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Personality Traits And Self-Esteem As Predictors Of Life Satisfaction In Indian Youth Students

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Abstract

India is a country where there is a lack of comprehensive studies in the literature on well-being. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between life satisfaction, self-esteem and the Big Five personality traits among Indian youth. The participants were 200 Hindu men and women from colleges and universities in Varanasi (UP), India. After the study, it was found that the level of life satisfaction of female participants was higher than that of male participants. After analysing the results, it was found that self-esteem explained about 18.5% of the variance in life satisfaction and the Big Five personality traits could explain about 14.3% of the variance. We found that the Big Five traits, neuroticism and conscientiousness were the most significant predictors of life satisfaction. Additionally, as per the Big Five personality traits, life satisfaction was predicted by self-esteem. Based on the findings of this study, neuroticism was found to have a positive relationship with life satisfaction and self-esteem. Based on previous studies, we will examine the significance of the data on the relationship between personality traits and other aspects of well-being.

Keywords: Big Five Factors, Self-esteem, Life satisfaction, India

Introduction

Life satisfaction is a vital aspect of total well-being, representing an individual's evaluation of their life in its whole. Various elements, including personality traits and self-esteem, influence it. In the context of Indian youth, understanding these relationships becomes essential as these demographics face unique socio-cultural pressures, academic challenges, and the transitional phase of adulthood. This review aims to elucidate how personality traits and self-esteem serve as predictors of life satisfaction among Indian youth students, taking into account various cultural, social, and psychological factors.

Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive assessment of an individual's life, characterised by an individualised feeling of fulfilment and contentment. According to Diener (1994), life satisfaction is one of the primary components of subjective well-being, alongside positive affect and negative affect. Individuals who report high life satisfaction often exhibit better mental health, exhibit adaptive coping mechanisms, and have more robust social relationships.

Factors Influencing Life Satisfaction

Demographic Factors: Age, gender, and socio-economic status can significantly impact life satisfaction levels. Research suggests that gender differences exist, with females often reporting lower satisfaction levels due to societal pressures (Diener et al., 2002).

Cultural Context: Cultural norms play a crucial role in shaping individual perceptions of happiness and satisfaction. In collectivist cultures In countries such as India, the value of social relationships and community ties exceeds individual achievements, impacting life satisfaction (Triandis, 1995).).

Psychological Factors: Personality traits and self-esteem have emerged. as significant predictors of life satisfaction, with evidence supporting that certain personality profiles contribute more positively to subjective well-being (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

The Big Five Personality Traits paradigm, which includes neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, and extraversion, has been extensively studied in psychology. Each of these traits offers unique insights into how individuals perceive their lives.

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Extraversion refers to the tendency to seek stimulation and enjoy the company of others. Research consistently demonstrates a positive correlation between extraversion and life satisfaction. Extraverted individuals often build more extensive social networks, experience more positive emotions, and cope better with stressors (Steel et al., 2008).

Neuroticism is defined by fluctuations in emotional stability, heightened anxiety, and variability in mood. Individuals high in neuroticism are prone to negative emotions, which can lead to lower life satisfaction (Watson & Clark, 1992).

The essential elements of conscientiousness are accountability, organisation, and goal-orienteers. Research indicates that conscientious individuals are more likely to experience higher life satisfaction due to their ability to set and achieve goals, maintain order, and manage responsibilities effectively (Buchanan & Seligman, 1995).

Agreeableness entails being compassionate, cooperative, and friendly. Agreeable individuals typically have strong interpersonal relationships, which significantly affect heir life satisfaction (Dutta & Roy, 2018).

Openness it requires a willingness to engage in new experiences and maintain them. Maintaining an open-minded attitude is essential. Researchers have linked higher openness levels to greater cognitive flexibility and creativity, which positively influence life satisfaction by facilitating engagement and adaptability (McCrae, 1996).

Studies have failed to identify the correlates and predictors of subjective well-being in different cultures because it affects people's quality of life. Research studies have indicated that external influences like money and health only slightly influence assessments of well-being (Diener et al. 1999). Research indicates a significant relationship between consistent personality traits and subjective well-being (Diener et al. 2003). Research indicates that in numerous countries, extraversion and neuroticism emerge as the most significant predictors of subjective well-being within the framework of the Big Five personality traits (for a concise overview, refer to Schimmack et al. 2002). In the late 1990s, a meta-analysis by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) indicated that conscientiousness and agreeableness, two additional personality traits, are also linked to subjective well-being. The relationship between subjective well-being and openness to new experiences appears to lack strong and consistent predictive power.

