

## Personality Style and Its Relation With Level of Anxiety

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Personality traits and anxiety disorders are dynamically interrelated. Personality refers to the long-established traits and patterns that propel individuals to consistently think, feel, and behave in certain ways. The aim of this study was to assess the Personality style and its relation with anxiety among young adults studying in selected Institutions of North India. **Methods:** A quantitative cross sectional study conducted among 211 young adults (18-24yrs) who were studying in selected Institutions of Northern India using convenience sampling technique. The data were collected by using Eysenck Personality Questionnaire to assess the type of personality and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) to assess the level of anxiety. **Results:** The results revealed that among 211 young adults, 42.2% had Moderate Neuroticism personality, 59.2% had moderate Extraversion Personality, 49.8% of them had Mild Lie personality and 49.8% had Moderate Psychoticism Personality. 39.4% of them had Minimum Level of Anxiety and 37.4% had Mild level of Anxiety. Moreover, There was a significant correlation of anxiety with Neuroticism and lie as  $p < 0.05$  level of significance.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Lie, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Personality, Psychoticism.

### INTRODUCTION

Mental health is the normal functioning of the mind in the appropriate social context.<sup>1</sup> Personality is the composition of mental and physical health of an individual.<sup>2</sup> Personality traits and anxiety disorders are dynamically related. People with certain personality traits are more likely to have anxiety.<sup>3, 4</sup>

Anxiety is body's inborn response to stress. An Important aspect in the development of anxiety is Control.<sup>5</sup> Individual might feel out of control, like there's a disconnect between your mind and body.<sup>6</sup> Anxiety disorders can be as diverse as the people they affect. Personality is strongly intertwined with the

diagnosis of social anxiety disorder, also called social phobia.<sup>7</sup> An anxiety attack is a feeling of overwhelming apprehension, agonize, pain or fear.<sup>8</sup> However; a person's personality might influence how anxiety feels to them as well as how they deal with it. It may worsen as a stressful event approaches.<sup>9</sup>

### NEED OF THE STUDY

Human personality is what makes a human unique individual.<sup>3</sup> Although documented theories about personality types reach back more than 2000 years, and stereotypes for describing human personality are also widely used in everyday psychology i.e. the description

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of personality on five or six trait domains, has nowadays consolidated its position in modern personality psychology.<sup>10,11</sup>

Anxiety level among the young adults is already a public health trouble. In fact, several previous researches have examined students' anxiety, depression, and stress and have discussed factors that might affect students' mental health.<sup>12</sup> Research shows that 20% level of anxiety among college students and 14.3% of secondary school students experience anxiety. During COVID-19 situation, most of the colleges and schools switch to virtual learning are unprecedented and unexpected experiences. It can be expected such circumstances to be associated with major psychological challenges in adults.<sup>13</sup>

During the time of the pandemic COVID-19, lockdown has been implemented by the government bodies to control the spread of the virus. But according to some studies this period leads to some sort of anxiety and affecting personality which may lead to poor academic performance among young adults. In this study the researchers aimed to understand how different types of personality and its relationship with anxiety.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the personality style and its relation with anxiety among young adults studying in selected Institutions of North India.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the personality style and level of anxiety among young adults
2. To determine the correlation between personality style and level of anxiety among young adults.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a multicentre, cross sectional descriptive online survey planned to find out the styles of personality and anxiety level among young adults studying in selected institutions of Northern India. Original data

were collected by using standardized tools of Eysenck Personality questionnaire and Beck Anxiety Inventory through Google form in order to assess types of personality and anxiety level among young adults respectively, during the month of November 2021. Study population included undergraduate and postgraduate young adults studying in selected Institutions of Northern India. We enrolled all (224) the students who were willing to participate and understand English. But only 211 were selected as per the inclusion and exclusion criteria through convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through Google forms till calculated sample size met.

Formal permission was taken from Institutional Review Board of concerned institution. Electronic informed consent was taken from all the participants to participate in the study. Participants were assured for their anonymity and confidentiality.

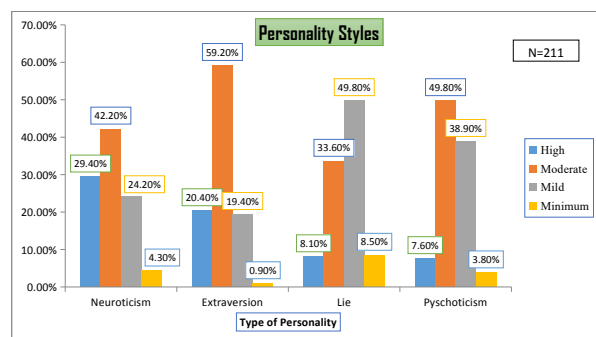
The tool included three sections i.e. Section A: Self-structured socio-demographic characteristics which comprised age, gender, religion, area of residence, type of family, Family Income, Education Status. Section B: Modified EPI scale consisted of 24 items to assess styles of personality such as neuroticism, psychoticism, and extraversion and lie. Section: C- it has included total of 21 symptoms and they had to mark for each symptom whether they felt anything like that in the past week on the range of Not at all, Mildly, Moderately and Severely.

