



## INVESTIGATING THE RELATION BETWEEN LIBRARY ANXIETY AND PERSONALITY TRAITS IN USERS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN BEHBAHAN IN 2016

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Library's anxiety is known as a deterrent factor to meet users' information needs and possibly reduce study capitation. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between library anxiety and personality traits among the users of public libraries in Behbahan.

**Methodology:** This research was a descriptive study that conducted using survey and correlation traits. Based on Morgan table, the sample size was selected 175 of users of public libraries in Behbahan. The data was gathered through the standard of Bostick library anxiety and short form of personality traits NEO (NEO-FFI). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated reliability about 90/0 for library anxiety scale and personality traits of Neuroticism, Introversion or Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness, respectively, 83/0, 75/0, 80 / 0, 79/0 and 79/0.

**Result:** Pearson correlation showed that there is a positive relationship between the anxiety and personality traits of Neuroticism and also there is a negative relationship ( $r=342$ ) between Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, ( $r=246$ ).

**Discussion and Conclusion:** librarians are required to identify their users' personality traits as an essential factor for more successful interaction. Based on these results we can see that discover the personality traits are mutual strategy both for librarians and for users.

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### Introduction

Public libraries are one of the essential parts of society when it comes to improving the culture of reading and one of the most important centers responsible for improving countries' reading hours per capita. The role of public libraries as part of the education system in gathering and spearing knowledge and technical know-how and as a tool for cultural advancement has also been recognized by all. Public libraries accept all users and provide them with opportunities to improve their knowledge through reading and research (1). Public libraries are a safe place for research and studying but can also create anxiety in some people which sometimes can affect their success when using library services. This initial anxiety when using library services can lead to further anxiety and unsuccessful use of library services in some customers(2). Despite the need for repeated visits

to physical and electronic resources in a library, library users often prefer to reduce their use of these resources and replace them with their personal information sources. This action is not limited to a specific group or country and can be seen in both public and academic libraries and can have many reasons. Some researchers such as Jarbek and Xiao call this phenomenon library anxiety(2). Library anxiety is created due to many reasons and acts as a barrier whose removal can improve the success rate of library users. Library anxiety is defined as having negative feelings such as doubt, stress, fear and mental disarray(3) which is limited to certain times and places and only shows itself when people are in the library or intend to visit a library(4). People with library anxiety experience higher interfering reactions during various stages of information seeking activities and also prefer to spend less time and energy on these activities. This, in turn, can prevent learning by these users.

Each person uses psychological constructs and personality traits when entering the society which are created due to confrontation with different people and situations (including cultural, economic, social standing, etc.). These psychological tools can help people in dealing with different situations and not only are affected by different factors such as family, society and peers but can also affect these factors in turn. These personality traits are in fact the triggers of different moods used to achieve different goals. This means that personality traits make people prone to certain actions in certain situations (5). Personality is the set of personality traits that include stable thought, emotional and behavioral patterns. The concept of personality trait will also become meaningful by categorizing a light number of different traits and is more general than traits. Although people can have different levels of different traits, they usually have only one personality trait(2). For example, Neo's personality categorization introduces 5 different dimensions of personality or traits including Neuroticism, Extroversion or introversion, flexibility, pleasantness and conscientiousness. Personality traits are an organized wet of various traits that are almost stable in people and differentiate people from one another. These personality traits can affect anxiety(6) .

