

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PERSONALITY OF GIRL STUDENTS STUDYING IN GIRLS' AND CO-EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17955199>

Review: 19/10/2025

Acceptance: 02/12/2025

Publication: 16/12/2025

Abstract: Personality development among students is strongly influenced by educational environments. Institutional climate, peer interaction, and social exposure play a significant role in shaping personality characteristics, especially among girls who often face unique socio-cultural pressures. The present study examines differences in the personality of girl students studying in girls' and co-educational colleges of Ropar district. A sample of 120 final-year students was selected using survey method. Personality scores were compared across institution type and academic streams — Arts, Science, and Commerce—using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Results revealed significant differences between the two institutional groups across all streams, with co-educational institutions showing comparatively favourable personality scores. Educational implications for fostering personality development among girl students are discussed.

Keywords: Personality, Girl Students, Co-educational Institutions, Girls' Colleges, Comparative Study

Introduction: Human diversity is evident not only in physical traits but also in the psychological, emotional, and behavioural patterns that distinguish one individual from another. No two people are alike; each possesses a unique constellation of abilities, attitudes, and ways of responding to situations. These distinct patterns collectively form one's personality, which is understood as the dynamic organization of psychological traits, behavioural tendencies, emotions, motives, and social interaction styles that enable individuals to adjust to their environment. The concept, originally derived from the Latin word *persona*—referring to an actor's mask—has evolved to encompass both the inner psychological world and the outward expressions that define a person's identity. As highlighted in psychological literature, personality is multidimensional and enduring, shaped by biological factors, socio-cultural influences, and life experiences (Bhatnagar, 2007). Scholars such as Geogory (1992), Moyhian & Peterson (2001), and definitions from the Oxford Dictionary of Psychology (2001) and Saskatchewan Learning Glossary (2007) emphasize that personality comprises consistent behavioural, emotional, and cognitive patterns that differentiate one person from another.

Within the domain of education, personality development holds great significance, as schools provide structured environments that influence students' confidence, adjustment, social maturity, and interpersonal behaviour. Educational institutions do not merely impart academic knowledge; they also shape the social experiences and emotional growth of learners. For girls in particular, the institutional climate becomes a determining factor in personality formation because their development is closely linked to societal expectations, peer interactions, gender-related opportunities, and support systems. Students studying in girls-only institutions encounter learning settings distinct from those in co-educational schools, where interaction patterns, competition, classroom dynamics, and exposure levels vary considerably. These differences may lead to variations in confidence, communication styles, social adaptability, and overall personality profiles.

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Given these considerations, it becomes essential to study whether the type of institution—girls-only or co-educational—plays a significant role in shaping the personality characteristics of girl students. Moreover, as girls pursue different academic streams such as Arts, Science, and Commerce, the learning environments and subject demands may further influence their personality development. Therefore, the present study aims to examine whether institutional type contributes to meaningful differences in the personality of girl students across various streams, thereby contributing valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers concerned with girls' holistic development.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the difference in personality among girl students studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.
- To study personality differences among girl students of Arts stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.
- To study personality differences among girl students of Science stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.
- To study personality differences among girl students of Commerce stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant difference in personality among girl students studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.

H2: There is no significant difference in personality among girl students of the Arts stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.

H3: There is no significant difference in personality among girl students of the Science stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.

H4: There is no significant difference in personality among girl students of the Commerce stream studying in girls' and co-educational institutions.

Delimitations of the Study

- The study was limited to 120 girl students from Ropar district.
- Only one girls-only and one co-educational institution were included.
- Only final-year (IIIrd year) girl students were selected.

Design of the Study: The present investigation adopted a descriptive research design, as it aimed to systematically explore and compare the personality characteristics of girl students across different institutional settings. The descriptive approach was most suitable for obtaining an accurate portrayal of personality differences. The survey method was employed for data collection, enabling the researcher to gather standardized information from sample efficiently. This method allowed the assessment of students' personality traits through a structured tool, thereby facilitating comparison between girls studying in girls-only and co-educational institutions. The design ensured that the findings reflected naturally occurring variations within the population.

Statistical Techniques Used

- I. Descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to understand the nature of score distribution.
- II. The t-test was applied to examine the significance of difference in personality scores between groups across streams.

