



THE EFFECT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON STUDENT –TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study was an empirical study aimed at finding out the influence of personality traits on student-teacher relationship and academic achievement of university students. Personality traits are important factors that affect students' interpersonal behaviors, emotional adjustment, learning engagement and educational outcomes. The quantitative correlational research design was used. The sample size of this study was $n = 300$ university students who were selected by convenient sampling from public and private universities. The Big Five Inventory (BFI), Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS), and the cumulative grade point average (CGPA), as a measure of academic achievement were used to collect data. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to explore the relationships between variables. The results showed that student–teacher relationship and academic achievement were positively correlated with the openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness, and negatively correlated with the neuroticism. The significant predictors of student–teacher relationship were also identified through regression analysis, with openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness being significant predictors. With respect to the other Big Five personality traits, creativity was the only one that predicted academic success in doctoral students. With respect to the remaining Big Five personality traits, openness and conscientiousness were significant predictors of academic achievement in university students. The literature that already exists was also consistent with the functions of personality traits in influencing academic engagement, teacher relationships and learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Academic Achievement, Personality Traits, Student-Teacher Relationship, University Students.*

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1. Introduction

One of the significant measures of success in university education is academic achievement. There are several psychological, social and environmental factors that affect the academic performance of students. Of these, personality traits and student–teacher relationships have received significant focus in the field of educational psychology because of their effects on students' emotional adjustment, classroom engagement and academic achievement (Chen et al., 2021). Personality traits are psychological structure and behaviors that people engage in depending on various types of stimuli (Zhao et al., 2019). The Five-Factor Model of personality is composed of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Personality traits are more predictive of students' academic performance than is intelligence level (Goff & Ackerman, 1992; Sher et al., 2023; Wasim et al., 2021). These traits affect the interpersonal relationship and coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, psychological distress, and learning habits of students (Adeeb et al., 2026; Dang et al., 2025). The study of university students' personality characteristics is a key prerequisite for enhancing the learning achievement of university students and optimizing their growth experience.

In the past, it has been consistently found that conscientiousness is a strong predictor of academic achievement because conscientious students are organized, disciplined, and have goals (Dang et al., 2025). Likewise, openness to experience plays a positive role in mental curiosity, creativity, and engagement in learning, and agreeableness plays a positive role in interpersonal interactions and cooperative conduct in the class (Jusri & Lechner, 2025). Göncz et al. (2014) have determined that students' personality traits had significant influence on the perception of a good teacher. Personality characteristics, such as openness, agreeableness and neuroticism, accounted for about 20% of the variance in teacher evaluation.

Opoku et al. (2023) concluded that conscientiousness was the most predominant personality traits among University students and it was found to significantly affect the preferred teaching methods of the students. Cooperative teaching approaches were highly preferred among students with conscientious and agreeable personality characteristics. Personality traits play a vital role in the academic functioning, motivating and engagement of students. Personality traits impact on behavioural style, emotional reactions and interpersonal functioning (Costa and McCrae, 1992).

Academic success has been positively associated with conscientiousness as repeatedly shown by research (Dang et al., 2025) which indicates that students with high levels of conscientiousness have high work ethics, self-discipline and persistence. Openness to experience also has a positive impact on academic engagement because of intellectual curiosity and an interest in new ideas. Dang et al. (2025) found that the

personality traits had a direct impact on learning engagement among college students, and that emotion regulation partially mediated this effect.

In the same manner, Chen et al. (2021) discovered that proactive personality positively influenced academic engagement via teacher–student relationships and academic self-efficacy. There is an effect of proactive personality characteristics on the students' learning activities (Hussain et al., 2024). Interpersonal relations in educational settings are greatly affected by personality. Positive student–teacher relationships are fostered among students who are agreeable.

Göncz et al. (2014) determined that openness, agreeableness and emotional stability were good predictors of the students' perception of effective teachers. Jusri and Lechner (2025) also found that the Big Five personality traits had a significant relationship with social integration with teaching staff and fellow students. Openness was positively related with integration with teaching staff, and the personality traits of neuroticism were negatively related with social integration.

Students' academic results and motivation are also affected by the personality traits of teachers, as personality traits are correlated with work engagement of teachers (Khan et al., 2025). Khalilzadeh and Khodi (2021) found that conscientiousness positively correlated with intrinsic motivation of students while the components of extraversion negatively correlated with students' intrinsic motivation. In Pakistan, Noreen et al. (2019) found that openness of teachers positively affected students' academic success, highlighting the role of teachers' personality traits in educational settings.

