



Online Information Review

Influence of personality traits on open access mode of publishing

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Influence of personality traits on open access mode of publishing

Influence of
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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess the influence of personality traits on perception and acceptance of open access (OA) mode of publishing by the author community of University of Kashmir, India. The study is an attempt to highlight the relationship between personality traits of authors and OA mode of publishing.

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on the responses of 48 faculty members affiliated with different Departments of Science Discipline of University of Kashmir. Big Five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience) were tapped through ten-item personality inventory, and information regarding OA was gauged through six self-devised statements.

Findings – Pearson correlation test confirms statistically significant relation between personality traits and different dimensions of OA mode of publishing. Personality traits are found to have an influence on author's perception of OA mode of publishing. However, the study could not ascertain any relation between the notions of an author about the quality of OA content with any of the personality traits. Emotionally stable authors are found to explicitly submit their work in OA journals without any anxiety or negativity. Agreeable and conscientious authors also prefer to keep their work open to make it helpful to the broader audience and get maximum recognition from peers and citations to their work respectively. However, some authors (agreeable) hesitate in submitting their work in open platforms due to the fear of getting their works easily copied.

Originality/value – The study is first of its kind highlighting a new dimension in the field of OA and investigates the influence of personality traits on author's attitude towards open mode of publishing.

Keywords Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Open access publishing, Big five personality traits, Openness to experience, Extraversion, Emotional stability, Author personality traits, Psychoanalytical study

Paper type Research paper



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Introduction

Open Access literature, as defined by Suber (2012) is free availability of scholarly content on the public web with least copyright and licensing restrictions. Eve (2014) further adds that OA literature does not involve any sort of fee to access its content other than the charges of

internet service provider. Harnad (1994) comments on OA as a phenomenon that provides access to every piece of esoteric writing with an ensured quality control (peer review) mechanism and compares the open scholarly literature to free airwaves. The movement of OA has shifted the paradigm of how authors look at scholarly communication. OA publications are openly available on web to anyone anywhere and moreover free of cost. Research articles published via OA allow users to access, read, download, print, copy, distribute or print full texts, over internet. It provides an opportunity for researchers to get wider audience to their publications and enhance subsequent citations thereof. OA mode of publishing formerly first appeared during late 1980s and gained wide appearance and popularity with the advent of internet. The first OA peer-reviewed and free scientific online archive appeared in late 1980s and 1990s. Dai *et al.* (2014) report 1.8m research articles published in about 28,000 active peer-reviewed journals every year.

OA has gained momentum and wide acceptance in the scholarly world but there are certain researchers who hesitate to submit their research work via this platform because of their notions and beliefs about OA. There is a need to know whether authors who accept this mode of publishing as an opportunity for their professional excellence and as a social responsibility are willing to publish via OA route and how far personality traits influence their decision making. Personality, the combination of responses to situations arising at different times by an individual, plays a vital role in influencing and manipulating the perception and behaviour of a person. Whether it is information-seeking behaviour, reading habits, networking behaviour, or information disclosure in online communities, authors observe distinctive patterns of personality traits with such activities. Personality as a subject has been studied for decades by many scholars and is defined as the unique and persistent pattern of thoughts, emotions and behaviour of an individual that characterize adaptation to the situations of his/her life. The way an individual interacts with other people around is influenced by his/her inner processes and thoughts (Balmaceda *et al.*, 2014; Jani, 2011). Duff *et al.* (2004) and Furnham (1992) state one of the most accepted and widespread model of personality, “Big Five” which claims that five major dimensions (i.e. neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) are indispensable and sufficient to interpret the individual behaviour, cognitive and emotional pattern, and can reflect broad individual differences in learning styles and approaches. John *et al.* (as cited in Althoff, 2010) define personality traits as: extraversion a “peppy attitude towards the social and material world and includes traits such as friendliness, action, confidence, and positive emotionality”; agreeableness as a “contrast to common configuration towards others with antipathy and includes traits such as humanity, tender-mindedness, belief, and shyness”; conscientiousness refers to “task and goal directed behaviour, such as thinking before acting, suspending gratification, following norms and rules, and planning, organizing, and ranking tasks”; neuroticism as “emotional instability with negative emotionality, such as feeling apprehensive, edgy, depressed, and stressed” and openness as the “extensiveness, complexity and novelty of an individual’s psychological and practical life”. Personality being so much influential on human behaviour even guides the attitude and perception of individuals towards any aspect of life. Whatever an individual feels or perceives about any object or situation is dominated by his/her personality. The current study attempts to assess how personality dimensions of authors influence their attitude and perception towards OA and submitting their works in the same.

