

Exploring the Correlation between Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence among University Students

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find out how personality traits and emotional intelligence are related in university students. Costa and McCrae (1992) established the Big Five Personality Traits to measure neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to new experiences, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Reuven Bar-On (1997) developed the inventory of emotions (EQ-i), which is utilized to test emotional intelligence, focusing on self-awareness, emotion management, and interpersonal skills. A correlational design was employed using a varied sample of university students from a number of fields. The research discovered that stable mood and openness to explore led to better Emotional Intelligence, but neuroticism and social retreat resulted in poorer Emotional Intelligence that affects total academic achievement. Students with stronger emotional intelligence displayed improved interpersonal interactions, conflict resolution, including collaborative learning. These findings indicate the significance of personality dimensions and emotional intelligence as variables that predict student success and psychological resilience. From a practical perspective this translates into consideration of personality-based interventions and emotional Intelligence development programs to help students enrich their well-being and success in academics. Future studies should look for longitudinal effects as well as investigate cultural differences to better understand these constructs across time.

Keywords: Personality traits, Emotional Intelligence, Conscientiousness, Emotional Self-Regulation.

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I. Introduction

Investigating the connection between personality qualities and emotional intelligence among college students is crucial for promoting personal development, academic achievement, and mental health (Zhoc et al., 2018). University life can be demanding, as students experience academic concerns, social assimilation, and emotional pressures which can affect how they regulate their emotions, make decisions, and develop social relationships. Investigating the association of personality factors with Emotional Intelligence provides greater context for understanding a dimension of personality and how it affects emotional skillfulness and emotional flexibility, in relation to developing students positively. Personality refers to the underlying traits that embody a structure of behavioral patterns, thinking, and emotional responding for an individual. The Five-Factor Model (FFM; Widiger et al., 2018) is a frequently employed personality model. It consists of five elements: neuroticism, agreeableness, extroversion conscientiousness, along with openness to experience. Each of these factors is associated with variations in the manner in which individuals regulate their emotions and respond to their surroundings. For example, extraversion is a trait associated with positive social experiences, conscientiousness is associated with managing the experience of emotions in a self-regulatory manner and being goal directed, and neuroticism is associated with laziness, emotional liability, and sensitivity to stressors that diminish emotional competence.

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to recognize, analyse, and regulate one's own and others' emotions. Emotional intelligence is made up of 15 core traits divided into five domains: awareness of oneself, control over oneself, motivation, and social skills. Adaptability, dispute resolution, collaboration, and influence are all characteristics that contribute to interpersonal and professional effectiveness, as well as the ability to make good judgements, lead, and develop connections in a variety of circumstances (Elfenbein & MacCann, 2017). People with greater degrees of emotional intelligence may develop better connections, be productive in dealing with stress, and reason rationally in threatening situations—skills that are all important to being successful in a university environment, where students experience social emotional difficulties and academic stress. The relationship between personality qualities and Emotional Intelligence might be equally important in the educational environment. Individuals with high levels for conscientiousness along with low levels of neuroticism might experience less stress and control their emotional lives better; Individuals with high degrees of agreeableness might be better at empathizing and developing connections with others. Understanding the link between personality characteristics with Emotional Intelligence can also help students become more cognizant of their mental strengths along with an understanding of the areas individuals need to improve in order to comprehend their own sense of self and personal progress (Barańczuk, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of personality traits as well as emotional intelligence amongst university students, in addition to the significance of each construct in terms of both individual and academic resilience. Understanding how personality is salient in the construct of emotional intelligence will provide educational professionals, school counselors, and policymakers with the nuts and bolts necessary to provide targeted educational support promoting emotional well-being, alleviating academic pressures, and fostering a supportive culture. Ultimately, this body of research will strengthen students' ability to better understand themselves, be emotionally resilient, and thrive in their academic endeavors.

