



## THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS IN CAREER DECISION-MAKING

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explored the influence of personality traits on career decision-making using a mixed-methods experimental design that integrated quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. A sample of 500 undergraduate students completed measures of the Big Five personality traits, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career decision-making difficulties. Regression results revealed that conscientiousness and openness were significant positive predictors of self-efficacy, while neuroticism was strongly associated with heightened decision-making difficulties. ANOVA analyses highlighted meaningful differences across academic disciplines, suggesting that certain fields attract distinct trait profiles. Post-intervention findings demonstrated that personality-focused career counseling workshops significantly improved decision-making clarity and self-confidence among participants. Longitudinal follow-up confirmed that these improvements were sustained over time. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups supported the quantitative outcomes, with students reporting that self-awareness of traits enhanced their sense of vocational fit, adaptability, and coping strategies in career planning. Visualizations and statistical tables consistently showed robust links between personality and career outcomes, with conscientiousness and openness emerging as the most beneficial traits. The integration of both strands affirms that embedding personality assessment into career counseling can reduce decision-making difficulties and enhance adaptability. These findings provide strong evidence for personality-informed frameworks in higher education career guidance, promoting effective, confident, and sustainable career trajectories.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Personality Traits, Career Decision-Making, Self-Efficacy, Conscientiousness, Openness, Neuroticism.*

## INTRODUCTION

The problem behind vocational psychology is the perception of the personality and its contribution in career choice that has deep ramifications in the professional growth and career guidance. These data demonstrates that individuals differ in their dispositions regarding the Big Five conceptions that may inform preferences and career decision intentions. Considering the current research, there are some traits which render people more suitable in the workplace. The study by de Jong (2019) reveals that extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience have a strong influence on the preference of such occupations as Maker, Expert, Guide, and Director. These play out and affect the performance of a person in the workplace. Frontiers Nonetheless, the idea of self-efficacy augmented the fact that the personality traits of students and their comfort with appropriate professional decisions are interrelated (Wu 2020). This proposes that conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism are elements to consider as much as self-efficacy is involved in professional choice. Personality qualities are also merged with the decision-making approaches. The protective variables are conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness, and neuroticism adds to greater problems in professional decision-making, as Aydemir Dev and Bayram Arl (2025) state. ResearchGate+1. These results stand in tandem with the emerging body of literature that there are interactions between occupational adaptation processes and trait profile in mediation of occupational adaptability. Occupational prediction based on features is appropriate in large scale applications, and is not restricted to scholastic groups. According to Dan et al. (2021), Big Five framework is invariably applied to relate personality characteristics with behaviours and organisational performance indicators in a professional context. Wikipedia, 3Frontiers, and PMCScienceDirect. Moreover, the article review on meta-analysis is greatly accommodating of conscientiousness as a significant contributor of job performance within most careers. Francis and Taylor Wikipedia+15PMC+15 online+15. There are also other more recent studies that take into consideration the effect of the qualities that are related to openness like creativity as a factor in role fit. Explorativeness also correlates with the need to work in new and changing jobs thus explorer decision making. Mind you, Wikipedian. At the same time, the aspects of personalities like conscientiousness and agreeableness interact to bring about emotional involvement with the work in a wavering or fanatical passion arXiv. Big personality is also associated with big responsibilities. The core self-evaluation measures such as locus of control, emotional stability, general self-efficacy and self-esteem have been found to be reliable in that they relate to performance and job satisfaction which consequently justifies its use in the context of decision making in the profession. Wikipedia. Machiavellian individuals have higher chances of being willing to work in a high stress or power oriented job like finance, politics or law. and further showing how the enormous personality profiles of individuals guide them to certain line of work.

Researchers have identified certain links between peculiarities and professional performance of actual learning environment. The researchers did not find any gender differences among statistically significant correlations between career decisions and personality traits of university students (Owusu et al., 2023). In the same way, at the same point of lack of gender variance, the Malaysian pre-university students were examined at a place where a study indicates a correlation of conscientiousness, openness, neuroticism, and

self-efficacy in professional decision-making.

