

# BIG FIVE PERSONALITY FACTORS AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG RESEARCH STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

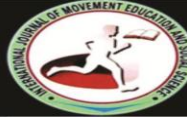
*The aim of the present study was to assess the role of Big Five personality factors as predictor of life satisfaction among students engaged in research. Using purposive sampling data were collected from 95 students engaged in research in University of Jammu. Pearson product moment of correlation and Multiple linear regression analysis was applied for statistical analyses of the data. Overall the model of Big five personality emerged out to be significant predictor of life satisfaction in research student. However, out of Five factors of personality only agreeableness and neuroticism came out to be the significant predictors of life satisfaction. Agreeableness showed positive relationship whereas neuroticism shares negative relationship with life satisfaction in research students. The findings of the study indicate the importance of personality factors as determinant of life satisfaction in research students.*

**Keywords:** *Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Life satisfaction, Neuroticism, Openness to experience*

## I. PERSONALITY

The concept of personality has been studied and defined by different researchers in a number of different ways. In general, personality has been defined as differences in the thinking, feeling and behaving aspect of every individual [1]. Personality is a unique set of characteristic of an individual that influences their cognitions, motivations and behaviours across various situations [2]. The personality traits of an individual are assumed to be relatively stable over a period of time, different in every individual and tend to influence the behaviour. Initially different number of personality traits that have been identified that has shown some form of overlapping. Upon further analysis of these traits, Big Five personality traits came into existence. Big Five personality traits subsume all other different traits and represent basic structure behind these traits [3, 4, 5].

The theory based on the Big Five factors is called as Five Factor Model (FFM). These five dimensions of personality are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Openness to experiences refers willingness to explore unusual ideas, preferences for trying out new things, ideas, appreciation for art etc. Conscientiousness is having planned and organized behaviour, showing self-



discipline, being dutiful etc. Extraversion means being sociable, gregariousness, seeking excitement and positive emotions. Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate, showing compliance, trust etc. Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily. Those scoring high on neuroticism experience i.e anger, anxiety, depression and impulsiveness [3].

## **II. LIFE SATISFACTION**

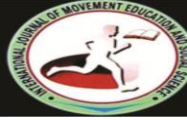
Life satisfaction of a person has been defined as an individual's personal judgement of wellbeing and quality of life based on his or her own chosen criteria [6]. The term life satisfaction comes under the broader concept of subjective wellbeing. Subjective wellbeing of a person has been defined as a combination of emotional component and cognitive component. Emotional or affective component includes happiness, positive emotions whereas cognitive component refers to individual's judgment and evaluation of overall quality of life. Life satisfaction is therefore considered as cognitive component of subjective wellbeing [6,7, 8]. Experiencing of positive emotion, satisfaction with life, work and social relationship contributes to overall subjective wellbeing [9,10].

Previous researches have revealed that life satisfaction is associated with numerous favourable outcomes such as better physical health [11] lesser mental health problems [12]. Among student high level of life satisfaction has been found to be linked with increased academic self-efficacy, greater academic achievements, lesser stress [13,14,15,16]. On the other hand low level of life satisfaction leads to intra and inter personal stress and less positive academic experience ([17]

## **III. PERSONALITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION**

Numerous studies have found a relationship between personality and wellbeing of person. Previous meta analysis studies revealed that personality traits are one of the strongest predictors of subjective wellbeing [18,19]. Relationship between personality and subjective wellbeing (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect) among 16,367 residents of Australia was examined. Findings revealed that those who are more extraverted, conscientious, agreeable and more emotionally stable personalities tend to experience higher life satisfaction, report frequent positive emotions and lesser negative emotions [20]. Another study found that Big Five personality factors predicted 25.4 percent variance in life satisfaction among 235 Iranian Muslim adults [21].

Personality traits especially neuroticism and extraversion are found to be the most robust predictor of life satisfaction [22, 23]. Relationship between Big five personality traits and life satisfaction among 208 NCC female students was explored. Big five personality traits explained 30.1 percent variance in life satisfaction among students. Extraversion and Neuroticism emerged out to be the strongest predictor of life satisfaction [24]. Similarly another study conducted on 249 University students showed that Big Five Factors predicted 31 percent variance in life satisfaction and extraversion, neuroticism and conscientiousness were the significant predictor of life satisfaction in students [25].



