

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS AS INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

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Abstract

Personality is a non-intellectual representation of the individual. It refers to the type of thinking, feelings, and set of behaviors of individuals. Academic achievements prove the performance of students in educational settings. Personality traits influence the strategies and attitudes for the attainment of goals. There are two basic objectives of this study. First, it measures the personality characteristics of high and low academic achievers. Second, it analyzes the differences in the personality characteristics of high versus low academic achieving participants.

This is cross-sectional research. This study was conducted among six hundred students of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. Among them, three hundred were high academic achievers and three hundred were low academic achievers. The study participants were selected through purposive sampling. The standardized California Personality inventory was administered to the participants to assess their personality characteristics. Then differences in their responses were analyzed. Results of this research indicate that high achiever students' personality characteristics are not matched with low achiever students. High achievers appeared responsible and had more self-acceptance and feelings of achievement via independence. As expected, the low academic achievers were higher on socialization.

Keywords: *Personality characteristics, Indicators, academic achievements, California Personality Inventory, Sociability*

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between personality characteristics and academic achievements has remained an important area of interest not only for psychologists but also for researchers interested in the problems related to education. Earlier, most attention was given to intellectual characteristics as the main contributors to academic success or failure but more research in this area indicated the importance of non-intellectual factors like personality, motivation, self-disciplining, habits, and attitudes as significant contributors to education-related issues. (Herera, et al., 2019; Spengler et al., 2016). Personality traits or characteristics represent an individual's particular style of feelings, thinking, and perceiving. Some studies focused more on the internal bases of personality indicating cognitions of the internal expressions of the traits, while others focused more on the environment as a more influencing factor in personality characteristics (Bipp et al., 2008). Non-cognitive factors or personality characteristics are responsible for individual differences in every aspect of human life from educational to social and vocational (Marcela, 2015). Personality characteristics are patterns of an individual's attitude, enthusiasm, feelings, and perception (Ariani, 2013). Several studies had indicated that personality predicts educational performance more than intelligence level (Spengler et al., 2013).

A meta-analysis by O'Connor and Paunonen (2007) indicated that conscientiousness which represents responsible and self-disciplined behavior is more associated with good educational achievements whereas extraversion was found to have a negative relation with good class and educational performance (Hair & Hampson, 2006). Students with a high score on conscientiousness were found more focused, self-organized, and enthusiastic to learn new things as compared to those who scored low on conscientiousness. The findings of several studies indicated a negative association between age, academic performance, and intelligence. The impact of age is greater in the early grades but lower in the higher studies. Other studies (conducted on the relationship of the five-factor model of personality with academic achievement indicated that factors openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are positively correlated with academic achievement and motivation (Hakimi et al., 2011). Neuroticism has a negative association with academic performance among students of higher classes, on the other hand, extraversion is found to be directly related to the academic performance of college students, and conscientiousness and

openness have a positive impact on the achievements in higher education (Marcela, 2015). The findings of some researchers suggested an indirect association between emotional imbalances with the academic performance of students. Agreeableness and conscientiousness were found to have a direct influence on the academic performance of students of the age range of fourteen to sixteen years and higher institutions (Ariani, 2013). Results of a study by Slobodskaya, Safronova, and Windle (2005) suggested the indirect impact of extraversion, psychoticism, and neuroticism on the grades achieved among college students. Another study revealed a direct influence of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness on the performance in academics whereas neuroticism was found to hurt the academic performance of students. Results of different studies have indicated that self-control, confidence in oneself, and self-esteem are the traits having a direct influence on achievement in studies, whereas low self-esteem, poor self-concept, and psychoticism impair academic performance (Felder, et al., 2002).

In Pakistan, less research work has been done on the influence of personality characteristics on study habits and performance in academics. The findings of a study by Mahmood (2003) suggested that responsibility, non-impulsivity, self-discipline, and low socialization influence the academic performance of students positively. Rehman (2001) researched to measure the association of self-concept with the academic environment, intelligence, and achievement in studies. Findings revealed a direct and positive association of student self-concept with their achievements in studies, class performance, and learning skills.

There is a need to conduct more studies to analyze and find out the factors associated with academic achievement and effective learning skills. It will help the teachers, students, and parents to overcome the problem of low academic achievement among students. The objective of this research was to measure the personality characteristics of undergraduate high achievers and low achievers.