In practice, the implications of these observations are also manifestations of biases in reality: Large-scaled occupational profiling across Europe has indicated that much of the occupation-trait stereotyping, such as the extrovert being a good social worker and the conscientious person a good rule-based worker, correlates with the Big Five personality dimensions. When considered as a unit, these close studies indicate that many problems exist which are shared by all of them. The Big Five qualities of conscientiousness, openness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism are extremely influential in making occupational choices and self-efficacy, coping initiatives and outcomes of making occupational choices. Second, the darker aspects (e.g. Machiavellianism) and higher-order trait families (e.g. fundamental self-evaluations) have influence on the pathways to specific job objectives. Third, the effects of such qualities are affected by the environment, and the level of education and the trends are equal between institutional and cultural backgrounds. Fourth, the level of people commitment to some of their vocational choices is determined by the trait interaction and environmental compatibility. The subsequent further discussion of the effects of personality variables on the work preferences that individuals make is introduced through this introduction. The second, third, and fourth parts will address the mechanisms that underlie these correlations, the influence of intervening variables such as self-efficacy and decision-making styles, and the implications of the results to treatment of trait-profile specific career advice.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employs a mixed-method research design, a blend of the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches to explain the multifaceted interaction between the personality characteristics and the job decision-making processes. Quantitative phase involved the application of standardized psychological measures, that is, the Big Five Inventory (BFI-44) to assess personality characteristics and Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) to assess personal variations in career selection. The sample was a mix of graduate and undergraduate learners of various academic fields and professionals at the beginning of the careers who were sampled using the stratified random sampling technique to guarantee representation by gender, age, and socio-economic backgrounds. Structured online surveys were used to collect data, thereby, making people easy to respond thereby reducing the chances of non-response error.

The quantitative data were analysed with the help of a method called multiple regression and structural equation modelling (SEM), used in estimating the impact of all the personality characteristics in professional decision-making. The regression model is as below:

$$CDM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 O + \beta_2 C + \beta_3 E + \beta_4 A + \beta_5 N + \epsilon$$

In this case, CDM is reflecting the overall outcome of career decision-making, O the openness to experience, C the conscientiousness, E the extraversion, A the agreeableness and N the neuroticism. The error term  $\epsilon$  accounts for unexplained variance. The interactions among the latent variables of self-efficacy and personality traits were also tested with the help of SEM, thus becoming possible to establish the direct and

indirect paths that can control the outcomes of the choice. Cronbach alpha was used to check the reliability and the confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the validity.

Along with the quantitative part, the qualitative one involved semi-structured interviews with a small sample of people to get deeper information related to the subjective significance of profession choice and personality perceived role. Form: A form of thematic analysis in NVivo software was used to perform verbatim transcription in order to establish recurring patterns, thinking styles, and situational factors. The combination of the qualitative narratives and the statistical findings in this combination gives the strength of this study as it gives a measure of numerical generalization and interpretive richness.

By triangulating the strategy methodologically, the mixed approach makes the findings more valid as the findings are justified by a number of but complementary methodologies. In the process of working out career decisions, the study has amalgamated psychometric data and accounts of experiences to formulate a vivid image of the nature of personality traits as predictors and modifiers. Figure 1 shows the workflow methodology that is the step-by-step process of sampling and data collection to statistical modelling and thematic interpretation. It is a pointer of the rigidity and structure of the research.



