

**Personality disorder among higher education
students in the Sultanate of Oman in the light
of some variables
"Al Sharqiyah University as a Model "**

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the prevalence of personality disorders among Al-Sharqiyah University students and explore their connections with variables like gender, age, and academic level. Researchers used a descriptive approach, surveying 845 randomly selected students during the 2023/2024 academic year. Utilizing the Personality Disorders Scale by Ghanem et al. (2007), the study identified obsessive-compulsive and paranoid personality disorders as the most prevalent. Significant differences were found between genders for schizotypal and borderline disorders, favoring females. Age-related differences were notable for most disorders, except obsessive-compulsive and paranoid disorders, which were more common in those under 20. Academic level also influenced the prevalence of most disorders, excluding paranoid, obsessive-compulsive, and avoidant personality disorders. These findings enhance awareness of personality disorders among students and aid in identifying those at risk for early intervention. They also provide a foundation for further descriptive studies exploring the causes of personality disorders in the Omani environment or research focused on treatment programs.

Keywords: Personality Disorders - Al-Sharqiyah University – Higher Education Students.

اضطرابات الشخصية لدى طلبة التعليم العالي في سلطنة عُمان في ضوء بعض المتغيرات "جامعة الشرقية نموذجاً"

المخلص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى تقييم انتشار اضطرابات الشخصية بين طلاب جامعة الشرقية واستكشاف ارتباطها بمتغيرات مثل الجنس، العمر، والمستوى الأكاديمي. استخدم الباحثون المنهج الوصفي، حيث شملت العينة ٨٤٥ طالباً تم اختيارهم عشوائياً خلال العام الأكاديمي ٢٠٢٣/٢٠٢٤. وباستخدام مقياس اضطرابات الشخصية لغنيم وآخرين (٢٠٠٧)، حددت الدراسة أن أكثر الاضطرابات شيوعاً بين الطلاب هي اضطراب الشخصية الوسواسية القهرية واضطراب الشخصية الزورقة (المرتابه). كما وجدت فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الجنسين في اضطراب الشخصية الفصامية النمطية واضطراب الشخصية الحدية، وكانت الفروق لصالح الإناث. أما الفروق المرتبطة بالعمر فكانت واضحة في معظم الاضطرابات، باستثناء الوسواسي القهري والزوري (المرتابه)، والذين كانا أكثر شيوعاً لدى من هم دون سن العشرين. كذلك أظهر المستوى الأكاديمي تأثيراً على انتشار معظم الاضطرابات، باستثناء اضطراب الشخصية الزورقة، والوسواسية القهرية، والتجنّبية. تسهم هذه النتائج في تعزيز الوعي باضطرابات الشخصية بين الطلاب والمساعدة في التعرف على الفئات الأكثر عرضة للتدخل المبكر. كما توفر أساساً لمزيد من الدراسات الوصفية التي تستكشف أسباب اضطرابات الشخصية في البيئة العُمانية أو تركز على البرامج العلاجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : اضطرابات الشخصية - طلبة التعليم العالي - جامعة الشرقية

Introduction

Today, societies worldwide are undergoing rapid scientific and technological advancements that significantly affect social, economic, and psychological aspects. This progress has contributed to a wealth of knowledge and the emergence of diverse ideas (Abdel-Moneim, 2022). However, some of these ideas can be detrimental, adversely impacting human personality in contemporary times.

Human identity undergoes multiple stages from childhood onward. A compatible identity aligns with others and possesses reliable traits that distinguish the individual while reflecting strong interpersonal connections. In contrast, an incompatible identity indicates an individual's inability to negotiate or relate with others despite their physiological development. This type of identity is referred to as "scattered identity," consisting of various behavioral patterns that partially or wholly shape the individual's identity from childhood through later stages (Judah, 2012). These transformations in identity and personality traits constitute a critical basis for understanding the emergence of psychological disorders, particularly personality disorders.

Personality disturbances are chronic and prevalent mental health conditions that present considerable challenges in clinical practice, typically associated with maladaptive behavior patterns, disturbed interpersonal relationships, and multidimensional social dysfunction (Tyrer et al., 2015). Personality disorders contribute to various psychological and social issues in daily life, including criminal behavior, addiction, and harm to others. Although these disorders are prevalent across different societal groups, many individuals do not seek therapeutic or counseling support. Instead, they are often recognized indirectly through concerns raised by their social circles (Askar, 1996).

