

Personality and Political Disengagement of University Students

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Abstract- The present study was designed to investigate the relationship between political disengagement and personality traits of the students. Another goal of the study is to determine the significant differences between political disengagement and personality traits in terms of gender, nature of residence, faculty, study year and socio-economic status. To conduct this study, data were collected from 200 undergraduate and graduate students of the University of Chittagong. Two questionnaires were used to collect information from the participants. These are: (1) The Bangla version of Personality Disengagement dimension of the Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS) and (2) Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised Short Form (EPQR-S). The results of the correlation indicated that political disengagement was significantly negatively correlated with extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism but positively correlated with lie. Mann Whitney Test indicated there were no significant difference between male and female in terms of political disengagement, extraversion, psychoticism except lie and neuroticism. There were also no significant differences in terms of residence. Kruskal Wallis Test indicated that student's political disengagement significantly differed in terms of faculty but extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism did not significantly differ in terms of faculty. Besides, both political disengagement and personality traits did not significantly differ in terms of study year. Moreover, political disengagement and lie significantly differed in terms of socio-economic status. So, the findings point out that personality traits are linked with political disengagement and extraversion, psychoticism, neuroticism and lie influence a person to be politically engaged though the levels vary individual to individual as well as building up his/her political perception.

Index Terms: Political disengagement, extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism.

1. INTRODUCTION

PERSONALITY is defined as the characteristic set of behaviors, cognitions, and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors. Trait-based personality theories, such as those defined by Raymond Cattell (1943) [1] define personality as the traits that predict a person's behavior. "Personality" refers to a multifaceted and enduring internal or psychological, structure that influences patterns in a person's actions and expressed attitudes.

Researchers have associated personality with such attributes as temperament and values, but most scholarly attention has centered on individual differences in traits, or general behavioral and attitudinal tendencies. The focus on traits was reinvigorated with the rise of the Big Five personality framework in the 1980s and 1990s, when cross-cultural evidence pointed to the existence of the dimensions of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Studies have found ideas. They agree to take the same position on many issues and agree to support the same changes to law and the same leaders. An election is usually a competition between different parties. Some examples of political parties worldwide are the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the Conservative in the United Kingdom, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany and the Indian National Congress in India.

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It is very often said that politics is about power. The history of political thought can be traced back to early antiquity, with seminal works such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics and the works of Confucius. With these considerations in mind, political scientists have devoted an increasing amount of attention to the study of personality and citizen attitudes and behavior. As to the social dimension of political information, many scholars have examined the effects of personality on political discussion (e.g., Gallego & Oberski, 2012; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2012; Hibbing, Ritchie, & Anderson, 2011; Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, & Anderson, 2010) [2], [3], [4]. Not surprisingly, a similar positive relationship exists between extraversion and political discussion. The characteristically talkative nature of extraverts brings them to take up multiple topics of conversation, including politics. It was found that the self-reports of openness and extraversion have a significant effect on political participation, an effect that is mostly found in political participation research (Mondak, 2010; Vecchione & Caprara, 2009) [5], [6]. Fathers rating of the child's agreeableness is related with a higher political participation intention, while the more emotional stability is linked with less political participation. These analyses clearly show that observer ratings add to the understanding of the effect of personality on political participation. In these analyses, the self-concept has most effect on actual behavior (McCrae & Weiss, 2007) [7].

Previous scholars (Geber et al. 2011) [8] have claimed that personality attributes are "causally prior" to attitudes and behaviors, but there has been very little longitudinal evidence on the association between personality and

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political behavior. Although the personality and politics literature has shown tremendous progress in recent years, additional work remains to be done to produce comprehensive explanations of political behavior. Studies currently focus on the direct impact of traits on political attitudes and actions, but personality also could work through other individual-level attitudes and characteristics to influence behavior. Instead of assuming that personality operates in isolation from other predictors of political behavior, scholars can build on past studies by mapping out and testing interrelationships between psychological traits and the many other factors thought to influence how and how well citizens engage the world of politics.

