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## An assessment of the big five personality traits and employability skill assessment of agricultural graduates of Tamil Nadu, India

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### Abstract

The crux of education is change in behaviour. Gaining knowledge is the integral part of education but more important is the change in behaviour; the knowledge, skill and of course attitude. Change in all these aspects leads to a change in personality. This personality is more important when it comes to employability. A study was conducted in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University to assess the employability of students. As part of the same, a personality assessment using the Big Five Personality traits was done with the final year students. Big Five Model of personality, now globally accepted as the most scientific and validated model of personality. The Big Five personality traits, also known as the five factor model (FFM), is a model based on common language descriptors of personality namely Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Agreeableness. The personality score of students shows that, students have a medium range of extraversion (51.76 percent), medium range of conscientiousness (40 percent), high level of emotional stability (40 percent), students are highly open to experience (83.52 percent), they are highly adapted to agreeableness (50.58 percent) and low level of polychronicity (35.29).

**Keywords:** Personality traits, agricultural graduates

### Introduction

Personality of an individual is the most important in a social setting. Students are moulded in the schools and later in universities to develop a pleasing personality. Efforts are taken to enhance their skills in multiple affairs like intelligence, team work, socializing, etc through formal education and extracurricular activities. It is acceptable that students who take part in various extracurricular activities in university are more often successful in their later lives or more so lead a happy life which is the ultimatum. Starting in the 1980s, personality psychology began a profound renaissance and has now become an extraordinarily diverse and intellectually stimulating field (Pervin & John, 1999) [7]. According to Marshall (2010) [4] Ongoing research including profiling and monitoring the personality traits and psychosocial behavior of students can assist students in adapting successfully. Personality traits such as optimism, endurance, dominance, order, exhibition, self-confidence and creativity were highly expressed and developed, as profiled in the study conducted by Mey See Ching (2014) [6]. These highly expressed and developed traits indicate that students are dignified, flexible, hopeful and unyielding in their desire to excel. They also value cognitive activity and insight. However, their profile shows some concerns in traits such as support seeking and security seeking, which dropped continuously during the study. Such findings suggest that students may not be ready for counseling and prefer not to seek help and support when they encounter problems. According to Meera (2009) [5] conscientiousness emerged as a partial mediator of the relationship between intrinsic motivation to accomplish and GPA.

Clark (2000) [2] found in his review of the literature that most studies involved administration of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to students described as academically gifted. Studies have also employed the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), or Jackson's Personality Research Form (PRF). The relative convergence by researchers on the value of a Big Five organizing framework for personality makes it a promising starting point for examining the intricate relationship between personality, motivation, and achievement (Costa & McCrae, 1992) [1].

There are a number of potential practical applications associated with using Big Five trait information to help students successfully negotiate the transition to college.

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Most of these revolve around two concepts: (1) maximizing person-environment fit for students; and (2) enabling college student personnel who work with students to adjust their approach to students to enhance their own effectiveness.

### Methodology

The study was conducted by taking a sample of 660 final year students of one leading agricultural university in Tamil Nadu. The sample was selected from various degree programmes from the colleges of the university. 'Aspiring Minds Computer Adaptive Test (AMCAT)', Bangalore which is an assessment agency recognized under National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), has been taken by more than ten lakh students throughout India especially in engineering and software sectors. Agricultural Universities has not yet entered into this arena of testing the employability skills. However, it was observed that MNCs and banks are using AMCAT tests for recruitment in Agricultural Universities too.

The personality traits were analysed by AMCAT based on the Big Five Model of personality, now globally accepted as the most scientific and validated model of personality. The Big Five personality traits, also known as the five factor model (FFM), is a model based on common language descriptors of personality. The "big five" are broad categories of personality traits. You might find it helpful to use the acronym OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) when trying to remember the big five traits. CANOE (for conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion) is another commonly used acronym. It is important to note that each of the five personality factors represents a range between two extremes. For example, extraversion represents a continuum between extreme extraversion and extreme introversion. In the real world, most people lie somewhere in between the two polar ends of each dimension.

**Openness:** The trait features characteristics such as imagination and insight. Those who are high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests. They are curious about the world and other people and eager to learn new things and

enjoy new experiences.

**Conscientiousness:** Standard features of conscientiousness include high levels of thoughtfulness, good impulse control, and goal-directed behaviors. Highly conscientious people are organized and mindful of details. They plan ahead, think about how their behavior affects others and are mindful of deadlines.

**Extraversion:** This is characterized by excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, and high amounts of emotional expressiveness. They are high in extraversion are outgoing and tend to gain energy in social situations. Being around other people helps them feel energized and excited.

**Agreeableness:** It includes attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection, and other prosocial behaviors. Those who are high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative while those low in this trait tend to be more competitive and sometimes even manipulative.

**Neuroticism:** This is characterized by sadness, moodiness, and emotional instability. Individuals who are high in this trait tend to experience mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and sadness. The people low in this trait tend to be more stable and emotionally resilient.

### Results and Discussion

#### Assessment of personality traits of respondents

The personality traits were analysed by AMCAT based on the Big Five Model of personality, now globally accepted as the most scientific and validated model of personality. The Big Five personality traits, also known as the five factor model (FFM), is a model based on common language descriptors of personality. This widely examined theory suggests five broad dimensions used by some psychologists to describe the human personality and psyche <sup>[1, 2]</sup>. The five factors have been defined as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism / emotional stability often listed under the acronyms *OCEAN* or *CANOE*. The table below shows percentile in each trait.

