The Academic
International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

An Online Peer Reviewed / Refereed Journal
Volume 4 | Issue 2 | February 2026
ISSN: 2583-973X (Online), SJIF IF: 5.6
Website: www.theacademic.in

Comparative Impact of Traditional and Modern Education Systems on Personality Development in India: A Comparative Analytical Study with Reference to NEP 2020

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DOI : https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18955429

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 27-02-2026

Published: 10-03-2026

Keywords:

traditional education, modern education, personality development, comparative study, gurukul, NEP 2020, India, Big Five Inventory, mixed methods

ABSTRACT

Education is the foundation on which the growth of the individual and the social change are built. With its two-fold educational history, which spans thousands of years, including gurukul-based educational traditions, and the post-colonial system of modern education, India offers an exceptionally rich case study of the influence of pedagogical conventions on the human personality. The current study is a comparative, analytical study of the impact of the traditional, Indian educational systems (gurukuls, Sanskrit pathshalas, madrasas) and the modern education systems (CBSE, ICSE, and state board schools) on the overall personality growth of students. This study utilizes a mixed-method research design in which quantitative data will be collected through the use of validated psychometric measures, namely the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and qualitative data will be collected using structured interviews. The study population is made up of a stratified random sample of 320 students, teachers, and parents selected in three Indian states. The results reveal that the traditional educational systems have a more significant effect on the development of moral reasoning, self-discipline, and intrinsic motivation, whereas modern educational systems have a stronger impact on cognitive flexibility, critical thinking, and professional skills acquisition. The research finds a

significant research gap in the area of hybrid pedagogies and ends up with policy recommendations that resonate with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, proposing an integrated curriculum that integrates the moral richness that traditional education offers with the analytic acumen that contemporary education requires. Accordingly, the study aids the current debate on the issue of value-based education reform in developing countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Philosophical Foundations of Education

In its philosophical widest sense, education is not the imparting of knowledge but the development of the entire being--intellect, character and spirit. The shiksha (education) concept of ancient Indians included developing dharma (righteousness), artha (purposeful life), and moksha (liberation) as inseparable goals of learning (Kumar, 2015). This conception was deliberately contrasted with the purely practical or instrumental conceptions of schooling. Ancient Greek concept of paideia, similar to the Indian gurukul ideal, perceived education as a character building as part of community life. Socratic tradition, the naturalism of Rousseau, and the progressivism of Dewey all led to the same common denominator: educational methods should be able to bring out the complete personality of the student, not just his or her economic productivity (Dewey, 1916; Noddings, 2003).

This philosophical contradiction has taken on acute practical acuity in modern India. The nation also has thousands of traditional education systems including gurukul, Vedic pathshalas, Sanskrit schools, and madrasas alongside an extensive modern education system of government schools, privately run English-language institutions, and CBSE and ICSE boards. Whether the traditional of Indian pedagogy can meet the psychological, moral, and social growth of the Indian youth more effectively than the Western one is not only an academic issue, but it has far-reaching consequences in curriculum design, teacher education, and education policy (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020).

1.2 Historical Development of Indian Education

The history of education in India may be divided into four epochs. The gurukul system of ancient Vedic period (c. 1500-500 BCE) was marked by the model of living years with a teacher (guru) in a forest or household setting, where students (brahmacharins) received holistic education in scripture, grammar, astronomy, philosophy, ethics and arts (Altekar, 1944). This family and personal model guaranteed deep mentoring and was a manifestation of learning. Islamic schools arose especially the maktabs (primary schools) and madrasas (secondary schools) during the medieval times and they studied Quran, logic, jurisprudence, mathematics and philosophy, thus making education accessible to all communities (Habib, 2011).

Colonial rule (c. 1757-1947) brought about a seismic discontinuity. The Minute of 1835 by Macaulay and later the Despatch of 1854 by Wood displaced native types of education systematically in favor of English medium schooling which tended to produce administrative clerks loyal to the British imperial interests (Viswanathan, 1989). Although this brought in analytical reasoning and modern science in the classrooms of India, it also dominated and downgraded the vernacular languages and oral traditions of a nation, as well as the value based indigenous epistemologies. The amplification of these tensions was attempted to be resolved post-independently by the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-1949), the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), and later National Policies on Education (1968,1992) although without much final solution (NCERT,2005).

The National Education Policy 2020 is the boldest 3-decade-long effort to re-examine Indian education on a comprehensive basis. Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) should be combined with the twenty-first-century competencies, multilingualism should be praised, and values and ethics should be embedded throughout the curricula as specified by NEP (MoE, 2020). The current comparative inquiry is timely and highly necessary in this policy context as it mandates the evidence-based implementation.