According to the American Psychiatric Association, personality disorders are defined as "enduring patterns of inner experience and behavior that markedly deviate from the expectations of the individual's culture, are inflexible and pervasive, and manifest across a broad range of personal and social situations. DSM5-TR (2022) p 733. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2021) emphasizes that these disorders cannot be attributed solely to cultural or social factors; rather, they are fundamentally associated with significant psychological distress or severe impairment across personal, familial, social, educational, and occupational domains.

Global epidemiological studies indicate that the prevalence of personality disorders in the general population ranges between 4% and 15% (Coid et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2009), with relatively higher rates among males compared to females. Among outpatient psychiatric populations, prevalence estimates range from 40% to 50% (Beckwith et al., 2014). Tyrer et al. (2015) indicate in their study that the Lancet journal (2015) conducted a comprehensive review and showed that personality disorders are closely linked to increased mental illness and social dysfunction, making them among the conditions with the greatest impact on overall mental health. Ghanem (2007) further highlighted that many affected individuals lack sufficient awareness of their disorder, explaining their reluctance to seek treatment and complicating accurate estimation of prevalence.

Although personality disorders are recognized as universal clinical entities, their manifestations and contexts may be influenced by culture (Benkouider et al., 2025). Culture can shape patterns of symptom expression, social perception of the disorder, and the likelihood of seeking help, emphasizing the importance of examining these disorders in local contexts to understand their particularities.

In this context, the Sultanate of Oman represents an Arab Gulf society undergoing rapid social and economic transformations alongside educational progress. University students face significant psychological and social challenges due to academic pressure and future expectations, which can promote the development or worsening of personality disorders and maladaptive traits. Research shows that the university period is vital for identity development and personality stabilization, often accompanied by social anxiety, fear of criticism, and difficulties adapting to increased demands. This environment raises the risk of developing or amplifying personality disorders.

Based on the above, this study gains significance from its aim to **explore the most common personality disorders and their relationship with a number of factors among higher education students in the Sultanate of Oman**, thereby contributing to filling gaps in Arab and Gulf literature on this topic and supporting psychological counseling and preventive efforts within the Omani university environment.

Accordingly, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the most common personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University attributed to the variables of gender, age, and academic level?

Study objectives

The study aimed at:

- Identify the most common personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University.
- Verifying the existence of statistically significant differences in personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University is attributed to the variables of gender, age and academic level.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in several key areas:

1. **Understanding Personality Disorders:** These disorders are crucial in psychology, as they explain many psychological issues encountered in daily life.
2. **Filling Research Gaps:** This research addresses a gap in scientific literature regarding personality disorders in Arab societies, as such studies are limited.
3. **Practical Applications:** The findings and recommendations can assist specialists, counselors, and researchers in developing guidance and preventive programs for students to mitigate personality disorders.
4. **Foundation for Future Research:** This study may encourage further investigations in the Arab context aimed at treating personality disorders.

Study Methodology

The study aimed to identify the prevalence of most common personality disorders in relation to some variables among higher education students in the Sultanate of Oman and their relationship to certain variables (gender, age, and educational level). Therefore, the researchers employed the descriptive approach, as it is considered the most suitable approach for the study.

Study population and sample:

The study population consisted of 5717 male and female students at Al-Sharqiyah University for the academic year 2023/2024, from which a sample of 845 participants was selected using the simple random sampling method. The characteristics of this sample are presented below.

Variable Type	The Levels	Frequency	The Percentage%
Gender	Male	224	26.5%
	Female	621	73.5%
	Total	840	100%
Age group	Younger than 20 years	282	33.4%
	From 21 to 31 years	469	55.5%
	32 years and above	94	11.1%
	Total	840	100%
Academic level	Bachelor	722	85.4%
	Master	123	14.6%
	Total	840	100%

Table - 1

Distribution of the study sample according to demographic variables

Study instrument

The researchers used the Ghanem et al. (2007) Personality Disorders Scale, which consists of 80 statements, to measure 10 personality disorders, namely schizotypal, schizoid, antisocial, borderline, narcissistic, avoidant, dependent, obsessive, hysterical, and paranoid. Table 2 shows the items specific to each personality disorder:

