

**RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIG FIVE PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The aim of present research study is to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence and big five personality dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience) among university students of Karachi, Pakistan. The sample of 331 students (male = 166, female = 165) with Mean age of 21.70, (SD = 2.700) was gathered from different department of university of Karachi. Demographic information form, Big Five Inventory (Oliver, 1991) and Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2003) were administered on all participants. Data analysis was done by using SPSS (version-18). Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to find out the correlation of big five personality dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience) with emotional intelligence. Results reflect that Extraversion ( $r (331) = .452, p < .001$ ), Agreeableness ( $r(331) = .228, p < .001$ ), Conscientiousness( $r(331) = .324, p < .001$ ), and Openness to experience ( $r (331)= .285, p < .001$ ) are significantly positively correlated with emotional intelligence whereas Neuroticism ( $r (331)= -.333, p < .001$ ) significantly negatively correlated with Emotional Intelligence.*

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**Key Words:** Emotional Intelligence, Big Five Personality Traits, University Students

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (2000) define emotional intelligence as an ability of reorganization of emotions along with their meaning and relationship, reasoning and problem solving through utilization of emotions. Goleman (1995) stated that emotional intelligence is a Meta capacity, it enhance or inhibit individuals' abilities in various areas. Daniel Goleman (1998) argued that emotional intelligence is necessary for achieving successes being a learner, teacher, parent and manager. Further, Bar On (1997) stated that emotional intelligence is an overall notion of emotional (non-cognitive) abilities, competencies and capacity, which assist individuals to be an individual who can cope with stressful situation and can adjust with the environmental variability. Bar On (1997) model of emotional intelligence contains five aspects intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress coping and general mood.

McCrae and Costa (1987) and McCrae and John (1992) explained personality in big five dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience). Extraversion is a capacity of being optimistic, solid, lively, kind and gregarious, Agreeability is a capacity of mercifulness and compassion. Conscientiousness is a tendency of self-discipline, organization, rationalization along with planning and decision making ability. These people are achievement oriented and successful in various areas (i.e. academic, work place etc.). Neuroticism is a capacity of having anxiety, stress, antagonism, negative thinking impulsivity and apprehension. Openness is a capacity of curiosity, progressiveness and creativity, trustworthiness, consideration, and authenticity (John, 1989; McCrae & John, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1987). The relationship between emotional intelligence and personality is broadly explored such as researches indicated that Big five dimensions of personality Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience are significantly related with emotional intelligence (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Andi, 2012; Mahasneh, 2013; O'connor & Jackson, 2009; Sala, 2002).

Extraversion is an ability of high involvement in outside world. They are optimistic, emotional stable, talkative, enthusiastic and sociable. Extroverts have high motivation for practicing social skills. These characteristics includes in emotional intelligence as components (Bar-On, 1997 & Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Mayleen, et al. (2009) found correlation of emotional Intelligence and

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components of emotional intelligence (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability and General Mood) with Extraversion and introversion personality dimensions and emotional intelligence's aspect stress management found strongly related with Introversion. While, Extraversion personality domain mainly related with positive affect (Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh, & Shao, 2000) hence extrovert are optimistic and they have high level of positive affects; these qualities are also a tendency of emotionally intelligent individuals. Finding revealed that extraversion positively associated with emotional intelligence (Besharat, 2010; Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Dawda & Hart, 2000; Petrides, Vernon, Scermer, Lighthart, Boomsma & Veselka, 2010; Shulman & Hemeenover, 2006; Van der Zee, Thijs, & Schakel, 2002; Van Rooy, Viswesvaran, & Pluta, 2005). Extroversion is also found mainly related with some components of emotional intelligence such as social skill, mood regulation (Saklofske, Austin, & Minski, 2003) management of emotions (Gannon & Ranzijn, 2005) and emotional stability (Van Rooy et al., 2005).

However, Neuroticism is a tendency to experience negative emotions quite easily such as anxiety, impulsiveness, aggression, sadness etc. Neurotic individual are lacking affective stability for instance difficulty in emotional appraisal, expression, regulation and management. On the other hand, emotionally intelligent individuals have ability to experience positive / pleasant emotions and they can monitor, interpret and cope with emotional stimuli without any difficulty. They are emotionally stable. Researches depicted negative correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism (Besharat, 2010; Andi, 2012; Christopher, Singh & Brett, 2011). It is evident that personality dimensions Extraversion and Neuroticism linked with the changes in emotional intelligence toward both positive and negative directions, such as regulation of emotions, getting ready for positive and negative experiences. Emotional intelligence predicted positively under Extraversion and negatively under Neuroticism. It's closely related with mood adjustment a main aspect of emotional intelligence (Bar-On 1997).

