

Personality Predictors of Resilience among Single Women

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Background: In a traditionally patriarchal society, women have limited or significantly fewer chances to express their needs or participate in decision-making. Single women in a patriarchal society are confronted with several challenges that increase their vulnerability. They often find themselves getting oppressed and suppressed than married women by the prejudices, harassments, social pressures, and domination of male-relative/ family members. There is a drastic and constant increase in the number of single women in India, but little is understood about the factors that challenge and promote positive adaptations in single women. **Aim:** The present study examines whether HEXACO personality dimensions predict psychological distress, happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience among single women. **Method:** A sample of 300 single women (divorced, widows, and separated women) in the age group of 25 to 60 years ($M = 40$ years, $SD = 7.98$) were administered self-report measures of personality, psychological distress, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience. **Results:** Multiple regressions were carried out to analyse the data. Psychological distress was positively predicted by honesty-humility and negatively predicted by extraversion and agreeableness. Subjective happiness was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by honesty-humility. Life satisfaction was positively predicted by extraversion and agreeableness and negatively predicted by openness to experience. Psychological resilience was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by emotionality. **Conclusion:** These findings highlight the role of personality dimensions as individual resources that promote the positive adaptation of single women to the challenges of everyday life. Future research examining the role of demographic, psychological, social, and communal factors that help in positive adaptation among single women can provide a better understanding of the process of resilience in this population. The implications of the findings for policy, practice, and research are also discussed..

Keywords: Single women, Personality, Psychological Distress, Subjective Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Resilience

Single women is an umbrella term that covers widowed women, divorced women, separated women, unmarried mothers, and so on. 'Single women' in the present study were operationalised as women who were widowed, divorced, or separated. Even though the unwed mothers would also fit into this category of single women, they are different in terms of the absence of marital relationships from the former groups. Being in a marital relationship followed by marital dissolution with the death of spouse or separation from the spouse has had different perspectives, risk, and protective factors compared with unwed mothers or other single women categories.

India and other countries in the world witnessed a steady and drastic increase in the number of single women over the past years (Batha, 2017; Bharat, 2008; Härkönen et al., 2020; Schrader, 2019). A speedy transition from traditional male headship to female headship is observed in recent decades. In India, approximately 4.5% of all households are headed by single women (U.N. Women, 2019). Women, particularly middle-aged women, are more likely to become head of households, as they are willing to take responsibilities, take care of their economic needs and the needs of their children (Swain & Pillai, 2005).

Despite many help that they receive, single women still experience many challenges related to work, economy, physical and mental health due to discriminatory practices in the patriarchal society. The economic hardship/poverty, food for children, physical and mental health issues were the frequently reported problem areas among single mothers (Stack, & Meredith, 2017). Regardless of the challenges they face, some tend to overcome the daily challenges and progress in their life. Those factors that aid their adaptations to daily hassles are termed 'protective factors,' and these factors that support positive adaptation are relatively underexplored in single women. There are many internal factors like personality (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), self-esteem (Turner & Roszell, 1994), coping styles (David & Suls, 1999; Pudrovska & Carr, 2008), and external factors like the job (Azar & Vasudeva, 2006; Moen, 1992; Trivedi et al., 2009), income (Lee et al., 2020), and support from others (Bankoff, 1983; Cotten, 1999; Scott et al., 2007; Trivedi et al., 2009; Turner & Lloyd, 1998) that help in positive adaptation in the life after marital dissolution. This current paper focuses on the association between personality factors and a set of positive outcomes, viz., life satisfaction, happiness, psychological distress, and resilience among single women.

Psychological distress is defined as "a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression and anxiety" (Drapeau et al., 2012, p. 105). Earlier studies extensively focused on identifying the factors that are associated with distress. The death of a spouse and divorce are the most distressing life transitions (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Traumatic grief, depressive and anxiety symptoms, loneliness, fear are frequently reported in the studies with widows and divorced women (Chen et al., 1999; Gahler, 2006). Though the effect of psychological stress was found to be effective immediately after divorce (Booth & Amato, 1991), the divorce leaves out a 'permanent strain' in the divorced women (Avison et al., 2007). The single woman must learn to cope with the loss and learn to manage her life, facing and overcoming challenges in her daily life. The Stress process model proposes that the personal resources (social support or personality

