

An Analysis of Association Between Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence and Prosocial Behaviour: A Gender Study

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Abstract

This research paper aims at analyzing the associations, among personality traits, emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour while studying the effect of gender on these variables. A sample of 100 individuals was chosen for this study and were assessed based on three questionnaires – BFI, AES and HAS. Five hypotheses were formulated. Analysis of data showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and its various dimensions and personality traits, but not so much in prosocial behaviour.

Keywords: personality, prosocial behaviour, emotional intelligence, gender.

Prosocial behaviours are those that are intended to help others. They are characterized by a concern for the rights, feelings, and welfare of other people. Behaviours that can be described as prosocial include feeling empathy and concern for others and behaving in ways to help or benefit other people (Cherry, 2015). Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) define it as, “voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals”. These actions consist of, sharing, assisting, empathizing, and supporting other people in need. The term was originally introduced in the 1970s and was used in opposition for “antisocial behaviour”. Most of the research and study done on prosocial behaviour have their base in the brutal murder of Katherine Genovese (better known as Kitty Genovese) in the year 1964. It was found that the 28-year-old Kitty, was violently stabbed in front of her own house, and it was interesting yet disappointing to see that none of the individuals present at the scene of crime came to her aid, even after witnessing her getting stabbed or hearing her loud screams. This incident fueled a plethora of research on prosocial behaviour and the reasons people helped other individuals, and it wasn't just limited to the social aspect, but was now enveloping the emotional as well as the cognitive aspects of it. Hence, it became more essential that prosocial behaviour was not just studied as a matter of interest, but analyzed at the micro, meso and macro levels.

Former Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, asserted that, “one big change in what kids should learn is the need to nurture creative thinking and emotional intelligence”. In today's world, emotional intelligence has proven to be a highly desirable quality in almost all areas of life. Besides cognitive intelligence, it is one of the most valued traits that often aids individuals in understanding the world around them effectively and use that knowledge to connect with other people and live a happier life. Emotional intelligence is capability of an individual to precisely pinpoint and manage emotions of their own self as well as other individuals. The term was invented by Peter Salovey & John D. Mayer in 1990, and was outlined as, “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among

them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action.” Author, psychologist, and journalist Daniel Goleman (1995), in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, conveyed that EQ was as significant an aspect of lives and the eventual success as was our social academic, interpersonal and professional aspects of our life. He suggested that there are five significant constituents of emotional intelligence: an awareness of the self (the capability to understand or acknowledge your own emotions), self-regulation (the appropriate expression of emotions), social skills (the ability to interact well with others), empathy (capability to comprehend and recognize feelings and emotions of other individuals), and motivation (are motivated by internal rewards such as flow, happiness, self-improvement etc.). Even after decades of research, emotional intelligence remains an elusive subject and much of it is still left to learn. There are still challenges to measuring the construct, and its application. There is also a need to examine the EI of children under 10 years of age, to successfully measure the developmental milestones. Lastly, whether the norm of women scoring much higher in emotional intelligence than men, can be challenged across sexes, is yet to be discovered. Personality has, for decades, intrigued psychologists and researchers, and led them to study this concept on a wide scale. There is no field in our life, where personality doesn't play an important role. Personality can be defined as a particular way of thinking, feeling, behaving of an individual. However, personality is not limited to such basic perspectives. It distinguishes an individual from all others by their attitudes, beliefs, values, opinions, moods, along with superficial things such as their dressing style, how they live, how they treat others etc. All of this encompasses an individual's unique personality. It has often been debated whether personality is something which is inherited by people or is it something that is acquired from the environment. This argument between nature and nurture has gone on for decades and still not scientifically proven. Nonetheless, there have been a whole lot of theories over the decades that classify people into different categories based on their own parameters, some of which are used till date when talking about

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personality, beginning with Galen (2000 BC) to Erikson (1953, 1958).

