

# Association of Personality Traits with Emotional Intelligence of College Going Boys and Girls

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Received: 17-05-2022

Revised: 27-08-2022

Accepted: 02-09-2022

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## ABSTRACT

Personality can be explained as the distinctive and characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behavior that make up an individual's personal style of interacting with the physical and social environment. As we see young people often face difficulty in managing day to day challenges at home, college and also in their relationships which make them unable to manage their emotions, behavior and ultimately seriously impact their personality. Having healthy emotional intelligence creates positive outcome in relationships with others and oneself and leads to sound personality and is considered as key to success in life. Therefore, the present study was conducted to identify the personality traits and emotional Intelligence of adolescent. Association between personality and emotional intelligence was also measured along with gender difference between college going boys and girls regarding personality traits. A sample of 200 students from four colleges of Chandigarh in the age range of 18-24 years was selected for the study. Scales administered were Big Five Personality Test and Emotional Intelligence Test. The data were collected and frequency and percentages were calculated and data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Results revealed that majority of the students scored higher in agreeableness trait of personality followed by extra version. Significant and positive correlation was found between personality and emotional intelligence. Majority of boys and girls showed average emotional intelligence (63 % and 77 %) respectively. On the other hand, significant gender differences were found between boys and girls with regards to personality.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- College goers both boys and girls scored high in agreeableness trait of personality.
- A significant and positive correlation between extra version, openness to experience with emotional intelligence was found.
- Neuroticism trait of personality was significant and negative correlated with managing emotions domain of emotional intelligence.
- There were significant gender differences found in extra version, agreeableness and neuroticism traits of personality where boys scored higher than girls except agreeableness trait.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, extra version, gender difference, personality

“Personality” derived from the Latin term “Persona” which means a mask worn by theatre actors to represent their role and personality in the play and the authentic self, which includes one’s intrinsic motivations, emotions, habits, and ideas (Chan, 1996). Robbins (2001)

viewed personality as “the sum total of ways in which

**How to cite this article:** Nitima, Gandhi, S., Pathania, R. and Katoch, M. (2022). Association of Personality Traits with Emotional Intelligence of College Going Boys and Girls. *Int. J. Soc. Sci.*, 11(03): 151-158.

**Source of Support:** None; **Conflict of Interest:** None



an individual reacts and interacts with others". Simply put, personality can be defined as a compound of human characteristics and variables. It is a characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. It embraces moods, attitudes, and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. It includes behavioural characteristics, both inherent and acquired, that distinguish one person from another and that can be observed in people's relations to the environment and to the social group. It is an impression that individual makes on others and also refers to his/her social skills, charismatic qualities and the like (Hall *et al.* 1985). Personality is influenced by various factors that include genetic, hereditary factors, physical appearance or physique, culture, family and rate of maturation. For personality development, the characteristics such as aggressiveness, nervousness, timidity and sociability are strongly influenced by genetic endowment.

Emotional intelligence is viewed as the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment (Singh, 2003). It also refers to the ability of an individual to recognize his own emotions and those of others, distinguish and differentiate between them and classify them appropriately. The concept of emotional intelligence has been popularized by Daniel Goleman's (1995) influential book "Emotional Intelligence" in which he claimed that emotional intelligence can matter more than IQ and suggested a redefining of what it means to be smart. People who show high levels of emotional intelligence are individuals who know themselves and their needs, strengths, weaknesses and manage to control themselves and form sound relationships. According to Goleman (1995) five factors that affect emotional intelligence includes (a) knowing one's emotions which allows individuals to make conscious choices regarding major and minor life decisions as well as learning to identify and convey emotions, (b) managing emotions which is the ability to handle feelings in an appropriate manner in relation to the ability to increase one's level of the self-awareness, (c) motivating ourselves that can be viewed as the extent to which an individual acts upon a given idea, thought or goal, (d) recognizing emotions

in others which means to take into consideration the emotions and needs of other individual and (e) handling relationships is the degree to which an individual forms and maintains relationships and also reflects one's level of self-awareness and social competence. There are a number of variables associated with emotional intelligence like personality, academic achievement, locus of control, mental health, self-esteem, coping skills, self-efficacy, peer attachment, problem solving skills, social competence, leadership, work-life balance, job satisfaction, family environment etc.