Scholars have posited that high levels of openness and extraversion affect most forms of political participation. The empirical record provides strong, although less than universal, support for these expectations. Many tests of the relationships between openness and various forms of political participation have shown significant positive links, including to individualistic acts such as donating to candidates and social acts such as attending rallies (e.g., Ha, Kim, & Jo, 2013; Mondak et al., 2010) [9], [10].

Although most research examining whether openness and conscientiousness influence political ideology has appeared only within the last decade, support for the expected openness-liberalism and conscientiousness-conservatism links already is voluminous. These relationships have been documented in multiple studies in Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, and especially the United States (e.g., Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, & Ha, 2010; Sibley, Osborne, & Duckitt, 2012) [11], [12]. Extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism are also sometimes significant correlates of political views. However, these relationships appear more sporadic, and substantively less impressive, than the effects of openness and conscientiousness.

Another research was conducted on the interplay between political context and individual personality attributes. This dissertation focused primarily on political participation in the United States. A few recent studies by Bekkers (2005) [13], Ha, Kim, and Jo (2013) [9], and Mondak, Canache, Seligson, and Hibbing (2011) [14], have examined the relationship between personality traits and participation in the Netherlands, South Korea, Venezuela, Uruguay, and Finland but there have not yet been any large-scale cross-national analyses of personality and participation. The Americas Barometer conducted nationally representative surveys in 24 countries in 2010. Each survey contains measures of the Big Five, participation, and civic affiliations. This dataset will serve as an important starting point for assessing the impact of personality on participation across different contexts. In the end, researchers interested in the association between personality and political behavior would be well served by implanting the research ideas discussed above.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Differences in people's personalities are hardly the only sources of variation in political behavior. To the contrary, we know that patterns of political behavior vary with demographic attributes, socioeconomic status, aspects of the social context, media exposure, enduring values and political orientations, and more. With that in mind, what is to be gained by adding personality to the mix? What would be factoring in personality teach us about the bases of political behavior, and what, if anything, might attention to personality reveal about all of the other factors thought to matter for how citizens engage the political world? This section reviews what empirical research has shown regarding relationships between the Eysenck personality traits and the sorts of variables of interest.

To students of comparative political behavior. Personality variables should not be thought of as replacing other predictors of political behavior. Attention to personality does not imply that past research is somehow incorrect for focusing on variables such as age, income, interest in politics, and partisanship. Instead, it is more appropriate to suggest that personality researchers feel that past accounts have been incomplete because psychological factors have been downplayed or ignored. We noted earlier that the factors thought to influence political behavior can be differentiated on the basis of whether they are relatively permanent and stable or momentary and fleeting, and whether they are mostly internal or external to individuals. Personality traits are psychological structures that are relatively stable over long periods of time and that are mostly internal to individuals. Attention to personality helps us represent this quadrant of influences on political behavior, but in doing so it in no way diminishes the importance of other predictors.

Sorting political phenomena into a few simple groupings can help us get a sense of what types of personality effects we might observe. We will consider effects in three categories: the acquisition of political information; political values, orientations, and attitudes; and various forms of political participation. Although most research on the Eysenck personality and political behavior dates back only about a decade, there is already a vast body of findings. Rather than recount each individual effect, we focus on findings that are especially sensible and intuitive, that have been seen consistently across multiple studies, and that are particularly intriguing or illuminating.

The issues discussed in this section hopefully will encourage scholars to consider the most productive ways to study personality and politics. Our purpose in offering these suggestions is not to chastise researchers who have followed different courses. In our view, all work that pays serious attention to personality helps to add psychological realism to our explanations of political behavior. Moreover, given the still early state of the newest wave of research in this area, it is understandable that there have been both hits and misses. We are convinced that scholars working in this area can look forward to dramatic advances in the near future.