Personality Disorders	Phrase Numbers	Number of Items	Imposed Diagnostic Criteria
Paranoid Personality	1-8	8	4
Schizotypal Personality	9-16	8	4
Schizoid personality	17-24	8	5
Antisocial Personality	25-32	8	3
Borderline Personality	33-40	8	5
Hysterical Personality	41-48	8	5
Narcissistic Personality	49-56	8	5
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	57-64	8	4
Avoidant Personality	65-72	8	4
Dependent Personality	73-80	8	4
Total	80		

Table – 2
Distribution of the Personality Disorder Scale Dimensions and their diagnostic criteria

Psychometric properties of the Personality Disorders Scale in the current study

The psychometric properties of the Personality Disorders Scale were reconfirmed as follows:

Validity: The validity of the scale was confirmed through internal consistency validity on a sample of (70) students from the study community (35 students represent the undergraduate level, and 35 students represent the master's level = 70 students), by calculating the correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the total score of the dimension to which it belongs.

The validity indicators showed that all the paragraphs of the personality disorders scale were significantly related to the total score of its dimensions. Therefore, the personality disorders scale has an acceptable degree of validity.

Reliability: The reliability of the Personality Disorders Scale was calculated by application and re-application, with an interval of 15 days between the two applications. The reliability indicators showed that all values of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the first application and the second application for all dimensions of the Personality Disorders Scale were statistically significant at the significance level (0.01). Therefore, the Personality Disorders Scale has an acceptable degree of stability.

Disordered Personality	
Paranoid Personality	0.481
Schizotypal Personality	0.681
Schizoid personality	0.664
Antisocial Personality	0.655
Borderline Personality	0.789
Hysterical Personality	0.584
Narcissistic Personality	0.526
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	0.542
Avoidant Personality	0.687
Dependent Personality	0.700
Whole Scale	0.878

Table 3**Correlation coefficients between the first and second applications**

Table 3 clearly shows that all values of the Pearson correlation coefficient between the first application and the second application for all dimensions of the Personality Disorders Scale are statistically significant at the significance level (0.01). Therefore, the Personality Disorders Scale has an acceptable degree of reliability.

Study results

To answer the first question, which was: What are the most common personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University? The researchers analyzed the data, calculating the average scores and the variation in scores for each personality disorder item based on the participants' responses. They then checked these results against the official standards for each type of personality disorder, and Table 4 shows the results of the prevalence of personality disorders among students

Number	Disordered Personality	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Imposed Criteria	Rank
1	Paranoid Personality	4.92	1.70	٤	٢
2	Schizotypal Personality	3.68	1.78	٤	٥
3	Schizoid personality	2.62	1.70	٥	٨
4	Antisocial Personality	2.19	1.74	٣	٩
5	Borderline Personality	3.72	2.16	٥	٤
6	Hysterical Personality	3.16	1.88	٥	٧
7	Narcissistic Personality	2.19	1.74	٥	١٠
8	Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	5.05	1.63	٤	١
9	Avoidant Personality	3.91	2.01	٤	٣
10	Dependent Personality	3.62	1.98	٤	٦

Table - 4

**Arithmetic means and standard deviations of sample estimates
according to the Personality Disorders Scale**

Table 4 shows that all ten personality disorders are present among university students, but the prevalence of each varies depending on the disorder. Result shows that obsessive-compulsive personality and paranoid personality had average scores above the diagnostic threshold. Due to this, these two personality types are considered more prevalent among students at Al Sharqiyah University. Conversely, avoidant, schizotypal, and dependent personality disorders had average scores close to the threshold, indicating

they are somewhat common. The other personality disorders had average scores below the threshold, meaning they are present but less common.

Question two was: Are there statistically significant differences in personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University attributed to the variables of gender, age, and academic level?

The researchers analyzed the data to extract the arithmetic means (AM) and standard deviations (SD) of the study sample individuals' responses regarding the level of personality disorders, and compared these means using the (T-Test) test for two samples and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to verify the significance of the differences attributed to the variables (gender, age, educational level) as follows:

i. Gender Variable

The independent sample T-Test was used to determine the significance of statistical differences according to the gender variable (male, female), and Table 5 shows that:

Disordered Personality	Gender	Number	AM	SD	T-Value	Statistical Significance	(η^2) Value	Consequence
Paranoid Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٤.٨٦	١.٧٠	0.607	0.544	0.000	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٤.٩٤	١.٧١				
Schizotypal Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٣.٣٤	١.٨٢	3.395	0.001	0.013	Weak Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٣.٨١	١.٧٥				
Schizoid personality	Male	٢٢٤	٢.٧٥	١.٧٩	1.301	0.193	0.002	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٢.٥٨	١.٦٧				
Antisocial Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٢.٢٠	١.٨٨	0.068	0.946	0.000	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٢.١٩	١.٦٩				
Borderline Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٣.١٣	٢.١	4.813	0.000	0.027	Weak Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٣.٣٩	٢.١				
Hysterical Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٣.٢١	٢.٠١	0.486	0.628	0.000	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٣.١٤	١.٨٢				
Narcissistic Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٢.٢٠	١.٩٢	0.128	0.898	0.000	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٢.١٨	١.٦٧				
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٤.٩١	١.٦٤	1.563	0.118	0.003	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٥.١	١.٦٢				
Avoidant Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٣.٩٠	٢.١١	0.143	0.886	0.000	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٣.٩٢	١.٩٨				
Dependent Personality	Male	٢٢٤	٣.٧	٢.١١	0.689	0.491	0.001	No Influence
	Female	٦٢١	٣.٥٩	١.٩٣				

Table – 5

T-test to determine the significance of statistical differences according to the gender variable

Table 5 showed that there were no significant differences in the prevalence of personality disorders by gender, except in Schizotypal Personality and Borderline Personality ($p>0.05$) in the study sample's estimates of the level of personality disorders attributed to the variable (gender) in the personalities (Schizotypal Personality, Borderline Personality). The differences were in favor of the female sample.

ii. Age Variable

ANOVA analysis was used to confirm the significance of statistical differences according to the age variable (less than 20 years, from 21 to 31 years, and 32 years), as shown in Table 6:

Disordered Personality	Resource	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Means Squares	P Value	Statistical Significance
Paranoid Personality	Between groups	٤.٩٥٧	٢	٢.٤٧٨	٠.٨٤٩	٠.٤٢٨
	Within groups	٢٤٥٧.٣٤٦	٨٤٢	٢.٩١٨		
	Total	٢٤٦٢.٣٠٣	٨٤٤			
Schizotypal Personality	Between groups	٥٣.٥٧١	٢	٢٦.٧٨٥	٨.٥٥٧	٠.٠٠٠
	Within groups	٢٦٣٥.٥٧٢	٨٤٢	٣.١٣٠		
	Total	٢٦٨٩.١٤٣	٨٤٤			
Schizoid personality	Between groups	٢٢.٢١٧	٢	١١.١٠٨	٣.٨٣٤	٠.٠٢٢
	Within groups	٢٤٣٩.٣٥٧	٨٤٢			
	Total	٢٤٦١.٥٧٤	٨٤٤			
Antisocial Personality	Between groups	٣٧.١٥٩	٢	١٨.٥٨٠	٦.١٥٢	٠.٠٠٢
	Within groups	٢٥٤٣.٠١١	٨٤٢	٣.٠٢٠		
	Total	٢٥٨٠.١٧٠	٨٤٤			
Borderline Personality	Between groups	١٩٨.١٨٤	٢	٩٩.٠٩٢	٢٢.٢٧٥	٠.٠٠٠
	Within groups	٣٧٤٥.٦٦٧	٨٤٢	٤.٤٤٩		

	Total	٣٩٤٣.٨٥١	٨٤٤			
Hysterical Personality	Between groups	٤٠.٢٤٦	٢	٢٠.١٢٣	٥.٧٠٦	٠.٠٠٣
	Within groups	٢٩٦٩.٢١٧	٨٤٢	٣.٥٢٦		
	Total	٣٠٠٩.٤٦٣	٨٤٤			
Narcissistic Personality	Between groups	٢٩.٠٣٧	٢	١٤.٥١٨	٤.٨١٧	٠.٠٠٨
	Within groups	٢٥٣٧.٩٠٥	٨٤٢	٣.١٠٤		
	Total	٢٥٦٦.٩٤٢	٨٤٤			
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	Between groups	١٠.٥٩٥	٢	٥.٢٩٨	١.٩٩١	٠.١٣٧
	Within groups	٢٢٤٠.٦٧٨	٨٤٢	٢.٦٦١		
	Total	٢٢٥١.٢٧٣	٨٤٤			
Avoidant Personality	Between groups	٤٥.٧٤٩	٢	٢٢.٨٧٥		٠.٠٠٤
	Within groups	٣٣٩٥.٦١٦	٨٤٢	٤.٠٣٣		
	Total	٣٤٤١.٣٦٦	٨٤٤			
Dependent Personality	Between groups	٢٦.٣٥٦	٢	١٣.١٧٨	٣.٣٦٢	٠.٠٣٥
	Within groups	٣٣٠٠.٢١٧	٨٤٢	٣.٩١٩		
	Total	٣٣٢٦.٥٧٣	٨٤٤			