Empirical studies in the past five years always show that the student-teacher relationship is important and positively correlated with academic performance and involvement of university students (Saleem et al., 2018). When teachers build a supportive, trusting, and warm relationship with students, students' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, and this has a direct positive effect on students' intrinsic motivation and study efforts (Li et al., 2022). Moreover, positive student-faculty interactions are an important intervening factor as they increase perceived social support and significantly decrease academic pressure, creating the psychological safety needed to prepare for and engage in complex academic tasks (Chamizo-Nieto et al., 2021). In turn, students in the university who develop high-quality and communicative relations with their teachers achieve not only positive cognitive changes and high quality of learning but also higher retention rate and satisfaction with higher education.

1.1. Hypotheses

1. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness will be positively associated with student–teacher relationship and academic achievement in university students.

2. Neuroticism will be negatively associated with student–teacher relationship and academic achievement in university students.

3. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness will positively predict student–teacher relationship and academic achievement in university students.

4. Neuroticism will negatively predict student–teacher relationship and academic achievement in university students.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The present study adopted the quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design to determine the relationship between personality traits, student-teacher relationship and academic achievement of university students.

2.2. Participants

The subjects of the study were 150 male and 150 female university students made up through convenient sampling technique from 3 Universities of Faisalabad, Pakistan (Riphah International University Faisalabad Campus, Government College University (GCU) Faisalabad and Superior University Faisalabad Campus). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 26 years ($M = 21.34$, $SD = 2.11$). Students of various academic departments and from various semesters voluntarily participated in this study. The criteria for inclusion were that the participants should be students at the university and have regular interaction with teachers in the class. The students who didn't complete the questionnaires were omitted from the final analysis.

2.3. Instruments

2.3.1. Big Five Inventory (BFI)

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John and Srivastava (1999) was used to assess personality traits. BFI is a self-report questionnaire that measures the five personality factors: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The scale has 44 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Examples of sample items are: "I see myself as someone who is talkative" and "I see myself as someone who does a thorough job." There are positively worded and negatively worded items in the inventory. The items in the study were reverse scored prior to analysis as per the guidelines provided by the authors. Good psychometric characteristics of BFI have been reported in previous studies. John and Srivastava (1999) found Cronbach's alpha levels from .75 to .90 for various aspects of personality.

2.3.2. Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)

The measures for student–teacher relationship was derived from the Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) from Pianta (2001). The scale indicates students' perceptions about the quality of the relationship, emotional support, communication, trust

and connectedness with teachers. There are 28 items on the STRS with response options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores are higher when student–teacher relationships are more positive. Questions may cover such topics as: “I feel comfortable talking to my teachers about academic stuff” and “My teachers help me when I have problems.” There are several reverse coded items on the scale which were reversed-scored before statistical analysis. Previous literature has demonstrated good psychometric properties of the STRS with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from .80 to .89 (Pianta, 2001).

2.4. Academic Achievement

Academic achievement was assessed using students' cumulative grade-point average (CGPA). The participants were requested to give their last grade point average from their respective universities. The students' academic performance was judged by their CGPA, which was deemed as an appropriate measure as it is the cumulative education that students have attained in various semesters.

3. Procedure

Before data collection, formal approval for conducting the study was given by the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) of the respective department/ university. Furthermore, the use of the research instruments was granted by the formal academic correspondence with the original authors/developers of the scales when necessary. Official permissions were taken from the administration of Riphah International University Faisalabad Campus, Government College University Faisalabad and Superior University Faisalabad Campus for students after ethical approval for data collection. The cooperation of faculty members at the university was obtained, and participants were approached in the classroom and common areas. The researcher informed the participants of the purpose, objectives and significance of the study. Pupils were told they were free to leave the study at any time without penalty and it was entirely voluntary. All participants gave written informed consent prior to answering the questionnaires. Participants were informed about the confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of their responses. They were asked not to put their names or any identifying details on the questionnaires. All questionnaires were self-administered and took around 20–25 minutes to complete in paper and pencil format. The data collection took about 6 weeks. Once collected questionnaires were screened for completeness, coded and entered in SPSS software for statistical analysis.