With sufficient reflection on how best to study personality and politics, those advances hopefully will be larger in scope and sooner in coming.

1.2 Objectives of the study

2. METHODS

2.1 Participants

The sample of the present study is constituted of 200 university students. Participants were taken purposively from Chittagong University. Among them 100 students were general students having no active participation in national politics and they were divided both male and female equally. Another 100 students had active participation in national politics and they too were divided both male and female equally.

2.2 Design

A cross sectional survey research design was followed for conducting present study.

2.3 Measures

The following instruments were used in the present study: *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised-Short Form (EPQR-S)*:

Eysenck's scales for the measurement of personality among adults, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) have been developed by Hans J. Eysenck and Sybil B.G Eysenck in 1975 [18] which measured two personality tendencies, Neuroticisms (N), Extraversion (E) and refined over a period of nearly 50 years. Subsequently a third personality dimension, Psychoticism (p) was added creating additional personality Questionnaire. The early Maudsley Medical Questionnaire (MMQ) contains 40 items (Eysenck, 1952) [15], the Maudsley Personality Inventory (MPI) contains 48 items (Eysenck, 1959) [16], the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) contains 57 items (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1964a) [17], the Eysenck Personality Inventory Questionnaire (EPQ) contains 90 items (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975) [18] and the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQR) contains 100 items (Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett, 1985) [19]. More recently Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (1985) [19] devised a short form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQR-S) for use among adults. It is consisted of 48 items and 4 subscales: Psychoticism contains 12 items (2,6,10,14,18,22,26,28,31,35,39,43), Extraversion contains 12 items (3,7,11,15,19,23,27,32,36,41,44,48), Neuroticism contains 12 items (1,5,9,13,17,21,25,30,34,38,42,46), Lie contains 12 items (4,8,12,20,24,29,33,37,40,45,47). Each question has a binary response 'yes' or 'no'. Each dichotomous item was scored 1 or 0, and each scale had a maximum possible score of 12 and minimum of zero. They report reliabilities for males and females are respectively of 0.84 and 0.80 for Neuroticism, 0.88 and 0.84 for Extraversion, 0.62 and 0.61 for Psychoticism

- (a) To investigate the relationship between political disengagement and Eysenck personality traits (Extraversion, Lie, Psychoticism and Neuroticism).
- (b) To determine the significant differences in political disengagement and personality traits in terms of gender, nature of residence, faculty, study year and socio-economic status of the students.

and 0.77 and 0.73 for the lie scale. For the present study, we used the translated Bangla version of EPQR-S (Hossain & Ahmed, 2018). In this study, the standardized Cronbach's a Coefficient of 0.667 for Psychoticism, 0.728 for Extraversion, 0.606 for neuroticism, and 0.831 for the Lie scale.

The Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS):

The Participatory Behaviors Scale (PBS) were developed by Talo and Mannarini (2014) [20]. It has four dimensions of participation: formal political participation, activism, civil participation and disengagement. In this study translated bangla version of political disengagement dimension consist of 7 items (Hossain, 2018) was used to measure political disengagement behaviors. In the present sample, the standardized Cronbach's a Coefficient of 0.012 for this dimension and the range of corrected item total correlations was from .478 to .885.

Each participant's responses to the test items were scored according to the scoring principles of the PBS and the EPQR-S. A Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > 0.05$) and a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q-Q plots and box plots showed that the sample were not normally distributed. Breusch-Pagan and Koenker's test ($p > 0.05$) and Levene's test of equality error variance ($p > 0.05$) showed that heteroskedasticity was not present, that is, sample variance was same as population variance. These sample characteristics was not fulfilled the main assumptions of parametric test. That is why non parametric test was conducted in this study.

