

NEUROTICISM AND SELF CONCEPT AMONG ADULTS

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Abstract

The present study aimed to find out if there is a significant relationship between self concept and neuroticism. The population selected for the study ranged from 18 to 60. Neuroticism and Self concept are both commonly used personality constructs and determining if there is an association in them will be beneficial for any further research on both the topics. Correlational research design was used to study this association. Neuroticism sub-scale of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire- Revised was used to test Neuroticism and Robson Self concept questionnaire was used to test self concept in the subjects. The type of data received was quantitative. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to calculate correlation between the two variables. It was found that neuroticism and self concept are negatively correlated to each other. The correlation coefficient obtained for $n=80$, was $-.594$ ($p<0.01$) which denotes negative moderate correlation.

Keywords: Neuroticism, Self-concept, correlational study, personality.

Introduction

Personality is an important aspect of a person's life. It determines how a person feels, behaves and interprets his surroundings. While there is no generally agreed upon definition of personality, most theories focus on motivation and psychological interactions with the environment one is surrounded by. (Sadock, Benjamin; Sadock, Virginia; Ruiz, Pedro, 2017) One of the most known and discussed trait personality is neuroticism. According to McCrae and Costa, Neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotions such as sadness or anxiety, as well as mood swings. The term neuroticism was first introduced by Hans Eysenck in the 1950s and is one of the personality trait in the Big Five Personality model by Sigmund Freud. People high in neuroticism are very emotionally reactive and more likely to experience negative emotions.

While Neuroticism is a personality trait and is fairly intrinsic, self-concept is something that develops over the years. Self-concept is an overarching idea we have about who we are—physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and in terms of any other aspects that make up who we are (Neill, 2005). It is multidimensional, and can be broken down into these individual aspects. Self-concept usually answer the question “Who am I?” and can be said to be the idea that we have about ourselves. Self-concept can either be positive or negative. Positive self-concept is a growing belief about yourself that helps you to cope successfully with the events in your life, and then to make a positive impact on the lives of others (Bergman, 1990). A negative self – concept represents weak self-approval. Self-concept influences the way one copes with situations.

Even though neuroticism is a trait factor and self-concept a result of external influence on personality, both neuroticism and self-concept affect the way one tackles their problems in life and personalities. This study enabled us to test and hypothesize any possible connection between these two variables and to learn effects they have on each other. This study answers the question ‘are neuroticism and self-concept related to one another?’ and further increases the scope of discussion and research on the topic.

Statement of problem:

To find the relationship between neuroticism and self-concept.

Significance and Rationale of the study:

The primary basis of this study was to explore the relationship between neuroticism and self-concept. This study will help us understand both the variables more efficiently and gives a base for further researches and interventions for neuroticism and self-concept.

Literature Review:

People engage in social-undermining behaviour when they behave in ways that are intended to hinder a targeted person's ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, achieve work-related success, and maintain a favourable reputation, according to a paper by Michelle K. Duffy, Jason D. Shaw, and Kristin L. Scott, University of Kentucky (2006). The first stream of research has found that aggressive work groups, such as social undermining, shape individual members' undermining conduct, and that individual differences may attenuate this link. The second line of research has begun to look into the relationship between personality traits like SE and neuroticism and antisocial conduct. The first hypothesis for the study was that there would be a positive correlation between the amount of undermining and the amount of individual undermining behavior at the time later. The role of self-esteem and its relationship to esteem-threatening situations were also investigated. Hypothesis 2 was that group undermining and SE would interact to predict individual undermining behaviour in the future, with a higher positive link between group and individual undermining among high-SE individuals. Hypothesis 3 was that there would be a significant Group Undermining SE Neuroticism interaction in predicting individual undermining behaviour in the future, with the positive relationship between group undermining and individual undermining being strongest among individuals with high SE and neuroticism. SE was measured using Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item scale (.81), neuroticism was tested using Goldberg's (1992) 12-item measure (.83), and group social undermining was quantified using a seven-item measure adapted from Duffy's (2002) social-undermining measure. Only persons with high SE and neuroticism demonstrated a strong positive association between group undermining and individual undermining, according to the study's findings. Duffy, Shaw, and Scott made observations. The interplay between group undermining and SE is significant, and a plot of the significant relationship shows a substantial positive association between group undermining and individual undermining among high-SE people, but a flat, non-significant slope among low-SE people. They discovered that three components interact to establish the conditions in which people engage in undermining behaviours: social information processing, esteem-threatening social cues, and sensitivity to punishment signals in the environment.