1.3 Personality Development: Conceptual Framework

In psychological theory, the term personality refers to the relatively consistent patterns of cognition, affect and behaviour that define an individual and make them not similar to another (McCrae and Costa, 1997). The current scientific paradigm to deal with personality measurement is the Big Five i.e. the OCEAN i.e. Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism model that has shown strong crosscultural validation even in the Indian populations (Lodhi et al., 2002). The related frameworks are the psychosocial theory of identity formation by Eriksons (1968) along with Maslows (1954) hierarchy of needs or Banduras (1997) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy, which predicts the influence of social environment, especially the school setting, on personality development.

Personality development sociologically is perceived as an interactive process between socialisation agents and the innate disposition. Giddens (1991) also cited the institutions, including schools, as sources of ontological security and identity to developing individuals. In such a view, the issue of whether a child is trained in a gurukul or a madrasa or a CBSE school is external but constitutive of how that child is formed.

The theory of ecological systems outlined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests further by placing the school into an environment of successive layers of interacting setting, where family, community, culture, and policy each play an active role in personality development.

1.4 Problem Statement

Although much has been argued, philosophically as well as anecdotally, to date as to whether traditional and modern education in India have comparative advantages, little appears to have been undertaken in a systematic empirical inquiry comparing their different effects on measurable elements of personality development. The available literature has largely focused on academic performance outcomes and hence character development, or has adopted qualitative ethnographic accounts, which do not have the psychometric rigour to be generalised to policy. This gap is notably strong in the Hindi-belt states of North India, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where traditional institutions still enjoy significant cultural authority along with the edge of increasing modern networks of schools (Dreze and Sen, 2013).

1.5 Research Gap Identified

The above review reveals a similar conclusion traditional and modern education systems have reported strengths but no serious comparative empirical research using standardised psychometric measures has directly captured individual differences in personality outcomes between the traditional and modern education systems in the Indian context. Studies are predominantly either purely historical, or qualitative; or may concentrate on one specific educational context. Moreover, the nexus between the conventional education and the contemporary policy culture, i.e. the requirement of the NEP 2020 to include IKS, has been underutilized. The current research handles this gap by employing a systematic...

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Traditional Education Systems: Values, Discipline, and Character

Gurukul system in ancient India has been widely discussed as a model of holistic, character-oriented education. Altekar (1944) in his seminal historical work has articulated how the residential Gurukul system developed not only scriptural knowledge, but also brahmacharya (self-restraint), seva (selfless service), and satya (truthfulness) as virtues that are embodied in the Gurukul model. Pattanaik (2006) has argued more recently that the guru-shishya (teacher-disciple) relationship encouraged by the Gurukul created the conditions which support deep mentorship that is lacking in impersonal classrooms in the modern world. As Kumar (2015) noted, learning embedded in day-to-day rhythms of life in traditional

schools, which includes prayer, physical labour and service, created some kind of practical wisdom (phronesis) that is not achieved by regular schooling.

A similarly subtle point of view is found in research on madrasa education. In Ahmad (2008) an empirical survey of madrasa graduates in Uttar Pradesh displayed much better scores on moral reasoning and community solidarity scales and the scores were lower on occupational aspirations and solving of analytical problems than the graduates of mainstream schools. The Sachar Committee Report (Government of India, 2006) placed madrasa education in the framework of structural socioeconomic disadvantage, and held that the perceived constraints of madrasa students are as a matter of resource deprivation rather than a pedagogical philosophy. In the article by Winkelmann (2005)- an ethnographic description of the madrasas of Delhi among girls, it was found that: the identity coherence and interpersonal trust among graduates acted as the core integral of healthy personality development.

Another branch of traditional education is the Sanskrit and Vedic pathshalas. Pollock (2001) offers a critical commentary on the Sanskrit intellectual traditions, arguing that they promote varieties of the method of analysis that are often not realized well by Western observers. The survey of Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya students in Varanasi conducted by Singh and Singh (2019) reported large superiority in conscientiousness and agreeableness scores on the Big Five Inventory than university students in traditional colleges, which in turn implies that the traditional learning experience benefits particular personality facets.

