

Extraversion as a Predictor of Interpersonal Needs Orientation

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Received March 03, 2020; Revised March 21, 2020; Accepted March 23 2020

ABSTRACT

Personality refers to the more or less stable and enduring organization of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique that determines the unique adjustment to the environment. Interpersonal needs conceptualized by Schutz proposes that individuals desire for three interpersonal needs; inclusion, control and affection, in social contexts. The present study is a mini review of existing literature that explores the relationship between big five factors of personality and interpersonal needs. The conclusions drawn from the study indicates that among the five personality traits, extraversion is the major predictor of interpersonal needs orientation in individuals. The findings of the current study are relevant as it determines the role of extraversion as a strong personality trait and need to improve extraverted traits in interpersonal therapy and social skills training.

Keywords: Personality, Big five factors, Extraversion, Interpersonal needs orientation

INTRODUCTION

Personality and big five factors

Personality is always an interesting theme for psychologists [1]. It's a complex and wide area of study. Personality is often regarded as the foundation of an individual. Personality refers to those characteristics of the person that accounts for consistent patterns of feelings, thinking, and behaving [2]. Personality is always a measure that determines one's success in academics, career as well as relationships.

The trait theories of personality emphasize the personal characteristics of individuals. The idea of big five factors emerged from the trait theories of personality. The earliest works on five factors was done by Fiske in 1949 but were not widely accepted during those days. Gordon W Allport and Henry S Odbert identified 1700 words that distinguished between people. In 1940, Cattell reduced them into 35 traits. Warren T Norman in 1960 studied Allport's and Odberg's traits and claimed that 3500 traits among them are stable personality characteristics. Later Costa and McCrae in 1985 came up with the idea of big five factors which are i) openness to experience, ii) conscientiousness, iii) extraversion, iv) agreeableness, and v) neuroticism.

Interpersonal needs

Communication is always a significant factor in the course of one's lifetime. We all are social beings and can't live without interacting with others. Hence building interpersonal relations is a must. Healthy relationships are always an indicator of one's quality of life.

Schutz developed the FIRO-B containing six scales with nine-item questions. The theory is based on the belief that when people get together in a group, they are driven by three main interpersonal needs—inclusion, control and affection. The three interpersonal needs are conceptualized under two levels—wanted and expressed. Inclusion refers to the general social orientation of an individual, control is the need for power and influence, and affection refers to the need for intimacy [3].

The present study aims to identify the relationship between big five traits of personality and interpersonal needs

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Citation: Viswanath P. (2023) Extraversion as a Predictor of Interpersonal Needs Orientation. *J Psychiatry Psychol Res*, 6(1): 399-401.

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orientation in individuals through a mini review of existing literature.

Review of studies indicating the relationship between extraversion and interpersonal needs

There is considerable amount of literature concerned with the relationship between big five traits of personality and interpersonal needs. A study [4] explored the relationship between personality and behavioral intention in student teams and identified that extraversion is significantly correlated with inclusion, affection and control. Agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were also found to be influencing interpersonal needs. Compared to wanted needs, expressed needs were identified to be highly influencing extraversion [5]. The researcher validated the finding justifying that individuals with high expressed needs tend to be social and talkative, which indicates high extraversion [5]. Additionally, expressed needs were positively correlated with conscientiousness as well.

Another study [6] explored that extraversion significantly correlates with expressed and wanted inclusion as well as expressed and wanted affection. The study also provided an extensive analysis of the relationship between the primary factors of each big five trait with interpersonal skills. The results specified that expressed inclusion is influenced by all factors of extraversion, especially by gregariousness. Wanted control, though not influenced by extraversion was found to be correlated with vulnerability factor of neuroticism. Further regression analysis showed that high wanted and expressed inclusion, high and expressed control and affection as well as low wanted control leads to high extraversion [6]. Extraversion was identified to be a significant predictor of interpersonal need orientation, except wanted control in another study previously conducted by the same researcher [7].

A study was conducted by the researcher of the current study to determine the relationship between big five personality traits and interpersonal skills in college students. The Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B) were used to collect data from 80 participants. The results of the study confirmed that among the big five factors of personality, extraversion is positively correlated with interpersonal skills. The study also mentioned about the findings established [8] which suggested a positive relationship between extraversion and interpersonal needs. Additionally, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness and interpersonal skills were found to be higher among females when compared to their male counterparts. This finding, however, is debatable as it was identified in a study conducted that males possess higher interpersonal skills than females [9].

CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of this study determine that among the big five factors of personality, extraversion is the most significant predictor of interpersonal needs orientation in individuals. Extraverted personalities are those who are very good at interacting with others. They are social, outgoing, energetic, enthusiastic and assertive. Hence, they can easily build interpersonal relations. Introverts, on the other hand, are those who are reserved, shy and withdrawn. They always prefer to be silent and often fail in forming relationships. Their withdrawal nature makes them less approachable. But that doesn't make introversion a negative indicator in developing relationships. Even introverts can make relationships, even though it takes time. They are more interested in long term relations and may outweigh quality than quantity. Unlike introverts, extraverts are more interested in increasing their social circle with new relations. They are not much self-centered like introverts and hence find it easy to gain others' attention and thereby can build interpersonal relations much easily.

However, the present study has certain limitations. This study is unable to encompass the entire literature related to the relationship between personality and interpersonal relations, and thus the conclusions drawn cannot be considered as final. Due to practical constraints of the methodology used, the results obtained cannot be generalized comprehensively. Considerably more work will need to be done to identify the impact of extraversion as well as other predictors on interpersonal needs orientation.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the present study specifies that extraversion has a pivotal role in determining the interpersonal needs orientation of individuals and the influence could be extensively studied in future studies. The results obtained from this study signify the need for emphasizing extraverted traits in interpersonal therapy and other forms of social skills training. The study also provides new insights into the importance of personality assessment in personnel selection and other stages of recruitment process in educational and organizational settings.

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