Personal Traits and their Relationship with Future Anxiety and Achievement

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the type of personalities that students had and the relationship between personality type with future anxiety and students' achievement. The sample of the study consisted of 304 students from Tafila Technical University and Al-Hussien Bin Talal University. The results indicated that the most popular personality trait was conscientiousness and the least one was neuroticism. There was a statistically significant difference in agreeableness personality attributed to gender in favor of female students. Future anxiety level was mid, and it was negatively correlated with the extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness and positively correlated with neuroticism. Finally, the result indicated that differences in means of achievement were statistically significant in favor of female students, and there was not statistically significant difference in means of future anxiety attributed to gender.

Keywords: Personality, Traits, Future Anxiety, Achievement.

1. Introduction

Personality and its relation with psychological, social and educational factors are considered to be one of the most important issues in human life. Jeel (2000) defined personality as the group of aptitudes, acquired interests from experience and inherited biological motives. Allport indicated that personality is the dynamic organization of psychological, physical, mental and social systems which determine the individual behaviour, thoughts and make him differ from others (Majeed, 2008). According to Cattell, personality allows the prediction of the behaviour when the person is placed in certain circumstances (Mustafa, 2011). According to Eysenck, it is the total number of behavioral patterns and underlying phenomenon, caused by genetics and environment (Gubari & Abu shaiera, 2010). It could be argued that personality refers to the external characteristics, which make us differ from others, as a result of the individual differences (Salhi, 2013). Isawi (2002) indicated that the personality is the combination of individual personal traits, growth, interests, and thoughts, which resulted from the interaction between heredity and environment, in addition to that some personal traits formed as a result of environmental, political, religions, intellectual and methods of socialization.

Pennington (2007, p. 2-3)"Summarized the definitions of personality as follows:

- Personality is that which predict what a person will do in a given situation; it is concerned with all the behavior of the individual, both overt and under the skin (Raymond Cattell).

- Personality is the more or less stable and enduring organization of a person's character, tem peramend , intellect and physique, which determines his unique adjustment to his (or her) environment (Hans Eysenck)
- Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his (or her) environment (Gordon Allport).

These three definitions have five aspects in common. First, each person has a unique personality. Second, there is an assumption that accurate knowledge of a person's personality will allow prediction of their future behavior to be made. Third, personality is concerned with the whole person in terms of behavior, thoughts and feelings. Fourth, the personality of an individual helps them to adjust to their environment. Finally, personality is said to be dynamic; this means that it is not stable and enduring it is also subject to change over the life of a person".

Trait theory focused on the issues of personality which assumed that personality is composed of a set of traits; the trait is the main unit of personality (Amood, 2003, Rosellini & Brown, 2011). Trait is a concept that could be noticed from the individual behavior. Mohamad (2002) defined traits as the physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics, which gives the individual its individuality that is relatively constant. Guilford viewed traits as physiological, behavioral and mental abilities, which is considered relatively constant and differ from one person to another (Mustafa, 2011, Bleklani, 2008). MacCare & Terracciano (2005) referred to five dimensions for the personalities; they are extraversion, kindness, vigilance of conscience, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Kolbyrek called these dimensions as the Big Five Factors (BFF): Extraversion is a group of traits that focuses on the strength and quality of social relationships and intimacy with others which seeks individuals in the construction of social relations and dealing positively with the expertise and experience.

Extraversion people are characterized by the following traits: warmth, activity, sociality, assertiveness, search for stimulation, and had positive emotions. Neuroticism is a personality disorder that affects a person's life and his/her sense of happiness. Typically, those individuals are characterized by anxiety, aggression, depression, and impulsivity. Agreeableness is a personality trait that focuses on intrapersonal and interpersonal relations. Those people are characterized by confidence, altruism, empathy, and humanity. Openness to experience: the people who are characterized with openness to experience are mentally mature, curious, ambitious, competitive, enthusiastic, sensitive and respectful to values. Conscientiousness is the individuals' ability to be committed to perform duties, to do the best effort for achievement, to think before doing, to be able to work continuously, and to maintain efficient responsibility, regularity, seriousness, self control, attention, ambition and prudence.

