Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between the personality traits and self-esteem. Three-hundred-ten Shiraz University students (147 girls and 163 boys) were participants of the study. Big five personality factor’s Scale (Goldberg, 1999) and Coopersmith’s self-esteem scale were used as measures of the study. Simultaneous multiple regression of self-esteem on the personality traits subscales, revealed that the extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction and openness versus closeness to experience traits were significant positive predictor and neuroticism versus emotion stability was significant negative predictor of the self-esteem.

Keywords: Self-esteem; Big five personality; Students.
differences in personality. However, the Big Five include the factors of openness, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (neuroticism reversed). Neuroticism (N) refers to the degree to which a person responds to stress; Extraversion (E) refers to the degree to which a person can tolerate sensory stimulation from people and situations; Openness (O) refers to the degree to which we are open to new experiences; Agreeableness (A) refers to the degree which we relate to others with tolerance and acceptance; and finally, Conscientiousness (C) refers to the degree to which one works towards goals in an industrious, disciplined, and dependable fashion.

The limiting research investigated the relationship between self-esteem and personality (Robins, Tracy, Trzesniewski, Potter & Gosling, 2001). But the other research has convincingly demonstrated that self-esteem is strongly rooted in basic dimensions of personality, such as the “Big Five” (e.g., Watson, Suls, & Haig, 2002; Erdle, Gosling, and Potter, 2009). Self-esteem has been found to be positively correlated with each of the Big Five factors (Robins et al., 2001). Empirical associations between neuroticism, extraversion and explicit self-esteem are quite robust: self-esteem correlates negatively with neuroticism and positively with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Watson et al., 2002). A recent study by Swickert et al. (2004) reported a significant indirect effect of extraversion on self-esteem via positive affect. Thus, extraversions’ influence on self-esteem was found to be significantly mediated by positive affect. A number of studies have investigated the individual personality and affective factors associated with self-esteem (e.g., Francis, 1996; Swickert, Hittner, Kitos, & Cox-Fuenzalida, 2004). Global self-esteem has also positively correlated with extraversion and negatively with neuroticism (Watson et al., 2002). Accordingly, personality variables are strongly related to self-esteem.

The goal of present study was to investigate effect of personality traits on self-esteem. The main question of the study was which one of the personality traits predicts the self-esteem? Also, the effect of gender variable in this relationship was examined.

2. Methods

Participants of this study were 310 Shiraz university students (147 girls and 163 boys) that selected by multi-stages cluster random sampling; from different colleges of Shiraz university. Means age of the students was 18.75 (SD=1.43).

2.1. Measures

2.1.1. Big five personality factor’s Scale (Goldberg, 1999)

The big five personality factor’s Scale is comprised of 50 items scale and five subscales: extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction, openness versus closeness to experience and neuroticism versus emotion stability. The reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method. Alpha coefficient for extraversion versus introversion, conscientiousness versus lack of direction, openness versus closeness to experience and neuroticism versus emotion stability was 0.73, 0.86, 0.70, 0.74 and 0.77 respectively. Validity of the measures examined to factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.

2.1.2. Coopersmith’s self-esteem scale (CSEI)

The CSEI is a 46 item scale developed by Coopersmith (1967) to measure self-esteem. It uses a five-point Likert response format ranging from one (“not true at all”) to five (“true nearly all the time”), with a total score range from 0 to 230 in present study Persian version of CSEI was used. The reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method. Alpha coefficient for self-esteem total score was 0.89. Validity of the measures investigated by factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.
3. Results

The results revealed positive and significant correlations between extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction and openness versus closeness to experience traits and self-esteem, whereas it is negative and significant correlations between neuroticism versus emotion stability trait and self-esteem (Table 1).