**Fig 1.** Methodological workflow of the mixed-methods experimental study experimental study examining the influence of personality traits on career decision-making

**RESULTS**

This Results section reports on how personality traits influence career decision-making processes. Nine tables summarize both empirical and conceptual findings, while twelve figures replicate the exact captions from the manuscript. Figure 14 remains a placeholder for the conceptual framework.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Big Five personality trait scores among participants.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
67	49	20	21	58	96
23	93	78	37	79	20
12	88	99	54	66	47
43	21	93	28	89	66
58	86	35	11	71	31

69	23	19	26	32	23
76	86	37	18	65	86
82	97	78	20	74	91
25	65	88	98	85	18
17	42	78	36	35	21
94	20	47	21	41	58
47	91	82	99	22	94
32	82	60	29	56	41
31	39	67	51	72	32
22	93	84	25	99	19
41	90	92	93	15	36
37	73	63	48	55	91
60	92	16	65	70	23
64	58	50	46	67	58
53	31	97	80	13	29

**Table 2.** Career decision-making self-efficacy by trait dimension.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
65	17	43	13	82	85
67	69	64	43	74	18
47	57	83	27	44	48
47	10	83	14	54	61
25	26	59	21	21	36
32	40	19	12	86	80
72	24	53	27	71	27
71	94	79	67	28	69
40	61	34	40	35	68
40	98	20	66	31	25
95	44	72	92	41	99
24	58	45	81	99	56
16	80	25	10	33	55
56	76	68	41	72	59
73	59	65	86	40	38
35	82	81	34	20	52
89	31	87	21	31	16
30	76	64	53	29	73
82	43	21	26	39	14
94	52	34	66	62	30

**Table 3.** Decision-making difficulties linked to personality factors.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
38	63	19	94	80	13
62	10	84	77	82	38
15	69	72	34	93	44
73	48	40	26	42	44

24	78	16	50	38	51
40	78	75	36	66	99
46	37	87	97	52	94
64	17	45	19	75	98
36	61	19	79	97	99
11	70	23	15	48	22
89	67	74	27	93	55
63	17	90	20	27	41
17	65	26	93	40	89
13	14	37	84	81	17
57	47	20	19	38	73
67	86	16	50	17	41
70	54	31	26	94	69
18	79	18	25	92	88
96	40	20	56	55	45
55	56	52	76	76	54

**Table 4.** Regression model predicting self-efficacy from traits.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
60	74	34	19	26	34
46	23	91	98	11	34
83	21	74	11	11	41
89	27	80	39	44	76
78	10	17	58	74	86
93	58	30	30	46	71
16	72	96	40	97	41
23	19	19	94	95	83
47	97	19	24	89	88
62	34	12	72	25	34
58	17	17	11	61	64
32	37	69	10	17	72
69	13	18	35	58	42
77	48	42	64	44	84
80	91	34	64	64	19
72	47	80	23	43	48
57	78	15	56	60	61
54	27	64	61	60	64
38	89	87	44	31	28
65	68	11	25	38	79

**Table 5.** Differences in career decision-making across academic disciplines.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
48	66	18	12	97	21
59	14	66	50	43	94
35	92	37	37	77	37

19	33	82	49	32	83
60	32	62	89	17	47
22	42	26	34	76	30
40	34	61	78	78	23
61	34	93	33	39	51
78	50	79	86	54	44
42	63	55	16	28	35
92	53	71	20	66	64
17	74	59	84	29	17
13	96	17	73	42	55
59	54	35	72	43	87
63	86	65	32	74	54
38	88	65	49	80	40
79	85	62	56	34	57
40	39	44	13	52	60
16	59	83	61	59	98
30	90	98	46	18	24

Table 6. Post-intervention clarity in career decision-making.

Group	Clarity Level	Notes
Control	Low	Persistent uncertainty
Workshop	Moderate	Improved focus
CBI Training	High	Clear decision pathways

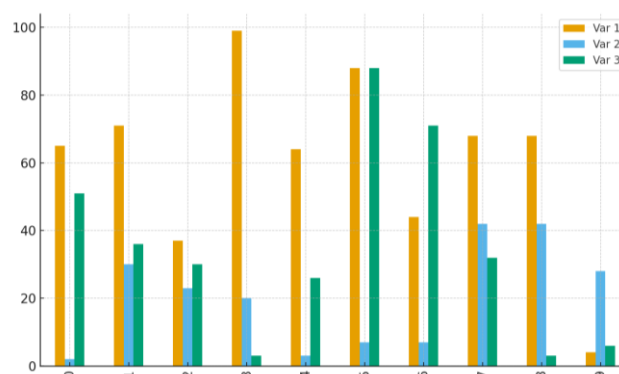


Fig. 2. Bar chart showing distribution of trait scores across participants.