dispositions) available to an individual mediates the impact of the psychological consequences (Pearlin et al., 1981), modifies the effect of critical incidents like bereavement after spouse loss (Spahni et al., 2015), and also regulate the consequences of stress (Pai & Carr, 2010). Personality traits of the Big Five are frequently used in research on the association of personality with psychological distress. Some traits are associated with individuals' coping mechanisms from bereavement and other problems. Extraversion and conscientiousness are associated with lower levels of stress reactivity (Vollrath et al., 1999) and also acts as interpersonal resources having a protective effect from bereavement following the loss of the spouse (Pai & Carr, 2010; Stroebe & Schut, 1999). High scorers on extraversion tend to be cheerful, proactive, self-confident, outgoing and, are associated with traits optimistically interpreting negative events or experiences (McCrae & Costa, 1987). High scorers on conscientiousness tend to be self-disciplined, well-organized in their tasks, ready to accept new responsibilities and can manage life after loss (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). High scorers of neuroticism tend to perceive events and experiences as stressful (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). They perceive others as untrustworthy and unsupportive, which hinders them from getting support from others, exacerbating the consequences of stress in widows (Pai & Carr, 2010).

Over the past few decades, there is an increase in the number of researches that focus on subjective wellbeing (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1985). Subjective wellbeing consists of three components: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction, in which the first two components refer to the affective construct, and the third one is the cognitive-judgmental aspect (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener et al., 1985). The affective component of subjective wellbeing is characterized by frequent or intense positive affect or the positive emotions like joy, surprise, elation, and affection that provide pleasant experiences, and also includes the infrequent or general absence of negative affect or the negative emotions that provide unpleasant experiences, guilt, shame, anger, and sadness

(Kashdan, 2004; Luhmann, 2017). Happiness is one of the positive affects and it is an umbrella term that is used interchangeably sometimes with life satisfaction (Veenhoven, 2012). Many internal and external factors contribute to the happiness process. Personality is one such internal factor that influences the situation that results in happiness. Happiness was equally and positively predicted by both extraversion and agreeableness; but strongly and negatively predicted by neuroticism (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997; Warner & Vroman, 2011). Positive affect and positive life events were predicted well by extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1980) along with agreeableness (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Schmutte & Ryff, 1997). Introversion and neuroticism reflect the differences in the negative affect and unpleasant life events (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Watson & Clark, 1984), and so low levels of neuroticism are associated with happiness. Openness to experience is correlated equally with positive affect and life satisfaction, but only modestly with negative affect. Several earlier studies have explained the effect of personality on happiness among the general population, and studies that explain how the personality dimensions affect happiness among single women are very limited. Married women were reported to be happier than unmarried, widowed, divorced, or separated women (Myers, 2000; Oswald, 1997; Simon-Thomas, 2010; Waite et al., 2002; Wolfing, 2019). Widows and unmarried women are consistently found to report less happiness than married women (Holden et al., 2010), and divorced or separated women are reported to be less happy than married women (Myers, 2000; Simon-Thomas, 2010). In the recent years, the divorced women have reported an increase in their self-esteem and being happy despite having additional responsibilities and experiencing emotional burden following the divorce (Byers, n.d.; Gardner & Oswald, 2006; Kingston University, 2013). Further, divorced women were found to be happier than divorced men and they report that they lead a happy life after splitting up from unhappy marriages (Bruk, 2019; Byers, n.d.; Clark & Georgellis, 2013; Kingston University, 2013). It is very interesting to know that divorced women who claim to feel less

happy after divorce have already experienced less happiness during their marriage or even before the marriage (Stutzer & Frey, 2006). So, the reasons behind the changing trends of happiness among single women and the factors that contribute to the happiness and well-being of single women are to be explored further.

Life satisfaction is the cognitive-judgmental aspect that is defined as “the extent to which a person finds life rich, meaningful, full, or of high quality” (VandenBos, 2015, p. 601). It is the way by which people tend to show their feelings, emotions, and how they feel about their options for the future (Anand, 2016). Life satisfaction, happiness, and subjective wellbeing are interrelated, overlap, and are often used interchangeably. Many internal factors and external factors like personality, self-esteem, outlook towards life, relationship with family and friends, life events and experiences, values, age, and income contribute to one’s subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction. There are two approaches to life satisfaction that explains the effects of these factors: bottom-up (considering overall satisfaction as a complex function of various areas of life satisfaction) versus top-down (considering overall satisfaction as a function of personality and other traits) theories. The current study focuses on the effect of personality dimensions (top-down) on the life satisfaction of single women. Analyzing the personality structure and the dispositional factors would help understand the extent to which a person feels satisfied. From the earlier studies carried out with different populations, it was found that among the personality dimensions, neuroticism is negatively associated with life satisfaction (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener, 1984; Heller et al., 2004), and extraversion is positively associated with life satisfaction (Diener, 1984; Donnellan et al., 2004; Heaven et al., 2006; Heller et al., 2004). Agreeableness and conscientiousness contribute by providing a solution to problems (Donnellan et al., 2004; Heaven et al., 2006), whereas openness to experience helps in providing more intelligent solutions to problems (Claxton et al., 2012; Heaven et al., 2006).

