

Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The study intends to examine the emotional intelligence and personality traits among young adults. Through online survey two questionnaires were distributed to a group of young adults aged between 18 to 25 years (N=77 females and N=73 males). A total of 150 samples were selected from various colleges and working sectors of Kerala for the study. Quantitative non-experimental design was adopted. Emotional Intelligence was measured using Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte (1998) and Personality traits was measured by Big five inventory (BFI-44) developed by John and Srivastava (1999). Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation and independent sample t-test was used to study the data. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and agreeableness among young adults while the other four personality traits didn't show any significance. Also, this study revealed that there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence based on gender among young adults. It was noted that females have more emotional intelligence than males. In addition, the study revealed that there is a significant difference in agreeableness trait based on gender among young adults, while the other four personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) didn't show any significance.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Personality traits, Young Adults*

In the words of Charles R. Swindoll, "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it". We are unable to change the inevitable. All we can do is play the one string that we have, and that is our attitude. How we tend to recognize ours as well as others emotion, understand, regulate and the way in which we react influence our life. Emotional Intelligence plays a major role in our life. If you know about yourself, then only you can understand others. Self-understanding, self-awareness, self-evaluation and cognitive abilities such as learning, understanding and dealing with new situations makes it important for a person to have Emotional Intelligence (EI). Some studies show that EI do integrate and rely on personality traits.

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Young adulthood includes the age range 18-25 years as defined by The Society of Adolescent Health and Medicine. It is defined as a period of frequent change and exploration that covers many aspects of their life: home, family, work, school, resources and role by the State Adolescent Health Resource Centre-SAHRC, (2017). It is important to develop EI to know how well a person can use their characteristics and characteristics of personality when handling the emotions of themselves and/or others.

Emotional Intelligence

Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1990 describing it as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). According to Dr. Daniel Goleman (1995) the components of EI; self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skill can help one manage stress better.

The scope of emotional intelligence involves verbal and nonverbal assessment and emotional expression, the control of emotion in oneself and others and the use of emotional expression to solve problems (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Emotional intelligence (EI) is linked to several significant factors in life. In fact, EI is an important predictor of subjective well-being, work success, interpersonal relationships with romantic partners, social support, IQ and wellbeing, whereas loneliness and depression are negatively linked, among others. EI can also be strengthened by training and intervention programmes (Sarrionandia et al., 2018).

Personality and Personality Traits

The term personality itself is derived from the Latin word "persona," which refers to the performers' dramatic mask work in order to either project multiple characters or conceal their identities. Personality, at its most basic, is the characteristic patterns of emotions, feelings, and behaviours that make a person unique. It is believed that personality originates from inside the person and is reasonably stable across life. Although there are many distinct personality concepts, most concentrate on the patterns of behavior and characteristics that can both predict and explain the behaviour of a person.

Allport, (1961) define "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behavior and thought".

"The characteristics or blend of characteristics that make a person unique" (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).

The components of personality include; Extraversion: they are expressive and don't ponder themselves, seeing everything in an increasingly positive way and are centered on finding new sensations. Neuroticism: refers to an individual's capacity to stay steady and adjusted also known as Emotional Stability. Agreeableness: refers to who are generally warm, cordial, and prudent. Openness: It shows how open-minded an individual is and appreciates attempting new things. They are inventive, inquisitive, and open-minded. Conscientiousness: self-restraint and follow an arrangement, instead of acting suddenly (Goldberg, 1993).

Personality trait is defined as "a relatively stable, consistent, and enduring internal characteristic that is inferred from a pattern of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and habits in the individual" (APA, 2020). The analysis of personality traits can be helpful in summarising,

forecasting, and describing the behaviour of an individual, and there are a number of personality trait theories, including the personality trait theory of Allport and the personality trait theory of Cattell.

As EI is important for the understanding and control of emotions that are very important in personality construction, the relationship between EI and personality characteristics is interconnected. There has been substantial study into the relationship between both variables, but the degree of relationship between these two factors depends on the measure used to assess.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been studies that show positive correlation exists between the total emotional maturity score and the dominance of personality traits, privacy, comfort, sensitivity, abstractness, and apprehension and many adolescent respondents were found to be highly emotionally unstable on the emotional maturity scale among adolescent students (Patrani & Bhakre, 2018).

Kumar and Rajesh (2016) conducted a study to find the relation and importance of the mean difference between adolescents' emotional intelligence and personality. Results show that, with the exception of neuroticism, emotional intelligence is strongly positive in correlation with all five personality variables and t-test revealed that emotional intelligence and neuroticism, extra version and openness tests of personality are significantly different for boys and girls.

