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# Effect of Personality Traits and Wisdom on Perceived Stress among Research Scholars

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**Abstract:** The study was conducted to determine the effects of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars. The current research also investigated gender differences. The present study used the perceived stress scale, Goldberg's Big Five inventory, and wisdom three-dimensional scales for data collection—a sample of the present study comprised of students, (n=200). For data analysis, Pearson correlation and independent sample t-test were used. The result revealed that males score high on wisdom as compared to females. There is a negative correlation between wisdom and perceived stress. The findings have theoretical applied significance in the role of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars.

**Keywords**: Perceived Stress, Wisdom, Personality Traits

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## INTRODUCTION

Wisdom is having good insight and knowledge of experiences in daily life (Rutherford, 2017). Erikson (1959) argued that wisdom involves collective optimal development, not the ego. Group wisdom is a cognitive skill that can be studied and tested, also wisdom is a special form of applied intelligence (Glück & Weststrate, 2022).

People with wisdom seem to have a great and insightful understanding of what they are and what they do, they are aware of their flaws and strengths, they are aware of what they know and what they need to know, and which things are important to be known of and which are not so important (Zhang et al,.2022). Sternberg's quest for an obscure theory of intelligence and its connection to creativity and intelligence explains that the dimension of information intelligence is related to an individual's ability to understand life. (Sternberg, 1986). It encompasses an individual's ability to understand events and the nature of life, to be well-informed, active, wise, pragmatic, experienced, and observant. (Ardelt, 2000). The measurement of intelligence is related to metacognition, including self-reflective and instinctive qualities. These qualities assess to which degree subjectivity and projection are processed by determining phenomena from different perspectives (Klussman et al., 2022).

Variations in affect related to stressors across individuals may be partially explained by personality variables. For instance, on days when stressors occur, those with greater degrees of neuroticism—a personality trait linked to anxiety and depression symptoms—report feeling more negatively affected (Mroczek & Almeida, 2004).

The dimensions of emotional intelligence refer to the presence of positive emotions (empathy, compassion) and intelligent behaviors such as the quality of understanding others' emotions, kindness, peace, and sensitivity (Ardelt, 2003). The emotional intelligence dimension refers to positive emotions (empathy and compassion) and intelligent behaviors such as understanding others, kindness, peace, and sensitivity. (Ardelt, 2003). Analytical qualities (Rahimi, 2007) and personality are among the unique components of an individual. Goldberg (1993) introduced five domains of personality traits through empirical research that constituted a psychological descriptive model. The Big Five remained almost unchanged over time (Alegre et al., 2019).

Personality expert Engle also believes that personality is a distinctive feature of an individual and cannot be compared with others (Engle, 2003). These differences are due to genetic and environmental factors (Engler, 2003).

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Personality can be determined from personal traits such as cognition, perception, emotional interaction, response, and behavior. It can also be recognized through variations that folks can identify (Rahimi, 2007).

Personality comes from the Latin phrase persona, which means mask. The Greek actor carried out on stage sporting a mask. A man or woman possesses a dynamic and prepared set of traits that uniquely affect cognition, behavior, and motivation in every scenario (Ryckman, 2004). Personality is the premise of behaviorism (Malone, 2014). According to research, individuals with high levels of neuroticism have a "hyper-reactivity" to stressors, meaning that repeatedly triggering negative emotion increases susceptibility to stressors—a phenomenon known as "kindling effects. (Gilbert, 1994)

Stress is an unavoidable section of everyday existence however some humans experience stress at a greater level. Stress has distinct means for exceptional individuals. Stress was once first coined by way of Dr. Hans Selye in the 1930s. Stress is the standard response of the physique to any exchange when required (Tan,2018). Aristotle, Hippocrates, and different Ancients have information of burdened its untoward effects. Stress emanates when a man or woman realizes that they can't correctly cope with wants being made on them or with the ultimatum to their well-being (Lazarus, 1966).

Stress can be invoked in a range of exceptional ways. One kind of stress is situational stress which is a response to a particular match or stressor. Situational stress is the consequence of a transaction between the conceivable stressor and a person (Crum et al.,2020). By this definition, stress happens when a character sees an event or circumstance is threatening or past his potential to cope with it. When a man or woman discovers an event as worrying he or she may also seek coping techniques to reduce stress (Ramanathan & Desrouleaux, 2022). To explain emotional strain as a more advanced process, Richard Lazarus developed the trading idea of stress and coping strategies (TTSC), (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to explain stress as a result of dealing between the character and his surroundings. Stress as a transaction had the greatest impact when Dr. Susan Kobasa first used the term resilience (Kobasa, 1979).

**Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to find out the effect of personality traits and wisdom on the level of perceived stress among graduate students of masters, MPhil, and Ph.D. Personality traits are widely studied in many different professions e.g., in mental health, banking, the teaching profession, etc. but in this study main focus was to find out the effects of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among higher-level education institutes and their students. The perceived stress was measured among higher-level students. The nature of humans is to copy different behaviors. This imitation may lead to different personality deficits and causes stress and many other disorders (i.e.) antisocial personality disorders, borderline personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, and paranoid personality disorder. But if a person has enough ability to handle situations and focuses on his personality traits then there is a low probability of getting involved in stress. This ability is generally known as Wisdom. Wisdom helps people to work on their problems and utilize their capabilities to overcome stress.