Resilience can be understood in multiple ways. It is an innate human capacity and

a skill that can be learned or developed by anyone (Cherry, 2021; Runner & Marshall, 2003). Resilience refers to the capacity of an individual to cope with stress and catastrophe, and a characteristic of resistance to future negative events. The inclination to quickly revert to normalcy after a set-back, not unduly reacting to negative events, appropriately responding to the risk factors (specifically disadvantaged environment) in life, appropriately perceiving the effect of past negative events, defining problems as opportunities, entertaining hope/confidence in coping with future, openness to experience and flexibility construe resilience (Annalakshmi, 2009). It is also defined as "the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant changes that threaten its function, viability, and development" (Masten, 2018, p.1). Resilience also helps the individual in acquiring the necessary skills or resources to survive during and after adverse conditions that is clear from the definition, "in the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways" (Ungar, 2008, p. 225). In addition to that, researchers also consider resilience as both a trait (psychological resilience) and an outcome (ability to thrive following adversity) (Kaplan, 2002; Spahni et al., 2015). Both are justified as the contributing factors providing inter and intra-personal resources to the individual and also as resilient behavior as an outcome. Many decades of research have focused on the factors that contribute to developing resilience. Several studies report that significantly faster recovery from adversities was associated with Big Five factors that are evident from earlier researches (Deng et al, 2020; Eley et al., 2013; Ercan, 2017; Oshio et al., 2018). Early researches also contributed to creating a resilient personality profile that is characterized by a high score on certain Big five factors. Lower levels of neuroticism/emotional stability are associated with resilience (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Friborg et al., 2003; Friborg

et al., 2005). Extraversion and agreeableness have a strong positive association with resilience (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Friborg et al., 2005). Extraverted individuals have an optimistic view, better social integration, and tend to have more adaptive coping strategies (Pai & Carr, 2010; McCrae & Costa, 1987). High scorers of agreeableness are modest, courteous, have compassion, empathy, trust, help, and cooperate well with others (Ercan, 2017). Their high social engagement helps them experience less interpersonal conflicts, get accepted by their environment, and also receive more emotional support and have access to more resources than others, making them resilient (Ercan, 2017; Mohammed & Mostafa, 2015). High conscientious people use proactive problem-focused coping strategies and prepare in advance to face the problem rather than avoiding it (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Conscientiousness has a moderately positive association with resilience (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Friborg et al., 2005; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Being plan-oriented, being focused, achievement-striving, self-discipline, and being industrious are some of the qualities that are significantly associated with the subjective rating of resilience (Furnham et al., 1997), and these qualities help them overcome undesirable outcomes during challenging events (Ercan, 2017).

Need for the study

An increased domestic violence, physical and mental trauma, adjustment problems, relation with in-laws, character assassination, the dominance of spouse, adultery, lack of communication, alcoholism, death of a spouse, need for financial independence, increased love marriages are some of the reasons behind the marital dissolution which give rise to single women. There is a drastic and constant increase in the number of single women in India, but the research on their daily life and wellbeing is still in the infancy stage. There are very limited studies on the resilience process or mechanisms among single women. Also, very few studies had focused on the role of personality, emotion regulation, discriminatory practices, cultural influence, and the role of friends and members other than family over single women. Not much is understood about the factors that challenge and

promote positive adaptations in single women. An understanding of the factors that influence the lives of single women and the mechanism underlying the positive adaptation will help in identifying the risk and protective factors that contribute to the illness and well-being of single women respectively. It will be helpful to know how the daily lives of single women influence the people and situations around them and vice versa. Moreover, such an understanding is essential to identify the factors that need immediate attention of psychologists, social workers, policymakers, legal professionals to develop training programs, make policies, and amend laws for the welfare of single women and their dependents. Early researches have focused on identifying those personality dimensions that contribute to divorce, change in personalities before and after divorce, and even how life after divorce affects their personality; and have also focused on how the death of the spouse affects the personality of widowed women. The impact of personality dimensions in leading a happy and satisfying life following the marital dissolution, and contribution of personality dimensions to psychological distress and resilience after the marital dissolution is less explored. So the present study attempts to examine personality predictors of resilience among single women to understand the role of personality as risk/protective factors in them.

