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## Relationship between Personality Traits and Help-seeking Behaviour of Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract:** *The individual knows that he or she needs assistance to solve the problem. Yet, seeking assistance may be associated with an open admission of failure and dependence on others. These anticipated psychological costs often hinder the seeking of help, which may result in the intensification of the problem. This study aimed to assess the relationship between personality traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students. The study employed a quantitative and descriptive research design. All the undergraduate students of the education department of district Lahore were the proposed population of the current research. The study sample comprised 538 undergraduate students using a stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire containing 54 items was used as a data collection instrument. Results showed a significant relationship between personality traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students. It was recommended that the potential utility of understanding and harnessing individual personality differences and their help-seeking Behaviour should be boosted among the students at the undergraduate level.*

**Key Words:** Personality traits, Help-seeking Behaviour, Undergraduate Students

### Introduction

Personality is a determining component of how a person would react in different circumstances. Personality is explained as the conceptual, emotional, and ethical dissimilarities that distinguish one person from others (Hockenbury, 2010).

The idea of personality in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2006) has not been fully established. Dimensional personality traits, on the other hand, have a tendency to take on a more solid and long-lasting form because they already reflect the effects of early infancy and adolescence. Personality can't be explained in just one way, as there are various personality approaches that explain it in different ways. Personality should be composed of characteristics that can be changed. Because of its characteristics, it makes everyone special because it impacts the individual's ability to question and behave. Behaviour is one example of dimensions, extraversion or introversion, according to Eysenck's approach of personality, and the other is neuroticism, which can be detected back to biological causes (Eysenck, 1982).

Personality traits are often characterized as descriptions of individuals' comparatively consistent ways of thinking, feelings, and Behaviour (Costa & McCrae, 2003). Personality traits are integrated features that specify the causes of emotions, consciousness, and behaviour. An individual's aptitude, enthusiasm, attitude, and temperament are all influenced by personality traits, which can be genetic or learned (Brandstätter, 2011).

The commonly used model for measuring personality traits is the Five Factor Model (FFM) or the "Big Five" (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993). In accordance with the FFM, personality differences are also

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estimated by five important aspects: conscientiousness (e.g., organized, attentive), agreeableness (e.g., confident also approachable), neuroticism (e.g., concerned, worried), openness to incidence (e.g., artistic also being curious), also extraversion (e.g., open-minded along daring) (John & McCrae, 1992).

Help-seeking Behaviour has generally been explained as asking for help to make up for one's deficiencies, thereby raising the chances of future success (Ames & Lau, 1982). A more modern definition related to mental health would be a flexible survival process, which is a try to acquire outside help to cope with a psychological problem (Rickwood et al., 2012). There is a clear and urgent requirement to raise all forms of help-seeking Behaviour among learners (Leahy et al., 2010). Help-seeking focuses on three elements attitude or perception also readiness, aim to look for help, and authentic help-seeking behaviour. Seeking help is an individual's movement of asking for help to evade a difficult, troubling, and difficult situation in the male's or female's day-to-day operations. A problem can be explained as thinking, emotions or movement by you and others, for example, feelings that can't be conveyed in tests. (Corally & McCarthy, 2011). Differences in personality aspects are thought to influence how people externally deal with everyday problems, including mental health problems. Accordingly, the current research examined the relationship between personality type in help-seeking behaviour to overcome problems.

## Literature Review

Personality can be defined as a hierarchy of innate composition that is expressed socially. Another subject regarding the definition of personality is the issue with the definition of personality, which is distinguished into two dimensions. One characteristic is concerned about that where is personality, so-called the locus. The second one is about the perception of organisms that nature has an organic base. So, its consequences into the matter of what personality is and where it lies (Gibb, 2008).

The link between traits of personality, emotional quotient, as well as pupils' success in life has been the subject of several studies in Pakistan and many other nations. Better academic success is associated with a well-developed personality (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007; Vitulica & Zupancicb, 2010). According to Poropat (2009), the three personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness are strongly correlated with pupils' academic success. Academic achievement and conscientiousness, in particular, have a strong relationship. At the same time, there is a link between neuroticism and poor academic performance (Ahadi & Narimani, 2009).

