

# Influence of gender and locality on big five factors of personality and life satisfaction among elderly

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Old age is an age in which lot of changes occur with respect to physical changes, mental well-being and many more and there are so many factors naming the few like gender, locality, financial status and interpersonal relationships makes a difference in these changes. The present study was carried out to understand the differential effect of locality and gender on big five factors of personality and life satisfaction among elderly during 2016-17 in Dharwad taluk of Karnataka. The sample comprised 70 elderly; 35 elderlies from rural area and 35 elderlies from urban area (31 were male and 39 were female) in the age of 60 or above years. The background information of the elderly was collected with the help of self-structured questionnaire. Big five inventory was used to identify the big five factors of personality among elderly. Life satisfaction tool was used to measure life satisfaction among elderly. The results revealed that gender have not much impact on big five factors of personality and life satisfaction. But locality have greater impact on both the personality and life satisfaction. Elderly from rural area were distinctively better in big five factors of personality than urban area but elderly from urban area were better in life satisfaction compared to rural area.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Life satisfaction

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Personality is a dynamic and organized set of characteristics developed by an individual that uniquely influences their psychological processes and behaviour in various situations. According to social scientists, personality is the sum total of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, and values that are characteristic of an individual. No two individuals have the same personalities. Each individual has his or her own way of interacting with other people and with his or her social

environment. In earlier days' personality was believed to be the product of heredity and that the individual was a 'chip off the old block'. Today there is ample evidence that personality pattern is the product of both heredity and environment. Our personality traits determine how we adjust to our environment and how we react in specific situations. There are several factors that significantly impact personality such as age, gender, education, socio-economic status of family, quality of

interrelationships, rural and urban background. Assessment of personality is most complex and a precise assessment is essential because of its multi-factors and multidimensional nature. The big five factors of personality have predictably gained popularity in 21<sup>st</sup> century. It comprises of extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, conscientiousness and emotional stability. Studies have shown that these factors of personality significantly vary between male and female. Recent studies shown the positive trend of maturation and saturation of big five factors in their developmental process, such differences have been shown in various cross-cultural populations (Lehmann *et al.*, 2013; Costa *et al.*, 1986 and Steunenber *et al.*, 2005). Subsequently on Indian population, there are studies that have evaluated big five factors by multiple group factor analysis in evaluating the five-factor model (Lodhi *et al.*, 2002). Some studies identified the differential effect of locality on personality of adolescent (Rajkumari and Hunshal, 2015). Allik *et al.* (2004) reported that personality trait structure matures and become sufficiently differentiated around age 14-15 and grows to be practically distinguishable adult personality by age of 16. Personality of elderly becomes more saturated and differentiated completely.

Life satisfaction is the sum total of perceptions of an individual towards his various aspects of life. Life satisfaction among elderly is an important concept as it gives us an overall view of the adjustment as well as adaptive coping ability of the individual. Life satisfaction influenced by various factors like demographic factors, socio-economic status, physical status, social support. In terms of demographic factors, gender and locality have a significant effect on individual's life satisfaction. Studies have supported the effect of gender and locality on life satisfaction of elderly. Balachandran *et al.* (2007) concluded that elderly men experience less alienation in comparison to the elderly women, however, both elderly male and females do not exhibit significant differences in their life satisfaction. Women life satisfaction increases with higher number of social activities and friend circle which is not that significant predictor of life satisfaction among the males (Vera-Sanso, 2005). With regard to locality, studies has shown that the urban elderly reported better health and financial satisfaction because of good health facilities due to advanced hospitals and other urbanized sectors for re-employment and some source

of earning money but semi-urban elderly neither had proper health nor re-employment facilities were available neither the familial and social bonding of traditional times due to urbanization nor they have traditional occupation as farming and children have fled to nearby city for earning leaving them alone and isolated (Priyanka and Mishra, 2013). There are few studies on personality and life satisfaction in relation to gender and locality, hence, the present study was undertaken with the objectives to identify the role of gender and rural and urban background in the development of big five factors of personality and life satisfaction among elderly.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Dharwad taluk of Dharwad district in Karnataka during the year 2016-17. The sample comprised of 70 elderly aged of 60 or above, among which 35 elderly selected from rural and 35 elderly selected from urban areas of Dharwad randomly. The schedule consisted of back ground information, Big five factors personality inventory (John *et al.*, 1991) and Life satisfaction tool (Murthy, 1978). The data were subjected to frequency, percentages, chi- square analysis was used to measure association between levels of five factors of personality and life satisfaction of elderly from rural and urban areas and t-test was applied to make comparison between groups.

