

# The Relationship between Personality Styles and Academic Self-Efficacy among Jordanian EFL Learners

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## ABSTRACT

The study aims to find out personality styles (Extroversion and Neuroticism) among students of English in the Hashemite University and measure academic self-efficacy in them. It also attempts to disclose the relationship between personality styles (the Extrovert and Neuroticism) and self-efficacy among students enrolled in academic courses in English, and how different this relationship is according to gender and grade. The sample consists of 120 randomly selected students. To collect data the Personality Styles Scale (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the Academic Self-efficacy Scale (Abu Zureik and Jaradat, 2013) were used. Results indicated the presence of high academic self-efficacy and the widespread of the pattern of extraversion, and the existence of significant differences between extraversion and academic self-efficacy. These correlated with sex but less significant differences were shown depending on the academic level variable. We recommend encouraging neurotic students to gain attributes and characteristics of extraversion after finding that the relationship between extraversion and academic self-efficacy was negative. This can occur through focusing on the positive energy they have and showing the ability and the desire to learn.

**KEY-WORDS:** academic self-efficacy, Hashemite University, personality styles, profile, EFL

## 1. Introduction

The human interest in personality and categorizing it started since long ago. Specialists and professionals tried to make classifications to group people's characteristics in commonly agreed upon sorts. Such typology of personalities was based on physical features and external characteristics for some. Many attempts were made, indeed, by scholars in the field of psychology to develop theoretical frameworks and create a typology of personality features. "The Theory of Psychological Types", for instance tried to group similar personality features in one trait. The trait theory is considered as one of the most influential theories and has a substantial role in personality analysis. The theory tries attempts to categorize the individuals according to the extent to which particular features are present (De Raad, 2000).

To clarify the concept of the "trait", it is the physical, mental, emotional, social (innate or acquired) feature. It helps the individual be distinct and helps to understand him/her. Researchers tried to categorize personality features, but resorted hundreds. As a result, researchers and scholars started thinking seriously of a paradigm that can describe the main dimensions of personality. To do so, they grouped related features together and classified them into one independent trait that can be generalized through different persons and various cultures (Ewen, 1998). Scholars used factor analysis to enable a better explanation of human behavior (Digman, 1990). While using factorial analysis, Cattell could resort sixteen personality factors that became known as the "16PF". As a follow up of research on personality styles, Eysenck summarized personality into three main dimensions; extraversion, neuroticism and Psychotic (De Raad, 2000) (the present paper put focus on the first two dimensions). Later, Costa & McCrae (1997) sorted out the Five Big Personality Factor Model which became the most illuminating personality model in understanding and interpreting human personality.

After the adoption of various models of personality styles in psychology, many research turned its directions towards the relation between personality styles and features with other variables. A case in point is Zee, Thijs&Schakel (2002)'s study that linked emotional and academic intelligence with the Five Big Personality Factors among 116 university students in Netherlands. Results indicated a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and the Big Five Personality Factors mainly with the variables of extroversion and emotional stability.

In this present work, emphasis is made on the nature of the relationship between two personality styles (extroversion and neuroticism) and academic self-efficacy among the Hachemite university EFL students, Jordan. Additionally, the aspects of gender and specialty were considered whether they correlate with the main variables or not.

To guide the study, a number of research questions are asked:

1. What are the personality styles that characterize EFL students in the Hachemite University?
2. What is the degree of academic self-efficacy among EFL students at the Hachemite University?
3. What is the relationship between the two studied personality styles (extroversion and neuroticism) and academic self-efficacy among such students?
4. Is there a difference in the kind of this relationship when considering the variables of gender and academic level?

## 2. Method

A purely quantitative method was employed using the Personality Styles Scale (Costa & Mc Crae, 1992) and the Academic Self-efficacy Scale (Abu Zureik and Jaradat, 2013). The scales were used in the Hachemite University and distributed during the second term of the academic year 2015-2016. The sample consisted of 385 undergraduate students (123 males and 262 females).

### 2.1. Instruments

**Personality Styles Scale.** The scale was used to measure two personality dimensions (extrovert and neurotic) based on the list of the Five Big Personality Factor Model (Costa & McCrae). The scale consisted of 24 items (divided into 12 items for each dimension). The scale was tested and proved validity with Cronbach Alpha: 0.77.