Given the importance of public libraries in society, it is necessary to investigate factors affecting the quality of their services. The reason for this necessity is the fact that public libraries need to create proper mechanism and reduce barriers in order to maximize the use of library resources by public and improve culture and society(7). On the other hand, one of the topics which is widely studied by psychologists today is the role of emotions in life. Anxiety is one of the emotions that can affect a person's performance. Therefore, it is necessity to understand anxiety and its contributing factors(2). Due to this importance, this study aims to investigate the relation between personality traits and library anxiety of users in public libraries of Behbahan county. Reviewing studies about "personality traits" and "library anxiety" reveals a large volume of studies in this regard which shows the importance of this topic among experts in the field. Lee in his study investigated library anxiety and essential skills in students of University of California. His findings showed that although all students believed in the important role of libraries in their academic success, some students had made limited use of library resources due to library anxiety. In fact, the results showed that people with library anxiety wouldn't visit a library unless absolutely necessary (8). Due to recent worried about Facebook in schools, Tang, Chen, Yang, Chung and Lee performed a study in order to investigate the relation between personality traits and addiction to Facebook. Their results showed that some personality traits such as adaptability, conscientiousness and Neuroticism had a negative relation with Facebook addiction (9). In another study in Iran, Naderi investigated the relation between computer anxiety and personality traits. His results showed that there is a relation between age and gender and computer anxiety and also between computer anxiety in university students and their field of study(10). Rekabdar and Soleymani in 2008 investigated the relation between statistic anxiety and personality traits of students in Islamic Azad University of Abadan. Their results showed a significant relation between gender and high school diploma trait with statistic anxiety while there was no significant relation between age and statistic anxiety. Their results also showed that female students had higher levels of statistic anxiety compared to male students (11). Khosravi and Bigdeli investigated the relation between text anxiety and personality traits in students of Semnan University. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relation between Neuroticism and test anxiety but no significant relation existed between Extroversion or introversion and test anxiety in students. Among the investigated personality traits, Neuroticism acted as predicting variable for test anxiety. The results also found no difference between male and female students when it came to test anxiety(6). Ghaffari in 2014 conducted a study in order to investigate the relation between library anxiety and introversion and extroversion personality traits in students of humanitarian in Payam-e-Nour University of Qom. The results showed that there is a significant relation between library anxiety and personality traits with library anxiety being lower in extrovert students compared to their introvert peers(2). Review of pervious literature shows that although some studies investigated personality traits and their relation with library related problems (among both librarians and library users), there is still exists a gap in this regard. Therefore, the research questions of this study include:

- What are the personality traits of public library users in Behbahan county?
- What is the amount of library anxiety among public library users in Behbahan county?
- Is there a relation between library anxiety and personality traits among public library users in Behbahan county?
- Is there a relation between library anxiety and gender of public library users in Behbahan county?
- Is there a relation between library anxiety and education level of public library users in Behbahan county?
- Is there a relation between library anxiety and marital status of public library users in Behbahan county?
- What is personality traits based on gender among library users in public libraries of Behbahan county?

## Findings

Some analyses were carried out in order to describe the gathered data including percent, frequency distribution, average and variance. Person correlation coefficient and linear regression test were also used for inferential statistical analysis.

The study population consisted of 37% male and 63% female participants. Among the respondents, 83% were single and 17% were married. 13% of the participants had education level below high school diploma, 48% had high school diploma, 6% had an associate degree, 28% had a bachelor degree and 5% had a master's degree. Regarding age groups, 75% of the participants were in the age range of 14-24, 19% in the range of 24-34, 3% in the range of 34-44 and 3% in the range of 44-54 with the average age of participants being  $22.14 \pm 7.06$  years.

### Question 1: What are the personality traits of public library users in Behbahan county?

Table 1. Average and Std.deviation Personality traits according to Gender

Subscales		neuroticism	extraversion	openness	agreeableness	conscientiousness
Gender						
Male	Mean	35.58	38.33	38.17	39.28	<b>38.97</b>
	Std.deviation	4.95	3.56	4.68	4.85	<b>4.15</b>
Female	Mean	34.54	38.31	41.23	40.02	<b>39.33</b>
	Std.deviation	4.89	4.09	6.11	4.03	<b>3.79</b>
Total	Mean	40.75	40.00	39.25	42.50	<b>37.75</b>
	Std.deviation	8.26	4.29	2.63	3.69	<b>1.70</b>

According to table 1, the average score for Neuroticism (40.75), Extroversion/introversion (40.00), and openness (39.25), agreeableness (42.50) and conscientiousness (37.75) were all in the range of 24-48 which means each of these traits were moderately present. In other words, in average the public library users had a moderate amount of all personality traits. The average score of these personality traits based on gender also shows that all personality traits were moderately present. On the other hand, the frequency of agreeableness personality trait was higher than average in male participants while the personality trait of openness was more frequent than average in female participants.