2.4 Procedure

Each participant was briefed about the general study purpose and requested to participate in the study. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. After getting their verbal consent the paper-based survey was administered in individual person. The survey components included an informed consent statement, socio-demographic section, the PBS and EPQR-S. Participants were asked to sign on the consent paper, record the socio-demographic information (age, gender, residence, study year, faculty, monthly family income and GPA), and read carefully the standard instructions of how to respond before going through the items or questions of the test /scale. They were requested not to omit any item in the scale. There was no time limit for the respondent to answer all the items the scale. After completing the task, the answered questionnaires were collected from them. Finally, they were

given thanks for their sincere cooperation. All the data were collected over a 2-week period from all the participants.

3. Results

In the present study, the obtained data were analyzed by using Spearman Rank Correlation, Mann Whitney Test and Kruskal Wallis Test. All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 23 for windows. The relationship between total political disengagement and personality traits were investigated using Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient as shown in table 1.

Table 1

Spearman Rank Order Correlation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Political Disengagement	-				
2. Extraversion	-.369**	-			
3. Lie	.582**	-.456**	-		
4. Psychoticism	-.384**	.296**	-.356**	-	
5. Neuroticism	-.246**	.023	-.345**	.223**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table 1 revealed that, there were significantly negative correlations between student's personality traits-extraversion ($-.348, p < .01$), neuroticism ($-.363, p < .01$), psychoticism ($-.208, p < .01$) with political disengagement but positive significant correlation was found between lie and political disengagement ($.568, p < .01$).

Table 2

Mann Whitney Test for gender

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	r
Total PD.	4426.500	9476.500	-1.406	.160	-.099
Total E.	4.274E3	9.324E3	-1.789	.074	-.127
Total L.	3.283E3	8.333E3	-4.215	.000	-.298
Total P.	4628.000	9678.000	-.917	.359	-.065
Total N.	3664.500	8714.500	-3.393	.001	-.233

a. Grouping Variable: Sex of Participant

Table 2 indicates that, males are not significantly differing from females in terms of political disengagement (PD) ($U = 4426.500, z = -1.406, r = -.099$), extraversion (E) ($U = 4.274E3, z = -1.789, r = -.127$) and psychoticism (P) ($U = 4628.000, z = -.917, r = -.065$) but they differ in terms of lie (L) ($U = 3.283E3, z = -4.215, r = -.298$) and neuroticism (N) ($U = 3664.500, z = -3.293, r = -.233$).

Table 3

Mann Whitney Test for residence

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	r
Total PD.	4731.500	8386.500	-.387	.699	-.027
Total E.	4.800E3	1.147E4	-.219	.827	-.015
Total L.	4.520E3	1.119E4	-.913	.361	-.065
Total P.	4323.000	10993.000	-1.408	.159	-.01
Total N.	4544.500	11214.500	-.855	.392	-.06

a. Grouping Variable: Nature of Residence

Table 3 indicates that there were no significant differences between residential students and non-residential students in terms of political disengagement ($U = 4731.500, z = -.387$,

$r = -.027$), extraversion ($U = 4.800E3, z = -.219, r = -.015$), lie ($U = 4.520E3, z = -.913, r = -.065$), psychoticism ($U = 4323.000, z = -1.408, r = -.01$) and neuroticism ($U = 4544.500, z = -.855, r = -.06$).

Table 4

Kruskal Wallis Test for faculty

	Total PD	Total E.	Total L.	Total P.	Total N.
Chi-Square	32.283	7.081	14.298	6.757	5.414
Df	7	7	7	7	7
Asymp Sig.	.000	.420	.046	.455	.610
Monte Carlo Sig. Sig.	.000*	.415*	.060*	.435*	.595*
99% Confidence- Interval	Lower Bound	.000	.325	.017	.345
Upper Bound	.023	.505	.103	.525	.684

a. Based on 200 sampled tables with starting seed 2000000. b. Kruskal Wallis Test

c. Grouping Variable: Faculty of Participant

Table 4 indicates that student's political disengagement (Chi-Square = 32.283) significantly differs in terms of faculty but extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism do not significantly differ in terms of faculty.