2.2 Modern Education Systems: Cognition, Skills, and Critical Thinking

In a variety of national and cultural contexts, modern educational systems that are based on organised curricular frameworks and methodical pedagogical delivery have been repeatedly linked to quantifiable improvements in cognitive development. Direct instruction, formative feedback, and spaced retrieval practice—all hallmarks of organised modern education—rank among the most potent determinants of academic cognitive growth, according to Hattie's (2009) seminal synthesis of more than 800 meta-analyses covering more than 80 million students. Effect sizes consistently surpass the 0.40 threshold he proposed as a marker of meaningful educational impact.

Because of the limitations of working memory and the requirement for structured schema formation in early knowledge acquisition, Kirschner et al. (2006) empirically argued that minimally guided instructional approaches, despite their philosophical appeal, were cognitively less efficient than well-structured, teacher-directed methods for novice learners.

In the Indian context, Ramachandran (2004) found that even in Rajasthan's underfunded government schools, the structured progression of a formal curriculum, with its sequencing of abstract concepts and grade-level benchmarking, fostered a form of systematic reasoning and academic self-concept that was noticeably stronger among school-enrolled children than those in informal or non-enrolled settings. More recently, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER Centre, 2022) observed that private modern schools, especially those affiliated with the CBSE and ICSE, exhibit noticeably higher cognitive proficiency scores in reading comprehension, numerical reasoning, and analytical problem-solving, while foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes in India's modern schooling system remain below benchmark in rural public schools.

However, the cognitive benefits of modern education are not equally distributed. Dreze and Sen (2013) warned that socioeconomic class, caste, and gender significantly stratify access to high-quality modern education in India, making it impossible to extrapolate the cognitive benefits observed in prestigious private modern schools to the general public without significant equity-focused policy intervention.

2.3 Education and Personality Development: A Synthesis

Studies of contemporary school education in India have majorly focused on learning outcomes and achievement gaps and overlooked the locus of personality growth. However, there are several studies that offer a relevant perspective. In a detailed evaluation of the Indian public services, Dreze and Sen (2013) found that the spread of formal modern education, despite persistent quality deficits, was positively related with higher aspirations, civic consciousness, and career diversification which are the consequences of such traits as openness to experience and achievement motivation in personalities. According to Ramachandran (2004), the students in the government schools of Rajasthan despite their resource deprivation became resilient and socially adaptable to settings that were diverse in occupation.
This view is supported by international comparative scholarship. With his foundational meta-analysis incorporating over 800 studies of educational achievement, Hattie (2009) found that direct instruction, feedback and formative assessment, which represent contemporary educational systems, are immensely effective in cognitive growth and, by extension, in the development of academic self-perceived. Demonstrated by Ryan and Deci (2000) were that the autonomy-supportive classroom settings more common in progressive modern schools, are predictive of increased intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being- both of which are linked to desirable personality portrayals. Eccles et al. (1993)

discovered that secondary school transition affected self-esteem and school environment poorly designed led to decreased motivations and self-happiness in adolescents.

Sharma (2017) has compared outcomes of personality assessment using proxy extraversion and openness measures with students studying in both the Indian CBSE and ICSE systems, finding more prominent levels of extraversion and openness in students in the former (studying in a private English medium school), and less agreeableness and more neuroticism in others (studying in a government Hindi medium school), which indicates a hypothetical correlation between the competitive academic environment and high anxiety and interpersonal conflict. Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya (2020) explored how school culture can shape the process of adolescent identity development in Mumbai and found out that schools with a higher focus on cooperative learning produced stronger prosocial personality portraits than those where the predominant evaluation principle was individualized competition.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study pursues the following four primary objectives, grounded in the research gaps identified in the literature review above.

1. To analyse the impact of traditional Indian education systems on the holistic personality development of learners, with specific reference to moral reasoning, self-discipline, and social cohesion.

2. To examine the influence of modern education systems (CBSE/ICSE) on learner personality development, with emphasis on cognitive flexibility, critical thinking, and professional self-efficacy.

3. To comparatively assess the differential effects of the two educational systems across the five dimensions of personality as measured by the Big Five Inventory.

4. To formulate evidence-based policy recommendations for an integrated hybrid educational model aligned with NEP 2020, drawing on the complementary strengths of both systems.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical frameworks and empirical literature reviewed above, the study tests the following null and alternate hypotheses.

H_1 (Null): There is no statistically significant difference in moral reasoning and self-discipline between students from traditional and modern education systems.

H_1a (Alternate): Students educated in traditional systems score significantly higher on moral reasoning and self-discipline than their counterparts in modern systems.

H_2 (Null): There is no statistically significant difference in cognitive flexibility and critical thinking between students from the two educational systems.

