



## **Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among Corporate Professionals in Dhaka**

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### **Abstract**

*Mental health challenges in high-pressure corporate environments are rising globally, yet personality-based approaches to workplace well-being remain underutilized, especially in emerging economies like Bangladesh. This study investigates how the Big Five personality traits – Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness – predict psychological distress (depression, anxiety, and stress) among 300 corporate professionals in Dhaka. Using a cross-sectional design and validated Bangla versions of the BFI-44 and DASS-21, data were analyzed through multiple regression, correlation, and ANOVA. Findings reveal neuroticism as the strongest positive predictor of all distress outcomes, while extraversion and conscientiousness show consistent protective effects. Openness and agreeableness display complex roles – buffering some symptoms but amplifying others under specific workplace conditions. Gender emerged as a moderator for anxiety, though job position and education level showed no significant effects. These results underscore the need for personality-sensitive mental health strategies in collectivist, performance-driven settings. The study offers practical recommendations for integrating personality assessments into organizational wellness policies to foster resilient and productive workforces.*

**Keywords:** Personality Traits, Workplace Mental Health, Psychological Distress, Big Five Model, Corporate Stress, Employee Well-being, Bangladesh, Organizational Psychology.

### **1. Introduction**

Corporate professionals play a key part in boosting growth across many sectors such as banking, IT, telecom, pharma, and manufacturing. Drucker (1993) points out that the business world operates as a system powered by strategic management, staff performance, and company expansion. These jobs offer a lot of status and financial security, but they often bring intense stress and risks to mental health. More and more people now see how important mental well-being is at work, as it has a direct effect on how well employees do their jobs how much they get done, and how successful the company is (Schaufeli et al. 2009).

Studies in occupational psychology have shown that personality traits have a big influence on how workers see and deal with job stress (Judge et al. 1999). Many office workers now face mental health issues like stress, worry, and burnout in high-stress jobs (Hasan et al. 2022). To illustrate, Hasan et al. (2022) found that 67% of office workers in Dhaka say they feel medium to high stress. Of these, 45% show signs of worry and 38%

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety...* Kazi Fardous Iqbal and Md. Nur-E-Alam Siddique show signs of feeling down. These results show we need to look closer at how personality traits affect mental health in office settings.

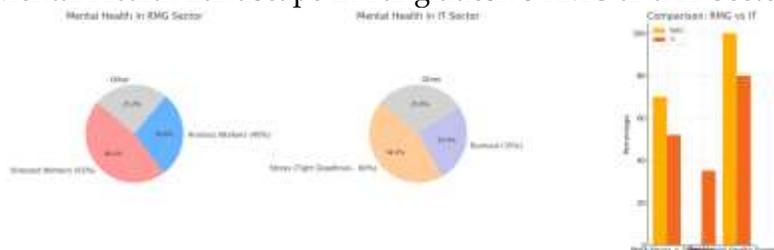
### 1.1 Mental Health in the Corporate Workplace

The mental health issues corporate professionals face affect both individuals and organizations. Work-related stress and its associated disorders have a big impact on employee absences, staff turnover, and lower output (WHO, 2020). Bangladesh's corporate sector has grown quickly in the last ten years, thanks to economic freedom, money from abroad, and expansion in key industries like telecom and clothing (Rahman & Hossain 2021). This growth however, has led to higher job demands, performance goals, and more stress at work for professionals. Though many Bangladesh companies now recognize these problems, they still lack enough mental health support at work. More and more studies, including work by Sonnentag and Frese (2003), show that changes in how companies run, policies for work-life balance, and mental health programs are key to tackle these issues well.

Bangladesh's corporate landscape, marked by rapid economic growth, includes high-pressure sectors such as Ready-Made Garments (RMG), Information Technology (IT), and Banking. The RMG sector, contributing 12% of GDP and employing 4.4 million workers (mostly women), faces chronic stressors like 10–12-hour workdays, automation anxiety, and post-COVID-19 wage cuts (BGMEA, 2023; World Bank, 2021). Similarly, the IT sector, pivotal to achieving Digital Vision 2041, employs 600,000 professionals who report burnout due to tight deadlines, client pressures, and 50+ hour workweeks, compounded by inadequate mental health support (BASIS, 2023; BCC, 2023). The Banking sector, another cornerstone of the economy, grapples with stressors like stringent financial targets, regulatory compliance, and customer demands, often leading to heightened anxiety among employees (Rahman & Hossain, 2021; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Alarming, 65% of RMG workers, 60% of IT professionals, and a significant portion of bankers report moderate to severe stress, underscoring systemic mental health challenges across these critical industries (BILS, 2022; BASIS, 2023). These sector-specific stressors, coupled with limited organizational support, highlight the urgency of addressing workplace mental health in Bangladesh's evolving corporate environment.

