

## From Traits to Wellbeing: How Personality Shapes Quality of Life

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### ABSTRACT

*The current article examined the predictive role of personality characteristics in determining quality of life (QOL) among Pakistani university students. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed with 175 undergraduate and graduate students (128 males, 47 females) taken from universities in Karachi through convenience sampling. Participants completed the Big Five Personality Test (50-item version) and the Quality of Life Scale (16-item version). Correlation and regression analyses were applied to study the associations between personality dimensions and QOL. Results indicated that extraversion and openness to experience significantly predicted higher QOL, while agreeableness and conscientiousness showed positive correlations but were not unique predictors in the regression model. These findings were in accordance with cultural traits of Pakistani society, where strong family systems, collectivistic norms, and social networks can shield the negative influence of neurotic tendencies. The study contributes to both international and national literature by contextualizing personality and well-being linkage within South Asian cultural bases. Implications for psychotherapy, student support facilities, and educational policy are mentioned, along with the recommendations for further research exploring similar constructs.*

**Keywords:** Personality characteristics, Quality of Life, Big Five, University Students, Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

Quality of life sways in shades both intimate and universal, unfolding across the contours of our daily existence. It's the tapestry that weaves together expectations and experiences, shaped by how we interpret our world and measure our own functioning. Though wholly personal and idiosyncratic, this concept remains intuitively graspable, sharing common ground with the collective human experience. Serving as a compass to gauge holistic well-being, quality of life draws interest not just from researchers but from everyday individuals, communities, and policymakers alike. Its many facets include material comfort,

meaningful relationships, parenting, altruism, communal belonging, creative expression, self-reflection, and independence. At the heart of individual quality of life lies a complex interplay of personal and contextual factors, physical, emotional, environmental, and interpersonal elements that coalesce in unique ways (Revicki et al., 2000).

Personality, understood as a constellation of enduring motivational, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral traits, wields profound influence over life's arc, from health behaviors and longevity to career efficacy and susceptibility to mood disorders (Montag & Elhai, 2019). Indeed, research spanning both general and clinical populations has repeatedly uncovered robust links between personality traits and quality of life. For instance, neuroticism often amplifies perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and physical symptom burden, eroding mental and physical well-being in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Gonzalez-Abrales et al., 2013; Soltys et al., 2021). By contrast, traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness consistently buffer against stress and depressive symptoms (Melo et al., 2011; Hunt et al., 2023).

The Big Five or the Five Factor Model has been a major basis of personality assessment and understanding, exploring traits as relatively lasting patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that direct reactions across situations (Roberts, 2009). The model, grounded on key points like traits, can be assessed, including individual differences, influence behavior, and can be self- or interpersonally reviewed (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Extensive empirical studies, including genetic, developmental, neuroscientific, and cross-cultural, confirm its permanency and predictive power (Widiger, 2017). Each of the personalities brings meaningful relationships across spheres of life. Extraversion has social energy and positivity; Agreeableness fosters compassion and collaboration; Conscientiousness carries discipline and path; Neuroticism pulls toward emotional helplessness; and Openness shows inquisitiveness and imagination (John et al., 2008). This model shows that personality can have an impact on the quality of life: it may mold healthy behaviors and biomarkers (Sutin et al., 2010), endurance (Friedman et al., 2010; Roberts et al., 2007), mental and physical health, childrearing style (Huver et al., 2010), romantic gratification (Malouff et al., 2010), and professional outcomes (Borghans et al., 2008).

Worldwide, a breadth of studies, from chronic illness populations to students, points to the consistent impact of Big Five traits on quality of life. In stroke survivors, neuroticism predicts diminished life satisfaction, while extraversion and conscientiousness bolster recovery (Kim et al., 2013). In Parkinson's patients, similar patterns emerged across longitudinal analyses (Mendorf et al., 2025). A scoping review in Chinese populations confirmed that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness enrich quality of life, with social support as a key mediator; neuroticism, however, eroded well-being irrespective of social support (Chen, 2024). Among cancer patients, extraversion and conscientiousness lift quality of life, while neuroticism dims it (Beckmann & Wood, 2017). Cognitive flexibility also surfaces as a mediator between personality and life satisfaction in student samples (Odacı & Cikrikci, 2019).

