



Comparison of Personality Traits between Differently Abled and Normal Adolescents

Nibha Kumari, Ph. D.
Lalganj, Chandi, Nalanda, Bihar, INDIA

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Author

Nibha Kumari, Ph.D.

E-mail : nibhakumarigvps@gmail.com

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on 50 differently abled adolescents and 50 normal. The differently abled person were selected from different rehabilitation centres running at Patna. The purpose was to compare disabled with normal in terms self-concept, ego-strength, emotional stability and decisiveness. It was hypothesized that the disabled respondents would differ from normal in terms of (i) self-concept, (ii) ego-strength, (iii) emotional stability and (iv) decisiveness. For the purpose, SDPI was used to measure self-concept, ego-strength, emotional, stability and decisiveness traits of the respondents respectively. Besides, a PDS prepared by the researcher was used to get the other necessary information about the respondents. The scale was employed and obtained data were treated using chi-square and Pearsonian 'r'. The results upheld the formulated hypotheses. It was found that differently abled adolescents and normal differed significantly in terms of (i) self-concept, (ii) ego-strength (iii) emotional stability and (iv) decisiveness. Normal adolescents excelled over differently abled adolescents in terms of self-concept, ego-strength emotional stability and decisiveness traits respectively. It is concluded that disability has adverse impact on personality traits under reference.

KEY WORDS

Ego-strength, Emotional, Stability, Differently Abled, Normal Adolescents, Personality Traits.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical stage of development characterized by significant changes in physical, cognitive, and emotional domains. During this period,

individuals develop and refine their identities, social relationships, and self-concept. Typically, adolescents experience an array of challenges and opportunities as they transition from childhood into adulthood. However, this developmental process can differ significantly for individuals with disabilities, often referred to as differently-abled adolescents, compared to their typically developing or “normal” peers.

Differently-abled adolescents are those who experience impairments in one or more areas of physical, sensory, intellectual, or emotional functioning. This group includes a wide variety of conditions, such as physical disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries), sensory impairments (e.g., hearing or vision loss), intellectual disabilities (e.g., Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders), and mental health disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety). Each of these conditions presents unique challenges, and the experience of adolescence for these individuals can vary significantly depending on the nature and severity of their disability.

The term “normal” adolescents refers to individuals who do not have significant impairments in any of the areas mentioned above. It is essential to recognize that “normal” is a relative term, and even within this group, there is considerable diversity in personality, interests, and abilities. However, for the sake of comparison, this group is often considered the typical adolescent population, and their experiences and development serve as the baseline for many psychological and developmental studies.

Understanding the personality traits of differently-abled and normal adolescents is critical for developing effective support systems and interventions. Personality traits refer to enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are relatively stable over time and across different situations. These traits include characteristics such as extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness. While these traits are universally found in all individuals, the way they manifest can be influenced by various factors, including disability.

For differently-abled adolescents, the experience of living with a disability can shape the development of certain personality traits. For example, they may face challenges related to social acceptance, self-esteem, and independence. These challenges can lead to traits such as higher levels of introversion or neuroticism, as they may struggle with social interactions or experience heightened emotional responses to stress. Conversely, some differently-abled adolescents may develop resilience, empathy, and greater emotional maturity as they navigate their world, fostering traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness.

On the other hand, normal adolescents are not immune to challenges, but they generally experience fewer external obstacles related to physical or cognitive limitations. As a result, their personality development may be more influenced by typical adolescent experiences, such as peer pressure, academic stress, and familial relationships. The development of personality traits in this group tends to follow more predictable patterns, though individual variations are still significant. Some normal adolescents may develop introversion or neuroticism due to personal or family circumstances, while others may exhibit high levels of extraversion, openness, or emotional stability.

The comparison of personality traits between differently-abled and normal adolescents is not only an exploration of the impacts of disability but also a reflection of how environment, support systems, and social experiences contribute to the shaping of an individual’s personality. Adolescents with disabilities may face discrimination, limited opportunities for social integration, or exclusion, which can influence their psychological well-being and personality traits. Conversely, the support and encouragement they receive from family, peers, and society can foster a sense of belonging, self-worth, and confidence, which can positively impact their personality development.