**Figure-1:**

Mental Health Landscape in Bangladesh's RMG and IT Sectors



**Source:** BGMEA (2023), BILS (2022), CPD (2023), World Bank (2021)

### 1.2 The Role of Personality Traits in Stress Management

Personality traits, especially those outlined in the Big Five Personality Traits Model by Costa and McCrae (1992), play a crucial role in how employees handle stress and maintain their mental health at work. One of these traits, neuroticism, is particularly important because it's been shown to correlate with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress in the workplace. This is largely due to the tendency of individuals high in neuroticism to

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety...* Kazi Fardous Iqbal and Md. Nur-E-Alam Siddique respond negatively under pressure and when faced with challenges (Lahey, 2009). On the flip side, traits like extraversion and conscientiousness generally promote resilience and effective stress management. People who score high in these traits are typically better at seeking support from others and organizing their tasks in a way that reduces stress (Bakker et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2009).

The link between personality traits and mental health outcomes in the workplace is a bit complicated. Take conscientious employees, for example; they often shine when it comes to organizing tasks and performing well. However, their inclination for perfection can sometimes lead to stress and burnout (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). On the flip side, employees who are highly agreeable typically promote strong teamwork. Still, they might find themselves feeling emotionally drained if they have trouble standing up for themselves or dealing with conflicts at work (Graziano et al., 2007). In places like Bangladesh, where many professionals clock in long hours without adequate mental health support, grasping these dynamics is even more crucial.

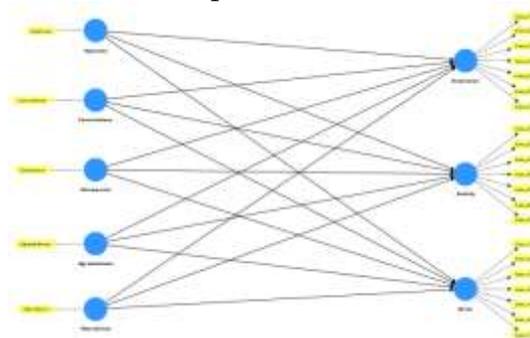
### 1.3 Theoretical Framework: The Big Five Personality Traits Model

The Big Five Personality Traits Model, developed by Costa and McCrae in 1992, serves as the backbone of this research. This model breaks down personality into five main dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. A wealth of studies has looked into how these traits affect workplace stress and mental health. For instance, research by Lahey (2009) and Kotov et al. (2010) reveals that neuroticism is a strong indicator of stress and depression, particularly in demanding corporate settings. On the flip side, extraversion tends to correlate with greater job satisfaction and resilience, particularly in collaborative environments (Grant et al., 2009). Furthermore, some studies have examined how cultural backgrounds, like the collectivist culture often found in Bangladesh, can shape stress perceptions and coping strategies. Hofstede (1980) suggested that in collectivist societies, where group harmony is valued more than individual well-being, workplace stress can actually intensify. This underscores the necessity of factoring in cultural influences when looking at mental health within Bangladeshi corporations.

### 1.4 Conceptual Framework Except the Moderating Variables

The probable conceptual framework, except the effects of moderating variables would be like this:

**Figure-2:**  
Conceptual Framework



**Source:** Researcher's Construct

## **2. Problem Statement**

Corporate professionals in Bangladesh's high-growth sectors like RMG and IT operate in environments marked by intense job demands, including long working hours, tight deadlines, and automation anxiety (Bakker et al., 2010; BGMEA, 2023). These stressors, compounded by client pressures and collectivist workplace norms, escalate risks of anxiety, burnout, and depression (Schaufeli et al., 2009; BCC, 2023). Despite global recognition of workplace mental health, structured interventions remain scarce in Bangladeshi organizations, with 80% lacking tailored support (BASIS, 2023). Understanding the impact of these personality dimensions on workplace mental health is critical for developing targeted interventions that promote employee well-being and improve organizational efficiency. While personality traits like neuroticism and conscientiousness shape stress resilience, their interplay with Bangladesh's unique cultural and sectoral dynamics remains underexplored. This study aims to explore how these personality traits influence mental health outcomes in corporate professionals in Bangladesh and contribute to the design of mental health strategies tailored to the unique needs of corporate professionals.

