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Brief Communication

E-Culture and Personality Dimensions among University Students

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The present study explores the relationship between e-culture and personality dimensions. Sample comprised of 100 students (50 females and 50 males) between the age group of 18 to 24 years (Mean Age=21.1 years) studying at Annamalai University. Tools used for data collection were the (1) E-culture inventory, (2) Multivariable personality inventory, chosen after a comprehensive review of related literature. Subjects were contacted individually by the researcher and data was collected through face-to-face interview. The responses were scored and statistically analyzed. Pearson's product moment correlation was calculated. Results indicated that e-culture is positively and significantly related to the personality dimensions of 'need-achievement' and 'dominance.'

The innovations in the field of science and technology during the 20th and 21st centuries have caused an explosion in the use of electronic items throughout the globe. Prevalence and excessive use of electronic goods has been found among people cutting across cultural differences. Electronic technology is changing our life-style to a great extent. There are many areas of electronic technology helping different sections of common man.

Breakthroughs made in the arena of information technology and communications (ICT) have resulted in the emergence of e-banking, e-commerce, e-governance and e-medicine, etc, which have set in a trend for e-culture (Patel & Rajendran, 2005). According to Uzelac (2003) the ICT revolution started some decades ago but its development towards network logic was brought about by the Internet which gave it an extra push. It is the ICT-availability and Internet access that provides opportunities for production of e-culture (Mercer, 2003).

E-culture is both technological and a social development. There is a widespread consensus that new digital and networking technologies like the World Wide Web (WWW) and the Internet have the capacity to change the domains of everyday social and personal life by transforming work and knowledge forms, gender and body politics, health and science, domestic life and entertainment as well as transforming national economics and international relations, democracy and the distribution of power (Dona Kolar-Panov, 2003).

Presently research on e-culture is at a rudimentary level and thus is its definition. Scholars working in this field have attempted to define e-culture in different ways, but all being far from conclusive. Patel and Rajendran (2005) have defined "electronic culture" as "increased use of electronic goods by individuals in various areas." According to the view of De Haan and Huysmans (2002) the term 'e-culture' is stated to refer to the diffusion

of new technology, its application for various avenues such as information and communication in addition to shifts effected in related attitudes, values and norms.

Culture and psychological processes influence one another and a dynamic interplay exists between them (Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004). According to Oishi (2004) 'culture and personality" is one of the fashionable slogans of contemporary social science. The culture and personality study also called "Psychological Anthropology," is a branch of anthropology that seeks to determine the nature of the interest between the individual and his culture. Numerous research studies in anthropology and social psychology indicate the influence of culture upon personality variables. Chauhan (1985) indicates that the impact of culture upon man is of crucial concern. Cultures are diverse and dynamic social systems and not static monoliths (Bandura, 2002), cultural changes are inevitable due to innovations exert influence on personality.

The knowledge and understanding of personality serves many a purpose. It helps to anticipate and cope with the problems of interpersonal interaction and also facilitates the process of accommodation and assimilation to environment. For psychologists, knowledge about factors influencing personality is of crucial importance, it enables them to predict and manipulate the behaviour of the clients productively.

Purpose of the study

Researches on e-culture now are only at the beginning of a long process. Reviews indicate that studies on e-culture are fragmented and inadequate. Scanty information is available about the effect of e-culture on social and cultural development. Only recently, the International research community has started showing interest in exploring e-culture. The impetus for the new interest may be the realization that e-culture is widespread, inevitable and also places adaptive demands upon people.

In India, unfortunately, the research efforts in understanding and investigating the status of e-culture have not yet gained momentum. The research and academic community are dormant regarding the influence of e-culture. An examination of related literature in Indian context indicates that e-culture has received poor attention. In particular, from a psychological perspective, e-culture still remains unexplored at local level and less explored at global level. The knowledge and understanding of the relationship between cultural changes and personality is indispensable in order to mould and govern one's behavioural pattern. It is now essential for psychologists to also evaluate the influence of e-culture upon personality, as the emerging and encompassing e-culture effects shifts in related attitudes, values and norms (De Haan & Huysmans, 2002). Hence this study is an attempt to explore the relationship between e-culture and personality dimensions in Indian context.