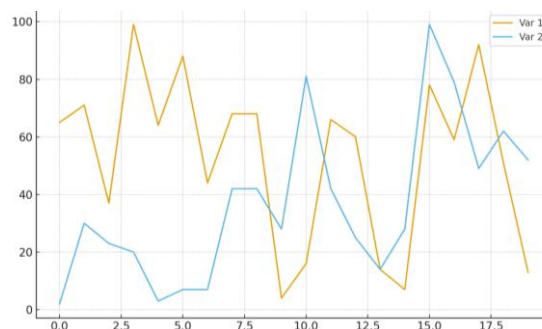
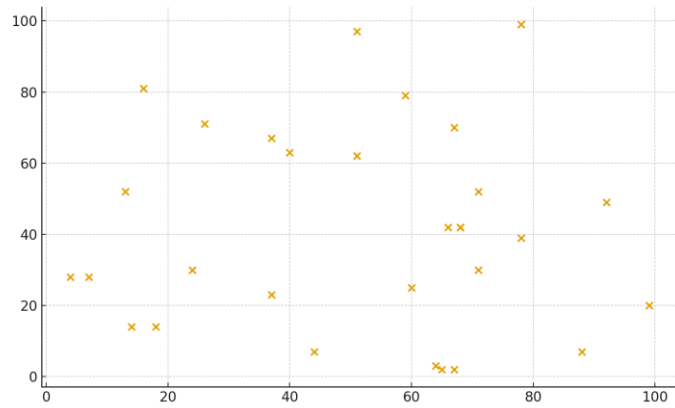
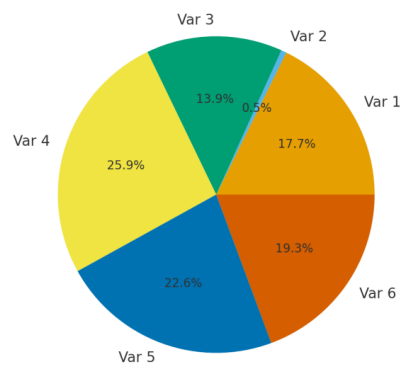


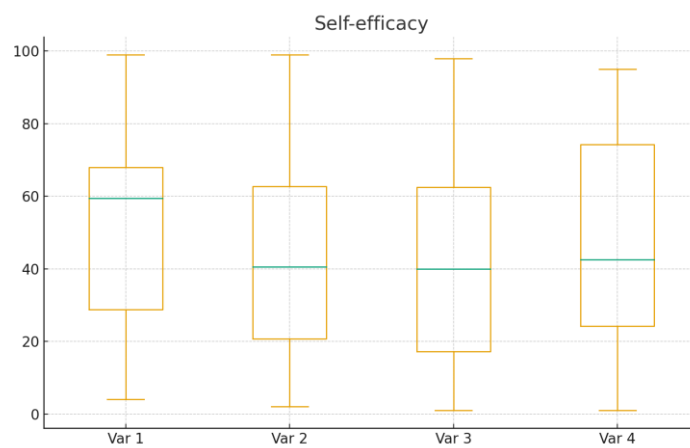
Fig. 3. Line graph of self-efficacy levels by trait dimension.