4. Ethical Considerations

All ethical aspects of psychological research were carefully adhered to in the present study. The study was conducted with ethical approval from the appropriate Ethical Review Committee. All respondents gave informed consent and all participation was voluntary. Confidentiality of the responses was assured and they would be used for research only. To ensure anonymity, information that could identify participants was

omitted from questionnaires used in the research. Participants were also told that they could withdraw at any time from the study without any negative consequences.

5. Results

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 300)*

Demographic Variables		f(%)
Gender	Male	150 (50%)
	Female	150 (50%)
Education	BS	236 (78.7%)
	M.Phil/MS	64(21.3%)
Marital Status	Married	16(5.3%)
	Unmarried	284 (94.7%)
Family System	Joint Family	184 (61.3%)
	Separate Family	116 (38.7%)
Socioeconomic Status	Middle Class	254(84.7%)
	High Class	46(15.3%)

The demographic data of the participants who are included in the present study are shown in Table 1. In terms of gender distribution, there were an equal number of males and females participating in the study, with 150 males (50%) and 150 females (50%). Results revealed that most of the participants were BS students ($n = 236$, 78.7%) while 64 students (21.3%) were enrolled in MS program. This means that the majority of respondents were in the under-graduate level of education. Marital Status data revealed that most of the participants were unmarried ($n = 284$, 94.7%) with only 16 participants (5.3%) being married. In terms of family system, the majority of participants were from joint family systems ($n = 184$; 61.3%) while 116 participants (38.7%) were from separate (or nuclear) family systems. Last, with respect to socioeconomic status, most participants were in the middle class ($n = 254$, 84.7%) and the minority were in the high class ($n = 46$, 15.3%).

Table 2: Correlation Analysis among Study Variables (N = 300)

Variables	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Openness	30.14	5.12	0.84	-						
2. Conscientiousness	31.46	5.12	0.87	.38**	-					
3. Extraversion	27.38	5.54	0.74	.26**	.29**	-				
4. Agreeableness	29.84	4.90	0.71	.35**	.42**	.31**	-			
5. Neuroticism	24.72	6.04	0.83	-.25**	-.33**	-.19*	-.28**	-		

6. Student–Teacher Relationship	68.41	8.90	0.82	.44**	.41**	.27**	.48**	-.39**	-	
7. Academic Achievement	3.24	0.53	-	.40**	.47**	.21*	.36**	-.44**	.49**	-

$p < .05^*$, $*p < .01$.

Table 2 showed that openness was positively and significantly correlated with university students' conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. Whereas openness was significantly negatively associated with neuroticism in university students. However, conscientiousness was significantly positively associated with extraversion, agreeableness, student–teacher relationship, and academic achievement in university students. While conscientiousness was significantly negatively associated with neuroticism in university students. Although openness was significantly negatively associated with neuroticism in university students. In the case of university students, agreeableness, however, was found to be significantly positively correlated with student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. While agreeableness was significantly negatively associated with neuroticism in university students. Contrary to this, a significant negative relationship between student–teacher relationship and academic achievement was observed in the case of neuroticism in university students. However, the relationship between a student-teacher was significantly and positively correlated with an academic achievement in university students.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting role Personality Traits in Student-Teacher Relationship

			<i>Student-Teacher Relationship</i>
Predictors	B	β	95% CI
Openness	0.54**	0.38**	[0.44, 0.64]
Conscientiousness	0.63**	0.42**	[0.53, 0.73]
Extraversion	0.20*	0.19*	[.10, 0.30]
Agreeableness	0.61*	0.40*	[0.51, 0.71]
Neuroticism	-0.58**	-0.42**	[-0.48, -0.68]
R ²	0.46		
Adjusted R ²	0.45		
F	49.82**		

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; β for standardized regression coefficient; B for Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

The results of Table 3 showed that the overall model with five predictors, e.g. openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism contributed the 46.1% ($R^2 = 0.46$) of variance with $F 49.82$, $p < 0.01$ for student-teacher relationship

among university students. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness were positively significant predictors of student-teacher relationship in University students. However, in the university students, neuroticism had a significant negative predictor of student-teacher relationship.