Method

Sample

The sample for this study comprised of 100 students (50 females and 50 males) randomly selected from Annamalai University, Chidambaram Taluk in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu. The age range of the sample were between 18 to 24 years (Mean Age= 22.1 years).

Tools

The research tools used in this study for data collection were the (1) E-culture Inventory and (2) Multivariable Personality Inventory.

(1) E-culture inventory: This inventory was developed by Patel and Rajendran (2005) to measure e-culture. The inventory consists of 42 items with 2 responses, i.e., "yes" and "no" respectively for each item. The 42 items are classified into 4 areas, namely, home=16 items, office=11 items, personal=8 items and

public=7 items. The score for 'yes' in home area is 2, in office is 1, in personal area is 3 and in public area is 1 were as the score for 'no' in all the areas is 0. The maximum score possible in this inventory is 74 and the minimum score is 0. High score indicates high e-culture and low score indicates low e-culture. The reliability and validity co-efficient for this inventory were found to be highly significant at 0.001 levels.

(2) Multivariable Personality Inventory (MPI): This inventory was developed by Muthayya (1973) is a multidimensional measure on personality. This tool measures an individuals personality based on nine personality variables, namely, dominance, neuroticism, empathy, need-achievement, ego-ideal, introversion, self-confidence, dogmatism, and pessimism.

This inventory consists of 50 items distributed among 9 dimensions represented in it. There are 5 items in empathy, 5 on ego-ideal, 6 in pessimism, 7 in neuroticism, 6 in introversion, 5 in need-achievement, 5 in self-confidence, 5 in dogmatism, and 6 in dominance. This measure is a two point scale; each item is followed by two responses: 'yes' and 'no'. The 'yes' response indicates the presence of the variable in the respondent and the 'no' the absence of it. A score of 1 is given for the presence of the variable (that is, 'yes' response) and 0 for the absence of it (that is, for 'no' response). If an item is unanswered it is not taken for consideration. The 9 different variables of the inventory receive different range of scores. The higher the score in a trait indicates the prevalence of that trait in the respondent. Each of the 50 items included in this scale was based on satisfactory validity indices obtained. The developer of the scale obtained reliability co-efficient of 0.52; significant at 0.01 levels.

Procedure

The subjects were personally and individually contacted by the researcher and data was obtained through face-to face interview. The duration of data collection were spread over a period of one month. The obtained responses were scored and statistically analyzed.

Results and Discussion

The objective of the study is to explore the relationship of e-culture with personality dimensions. For this purpose Pearson's product moment correlation were calculated, since no significant gender differences were found results for both sexes are combined and given in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson's moment correlation co-efficient for e-culture with personality dimensions.

Personality dimensions	r
Empathy	-0.015
Ego-Ideal	-0.016
Pessimism	0.079
Introversion	-0.011
Neuroticism	-0.014
Need Achievement	0.119*
Self-Confidence	0.033
Dogmatism	-0.007
Dominance	0.118*

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$

It is inferred from the results summarized in Table 1 that e-culture is positively and significantly related to two personality dimensions, namely, need-achievement and dominance. This study reveals that people high in the personality traits of 'need-achievement' and 'dominance' tend to make more use of electronic products. The increased indulgence in electronic culture by them may be a symbolic indication of their achievements and also an effort to dominate others.

Van Dijk (2001) has pointed the conditions for the emergence of e-culture as four different

types of access to information and communication technology (ICT): (1) motivation- which concerns psychical access to ICT, the interest in it, the will to use it and the lack of fear of new technology; (2) possession- means in this context the availability of equipment and an Internet connection at home or at work, school or university; (3) use- the actual use that people make of available possibilities; and (4) skills- the possession of digital skills.

Hence the presence of motivation to posses and use electronic products and also acquiring the required digital skills by individuals high in 'need-achievement' and 'dominance' might be felt as an accomplishment enabling them to feel superior to others who lack it.

The present study indicates that personality dimensions of 'need-achievement' and 'dominance' are positively and significantly related to e-culture.

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