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Extraversion Emotional Exhaustion and Academic Competence in University Students

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ABSTRACT

University life significantly influences students' personality development while exposing them to various emotional and psychological challenges. This study explored the relationship between Extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and

academic competence in undergraduate students from both private and public universities in Lahore. Using a correlational design, data were gathered through stratified random and convenience sampling from 250 students (125 males, 125 females), with a mean age of 19.62 years. Extraversion was measured using the Big Five Inventory (α = 0.66), emotional exhaustion with the Emotional Exhaustion Scale (α = 0.89), and academic competence with a scale developed by Jabeen & Afridi (2019) (α = 0.93). Pearson correlation and t-test analyses were used. Results showed a significant positive correlation between Extraversion and academic competence ($r = 0.37$, $p < .01$), and a significant negative correlation between emotional exhaustion and academic competence ($r = -0.20$, $p < .01$). The findings have practical implications for students, educators, and mental health professionals in designing interventions to enhance academic performance and reduce emotional exhaustion.
Keywords: Extraversion, emotional exhaustion, Academic Competence, University Students, Undergraduate

INTRODUCTION

University life represents a major transitional phase where students experience substantial emotional, psychological, and academic challenges (Kitzrow, 2003). Students often struggle with test anxiety, emotional exhaustion, time management, and substance use, all of which are intensified post-COVID-19 by increased social anxiety (Svartdal et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2024). Emotional exhaustion, defined as a state of depletion due to chronic stress, is a key component of burnout and includes symptoms such as fatigue, low motivation, and reduced empathy (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Leiter et al., 2001). It is influenced by multiple factors including academic workload, isolation in hostels, and exposure to traumatic casework, particularly among trainee clinical psychologists (Owen et al., 2021).

Extraverted students generally demonstrate stronger coping skills, emotional regulation, and academic competence, while students who experience emotional exhaustion often show lower academic performance (De Raad et al., 2024; Peralta & Saldanha, 2017). Peer support tends to replace family support in university life and plays a crucial role in students' emotional stability (Bernardon et al., 2011). Additionally, the tendency to confuse anxiety and depressive symptoms can further increase emotional exhaustion and impair academic performance (Negash et al., 2021). In Pakistan, student burnout has received less attention compared to the Western context, where extensive research has focused on this issue (Hachem et al., 2022).

Several personality traits, especially neuroticism, significantly contribute to burnout. Studies have shown neuroticism to be a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Zuo et al., 2024; Alarcon et al., 2009; Angelini, 2023). While extraversion can enhance emotional resilience, it may also lead to exhaustion due to increased social demands (Li & Xu, 2020). The complexity of emotional exhaustion involves physical, emotional, and motivational depletion and

can be exacerbated by maladaptive coping mechanisms like avoidance (Yang, 2023; Smout et al., 2021).

University students commonly face multiple stressors such as academic overload, poor hostel conditions, adjustment issues, and procrastination, all of which contribute to burnout and low self-esteem (Ahmad et al., 2020; Goher et al., 2022). Newly admitted students often face more emotional challenges due to the abrupt transition into university life (Anbesaw et al., 2022; Erol et al., 2022). Addressing burnout requires guidance and mental health services, particularly for students who struggle with emotional regulation (Marques et al., 2023).

Finally, academic competence plays a critical role in student success. Meta-analyses have shown it to be a strong predictor of academic achievement and future job performance, influenced by factors such as self-efficacy and intelligence (Schneider & Preckel, 2017; Blázquez et al., 2017; Van Iddekinge et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of understanding how emotional exhaustion and personality traits affect academic performance to develop effective interventions for university students.