#### **IV. JUSTIFICATION OF THE CURRENT STUDY**

Students engaged in research often experience multiple demands pertaining to hectic academic routines, project submission deadlines, financial issues etc. Personality traits of the students influence their behaviour towards difficult situations encountered by them and their reaction towards such situations. Previous studies have revealed the personality traits are significant predictor of life satisfaction among students. Life satisfaction in turn predicts student's academic performance and achievements. Therefore it becomes important to assess the role of Big Five personality Factors and life satisfaction among students engaged in research. Moreover hardly any such study has been found in this context. Therefore, considering the need the present study was undertaken.

#### **V. HYPOTHESIS**

Big Five personality factors will be significant predictor of life satisfaction among research students.

#### **VI. METHODOLOGY**

##### **6.1 Sample**

The data were collected using purposive sampling from 95 students engaged in research in University of Jammu. Participant age ranged from 23 (minimum) to 35 (maximum). Mean age of the participants was 27.13 year. There were 29 male (30.5%) and 66 females (65.9%). Fifteen students were pursuing M.Phil (15.8%) and 80 students were pursuing Ph.D (84.2%). Out of them, there were 20 married (21.1%) and 75 were unmarried (78.9%).

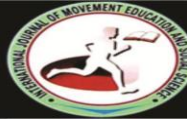
##### **6.2 Tools**

6.2.1. Satisfaction with life scale [26]: The scale measures global life satisfaction of person. There are 5 items in the scale on a 7 point rating scale ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) of scale is .87.

6.2.2. Big five personality inventory [27]: The inventory consist of ten items measuring the five factors i.e. openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Responses are to be given on a 5- point rating scale ranging from 5(Agree strongly) to 1 (Disagree strongly). Test-retest stability is .83 to .72. Self-peer convergent validity correlation is .57 to .45.

##### **6.3. Procedure**

The study was carried on students engage in research activities in different departments of University of Jammu. Purposive sampling was used for collecting the data. Before conducting the research, purpose of the study was stated to the students. Students interested in participation were given the questionnaires with proper instructions



mentioned on its cover page. They were also given verbal instructions. Assurance regarding the confidentiality of the responses was given to the students. As soon as the questionnaires were filled in they were taken back from the participants and subjected to the analysis.

#### 6.4 Statistical Technique

For statistical analysis of the data, Pearson's product moment of correlation and Multiple linear regression was employed. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (20<sup>th</sup> version) was used for this purpose.

### VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to assess the hypothesis, Pearson product moment method of correlation and the multiple linear regression analysis was used, Table 7.1 shows the correlation between Big Five personality factors and life satisfaction. Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 shows the results of multiple linear regression.

**Table 7.1 Correlation between Big Five Personality Factors and Life satisfaction**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Life satisfaction	1					
2. Extraversion	.099	1				
3.Agreeableness	.263**	.062	1			
4.Conscientiousness	.006	0.50	.101	1		
5. Neuroticism	-.209*	-.057	.009	-.188	1	
6.Openness to experience	.081	-.209*	-.017	.130	-.014	1

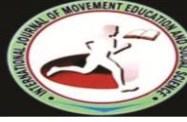
\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level ( $p < 0.05$ )

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level ( $p < 0.01$ )

On examining Table 7.1, significant and positive relationship was found between agreeableness and life satisfaction ( $r = .263$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Significant and negative relationship came out between neuroticism and life satisfaction ( $r = -.209$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Correlation between life satisfaction and other factors (extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience) was found to be non significant.

**Table 7.2 Model summary of Big five personality factors as predictor of life satisfaction**

Model Summary				ANOVA					
N	R	R Square	Adjusted		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.



			R Square						
95	.373	.139	.091	<b>Regression</b>	417.195	5	83.439	2.873	.019
				<b>Residual</b>	2584.342	89	29.038		
				<b>Total</b>	3001.537	94			

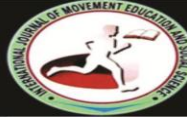
- Predictor Variable: (constant), Openness, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness
- Outcome Variable: Life Satisfaction

Table 7.2 shows the regression model of overall contribution of Big Five personality factors on life satisfaction. The model  $F(5, 89) = 2.873$ ,  $p = .019$  is significant at .05 level of significance. Therefore, a regression model result is significantly better in prediction of the impact of big five personality factors on the life satisfaction of the students engaged in research. Now, R square value is .139 that means 13.9 percent variance in independent variable i.e. on life satisfaction is because of independent variable i.e. personality factors. Thus, Big Five personality factors can become a predictor of life satisfaction among the research students.