In Pakistan, evidence remains sparse but emerging. A recent study juxtaposing students in Islamabad and Parachinar revealed that extraversion and agreeableness predict better quality of life, while neuroticism undermines it, differences shaped by resource access and socio-cultural context (Nasir & Nasir, 2025). Recently, scholars have continued to focus on the profound role of personality in developing quality of life (QoL). Evidence consistently demonstrates that the Big Five personality traits predict well-being across health, social, and psychological domains. A nationwide cross-sectional study revealed that openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness were positively associated with health-related quality of life (HRQOL), whereas neuroticism demonstrated a negative relationship. Interestingly,

this research also suggested the possibility of “healthy neuroticism,” in which higher neuroticism may foster vigilant health behaviors under certain conditions (JMIR Public Health and Surveillance, 2024).

Cross-cultural research further validates these associations. A recent study of middle-aged adults in Iran found that extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness significantly predicted higher quality of life, whereas neuroticism was negatively associated with QoL outcomes (Habibi et al., 2025). Similarly, among individuals with disabilities, social support mediated the relationship between positive traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness) and quality of life, but it did not buffer the detrimental effects of neuroticism (Cai et al., 2022). A broader perspective is provided by longitudinal meta-analysis, which revealed that not only do stable levels of Big Five traits predict life satisfaction, health, and relational outcomes, but changes in these traits over time also exert meaningful, albeit smaller, predictive effects (Piers et al., 2023). Collectively, these findings underscore the dynamic and multidimensional ways personality shapes quality of life, extending beyond static traits to developmental trajectories and contextual mediators.

In Egyptian nursing students, neuroticism harms QoL, while conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness support it; social appearance anxiety also figures prominently (El-Etreby et al., 2025). Among people with disabilities, quality of life correlates positively with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and social support, and negatively with neuroticism; social support mediates all but the neuroticism-QoL link. A meta-analysis of Iranian middle-aged adults affirms that agreeableness and conscientiousness are strong quality-of-life predictors, while high neuroticism predicts poorer outcomes (Habibi et al., 2025; Verdugo et al., 2024; Cherry, 2019). A broader meta-analysis highlights, in general populations, that lower neuroticism and higher extraversion and conscientiousness most strongly forecast life satisfaction.

### **Significance of the Study**

Although international evidence underscores the noteworthy role of personality traits in enhancing quality of life, scientific study on this relationship within the Pakistan remains inadequate. The bulk of previous studies in Pakistan primarily aimed at mental health consequences like depression, anxiety, and distress (Riaz & Khalily, 2020; Saleem & Mahmood, 2019) or on the effect of socio-demographic features on well-being (Hussain & Aslam, 2021). This current study provides valuable insights that many researchers overlook, i.e., how dispositional aspects, including personality, stimulate life satisfaction and well-being.

This gap is significant because Pakistan’s socio-cultural setting presents exclusive hurdles that usually interfere with personality development and shape QoL. Features like collectivist family systems, religious beliefs, and economic uncertainty are possibly moderate or mediate the impact of personality on well-being. For illustration, characteristics like agreeableness and conscientiousness can have a stronger predictive rate for QoL in such societies than in individualistic communities (Ahmad & Fatima, 2021). On the other hand, neuroticism may exhibit more distinct damaging effects in a context where mental health stigma limits help-seeking behaviors (Khan et al., 2022).

Highlighting this literature gap, the current paper has both theoretical and practical significance. From a scholarly standpoint, examining personality and QoL among Pakistani people contributes to cross-cultural psychology by measuring whether findings from Western and East Asian contexts generalize to South Asia. It also advances indigenous knowledge by situating personality research within the cultural, social, and economic realities of Pakistan.

From a practical standpoint, such research can inform interventions aimed at enhancing well-being across different segments of the population. For example, understanding that conscientiousness and extraversion predict a better quality of life could guide mental health practitioners and educators in developing personality-based training and counseling modules. Similarly, policy initiatives in education and workplace settings can be tailored to foster resilience and life satisfaction, particularly among individuals who exhibit high levels of neuroticism. In a country where access to psychological services is scarce, such preventive and personality-informed approaches could play a vital role in improving public mental health outcomes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Objective**

- To examine the predictive association between study variables among university students.

### **Hypotheses**

1. Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience will positively predict quality of life.
2. High scores on neuroticism will be negatively associated with quality of life.