Methodology

Study Design

The correlational design was used in the research which was used to find the association between extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and academic competence in university students

Participant and Sampling Strategy

The study used a combination of stratified random sampling and convenience sampling, approaching students in libraries and cafeterias. Data were collected from 250 undergraduate students (equal number of males and females) from both private and public universities. A pilot study with 15 participants was conducted beforehand to assess participant responses. The research utilized scales measuring Extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and academic competence.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=250)

Variables	F	%
Gender		
Boys	125	50
Girls	125	50
University		
Private	113	45.2
Government	137	54.8
Semester		
1st	2	0.8
2nd	28	11.2
3rd	11	4.4
4th	25	10

5th	94	37.6
6th	30	12
7th	53	21.2
8th	7	2.8
Marital Status		
Single	239	95.6
Married	11	4.4
Place of Residence		
Hostel	113	45.2
Personal Home	137	54.8
Family System		
Nuclear	168	67.2
Joint	82	32.8
Socioeconomic Status		
Lower	11	4.4
Middle	220	88
Upper	19	7.6

Note. f= frequency, %= percentage

Measures

Demographic Form

The demographics were used to get some personal information for the analysis of the variables from the participants involved in the research. The demographics were age (18-25), marital status (single/married), Degree program, place of residence (dormitory/personal home), family system (nuclear/joint), gender male/female major (department/field), semester (1-8), birth order, and parental survival status (living/death of at least one parent).

Extraversion

For the extraversion variable, Big-Five Personality Inventory (BFI) scale was used which had total 44 items from which only items of extraversion (F1) was selected. The original scale was developed in English (John et al., 2011). The scale was translated in Urdu by Rehman and Johnson (2019).

Burnout Scale

For the emotional exhaustion variable, a sub scale of burnout scale; emotional exhaustion consisted of 18 items out of total 44 items (Shahzad & Saleem, 2014).

Academic Competence

For the dependent variable i.e. academic competence, the academic competence scale was used which has 33 items consisting of study skills, communication, management, and self-spiritual. The sub-factor Study Skills (F1) includes 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 28, 29, 30, and 38 items. The sub-factor Communication Skills (F2) includes 8, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, and 35 items. The sub-factor Management Skills (F3) includes 12, 15, 16, and 20 items. The sub-factor Self-spiritual (F4) includes 2, 11, 18, 33, 34, and 36 items. This scale was developed

by the professors at UMT (Jabeen & Afridi, 2019).

Procedure

Firstly, the topic was approved by the department. The list of universities of both private and government sectors were obtained permission was taken for the collection of data the participants were informed about the aim and objectives of the study. The participants took 15 minutes to fill the questionnaire. After the administration feedback session took place. After that the SPSS data was entered with the help of variables assigned codes according to the research hypothesis. Then different analysis was run to see the relationship between variables.

Statistical Analysis

Data was entered into the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software which was then analyzed by using different methodologies. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics to find the ranges and percentages of demographic variables. Descriptive and inferential analysis was also used to analyze the results. Correlational analysis and t-test were used to find the association and differences between extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and academic competence in university students.

Ethical Consideration

The permission for using scales were taken from the department of Clinical Psychology at the Superior University. Then the permission from different universities in Lahore was taken for data collection. Universities authorities were informed about the goal, purpose and objective of the study. After presenting the goals and methods of the study to participants, their informed consent was obtained. Participants may withdraw at any time and may have questions while completing the form. and it was assured that their names would remain confidential.

RESULTS

Table 2

Relationship among Extraversion, Emotional exhaustion, Academic Competence, Study Skills, Communication, Management, and Self-Spiritual in University Students

Variables	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BFI_TOTAL	250	19.62	5.54	-	- 0.00	0.37**	0.32**	0.34**	0.21**	0.43**
EES_TOTAL	250	13.87	6.76	-	-	- 0.20**	- 0.21**	-.17*	- 0.27**	-0.08
ACS_TOTAL	250	67.40	19.64	-	-	-	0.94**	0.89**	0.70**	0.79**
Study Skills	250	23.75	8.27	-	-	-	-	0.79**	0.61**	0.66**
COM	250	16.39	5.15	-	-	-	-	-	0.53**	0.66**
Management	250	6.33	2.52	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45**
Self-Spiritual	250	11.96	3.62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. M= mean, SD= standard deviation, n= sample. BFI=Big Five Inventory (Extraversion), EES=Emotional Exhaustion, ACS=Academic Competence, COM=Communication Skills

