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Research Article

ROLE OF PERSONALITY, INTELLIGENCE AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING IN EGO-STRENGTH

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was aimed at analyzing the role of personality, intelligence and physical well-being in ego strength among young adults. For this purpose, university students (n=80) in the age range of 21-24 years were selected from various departments of Punjabi University, Patiala. All the subjects were administered C-scale of 16 PF (Cattell and Eber, 1962), Culture Fair test (Cattell, R.B. 1973), Physical well-being scale, Jalota's GMAT (1973) and California Psychological inventory (Harrison G. Gough, 1987) scales in group settings. Obtained scores were subjected to correlational analysis. Results revealed a positive and significant association of ego strength with personality, intelligence and physical well-being of young adults. The significant implications have been discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychologists for a long have been pondering over various concepts like ontological strength, adaptive energy, control apparatus and ego strength to account for superior mental endowment of psychologically healthy and creative individuals. The use of the concept of ego was prevalent even before the emergence of psycho-analytical theory but it was Freud who theorized systematically the concept of ego and its development to denote the conscious, rational and realistic aspects of our mind. Freud (1923) postulated the pleasure and reality principle of psychic life of humans. Individual as an infant functions under the pleasure principle which operates in the service of Id- the most primitive agency of psychic structure. There is no judgment, no ability to tolerate tension or recognize reality at this stage of life. As the infant grows, external and social influences place demands and conditions on him to behave in an accepted manner. The result of interaction of Id with external environment leads to the development of ego. Its primary function is to transform the pleasure principle of childhood into reality principle of adult life. It plays a vital role in organizing and synthesizing the functions that are necessary for the integration of external influences into ones developing personality as well as for healthy adaptation in the ever changing world. In other words ego obeys the reality principle and operates by means of secondary processes in performing the perception and judgment functions. It is in this

context of Freudian theory that neo-Freudians especially Anna Freud (1936). Hartman (1958, 68) and Erikson (1950) formulated their theories with central focus on the ego.

Becker (1971) looked at ego as simply a unique process of central controlling behavior. Throughout life we constantly come across the changing and challenging situations. How capable or incapable the ego will be in adapting to changes determine the nature and quality of solutions with regard to person's life itself. Barron (1963) preferred to term this attribute ego as ego strength and defined it as a capacity to meet problems without being dismayed or overwhelmed to endure suffering and great loss without foundering. When the ego performs its functions adequately individuals experience themselves as coherent, functional human beings with an enduring sense of personal identity (Bjorklund, 2000). Other researchers like Hartman's (1958) description of the role of ego apparatus in adaptation and Erikson's (1950) stress on integrating and stabilizing influences of ego in person's life history are hints related to that capacity of ego which has been termed as ego strength.

Cattell (1965) operationalized the concept by developing a psychometric measure for its assessment which was independent of psychoanalytic theory that provided proof of validity to the Freudian concept of ego. He defined ego strength as denoting dynamic integration and maturity as opposed to uncontrolled, disorganized general emotionality

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which is indicative of ego weakness. Fenichel (1974) interpreted neurosis as weakness of ego. Sinha and Prabhat (1993) found significant positive correlations between ego strength and job satisfaction. They found that individuals low on ego strength get easily annoyed, dissatisfied with their situations, family and feel unable to cope with life whereas subjects with high ego strength are able to mobilize their internal resources for constructive goals and work output (Barnes & Blenche, 1984) and easily rebounded from negative emotional states (Tugade and Fredrickson 2004). It has been seen that in corporate world employers prefer people with high strength in their work force as these people have found to maintain better group morale and are higher on leadership qualities (Hall, 2009). The effective functioning of scientists, architects, and pilots has also been related with their high ego strength (Barron, 1968 & Mackinnon, 1961). Moreover occupations where sudden adjustments and quick decision-making is required employees with high ego strength are preferred as compared to professions in which individuals set their own pace for work (Singh, 2007).

