

Big five personality factors and emotional intelligence among college students

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to check the effect of Big Five Personality Traits on Emotional Intelligence on males and females among College Students. In the study it included 100 participants (N=100) who were grouped into 50 M and 50 F according to their age range 18-22 respectively. They were asked to complete the self-report measures of NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO –FFI) and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). The findings indicated that there is no correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism, Openness to Experience and Agreeableness but significant positive correlation is there in Extraversion and Conscientiousness among males, although in females no correlation was proved between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism, Openness to Experience and significant positive correlation in Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The findings also reported that except Conscientiousness there is no significant difference between Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Emotional Intelligence among Male and Female college students. Implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: *Big Five Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence, College Students*

Personality has been explained as “individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving” American Psychological Association (2017). Paul Costa and Robert McCrae are credited for proving the validity of five-factor model which explains personality in terms of five main items.

Openness to Experience: It can be understood as people’s interest to explore, their capacity to be vulnerable, and to think creatively. People, who score towards the above end of this parameter show keen interest in learning, interact with others, generally have a career in creative field (Lebowitz, 2016a). individuals, who scores less likes to stick with rigid plans and activities with set rules and instructions instead of variety, follows whatever they know, and avoids, dislikes modern art.

Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness is a personality trait that can be described as a habit to react in certain ways under certain conditions or, a way to understand and act in a fairly

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lasting way over time in different situations (Roberts, Jackson, Fayard, Edmonds & Meints 2009). Those who score high in this factor strive to utilize abilities to the fullest and benefit a lot over those who have low conscientiousness. While people low in conscientiousness tend to prolong, be giddy, and be hasty in their work and decisions.

Extroversion: Extroverts feel energized and active by communicating with society and do not prefer to be alone. People high in extroversion always participate in activities that give them a chance to form new relationships and interactions. However, people low in extroversion or introverts are people with few words who prefer to be hushed, thoughtful and observant.

Agreeableness: Indicates the efficiency of interactions among people and one's attitude towards others. It's a concept that is based on how a person communicates with others in general. People scoring toward the higher end of the spectrum on this trait tend to have real, strong, empathetic and caring relations, while, people who are on the lower end of the parameter are unlikely to be accepted by others and appear to be callous, arrogant, clumsy and mean.

Neuroticism: Neuroticism is not related with hatred or inadequacy but with being sure, having faith in one self and being comfortable with self. It highlights an individual's emotional stability and mindset. High neuroticism may result in complications. People, that are on the lower side of the scores have self-confidence, trust their instincts, and do not give up easily in times of difficulties.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

According to Daniel Goleman "Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others" and consists of 5 areas:

Self-awareness: Is the capability to identify and comprehend one self's feelings. Other than just identifying emotions it also means being aware of its effect on one's own actions, moods, and emotions of another person.

Self-regulation: An Emotionally intelligent person should control, manipulate feelings in addition to being mindful of one's own emotions and the effect it has on others. This doesn't mean ignoring, isolating suppressing legitimate emotions— it just means acknowledging the correct moment and channel to show your feelings. It means properly managing one's feelings.

Social skill: It is the skill to communicate well, in a desired way with others. True emotional intelligence requires more than just knowing their own as well as other's feelings- this also comprises of the ability to work with this knowledge in everyday communications.

Empathy: It is the capability to acknowledge how people feel is an important aspect of emotional intelligence. But it is not only limited to having the ability to identify other people's emotional condition, but also contains an individual's reaction towards that feelings.

Motivation: Individuals that are smart emotionally are driven by stimuli that are above extrinsic benefits such as notability, acceptance, and acclamation. Rather, they are passionate about fulfilling their wants and ambitions. They constantly search for things that lead to intrinsic benefits, feeling energized by connecting and achieving highest proficiency.

PERSONALITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENDER

These two can be linked together when judging. Many of the above mentioned traits in the Big Five affect an individual's EQ. Although not many studies have been conducted on these but few researches like that of Costa, Terracciano and McCrae (2001) indicated that men scored lower on the Five Factor Model (FFM) traits of neuroticism, extraversion and agreeableness, whereas women scored lower on openness. No significant difference was found in conscientiousness. Chapman, Duberstein, Sörensen, and Lyness (2007) in their study have also shown same result other than the trait of extraversion in which men had scored higher.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Naz, S., & Malik, N. I. (2019) in their study investigated the aspect of congeniality along with conscientiousness in university students' emotional intelligence as well as cognitive styles. Data was gathered from 3,500 college students using Object-Spatial Imagery and Verbal Questionnaire, Emotional Intelligence Self-Report Measure, Ten Item Personality Inventory. Results proved that Conscientiousness has a significant positive affect and Agreeableness has significant negative moderator for Emotional Intelligence and Cognitive Styles relationships. *Siegling, A. B., Furnham, A., & Petrides, K. V. (2015)* checked whether a relationship among the trait of emotional intelligence and the Five-Factor Personality model between males and females was invariant. Five English-speaking majorly people pursuing undergrad studies were asked to complete different assessments personality and emotional intelligence. It was found out that models foretelling worldwide TEIQue scores from the Big Five did not vary across studies, proving that Neuroticism and Extraversion are the strongest correlates of EI, and Conscientiousness, Agreeability.

Kappagoda, U. W. M. R. (2013) investigated the connection between emotional intelligence and the five-factor model among English teachers of Sri Lanka. The sample was gathered randomly from 470 English teachers. The English teachers filled a questionnaire with two instruments. The data collected were checked using coefficient of correlation and regression analysis. The results showed significant positive correlation with Extraversion personality, agreeability and open-mindedness, though not substantially associated with conscientiousness and neuroticism. It has been concluded that emotional intelligence has impact on English teachers' five-factor personality model.

Augusto Landa.et.al. (2010) Analyzed association among emotional intelligence (EI) relationship, personality traits along with psychological well-being on college students. However, it analyzed the ability of EI and personality traits. Conclusions indicated that less neurotic levels and higher extraversion scores were measures which are very closely connected to all mental health scales and predicts well-being. In addition, after predominating personality factors, higher result proved to be two constant medium for all psychological well-being scales.

Mishra, R., & Ranjan, P. (2008) checked the relation of gender differences on emotional intelligences. 80 participants took part in which 40 were males and 40 were females. According to the findings gender difference does have an impact on emotional intelligence and that women have low score than men implying the fact that males are more resilient during difficult situations and may be able to regulate stress and their emotions positively.

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

- There will be significant relationship between Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism and Emotional Intelligence among male college students.
- There will be significant relationship between Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism and Emotional Intelligence among female College students.
- There will be significant gender differences on the level of Big Five Personality (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism) among male and female college students.
- There will be significant gender difference on the level of Emotional Intelligence among male and female college students.

Sample

The sample size of the current study is 100 college students, who were grouped into 50 Males and 50 Females accordingly. They were from the age range of 18 years to 22 years.

Instruments

Neo Five- Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) was developed by Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae. It is an easy, widely accepted, scientific and credible measurement of personality based on the five-factor model. It consists of 60 items which are- 1) Neuroticism, 2) Extraversion, 3) Openness to Experience 4) Agreeableness, 5) Conscientiousness. The items on NEO-FFI are rated on a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The five subscales are scored individually. The test- retest reliability for this test was found to be ranging between 0.68-0.86.

Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) was developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte. It is a self-report and self -scorable measurement of Emotional Intelligence. It contains 33 items and using a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) scale for responses. The test-retest reliability was 0.78. The sum of all the items is the general score of the questionnaire. More the score higher is the emotional intelligence of the individual.

Procedure

The tests were given to students from the age group of 18 years to 22 years. They were explained the tests and the reason behind the administration of the test. After taking consent from them, the tests were given in the following order- NEO Five- Factor Inventory (NEO – FFI) and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). After the completion of the tests the forms were taken back and scoring was done accordingly.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

TABLE 1 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Big five personality traits among male college students

	N 50	Neuroticism (N)	Extraversion (E)	Openness to Experience (O)	Agreeableness (A)	Conscientiousness (C)
Emotional Intelligence	r	-.034	.297	.109	.077	.477
	p	Insig.	Sig*	Insig.	Insig.	Sig.**

**Significant at 0.01 level, *Significant at 0.05 level
Insigificant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level

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TABLE 2 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Big five personality traits among female college students

Emotional Intelligence	N 50	Neuroticism (N)	Extraversion (E)	Openness to Experience (O)	Agreeableness (A)	Conscientiousness (C)
r		-.207	.522	-.126	.347	.407
p		Insig.	Sig.**	Insig.	Sig.**	Sig.**

**Significant at 0.01 level

Insig. at both 0.05 and 0.01 level

TABLE 3 Mean and t-test value for Neuroticism among male and female college students

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	24.98	7.766		
F	50	25.18	6.933	-0.136	Insig.