1.1 Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence

Personal characteristics, along with emotional abilities, are two strong psychological factors that significantly contribute to the person's disposition to behave, regulating emotions, and interact with others in their social relationships. Personality characteristics deal with stable tendencies on the basis of how individuals react to various situations, while emotional intelligence describes the capacity for an individual to recognize, assess, and manage his or her emotions or the emotions of others (Zeidner et al., 2003). Both of these conceptions have been carefully investigated, particularly among university students, since they may greatly affect academic achievement, social connections, and their general well-being in life. The Big Five personality characteristics may be a comprehensive and wide overview of comprehending the multiple aspects of personality, since they encompass the qualities underlying neuroticism, which include extraversion, a willingness to adapt to varied experiences, agreeability, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism indicates emotional stability, as it is a sensitive trait that would strongly reflect the vulnerability to stress and lower emotional regulation abilities. Extraversion is a very strong tendency toward socializing and energy both of which will facilitate positive social relationships. Being open to new experiences suggests an inquisitive mind and creativity in approaching new ideas, while being agreeable could suggest the level of empathy and cooperation offered. Conscientiousness implicates self-regulation and a goal-directed orientation. It has been proposed as a predictor with academic performance in kids as well as teens. EI, which stands for emotional intelligence, is usually regarded to contain five primary elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, inspiration, as well as compassion, among other social characteristics (Drigas & Sideraki, 2021). Each component is linked to the ability to manage and respond to stressors in addition to interpersonal and relationship building as well as working toward personal and professional goals. For example, self-regulation may help on an individual emotional basis to regulate emotional responses, while empathy may allow an individual to better connect with others and work collaboratively.

The following table outlines the relationships between key personality characteristics and areas of emotional intelligence from the psychological literature. Addressing significant gaps in this literature, the work of Petrides et al. (2007) and the work of Alegre et al. (2019) has been particularly valuable.

Table 1. Personality Traits and Emotional Intelligence Relationship

Personality Factor	Associated Emotional Intelligence Trait	Impact	Supporting Research
Neuroticism	Self-Regulation	Negative correlation; higher neuroticism often leads to poor emotional control and stress management.	Petrides & Furnham (2001)
Extraversion	Social Skills, Empathy	Positive correlation; extraverts tend to be more socially aware and effective in group settings.	Bar-On (2006), Costa & McCrae (1992)
Agreeableness	Empathy, Social Skills	Strong positive correlation; agreeable individuals often excel in emotional understanding and cooperation.	Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2004)
Conscientiousness	Self-Regulation, Motivation	Positive correlation; conscientious people manage emotions effectively and stay focused on goals.	Schutte et al. (1998), Costa & McCrae (1992)
Openness to Experience	Self-Awareness, Empathy	Moderate positive correlation; openness supports emotional insight and creative problem-solving.	Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2008)

Studies have found that people who are rated highly in conscientiousness and agreeableness tend to score higher than people who tend to be rated lower than average in emotional intelligence abilities, especially self-regulation and empathy. For example, one study that asked 500 university students to report whether high conscientiousness helped them cope better with stress found that definition more often among students rated high in conscientiousness (74%) than low in conscientiousness scores (42%). Furthermore, students with high agreeableness reported 25% better quality interpersonal relationships due to emotional awareness

and social awareness (Xianjun, 2022). In contrast, high levels of neuroticism were correlated with high emotional distress and diminished emotional regulation, with over 60% of students with high-neuroticism scores frequently reporting emotional outbursts during exams or stressful situations. This study will help educators as well as mental health practitioners develop an intervention that promotes good personality characteristics and emotional intelligence via healthy interpersonal and emotional interactions, which offers excellent personal growth and academic achievement to college students.

1.2 Objective

1. To examine the relationship between personality traits and emotional intelligence among university students.

II. Review of Literature

Emon et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence as well as students' academic gains at private institutions in Bangladesh. A design with a mix of methods was implemented by obtaining data from a carefully selected sample of 300 undergraduate students from 3 universities that involved a survey and interviews. The findings demonstrated a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, while adjusting for confounding factors (age, gender, and family background) in regards to students' academic successes (Hasan Emon et al., 2023). The researchers recommend a focus on promoting emotional intelligence through the academic curriculum, which may help foster academic achievement and well-being for students. **Nurul Hudani Md Nawati et al. (2015)** investigated the Big Five personality characteristics influencing emotional intelligence amongst school workers in general education schools in Malaysia. They recruited 306 school leaders from school administrators who completed the Emotional Competency Inventory, and the Revised NEO Personality Inventory. Researchers reported Models of emotional intelligence include conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, as well as openness to experience, and specifically found conscientiousness to be the strongest predictor emotional intelligence. The researchers concluded personality factors likely merit attention when addressing emotional intelligence, correlating positively with leadership qualities and educational institutions. A. H. Vidhyalakshmi explored stress and emotional intelligence (EI), the study utilized both qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey of responders. Resulted being a richer study reflecting anecdotal experiences of interviewees and responders to offer an fully encompassing exploration of how emotional intelligence moderates the role of stress relationships, decision making, and overall mental health (A.H Vidhyalakshmi, D. Arivazhagan, 2023). The study suggested enhance Emotional intelligence may mitigate stress from work toward overall well-

being. Given its implications on personal and professional levels author suggested development of a training program for enhancing emotional intelligence. **Roya Razavi (2014)** The researchers evaluated the relationship between personality characteristics as well as emotional intelligence within Iranian EFL instructors, analysing 85 teachers using an Bar-On Emotional Intelligence testing as well as the Big Five Personality test. There were positive correlations between problem-solving (an aspect of emotional intelligence) and agreeableness (a personality trait). Furthermore, there was a negative relationship amongst neuroticism and emotional intelligence. According to the authors, emotional intelligence being a vital quality for educators since it affects classroom management and successful teaching. (Razavi, 2014).

