



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 8, Issue, 2, pp. 15746-15748, February, 2017

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

Research Article

PERSONALITY AND PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG MEDICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15th November, 2016
Received in revised form 25th
December, 2016
Accepted 28th January, 2017
Published online 28th February, 2017

Key Words:

Personality traits, Perceived stress and
medical college students

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The present research was framed to investigate the relationship between personality traits (Neuroticism and Psychoticism tendencies) and perceived stress among medical college students. **Methods:** The sample included a total of 60 students. Two measures were used i.e. Hans Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPQ-R) and Sheldon Cohen perceived stress scale. Means and SDs were computed and Pearson product moment correlation was applied to check the relationship between personality traits and perceived stress among medical college students. **Result:** The correlation score between neurotic personality trait and perceived stress is **0.45** and it is significant at **0.01** level. It indicates that higher the level of neuroticism greater the perceived stress. The correlation score between psychoticism personality trait and perceived stress is **0.43** and it is significant at **0.01** level. These indicate the correlation between psychoticism personality trait and perceived stress is negative. **Conclusion:** The result revealed that relationship was found in neurotic and psychotic tendencies with perceived stress. On the basis of obtained result researchers can conclude that personality (neurotic and psychotic tendencies) leads to significant alleviation of perceived stress.

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INTRODUCTION

Personality

The word 'Personality' has its origin in Latin word 'PERSONA' which means a mask. In Greco-Roman theater, the actors wore masks and the colour and the type of mask depicted the qualities and personality of the character they played.

Personality is that pattern of characteristics thoughts, feeling, and behaviors that distinguished one person from another and that persists over time and situations.

1. **Mischel (1976):** "The distinctive patterns of behavior including thoughts and emotions that characterize each individual's adaptation to the situations in his or her life".
2. **Allport (1937):** "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment".
3. **Feldman (2004)** : "The pattern of enduring characteristics that differentiates a person or the pattern of behaviour that makes each individual unique is called personality".

Trait: A consistent, enduring way of thinking, feeling or behaving

PEN Model of Personality

Hans Eysenck introduced this model. The PEN model is comprised of three personality dimensions based on psychophysiology. These three dimensions are related to basic emotions.

1. **Psychoticism** –Psychoticism is a personality pattern typified by aggressiveness and interpersonal hostility.
2. **Extroversion** – Extroversion tends to be manifested in more outgoing, talkative, energetic behavior
3. **Neuroticism** - Neuroticism describes unpleasant emotions like anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability. Neuroticism also refers to an individual's level of emotional stability and impulse control and is sometimes referred to as emotional stability.

Perceived Stress

Stress is a general term applied to various psychological and physiological pressures experienced or felt by people throughout their lives. Stress is associated with a complex relationship between personal factors and external factors

Dr. Hans Selye: "Stress as the rate of all wear and tear caused by life"

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Hendrix *et al* (1995): “Uncomfortable cognitive state resulting from exposure to a stressor that can result in psychological and physiological strain”.

Selye proposed that there are four types of stress. On one side Eustress (good stress), Distress (bad stress). On the other side is Overstress (hyper-stress) and Understress (hypo-stress). The goal is to balance these as much as possible. It is extremely useful for a productive lifestyle because it makes working enjoyable instead of a chore as seen with distress.

Perceived stress is the feeling or thoughts that an individual has about how much stress they are under at a given point in time or over a given time period. Human experience stress or perceive things as threatening, when they do not believe that their resources for coping with obstacles are enough for what the circumstances demand. When we think the demands being placed on us exceed our ability to cope, we then perceive stress.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ebstrup, *et al.*, (2011) studied personality traits and perceived stress, and found that those who are high in neuroticism are more likely to perceive life events as highly stressful while those high in extraversion are less likely to perceive life events as stressful. Maryam Mirhaghi, *et al* (2015) explore the Relationship between perceived stress and personality traits in emergency medical personnel. This was a correlational study in which the convenience sampling method was used to select 120 men as the sample. Research instrument included demographic form, NEO Five-Factor Inventory and Cohen’s Perceived Stress Scale. The results revealed that Neuroticism (N) was significantly and positively correlated with perceived stress and extraversion (E), agreeableness (A), conscientiousness (C) were negatively correlated with the perceived stress scale.

Christopher Morris studied the Connection between Personality Traits and Perceived Stress. A convenience sample of 28 undergraduate students (13 who were immersed in the culture of a developing nation and 15 in a normal setting) completed measures of perceived stress and the NEO-Personality Inventory. It was found that personality traits (neuroticism and extraversion) play a role in how educational stress is perceived, and that there is significant differences between the experimental and control groups on levels of perceived stress.

Mroczek and Almeida (2004) also conducted a study regarding daily stress levels and the Five-Factor Model of personality. According to these researchers, those higher in neuroticism react to stressful events in a more aversive and negative way. The result of study showed a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and levels of neuroticism, and that those participants that scored higher on neuroticism reported an over-all higher amount of stress on any given day.