Table 5

Kruskal Wallis Test for study year

	Total PD	Total E.	Total L.	Total P.	Total N.
Chi-Square	6.360	1.853	3.879	4.593	.458
Df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp Sig.	.095	.603	.275	.204	.928
Monte Carlo Sig. Sig.	.070*	.590*	.250*	.205*	.925*
99% Confidence- Interval	Lower Bound	.024	.500	.171	.131
Upper Bound	.116	.680	.329	.279	.973

a. Based on 200 sampled tables with starting seed 2000000. b. Kruskal Wallis Test

c. Grouping Variable: Study year of participant

Table 5 indicates that student's political disengagement, extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism do not significantly differ in terms of study year.

Table 6

Kruskal Wallis Test for socio-economic status

	Total PD	Total E.	Total L.	Total P.	Total N.
Chi-Square	11.197	5.504	12.691	3.351	5.101
Df	5	5	5	5	5
Asymp Sig.	.048	.358	.026	.646	.404
Monte Carlo Sig. Sig.	.040*	.335*	.020*	.645*	.445*
99% Confidence- Interval	Lower Bound	.004	.249	.000	.558
Upper Bound	.076	.421	.045	.732	.536

a. Based on 200 sampled tables with starting seed 1585587178. b. Kruskal Wallis Test

c. Grouping Variable: Socioeconomic Status of Participant

Table 6 indicates that, student's political disengagement (Chi-Square=11.197) and lie (Chi-Square=12.691) significantly differ in terms of socio-economic status but extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism don't significantly differ in terms of socio-economic status.

3.1 Discussion

Personality affects a lot to a person's political identity and because of this it is seen the different observations on the same issue among individuals. Our present study was designed to investigate the relationship between political disengagement and personality traits-extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism. Reviewing the relevant literature, two objectives were set for the study. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship

between political disengagement and personality traits of the students. Another goal of the study is to determine the significant differences between political disengagement and personality traits in terms of gender, nature of residence, faculty, study year and socio-economic status. To conduct this study, data were collected from 200 undergraduate and graduate students of the University of Chittagong. Following standardized procedure, the Bangla version PD and translated Bangla version of EPQR-S measures were administered to them. Because of the violation of the assumption of parametric test which is detected by normality test, non-parametric tests were used in this study. Then the data of the participants were analyzed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation, Mann Whitney Test and Kruskal Wallis Test.

From the Spearman Rank Order Correlation results, we found that political disengagement was significantly negatively correlated with extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism but positively correlated with lie. That means students with higher extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism have least possibility of political disengagement and with higher lie have greater possibility of political disengagement. The following results supports the past research conducted by Mondak (2010) [5] and Vecchione & Capara (2009) [6]. According to their results, extraversion has positive significant correlation with political engagement. That means, students who are extrovert have greater possibility of political engagement.

From the Mann Whitney Test results, we found that male is not significantly differ from female in terms of political disengagement, psychoticism and extraversion but they differ in terms of lie and neuroticism. Here, male tends to talk more lie than female but in contrast female tends more neuroticism. Besides, political disengagement, extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism do not significantly differ in terms of residence.

From the Kruskal Wallis Test results, we found that student's political disengagement significantly differs in terms of faculty but extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism do not significantly differ in terms of faculty. Besides, political disengagement, extraversion, lie, psychoticism and neuroticism do not significantly differ in terms of study year. Moreover, students' political disengagement and lie significantly differ in terms of socio-economic status but do not significantly differ in terms of extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism.

At the end, most of our findings supported the previous researches though there might have some differences. Personality traits are linked with political disengagement and extraversion, psychoticism, neuroticism and lie influence a person to be politically engaged though the levels vary individual to individual as well as building up his/her political perception.

3.2 Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, the study was conducted with a moderate number of participants (n=200).

Second, participants were not selected randomly. Third, the research was conducted within a short area. Finally, there might have bit doubt on the accuracy of the information given by the participants as they might not take it seriously.

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