### **Research Design & Sample**

This study used a cross-sectional quantitative design to explore the predictive relationship between personality traits and quality of life. A total of 175 university students (128 males, 47 females) participated in this study. A sample was selected from various public and private universities in Karachi, Pakistan, using a convenience sampling technique. Eligibility criteria included (a) being enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program, and (b) an age range of 18 to 35 years. Exclusion criteria included students outside this age range and individuals not currently enrolled in a university program in Karachi.

### **Measures**

**Big Five Personality Test (50-item version)** assesses five domains of personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (John & Srivastava, 1999). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reported Cronbach's alphas for the subscales range from .76 to .90, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. In the present study, the alpha coefficients for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness were 0.86, 0.78, 0.76, 0.90, and 0.76, respectively.

**Quality of Life Scale (QOLS; 16-item version) (Burckhardt et al., 1989):** The scale evaluates five key dimensions: material and physical well-being, relationships, social activities, personal growth, and recreational activities. An additional item assessing independence was later included, bringing the total to 16 items (Anderson, 1995). Respondents rated each item on a 7-point scale reflecting satisfaction with various life domains. Previous studies have reported strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .82-.92$ ) and test-retest reliability ( $r = .78-.84$ ; Burckhardt et al., 1989; Burckhardt et al., 1992; Neumann & Buskila, 1997; Wahl et al., 1998).

### Procedure

After obtaining approval from the institutional research committee, participants were approached at their respective universities. A trained psychologist briefed the participants about the study's purpose, objectives, and procedures. Eligible students provided written informed consent prior to completing the questionnaires. Data collection was conducted in classroom settings, and participants were given the freedom to ask questions if clarification was needed. On average, completion of the questionnaires required 20–25 minutes.

### Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical standards outlined in the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2020) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Participation was voluntary, and students were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without drawbacks. Informed consent was taken from all participants before data collection.

### RESULTS

**Table 1: Items of the scales, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Cronbach alpha  $\alpha$  values.**

Variables	Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$
Extraversion	10	31.61	5.75	.60
Agreeableness	10	36.22	4.69	.40
Conscientiousness	10	35.23	5.33	.58
Neuroticism	10	31.10	7.45	.79
Openness to experience	10	35.79	4.81	.54
Quality of Life	16	88.89	14.03	.90

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation

The table given above mentions the number of items, mean, standard deviation, and the value of Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha$  for the 6 scales used in the study. One of them is the QoL, and the other 5 were the subscales of the Big Five Personality Traits. The value of Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha$  revealed the internal consistency Scale. A moderately low internal consistency was observed for all scales except for the Neuroticism Scale and Quality of Life Scale.

**Table 2: Correlation between Extraversion, Agreeableness, Consciousness, Neuroticism, Openness, and QoL.**

Variables	2	3	4	5	6
1. Extraversion	.214**	.358**	.479**	.117	.359**
2. Agreeableness	-	.401**	.166*	.574**	.337**
3. Conscientiousness		-	.406**	.406**	.324**
4. Neuroticism			-	.138	.142
5. Openness				-	.339**
6. QOL					-

Note: \*\* $p < .01$

The table shows the correlation between the personality types and QoL. Furthermore, the results revealed that there is a moderately significant relationship between extraversion with agreeableness,

conscientiousness, neuroticism, and QoL. Furthermore, agreeableness showed a moderately significant relationship with conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, and QoL. Additionally, conscientiousness had a moderately significant relationship with neuroticism, openness, and QoL. Lastly, openness to experience has also revealed a significant positive correlation with QoL.

**Table 3: The linear regression of Extraversion as a predictor of Quality of Life.**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Extraversion	.547	.108	.359	5.06	.000
<i>R</i>	.359				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.129				
$\Delta R^2$	.124				
<i>F</i>	25.60 (1, 173)				

*Note: DV: QoL*

The result shows extraversion as a significant predictor of Quality of Life. Thus, the results manifested the impact of personality type on the quality of life. Where the variance comes out to be up to 12% ( $R^2 = .129$ ,  $F = 25.60$ ).

**Table 4: The linear regression of Agreeableness as a predictor of Quality of Life.**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Agreeableness	.630	.134	.337	4.70	.000
<i>R</i>	.337				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.113				
$\Delta R^2$	.108				
<i>F</i>	22.13 (1, 173)				

*Note: DV: QoL*

The results indicate that agreeableness is a significant predictor of Quality of Life. Thus, the results manifested the impact of personality type on the quality of life. Where the variance comes out to be up to 11% ( $R^2 = .113$ ,  $F = 22.13$ ).

