



## COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERSONALITY TRAITS ACCORDING TO THEIR ACADEMIC UNIT

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the difference of the personality traits of the university students according to the academic units they study at. The data is obtained from the students who study at four different academic units at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, with convenience sampling method. Descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis and ANOVA tests were used to analysis the data gathered via surveys. The results of statistical analysis showed that the personality traits of the tourism students do not differ from the students who study at the other academic units. Openness to experience and agreeableness dimensions of the personality may differ between vocational school students and faculty of the theology students.

**Keywords:** Personality, Personality Traits, Factors Affecting Personality.

### INTRODUCTION

The root of the Word personality is based on the concept "persona" in Latin. In the past, the masks used by the players in Roman theatres were referred to as "persona". Reasons for utilizing these masks were that the distance between stage and audience were large and the audience could not see the mimic corresponding to the role that player reflected (Eroğlu, 2011). Personality is one of the important factors that make individuals different from each other, affects perceiving environment by them. Personality depends on common patterns and social events (Tomrukçu, 2008). People show difference in terms of both their physical appearance and attitudes and behaviours. There exists many reasons why people are so different from each other (Özgüven, 1998). These reasons may be hereditary ones as well as environmental ones. Personality concept is frequently confused with character, temperament and talent concepts. Character, temperament and talent concepts are related to personality concept by not synonym of it. The objective of conducting this research is to compare personality traits of the students according to the units they study at. It is planned that the study consists of two chapters, first chapter is theoretical, wide coverage will be given to practice in second chapter. In theoretical chapter, personality concept, five-factor model, personality related concepts and the factors affecting formation of personality will be addressed.

#### 1. PERSONALITY CONCEPT

It is known that personality concept, as a part of social life of people, has attracted interest for ages. However, scientific development concerning personality started with emergence of personality psychology as a scientific discipline apart from other social science areas (Abdioğlu, Kılıç and Çalış, 2015; Tanrıverdi, 2012). When literature is reviewed, it is seen that experts approach personality subject from many different viewpoints. Some authors have emphasized that genetic factors and early childhood experiences are efficient in development of personality, others point out that personality always develop in the context of effects of social and environmental factors. While some researchers prefer seeing personality as combined entirety, others focus on distinctive features. Due to this different viewpoints, making single description of personality become hard (Dal and Eroğlu, 2015).

Some descriptions made in relating to personality concept in literature is given below. Personality is a type of consistent and structured relationship that individual establishes with his/her inner and exterior environment, distinguishes him/her from other individuals (Cüceloğlu, 2002). To Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), personality is internal psychological characteristics which defines and reflects how person responds to his/her environment. Eysenck (1970) describes personality as organization in relatively stable and static way of his/her trait, emotional, cognitive and physical structure that identifies compliance of human to

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environment in a manner specific to him/her (Rogers, 2005; Tunç and Aliyev, 2015). It is also likely to define personality as distinctive and characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour that characterizes way of interaction with psychical and social environment of individual (Atkinson, Atkinson, Bem and Hoeksema., 2002).

Personality is pretty wide matter that covers all attitudes, interests and skills, style of dressing and speaking, physical appearance, body language, communication skills, reactions and habits of individual. Therefore, it is concept which reveals all characteristics of individual. In a general description, personality is the behaviours specific to individual, invariable and set him/her apart from other individuals (Balkan, Serin and Kılıç, 2014; Hogan, Hogan and Roberts, 1996; Zweig and Webster, 2004). In another description, personality is identified as constant properties which is shaped with interaction of individual with his/her environment (Goldberg, 1993; Olverve Mooradian, 2003).

When different descriptions made relevant to personality concept is analysed, mostly three primary features of personality is emphasized. These may be summarized as (i) uniqueness of each individual, (ii) consistency of personality and (iii) stationarity of personality. For Somer (1998), the common point for all of personality descriptions is that they display consistency under various conditions and are long -term inclinations. Personality is typical condition of the factors that shape behaviour and actions of a person. With the influence of stimulants coming from inside and outside continuously, personality encompasses psychological, biological, hereditary and all acquired characteristics, emotions, desires, instincts, requests and behaviours exhibited of human (Yelboğa, 2006). In other words, natural- born characteristics and the effect of the environment where individual grows and lives in have great impact for personality shaping (Ünsar, 2011).

