

PERSONALITY DYNAMICS OF EATING DISORDER AMONG ADOLESCENT FEMALE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study was to determine the personality dynamics of eating disorder among adolescent female students. The sample for this study was 50 female adolescent students. The study area was Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. The female students between age group of 13 to 15 years were selected from different CBSE and ICSE affiliated schools. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the sample. Eating disorder inventory prepared by Agashe and Karkare (2007) and Eysenck's PEN Inventory was preferred for data collection. Analysis of data revealed that overall stepwise regression yields significant variance by psychoticism and neuroticism on eating disorder in female adolescent students and able to generate 54% variance while extraversion was excluded from the regression model. It was concluded that Eysenck's personality dimensions namely psychoticism and neuroticism are moderate predictors of eating disorder among female adolescent students.

Keywords: *personality, eating disorder, adolescents*



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Introduction:

World Health Organization (2015) while giving an international classification of diseases and related health defined eating disorders as a set behavioural condition that is associated with physiological disorders. The World Health Organization (2015) included anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa etc. in disordered eating. It involves abnormal eating habits that can range from excessive to insufficient food intake. The eating disorders involve an abnormal attitude of an individual which forces them to change their eating behaviour and the major reason behind disordered eating habits is an obsession to certain body shape and this obsession forces an individual towards unhealthy eating practices. Eating disorder is an illness which is linked to the thought process and emotions of an individual. Sometimes an individual develops an eating disorder to cope with problems in life. The most reported cases of eating disorder consist of females between 12 to 35 years of age. The causes of an eating disorder may include factors such as age, environmental factors, biological factors, trauma, trauma, culture, socio economic status and personality traits. Fassino et al. (2004), Klump et al. (2004) and Wade et al. (2011) determined certain personality traits that are directly associated with eating disorder. They identified traits such as sensation seeking, harm avoidance, emotional stability,

personality disorder namely obsessive-compulsive disorder, assertiveness, etc. which directly or indirectly have an impact on eating disorder. The other personality dimensions namely neuroticism and extraversion were also included in the studies related to eating disorder by researchers namely De Bolle et al. (2011) and Ghaderi and Scott (2000). Apart from these researchers such as Mac Laren and Best (2009), Rowe (2011), Macgregor and Lamborn (2014) have studied the relationship between personality and eating disorder but the results are somewhat contradictory and some psychometric shortcomings are observed. A study conducted by Miller et al. (2006) reported a serious combination of neuroticism and introversion in predicting eating disorder in undergraduate women but Eysenck's personality dimension also encompass psychoticism.

In India, the prevalence of eating disorder is on the rise. A study conducted by Nivedita et al. (2018) reported a 13.68% prevalence of eating disorder in student population selected from Mysore city. This is a major concern as eating disorder is a major psychological problem that can hamper future of our adolescent students. Hence the present study was planned to explore the personality dynamics of eating disorder among adolescent female students.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to explore the personality dynamics of eating disorder among adolescent female students.

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that Eysenck's personality dimensions namely psychoticism, extraversion and neuroticism will significantly predict eating disorder in female adolescent students.

Methodology Sample:

The sample for this study was 50 female adolescent students. The study area was Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. The female students between age group of 13 to 15 years were selected from different CBSE and ICSE affiliated schools. The average age of the sample was 14.31 years. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the sample.

Tools

(A) Eating Disorder Inventory:

To assess eating disorder in female adolescent students, Eating Disorder Inventory prepared by Agashe and Karkare (2007) was preferred. This inventory has 25 questions in which some of them are negatively worded. The inventory enjoys a reliability coefficient of

0.82 and its content validity is scientifically proven. High scores on EDI denotes more magnitude of eating disorder.

(B) Eysenck's PEN Inventory:

To tap extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism dimensions of Eysenck's personality theory, the PEN inventory developed by Eysenck (1968, 1969) has been preferred. This inventory measures Psychoticism (P), Extraversion (E) and Neuroticism (N) respectively. This Hindi PEN Inventory comprises in all 78 items and this inventory is highly reliable and valid.

Procedure:

50 female adolescent students were put to eating disorder inventory and Eysenck's PEN inventory respectively. The response on each item for both the instruments was scored off and tabulated. Stepwise regression analysis was employed for data analysis and the results are presented in table 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Analysis and Interpretation :

Table 1

Model Summary

Step-wise Regression

Prediction of Eating Disorder among Female Adolescent Students Based on Personality Dimensions Namely Psychoticism, Extraversion and Neuroticism

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.676 ^a	.457	.448
2	.749 ^b	.562	.543

Table 2

ANOVA

Step-wise Regression (N=50)

Model	F
1	40.39**
2	30.12**

** Significant at .01 level a

Predictors: Psychoticism

b Predictors: Psychoticism, Neuroticism

Excluded variables - Extraversion

Table 3

Standardized Coefficients

Model	Model	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta	t
1	Constant	2.224		2.02*
	Psychoticism	.840	.676	6.35**
2.	Constant	-.041		-.034
	Psychoticism	.609	.490	4.39**
	Neuroticism	.407	.373	3.35**

* Significant at .05 level, ** Significant at .01 level

A perusal of entries shown in table 1, 2 and 3 reveals the following:

- Psychoticism was found to be the single best predictor of eating disorder in adolescent female students. Psychoticism alone was able to generate 44% variance on eating disorder. The F=40.39 give empirical weightage to this fact at .01 level of statistical significance.
- Neuroticism along with psychoticism was found to be the second best model for predicting eating disorder in female adolescent students. These two variables were able to generate 54% variance on eating disorder. The F=29.71 give empirical weightage to this fact at .01 level of statistical significance.
- Extraversion was excluded from the regression model.

Result:

Analysis of data revealed that overall stepwise regression yields significant variance by psychoticism and neuroticism on eating disorder in female adolescent students and able to generate 54% variance on eating disorder while extraversion was excluded from the regression model.

Discussion:

Results reveal that psychoticism and neuroticism dimensions of personality emerged as potent variables that affect eating disorder in female adolescent students while extraversion-introversion dimension was excluded from the regression model. Individuals with a high level of psychoticism tend to be non-conformist and toughminded which is also seen in patients suffering from anorexia and bulimia nervosa. (Braun et al., 1994). The other potent variable that influence eating disorder is neuroticism which is not at all surprising because it denotes negative emotions or emotional instability. To divert the attention from unpleasant emotions

neurotics tend to develop disordered eating habits. Another dimension of personality which is excluded from the regression model was extraversion which is not surprising due to contradictory findings on the relationship between extraversion and eating disorder.

Conclusion

Based on results following conclusions are drawn :

1. Psychoticism emerged as the most powerful Eysenkian personality dimension which affects eating disorder in female adolescent students.
2. Neuroticism emerged as the second most powerful Eysenkian personality dimension along with psychoticism which affects eating disorder in female adolescent students.
3. Extraversion dimension of personality did not influence eating disorder in female adolescent students.

Summarily it may be concluded female adolescent students with high psychotic and neurotic tendencies may be predisposed to developing eating disorder.

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