The purpose of the study by H.M. Nithya and Sheela Julius (2007) was to find out whether usage of the Internet in India was influenced by personality dimension of an individual, extroversion, neuroticism and self-concept, in particular. Researcher pointed out that gender and personality also plays a crucial role in the use of internet. Reference to a study by Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) where they found that scores on extroversion were positively correlated with use of leisure services for men, and negatively correlated with the use of social services for women. Scores on the neuroticism scale were positively correlated with use of social services for women, and negatively correlated with the use of information services for men to an another study by Swickert, Hittner, Harris, and Herring (2002) where weak correlation was found between neuroticism and the internet. In the research Nithya and Julius used Eysenck Personality inventory for the scales of neuroticism and extroversion and Mohsin self-concept inventory for the scale of self concept. The researchers found a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and self-concept scores among heavy Internet users. However, among heavy Internet users, there was no significant link between extroversion versus neuroticism and self-concept values. There is a substantial positive correlation among extroversion and self-concept scores in the category of light Internet users. However, the study identified a connection between neuroticism and self-concept ratings in both light and heavy Internet users, though at different levels. This could indicate that neuroticism or self-concept are both affecting one another, allowing for more discussion.

Zhixin Yao (2020), University of California, studied the correlation between neuroticism and self-esteem. Low self-esteem and high neuroticism have been linked in some research to the same outcome (violence), whereas others have shown the opposite. As a result, more research is needed to uncover the link between neuroticism and self-esteem. The study's hypothesis was that those with high self-esteem have reduced neuroticism levels. This study used a survey consisted of questions from the RSES, and EPQ-R, for neuroticism, in order to find the negative correlation between these two variables. A Pearson correlation coefficient found a strong negative correlation between neuroticism and self-esteem using the Pearson analysis. With $R^2 = 0.32$, the regression graph similarly shows a negative association between the two variables. As a result, all of the evidence supports the hypothesis. People with high neuroticism, or high anxiety, insecurity, emotional instability, and worry, have low self-esteem, which relates to low self-value, low emotions of self-worth, and low social acceptance, according to Yao's research.

The aim of the report by Norbert Schmitz, Joachim Kugler, and Jens Rollnik (2003) was to analyze the relationship between neuroticism, self-esteem, and depressive disorders in representative community sample. (1) Is there a distinctive affiliation between neuroticism and depression in the representative national sample

than there is between self-esteem and depression? (2) Is there an interaction between neuroticism, self-esteem, and socio-demographic parameters such that subjects with distinct patterns of risk factors have a greater association with depression? and (3) Can neuroticism, self-esteem, and sociodemographic variables be used to predict depression? Rosenberg self-esteem scale for self-esteem and Transparent Bipolar Inventory for Neuroticism were the tests employed by Schmitz, Kulger, and Rollnik. To begin, logistic regression models were employed to investigate the relationships between depression, neuroticism, self-esteem, and sociodemographic factors. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression models were used to evaluate the data. Second, the researchers employed the classification and regression tree (CART) technique to discover factors that distinguish subgroups of subjects based on diverse patterns of independent (predictor) variables. Neuroticism, self-esteem, and comorbid depression were found to have a stronger link than personality characteristics and pure depression. Those with medium to high Neuroticism and extremely low Self-Esteem scores had a depression prevalence of 71.7 percent in the CART model. The cross-validation findings were quite consistent, showing that the tree's independent prediction accuracy could be estimated with confidence. In this research, The relationship of neuroticism and self-esteem, as well as pure and comorbid sadness, received special attention. According to the study, depression was linked to not only low self-esteem and high neuroticism, but also a medium level of neuroticism and poor self-esteem.

Objective:

- a. To study the correlation between neuroticism and self-concept in adulthood.
- b. Determine the influence of neuroticism and self-concept on each other.

Operational definition:

Neuroticism: Neuroticism is operationally defined by items referring to irritability, anger, sadness, anxiety, worry, hostility, self-consciousness, and vulnerability that have been found to be substantially correlated with one another in factor analyses (Costa & McCrae, 1992a; Goldberg, 1993).

Self-concept: The organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself is called self-concept (Carl Rogers, 1959). Carl Rogers believed that your self-concept was made up of three different parts:

Ideal self: The person you want to be

Self-image: How you see yourself, including attributes like your physical characteristics, personality traits, and social roles

Self-esteem: How much you like, accept, or value yourself, which can be impacted by a number of factors including how others see you, how you think you compare to others, and your role in society (Argyle M., 2008).

Hypothesis:

There will be a negative correlation between neuroticism and self-concept in the adulthood.

Variables under study:

As the presented study was a correlational study, therefore there is no independent variable or dependent variable as the causal relationship does not exist in between the variables.

The first variable under consideration was Neuroticism and the second variable under consideration was Self-concept. The objective for this study was to determine and analyze the correlation between neuroticism and self-concept.

Research design:

As previously mentioned, correlational research design was used for this research. Correlational research refers to a non-experimental research method which studies the relationship between two variables with the help of statistical analysis. A correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative.

Tools:**For Neuroticism:**

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire- revised (EPQ-R) short version.

EPQ-R is a self-report questionnaire. EPQ-R short version contains 48 items from the full EPQ-R. Results are presented in four scales: Psychoticism (P), Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), and Lie (L).