Thus, personality has been studied vastly and there has been a plethora of research on this subject matter. All the theories of personality have proved monumental in shaping the field of personality psychology, and the contribution of each of the psychologists are priceless, because if that were not the case, we wouldn't have such a rich history and even the literature for it. We wouldn't have the ability to know about ourselves, our traits, our unique characteristics, or even the world. The field of personality theory has given us a lot over the past few decades. What remains to study is its impact and relationship with other aspects of our life. In this research, I intend to study how our individual personality (extraversion or introversion) is linked with our understanding of emotional states of others (emotional intelligence) and the positive acts we commit to benefit the society or the world around us (prosocial behaviour). I also intend to study where our accurate understanding of others' emotions, somehow pushes us to really help those in need, and not let their fate be the same as Kitty Genovese – a victim of humanity. Lastly, I also intend to find out and maybe know further, if women, being more emotionally intelligent than men, are more sensitive to others in need, or is there no differentiation between the sexes among this one, and no matter how emotionally intelligent you are, you do/

Aim. To analyze the relationship between personality, prosocial behaviour and emotional intelligence.

Objectives

- 1) To determine the association of personality traits with prosocial behaviour among young adults.
- 2) To determine the association of personality traits with the emotional intelligence among young adults.
- 3) To determine the difference in prosocial behaviour among young adult males and females.
- 4) To determine the difference in emotional intelligence among young adult males and females.
- 5) To explore the significant association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour.

Hypotheses

- 1) There will be a significant association of personality traits with prosocial behaviour among young adults.
- 2) There will be a significant association of personality traits with the emotional intelligence among young adults.
- 3) There will be a significant difference in prosocial behaviour among young adult males and females.
- 4) There will be a significant difference in emotional intelligence among young adult males and females.
- 5) There will be a significant association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour.

Method

Research Design. Since the study is quantitative in nature, the research design opted for in this study is that of quantitative research design. As the study aims to study the associations between variables, more specifically talking, the research design employed would be correlational design quantitative research.

Variables. Amongst the variables, personality traits is taken as an independent variable and emotional intelligence & prosocial behaviour are taken as dependent variables. Gender was also considered when establishing links among the three variables, as it was important to know the differences between the sexes that arose because of the study.

Sample and its selection. The sample selected was 100, out of which 50 % of the population constituted males and the rest 50%, females. The selection of the sample was done through non-probability sampling, purposive type. The age group chosen for the study was 18-25 years of age (young adults). The data was collected both through physical method (60%), and through google forms (40%). No other demographic variations except age and gender were considered. Exclusion criteria consisted of individuals falling in either of the categories: children, teenagers, older adults, people with disability and those with clinical illnesses.

Description of tools employed

1. **Helping Attitude Scale (HAS):** Helping Attitude Scale (HAS), measuring prosocial behaviour, was developed by Gary S. Nickell, a professor of psychology, in 1998. The latest edition of this scale HAS Form 20 was used for this study. The scale consists of 20 statements. The neutral score was 60. Individuals who scored higher were high in prosocial behaviour and the ones who scored less than the neutral score were low in prosocial behaviour.
2. **The Assessing Emotions Scale (AES):** This scale was given by Nicola Schutte, an associate professor in the University of New England, Australia, in the year 2009, and is also commonly known as the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT). The test contains 33 items that are distributed and measured according to the five-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Those who scored higher and above 105 were considered high in emotional intelligence whereas those who scored low and below 105 were considered low in emotional intelligence.
3. **The Big-Five Inventory (BFI):** This personality inventory measure was given by John Oliver P. and Srivastava S. in 1999. This is a self-report personality inventory which consists of 44 items that are distributed across 5 dimensions (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism, or commonly abbreviated as OCEAN) and 30 facets and are measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Each of the dimension has negative items which are reverse

scored and then added to the normally scored responses to arrive at results.

