



# A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF ADULT LEARNERS

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and personality traits among adult learners. Conducted in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, the research involved a sample of 100 adult students from 20 randomly selected Distance Education study centers. Utilizing stratified random sampling, the study employed standardized questionnaires, including the Personality Inventory by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Har Mohan Singh (2011) and the Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT) by Dr. Ekta Sharma (2011), to gather data.

The primary objective was to explore the correlation between EI and the personality traits of Extroversion and Introversion. Descriptive statistics revealed an average EI score of 203.25 (SD = 18.85), with Extroversion and Introversion means of 64.15 (SD = 1.64) and 62.95 (SD = 1.31), respectively. Correlation analyses demonstrated a significant positive correlation between EI and Extroversion ( $r = .749$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a significant negative correlation between EI and Introversion ( $r = -.887$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, Extroversion and Introversion were negatively correlated ( $r = -.420$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

The findings refute the null hypothesis, indicating that significant relationships exist between EI and personality traits among adult learners. Specifically, individuals with higher EI are more likely to exhibit extroverted characteristics, while those with lower EI tend to display introverted traits. These results emphasize the importance of considering both Emotional Intelligence and personality traits in understanding the psychological factors that influence adult learners' experiences and academic outcomes. The study's insights can inform the development of targeted educational interventions aimed at enhancing the success and well-being of adult learners.

*Key words: Emotional Intelligence, Personality Traits, Adult Learners, Extroversion, Introversion.*

## I. Introduction

Education, Emotional Intelligence, and personality are deeply interconnected components that collectively shape an individual's learning journey and academic success. A thorough understanding of these elements offers valuable insights for educators, students, and policymakers aiming to enhance the educational experience. Eudaimonic well-being, associated with self-realization, personal growth, goal achievement, and overall development, is profoundly influenced by one's emotional perception, self-esteem, and motivation—key aspects shaped by Emotional Intelligence and personality traits.

The study on the relationship between personality traits and Emotional Intelligence (EI) of adult learners seeks to understand how these two psychological constructs interact and influence one another in the context of adult education.

**Personality Traits** refer to the consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that characterize an individual. Commonly, these traits are assessed using models like the Big Five Personality Traits, which include Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

**Emotional Intelligence (EI)**, on the other hand, involves the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others. EI includes skills such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

In the context of adult learners, understanding the relationship between personality traits and EI can provide insights into how these learners engage with their educational experiences. For instance:

- Conscientiousness might be linked to higher levels of EI, as individuals with this trait tend to be organized, goal-oriented, and disciplined—qualities that can enhance emotional self-regulation and motivation in learning environments.
- Extraversion might correlate with better social skills and empathy, key components of EI, since extroverted individuals are often more outgoing and assertive, facilitating positive interactions with peers and instructors.
- Neuroticism could be negatively associated with EI, as individuals high in this trait may struggle with emotional stability, which could hinder their ability to manage emotions effectively in stressful academic situations.

The study likely examines how these personality traits either support or challenge the development and application of EI in adult learners, and how this relationship impacts their academic performance, motivation, and overall well-being in educational settings. By exploring these dynamics, the research could offer valuable strategies for educators to tailor learning environments that foster both personality development and emotional intelligence, ultimately enhancing the educational experience for adult learners.

## II. Conceptual Background:

The relationship between personality traits and Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a critical area of study, particularly in the context of adult learners. Both constructs play significant roles in shaping how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to their environments, especially in educational settings.

Personality Traits refer to the enduring patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that characterize an individual. The Five-Factor Model (FFM), or Big Five personality traits, is one of the most widely accepted frameworks for understanding personality. It encompasses five dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Each of these traits influences how individuals interact with the world around them, including their learning processes, motivation, and interpersonal relationships.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), on the other hand, involves the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. It is a key factor in successful personal and professional functioning, as it affects decision-making, problem-solving, and social interactions. EI is often divided into several components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management. In the context of adult learners, the interplay between personality traits and EI is particularly relevant. Adult learners often face unique challenges, such as balancing education with work and family responsibilities, which can influence their learning outcomes. Research suggests that personality traits can significantly impact EI. For example, individuals high in Conscientiousness may exhibit better self-regulation and emotional control, while those high in Extraversion may possess strong social awareness and relationship management skills. Furthermore, the relationship between personality traits and EI can influence academic performance, motivation, and adaptability in adult learners. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to develop targeted interventions that enhance the learning experiences of adult students. It also highlights the importance of fostering both personality development and emotional skills to support adult learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

This conceptual background underscores the need to explore the dynamic interaction between personality traits and EI among adult learners, offering a foundation for further research and practical applications in educational settings.