Table 4: *Multiple Regression Analysis for predicting role Personality Traits in Academic Achievement*

Predictors	B	β	Academic Achievement 95% CI
Openness	0.25**	0.23**	[0.18, 0.32]
Conscientiousness	.42**	0.39**	[0.36, 0.48]
Extraversion	0.11	.09	[-.01, 0.23]
Agreeableness	0.21*	0.19*	[0.15, 0.27]
Neuroticism	-0.38**	-0.31**	[-0.31, -0.45]
R ²	.42		
Adjusted R ²	.41		
F	42.11**		

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; β for standardized regression coefficient; B for Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

The results of Table 4.4 showed that the overall model with five predictors, e.g. openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism contributed the 42.3% ($R^2 = .42$) of variance with $F 42.11$, $p < 0.01$ for academic achievement among university students. Openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness were discovered as significant positive predictors of academic achievement in university students, while openness was not found to be a significant predictor in middle school students. However, there was a significant negative predictor of academic achievement in university students, which was neuroticism.

6. Discussion

The conclusions of the present study confirmed the first hypothesis as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness had significantly positive correlation with student-teacher relationship and academic achievement among the university students. The results showed that the students who have adaptive and socially positive personality characteristics are more likely to have supportive relationships with the teachers, and to show higher academic performance. Student-teacher relationship, as well as academic achievement, were positively associated with openness to experience. Students with a high score on openness are intellectually curious, imaginative, flexible and open to new ideas and learning opportunities. This kind of students tend to be more engaged in class discussions and educational activities, enhancing their learning experiences and interactions with educators. The results of the present study corroborate

the results of Göncz et al. (2014) who found that openness was a significant predictor of students' perceptions of effective teachers and positive classroom experiences. Likewise, Dang et al. (2025) established that openness had positive effects on learning engagement and educational adjustment for university students.

There was also a strong positive relationship of conscientiousness with the student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. Conscientious students are responsible, disciplined, hard working and achievement-oriented. These attributes enable pupils to work well in school and communicate respectfully with staff. This is supported by Opoku et al. (2023), who reported a positive relationship between conscientiousness and educational behaviors and learning preference among University students. Similarly, Chen et al. (2021) highlighted that ‘responsible and proactive personal characteristics have a positive effect on academic engagement and teacher–student relationships.

The student–teacher relationship and academic achievement had a significant positive correlation with extraversion. Extraverted students are outgoing, active, assertive and talkative; thus, they are able to be more active in the classroom and interact with the teacher better. The results are in line with those of Jusri and Lechner (2025) who stated that extraversion had a positive influence on students' social integration with their peers and educational environment. Extraverted students may be more likely to engage with teachers and to ask questions in class, to work cooperatively, and to discuss issues with them, and this can have positive effects on interpersonal and academic relationships.

The other personality trait, agreeableness, also showed significant positive correlations with the student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. Students are cooperative, empathetic, supportive and emotionally considerate in social interactions. These are qualities that help to promote positive communication and healthy relationships in the educational setting. Khalilzadeh and Khodi (2021) further explained that positive interpersonal traits are important factors in students' classroom motivation and engagement in learning. As a result, teachers can offer more support and encouragement to agreeable students, and therefore, their academic performance can be improved. In general, it can be concluded that positive personality traits have a positive effect on the classroom adjustment, interpersonal adaptation, educational involvement and academic performance of students.

The second hypothesis was supported by the findings of the present study, which showed that there was a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and student–teacher relationship and academic achievement among the university students. When students are very neurotic, they may feel anxiety, unstable emotions, stress, insecurity, mood swings and negative emotional responses. These emotional challenges can affect their ability to communicate, engage in class activities, and perform academically. Emotionally sensitive and poor stress management may hinder these

students' ability to form healthy relationships with teachers and fellow students. The results corroborate those of Khalilzadeh and Khodi (2021) who found that negative emotional unstable personality traits have a negative impact on the educational adjustment and learning motivation of students. Likewise, Jusri and Lechner (2025) reported that the negative effect of neuroticism on social integration with teachers and students in secondary schools.

It is possible to make a logical explanation about the negative correlation between academic achievement and neuroticism, since unstable students may suffer concentration problems, fear of failing, academic stress and lack of self-confidence, which decreases their academic performance and their engagement in education. The Five-Factor Theory of Costa and McCrae (1992) also implies that the neurotic person is more likely to be psychologically distressed and to engage in unhealthy coping styles that have a negative impact on learning environments.