With reference to personality descriptions, basic properties of personality may be listed as follows (Abdioğlu et. al, 2015; Eren, 2000; Günel, 2010; Güney, 2000; Tanrıverdi, 2012):

- Personality is a complement of natural- born and acquired inclinations.
- There are a number of differences that separate personal characteristics of an individual from that of others.
- Personality adapts characteristics of individual to environment. Exhibiting different attitudes and behaviours under different environmental conditions depend on that.
- Only one natural-born character is available in personality of each individual and the character is an essential element of personality.

Five -factor model suggests that personality of an individual may be described by analysing it with five independent factor (Bitlisli, Dinç, Çetinceli and Kaygısız, 2013). These five factors which are to be clarified below are called "Five Factor" or Big Five. Personality traits classification model which is represented with these five factors is also named as "Five Factor Model" (Digman, 1990).

#### **Five Factor Model of Personality**

Studies of the researchers such as Allport and Odper (1936) and Thurstone (1934) have constituted first steps of five factor model of personality. In the direction of the studies carried out within the framework of five factor personality traits, Costa and McCrae (1985), as a result of all-round measurement and scoring of behaviour variables of large people groups they denominate as "factor", have determined that personality is made up of five factors. These five main dimensions are defined as extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness (Develioğlu and Tekin, 2013).

It is set forth that extroversion is associated mostly with social stimulants, agreeableness with quantity of relationships, conscientiousness characteristic involves significant features for success in daily life, environments such as school, work, particularly, emotional balance is in brief represented with the adjectives like clam, balanced, unexcited, and consistent, etc., openness to experience is shaped with their inclinations, life styles and preferences rather than skills of persons (Aslan, Ünüvar and Başoda, 2012). These personality traits are expounded below.

**Extroversion;** individuals have a number of personality traits like sympathetic, liking to remain together with people, social, enterprising, colourful (Kılıç and Bozkaya, 2014). Extrovert persons are people who confidence themselves, possess leadership properties, like remaining together with others, dominant and active (Barrick and Mount 1991). With positive feelings, more frequent and extensive personal interactions and being optimistic in general, extrovert persons are predisposed to re-



evaluate problems by looking them in positive light (McCrae and John, 1992). Since the students having extrovert personality traits care for being in the same environment with people, are full of beans and always think positive, it is anticipated they become successful in their courses (Abdioğlu et. al,2015).

**Emotional stability/instability - neuroticism;** meant as emotional stability too. The individuals who take high score at neuroticism scale are inclined to live negative emotions like anger, anxiety and depression, etc. Neuroticism means inclination of living negative, stress forming emotions. Among the characteristics included in this scope, lack of irritability, degree of self- confidence, being optimistic or pessimistic, sentimental, reserved and anxious may be sorted. The individuals who take low score from neuroticism (meant as emotionally stable) become calm, east, balanced or coldblooded (Bitlisli et al., 2013). When it is considered that the students possessing emotional balanced personality traits have the ability to control themselves, pull together and evaluate events rationally, it is expected that these students succeed more (Abdioğlu et al., 2015).

**Agreeableness;** states interpersonal aspects of personality (McCrae and John, 1992). Thinking others before himself/herself, inclination of being coherent, sympathetic, warm-blooded, polite and respectful takes place among the properties of this dimension. While the individuals who take high score from this factor are disposed to being good natured, merciful, soft-hearted (Barrick and Mount 1991), reliable, reconciliatory, collaborator, those who get low score are inclined to be incompatible and opponent in their relationships with other persons due to having debater, aggressive structure (Digman, 1990; Develioğlu and Tekin, 2013). The students with agreeableness trait have the talent to keep pace with all kinds of surroundings. As such students are in compliance with their friends and instructors, it is supposed that they become a successful student (Abdioğlu et. al., 2015).