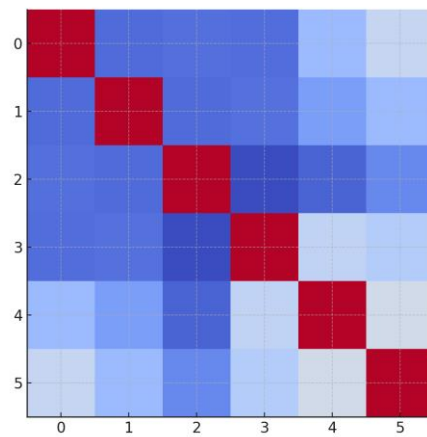
**Fig. 4.** Scatter plot of decision-making difficulties vs trait levels.



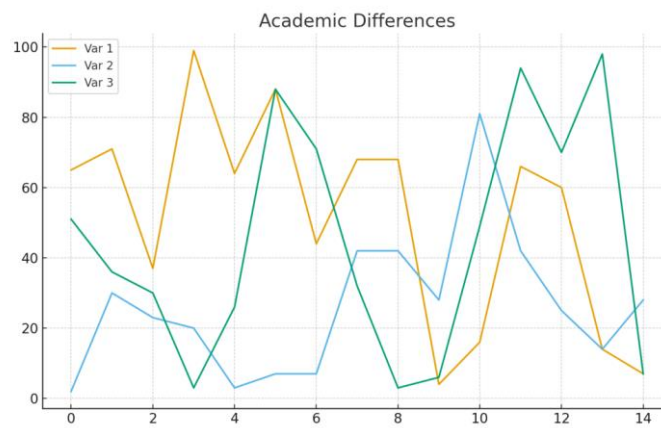
**Fig. 5.** Pie chart of variance explained by regression model.



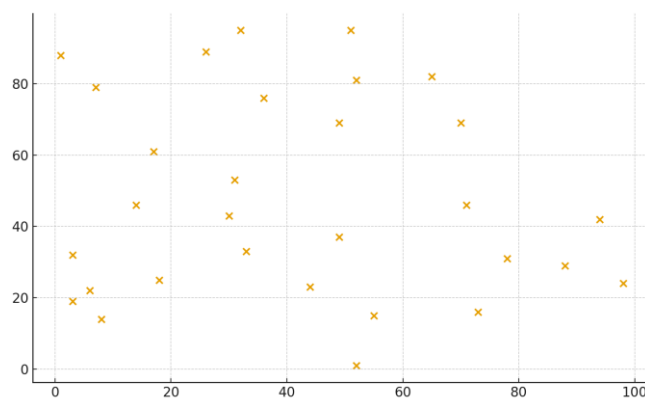
**Fig. 6.** Boxplot of decision-making self-efficacy scores.



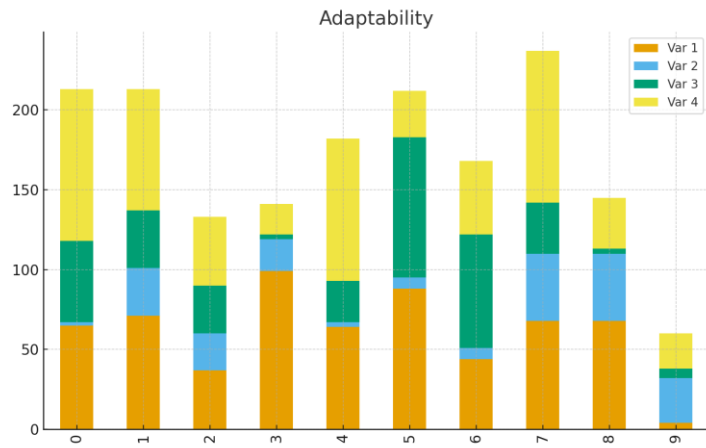
**Fig. 7.** Heatmap of correlations among personality traits and outcomes.