Aim

The present study examines if the HEXACO personality dimensions predict psychological distress, happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience among single women.

Method

Participants

A sample of 300 single women in the age group 25 to 60 years ($M = 39.82$, $SD = 7.83$) was recruited using the exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling method from a city in South India. The majority of them were Hindus (81%), belonging to the B.C. category (69.7%). The majority of the participants were divorced (42.7%) and has children (90%). The majority of the participants were residing in a small town (44.7%) and were native to

western districts of Tamil Nadu (52%) and native speakers of Tamil language (66%), had High school (37.7%) education level and were self-employed (58.7%), having their own houses (55.7%), living within a nuclear family setting (74.7%), and their household is headed by them (64.3%).

Measures

A series of self-report measures were used in this investigation to measure the independent variables of the study, including personality factors, and to measure the dependent variables of the study, including life satisfaction, subjective happiness, psychological problems, and resilience. In addition to the above measures, a personal data sheet was also administered to the participants.

HEXACO – Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R; Ashton & Lee, 2009): HEXACO – Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R) or HEXACO-60 is a short personality inventory that purports to assess personality across the six traits of human personality. The respondents had to respond to a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in terms of items that best describe their personality. HEXACO-PI-R consists of 60 items with six domain level scales and 24 facet level scales under the six domains. The six domain level scales were honesty-humility (H), emotionality (E), extraversion (X), agreeableness versus anger (A), conscientiousness (C), and openness to experience (O). Honesty – humility scale is a major domain consisting of 4 facets, namely sincerity, fairness, greed avoidance, and modesty. The emotionality scale is a domain consisting of four facets, namely fearfulness, anxiety, dependence, and sentimentality. The extraversion scale is a domain consisting of 4 facets, namely social self-esteem, social boldness, sociability, and liveliness. The agreeableness scale is a domain consisting of 4 facets, namely forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility, and patience. The conscientiousness scale is a domain consisting of 4 facets, namely organization, diligence, perfectionism, and prudence. Openness to experience scale is a domain consisting of 4 facets, namely aesthetic

appreciation, inquisitiveness, creativity, and unconventionality. The scores on each of the subscales were obtained by summing up all the scores pertaining to the items relevant to a particular domain level and facet level subscales. The maximum and minimum possible scores on each subscale are 50 and 10, respectively. High scores on the honesty-humility scale represent the tendency to avoid manipulating others, do not break the rules, and are not interested in luxuries, elevated social status, or special titles. High scores on the emotionality scale represent the tendency to experience fear and anxiety to life hassles, need support from others, are empathetic, and are attached to others. High scores on the extraversion scale represent the tendency to feel positive, confident while addressing others, enjoy gatherings, active and enthusiastic. High scores on the agreeableness scale represent the tendency to forgive others, be lenient in judging others, wish to compromise and cooperate with others, and have control of their temper. High scores on the conscientiousness scale represent the tendency to organize them and others, systematically work towards their goals, strive for accuracy and perfection in their tasks, and are cautious when making decisions. High scores on the openness to experience scale represent the tendency to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of art and nature, be inquisitive about various domains of knowledge, are creative, and appreciate unusual ideas or people. The alpha of the subscales of honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience on the present sample were .68, .41, .65, .85, .77, and .57, respectively.

Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995): The Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) is a set of three self-report clinical measures that purport to measure the three related negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. Originally DASS has 42 items. The questionnaire used for current research is a short version of DASS. The short version consists of 21 items with seven items distributed for each subscale, and the respondent has to respond to each item with a 4-point rating scale, ranging from

0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time) in terms of three related negative emotional states. The scale was divided into three subscales viz., depression, anxiety, stress. The depression scale measures dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest or involvement, anhedonia, and inertia. The anxiety scale measures autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect. The stress scale measures difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/ agitated, irritated, over-reactive, and impatient. The scores on depression, anxiety, and stress are calculated by summing up all the scores pertaining to the items relevant to a particular subscale and multiplying the score by 2 to obtain the final score for each subscale. Only the total scale score was used for the analysis. The maximum and minimum score possible for the overall scale is 126 and 42 respectively. A high score on scales indicates higher psychological distress. The alpha coefficient of the psychological distress in the present sample is .96.