## III. Need for the Study:

The increasing prevalence of adult learners in educational settings underscores the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to their success. As these learners often juggle multiple responsibilities—such as work, family, and personal commitments—their unique challenges necessitate a closer examination of the psychological constructs that can enhance their learning experiences.

### 1. Understanding the Interplay Between Personality and Emotional Intelligence:

The relationship between personality traits and Emotional Intelligence (EI) remains underexplored, particularly among adult learners. Investigating this interplay can provide insights into how different personality profiles influence emotional competencies, which are essential for navigating the complexities of adult education. By identifying which traits correlate with higher levels of EI, educators can better understand how to support adult learners in developing these essential skills.

### 2. Enhancing Learning Outcomes:

Emotional Intelligence has been linked to improved academic performance, motivation, and overall well-being. Understanding how personality traits impact EI can help educators design targeted interventions that foster emotional competencies, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes for adult students.

### 3. Supporting Diverse Learning Needs:

Adult learners come from diverse backgrounds and possess varying life experiences. By exploring the relationship between personality and EI, this study can help identify the specific needs of different learner profiles. This understanding can inform personalized educational strategies that cater to the unique challenges faced by adult learners.

### 4. Implications for Educators and Institutions:

Insights from this study can provide educators and institutions with valuable information on how to create supportive learning environments that promote emotional and social development. By focusing on the interplay between personality traits and EI, educators can enhance their teaching methodologies and support systems, leading to improved retention rates and learner satisfaction.

### 5. Contribution to Theory and Practice:

The findings from this research can contribute to the existing body of knowledge in psychology and education by filling the gap in literature regarding the relationship between personality and EI among adult learners. This study can also serve as a foundation for future research, guiding the development of effective training programs and resources aimed at fostering both personality development and emotional intelligence in adult education.

This study addresses a significant gap in understanding the factors that influence the academic success of adult learners and emphasizes the need for targeted strategies that integrate insights from personality psychology and Emotional Intelligence to enhance the educational experience.

## IV. Literature review:

Berenson, R., Boyles, G., & Weaver, A. (2008) explored the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a predictor of academic success in online learning environments. With the growing popularity of online classes, it is increasingly important for administrators to identify factors that can predict students' academic performance. This study focused on the intrinsic factors of EI and personality to determine their ability to predict grade point average (GPA) among community college students. Through stepwise multiple regression analysis, the study found that EI was the most significant direct predictor of GPA. Furthermore, when personality traits were added to EI, the predictive power for GPA increased substantially. The study concluded that soft skills, such as EI, are crucial for academic success and could be used to develop profiles of successful online students. These profiles could be valuable for marketing, advisement, quality assessment, and retention efforts in online education.

Koç, S. E. (2019) conducted a study to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), self-directed learning readiness, and academic achievement among first- and second-year students at a private university in Ankara. The study



aimed to explore how EI and self-directed learning readiness influence academic success and whether EI impacts students' readiness for self-directed learning. To measure these constructs, the study utilized the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale and Schutte et al.'s (2001) Emotional Intelligence Scale. Using SPSS version 20, the researcher performed correlation and regression analyses to address the research questions. The findings revealed a strong correlation between EI and self-directed learning readiness. Additionally, EI was found to be a significant predictor of self-directed learning readiness, with minimal influence from gender. However, the study did not find any significant relationship between self-directed learning readiness and GPA, nor between EI and GPA. Furthermore, the participants' academic departments did not have any impact on their GPA.