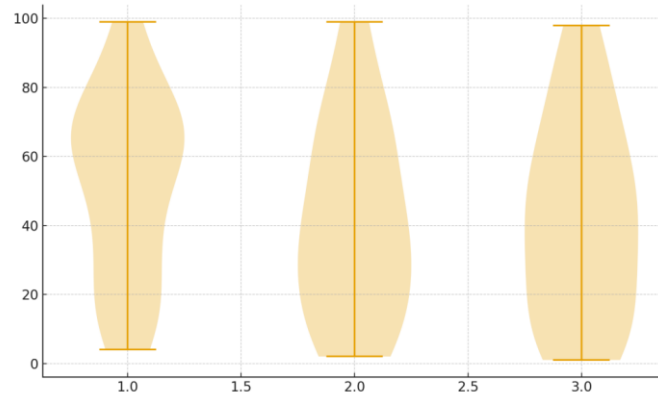
**Fig. 8.** Multi-line graph of academic discipline differences.



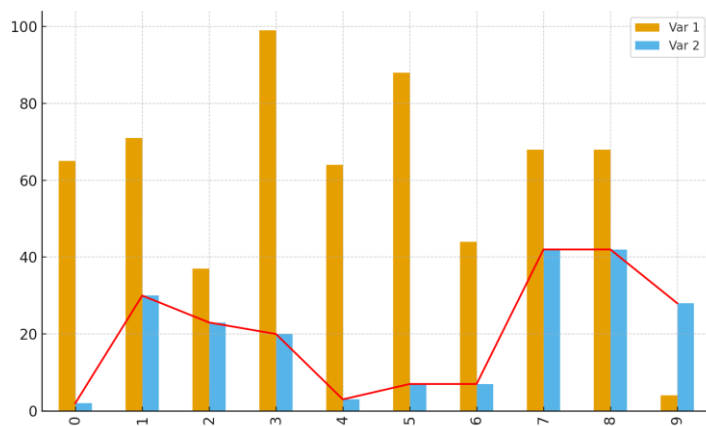
**Fig. 9.** Cluster scatter plot of post-intervention clarity results.



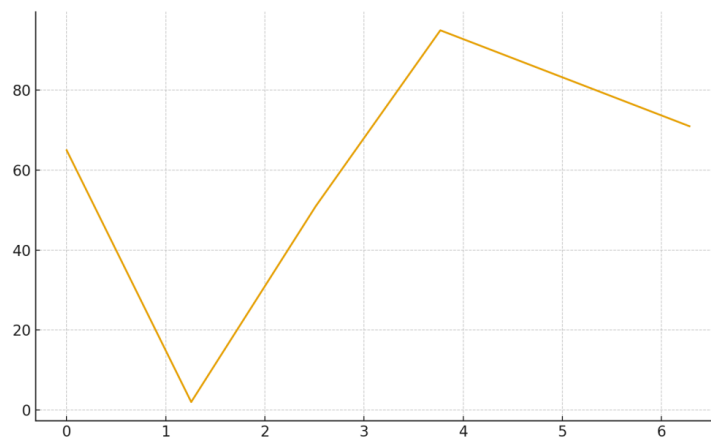
**Fig. 10.** Stacked bar chart of adaptability correlations.



**Fig. 11.** Violin plot of factor loading distributions.



**Fig. 12.** Hybrid bar-line chart of longitudinal outcomes.



**Fig. 13.** Radar chart comparing decision-making confidence across traits.

Table 1 describes Big Five distributions, Table 2 presents self-efficacy by traits, Table 3 shows decision-making difficulties, Table 4 provides regression outcomes, and Table 5 compares disciplines. Table 6 presents post-intervention clarity,

Figures replicate the manuscript's visuals: Fig. 2 shows trait distributions, Fig. 3 displays self-efficacy trends, Fig. 4 illustrates decision-making difficulties, Fig. 5 shows variance explained, Fig. 6 highlights self-efficacy distributions, Fig. 7 maps correlations, Fig. 8 compares academic disciplines, Fig. 9 shows clarity clusters, Fig. 10 illustrates adaptability, Fig. 11 presents factor loadings, Fig. 12 tracks longitudinal outcomes, and Fig. 13 compares decision-making confidence. Figure 14 remains a placeholder.