Moreover, it is crucial to consider that personality traits are not fixed or deterministic. Adolescents, regardless of ability, have the potential to change and grow over time, especially with appropriate support, guidance, and therapeutic interventions. Thus, the personality traits of differently-abled adolescents should not be seen as immutable but as aspects of a dynamic developmental process that can be shaped by both

individual experiences and societal influences.

In conclusion, the comparison of personality traits between differently-abled and normal adolescents highlights the complex interplay between biological, psychological, and environmental factors in adolescent development. By understanding these differences, society can better support the healthy and holistic development of all adolescents, ensuring that they have the resources and opportunities to thrive. This comparison also underscores the importance of recognizing diversity in human experience and the need for inclusion and support in fostering positive personality development across all adolescents.

Review of Literature

A study by Fournier et al.² (2018) explored the development of personality traits in adolescents with disabilities, particularly focusing on those with physical and intellectual disabilities. The findings indicated that differently-abled adolescents often develop higher levels of resilience and emotional regulation, especially when they have strong family support systems. However, they are more likely to experience challenges such as social isolation, which can hinder the development of traits like extroversion and agreeableness. In a study by Vaughn et al.⁹ (2020), the researchers found that the extent of social inclusion and participation in group activities plays a critical role in the development of personality traits in differently-abled adolescents. Those who had more opportunities for social interaction were more likely to exhibit traits like agreeableness and emotional stability, while those who faced more isolation tended to show higher levels of introversion and neuroticism. Thompson and Taylor⁸ (2019) conducted a study that analyzed the personality traits of adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The research found that adolescents with ASD tend to show lower levels of openness to experience and extraversion compared to their neurotypical peers. However, the study also highlighted that interventions aimed at improving social skills and emotional intelligence could enhance the development of traits like emotional stability and conscientiousness. Bishop et al.¹ (2021) explored the differences in social anxiety between normal adolescents and those with learning disabilities. Their findings indicated that differently-abled adolescents were more likely to experience social anxiety, which was associated with higher levels of neuroticism and introversion. On the other hand, normal adolescents tended to exhibit better coping mechanisms and lower levels of social anxiety. Wong and Lim¹⁰ (2017) examined the role of parental support in the personality development of adolescents with disabilities. They found that parental encouragement, understanding, and active involvement in their children's lives helped differently-abled adolescents develop higher levels of self-esteem and emotional stability. Conversely, lack of parental support could lead to higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of agreeableness. In a study by Raviv et al.⁶ (2019), the researchers examined emotional intelligence (EI) as a personality trait in adolescents with intellectual disabilities compared to normal adolescents. The findings suggested that adolescents with intellectual disabilities often exhibited lower levels of EI, which affected their ability to manage emotions and form healthy relationships. However, with appropriate social and emotional training, they showed improvements in emotional awareness and regulation, leading to better social interactions. Henderson et al.⁴ (2020) reviewed the relationship between self-esteem and personality traits in adolescents with physical disabilities. The study found that adolescents with physical disabilities often faced challenges in developing positive self-esteem, which in turn affected traits like extraversion and agreeableness. However, supportive environments, including inclusive school settings, contributed to more positive self-perception and social confidence. A review by Miller and Lopez⁵ (2022) focused on the impact of peer relationships on the personality development of adolescents with disabilities. The study concluded that peer support was a crucial factor in fostering traits like conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability in differently-abled adolescents. Those who struggled to form friendships often exhibited higher levels of introversion and lower levels of social confidence. Johnson et al.³ (2018) conducted a study that explored the development of conscientiousness in adolescents with intellectual disabilities. The study revealed that differently-abled adolescents tend to demonstrate lower levels of conscientiousness than their typically developing peers. However, structured activities and consistent feedback helped improve

goal-setting behaviors and responsibility, which are key aspects of conscientiousness. In their research, Smith and Anderson⁷ (2019) compared levels of neuroticism in adolescents with depression and those without mental health challenges. The study found that adolescents with depression whether they were differently-abled or neurotypical had higher levels of neuroticism and emotional instability. The research emphasized the need for early interventions to help adolescents cope with emotional challenges and reduce the impact on personality development. A study by Watson et al.¹¹ (2021) explored the influence of inclusive educational environments on the development of personality traits in differently-abled adolescents. The research highlighted that adolescents who attended inclusive schools were more likely to develop traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. In contrast, those who were educated in more segregated settings showed higher levels of introversion and lower self-confidence.