To summarize personality refers to the behavioral characteristics, attitudes, way of feeling and thinking while emotional stability of young person's is affected by their personality which predicts the way he/she manage their emotions. As we see the emotional intelligence and personality traits are closely correlated to each other because as emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand and control their emotions and this ability help them in constructing their personality. In many studies it was found that the big five traits model of personality has established a positive relationship of emotional intelligence with extraversion, agreeableness, open to experience, conscientiousness and negative with neuroticism (Gurumayum, 2020). The relationship between these two variables has been widely investigated, many research studies have shown some strong positive relations between emotional intelligence and personality traits. Brackett and Mayer (2003) found highly significant correlation of emotional intelligence with neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness, but moderately related to openness to experience. Alghamdi *et al.* (2017), Chen and Lai (2015) and Athota *et al.* (2009) reported that extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience, emerged as significant predictors of emotional intelligence and conscientiousness and neuroticism have no impact on emotional intelligence. Studies of Rahmani and Lavasani (2012) and Weisberg *et al.* (2011) revealed significant difference where girls showed significantly higher scores on extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience and agreeableness as compared with boys. It has been reported that personality traits greatly influence emotional construct of college going boys

and girls. As they move from school to college youth face many problems like varied levels of stress and anxieties, substance abuse, poor eating habits and disturbed sleeping patterns as compared to general population. Lock down has exaggerated their problems due to uncertainty regarding their future plans (Katoch *et al.* 2021). They face difficulty in maintaining their social relationships which will lead to develop negative personality. Neurotic people shows negative personality and facing difficulty in managing their emotional stability. For example, people with extraversion or agreeableness traits of personality will be able to handle their emotional reactions well and will respond better in hardships as compare to others. Due to fluctuations of emotions in one's life and handling relationships, many adjustments problems will generate in later life. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the impact of personality on emotional intelligence among the college going youth. Thus, the present study was carried out with objectives to assess the big five personality traits of youth, gender differences in their personality pattern, emotional intelligence and association of personality traits with emotional intelligence.

## METHODOLOGY

**Sample and sample size:** The present study was conducted in the city of Chandigarh. Four colleges were selected randomly from the list of colleges for sample selection. A total sample of 200 consisting of 100 undergraduate boys studying in co-educational colleges and 100 undergraduate girls from government girl's colleges of Chandigarh were selected for the purpose of study. By using stratified random sampling, 50 young boys and girls in the age group 18-24 years from each college were examined, thus making a total sample of 200.

**Method of data collection:** Standardized questionnaires were administered to collect data through questionnaire and survey method. Before administration of every test, standard instructions as per the manual were given to the respondents. They were briefed about the study and also about the confidentiality of the results.

**Tools used:** To measure the personality of the respondents, a standardised test based on Big five factor model of Goldberg (2001) i.e. The Big Five Personality Test is used. It contains 50-item version, obtained from International Personality Item Pool- IPIP, consisting of 10 items for each of the Big-Five personality factors: Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Neuroticism (N) and Openness to experience (O). This test has good internal consistency and relate strongly to major dimensions of personality.

In order to assess the emotional intelligence of the sample one of popular test developed by Dr. Ekta Sharma (2011), Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT) was used. EIT comprised of 60 items and scored as per 5 point Likert scale. This test was found to be highly reliable. It was inferred that all the items of test are highly correlated and the test developed is highly valid.