Due to inherent complexity implied in its wholistic conception, limited attempts at its operationalization, construct of ego strength evoked little empirical research both in clinical and psychometric domains. The broad concept of ego and its strength as elaborated by Freud (1923) himself and later on followed by neo Freudians Freud, A, Hartman, Kris, Erickson and empirical attempts of Barron (1968) in this regard imply that in some ways personality, intelligence and physical vitality are its important components. The present study is an attempt to analyze the role of personality, intelligence and physical well-being in the development of ego strength.

Objective

To see the association of ego strength with personality, intelligence and physical well-being among young adults.

Hypotheses

Ego-strength will be positively correlated with personality, intelligence and physical well-being of young adults.

Design

Correlational design was adopted to see the relationship of personality, intelligence and physical well-being with ego-strength.

Method

Sample comprised of 80 post graduate students in the age range of 21-24 years drawn from various departments of Punjabi university Patiala, Punjab. Selection of subjects was random and based on their willingness for participation in the study.

Tools used

1. C Scale of 16 PF (Cattell and Eber, 1962). Since sixteen personality factors of Cattell's 16 PF inventory are considered to be representing "functionally independent and psychologically meaningful dimensions" of human personality, therefore, it was possible to measure C factor separately. The C scale i.e. emotional stability vs. high ego strength (items of forms A and B were combined to make working instrument) was used for the psychometric assessment of ego strength. This scale

consists of 26 items (13 each from form A and B). Each item is provided with three alternatives and the subject was to choose and tick the answer from the alternatives given. Observations by various researchers (Gupta, 1972; Virk, 1972; and Jerath, 1975) revealed the use of 16 PF (including Factor C) to be quite valid and reliable in the Indian society. Internal consistency reliabilities are on average 0.76 for the primary scales and a range of 0.68 to 0.87 for all 16 scales.

2. California Psychological Inventory (Harrison G. Gough, 1987). This inventory was used as a measure of personality. It consists of 462 items to be answered in true and false. It provides scores on 20 scales and three new v1, v2, v3 scales for use in assessing the underlying theoretical dimension of the matrix of measurement.
3. Culture Fair Intelligence test (Cattell, R.B. 1973). This test (Scale 2, Form B) was used to assess individual's level of intelligence. It consists of four subsets that are Series (12 items), Classification (14 items), Matrices (12 items), and Conditions (8 items). The task of the subject is only to perceive relationships in shapes and figures. The reliability of this scale is .87 (Consistency over items), .80 (Consistency over parts) and .84 (Consistency over time) and validity is .85. The test can be administered individually or in a group.
4. Physical well-being Scale: A scale for assessing sense of physical well-being was derived from MMPI. It comprises of 32 items. The task of the subject was to tick True or False as applicable to them. The subscale of MMPI is considered of high value for the independent assessment of all specific aspects of individual covered by this inventory.
5. General Mental Ability Test (Jalota, S.1960): This test was used to assess crystallized intelligence. It consists of 100 items. Each item is provided with 5 alternatives. The time limit for the test is 25 minutes. Separate answer sheets were provided and the task of the subject was to write in answer on the answer sheet. Test retest reliability coefficient has been found to be in the range of .75 to .85.

Procedure

To achieve the objective of the present study 80 students in age range of 21 to 24 years were randomly selected from numerous departments of Punjabi University Patiala. Data was obtained in group setting with group size of 10-12 participants. During rapport building sessions, students were informed about the purpose and significance of the study as well as confidentiality of their responses was assured. In order to dissipate the effect of fatigue, information was drawn in three consecutive days with a time gap of 10-15 minutes in between the administration of tests. In the first and second sessions of first day, C-scale of 16 PF (Cattell and Eber, 1962) and Culture Fair Test (Cattell, R.B. 1973) were given. On the second day Jalota's General Mental Ability Test (GMAT) and Physical stability Scale were administered in two sessions each with a gap of 10-15 minutes. California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1987) was administered in a single session of the third day. Subjects were instructed to "Read each statement carefully and mark the appropriate option on separate answer sheets. There is no right or wrong answers, so please try to mark all the statements carefully and honestly. Your responses would be

kept confidential. Time limits were strictly adhered in case of culture fair test and group test of general mental ability test. Cooperation of various teachers also helped to draw out honest information from students. All the tests were scored according to the guidelines provided in the respective manuals of the tests. To arrive at scientific conclusions obtained data was subjected to correlational analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pearson product moment correlations were computed between variables of ego strength and 23 indices of personality, two indices of intelligence namely fluid and crystallized intelligence and variable of physical well-being. Obtained results are given below:

Table Coefficient of correlations between Variables of Ego Strength, Personality, Intelligence and Physical well-being (n=80).