As per Ugoani (2015) the experiment was undertaken to explore the degree of relationship among urban adolescents between emotional intelligence and personality stability. A very strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and personality stability was found in the study. Similarly, Ghiabi and Besharat (2011) conducted a study to examine the relationship between the dimensions of personality and emotional intelligence (EI) in a sample of University of Tehran students. The results showed that extraversion and neuroticism, respectively, could be positively and negatively predicted by EI.

A study by Weisberg et al. (2011) examined gender differences in personality characteristics, both at the Big Five level and at the sub-level of two aspects in each Big Five domain. Women reported higher Big Five Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism scores than men, replicating prior findings. However, more extensive gender differences were found at the level of the aspects, with significant gender differences appearing in both aspects of each Big Five trait.

In a study by Katyal and Awasthi (2005) conducted on students from various Chandigarh Government Schools to evaluate gender differences in emotional intelligence, found that girls had higher emotional intelligence than boys. Likewise, In addition to exploring gender differences, a study conducted by Atta et al. (2003) to examine relationship patterns between personality traits and emotional intelligence (EI) revealed that EI correlated positively with extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness, and neuroticism negatively. Further it revealed that no gender differences in EI, openness to experience and agreeableness, while significant gender differences in extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism were shown.

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) conducted a study to measure emotional intelligence in adolescents and found that EI was measured reliably in adolescents, was higher for women than for men, and was positively associated with the ability to identify emotional expressions, amount of social support, degree of social support satisfaction, and behaviour of mood management.

As per Costa et al. (2001), Secondary analyses of revised NEO Personality Inventory data from 26 cultures, indicates that gender differences are small relative to individual gender variations; differences for both college-age and adult samples are replicated across cultures and differences are broadly consistent with gender stereotypes. In Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Warmth and Openness to Feelings, women reported themselves to be higher, while men were higher in Assertiveness and Openness to Ideas, contrary to evolutionary theory predictions. Gender differences varied in magnitude across cultures.

As personality of young adults is created by a combination of the mindset, opinions, desires, actions, etc. of an individual and the emotions of a person are not only feelings but a particular way of communicating their thoughts, which varies from person to person as well as personality, they continue to feel insecure, mentally disturbed and tense with the changing selves and environment of adulthood, which further reflects their personality. Current research is an empirical endeavor, to study relationship of EI with each personality traits in young adults. There are studies conducted on the topic to find the relationship between EI and Personality traits in other countries. However, there are no much studies based on Indian population and in young adults. To increase the understanding of this topic i.e., to find relation between their personality traits and emotional intelligence which can be helpful for them to control their reaction and to shape their personality. So, this study further tries to find gender difference and correlation between two most important assets of development emotional intelligence and personality traits.

METHODOLOGY

The Present study was aimed to examine the Emotional Intelligence and Personality traits among young adults.

Objectives

- To assess the Emotional Intelligence and Personality traits among Young adults.
- To study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality traits among young adults.
- To study the difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults with regard to their gender.
- To study the difference in Personality traits among young adults with regard to their gender.

Hypotheses

- H₀1: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality traits among young adults.
- H₀1.1: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion among young adults.
- H₀1.2: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Agreeableness among young adults
- H₀1.3: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conscientiousness among young adults

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- H₀1.4: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism among young adults.
- H₀1.5: There will be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Openness among young adults.
- H₀2: There will be no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3: There will be no significant difference in Personality traits among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3.1: There is no significant difference in Extraversion among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3.2: There is no significant difference in Agreeableness among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3.3: There is no significant difference in Conscientiousness among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3.4: There is no significant difference in Neuroticism among young adults with regard to their gender.
- H₀3.5: There is no significant difference in Openness among young adults with regard to their gender.

Participants

A sample of 150 young adults (N=150), 77 females and 73 males between the age group of 18 to 25 hailing from Kerala were selected for the study. Purposive sampling technique was applied for collecting sample of 150 young adults which includes students from various colleges and working sectors of Kerala.

Tools used for the study

- **Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998).** The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte (1998) is a method of measuring general Emotional Intelligence (EI), using four sub-scales: emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions. The SSEIT is structured off of the EI model by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The SSEIT model is closely associated with the EQ-I model of Emotional Intelligence and includes a 33-item self-report using 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. The reliability and validity of the scale is 0.90 and 0.43 respectively.
- **Big five inventory (BFI-44) (John & Srivastava, 1999).** BFI-44 is a self-report inventory developed by John and Srivastava (1999) designed to measure an individual on the Big Five Factors of personality. It has 44 items and consists of five subscales: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. Reliability of the BFI ranges from 0.79 to 0.88 and validity is 0.92.
- **Socio-demographic data sheet** The socio-demographic data sheet includes information such as name, age, and gender.

