

Role of Personality Traits in Career Maturity Attitude among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study aims to determine the predictive strength of personality traits based on the five-factor theory on the career maturity's attitudinal dimension among adolescents of Jammu city. **Method:** The Sample consisted of 220 adolescents ranging in age from 16-20 years. Career maturity Inventory's (Gupta, 1989) attitude scale and Big Five Inventory (BFI) (by John & Srivastava, 1999) were administered. Data were analyzed by using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. **Results:** The personality trait variables jointly significantly predicted career maturity. In the given model, independent variables explained 12% variance in the dependent variable. Conscientiousness and openness to experience positively and significantly predicted career maturity's attitude dimension in adolescents. However, neuroticism personality trait had a negatively significant predictive capacity. Analysis of each independent variable's contribution to the model was done, and it was found that the highest contribution came from conscientiousness ($\beta=.20$), followed by openness ($\beta=.19$), neuroticism ($\beta=-.19$), agreeableness ($\beta=.11$) and extraversion ($\beta=.05$). **Conclusions:** Personality traits are significant factors influencing career maturity. It is recommended that parents, teachers and school administrators provide a healthy and congenial environment that would help students develop certain personality traits that would enhance their career maturity.

Keywords: career maturity, career maturity attitude, personality traits, adolescents.

With the emergence of new careers and occupations, choosing a career has become challenging (Gottfredson, 2005). Career maturity as a construct can help individuals adjust and adapt to the new world of work and make appropriate career choices. It is an individual's ability to make career-related choices efficiently and independently, appropriate to his/her life stage. Donald Super first introduced the concept of vocational/career maturity in the 1950s. He defined it as "the degree to which an individual exhibits career behaviours and choices that are appropriate for his or her age" (Super, 1957 as cited in Wu, 2009). This entails that the individual must have appropriate cognitive abilities to deal effectively with the various career challenges of the specific developmental stage. Career maturity generally refers to the "readiness of an individual to make informed, age-appropriate career decisions and the ability to deal with career development tasks" (Savickas, 1984, p.2). An individual must reach a certain level of career maturity to make wise and realistic occupational choices (Busacca & Taber, 2002). Its importance in career development research is highlighted by several relationships it shows with various constructs associated with effective career development and career-related domains. Studies have revealed that career maturity is influenced by various factors, including educational level, gender, culture (Repetto, 2001), economic status (Patton & Creed, 2002), intelligence and others.

Another critical factor to take into consideration during career choice is personality traits. *Personality* refers to the intellectual, affective and behavioural differences that distinguish one individual from others (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2010). Studies demonstrate that personality affects an individual's career maturity (Liu, Peng, Mao, & Wong, 2016), career decidedness (Lounsbury, Hutchens, & Loveland, 2005), career performance (Yelboga, 2006), career explorations (Nauta, 2007) and career satisfaction (Crant, 2006). Several approaches elaborate and define personality. One of these approaches is the trait approach to personality. In this study, the five-factor personality traits are preferred to measure personality traits due to their constancy in defining personality (Bacanli, Ilhan, & Aslan, 2009). Personality traits constitute extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience dimensions.

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Extraversion refers to the social adaptability of a person (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extroverted personality traits such as sociability, assertiveness, activity etc., show positive relation with career maturity (Atli, 2017; Kolawole, 2017). The agreeableness trait refers to the attributes of being kind, trusting, considerate and cooperative (McCrae, 1994). Individuals high on agreeableness are more prone to trusting information about career choices and listening to the advice of others (Lounsbury, Hutchens & Loveland, 2005; Akomolafe & Akinduyo, 2019). Agreeableness also shows a significant positive relationship with career maturity (Atli, 2017). Conscientiousness is the desire to do a task well and to take obligations to others seriously (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2006). It shows a significant positive relationship with career maturity (Ottu & Idowu, 2014). Openness to experience can be defined as an individual's willingness to adjust to new ideas or situations. It comprises personality traits like curiosity, versatility in thought, creativity and sensitivity. Studies have shown that openness to experience personality traits positively predicted career maturity (Ottu & Idowu, 2014; Atli, 2017; Akomolafe & Akinduyo, 2019). Neuroticism refers to the tendency of an individual to experience negative affect such as fear, sadness, anger, guilt etc (Lucas & Donnellan, 2011). It negatively affects career maturity (Atli, 2017; Akomolafe & Akinduyo, 2019).