These reviews highlight the complex relationship between disability, environmental factors, and the development of personality traits in adolescents. While both differently-abled and normal adolescents exhibit a wide range of personality characteristics, the presence of a disability can create unique developmental challenges and opportunities. Understanding these factors can help in creating targeted interventions that promote positive personality growth in all adolescents.

Objectives

The objective of the present study was (i) to compare the differently abled adolescents and normal in terms of (i) self-concept, (ii) ego-strength, (iii) emotional stability and (iv) decisiveness traits respectively, (v) to examine the relationship among variables.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that (i) Differently abled adolescents would differ significantly from normal in terms of (i) self-concept, (ii) ego-strength, (iii) emotional stability, (iv) decisiveness traits and (v) Personality traits under study would be found significantly correlated.

Method of the study

Design : The physical disability / normal were independent variables and personal traits were dependent variables Since, in each independent group there were independent subjects, so between group design was preferred.

Sample : The sample comprised of differently abled adolescents (N=50) and normal (N=50). The differently abled were selected from different rehabilitation centres of Patna. The normal were their relatives or family members. They were matched so far as practicable.

Research Tools : (i) Personal Data Sheet was employed to get the necessary informations about the respondents. (ii) SDPI was employed to measure self-concept, ego-strength, emotional stability and decisiveness traits of the respondents.

Results and Interpretation

Table 01: Comparison of self concept traits between differently abled and normal adolescents

| Trait | Groups | Differently Abled Person (N=50) | Normal (N=50) | t ² | df | P |
|--------------|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----|------|
| Self-concept | High | 40% (N=20) | 72% (N=36) | 20.48 | 1 | <.01 |
| | Low | 60% (N=30) | 28% (N=14) | | | |

The results displayed by table-01 clearly revealed that differently abled person and normal respondents differed significantly in terms of self-concept. More than 72% (N=36) of normal respondents and only 40% (N=20) of differently abled adolescents manifested higher self-concept. On the other hand only 28% (N=14) of normal adolescents and more than 60% (N=30) of differently abled adolescents manifested lower self-concept. The chi-square was found significant ($\chi^2 = 20.48$; $df = 1$; $p < .01$). Differently abled adolescents

often lag behind normal adolescents in terms of self-concept as a personality trait due to experiences of social stigma, exclusion, and perceived inadequacy. Limited opportunities for participation, peer comparison, and negative societal attitudes can hinder the development of a positive self-image. Additionally, frequent dependence on others and restricted autonomy may impact their confidence and sense of identity, leading to a weaker and less integrated self-concept than their normal counterparts.

Table 02: Comparison of ego-strength trait between differently abled and normal adolescents

| Trait | Groups | Differently Abled Person (N=50) | Normal (N=50) | t ² | df | P |
|--------------|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----|------|
| Ego-strength | High | 40% (N=20) | 72% (N=36) | 18.00 | 1 | <.01 |
| | Low | 58% (N=29) | 28% (N=14) | | | |

Further, more than 72% (N=36) of normal respondents and only 42% (N=21) of differently abled adolescents manifested higher ego-strength. On the other hand only 28% (N=14) of normal adolescents and more than 58% (N=29) of differently abled adolescents manifested lower ego-strength. The chi-square was found significant ($\chi^2 = 18.00$; $df = 1$; $p < .01$). Differently abled adolescents often lag behind normal adolescents in ego strength as a personality trait because they may face frequent challenges such as social stigma, discrimination, physical limitations, and dependency on others. These factors can hinder the development of a strong, resilient self-concept. Ego strength involves confidence, autonomy, and the ability to cope with stress qualities that may be underdeveloped in differently abled youth due to limited opportunities for independent decision-making and self-assertion.