**Data analysis:** After getting the responses from the participants the data was coded, tabulated and frequencies and percentages were calculated. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the appropriate statistical tools were used to draw meaningful inferences. Linear regression, t-test was applied to find appropriate and significant results. The analysis of data was conducted with the help of SPSS software.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Percentage distribution of personality dimensions among the sample

Traits	Boys (%)	Girls (%)	Total (%)
Extraversion	23%	15%	19%
Agreeableness	39%	45%	42%
Conscientiousness	7%	19%	13%
Neuroticism	16%	7%	11.5%
Openness to experience	15%	14%	14.5%

The Table 1 indicates that boys have high level (39%) of agreeableness followed by extraversion trait while most of the girls (45%) were higher only on agreeableness trait of personality. On the whole, majority of both boys and girls scored higher on agreeableness trait and lower

in neuroticism trait of personality. Results are in-lined with Bergold and Steinmayr (2018) who reported that students scored higher on the conscientiousness trait and lower on the neuroticism trait or personality.

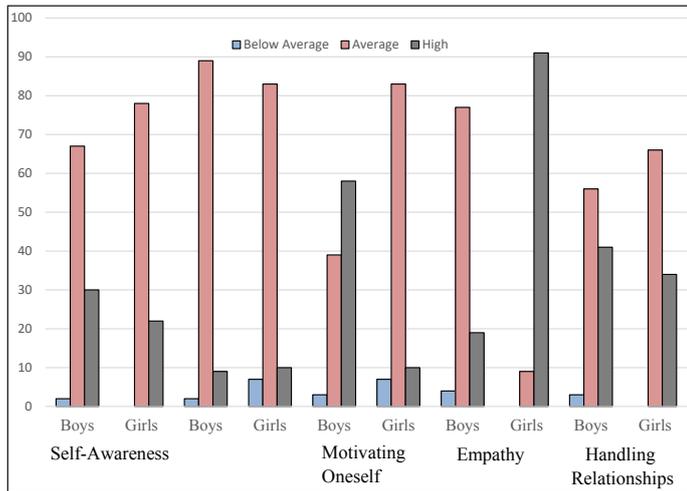


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of scored obtained by boys and girls on each dimension of emotional intelligence

The results for emotional intelligence test among the sample are represented separately for boys and girls on each dimension in Fig. 1. The Fig. 1 presents the diagrammatic data regarding the scored obtained by 100 undergraduate boys and undergraduate 100 girls in three different levels of emotional intelligence. The above findings highlights that more than half of boys 58% and girls 54% scored high only in the category of motivating oneself followed by 39% boys and 46% girls in average level respectively. In general, more than half of sample also shows high level under this category. Majority of participants including boys and girls have scored in average level for remaining four categories. Most of the boys 89% have achieved highest average score in managing emotions and about 83% girls scored under average level for same category. Whereas almost all girl's 91% have highest average scored for empathy while most of boys 77% scored average under this category. In the category of self-awareness only 67% boys and 78% girls showed average level. Half of the boys 56% and girls 66% obtained average score with regard to handling relationships category.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of overall Emotional Intelligence among the sample

Sample	High	Average	Below Average
Boys	34%	63%	3%
Girls	23%	77%	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

Table 2 presented the overall scored obtained by boys and girls in emotional intelligence scale. More than half of boys 63% have average level whereas only 34% boys have high level of emotional intelligence. In case of girls 77.0 per cent falls under average level while only few girls 23 per cent are in high level. So on the basis of scored obtained by the whole sample of college goers 70.0 per cent have average level of emotional intelligence. The results are in line with Thamizhselvan and Vembu (2019), Sinha et al. (2017) who reported in their studies that more than half of the students had average level of emotional intelligence.

In order to find out the association of personality with emotional intelligence, linear regression model has been applied. Each variable of emotional intelligence has been regressed on each variable of personality to find out the significance and contribution of each variable of emotional intelligence with personality respectively. Data has been incorporated in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates that overall 2% variations are caused by various variables of personality i.e. extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience in self-awareness. However, the coefficients of extraversion, neuroticism, are positively correlated with self-awareness thereby showing that any increase in these variables will lead to increase in self-awareness. The results further indicate that neuroticism and openness to experience are significant at 95% confidence interval which means that both these variables significantly impact managing emotions. The coefficient of the neuroticism showed that less the individual tend to be neurotic, more he/she can manage their emotions there by depicting negative correlation among them.

