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## **Personality and Altruism among Psychology and Non Psychology Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Personality is any individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Altruism is a prosocial behavior which promotes someone else's welfare even at a risk to ourselves. The particular study is conducted on young adults between the age group of 18-25 and the population taken was on psychology and non psychology students. The sample taken here were 228 individuals and this includes 117 psychology students and 111 non psychology students. Convenient sampling method was used under the study. For measuring personality Ten Item Personality Inventory was used and for measuring altruism Adapted self report altruism scale was taken. From our study it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between three personality traits namely openness, conscientiousness and extraversion with altruism.

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Keywords: Personality, Altruism, Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion.

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### **1. Introduction**

A psychological feeling of intellectual and professional fraudulence is described as the "impostor phenomenon" (Clance and Imes, 1978). They first recognised the impostor phenomenon in counselling sessions with extremely successful women who continued to ascribe their accomplishments to other forces despite conflicting evidence. People who experience impostorism think others have exaggerated views of their abilities and worry about being judged. These people perceived themselves as frauds and felt they weren't deserving of honours, promotions, or respect. People with impostor tendencies place a lot of pressure on themselves to maintain the forefront and as a result, they are known to exhibit high levels of perfectionism and workaholism. Students may experience pressure in a traditional setting as a result of social cues from peers, teachers, and institutional norms. According to a study conducted by Fraenza (2016), traditional graduate students had significantly higher impostor phenomenon ratings than graduate students who studied online.

The urge to look perfect, or even the belief that perfection is conceivable, are all examples of perfectionism. It is often seen as a strength rather than a weakness. The phrase "healthy perfectionism" may be used to explain or defend perfectionism. Examining the connections between perfectionism, shame-coping, and failure phobia in a sample of college athletes, after a poor performance, athletes may suffer shame and other negative emotions. According to Elison et al. (2006), people may react inadvertently to situations that cause shame by using one of four coping mechanisms. We predicted that the degree to which the coping mechanisms involve conscientiousness will determine the magnitudes of the associations between shame-coping mechanisms and perfectionism and fear of failure. The term "demanding of oneself or others a higher degree of performance than is necessary by the context" was used to describe perfectionism (Hollender, 1965). It is a broad personality type that is characterised by an individual's interest in attaining flawlessness and perfection in everything they do along with a critical assessment of oneself and consideration of others perspectives. Perfectionism is also related to another variable underachievement that is highly related to fear of failure. People who strive for perfection could start to think that "self-worth equals ability which equals performance" (Burka & Yuen, 1982). Perfectionists think that success and self-worth are related in this way.

Some people may experience fear of failure in everything they do. Also, intend to doubt their skills. Fear of failure can be compared with the impostor

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phenomenon. The fear of failing frequently results from a fear of feeling humiliated or ashamed. Avoiding attempts altogether could occasionally serve as a method of self-protection against regret and misery because failing can result in feelings of worthlessness. The potential of failure is frequently downplayed or rejected in a culture that places a high value on performance and success. However, success can only be obtained by a select few due to the very structure of a competitive culture (Esther, 1990). The fear of failure is a problem that affects everyone, not just students, and it has been ingrained in us as a result of growing up in our society (Richard G Beery, 1975).

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the Imposter Phenomenon, Perfectionism and Fear of Failure. There is a scarcity of research that has looked at Perfectionism and Fear of Failure about feelings of the imposter phenomenon among these undergraduate students. Results of this study may help administrators and professors who interact with undergraduate students understand the variables that may have an impact on student's mental health. Psychology is a scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context. It is essential to know and understand the human mind and behavior, not only for the psychology student but also for the non-psychology students to act and behave properly in a given situation. Individuals respond and behave in their own different ways. This may be due to their difference in innate personality traits. Personality is any individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Understanding personality will allow us to predict how individuals will respond to specific situations and how they prefer and value certain sorts of things. This study is to understand the relationship between personality trait and altruism among young adulthood which includes those between the age 18 to 25.

Altruism is a prosocial behavior which promotes someone else's welfare even at a risk to ourselves. It is essential to understand why people show altruistic behavior even at the risk of life and which personality trait is more reasonable for this altruistic behavior. The study mainly focused on five major personality traits such as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. These personality traits may contribute to individual differences in altruism. The altruistic behavior may differ based on the relationship between senders and receivers. The personality trait that contributes to altruistic behavior may differ according to the relationship between the parties involved. So, there may be differences in personality traits and altruism in psychology and non-psychology students, since it is assumed that psychology students are more aware of human behavior and socially responsible individuals compared to non-psychology students.

By assessing the personality trait and altruism in psychology and non-psychology students we can understand whether there is significant change in personality traits (such as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability) and altruism in them. Learning psychology helps to understand others as well as our own behavior, emotions and ideas. So, it is significant to understand whether learning psychology is relevant in this current social world for social development. If it is so, both learning and teaching psychology must be included in the educational system as a part of the academic curriculum. So that individuals get an idea about human thoughts, behavior, feeling and emotions, and this may help the individual to become a better human being who will be an asset for the society. The aim of the present study is to analyze the relationship between personality traits and altruism and to compare personality traits and altruism in psychology and non psychology students.