Nicoleta Leon-Armanu (2018) conducted a study to explore the relationship between the five major personality traits (as defined by Costa & McCrae, 1992) and levels of Emotional Intelligence (as measured by Bar-On, 1997), with the goal of providing insights that could help adults enhance their job performance through improved soft skills. The study was particularly driven by the limited research on these topics within the Romanian context. The findings revealed that the introversion-extraversion dimension significantly influences levels of Emotional Intelligence, with differences observed between the extremes of the Big Five personality traits based on varying EI levels. Additionally, the study found correlations between the extraversion and conscientiousness traits and Emotional Intelligence. The research further indicated that personality factors interact with each other to impact EI levels. These insights can be utilized to help adults gain a better understanding of themselves and can be valuable in leadership training, enabling leaders to better understand their teams and the dynamics within their groups.

Nurul Fatihah Mohamad Nurhadi Chow and Nurul-Azza Abdullah (2019) conducted a study to examine the relationship between organizational commitment, Emotional Intelligence (EI), and work performance among adult students. The study highlights the significance of organizational commitment and EI as key factors influencing the performance of adult students, who may face challenges due to the burden of additional responsibilities. The study sample consisted of 167 Distance Learning students from a local university, selected through a sampling method. The research utilized a four-part survey: the first part gathered demographic information, the second part assessed organizational commitment using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), the third part evaluated EI using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), and the final part measured work performance using a modified version of a work performance questionnaire by Fatimah Wati Halim and Iran Herman (1977). The findings revealed positive relationships and significant influences of organizational commitment and EI on the work performance of adult students. These results suggest that emotional intelligence is an important aspect to be considered by institutions managing adult student admissions. Additionally, the study provides insights for organizations to enhance organizational commitment among their employees, who are also students, to improve overall work performance.

Pirsoul, T., Parmentier, M., & Nils, F. (2021) explored the complex role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the career development of adult learners, focusing on the multidimensional nature of EI and how its specific dimensions predict career-related outcomes. While EI is widely recognized as a critical meta-competency that helps individuals navigate their careers, its various dimensions have not been thoroughly examined at the measurement level. Consequently, it remains unclear how specific dimensions of EI influence career-related outcomes beyond the general EI factor. To address this gap, the researchers employed a bifactor Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling (ESEM) framework among a sample of 445 Belgian adult learners. The study investigated the incremental and predictive validity of different EI dimensions on key career-related outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion, work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and career satisfaction. The results revealed that, in addition to the general EI factor's predictive effect on career outcomes, several specific EI dimensions—such as comprehension, regulation, and utilization—made unique contributions. These findings underscore the importance of distinguishing between the effects of different EI dimensions, offering valuable insights for guidance counselors and informing the design of customized interventions to support career development.

Urban, K., & Jirsáková, J. (2021) explored the motivation and personality traits of adult learners compared to traditional students. Unlike traditional students, post-traditional students often follow a non-linear educational path, typically returning to their studies at an older age while balancing jobs and family responsibilities. The study aimed to assess the motivation and personality characteristics of 67 adult learners (part-time students) and 84 traditional students using the Czech version of the Business-Focused Inventory of Personality. The results revealed that adult learners exhibited higher levels across various aspects of their personality related to working life, such as occupational orientation, behavior, social competencies, and psychological constitution. These findings suggest that part-time students demonstrate greater achievement motivation and conscientiousness in both their work and studies, likely due to the additional demands and responsibilities they manage alongside their education.

Zahed-Babelan, A., & Moenikia, M. (2010) conducted a study to explore the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its components in predicting the academic achievement of students in the distance education system at Payame Noor University. The study's statistical population included all students at Ardabil Payame Noor University, totaling 7,000 during the 2008-2009 academic year. A sample of 328 students was selected through multistage sampling. Given the study's objectives and research questions, a correlation method was employed. Data were collected using the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory and students' academic mean scores. The reliability of the EI instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 within the Iranian context. Multiple regression analysis using the enter model was applied for data analysis. The results indicated that EI and its dimensions significantly predict students' academic achievement. Among the components of EI, the contributions of Interpersonal (social awareness and interpersonal relationships), General Mood (self-motivation), and Intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-expression) were -0.368, 0.220, and 0.163, respectively.

