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Person-Situation-Behaviour Triad: Exploring Relationships and Behavioural Consistency

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ABSTRACT

The present paper, a part of a major work in this field, concentrates on exploring the precise relationship of personality and situational elements with behavior. It was also aimed to examine the behavioral consistency across situations. The study was conducted on 200 XIthand XIIth grade students (100 male, 100 female) drawn from various schools of Karnal and Kurukshetra towns in Haryana (India). Participants received the NEO Five Factor Inventory-Revised. The behavior of the participants was observed through a video recording, with their knowledge and consent, in three dyadic experimental situations and then was rated on Riverside Behavioral Q-sort. Although 64 behavioral characteristics were rated on Riverside Behavioral Q-sort, only 34 of them were retained for further analysis in a view of their psychometric properties in the instant study. Results of correlational analysis revealed that personality traits correlated significantly ($p<.01$) with most of the trait-congruent behaviors. Neuroticism was found correlated with 6 behaviors, Extraversion with 9, Openness with 3, Agreeableness with 6, and Consciousness with 3. Situational dimensions, measured as 8 DIAMONDS, have shown a relatively lower degree of relationship with behaviors in dyadic situations. The data have provided strong evidence for cross-situational consistency in the majority of observed behaviors. The findings of the study were discussed in light of earlier researches in the field and pertinent theoretical models.

Keywords: Personality; Situation; Consistency; Person-situation-behaviour triad; Q-sort

1. INTRODUCTION

The person-situation-behavior framework has been a cornerstone of personality research, prompting an ongoing investigation into the interplay between individual characteristics and situational contexts in shaping behavior. Despite numerous studies investigating the factors influencing behavior, whether personality or situation holds greater sway remains unresolved. Studies were split on whether personality or situation was a more important factor in determining behavior. While predicting a person's actions and motivations based solely on personality traits held historical merit, Mischel's[1] groundbreaking work in Personality and Assessment cast doubt on its exclusive role in shaping daily behavior. Mischel's research yielded correlations between personality traits and behavior that were typically around .20 to .30, which he characterised as the personality coefficient. However, in a later study[2] it was observed that the so-called personality coefficient is about r=.40. But these coefficients were misinterpreted in the sense that they indicate the extent of variance in behavior as explained by personality and the remainder is a portion of variance explained by the situation. Such interpretations lead to a perspective known as a situationist perspective. However, this extreme reaction was not broadly acceptable and the reviews of pertinent research concluded that correlation coefficients between situation and behavior were in the range of .30 and .40, which are not much different from those of personality[3].Another line of investigation into the influence of personality and situations on behavior has been through the notions of between-person and within-person variance.In a meta-analytic study of such research[4],it was observed that 49 % to 78 % of personality variability occurs within individuals across situations. A few other studies have also shown that there is a greater influence of situation than of personality in predicting behavior. For example, a substantial amount of within-person variance (50 %) was observed in daily behavior[5], and 48 % to 70 % within-person variance for Big Five personality traits[6]. But at the same time, certain researchers highlight about equal degree of within-person and between-person variability in personality traits like conscientiousness and neuroticism[7]. Green[8], *et al.* highlighted that variance attributed to personality (between-person) ranges from 36.4 % to 65.7%, which is somehow larger than the variance cited for situation (within-person). So, here one thing is clear till now we could not get a clear picture about what is more influential, person or situation, in determining behavior.

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It has also been a point of concern for the researchers whether people in similar situations behave in a similar and consistent manner. If the change in behavior is more visible than consistency, it means the situation has a greater impact on behavior. Because, consistency in behavior is attributed to personality whereas change is attributed to the situation[3]. It is believed if the behavior remains consistent across situations, then the ranking of people stays the same, even though the absolute magnitude of the behavior (mean level) changes. This kind of consistency, assessed in terms of stability of rank positions (correlation coefficient) was found to be remarkable. Funder and Colvin[9] found that out of 62 behaviors 37 remained consistent, the correlation being significant at $p < .001$, where 20 of the 62 behavioral items changed between the two sessions ($p < .05$ level). Importantly they found that people who were more expressive in one setting (getting acquainted conversation) also tended to be more expressive in another (debate context). In a later study, these results were replicated and behavioral consistency was fairly strong[10]. In a cross-cultural study[11], it was found that both American and Japanese participants maintained a rank-order consistency in respect of their positive mood across various situations. Some other studies[8,12] have also identified consistent behavior patterns across various contexts, supporting the notion of cross-situational consistency.

