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# Personality Correlates of Social Capital

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***Abstract:*** *The purpose of the study was to examine some personality factors related to different dimensions of social capital. The sample comprised 200 students randomly drawn from semi-urban degree colleges located in Vaishali district of Bihar (India). The study entailed measuring extraversion; and neuroticism dimensions of personality using established psychometric tests. The study yielded a number of factors of social capital i.e., bonding with friends, acceptance of system, support & cooperation, selfishness and harmony. The findings revealed that dimensions of personality such as extraversion was significantly and positively related to factors of social capital such as bonding with friends. However, social capital factors such as selfishness and harmony were negatively associated to neuroticism dimension of personality.*

***Key words:*** *Social capital, Personality dimensions, Factor analysis*

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## I. Introduction

Social scientists (e.g., Bourdieu, 1980, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993) in the field of social capital have made considerable efforts in defining social capital. In fact, social capital implies different things to different people (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2000). Coleman (1988) describes social capital as a resource of individuals that emerges from societies. Thus, the source of social capital is interaction with the people, a person is related to. Coleman uses the term to refer to all human relationships and describes social capital in functional terms as "the value of those aspects of social structure to actors as resources that they can use to achieve their interest". Putnam (2000) identifies the two main components of social capital as "bonding" and "bridging" capital. Bonding refers to the interaction between like people and represents immediate family, close friends and professional colleagues who help people to "get by". Bridging refers to the vertical links between a person and other outside groups and is more likely to enable people to build links that allow them to get on (Blackshaw& Long, 2005).

Few empirical studies linked personality traits to the social network structure. Burt et al. (1998) confirmed the idea that personality varies systematically with structural holes. Recent studies also investigated how the certain personality types might affect the structural position of the individual in the network. Klein et al. (2004) looked into the effect of demographic characteristics, values and Big Five personality traits on the network centrality. In particular, they found that individuals that are highly educated and low in neuroticism (high on emotional stability) became high in advice and friendship centrality and low in adversarial centrality. Surprisingly, openness to experience was negatively correlated to friendship centrality.

Some people in the society find a place easily on many social networks and they have the propensity to derive benefit from societal interactions. They are perceived by people around them as more sociable, outgoing and approachable. They share their experiences with others and also show concern for others. They seem to possess high social capital. Similarly within organizations, some employees are on many formal and informal networks; they are the employees who are always "available". They keep keen interest in the affairs of the organization and interact freely with others. These persons have better networking which they leverage for their personal advancement and growth. Definitely they possess higher social capital. On the other hand, there are people both within the community and in organizations who are reserved, do not mingle freely with others and mostly keep to themselves.

People's individual attitudes, values and characteristics have a bearing on their social capital. In other words individual's personality to some extent is able to predict how an individual sense, interpret and act on the information and stimuli which they receive from their environment. Therefore, personality factors can be good predictors for many aspects of social phenomena. Some personality characteristics enhance social capital; some other personality characteristics diminish social capital. The present study was undertaken with a view to examining the relationship between personality factors and the factors of social capital. Two personality factors have been included in the present study, which are as follows: *extraversion* and *neuroticism.*

Extraversion dimension of personality has been hypothesized to enhance social capital; while neuroticism has been hypothesized to weaken social capital. Extroverts have been found to have more social capital (Swickert, Rosentreter, Hittner & Mushrush, 2002). Highly extroverted people are generally more warm,

sociable, assertive and active (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Based on these characteristics, it is no surprise that extraversion is associated with the magnitudes of social capital (Brown, 1996; Pollet et al. 2011).
The aim of the present study is to examine how do extraversion and neuroticism dimensions of personality related to the individual's social capital. The following hypotheses have been formulated:

- *It was hypothesized that the different components of social capital would be positively related to each other.*
- *Extraversion dimension of personality would be positively related to different components of social capital.*
- *Neuroticism dimension of personality would not positively related to different components of social capital.*

## II. Method of study

**Sample**

Sample comprised of 200 students randomly drawn from degree colleges in the district of Vaishali (Bihar). Two-thirds of the respondents was undergraduate and remaining one-third was postgraduate. The distribution of educational level of respondents' father was 20.5% non-matriculate, 15.0% matriculation pass, 14.0% graduate and 50.5% holding post graduate degree.

**Tests and Instruments**

The following tests and instruments were employed:

(i) For measuring personality factors such as *extraversion* and *neuroticism*, a scale developed by Bhushan (1969) was used.
(ii) A set of questionnaire was developed consisting of 52 items measuring different dimensions of social capital (Lakshmi, 2016).
(iii) A Personal Data Blank was prepared to elicit biographical and other information, such as age of the respondents, educational level, gender etc.

**Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)**

The Hindi version of the *Eysenck Personality Inventory* (Bhushan, 1969) was used to measure the personality dimensions. The inventory comprises 57 (fifty-seven) items, out of which 24 items measure *extraversion* (E) and another 24 items measure *neuroticism* (N), the rest nine items constitute the lie-scale of the inventory. The validity coefficients of the Hindi version for both *extraversion* (*r*=.89) and *neuroticism* (*r*=.84) were significant. The reliability of the test was also convincingly high. For the *extraversion* dimension the split-half reliability (*rii*=.64), test-retest reliability (*rii*=.73) and the index of reliability (*rii*=.78) were highly significant. Similarly, for the *neuroticism* dimension, the split-half reliability (*rii*=.50), the test-retest reliability (*rii*=.76) and index of reliability (*rii*=.78) were all highly significant. The reliability coefficients for the lie-scale have not been reported by the author.

**Development of Social Capital Measure**

Respondents' social capital was assessed with the help of the questionnaire developed by Lakshmi (2015). The responses were rated on a 5-points scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Initially, the questionnaire comprised of 60 items to assess the social capital of the respondents. Subsequently, eight items were dropped on the basis of item analysis. Finally, responses to the remaining 52 items were factor analyzed using the principal component analysis (PCA) with rotated varimax solution on the criteria that eigenvalue should not be less than 1(one) and the factor must have acceptable reliability (alpha coefficient > .60). An initial analysis (SPSS-17 version) was run to obtain eigenvalue for each factor of the data. Kaiser's (1960) rule was followed to determine which factors were more eligible for interpretation because this rule requires that a given factor is capable of explaining at least the equivalent of one variable's variance. Using this rule, five factors had eigenvalue over Kaiser's criterion of 1.
Factor I was given the name, '*Bonding with friends*'. The factor explained 78.20 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability *(rii = .80).*
Factor II was given the name, *'Acceptance of system'*. The factor explained 24.36 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability *(rii = .73).*
Factor III was given the name, '*Support and cooperation'*. This factor explained 34.64 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability *(rii = .72).*
Factor IV was given the name, '*Selfishness*'. This factor explained 12.93 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability *(rii = .60).*
Factor V was given the name, *'Harmony'*. This factor explained 14.50 per cent of the common variance and also showed higher reliability *(rii = .68).*

## III. Results & Discussion

In order to examine the hypothesis that the different components of social capital would be positively related to each other, coefficients of correlation have been computed. Table 1 presents the summary of the coefficients of correlation.

**Table 1** Mean, SD & Inter-correlations of Factors of Social Capital

| Factors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.Bonding with friends** | | | | | 3.29 | .68 |
| **2.Acceptance of system** | .11 | | | | 2.61 | .82 |
| **3.Support &Cooperation** | **.37**** | **.27**** | | | 2.75 | .65 |
| **4.Selfisness** | **-.26**** | -.13 | **-.22**** | | 2.94 | .89 |
| **5.Harmony** | **.17*** | .02 | **.20**** | **-.21**** | 4.33 | .63 |

***p*<.01,**p*<.05, N=200

Table 1 displayed that the factor of social capital such as *bonding with friends* was positively associated to *support & cooperation* ($r$ =.37, $p$ < .01) and *harmony* ($r$ =.17, $p$ < .05) whereas negatively related to *selfishness*($r$ = -.26, $p$ < .01). *Acceptance of system was* also positively correlated to *support & cooperation* ($r$ =.27, $p$ < .01). However, *support & cooperation was* negatively related to *selfishness* ($r$ = -.22, $p$ < .01). *Selfishness was* negatively associated to *harmony* ($r$ = -.21, $p$ < .01). The factor, *harmony* had the highest mean scores ($M$ = 4.33, $SD$ = .63) followed by *bonding with friends* ($M$= 3.29, $SD$ = .68), *selfishness* ($M$ =2.94, $SD$= .89), *support & cooperation* ($M$= 2.75, $SD$= .65) and *acceptance of system* ($M$= 2.61, $SD$= .82).

Further, to test the hypothesis that extraversion dimension of personality would be positively and neuroticism negatively related to different components of social capital, coefficients of correlations have been computed. Extraversion dimension of personality was positively associated to *bonding with friends* ($r$ =.22, $p$ < .01), *support* & *cooperation* ($r$ =.16, $p$ < .05), *selfishness* ($r$ =.15, $p$ < .05). However, extraversion did not show any significant relation to *acceptance of system* component of social capital. Neuroticism was positively related to *selfishness* ($r$ =.24, $p$ < .01) and negatively related to *harmony* ($r$ = -.27, $p$ < .01). The findings were partially in the hypothesized direction.

The finding was also in congruence with the finding of Sheldon (2008) who suggested that extroverted individuals benefit from social network sites more than introverted individuals. Some previous studies (Russel et al. 1997; Anderson et al. 2001) reported that extroverted individuals have been found to have larger networks and higher contact frequencies. However, a more recent study by Grant (2013) showed that higher levels of extraversion are not necessarily beneficial. Moderately extraverted sales people have better sales revenues than lowly or highly extraverted salespeople.

**In general,** the study showed that *extraversion* factor of personality was related to different components of social capital. In addition, there are several considerations that need to be taken into account when considering the findings of the current study. First, the study was primarily based on self-report data. As a result, the strength of relations between variable was overestimated due to common method of variance. Second, the nature and forms of social capital change over time as well as the multidimensional construct of both personality and social capital.

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