



## EFFECT OF NEUROTICISM ON SUPERSTITIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF VARSITY STUDENTS

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The aim behind carrying out this study was to assess the impact of neuroticism on superstitious behaviour among university students. To conduct the study, 50 students (Ave age 24.11 years) pursuing their education from Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur (C.G.) were selected randomly. Superstition among selected subjects was assessed by Superstition Scale prepared by Dubey and Dixit. Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al. (1987) was used to assess neuroticism dimension of personality.

*Statistical technique Q1 and Q3 was used to divide cases into high, low and average degree of neuroticism. One Way ANOVA revealed that low neurotic university students had significantly less superstitious beliefs as compared to average and high neurotic students. On the basis of results researcher concludes that neuroticism dimension of personality significantly affect superstitious beliefs in university students.*

**KEYWORDS:** Superstition, neuroticism

World over superstitious beliefs prevails in every society. In India it is not uncommon and due to some ritualistic customs superstitious is common. Psychologists like Vyse (2013) opined that superstitions are formed to decrease anxiety or tension caused by certain situation or future outcome. Vyse contended that rituals and superstitions are those behaviour which is carried out to control the future events. Sometimes person feels that by doing certain things, outcome of an event will be in his/her favour. Superstition gives us false illusion that by doing it

future circumstances will be our total control (Brevvers, Dan, Noel and Nils, 2011). Study of superstition or paranormal behaviour is not new in psychology. "To stand over in awe" is the term given in Latin for superstition. According to general definition superstition means certain beliefs formed over the years believing that by doing fixed mannerism or rituals will bring good luck. It is a set of taboos or inhibitions of behaviour. Superstition is a set of behaviour with an aim to deal with fear of future circumstances and its resulting impact. Superstition often formed due to casual coincidences. If a student gets full marks by wearing a particular colour shirt, he/she tries to wear that colour in all

the future examinations. Perkins (2001) opined that superstitious beliefs is used by person to ease out stress and anxiety of modern day competitive world. Researches in the area of personality and superstition also reveal that they are somewhat inter-related with each other (Thalbourne and Haraldsson, 1980). But the results are somewhat contradictory with Willing and Lester (1997) found no relationship between personality variables and superstitious beliefs. This is even more surprising in the case of personality dimension neuroticism and superstition. Thomson (2008) while stating the relationship between neuroticism and superstition

opined that neuroticism being characterised by moody, emotional or anxious. So it is not surprising that person with these characteristics are more superstitious. The dimension of neuroticism is a major dimension of Eysenck's personality theory. It is also known as emotional stability/instability. Neuroticism is closely related to the term anxiety. Eysenck and Ruchman (1965) opined that neurotic tendencies includes restlessness, anxious and mood changes while low neurotic people show the emotional characteristics of stable, calm and even tempered. Since it has been opined that personality variables are related to superstitious beliefs, researcher scientifically studied the relationship between neuroticism dimension of personality and superstitious beliefs in university students in the present study.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to assess superstition in university students on the basis of their neurotic tendencies.

### Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that low neurotic university students will show lesser magnitude of superstition as compared to university students exhibiting average and high level of neuroticism.

### METHODOLOGY :-

The following methodological steps were taken in order to conduct the present study.

### Sample :-

To conduct the study, 50 students (Ave age 24.11 years) pursuing their education from Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur (C.G.) were selected as sample. Sample comprise of both male and female students. The sample was collected through random sampling method.

### Tools:

#### Superstition Scale :

Superstition scale prepared by Dubey and Dixit (2011) was used in the present study so as to measure superstition among selected university students. The scale consists of 40 statements. Three alternatives are given for each statement. This scale is highly reliable and valid.

#### Eysenck's PEN Inventory

For the purpose of tapping neuroticism dimensions of Eysenck's personality theory, Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al (1978) was used. This inventory is highly reliable and valid.

### Procedure:

After strictly following ethical considerations, superstition scale prepared by Dubey and Dixit (2011) was administered to each subject. After sufficient rest Hindi PEN inventory prepared by Menon et al. (1978) was administered. Scoring of responses was carried out in accordance with author's manual. To divide cases in high, average and low neurotic categories, statistical technique 25th percentile and 75th percentile cutoff was used. Scores in neuroticism scale lying below 25th percentile i.e.  $Q_1$  were termed as low neurotic group, scores lying above 75th percentile i.e.  $Q_3$  were termed as high neurotic group and scores lying between  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  were termed as average neurotic group. The scores on superstition scale of these three groups were compared with the help of One Way ANOVA and Least Significant Difference Test. Results are presented in table 1 and 2 respectively.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

**Table 1**  
**One Way ANOVA Results on Superstition between**  
**High, Low and Average Neurotic University Students**

Groups	N	Superstition	
		Mean	S.D.
High Neurotic Students	14	85.28	12.36
Average Neurotic Students	23	77.17	6.65
Low Neurotic Students	13	72.30	5.42
		F=8.35, p<.01	

One Way ANOVA analysis shows that supersitious beliefs among university students differed significantly on the basis of their level of neuroticism as is statistically evident from F ratio of 8.35 which meet the criteria of significance at .01 level..

The obtained result shown in table 1 was also confirmed by Least Significant Difference Test presented in table no. 2.

**Table 2**  
**Comparison of Mean Scores on Superstition among University Students Classified as High, Low**  
**and Average Neurotic (N=50)**  
**Least Significant Difference Test with Significance Level .05**

Mean (I)	Mean (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)
High Neurotic Students	Average Neurotic Students	8.11*
	Low Neurotic Students	12.97*
Average Neurotic Students	Low Neurotic Students	4.86

**Statistical figures presented in table 2 draws following inferences:**

Perusal of mean difference between various study groups gives following results :

- Superstitious beliefs in university students belonging to high neurotic group (M=85.28) was found to be significantly higher as compared to university students belong to average neurotic group (M=77.17). The mean difference of 8.11 respectively were found to be statistically significant at .05 level.
- Superstitious beliefs in university students belonging to high neurotic group (M=85.28) was found to be significantly higher as compared to university students belong to low neurotic group (M=72.30). The mean difference of 12.97 respectively were found to be statistically significant at .05 level.
- The superstitious beliefs in university students belonging to high and average neurotic group did not differ significantly with each other. The mean difference of 4.86 was not found to be statistically significant at .05 level.

On the basis of analysis of data, following results are obtained :

**RESULTS :**

- Superstitious beliefs were found to be higher in high neurotic university students as compared to average and low neurotic university students.
- Superstitious beliefs did not differ significantly between low and average neurotic university students.

## DISCUSSION:

According to Eysenck's personality theory, neuroticism refers to emotional stability / instability. So there is no surprise that high neurotics are more superstitious because they are more anxious. Due to a high level of anxiety, high neurotics try to control and cope up with this anxiety with false illusion by doing certain things. The false illusion about controlling circumstances by certain kind of behaviour or act is superstition and hence high in neurotic subjects.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of results, the researcher concludes that the neuroticism dimension of personality significantly affects superstitious beliefs in university students.

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