Ongoing discussion indicates that the findings relating to person-situation issues are inconsistent and, in some cases, conflicting too. Many researchers have apprehended that these inconsistencies can partly be due to the lack of uniform and fair methods for the assessment of behaviors and situations[10]. Experts do agree on the point that situations are imperative, but the important question is, precisely what are the psychologically important attributes of situations? It is also realised that the very essence of a situation arises from the complex interplay between personal interpretation and environmental stimuli, making it unapproachable to any objective lens. However, in the recent past there has been considerable progress in identifying fundamental characteristics of the situation and its objective assessment. For example, Rauthmann[13], *et al.* explored eight dimensions of the situation (8 DIAMONDS) that got much recognition. They also developed a tool for the fair assessment of situations named Riverside Situational Q-sort.

It is not only the domain of situations where researchers face a scarcity of suitable assessment tools, it seems more challenging when it comes to understanding behaviors[3]. Many researchers realised that sufficient efforts were not focused on how people act in the real world and emphasised that there is no substitute for closely observing behavior in real-life settings[14,15]. It was also realised that behavior measurements through self-descriptions or answers to questions suffer several disadvantages, including the participants' lack of self-awareness and inability to understand how they will behave in novel situations. At times they may be reluctant to disclose precise details about their situations or life events. Hence, objective measures are needed that can be used in direct observation of behaviors. On getting insight from some early studies, an observation-oriented tool Riverside Behavioral Q-sort was developed[17] and validated[16] that allows researchers to rate participants' behaviors.

An overview of studies relating to person-situation debate indicates that these are not much in number and most of them have focused on limited aspects of situations and behaviors. There is a clear paucity of broad conceptualisations of situations and comprehensive measurements of behavior. When it comes to measurements it is realised that the methods for fair assessment of behaviors and situations were lacking. Many of the studies just assessed a few behaviors or participants described themselves on self-report measures of how they have behaved or would behave in a given situation. More so, these may be underlying reasons for inconsistent and conflicting findings regarding the contribution of personality and situation in determining behavior. Another reason for the lack of consistent findings is the necessity of observing behavior in defined and systematically varied situations, which has rarely been accomplished. In light of these indications, the present study takes up the issue of the personality-situation-behavior triad in well-defined and systematically manipulated laboratory settings, and employs relatively fair tools for the assessment of situations and observed behavior. Moreover, the study can offer valuable data on how social behaviors are linked with personality traits and experimentally manipulated dyadic situations in the Indian population. Therefore, the study is aimed to meet the following research objectives:

1. To explore the relationship between personality traits and behavior.
2. To explore the relationship between elements of situation and behavior.
3. To examine the behavioral consistency across situations.

In view of the paucity of empirical data and pertinent theoretical formulations relating to the issues under investigation, it was thought advisable to treat it as an exploratory study and not to propose any specific hypotheses.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

A sample of 200 XIth and XIIth grade students (100 male, 100 female) in the age range of 14 to 19 years ($M = 16.28$) was drawn from various government and private schools of Karnal and Kurukshetra towns in Haryana (India). Schools were selected with convenience. After securing permission from the school authority, participants were drawn randomly from the selected schools. In view of the experimental plan of the study, it was ensured that there were an equal number of male and female participants in the final sample. They came from various educational streams and socioeconomic backgrounds ranging from lower middle to upper class.

2.2 Design

The study employed a correlational design with single-group multi-measures. The design involved the assessment of 100 dyadic pairs of male and female participants on Big-five personality traits, eight dimensions of situational variables, and rating on 34 behaviors observed in a controlled laboratory setting.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 NEO Five Factor Inventory-Revised

The NEO Five Factor Inventory[18] (NEO-FFI R) is a concise measure of the five broader personality traits. The 60-item NEO-FFI R comprising 12 items each for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, uses a five-point Likert response format. Two-week test-retest reliability is uniformly high, ranging from .86 to .90 for the five scales[19] and internal consistency ranging from .61 to .86[18].