## **3. Rationale of the Research**

This study bridges the gap in workplace mental health research by investigating how personality traits influence stress resilience among corporate professionals in Bangladesh's high-pressure sectors like ready-made garments (RMG) and information technology (IT). While neuroticism is linked to workplace anxiety and conscientiousness to resilience in Western settings (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2009), these dynamics remain underexplored in Bangladesh's unique corporate landscape, marked by rapid sectoral growth (Rahman & Hossain, 2021), automation anxiety, and collectivist workplace norms. Despite global recognition of workplace mental health, structured support remains scarce in Bangladeshi organizations. By analyzing the interplay of traits like neuroticism and extraversion with localized stressors (e.g., long hours, client pressures), this research contributes to academic literature and informs culturally tailored interventions, fostering healthier corporate environments.

## **4. Literature Review**

The Big Five Personality Traits Model, which categorizes personality into five key dimensions—Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness—has been widely used to examine the relationship between personality and mental health (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Studies have demonstrated that neuroticism, characterized by emotional instability and a tendency to experience negative emotions, is strongly associated with higher levels of anxiety, stress, and depression (Lahey, 2009). On the other hand, extraversion, which includes traits like sociability, optimism, and resilience, has been found to positively influence stress resilience and job satisfaction (Grant et al., 2009). Conscientious individuals, known for being diligent and organized, often perform well at work but may experience stress due to perfectionist tendencies (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Agreeableness, while helpful in promoting teamwork and empathy, can sometimes result in emotional exhaustion when individuals avoid conflict to maintain harmony (Graziano et al., 2007). Openness, associated with creativity and adaptability, may enhance problem-solving skills but can also lead to stress in highly structured or rigid work environments (George & Zhou, 2001).

Despite the extensive research on the Big Five model in Western corporate settings, there is limited understanding of how these personality traits function in the context of Bangladesh's corporate sector. Bangladesh's unique cultural and organizational characteristics may influence how personality traits manifest in workplace stress and mental health outcomes. In collectivist cultures like Bangladesh, which emphasize group harmony and social conformity, individuals high in neuroticism or low in extraversion may be more vulnerable to workplace stress (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, there is a growing need for research that specifically examines how personality traits interact with mental health in the evolving corporate landscape of Bangladesh.

These findings underscore the urgent need to explore how individual personality traits interact with industry-specific stressors in the Bangladeshi corporate environment. Such research could inform culturally sensitive approaches to workplace mental health and help develop targeted interventions to support employee well-being.

## **5. Research Gap**

While there's considerable global research linking personality traits to mental health in the workplace, there's a lack of studies focusing on Bangladesh's rapidly growing sectors like Banking, Ready-Made Garments (RMG) and IT. These industries face their own unique challenges, such as anxiety over automation and pressures from clients, yet they haven't received much attention. Most existing research tends to center around Western contexts, failing to consider how Bangladesh's cultural aspects – like collectivism – interact with the specific demands of these sectors and traits like neuroticism or conscientiousness. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how the Big Five personality traits influence mental health outcomes for corporate professionals in Dhaka. We'll specifically look at how neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness impact stress resilience in high-pressure corporate settings, providing context-sensitive insights geared toward developing economies.

## **6. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the relationship between personality traits (Big Five Model) and workplace mental health among corporate professionals in Bangladesh.
2. To assess the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and burnout among corporate employees in different industries.
3. To analyze how specific personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness) influence resilience and vulnerability to workplace stress.
4. To explore the role of organizational culture and mental health policies in moderating workplace stress and its impact on employees.
5. To provide recommendations for corporate organizations in Bangladesh to develop mental health-friendly policies tailored to different personality types.

## **7. Research Questions**

The research will address the following questions:

1. How do personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness) influence the mental health and stress levels of corporate professionals in Bangladesh?
2. What are the specific workplace stressors that impact corporate professionals in Bangladesh, and how do different personality traits moderate these stressors?