TABLE 4 Mean and t-test value for Extraversion among Male and Female college students

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	26.60	5.736		
F	50	27.94	6.106	-1.131	Insig.

TABLE 5 Mean and t-test value for Openness to Experience among Male and Female college students

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	26.42	5.481		
F	50	25.94	5.723	0.428	Insig.

TABLE 6 Mean and t-test value for Agreeableness among Male and Female college students

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	24.96	6.493		
F	50	27.34	6.461	-1.837	Insig.

TABLE 7 Mean and t-test value for Conscientiousness among Male and Female college students.

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	28.14	7.629		
F	50	31.18	6.514	-2.143	Sig.*

*significant at 0.05 level

TABLE 8 Mean and t-test value for Emotional Intelligence among Male and Female college students

GENDER	N	MEAN	S.D.	t	p
M	50	120.08	17.356		
F	50	125.54	17.355	-1.515	Insig.

DISCUSSION

The result in *Table 4.1* indicates no correlation in Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism (-.034), Openness to Experience (.109) and Agreeableness (.077) in males. Emotional Intelligence can be defined as an individual's ability to acknowledge, differentiate and manage their as well as that of others emotions. Although significant positive correlation is present between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion (.297) with p value being significant at 0.05 level and Conscientiousness (.477) with the p value significant at 0.01 level. The result is supported from the empirical evidence provided by Kappagoda, U. W. M. R. (2013) signifying that no correlation exists between emotional intelligence and neuroticism. Findings according to *Table 4.2* indicates that no correlation is there among Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism (-.207), Openness to Experience (-.126) in females although positive and significant correlation prevails amid Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion (.522), Agreeableness (.347) and Conscientiousness (.407) with the p value being significant at 0.01 level. Neuroticism is defined as personality trait in which the person's emotional stability is judged. It is supported by the study of Dehghanan, H., & Rezaei, M. (2014) which indicates that significant positive correlation exists between emotional intelligence, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The result in *Table 4.3* indicates that t value (-0.136) thus there is no significant difference in Neuroticism among male and female college going students. However Weisberg, Y. J., DeYoung, C. G., & Hirsh, J. B. (2011) in their study investigated that females scored in higher neuroticism scores as compared to males. Findings according to *Table 4.4* indicate that there is no significant difference in Extraversion among male and female college students as the t value is (-1.131). *Table 4.5* indicates no significant difference in Openness to Experience among Male and Female college students with the t values being (0.428). According to *Table 4.6* results indicate t value of (-1.837) proving insignificant difference in Agreeableness among Male and Female college students. *Table 4.7* indicates significant difference in Conscientiousness among Male and Female as the t value is (-2.143). The findings of the current study for table 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 result is supported by research of Atta, M., Ather, M., & Bano, M. (2013); it provides evidence of no gender difference between openness to experience and Agreeableness and a significant gender difference is present in emotional intelligence and conscientiousness. Findings in *Table 4.8* indicates that t value of (-1.515) thus there is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among Male and Female college students as mean. The result is supported from the empirical evidence provided by Pant, N., & Prakash, A. (2004) examined gender difference regarding emotional intelligence on Indian individuals with results indicating absence of relation between both of them.

CONCLUSION

No correlation exists between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism, Openness to Experience and Agreeableness but positive and significant correlation is there between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion and Conscientiousness in males. No correlation is there between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism, Openness to Experience although positive and significant correlation prevails between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness in females. No significant difference is present in Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Emotional Intelligence among Male and Female college students. A significant difference is present in Conscientiousness among Male and Female college students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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