Help-seeking is investigated in various aspects with respect to multiple personal and social characteristics. Usually, it is distinguished as a mindset, point of view, Behaviour, action, private and social disgrace, cultural standards, gender, and formal and informal methods of looking for help. On most occasions, males struggle to seek help because of their faith system and philosophical norms. The fundamental motive of performing such a study is to create a hypotheses that supports the procedure of male's help-seeking, interferences that provide help-seeking, and recognizing the methods of help-seeking (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).

Researchers have described the degree of mental distress as greater in the post-secondary learner anatomy (Agteren et al., 2019; Deasy et al., 2014; Pedrelli et al., 2015). The requirement of additional explore possible determinative factors of help-seeking attitude is accentuated through the discovery that most postgraduate learners don't look for academic assistance, in spite of its rising accessibility in tertiary school environments and revealed positive relations with educational accomplishment and prosperity (Eisenberg et al., 2007; Pedrelli et al., 2015; Zivin et al., 2009).

Psychological help-seeking behaviour is the process of asking for psychological assistance from others in order to resolve the current issue. 58.4% of informal forms of support were the first psychological aid that teenagers sought. Up to 80.7% of students sought out informal help. Adolescents' mental health issues may be lessened through informal help-seeking and the presence of social resources (Heerde & Hemphill, 2018).

Shi and Hall's (2020) finding that more than 30% of students decide against seeking psychological assistance supports this. According to Salim's (2010) study, just 6% of students seek professional psychological assistance. When people can still get aid from informal sources to solve their difficulties, asking for psychological support from them is not a problem. However, this will become an issue if it is



not handled properly, in which case formal sources of aid must be sought. According to Rickwood et al. (2005), seeking proper psychological assistance is precautionary as well as has the ability to lessen intellectual discomfort and enhance psychological health.

## Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between personality traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students on the basis of gender.

## Material and Methods

**Research design:** The study was quantitative in nature, and a co-relation research design was used.

**Population:** Students from education departments of public and private universities of Lahore were the population of the study. A total population was 2688 undergraduate students, of which 1886 were from public and 802 were from private universities.

**Sampling:** A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting the sample. By dividing the universities into public and private ones, strata were created. A total sample size was 538, of which 288 were from public and 250 were from private universities.

**Research instrument:** The Big Five Inventory, developed by Goldberg (1993), was applied to examine the personality traits of undergraduate students on a five-point Likert scale. The Behaviour of students who seek help will be examined on a five-point Likert scale by using the attitude towards seeking professional psychological help scale (ATSPPH-SF) developed by Fischer and Farina (1995).

**Reliability:** Reliability analysis showed the reliability of the big inventory questionnaire as 0.85 and 0.79 for the Behaviour of seeking professional psychological help questionnaire.

## Results and Discussion

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between personality traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students.

**Table 1**

*Relationship of Personality Types/Traits and Help-Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduate Students*

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .797 | .636     | .632              | 3.68320                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness

Table 1 shows that 63.6 % variance is described in the criterion variable help-seeking behaviour of university undergraduate students by the predictor variable personality traits (R square of  $.636 \times 100 = 63.6\%$ ). In this table, the value of R square 0.636 indicates the 63.6% variance in the criterion variable, help-seeking Behaviour .

**Table 2**

*Multiple Regression Test Result*

| Model      | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | p    |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Regression | 12600.026      | 5   | 2520.005    | 185.759 | .000 |
| Residual   | 7217.090       | 532 | 13.566      |         |      |
| Total      | 19817.115      | 537 |             |         |      |

a. Dependent Variable: HSB

b. Predictors: (Constant) Openness, Neuroticism, conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness

Table 2 shows the test is used to check how reliable the measures are in establishing an ideal fit of the model. The p-value  $.000 < .05$  indicates a good fit of the model.