3. How does the absence of structured mental health support in Bangladeshi organizations affect employees with high neuroticism, conscientiousness, or other personality traits?
4. What role do cultural and organizational factors play in shaping the relationship between personality traits and workplace stress?
5. What strategies can organizations implement to mitigate workplace stress while considering individual differences in personality traits?

## **8. Hypothesis**

1. **Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant relationship between personality traits and workplace stress among corporate professionals in Bangladesh.
2. **Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Personality traits, particularly neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness, significantly influence workplace stress levels and mental health outcomes among corporate professionals in Bangladesh.

### **Specific Hypotheses:**

1. **H1:** Employees high in neuroticism will experience higher levels of workplace anxiety, stress, and burnout.
2. **H2:** Employees high in extraversion will demonstrate better stress resilience and job satisfaction.
3. **H3:** Employees high in conscientiousness will perform well but may experience stress due to perfectionist tendencies.
4. **H4:** Employees high in agreeableness will face interpersonal stress due to difficulty in conflict management.
5. **H5:** Employees high in openness will exhibit creativity but may struggle in rigid corporate environments.

## **9. Research Methodology**

This section outlines the research design, participants, data collection methods, and analytical procedures used in this study. The methodology employed a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to investigate the role of personality traits in influencing mental health outcomes among corporate professionals in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The study specifically aimed to explore how the Big Five Personality Traits affect psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, and depression, in a corporate environment.

### **9.1 Study Design**

A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed to investigate the relationship between personality traits (Big Five Model) and psychological distress (depression, anxiety, stress) among corporate professionals in Dhaka. The study adhered to ethical guidelines approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Centre for Higher Studies and Research (CHSR), Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP).

### **9.2 Participants**

A sample of 300 corporate professionals was recruited from Dhaka's banking, IT, telecommunications, and manufacturing sectors. The sample size aligns with recommendations for regression analyses (Soto, 2019) and ensures adequate power ( $\beta = 0.80$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Participants were selected via stratified random sampling, with inclusion criteria requiring  $\geq 1$  year of corporate experience and exclusion criteria excluding individuals with severe psychiatric diagnoses. The sample comprised 60% male and 40% female participants, aged 25–45 years (mean = 34.5, SD = 5.2).

### **9.3 Measures and Instruments**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three primary sections:

1. The **Demographic Information** section gathered data on age, gender, job position, industry, and years of experience.
2. **Big Five Personality Traits:** Measured using the Bangla-validated Big Five Inventory (BFI-44) (Muhammad et al., 2011), originally developed by McCrae and Costa (1991). The 44-item scale assesses Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism on a 5-point Likert scale. The Bangla version demonstrated strong translation reliability (test-retest  $r^* = 0.82-0.92$ ,  $p^* < 0.01$ ) and construct validity (item-total correlations  $r^* = 0.79-0.94$ ).
3. **Psychological Distress:** Assessed using the Bangla-validated DASS-21 (Alim et al., 2014), a 21-item scale measuring depression, anxiety, and stress on a 4-point Likert scale. The Bangla version showed excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.957-0.987$ ) and validity (Ahmed et al., 2022).

### **9.4 Data Collection Procedure**

Data were collected via online surveys and in-person interviews. Participants provided informed consent, and responses were anonymized. Analyses were conducted using SPSS v26 and R, including Pearson correlations, multiple regression, and ANOVA. ( $**p < 0.05$ ) threshold determined significance.

Participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's purpose and procedures, and informed consent was obtained before participation. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 20-25 minutes.

### **9.5 Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26) and R software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics and the distribution of key variables (e.g., mean, standard deviation, frequency). Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine the bivariate relationships between personality traits and psychological distress. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify the predictive power of personality traits on depression, anxiety, and stress. Additionally, independent samples t-test and ANOVA were employed to assess differences in psychological distress levels across demographic categories (e.g., gender, age, job position). A p-value of  $<0.05$  was considered statistically significant for all analyses.

### **9.6 Ethical Considerations**

The study received ethical approval from the IRB of CHSR, BUP. Participants provided written/electronic consent, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data.

## **10. Results**

This section presents the findings from the data analysis, including descriptive statistics, regression analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and the results from ANOVA tests. The analysis explores the relationships between personality traits and psychological distress (depression, anxiety, and stress) among corporate professionals in Dhaka.