DO	CS	SY	Sp	Sa	IN	EM	Re	So	SC	Gi	Wb	To	Ac	Ai	Ie	Cm	Py	Fx	FM	V1	V2	V3	GMAT	CFT	PS
.28	.07	.12	.25	.28	.19	.12	.01	.02	.18	-.09	.14	.36	.08	.40	.34	.02	.46	.24	-.17	-.22	.06	.22	.34	.40	.60

Results presented in Table no 1 show that variable of ego strength is positively correlated with personality indices dominance (r=.28), achievement via independence (r=.40), intellectual efficacy (r=.34), psychological mindedness (r=.46) at 0.01 level of significance and with sp- social presence (r=.25), Fx- flexibility (r=.24) V1 internality (r= -.22) and V3 sense of fulfillment (r=.21) significant at 0.05 level. The nature of all these indices of personality and magnitude of coefficients of correlations of these indices with ego strength has yielded significant information about the involvement of personality factor in the functioning of ego strength. California Psychological Inventory is broad based instrument which tend to cover all the major aspects of personality. Hence, the obtained picture about personality profile directly linked with factor of ego strength can be taken as reliable indicator. These results reveal that persons who tend to have high ego strength are more likely to be confident, assertive, task oriented, have positive self-perceptions, and have strong drive to do well, efficient in use of intellectual abilities, good at judgment of others and self-assured. Their characteristics of psychological mindedness and social presence give the expression of the external orientation but their preference for independence and strong sense for self realization clearly indicate, confident, intellectually efficient and self-assured task oriented style of functioning. This constellation of personality characteristics which are closely associated with ego strength is consonant with clinical description of personality of those who show efficient functioning of people like writers, successful scientists, artists, architects, pilots and entrepreneurs.

For unraveling the nature of association between intelligence and ego strength, indices of gf-fluid intelligence gc-crystallized intelligence correlate with index of ego strength. As shown in the table, both the indices of intelligence are positively and significantly correlated with ego strength (r=.40 and .34 p<.01 respectively). The two indices of intelligence were used following Cattell's theorizing that fluid and crystallized intelligence must be treated separately for researches. The positive correlation between gf and gc with ego strength confirm the Barron's theoretical assertion that ego strength and intelligence have positive relationship. The magnitude of correlation further confirms the interplay of intelligence in the dynamics of ego strength beyond doubt. These results indicate that coexistence of cognitive efficiency and ego strength

provide foundation for analytical reality orientation which further becomes the hallmark of success in the respective field of the person.

Highly positive and significant correlation between variables of physical stability and ego strength (r=.60 p<.01) are again in consonance with Barron's (1968) theoretical speculation about this. He observed that after recovery through therapy, people tend to show better physical controls and well-being and that ego strength grows as the individual moves toward maturity. To test speculation of Barron empirically, physical stability scale was derived from MMPI and was found correlated with ego-strength.

The magnitude of the coefficient of correlation reveals that physical well-being and physical stability is basic to and essential requirement of high ego strength. It is further important to note that magnitude of correlation between these two variables is the highest in the whole correlation analyses which confirm the pre-eminence of physical well-being in the biological matrix as pre requisite of development of ego strength.

This study clearly reveals ego strength to be a unifying thread running through personality, intelligence, and physical stability. Amongst the aforementioned variables only ego strength emerges accessible for proactive manipulation i.e. it serves as a medium through which we can strive for mature personality development, fostering intellectual ability and initiating greater physical stability. The maturing ego encounters many conflicts during physical development and their corresponding psychosocial stages. Family and school environment plays a vital role in providing the nurturing backdrop for the ego to attain earmarked strengths (Erikson's theory of ego strength) as a characteristic of each stage. Findings of the present study warrant further researches. To understand behavior and adaptation of young people in ever changing scenario, the unique contribution of each factor needs to be investigated.

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