

# A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG GRADUATE AND POST GRADUATE STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and big five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Neuroticism) among graduate and post graduate students. The random sampling method was used in this study. The total sample consisted of 480 subjects out of which 240 were graduate students and 240 were post graduate students. Students were from the various colleges and departments of M.K. Bhavnagar University. Indian version (Thingujam, N. K. S., & Ram, U., 2000) of Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte et al., (1998) was used to measure emotional intelligence and Personality traits associated with the FFM were assessed using the BFI (John, O.P., Donahue, E.M., and Kentle, R.T., 1991). The data were analyzed using Karl Pearson correlation coefficient of r-test. The result showed that there is significant correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience among graduate and post graduate students. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism among graduate and post graduate students.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Big Five Personality Traits, Graduate and Post Graduate Students

## Introduction

The term “emotional intelligence” became widely known with the publication of **Goleman’s** book: Emotional Intelligence-Why it can matter more than IQ (1995). According to **Goleman (1995)**, “Emotional intelligence consists of abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope.” There have been five models proposed as a means of better defining emotional intelligence: the Ability Model, the Trait Model, the Mixed Model, the Bar-On Model and the Genos Model. Emotional intelligence has been shown to relate to job success more than IQ (**Goleman, 1995**). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a significant indicator of future achievement in every walk of life, as well as academic achievement, and career success (**Saarni, 1999; Goleman 1995; Li, Wang & Li 2012; Bar-On, 2002**). There is growing research that connects emotional intelligence and emotional skills to achievement, productivity, career success, personal health, resilience and leadership (**Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1995; Sternberg, 1985; Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Greenspan, 1997; Nelson and Low, 2003**). Emotional intelligence has been suggested to be an important factor to predict mental and physical health (**Salovey & Mayer 1990**).

English word “personality” originated from the Latin word “persona”. According to **G. W. Allport (1937)**, “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment.” The study of personality includes psychoanalytic approach, behavioral approach, gestalt approach, humanistic approach personality trait approach etc. multiple approaches to the question of who we are and how and why we are similar and different to other individuals. **Allport & Odbert (1936)** defined personality traits as, “Generalized and personalized determining tendencies-consistent and stable modes of an individual’s adjustment to his environment”. The Big Five Personality Traits, also known as the five factor model (FFM). The five factors have been defined as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The most important factors in determining personality are biological factors, cultural factors, social factors and situational factors. Academic success is strongly influenced by individual differences in motivation and achievement. The Big Five traits have been related to a wide range of behaviors (**Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2005**), including academic achievement and job performance (**Costa & McCrae, 1992**). According to the five-factor theory propagated by **McCrae et al. (2000)**, the five personality factors are the base on which the foundation of an individual’s behavior such as self-concept, personal strivings, habits or attitudes is based. According to **Tomas et al. (2007)**, the development of the big five personality factors has provided researchers with a tool to assess the importance of personality traits in various domains including educational settings.

**Sala (2002)** examined that EI measured by Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory (1998) was significantly related to extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness. **Bracket and Mayer (2003)** found that a high significant correlation between emotional intelligence and Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, but it has been moderately related with Openness to experience. **Mayleen, et al., (2009)** has found a powerful correlation between extraversion personality and emotional intelligence with the research conducted using 529 respondents. According to **Besharat (2010)** the correlation between emotional intelligence and the dimensions of extraversion and conscientiousness is significant and positive. Moreover, he found negative relationship between emotional intelligence and neuroticism. Previous researchers who had conducted studies on the relationship between personality traits and emotional intelligence found strong relationship existed between personality traits and emotional intelligence (Ahmad Mohammed MousaMahasneh. 2013; Shaffer, R., & Shaffer, M., 2005).

### Objective

To study the correlations between emotional intelligence and big five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Neuroticism) among graduate and post graduate students.

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion among graduate and post graduate students.
2. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and agreeableness among graduate and post graduate students.
3. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness among graduate and post graduate students.
4. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and openness to experience among graduate and post graduate students.
5. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism among graduate and post graduate students.

### Method

#### Sample:

The sample consisted of 480 graduate students out of which 240 were graduate students and 240 were post graduate students, selected from various colleges and departments of M.K. Bhavnagar University. All the subjects were randomly selected keeping in view the control variables of the study.

#### Instruments:

##### 1. Personal Data Sheet:

A personal data sheet developed by the investigator was used to collect information about academic qualification (graduate and post graduate), gender (graduate boys and graduate girls) as well as to collect some other demographic information.

##### 2. Emotional Intelligence Scale:

Indian version (**Thingum and Ram, 2000**) of Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by **Schutte (1998)** was used to measure emotional intelligence. The questionnaire includes 33 items using 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. Schutte report a reliability rating of 0.90 for this Emotional Intelligence Scale. The author has reported satisfactory validity of the questionnaire.

##### 3. Big Five Inventory-BFI:

Personality traits were measured using the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (**John, O. P., Donahue, E. M. & Kentle, R. T., 1991**). This inventory consists of 44 statements which are rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponds to 'strongly disagree' and 5 corresponds to 'strongly agree'. Despite being a short scale measure, the BFI presents with an average Cronbach's alpha of 0.83. The BFI showed an overall convergence of 0.80 with the TDA and a 0.77 convergence with the NEO-FFI.

#### Procedure:

The testing was done on an academic qualification group of graduate students and post graduate students. The whole procedure was explained to them clearly. Obtained data were analyzing using r-test for correlate graduate students and post graduate students on emotional intelligence and big five personality traits.