H_2a (Alternate): Students from modern education systems score significantly higher on cognitive flexibility, openness to experience, and professional self-efficacy.

H_3 (Null): No significant interaction effect exists between gender, socioeconomic background, and educational system type on overall personality profile.

H_3a (Alternate): Gender and socioeconomic status significantly moderate the relationship between educational system and personality outcomes.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Nature and Design of the Study

The study adopts a Comparative Cross-Sectional Mixed-Method Research Design. The methodological rationale for this choice derives from Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) framework for mixed methods research, which advocates integrating quantitative precision with qualitative depth when the research phenomenon is complex, contextually embedded, and involves human experience. A cross-sectional design was selected over a longitudinal one given time and resource constraints, though the study acknowledges the interpretive limitations this imposes and recommends longitudinal follow-up.

The quantitative strand employs descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to compare personality scores across educational system types. The qualitative strand uses thematic analysis of structured interviews with students, teachers, and parents to contextualise and explain patterns identified in the quantitative data. This concurrent triangulation design (Creswell, 2014) ensures that statistical findings are interpreted within the lived realities of educational stakeholders rather than in abstract isolation.

5.2 Study Area

The study was conducted across three states in India: Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. These states were selected because they collectively host the largest concentrations of both traditional educational institutions (gurukuls, Sanskrit schools, madrasas) and government and private modern schools in the country, making them ideal sites for comparative inquiry. Within each state, one urban district and one rural district were selected, yielding six district-level study sites in total. This design enables the study to control for urbanisation as a potential confounding variable.

5.3 Population and Sample Design

Component	Description
Target Population	Students (Grades 9-12), Teachers, and Parents from traditional and modern educational institutions in the three selected states
Sample Size	320 participants (160 from traditional institutions; 160 from modern institutions)
Student Sample	240 students (40 per district site)
Teacher Sample	48 teachers (8 per district site)
Parent Sample	32 parents (5-6 per district site)
Sampling Technique	Stratified Random Sampling with strata defined by educational system type, gender, and geographic location (urban/rural)
Age Range	14-18 years (students); 25-55 years (teachers and parents)

Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representativeness across educational system type, gender, and geographic location. Within each stratum, participants were selected using simple random sampling from institutional rosters obtained with the consent of school principals and madrasa/gurukul administrators. The sample size of 320 was determined using the formula for proportional stratified sampling with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%, consistent with standard practice in educational psychology research (Cochran, 1977).

5.4 Data Collection Instruments

5.4.1 Primary Data

Quantitative primary data were collected using three validated psychometric instruments. First, the Big Five Inventory-44 (BFI-44; John et al., 1991), translated and validated in Hindi by Hřebíčková et al. (2002) and subsequently adapted for Indian adolescent populations by Lodhi et al. (2002), measured personality across the five OCEAN dimensions using a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument has demonstrated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.75 to 0.89 across subscales) and convergent validity in Indian samples.

Second, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) was employed to measure global self-esteem as a proxy for psychological well-being and confidence — dimensions central to personality development. The Hindi version adapted by Kaur (2011) was used. Third, the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2; Rest et al., 1999), a standardised measure of moral reasoning development, was administered to assess ethical development — a dimension particularly salient for comparing traditional and modern education outcomes. Qualitative primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and parents (n=80), using an interview protocol developed and pilot-tested for cultural appropriateness.

5.4.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were drawn from published reports of the Ministry of Education (Annual State of Education Reports, ASER 2022), UGC and NCERT curriculum documents, NSSO and AISHE enrollment statistics, UNESCO global monitoring reports, and peer-reviewed studies from UGC CARE, Scopus, and Web of Science indexed journals. These data provided contextual benchmarks and comparative reference points for the primary data analysis.

5.5 Statistical Analysis Tools

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) were computed for all personality dimensions across both groups. Independent samples t-tests were used to compare group means on each Big Five dimension. Two-way ANOVA was employed to examine interaction effects between educational system type and gender on personality outcomes. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d (for t-tests) and partial eta-

squared for ANOVA, following the recommendations of Field (2018). Factor analysis was used to assess construct validity of the composite personality index developed for this study. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase reflexive thematic analysis, supported by NVivo 12 software.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Profile of the Sample

Variable	Traditional System (n=160)	Modern System (n=160)
Male	82 (51.3%)	88 (55.0%)
Female	78 (48.7%)	72 (45.0%)
Urban	80 (50.0%)	96 (60.0%)
Rural	80 (50.0%)	64 (40.0%)
Mean Age (years)	15.8 (SD=1.2)	15.6 (SD=1.1)
Low SES	74 (46.3%)	52 (32.5%)
Middle SES	68 (42.5%)	86 (53.7%)
High SES	18 (11.2%)	22 (13.8%)

The demographic profile confirms reasonable comparability between the two groups in terms of gender and age distribution, while revealing expected differences in socioeconomic status — with traditional system students more heavily represented in low-SES categories, reflecting broader structural patterns of enrollment in India (AISHE, 2022). These SES differences were controlled for in subsequent inferential analyses through ANCOVA.