Less work has been done in this field in Sindh, especially with reference to the personality characteristics of students. Thus, the study was conducted because it is important to find out the contributing factors of high achievement and predictors of low academic achievement. It was designed to find out the personality characteristics of high and low academic achievers among university undergraduates. The findings would be helpful for teachers, parents, and educationalists to gain insight and understanding of some factors associated with low academic achievement and to guide the students accordingly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to test two hypotheses (i) There would be significant differences in the personality characteristics of the high versus low academic achieving participants. (ii) The low achiever participant would score higher on sociability than the high academic achiever participants.

This study is an empirical cross-sectional survey research. Being a quantitative research, data were collected through a standardized questionnaire. Total number of research participants was six hundred and forty persons based in the Sindh University Jamshoro. Among the research participants three hundred and twenty were high academic achievers (n = 320, male= 170, female= 150) and three hundred and twenty were low achievers (n=320, male= 160; female= 160).

The sample was collected from the undergraduate students of Sindh University studying in different departments such as Psychology, Sociology, Urdu, Computer Science, English, Social work, Zoology, Physiology, Freshwater biology, and Biochemistry. Data was collected from the students of BS-II to BS-IV. The age of the participants was 19-23 years (Mean age= 21.98). Participants belonged to different social classes, upper middle class 21%, middle class 56%, and lower middle class 23%. The achievement of the participants was assessed through their mark sheets issued by the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. The undergraduate university students who had 70% or more marks and those who had 50% or below marks were included in the sample. The university students who are not enrolled as an undergraduate were excluded from the sample. The average achievers were not included in the sample.

California Psychological Inventory (CPI) was used as an assessment tool. It is a self-report personality inventory. The response category is based on Yes or No options. The CPI is a valid inventory to assess the personality characteristics of individuals because it has been used in several studies conducted for the assessment of the personality variable (Sample, 2009). Six subscales were used in this research, namely Responsibility (Re) (30 items), Self-acceptance (Sa) (26 items), Sociability (28 items), Capacity for status (26 items), Achievement via independence (Ai) (26), achievement via conformance (30 items), to

assess the personality of participants.

For the data, collection permission from the Directors/chairpersons of different departments was taken. The questionnaire was distributed in the classrooms among students. To fulfil the ethical consideration before the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher informed the concerned Heads of the departments and a consent form was got filled out by participants. The objective of the research was made clear and the mark sheet from previous class was collected from participants. The research. Participants were encouraged to ask any question at any time, they were informed that their information would be kept confidential and only be used for educational purposes. Following instructions given verbally to the participants were also printed on the tool.

- (i) It is only a research study.
- (ii) You have to answer all the statements.
- (iii) There is no right and wrong answer to any statement.
- (iv) Only your true response is important.
- (v) Do not take much time to respond to any item.
- (vi) Read each item carefully and select the category of response according to the first thought that comes to your mind about the statement.
- (vii) There is no time limit.

Participants took nearly thirty to forty minutes to fill up the instrument. The mark sheets were collected before data collection. The participants were divided into two groups i.e. high and low achievers based on the mark sheets for the analysis. The participants having a 3.00 or more GPA were taken as high achievers and the participants having a GPA of 2.00 or below were the low achievers. To analyze the results of the study one-way analysis of variance statistics, ANOVA was performed.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 : Descriptive statistics of high and low academic achievers on the California personality inventory

Subscales of cpi	Mean		SD	
	h.achvr	l.achvr	h.achvr	l.achvr
Cs	14.16	19.46	3.05	7.70
Sociability	10.46	18.09	2.93	2.44

Ach via conf.	11.07	10.44	4.15	6.06
Ach via ind.	17.73	7.94	3.02	1.47
Self-acceptance	16.77	8.51	7.26	5.71
Responsibility	13.43	7.97	3.85	1.76

Cs= *capacity for status*; Ach. Via Ind. = *achievement via independence*;
 Ach. Via Conf. *achievement via conformance*; Re=*responsibility*

Table 1 is indicating the means and standard deviation of the high and low academic achiever participants on the California personality inventory.

Table 2: One-way analysis of variance of the scores of high and low academic achiever participants on the California Personality inventory

		Df	SS	F	Sig.
Ach. via con.	Between gp	1	20.953	0.823	.365
	Within gp	639	16267.403		
	Total	640	16288.356		
Ach via ind.	Between gp	1	15448.24	2748.339	.000
	Within gp	639	3591.84		
	Total	640	9040.368		
Cs	Between gp	1	3712.968	118.687	.000
	Within gp	639	19990.255		
	Total	640	23703.223		
Sociability	Between gp	1	321.210	45.322	.000
	Within gp	639	4528.824		
	Total	640	4850.034		
Self-acceptance	Between gp	1	12679.824	309.21	.000
	Within gp	639	26211.118		
	Total	640	38890.942		
Responsibility	Between gp	1	4721.817	531.289	.000
	Withingp	639	5679.097		
	Total	640	10400.9145		