Furnham and Cheng (2000) conducted research in the UK. In addition to mediating the relationship between personality and subjective well-being, self-esteem also mediates the impact of social cynicism, a subset of social beliefs, on life satisfaction (Lai et al. 2010).

Well-Being Research in India

However, India has not conducted many studies on life satisfaction. However, just a few scholars have examined the connection between personality traits, self-esteem, and other aspects of wellbeing. In addition, agreeableness, extraversion, and life happiness were found to be strongly positively correlated in a study on Indian students by Pandey, K.N. (2024). The study also noted a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and life satisfaction.

According to Kakkar and Devi (2014), extraverted youth in India may have better social connections and be more satisfied with their lives overall.

Elevated neuroticism can pose considerable difficulties for Indian students, particularly in the face of scholastic stress. The relationship between neuroticism and unhappiness is especially significant in a competitive educational environment characterised by high levels of stress and anxiety (Sahu & Jain, 2017).

In the context of Indian youth, elevated conscientiousness might result in academic achievement and enhanced interpersonal interactions, which may directly contribute to increased life satisfaction (Kumar & Rani, 2020).

In the collectivist framework of Indian society, where communal and familial bonds are essential, agreeableness may significantly contribute to the development of supportive relationships that improve life satisfaction among adolescents (Gupta & Kumar, 2016).

In a swiftly evolving cultural environment, openness among youth might assist them in managing societal expectations and fostering enriching experiences, hence potentially improving their life happiness (Patil & Ghosh, 2021).

Cultural pressures related to academic achievement and societal expectations in India can profoundly affect the self-esteem of young individuals. Students possessing elevated self-esteem generally indicate more life happiness, while individuals with diminished self-esteem frequently encounter dissatisfaction and tension (Bhargava & Saini, 2021).

The results, which align with findings from India, provide preliminary evidence that the innovative concepts of positive psychology, such as various dimensions of well-being, along with their associated metrics, can be effectively applied to samples from India. The findings from these studies underscore the importance of neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion in forecasting various aspects of well-being within Indian populations. The findings indicate that self-esteem may hold more predictive power than the Big Five traits in relation to well-being outcomes. Ultimately, these findings indicate that in India, sex may influence the connection between specific dimensions of well-being and their associated predictors.

At present, there appears to be a lack of research in India examining the relationship between personality traits and life satisfaction. In order to close this gap, the current study looked at the relationship between life satisfaction, self-esteem, and the Big Five personality traits in an Indian population. According to earlier studies carried out in India (mentioned above) and other countries, extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were projected to be

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significant predictors of life satisfaction. We predicted that self-esteem, in addition to the Big Five personality traits, is a key predictor of life satisfaction.

Method

Participants and Procedure for the study

Two hundred students from the University of Varanasi (BHU & MGKVP), India, took part. We selected 100 (50%) female and 100 (50%) male students from various academic disciplines to make up the sample. Every student identified as Hindu. The age range of students is 20-26 years old. One hundred (50%) of the participants came from Varanasi's urban areas, and another hundred (50%) came from Varanasi's various rural districts.

Participants of the study					
Male	Female				
100	100				

The questionnaire was completed in classrooms by groups of varying sizes. A proficient data collector was present to respond to any enquiries from the participants. Participation occurred anonymously, ensuring the confidentiality of individuals. We ensured that there were no correct or incorrect responses.

Behavioural Measures

The following scales were employed for the data collection:

SWLS (**Diener et al. 1985**): The purpose of this scale was to measure your general satisfaction with life. The measurement comprises five items. A 7-point scale is utilised for each item, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement.

NEO-Five Factor Inventory, Form-S, (Arora et al. 2010). The Big Five personality traits were assessed by this questionnaire. There are 60 measures in all, measuring neuroticism (12 items), conscientiousness (12 items), agreeableness (12 items), extraversion (12 items), and openness to experience (12 items). The items are scored using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (**Rosenberg 1965**). This 10-item scale gauges overall self-esteem. Each item is rated on a 4-point scale, where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 4 denotes strongly agree.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table1 Mean and SD values of male and female on the measure of NEO-FFI (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and consciousness), Life satisfaction and Self-esteem

