

Personality Traits among College Students in Nagaland: A Quantitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Personality traits are relatively stable patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour that influence individual functioning. Trait theories, particularly Hans Eysenck's Eysenckian Model of Personality, conceptualise personality along the dimensions of Psychoticism, Neuroticism, and Extraversion (Eysenck, 1967). The present study examines the distribution of these personality dimensions among college students in Nagaland, a culturally distinct and underrepresented population in psychological research. Using a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from 200 young adult college students across multiple districts of Nagaland through standardised personality assessment measures. Analysis of valid responses indicated that Psychoticism was the predominant personality dimension, while Neuroticism and Extraversion were comparatively less represented. The findings underscore the importance of cultural and contextual factors in personality assessment and highlight the need for region-specific psychological research. The study offers implications for the development of culturally responsive student support services, counselling practices, and mental health interventions in higher education settings.

Keywords: Personality, mental health, college students

1. INTRODUCTION

Personality traits refer to relatively enduring patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour that distinguish individuals across situations and over time. The study of personality has occupied a central position in psychology, evolving from early philosophical discourse to empirically grounded trait-based frameworks. Among the influential trait models, Hans Eysenck's Eysenckian Model of Personality, commonly referred to as the Big Three, conceptualises personality along the dimensions of Psychoticism, Extraversion, and Neuroticism (Eysenck, 1967). Psychoticism reflects individual differences in impulsivity, aggressiveness, and sensation-seeking tendencies. Extraversion represents sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality, while Neuroticism, often described as emotional instability, captures vulnerability to stress, emotional reactivity, and negative affect.

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated the relevance of personality traits in shaping various aspects of college life. Studies indicate that certain personality traits are significantly associated with academic performance and achievement, with traits such as openness to experience showing positive

relationships with scholastic outcomes (Poropat, 2009; Komarraju et al., 2011). Personality dimensions have also been linked to career satisfaction and occupational success, particularly extraversion and agreeableness (Judge et al., 1999; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Further, Neuroticism has been associated with elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, whereas Extraversion has been related to psychological resilience, adaptive coping, and positive affect (Kotov et al., 2010; Steel et al., 2008). Research additionally highlights the role of personality traits in social engagement and integration, with extraverted individuals demonstrating higher levels of social participation and interpersonal adjustment (Lounsbury et al., 2005; Graziano et al., 2007).

Nagaland, situated in Northeast India, represents a culturally distinct context characterised by diverse tribal communities and rich socio-cultural traditions. Despite this uniqueness, empirical research examining personality traits among college students in Nagaland remains limited. Cultural variables such as collectivism, respect for authority, social harmony, and community-oriented values—commonly observed within the broader Indian cultural framework—may significantly influence personality development and expression in this region (Triandis, 1995; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). Consequently, region-specific investigations are essential to understand how cultural context interacts with personality traits among young adults.

Understanding personality trait patterns among college students has important implications for higher education. Personality traits influence students' academic engagement, social relationships, and psychological well-being, underscoring their relevance for teaching practices, counselling interventions, and student support services. Existing literature broadly highlights three key domains: (a) the association between personality traits and academic success, (b) the role of personality in social adjustment and peer relationships, and (c) the influence of personality traits on psychological well-being, including stress, anxiety, and depression. Examining these dimensions within the cultural context of Nagaland may contribute to a more nuanced and culturally informed understanding of personality dynamics in Indian higher education.

The present study seeks to examine the personality dimensions of Neuroticism, Psychoticism, and Extraversion among college students in Nagaland, as conceptualised within Eysenck's trait framework. The study aims to assess the distribution of these personality traits and to analyse gender-based differences among the participants. By focusing on relatively stable patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour, the research contributes to an understanding of individual differences within a culturally specific context. Further, the study addresses the relevance of personality assessment in enhancing self-awareness and psychosocial adjustment among young adults. By identifying personality trait patterns and associated individual differences, the findings may inform the development of targeted academic and counselling interventions. Given the limited empirical research on personality traits among college students in Northeast India, the study offers regionally grounded evidence that may contribute to the broader literature on personality psychology and applied psychological practice.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Personality traits significantly influence behaviour, emotional regulation, and interpersonal functioning during the college years. Eysenck's personality model conceptualises individual differences along three biologically grounded dimensions—Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). This review synthesises key empirical findings on these traits among college students.

Extraversion is associated with sociability, assertiveness, and positive affect. Studies indicate that highly extraverted college students demonstrate better social adjustment, higher academic engagement, leadership tendencies, and greater life satisfaction (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Roberts et al., 2007). However, excessively high Extraversion may be linked to impulsivity and risk-taking, with outcomes influenced by cultural and contextual factors (Srivastava et al., 2003; Lucas & Donnellan, 2011).

Neuroticism reflects emotional instability and vulnerability to negative affect. Elevated Neuroticism among college students has been consistently associated with psychological distress, poor academic outcomes, and maladaptive coping (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975; Robins et al., 2001). Nonetheless, moderate levels may facilitate self-regulation and adaptive coping under stress (Roberts & Wood, 2006; Gupta & Chauhan, 2020). Psychoticism encompasses impulsivity, aggression, and non-conformity. High Psychoticism has been linked to antisocial behaviour, substance use, and interpersonal difficulties, while also showing associations with creativity and risk-taking (Eysenck, 1976; Furnham, 1994). Evidence suggests that Psychoticism is shaped by genetic, environmental, and neurobiological factors (Cloninger, 1987; Viding et al., 2008; DeYoung et al., 2010).

