

PERSONALITY PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS*

J. BHARATH RAJ

Introduction

Against the background of the increasing number of strikes, demonstrations, outbursts leading to damage of property, a serious study of the adjustment problems of college students is worth the trouble. A fall in the achievement standards has added to the situation. Thus a study of the personality problems of the college students would provide for one angle of viewing the whole problem of 'student unrest'—as there would be a number of Psychosocial variables related to the issue.

It is not the thesis of this paper to presume a positive relationship between 'student unrest' and 'personality problems'. There may be and again there may not be. This needs to be experimentally substantiated. What needs to be done is to test fairly large groups of students almost immediately after admission to colleges and later find out whether there is any correlation between our test predictions and the later behaviour patterns. If it turns out that the least mature and most emotionally unstable students create difficulties, then this calls for one type of handling. On the other hand if the evidence suggests that it is the most emotionally stable and mature students who create difficulties, then perhaps it is the educational system and other related factors which are to be altered.

In a large scale survey by the Calcutta University Psychology department, it was found that more than 65 per cent of the school students in Calcutta were mentally unfit for the courses pursued by them. Of them a considerable number suffered from nervous disturbances, who became violent at the slightest provocation (Arun Bhattacharjee and Kalyan Chowdhury, 1966).

In another study, 553 Medical College students in Mysore, were tested on Maudsley Medical Questionnaire and the results showed that an average of 23.5 per cent of them had definite neurotic problems for which they needed Psychological help (Bharath Raj, 1967). A similar study repeated at Ranchi on 250 students of Arts, Science and Commerce students showed that an average of 39.2 per cent of them had neurotic trends (Bharath Raj and Saraf, 1965).

An enquiry into the Prevalence of Psychiatric morbidity among 1554 students from Edinburgh University and 969 students from Belfast universities showed that nearly 9 per cent of men students and 14 per cent of women students showed Psychiatric disorders of a minor nature (Kidd *et al*, 1966).

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Sri J. Bharath Raj is Reader and Head of the Department of Psychology at the AIISH.

A nationwide study on limited lines was undertaken by All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association Committee which comprised of 3096 students who formed 1 per cent of college student population from 35 Universities by using a questionnaire. The study showed that a sizeable proportion of students showed problems. The older female students had more problems than younger and the younger male students had more problems than older males. In general the study pointed out the necessity of implementing counselling services for students (Psychological Researches in India, 1965).

The Problem

The major focus of the present study was to establish the criterion limits on the Neuroticism (N) and Extraversion (E) Scales for the student population tested so that the number of students who present definite neurotic trends could be identified. The second objective was to see how sex differences show themselves on these scales. Thirdly to compare the Neuroticism scores of students belonging to Arts, Teacher—Trainee and Science groups. For this purpose the Eysenck Personality Inventory (E.P.I.) (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1964) which measures both these dimensions with fairly high reliability (0.85) and validity indices was used. The inclusion of Lie Scale (L) provided a means to check the reliability of responses.

The Method

The E.P.I, was administered to a total group of 1018 students, 665 men and 353 women who were either university undergraduate students or teacher trainees in the city of Mysore. The test was administered in group settings following the usual procedure. Instructions were read aloud and explanations were kept to a minimum.

Results and Discussion

Table I shows age wise distribution of 1018 students. The mean age for the group came to 21.50 with a S.D. of 6.15.

TABLE I. Showing Age-wise distribution on 1018 student

<i>Age</i>	<i>F</i>
40-44	20
35-39	42
30-34	61
25-29	88
20-24	291
15-19	516
	1018

Mean Age: **21.50**
SD **6.15**

Table 2 shows the Lie score distribution of 1018 students. The Mean Lie score for the group worked out to be 5.27 with a S D of 1.74. The criterion limit of **M+1 SD on the Lie scale came to 7.01. Consequently the data sheets of 234 students who obtained a Lie score of 7 or more were rejected from further analysis, their responses being unreliable.**

TABLE 2. Showing Lie score distribution of 1018 students.

