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Extraversion and cultural differences. Comparative study between Spain and Romania

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Abstract. The present research focuses on two of the most beautiful Latin countries, Romania and Spain, paying close attention to the specific characteristics of each culture. In this sense, extraversion is among the personality traits that were approached and studied among the 70 participants, 30 of them being Spanish citizens and 30 Romanian citizens. The results showed that Spaniards have a higher level of extroversion than Romanians, given that the average of Romanians is 71.06 and that of Spaniards is 76.74, with a threshold of Sig (2-tailed) significance of 0.22. To support the data obtained, the literature highlights that the lifestyle of Spaniards and their culture, strongly impregnated with cheerfulness and good cheer, facilitates social interactions. The high frequency of holidays and festivals, as well as the high number of sunny days, start an impressive cycle of interaction according to which exposure to the sun improves people's mood and energy, which they can direct towards cheerful and extroverted social interactions, marked by trust and empathy.

Keywords. Personality traits, extroversion, culture, postadolescence

1. Introduction

Personality, the central element of this work, is one of the most critical aspects of our lives. It crosses the boundaries of the psyche and pours its influence on the reality we know and shape from the first moments of life. Its first gift is uniqueness, conferred by the mastery with which personality traits combine and outline the beautiful mix with which we present ourselves on the world stage, guiding our every reaction, thought, and feeling.



2. General considerations

With deep roots in Greek culture, the term personality had a symbolic meaning in ancient times, which was brought to the fore through theatrical art. Each character's role came to life through the mastery of the actors who played a characteristic pattern or an appearance, in other words "persona", the true personality hiding behind a mask (Aslan, 2008 apud Saglam, 2017). Personality is a biological, psychic, and social concept that has its origins in the process of adapting man to the demands of the environment, determining, as expected, a set of behaviors unique to each individual and specific to each situation (Mischel, 1968; Wiggins, 1971; apud Golu, 2007).

Our business card, personality, contains characteristics that possess relative stability and are unique, which allows individuals to differentiate themselves from each other, thus emphasizing the complexity and beauty of studying this concept. Moreover, it can explain and predict our behaviors in everyday life (Wright et. al, 1970 Shalabi & Nodoushan, 2009). Gordon Allport states that it represents the dynamic organization of psychophysical systems, which overflows and is reflected as clearly as possible within human thought and behavior. Given this definition, we can extract some essential characteristics of personality, namely: personality is a perfect mixture, a complex unit that brings together the psychic and biological nature of man; it does not have a static character; its elements are always in continuous interaction and that it is unique from individual to individual (Eřco et al., 2007).

The same author defines the notion of traits as the predispositions that establish the way to react and respond identically or similarly to different stimuli or situations, presenting the following characteristics (Tuřu, 2007):

- It represents a structure with relative stability, being the determinant of the way individuals think and act;
- They have a real character, being present within each individual;
- They have empirical veracity, which can be demonstrated by observation;
- They are in continuous interaction, overlapping and correlating with each other;

Given the extraordinary interest in personality, Gordon Allport, together with Odbert, laid the foundations and developed the Five Factors Model of Personality, made up of Exsection, associated with energy, sociability and assertiveness, Kindness, which is identified with care, confidence and the ability to make yourself likable, Conscientiousness, expressed through the ability to be organized, efficient and reliable, Neuroticism, which is evidenced by states of worry, anxiety, and nervousness, and Openness to experience, illustrated by a wide range of interests, rich imagination, and curiosity (Craik et al., 1993).

2.1. Personality development in adolescence and postadolescence

The post-adolescent period involves essential changes for the individual, who is moving quickly towards the beautiful adventure they are part of called life, which, through their decisions,



actions, and development, they begin to shape. Now, more than ever, the decisions and challenges they face have the power to change the course of their lives, educational and professional paths, and the pressure and stress they attract are as good as expected (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006).

Genetics is the first factor that spills over into each individual's personality, attracting its modification. Spenger et al. (2012 apud Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2018) believe that genetics is the determining factor of continuity and constancy that personality presents, reaching maturity in early adulthood. In support of this statement, Costa and McCrae (1994 and Haslam, 2007) state that the personality acquires a fixed character around the age of 30; adolescents and post-adolescents still have a fluctuating personality, perceptible to change. The study conducted by Roberts and Robins (2004 apud Caspi et al., 2005) highlighted three processes that facilitate personality constancy: creating, seeking integrating and positioning oneself in environments compatible with their personality traits. From this perspective, we can also deduce the essential role played by the individual's environment of belonging and development (Zeigler-Hill & Shackelford, 2018).