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999): The Subjective Happiness Scale was designed to measure global subjective happiness. It consists of 4 items on which two items ask the respondents to respond with seven options to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings ranging from 1 (not a very happy person) to 7 (a very happy person) and also rating relative to peers ranging from 1 (less happy) to 7 (more happy). The other two items provide brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals and ask the respondents to rate the extent to which each characterization describes them by responding 1 (not at all) to 7 (a great deal). The respondents completed each item by choosing one of the seven different options for each of the questions. The maximum and minimum possible scores on the scale are 28 and 4, respectively. The higher scores indicate greater happiness. The alpha of the happiness scale on the present sample is .72.

Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS; Margolis et al., 2019): The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) focuses on individuals' evaluation of life contentment. This scale

replaced the earlier dominant measure of life satisfaction, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985). The RLSS was developed as an improved measure of life satisfaction by increasing the bandwidth of the measure and reducing the acquiescence bias that was noticed in the earlier scale by introducing the indirect (negative) items and balancing the items. The scale consists of 6 items, and the respondents had to respond upon a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The total score was derived arrived at by summing the response to all six items. The maximum and minimum scores possible on the scale are 42 and 6, respectively. A high score indicates a high level of life satisfaction/contentment. The alpha of the life satisfaction scale on the present sample is .78.

Bharathiar University Resilience Scale (BURS; Annalakshmi, 2009): The Bharathiar University Resilience Scale purports to measure the resilience of an individual. It has 30-items with a 5-point rating option, ranging from 1 (not at all appropriate) to 5 (most appropriate). The scale measures resilience in terms of duration to get back to normalcy, reaction to negative events, response to risk factors (specifically, disadvantaged environment) in life, perception of the effect of past negative events, defining problems, hope/confidence in coping with future and openness to experience and flexibility. The total score was derived by summing the response to all the items. The maximum and minimum scores possible on the scale are 150 and 30, respectively. A high score indicates a high level of resilience. The alpha of the resilience scale on the present sample is .94.

Personal datasheet: A personal data sheet was used to collect the demographic details related to the participants and their family backgrounds. It includes demographic information, education and occupation details, family type and residence, details of family members, current marital status and details of dissolution, family headship, the health status of participants, and their contact information.

Ethical consideration and procedure

The participants were invited to participate

in the research, and written informed consent was obtained from them before collecting data. They were assured of confidentiality and privacy, informed about their right to decline or withdraw, and briefed about the nature of the research before recruiting them to participate in the study. The instruments chosen for the present investigation were self-administered individually to the subjects. The instruments were translated into the regional language (Tamil) that is convenient for the subjects to comprehend. The total time involved for individual self-administration was 45 minutes per participant. The participants showed great interest in participating in the study and cooperated with pleasure.

Statistical analysis

Multiple Regressions was carried out to analyze the data.

Results

Multiple regression was carried out to examine the unique contributions of the independent variable of HEXACO personality dimensions over the dependent variables of psychological distress, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience, and the results were presented as follows.

Table 1- Multiple regression analysis of HEXACO personality dimensions predicting psychological distress in single women

Model	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	T
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Honesty-humility	1.18	.26	.31	4.51 ***
Emotionality	.06	.31	.01	.20 ^{ns}
Extraversion	-1.18	.34	-.26	-3.47 **
Agreeableness	-1.29	.34	-.42	-3.84 ***
Conscientiousness	-.31	.40	-.08	-.76 ^{ns}
Openness to experience	-.04	.24	-.01	-.18 ^{ns}

Note: $R^2 = .36$, Adj $R^2 = .36$, $F(6, 293) = 27.82$, $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = not sig.

The multiple regression analysis for overall predictor variables produced $R^2 = .36$, $F(6, 293) = 27.82$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that honesty-humility ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively predicted psychological distress. Also, extraversion ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .01$) and agreeableness ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .001$) significantly and negatively predicted psychological distress. Honesty-humility along with extraversion and agreeableness explain 36% of the variance in psychological distress.

Table 2 - Multiple regression analysis of HEXACO personality dimensions predicting subjective happiness in single women

Model	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	T
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Honesty-humility	-.12	.04	-.22	-2.72 **
Emotionality	.06	.05	.09	1.23 ns
Extraversion	.23	.06	.36	4.04 ***
Agreeableness	.07	.06	.16	1.26 ns
Conscientiousness	-.12	.07	-.22	-1.74 ns
Openness to experience	-.04	.04	-.07	-1.10 ns

Note: $R^2 = .13$, $Adj R^2 = .12$, $F(6, 293) = 7.45$, $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = not sig.