2.3.2 Riverside Situational Q-sort(S8)*

The Riverside Situational Q-sort[20](S8*) comprised a total of 24 items under eight dimensions (called DIAMONDS). Each dimension of the S8* has three items rated on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (totally). It is a more cost-effective and precise tool for the mapping of psychologically meaningful properties of situations. Internal consistency (coefficient alpha) estimates of 8 DIAMONDS ranged between .80 and .90, except for Adversity (α=.71) and Mating (α=.61) dimensions. Apart from robust factorial validity, demonstrating high nomological validity the S8* and RSQ-8 yielded highly similar associations with nomological criteria, with congruence coefficients ranging between .89 and .99.

2.3.3 Riverside Behavioural Q-sort

The Riverside Behavioral Q-sort[16] (RBQ) is a 64-item assessment tool to characterise a person's range of behavior. RBQ is a flexible method for compiling a comprehensive account of how people behave in dyadic social interaction. Each behavior listed in RBQ was assigned a category on a nine-point scale, ranging from 1 (*extremely uncharacteristic*) to 9 (*extremely characteristic*), forming a forced-choice, quasi-normal distribution. In the unstructured situation, the reliability of the ratings for each behavior varied between .08 and .80, with an average of .53. In the present study, only 34 items were retained for further analysis which had a reliability estimate of at least above .50.

2.4 Procedure

After obtaining informed consent from the participants, they were administered NEO Five-Factor Inventory-R in small batches of 10-12 persons each. Then their behaviors were observed in three dyadic experimental situations through a video recording (with their knowledge). In the first situation (i.e., acquaintance) a pair of two opposite-sex participants, selected at random were instructed to sit in a small laboratory containing two chairs, a table, and a video camera for recording their behavior. The experimenter instructed them "Relax, I will be back in a few minutes, till then you can talk or whatever you would like to do," activated the camera and left. This way, five minutes were allowed to them to facilitate unstructured interaction. After 5 minutes experimenter came back, turned off the camera, got rating of the situation on RSQ-S8* and let them go.

The second situation (i.e., cooperation) occurred a week later, participants were paired randomly with a different opposite-sex member. In a way, both were there for a second time. A cooperative task (were instructed to work together for the solution of the nine dots problem) was given to them for 5 minutes in which they were instructed to work together for the solution of the problem. Again, the experimenter activated the camera and left the room for 5 minutes. The participants evaluated the situation on S8*. The third situation (i.e., competition) occurred immediately after 5 minutes of 2nd situation. The same pair of participants as in situation 2 was given a competitive task (preparing triangles with the help of matchsticks) for 5 minutes. Again, participants assessed the situation on S8* items. Interaction during the three situations was videotaped with the participants' full knowledge and consent. The behavior of the participants during different situations was rated only on 34 statements of Riverside Behavioral Q-sort on the nine-point scale by both researchers independently. The mid-rater score was considered for further analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics for all the three domains of variables, viz. personality, situations, and behaviours, are presented in their respective tables (Table1-3) along with Pearson product moment correlations. Since the behaviour of participants in three experimental situations was rated on RBQ by the two coders independently, the inter-rater reliability (rtt) was worked out to appraise subjective element in the rating of video recorded behaviour. The average inter-rater reliability for each of the RBQ items across situations is shown in Table 3. Reliability coefficients ranged between .52 and .81, with a mean of .68. As many as 16 items reached the reliability of self-report measures (rtt≥ .70). These reliability estimates are relatively higher than those reported by the authors of full scale RBQ[16] and may be regarded as adequate.