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## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

A sample of 117 Psychology and 111 NonPsychology students were chosen from various colleges in the state of Kerala using the convenience sampling technique. The participant's ages ranged from 18 to 25. Google forms were used to conduct the online survey. Before giving out the questionnaire, participant's agreement was obtained. On how to react to each statement, they were given instructions. Using SPSS- 28.0.1.1, the gathered data was examined. To ascertain the link between the two variables, Spearman rank correlation and Mann-Whitney U Test statistical analysis was utilised.

### 2.2. Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

Gosling et al. (2003) developed Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) which is a 10-item short inventory to assess the big-five dimensions (openness to experience, emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). Each of these traits had two items; one was positive and another was a negative statement where each item contained two descriptors (ex. I see myself as extraverted, enthusiastic). It had a six-week test-retest reliability of 0.72. Seven-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used as a rating scale for the participants to respond.

### 2.3. Self-Report Altruism Scale

The tool was developed by Rushton in 1981 and the adapted version was put forward by Peter Witt and Chris Boleman in 2009. The scale consists of 14 items and is rated from Never to More Often. And The score of 0 to 4 is given for each Choice. The Self Report Altruism Scale is a valid and reliable tool of measuring altruism. It has a reliability of 0.82.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1. Spearman Rank Correlation among Big Five Personality and Altruism**

	Altruism
<b>Extraversion</b>	0.195**
<b>Agreeableness</b>	0.110
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	0.192**
<b>Emotional Stability</b>	0.026
<b>Openness to Experience</b>	0.170*

**Table 2. Mann-Whitney U test of personality and altruism among Psychology and NonPsychology students**

	U	sig
<b>Extraversion</b>	6343.000	0.761
<b>Agreeableness</b>	5112.500	0.005
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	5770.500	0.144
<b>Emotional Stability</b>	6043.500	0.362
<b>Openness to Experience</b>	6116.000	0.444
<b>Altruism</b>	6431.000	0.900

The aim of the study is to analyze the nature of personality traits and altruism in psychology and non-psychology students. Personality is any individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The study mainly focused on five major personality traits such as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These personality traits may contribute to individual differences in altruism. Altruism is a prosocial behavior which promotes someone else's welfare even at a risk to ourselves. Altruistic behavior may differ based on the relationship between senders and receivers. The personality trait that contributes to altruistic behavior may differ according to the relationship between the parties involved. So, there may be differences in personality traits and altruism in psychology and non-psychology students, since it is assumed that psychology students are more aware of human behavior and socially responsible individuals compared to non-psychology students.

Table 1 shows the Spearman rank correlation between personality traits and altruism. From the table there is a significant relationship between openness and altruism which indicates that the students with high trait characteristics such as imagination, insight and curiosity show a high level of altruism. For the variable conscientiousness there is a significant relationship with altruism. This indicates that how organized the person is a factor affecting altruism. According to a theory called the empathy altruism hypothesis, altruistic behavior is motivated by the desire to help someone who is in need, which is an organized and goal directed behavior. For the variable extraversion too there is a significant relationship with altruism. This means that socially outgoing people are more prone to help people by engaging in many social activities without expecting any benefit or gain. There is a significant relationship for openness, conscientiousness and extraversion with altruism, and they are positively correlated. That is when openness, conscientiousness and extraversion are high, then the chances of showing high altruistic behavior is more.

For agreeableness and emotional stability, there is no significant relationship with altruism. It indicates that there is no significant relationship between agreeableness and altruism. This is contradictory because those individuals under study who are easygoing, cooperative and warm tend to show this behavior only to seek their own benefits and not others. In a study conducted in the year 2010, it was reported that boys from nuclear families showed significantly higher altruistic behavior than from joint families. This is similar to the above contradictory statement. Those in joint families are cooperative but are showing less altruism and the reason could be again they only want to be benefited themselves. Neuroticism is negatively correlated with altruism which is contradictory to negative state relief model theory of altruism. According to this theory people engage in altruistic behavior to reduce their own uncomfortable negative emotions or feelings. But from our study it is clear that lack of emotional stability, sadness, mood swings etc will negatively affect altruism and there is no significant relationship with altruism.

Table 2 shows the comparison of personality traits and altruism among psychology and non psychology students. The mean values mentioned show not much differences in personality traits and altruism except traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness. The obtained p value indicates that there is no significant difference in personality traits and altruism in psychology and non psychology students. Also the hypotheses regarding personality traits and altruism were rejected. This occurred because the course of study they are studying alone does not influence altruism; the individual differences such as family background, gender, culture may have an important role.

Personality is something which we hear a lot of times but seldom reap its true meaning in the right context. From young adolescents our personality develops and defines ourselves to our external world. Whereas altruism is rarely used and is often confused with empathy, modesty etc. To study their relationship was more like finding which trait of personality would likely show altruism in higher magnitude.

Comparatively there is higher social responsibility in psychology students than in non psychology. From this study we can convey that many measures could be taken in instilling psychology subjects in curriculums to develop kids with prosocial behavior and be fruitful in life. It can also be inferred that people who learn psychology are more likely to see things liberally than people who don't study psychology. The particular study gives insight to the fact that those who study psychology are likely to be more agreeable, showing more patience, kindness and putting themselves in other's place. Understanding others is among the major goals in psychology and to evaluate them. Psychologists make a test prediction about the relationship between variables. There is a lack of such an organized and goal directed approach to deal with the problem of others from non psychology students. From this we can conclude that there is higher conscientiousness among psychology students that allows them to do their work correctly. Due to higher conscientiousness and agreeableness people who learn psychology can cope up with daily life problems and it allows them to develop an improved quality of life.

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