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Abstract

Research indicates that personality traits are unevenly distributed geographically, with some traits being more prevalent in certain places than in others. The majority of research in this field has focused on cross-national comparisons, while less attention has been given to variations in personality traits within countries (Rentfrow, Kokela & Lamb, 2015).

More recently, regional personality differences have been mapped in both United States and Great Britain (Rentfrow, Gosling, Jokela, Stillwell, Kosinski & Potter, 2013; Rentfrow, Kokela & Lamb, 2015). The aim of the present study is to map regional personality differences in Sweden.

Using a representative sample of Swedish residents (N = 6154), we mapped the geographical distribution of the Big Five Personality traits across eight national areas (e.g. Stockholm, East Middle Sweden, South Småland and the Islands, South Sweden, West Sweden, North Middle Sweden, Middle Norrland and Upper Norrland).

The result revealed statistically significant associations on national areas and the degree of agreeableness \( F(7, 6154) = 4.63, p < .01, \text{ partial } \eta^2 = .005 \). Employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, significant differences \( p < .01 \) were found between South Sweden \( (M = 2.74) \) and the Upper Norrland \( (M = 2.93) \), and between South Sweden and North Middle Sweden \( (M = 2.88) \). Descriptive statistics illustrate a stepwise change toward higher degree of agreeableness, from the South of Sweden to the North of Sweden (Figure 1).

The result revealed statistically significant associations on national areas and the degree of conscientiousness \( F(7, 6164) = 2.51, p < .05, \text{ partial } \eta^2 = .003 \). Employing the Bonferroni post-hoc test, significant \( p < .05 \) differences were found only between Stockholm \( (M = 2.94) \) and the Upper Norrland \( (M = 3.06) \).

Insights about regional personality differences within a nation are useful, because such differences are associated with political, economic, social and health outcomes and thereby linked to a region’s history, culture and ability to change.
Figure 1. The association between degree of agreeableness and Swedish National areas.

Note. The degree of agreeableness vary from 1-4, where 4 indicates the highest possible degree of agreeableness. Degree of agreeableness is measured through the reverse of three items “I am good at making sarcastic comments”, “If someone treats you badly, I basically feel you should treat them the same way back”, “If someone criticizes me, I am not afraid of giving sharp and sarcastic answers” (Gustavsson, Jönsson, Linder & Weinryb, 2003).
References


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