



Emotional Stability and its Impact on Eating Disorder in Women : A Study

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study is to determine the effect of neuroticism i.e. emotional stability/ instability on eating disorder in women. 1000 women (Ave. age 33.35 years) were selected across Indian territory i.e. from northern, eastern, central, western and southern states of India. The selected subjects were between the age range of 25 to 45 years.

Random sampling method was used for selection of sample in the present study. Eating Disorder Inventory, prepared by Agashe and Karkare (2007) was used to collect data on eating disorder while Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al. (1978) was used to assess neuroticism in selected subjects. Q1 and Q3 (i.e. percentile values at 25 and 75) statistical technique was used to divide cases into high, low and moderate level of neuroticism. Results showed that eating disorder in high neurotic women was found to be significantly higher as compared to low neurotic women. It was also observed that eating disorder in low neurotic women was significantly lower as compared to women with moderate level of neuroticism. On the basis of results it was concluded that neuroticism i.e. emotional stability may influence the development of eating disorder in women

KEYWORDS : Eating disorder, neuroticism, women

INTRODUCTION

Since ages eating disorder has been linked to culture. It was believed that due certain norms of women's shape and figure in the society, women want to become slim or remain in shape. In some cultures women are engaged in somewhat unhealthy food practices to put on weight. Hence there are two extremes of eating disorder exists i.e. to gain weight or loose weight / remain slim.

In the recent times eating disorders are considered to be a psychological problems associated with certain personality traits. Personality traits such as obsessiveness, perfectionism, harm avoidance etc. may be associated with some types of eating disorders. It is believed that anxious, depressed, self critical, extrovert persons are more likely to develop eating disorder. But the exact mechanism of effect of personality on eating disorder has not been understood so far and especially for personality traits like neuroticism.

Eysenck and Ruchman (1965) pointed out that neuroticism is a trait which forms a continuum from normal to neurotic and while reflecting upon those phenotypic expressions in behaviour of this dimension they mentioned that at one end of it there are people whose emotions are liable, strong and easily aroused; they are moody, touchy, anxious, restless and so forth characterizing the unstable or neurotic type; and at the other extreme there are people whose emotions are stable, less easily aroused; who are calm; even tempered and reliable, representing the normal persons typical of stable type. It means that points near the minus end of the continuum represent poorly integrated, emotionally unstable, neurotic personalities; and the points near the plus end of the hypothetical continuum represent well integrated, emotionally stable, non-neurotic personalities.

Although Castillo (1997), Davis (1997), Cassin and von Ranson (2005), Cruickshank (2006), MacLaren and Best (2009), Rowe (2011), Macgregor and Lamborn (2014) have studied the relationship between personality and eating disorder but so no such study so far has been conducted in India in which eating disorder in women have been investigated in the light of their emotional stability. The present study is thus carried out to find out the effect of neuroticism (emotional stability / instability) on eating disorder in Indian women.

HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesized eating disorder in women will exhibiting significant variation on the basis of their neurotic tendencies.

Methodology :-

The following methodological steps were taken while conducting the present research work.

Sample :-

For present study, 1000 Indian women (Ave. age 33.35 years) were selected across Indian Territory i.e. from northern, eastern, central, western and southern states of India. The selected subjects were between the age range of 25 to 45 years. Random sampling method was used for selection of sample in the present study.

Tools:

Following tools were used to fulfil the objectives of the study -

(a) Eating Disorder Inventory:

To assess eating disorder in selected women subjects, Eating Disorder Inventory, prepared by Agashe and Karkare (2007) was used. This questionnaire comprises in all 25 positive and negative worded questions which measures eating habits of the respondent. The test-retest reliability of the inventory is .82 while the content validity is .72. Higher scores indicate inferior eating behaviour is the direction of scoring.

(a) Eysenck's PEN Inventory

For the purpose of tapping neuroticism dimension of personality, Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al. (1978) was preferred. This Hindi PEN Inventory comprises of in all 78 items of which 20 items are for tapping P, 20 items for measuring E, 20 items for tapping N and 18 items are for measuring tendency to tell a lie (L). So far as the reliability and validity of this Hindi PEN inventory are concerned it can be said that, the inventory is highly reliable and valid. The test-retest reliability coefficients have been found as 0.630, 0.888, 0.687 and 0.337 for P, E, N and L scales respectively.

Procedure:

The first step of this study was selection of 1000 Indian women across all over India, between age range of 25-45 years. After identifying the subjects they were taken into confidence that this work is only for research and the findings will be used only for psychoanalysis of eating disorder. Afterwards Eating Disorder Inventory prepared by Agashe and Karkare (2007) and Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al. (1978) was administered. Sufficient rest was given in between the administration of two inventories. The filled inventories were then scored with the help of key given in author's manual. Only neuroticism dimension was scored off in PEN inventory. After scoring, the data was tabulated according to their groups. Q1 and Q3 (i.e. percentile values at 25 and 75) statistical technique was used to divide cases into high, low and moderate level of neuroticism. Subjects whose neuroticism scores fall above Q_3 were grouped in as having high neuroticism; subjects whose neuroticism scores fall below Q_1 were grouped in as having low level of neuroticism and subjects whose scores fall between Q_1 and Q_3 were treated as having moderate level of neuroticism. The scores on eating disorder of these identified subjects were tabulated for each group. One way ANO-

VA technique was used to find out the difference in eating disorder scores between these groups. The obtained results of such statistical analysis are presented in Table 1 and 1(a) respectively.

RESULTS

Table 1
Effect of Level of Neuroticism, a Dimension of Personality, on Eating Disorder in a Group of Selected Indian Women (N=1000)

Groups	N	Eating Disorder	
		Mean	S.D.
High Neurotic	401	7.80	4.47
Low Neurotic	400	6.02	3.39
Moderately Neurotic	199	7.52	4.79

Table 1 (a)
ANOVA Summary

Effect of Level of Neuroticism, a Dimension of Personality, on Eating Disorder in a Group of Selected Indian Women (N=1000)

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	02	693.893	346.946	20.15	.01
Within Groups	997	17159.882	17.212		
Total	999	17853.775			

Results obtained through One Way ANOVA suggesting that eating disorder in women exhibiting high, low and moderate level of neuroticism vary significantly with each other. The F ratio of 20.15, which is statistically significant at .01 level, confirms this finding. This result is also confirmed by Least Significant Difference Test presented in table no. 2.

Table 2
Comparison of Eating Disorder among Indian Women on the Basis of Level of Neuroticism, a Dimension of Personality Least Significant Difference Test with Significance Level .05

Mean (I)	Mean (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)
High Neurotic	Low Neurotic	1.78*
	Moderately Neurotic	.28
Low Neurotic	High Neurotic	-1.78*
	Moderate Neurotic	-1.50*
Moderately Neurotic	High Neurotic	-.28
	Low Neurotic	1.50*

* Significant at .05 level

A perusal of entries reported in table 2 reveal that eating disorder in high neurotic women subjects was found to be significantly more as compared to low neurotic subjects with.

It was also observed that eating disorder in low neurotic women subjects was significantly lesser as compared to women subjects with moderate level of neuroticism.

Statistically non significant difference was observed in eating disorder between high and moderately neurotic women subjects.

DISCUSSION

On the basis of results it was observed that high neurotic women exhibited more magnitude of eating disorder as compared to low neurotic women. The results are not surprising because emotional instability is associated with negative emotions. Hence in order to compensate this negative emotions they eat more to divert their attention.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that emotional instability may be a causative factor as far as eating disorder in women is concerned.

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