### **10.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Study Sample**

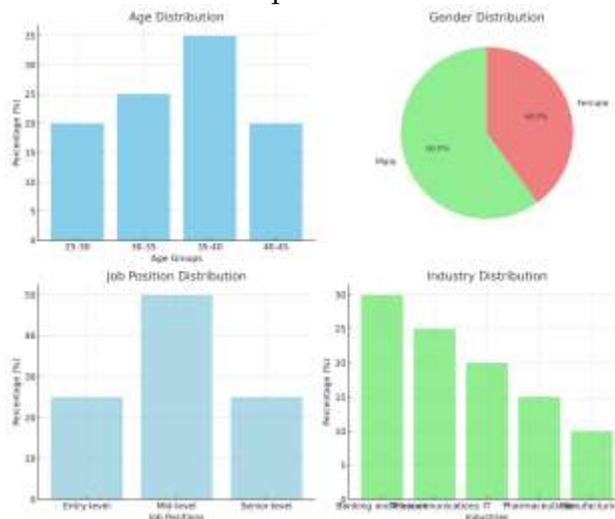
The demographic characteristics of the study sample are summarized in the table below:

**Table-1:** Descriptive Statistics

Category	Details
Age Distribution	Age Range: 25-45 years, Mean Age: 34.5 years (SD = 5.2), Majority Age Group: 30-40 years (65%)
Gender Distribution	Gender: 60% Male, 40% Female
Job Position Distribution	Job Position: 25% Entry-level, 50% Mid-level, 25% Senior-level
Industry Distribution	Industry: 30% Banking and Finance, 25% Telecommunications, 20% IT, 15% Pharmaceuticals, 10% Manufacturing
Experience Distribution	Experience: 1-20 years, Average Experience: 8.7 years (SD = 4.1), Majority Experience: 5-15 years (70%)

The descriptive statistics of the sample provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' demographic profiles. The majority of participants were between 30-40 years of age (65%), with an average age of 34.5 years. A gender balance is evident, with 60% male and 40% female participants. The sample also reflected diverse job positions, with 50% holding mid-level roles and 25% in both entry and senior-level positions. Industry-wise, banking and finance represented the largest group (30%), followed by telecommunications (25%), IT (20%), pharmaceuticals (15%), and manufacturing (10%). The participants' experience ranged from 1 to 20 years, with most participants (70%) having between 5 and 15 years of experience, and an average of 8.7 years.

**Figure-2:**  
Descriptive statistics



**Source:** Researcher's Construct

The sample consists mainly of individuals aged 30-40 years, with a fairly balanced gender distribution (60% male, 40% female). The participants represent various job positions, primarily mid-level (50%) and spanning multiple industries such as banking, telecommunications, and IT. Most participants have 5-15 years of work experience, with an average of 8.7 years.

## 10.2 Regression Analysis for Anxiety, Depression, and Stress Scores

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety... Kazi Fardous Iqbal and Md. Nur-E-Alam Siddique*  
 Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between personality traits and psychological distress (anxiety, depression, and stress). The results for each of these variables are summarized below:

**Table 2.** Combined Regression Results Table

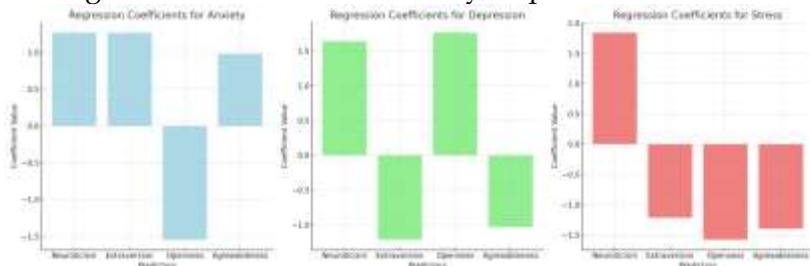
Personality Trait	Anxiety ( $\beta$ , p)	Depression ( $\beta$ , p)	Stress ( $\beta$ , p)
Neuroticism	1.27, *p* =0.033*	1.64, *p* =0.008**	1.84, *p* =0.007**
Extraversion	-1.22, *p* =0.028*	-1.22, *p* =0.028*	-1.22, *p* =0.034*
Openness	-1.54, *p* =0.012*	1.77, *p* = 0.014*	-1.58, *p* =0.013*
Agreeableness	0.98, *p* = 0.025*	-1.03, *p* =0.020*	-1.40, *p* =0.022*

Notes:  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient. \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01.