Technological development and rapid changes in life led to accompanied with a lot of stressful situations on individuals, indicated that a high levels of stress that affected negatively their lives, since university students represent a large proportion of the community; they are also subjected to additional stress resulted from the academic and study requirements, and they are worried about future. These factors lead to the disruption of their equilibrium, especially if anxiety levels are high. (Mahameed & Safasfeh, 2007, Abu Njelah, 2001). Al-Mashiekhi (2009) indicated that future anxiety affects young people, hinders their roles in community, prevents them from taking realistic philosophy in life, and makes them unable to formulate clear objectives as a result of stress, low income, unemployment, and continuous changes in life. Mental health is considered to be one of the most important issues in students' mental health; because this thing will enable them to cope with stress, anxiety and life challenges. According to that this study aimed to explore the personal traits of university students and their effects upon future anxiety and academic achievement.

1.2 Related literature

Many studies had been conducted to explore the personality traits and their relationship with different factors; Sawalha & Aboshi (2014) conducted a study which aimed at investigating the degree of personal traits (equilibrium, rationality, responsibility, firmness, decision-making, social ability, creativity, and control) among Amman Private University students in Jordan. The sample consisted of 537 students from scientific and humanity colleges. The results showed that that there were no statistical differences in personal traits attributed to the number of credit hours completed by students, and there were significant differences in personal traits attributed to gender, college, and accumulative average.

Salhi (2013) conducted a study to explore the effect of personal traits and psychological compatibility on academic achievement for university students; study sample consisted of 400 students. The results indicated that personality traits vary according to gender; female students were more nervous than males, while other traits were

similar. The results also indicated that the psychological compatibility varies according to gender. Academic achievement was affected be gender and personality traits (extraversion and conscientiousness). Jaber (2012) investigated the effect of BFF upon future anxiety among Al-Azhar and Al-Aqsa universities student, the sample consisted of 800 students. The results indicated positive correlation between neuroticism and future anxiety; the differences in personal traits were not affected by faculty or students' academic level, meanwhile social acceptability was significant in favor of humanity colleges.

The study of Mekhlafi (2010) aimed to identify the relationship between academic self efficiency and personal traits. The study sample consisted of 110 students. The study found statistically significant correlations between academic self efficiency and some personal traits; there were no significant differences between personality traits (harmony, stability, and emotional) attributed to gender, while the differences were significant in favor of females with savvy personal trait. The study of Syiam (2010) aimed to explore the relationship between psychological adjustment and personality traits (assertiveness, dogmatism, aggressiveness, self-esteem, happiness, independence, control and responsibility). The study sample consisted of 108 males and 92 females, randomly chosen from Gaza strip, the results showed that there were significant differences in self-esteem, independence and control traits attributed to age in favor of the group who are under the age of 65 and there were significant differences in self-esteem, independence, and happiness traits attributed to social situation in favor of married group. Salah (2007) investigated the relationship between personal traits and future anxiety; the sample consisted of 198 Iraqi employees in Australia (126 male, 72 female) aged between 18-58 years. The results indicated the presence of a high level of extraversion and good conscience, stability, and openness; the results also indicated a positive correlation between future anxiety and neuroticism, and there were no significant differences in personal traits attributed to gender and age.

1.3 Statement Problem

University students face different kinds of problems and stress which affects their lives, personalities, ability to overcome obstacles, as well as their role of socialization and shaping the characteristics of their personalities. Identifying the students' personality traits and their relation with future anxiety play a key role in identifying the extent of their ability to adapt and face the challenges. The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between the big five factors of personality (extraversion, Agreeableness, neurotic, conscience, and openness to experience) with future anxiety and academic achievement among university students in the southern region of Jordan; the study, in particularly, aimed to answer the following questions:-

- • What are the most common personality traits do the university students have?
- • What is the future anxiety level among university students?
- • Are there statistically significant correlations between personality traits, future anxiety and achievement?
- • Are there statistically significant differences in personality traits, future anxiety, achievement attributed to gender, and university?

1.4 The Importance of the Study

The study's importance arises from the fact that university students are the future community leaders; according to that researchers and decision makers have to care about them and study their personalities and the factors that may contribute and affect them, in order to provide them with mental health.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design

The study adopted the descriptive analytical design, because it fits its objectives.

