

A comparative study of personality traits among adolescents across gender

Dr. Swati Partani¹, Pranjali Bhakre²

¹Head & Assistant Professor, Department of Child Development, Maniben Nanavati College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

²M.Sc. Human Development, SNDT University, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
E-mail: ¹swatip@gmail.com, ²bhakrepranjali@gmail.com

Abstract: Adolescent is the most vital stage of development. Many physiological and psychological changes are taking place at this stage. Personality development plays an important role in emotional independence and identity formation in adolescents. This study aims to compare personality traits of adolescents across gender. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect sample of 300 students from 5 SSC board English medium schools in western suburbs of Mumbai. Further, sixty students of 9th grade were selected from each school. Sixteen Personality Factor Test (1991) made by Raymond B. Cattle was used to analyze Personality traits among adolescents.

Results revealed that, in terms of personality traits adolescent respondents were found to be warm-hearted, affected by feelings, feel few obligations, conscientious, stubborn, socially bold, dependent, and suspicious. They were found to be practical, wrapped up in inner urgencies, experimenting, and self-conflicted, frustrated and group dependent. They were also found to be concrete thinkers, prudent, taciturn, and realistic. In terms of gender difference in personality traits male respondents were found to be more warm-heartedness; less affected by feelings, more socially bold, tensed, and had more acceptances for changes. Whereas female adolescents were having traits like high reasoning, independent, stubborn, more suspicious, wrapped up in inner urgencies, shrewder, worrying, troubled, and more socially precise. These results can be recommended to schools to incorporate various programs to furnish adolescent's personality developmental needs.

Key Words: Personality traits, gender. Adolescence, development,

1. INTRODUCTION:

Adolescence is one of the most important periods of development where a child is going through a transition to become socially acceptable adult. Adolescent's period of development corresponds roughly to the period between the ages of 10-19 years, which is consistent with the World Health Organizations of adolescence. Yerpude (2013) mentioned that, In India, 21.4% of total population belongs to age group of 10-19 years. Adolescence begins with the onset of physiologically normal puberty, and ends when an adult identity is formed. One of the major developmental tasks of adolescents consists of achieving emotional independence as well as forming an identity as an individual (Havinghurst, 1972).

Adolescents are at most vulnerable stage, while going through transition of this stage adolescents strive to behave socially precise. So that society can accept them as an individual personality. But these vulnerabilities in them may affect their behavior, making them irritable and uncomfortable, which may affect their socialization. These kind of contradictory behaviors among adolescents create uncertainty among them while taking any decision.

Every person has some or the other characteristics which makes their personality. Personality of a person is of utmost importance as it is the way that how other people perceive that person. The combinations of attitudes, behavior, values etc. makes the personality of a person. How does a person reacts to situation depends upon his qualities which are behavioral or inherent also. Funder (2004) referred personality as an individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not behind those patterns.

Adolescent's personality traits have an impact of gender, genes, or even their environment. Larsen & Buss (2005) defined personality as the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intra psychic, physical, and social environments.

With regards to personality traits, the diagnostic and statistical Manual of Mental Disorder of the American Psychiatric Association (2000) posited that, "personality traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to and thinking about the environment and about oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of personal and social context. Whereas other researchers maintained that a personality traits is a consistent and long lasting tendency in an individual's behavior and action." Not only at stage of adolescence but also in later life of a person has similar traits which constitute their personality.

For instance McCrae and Costa (2008) indicated that neuroticism as a personality trait of adolescents related to tendency to experience such as sadness, hopelessness and guilt was linked to low confidence, irrational beliefs and pessimistic attitude. Extraversion, however, was related to a preference to companionship and social stimulation, were further linked to social skills. Trait openness to experience linked with need for variety, novelty and change such as interested in travelling, experimenting etc. These are few traits of adolescent's personality. These traits among adolescent has direct relation with day to day behavior of an adolescent. These traits give the characteristics which make their personality.

Arora (2016) quoted Stenberg (1994) said that "all people are essentially born with the same set of traits and that individual difference can be ascribed to the extent to which they are in possession." Personality traits can differ among individuals depending on the situation or the degree to which person reflects a particular behavior in them.

