

Gender Differences among Young Adults with Personality Disorder

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Abstract: *Personality disorders are characterized by enduring patterns of maladaptive traits, affecting the way individuals perceive themselves, relate to others, and cope with life's challenges. The prevalence of personality disorders among young adults has gained increased attention in recent years due to their potential long - term consequences on personal, social, and occupational domains. This research aims to explore male and female differences among young adults with personality disorders to better understand the unique challenges faced by them. 236 young adults aged between 20 and 40 years were selected using purposive sampling method in and around Karur, Tamil Nadu. The tools used were the Personal Data Sheet, Personality Belief Questionnaire (PBQ) Short form: (Beck, 1991). The results will be analysed using mean, standard deviation, independent sample t - test, and the findings were mentioned below.*

Keywords: Personality disorder, gender differences, young adults

1. Introduction

1.1 Personality

Personality is the way of thinking, feeling and behaving that makes a person different from other people. An individual's personality is influenced by experiences, environment (surroundings, life situations) and inherited characteristics. The pattern of experience and behaviour usually begins by late adolescence or early adulthood and causes distress or problems in functioning. Without treatment, personality disorders can be long - lasting.

(American Psychological Association)

Personality disorders are long - term patterns of behaviour and inner experiences that differ significantly from what is expected.

They affect at least two of these areas

- Way of thinking about oneself and others
- Way of responding emotionally
- Way of relating to other people
- Way of controlling one's behaviour

1.1.1 Types of Personality Disorder

Cluster A: Odd or Eccentric Disorders

- **Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Individuals are suspicious and mistrustful of others, assuming they have malicious intentions.
- **Schizoid Personality Disorder:** People with this disorder have difficulty forming close relationships and prefer solitary activities.
- **Schizotypal Personality Disorder:** Characterized by peculiar thoughts, beliefs, appearance, and interpersonal difficulties.

Cluster B: Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Disorders

- **Antisocial Personality Disorder:** Individuals have a disregard for others' rights, lack empathy, and engage in impulsive and irresponsible behaviour.

- **Borderline Personality Disorder:** People with this disorder experience intense mood swings, have unstable self - image, and engage in self - destructive behaviours.
- **Histrionic Personality Disorder:** Individuals seek attention and may exhibit dramatic or provocative behaviour to draw attention to themselves.
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** Characterized by an inflated sense of self - importance, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others.
- **Cluster C: Anxious or Fearful Disorders**
- **Avoidant Personality Disorder:** People with this disorder have extreme feelings of inadequacy and fear rejection, leading to social withdrawal.
- **Dependent Personality Disorder:** Individuals have an excessive need to be taken care of, leading to submissive and clingy behaviours.
- **Obsessive - Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD):** Different from Obsessive - Compulsive Disorder (OCD), OCPD involves a preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and control.

Many personality disorders tend to emerge and become more pronounced during this life stage. Young adulthood, typically defined as the period between late adolescence and the mid - 30s, is a crucial developmental phase characterized by significant changes in identity, relationships, and responsibilities. During this time, individuals are also forming their sense of self and navigating various life challenges, which can interact with and exacerbate personality disorder traits.

2. Review of Literature

Whipp, Korhonen, Raevouri et al (2018) conducted a population - based research to determine whether general aggression, as well as direct and indirect subtypes assessed in early adolescence, predict young adult antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) in a population - based sample. The results indicate that aggression levels in a general pre and early - adolescent population can significantly predict, with useful predictive utility, a serious psychiatric outcome in young adulthood in both sexes. And also these findings

suggest that focusing intervention on children and adolescents with higher aggression levels could reduce future ASPD cases.

Khoury, Zona, Bertha, Choi - Kain, Hennighausan and Lyons - Ruth (2020) assessed the patterns of “Disorganized Attachment Interactions among young adults with Borderline Personality Disorder, other Diagnosis and No diagnosis”. The results show underscore the utility of observational assessments to capture the interpersonal features of BPD and highlight the potential value of examining the development trajectories of disorganized and controlling attachment behaviour to identify pathways toward BPD.

Sher et. al (2015) assessed the “Gender differences in the clinical characteristics and psychiatric comorbidity in patients with antisocial personality disorder” The results show that men with ASPD commit more antisocial act compared to women with ASPD and women with ASPD are more likely to be victims of sexual or emotional abuse compared to men.

Friedman, Rhee, Ross, Corley and Hewitt (2021) conducted a meta – analysis to find the Genetic and environmental relations of executive functions to antisocial personality disorder symptoms and psychopathy among 765 young adults. The findings suggest that antisocial behaviour may relate to common executive function factors that capture covariance across response inhibition. The results from the twin model indicated that the association between LSRP secondary psychopathy and ASPDs was due to both genetic and non - shared environmental influences

Stewart, Singleton, and Benau et al (2019) measured the level of “Neurophysiological activity following rewards and losses among female adolescents and young adults with Borderline Personality Disorder”. The results show that healthy females, adolescents and young adults with Borderline Personality Disorder showed a reduced RewP. The Borderline Personality Disorder group had significantly reduced delta power to wins compared to healthy controls.