The results indicate significant relationships among extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and academic competence. Extraversion is negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and positively correlated with academic competence, suggesting that more extraverted students experience less emotional exhaustion and perform better academically. Emotional exhaustion is negatively linked to academic competence, meaning higher exhaustion is associated with lower competence. Among academic competence sub-factors—study skills, communication, management, and self-spirituality—each shows a positive correlation with extraversion and academic competence, and a negative correlation with emotional exhaustion (except self-spirituality, which shows a non-significant negative correlation). Additionally, all sub-factors are positively interrelated, indicating that students with stronger skills in one area tend to score higher in others as well.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value, Sig. Value, 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference, and Cohen's d

Variable	Gender				Sig.		95%		Cohen's d
	Male (N=125)		Female (N=125)						
	M	SD	M	SD	T	p	Lower	Upper	
BFI_TOTAL	19.24	5.20	20.01	5.21	-1.35	0.17	-2.33	0.42	-2.75
EES_TOTAL	19.48	9.91	24.27	10.46	-2.33	0.00*	-7.33	-0.30	-7.63
ACS_TOTAL	64.52	19.21	70.28	19.72	-2.33	0.02*	-10.60	-0.90	9.7
Study Skills	22.60	7.93	24.91	8.48	-2.22	0.02*	-4.35	-0.26	-4.61
COM.	15.65	4.92	17.12	5.30	-2.27	0.02*	-2.74	-0.19	-2.93
Management	6.49	2.52	6.16	2.52	1.02	0.30	-0.30	0.95	-1.25
Self-Spiritual	11.53	3.93	12.38	3.25	-1.85	0.06	-1.74	0.05	-1.79

Note. N=no. of participants, M=mean, SD=Standard Deviation, BFI=Big Five Inventory (Extraversion), EES=Emotional Exhaustion, ACS=Academic Competence, COM=Communication Skills

Table 5 shows that there were non-significant differences in extraversion personality traits with gender. There were significant differences in emotional exhaustion with gender. The mean of female was 20.01 and male was 19.24 which indicates that females have high emotional exhaustion as compared to males. There were significant differences in academic competence with gender. The mean of female was 70.28 and males were 64.5 which indicate that females have high academic competence as compared to males. There were significant differences in study skills with gender. The mean of female was 24.91 and male was 22.60 which indicates that females have high study skills as compared to males. There were significant differences in communication with gender. The mean of female was 17.12 and male was 15.65 which indicates that females have high communication skills as compared to males. There were non-significant differences in management skills with gender. There were non-significant differences in self-spiritual skills with gender.

DISCUSSION

Stress in the out most reason of emotional exhaustion in all around world in all the world stress is evident as it prevails all areas of life either in students' adults or any field of life. Stress prevails in both males and females in western researches have been done on both the occupational and university students' emotional exhaustion. Therefore, the counseling centers are been established to help out the dual regaling hour of need. University students and burnout experiences are highly linked with one another. University students face a lot of difficulties in their academic life various academic stressors affects the daily routine of the students (Umer et al., 2022).

The current study investigates the relationship between Extraversion, Emotional exhaustion and Academic Competence in University students. A population of 250 university students was recruited for data collection, of which 125 were female and 125 were male (N=250). Three scales of the Big Five Inventory (BFI), Burnout, and Academic Competence were used to collect data from university students along with a demographic sheet. Extraversion items were taken from the Big Five Inventory scale, emotional exhaustion items were taken from the burnout scale, and the entire academic competence scale was taken for the study. Students from both private (N=113) and government (N=137) universities were included in this study. Some other demographic variables including marital status, place of residence, and family type are used to understand how these variables relate to the main variables of extraversion, emotional exhaustion, and Academic Competence.