2. RATIONALE:

Adolescence is a vital stage of development, where personality traits vary from person to person. Personality of adolescent is developed with a combination of person's attitude, beliefs, emotions, behavior etc. Adolescents are at vital stage of identity formation where an adolescent is strive to make socially acceptable identity. Throughout this process factors such as changing self, genetic or inherent traits, changing environment of adolescence etc. also affects their developing personality. These changes happening with adolescents creates uncertainty, and a feeling of uncomfoting among them. Adolescents also frequently get emotionally upset and tensed which further showcase their personality. Reactions of an adolescent frequently changes in different situations as a result of their different personality traits and sometimes on their changing moods. So there is need to assess personality traits among them. Like other factors, gender also has impact on development of adolescent. Such as, pubertal changes can be seen earlier in girls as compared to boys of same age and reactions of male and female differs even in same situation which brings need to study if there is any difference in personality traits among male and female adolescents. The research conclusions will be helpful for the educational institutions to build programs for the adolescence which caters to their needs and works better with academics. The study was designed with following objectives:

- To explore personality traits among adolescents
- To compare personality traits among adolescents across gender

Hypothesis for this objective could be:

- There is no statistical significant difference for personality traits among adolescent across gender

3. METHODOLOGY:

Research design:

Comparative design

Participants

Purposive sampling technique was used for sampling. Sample of 300 SSC board students were selected, from 5 schools in western suburb of Mumbai. From each school data of 60 students was collected. All these students belong to 9th grade. There was 1:1 proportion for data on gender basis i.e. there were 150 boys and rest 150 girls.

Tool

Sixteen Personality Factor Test (1991) – R. B. Cattell

Procedure for data collection:

From every permitted school, students were provided with information about purpose of study and consent was taken from them before administering this test on them. 60 students from each school were provided with appropriate instructions for answering the tool and data was collected.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

The quantitative analysis was done for collected data with the help of Statistical software, in which test such as frequency, mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were used. The data representation was done through tables and graphs and results were discussed further.

5. RESULTS:

The findings and analysis of research were presented in order of research.