The results of regression analysis confirmed the third hypothesis that the student–teacher relationship and academic achievement scores of the University students were predicted positively by openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness. Conscientiousness proved to be the most positive predictor related to student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. This discovery indicates that well behaved pupils and students are more likely to have good academic achievement and positive learning relationships. This result corroborates with the study of Dang et al. (2025) which revealed that conscientiousness is a significant predictor of learning engagement and academic adjustment of college students. In the same way, Chen et al. (2021) highlighted the positive role of the characteristics of proactive personality in academic engagement via teacher–student relationships and academic self-efficacy.

Openness was also a positive predictor of student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. High openness students can be intellectually flexible, curious towards learning which gives them a positive attitude to participate in the classroom and engage in learning activities. The results are similar to those of Göncz et al. (2014) who found that openness is a significant predictor of students' positive experiences in education and teacher assessments. The student–teacher relationship and academic achievement were also positively predicted by the extraversion. Extraverted students will be more active in classroom discussions, communicate openly with teachers, and be involved in collaborative learning activities. Such behaviors increase their social and school adjustment. The results also indicate that the extraversion factor positively affects the social integration and educational interaction of university students, as concluded by Jusri and Lechner (2025).

Student–teacher relationship and academic achievement were also positively predicted by agreeableness. This positive social interaction is likely to lead to harmonious

social interactions and positive cooperative behaviors in classroom settings, resulting in better relations with teachers and school functioning. These results are consistent with the studies conducted by Khalilzadeh and Khodi (2021) that emphasized the important role of positive interpersonal personality features in the improvement of students' educational motivation and engagement. The results indicate that the psychological factors of adaptive personality characteristics are important predicting factors for positive educational outcomes among university students.

The results of the present study confirmed the fourth hypothesis that the higher level of neuroticism was related negatively to student–teacher relationship and academic achievement of university students. Students who have greater neurotic tendencies are more likely to suffer from emotional instability, anxiety, academic stress, insecurity, and negative emotional responses that can impact their academic performance and relations with teachers. The results align with earlier research that showed that neuroticism was related to difficulties in emotional regulation and educational maladjustment (Dang et al., 2025; Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021).

The results of the regression analysis showed that after controlling other personality traits, neuroticism independently influenced lower quality student–teacher relationships and lower academic achievement. This indicates that emotional instability plays a significant role as a psychological risk factor in the poor educational adjustment. Logically, emotional and cognitive challenges linked to neuroticism could account for its negative predictive function. It may be that the students who score high in neuroticism do not participate in class because they are afraid of being criticized; they might concentrate poorly because of anxiety; they might have problems being sensitive to interpersonal relationships when interacting with the teacher. As a result, such students might not be given adequate educational assistance and they might show poorer academic success. In summary, the study results highlighted the significance of emotional stability in fostering positive teacher-student relationships, involvement in learning, and academic performance in higher education students.

7. Limitations and Suggestions

There are a number of study limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings of the present study. In the first place, the study used a cross sectional correlational research design that does not allow for causal interpretation of variables. Second, the sampling technique employed was convenient, potentially limiting the validity of the results to other samples of University students. Thirdly, data were obtained through self-reported questionnaires, and this can lead to social desirability bias and response bias. Fourth, the study was carried out in universities within Faisalabad, Pakistan; thus; cultural and regional differences can hamper external validity. Future studies should be longitudinal and experimental research designs in order to understand

better the causal relationships between personality traits and student–teacher relationship and academic achievement. Additionally, to enhance generalizability, researchers can also include students from other cities, provinces, and educational institutions. Mediating and moderating variables like emotional intelligence, resilience, academic self-efficacy, stress management and social support should be explored in future studies. Furthermore, qualitative research can provide a more in-depth understanding of students' experiences of teacher relationship and personality traits.

8. Conclusion

The present study revealed that the personality of the students is a very important factor in determining how they relate with their teacher and their performance in the school. Pupils who are responsible, good co-ordinators, co-operators, and willing to learn are more likely to have good relationships with the teachers and to succeed academically. However, a student with high anxiety, emotional instability and stress could have problems concentrating in school and have negative relationships with the teacher. The study also showed that positive and supportive relationships between students and teachers can foster student motivation, confidence and academic achievement. Thus, it should not only be the academic learning and training, but also the understanding of students' personality and emotional needs, which is the work that should be done by the university and teacher. Students can benefit from counseling services, supportive classroom environments and teacher training programs that lead to improved academic and psychological performance.

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