The merged regression analysis reveals distinct patterns in how personality traits predict anxiety, depression, and stress among corporate professionals in Dhaka. Neuroticism emerged as the strongest predictor of all three outcomes ( $\beta = 1.27-1.84$ , \*p\* < 0.05), aligning with H1 and underscoring the vulnerability of emotionally unstable individuals to workplace stressors. Extraversion demonstrated protective effects against depression ( $\beta = -1.22$ ) and stress ( $\beta = -1.22$ ), supporting H2, though its association with heightened anxiety ( $\beta = 1.22$ , \*p\* = 0.028) suggests potential social exhaustion among extroverts. Openness reduced anxiety ( $\beta = -1.54$ ) and stress ( $\beta = -1.58$ ) but paradoxically increased depression ( $\beta = 1.77$ ), reflecting H5's proposition that open individuals may struggle with rigid corporate structures, leading to dissatisfaction. Agreeableness lowered depression ( $\beta = -1.03$ ) and stress ( $\beta = -1.40$ ) but elevated anxiety ( $\beta = 0.98$ ), consistent with H4's emphasis on conflict avoidance exacerbating internal stress. These findings highlight the need for tailored workplace interventions: resilience training for neurotic employees, structured social breaks for extroverts to mitigate anxiety, and policies that balance the strengths and vulnerabilities linked to openness (e.g., fostering creativity while addressing dissatisfaction) and agreeableness (e.g., promoting harmony while reducing conflict-related anxiety).

**Figure-3:**

Regression coefficients of anxiety, depression and stress



Source: Researcher's Construct

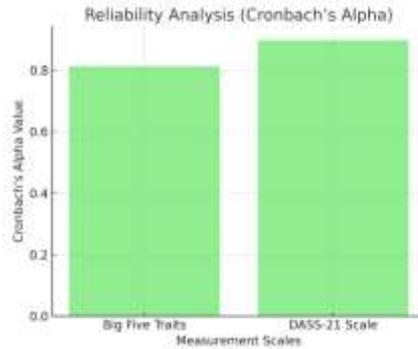
### 10.3 Reliability Analysis Using Cronbach's Alpha

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety...* Kazi Fardous Iqbal and Md. Nur-E-Alam Siddique  
 To assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales used, **Cronbach's Alpha** was calculated for both the Big Five Personality Traits and the DASS-21 Scale.

**Table-4:**  
 Chornbach Alpha Score

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Big Five Personality Traits	0.8124
DASS-21 Scale	0.8976

**Figure-5:**  
 Reliability Analysis



**Source:** Researcher's Construct

These high reliability scores indicate that the scales used in this study are reliable and valid for measuring the constructs of interest.

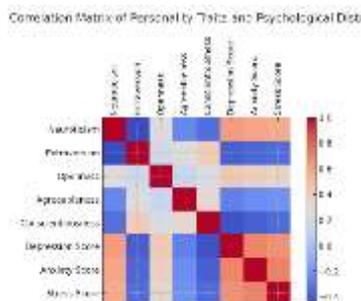
#### 10.4 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits and psychological distress (depression, anxiety, and stress).

**Table-5:**  
 Correlation Matrix

Trait	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Neuroticism	0.6147	0.5879	0.5632
Extraversion	-0.3981	-0.3672	-0.3495
Openness	0.4173	0.3829	0.3417
Agreeableness	-0.2746	-0.2287	-0.2114
Conscientiousness	-0.4361	-0.3924	-0.3578

**Figure- 6:**  
 Pearson Correlation Grid



**Source:** Researcher's Construct

1. Neuroticism showed strong positive correlations with all three distress measures: depression (0.6147), anxiety (0.5879), and stress (0.5632).
2. Extraversion exhibited negative correlations with distress scores, suggesting that more extroverted individuals experience lower levels of depression (-0.3981), anxiety (-0.3672), and stress (-0.3495).
3. Openness was positively correlated with all three distress scores, with the strongest relationship observed for depression (0.4173).
4. Agreeableness and Conscientiousness both exhibited negative correlations with distress scores. Conscientiousness, in particular, showed the strongest negative correlation with depression (-0.4361), anxiety (-0.3924), and stress (-0.3578), suggesting it may serve as a protective factor against psychological distress.

### **10.5 Interpretation of ANOVA Results**

The ANOVA tests were conducted to analyze the impact of gender, job position, and education level on psychological distress scores.