3.1 Personality Correlates

The behavior Q-sort items that significantly correlated with personality traits are shown in Table 1. Although the behaviors of the participants were observed in three situations (acquaintance, cooperation, and competitive), their correlations with personality traits were averaged across three situations to find more precise and dependable estimates. Findings of correlational analysis provide strong

evidence for the influence of broader personality traits on behavior in experimentally manipulated situations. Personality trait *Neuroticism* (N) correlated significantly with six of 34 RBQ items. Results show that it is positively correlated with behaviors like "physically animated, moves around" (.29, p < .0001), "shows signs of tension or anxiety" (r=.40, p<.0001), "acts irritated" (.35, p<.0001), "avoids interpersonal relationship" (.31, p<.0001), and "seems detached from the situation" (.37, p<.0001). However, N is negatively associated with "appears to be relaxed and comfortable" (-.38, p<.0001). Here we see that the main reason for the substantial degree of association of these behaviors with N is that all of them, without exception, characterise the core tendency of neuroticism to experience negative emotions. More so, these results are consistent with the findings of some of the earlier studies showing N's association with negative emotions and physically agitated behavior[21,22], anxiousness and anger[23,24]. Personality trait *Extraversion* (E) has covered a larger portion of social behaviors and has shown significant association with nine RBQ items. E has shown highest positive correlation with "seems to enjoy the situation" (.42, p<.0001), followed by "seems to like other(s) present" (.39, p<.0001), and "is expressive in face, voice, or gestures" (.39, p<.0001). The behaviors like "shows high enthusiasm and energy level" (.33, p<.0001), "acts in a self-indulgent manner" (.31, p<.0001), "is talkative" (.28, p<.001), "seems interested in what someone had to say" (.26, p<.001), and "speaks quickly" (.23, p<.001) are also positively correlated with *Extraversion*. The behavior that represents the lower pole of E "is reserved and unexpressive" is negatively associated with it (-.35, p<.0001). These behaviors, in a way, signify how extraverted people express themselves in a social situation. Extraverts are of course, sociable, like people, active, energetic, talkative, and they like excitement[18], in this sense, most of the significant correlates are E congruent behaviors. The present data further add to the consistency and stability of earlier observed ceiling[2] for personality coefficient as .40.

Table 1. Means, SDs, and correlations between personaltiy traits and RBQ items

RBQ item no.	Behavioural items	N	E	O	A	C
2	Appears to be relaxed and comfortable	-.38				
6	6Is physically animated; moves around	.29				
13	Shows signs of tension or anxiety	.40				
17	Acts irritated	.35				
20	Avoids interpersonal relationship	.31				
29	Seems detached from the situation.	.27				
3	Is reserved and unexpressive		-.35			
7	Seems to like other(s) present		.39			
12	Is talkative		.28			
1	Seems interested in what someone had to say.		.26		.21	
19	Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures		.39		.19	
22	Seems to enjoy the situation		.42			
30	Speaks quickly.		.23			
33	Acts in a self-indulgent manner.		.31			.23
9	Shows high enthusiasm and energy level		.33	.23		
21	Shows interest in intellectual matters.			.26		
27	Speaks fluently and expresses ideas well.			.21		
11	Expresses agreement frequently				.28	
15	Seems likable.				.24	
26	Offers advice.				.29	
28	Behaves in a competitive manner.				.32	
25	Gives up when faced with obstacles					-.19
32	Concentrates on or works hard at a task.					.27
	Mean	23.83	27.3	28.28	28.32	31.39
	SD	6.10	6.05	5.57	4.95	5.99

Note: r=.15, p<.05; r=.19, p<.01; r=.25, p<.001; r=.29, p<.0001.