**Table 1:** Personality scores of respondents

Range	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional Stability	Openness to Experience	Agreeableness	Polychronicity
Low	32.94	24.70	30.58	3.52	8.23	35.29
Medium	51.76	40.00	29.41	12.94	41.17	30.58
High	15.29	35.29	40	83.52	50.58	34.11

Extraversion (E) An extroverted, talkative, socially confident person, Emotional Stability (ES) A calm, happy, undisturbed & confident person, Conscientiousness (C) An organized, responsible, hardworking & achievement oriented person, Openness to experience (O) A broad-minded, unconventional, imaginative person with rich artistic sensitivity, Agreeableness (A) A kind, SYM pathetic, cooperative & warm person, Polychronicity (P) A multitasker.

The personality score of students shows that, students have a medium range of extraversion (51.76 percent), medium range of conscientiousness (40 percent), high level of emotional stability (40 percent), students are highly open to experience (83.52 percent), they are highly adapted to agreeableness (50.58 percent) and low level of polychronicity (35.29).

#### Students capability and training need analysis

The employability skills on English Comprehension, Quantitative Ability and Logical Ability were assessed by AMCAT. The Campus Ability (Table 2) shows the campus average scores (percentiles) and their standard deviations in comparison with the National norms. It also indicates if the difference between the Campus Average score and the National Average score is significant and if so, at what confidence level. Norm is the National Average of all the candidates tested on AMCAT. Confidence level refers to the likelihood (ranging from 0 to 100%) that the results observed in the study are real, and not due to chance. In this analysis, if confidence level is less than 90%, it indicates that the difference between the Campus Average and the National Average is not significant and that both the scores are

equivalent. For confidence level greater than or equal to 90%, the difference between the Campus Average and the National Average is considered significant. If the difference is positive,

on an average, the campus students are performing better than the National Average and vice versa.

**Table 2:** Campus ability

Modules attempted	Campus Average Percentile	Campus Average (Std. Dev.)	National Average (Std. Dev.)	Difference (Campus - National)	Confidence	Is Significant?1
English Comprehension	62	437(97)	410(85)	27	100%	Yes
Quantitative Ability	31	341 (125)	385(90)	-44	100%	Yes
Logical Ability	59	419(79)	400(90)	19	100%	Yes
Total Aptitude	50	399(78)	398(88)	1	68%	No

(1 if confidence level is less than 90%, it indicates that the difference between Campus Average and National Average is not significant and that both the scores are equivalent.)

### English Comprehension

Communication is the key to building relationships and trust that leads to success in business. English is a corporate language and hence, the ability to read and comprehend this language effectively is essential to qualify for all types of job profiles, whether it is technical or non-technical. The students of your institute have done fairly well in English, on an average, scoring slightly higher than the National Average. With proper guidance and self-practice in English vocabulary and communication skills, students will be able to acquire excellence and exceed the National Average by a larger difference. Recommended methods are regular tests and assignments conducted by the faculty and encouragement of communication in English.

### Quantitative Ability

Quantitative Ability measures a person's ability to deal with numbers and real-world problems quantitatively and mathematically. It is the ability to convert a real world problem into equations which can then be solved to find the result. This module is designed to measure a candidate's basic maths and algebraic skills, his/her understanding of basic quantitative concepts and his/her ability to reason quantitatively, solve quantitative problems and interpret graphical data. In Quantitative Ability module, campus, on an average, has scored below the National Average. Since the difference is not large, this gap can be abridged by taking appropriate corrective measures. The best way to ace this subject is to get an understanding of the basic concepts of this module like numbers, probability, word problems, etc. Students should practice a variety of questions from all the sub areas of this module, gradually increasing the difficulty level once the easier topics have been mastered.

### Logical Ability

The purpose of Logical Ability module is to test students' logical reasoning skills and to check their intuitive ability, decision making capability, problem solving approach and other areas which are important from a company's perspective. People with strong Logical Reasoning are quicker to perceive and interpret things objectively. Therefore, proficiency in this module is desired for all job profiles. Students of the institute, on an average, have scored equivalent to the National Average in Logical Ability module. Proper guidance from the faculty and focused efforts from students are required to score higher than the National Average. Students should solve different kinds of logical puzzles and play logical games regularly. This will sharpen their skills tremendously, thereby increasing the employability of your students.

From the above analysis, it is clearly visible that the performance of the students is good in English Comprehension, which is commendable. They have performed satisfactory in Logical Ability, whereas extra efforts can make a tremendous difference in performance. However, the students' performance is not satisfactory in Quantitative Ability, therefore additional training sessions and corrective measures are required by the campus authorities. Methodologies such as mock tests, assignments and extra classes can become a valuable strategy for the benefit of students. Institutes can also include proactive mentoring sessions for weak students and review their skills in the given area(s). Another approach can be to hold training sessions focusing on comprehensive guidance for the students to excel in their weak areas. The gain resulting from these training sessions and your continuous support will allow overall development of the student and further enhancement in their abilities.

### Conclusion

It is found from the skill assessment it is found that the students need training in quantitative ability and logical ability. The students capability and training needs were assessed on English Comprehension, Quantitative ability and logical ability. It was found that the graduates scored 62 percentage in English comprehension. 31 percentage in quantitative ability and 59 percentage in logical ability. It was found that our students were on par with other students who have taken AMCAT tests on national level in English and logical ability whereas we have to give emphasis on quantitative competence. Therefore additional training is required in this area. It was also found that the students were high in emotional stability, agreeableness and open to experience. The final year students should be compulsorily trained for employability as part of the final year programme.

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