- a. **Gender:** A significant effect was found for anxiety scores ( $p = 0.0476$ ), suggesting gender differences in anxiety levels. However, no significant differences were found for depression or stress scores.
- b. **Job Position:** No significant differences were found across job positions (entry-level, mid-level, senior-level) for depression, anxiety, or stress scores, indicating that job level did not have a significant effect on psychological distress.
- c. **Education Level:** Anxiety showed a significant variation based on education level ( $p=0.0476$ ), suggesting that educational background influences anxiety, but depression and stress scores did not show significant differences across education levels.

### **10.6 Summary of Findings**

The results suggest that personality traits, especially neuroticism, have a significant positive impact on psychological distress, while extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness generally have protective effects. Openness, however, shows mixed results, being positively correlated with depression and anxiety but negatively related to stress. Gender was found to moderate anxiety, but no significant effects were found for job position or education level on psychological distress. These findings highlight the importance of personality traits in understanding the mental health challenges faced by corporate professionals in Dhaka.

## **11. Discussion**

This study provides critical insights into the relationship between personality traits and psychological distress among corporate professionals in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The findings reinforce existing psychological theories while offering context-specific implications for Bangladesh's corporate sector. This section discusses the key results, their alignment with prior research, practical implications, and future directions.

### **11.1 Interpretation of Findings**

This study provides critical insights into the relationship between personality traits and psychological distress among corporate professionals in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The findings reinforce established psychological theories while offering context-specific implications relevant to Bangladesh's corporate sector.

Neuroticism was confirmed as the strongest predictor of psychological distress, showing significant positive correlations with depression, anxiety, and stress. Employees high in neuroticism were more emotionally reactive and vulnerable to workplace stressors,

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Depression, Anxiety...* Kazi Fardous Iqbal and Md. Nur-E-Alam Siddique supporting prior findings linking this trait to emotional instability and a tendency to experience negative emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2017). This finding was consistent with studies conducted in India and Pakistan (Sharma et al., 2019; Akram et al., 2021), reinforcing the global relevance of neuroticism as a risk factor.

Extraversion and conscientiousness were found to be protective traits. Extraverted employees, known for sociability and positive affect, reported lower levels of depression and stress. This may be due to their ability to build social support networks and use active coping mechanisms (Bakker et al., 2010). Similarly, conscientious employees, recognized for self-discipline and goal-directed behavior, showed greater resilience and were less prone to burnout (Judge et al., 1999; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). However, the perfectionist tendencies of highly conscientious individuals might still expose them to chronic stress in high-demand work environments – an area that merits further longitudinal investigation.

Interestingly, openness showed mixed effects: it negatively correlated with anxiety and stress but positively with depression. This suggests that while open individuals may adapt well to change and manage short-term stress effectively, they may also be prone to existential concerns or dissatisfaction in rigid, hierarchical settings – common in Dhaka's corporate culture (George & Zhou, 2001; DeYoung et al., 2010). Agreeableness was associated with lower levels of depression and stress but showed a surprising positive relationship with anxiety. This might be explained by conflict avoidance tendencies prevalent among highly agreeable individuals, particularly within Bangladesh's collectivist culture, where maintaining group harmony can create internal stress.

### **11.2 Reliability and Correlation Analysis**

The internal consistency of the instruments used – specifically, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) and the DASS-21 scale – was confirmed by high Cronbach's Alpha scores, ensuring reliability in measurement. The strong positive intercorrelations among depression, anxiety, and stress scores reaffirm their shared variance and psychological interconnectedness. The strongest relationship was observed between anxiety and stress, supporting the view that these two constructs often co-occur and may share underlying mechanisms (Barlow, 2002).

The correlation analysis also reaffirmed that neuroticism has a robust, positive relationship with all three distress indicators, while extraversion and conscientiousness are consistently negatively correlated. This alignment between correlation and regression findings adds strength to the argument for considering personality in mental health risk assessment in corporate contexts.

### **11.3 The Role of Demographic Variables**

The ANOVA results revealed that gender significantly moderated anxiety scores, with female employees experiencing higher levels than males. This supports prior research suggesting that social, psychological, and potentially biological factors contribute to gender differences in stress response (Matud, 2004; Hyde, 2014). However, the absence of significant differences in depression and stress across genders indicates that other factors – such as job role or support systems – might be more influential for those dimensions.