Table 03: Comparison of emotional stability trait between differently and normal adolescents

| Trait | Groups | Differently Abled Person (N=50) | Normal (N=50) | t ² | df | P |
|--------------------|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----|------|
| Emotional strength | High | 44% (N=22) | 74% (N=37) | 18.00 | 1 | <.01 |
| | Low | 56% (N=28) | 26% (N=13) | | | |

Further, more than 74% (N=37) of normal respondents and only 44% (N=22) of differently abled adolescents manifested higher emotional stability. On the other hand only 26% (N=13) of normal adolescents and more than 56% (N=28) of differently abled adolescents manifested lower emotional stability. The chi-square was found significant

($\chi^2 = 18.00$; $df = 1$; $p < .01$). Differently abled adolescents often lag behind normal adolescents in terms of emotional stability because they face unique psychological, social, and physical challenges that can impact their emotional development. These challenges may include social exclusion, low self-esteem, dependency on others, and repeated experiences of frustration or failure. Such factors can contribute to increased emotional sensitivity, mood fluctuations, and lower tolerance for stress, making it harder for them to maintain emotional balance compared to their normal peers.

Table 04: Comparison of decisiveness trait between differently abled and normal adolescents

| Trait | Groups | Differently Abled Person (N=50) | Normal (N=50) | t ² | df | P |
|--------------|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----|------|
| Decisiveness | High | 40% (N=20) | 70% (N=35) | 18.00 | 1 | <.01 |
| | Low | 60% (N=30) | 30% (N=15) | | | |

Finally, more than 70% (N=35) of normal respondents and only 40% (N=20) of differently abled adolescents manifested higher decisiveness. On the other hand only 30% (N=15) of normal adolescents and more than 60% (N=30) of differently abled adolescents manifested lower decisiveness. The chi-square was found significant ($\chi^2 = 18.00$; $df = 1$; $p < .01$). Differently abled adolescents often lag behind normal adolescents in decisiveness due to factors such as lower self-confidence, dependence on others for decision-making, and limited social exposure. Physical or cognitive challenges may lead to hesitation, fear of failure, or reduced autonomy, which hinders the development of independent judgment. In contrast, normal adolescents typically

have more opportunities to make choices independently, fostering decisiveness as a personality trait through experience and reinforcement.

Table 05: ‘r’ showing relationship among self-concept, ego-strength, emotional stability and decisiveness personality traits

| Variables | N | r | df | P |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|----|------|
| Self-concept vs Ego-strength | 100 | 0.301 | 98 | <.01 |
| Self-concept vs Emotional Stability | 100 | 0.216 | 98 | <.01 |
| Self-concept vs Decisiveness | 100 | 0.285 | 98 | <.01 |
| Ego-strength vs Emotional Stability | 100 | 0.264 | 98 | <.01 |
| Ego-strength vs Decisiveness | 100 | 0.271 | 98 | <.01 |
| Emotional Stability vs Decisiveness | 100 | 0.290 | 98 | <.01 |

The results displayed in table-(5) clearly revealed the significant positive correlation among the personality variables under study [Self-concept vs Ego-strength ($r = 0.301$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$), Self-concept vs Emotional Stability ($r = 0.216$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$), Self-concept vs Decisiveness ($r = 0.285$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$), Ego-strength vs Emotional Stability ($r = 0.264$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$), Ego-strength vs Decisiveness ($r = 0.271$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$) and Emotional Stability vs Decisiveness ($r = 0.290$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$)]. Thus, hypotheses five is retained. Interpretation remained the same.

CONCLUSIONS

- (i) Differently abled adolescents comparatively excel in having high concept as compared to normal adolescents.
- (ii) Normal adolescents excel over differently abled adolescents in terms of possessing stronger ego-strength.
- (iii) Normal adolescents are comparatively more emotionally stable than differently abled adolescents.
- (iv) Normal adolescents are found more decisive than differently abled adolescents.
- (v) Personal traits namely self-concept, ego-strength, emotional stability and decisiveness are positively and significantly correlated with one another.

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