Assessment of personality traits among adolescents

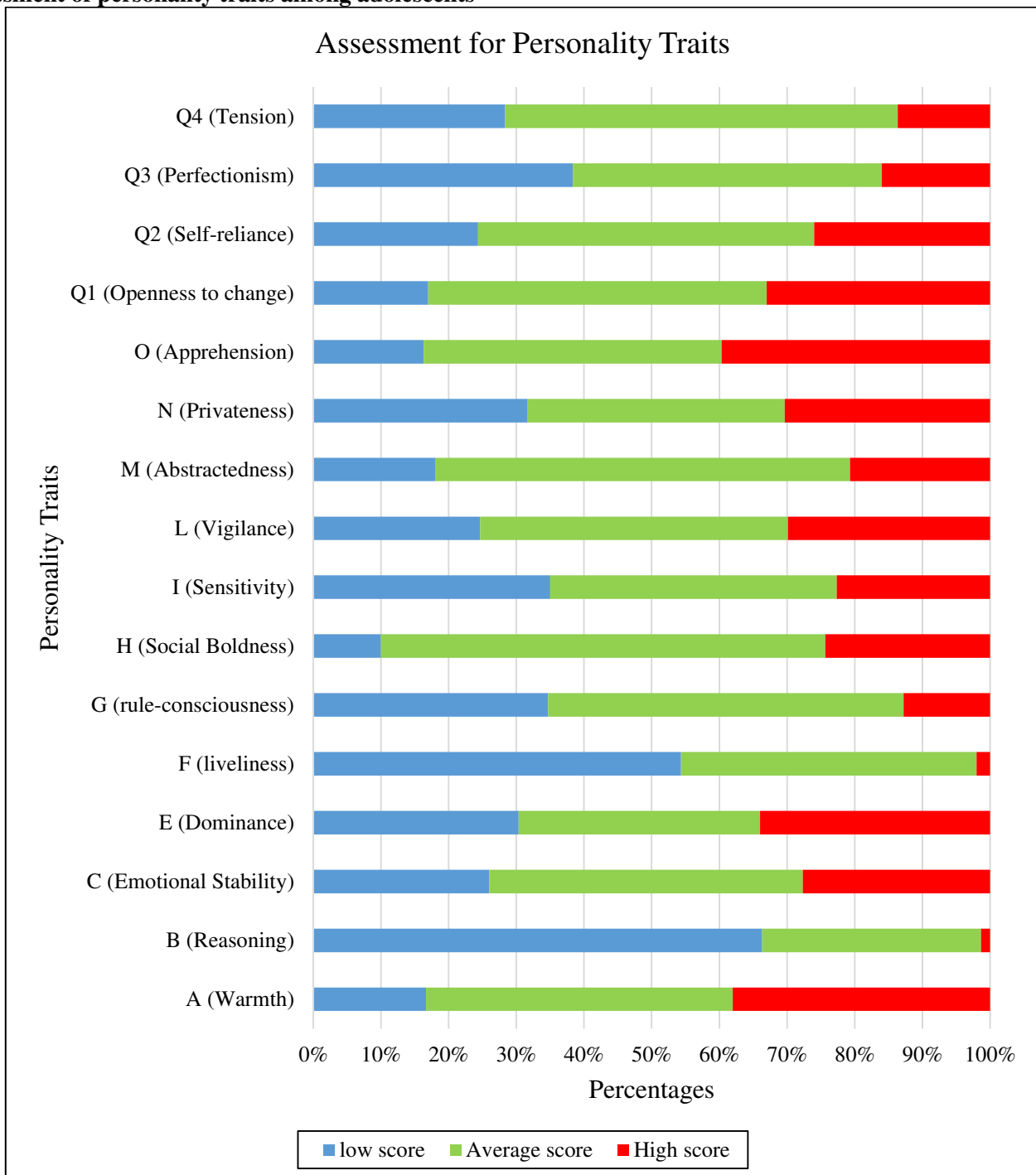


Figure 1: Levels of Personality Traits among adolescents

Traits warmth (45.33%), emotional stability (46.33%), dominance (35.66%), rule-consciousness (52%), social boldness (65.66%), sensitivity (42.33%), vigilance (43.66%), abstractedness (45.33%), privateness (38%), apprehension (44%), openness to change (50%), self-reliance (49.66%), perfectionism (45.66%) and tension (58%) for the adolescent respondents found to have average score (5-6). Adolescent respondents scored low for traits reasoning (66.33%) and liveliness (54.33%) of the adolescent respondents score low (1-4).

Adolescents were found to be warmer as this stage, referred as age of rapid development. Many developmental changes occur in this process, during transition from childhood to adulthood. Still some traits of childhood like being sensitive and sympathetic can be usually seen in them. They were also found to be tender-minded, dependent and sensitive on trait of sensitivity which can be the result of their warmth, which also makes them humble and mild but emotionality in them may tend them to become aggressive and stubborn in some situations. Adolescents score less on trait of emotional stability. Adolescents refer to be emotionally volatile in nature which usually makes them anxious and uncomfortable. So it can be said that adolescents are emotionally unstable and they get easily affected by situation.

For the trait of reasoning adolescents were found to be concrete thinkers. Major brain development takes place till 5 years of age but even in later years various part of brain such as pre frontal lobe or parietal lobes etc. are still developing in adolescents. According to cognitive development theory, adolescent able to reason from concrete things but abstract thinking is still developing in them. Adolescents can take decisions on concrete situation but hypo-deductive thinking is still developing in them across the maturity of their brain. So they could find it difficult to reason for abstract thoughts making them concrete thinkers. While trying to become socially-precise personnel, adolescents tend to behave with soberness. They were found to be serious and taciturn for trait of liveliness as they behave in socially acceptable way by following all the rules of society. Traits of rule-consciousness and openness to change among adolescent was found to be in average category, which makes them conscious about rules even if they follow them as obligations to avoid fear of being left out from any social groups. However they were found to be less tolerant for traditional difficulties as they rarely agree with any traditional rules. But risk taking behavior at this stage, makes them experimenting and with other changes they are generally adoptable for consequences of these experiments.

For the trait of social boldness adolescent were found to be venturesome, uninhibited and spontaneous which can be because adolescent likely to involve more with peer, these group which is important socialization according to them, makes them socially bold. Adolescents likely to involve more with peer groups than with their parents or other as it is a trait of this age.

For trait of vigilance and privateness, adolescents were suspicious and self-opinionated, shrewd, penetrating and sentimental because of changes happening in their body adolescents often get irritated and uncomfortable and emotionality among them makes them sentimental and may hurt others unintentionally gives them a trait of being penetrating. In this stage, parent try to instruct them to act in certain way, it is hard for them to behave according to parents feeling obligation for rules and make them suspicious about others which generally makes them shrewd.

Abstractedness among adolescents revealed that adolescents were imaginative, wrapped up in inner urgencies, careless of practical matters. However on trait of apprehension adolescents were worrying, depressive and troubled. Also with trait of tension adolescents scored in average category. In which they found to be tensed, overwrought but unfrustrated. Adolescents are at most vulnerable stage of development; all the transitions happening at this stage can be reason for them to be wrapped up inner urgencies. Adolescents have characteristic of personal fable where they think that they are center of attraction ignoring the practical aspect of day to day living. However when time comes to make practical decisions they feel troubled as their decisions usually involve emotions. As a result of which they may feel depressive, worrying and tensed. But their experimental nature helps them to accept the changes or consequences happen because of risk which prevents frustration in them. Adolescents are wrapped up with their own problems sometimes makes them careless of practical matters for which they are less concerned.