2.2 Population

The population of the study consisted of the 9932 students from Tafila Technical University (TTU) and Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (AHU) in Jordan.

2.2.1 Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 304 students from TTU and AHU; they were chosen randomly. Table (1) represents the sample distribution.

Table (1) Study sample

University \ Gender	Male	female	Total
TTU	72	61	133
AHU	65	106	171
Total	137	167	304

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Personality traits scale

The researchers used the BFF scale which was developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) and adapted by Alansari (1997). This scale consisted of 56 items and the following 5 traits: neuroticism (12 items), extraversion (11 items), openness to experience (9 items), and agreeableness (12 items), and Conscientiousness (12 items). The respondents will respond to the items using Likert scale (5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neutral, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree).

2.3.2 Future anxiety scale

Future anxiety scale was developed by Almashiekhi (2009). It consists of 43 items. The respondents were asked to respond to the items using Likert scale (3 always, 2 sometimes, 1 never).

2.3.3 Validity

Validity of the instruments was checked using expert judgments; 6 faculty members in educational colleges from Jordanian universities validate both instruments. Construct validity was checked; for the BFF scale by calculating the correlation between items and their domains. While the correlation between items and the total score was used to check the validity for future anxiety scale. Table (2) shows that.

Table 2: Construct validity for the instruments

Neuroticism		Extraversion		Openness to experience		Agreeableness		Conscientiousness		Anxiety					
items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation	items	correlation
1	.467**	2	.567**	3	.387**	4	.167**	5	.496*	1	.562**	16	499**	31	625**
6	.493**	7	.324**	8	.431**	9	.164**	10	.561**	2	596**	17	649*	32	607**
11	.594**	12	.279**	13	.288**	14	.533**	15	.488**	3	317**	18	481**	33	207**
16	.338**	17	.487**	18	.458**	19	.234**	20	.541**	4	568**	19	554**	34	646**
21	.551**	27	.007	23	.330**	24	.390**	25	.424**	5	491**	20	412*	35	478**
26	.500**	22	.363**	28	.600**	29	.423*	30	.526**	6	672**	21	679**	36	670**
31	.370**	32	.426**	33	.364**	34	.192**	35	.548**	7	588**	22	586**	37	488**
36	.460**	37	.532**	38	.529**	39	.456*	40	.582*	8	255**	23	259**	38	413**
41	.545**	42	.333**	43	.400**	44	.367**	45	.465**	9	546**	24	549**	39	536**
46	.356**	47	.188**			48	.296**	49	.493**	10	506**	25	458**	40	344**
50	.517**	51	.518**			52	.326**	53	.571**	11	642**	26	629**	41	530**
54	.481**					55	.440*	56	.581**	12	662*	27	423**	42	484**
										13	339**	28	457**	43	361**
										14	650**	29	610**		
										15	401**	30	452**		

As indicated in table 2 the correlations were statistically significant ($\alpha=0.05$); according to construct validity and expert judgments the two instruments were valid.

2.3.4 Reliability

Reliability of the study tools was checked using: test-retest and internal consistency (Cronbach α equation); pilot sample consisted of 40 students from TTU was used to check reliability, using test re-test method. The tools were applied 2 times; the duration time between the two applications was 10 days. Table (3) represents the findings for reliability concerning the two methods.

Table 3: Reliability of the instruments

Scale	Cronbach α	Test re-test
Neuroticism	0.68	0.73
Extraversion	0.67	0.71
Openness to experience	0.72	0.74
Agreeableness	0.69	0.74
Conscientiousness	0.71	0.73
Total/ personal traits	0.85	0.91
Future anxiety scale	0.91	0.94

Table 3 showed that the figures for reliability were appropriate for this study purposes.