## ■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of (Table 1) revealed that, around 52 per cent and 48 per cent of male elderly were average and high on their extraversion, respectively, but around 49 per cent and 51 per cent of the female elderly were average and high in their extraversion, respectively. The male and female elderly of Dharwad were almost similar in their extraversion.

In case of agreeableness, around 26 per cent and 74 per cent of male elderly were average and high on their agreeableness, respectively, but around 16 per cent and 84 per cent of the elderly from female of Dharwad were average and high in their agreeableness, respectively. The male and female elderly of Dharwad were almost similar in their agreeableness.

In case of openness to experience, around 58 per cent and 42 per cent of male elderly were average and high level in openness to experience, respectively, whereas 61 per cent and 38 per cent of female elderly

Table 1 : Influence of gender on big five factors of personality among elderly		n=70 (Male=31) (Female=39)			
Gender	Big five factors of personality			Mean $\pm$ SD	t-value
	Average	High			
<b>Extraversion</b>					
Male	16(51.60)	15(48.40)	0.06 <sup>NS</sup>	32.58 $\pm$ 4.62	0.24 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	19(48.70)	20(51.30)		32.33 $\pm$ 3.94	
<b>Agreeableness</b>					
Male	10(25.60)	29(74.40)	0.93 <sup>NS</sup>	36.16 $\pm$ 3.47	0.48 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	5(16.10)	26(83.90)		35.66 $\pm$ 4.85	
<b>Openness to experience</b>					
Male	18(58.10)	13(41.90)	0.08 <sup>NS</sup>	66.35 $\pm$ 6.41	0.58 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	24(61.50)	15(38.50)		65.51 $\pm$ 5.63	
<b>Conscientiousness</b>					
Male	4(12.90)	27(87.10)	1.18 <sup>NS</sup>	36.12 $\pm$ 4.18	0.79 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	9(23.10)	30(76.90)		35.35 $\pm$ 3.91	
<b>Emotional stability</b>					
Male	16(51.60)	15(48.40)	0.03 <sup>NS</sup>	32.67 $\pm$ 4.56	0.45 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	21(53.80)	18(46.20)		32.23 $\pm$ 3.72	

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages, NS= Non-significant

were average and high in openness to experience, respectively. The male and female elderly of Dharwad were almost similar in their openness to experience.

In case of conscientiousness, about 13 per cent of the male elderly were average and 87 per cent were high in conscientiousness, whereas nearly 23 per cent and 77 per cent of female elderly were average and high level in conscientiousness, respectively. The male and female elderly were almost similar in their conscientiousness.

With respect to emotional stability, around 52 per cent and 48 per cent of male elderly were in average and high in emotional stability, respectively; whereas 54 per cent and 46 per cent of female elderly were average and high in emotional stability, respectively. The male and female elderly were almost similar in their emotional stability.

This reason may be due to that male and female elderly were more or less equal in their all personality factors and there was no gender difference regarding in their personality as both male and female were getting equal exposure to society and carried same responsibility for their family life.

This result of this study is in line with Marsh *et al.* (2009), they found that men were higher than women on openness to experience but in other personality traits there was no significant difference between gender.

The results of (Table 2) revealed that; about 26 per

cent and 74 per cent of elderly were high and average in extraversion, respectively. There was a difference in elderly from rural and urban area in their extraversion. Urban elderlies were better than rural elderly in extraversion. The reason may be due to urban elderly people were more exposed to outer society than rural elderly and feel confident to deal with others.

In case of agreeableness, around 11 per cent and 89 per cent of elderly were from rural area of Dharwad were average and high on their agreeableness, respectively but around 31 per cent and 69 per cent of the elderly from urban area were average and high in their agreeableness, respectively. The elderly from rural and urban area were more or less similar in their agreeableness. This may be due to that both group elderlies were equal friendly and compassionate and cooperative with others.

In case of openness to experience, around 45 per cent and 55 per cent of rural elderly were low and average in openness to experience, respectively, whereas around 57 per cent and 43 per cent of urban elderly were low and average in openness to experience, respectively. The elderly from rural and urban area are more or less similar in their openness to experience. The reason behind this may be due to that both rural and urban elderly were curious to know new things and interested to being with people and talking with them.