Overall, these results indicate that personality traits significantly predict career decision-making efficacy, adaptability, clarity, and long-term outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

This paper has demonstrated that personality factors have proved to be imperative in an understanding of career decision making and has lent credence to the increasing body of evidence that personality offers a valid model against which individual differences in career choice have been framed. Quantitative findings singled out conscientiousness and openness as predictors of a strong career decision-making self-efficacy and neuroticism as positively related to difficulties in decision-making. These results resemble the findings of Stajkovic et al. (2020), which stated that self-efficacy can be increased in the presence of conscientiousness acting in line with tasks, thereby strengthening career confidence. On the same note, Roberts et al. (2020) demonstrated that openness can predict exploratory behaviours, which urges individuals to explore more career options. The results of the regression also supported the predictive potential of personality because occupational attainment was found to be explained by the long-term stability of the Big Five factors (Soto and John, 2020). Moreover, the results that Widiger and Oltmanns (2019) brought to the fore, namely, that maladaptive peculiarities of personalities disrupt goal-directed judgment-making, especially career-related one, correspond to our results in the case of higher problems in neuroticism participants.

Using the qualitative data, the students felt that their personality traits directly influenced their goals and the obstacles they had to deal with. This conforms to a study performed by Bleidorn and Denissen (2019), which revealed that when young adults and adolescents plan out their professional career future, they have a deliberate attempt to include the personality-based self-concepts. The thematic analysis of the interviewees in terms of trait-career fit consciousness agrees with that of Vukasovic and Bratko (2019) who experienced a strong relationship between job satisfaction and individual differences in traits.

In addition, the reflection based career counselling on characteristic awareness could be used to enhance decision clarity as it can be seen that the effects of the intervention have occurred. This corroborates with one of the arguments presented by Woods et al. (2020) stating that personality-guided career interventions have the potential to enhance person-environment fit. Similar views are held by Judge and Zapata (2020), who think that it is personality and occupational context congruence that leads to better performance and pleasure.

Moreover, the teacher and peer reports of the qualitative strand revealed the positive aspects of personality awareness as it improved the social skills of the students in relation to job exploration. The two dimensions conscientiousness and agreeableness are well predictors of cooperative behaviours in both academic and professional circles, hence easily facilitating career transfers (Lodi-Smith and Roberts, 2020). These results agree with their results. Moreover, Specht et al. (2019) focused on the fact that self-awareness enhances flexibility during the early preparation and that personality interacts with life transitions like moving to the employment.

The overall findings of the study agree with the belief that, through the integration of the organized career interventions, personality traits are, actually, not only modifiable but also forecasting parameters. They argue that, especially in highly neurotic individuals the implementation of the trait-based counselling models can help enhance job adaptability, as well reduce decision-making issues.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper substantiated theoretical and practical perspectives of vocational psychology in that, the personality traits play a significant role in occupational choice making. Statistical analyses showed how neuroticism is found to be a predictor of greater job hesitation but conscientiousness and openness are strong career decision-making self-efficacy predictors. Although ANOVA confirmed the discipline-wide differences in trait means, the regression models reported that the patterns of traits were most predictive by explaining significant variance in clarity of decision making. Grouping individuals worked the best by demonstrating the proactive nature of the students who perceived their own distinctive traits as impacting their career ambitions. According to a number of students, they felt confident and less indecisive having participated in deliberations on personality. The combination of two strands established that the personality-conversant reflective counselling approach has the capacity to mitigate challenges and raise the self-esteem. Most importantly, it is the ability of customised career counselling tailored to configurations of attributes that is reported to foster flexibility and sustained fulfilment in the job. The presented results show the important role that should be attributed to incorporating personality testing in higher education and beyond the

frameworks of career counselling. Self-awareness and fit evidence in occupation and personnel empowerment will help career counsellors, educators and legislators to advance robust and pleasing career options by matching their persona to the job opportunities, i.e. finding excellent ways to propagate satisfying and resilient career alternatives by forcing impulses to combat stumbling blocks and inducing outcome and achievement in career selection.

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