The overall content validity of the tool was assessed before administering in the survey, by sending the tool for seven experts. As participants were instructed to fill the form completely so there were no missing data and we received complete data sheet. Received data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics with Statistical product and service solutions (SPSS version 23) as per our study objective stated earlier. Categorical variables were depicted in frequencies and percentage and correlation coefficient was used to find out the correlation between styles of personality and level of anxiety. Statistical significance (*p*-value) was set at 0.05 for the tests involved

## RESULTS

### Objective:1- To assess the personality style and level of anxiety among young adults

The results revealed that among 211 young adults, 42.2% had Moderate Neuroticism personality, 59.2% had moderate Extraversion Personality, 49.8% of them had Mild Lie personality and 49.8% had Moderate Psychoticism Personality. (Fig No.1)



**Fig 1: Percentage distribution of Types of Personality style**

**Table:1 -Frequency and Percentage Distribution of levels of anxiety among young adults**  
N= 211

Level of Anxiety	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Severe ( 48 - 63)	05	2.4%
Moderate (32 - 47)	44	20.8%
Mild (15 - 31)	79	37.4%
Minimum ( $\leq 14$ )	83	39.4%

Maximum score- 63

Minimum score -0

**Table 2: To determine the correlation between Types of Personality and Anxiety among Young Adults**

(N=211)

Types of Personality		Correlations				
		Neuroticism	Extraversion	Lie	Psychoticism	Anxiety
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	--	.179	.141	.342	.327
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	.041	.000	.000*
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.179	--	-.002	.160	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		.981	.020	.745
Lie	Pearson Correlation	.141	-.002	--	.127	.207
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	.981		.066	.003*
Psychoticism	Pearson Correlation	.342	.160	.127	--	.132
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.020	.066		.056

Table 1 showing the data related to level of anxiety among young adults studying at Northern India has revealed that 83(39.4%) has minimal level of anxiety followed by 79(37.4%) has mild level of anxiety, 34(16.1%) has moderated level of anxiety and 15(7.1%) has severe level of anxiety respectively.

### Objective 2: To determine the correlation between Types of Personality and Anxiety among Young Adults.

## DISCUSSION

Personality refers to individual difference in characteristics pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving. In broad perspective, there are two different types of personalities which include introvert and extrovert. Extrovert people are energized by social interactions, outspoken, outgoing and concerned with what's going on with the outer world where as introverts are quiet, reflective and focused on inner world.<sup>14</sup> Dopamine is more active in the brains of extrovert than in the brains of introvert. Anxiety is a health condition that causes the feelings of worry, fear or tension in an individual. These responses can be triggered by some non-threatening sources like excessive caffeine or public performance stress, whereas some worrisome factors like excessive stress, certain medications Financial concerns could also be trigger for anxiety. The symptoms for anxiety are- uncontrollable worry, fear, muscle tension, fast heartbeat, restlessness, tingling and so on.<sup>15</sup>

The type of personality may have an effect on the level of anxiety. The results revealed that among 211 young adults, 42.2% had Moderate Neuroticism personality, 59.2% had moderate Extraversion Personality, 49.8% of them had Mild Lie personality and 49.8% had Moderate Psychoticism Personality. 39.4% of them had Minimum Level of Anxiety and 37.4% had Mild level of Anxiety. Moreover, There was a significant correlation of anxiety with Neuroticism and lie as  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. Studies have shown that research on how normal personality and personality disorders traits may relate to anxiety disorders as predisposing factors, complications etc. Extroverts are out-going individuals, hence when they are stressed, they act out. They tend to get difficult and at times obnoxious but this is their way of handling anxiety. When introverts are stressed out they withdraw. They do this to recharge themselves, and not to avoid a situation. This creates a loop in his/her thinking and hence might trigger anxiety.<sup>16</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study results has revealed that personality style (Neuroticism and Lie) has significant correlation with level of anxiety of young adults. Hence, personality styles plays important role in the anxiety level of individual. Personality style is major factor to consider while studying the level of anxiety among individual. However this study cannot be applied for clinical examination of an individual. To take this study further one could use clinically approved scales for the exact identification of anxiety level in an individual rather than finding a range. There should be counselling services regarding coping strategies to manage anxiety level among young adults in order to promote their mental health and well-being.

**Conflict of Interest:** Authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Source of Funding:** Nil

**Ethical Clearance:** Formal permission was taken from Institutional Review Board of concerned institution.

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