## V. Methodology

### VI. Sample and Sample Size

The study was conducted in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, selecting 20 Distance Education study centres randomly from the available list. The sample comprised 100 adult students. Stratified random sampling was employed for sample selection.

### VII. Method of Data Collection

Standardized questionnaires were utilized to collect data through a combination of questionnaire and survey methods. Before administering each test, respondents were given standardized instructions following the manual guidelines. A detailed briefing about the study and the confidentiality of the results was given to ensure informed and willing participation.

### VIII. Tools Used

**Personality Inventory:** This inventory was developed and standardized by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Har Mohan Singh in 2011, and the researcher adopted it.

**Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT) by Dr. Ekta Sharma (2011):** The Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT) was utilized to assess the Emotional Intelligence of the sample. Developed by Dr. Ekta Sharma, this test comprises 60 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The test has demonstrated high reliability, with all items exhibiting strong correlations indicating validity.

### IX. Data Analysis

Statistical methods such as correlation analyses and inferential statistics were employed to explore the relationships between personality traits and Emotional Intelligence. The findings were interpreted and presented to draw meaningful conclusions.

### X. Objective-1

To find out the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits of Adult Learners.

### XI. Hypothesis-1

There would be no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality Traits of Adult Learners.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence, Extroversion, and Introversion Among Adult Learners (N = 100)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotional Intelligence	203.2500	18.84727	100
Extroversion	64.1500	1.63531	100
Introversion	62.9500	1.31330	100

**Table 2:** Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationships Between Emotional Intelligence, Extroversion, and Introversion Among Adult Learners (N = 100)

Personality Traits		Emotional Intelligence
Extroversion	Pearson Correlation	0.749**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	100
Introversion	Pearson Correlation	-.887**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	100

**Note:**  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed).

### Interpretation of Results

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and personality traits among adult learners. The null hypothesis posited that there would be no significant relationship between EI and personality traits. Descriptive statistics revealed that the mean Emotional Intelligence score was 203.25 (SD = 18.85) among the 100 participants. The mean score for Extroversion was 64.15 (SD = 1.64), while the mean for Introversion was 62.95 (SD = 1.31).

Correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between EI, Extroversion, and Introversion. A significant positive correlation was found between Emotional Intelligence and Extroversion ( $r = .749$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that higher levels of Emotional Intelligence are associated with higher levels of Extroversion. Conversely, a significant negative correlation was observed between Emotional Intelligence and Introversion ( $r = -.887$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that higher Emotional Intelligence is associated with lower levels of Introversion. Additionally, a negative correlation was identified between Extroversion and Introversion ( $r = -.420$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that as levels of Extroversion increase, levels of Introversion tend to decrease.

These results provide evidence against the null hypothesis, suggesting that there are significant relationships between Emotional Intelligence and personality traits among adult learners. Specifically, adult learners with higher Emotional Intelligence are more likely to exhibit extroverted traits, while those with lower Emotional Intelligence are more likely to exhibit introverted traits. This underscores the importance of considering both Emotional Intelligence and personality traits when examining the psychological factors that influence adult learners' experiences and outcomes.

## XII. Conclusion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and personality traits among adult learners. The significant positive correlation between EI and Extroversion indicates that adult learners who possess higher levels of Emotional Intelligence are more likely to exhibit extroverted characteristics. In contrast, the significant negative correlation between EI and Introversion suggests that those with higher Emotional Intelligence tend to display lower levels of introverted traits.

These results highlight the importance of Emotional Intelligence in shaping personality dynamics within adult learners. The ability to navigate emotional and social challenges effectively can enhance interpersonal interactions, adaptability, and overall learning experiences. Understanding this relationship can inform educators and institutions in designing programs that foster both Emotional Intelligence and positive personality traits, ultimately supporting the success and well-being of adult learners.

Moreover, the study contributes to the broader literature on Emotional Intelligence and personality by emphasizing their interconnectedness in educational settings. Future research should further explore these relationships across diverse populations and contexts, as well as the potential for interventions aimed at enhancing Emotional Intelligence and promoting positive personality development among adult learners. By prioritizing these factors, educational programs can better equip adult learners to achieve their academic and personal goals.

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