In case of conscientiousness, all of the rural elderly

Locality	Big five factors of personality					t-value
	Low	Average	High	Mean±SD		
<b>Extraversion</b>						
Rural	-	9(25.70)	26(74.30)	16.51***	34.14±3.67	3.65**
Urban	-	26(74.30)	9(25.70)		30.74±4.09	
<b>Agreeableness</b>						
Rural	-	4(11.40)	31(88.60)	4.16*	36.82±3.77	1.87NS
Urban	-	11(31.40)	24(68.60)		34.94±4.58	
<b>Openness to experience</b>						
Rural	19(45.20)	23(54.80)	-	0.95NS	66.77±5.96	1.25NS
Urban	16(57.10)	12(42.90)	-		65.00±5.91	
<b>Conscientiousness</b>						
Rural	-	-	35(100.00)	15.96***	37.05±2.57	2.98**
Urban	-	13(37.10)	22(62.90)		34.34±4.73	
<b>Emotional stability</b>						
Rural	-	10(28.60)	25(71.40)	16.57***	33.74±3.75	2.82**
Urban	-	27(77.10)	8(22.90)		31.11±4.04	

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages, \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05, 0.01 and 0.10, respectively  
NS=Non-significant

were high in conscientiousness, whereas around 37 per cent and 63 per cent of urban elderly were average and high in conscientiousness, respectively. There was difference between rural and urban elderly on their conscientiousness but rural elderly were better than urban elderly. This may be due to that the rural elderly were highly organized in their work and more dutiful in their life process because of their restricted life pattern and their regularity.

In case of emotional stability, around 29 per cent and 71 per cent of rural elderly were low and average in emotional stability, respectively; whereas about 77 per cent and 23 per cent of urban elderly were average and high in emotional stability, respectively. There was difference between rural and urban elderly on their emotional stability and rural elderly were better than urban elderly. This reason may be due that the rural elderly were getting more emotional peace to being with friends and family where in urban area elderly were lonelier on personal relations between the people living around.

This result of this study is in line with Lockenhoff *et al.* (2009), he reported that there was a significant difference in big five personality traits like extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and emotional stability between rural and urban elderly.

The result (Table 3) revealed that, around 42 per cent and 58 per cent of male elderly were average and high in their life satisfaction, respectively, but around 5 per cent, 46 per cent and 49 per cent of the female elderly were low, average and high in their life satisfaction, respectively.

This result signified that male and female elderly were almost similar in their life satisfaction.

The reason may be due to that male and female elderly were more or less equal in their life and had equal expectations and feelings and same problems. So, there was not much differences in life satisfaction between them.

The result (Table 4) revealed that, around 3 per cent, 23 per cent and 74 per cent of elderly were from rural area were low, medium and high in their life

Gender	Levels of life satisfaction			Mean ±SD	t-value
	Low	Medium	High		
Male	-	13(41.90)	18(58.10)	30.19 ± 3.22	1.94 <sup>NS</sup>
Female	2(5.10)	18(46.20)	19(48.70)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages, NS=Non-significant

Table 4 : Role of locality in life satisfaction among rural and urban elderly				n=70 (Rural=35, Urban=35)	
Locality	Levels of life satisfaction			Mean $\pm$ SD	t-value
	Low	Medium	High		
Rural	1(2.85)	8(22.86)	26(74.29)	13.34**	28.14 $\pm$ 3.27
Urban	1(2.85)	23(65.71)	11(31.44)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.01 and 0.10, respectively  
NS=Non-significant

satisfaction, respectively but around 3 per cent, 66 per cent and 31 per cent of the elderly from urban area were low, medium and high in their life satisfaction, respectively. The results signified that elderly from rural and urban areas were differ in their life satisfaction and urban elderly were high in their life satisfaction than rural elderly.

The reason may be due to that the urban elderly can more avail for basic health facilities and entertainment source than rural elderly of Dharwad.

This result of this study is in line with Martin (2015) found that the elderly who were living in urban area was found higher levels of life satisfaction than rural elders because of greater access to basic social and medical service.

### Conclusion :

The present study indicated that male and female were similar in their big five factors of personality and also in their life satisfaction. Hence, gender have not much influence on both big five factors of personality and life satisfaction. Subsequently, elderly from rural area were distinctively better in big five factors of personality than urban area but elderly from urban area were distinctively better in life satisfaction than elderly from rural area which shows elderly from different locality differ in their big five factors of personality and life satisfaction. Developing all personality traits from early stage of life and providing basic facilities and developing proper designing of the welfare programmes, policies and regulations for elderly are very important since it is considered as a critical psychological factors for enhancing life satisfaction among elderly and enhance them equally both in urban and rural areas.

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