Review of related literature

According to Phares (1991), personality is an imperative mechanism which guides the human behaviour and forms an inclination towards certain reactions in any particular situation. Tendency to behave, act and respond in a specific manner is termed as personality trait of an individual and depends on the situation in which he/she is working. In information-seeking context, personality is likely to influence the attitude and behaviour of users. Studies confirm

relation between personalities and information-seeking behaviour of users. Kim (2001) states that cognitive style—the constant pattern of shaping and processing information—influences the behaviour of an individual working in a hypermedia system where information is offered and presented in multimedia format. Tidwell and Sias (2005) assess how personality affects the process of information seeking. Vishwanath (2005) focuses on the personality factors that determine the likelihood of adoption of a technological innovation. Nov and Ye (2008) studied users' personality and perceived ease of use of digital environment. Kinley *et al.* (2014) have studied users' web search behaviour in relation to their cognitive styles. Lopatovska (2014) also examines relationships between primary emotions, secondary emotions and mood in the online information search context. Savolainen (2015) studies the features of cognitive barriers and their impact on information seeking. Kim (2001) found online search experience of an individual as one of the factors that affect the search performance. Cognitive style of individuals with slight or no web searching experience was found to manipulate their search performance and usage of search/navigational tools. Kim and Stanton (2015) in a multilevel analysis discuss about institutional and individual factors affecting scientists' data-sharing behaviours. Stefanone *et al.* (2013) studied the antecedents of online information seeking and found individual differences as strong motives for uncertainty or assurance in the same. They also ascertain that personality affects users' online behaviour as in the offline world. Balmaceda *et al.* (2014) reveal that personality is likely to affect the communication pattern of people on the social networking platform, and certain dimensions of personality are found to have relation with communication pattern of users. Agreeable people are more communicative with extrovert people and emotionally stable individuals tend to interconnect through discussion threads with agreeable people. Kosinski *et al.* (2013) assessed the manifestations of user personality in web choice and online behaviour and found psychologically significant relation between user's personality and online behaviour. Borgman (as cited in Heinström, 2003) reveals that personality differences of information seekers are influential on their database searches. Al-Samarraiea *et al.* (2015) explored the impact of personality traits on users' online information-seeking behaviour and examine changes in eye movement during web searching process. Conscientious individuals were found to be prompt in most of the information-seeking tasks, followed by high level agreeable and extrovert web searchers. An exhaustive review of literature carried by Li *et al.* (2011) also shows strong relations between web behaviour of users, and their psychology and personality traits. Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) state that recognizing the strategic aspect of internet use is significant as it ranges far off the service selections chosen in a motivated manner. Apart from services chosen and motivation, personality of an individual plays an important role in the usage of internet.

However, no study has been carried out to observe the influence of personality dimensions on the acceptance of OA mode of publishing.

Methodology

The study is based on the data collected through 16-item close-ended questionnaire distributed amongst faculty members of Science discipline of University of Kashmir. Random, proportionate stratified sampling was adopted to select 48 faculty members constituting 40 per cent of total population. The questionnaire was distributed in the last week of January 2016 and responses were collected up to 10 February 2016.

For each item, participants were asked to rate their responses on a seven-point Likert scale: 1—strongly disagree, 4—neutral and 7—strongly agree. The questionnaire included ten items to measure Big Five Personality (BFP) traits, and six items were related to OA mode of publishing. In total, ten-item BFP inventory developed by Gosling *et al.* (2003) was used to gauge the personality of authors. Self-designed questions were devised to assess the attitude of sample under study towards publishing their research work via OA platform. Each item reflecting different aspect related to OA was scored on the same seven-point Likert scale.

Pearson correlation test was conducted to assess the relationship between the two set of variables: a set of independent personality variables (i.e. the BFP traits) and a set of dependent variables (i.e. OA mode of publishing) (Questionnaire included in the Appendix).

Findings and discussion

Personality traits constituting the inner thoughts and feelings guide the behaviour or outlook of an individual in a particular situation or environment. Attitude or perception of authors towards OA initiatives and will to submit their research work in OA were found to be correlated with their personality traits. Pearson correlation test was conducted and statistically significant relation was observed between the variables (Table I).

Quality of OA content

Even with the considerable growth of OA publishing, there are people who believe that there is little or no quality measure in OA and thus tag OA content as of poor quality (Harley *et al.*, 2010; Schroter *et al.* 2005). Quality concern of OA journals is because of the belief that publishing with them is without a proper peer review process (Pitney, 2010). However, the study could not ascertain any relation between the notions of an author about the quality of OA content with any personality trait (Table I).

Easy acceptance of articles in OA journals

A negative relation is observed between the impression of getting the work easily published via OA journals and conscientiousness trait ($r = -0.313$, $p < 0.05$; Table I). Conscientious individuals are likely to be career oriented, dependable and self-disciplined. More a person is conscientious more is he/she goal oriented, dutiful and competent (Costa *et al.*, 1984). High-level conscientious authors are found to publish their quality work through proper channel and do not rely on OA journals just for easy acceptance. However, no significant correlation ($p > 0.05$) could be ascertained between ease of publishing in OA mode with other personality traits.