**Table 3**  
Result of Multiple Regression Analysis for Coefficient

| Model      | Unstandardized Coefficients<br>B | Unstandardized Coefficients<br>Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients<br>Beta | t      | p    |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|------|
| (Constant) | 20.785                           | 1.872                                     |                                   | 11.102 | .000 |
| Extra      | .775                             | .029                                      | .773                              | 26.567 | .000 |
| Agree      | .446                             | .037                                      | .404                              | 12.170 | .000 |
| Cons       | -.419                            | .043                                      | -.275                             | 9.791  | .000 |
| Neuro      | .293                             | .045                                      | .200                              | 6.531  | .000 |
| Openness   | -.537                            | .054                                      | -.384                             | 9.893  | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: HSB

Table 3 explains the beta weights and values of statistical significance. The values of significance exhibited that all factors of personality traits (Extraversion  $p = .000$ , Agreeableness  $p = .000$ , Conscientiousness  $p = .000$ , Neuroticism  $p = .000$ , Openness  $p = .000$  significant relationship. Beta values (Extra version,  $B=20.785$ , Agreeableness,  $B=.775$ , Conscientiousness,  $B=.446$ , Neuroticism,  $B=-.419$ , Openness,  $B=.293$  indicate that the five factors of personality traits like Extra version, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness positively relate with help-seeking behaviour of university undergraduate students.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in help seeking behaviour of undergraduate students on the basis of gender.

**Table 4**  
Difference in Help-Seeking Behaviour of University Undergraduate Male and Female Students

| Help-seeking Behaviour | N   | M     | SD   | t    | df     | P   |
|------------------------|-----|-------|------|------|--------|-----|
| Female                 | 405 | 37.40 | 6.19 |      | 536    |     |
| Male                   | 133 | 34.99 | 5.35 | 4.32 | 257.20 | .00 |

Table 4 presents the results of an independent sample t-test to measure the difference in help-seeking behaviour of male and female undergraduate students. A significant difference was observed in the help-seeking behaviour of female ( $M=37.39$ ,  $SD=6.186$ ) and male ( $M=34.99$ ,  $SD=5.349$ ) students,  $t(536) = 2.40$ ,  $p = .000$ . The result shows a statistically significant difference in the help-seeking behaviour of male and female undergraduate students. The result shows that female students had greater help-seeking behaviour than male students.

### Conclusions

The study examined the relationship between personality types/traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students. The study came to the conclusion that there was a significant relationship between personality traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students. The study also concluded that the four factors of personality traits, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness, were positively related to the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students.

According to the results, a significant difference in help-seeking behaviour of male and female undergraduate students was observed. Mean values showed that female undergraduate students show more help-seeking Behaviour than male undergraduate students.

### Discussion

The purpose of the research was to explore the relationship between personality types/traits and the help-seeking Behaviour of undergraduate students. The unique contributions of this study are twofold. First,



this extends previous studies by examining both personality traits and help-seeking Behaviour in the same study. Second, the relationship between personality types/traits and help-seeking Behaviour was examined on the basis of gender. Data showed that personality traits played different roles in help-seeking behaviour.

The research study revealed that there was a significant difference in personality types/traits and help-seeking Behaviour. According to Bornschlegl et al. (2020), personality ranges such as extraversion and openness to experience are also exposed to step-by-step regression models such as remarkable in predicting intent to seek help, albeit with quite a small variance calculated in their respective consequences and have a well been recognized as an important forecaster of student willingness to seek help through health services. Extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness have already been recognized as important personality elements in the literature on factors of help-seeking Behaviour (Ceyhan & Yelpeze, 2020; O'Connor et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the research study revealed that female undergraduate students seek help more often than male undergraduate students. This study is congruent with the research conducted by Abuhammad and Hamaideh (2021), which indicates that females seek help more as compared to males.

In the latest research, Kumar et al. (2023) explained that male students did not significantly show lower help-seeking attitudes than female students. The researchers argued that in society, people are obscuring social values and norms, which are individualized by their strength, feelings, expressive style of emotion, and aggressiveness. These characteristics are seen as variables of help-seeking Behaviour and are more common in males and females. These are the major causes of similar interest in help-seeking behaviour in terms of gender. Other causes are both genders feeling less skeptical, less restrictive, equal rights, and more open-minded about seeking professional help.

## Recommendations

It is recommended to demonstrate the potential utility of understanding and harnessing individual personality differences and their help-seeking Behaviour. It suggests identifying the determinants of help-seeking Behaviour among male undergraduate students. A qualitative study can be organized in order to gain in-depth knowledge about personality traits and help-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students.

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