**Table 5: The linear regression of Conscientiousness as a predictor of Quality of Life.**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Conscientiousness	.532	.118	.324	4.49	.000
<i>R</i>	.324				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.105				
$\Delta R^2$	.100				
<i>F</i>	20.24 (1, 173)				

*Note: DV: QoL*

The table shows the results of regression analysis, indicating that conscientiousness is a significant predictor of Quality of Life. Thus, the results manifested the impact of personality type on the quality of life. Where the variance comes out to be up to 10% ( $R^2 = .105$ ,  $F = 20.24$ ).



**Table 6: The linear regression of Neuroticism as a predictor of Quality of Life.**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Neuroticism	.167	.089	.142	1.88	.061
<i>R</i>	.142				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.020				
$\Delta R^2$	.014				
<i>F</i>	3.55 (1, 173)				

*Note: DV: QoL*

The table shows the results of regression analysis, indicating that Neuroticism is an insignificant predictor of Quality of Life.

**Table 7: The linear regression of Openness to experience as a predictor of Quality of Life.**

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>
Openness	.617	.130	.339	4.73	.000
<i>R</i>	.339				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.115				
$\Delta R^2$	.110				
<i>F</i>	22.44 (1, 173)				

*Note: DV: QoL*

The table shows the results of regression analysis, indicating that openness to experience is a significant predictor of Quality of Life. Thus, the results manifested the impact of personality type on the quality of life. Where the variance comes out to be up to 11% ( $\Delta R = .115$ ,  $F = 22.44$ ).

**Table 8: The Multiple Regression Analysis of Personality types with Quality of Life.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>P</i></b>	<b><i>VIF</i></b>
Extraversions	.482	.119	4.04	.000	1.372
Agreeableness	.235	.158	1.48	.138	1.592
Conscientiousness	.206	.135	1.52	.129	1.512
Neuroticism	-.127	.094	-1.35	.176	1.415
Openness	.353	.153	2.30	.022	1.589
<i>R</i>	.497				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.247				
$\Delta R$	.224				
<i>F</i>	11.069 (5,169)				

*Note: \*\*p < .01*

The table shows the results of regression analysis, indicating that all five personality types are the predictors of QoL. Thus, the results manifested the significant impact of extraversion and openness to experience on the quality of life. Where the variance comes up to be up to 24% ( $R^2 = .247$ ,  $F = 11.06$ ). The multicollinearity diagnostics show that the VIF values for all predictors are below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity.

## DISCUSSION

This study investigated the predictive role of the Big Five personality traits on the QoL among university students in Karachi, Pakistan. The results corroborate extensive international evidence showing that extraversion is a robust predictor of well-being (Steel et al., 2008; Wilt et al., 2012). Extraverts are inclined to take social engagement, maintain active interpersonal links, and practice positive effects, all of which improve perceived QoL. Within Pakistan, collective belongingness, prolonged kinship systems, and group association are emphasized; the impact of extraversion can be specifically defined. Studies with the Pakistani population usually state this link. Khan et al. (2015) described that extraversion and conscientiousness significantly predicted life satisfaction among university students in Lahore, underscoring the social relevance of personality and QoL associations. Similarly, Batool and Khalid (2012) narrated that extraversion was positively related to happiness and optimism among Pakistani teens, representing that social engagement and passion for life directly translate into better well-being outcomes in this setting.

Openness to experience appeared as a strong predictor, highlighting the significance of curiosity, suppleness, and receptiveness to new experiences in shaping QoL. Literature of South Asia suggests that openness holds adaptability and healthy coping skills in novel educational environments (Riaz et al., 2012). In Pakistan's higher education domain, where students often balance outdated customs with globalized academic experience, openness may substitute resilience and appropriate problem-solving, thus contributing to improved well-being. Shaheen and Alam (2010) testified that openness was positively linked to psychological evolution and creativity in Pakistani undergraduates, signifying that students with higher openness may exhibit more inclination towards reframing academic challenges as opportunities for knowledge and progress.