					-	f-ratio	P
MEASURES	Working status	N	Mean	S.D.	df	1-14110	
NEUROTICISM	Male	100	33.89	5.421	1	5.244	.023*
	Female	100	35.90	6.903	198		
	Total	200	34.90	6.272	199		
EXTRAVERSION	Male	100	38.02	8.089	1	16.437	00**
	Female	100	34.23	4.686	198		
	Total	200	36.13	6.862	199		
OPENNESS	Male	100	38.42	4.648	1	29.497	.000**
	Female	100	34.89	4.544	198		
	Total	200	36.66	4.914	199		
AGREABENESS	Male	100	31.28	5.927	1	.000	.992
	Female	100	31.29	7.951	198		
	Total	200	31.29	6.995	199		
CONSCIOUSNESS	Male	100	27.24	5.897	1	.169	.681
	Female	100	27.59	6.142	198		
	Total	200	27.42	6.008	199		
SELF-ESTEEM	Male	100	30.56	4.480	1	.977.	.324
	Female	100	29.91	4.807	198		

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LIFE SATISFACTION	Total Male Female	199 100 100	30.24 23.44 26.16	4.645 6.949 5.803	199 1	9.89	.033*
*p<.05, **p<.01	Total	100	24.80	6.529	19	9	
40							MaleFemaleTotal
o kuroficism expante	OPENNES.	AGREABLINE	conscious	shi ^{es} sti	J.ESTEIN LIFE SATIS	ACTION	

Figure of Mean for male, female and total

Male youth scored considerably higher on neuroticism, extraversion, openness and satisfaction with life than the female youth of Varanasi, India. In other words we can say that extraversion and openness significant at the level of .01 and neuroticism and Satisfaction with life significant at the level of .05.

Tabble2 Relationship between satisfaction with life and Personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness), social media use and social interaction anxiety

agreeablene	ss and consc	ientiousness	s), social m	edia use and s	ocial interact	non anxiety	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Neuroticism 2 Extraversion 3 Openness 4 Agreeableness	1 143* .033 153*	.117* .035	036				
5Conscientiousness	163*	.106	105	.406**			
6 Self-esteem7 Life satisfaction	.117 .172*	085 272	.098 .089	164* 147*	427** 356**	.431**	1

^{*}P<0.05; **P<0.01

Further ascertaining the values of scores on both the measures of the independent variables, to elucidate patterns and relationships through Pearson's correlation of was aimed for and reported in Table 2. Results vide Table 2 revealed satisfaction with life to be positively correlated to neuroticism (r = 0.172, p > .05), Self-esteem (r = 0.431), p > .01 and negatively correlated to agreeableness (r = -0.147, p > .05) and conscientiousness (r = -0.356, p > .01). According to numerous previous studies, the big five are consistently linked to subjective well-being (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998; Gutiérrez et al., 2005), and another study by Hayes and Joseph (2003) in England discovered that none of the three measures of subjective well-being were related to openness. Results vide Table 2 revealed Self-esteem to be negatively correlated to agreeableness (r = -0.164, p > .05) and conscientiousness (r = -0.427, p > .01).

eISSN: 2589-7799

2025 January; 8 (1): 29-35

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Dependent	Predictors	R	R Square	R Square	Df	F Ratio	P
Variable				Change			
life satisfaction	C,O,N,E,A	.378	.143	.121	5/194	6.459**	.000
	C,O,N,E	.378	.143	.125	4/195	8.110**	.000
	C,O,N	.377	.142	.129	3/196	10.845**	.000
	C,N		.140	.131	2/197	15.015**	
		.374					.000

^{**}P<0.001

N-Neuroticism E-Extraversion, O-Openness, A-Agreeableness C-Conscientiousness,

The result of backward regression analysis (vide Table 2) may be summarized as follows: (i) all measures of Personality (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness); Social anxiety and social media use emerged to life satisfaction: (a), conscientiousness, openness, neuroticism, extraversion and agreeableness predict a total of 0.143 (14.3%)% of the variance in life satisfaction. The ANOVA results of F (5, 194) = 6.459, p<.01 indicates that the first model as significant. (b) Conscientiousness, openness, neuroticism and extraversion predict (deleting agreeableness) emerged to predict a total of 0.143 (14.3%)% of the variance in Life satisfaction. The ANOVA results of F (4, 195) = 8.11, p<.01 indicates that the second model as significant. High self-esteem seems to present an inconvenience, even though it is associated with psychological adjustment indicators such as subjective well-being (e.g., Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Diener, 1984; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001), Studies have indicates that elevated self-esteem correlates with various negative outcomes, including prejudice, aggressive behaviour, and alternative strategies for sustaining or boosting self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill, Chadha, & Osterman, 2008). (c) Conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism predict (After deleting agreeableness and extraversion) emerged to predict a total of 0.142 (14.2%)% of the variance in Life satisfaction. The ANOVA results of F (3, 196) = 10.845, p<.01 indicates that the third model as significant. (d) Conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism predict (After deleting agreeableness, extraversion and openness) emerged to predict a total of 0.143 (14.3%)% of the variance in Life satisfaction. The ANOVA results of F(2, 197) = 15.015, p<.01 indicates that the fourth model as significant.