Trait self-reliance among adolescents revealed them as they were group – dependent, prefers own decisions, follows own urges. Adolescents trying to get independent to take their own decision but uncertainty in them lead to conflicts. Adolescents in this age like to be involved with their peers they prefer to have more friends making them group dependent. While trying to become one of them adolescents like to takes their own decisions rather than their parent's taking decisions for them.

6. COMPARISON FOR PERSONALITY TRAITS ACROSS GENDER AMONG ADOLESCENTS:

Table: Mean, Standard Deviation and ANOVA results and *p*-value for gender difference in personality traits among adolescent

Personality Traits	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	<i>p</i> -value	Level of Significance
A (Warmth)	Female	5.75	1.56	0.77	0.37	Non-significant
	Male	5.92	1.71			
B (Reasoning)	Female	3.93	1.32	2.69	0.10	Non-significant
	Male	3.68	1.28			
C (Emotional Stability)	Female	5.31	1.78	0.502	0.47	Non-significant
	Male	5.45	1.64			
E (Dominance)	Female	5.68	1.79	0.05	0.82	Non-significant
	Male	5.64	1.64			
F (Liveliness)	Female	4.04	1.41	4.96*	0.02	Significant
	Male	4.38	1.23			
G (Rule-consciousness)	Female	5.13	1.55	4.04*	0.04	Significant
	Male	4.74	1.76			
H	Female	5.78	1.23	1.17	0.27	Non-significant

(Social boldness)	Male	5.92	1.09			
I (Sensitivity)	Female	5.24	1.66	4.86*	0.02	Significant
	Male	4.81	1.74			
L (Vigilance)	Female	6.12	1.86	2.84	0.09	Non-significant
	Male	5.78	1.62			
M (Abstractedness)	Female	6.06	1.57	0.06	0.79	Non-significant
	Male	6.01	1.49			
N (Privateness)	Female	5.81	2.08	3.102	0.07	Non-significant
	Male	5.38	2.05			
O (Apprehension)	Female	6.22	1.82	1.78	0.18	Non-significant
	Male	5.96	1.53			
Q1 (Openness to change)	Female	5.36	1.86	0.72	0.39	Non-significant
	Male	5.75	1.62			
Q2 (Self-reliance)	Female	4.84	1.73	3.81*	0.05	Significant
	Male	4.54	1.53			
Q3 (Perfectionism)	Female	6.23	3.71	2.64	0.10	Non-significant
	Male	5.96	1.29			
Q4 (Tension)	Female	5.17	1.41	0.01	0.89	Non-significant
	Male	5.19	1.32			

* $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

** $p < 0.01$ level of significance

Table showed that gender difference among personality traits of adolescent respondents. In personality traits liveliness ($F(1, 2) = 4.96, p = 0.02$), rule-consciousness ($F(1, 2) = 4.04, p = 0.04$), Sensitivity ($F(1, 2) = 4.86, p = 0.02$), and self-reliance ($F(1, 2) = 3.81, p = 0.05$) has p-value less than 0.05 which indicated that there is significant difference between personality traits of male and female adolescents.

Male respondents scored more for liveliness whereas for traits rule-consciousness, sensitivity and self-reliance female respondents score more as compared to male respondents.

Among all significant traits male respondents were found to be livelier as compared to female respondents. The reason could be the rapid hormonal changes happening in females making them more serious and sober. These hormonal changes may result into physical irritability or restlessness in them. Females are more concerned about their looks which are at rapid development at this stage which makes them feel shy, serious and restrained. Whereas males are gradually developing this could be the reason that they were found to be more outgoing and enthusiastic as compared to female adolescents.

For other personality traits warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, social boldness, vigilance, abstractedness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, perfectionism and tension with statistical p-value more than 0.05 indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female respondents scores for these personality traits.

Females scored high for traits rule-consciousness, sensitivity, and self-reliance as compared to male respondents. Females are generally more rule-consciousness as more rules posed on females as compared to males in our society. But rapid changes happening in females make them more conscious about acceptance in society so they generally follow more rules. Females tend to be more emotional as compared to males even because of vulnerability of hormonal changes happening in their body. That is why the female adolescents tend to more sensitive or can be upset with little things easily. One of major physical change for females in this age is menstruation among them. Menstruation happens periodically and females gradually need to manage these changes on their own which makes them self-reliant and they gradually tend to take independent decisions.