**Table 3:** Association of Personality Traits with Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence	Personality Traits	Un-Std.	Std. Error	Std. Coeff.	t	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
		Coeff. B		Beta			
Self-Awareness	Extraversion	0.113	0.087	0.099	1.306	0.193	0.02
	Agreeableness	-0.038	0.076	-0.041	-0.495	0.621	
	Conscientiousness	-0.018	0.104	-0.014	-0.172	0.863	
	Neuroticism	0.063	0.067	0.069	0.933	0.352	
	Openness to experience	-0.077	0.097	-0.068	-0.795	0.428	
Managing Emotions	Extraversion	0.01	0.044	0.017	0.234	0.815	0.07
	Agreeableness	-0.033	0.038	-0.07	-0.85	0.397	
	Conscientiousness	0.005	0.052	0.008	0.103	0.918	
	Neuroticism	<b>-0.097</b>	0.049	-0.167	-2	<b>0.047**</b>	
	Openness to experience	0.066	0.034	0.142	1.973	<b>0.05**</b>	
Motivating Oneself	Extraversion	<b>0.316</b>	0.112	0.21	2.818	<b>0.005***</b>	0.04
	Agreeableness	-0.042	0.099	-0.036	-0.43	0.668	
	Conscientiousness	-0.081	0.134	-0.05	-0.601	0.548	
	Neuroticism	-0.045	0.087	-0.038	-0.525	0.6	
	Openness to experience	0.011	0.125	0.007	0.084	0.933	
Empathy	Extraversion	0.079	0.068	0.087	1.167	0.245	0.05
	Agreeableness	-0.073	0.059	-0.102	-1.236	0.218	
	Conscientiousness	-0.02	0.081	-0.021	-0.25	0.803	
	Neuroticism	0.055	0.052	0.077	1.058	0.291	
	Openness to experience	-0.051	0.075	-0.057	-0.677	0.499	
Handling Relationships	Extraversion	<b>0.22</b>	0.127	0.129	1.734	<b>0.084***</b>	0.05
	Agreeableness	0.008	0.112	0.006	0.069	0.945	
	Conscientiousness	0.195	0.152	0.106	1.284	0.201	
	Neuroticism	0.14	0.098	0.104	1.428	0.155	
	Openness to experience	-0.182	0.142	-0.108	-1.281	0.202	

Significance Levels: \*\*\* 99% \*\* 95% \* 90%.

However, the positive coefficient of the variable openness to experience at 0.066 in the table suggests that more the individuals are open to their experiences more they can manage their emotions. This may be due to the reason that a person who is high in openness to experience is artistic, insightful, original, and are perceived to be open-minded. Also, they may see things from various perspectives and are able to use and regulate their emotions. This finding is supported by the empirical study of Sala (2002), Saklofske *et al.* (2003), Andi (2012), Chen and Lai (2015) and Gurumayum (2020) who

concluded that emotional intelligence was significantly correlated related to extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience traits of personality and negatively with neuroticism.

The results for motivating oneself and handling relationships indicate that only the variable extraversion is significant at 99% confidence intervals which mean that extraversion significantly impacts both these domains of emotional intelligence. This may be due to the reason that these people are more optimistic, have tendencies

to experience more positive emotions and hence motivating oneself. These people can be considered emotionally intelligent because they have interpersonal skills to interact with others which help them handle their relationships in a better way. Therefore, they are assumed to be able to use, understand and regulate one's and others' emotions making them more emotionally intelligent.

The associations of overall emotional intelligence with personality traits are shown in Table 4. The correlation of each trait of personality was assessed with overall emotional intelligence. However, the results for emotional intelligence were significant only for the variable "Extraversion" which means that extraversion significantly impact emotional intelligence. The coefficient of the variable is 0.674 in the table which means more extroverts the individual is, more is the emotional intelligence of individual. This may be due to the reason that individuals who are extroverts are

talkative, assertive, energetic, outgoing, excitement seekers and enthusiastic. These findings are supported by the empirical study of Sala (2002), Brackett and Mayer (2003), Saklofske et al. (2003), (Gosling et al. 2003), Bennett and Furnham (2007), Athota and Jackson (2009), (Ferrando et al. 2010), (Yusooff et al. 2013), (Chen and Lai, 2015) and (Alghamdi et al. 2017) who suggested that emotional intelligence was significantly correlated related to extraversion trait and negatively with neuroticism trait of personality.