Table-3 Backward regression for the criterion variable life satisfaction for youth students of Varanasi

Dependent Variable	Predictors	R	R Square	R Square Change	df	F Ratio	P
			10-	101	14100		
Life satisfaction		.431	.185	.181	1/198	44.824	.000

^{**}P<0.001

The result of backward regression analysis (vide Table 3) may be summarized as follows: (i) Measures emerged to Life satisfaction: (a) Life satisfaction predict a total of 0.181 (18.1%)% of the variance in self-esteem. The ANOVA results of F (1, 198) = 44.824, p<.01 indicates that the first model as significant. A good personality trait that aids in healthy functioning is self-esteem. In recent years, there has been a lot of interest in having a high sense of self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill, Chadha, & Osterman, 2008).

Discussion

This study stands out as the initial examination of the interplay between personality traits, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in India, a country that has been insufficiently represented in the well-being literature. The median score for life satisfaction is 17.5, and Table 1 reveals that, on average, 200 participants (26.16%) scored above the neutral value, which, as per the manual, signifies complete satisfaction. This finding is consistent with earlier studies. Diener and Diener (1996) conducted an analysis of the distribution of average subjective well-being ratings across samples from 43 nations, demonstrating that 86% of these ratings surpass the neutral point.

The findings of the study regarding the connection between personality traits and life satisfaction are consistent with previous research, such as that conducted by DeNeve and Cooper in 1998. The analysis of bivariate correlations revealed significant relationships among three of the Big Five personality traits: neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, in relation to life satisfaction. As expected, there was no correlation between extraversion and openness to new experiences with life satisfaction. Regression analysis revealed that, of the five personality traits assessed, only conscientiousness and neuroticism were significant predictors of life satisfaction. The multiple regression analysis indicates that personality traits explain 14.0% of the variation in life satisfaction scores ($R^2 = 0.140$, refer to Table 2).

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2025 January; 8 (1): 29-35

Life satisfaction and self-esteem showed a significant relationship (r = 0.431). This is consistent with earlier studies showing a reliable correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction (Diener and Diener 1995). Regression analysis revealed that self-esteem, when considered as a potential predictor, had a significant impact on life satisfaction. The multiple regression analysis shows that personality traits explain 18.5% ($R^2 = 0.185$, see Table 3) of the variation in life satisfaction scores. This provides a deeper exploration of the connection between these two characteristics and life satisfaction, enriching our comprehension of their role in well-being metrics. The results of this research suggest that these two characteristics influence life satisfaction exclusively via their effect on self-esteem. In conclusion, the results of this study, in conjunction with earlier research conducted in India, suggest that self-esteem serves as a crucial and reliable predictor of multiple dimensions of well-being among Indian students.

Diener et al. (1999) conclude, after a brief review of the literature, that, although sex differences in life satisfaction are small, when they are seen, women often report higher subjective well-being. It is also observed that when considering additional demographic factors, the disparities in gender traits often become less pronounced. Diener and Diener (1995) contend that regarding life satisfaction, the resemblances between the sexes are more evident than the disparities. The findings of the present study further revealed that there exist subtle sex differences in life satisfaction and its correlation with personality factors, aligning with these concepts. The results revealed that, among the looked at cohort, female students attained significantly superior scores compared to their male peers regarding life satisfaction.

. We can understand this finding by examining the socio-economic characteristics inherent in Indian society. In India, it is commonly anticipated that males will assume financial responsibility for their families upon reaching adulthood, while females tend to receive greater emotional and financial backing from their families. A multitude of factors, such as cultural transmission, emerging employment opportunities, and changing perceptions of parents, may play a role in the discerned sex differences in life satisfaction among the younger generation in India.

The findings of this research are noteworthy and align with those observed in various other parts of the world when evaluated collectively. This underscores the significance of the life satisfaction concept among Indian populations and provides evidence of validity for the Satisfaction with Life Scale. This study serves as an initial endeavour to explore the multifaceted aspects of subjective well-being and its various determinants within the context of India. A compelling avenue for future research entails exploring the impact of various factors such as social support, collective self-esteem, relationship harmony, affect balance, religiousness, spirituality, among others on life satisfaction within the context of India.

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