Table – 6

ANOVA analysis to verify the statistical significance of differences according to the age variable

The previous table shows that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the study sample's estimates of the level of personality disorders attributed to the variable (age) in the (paranoid and obsessive-compulsive) personality types. However, there were statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) for the remaining personality types under study.

The researchers used Scheffe's post-hoc comparisons to determine the marital differences in personalities that were statistically significant at the

level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the study sample's estimates of the level of personality disorders attributed to the variable (age), as shown in Table 7:

Disordered Personality	Age Group		Mean Differences	Statistical Significance	Direction of Differences
Schizotypal Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.86170	0.000	Younger than 20 years
	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	0.72281	0.002	From 21 to 31 years
Schizoid personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.52482	0.036	Younger than 20 years
Antisocial Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.69858	0.003	Younger than 20 years
	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	0.63882	0.005	From 21 to 31 years
Borderline Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.50279	0.007	Younger than 20 years
	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	1.67021	0.000	Younger than 20 years
	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	1.16742	0.000	From 21 to 31 years
Hysterical Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.73050	0.005	Younger than 20 years
	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	0.66003	0.008	From 21 to 31 years
	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.63830	0.009	Younger than 20 years
Narcissistic Personality	From 21 to 31 years	32 years and above	0.51747	0.031	From 21 to 31 years
Avoidant Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.39328	0.035	Younger than 20 years
	Younger than 20 years	From 21 to 31 years	0.71631	0.012	Younger than 20 years
Dependent Personality	Younger than 20 years	32 years and above	0.58865	0.045	Younger than 20 years

Table -7**Scheffe's post hoc comparisons**

Statistically significant differences were found at the $\alpha=0.05$ level between students aged 20 and younger and those aged 32 and older, with younger individuals showing higher prevalence for all personality types, including schizotypal, antisocial, borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, avoidant, and dependent. Additionally, significant differences were noted between the younger group and those aged 21 to 31, with the younger sample exhibiting a higher prevalence of borderline and avoidant personality types.

Finally, the table shows the presence of statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) between the study sample (from 21 years to 31 years) and the study sample (32 years and older), and the differences were in favor of the study sample (from 21 years to 31 years) in the personalities (schizoid personality, antisocial personality, borderline personality, hysterical personality, narcissistic personality).

iii. Academic Level Variable

The independent sample T-test was used to determine the significance of statistical differences according to the variable of Academic level (Bachelor's, Master's). Table 8 shows this.

Personality	Academic Level	Number	AM	SD	T Value	Statistical Significance	(η^2) Value	Consequence
Paranoid Personality	Bachelor	722	4.96	1.70	1.763	0.078	0.004	No Influence
	Master	123	4.67	1.69				
Schizotypal Personality	Bachelor	722	3.78	1.76	3.953	0.000	0.018	Weak Influence
	Master	123	3.10	1.80				
Schizoid personality	Bachelor	722	2.68	1.74	2.538	0.012	0.006	No Influence
	Master	123	2.31	1.46				
Antisocial Personality	Bachelor	722	2.26	1.78	2.952	0.004	0.008	No Influence
	Master	123	1.81	1.51				
Borderline Personality	Bachelor	722	3.88	2.13	5.100	0.000	0.030	Weak Influence
	Master	123	2.82	2.15				
Hysterical Personality	Bachelor	722	3.23	1.89	2.440	0.015	0.007	No Influence
	Master	123	2.78	1.85				
Narcissistic	Bachelor	722	2.26	1.77	2.935	0.004	0.008	No Influence

Personality	Master	123	1.81	1.51				
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality	Bachelor	722	5.07	1.64	0.775	0.438	0.001	No Influence
	Master	123	4.95	1.58				
Avoidant Personality	Bachelor	722	3.97	1.99	1.885	0.060	0.004	No Influence
	Master	123	3.60	2.16				
Dependent Personality	Bachelor	722	3.69	2.02	2.533	0.012	0.006	No Influence
	Master	123	3.24	1.75				

Table – 8

T-test to determine the significance of statistical differences according to the variable of Academic level

The previous table shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the study sample's estimates of the level of personality disorders attributed to the variable (educational level) in the personalities (paranoid personality, obsessive personality, avoidant personality). While it shows that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) in the study sample's estimates of the remaining levels of personality disorders attributed to the variable (Academic level).