One of the variables which were taken regarding the present study was the personality and one of its big five types. Personality is defined in a very complex way by different researchers; therefore, it is very difficult to define a precise definition of personality. The one of the definitions of personality as that individual's characteristics regarding his behaving, thinking style and feelings (Schacter et al., 2009). The relationship between positive affect and personality traits somehow depends on a person (Fleeson, 2009). If a person is acted extroverted towards other,

it results in high positive affect as compared to when a person acted introverted (Heller et al., 2004). According to the literature review, there is a relationship between the personality traits and emotional exhaustion in university population.

The result showed that extraversion has a negative significant correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.00$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, are more likely to have low emotional exhaustion. According to the previous researches as well as the present researches the extraversion factor has negative relationship with the emotional exhaustion. This is because of the main characteristics of the personality factor. The study conducted by Li and Xu (2020) found that extraversion had a positive indirect effect on employee voice through emotional exhaustion, suggesting that extraverted individuals may experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn influences their workplace behaviors. Therefore, in the present study main hypothesis was made regarding the possible relationship between the burnout and neuroticism and extraversion factor. The hypothesis stated that students who have extraversion personality characteristics face less emotional exhaustion as compared to other factors of personality. There is no evidence of this finding, but several studies have shown that extraversion is negative associated with emotional exhaustion, which indicated that students who score high on extraversion tend to have less emotional exhaustion (Li et al., 2019). Extraversion has a significant positive correlation with Academic Competence ($r=0.37^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicated that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, are more prone to be academically competent. According to the research by Doberty & Nugent (2011), it was seen that the personality trait consociations and extraversion was found to be significant related to the performance of the medical students whereas, other personality traits like social able were as also seen as the relationship with the medical environment.

Emotional exhaustion has a negative significant correlation with academic competence ($r=-0.20^{**}$, $p<0.05$). It was also found in previous studies that emotional exhaustion in academics results in severe negative effects on students' long-term goals, achievements, admirations, and well-being (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2017). This indicated that students, who are more competent academically, are more likely to have low emotional exhaustion.

The sub-factors of academic competence are study skills, communication skills, management skills, and self-spiritual skills. Study skills have a positive significant correlation with the extraversion personality trait ($r=0.32^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, are more likely to have high study skills. Previous studies had shown that there is a positive relationship between extraversion and study skills which indicated that individuals who have high extraversion personality traits are more conscientious and organized, which results in good study skills (Dang et al., 2025). Study skills have a significant negative correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.21^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicated that students, who have more emotional exhaustion, are more likely to have low

study skills. A study of 300 students in Faisalabad, Pakistan, using the Breso Burnout Inventory found that emotional exhaustion correlates negatively with academic performance (Umer et al., 2022). Study skills have a positive significant correlation with academic competence ($r=0.94^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicated that students, who have high study skills, are more likely to have high academic competence. Recent empirical research demonstrated a robust positive correlation between study skills—including time management, active recall, and structured study routines—and academic achievement, indicating that learners who employ strong study techniques consistently achieve higher academic competence (Zahra et al., 2023).

Communication has a significant positive correlation with extraversion personality traits ($r=0.34^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, tend to be more communicative. Recent studies reveal that extraversion is positively associated with communication competence and effectiveness, suggesting that individuals who score high on extraversion tend to be more expressive, verbally coordinated, and skilled in interactive communication (Hassan et al., 2019). Communication has a significant negative correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.17^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high communication, are more likely to have high emotional exhaustion. Literature shows that there is a significant negative relationship between communication and emotional exhaustion (Tausczika, 2010). Communication has a significant positive correlation with academic competence ($r=0.89^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high academic competence, are more likely to be communicative. Recent empirical findings show a positive association between communication skills and academic competence, indicating that students who are more skilled in expressing ideas clearly and interacting effectively tend to achieve higher educational outcomes (Amir et al., 2024). Communication has a significant positive correlation with study skills ($r=0.79^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high study skills, tend to be more communicative. Some studies make the evidence that communication skills can lead an individual to effective study skills (Kitsantas et al., 2011).