Recognition from peers and alike

Getting recognition from peers and experts is believed to be one of the main reasons that lure authors to publish their work via OA mode. This dimension is found to be positively correlated to conscientious authors who tend to achieve lofty levels of success through

Publishing in OA mode	Personality traits				
	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience
Poor quality of OA content	-	-	-	-	-
Easy acceptance of articles in OA journals	-	-	$r = -0.313^{**}$ $p = 0.007$	-	-
Recognition from peers and alike	-	-	$r = 0.404^{**}$ $p = 0.000$	$r = 0.385^{**}$ $p = 0.001$	-
Citation advantage to OA articles	$r = 0.324^{*}$ $p = 0.019$	-	$r = 0.326^{**}$ $p = 0.005$	-	$r = -0.247^{*}$ $p = 0.034$
Beneficial to other people	-	$r = 0.265^{*}$ $p = 0.022$	-	-	-
Easy copying of OA work without proper citation	-	$r = 0.263^{*}$ $p = 0.024$	-	-	$r = -0.292^{*}$ $p = 0.012$

Notes: *,**Significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively (two-tailed)

Table I. Pearson's correlation between the dimensions of OA mode of publishing and Big Five traits of personality

focused planning and persistence ($r=0.404$, $p < 0.05$; Table I) and emotionally stable authors who overtly submit their work in OA journals without any anxiety or negative feelings ($r=0.385$, $p < 0.05$; Table I).

Citation advantage to OA articles

Number of studies have shown that making research work freely available increases readership and citations (Harnad *et al.*, 2004; Kurtz, 2004). Aim of getting maximum citations drives authors to publish their work in OA journals, and this aim is found to be positively correlated with extraversion ($r=0.324$, $p < 0.05$) and conscientiousness ($r=0.326$, $p < 0.05$) traits of personality. However, negative correlation is found between openness to experience and citation advantage in OA mode ($r=-0.247$, $p < 0.05$). Hard working and success-orientated nature of high-level conscientious researchers; assertive, ambitious and social nature of extraverts (Erdheim *et al.*, 2006) drive them to publish their work in OA journals to get maximum citation advantages that leads to the recognition of their works. However, individuals who score high-level openness to experience (imaginative, adventurous, original, creative, curious, self-reflecting) are found to be least bothered about citations to their works.

Beneficial to other people

Hedlund (2008) is of the view that authors publish in OA journals in order to reach a broader audience and to benefit professionals interested in their research. Authors publishing their work in OA mode with a motive to help other authors/researchers/people are found to be positively correlated to agreeableness trait ($r=0.265$, $p < 0.05$; Table I). Agreeable people who tend to be cooperative, caring and concerned about other people (Costa and McCrae, 1992) make their work visible by choosing the OA mode of publishing to make it helpful to the broader audience.

Easy copying of OA work without proper citation

Author's fear of getting his/her work easily copied by others in OA mode is found to be positively correlated to agreeableness ($r=0.263$, $p < 0.05$). Authors scoring high in agreeableness hesitate in submitting their work in OA journals for the reason that their work can be easily copied by others claiming it to be their original content. However, negative correlation is found between the fear of getting work copied in OA mode of publishing and openness to experience ($r=-0.292$, $p < 0.05$; Table I). Researchers scoring high-level openness to experience who are quite broad minded and liberal (Wallach and Wing, 1969) submit their work voluntarily in OA journals and believe it to be just a myth that work can be copied in OA mode without giving proper citations. More a person is open to new experiences, less he/she is anxious about getting his/her work copied.

Conclusion

Personality traits are found to have influence on author's perception of OA mode of publishing which affect their submission in OA journals. Other than quality of OA content, all other dimensions are found to have statistically significant correlation with one or more of the personality traits. Conscientious authors being oriented, dependable and self-disciplined publish their work through proper channel to receive citations that lead to the recognition from peers and not just for mere easy acceptance. Emotionally stable authors overtly submit their work in OA journals without any anxiety or negative feelings. High-level openness to experience (imaginative, adventurous, original, creative, curious, self-reflecting) authors are least bothered about getting into the citation race.

Agreeable authors being cooperative, caring and concerned usually keep their work open by choosing the OA mode of publishing to make it helpful to broader audience, but at the same time some of them also hesitate to submit their work in open platforms for the reason of getting easily copied by others. The study has limitations in terms of involvement of participants from a particular university and faculty only. Readers are encouraged to further the study by including participants from other institutions also. In total, ten-item BFP instrument is used in the study; however, well comprehensive 240-item scale (Costa and McCrae, 1992), 44-item (Benet-Martinez and John, 1998; John and Srivastava, 1999), 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa and McCrae, 1992) and alike should also be utilized since long instruments tend to have better psychometric properties than short ones (Gosling *et al.*, 2003).

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Appendix. Questionnaire

Name _____ Department: _____

I. Personality

Please tick the box provided against to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly

I see myself as:

1	Extraverted, enthusiastic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Critical, quarrelsome.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Dependable, self-disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Anxious, easily upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Open to new experiences, complex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Reserved, quiet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Sympathetic, warm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Disorganized, careless.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Calm, emotionally stable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Conventional, uncreative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

II. Publishing in Open Access Mode

	Statement	Tick the relevant box						
1	Quality of articles published in journals that are freely available on the web is very poor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Journals that are freely available on the web easily accept the research article for publication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Publishing in open access mode helps to get recognition from parent institution, professional colleagues or peers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Articles that are published in Open Access mode receive more attention and citations than those published in journals requiring subscription to access	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	More people must get benefit from my works that I publish in Open Access Mode	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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