For the following research, the scale in use would be EPQ-R N (short version) i.e. the the neuroticism sub-scale from the EPQ-RS scale containing 12 questions. The questions are to be answered 'yes' or 'no'. The highest score is 12 and the lowest score is 0. Higher the scores, greater the level of neuroticism.

Reliability:

Reliability indices for neuroticism calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, was 0.87

Validity:

EPQ-R: confirmed factor validity, correlations with other personality measures (MMPI-2, ACL, STAI) and Rokeach Value Survey.

For Self concept:

Robson Self-concept Questionnaire:

The Robson Self Concept Questionnaire (Robson, 1989) is a self-report questionnaire. The answering methods employ Likert’s scale. Scoring for the test is taken straight off the scale as printed for some questions and reversed for others. The total of all 30 questions is the score. Higher scores on this scale indicate a positive self-concept.

Reliability:

The Cronbach α of the Robson Self-concept questionnaire is given was 0.89 which signifies high reliability. The “normal” value of the self concept score is given to be 140 with standard deviation of 20.

Validity:

Validity of the SCQ is given to be of good validity i.e. clinical validity of .70

Sample:

The sample considered was between the age group 18-60 for generalized results. Samples were selected through Simple Random Sampling to avoid any biases. The sample size was n=80. The consisted of 24 males and 55 females as shown in the pie chart below;

Procedure:

Both the tests Eysenck Personality Questionnaire -Revised and Robson’s Self concept Questionnaire along with the consent form were conducted online through google form. Participants were made aware of the purpose and nature of the study and that their participation is voluntary. The participants took approximately 10 minutes to fill the questionnaire.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis was performed using the statistical package SPSS version 21 for Windows, where a descriptive analysis was run for each of the dimensions featured in the questionnaire and for those items that yielded the most significant results. The data was examined for normality and any outliers. No outliers were found in the data. Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated and represented via the help of histograms. In addition, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to analyze the degree of correlation between neuroticism and self-concept. Pearson’s correlation coefficient was also used to prove the hypothesis that the variables are negatively correlated to each other. Microsoft Excel was used for arrangement and organization of data.

Result:

Descriptive statistics:

Statistics

		NEUROTICISM SCORE	SC TOTAL
N	Valid	80	80
	Missing	0	0
Mean		4.65	138.95
Median		4.00	138.50
Mode		1 ^a	132 ^a
Std. Deviation		3.226	22.559

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table(a)

Table(a) represents mean, median, mode, standard deviation,, skewness and kurtosis of given data. The mean for the neuroticism variable was 4.65. According to the EPQ-R scale, 4.65 denotes below average or low neuroticism and the mean for self-concept variable was 138.95. Referring to Robson’s self-concept questionnaire, the “normal” is taken to be 140 with the standard deviation of 20.

As shown in the table(b) the Pearson’s correlation coefficient r is $-.594$ and is significant at $p < 0.01$ when the experiment is two-tailed. $r = -.594$ denotes a negative moderate correlation between the variables at the significance level of $p < 0.01$, which signifies that probability of observing such a value by chance is less than 0.01 i.e. the value is highly significant in the population (99% by confidence and 1% by chance).

Correlations

Table B

		NEUROTIC ISM SCORE	SC TOTAL
NEUROTICIS M SCORE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	80	80
SC TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	-.594**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	80	80

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

Discussion:

Neuroticism is said to have a lot of negative connotations when it comes to experiencing emotions. Predisposition of neuroticism aggravate and enhance the effect of mental illness to a considerable extent. Neuroticism is correlated with many Axis I and II mental disorders from childhood through adulthood. A positive self-concept is a strong predictor of long-term mental health and overall wellbeing.

The analysis of the data showed a negative moderate correlation ($r = -.594$) between the variables neuroticism and self-concept for sample size ($n=80$) and ($p < 0.01$). Thus the hypothesis considered in this study; There exists a negative correlation between neuroticism and self-concept, was proven to be valid. It was observed that average sample considered was low on neuroticism (mean=4.65). Additionally, it was observed that the neuroticism level in the sample decreased with the age, i.e. young adults seemed to have higher neuroticism as compared to middle adults. Similarly, average sample considered was had average self-concept (mean =138.95) showing a very little amount of growth with age.

Conclusion:

The study presented revealed that people high in neuroticism, in other words, high anxiety, insecurity, emotional instability, and worry (Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K, 1991) tend to have negative self-concept where a negative self – concept represents weak self-approval and people with low neuroticism i.e individuals who tend to be more emotionally stable and less reactive to stress (Passer, Michael W.; Smith, Ronald E. ,2009) tend to have positive self-concept which means perceiving oneself positively. This researcher has abundant applications in interventions and can be used to nurture development of self-concept. It was also help us understand behaviors more efficiently. Nevertheless the study on this topic is limited and there is a lot of scope for further research on this topic.

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