Cultural context influences the expression of the Big Three traits, highlighting the need for population-specific research (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Understanding these traits has practical implications for student counselling and intervention programmes aimed at enhancing academic adjustment and psychological well-being (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985).

3. Objectives

1. To assess the prevalence and distribution of Psychoticism, Neuroticism, and Extraversion among college students.
2. To examine statistically significant differences in personality traits across male and female college students.

4. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the distribution of personality traits among college students in Nagaland. Descriptive quantitative methods are appropriate

for systematically measuring psychological variables and analysing data from large samples using statistical procedures, thereby enabling objective and generalisable findings.

Sample

The study was conducted across selected districts of Nagaland. The target population comprised undergraduate college students enrolled in various colleges within the state. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness and to minimise sampling bias. The final sample consisted of 200 participants, including 100 male and 100 female students, aged within the young adult range.

Tools for the Study

1. Socio-Demographic Proforma: A Socio-Demographic Proforma was specifically developed by the researcher to obtain participants' age, gender, birth order, educational level, family income, and parents' occupation for sample description and interpretation of results.
2. Personality traits were assessed using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQ-R; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). The EPQ-R is a standardized instrument measuring Psychoticism, Extraversion, and Neuroticism, with an additional Lie Scale to assess response validity. The questionnaire comprises 90 dichotomous items (Psychoticism = 25, Extraversion = 21, Neuroticism = 23, Lie Scale = 21) and has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties across diverse populations. Data were collected through hard-copy administration following informed consent. Responses were scored according to the EPQ-R manual, with keyed responses scored as one and non-keyed responses as zero. Participants with elevated Lie Scale scores were excluded from analysis to ensure response validity.

5. Results and Analysis

Table 1

Distribution of Personality Traits (N= 200)

Personality Traits	Observation
Lie Scale (rejected)	136 (68.0%)
Psychoticism	42(21.0%)
Neuroticism	12 (6.0%)
Psychoticism & Neuroticism	8 (4.0%)
Neuroticism & Extraversion	2 (1.0%)
Total	200(100.0%)

Table 2

Distribution on the types of personality traits among the gender

Personality Traits	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
Lie Scale (rejected)	42 (21.0%)	49 (24.5%)	91 (45.5%)
Psychoticism	32 (16.0%)	14(7.0%)	46 (23.0%)
Neuroticism	0 (0.0%)	17(8.5%)	17 (8.5%)
Psychoticism & Neuroticism	20 (10.0%)	20 (10.0%)	40 (20.0%)
Neuroticism & Extraversion	6 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.0%)
Total	100(50.0%)	100(50.0%)	200 (100.0%)

6. DISCUSSION

The present study revealed a markedly high proportion of elevated Lie Scale scores, with 68.0% of the total sample classified as invalid for personality trait interpretation. Gender-wise, Lie Scale elevations were more frequent among males (24.5% of the total sample) than females (21.0%). Such a substantial proportion of socially desirable responding raises important methodological considerations, particularly in self-report personality assessment among college students. Elevated Lie Scale scores are often interpreted as reflecting a stable tendency toward impression management or “faking good,” rather than situational response bias (Morita, 1969). The higher percentage of invalid male profiles suggests potential gender differences in response style, which must be considered when interpreting observed trait distributions.

Among the valid profiles (32.0%), Psychoticism emerged as the most prevalent personality dimension, accounting for 21.0% of the total sample. Notably, females contributed a larger share of Psychoticism scores (16.0%) compared to males (7.0%). This gender disparity indicates a comparatively higher representation of Psychoticism related characteristics such as impulsivity, emotional detachment, and non-conformity among female students in the present sample. While Eysenck (1976) associated Psychoticism with maladaptive and antisocial tendencies, the higher percentage observed among females in this regional context suggests that cultural and environmental factors may shape the expression of these traits differently across genders.

Neuroticism was observed in 8.5% of the total sample, with all cases represented by male participants. This finding aligns with previous research linking higher Neuroticism to emotional instability, academic stress, and vulnerability to anxiety and depressive symptoms (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). The exclusive male representation indicates a gender-specific pattern in emotional reactivity within the sample, though the relatively low overall percentage warrants cautious generalisation.

Combined personality profiles further illuminate trait overlap within the population. A total of 20.0% of participants exhibited a Psychoticism–Neuroticism combination, with equal representation among

females and males (10.0% each). Such co-occurring traits may reflect heightened psychological vulnerability, as the interaction of impulsivity and emotional instability can increase maladaptive outcomes. Additionally, 3.0% of the sample all female demonstrated a Neuroticism–Extraversion profile, while no participant exhibited Extraversion as a standalone dominant trait. The minimal presence of Extraversion may reflect sociocultural norms emphasising emotional restraint and collectivistic orientations within the regional context.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings underscore the relevance of personality screening within higher education settings and highlight the importance of culturally sensitive assessment frameworks. The percentage distribution highlights Psychoticism as the most prominent valid personality trait and underscores pronounced gender differences in trait expression. However, the exceptionally high proportion of Lie Scale elevations significantly constrains interpretability. Future studies employing larger, culturally diverse samples and incorporating qualitative or mixed-method approaches may help clarify the underlying dynamics influencing response validity and personality trait distribution among Indian college populations.

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