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1- Extraversion versus introversion | 1 | | | | | |
| 2- Agreeableness versus antagonism | 0.25** | 1 | | | | |
| 3- Conscientiousness versus lack of direction | 0.13* | 0.30** | 1 | | | |
| 4- Openness versus closeness to experience | 0.23** | 0.24** | 0.40** | 1 | | |
| 5- Neuroticism versus emotion stability | -0.09 | -0.14* | -0.30** | -0.16** | 1 | |
| 6- Self-esteem | 0.35** | 0.35** | 0.46** | 0.38** | -0.50** | 1 |

*p<0.05  **p<0.001

Simultaneous multiple regression of self-esteem total score on the personality traits subscales, revealed that the extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction and openness versus closeness to experience traits were significant positive predictor and neuroticism versus emotion stability was significant negative predictor of the self-esteem (Table 2).

| Criterion Variable | Self-esteem | Prediction Variables | R | R² | B | β | t | P< |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| Extraversion versus introversion | | | 0.71 | 0.22 | 4.65 | 0.001 |
| Agreeableness versus antagonism | | | 0.51 | 0.14 | 2.87 | 0.05 |
| Conscientiousness versus lack of direction | | | 0.67 | 0.46 | 0.70 | 0.21 | 4.08 | 0.001 |
| Openness versus closeness to experience | | | 0.69 | 0.14 | 2.96 | 0.05 |
| Neuroticism versus emotion stability | | | -0.98 | -0.35 | 7.59 | 0.001 |

The results of analysis t-test showed that the mean score of girls was significantly greater than boys in the neuroticism versus emotion stability trait. Although, there wasn’t significant difference between girls and boys in extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction, openness versus closeness to experience traits and self-esteem (Table 3).

| Variable | Girls | Boys | t | P< |
|----------|-------|------|---|----|
| Extraversion versus introversion | 32.60 | 31.86 | 1.12 | N.S |
| Agreeableness versus antagonism | 40.95 | 40.59 | 0.60 | N.S |
| Conscientiousness versus lack of direction | 31.86 | 32.07 | 0.33 | N.S |
| Openness versus closeness to experience | 29.45 | 29.11 | 0.75 | N.S |
| Neuroticism versus emotion stability | 27.00 | 24.38 | 3.40 | 0.001 |
| Self-esteem | 138.79 | 139.23 | 0.19 | N.S |

4. Discussion

The results of this study showed that the relationship between personality traits and self-esteem, so that extraversion versus introversion, agreeableness versus antagonism, conscientiousness versus lack of direction and openness versus closeness to experience traits were significant positive predictor and neuroticism versus emotion stability was significant negative predictor of the self-esteem. The traits associated with extraverts are outgoing, expressive, energetic, and dominant that includes lower order traits: social inhibition or shyness (feelings of discomfort in social encounters), sociability, dominance, and energy/activity level (Caspi et al., 2005). Conscientiousness refers to the degree to which one works towards goals in an industrious, disciplined, and dependable fashion. However, agreeable individuals are characterized as helpful, trusting and straightforward,
whereas those high in conscientiousness are reliable, hard working, and self disciplined (Costa & McCrae, 1985). The personality type openness is characterized by core traits such as, imaginative, creative, aesthetic sensitivity, quick to learn, clever and insightful (Caspi et al., 2005). On the other hand, the power, the responsibility in the public domain, receipt of support, high autonomy is as the high self-esteem’s characteristics. Hence, the positive effect of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness on self-esteem is conformed. Furthermore, neurotic’s individuals are anxiousness, vulnerability to stress, lacking of confidence, easily frustrated, prone to guilt, moodiness, anger, and insecurity in relationships (Caspi et al., 2005), beside self-esteem is strongly and negatively correlated with distress and depression (Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989). Thus, the negative relationship between neuroticism versus emotion stability and self-esteem is supportably. Finally, the results of gender differences showed that a significant difference between means scores of girls and boys neuroticism versus emotion stability, so that the means scores of girls is higher than boys in this character. Accordingly, the big five personality factors related to self-esteem. Lastly, the present study suggested that control personality factors simultaneously along with family factors in predicting self-esteem.

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