Results and Interpretation: The results obtained through the application of the t-test to compare personality scores across the two groups are presented below. These findings are interpreted in light of the research hypothesis to identify significant variations in the personality patterns of students from different institutional contexts.

a. Analysis of Personality Scores Across the Two Institutional Settings: The present section analyses the personality scores of girl students studying in girls-only and co-educational institutions. The comparison aims to determine whether the institutional environment contributes to significant differences in their overall personality development.

Table 1: Comparison of Personality Scores of Students from Girls' and Co-Educational Institutions

Institution	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of Significance
Girls Institution	60	157.9	105.7	3.02	Significant at 0.01
Co-Ed Institution	60	200.6	106		

The t-value of 3.02 indicates a significant difference between the two groups. The null hypothesis H1 is rejected. Co-educational girls show more favourable personality scores.

b. Analysis of Personality Differences Among Arts Stream Students: This section examines the personality scores of Arts stream girls studying in girls' institutions and co-educational institutions. The purpose is to determine whether the institutional setting contributes to significant variations in personality traits among Arts students.

Table 2: Comparison of Personality Scores of Arts Stream Students Across Institutional Settings

Institution	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of Significance
Girls Institution	20	158	24.41	3.93	Significant at 0.01
Co-Ed Institution	20	183	14.52		

The t-value of 3.93 shows a significant difference. The null hypothesis H2 is rejected. Co-educational girls of Arts stream scored higher on personality.

c. Analysis of Personality Differences Among Science Stream Students: This section focuses on analysing the personality scores of Science stream girls studying in girls' and co-educational institutions. The objective is to determine whether institutional type contributes to measurable differences in personality development among Science students.

Table 3: Comparison of Personality Scores of Science Stream Students across Institutional Settings:

Institution	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of Significance
Girls Institution	20	176	86	2.12	Significant at 0.05
Co-Ed Institution	20	173.5	85.3		

The t-value of 2.12 indicates significance at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis H3 is rejected. Co-educational group again shows favourable tendencies.

d. Analysis of Personality Differences Among Commerce Stream Students: This section analyses the personality scores of Commerce stream girls studying in girls' and co-educational institutions. The purpose is to determine whether institutional type contributes to significant differences in the personality characteristics of Commerce students.

Table 4: Comparison of Personality Scores of Commerce Stream Students Across Institutional Settings

Institution	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of Significance
Girls Institution	20	175	10.9	2.98	Significant at 0.01
Co-Ed Institution	20	183.2	4.6		

The t-value of 2.98 reveals significant difference. The null hypothesis H4 is rejected. Co-educational commerce students showed better personality scores.

These findings are in line with earlier studies, including those by Berg (1987), Goodwin (1987), Mathew (1992), and Ross (1994), which reported institutional climate as a major determinant of student personality.

Discussion of Results: The findings of the study provide significant insights into how institutional climate influences the personality development of girl students. The overall results revealed that girls studying in co-educational institutions obtained higher personality scores as compared to those studying in girls-only institutions. This aligns with earlier theoretical perspectives which argue that personality is shaped through social interaction, environmental stimulation, and interpersonal experiences (Moynihan & Peterson, 2001). Co-educational institutions typically provide more diverse social exposure, opportunities for mixed-gender communication, and broader peer networks. Such environments may enable girls to develop greater confidence, adaptability, and expressive behaviour—features commonly associated with positive personality development (Saskatchewan Learning, 2007). The significant t-value obtained in the overall comparison supports this claim and suggests that institutional type is an influential determinant of personality traits among young women.

When the results are examined stream-wise, similar patterns emerge across Arts, Science, and Commerce groups. In all three streams, girls of co-educational institutions scored significantly higher on personality than girls studying in single-gender institutions. These findings validate the argument that the development of personality is closely linked with the richness and diversity of one's immediate social environment (Gregory, 1992). Students in co-educational settings may experience a broader range of viewpoints, collaborative learning opportunities, and interpersonal challenges that stimulate psychological growth. This is consistent with the view of the Encyclopedia Dictionary of Psychology (2003), which defined personality as a configuration of behavioural response patterns that reflect an individual's adjustment to life. The higher scores of co-educational students indicate that this group may be developing more effective adjustment mechanisms due to the dynamic nature of their institutional climate.