Personality dimension Openness (O) is lesser known and encompasses a relatively narrow range of behaviors than N or E. A few of the RBQ-rated behaviors were found significantly correlated with O. These are "shows high enthusiasm and energy level" (.23, p<.001), "shows interest in intellectual matters" (.26, p<.001), and "speaks fluently and expresses ideas well" (.21, p<.01). Basically, openness to experience emphasises preference for novelty, intellectual curiosity, and stimulation of complex ideas18. Therefore, modest but significant correlations with these three behaviors are well understandable in the light of primary characteristics of openness. In this respect, the findings go along with some of the previous researchers[25-27]. Agreeableness (A) was found to be significantly correlated with six RBQ items, though the coefficients are of a modest level. It correlated highest with "behaves in a competitive manner" (.32, p<.0001), followed by "offers advice" (.29, p<.0001) and "expresses agreement frequently" (.28, p < .001). Correlation coefficients of "seems likable" (.24, p<.01), "seems interested in what someone had to say" (.21, p<.01), and "is expressive in face, voice, or gestures" (.19, p<.01) are relatively low. Since agreeableness is primarily a dimension of interpersonal tendencies, its association with behaviors like, expressing agreement frequently, seeming likable, expressive, interested in what someone had to say, and offering advice is interpretable in the broader perspective of interpersonal tendencies. Generally, people high on A reflect their genuine interest in listening to others and fostering positive social connections[28,29]. However, a modest positive correlation between agreeableness and "behaves in a competitive manner" contradicts its typical association with cooperation. The plausible explanation of this finding may be the tendency to playfully challenge others or encourage friendly competition within a positive social context. As compared to other personality traits Conscientiousness (C) correlated with social behaviors at a lower level. It correlated positively with behavioral indices like, "concentrates on or works hard at a task" (.27, p<.001) and "acts in a self-indulgent manner" (.23, p<.01). These associations are the consequence of greater emphasis on goal-directedness and higher work ethics, and higher tendency of self-control and self-esteem among people high on conscientiousness. However, conscientiousness correlated negatively with "gives up when faced with obstacles" (-.19, p<.01). Since people high on C are typically more persistent, goal-oriented and motivated, that's why they are less likely to quit tasks in the face of obstacles or challenges.

3.2 Situational Correlates

Another factor that influences the behavior of people is the perception of a situation and its elements. Riverside Situational Q-Sort (S8*) measured the situational characteristics in the form of eight dimensions (8 DIAMONDS) as perceived by the respondents. Significant correlations between the eight DIAMONDS and social behaviors, averaged across three situations, are presented in Table 2. Duty (D) correlated significantly with three of RBQ items: "is physically animated, moves around" (.21, p<.01), "behaves in a competitive manner" (.21, p<.01), and "concentrates on or works hard at a task" (.22, p<.01). Perceiving an element of duty portrays the importance of a situation to contain work, fulfilling duties, and attending to certain tasks, hence it predicts these three task-oriented behaviors. Intellect (I), another situational component, has yielded significant positive association with four behaviors, viz. "shows interest in intellectual matters" (.31, p<.0001), "speaks fluently and expresses ideas well" (.23, p<.01), "behaves in a competitive manner" (.19, p<.01), and "other seeks advice from P" (.25, p<.001). These results establish that when a situation affords an opportunity to display the intellectual prowess and cognitive demands it is most likely to elicit behaviors like, interest in intellectual matter, behaving in a competitive manner, and partner present seeks for advice. Additionally, the patterns of findings replicated the observations made by certain earlier workers with respect to this situational dimension[13,30].

Interestingly, *Adversity* predicted a wide range of behaviors and yielded a significant correlation with seven RBQ-rated social behaviors. It correlated positively at modest level with "is reserved and unexpressive" (.26, p<.001), "seems detached from the situation" (.23, p<.01), and "shows signs of tension or anxiety" (.21, p<.01). It correlates at a relatively lower level with "acts irritated' (.19, p<.01), "gives up when faced with obstacles (.18, p< .05), and "avoids interpersonal relationship" (.16, p< .05). *Adversity* further correlates negatively with "shows high enthusiasm and energy level" (-.20, p<.01). It is evident from these results that if situation is perceived as having inherent challenges and potential threats it may lead to all sorts of negative emotions and associated behaviors. Moreover, when the situation is threatening and difficult individuals might withdraw or become reserved as a coping mechanism to minimize social interaction and potential judgment in difficult circumstances. Several similar unpleasant behaviors were observed to be the consequence of situations taken as containing problems, conflicts, competition, and criticism[13,15]. *Mating* here describes to what extent people perceive a situation as conducive to love, romance, good impression, and being accepted by potential mates. It correlated significantly with only two behaviors, i.e., "expresses sexual interest" (.21, p<.01) and "seems to like other(s) present" (r=.18, p<.05). These behaviors may not be directly related to intent sex, love, and romance, rather promote a general sense of social affiliation and a desire to connect with others present. Buss[31] has also opined that in such a context people might be more likely to engage in behaviors that signal their interest in potential romantic partners.

