a particular trait, for instance, females are often found to be more agreeable than their male counterparts.⁸ The study of these differences in personality sheds light on the differences between behavior patterns in female and male undergraduate dental students. There has been a consistent attempt by researchers to understand the most important determinants of a student's academic performance therefore the study of personality traits among dental students has been a recurrent topic of research during the last few years.⁹ Personality tests have a role in

predicting the behavior and performance of dental students, both male and female, throughout their academic life. Understanding the personality of dental students is crucial for the maintenance of supportive student culture because the training and eventual practice of dental students revolves around multiple constituents of a person; in other words, their personality. The aim of the present research was to study the personality traits of undergraduate dental students with respect to gender.

METHODOLOGY

A Cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted from July to November 2021 at the College of Dentistry, Sharif Medical and Dental College. The exclusion criteria was individuals with any systemic illness, history of alcohol consumption, or smoking while individuals of all ages, genders and oral parafunctional habits were included. Convenience sampling was the sampling technique used. Ethical approval was obtained from Sharif Medical Research Center (SMRC) (No. SMDC/SMRC/205-21). Data was collected using the Ten Item Personality Inventory scale which had a Cronbach alpha value of 0.8.¹⁰ There was total of 10 questions assessing personality traits in individuals on a 7 point Likert scale.¹¹ A sample size of 200 was calculated with the help of WHO sample size determination software, keeping the confidence level of 95% with an anticipated population proportion of 52.86% with teeth clenching and an absolute precision of 0.07.¹⁰ SPSS 23 was used for statistical analysis. P value ≤ 0.05 was considered significant. Chi square test was to find the association gender with the personality traits.

RESULTS

The mean age of the participants was 24.93 ± 6.759 years out of which 29% were males and 71% were females. Table 1 shows that there was a statistically significant association between gender and the personality of trait of emotional stability. It was seen that females were more emotionally stable as compared to males.

Table 1: Association between Personality Traits and Gender in Undergraduate Dental Students

Personality Trait	Gender		P-Value
	Male n(%)	Female n(%)	
Extraversion	50(25%)	113(56.5%)	0.273
Agreeableness	55(27.5%)	138(69%)	0.416
Conscientiousness	55(27.5%)	140(70%)	0.147
Emotional Stability	53(26.5%)	109(54.5%)	0.017
Openness to Experience	58(29%)	136(68%)	0.184

There was a non-significant association between gender and the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience with a higher percentage of females having these personality traits in comparison to the males as shown in table 1.

DISCUSSION

The establishment of personality traits is strongly influenced by extrinsic surroundings, according to personality studies. Young adolescence is a period when several people are attending college and/or beginning their careers, and this is also a phase where personality shifts have been most pronounced. A study, which was conducted under Schneider's Attraction, Selection, and Attrition theoretical foundation, examined the potential effects of academic focus on student's acquisition of personality traits.¹² In addition to cognitive skills, individuals need a combination of personality traits to succeed in dentistry education and ultimately in the dentistry industry. A personality is made up of an inherent characteristics of an individuals modified or emphasized by his upbringing and surroundings. Character is the as a consequence of his birth characteristics and his events of life.¹³ There is not a vast body of literature that reports any data that correlates the prevalence of personality traits with the gender. Our study reported that the personality traits of emotional stability (54.5%) extraversion (56.5%), agreeableness (69%), conscientiousness (70%) and openness to experience (68%) were higher in comparison to the males. According to Hoque A, it was obvious that gender and personality characteristics did not significantly correlate. It's possible that this is reflection of the traits among some female students who just might view dental school as an unfriendly atmosphere.² According to Smithers et al., females scored greater on the agreeableness, neuroticism, as well as transparency ($r = .17$, $p.05$) scales than males.¹⁴ This result is consistent with one by Chamberlain et al., which found a substantial association ($r = .45$) among gender and neuroticism. According to this association, female participants exhibited greater levels of anxiety, self-consciousness, and vulnerability compared their male counterparts¹⁵. Our study reported an association between gender and the personality of trait of emotional stability ($p=0.017$). It was also reported in our study that there was a non-significant association between gender and the personality traits of extraversion ($p=0.273$), agreeableness ($p=0.416$), conscientiousness ($p=0.147$) and openness to experience ($p=0.184$). Smithers et al. previously showed that it is important to distinguish among clinical and academic competence while determining the variables that indicated achievement in dental school.¹⁶ In another analysis, the

researchers discovered that a reliable personality test founded on the Five Model of personality might enhance hiring practises.¹⁷ According to one of the best well-known ideas regarding career path, Holland contends that such personality types were drawn to particular workplace surroundings that are within line with their individual beliefs and passions and allow people to put their abilities and skills to use on engaging challenges. Holland's concept outlines 6 personality categories (R), Social (S), Investigative (I), Conventional (C) Artistic (A), Enterprising (E), and that, when combined, are utilized to describe both people and work environments. It is considerably more sophisticated than we can convey here. It is believed that individuals look for workplaces whose characteristics fit his particular vocational personalities.¹⁸ The combination among a person's personality and surroundings eventually determines how well they do at workplace, only with finest results happening whenever there is a good fit in between two.

LIMITATIONS

The self-assessment of personality trait by participants by means of a questionnaire cannot be solely relied upon when assessing personality type. It requires assessment by a psychologist as well which could not be done due to financial constraints.

CONCLUSIONS

The personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience were more prevalent in the females in comparison to the males.

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