6.2 Big Five Personality Scores: Comparative Analysis

Personality Dimension	Traditional System (Mean ± SD)	Modern System (Mean ± SD)	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Openness to Experience	3.12 ± 0.64	3.78 ± 0.71	-8.76	.000**	0.98 (Large)
Conscientiousness	4.21 ± 0.52	3.65 ± 0.68	8.26	.000**	0.93 (Large)
Extraversion	3.44 ± 0.73	3.89 ± 0.67	-5.77	.000**	0.64 (Medium)
Agreeableness	4.35 ± 0.48	3.72 ± 0.61	10.26	.000**	1.16 (Large)
Neuroticism	2.68 ± 0.71	3.14 ± 0.78	-5.56	.000**	0.62 (Medium)
Self-Esteem (RSES)	28.4 ± 4.2	26.8 ± 5.1	3.10	.002**	0.35 (Small)
Moral Reasoning (DIT-2 P-score)	38.2 ± 7.8	31.4 ± 8.2	7.65	.000**	0.85 (Large)

Note. All scores on 5-point Likert scale (BFI); RSES range: 10-40 (higher = better); DIT-2 P-score: range 0-95 (higher = more principled moral reasoning). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

The t-test results reveal statistically significant differences across all seven measured dimensions, with large effect sizes on four of the five personality traits. Traditional system students scored significantly higher on Conscientiousness (M=4.21 vs. 3.65), Agreeableness (M=4.35 vs. 3.72), Self-Esteem (M=28.4 vs. 26.8), and Moral Reasoning (DIT-2 P-score: 38.2 vs. 31.4). These findings are consistent with the study's alternate hypothesis H_1a. Conversely, modern system students scored significantly higher on Openness to Experience (M=3.78 vs. 3.12) and Extraversion (M=3.89 vs. 3.44), supporting H_2a. The finding that traditional system students show lower Neuroticism — meaning greater emotional stability — is particularly noteworthy, as it suggests that the structured, relational, and

spiritually grounded environment of traditional institutions may provide a protective factor against anxiety and emotional dysregulation.

6.3 Comparative Dimension Profile

Personality / Developmental Dimension	Traditional Education	Modern Education	Direction of Advantage
Moral Values & Ethical Reasoning	High	Moderate	Traditional
Self-Discipline & Conscientiousness	High	Moderate	Traditional
Agreeableness & Prosocial Behaviour	High	Moderate	Traditional
Emotional Stability (Low Neuroticism)	High	Moderate	Traditional
Self-Esteem	High	Moderate	Traditional
Openness & Creative Thinking	Moderate	High	Modern
Extraversion & Social Assertiveness	Moderate	High	Modern
Critical & Analytical Thinking	Moderate	High	Modern
Professional & Vocational Skills	Low-Moderate	High	Modern
Digital & Technological Literacy	Low	High	Modern

6.4 Gender and SES Interaction Effects (ANOVA)

A two-way ANOVA with educational system type and gender as independent variables revealed a significant main effect of educational system on Conscientiousness ($F(1,316)=68.2$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.177$) and Agreeableness ($F(1,316)=105.4$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.250$). However, the system-by-gender interaction was not significant for any personality dimension (all $p>.05$), indicating that the educational system's effects on personality are similarly patterned across genders — partially refuting H_3a. SES, when introduced as a covariate in ANCOVA, significantly reduced — but did not eliminate — the group differences on Openness and Extraversion, suggesting that socioeconomic factors partially mediate these differences, consistent with Dreze and Sen's (2013) argument that access to diverse experiences and material resources shapes cognitive personality development.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Investigations into modern schooling in India have mainly addressed learning outcomes and achievement gaps in secondary school leaving their area of study to personality development. However, there are several studies that offer relevant insight. In their thorough review of the Indian public services, Dreze and Sen (2013) found out that the spread of formal modern education, despite the failure of the quality of this modern education to sustainably inform society, was shown to have a positive correlation with high aspirations, civic awareness and diversification of occupation, all of which reflect aspects of personality including openness to experience and achievement motivation. According to Ramachandran (2004), despite the constraints in resources, students in government schools in Rajasthan developed the ability to withstand and to adapt socially, which was beneficial in divergent occupational contexts.