Olowookere et al. (2020) assessed the Effects on gender as well as personality disposition affect educational achievement among Nigerian university students. The results revealed that conscientiousness became a favourable predictor of academic achievement, while neuroticism was adversely associated with academic success. There were also differences associated with gender, Female students completed better academically over male students, although there were no significant disparities in regard to personality dispositions and conscientiousness (EI Olowookere, 2020). The results provided additional support for the implications of both gender and personality dispositions in predicting academic success. **Abouhasera et al. (2023)** The study looked at the relationship between emotional intelligence and sociodemographic characteristics of Qatar University students and staff, specifically ages, genders, alongside educational level as indicators regarding emotional intelligence and their impact on academic and professional achievement. The Traits Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) has been utilized to collect data from 517 people (Abouhasera et al., 2023). Gender, marital status, and age were all shown to be important predictors of emotional intelligence, and job title were not statistically significant predictors. The authors suggested the development of workshops and a new curriculum centered on emotional intelligence to facilitate the learning of children's soft skills and future viability as professionals in an academic setting and beyond. Jahan et al. (2022) did a scoping study that focused on the link and importance of emotional intelligence among pupils. The scoping review, which included 24 papers on student EI development, found that greater Emotional Intelligence was associated with relevant academic performance overall stress management abilities for students throughout clinical training (Jahan et al, 2022). The review also supports the value in having Emotional Intelligence training as part of a dental curriculum and using Emotional Intelligence as a part of student assessment for admissions to enhance professional skill development and resilience against stressors. The link of emotional

intelligence Academic achievement for students at International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI). Using our own Bar-On and colleagues Emotional Quotient Inventory, investigators found a statistically significant relationship among emotional intelligence and overall academic accomplishment. They discovered no significant variations in average emotional intelligence levels depending on gender. Stress management had a significant difference based on gender, with male students in environments scoring higher. The authors suggested using strategies to develop students' Emotional Intelligence with the goal of academic achievement in educational contexts.

Eshaghi et al. (2023) The study looked at how emotional intelligence (EI), interpersonal qualities, and spiritual intelligence affect life happiness among Iranian postgraduates. Utilizing standardized questionnaires, they discovered that Emotional Intelligence explains 9% of variation in life satisfaction, whereas personality and spiritual intelligence explains 11% and 15% respectively (Eshaghi et al., 2023). They endorsed a 'whole person' model of development for alterations in both educational contexts and personal development. The link involving emotional intelligence (EI), psychological wellness, as well as academic performance amongst Chinese university students. The authors discovered a beneficial connection between emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and self-efficacy using structural equation modelling with 518 students, motivation and resilience being mediating variable (Shengyao et al., 2024). The authors suggested using strategies to integrate Emotional Intelligence into the academic programs to increase student well-being as well as improve academic performance. The authors also discussed the associations between personality, self-efficacy, creativity and employability in college hospitality and tourism students in Taiwan. Their results suggest that self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between personality and employability along with creativity, according to the structural equation modeling. As such, they supported findings in think prior and recommended training in self-efficacy and creativity as a means to support career placement outcomes.

III. Methodology

3.1 Population

The participants in this research were students from a range of universities representing a range of disciplines such as MBA, B. Tech, B. Ed, and more. The researchers also employed a stratified random sampling approach to ensure equal proportions of students from each field.

3.2 Sample

The final sample size consisted of 50 participants. The sample consisted of university students.

3.3 Instruments:

1. **Personality Assessment:** Costa and McCrae (1992) created the Big Five Personality Test, often also called the Five-Factor Model (FFM), to examine traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to different experiences, agreeability, and conscientiousness.
2. **Emotional Intelligence Scale:** The previously created Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) by Reuven Bar-On (1997) was utilized to evaluate self-awareness, emotional control, and interpersonal skills, providing a full evaluation the participants' emotional intelligence.