The results in the Science stream further highlight an important dimension: although the mean difference was smaller compared to other streams, the difference remained statistically significant. This suggests that even in academically demanding environments, where scholarly focus is intense, the role of institutional setting remains influential. The Science results are supportive of Bhatnagar's (2007) assertion that personality evolves not only through academic input but through the cumulative life experiences and interactions a student encounters. Co-educational institutions likely provide a broader spectrum of cognitive and social stimuli, contributing to a more balanced development of emotional and social competencies alongside academic engagement. Thus, even when academic pressure is high, the social advantages of co-education may continue to promote more favourable personality traits.

The Commerce stream results also reflected significant personality differences, reinforcing the consistency of the trend observed throughout the study. These findings are in agreement with past studies such as Berg (1987), Goodwin (1987), and Ross (1994), all of which emphasized that personality development is strongly influenced by institutional environment and peer dynamics. The consistently higher scores of co-educational students across all streams may suggest that exposure to diverse social groups enhances emotional stability, communication skills, and social maturity. The results resonate with Oxford Dictionary of Psychology's (2001) conceptualization of personality as the sum of behavioural and mental characteristics distinctive to an individual. Hence, the diversity of experiences in co-educational environments appears to contribute positively to these behavioural

characteristics. Overall, the study underscores the importance of institutional climate as a powerful factor shaping the personality of girl students and highlights the need for structured efforts in girls-only institutions to enrich social and interpersonal experiences.

Educational Implications:

- I. Enhancing Personality Development Programmes:** The study highlights the need for structured personality development initiatives in both girls' and co-educational institutions. Workshops on self-confidence, communication skills, and emotional intelligence can significantly strengthen students' interpersonal abilities. Such programmes help learners develop balanced and mature personalities.
- II. Strengthening Guidance and Counselling Services:** Teachers and counsellors should provide individualized guidance to address students' academic, personal, and social concerns. Regular counselling sessions can help girl students overcome hesitation, build self-esteem, and improve their adjustment in educational settings. This support system is essential for fostering healthy personality growth.
- III. Creating Supportive and Inclusive Classroom Environments:** The findings suggest that institutional climate influences personality development. Therefore, teachers must create classrooms that encourage dialogue, participation, and mutual respect. Inclusive practices can help girls express themselves freely and develop confidence irrespective of institutional type.
- IV. Encouraging Collaborative and Social Learning Activities:** Group projects, peer interactions, debates, and co-curricular activities provide opportunities for social learning, which is central to personality development. Institutions should integrate these activities regularly to help students develop leadership skills, social confidence, and adaptability.
- V. Special Initiatives for Girls' Institutions:** Since co-educational students showed higher personality scores, girls-only institutions may need additional programmes to enrich social exposure. Activities such as inter-college events, leadership clubs, and experiential learning can offer wider interaction opportunities, helping girls strengthen social maturity and communication skills.
- VI. Teacher Training for Personality-Focused Pedagogy:** Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student behaviour; hence, they must be trained to adopt personality-sensitive teaching strategies. Capacity-building training can equip teachers with skills to promote positive behaviour, reduce anxiety, and encourage student participation, leading to holistic development.

Conclusions: The present study clearly demonstrates that institutional climate plays a crucial role in shaping the personality of girl students, as evidenced by the consistently higher personality scores of students studying in co-educational settings across all academic streams. Personality, being a dynamic organisation of behavioural tendencies and psychological characteristics, develops through meaningful interactions, social experiences, and exposure to diverse environments. The results indicate that co-educational institutions may provide richer social contexts, broader peer interactions, and greater opportunities for communication and adjustment, which together foster more confident and socially mature personalities among girls. However, this does not diminish the potential of girls' institutions; rather, it highlights the need for targeted personality enhancement programmes, supportive classroom environments, and strong guidance and counselling services to strengthen holistic development. Overall, the study reinforces that educational institutions carry a significant responsibility in nurturing well-rounded individuals, and providing conducive environments that promote emotional, social, and psychological growth is essential for preparing girls to meet the challenges of personal and professional life with confidence and competence.

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