Fifth situational dimension, pOsitivity (O) was found correlated significantly with seven of the RBQ items. It correlates highest with "laughs frequently" (.26, p<.001), followed by "seems to enjoy the situation" (.24, p<.01), and "shows high enthusiasm and energy level" (.23, p<.01). *pOsitivity* further correlates modestly with "seems interested in what someone had to say" (.19, p<.01), "is expressive in face, voice or gestures" (.21, p<.01), "behaves in a cheerful manner" (.22, p<.01), and "initiates humor" (.17, p<.05). As the element of *positivity* in situation denotes the extent people perceive a situation as pleasant, enjoyable, playful, simple, and clear, it promoted all sort of positive emotions, humor, enjoyment, and playfulness.

Such a situation might create a sense of fostering social engagement, expressiveness, and a willingness to participate in playful interactions[20]. The Situational attribute of *Negativity* is correlated significantly with five behavioral characteristics. It correlates highest with "shows signs of tension or anxiety" (.25, p<.001) and about equally high with "exhibits physical discomfort or pain" (.24, p<.01). Other behaviors that correlate significantly with *Negativity* are: "appears to be relaxed and comfortable" (-.23, p<.01), "acts irritated" (.23, p<.01), "gives up when faced with obstacles" (.20, p<.01). It is apparent from these results that such situations are potentially anxiety-inducing and illicit negative feelings and associated behaviors. The genesis of these predictions can be traced in the defining character of this kind of situation as being tied to the personality dimensions of *negative valence* and *neuroticism* as a trait with a *negative affect*[20].

Likewise, *Deception* has also set a negative undertone for social behavior. It correlated positively with behaviors like "seems detached from the situation" (.26, p<.001) and "avoids interpersonal relationship" (.21, p<.01). On the other hand, *Deception* has shown negative association with "seems interested in what someone had to say" (-.21, p<.01) and "initiates humor" (-.20, p<.01). Deception reflects the extent people perceive a situation to contain betrayal, mistrust, lying, and hostility. Current findings suggest that on account of situation underlying issues with a partner people display social withdrawal and disengagement in relationships reduces the likelihood of engaging in playful or humorous behavior. Experts believe that this withdrawal could be a self-protective mechanism, a way to distance oneself from potential manipulation or exploitation[32,33]. Just the opposite of it, the *Sociality* element of dyadic situation predicted many positive behavioural characteristics. It correlated positively with "is expressive in face, voice, or gestures" (.25, p<.001), "seems to like other(s) present" (.24, p<.01), "behaves in a cheerful manner" (.21, p<.01), and "is talkative" (.19, p<.01). *Sociality* exhibited negative association with "is reserved and unexpressive" (-.25, p<.001). These findings provide strong evidence for the fact that if situations are perceived social, they tend to encourage individuals to be more expressive in their communication, share their thoughts and feelings more effectively, and promote positive emotions. Rauthmann[13] *et al.* also opined social situations encourage expressive communication, social interaction, and sharing of thoughts.

Table 2. Means, SDs, and correlations between situational 8 DIAMONDS and RBQ items

RBQ items no.	Behavioural items	D	I	A	M	O	N	D	S
1	Seems interested in what someone had to say.					.19		-.21	
2	Appears to be relaxed and comfortable						-.23		
3	Is reserved and unexpressive			.26					-.25
4	Laughs frequently.					.26			
6	Is physically animated; moves around	.21							
7	Seems to like other(s) present								.24
8	Compares self to other(s)				.18				
9	Shows high enthusiasm and energy level			-.20		.23			
12	Is talkative								.19
13	Shows signs of tension or anxiety			.21			.25		
14	Initiates humor.					.17		-.20	
17	Acts irritated			.19			.23		
19	Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures					.21			.25
20	Avoids interpersonal relationship			.16				.21	
21	Shows interest in intellectual matters.		.31						
22	Seems to enjoy the situation					.24			
23	Expresses sexual interest				.21				
24	Behaves in a cheerful manner.					.22			.21
25	Gives up when faced with obstacles			.18			.20		
27	Speaks fluently and expresses ideas well.		.23						
28	Behaves in a competitive manner.	.21	.19						
29	Seems detached from the situation.			.23				.26	
31	Other seeks advice from P.		.25						
32	Concentrates on or works hard at a task.	.22							
33	Acts in a self-indulgent manner.							.18	
34	Exhibits physical discomfort or pain.						.24		
	Mean	15.62	14.06	5.26	4.66	12.80	8.68	6.68	10.04
	SD	3.22	3.31	2.76	2.95	3.15	2.35	2.69	2.90