Procedure

A total of 150 participants were selected for the study. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before collecting the data. Two questionnaires regarding the emotional intelligence and personality traits were administered to them along with the socio-demographic data sheet. The scale was administered to the participants through Google Forms. The respondents were given assurance based on the ethical guidelines of this study as well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was scored, tabulated, and descriptive statistics were calculated on the collected data. With the help of inferential statistics, the outcomes or results were then interpreted hypothesis-wise. The following are the findings, which are presented and discussed.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage of socio-demographic variables

Variable	Type	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	77	51
	Male	73	49

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics socio-demographic variances. The gender of the sample consisted of both males and females from various schools and colleges that were 77 males and 73 females having 51 % and 49 % respectively.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness and Emotional intelligence among Young Adults

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extraversion	25.63	5.78
Agreeableness	34.18	5.03
Conscientiousness	29.23	5.29
Neuroticism	24.90	5.81
Openness	36.16	5.45
Emotional intelligence	127.97	12.10

Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the result of various Personality traits- Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness and Emotional Intelligence. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (20) and sample population was 150 to test the mean and standard deviation difference in descriptive statistics. The mean of 5 Personality traits were Extraversion 25.63, Agreeableness 34.18, Conscientiousness 29.23, Neuroticism 24.90, Openness 36.16 and Emotional Intelligence 127.97. And the standard deviations of the 5 Personality traits were Extraversion 5.78, Agreeableness 5.03, Conscientiousness 5.29, Neuroticism 5.81, Openness 5.45 and Emotional Intelligence 12.10. The mean value indicates the average of the data set whereas the standard deviation values indicate that the data is clustered about the mean.

Table 3 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion among young adults

N=150		Extraversion
Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.37
	p-value	.653

H₀1.1: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion among young adults.

Table 3 shows the correlation between the emotional intelligence and extraversion. The Pearson correlation results revealed the correlation coefficient ($r = -.37$) and p-value (.653) at significance level 0.05. **Therefore, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and extraversion, but there is a low**

negative correlation indicated by the correlation coefficient. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Agreeableness among young adults

N=150		Agreeableness
Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.172*
	p-value	.036

Note: * $p < .05$

H₀1.2: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Agreeableness among young adults.

Table 4 shows the correlation between the emotional intelligence and agreeableness. The Pearson correlation results revealed the correlation coefficient ($r = -.172$) and p-value (.036) at significance level 0.05. **Therefore, the result shows that there is a significant negative low correlation between emotional intelligence and agreeableness among young adults. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 5 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Conscientiousness among young adults

N=150		Conscientiousness
Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient (r)	.022
	p-value	.792

H₀1.3: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conscientiousness among young adults

Table 5 shows the correlation between the emotional intelligence and conscientiousness. The Pearson correlation results revealed the correlation coefficient ($r = .022$) and p-value (.792) at 0.05 significance level. **Therefore, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness, but there is a low positive correlation indicated by the correlation coefficient. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 6 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism among young adults

N=150		Neuroticism
Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient (r)	.077
	p-value	.351

H₀1.4: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism among young adults

Table 6 shows the correlation between the emotional intelligence and neuroticism. The Pearson correlation results revealed the correlation coefficient ($r = .077$) and p-value (.351) at 0.05 significance level. **Therefore, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness, but there is a low positive correlation indicated by the correlation coefficient. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 7 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Openness among young adults

N=150		Openness
Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.088
	p-value	.284

H₀1.5: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Openness among young adults

Table 7 shows the correlation between the emotional intelligence and openness. The Pearson correlation results revealed the correlation coefficient ($r = -.088$) and p-value (.284) at 0.05 significance level. **Therefore, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and openness, but there is a low negative correlation indicated by the correlation coefficient. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 8 Independent t test of emotional intelligence among young adults based on gender

Emotional Intelligence	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	129.87	11.82	1.34	1.0	148	.048*
Males	73	125.97	12.16	1.42			

Note: * $p < .05$

H₀2: There is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there is a significant difference in the scores of emotional intelligences among Females ($M = 129.87$, $SD = 11.82$) and Males ($M = 125.97$, $SD = 12.16$). The obtained Sig. value was ($t = 1.0$, $p < 0.05$). **Therefore, the results show that there is a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 9 Independent t test of extraversion among young adults based on gender

Extraversion	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	25.49	5.86	.66	.303	148	.762
Males	73	33.24	5.74	.67			