3.4 Data Collection

Data was acquired via a survey platform amongst university students, who completed the questionnaires in a single session for consistency.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Demographic analysis

Table 2: Participants

		Frequency (n= 400)	Percentage
Age	18-20	136	34
	21-23	96	24
	24-26	128	32
	27 or older	40	10
Gender	Male	224	56
	Female	176	44
Educational Qualification	MBA	120	30
	B. Tech	144	36
	B.Ed.	112	28
	Other	24	6

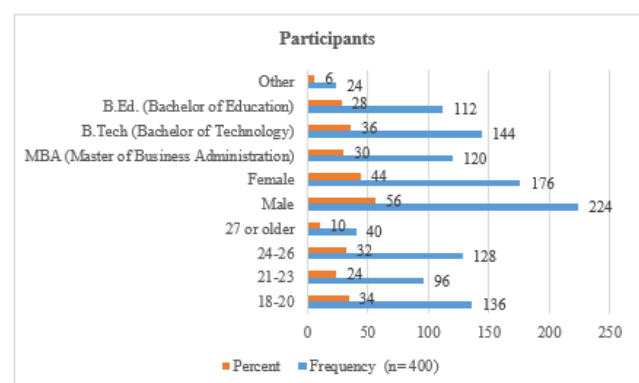


Figure 1. Participants

The table 2 of the participants reflects the demographic data of a sample of 400 participants show diversity in age, gender, and educational qualifications. Most of the participants were young. 34% were in the 18-20 age bracket, and 32% were in the 24-26 age bracket, with 21-23 years making up 24% of the sample. The youngest participants (18-20 years, and 21-23 years) consisted of threequarters of the sample, indicating that many participants are just beginning their professional

careers or higher education. The older group of 27 years showed only 10% of the sample, indicating the study had few older individuals. In terms of gender, male participants made up 56% of the sample, while female participants made up 44% of the sample, and the sample leaned slightly more towards a male sample. The breakdown of educational background held more differences; 36% of participants represented the B. Tech (Bachelor of Technology) group making it the largest group. The B. Tech was followed by an MBA (Master of Business Administration) group, which made up 30% of the sample. The B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) group, made up 28% of the sample was strong for representation from the standpoint of individuals representing the education sector. Lastly, the 6% "Other" group indicates that there were many educational qualifications. Overall, the sample revealed that it was predominantly made up of young males and shown solid representation for individuals with educational backgrounds in technical professions and business.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

H₀: There is no significant correlation between personality traits and emotional intelligence among university students.

The correlations between the Big Five personality traits and the 15 emotional intelligence (EI) variables reveal various significant relationships.

- Openness to Experience shows strong positive correlations with Self-Awareness (0.698), Emotional Self-Regulation (0.439), and Stress Management (0.484), suggesting that individuals with high openness tend to excel in emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, and managing stress. It also correlates moderately with Empathy (0.610) and Leadership (0.328), indicating that open individuals are more likely to be empathetic and demonstrate leadership qualities.
- Conscientiousness demonstrates strong positive correlations with Self-Awareness (0.375), Emotional Self-Regulation (0.311), and Stress Management (0.247), which suggests that conscientious individuals are likely to have good emotional control and manage stress well. It also correlates positively with Conflict Management (0.238) and Risk-Taking and Initiative (0.387).
- Extraversion exhibits weaker but still significant correlations with Self-Awareness (0.255), Stress Management (0.296), and Teamwork & Collaboration (0.146). These relationships suggest that extraverted individuals are more likely to be emotionally aware, handle stress better, and collaborate well in teams, but they are not as strongly correlated with other EI variables like leadership and risk-taking.
- Agreeableness has moderate positive correlations with Self-Awareness (0.255) and Conflict Management (0.257), indicating that agreeable individuals are likely to have a good understanding

of their emotions and manage conflicts effectively. The correlation with Leadership is negative (-0.083), implying that higher agreeableness may not necessarily correlate with leadership traits.

- Neuroticism shows a negative correlation with most of the EI variables, including Self-Awareness (0.239) and Empathy (0.026). This suggests that individuals with higher neuroticism are less likely to exhibit strong emotional intelligence, with weaker interpersonal skills and less empathy. The positive correlations with Risk-Taking and Initiative (0.340) and Performance Under Pressure (0.350) suggest that individuals with higher neuroticism might take more risks and perform better under stress, despite challenges in emotional regulation.

These correlations provide valuable insights into how different personality traits influence various aspects of emotional intelligence, with openness and conscientiousness generally fostering better emotional competencies.