Very few research studies have been reported examining the relationship between the two variables, especially under the scenario when there is a paradigm shift in the concept of careers from traditional to boundary-less (McCrae & Costa, 2006; Arora & Rangnekar, 2016). Thus, the present study seeks to contribute to the literature on the determination of career maturity by different personality traits in adolescents. The results obtained would help the counsellors and career professionals to determine the levels of career counselling the adolescents with different personality traits need to make efficient career choices. Hence, the objective of this study was to assess the influence of the big five personality traits on the career maturity attitude of adolescents. The hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

H1 Personality traits will have significant relationship with career maturity attitude among adolescents

H2 Personality traits will significantly predict career maturity attitude among adolescents.

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METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study employed a cross-sectional design, using purposive sampling. This study was conducted on a sample of 220 adolescents falling in 16-20 years of age in Jammu city, J&K. The average age of the sample is 18.16.

Procedure:

The data was collected using Google forms from Feb 3, 2021, to July 24, 2021. Link to the google form was posted on various social media platforms and circulated through emails. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Informed consent was obtained before the start of the survey. All the ethical procedures were adhered to during this study.

Instrument used:

- ***Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), by Gupta (1989):*** It is an Indian adaptation of the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) by Gupta (1989). The inventory was originally constructed and standardized by Crites (1973-1978). It measures the maturity of attitudes and competencies that are critical in realistic career decision-making. In this study, only the career maturity attitude (CMA) scale is employed. The attitudinal variables assessed by attitude scale are (i) decisiveness, (ii) involvement, (iii) independence, (iv) orientation, and (v) compromise in career decision-making. The test-retest reliability of the CMI attitude scale is ranging between 0.70 to 0.92. The scale has a relatively high level of content and construct validities as expressed by experts.
- ***The Big Five Inventory (BFI), by John and Srivastava (1999):*** It's a self-report measure of the Big Five personality traits, including openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. It contains 44 items or personality descriptors having the relatively accessible vocabulary to which the subject responds on the degree of agreement and disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale. Each subscale consists of 7 to 10 items each. Test-retest reliability of this scale is 0.728.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In line with the purpose of the study, correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to determine the relationship and the predictive strength of personality traits on career maturity attitude. The data set met the assumptions of the multiple regression analysis. The normality of data was examined using the Durbin Watson criteria. The correlation coefficients between the variables were below 0.70, indicating the absence of multicollinearity.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Correlations for study variables

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Career Maturity Attitude	220	28.16	5.32	-					
2.Extraversion	220	26.11	4.06	.090	-				
3. Agreeableness	220	28.40	5.89	.062	.028	-			
4.Conscientiousness	220	28.80	4.90	.156*	.044	.425**	-		
5. Neuroticism	220	23.83	4.17	-.187**	-.024	-.081	-.096	-	
6. Openness	220	31.36	5.98	.173**	.160*	.271**	.234**	-.108	-

*p<0.05. **p<0.01

Table 1 revealed that there are statistically significant positive correlations between career maturity attitude and conscientiousness ($r=.156, p<.05$) and openness ($r=.173, p<0.01$). There is a significant negative correlation between career maturity attitude and neuroticism ($r=-.187, p<0.01$). Agreeableness and extraversion did not show a significant correlation with career maturity attitude. Therefore H1 is partially accepted.