**Academic Self-efficacy Scale.** The revised version of the academic self-efficacy scale developed by Abu Izrik & Djradat (2013) was used. 28 items were selected and two others were added. The 30 items measure the student's efficacy in the classroom, his task achievement, test preparation, his competence use & academic achievement. To achieve content validity, the modified self-efficacy scale was reviewed by two experts in the field. Through their recommendations, a number of changes were made accordingly. The scale was tested through 45 students who did not take part in the research. The Cronbach Alpha: 0.93 which represent a high score.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Personality Styles and self-efficacy among Learners

To sort out the existing personality styles, means and standard deviations were calculated and summarized in table 01:

Table I: Means and Standard Deviations For Personality Styles and Academic Self-Efficacy Among Learners

Rank	Feature	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	Extraversion	3.48	.503	Medium
2	Neurotic	2.83	.541	Medium
3	Self-efficacy	3.38	.566	Medium

According to table 01, results show that the mean scored  $M = 2.83$  for neuroticism,  $X = 3.38$  for self-efficacy and  $X = 3.48$  for extraversion. The table reveals a lower standard deviation ( $SD = .503$ ) for extraversion compared to neuroticism ( $SD = .541$ ). self-efficacy scored higher than the personality style in terms of standard deviation ( $SD = .566$ ).

In order to test the correlation between the personality styles and self-efficacy, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. Table 02 summarizes the results:

Table II:

Personality Style	Data	Academic self-efficacy
Neurotic	R value	-.347**
	Statistical significance	.000

		N	385
Extraversion	R value	.322**	
	Statistical significance		.000
		N	385

\* (0.05) level of significance

\*\* (0.01) level of significance

According to the table, two results are revealing:

- There exists a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and academic self-efficacy.
- There exists a significant positive correlation between extraversion and self-efficacy Academy.

**Relating personality Styles and Academic Self-efficacy to Gender and Academic achievement**

To test the correlation between these variables, the Z test was used. Results are displayed in table 03:

Table III: Correlation coefficients between personality styles and academic self-efficacy among students according to gender

Personality Style	Data	Academic self-efficacy		Z	Correlation coefficient
		male	female		
Neurotic	Correlation coefficient	-.559**	-.221**	**3.683	0.0002
	N	123	262		
Extraversion	Correlation coefficient	.468**	.188**	**2.873	0.002
	N	123	262		

According to the table, there is a significant statistical difference (□□□□□□□□ between neuroticism and academic self-efficacy in relation to academic achievement. Yet, no statistically significant difference (□□□□□□□□ was found for extraversion and academic self-efficacy in relation to the same variable (i.e. academic self-efficacy)

**4. Discussion**

The results revealed that the extraverted style prevailed compared to the neurotic style among Jordanian university students. This can be related to the appropriate learning conditions, and the necessary activities that go hand in hand with their preferences, needs and ambitions. Hence, university can be considered as a rich environment of stimuli that make students more interactive the thing that reflects upon their personality style (i.e. extroverts). As for academic self-efficacy, results showed an average level among the same students. We can relate this to the nature of the students themselves, where students prove to be skillful on the one hand once they are at university and the efficient teaching on the other. The Jordanian university contributed in making self-efficacy occurs through a professional teaching staff with a high academic competence and through taking students psychological and social states into account. This is more likely helpful for learners to develop their self-confidence. This positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and achievement was similarly found by Fan, Lindt, Giner & Wolters, 2007 and also attribute it to the students' self-confidence and thus reflected on their effectiveness own academy, and this has been confirmed by studies in the presence of a positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement (Fan, Lindt, Giner & Wolters, 2007).

The second personality style investigated in this paper is neuroticism. Findings revealed a negative correlation between this variable and academic self-efficacy. This type of personality is known to be tense emotions, discouraged by nature and has difficulty to adapt to new and challenging situations and events. This personality style is not easily affected by the surrounding (Costa & McCrae, 1992). All in all, results revealed a positive correlation between extraversion and academic self-efficacy. This is because extroverts are characterized by where is characterized by physical skills, conscientiousness towards interaction and responsiveness. In this, Costa & McCrae, (1997) claimed that extroverts are excited by nature and look for excitement as well. Hence, he added that students with this kind of personality tend to be more active and interactive in the classroom and learning contexts.

When considering gender, results showed a difference between males and females in terms of the relationship between each of the two considered styles (extraversion and neuroticism) and academic self-efficacy. We relate this gender-differentiated aspect to the nature of males themselves. Males are characterized by the frequent change in mood according to nature of the learning context they are exposed to. That is, males are generally influenced by the nature of the teacher, his teaching method, the subjects. If these aspects go hand in hand with their preferences, their academic self-efficacy is more likely to be high and vice versa. For females, this aspect was not significant, that is, females are more likely to be static in their learning contexts. Concerning the statistical difference we reached between extraversion and academic self-efficacy in relation to academic achievement, results showed that first and second year students are less mature academically and have less abilities to manage different academic situations compared to third and fourth year students. This leads them to be less efficient academically.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Extension programmes designed to help students increase academic self-efficacy they have need to be developed and adopted.
- Further studies examining personality traits with other academic variables need to be conducted.

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