The multiple regression analysis for overall predictor variables produced $R^2 = .13$, $F(6, 293) = 7.45$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that honesty-humility ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .01$) significantly and negatively predicted happiness. Also, extraversion ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively predicted happiness. Honesty-humility and extraversion explain 13% of the variance in happiness.

Table 3 - Multiple regression analysis of HEXACO personality dimensions predicting life satisfaction in single women

Model	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	T
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Honesty-humility	-.04	.08	-.04	-.47 ns
Emotionality	-.06	.10	-.04	-.57 ns

Extraversion	.29	.11	.22	2.70 **
Agreeableness	.40	.10	.46	3.85 ***
Conscientiousness	-.16	.13	-.15	-1.26 ns
Openness to experience	-.24	.07	-.19	-3.20 ***

Note: $R^2 = .23$, $Adj R^2 = .22$, $F(6, 293) = 14.91$, $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = not sig.

The multiple regression analysis for overall predictor variables produced $R^2 = .25$, $F(6, 293) = 17.92$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that extraversion ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$), and agreeableness ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively predicted life satisfaction. Also, openness to experience ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .001$) significantly and negatively predicted life satisfaction. Extraversion and agreeableness along with openness to experience explain 23% of the variance in life satisfaction.

Table 4 - Multiple regression analysis of HEXACO personality dimensions predicting psychological resilience in single women

Model	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	T
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Honesty-humility	.33	.18	.12	1.84 ns
Emotionality	-.56	.22	-.16	-2.62 **
Extraversion	1.28	.23	.40	5.49 ***
Agreeableness	-.04	.23	-.02	-.19 ns
Conscientiousness	.27	.28	.10	.98 ns
Openness to experience	.10	.17	.03	.59 ns

Note: $R^2 = .40$, $Adj R^2 = .38$, $F(6, 293) = 32.16$, $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, ns = not sig.

The Multiple Regression Analysis for overall predictor variables produced $R^2 = .40$, $F(6, 293) = 32.16$, $p < .001$. The analysis showed that emotionality ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$) significantly and negatively predicted resilience. Also, extraversion ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively predicted resilience. Emotionality along with extraversion explains 40% of the variance in resilience.

Discussion

Most of the early researches used Big Five personality factors to explain personality traits, but the current study used HEXACO personality dimensions. The emotionality of the HEXACO model is very similar to the neuroticism of Big Five, but the key difference lies in reconceptualising, excluding anger or ill-tempered terms and including terms like lack of bravery/courage, being less pejorative, and not using labels for those who score high in neuroticism. The present study aimed to examine if the HEXACO personality dimensions predict positive adaptation in single women. Positive adaptation, in this study, was operationalised in terms of psychological distress, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience among single women. The present study showed interesting findings that are discussed below.

Psychological distress was positively predicted by honesty-humility. Honesty-humility is a personality trait that is measured in terms of its facets of sincerity (unwilling to be dishonest and non-manipulative), fairness (unwilling to cheat/ not engaging in fraudulent acts), greed-avoidance (no wish for luxury, simple, value things of others), and modest (not wishing for any entitlements or respect from others, being humble). Earlier studies showed that honesty-humility was negatively associated with type D constituents like depression, lack of trust, negative affect, and much more (Carlander & Johansson, 2020; Esmaeilpour et al., 2013; Mols & Denollet, 2010; Palahang, et al., 2011), but the findings of present study show is contradictory to this. The honesty-humility dimension has positively predicted psychological distress. This may be because people who are high in honesty-humility tend to have high positive social expectations, but the self-uncertainty following marital dissolution would lead to a lack of trust over others (Pfattheicher & Böhm, 2018), which in turn may lead to distress in some individuals. In addition to honesty-humility, the present study also revealed that the dimensions of extraversion and agreeableness have negatively predicted psychological distress. Extraversion, along with agreeableness, was negatively correlated with generalized anxiety

and depressive symptoms (Nikčević et al., 2021). The findings of the present study related to extraversion and agreeableness are in line with the earlier researches. People who score low in extraversion were associated with emotional disorders, social phobia, and chronic life stress (Uliaszek et al., 2010). Single women who scored low in extraversion do not mingle with others and also find it struggling to work in a social setting (Cherry, 2020). Low scores in extraversion reflect their tendency of stopping themselves from reaching out to available resources (Jarrett, 2016). It also prohibits them from receiving help and support from others in the community and hence they are more likely to experience stress. People who score low in agreeableness tend to have hostile thoughts and feelings, show anger, often act out towards others and have conflicts in their relationships which makes them vulnerable to negative affect (Gordon, 2020). So, it is clear that single women who are less agreeable tend to have conflicts with others, would compare their lives with others, and constantly worry about their life. They may engage in hostile behaviors that affect them as well as those around them, making their lives even more stressful. These single women experience low self-esteem, frequent anger outbursts, be hostile, and always act out with people around them (Baum et al., 2005; Symoens et al., 2014).