3. Results

Question 1: to answer question 1, "What are the most common personality traits do the university students have?" Descriptive statistics were used; table (4) represents the means and standard deviations (SD) for students' personal traits.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations for students' personal traits according to university and gender

Personal Traits/ University	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Neuroticism	2.98	.535	3.18	.572	3.09	.563
TTU	3.01	.572	3.17	.565	3.08	.572
AHU	2.90	.492	3.19	.578	3.10	.558
Extraversion	3.59	.537	3.61	.404	3.60	.468
TTU	3.64	.573	3.56	.390	3.60	.497
AHU	3.55	.494	3.64	.411	3.60	.445
Openness to experience TTU	3.17	.519	3.22	.513	3.20	.516
AHU	3.22	.478	3.17	.506	3.20	.490
	3.11	.558	3.25	.518	3.20	.536
Agreeableness	3.18	.368	3.31	.390	3.25	.386
TTU	3.16	.313	3.33	.353	3.24	.341
AHU	3.20	.423	3.30	.412	3.26	.418
Conscientiousness	3.78	.549	3.86	.509	3.82	.528
TTU	3.80	.529	3.80	.497	3.80	.512
AHU	3.76	.575	3.90	.516	3.84	.541

As indicated in table (4), the students' personality traits distributions were descending, arranged as follows: conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and neuroticism.

Question 2: to answer question 2, "What is the future anxiety level among university students"? Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used. Table (5) represents the findings.

Table 5: Future anxiety level among university students'

Future Anxiety / University	Mean	S.D
TTU Male	1.88	.388
Female	1.84	.354
Total	1.86	.371
AHU Male	1.92	.351
Female	1.91	.386
Total	1.92	.372
Grand Total		
Male	1.90	.370
Female	1.88	.375
Total	1.89	.372

The results indicated that the level of anxiety was mid concerning all students despite their gender or university. The following scale was used to describe the anxiety level (1-1.66 low, 1.67-2.33 moderate, 2.34-3.00 high). The results also indicated that male students had higher future anxiety than females.

Question 3: to answer question 3, "Are there statistically significant correlations between personality traits, future anxiety and achievement"? Pearson Correlation was used; table (6) shows the results.

Table 6: Correlation between personality traits, Future anxiety and achievement

Traits	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness to experience	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Neuroticism	-	-.193**	-.225**	-.292**	-.240**
Extraversion	-.193**	-	.111	.129*	.210**
Openness to experience	-.225**	.111	-	.096	.255**
Agreeableness	-.292**	.129*	.096	-	.346**
Conscientiousness	-.240**	.210**	.255**	.346**	-
Anxiety	.566**	-.222**	-.215**	-.280**	-.231**
Achievement	-.029-	.013	-.041-	.070	.235**

Table (6) indicates that there is a negative statistically significant correlation ($\alpha= 0.01$) between future anxiety and agreeableness, openness to experience, conscientiousness and extraversion, while the correlation between future anxiety and neuroticism was positive and statistically significant ($\alpha= 0.01$). Concerning the students' achievement, the results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between students' achievement and conscientiousness personality, but it is not significant regarding other personality traits. The results also indicated a negative non-statistically significant correlation between students' achievement and future anxiety.

Question 4: to answer question 4 "Are there statistically significant differences in personality traits, future anxiety, and achievement attributed to gender, and university", MANOVA was used. Table (7) represents the findings.

Table 7: MANOVA for the effect of gender and university upon personality traits, Future anxiety and achievement

Gender/personal Traits	type sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig
Gender Neuroticism	1.183	1	1.183	3.792	.053
Extraversion	.050	1	.050	.224	.637
Openness to experience	.036	1	0.36	.134	.714
Agreeableness	.854	1	.854	5.69	.018
Conscientiousness	.468	1	.468	1.63	.202
Anxiety	.134	1	.134	.992	.320
Achievement	440.6	1	440.63	8.45	.004
University Neuroticism	.099	1	.099	.316	.574
Extraversion	.064	1	.064	.286	.593
Openness to experience	.083	1	.083	.310	.578
Agreeableness	.000	1	.000	.003	.960
Conscientiousness	.444	1	.444	1.55	.214
Anxiety	.140	1	.140	1.03	.310
Achievement	10.92	1	10.92	.210	.647
Gender*university Neuroticism	.007	1	.007	.024	.878
Extraversion	1.31	1	1.31	5.84	. 160
Openness to experience	.765	1	.765	2.86	.092
Agreeableness	.024	1	.024	.161	.688
Conscientiousness	.149	1	.149	.522	.471
Anxiety	.020	1	.020	.148	.701
Achievement	.521	1	.521	.010	.920
Error Neuroticism	78.94	253	.312		
Extraversion	56.46	253	.223		
Openness to experience	67.68	253	.268		
Agreeableness	37.93	253	.150		
Conscientiousness	72.24	253	.286		
Anxiety	34.11	253	.135		
Achievement	13178.2	253	52.1		
Total Neuroticism	2605.1	261			
Extraversion	3465.1	261			
Openness to experience	2694.4	261			
Agreeableness	2781.1	261			
Conscientiousness	3863.3	261			
Anxiety	991.1	261			
Achievement	1398773	261			