Procedure. To collect the sample, girls and boys were approached separately. A rapport was established with the participants. They were ensured that their identities and the responses that they gave to the questionnaires would be kept strictly confidential, and not revealed anywhere. They were also given the confidence that their responses will not be individually read or judged in any way, and these responses will be used only for research purposes. They were told that the participation in the study was totally voluntary, and they can opt out of it, whenever they feel uncomfortable. They were asked for their written as well oral consent. After the formation of rapport, all the three questionnaires were distributed to the girls and boys. Along with the instructions printed with the scales, the participants were also given oral instructions and made to understand what they were required to do and how to respond to each statement. They were told that it was not a test, therefore there was no right and wrong answer and that they need not worry about the results. They were asked to give honest answers and not skip any statement. The participants were given around 10-15 minutes to complete approximate 100 questions of 3 questionnaires. After the participants completed the questionnaires, the response sheets were collected back from them. Using proper statistical tools, the raw data of the 100 participants was first reverse scored and then calculated as per the hypotheses.

Statistical Analysis: The statistical analysis of the data obtained from the population was done through SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) software, most used for statistics in the social sciences field. According to the hypotheses, it was seen that my topic was based on determining the association between variables and comparing the differences between genders. Therefore, the software was used to find out correlation and t-test scores and determine how these affected my variables on 0.5 and 0.1 levels of significance.

Results and Discussion

The present study aims at analyzing the relationship between the variables, which are, personality traits, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behaviour and to see how gender correlates to or differs from each other within these three variables. For this purpose, statistical techniques used to arrive at the results were- t-test and Pearson's correlation.

The table of correlation shows the association between prosocial behaviour (PSB), emotional intelligence dimensions and the five personality traits (BFI openness, BFI conscientiousness, BFI extraversion, BFI agreeableness, BFI neuroticism). As per the table, a significant relationship has been found between emotional intelligence and its various dimensions and personality traits, but not so much in prosocial behaviour.

In the first hypothesis, it was hypothesized that there will be a significant association of personality traits with prosocial behaviour among young adults. This alternative hypothesis has been rejected as per the results obtained through statistical correlational analysis. Results show (Table 2) that when association of prosocial behaviour was seen with the Big Five dimensions of personality, the most closely associated dimension of Big Five is Openness ($r=0.187$) Therefore, it can be said that personality traits are not significantly associated with prosocial behaviour among young adults.

The second hypothesis derived was that there will be a significant association of personality traits with emotional intelligence among young adults. Findings revealed that all the dimensions of personality heavily correlate to all the dimensions of emotional intelligence both at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. Only between BFI dimension conscientiousness and utilization of emotions, there is no significant relationship present. Overall, the correlation is very strong and hence it can be said, that there is a significant association of personality traits with emotional intelligence among young adults. The said hypothesis has been accepted.

The third hypothesis formulated was that there will be a significant difference between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour among young adult males and females. Results show a clear difference between the means and standard deviations of young adult males ($M=69.70$, $SD=7.429$) and females ($M=71.26$, $SD=5.59$) with respect to their prosocial tendencies and behaviours. The t value obtained was 1.186 which is significant at $p=0.05$ level. This shows that there is a substantial variation between the two sexes. Hence, it can be said that the hypothesis has been accepted and that there is a significant difference in prosocial behaviour among young adult males and females.

The fourth hypothesis derived was that there would be significant difference in emotional intelligence among young adult males and females. Through final data, it was learned that within males and females there is no overall difference in emotional intelligence dimensions, except for in managing own emotions where there is a significant difference between males ($M= 34.80$, $SD=4.54$) and females ($M=34.36$, $SD=6.14$). The t value obtained is 0.407 which is significant at $p=0.05$ level. Since there is one dimension of EI which shows significant difference between the two, it can be said that this hypothesis will be partially accepted.

Lastly, the final hypothesis derived was that there will be a significant association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour. From the correlation table, out of the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, only managing one's own emotions ($t= 0.407$) shows a significant association between the two variables. The rest of the dimensions don't show any noticeable association of any kind

(positive or negative) with prosocial behaviour. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is partially accepted only, as it can be said that there is no significant association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour according to the results obtained.