Moreover, parenting style leaves a strong mark on the child's personal and social development. The study conducted by Daniel (2016 apud Anaya & Pérez-Edgar, 2019) on a sample of 239 families highlighted the fact that involvement, love, and closeness to the little ones determine their ability to manifest prosocial behaviors, expressed through help, generosity, cooperation in adolescence or adulthood. In contrast, this type of parenting is also correlated with a much lower level of aggression and frustration to the antipathy they may feel from those around them in different circumstances. As far as maturation is concerned, among the characteristics that change the transition from childhood to maturity are emotional stability, dominance, kindness, and conscientiousness, for which the scientific world has identified two explanations: from a humanistic point of view, maturation is associated with the process of self-actualization and personal development, which implicitly affects the rigid structure of the personality, transforming it into creativity and openness to new experiences, and from a functional point of view, maturation coincides with the civic sense and with the desire to become more involved, more organized and more helpful to those around them, thus resulting in the goal of social integration through qualities such as mental balance, perseverance, and kindness (Caspi et al., 2005).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Objectives and hypotheses

The primary purpose of this paper is to explore, identify and analyze the cultural differences and similarities between Romanians and Spaniards in terms of personality trait, extraversion. In this regard, the research was conducted on a sample of students with both Romanian and Spanish citizenship.

Objective: To examine the differences in extraversion among students from Romania and Spain.

Hypothesis: It is presumed that there are differences in terms of extraversion between Romanian and Spanish students

3.2. Sample description

The sample consists of 70 subjects. Of the participants, 50% are Romanian citizens, and 50% are Spanish citizens, thus achieving a balance between the two groups. All subjects were represented by students attending the Ovidius University in Constanta courses and the University of Cordoba in Spain.

3.3. Research methods

The FFPI questionnaire is a testing and self-testing tool consisting of 100 items, which targets the five personality factors, namely Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Emotional Stability (S), and Autonomy (A).

Externality, seen from the perspective of Eysenck's model, is present in individuals who are, on the one hand, sociable, active, and most of the time full of life, assertive, adventurous, and on the other hand, carefree, dominant, and greedy for attention (Matthews, 2003).

3.4. Research design

The participants completed the test individually and online. The sampling of the research was designed based on the criterion of the nationality of the subjects. Therefore, the number of Spanish and Romanian participants was equal, aiming to meet this condition throughout the data collection period. The time allocated to completing the questionnaires was around 30 minutes for each subject, and the data collection took place between 21.11.2023 and 18.04.2024.

3.5. Ethical considerations

From an ethical point of view, the participants were told that they could withdraw at any time, regardless of the stage of the study. Respect for the privacy of the participants was constantly taken into account, and the confidentiality of their data was ensured.

3.6. Testing the hypothesis

Hypothesis: It is presumed that there are differences in extraversion between Romanians and Spaniards.

In order to verify this hypothesis, a series of steps were followed with the help of the IBM SPSS Statistics application 20. The first step of the test was creating the Descriptive Statistics table, which revealed essential information regarding the level of extroversion of Romanian and Spanish citizens. According to him, in terms of extraversion, the average sample of Romanian citizens is



71.06, with a standard deviation of 2.02, while the average of Spanish citizens is 76.74, with a standard deviation of 1.35.

Tests of Normality							
	Nationality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ⁱⁿ			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistical	Df	Sig.	Statistical	Df	Sig.
Extraversion	Romans	,118	35	,200*	,972	35	,493
	Spanish	,088	35	,200*	,952	35	,130
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.							
a. Lilliefors Meaning Correction							

Table 1. Extraversion Tests of Normality

In order to identify the normality of the distributions of the Romanian and Spanish samples in terms of extraversion, we applied the Test of Normality. In it, I turned my attention to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which revealed a symmetrical distribution, given that the GIS has a value greater than 0.05 in both categories. Therefore, the significance threshold of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, revealed by the normality table, is more significant than 0.05, which leads us to apply a parametric method to verify the suggested comparison.