It was found that there are statistically significant differences attributed to gender ($\alpha = 0.05$) in students' achievement in favor of females, (females mean = 73.6, males mean=71.9), and there is statistically significant differences in agreeableness personal trait attributed to gender in favor of females, (females mean =3.2, males mean= 3.0)

4. Discussion

This study aimed to determine the type of personalities that university students had and their relationship with future anxiety and achievement. The results indicated that conscientiousness trait was the highest one from the BFF; this result is similar to the finding of shakfa (2011). This could be explained by the sub traits underlying this type of personality which reflects the importance of self-support to achieve goals, perform task efficiently, commitment, ambition, and perseverance; these traits are the characteristics of university students whom they seek for scientific knowledge in order to achieve a high level of self-esteem and improve their socioeconomic status. The results also indicated that the neurotic personality was the lowest; this shows that university students were emotionally and mentally mature, and their methods of thinking depended upon logical and scientific facts, and they coped with socio-psychological stress, which motivate them to challenge positively so as to achieve their goals.

The results showed that the future anxiety level among university students was mid; this anxiety could be resulted from the social stress upon students, the shortage in employment, life stress, and the increase in prices. The results indicated a positive correlation between neurotic and future anxiety. This finding is similar to the findings of Salah, 2007, alsaleem, 2006. Neurotic lead to negative attitudes toward life, decrease in self-esteem and low level of energy and activity; according to these negative psychological habits the individuals become more pessimism and lack the ability to take decisions (Ang, Dyne & Koh, 2006). Such habits include; doubt, depression, hesitation, social isolation, pessimism, self-dissatisfaction, inability to cope with life requirements and life stress, and the fear of future changes.

The results also indicated that the difference in means of agreeableness trait was statistically significant in favor of female students; this could be due to the emotional and psychological nature of females; they were characterized by compliance and they lived to be socially accepted. Females did their best to make the others in the family happier. This result is similar to the findings of Juda, 2010 and Younes & khaleel, 2007, but it encountered the findings of Melhem, 2010 and Abdlmajeed, 2010. The results showed that the difference in achievement was statistically significant in favor of females; this could be attributed to the nature of social life in Tafila and Ma'an; the two governorates were conservative, and females spend most of their time either at the university or at home. Thus females spend a lot of time studying, while males can spend much time outside home with friends or in cafes and clubs. In addition, females were more motivated to get degrees because it is one of the marriage requirements.

The results also pointed out that the differences in future anxiety was not significant because the two genders had fair for their future, and they planned to have a good one; this finding was similar to the findings of Abdlhalem (2010), and Alamammi (2010), while it encountered the findings of Faraj & Mahmoud (2006) and Ismail (2003) which found that males were more worried about future than females.

5. Conclusion

Personality is an important topics that ran researchers and practitioners in the field of psychology and mental health, as they affect the individual's interaction with himself and with others, in the recent studies, researchers found that the personality is controlled by five major traits; these are: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience, and finally conscientiousness, these traits were accompanied with sub traits which characterize each one of them and makes its uniqueness. Personality traits and future anxiety play great role in guiding the individual's behavior and its responses to outside stimuli, and dealing with the daily life circumstances, and they affects human behavior, achievements and his/her role in society.

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between personality traits future anxiety and achievement on the students of Tafila Technical University and Hussein Bin Talal University. The study concluded that most students have the conscientiousness type of personality, while the least one is neuroticism. University students' had mid-level of future anxiety.

6. Recommendations

According to the results, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Universities have to conduct workshops to raise the awareness of students' conscientiousness about their personalities and to indicate the importance of psychological health.
2. Support students through counseling centers by providing them with the best practices to cope with stress and life challenges.
3. Increase the students' awareness of future anxiety and its effect upon their personalities.

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