**Objectives**

- To investigate how the personality traits of students were affected by perceived stress according to personality domains.
- To examine perceived stress among higher-level students.
- To investigate the relation between wisdom and personality traits.
- To find out the relation between wisdom and perceived stress in students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted by Rezaei et al., (2020) results showed a significant correlation between emotion regulation, intelligence, social awareness, social skills (a subscale of social intelligence), perceptual control over internal situations, perceived stress, and life satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis shows that perceived stress, intelligence, and social skills are the strongest predictors of college students' life satisfaction.

A study by Pasupathi, Staudinger, and Baltes (2001) indicated that adolescents show potentially better growth in the field of intelligence, and as they grow older, they become smarter like adults. The age between 23 and 26 demonstrates significantly positive age contributions to performance related to intelligence. According to Pasupathi

et al., (2001), Adolescence indicates that the level of knowledge and judgment about intelligence is lower than that of grown-ups. This suggests that at a young age, the learning and judgment associated with wisdom develop at the adult level. Their findings suggest that knowledge associated with wisdom and judgment age develops after early adulthood. This does not mean that traits, experiences, and backgrounds related to intelligence can only be acquired in adulthood.

According to Lim (2020) recent studies on personality traits, students who study at higher-level colleges score high on conscientiousness, a trait that predicts better grades and achievement. (Myers, 2011) and students with low discontent are deprived of crime (John & Srivastava, 1999). According to another study conducted by Rezaei & Mousanezhad (2020) and findings of their study results showed a significant correlation between wisdom and perceived stress among among college students. Some researchers investigate the biological reasons behind perceived stress and personality traits and the results indicated genetic influences cause more than 70 percent of the association between Big Five personality traits and perceived stress. Genetic influence also causes the persistence of perceived pressure while changes in perceived pressure are basically because of the whole impact of the environment. The persistence of the relationship between the five personality traits and perceived stress is mostly explained by genetically inherited factors; unshared environmental factors contribute more to the changes in the relationship between personality traits and perceived stress (Luo et al., 2017).

Researchers have been studying the causes of stress and stress in students over the years. Older students perceive significantly higher stress than younger students. This stress starts with the workload. (Altaf & Kausar, 2013). College students' acquisition of wisdom is inversely correlated with stress. Over time, though, wisdom may act as a stress reliever. Therefore, cultivating knowledge may improve composure and mental wellness, especially under difficult situations (Ardelt, & Bruya, 2021).

A research was conducted by Qu, Sun, and Zang., (2017) in which researchers examined the combined effects of perceived stress and the Big Five personality traits on pedestrians and investigated the remarkable results. Altruism, neuroticism, and openness significantly influenced different dimensions of pedestrian behavior, while perceived stress in general was also considered a very important and positive indicator of positive behavior. In addition, the effect of neuroticism on positive behavior is completely driven by stress.

### Research Hypotheses

$\mathbf{H}_1$ = Males score higher on wisdom as compared to females
$\mathbf{H}_2$ = There is a negative relation between perceived stress and wisdom.
$\mathbf{H}_3$ = Personality traits are positively associated with perceived stress.

## METHOD

### Participants

The sample of the present study consists of 200 research scholars from the universities (male=100 & female=100). A purposive sampling technique was used to select samples. The age of participants was 24 to 45 years old.

### Instruments

For measuring the personality of students the personality scale of the Big Five Inventory Goldberg (1990) consisting of 44 items and having an alpha reliability of .89 has been used For measuring perceived stress among students of higher education levels, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used. PSS was developed by Sheldon Cohen (1983). The scale was developed to measure the perception of stress. PSS consists of 10 items. The Cronbach reliability of PSS is 84 to 86. It is very difficult to measure wisdom but Ardelt, M after conducting interviews with 180 older adults developed a three-dimensional wisdom scale (3D-WS). The final version of this scale consists of 39 items, 14 items for cognitive, 12 for reflective, and 13 for the affective components of Wisdom. The reliability of the scale was 0.86.

## RESULTS

This research was conducted to identify the effect of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars. The sample size is 200.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of demographic variables

| Demographic Variables | F | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | 50 |
| 1. Male | 100 | |
| 2. Female | 100 | 50 |
| Marital Status | | 31.5 |
| 1. Married | 63 | |
| 2. Unmarried | 134 | 67 |
| 3. Divorced | 3 | 1.5 |
| Research Scholars | | |
| 1.MS | 75 | 37.5 |
| 2.M.Phil. | 61 | 30.5 |
| 3.PhD | 64 | 32 |
| | | |
| Studying with job | | 60.5 |
| 1. Yes | 121 | |
| 2.No | 79 | 39.5 |
| Stage or level of study | | 5 6.5 |
| 1. course work | 113 | |
| 2. Research work 87 43.5 | | |

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage. Both male and female participants are equal in number (n=50, 50.0%). In the sample, married participants are greater (n=165, 55.0%) as compared to unmarried participants (n=135, 45.0%). In sample participants studying with the job are greater (n=121, 60.5%) as compared to studying without a job (n=79, 39.5%). Coursework participants are greater (n=113, 56.5%) as compared to research work (n=87, 43.5%).