Ach. Via Con. = *achievement via conformance*; Ach. Via Ind. = *achievement via independence*; Cs=*Capacity for status*

Table 2 is presenting the one-way analysis of the variance of the high and low academic achievers on the California personality inventory. The F-value is indicating significant differences in the personality characteristics of

high and low academic achiever participants. The F-value (1,399) of analysis of variance on the personality variables achievement via independence (2748.33, $p=.000$), capacity for status (118.687, $p=.000$), sociability (45.32, $p=.000$), self-acceptance (309.21, $p=.000$) and responsibility (531.28, $p=.000$) is indicating significant differences among high and low academic achievers. The mean scores are indicating that high achievers are more responsible, and have more self-acceptance and concept of achievement via independence while low achievers scored higher on sociable and capacity for status subscales of the CPI. Thus, both hypotheses are accepted.

Success in academics and a good achievement level have a positive impact on job opportunities and better adjustment in later life. The finding of the study has indicated differences in the personality traits of high and low academic achievers. These results are consistent with previous studies. High achievers are more responsible and have more self-acceptance and the concept of achievement via independence (Fagan & Squiteria, 2002). Low achievers are found more sociable and have a wide variety of interests. The students higher on responsibility, self-acceptance, and achievement via independence are more organized, self-disciplined committed and hard working. These characteristics are positively related to the learning and academic achievement of students.

Generally, it has been observed that students, who like to socialize, spend much time in social activities and consequently remain failed to follow any timetable of studies, and completion of academic tasks like assignment submission, participation in class activities, or class. A major part of their precious time is wasted in social activities, which causes concentration and attentiveness in class, poor time management decrease active participation during class, inability to complete academic tasks, and poor learning of academic material. Time spent with friends and having fun is important for refreshing tired minds but these activities should be planned and for a limited time. High-achieving students are consistent, remain committed to academics and focus on academic tasks seriously. They are less socialized showing that they may follow a schedule to learn and remain focused on academic tasks. They also try to complete their assignments and other learning-related tasks regularly. It directly influences their grades, which enhances their motivation to learn and achieve.

High achievers were high on achievement via independence, they may lead to set goals of both types i.e., short-term goals of completing any assignment or passing any exam, and long-term goals about their ambitions in life. They not only focus on their studies but try to increase their

knowledge or skills in other related areas which can contribute positively to their academic achievements. The responsibility trait develops persistence and perseverance, which help them to be successful. Spending more time on academic-related activities and learning tasks, enable them to perform efficiently.

The low-achieving students mostly believe in luck rather than doing an effort they do less hard work to attain their goals successfully. Low grades and failure in the completion of academic tasks become a reason for the development of poor self-concept and feelings of helplessness, which again causes an increase in learning difficulties. The problem of low academic achievement or poor learning needs to be addressed at the early levels of education and can be overcome by the continuous and combined efforts of teachers and parents.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the context of the findings and analysis, this study presents some recommendations. First, the primary education years are building blocks of future achievements and teachers and parents both should focus on learning, the problems of learning in academics during that time. Second, Low achievers must be guided about time management, and the schedule of study, need to be open about study difficulties and take the help of teachers and parents about study-related issues. Third, in higher education institutions seminars and workshops be arranged for students to be aware of different learning methods. Fourth, socialization is important for relaxation and building relations for young students but it is very important to understand. Fifth, awareness lectures for students about the importance of time management and positive personality characteristics like responsibility, self-acceptance, conscientiousness, and the importance of independent rational thinking should be conducted to increase their insight and understanding about learning and academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students should try to be self-disciplined, responsible, consistent, and committed to their studies for effective learning and better grades. More socialization is negatively related to academic achievement thus students must try to limit their social activities. Low academic achievers should be identified at the early or primary education level and teachers as well as parents both should give them much attention and guidance to overcome their learning problems. They should be trained

to be regular and punctual, to follow a study schedule, to take interest in their class, and must ask questions to clear their concepts. Teachers and parents can play an important role in the development of good learning skills and enthusiasm to achieve in students.

However, this research focuses on University students yet it would be more beneficial to conduct such studies on primary and secondary school children as well. Schooling at primary and secondary education levels is the time of the development of learning skills and strategies, which remain with students throughout their academic life. In future studies, the relationship of some other variables such as self-regulation, self-efficacy, and procrastination with academic achievement can be measured and it will be fruitful to understand the nature of the low achievement problem comprehensively.

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