3. Methodology

Objectives

- To assess the extent of personality disorder among young adults.
- To measure the difference in personality disorder among the male and female young adults.

Hypotheses

- The extent of personality disorder among young adults is mild.
- There is a significant difference in personality disorder among male and female young adults.

Sample

236 young adults between the age group of 20 to 40 were selected using purposive sampling method from various area in and around Karur, Tamil Nadu.

Tools

Personal Data Sheet which include Name, Gender, age, Social Media usage, domicile and Marital status was used to measure the personal details of the participants.

Personality Belief Questionnaire (PBQ) Short form: (Beck, 1991), is a 65 item self - report measure of beliefs associated with Personality Disorders using a 5 - point Likert scale (0= I don't believe it at all, 4= I believe it totally). The internal consistency and test - retest reliability ranging from 0.77 to 0.93.

Procedure

After building rapport and obtaining consent from the selected young adults, Personality Belief Questionnaire was administered. The sample were informed that the responses will be kept confidential and the data will be used only for academic purposes. The data were collected and statistically analyzed using SPSS. The results thus obtained are tabulated and interpreted below.

Data Analysis

In order to investigate the gender difference in Personality disorder among male and female young adults, independent sample t - test was performed.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean Differences in Personality Disorder among Male and Female Young Adults (N=236)

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean score	SD	t - value	Significance
Avoidant	Male	105	17.15	3.9	1.27	N. S
	Female	131	16.47	4.14		
Dependent	Male	105	15.75	4.3	3.26	S
	Female	131	13.61	5.4		
Passive Aggressive	Male	105	15.86	4.2	6.8	N. S
	Female	131	15.24	6.1		
Obsessive Compulsive	Male	105	17.40	3.9	2.1	S
	Female	131	16.22	4.45		
Anti - social	Male	105	16.37	3.8	2.4	S
	Female	131	14.79	5.6		
Narcissistic	Male	105	15.47	4.6	2.7	S
	Female	131	13.53	5.8		
Histrionic	Male	105	16.19	4.08	3.5	S
	Female	131	13.76	5.9		

Schizoid	Male	105	16.60	4.3	1.5	N. S
	Female	131	15.56	5.9		
Paranoid	Male	105	15.93	4.3	2.2	S
	Female	131	14.48	5.2		
Borderline	Male	105	15.43	4.4	2.6	S
	Female	131	13.58	6.1		

N. S – not significant

S - Significant

Table 1 shows the mean difference in Personality disorder among the male and female sample. The mean value of Avoidant personality disorder of male and female is 17.15 and 16.47 and t value is 1.27 which shows there is no statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Dependent personality disorder of male and female is 15.75 and 13.67 and t value is 3.26 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Passive aggressive personality disorder of male and female is 15.86 and 15.24 and t value is 6.8 which shows there is no statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Obsessive compulsive personality disorder of male and female is 17.40 and 16.22 and t value is 2.1 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Anti - social personality disorder of male and female is 16.37 and 14.79 and t value is 2.4 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Narcissistic personality disorder of male and female is 15.47 and 13.53 and t value is 2.7 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Histrionic personality disorder of male and female is 16.19 and 13.76 and t value is 3.5 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Schizoid personality disorder of male and female is 16.60 and 15.56 and t value is 1.5 which shows there is no statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Paranoid personality disorder of male and female is 15.93 and 14.48 and t value is 2.2 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample. The mean value of Borderline personality disorder of male and female is 15.43 and 13.58 and t value is 2.6 which shows there is statistically significant difference among male and female sample.

5. Discussion

The research involved a sample of young adults and aimed at examining the difference among male and female of personality disorder. The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference among male and female in avoidant personality disorder, passive aggressive personality disorder and schizoid personality disorder. There may be more reasons for not having differences among male and female in personality disorder. Firstly, it may be due to number of participants in research be insufficient to detect small differences between male and female. Secondly, it may be due to societal and cultural expectations, norms and roles may influence the presentation and reporting of symptoms, it leads to variations in diagnosis rated between genders. Thirdly, gender difference may also be obscured by comorbidities with other mental health condition. And also

the result shows that there is statistically significant difference among male and female in dependent personality disorder, obsessive compulsive personality disorder, anti - social personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, paranoid personality disorder and borderline personality disorder. Personality disorder have been subjected to numerous research and suggested personality disorder such as borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder statistically significant differences among male and female. Personality disorders are complex and be influenced by various factors including genetic, environmental and cultural elements.

6. Conclusion

Gender differences in personality disorders have been a subject of interest in the field of psychology and psychiatry. While the research in this area is complex and evolving, some general patterns have been observed. It's important to note that individual differences exist, and not everyone conforms to these patterns.

7. Limitations

- Interventions for all variables were not administered.
- Not all demographic variable is included.
- Limited to specific population.
- Severity of population disorder.

8. Implications

- Tailoring therapeutic approaches to address gender - specific needs and challenges can be beneficial.
- Identifying potential gender - related risk factors and early signs of personality disorders can facilitate early intervention and prevention efforts.

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