Summary and Conclusion

Homo sapiens are perhaps, the most nuanced social creatures of all, that are deeply affected by their situations, surroundings, and interactions. We thrive

studied. Lastly, emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to manage and understand others' emotions, as well as their own. Emotional intelligence, as a secondary form of intelligence (first being, cognitive intelligence), has gained world-wide acclamation, as a form of intelligence necessary to function well, and strive in the world today. Emotional intelligence may be able to affect our personality and prosocial behaviour as well. The aim

Correlations

		PSB	EI perception of emotion	EI managing own emotions	EI managing other's emotions	EI utilization of emotions	EI	BFI openness	BFI conscientiousness	BFI extraversion	BFI agreeableness	BFI neuroticism
PSB	Pearson Correlation	1	.114	.045	.148	.241	.159	.187	.089	.067	.163	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.260	.654	.142	.016	.115	.063	.381	.507	.105	.093
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EI perception of emotion	Pearson Correlation	.114	1	.411	.444	.426	.760	.295	.471	.225	.253	.271
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260		.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.024	.011	.006
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EI managing own emotions	Pearson Correlation	.045	.411	1	.563	.455	.803	.305	.370	.331	.318	.218
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.654	.000		.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.001	.001	.030
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EI managing other's emotions	Pearson Correlation	.148	.444	.563	1	.583	.816	.351	.231	.395	.477	.301
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.021	.000	.000	.002
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EI utilization of emotions	Pearson Correlation	.241	.426	.455	.583	1	.732	.441	.136	.260	.381	.373
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.176	.009	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
EI	Pearson Correlation	.159	.760	.803	.816	.732	1	.431	.417	.388	.446	.358
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
BFI openness	Pearson Correlation	.187	.295	.305	.351	.441	.431	1	.216	.148	.314	.846
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.003	.002	.000	.000	.000		.031	.143	.001	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
BFI conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.089	.471	.370	.231	.136	.417	.216	1	.170	.410	.209
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.381	.000	.000	.021	.176	.000	.031		.091	.000	.037
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
BFI extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.067	.225	.331	.395	.260	.388	.148	.170	1	.046	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.507	.024	.001	.000	.009	.000	.143	.091		.652	.540
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
BFI agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.163	.253	.318	.477	.381	.446	.314	.410	.046	1	.245
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.105	.011	.001	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.652		.014
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
BFI neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	.169	.271	.218	.301	.373	.358	.846	.209	.062	.245	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.093	.006	.030	.002	.000	.000	.000	.037	.540	.014	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

on social connections and have an irresistible need to not be alone (barring some personality types). Therefore, they carry with themselves a tendency of helping others in need. This tendency of helping others in need, to well, ultimately help us, is called prosocial behaviour. There have been several theories and research that aim at finding out a concrete cause behind such prosocial acts, but none so far have been able to pinpoint the exact cause for this behaviour, because like our personality, prosocial act is dynamic in nature and carried out in social situations, therefore providing one specific cause has been next to impossible. Our personality can be defined as the way we think, act, feel and behave. Our personality is unique to us, and is not shared by anyone else, rather it is dynamic i.e., keeps varying from person to person. Many theories, since the time of Hippocrates, have been given to explain the different kind of personality. These theories have become the base upon which the current ideas of personality are

of the study, therefore, is to analyze the relationship between personality traits, emotional intelligence, and prosocial behaviour.

The present study makes use of the most underrated concepts of psychology and has been a sincere attempt to study those concepts to provide a steppingstone for further research. The research conducted has been done with utmost authenticity and dedication towards analyzing the social and personality field of psychology. However, as no research is perfect research, this research too has areas which unfortunately might have swayed the results in a slightly different direction than what was expected, and thus has its own limitations. The future scope for this study is limited but not non-existent. For one, this variable could be used to understand factors other than the personality ones, to understand the factors that motivate individuals to act in a prosocial way. For another, this research could be that small drop in the vast ocean of literature that can

somehow contribute towards the field of social psychology. Lastly, there is further scope of research as some of the hypothesis that have been partially accepted or rejected, have been done so because there is more to study in those. They were not generalized because of the small sample size, but still more of study and research into that topic is required.

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