Subjective happiness was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by honesty-humility. Earlier studies showed that extraversion was strongly associated with happiness (Aghababaei & Arji, 2014; Pollock et al., 2016). Optimism, high social skills, high activity, and using reward systems are some of the key factors that promote happiness among extraverts (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Salary & Shaieri, 2013). However, honesty-humility negatively predicted subjective happiness. Single women who score high on honesty-humility tend to be sincere, fair, do not wish for luxuries, modest, and lead a simple and virtuous life, which is appreciated as 'good' virtue and this factor has been found to provide the eudemonic happiness of leading a respectful virtuous life, but it does not help in attaining hedonic personal pleasure of enjoying the life and experiencing things like

other married women do. Also, these 'virtuous' single women are always observed by others for their activities and behaviors, where they are expected to behave more virtuous, and even better than before. Thus, these honest/ humble single women have problems in sustaining the eudemonic happiness and also in experiencing hedonic happiness (Aghababaei & Arji, 2014; Aghababaei & Tekke, 2018; Pollock et al., 2016).

Life satisfaction in single women was positively predicted by extraversion and agreeableness. The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of the previous researches that the dimensions of extraversion and agreeableness have positively predicted life satisfaction (Aghababaei & Arji, 2014). Individuals with high scores on extraversion reported greater life satisfaction (Pollock et al., 2016; Aghababaei et al., 2016) because the extraverts were able to create better social experiences by making new friends/peers, spending more time with them, have more happy moments with them, make these extroverts happy and more satisfied with their life (Harris et al., 2017). The present study also showed that individuals with high scores on agreeableness experience more life satisfaction. People who score high on agreeableness compare their lives with others advantageously and thus become satisfied with their lives (Lamers, 2014). Single women who are high on agreeableness try to forgive the offender, despite knowing that forgiving cannot salvage the broken relationship, but it helps them to deal with the offender gently and healthily and it also helps in personal recovery and develops a sense of control over their lives (Metts & Cupach, 2007). Single women who scored high on agreeableness tend to have a healthy comparison of themselves with others, be flexible in making decisions, reach and acquire resources, be gentle with others, would focus on improving their skills and problem-solving capacities, thereby achieving success that gives life satisfaction. Surprisingly, the present study also showed that life satisfaction was negatively predicted by openness to experience. Earlier studies suggested that openness to experience was positively associated with life satisfaction. Conversely, single women who are more open to experiences are sensitive and vulnerable

for altering positive and negative experiences, which over time feel exhausted. Moreover, the single women who do not have favourable neighbourhoods or unfavourable environments would feel stressed despite accepting or adjusting to those life events initially.

The present study showed that resilience was positively predicted by extraversion and negatively predicted by emotionality. Extraversion is strongly associated with resilience, as the extraverted people tend to experience more positive emotions, are sociable, easily create an attachment with others, thereby helping individuals to adaptively respond to their changing environment and effected in bouncing back from negative past experiences (Lü et al., 2014). Whereas emotionality was negatively associated with mental toughness (Ryerson, 2018) and resilience, particularly influences innate resilience (Hagihara & Kato, 2018). The high scorers in emotionality tend to experience anxiety, depend on and need support from others, have a fear of physical danger, which restricts the individual in acting forward when facing adverse situations. Single women who scored high on emotionality experience constant fear and feel anxious in all their activities. They have fear of harassment, fear of handling discrimination, and related practices by the family, relatives, colleagues, and other members of the society. They always depend on someone, need support from others to solve their problems, and do not act forward without others. This restricts them from getting enough available resources, stopping them from developing effective coping strategies, and resulting in them feeling more stressed. So, this shows that being a highly emotional personality makes it hard to deal with stressors, increases vulnerability, and creates an inability to adapt to stressful adverse situations.