Results Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the most common personality disorders among students at Al Sharqiyah University are **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD)** and **Paranoid Personality Disorder**, both scoring above average. In contrast, **Avoidant Personality Disorder**, **Schizoid Personality Disorder**, and **Dependent Personality Disorder** scored near the average, indicating moderate prevalence, while **Borderline**, **Histrionic**, **Antisocial**, and **narcissistic personality disorders** scored low, suggesting they are rare among students. These results reflect students' tendencies toward perfectionism, consistency, controlling relationships, and regulating thoughts, which may limit their flexibility, skills, and openness to new experiences. Additionally, students exhibit persistent suspicion of others, interpreting motives as hostile, alongside moderate social inhibition, social avoidance, and hypersensitivity to criticism.

These findings are consistent with previous studies such as **Arar et al. (2015)** and **Fahmy (2021)**, which reported personality disorders as common

among university students, as well as **Gawda & Czubak (2017)** and **Coid et al. (2006)**, who found OCPD to be the most frequent disorder among students. However, the results differ from **Al-Mohsen (2019)**, who identified Dependent Personality Disorder as the most prevalent. This discrepancy may be due to the higher prevalence of OCPD and Paranoid Personality Disorder and the moderate prevalence of Avoidant, Schizoid, and Dependent Personality Disorders in this sample, potentially linked to childhood traumatic experiences that contribute to the development of these disorders (Joan et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2021; Migatli, 2018). Migatli (2018) further supports this interpretation, reporting a significant relationship between childhood trauma and the emergence of personality disorders, highlighting the importance of considering students' psychological backgrounds when interpreting prevalence rates.

Differences between this study and prior research can also be attributed to **the Omani environment and culture**. Parenting styles, social norms, and prevailing values significantly influence personality traits and disorder development. For example, the low prevalence of **Narcissistic and Psychopathic Personality Disorders** can be explained by Oman's conservative, secure, and low-crime society, which encourages humility, kindness, and tolerance.

Regarding gender differences, significant differences were observed in **Schizoid and Borderline Personality Disorders**, favoring females, while no significant differences were found for other disorders. This aligns with **Al-Mohsen (2013)**, indicating females are more likely to develop borderline personality disorder due to higher emotional sensitivity, which, when combined with maladaptive patterns, can increase emotional instability. Concerning Schizoid Personality Disorder, the findings contrast with **Al-Mohsen (2013)**, who reported a higher prevalence among males. In the Omani context, females may be more inclined to adhere to beliefs associated with Schizoid traits, such as strong belief in magic or intuition, which may increase vulnerability when these traits develop pathologically.

Regarding age, statistically significant differences were observed in most personality disorders except for **Paranoid and Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorders**, with younger students (<20 years) exhibiting higher scores. This may be explained by the transitional phase from adolescence to

early university life, marked by psychological instability and new academic and social pressures, which could exacerbate pathological symptoms. Regarding academic level, undergraduate students scored higher on several personality disorders, including **Schizotypal, Borderline, Narcissistic, Histrionic, and Dependent Personality Disorders**, compared to graduate students, while **Paranoid, OCPD, and Avoidant Personality Disorders** did not show significant differences. This may be attributed to the greater life stability (socially and financially) of graduate students, which could mitigate pathological symptom expression relative to undergraduates.

Study Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the thoroughness of this study, the findings are limited by the sample size and the specific university setting, which may restrict how well they apply to other Omani universities or cultural environments. Additionally, relying on self-report measures might introduce bias due to personal perceptions or self-evaluation. Nevertheless, the study paves the way for future research, such as cross-university comparisons within Oman, investigating the impact of counseling and psychological support programs on personality disorders, and examining the link between academic stress, psychological trauma, and the development of personality disorders. Including behavioral observations and assessments by third parties could further improve the accuracy of self-reported data and enhance understanding of the prevalence and expression of personality disorders in local contexts.

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