**Openness to experience;** Individuals have got some personality traits like being clever, having high imagination, disposed to art, curious and informed, etc. (Develioğlu and Tekin, 2013). Personal trait of openness to experience reflects being specific of a person, his/her change and degree of desiring diversity (Bitlisli et. al., 2013). The individuals whose openness trait are high are brave against new and unusual experiences, like change, cultured and broad minded (Aslan et. al, 2012). As horizons of the students having trait of openness to experience become wider, it is hoped that they will comprehend subjects more easily and obtain success (Abdioğlu et. al., 2015).

**Conscientiousness;** shows to what extent person is arranged, organized, disciplined, decisive and reliable (Aslan et. al, 2012). Conscientiousness feeling of individuals means characteristics of conduct and how they control their instincts. Responsible individuals are target-oriented and stated smart and reliable in general. As regards their negative sides, the individual having high conscientiousness may be workaholic and perfectionist (McCrae and John, 1992). Since the students with higher conscientiousness emotion will be more interested in their courses, it is thought they will become more successful (Abdioğlu et. al, 2015).

### 1.1. Concepts Concerning Personality

Character, temperament and talent concepts are the concepts that are mostly confused with personality. Köknel (2005: 20) describes character as follows. "It is entirety of the behaviours specific to person, the value is appraised by surrounding to activities and physical, emotional and mental activity of humans." The chief point that secludes character concept from personality is that it contains moral elements. In this case, character is related to personality but have not he same meaning. Personality is a concept that also involves character and covers physical and spiritual characteristics specific to him/her of individual (Yeni, 2015). Character of individual is developed and shaped with the effect of family and environment. Firstly, within family life, later with the effect of school and environmental conditions, character of individual grows to certain maturity (Zel, 2006).

According to Cloninger and Svrakic'e (2000), temperament creates emotional and hereditary side of personality. Temperament corresponds to processes of establishing relationship, perception that lies behind combining emotion based talents and behaviours together (Yeni, 2015). Temperament is all of structures which are natural-born at individual, do not change and show continuity, develop with the effect of environment. Temperament is all of the genotypes that form and shape mental power of individual. In a nutshell, temperament is skeleton of personality, put it differently, its sub-structure and affects personality together with character (Aytaç, 2000).

Another factor which is influential for formation and shaping of personality is talent. Talent is divided into two, physical and mental. Mental talent indicates mental traits of individual such as



comprehension, analysing and making out (Eroğlu, 2011). Physical talent is all of talents like seeing, walking, running, standing up, moving hands, arms and feet in harmony, etc. (Zel, 2006). To Morgan (1965), talents affect personality in the direction of recognition of person. Smart children are rewarded, liked by their family, teachers and people around them and become focus of interest on account of their success. Thus, intelligence and special talents is effective for development of the qualifications to provide self - confidence feeling and respectability at children and adults (Kesen, 2014).

### **1.2. Factors Affecting Formation of Personality**

When the literature concerning personality is reviewed, it is seen that the factors affecting formation of personality are dealt under two main titles, hereditary and environmental factors. Among the factors affecting personality, heredity takes the first place. Heredity means transfer of individual traits from one generation to another one by means of chromosome of mother- father. For mental, physical and emotional characteristics such as skeleton, weight, length, eye, hair and skin tone related to physical structure of individual, his/her mood, jitteriness, emotional state, resistance, withstanding, etc. heredity has high share (Yeni, 2015). In a performed study, in order to understand effect of heredity on personality traits, identical twins have been examined. Excess similarities in behaviours and some matters for the twins who are grown in same places demonstrate efficiency of heredity on personality. It has been observed that the twins who left around 40 years ago and grown 70 km away from each other drive the same model and the same colour car, smoke the same brand cigarette at the same density and each has a dog they give the same name. Researches disclose that genetics influences more or less 50% of personality similarities of twins, more than 30% for their selection of vocational and interest areas of outside work (Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013 excerpted from Robbins, 2012, p. 136). Besides, the habits acquired in very early ages form foundation of personality and the personality traits which are potentially found from birth develops and are shaped according to environment and culture conditions (Akto, 2011).