**Result and Discussion**

The objective of present study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and big five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Neuroticism) among graduate and post graduate students. The r-test was used to find out whether academic qualification (graduate students/post graduate students) has a correlate on emotional intelligence and big five personality traits. Significant correlation was found between graduate students and post graduate students on emotional intelligence and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism among graduate and post graduate students.

**Table 1**  
**Showing the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Extraversion**

Variables	N	r
Emotional Intelligence	480	0.17
Extraversion		

Significant level 0.05=0.09

0.01=0.13

NS=Not Significant

The result showed that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion. In the result table 1 we can see that correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and extraversion is 0.17. Here correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Thus we can say that there are significant correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion among graduate and post graduate students. Thus premeditated null hypotheses no.1 is rejected, because it is significant correlation. The finding is expected as individuals who are extroverts are talkative, assertive, energetic, outgoing, excitement seekers and enthusiastic (McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). These people are more optimistic and have tendencies to experience more positive emotions. Therefore, these people can be considered emotionally intelligent because they are active, outgoing and sociable, have interpersonal skills to interact with others, and they are assumed to be able to use, understand and regulate one's and others' emotions (Ghiabi, B., & Mohammad Ali Besharat., 2011; Avsec, A., Taksik, V., & Mohoric, T., 2009; McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). In other words, extroverted person tends to express their feeling and emotion freely as compared to introverts.

**Table 2**  
**Showing the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Agreeableness**

Variables	N	r
Emotional Intelligence	480	0.11
Agreeableness		

Significant level 0.05=0.09

0.01=0.13

NS=Not Significant

The result showed that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and agreeableness. In the result table 2 we can see that correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and agreeableness is 0.11. Here correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Thus we can say that there are significant correlation between emotional intelligence and agreeableness among graduate and post graduate students. Thus premeditated null hypotheses no.2 is rejected, because it is significant correlation. Meanwhile for individuals who are agreeable, they are kind, altruistic, forgiving, warm and compassionate (McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). People with these agreeable characteristics have high emotional intelligence (Hari Krishnan Andi., 2012; Shaffer, R., & Shaffer, M., 2005; McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). The individuals with high level of agreeableness are assumed to be optimistic, can engage in effective interpersonal relationship and are able to perceive, express and regulate emotions effectively.

**Table 3**  
**Showing the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Conscientiousness**

Variables	N	r
Emotional Intelligence	480	0.09
Conscientiousness		

Significant level 0.05=0.09

**0.01=0.13****NS=Not Significant**

The result showed that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness. In the result table 3 we can see that correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness is 0.09. Here correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Thus we can say that there are significant correlation between emotional intelligence and conscientiousness among graduate and post graduate students. Thus premeditated null hypotheses no.3 is rejected, because it is significant correlation. In addition people who are conscientious are productive, reliable, responsible, thorough and so forth (McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). The more conscientious an individual is, the higher the emotional intelligence one has (NurulHudaniMdNawi, Ma'rofRedzuan&HaninaHamsan., 2012; Avsec, A., Taksik, V., & Mohoric, T., 2009). Therefore, conscientiousness is positively associated with emotional intelligence as proven by the present study.

**Table 4****Showing the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Openness to Experience**

Variables	N	r
Emotional Intelligence	480	0.14
Openness to Experience		

**Significant level 0.05=0.09****0.01=0.13****NS=Not Significant**

The result showed that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and openness to experience. In the result table 4 we can see that correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and openness to experience is 0.14. Here correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Thus we can say that there are significant correlation between emotional intelligence and openness to experience among graduate and post graduate students. Thus premeditated null hypotheses no.4 is rejected, because it is significant correlation. A person who is high in openness is artistic, insightful, original, fantasy and so forth (McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). This type of people are perceived to be open-minded, could see things from various perspectives and are able to use emotions to guide in decision making process. Thus, they are assumed to be emotionally intelligent persons as supported by literature review and the results of this study (Mohsin Atta, Muhammad Ather&Dr Maher Bano.,2013).

**Table 5****Showing the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Neuroticism**

Variables	N	r
Emotional Intelligence	480	-0.04
Neuroticism		

**Significant level 0.05=0.09****0.01=0.13****NS=Not Significant**

The result showed that there is insignificant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism. In the result table 5 we can see that correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and neuroticism is -0.04. Here correlation is not significant at 0.05 level. Thus we can say that there are insignificant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism among graduate and post graduate students. Thus premeditated null hypotheses no.5 is accepted, because it is not significant correlation. Individuals who are high on neuroticism are anxious, hostile, vulnerable, tense, unstable and self-defeating (McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P., 1992). As an emotionally intelligent person, one should be aware of one's emotions, understand and interpret it thoroughly, manage and regulate one's emotions and convert the negative ones to a more positive emotions such as change one's perceptions of the situations (Ghiabi, B., & Mohammad Ali Besharat, 2011). Therefore, individuals who are high on neuroticism are predicted to be low on emotional intelligence as they have tendency to experience negative moods and do not know how to interpret and regulate their emotions. In contrast, people with low level of neuroticism are able to manage and regulate their emotion effectively (Avsec, A., Taksik, V., & Mohoric, T., 2009).

**Conclusion**

There is significant correlation between emotional intelligence and extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience among graduate and post graduate students.

**Research Paper**

There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism among graduate and post graduate students.

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