For other non-significant personality traits – warmth, emotional stability, social boldness, openness to change and tension had slightly higher score for male respondents as compared to female respondents. Whereas for traits reasoning, dominance, vigilance, abstractedness, privateness, apprehension, perfectionism female had slightly more score than male adolescents.

Males adolescents are generally more outgoing as they are more involved in different peer groups which makes them more socially involved and helps them to become socially bold than female respondents. Also these social groups involved in many different activities some of which are even risky but adolescents try them and show adaptableness for its outcomes. Male respondents are less vulnerable to changes, as these changes are less bothering to them. Adolescent females are generally provided with more care as compared to male adolescents. Due to cultural practices, male adolescents restrain to open up to adults about their physiological changes. This can be reason for male adolescents being more tensed as compared to females because they try to handle effects of all these slow changes on their own without taking help from parents.

Early maturity in females may be the reason of their abstract thinking and more reasoning. Females are more suspicious, as society have more rules for them and it is difficult for them to believe on someone. This can be reason that female adolescents are shrewder and do not likely to share their secrets. Females are generally concerned about their look more than male adolescents. So they were found to be more worried, depressed and wrapped up in inner urgencies. Female tend to score more for perfectionism can be result of, female adolescents always wanted to be socially precise and controlled.

This results can be supported with research done by Peerzada (2014) had done a comparative study on personality characteristics of rural and urban adolescents of district anantnag and Shrinagar (J & K). Who found that, male adolescents were out going, emotionally stable, excitable, assertive, enthusiastic, adventurous, reflective, apprehensive and prefers own decisions whereas female adolescents were reserved, affected by feeling, obedient, sober, shy, self-assured and socially dependent.

7. CONCLUSION:

Adolescent respondents were found to be warmer, tender-minded, more sensitive, sympathetic, less emotionally stable, dominant and concrete thinkers. They were also found to be more conscious for rule, less-lively, open for change, experimenting, more private, abstractedness, more apprehensive. Adolescents were also trying to be self-sufficient, and perfectly accomplish their work.

Gender difference in personality traits were reported, in which male respondents were found to be livelier whereas females were found to be more rule-conscious, sensitive, and self-reliant. Female respondent were found to be slightly more reasoning, dominant, vigilant, more abstracted, more private, apprehensive, trying to be perfect. Whereas male were found to be slightly warmer, more emotionally stable, socially bold, open to change and more tensed as compared to female respondents.

8. RECOMMENDATION:

- This study can be done for large sample to generalize the results.
- This research can be diversified by including other variables such as urban and rural, different age group etc. for better understanding of personality development among adolescents.
- Adolescent need to be trained for their better personality development.

9. LIMITATIONS:

- This study was confined to the 9th grade students.
- Study was restricted to five SSC board schools in western suburb of Mumbai.
- Personality traits assessment can also be done using simpler version of personality tests.

REFERENCES:

1. American Psychiatric Association (2000). Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition- Text revision.
2. Arora, R. (2016). Personality traits of adolescents of working and non-working mother. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(4), ISSN: 2454-1362, 216-218.
3. Cattell, R.B. (1991). *Administrator's Manual for The 16 PF*. Campaign: IPAT.
4. Funder, D. C. (2004). *The Personality puzzles (3rd Ed.)*. New York: W. W. Norton.
5. Havinghurst R. J. (1972). *Developmental Tasks & Education*. New York McKay.
6. Hurlock, E. (1950). *Developmental Psychology*. 5th edition New York Tata McGraw-Hill publications.
7. Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2005). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature (2nd Ed.)*. New York: McGraw Hill, 4.
8. McCrae, R.R., Costa P.T. (2008). *The five factor theory of personality*. - In John OP, Robies R.W. & Pervin L. A. (Eds.) *Handbook of personality psychology*, New York Guilford, 159-181.
9. Peerzada, N. (2014). A comparative study on Personality characteristics of rural and urban adolescents of district Anantnag and Srinagar (J&K), India. *Journal of Educational Research and Behavioral Sciences*, 3(4), 81-86.
10. World Health Organization (1986). Young people's health – a challenge for society Report of a Study Group on Young People and Health for All by the Year 2000, *Technical Report Series, No 731*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
11. Yerpude, P. et al (2013). A study of health status among school going adolescents. *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*. 3(11), 8-12.