Another factor affecting formation of personality is environmental factors. Individuals follow patterns of behaviour of other people around them throughout their life consciously or unconsciously. As a result, they add new properties to their personality with the things they have learnt in their cultural structure and give shape to their personality (Zel, 2006). Environmental factors are classified as family factor, cultural factors, social class and geographical- physical factors. For Hellriegel et. al (1992), family is a key element for formation and development of personality. Considering interaction of child within family with his/her mother, father, sibling and if any, other family members, adopting them as role model and exhibiting similar ones of their behaviours, it may become quite efficient. Economic status, education level of mother and father, family structure and size are important variables for development of personality. For instance, growing as single child of a house, growing as five siblings may result in differentiation in personality of individual. Another matter is that differences may and observed between a child growing in a family whose income level is low and the child growing in a rich family because of their different life styles (Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013).

One of the factors which have a great impact on formation of personality is social class to which an individual belongs to. Social class influences personality trait, education possibilities, way of life, thought and consumption of individual. To exemplify, a child coming to the World in an environment where socio-economic possibilities are good will very likely have a profession, the life style of which is well and display behaviours fit for his/her current condition. A child born in socio-economically sub-class will act in a particular manner in accordance with his/her existing condition and environmental circumstances (Eroğlu, 2011) One of other factors affecting personality of individual is culture. According to Erdoğan (1994), culture is efficient on the elements such as eating, dressing, customs and traditions of individual. This case may also have an impact on life and habits of individual. In this case, it may be said that personality of individual may be impressed from culture. Therefore, the values and norms which are dominant to a society reflect on life styles, social relations with their environment and the habits of individuals and direct their behaviours. As a result of that, personality of individuals may be affected indirectly from the environment and culture of society in which they live in (Özsoy and Yıldız, 2013).

Geographical and physical environment is one of the significant factors affecting personality of individual. Effect on formation of personality of geographical environment where human was born and live cannot be ignored. To Koptagel-İlal (1982), as a part of geographical environment; climate, nature and the physical conditions of the region lived have apparent effects on personality traits of individuals. In addition to its direct effects, possibly higher direct effects of physical environment exist. Because



effects of geography on other factors which becomes influential on the formation of personality of individuals, especially on the culture and anthropological structure of that society is a well-known matter. For example, personality traits are different between the people who live in coastal regions and the persons who live in lands, bottom lands and mountainous regions, warm or cold climates owing to geographical difference. A general belief is available that those who live in cold climate conditions have tougher and dull temperament, the people who live in hot climate and coastal regions have fast changing emotional manner and softer temperament (Girgin, 2007).

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Sample of the Research

The population of the research is composed of Hacı Bektaş Veli University's students, the sample, of students of Tourism Faculty, Faculty of Theology, Vocational School of Health Services and Vocational School. In this research, non-random sampling method is used. Capabilities of representing population by non-random sampling are weak (Nakip, 2006). It is impossible to say that results of the study will reflect properties of population completely. However, it is possible to have an opinion about the population from research results.

### 2.2. Data Collection

Questionnaire techniques are benefited for obtaining data. The questionnaire consists of two parts, in the first part, while demographic and general questions relevant to participants are included, in the second part, questions about personality inventory are given. In order to identify personality trait within the research, it is made use of the study of Aslan, Ünüvar and Başoda (2012) who use after translating into Turkish of Five-Factor Personality Inventory developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). In the inventory forming from five factors in neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience, 12 variables are present for each factor. The Likert-type scale is used in the research, responses are taken as interval of 1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree. 400 pcs questionnaires were distributed to students in March 2016, as 32 ones of these questionnaires were filled out missing or wrong, they were taken out of the scope of application and remaining 368 pcs questionnaire was used for analyses.

### 2.3. Analysis of Data

Since scale of a formerly conducted study is utilized in the research, Confirmatory Factor Analysis is used. ANOVA analysis is also benefited to determine whether personality traits change as per the units studied.