The interpretation of the slope and y intercept, we have to look on coefficients; *unstandardized and standardized*. The calculated B value shows the slope of the regression analysis for the dimensions of personality. In turn the slope shows the rate at which criterion variable; here life satisfaction changes with per unit change in predictor variable, here Big Five factors of personality. It is more useful to think of this value as representing the change in the outcome associated with a unit change in the predictor. Table 7.3 shows that

**Table 7.3 Big Five Personality factors regressed on life satisfaction**

Coefficients				
Un-Standardized	Coefficients	Standardized coefficients	t	p value
	<b>B</b>	<b>Beta (β)</b>		
(Constant)	18.200		3.697	.000
Extraversion	-.372	-.116	-1.152	.253
Agreeableness	.898	.268	2.699	.008
Conscientiousness	-.238	-.074	-.724	.471
Neuroticism	-.700	-.230	-2.293	.024
Openness	.507	.116	1.142	.257

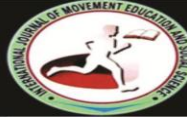


out of five personality dimensions, only agreeableness ( $B = .898$   $t = 2.699$ ,  $p = .008$ ) and neuroticism is significant ( $B = -.700$   $t = -2.293$   $p = .024$ ) at .01 level and at .05 level respectively. Further, agreeableness has positive impact on the life satisfaction while neuroticism shares negative relationship with the life satisfaction. Therefore the hypothesis that Big Five personality factors will be significant predictor of life satisfaction among research students is partially accepted as only two factors have been found to be significantly related to life satisfaction.

The results shows that more the research student are cooperative, tend to agree and trust (agreeableness) others greater will be there level of satisfaction with life. Whereas research students high on anxiousness, impulsiveness, depression, and are less emotionally stable (neuroticism) will experience decrease in their satisfaction with life. The results are consistent with the past studies. A study was conducted on 300 high school students also found significant and negative relationship between neuroticism and life satisfaction [28]. Significant and negative association was also found between life satisfaction and neuroticism among 1,961 Chinese adolescents [29]. Another study investigated the relationships among Big five personality factors and life satisfaction in 624 high school students. It was found that overall personality factor significantly predicted 47 percent variance in life satisfaction. Out of the five factors neuroticism came to be the strongest predictor. Although agreeableness showed positive relationship with life satisfaction, however when entered in regression analysis with other variables, agreeableness was found to predict life satisfaction in girls only as compared to boys [30].

## VIII. CONCLUSION

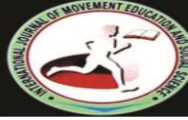
Present research is important from the perspective of analyzing the Big Five personality factors as predictor of life satisfaction among research students in University of Jammu. The result shows that the model of the present study is significant and 13.9 percent variance in life satisfaction was explained by Overall Big Five personality Factors. Only agreeableness and neuroticism came out to be the significant predictors. Personality trait of agreeableness shares a positive and significant relationship with the life satisfaction. This indicates if a person, for instance, is highly agreeable and might engage in helping behaviour, trust and cooperate others, this will contribute towards his/her satisfaction and improved sense of wellbeing. Neuroticism in the current study has a negative but significant relationship with the life satisfaction. Neuroticism is related to the emotional stability of the person. Studies have revealed that people with high satisfaction in life are well adjusted, free from psychopathology and have high subjective well being. Considering the results it is suggested that importance should be given towards development of positive emotions, altruism, modesty and compassion among research students. Personal counselling sessions should be provided to the research students in the campus itself that can help in venting out their negative emotions by discussing their problems/issues. This will lead to increase in their life satisfaction and that will in turn positively impact their research. The present study has limitations in terms of its low sample size, data collection from one University, use of non-probability sampling which makes the findings difficult to generalize. In future, it is suggested that intervention programmes for increasing the



wellbeing of such population should be carried out. Role of other important and relevant variables can be taken into consideration for future research.

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