Agreeableness is a tendency to be empathetic, kind, credulous, honest, warm, supportive, and they are usually compromising their interests with others. These kinds of people have ability of maintaining interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence components resembled with agreeable personality trait such as empathy and managing relationships are aspects of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997 & Davies et al., 1998). Several researches depicted positive correlation between agreeableness and emotional intelligence

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(Besharat, 2010; Andi, 2012; Mahasneh, 2013; O'connor & Jackson, 2009 & Sala 2002), however, Van Rooy et al. (2005) found low correlation of agreeableness with emotional intelligence in a meta analysis, while Christopher, et al. (2011) reported no relationship of agreeableness with emotional intelligence among university students. According to Avsec1, Takšić and Mohorić, (2009) some aspects of emotional intelligence has no correlation with agreeableness such as emotional expression, labeling and regulation but managing interpersonal relationships and empathy is positively correlated with emotional intelligence.

Conscientiousness is a positive personality trait and it possesses interpersonal skills. Conscientious individuals tend to be well organized, responsible, self disciplined, dutiful and goal directed. They usually prefer to do work in planned way rather than being spontaneous. Similarly emotionally intelligent individuals are good in skills like self-control, decision-making, problem solving etc., and emotional intelligence positively influences conscientiousness (Douglas, Ceasar, Frink, Dwight, Ferris & Gerald, 2004). Numerous researches revealed positive correlation between conscientiousness and emotional intelligence (Besharat, 2010; Hart, 2000; Hudani, Redzuan & Hamsan, 2012; Gannon & Ranzijn, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Saklofske et al., 2003), whereas, Van Rooy et al. (2005) reported average correlation of emotional intelligence and conscientiousness in a Meta analysis.

Moreover, the positive relationship between openness to experience and emotional intelligence can be predicted because openness to experience closely related with intellectual ability such as creativity, curiosity, flexibility etc. Emotional intelligence is also related with intellect such as perception and awareness of emotions, proper management of emotions, coping etc. Lopes Salovey, Côté and Beers (2005) found that openness to experience is positively related with affective management (a component of emotional intelligence) and Tropin (2005) found highly positive correlation with management and regulation of emotions. Further, researches depict the close relationship between emotional intelligence and openness to experience (Besharat, 2010; Shulman & Hemeenover, 2006; Petrides, Vernon, Scermer, Lighthart, Boomsma & Veselka, 2010; Van Rooy et al., 2005). Whereas, De Raad, (2005) found lower correlation between emotional intelligence and openness to experience.

The present research aims to study the relationship of emotional intelligence and big five personality dimensions in university students of Pakistan. University is the higher education setup entering where students face

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number of complex academic changes. These changes persistently threaten their capabilities of functioning efficiently and purposefully. Emotional intelligence and personality dimensions play essential role for well-adjusted and successful life. Only few researches conducted in this context in Pakistan, which is otherwise fairly explored area worldwide. Therefore, the present research carried out to bridge the gap by investigating that area. By exploring correlation between emotional intelligence and personality dimensions in Pakistani university students the results of this research will be utilized for growth and development of the aspects of the emotional intelligence specifically, aspects of the emotional intelligence that directly influences positive personality traits in Pakistani culture. For this purpose following hypothesis were formed 1) Extraversion would be positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence; 2) Agreeableness would be positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence; 3) Conscientiousness would be positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence; 4) Neuroticism would be negatively correlated with Emotional Intelligence; 5) Openness to experience would be positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants***

The sample of 331 university students (166 males & 165 females) obtained from different Universities of Karachi with age range of 19 years to 30 years. The mean age is 21.7 years with standard deviation of 2.7. The participants belonged to various socio economic statuses (upper, middle & lower).

### ***Measures***

#### **Personal information sheet**

Personal information contained personal information of participants. Including; name, gender, age, education, family structure and socioeconomic status.

#### **Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF)**

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescents Short Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2003) is a 30 item questionnaire assesses individuals' overall trait emotional intelligence. The scale includes 30 statements

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that derived from the 15 subscales of the Adult Trait EI sampling domain (two items per subscale). Respondents have to respond to on a seven point Likert Scale. Higher score on the TEIQue-SF indicate high trait emotional intelligence. The TEIQue-SF has an adequate reliability and validity, Internal consistency is .85 and test re-test reliability ranged from .50-.82 (Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

### **The Big Five Inventory (Martinez & John, 1991)**

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a self-report inventory. It assesses the Big Five dimensions of personality. It contains of short sentences with quite easy vocabulary. The test contains of 44 concise personality descriptors to which the test-taker responds with degree of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale. The test has been normed on several hundred thousand adult at the University of Texas (Gosling). Differences between ethnic groups are generally insignificant. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) has adequate reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha reliability of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness is 0.87, 0.79, 0.81, 0.82 and 0.79 respectively (John & Srivastava, 1999)

### ***Procedure***

Initially, written consent taken from university students. They were assured about confidentiality and they informed about their right to withdraw from the research any time whenever they want. Brief description of research and procedure of research explained to them. Then personal information sheet including participant's name, age, education, followed by The Big Five Inventory (Martinez & John, 1991) and Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) were administered. Later scoring of research forms were done according to standardized method of scoring and the results were statistically analyzed.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

Data were analyzed by using, SPSS, (version-18). Pearson Product Moment Coefficients of Correlation were computed to assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Big Five Personality Dimensions.