### Question 2: What is the amount of library anxiety among public library users in Behbahan county?

Table 2. Average and Std.deviation of Library Anxiety according to Gender

Subscales		barriers with staff	affective barriers	comfort with the library	knowledge of the library	mechanical barriers	Library Anxiety
Gender							
Male	Mean	27.33	25.58	14.67	9.00	6.33	<b>83.76</b>
	Std.deviation	10.92	6.4	4.57	2.54	1.62	<b>18.671</b>
Female	Mean	23.97	24.30	13.52	9.82	6.36	<b>77.41</b>
	Std.deviation	7.73	6.12	4.06	3.28	1.62	<b>16.96</b>
Total	Mean	23.25	27.75	13.50	9.50	5.57	<b>79.80</b>
	Std.deviation	11.87	10.68	3.41	0.57	1.25	<b>17.80</b>

In order to measure library anxiety among participants, 33 items were used with the cut-off score of 3 which means that the average score was 99. Based on the information presented in table 2, the library anxiety score of male users was equal to 83.76 which is lower than average. The library anxiety score of female users was 77.41 which is also lower than average score. In other words, both male and female public library users in Behbahan county have below average library anxiety. The average library anxiety score for both genders is 79.80 which is below average and thus a lower than average library anxiety.

Table 2 also shows that the score for dimension of “barriers with staff”, factors related to interaction with librarians, which included 12 items, was equal to 23.25 which is lower than the average value (36) showing lower than average library anxiety caused by this dimension.

In the dimension of “affective barriers” which included 10 items, the average score of participants was 27.75 which is lower than the average value (30).

In the dimension of “Lack of comfort with the library” which included 6 items, the average score for participants was 13.50 which is lower than the average value (18).

In the dimension of “lack of knowledge of the library/library skills” which included 3 items, the average score of participants was 9.50 which is higher than the average value of 9. In other words, only the dimension of “lack of knowledge of the library” caused above average anxiety in participants.

Also in the dimension of “mechanical barriers” which included 2 items, the average anxiety score of participants was equal to 5.75 which is lower than the average value of 6.

### Question 3: Is there a relation between library anxiety and personality traits among public library users in Behbahan county?

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficient between Library Anxiety and Personality Traits

Variations		neuroticism	extraversion	openness	agreeableness	conscientiousness
Library Anxiety	Pearson correlation	*0.246	0.172	-0.189	** -0.270	** -0.342
	Sig.	0.013	0.085	0.059	0.006	<b>0.000</b>
	N	101	101	101	101	<b>101</b>

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

The aim of this question is to determine the relation between library anxiety of library users in Behbahan county and their personality traits. The findings of this stud can be used in order to devise methods or reducing library anxiety and also for better understanding of personality traits in order to better communicate with library customers.

Based on the findings presented in table 3, Pearson correlation coefficient shows a positive, significant relation between Neuroticism personality trait and library anxiety. There is also a significant and negative relation between conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits and library anxiety. The relation between library anxiety and conscientiousness is stronger ( $r=0.342$ ) than the relation between Neuroticism and library anxiety ( $r=0.246$ ).

Table 4. Correlation between subscales of Library Anxiety and Personality Traits

Subscales	barriers with staff	affective barriers	comfort with the library	knowledge of the library	mechanical barriers
neuroticism	*0.250	0.189	0.148	0.094	<b>-0.026</b>
extraversion	0.032	0.155	0.059	**0.475	<b>0.065</b>
openness	*-0.215	*-0.216	-0.124	-0.035	** <b>0.399</b>
agreeableness	*-0.229	** -0.260	** -0.297	-0.018	<b>0.168</b>
conscientiousness	** -0.312	** -0.326	** -0.327	0.035	<b>0.099</b>

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

According to table 4, Pearson correlation coefficient shows a significant relation between dimension of “barriers with staff/librarians” and personality traits of “Neuroticism”, “openness”, “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” with the relation between Neuroticism and interaction with librarians being negative unlike other personality traits. However, the relation between this dimension and Extroversion/introversion personality trait was not significant. The results also show that there was a sig-

nificant, negative relation between the dimension of “affective barriers” and “Openness”, “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” personality traits and the dimension of “feeling comfortable in the library” had a significant and negative relation with “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” personality traits. The dimension of “lack of library skills” has a significant and positive relation with Extroversion/introversion personality trait while the dimension of “mechanical barriers” had a positive, significant relation with “openness” personality trait.