Table 2

Regression coefficients of personality traits on career maturity attitude

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95%CI
Constant	18.22	3.5	5.22	.000	[11.30, 25.10]
Extraversion	.07	.09	.79	.429	[-.103, .242]
Agreeableness	.10	.07	1.26	.052	[019, .272]
Conscientiousness	.21	.08	2.78	.006	[.061,.357]
Neuroticism	-.23	.08	-2.97	.003	[-.375, -.076]
Openness	.20	.07	2.72	.007	[.054, .337]

Note. CI= Confidence interval

Table 2 shows the impact of each personality traits on career maturity attitude individually. The R^2 value of .12 revealed that the predictors explained 12% of the variance in the outcome variable with $F(5, 214) = 5.549, p<0.01$. Hence the H2 is accepted. The findings revealed that conscientiousness ($\beta =.20, p<0.01$) and openness ($\beta =.19, p>0.01$) positively predicted the career maturity attitude. The neuroticism negatively predicted the career maturity attitude ($\beta =-.19, p<0.01$), while extraversion ($\beta =.05, p>0.05$) and agreeableness ($\beta =.11, p>0.05$) have a non-significant effect on career maturity attitude.

Each personality trait's contribution was analyzed; conscientiousness contributed highest, followed by openness, neuroticism, agreeableness and extraversion. However, the contribution of extraversion and agreeableness to the model was found insignificant. Findings of this study demonstrated that conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism, among five-factor personality traits, significantly predict career maturity attitude in adolescents. Individuals showing high levels of

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conscientiousness usually demonstrate a high level of self-control and efficiency in planning, organizing and carrying our tasks (Barrick & Mount, 1991). They are sincere, logical, reliable and focused. They are more organized, disciplined and structured in choosing a career path and exploring alternative career direction than to others (Lounsbury, Hutchens & Loveland, 2005). The present study results are consistent with the outcome of the research carried out by Ottu and Idowu (2014) and Akomolafe and Akinduyo (2019).

Individuals with high openness to experience personality trait are more aware of and in need of information on career choices than others (Nauta, 2007). They are more inclined to investigate and explore careers and the business world. This assessment and relating of one's own skills to various careers increases individual's career maturity attitude levels with openness personality traits. This study agrees with the findings of Atli (2017). Neurotic personality traits involve several negative characteristics, like being introverted, insecure, and overreacting under stress. These characteristics prevent individuals high on neuroticism from acquiring information and exploring available careers. Thus negatively impacting career attitudes. The findings of the present study are alignment with studies done by Atli (2017), Kolawole (2017) and Akomolafe and Akinduyo (2019).

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the evidence regarding the influence of an individual's personality traits on his/her career maturity attitude. Conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience among five-factor personality traits significantly predicted career maturity attitude in adolescents. Conscientiousness and openness to experience positively predicted the career maturity attitude while neuroticism negatively predicted it. It has been observed that individuals with attentiveness in their behaviour, conscientiousness, high inner discipline, consistency in their behaviour have higher levels of career maturity. Likewise, having an open personality type, that is openness to personal growth and inquiring personality, has a significantly positive impact on career maturity. On the contrary, individual's high on neurotic personality trait usually lack self-esteem, are introverted, and regard change as a threat to their being, leading to a significantly negative influence on career maturity. This study demonstrates that adolescents should have discipline, consistency and reliability in their efforts to make efficient and appropriate career decisions. They should be provided with and encouraged to access resources to learn about various occupations, such as the internet, magazines, books etc. While individuals with open personalities can access information, adolescents with high levels of neuroticism should be helped in access to information regarding the process of career choice, as they do not possess the same strong characteristics. Interventions at the academic and personal level may help an individual to become more career mature. Hence, it is recommended that parents, teachers and school administrators provide a healthy and congenial environment, which would help students develop certain personality traits that would enhance their career maturity. Furthermore, suggestions for further study could be proposed on this topic, along with the limitations of the present study. Firstly, as only questionnaires were used as the main source of data collection, further detailed qualitative studies could be used to examine this relationship between variables. Secondly, it would be rewarding to check the validity of the results of this study on a large and different sample.

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