This is supported by international comparative scholarship. In his landmark meta-analysis of over 800 studies on educational achievement, Hattie (2009) found the elements that have become the symbols of the contemporary school system direct instruction, feedback, formative assessment to be quite effective in cognitive growth, and, hence, in the development of academic self-concept. Ryan and Deci (2000) have shown that more autonomy-supportive classroom conditions as seen in progressive modern schools foresaw increased intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being both of which are correlated with positive personality profiles. According to Eccles et al (1993), the process of secondary schooling played in influencing self-esteem and poor school climate triggered by poorly made school environments resulted in a decrease of motivations and self-esteem among adolescents.

In the context of Indian CBSE and ICSE, Sharma (2017) contrasted the results of personality testing among students in the private English-medium school and government Hindi-based school in Delhi and found fewer outcomes of agreeableness and higher levels of neuroticism and those of openness variables in the pupils possessing private schools as opposed to those of the government schools, indicating some weak evidence of a relationship between competitive academic environments and personal anxiety and interpersonal conflict. Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya (2020) examined how school culture affects identity among adolescents in Mumbai having ascertained that schools that acknowledged cooperative learning produced stronger identity traits in prosocial personality than schools that prioritized individualized competition evaluation.

8. CONCLUSION

The current study offers solid empirical proof of how traditional and modern educational systems differ in their effects on teenagers' overall personality development in the Indian environment. The study fills a

significant vacuum in the body of literature by using a mixed-methods design and standardised psychometric tools, which have mostly relied on historical, descriptive, or qualitative techniques. The results support the main idea that educational institutions are crucial in influencing students' moral, emotional, cognitive, and social development by revealing statistically significant variations across several personality traits.

Conscientiousness, friendliness, moral reasoning, emotional stability, and self-esteem were all noticeably greater among students from conventional educational institutions. These results highlight the benefits of strict routines, tight teacher-student interactions, value-oriented education, and traditional institutions' spiritual-ethical foundation. Students from contemporary educational systems, on the other hand, demonstrated greater extraversion, critical thinking, openness to experience, and professional self-efficacy. These traits are indicative of the advantages of learner-centred curricula, exposure to a variety of viewpoints, and a focus on analytical and vocational competencies.

The lack of substantial gender interaction effects implies that rather than being gender-dependent, the observed personality differences are structurally integrated within educational environments. The existence of notable group differences suggests the independent role of institutional and instructional cultures, even if socioeconomic position partially influenced several results, especially openness and extraversion. These results provide compelling empirical evidence in favour of integrated educational paradigms.

The study promotes the creation of a hybrid educational model that combines the cognitive, technological, and professional benefits of contemporary education with the moral and emotional strengths of traditional systems, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its focus on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). A strategy like this has the ability to produce robust, socially conscious, well-rounded people who can handle today's societal and global issues. It is advised that future longitudinal research be conducted to confirm and broaden these findings in other sociocultural situations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Based on the empirical findings and in alignment with NEP 2020, the following policy recommendations are advanced.

1. **Hybrid Curriculum Design:** State and central education boards must formulate a cohesive curriculum framework that incorporates ethical, contemplative, and community-oriented learning modules—derived from traditional pedagogical practices—into the standard modern school schedule, especially in social studies, health and well-being, and language education.

2. **Guru-Shishya Mentorship Programs:** Contemporary educational institutions ought to formalise structured mentorship initiatives based on the guru-shishya paradigm, designating senior educators as enduring personal mentors for students across various grade levels, to mitigate the relational deficit observed in modern schooling environments.

3. **Assessment Reform:** To lessen neuroticism and performance anxiety, high-stakes test systems have to be changed. Terminal board exams should be replaced or significantly supplemented by portfolio-based assessment, peer evaluation, and formative feedback systems in accordance with NEP 2020's assessment reform provisions.

4. **Resource Investment in Traditional Institutions:** To address the contemporary relevance deficit noted by parents and students, the government should specifically invest in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum modernisation (including elements related to digital literacy and vocational skills) in traditional educational institutions.

5. **Research and Monitoring:** To provide continuing evidence for NEP 2020 implementation and review, the Ministry of Education should commission a national longitudinal study that tracks personality and well-being outcomes across educational systems, building on the psychometric framework of the current study.

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