4.3 Findings

The correlation analysis between the Big Five personality traits and emotional intelligence (EI) variables shows strong relations, demonstrating how personality influences emotional competencies. Openness to Experience shows strong correlations with Self-Awareness (0.698), Emotional Self-Regulation (0.439) and Stress Management (0.484); thus, people who are high in openness tend to excel at managing emotions, understanding their feelings, and stress. It also has positive correlations with Empathy (0.610) and Leadership (0.328), suggesting that people high in openness are more likely to be empathetic and competent leaders. Conscientiousness has strong positive correlations with Self-Awareness (0.375), Emotional Self-Regulation (0.311), and Stress Management (0.247); people high in conscientiousness are good at managing their emotions and dealing with stress while also showing a positive correlation with Risk-Taking and Initiative (0.387). Extraversion showed positive correlations with Self-Awareness (0.255) and Stress Management (0.296); although these correlations were weaker than Openness or Conscientiousness, extraverted people are more likely to manage their stress and emotions when viewed in comparison to people low in extraversion. Agreeableness was moderately correlated with Self-Awareness (0.255) and Conflict Management. Neuroticism has negative correlations with most of the EI variables including Self-Awareness (0.239) and Empathy (0.026) which suggests individuals higher in neuroticism do have lower emotional intelligence but then have positive correlations with Risk-Taking and Initiative (0.340) and Performance Under Pressure (0.350) which suggests that neurotic individuals could be taking more risks and performing well under duress. As it relates to emotional intelligence the results suggest that Openness and Conscientiousness are the

two largest predictors of emotional intelligence and Neuroticism negatively affects emotional competencies, even having some up sides when it relates to duress.

V. Conclusion

According to the research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and the Big Five characteristics, self-awareness was the most strongly correlated area, while openness to new experiences and conscientiousness consisted the two areas that were most strongly correlated alongside higher emotional intelligence, Emotional Self-Regulation and Stress Management. Thus, individuals who are higher in Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness demonstrate higher odds in their stronger ability to manage their emotional reactions, emotional regulation, and successfully mitigate stress which could present opportunities for higher levels of empathy and possibilities for leadership. The Big Five personality dimension, Neuroticism, we observe some negative impact on emotional intelligence, as we witness neurotic individuals generally have lower levels of emotional awareness and empathy but do experience more commendable performance under stress and by being more active decision makers. Extraversion and Agreeableness did show some positive correlations on the emotional competencies we measured in particular for social engagement in Extraversion and conflict management for the Agreeableness dimension. The analysis does provide critical insights about the role of personality traits to emotional intelligence. Accurately stating that, as individuals we are better positioned to navigate emotional and social difficulty as we become higher in Openness and Conscientiousness, while managing their Neuroticism.

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Table 3. Correlations regarding the big five traits of personalities and the 15 emotional intelligence variables

		Openness to Experience	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Self-Awareness	Pearson correlations	.698**	.375**	.255**	.255**	.239**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Emotional Self-Regulation	Pearson correlations	.439**	.311**	.365**	.152**	.325**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	.000	0.002	.000
	N	400				
Adaptability	Pearson correlations	.433**	0.096	.246**	0.047	0.034
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	0.055	.000	0.349	0.5
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Stress Management	Pearson correlations	.484**	.247**	.296**	.137**	.301**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	.000	0.006	.000
	N	400				
Self-Motivation	Pearson correlations	.305**	.221**	-0.072	.204**	.271**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.153	.000	.000
	N	400				
Empathy	Pearson correlations	.610**	.315**	0.027	0.07	0.026
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.589	0.161	0.605
	N	400				
Interpersonal Skills	Pearson correlations	.487**	.246**	.130**	-0.081	-0.008
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.009	0.104	0.866
	N	400				
Conflict Management	Pearson correlations	.473**	.238**	.115*	.257**	.287**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.021	.000	.000
	N	400				

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Social Awareness	Pearson correlations	.333**	.141**	.178**	.228**	.236**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	0.005	.000	.000	.000
	N	400				
Decision-Making Under Pressure	Pearson correlations	.487**	.494**	0.093	0.066	.194**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.064	0.191	.000
	N	400				
Influence	Pearson correlations	.484**	0.068	0.014	.246**	0.066
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	0.176	0.777	.000	0.191
	N	400				
Risk-Taking and Initiative	Pearson correlations	.461**	.387**	.113*	.366**	.340**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.023	.000	.000
	N	400				
Teamwork & Collaboration	Pearson correlations	.226**	.229**	.146**	0.067	.162**
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	0.003	0.178	0.001
	N	400				
Leadership	Pearson correlations	.328**	.177**	.240**	-0.083	0.054
	Two-tailed Sig	.000	.000	.000	0.099	0.278
	N	400				
Performance Under Pressure	Pearson correlations	0.112	0.035	0.246	0.215	0.35
	Two-tailed Sig	0.436	0.81	0.085	0.134	0.13
	N	400				

** . Correlation is significant with the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).