### 2.4. Hypothesis of the Research

Hypothesis which is formed from objective of the research is as follows.

**H:** difference is available between personality traits of students according to academic unit they study at.

## 3. FINDINGS

This chapter contains results of percent and frequency distribution analyses. General characteristics of the students who participate in the research are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Properties of the Participants**

Variables	Number	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	150	40,8
Female	218	59,2
<b>Age</b>		
16-20	153	41,6
21-25	209	56,8
26-30	5	1,4
31 and above	1	0,3
<b>Academic Unit Studied</b>		
Tourism Faculty	101	27,5



Faculty of Theology	78	21,2
Vocational High School	95	25,8
Health High School	94	25,5

When Table 1 is analysed, it is seen that most of participants are female (59,2%), age range 21-25 (56,8%) and mostly consist of the students who study at Tourism Faculty (27,5%).

**Table 2: Fit Indices for Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

$\chi^2$	Df	p	$\chi^2 / df$	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
441,726	256	,000	1,725	,92	,96	,44

To determine construct validity of the scale used in the research, Confirmatory Factor Analysis is made. The fit indices obtained following Confirmatory Factor Analysis are given in Table 2 above. When the harmonic index values in Table 2 are considered, it is seen that  $\chi^2 / df$  value of personality scale is 1,725. If this value is below 2 or 3, shows perfect harmony, while below 5 shows moderate harmony. Accordingly, the  $\chi^2 / df$  value of the personality scale shows excellent harmony. As the sample grows, the growth of the degree of freedom creates difficulties in assessing harmony. Hence, as the sample grows, the ratio of chi-square and degree of freedom increases. In this case, the theorists working in the field developed new adaptation indices such as RMSEA, GFI and CFI (Karacaoğlu and Köktaş, 2016: 124). The CFI (0.96) and GFI (0.92) values of the personality scale are above 0.90, reflecting a good harmony. The value of RMSEA obtained for DFA is expected to be between 0 and 1. The fact that the RMSEA value is below 0.80 indicates that there is good harmony between the population and the sample. The fact that the RMSEA value of the personality scale obtained as a result of the research is below 0.44 and 0.80 indicates a good harmony between the population sample.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability**

N=368	Average	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Neuroticism	3,7269	,90782	,783
Extraversion	3,7249	,89331	,851
Conscientiousness	3,8691	,83935	,874
Agreeableness	3,9112	,79924	,851
Openness to experience	3,7889	,78921	,763

Owing to the fact that the questions pertaining to neuroticism dimension hold negative expressions, they are coded reversely before the analyses to be made. In consequence of reliability analysis which is realized to test the factors and the scale included in the inventory, it is seen that the inventory and factors are quite reliable. To Altunışık et. al (2007), for reliability of scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients should be at least 0.70. When Table 3 is reviewed, it is observed that reliability coefficients of personality sub-dimensions are bigger than 0.70.

**Table 4: Results of One Way Analysis of Variance for Personality Dimensions**

		Sum of Squares	std	Average square	F	Sig.
Neuroticism	Between groups	4,728	3	1,576	1,930	,124
	Within- group	297,201	364	,816		
	Total	301,929	367			
Extraversion	Between groups	5,124	3	1,708	2,161	,92
	Within- group	287,741	364	,790		
	Total	292,865	367			
Conscientiousness	Between groups	2,897	3	,966	1,375	,250
	Within- group	255,660	364	,702		



<b>Agreeableness</b>	Total	258,557	367			
	Between groups	5,182	3	1,727	2,743	,043
	Within- group	229,252	364	,630		
<b>Openness to experience</b>	Total	234,434	367			
	Between groups	10,507	3	3,502	5,835	,001
	Within- group	218,488	364	,600		
	Total	228,995	367			

significant at P=0.05 level

When Table 4 is looked at, it may be seen that, as a result of ANOVA test, neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness do not differ as per the academic unit where education is received. It is clear that agreeableness and openness to experience dimensions significantly differ according to academic unit where students study at.