Table 2: Alpha Reliability Coefficient of perceived stress scale (PSS), Goldberg Big Five Inventory (GBFPI) and three-dimensional wisdom scale (3D-WS)

| Variables | M | SD | Range | $\alpha$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSS | 26.8 | 6.1 | 13-40 | 0.73 |
| GBFPI | 147.4 | 19.19 | 94-189 | 0.849 |
| 3D-WS | 129.2 | 17.11 | 77-181 | 0.867 |

Note. PSS- Perceived Stress, GBFPI = Goldberg Big Five Personality Inventory, M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; $\alpha$= Reliability Coefficient

The results in Table 2 exhibit that the calculated reliability coefficient of PSS, GBFPI, and 3D-ws are .73, .84, .84, and .86 respectively. These results show that all Scales have above-average levels of internal consistency.

Table 3: Pearson correlation among PSS, GBFPI, AND WD-WS. (N=200)

| Scale | I | II | III |
|---|---|---|---|
| PSS | - | .352** | -.340** |
| GBFPI | - | - | 0.494 |
| 3D-WS | - | - | - |

Note. PSS=Perceived Stress, GBFPI=Goldberg Big Five Personality Inventory

Results of Table 3 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived stress and big five personality traits and the 3Dimensional wisdom scale. Wisdom has a positive relationship with personality traits and a negative with perceived stress.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-values of Gender on PSS, GBFPI, AND 3D-WS. (N = 300)

| | female (n =100) | | Male (n =100) | | | | 95%CL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variables | M | SD | M | SD | *t*(200) | *p* | LL | UL | Cohen's d |
| PSS | 25.87 | 5.2 | 27.9 | 6.75 | 1.41 | 0.15 | -1.4 | 2.54 | 0.23 |
| GBFPI | 145.6 | 16.77 | 149.3 | 17.32 | 1.58 | 0.12 | -1.07 | 0.824 | 0.04 |
| 3D-WS | 127.3 | 18.73 | 131.1 | 19.54 | 2.93 | 0.01 | 0.35 | 4.33 | 0.23 |

Table 4 shows that Goldberg's Big Five Personality Inventory Scale and Wisdom scale has differences concerning gender, results indicate that males have higher scores on perceived stress (27.9) as compared to females (25.87). Male participants scored higher on the Big Five personality inventory (149.3) as compared to females (145.6). There are also differences in wisdom as males scored high on the 3-dimensional Scale (131.1) as compared to females (127.3).

## DISCUSSION

The major objective of the present study was to investigate the effects of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars. The study also finds the gender difference between males and females. Most of the hypotheses were supported in the research. In the first step reliability of the scales was ensured. The reliability confirmed that all the scales used in the study have satisfactory internal consistency.

The first hypothesis" male researchers score high on wisdom as compared to female researchers" was supported in the present study. Ardelt (1997) stated that "wisdom for men is more strongly characterized by cognition and less influenced by women," but the small sample size makes this conclusion worthless. Another study also found that male participants were more likely to give examples of intellectual ability and have a better reputation than women. (Sowarka, 1989).

The second hypothesis "there is a negative relationship between wisdom and perceived stress was also supported in this study. Ardelt & Bruya (2018) found that perceived stress negatively affected 3D intelligence scores, so they estimated that increased stress due to increased workload at the end of the period would reduce intelligence scores.

The third hypothesis"personality traits are positively associated with perceived stress was also supported in this study". Ashraf and Rohafza (2011) found that personality traits are a risk factor for strangely proportional levels of stress. Some personality characteristics are correlated with stress.

## CONCLUSION

The major objective of the present research was to investigate the effect of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars. The study also investigates gender differences in wisdom perceived stress and personality traits. The major finding of this study is wisdom will be higher in males as compared to females. Wisdom is negatively associated with perceived stress. The present study is pretty insightful in understanding the effect of personality traits and wisdom on perceived stress among research scholars.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present studies have many implications.

- This research provides an insightful understanding that perceived stress can hurt the wisdom of a person.
- This research will provide awareness about gender roles in wisdom. This research also indicates that males are wiser as compared to females.
- This research will contribute to the existing literature and be fruitful for future studies.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- Only scales were used to collect the data which may create single source bias. In future research data can be collected from other sources.
- We used a Cross-sectional research design that limited the generalizability of the results. Social and personal preferences can also be a limitation, as a self-reported assessment was used in this study.

- The size of the sample should be increased and it can bring change in the results of research on the variable being studied.
- The analysis of the subscale should be carried out in the future as well as other cities should be considered in future studies.
- Scholars might have manipulated their true responses so it can be overcome by using a counter.

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