Table no.2 T-test for Equality of Means

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Mr. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
Extraversion	Equal variances assumed	7,843	,007	2,335	68	,022	-5,686	2,435	10,544	-,827
	Equal variances not assumed.			2,335	59,283	,023	-5,686	2,435	10,557	-,814



Following the graphical analysis of the variables, it can be seen that the symmetry of both figures is similar, the distributions being approximately symmetrical.

Table no.2. reveals a significant difference in the level of extraversion between the sample of Romanians and Spaniards studied. Thus, the average for Romanians is 71.06, and the average for Spaniards is visibly higher, respectively 76.74. In it, the Independent Samples T Test reveals that Sig (2-tailed) is equal to 0.22, which denotes a significant difference between the level of extroversion of Romanians and Spaniards. Therefore, Spanish citizens have a higher level of extroversion than Romanian citizens. The hypothesis is confirmed.

3.7. Interpreting the results

Externality, as previously presented, is a personality trait that denotes the sociable and assertive character of an individual who seems carefree, attracted to be the center of attention, and dominant in social contexts. Given that Spaniards have emerged from testing that they are more extroverted than Romanians, we will explore the possible causes of this phenomenon in the following lines.

From young to old, child or elderly, they all animate the atmosphere of terraces, restaurants, and cafes throughout the day, this activity being part of their routine. Large tables, laughter, and hustle and bustle are the inevitable elements on the streets of any city, which often enjoy different festivals, holidays, and days off, thus seeming like an ideal scenario, not devoid of social anxieties, sadness, or thoughtfulness.

Festivals and cultural events of the order of hundreds in Spain go beyond economic borders and become a means through which communities celebrate traditions, encourage cohesion, and give rise to strong social ties. Within them, social, economic, and cultural differences take a back seat, people being united by common experiences and a variety of intense sensations and emotions, from the joy and ecstasy caused by music and dance to the depth of ceremonies and traditions. Recent research, such as that conducted by Moussa (2020), highlights the profound impact that festivals can have on their participants. Through detailed interviews and observations, Moussa shows that festivals are not only entertainment events but also places where people can be the center of attention, build unforgettable memories, and form lasting social connections.

Closely related to this argument, the study by Gomez-Cobo et al. (2018) highlights that one of the main reasons for Spaniards' happiness is behind the frequent social interactions they carry out. In close contact with those around you, interaction and quality time spent with loved ones determine a circular reaction, so that friendships end up capitalizing on happy moments and solving their problems. Therefore, relationships and trust in them become a secure space where they take shelter whenever the soul asks for it.

In the same context, some studies prove that extroverted people, such as the Spaniards studied, have a better ability to manage, interpret social interactions and integrate into society, often providing support to those around them (Ilmarinen, 2018; Pollet et al., 2011; Roberts et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2021 apud Card & Skakoon-Sparling, 2023).

Another factor that can favor the more extroverted manifestation of Spaniards compared to Romanians is the country's geographical position and the warm climate they enjoy most of the year. Given the fact that man is one of a warm-blooded beings, studies show that positive, high temperatures offer the essential opportunity for individuals to explore as much as possible the



external environment, which offers both in terms of social interactions and in terms of shaping new experiences (Wei et al., 2017).

Also worth mentioning are the positive impacts of the many sunny days enjoyed by most of the Iberian region on social interactions and relationships. According to the official tourism website of Spain (Turespaña, 2024), spectacular Andalusia has at least 320 days of sunshine in its sky, which favors the production of serotonin and vitamin D in the body.

As in a chain reaction, sun exposure can improve people's mood and energy, which they can direct toward positive and extroverted social interactions marked by trust and empathy (Krause et al., 2020)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the result highlights that factors such as culture and lifestyle leave a strong mark on the level of extraversion expressed by each person. Interpersonal interactions are significantly influenced by the high frequency and diversity of holidays and festivals that animate the incredible landscape and offer them the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone and strengthen their bonds with loved ones and the community. On a biological and affective level, the number of sunny days they enjoy also plays an important role, which favors the expression of sociability in as many circumstances as possible, the predominant ones being those outdoors.

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