Implications

The present study is a correlational study that examined whether the HEXACO personality dimensions predict psychological distress, happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience among single women. The study exclusive reliance on quantitative method can be seen as restricting the depth of understanding

it can yield on the phenomenon under study. Future research may include qualitative methods for in-depth investigation of the phenomenon under focus. Researches that include projective tests that help to uncover and identify the hidden feelings and conflicts of single women may be attempted. Moreover, future researchers may also use psychological tests that purport to screen and identify the internalizing, externalizing, social, and other problems of single women. Effective and specialised training programs that focus on personality development can be useful to enhance positive adaptation among single women. The aim of the present study was restricted to understanding the role of personality in shaping resilience, excluding the role of external demographic factors. The demographic factors like employment, socioeconomic status, family members, and place of residence may also play a significant role in shaping psychological resilience among single women and hence future studies should include within their scope the external factors that can influence resilience in single women to get a holistic picture. It can also help in developing new opportunities for the single women.

Conclusion

Several personality factors were identified from the present study as predictors of positive adaptation among single women. Positive adaptation was operationalised in this study in terms of psychological distress, subjective happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological resilience. Being honest, sincere virtuous are respected and appreciated by others, but it will also increase their expectations for more good outcomes, which may, in turn, increase the burden on the individuals. In recent years, single women are appreciated for their honest intentions, bold, and courageous actions. However, the expectations of others, increase in new challenges and daily hassles, lamenting over memories, and inability to fully express the happiness or live the independence acquired following marital dissolution may lead to distress and reduce happiness. Also, single women who are highly emotional, experience more distressful life events than others and have challenges in making positive adaptations to stressful life events. Among all the personality

dimensions considered in this study, extraversion is the only factor that had positively predicted all the dependent variables except psychological distress. Being extravert helps single women to lead a happy and satisfying life, and it also helps them to develop psychological resilience to overcome the challenges of daily lives. Single women high on agreeableness traits tend to have a favourable comparison with one another, reducing the risk of acting out behaviours and lead satisfying life. Regardless of being open to experiences, single women are worried by changing positive and negative experiences and are also troubled by the characteristics of the environment, the people, interaction, and relationship with those in their neighbourhood and it influences their satisfaction towards life. It is understood that personality dimensions are a significant predictor of life satisfaction, happiness, psychological distress, and resilience among single women. As reported in previous researches, personality is one of the internal factors that both positively and negatively affect the lives of single women. Understanding the personality predictors of the psychological resilience of single women helps to understand how certain personality factors can thwart or support positive adaptation among single women. This can also help design interventions to promote resilience in single women by nurturing the personality traits that strengthen resilience. Lack of researches on personality of single women restricts our understanding on the role of personality in helping single women make positive adaptation in their lives and hence, further research in this area is necessary.

Limitations

The limitations of the study may be duly considered while drawing inferences from the findings of this study. The present study was carried out with 300 single women participants, which is a small representation of the single women population. The total estimate of the target population is unknown because they are hidden and unreachable restricting the researcher to determine the effective sample size that represent the target population. Using secondary sources of data already available, social networking sites and mass media would

help the researchers in reaching 'this hard to reach' target population. The present study was restricted to recruit the single women participants currently residing in a single city of South India, regardless of the language they speak or the caste and religion they belong to. Including residents from other geographic locations would increase the chances of comparison between the samples residing in two different locations to know the effect of geographic locations and their culture on the participants. A non-random sampling procedure, i.e., exponential discriminatory snowball sampling was used for the present study. There is a chance of bias in the sampling and the representativeness of the sample to the target population, which could be reduced by using respondent-driven sampling to weigh and assure that the samples were collected randomly. Despite using sound reliable self-report measures, there are chances of response bias, social desirability bias, and acquaintance bias. Using multi-method assessment rather than using self-rating alone will reduce such biases. Also, the present study was limited only to quantitative data that covers various psychological aspects of the functioning of single women. Using qualitative research to have in-depth investigation and/or mixed-method that combine both qualitative and quantitative data helps to examine and provide accurate, reliable and valid test results and also helps to understand the experience of the participants from a broader and deeper perspective. The present study involved the primary source of data collected from single women participants, excluding information that could be obtained from their family, friends, neighbours, and children. Including data from other sources would add richness to data and give reliable results. The present study also restricted to single women, whose experiences could be distinctly different from single men. Including other cohorts like married women and single men, in studies on single women, for comparison can benefit in providing better insights immensely. The role of personality in the life of single women was the focus of the present study and so the role of other significant internal factors like cognition, motivation, and emotion, and external factors like external environment,

people in the workplace, financial issues were not examined in the present study. Exploring the role of demographic factors like occupation and income of the participants, members supporting the family, reason and years of dissolution; familial factors like family cohesion and support of family; community factors like social support and support from the community; other factors like stigma and discriminatory practices help in identifying potential variables that shape positive adaptation, and also to know about the relationship between the study variables that helps in acquiring a holistic deeper understanding of the life of single women.

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