With regard to personality dimensions that difference is present, to understand in which academic units difference take place, homogeneity of the variances being precondition of difference test is viewed. The results concerning homogeneity of variances are found in Table 5.

**Table 5: Homogeneity of Variances**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Significance
Neuroticism	1,073	3	364	,360
Extraversion	6,347	3	364	,000
Conscientiousness	4,184	3	364	,006
Agreeableness	5,219	3	364	,002
Openness to experience	4,248	3	364	,006

On account of lack of homogeneity of related variables' variances, Tamhane's T2 multiple comparison test is applied. Results of multiple comparison test is stated in Table 2.

**Table 6: Difference between Personality Levels by Education Units**

Dependent Variable	Units	Average	Average difference (I-J)	Std. Dev.	Significance
<b>Agreeableness</b>	I-Vocational School	3,7614			
	J-Faculty of Theology	4,0812	-,31979	12331	,060**
<b>Openness to experience</b>	I-Vocational School	3,5526			
	J-Faculty of Theology	4,0417	-,48904*	12199	,001*

When looked at Table 6, it is seen that differences following related action have occurred only between Vocational School and Faculty of Theology. While agreeableness is significant at  $p > 0.10$  level, openness to experience dimension is seen significant at  $p > 0,05$  level. It is apparent that students of Faculty of Theology have higher average for agreeableness and openness to experience traits. In line with this result obtained, the research hypothesis of " there is a difference between the personality traits of the students according to the academic degree of education " is accepted.

### 3. CONCLUSION

It is possible to define personality that has many descriptions in literature as specific, ongoing emotional, cognitive and behavioural traits which distinguish one individual from others. Again, it appears that extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness are discussed in the variables which constitute personality, are used for measuring personality in literature. In this research carried out, it is tried to specify whether personality traits of the students who study at different academic units differ by means of use of extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness variables. Primary purpose in the research is to able to determine if



personality levels of the students who receive education in different units and the students who receive tourism education differ.

The data used in the research is obtained from four different academic units via questionnaire. These academic units are Tourism Faculty, Faculty of Theology, Vocational School of Health Services and Vocational School found within Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. From the results taken from the research methods in which convenience sampling, one of non-random sampling methods is used, it is impossible to make generalization about the population but may have opinion about the population.

Since the inventory used in the research is the one utilized formerly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis is used. After having desired fit indices of data given following Confirmatory Factor Analysis, ANOVA analysis is benefited to apprehend whether there exists difference between academic units where education is received.

At the end of the research, it becomes evident that personality traits of the students differentiate according to the academic unit where education is received. In the circumstances, hypothesis of the research (difference is available between personality traits of students according to academic unit they study at) is accepted. Based on differentiating personality traits of the students who study at each different academic unit, it is likely to say that personality traits are one of contributing factors for their preference of the units where they study at. Again, it is seen that agreeableness and openness to experience being personality traits also become distinct in regard to the academic unit where education is received. When it is reviewed in which academic units these differences are found, it is witnessed that differences have occurred only between Vocational School and Faculty of Theology. It is seen that agreeableness and openness to experience traits of the students of Faculty of Theology have higher average. It is found that no difference appear for compared personality traits of the students of Tourism Faculty and the students of other three academic units.

When result of the research is evaluated in terms of tourism students, no difference is obtained between these students expected to be more extrovert due to particulars of tourism sector and the students in other units from the aspect of extraversion dimension. This result provides possibility to make the comment that for the students who study at tourism faculty, university placement scores that they get become efficient to receive tourism education compared to their personality traits. It is thought that the students who make preference as per their placement scores by ignoring their personality traits will not show success, perceiving that the department they receive education is inappropriate to them in next years. It is envisaged that these students will be unhappy personnel by unwilling working in tourism sector, lower service quality and increase turnover rate of personnel in tourism sector. In addition, this conclusion is important to raise awareness of educators and students on thinking personality traits too while making university preferences.

Research results are only limited to the students of four units in the university where research is conducted. Conclusions cannot be generalized to all university students in Turkey. Similar one of this research may be applied in universities of other provinces and personality subject may be reviewed with different variables.

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