Personality Factors as Predictors of Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents

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Abstract

The present research was planned to study the Big Five Personality Factors as predictors of emotional intelligence among adolescents. In the present study sample (N) of 530 students (Boys= 288 & Girls=242) were obtained through random sampling method. The age group was between 17 to 20 (M= 17.31, SD= .88) years. To study the variables two standardized measures were used to collect the data. NEO-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3; McCrae & Costa, 2010) was used to measure neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS; Schutte et al., 1998) was used to measure perception of emotions, managing self-emotions, managing others' emotions, and emotion utilization. After data screening and cleaning procedure it was subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation to study the relationship among the variables. To test the predictability of the predictors stepwise multiple regressions was used. Results showed that personality variables viz. extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness had significant positive correlation with emotional intelligence, and neuroticism had significant negative correlation with emotional intelligence. Agreeableness had positive but non-significant correlation with emotional intelligence. All five personality factors were found to be significant predictors of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Personality, Emotional Intelligence, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness.

The present study is an attempt to explore Big Five Personality Factors as predictors of emotional intelligence among adolescents. The study of emotional intelligence (EI) is currently a topic of considerable interest and activity within individual differences research. As far as community mental health is concerned emotional intelligence is very important. EI is an advantage in any area in life, whether in intimate relationships and romance or picking up the nonverbal rules that help success in organizational setup. Big Five personality factors are universal and are the core part of human behaviour. Personality traits have been proposed to be consistent and stable across a lifetime, acting as a type of template for an individual's behaviour (Myers, 1998). Looking forward to the importance of emotional intelligence in practical life, the present study has attempted to examine whether personality factors are significant predictors emotional intelligence.

Personality: Personality is a dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings (Allport, 1961). Although trait theories were well established by the 1960s, there was no consensus concerning the number or nature of the traits that make up personality. Replications of Cattell's work in factor analysis often failed to find the original factor structure he described. Instead, a number of studies using Cattell's variables came up with a simpler five factor structure. Since then, further research has confirmed a basic five actor model of personality or 'Big Five' i.e. Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993).

Emotional intelligence: According to ability model, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive (e.g., identification of emotion from the facial expression of others), understand (e.g., understanding the transition of emotion from one component to another), use (e.g., using emotion to facilitate thought process) and regulate emotions (or management of emotion) (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). There are both self-report and ability measures of this model. In the ability measure the respondent has to select the most appropriate response as decided by the majority of the people in the society. The self report measure can be considered as perceived emotional intelligence as it reflects perception of the emotion abilities but ability measure can be considered as a type of intelligence.

Personality and Emotional Intelligence: The relationship between emotional intelligence and personality has been widely discussed in the relevant literature, but the degree of the relationship depends on the measures used to assess emotional intelligence. For example, using one of the emotional intelligence measures, BarOn's Emotional Intelligence Quotient and the NEO-PI-R, a measure of the Big Five personality factors, Brackett and Mayer (2003) found that emotional intelligence is highly significantly correlated with Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, but moderately related to Openness to experience.

Sala (2002) also found that emotional intelligence measured by Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory is significantly related to Extraversion, Openness to experience and Conscientiousness. However, when the MSCEIT was used, only Openness to experience and Agreeableness were found to relate to emotional intelligence (Brackett and Mayer, 2003). Surprisingly there was no significant relationship found between the two constructs when the MEIS was adopted (Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002).

Common traits associated with Emotional Stability include secure, stable, relaxed, self-sufficient, not anxious, tolerant of stress; while Neuroticism includes being anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, emotional, worried, and insecure. These two dimensions represent the "big two" described by Eysenck (1971) over 30years ago.

Agreeableness is labelled as friendliness and Social Conformity (Digman, 1990). Agreeableness seeks to measure whether one has a pro-social, co-operative orientation towards others or if they act with antagonism. Traits associated with this dimension involve the more humane aspects of humanity – characteristics such as altruism, nurturance, caring, and emotional support at the one end of the dimension, and hostility, indifference to others, self-centeredness, spitefulness, and jealousy at the other (Goleberg 1983; Costa & McCrae, 1985). Conscientiousness includes the control of impulse which facilitates tasks and other goal-oriented behaviours

(Hergenhahn & Olson, 1999). Openness was interpreted as intellect (Goldberg 1983; Hogan 1983; Digman& Inouye, 1986) and intelligence (Borgatt, 1964) and openness (Costa & McCrae, 1985). McCrae and Costa (1995) analysed Openness as openness to feelings and to new ideas, flexibility of thought, and readiness to indulgence in fantasy. Based on the literature review the following **hypotheses** were framed:

1. Big five personality factors are significantly correlated with emotional intelligence.
2. Big five personality factors are significant predictors of emotional intelligence.

Method

Sample:

In the present study sample (n) of 530 students (Boys= 288 & Girls=242) were obtained through random sampling method. The age group was between 17 to 20 (M= 17.31, SD= .88) years. All the participants were students from various Junior Colleges in Jalna District. As all tests included in this study are in English language, the researcher was assured that all participants have sound knowledge of English Language before including them in an actual sample.