**Question 4: Is there a relation between library anxiety and gender of public library users in Behbahan county?**

Table 5. One Sample T-Test for Determination of Library Anxiety according to Gender

Scale		Mean	Mean Difference	T	df	Sig.
Library Anxiety	Male	82.92	-16.08	-5.13	35	<b>0.000</b>
	Female	77.97	-21.03	-9.70	60	<b>0.000</b>
	Total	79.80	-19.19	-10.83	100	<b>0.000</b>

According to table 5, male library users feel more anxiety (82.92) compared to female library users (77.97).

**Question 5: Is there a relation between library anxiety and education level of public library users in Behbahan county?**

Table 6. Correlation Library Anxiety and its subscales with Education level

Variations		barriers with staff	affective barriers	comfort with the library	knowledge of the library	mechanical barriers	Library Anxiety
education level	Pearson correlation	*-0.243	-0.143	-0.173	0.079	-0.124	<b>*-0.216</b>
	Sig.	0.015	0.157	0.085	0.435	0.218	<b>0.031</b>
	N	101	101	101	101	101	<b>101</b>

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

According to table 6, there is a significant and negative relation between education level and library anxiety. Based on this table, education level has a negative, significant relation with “barriers with staff” ( $r=-0.243$ ). In other words, higher education leads to less anxiety caused by factors related to interaction with librarians.

**Question 6: Is there a relation between library anxiety and marital status of public library users in Behbahan county?**

Table 7. Correlation Library Anxiety and its subscales with marital status

Variations		barriers with staff	affective barriers	comfort with the library	knowledge of the library	mechanical barriers	Library Anxiety
Marital status	Pearson correlation	-0.195	-0.174	-0.193	0.022	0.045	<b>*-0.202</b>
	Sig.	0.053	0.085	0.055	0.832	0.660	<b>0.045</b>
	N	101	101	101	101	101	<b>101</b>

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

The results showed no significant relation between library anxiety and marital status of library users.

**Question 7: What are personality traits based on gender among library users in public libraries of Behbahan county?**

Table 8. Pearson correlation coefficient between Gender and Personality Traits

Variations		neuroticism	extraversion	openness	agreeableness	conscientiousness
Gender	Pearson correlation	-0.103	-0.003	0/257*	0.083	<b>0.044</b>
	Sig.	0.316	0.979	0.011	0.421	<b>0.668</b>
	N	101	101	101	101	<b>101</b>

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

According to table 8, there is a significant relation between gender and “openness” personality trait ( $P=0.011$ ). Based on this significant relation and the score for this personality trait for male and female participants presented in table 1, it can be said that the openness is higher in female participants (41.23) compared to male participants (38.17).

### Discussion and conclusion

Library anxiety is an unpleasant feeling or emotion experienced by people while using a library’s services(2). There have been many proposals about methods to reduce library anxiety which include improving library skills and information literacy, holding library orientations for academic libraries, familiarizing library users with the concept and nature of library anxiety, positive interaction between librarians and customers, cooperation between teachers and faculty members with librarians and students, creating positive experiences for library users, trying to emphasize the role of libraries in research, training people about using library facilities and providing necessary guidelines for library users(12; 13; 14).

The results of this study showed that there is a positive and significant relation between Neuroticism personality trait and library anxiety, while there is a negative and significant relation between agreeableness and conscientiousness personality traits and library anxiety. The results also show that the relation between conscientiousness personality trait and library anxiety is stronger than the relation between Neuroticism and library anxiety. There was also a significant relation between “barriers with staff/librarians” and personality traits of “Neuroticism”, “Openness”, “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” with the relation between Neuroticism and interaction with librarians being negative unlike other personality traits. But there was no significant relation between this dimension and Extroversion/introversion personality trait. There is also a significant, negative relation between the dimension of “emotional factors” and “Openness”, “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” personality traits and between “feeling comfortable in the library” with “agreeableness” and “conscientiousness” personality traits. There is also a positive, significant relation between “lack of library skills” with Extroversion/introversion personality trait while there is a positive significant relation between “mechanical barriers” with “Openness” personality trait.

Based on the results of this study, librarians in public libraries must pay special attention to the customers’ personality traits in order to succeed in attracting people to libraries. Librarians and informatics experts need to accept personality traits as an essential part of their interaction with library customers in order to prevent libraries from becoming places that are only visited once. Based on these results, identification of personality traits is a two-way approach which both librarians and library users need to understand and use effectively. In order to reduce library anxiety among library users, one can suggest that librarians should understand the personality traits of their customers and use this knowledge to tailor their services to the customers’ personality traits.

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