Agreeableness and conscientiousness also demonstrated a significant relationship with QoL, though they were not unique predictors in the multiple regression analysis. Ali and Zahra (2017) observed that agreeableness contributed to interpersonal congruence and apparent life satisfaction among Pakistani scholars. In collectivistic contexts, agreeableness could be given value for maintaining sound relationships and gratifying social responsibilities are central to cultural identity (Sohail & Anwer, 2017). Conscientious pupils, in contrast, are typically healthier at self-regulation and academic achievement, which indirectly lessen stress and improve life quality. Past studies in Pakistan have shown that conscientiousness predicts academic success and reduced academic stress (Riaz et al., 2012; Gul & Niazi, 2019), suggesting that conscientious individuals experience higher QoL partly through goal attainment and achievement satisfaction. While their predictive power weakened in the regression model, these traits likely interact with environmental factors such as academic pressure, family expectations, and cultural definitions of success to shape subjective well-being.

Interestingly, neuroticism did not significantly predict QoL, which diverges from much of the global literature where neuroticism consistently predicts lower well-being and higher distress (Kotov et al., 2010). However, comparable results have been reported in Pakistani samples. For instance, Saleem and Mahmood (2013) found that the negative impact of neuroticism on life satisfaction was reduced when social support and family cohesion were considered. Another study by Khan and Iqbal (2016) reported that while neuroticism correlated with psychological distress, its association with life satisfaction was weaker once religiosity and social connectedness were accounted for. This suggests that cultural protective factors, such as extended family systems, collectivist orientations, religious coping, and strong peer bonds, may buffer the detrimental effects of neurotic tendencies in Pakistan. Additionally, social desirability bias may have influenced self-report responses in this study, leading to underreporting of



negative emotions. Such tendencies are common in collectivistic societies where emotional restraint and avoidance of overt negativity are socially reinforced (Hassan & Gul, 2018).

## **IMPLICATIONS**

These findings reinforce the cross-cultural applicability of the Five Factor Model in predicting life outcomes, while also pointing to cultural nuances. In collectivist contexts such as Pakistan, traits like extraversion and agreeableness may be particularly beneficial due to the premium placed on social relationships and communal harmony. Similarly, openness may play a unique role in transitional societies where exposure to diverse experiences and ideas is growing.

Practically, the results carry implications for higher education and counseling services. University-based interventions could be tailored to encourage positive personality expression. For instance, programs fostering social connectedness may help extraverted and agreeable students thrive, while workshops promoting creativity and adaptive thinking could particularly benefit students high in openness. Counselors should also recognize that personality-linked vulnerabilities, such as tendencies toward neuroticism, may be moderated by cultural support systems.

## **SHORTCOMINGS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study has a few limitations. By using convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of findings beyond urban student populations. Additionally, the relatively low internal consistency of some subscales (e.g., agreeableness,  $\alpha = .40$ ) suggests the need for culturally adapted or locally validated personality measures (Hanif & Tariq, 2014). Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations, and the dependence on self-report instruments raises concerns about social desirability bias.

Future studies must examine these limitations by applying longitudinal model, larger and more varied samples, and culturally adapted personality instruments. Moreover, examining mediating factors such as family support, religiosity, and collectivist values could shed light on why traits like neuroticism behave differently in Pakistani contexts. Cross-cultural comparative studies between Pakistani and Western populations would also clarify whether these patterns are culturally specific or more broadly applicable.

## **CONCLUSION**

The difference in significance between the linear and multiple regression models can be attributed to the way predictors are treated. In the linear regression models, each personality trait is assessed individually, showing significant relationships with Quality of Life due to their independent effects, without considering the overlap or correlation between them. However, in the multiple regression model, when all personality traits are included together, some variables lose their significance because their effects are shared with other predictors. Taking examples of agreeableness and conscientiousness, become insignificant as their role overlays with other characters, and neuroticism exhibit marginal significance due to shared variance with the other predictors. Conversely, extraversion and openness remain significant in the multiple regression, proving a more discrete and unique link with QoL. This explains that the significance of variables can weaken in multiple regression when the impact of other correlated predictors is reported for, even if they were significant in simpler linear models.

The low VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values designate that there is no severe multicollinearity among the predictors in the model. In this paper, as all VIF values are below 10, it advocates that the predictors (Big Five) are not predominantly related to each other to the degree that it would source variability in the

regression model. This means, predictors are not much collinear to cause multicollinearity issues, their unique contributions to elucidate QoL are reduced when other variables are included in the model, leading to some predictors becoming statistically insignificant.

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