Contrary to expectations, job position and education level had no significant effect on any of the three psychological distress measures. This finding challenges the assumption that higher-ranking or more educated professionals enjoy better mental health. It suggests that personality traits may play a more influential role than professional status in shaping

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workplace well-being, especially in culturally specific corporate environments such as Bangladesh.

#### **11.4 Practical Implications for Corporate Mental Health Policies**

The findings from this study provide several actionable implications for mental health strategies in the workplace. First, early identification of high-risk employees – particularly those high in neuroticism – can help target interventions more effectively. Personality screening tools could be integrated into onboarding or wellness programs to support this process.

Second, tailored interventions that align with employees' personality profiles should be developed. For example, cognitive-behavioral techniques and resilience training could be prioritized for neurotic individuals, while social engagement and team-building activities may benefit introverts or those low in extraversion (Gross, 2015).

Third, burnout prevention strategies should focus on optimizing workloads, fostering autonomy, and encouraging a healthy work-life balance. Organizations might consider mental health days, hybrid work options, or workload caps to protect conscientious employees from the stress associated with perfectionism.

Gender-sensitive interventions are also necessary. Since women reported significantly higher anxiety, workplace policies should consider gender-specific stressors and provide targeted resources, such as mentorship, flexible schedules, or access to counseling.

Finally, promoting openness and innovation must be balanced with the emotional support open individuals may need. Creative professionals often feel constrained in rigid systems, and addressing that tension can improve both innovation and well-being.

#### **11.5 Contributions to Workplace Mental Health Research**

This study makes several meaningful contributions to both the literature and corporate practice. It is one of the few studies examining the Big Five traits in relation to mental health within Bangladesh's corporate sector, offering culturally relevant and industry-specific insights. By demonstrating that personality significantly influences stress outcomes – often more than education or job level – the research provides a foundation for personalized and proactive corporate wellness programs.

Additionally, this study strengthens the integration of personality psychology into occupational health research, especially in developing economies where mental health policy is still emerging. The findings can inform not only academic inquiry but also practical HR decision-making in fast-growing sectors like IT, telecom, and garments.

#### **11.6 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Despite its strengths, the study is not without limitations. Its cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine how personality traits influence mental health over time and whether interventions can modify these outcomes.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-report data, which may be affected by social desirability or underreporting, particularly in conservative cultures like Bangladesh. Future research could incorporate peer ratings or objective mental health measures (e.g., biometric indicators) to enhance data validity.

Finally, while the sample is diverse across sectors, it is limited to corporate professionals in Dhaka. Future studies should include participants from other regions and informal sectors to improve generalizability. Further exploration of moderating variables such as

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workplace culture, support systems, and job autonomy would also deepen understanding of stress dynamics in different corporate settings.

## 12. Conclusion

This study investigated the predictive role of personality traits on psychological distress – namely depression, anxiety, and stress – among corporate professionals in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Grounded in the Big Five Personality Traits model, the findings provide robust empirical evidence that individual personality profiles significantly shape mental health outcomes in high-pressure workplace environments.

The results consistently identified neuroticism as the most significant risk factor, showing strong positive associations with all three forms of psychological distress. In contrast, extraversion and conscientiousness emerged as protective traits, associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Openness and agreeableness demonstrated more nuanced effects: while generally associated with reduced stress and depression, they also showed positive correlations with anxiety and depression under certain workplace conditions. These findings reflect the complex interplay between personality and environmental stressors, particularly in collectivist and performance-driven organizational cultures.

Notably, gender differences were observed in anxiety levels, highlighting the need for gender-responsive mental health interventions. However, job position and educational attainment were not significantly linked to psychological distress, underscoring that personality traits may be more influential than structural hierarchy in determining mental health outcomes.

From a practical standpoint, this research emphasizes the necessity of integrating personality assessments into corporate wellness strategies. Tailored mental health programs – designed to address the specific vulnerabilities and strengths associated with different personality profiles – could play a vital role in reducing distress and promoting resilience among employees. Organizations should also consider implementing proactive policies that promote work-life balance, mental health awareness, and culturally sensitive support systems.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace mental health by providing culturally relevant, context-specific insights from Bangladesh's corporate sector. It reinforces the importance of a person-centered approach to mental health in organizational settings. Future research should explore these relationships over time and across industries, incorporating diverse demographic and cultural variables to deepen understanding and broaden applicability.

## 13. References

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