Tools:

NEO Five–Factor Inventory-3 (NEO FFI-3; Costa & McCrae, 2010) is a short form and recently updated of NEO Personality Inventory–Revised (NEO-PIR). The NEO-FFI contains 60 items that are to be responded to on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree", "Disagree", "Neutral", "Agree", and "strongly agree" for the five domains namely, neuroticism (emotional instability), extraversion (extraverted, outgoing, active, and high-spirited), openness (being open to new experiences, having broad interests in life, and highly imaginative), agreeableness (being eager to cooperate and avoid conflict, compassionate, and good-natured) and conscientiousness (being well-organized, having high standards and striving for achieving goals).

Internal consistency estimates range from .66 to .88 and the reliability coefficient for each subscales are obtained as Neuroticism (.82), Extroversion (.80), openness to experience (.78), Agreeableness (.72) and Conscientiousness (.83).

Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, & Golden, 1998) includes 33 items and is based on the model of emotional intelligence proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Participants respond to each item using a 5-point scale, including 1 as "strongly disagree," 2 as "disagree," 3 as "undecided," 4 as "agree," and 5 as "strongly agree". This measure yields a global score and higher score indicates higher emotional intelligence. The authors reported two-week test-retest reliability at.78 and alpha co-efficient reliability was.87. Later, Ciarrochi, Deane, and Anderson (2002) identified four subscales of SEIS, that is, perception of emotion (a =.76), managing others' emotions (a=.66), managing self-relevant emotions (a=.63), and Utilizing Emotions (a =.55).

Results

Table 1- *Results of Pearson's product moment correlations between Personality and Emotional Intelligence.* (*n*=530)

	N	E	O	A	C	EIT
N	1					
E	.05	1				
O	-.09*	.23**	1			
A	-.11**	.24**	.32**	1		
C	-.10**	.37**	.31**	.23**	1	
EIT	-.12**	.22**	.19**	.01	.26**	1

*p < .05 (two-tailed) **p < .01 (two-tailed)

Note. N= Neuroticism; E= Extroversion; O= Openness to Experience; A= Agreeableness;

C= Conscientiousness; EIT: Emotional Intelligence Total.

Table 2- Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression for Personality variables predicting Emotional Intelligence

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
C	0.585	0.095	.259**	0.618	0.094	.274**	0.53	0.098	.235**	0.442	0.103	.196**	0.464	0.103	.206**
N				0.308	0.089	.144**	0.324	0.089	.152**	0.299	0.089	.140**	-0.28	0.089	-.13**
O							0.318	0.106	.131**	0.28	0.106	.115**	0.342	0.109	.140**
E										0.241	0.093	.116*	0.273	0.094	.131**
A													-0.19	0.081	-.103*
R²		0.067			0.088			0.103			0.114			0.124	
F		37.998**			25.342**			20.161**			16.950**			14.770**	

Note. *P < 0.05 **P < 0.01

A multiple stepwise regression was calculated to predict emotional intelligence based on personality factors. A significant regression equation was found $F (5,524) =14.77$, $p<.01$), with R^2= .12.

Regression Equation:

Y= 94.588+0.46 (X1) -0.28 (X2) +0.34 (X3) +0.27 (X4) -0.19 (X5)

Y= 94.588+0.46 (Conscientiousness) -0.28(Neuroticism) +0.34 (Openness to

Experience) +0.27 (Extroversion) -0.19 (Agreeableness)

Discussion

In correlation analysis Table 1 shows that Pearson' product moment correlation between neuroticism and emotional intelligence was significantly negative (r =-0.12, p<.01), extraversion and emotional intelligence was significantly positive (r =.22, p<.01), openness to experience and emotional intelligence was significantly positive (r =.19, p<.01), agreeableness and emotional intelligence was positive but not significant, conscientiousness and emotional intelligence was significantly positive (r =.26, p<.01). Hence the first hypothesis stated that Big five personality factors are significantly correlated with emotional intelligence was partially accepted. To support the present findings, similar studies have been reported here. As Parker (2001) correlated the Bar On EQ-i:S with the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI, Costa & McCrae, 1992). Costa & McCrae (1980) there is a clear association between extraversion and a measure of positive affect. In previous research significant correlation was found between openness and emotional intelligence (Brackett & Mayer, 2002).

In regression analysis Table 2 the positive signs of X1, X3, and X4 indicated that emotional intelligence increases with conscientiousness, openness to experience, and extroversion respectively. The negative sign of X2 and X5 indicated that emotional intelligence decreases with neuroticism and agreeableness respectively. Irrespective of their signs, all the five personality factors (N, E, O, A, C) have found significant predictors of emotional intelligence. Hence the second hypothesis stated that Big five personality factors are significant predictors of emotional intelligence was accepted. To support for the present study similar findings (Parker, 2001; Zhou et al., 2002) had been found.

Conclusions:

1. Pearson' product moment correlation between neuroticism and emotional intelligence was significantly negative.

2. Extraversion and emotional intelligence was significantly positive.

3. Openness to experience and emotional intelligence was significantly positive.

4. Agreeableness and emotional intelligence was positive but not significant.

5. Conscientiousness and emotional intelligence was significantly positive.

6. Emotional intelligence increases with conscientiousness, openness to experience, and extroversion respectively.

7. Emotional intelligence decreases with neuroticism and agreeableness respectively.

8. All the five personality factors (N, E, O, A, C) have found significant predictors of emotional intelligence.

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