3.3 Cross-Situational Consistency

The degree of cross-situational consistency in respondents' behavior across three laboratory situations, as assessed through Pearson correlation, is reported in Table 3. As the results in the table indicate, 15 of the 34RBQ items attained significant correlations at $p<.01$ ($r \geq .19$) between situation 1 (acquaintance) and situation 2 (cooperation), and 9 of them reached .001 p level ($r \geq .25$). The item that has shown highest degree of consistency is "Smiles frequently" (.38, p<.0001), followed by "Behaves in a cheerful manner" (.34, p<.0001), and "Is talkative" (.31, p<.0001). Consistency coefficients of "Is reserved and unexpressive (.28, p<.001), "Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures" (.27, p<.001), and "Seems to enjoy the situation" (.27, p<.001) are also impressive. Interestingly, all these RBQ-rated behaviors signify the personality trait *Extraversion.*

Behavioral consistency coefficients between situation 1 (acquaintance) and situation 3 (competition) are relatively lower than that of situations 1 and 2. Fourteen of the 34 correlations are significant at .01 *p level* and 8 of them attained significance at .001 p level. Behaviors like "Smiles frequently" (.37, p<.0001), "Laughs frequently"(.32, p<.0001),"Is talkative"(.32, p<.0001),"Is reserved and unexpressive"(.30, p<.0001) demonstrated a considerable degree of consistency across situation 2 and 3. RBQ items "Behaves in a cheerful manner"(.27), "Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures"(.26), "Avoids interpersonal relationship"(.25), and "Seems to enjoy the situation"(.25) have shown modest level consistency with p<.001.

Interestingly, a substantial degree of cross-situational consistency has been observed between situation 2 (cooperation) and situation 3 (competition) for the majority of RBQ items. Thirty of the 34 correlations were significant at $p<.01$ and 22 of them attained .0001 *p* level. In the case of 8 behaviors the consistency coefficients even exceed .50, reaching as high as .62 ($p<.00001$). These are: "Initiates humor" (.62), "Behaves in a cheerful manner" (.60), "Laughs frequently" (.54), "Seems to enjoy the situation" (.53), "Smiles frequently" (.52), "Seems to like other(s) present" (.51), both "Is talkative" and "Seems interested in what someone had to say" (.50). Correlation coefficients are also very impressive in the case of "Shows high enthusiasm and energy level" (.46), "Speaks fluently and expresses ideas well" (.46), "Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures" (.46), "Speaks quickly" (.43), "Shows signs of tension or anxiety" (.42), "Is reserved and unexpressive" (.41), all are significant at .0001 *p* level. Here also, we can see that the majority of these behaviors characterise the Extraversion personality dimension.

The present data offer new insights into the issue earlier glimmered by Mischel[1] and Ross and Nisbett[2], wherein they count on .30 to .40 as a ceiling for behavioral consistency across situations. Here, a large number of correlations between Situation 2 (Cooperation) and Situation 3 (Competition) were greater than .40, and they ranged as high as .62. However, the other two cross-situational comparisons, between Situation 1 (Acquaintance) and Situation 2 (Cooperation) and between Situation 1 (Acquaintance) and Situation 3 (Competition) revealed lower degree of consistency having only 3 and 4 correlations greater than .30, respectively. In the instant study, three situations vary along two lines, in respect of the pairing of participants in the dyad and the structure of the experimental plan. In this sense, Situations 2 and 3 were more alike than Situations 1 and 2, and Situations 1 and 3. It is rather interesting to note that most of the studies[9,34,35] after Mischel's claim have reported many of consistency coefficients greater than .40. We believe that these higher cross-situation correlations are attributable to new insights into important elements of situations and broader coverage of behaviors and their systematic measurement. The variation in the consistency observed across different pairs of situations can be best understood in the light of the extent of situational similarity; greater the situational similarity greater is the degree of consistency. A strong and positive relationship between situational similarity and behavioral consistency has earlier been indicated[35,36].