Mroczek & Almeida, (2014) results showed that extraversion was significantly negatively correlated with perceived stress. Two studies by Bolger and Schilling (1991) and Bolger and Zuckerman (1995), focusing solely on neuroticism, sought to create a suitable framework to study personality and stress and took into consideration that personality may not only play a role in the reaction to stressors but also exposure to the stressful events themselves. This framework also included the connection between personality traits and coping efforts. The

results showed that those participants who scored higher in neuroticism had significantly greater reactivity to conflict, as well as significantly more exposure to conflict. Adding to those results, the coping strategies chosen and the effectiveness of those strategies for those who scored high in neuroticism were significantly different than for those who scored low in neuroticism. This showed that those high in neuroticism not only reacted differently to stress, but also perceived stress in a different way than those low in neuroticism. Additionally, the results revealed that reactivity accounted for twice as much difference in stress than exposure, which indicated that reaction was more pertinent than exposure in the perception of stress.

Objectives

1. To study the personality traits and perceived stress among medical college students.
2. To study the relationship between the personality traits and perceived stress among medical college students.

Hypotheses

1. There would be positive relationship between Neuroticism and perceived stress.
2. There would be negative relationship between Psychoticism and perceived stress.

Sample

The sample for the present research consisted of 60 medical college students from Nashik city. The sample was randomly selected. The age range of the sample was 19-21 years.

Variables

1. Personality traits
2. Perceived stress
3. Medical College students

Controlled Variable

1. Age – 19 to 21
2. Hostel residential student

Tools

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ-R): By Hans Eysenck

The EPQ-R constitutes of 90 items from three traits of Personality: Psychotics, Neurotics and Extroversion. The response will be given in yes or no form. The scoring is done with the help of scoring key. The raw score converted into the sten score.

Reliability: Test retest reliability coefficient was 0.80

Validity: The validity of the test was highly satisfactory. The test was validated with psychiatric group.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS): By Sheldon Cohen

The perceived scale constitutes of 10 items each item has four alternate answers graded on the four point scale. The scores of this scale vary in between 0 to 40 which high score showing high degree of perceived stress and low score showing low degree of perceived stress.

Reliability: Test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.78

Validity: Validity coefficient was 0.78

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the data means and SD were calculated and Pearson r-correlation was computed to check the relationship. The obtained data is systematically presented in the following tables.

Table 1 Showing the relationship between Neuroticism and Perceived stress (N=60)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Level of Sig
Neuroticism	60	90.25	8.63	0.45	0.01
Perceived Stress	60	165.45	9.85		

Table no 1 shows the correlation in neurotic personality trait & perceived stress among medical college students. For this analysis person correlational method was used. For the obtained value in table no 1 show the correlation score between neurotic personality trait and perceived stress is 0.45 and it is significant at 0.01 level. These indicate the correlation between neurotic personality trait and perceived stress is positive. It indicates that higher the level of neuroticism greater the perceived stress.

The results are also supported by the findings of Ebstrup, *et al.* (2011), Bolger and Schilling (1991) and Bolger and Zuckerman (1995), and Christopher Morris (2015) they studied personality traits and perceived stress, and found that those who are high in neuroticism are more likely to perceive life events as highly stressful. It means those who are high in neurotic personality traits they are more likely perceive life events as stressful.

Table 2 Showing the relationship between Psychoticism and Perceived stress (N=60)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Level of Sig
Psychoticism	60	89.67	7.98	0.43	0.01
Perceived Stress	60	165.45	8.21		

Table no 2 shows the correlation in psychoticism personality trait & perceived stress among medical college students. For this analysis person correlational method was used. For the obtained value in table no 1 show the correlation score between psychoticism personality trait and perceived stress is 0.43 and it is significant at 0.01 level. These indicate the correlation between psychoticism personality trait and perceived stress is negative. It indicates that higher the level of psychoticism higher the perceived stress.

CONCLUSION

In the present research found that there is a positive relation between neuroticism and psychoticism personality traits and perceived stress among medical college students. The result of study showed a significant positive correlation between perceived stress and levels of neuroticism, and that those participants that scored higher on neuroticism reported an overall higher amount of stress on any given day. The results showed that psychoticism was significantly positively correlated with perceived stress.

Implication

The Present research study will be helpful in developing intervention strategies for the professional college students who experience high level of stress during their academic career so that the health issues can be substantially reduced. The educational institutes can setup counseling cells which can help the students to cope up with the stress linked with the demands of the curriculum, home sickness, peer pressures, hectic schedules of the course etc.

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How to cite this article:

Mrunal A Bhardwaj and Jaimala A Sode.2017, Personality and Perceived Stress among Medical College Students. *Int J Recent Sci Res.* 8(2), pp. 15746-15748.