Management has a significant positive correlation with extraversion personality traits ($r=0.21^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, are likely to have high management skills. Although several recent studies identify a positive relationship between extraversion and managerial effectiveness, findings suggest this link is often indirect, as conscientiousness—characterized by organization, diligence, and goal-orientation—frequently plays a more central role in driving management skills (Kang et al., 2023). Management has a significant negative correlation with emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.27^{**}$, $p<0.05$). There are some studies which explain the negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and management skills, but this relationship seemed complex as it is mostly related with other factors (Kang et al., 2023). Management has a significant positive correlation with academic competence ($r=0.70^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high academic competence, are more likely to have high management skills. Recent studies highlight that management skills are

positively linked to academic competence, but this relationship is often mediated by factors such as motivation and self-regulation, indicating that effective management contributes to student success primarily through enhanced self-motivation and disciplined learning strategies (Zafar et al., 2024). Management has a significant positive correlation with study skills ($r=0.61^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high study skills, are likely to have high management skills. There are some studies which explain the positive association between management skills and study skills, but there is no clear description on it (Seligman, 2005). Management has a significant positive correlation with communication ($r=0.53^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high communication skills, are more likely to have high management skills. The studies show that there may be a positive relationship between management and communication skills, because high communication skills are an important component of high management skills (Khaliq et al., 2025).

Self-spiritual has a significant positive correlation with extraversion personality traits ($r=0.43^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high extraversion personality traits, are more likely to have high self-spiritual skills. There are some studies which explain that there may be a positive relationship between self-spiritual skills and extraversion personality trait, as individuals who have high extraversion personality traits tend to be empathetic and compassionate, which may result in high spirituality (Heilborn & Lopez, 2005). Self-spiritual has a negative correlation emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.08$, $p>0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high self-spiritual skills, are more likely to have less emotional exhaustion. The study has found that there is a negative correlation between self-spiritual skills and emotional exhaustion. Self-spiritual has a significant positive correlation with academic competence ($r=0.79^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high academic competence, are more likely to have high self-spiritual skills. A study demonstrated that students with higher levels of spirituality tend to achieve better academically, with spirituality fostering increased achievement motivation, resilience, and well-being, all of which contribute to higher academic performance (Ma & Wang, 2022). Self-spiritual has a significant positive correlation with study skills ($r=0.66^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students who have high study skills are more prone to self-spirituality. There are several studies which explain a positive relationship between management skills and study skills. Self-spiritual has a significant positive correlation with communication ($r=0.66^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high communication skills, are likely to have high self-spiritual skills. According to a study by Mehralian et al. (2023), there is a positive relationship between communication skills and self-spirituality. Self-spiritual has a significant positive correlation with management ($r=0.45^{**}$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that students, who have high self-spiritual skills, are more likely to have high management skills. Research shows that if an individual have higher levels of self-awareness, mindfulness, and spiritual well-being, are more likely to manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, which results in managing tasks, relationships, and teams more effectively (Reisdorf & Murray, 2023).

There was a significant difference in emotional exhaustion with gender. Females (*M*=24.27) have more emotional exhaustion as compared to males (*M*=19.48). The research supports the results, which shows that there are gender differences in emotional exhaustion, as females reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion than males (Negash et al., 2021). There were significant differences in academic competence with gender. Females (*M*=70.28) have high academic competence as compared to males (*M*=64.5). There were significant differences in study skills with gender. Females (*M*=24.91) have high study skills as compared to males (*M*=22.60). The research supports the results, which shows that there are gender differences in academic achievement and skills, as females have high performance as compared to males in these areas (Salehyan et al., 2013). There were significant differences in communication with gender. Females (*M*=17.12) have high communication skills as compared to males (*M*=15.65). Previous studies have shown that females have high verbal communication skills as compared to males, whereas several studies have attributed communication skills with socialization and societal expectations (Hall, 2018).

There were no significant differences in extraversion personality traits, self-spiritual , management skills with gender. Several researches explained that those variables that have non-significant differences do not have any significant impact on these variables (Murayama et al., 2015).

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