Table 3. Means, SDs, reliability, and correlations between situations

RBQ items no.	Behavioural items	Mean	SD	rtt	Situation 1&2	Situation 2&3	Situation 1&3
1	Seems interested in what someone had to say	3.95	2.15	.68	.23	.50	.19
2	Appears to be relaxed and comfortable	4.66	1.62	.79	.19	.33	.16
3	Is reserved and unexpressive	3.14	2.20	.78	.28	.41	.30
4	Laughs frequently	2.08	2.04	.81	.26	.54	.32
5	Smiles frequently	2.98	2.13	.78	.38	.52	.37
6	Is physically animated; moves around	1.38	1.17	.66	.03	.14	.06
7	Seems to like other(s) present	2.86	2.00	.74	.19	.51	.17
8	Compares self to other(s)	1.96	1.31	.71	.08	.21	.09
9	Shows high enthusiasm and energy level	2.82	1.99	.77	.26	.46	.21
10	Talks at rather than with other(s).	1.49	1.32	.72	.11	.10	.13
11	Expresses agreement frequently	1.33	1.12	.65	.07	.21	.08
12	Is talkative	1.66	1.89	.76	.31	.50	.32
13	Shows signs of tension or anxiety	1.72	1.43	.77	.23	.42	.20
14	Initiates humor.	1.81	1.69	.69	.26	.62	.22

15	Seems likable.	2.32	1.83	.55	.16	.39	.15
16	Seeks advice.	1.89	1.51	.62	.07	.21	.05
17	Acts irritated	1.12	0.83	.73	.10	.31	.12
18	Behaves in a fearful or timid manner.	2.14	1.51	.79	.24	.21	.20
19	Is expressive in face, voice, or gestures	2.87	2.04	.72	.27	.46	.26
20	Avoids interpersonal relationship	1.69	1.45	.59	.12	.34	.25
21	Shows interest in intellectual matters.	2.08	1.80	.67	.11	.30	.09
22	Seems to enjoy the situation	2.50	1.93	.56	.27	.53	.25
23	Expresses sexual interest	1.06	0.74	.54	.02	.11	.02
24	Behaves in a cheerful manner.	2.41	2.06	.76	.34	.60	.27
25	Gives up when faced with obstacles	1.42	1.22	.52	.09	.21	.08
26	Offers advice.	1.61	1.36	.57	.04	.37	.01
27	Speaks fluently and expresses ideas well.	2.21	1.98	.60	.23	.46	.17
28	Behaves in a competitive manner.	1.50	1.23	.75	.05	.05	.01
29	Seems detached from the situation.	1.28	1.10	.59	.13	.24	.08
30	Speaks quickly.	1.81	1.50	.66	.14	.43	.13
31	Other seeks advice from P.	1.70	1.43	.58	.04	.39	.10
32	Concentrates on task or works hard	2.99	1.43	.67	.08	.22	.10
33	Acts in a self-indulgent manner.	1.82	1.60	.58	.18	.32	.21
34	Exhibits physical discomfort or pain.	1.11	0.87	.72	.03	.23	.09

4. CONCLUSION

The present data provide strong evidence for the influence of broader personality traits on behavior in dyadic situations. Despite marked variation in situations with respect to the interaction partner and the structure of the assigned task, personality traits showed a substantial degree of relationship with social behaviors which directly correspond to the central core of respective traits. Contrary to the claim posited by some earlier researchers, the findings of the study suggest that behavior is determined more by personality dispositions than the properties of situations. Though people are likely to change their behavior considerably across situations, the findings reveal a sizable degree of cross-situational consistency in the behavior of participants. In a way, the striking consistency in behavior across situations also signifies the importance of personality attributes over the characteristics of the situation.

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