<i>Lie Score</i>	<i>F</i>
9	16
8	54
7	164
6	248
5	221
4	171
3	90
2	38
1	14
0	2
	1018

Mean Lie Score: 5.27
SD 1.74

By sorting out the 24 items depicting Neuroticism and 24 items depicting Extraversion, on the EPI, distributions were drawn for the 784 students and these findings are presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. Showing distribution of Neuroticism and Extraversion among 784 students

<i>Scores</i>	<i>Neuroticism</i>	<i>Extroversion</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>	
20-24	22	2	
15-19	150	142	
10-14	359	47)	
5-9	223	164	
0-4	30	6	
	784	784	
Mean Neuroticism Score	11.45	Mean Extraversion Score	11.80
SD		SD	
	4.25		

The Mean Neuroticism score for the group was 11.45 with a Standard deviation of 4.25. The Mean Extraversion score for the group came to 11.80 with a standard deviation of 3.30. As the Mean scores for N and E scales closely approximate each other it can be inferred that the group showed greater variability on

Neuroticism than Extraversion. In Eysenck's study, comprising of students of comparable age, the Mean N score was 10.00 with S D of 5.00, which would indicate our student group as being relatively more unstable emotionally. Separate frequency distributions were drawn for males and females on the 24 items of Neuroticism. The Mean Neuroticism score for males was 11.05 with a standard deviation of 4.30 and the mean Neuroticism score for females was 11.95 with a standard deviation of 4.20. A slight preponderance of neurotic trends is evident among females, although the variability of the two groups is almost the same. The results are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4- Showing distribution of Neuroticism among Males (N=502) and Females (N=282)

<i>Scores</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
20-24	14	8
15-19	79	67
10-14	233	127
5-9	151	74
0-4	25	6
	502	282
Mean Neuroticism score (Males)	11.05	Mean Neuroticism score (Females)
SD	4.30	SD
		11.95
		4.20

On the same lines distributions were drawn for male and female groups on the 24 items of Extraversion scale. The Mean extraversion score for male group came to 12.10 with a Standard deviation of 3.15 and for the female group the Mean score was 11.25 with a standard deviation of 3.45. The males show a slightly greater tendency toward extraversion. The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5. Showing distribution of Extraversion scores among Males (N=502) and Females (N=282)

<i>Scores</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
20-24	2	0
15-19	95	45
10-14	318	155
5-9	85	78
0-4	2	4
	502	282
Mean Extraversion score (Males)	12.10	Mean Extraversion score (Females)
SD	3.15	SD
		11.25
		3.45

Table 6 shows the frequency distribution drawn for the Arts, Teacher-Trainee and the Science students on the scale of Neuroticism. The Mean Neuroticism scores for these groups were 11.45, 11.35 and 11.50 respectively indicating no significant difference between these three groups.

TABLE 6. Showing distribution of Neuroticism among Arts, Teacher-Trainees and Science students.

<i>Scores</i>	(N=428)	(N=240)	(N=116)
	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Teacher- Trainee</i>	<i>Science</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
20-24	11	6	5
15-19	76	49	25
10-14	211	101	47
5-9	116	76	31
0-4	14	8	8

Mean Neuroticism Score of Arts students= 11.45

Mean Neuroticism Score of Teacher-Trainees=11.35

Mean Neuroticism Score of Science students=11.50

Having worked out the criterion limit of M+ISD i.e., $11.45+4.25 = 15.70$, the number of students who presented definite neurotic trends, obtaining a neuroticism score of 16 and above were identified among the different groups. In the following table these figures have been raised to percentages. No definite conclusions can be drawn from this finding as the groups were not of comparable sizes. However a total of 124 students out of 784 i.e., 15.81 per cent or nearly 16 per cent of the total group presented definite neurotic trends. The results are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Showing No. of students obtaining Neuroticism score (i.e., M+ISD) among different groups.

	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Teacher- Trainees</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Total</i>
No. of students	62	39	23	124
Per cent of students	14.4	16.25	19.82	15.81

As per the criterion established of M+ISD in identifying deviations from Normalcy on the N and E scales of EPI, 124 students from the study group of 784 i.e., 16 per cent of them were identified to be neurotics. Among them 14 were introverted neurotics, 15 were extraverted neurotics and the remaining 95 fell in the middle range of M+ISD on the E scale.

Summary and Conclusions

The present study was undertaken to analyse the responses of college students on a Personality Inventory, EPI on two important dimensions of Personality, namely, Neuroticism and Extraversion. The test was administered to a total of 1018 students (Arts, Science and Teacher-Trainees) consisting of 665 males and 353 females. After eliminating data from 234 students showing a 'desirability

response set' (obtaining a Lie score of 7 or more), the responses of 784 students (502 males and 282 females) have been analysed on N and E scales. Establishing the criteria of M+ISD to delineate deviations from normalcy, 16 per cent of the study group were identified to be neurotics. No appreciable difference was observed in Neuroticism scores among the sexes or the different groups Arts, Science and Teacher-Trainees.

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