H₀3.1: There is no significant difference in Extraversion among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional Intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores of extraversion based on gender. Females ($M = 25.49$, $SD = 5.86$) and Males ($M = 33.24$, $SD = 5.74$). Statistically not significant at ($t = .303$, $p > 0.05$) levels. **Therefore, there is no significant difference in Extraversion among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

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Table 10 Independent t test of Agreeableness among young adults based on gender

Agreeableness	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	33.24	5.47	.62	2.366	148	.019*
Males	73	35.16	4.31	.50			

Note: * $p < .05$

H₀3.2: There is no significant difference in Agreeableness among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in the scores of Agreeableness based on gender. Females ($M=33.24$, $SD=5.47$) and Males ($M=35.16$, $SD=4.31$). Statistically significant at ($t= 2.366$, $p<0.05$) levels. **Therefore, there is a significant difference in Agreeableness among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.**

Table 11 Independent t test of Conscientiousness among young adults based on gender

Conscientiousness	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	29.27	5.10	.58	.093	148	.926
Males	73	29.19	5.52	.64			

H₀3.3: There is no significant difference in Conscientiousness among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores of Conscientiousness based on gender. Females ($M=29.27$, $SD=5.10$) and Males ($M=29.19$, $SD=5.52$). Statistically not significant at ($t= .093$, $p>0.05$) levels. **Therefore, there is no significant difference in Conscientiousness among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 12: Independent t test of Neuroticism among young adults based on gender

Neuroticism	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	25.75	5.97	.68	1.846	148	.067
Males	73	24.01	5.53	.64			

H₀3.4: There is no significant difference in Neuroticism among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional Intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores of Neuroticism based on gender. Females ($M=25.75$, $SD=5.97$) and Males ($M=24.01$, $SD=5.53$). Statistically not significant at ($t= 1.846$, $p>0.05$) levels. **Therefore, there is no significant difference in Neuroticism among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 13 Independent t test of Openness among young adults based on gender

Openness	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p-value
Female	77	36.54	5.72	.59	.872	148	.384
Males	73	35.76	5.19	.67			

H₀3.5: There is no significant difference in Openness among young adults with regard to their gender.

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the differences between emotional Intelligence and personality traits based on gender. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores of Openness based on gender. Females ($M=36.54$, $SD=5.72$) and Males ($M=35.76$, $SD=5.19$). Statistically not significant at ($t= .872$, $p>0.05$) levels. **Therefore, there is no significant difference in Openness among young adults with regard to their gender. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.**

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and agreeableness trait among young adults. It was observed significant negative low correlation between emotional intelligence and agreeableness ($r = -.172$, $p<0.05$) while the other 4 personality traits didn't show significant relationship to emotional intelligence levels among young adults. Similar results were found in studies conducted by researchers, like Atta, Ather and Bano (2003) and Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002) which revealed association between emotional intelligence and agreeableness. The present study indicates that there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence with regard to gender among young adults and it was noted that females have more emotional intelligence than males. Females ($M=129.87$) and Males ($M=125.97$). The findings of the study are supported by previous researchers like Katyal and Awasthi (2005) and Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar (2001), which revealed that emotional intelligence was higher for females than males which implies that emotional intelligence training can be provided to men. Although there is on-going debate as to whether Emotional Intelligence can be improved, some evidence exists to suggest that it can be enhanced (Slaski & Cartwright, 2003). If emotional intelligence skills can be developed, then it can help them in controlling their reaction and to shape their personality. Further, it was observed that there is a significant difference in agreeableness trait with regard to gender among young adults, while the other 4 personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) didn't show significant difference based on gender among young adults. Males ($M=35.16$) and Females ($M=33.24$) which indicated males show more agreeableness traits to emotional intelligence compared to females. The findings of the study are supported by previous researchers, like Weisberg, DeYoung, and Hirsh (2011), Costa, Terracciano and McCrae (2001) and Feingold (1994) which revealed gender differences in agreeableness.

Limitations

- Age and culture of the participants being heterogeneous, could acts as confounding factors which may have affected the result of the study.
- As the sample was taken from a particular city it cannot be generalized to the whole population.
- Participants had to fill the questionnaire online. This also could have influenced the concentration of participant resulting in inaccurate responses.
- The study was only based on young adults therefore agreeableness among other individuals in other stages of life cannot be taken into consideration.

Suggestions for future study

- To include all the genders to have more representative sample.
- Further studies can also focus on the influencing factors of the variables and opt for unstructured questionnaires to collect data to derive a better conclusion on the status of these variables in the population.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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