The mean scores of boys and girls regarding their personality traits were interpreted by using t-test and data was represented in table 5. The table showed significant differences in mean scores of extraversion as well as neuroticism trait where boys scoring more on extraversion ( $t = -2.069, p < 0.05$ ) and neuroticism ( $t = -3.503, p \leq 0.001$ ) as compared to their other counter parts. The findings get the support from (Lynn and Martin, 1997), Bester (2007) and (Vianello et al. 2013) who found

**Table 4:** Association of Personality Traits with overall Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence	Personality Traits	Un-StdCoff.	Std. Error	Std. Coff.	t	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
		B		Beta			
	Extraversion	<b>0.674</b>	0.314	0.16	2.149	<b>0.033**</b>	
	Agreeableness	-0.138	0.276	-0.041	-0.5	0.618	0.04
	Conscientiousness	0.114	0.375	0.025	0.305	0.761	
	Neuroticism	0.307	0.242	0.093	1.268	0.206	
	Openness to experience	-0.391	0.35	-0.094	-1.115	0.266	

**Table 5:** Difference between Personality on the Basis of Gender

Dimensions	Gender	Mean	SD	SEM	t-value	p-value
Extraversion	Girls	30.05	5.35672	0.53567	-2.069	<b>0.04**</b>
	Boys	31.57	5.02771	0.50277		
Agreeableness	Girls	35.66	5.46471	0.54647	1.906	<b>0.058*</b>
	Boys	33.89	7.50743	0.75074		
Conscientiousness	Girls	33.03	5.31522	0.53152	1.258	0.21
	Boys	32.17	4.29483	0.42948		
Neuroticism	Girls	27.51	6.58663	0.65866	-3.503	<b>0.001***</b>
	Boys	30.72	6.37242	0.63724		
Openness to experience	Girls	32.54	4.91014	0.49101	1.344	0.181
	Boys	31.53	5.69149	0.56915		

Significance Levels: \*\*\* 99% \*\* 95% \* 90%.

that men obtained higher means scores in extraversion trait of personality than the girls and tended to select more friends than those who are low on this trait.

It is found that agreeableness trait also statistically significant with girls scoring higher than boys ( $t = 1.906$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This may be due to the reason that women have a more interdependent self-construal, in which their sense of self includes other women having more interconnected and affiliative social groups. Therefore, may be more motivated than men to maintain social and emotional bonds by enacting more agreeable traits and tended to be selected more as friends as compared to others. Similar findings are obtained in the empirical studies of Chapman *et al.* (2007), (Weisberg *et al.* 2011), (Rahmani and Lavasani, 2012) reported in his study that girls scored higher on agreeableness trait of personality than boys.

## CONCLUSION

Personality is important key factor for identifying the emotional intelligence of individuals. The characteristic patterns of thinking, behaving and feeling depends on the personality traits. In general personality traits are highly correlated with emotional intelligence while neuroticism have inverse relationship with emotional intelligence. The conflicts in any relationship should be resolve in healthy and constructive ways which can strengthen trust, freedom, emotional well-being and safety in relationships. From results it was concluded that most of the boys as well as girls were found to be in the trait of agreeableness and have average level of emotional intelligence. Significant and positive correlation was found in motivating oneself, handling relationships & emotional intelligence with extraversion trait whereas managing emotions positively significant with openness to experience and negatively with neuroticism Significant gender differences were revealed with regard to extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism traits of personality where boys scored higher on each trait except agreeableness. More research will be needed to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and personality of school going adolescents or children, doctors, engineers, teachers etc. Qualitative research may be done in the same area

to better understand the personality and emotional intelligence with larger sample size.

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