## **RESULTS**

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Characteristics of sample*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	166	50.2
	Female	165	49.8
<b>Family status</b>	Joint	102	30.8
	Nuclear	229	69.2
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>	Middle	109	32.9
	Upper Middle	135	40.8
	Upper	087	26.3
<b>Age</b>	Mean	21.70	
	Std. Deviation	2.700	

**Table 2**  
*Pearson Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Personality Dimensions*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Sig*</b>
<b>Extraversion</b>		.451	.000
<b>Agreeableness</b>		.228	.000
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	331	.324	.000
<b>Neuroticism</b>		-.333	.000
<b>Openness to Experiences</b>		.285	.000

\* All correlations is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of present research reflect that emotional intelligence and big five personality dimensions reasonably correlated. Large numbers of previous researches are consistence with our present research finding (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; O'connor & Jackson, 2009; Petrides et al., 2010; Sala, 2002). The fact of significant correlation between personality dimensions and emotional intelligence can be stated as Emotional intelligence represents one's abilities not disposition, it affects personality growth and development. A descriptive model of personality harmonious with this, i.e. surface view of personality dimensions possess central basis in emotional management (Athota et al., 2009).

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Extraverts individuals has tendency to experience pleasant / positive emotions and they are open to other, not reserved and informal while being in contact with others. They tend to be well socialized as a result they have high motivation to exercise social skills, that are qualities of emotionally intelligent individuals. Extroverts are best in expressing and labeling of emotions like emotionally intelligent individuals. Thus there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion ( $r = .452, n=331, p< .000$ ; see table 2). Findings are consistent with prior researches (Besharat, 2010; Mayleen et al., 2009; Shulman & Hemeenover, 2006; Veselka, 2010; Zadal, 2004).

Agreeable individuals are empathetic, compassionate, supportive, warm and considerate. They can manage proper interpersonal relationships because they are welcoming, warm, caring and respect others. These qualities directly related with other's emotions. Similarly, empathy, managing interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships are characteristics of emotionally intelligent individuals, therefore the positive correlations between emotional intelligence and agreeableness is well justified. Agreeableness is closely related with empathy managing interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships (Avsec, Takšić & Mohorić, 2009). Present research finding reflect relatively weak however significant and positive relationship between Agreeableness and trait emotional intelligence ( $r = .228, n=331, p< .000$ ; see table 2), it was previously found by (Besharat, 2010; Andi, 2012; Sala, 2002).

Ones and Viswesvaran (1996) argued Conscientiousness has strong correlation with emotional intelligence. Douglas, Ceasar, Frink, Dwight, Ferris and Gerald (2004) found that high level of emotional intelligence generate positive impact on conscientiousness. Our finding also depict positive correlation between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness ( $r = .324, n=331, p< .000$ ; see table 2). McCrae (2000) explained the association of emotional intelligence and conscientiousness as conscientious individuals are tend to be self disciplined, have well planning and decision making skills, understanding of self and other responsibilities; emotionally intelligent individuals also possess similar characteristics such as these individuals have control over their feeling and affective change and they have coping and decision making ability along with interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Further, Openness to experience is the best predictor of perception and understanding of emotions these finding are consistent to McCrae (2000) affirmation that openness related with emotional intelligence because of its close resemblance with crystallized intelligence. Openness to experience personality dimension contain intelligence aspects such as creativity, insightfulness,

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flexibility, independence and inquisitiveness. It might be expected that these qualities enhanced individuals' affective capabilities. Hence, positive relationship between openness to experience and emotional intelligence is predictable. Our findings reflect positive correlation between Emotional intelligence and Openness to experience in university students ( $r = .285, n=331, p< .000$ ; table 2), consistent with previous research evidences (Besharat, 2010; Shulman & Hemeenover, 2006; Veselka, 2010).

However, Emotional Intelligence significantly negatively correlated with Neuroticism ( $r = -.333, n=331, p< .000$ ; table 2). Besharat (2010) and Christopher et al. (2011) reported consistent findings. Neurotic individuals are emotional unstable, worried and depressive. Neuroticism personality trait based on intense negative emotional experience with lacking emotional stability. All negative emotions are originated in personality dimension neuroticism and individuals with neuroticism face difficulty in expression, regulation, reorganization and handling of emotions, whereas, emotionally intelligent individuals can unitize emotions properly such as they possess ability of understanding, management, regulation and assessment of emotions.

It is concluded that emotional intelligence and big five personality dimensions significantly correlated. This research investigated the strength of relationship from university students' perspective. Overall findings of the research reflect that four dimensions of personality Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience positively correlated with Emotional Intelligence but Neuroticism negatively correlated with Emotional Intelligence. Student with high emotional intelligence are said to be more effective in decision making, managing others and nurturing, with positive personality dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience.

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