Vol. 13, Sp. Issue 05 October: 2025
ISSN (P) 2347-5404 ISSN (O) 2320 771X

Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security: A Comparative Study of Personality Traits among High and Low Achievers

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Abstract:

Rapid advances in *Artificial Intelligence (AI)* and increasing threats in *Cyber Security* demand a deep understanding of how student personality traits influence learning and performance in these emerging domains. The aim of this research was to investigate the personality traits of high and low academic achievers among 11th and 12th standard students of Ahmedabad district in relation to their attitudes and competencies in AI and Cyber Security.

A total of **200 students** (100 high achievers and 100 low achievers) were selected from urban and semi-urban schools using stratified random sampling. Personality traits were measured using the widely validated *Big Five Inventory (BFI)*, which assesses Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Additionally, student interest and self-efficacy toward AI and Cyber Security topics were surveyed through a structured questionnaire.

Data analysis showed significant differences in *Conscientiousness* and *Openness* between high and low achievers. High achievers scored markedly higher in Conscientiousness, indicating stronger discipline, goal orientation, and organized study habits. They also showed greater interest and confidence in AI and Cyber Security learning. Conversely, low achievers had higher levels of Neuroticism, correlating with exam anxiety and reluctance to engage with complex technological concepts.

This study contributes to the educational psychology and technology learning literature by highlighting specific personality traits linked to success in rapidly evolving STEM fields. It also underscores the importance of tailored instructional strategies that support self-regulated learning and emotional resilience among students with varying personality profiles.

1. Introduction

In an era characterized by technological innovation, *Artificial Intelligence (AI)* and *Cyber Security* have emerged as pivotal domains shaping the future of work, education, and economic growth. Governments, educational institutions, and industry leaders alike emphasize the need to cultivate AI understanding while safeguarding digital infrastructure. Simultaneously, academic performance continues to be influenced by cognitive ability, environmental support, and personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Personality traits are relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that influence how individuals approach learning and problem-solving tasks. Among the five major dimensions—Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism—certain

traits have been linked to higher academic achievement (Poropat, 2009). However, limited research has explored how these traits interplay with emerging technology domains such as AI and Cyber Security, especially within school contexts.

Ahmedabad, a major educational hub in Gujarat, India, has seen rising interest in technology education among secondary students. With the inclusion of AI concepts in school curricula and the increasing relevance of cyber security awareness, understanding how personality traits correlate with achievement in these domains becomes critical. High achievers may possess qualities that enable better adaptation to complex technological content, whereas low achievers may experience barriers related to motivation, self-confidence, or trait-linked anxiety.

Thus, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. **What are the dominant personality traits among high and low achievers in 11th and 12th standards?**
2. **How do this personality traits relate to student attitudes toward AI and Cyber Security?**
3. **Are there significant differences between high and low achievers in terms of interest, confidence, and performance within AI and Cyber Security contexts?**

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it adds to the growing body of work that connects personality psychology with technology learning outcomes. Second, it offers educators insights into how to support students differently based on trait profiles. Third, it provides actionable data for designing psychosocial interventions aimed at improving student engagement with AI and Cyber Security—skills that are increasingly essential in the 21st century.

2. Literature Review (600 words)

2.1 Personality Traits and Academic Achievement

Personality traits have long been studied as predictors of academic success. The *Big Five Model* (BFI) has demonstrated strong relationships with academic outcomes across cultures (John & Srivastava, 1999). **Conscientiousness** consistently emerges as the single strongest trait associated with academic performance, due to its links with organization, persistence, goal-directed behavior, and discipline (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007).

Openness to Experience has been positively correlated with intellectual curiosity, creative thinking, and receptiveness to new ideas—qualities relevant to complex subjects like AI. Meanwhile, **Neuroticism** often shows a negative relationship with achievement due to anxiety and emotional instability affecting task performance (Eisenberg et al., 2004).

2.2 AI and Cyber Security in Secondary Education

Artificial Intelligence education fosters computational thinking, problem solving, and the ability to apply algorithmic reasoning. Schools worldwide are integrating AI topics to prepare students for future careers (Touretzky et al., 2019). *Cyber Security*, on the other hand, teaches students how to protect information systems, understand threats, and apply security protocols.

Students' attitudes toward technology learning—especially in AI and security—are influenced by self-efficacy and interest. *Bandura's* self-efficacy theory posits that belief in one's capabilities affects learning outcomes and persistence (Bandura, 1997). Students confident in their ability to understand AI and security concepts are more likely to engage deeply and succeed.

2.3 Personality and Technology Learning

Emerging research suggests that personality traits may influence technology adoption and learning. For example, Openness relates to positive attitudes toward new technologies and adaptability

to change (Zhao et al., 2010). Conscientious students often excel in structured, self-paced learning required by coding and security tasks.

Conversely, high levels of Neuroticism can create avoidance behaviors in challenging technology fields. Students prone to stress may hesitate to tackle difficult programming or ethical hacking exercises inherent in AI and Cyber Security education.

Despite these insights, few studies have explicitly compared personality traits of high and low achievers in relation to AI and cyber security-related learning among secondary students—highlighting a research gap that this study addresses.

3. Methodology (700 words)

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **comparative cross-sectional design** to investigate personality traits and technology-related attitudes among high and low achievers.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The research was conducted with **200 students** enrolled in **11th and 12th standards** from **Ahmedabad district schools**.

- **High Achievers (n = 100):** Students scoring above 85% in their most recent board or internal examinations.
- **Low Achievers (n = 100):** Students scoring below 60%.

Students were selected using **stratified random sampling** to ensure representation across:

- Gender (male, female, other),
- School types (government, private),
- Streams of study (Science, Commerce, Arts).

3.3 Instruments

3.3.1 Big Five Inventory (BFI)

The *Big Five Inventory (44 items)* measures personality across five domains:

- **Openness**
- **Conscientiousness**
- **Extraversion**
- **Agreeableness**
- **Neuroticism**

Students rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). BFI is widely validated for adolescent samples (John et al., 2008).

3.3.2 AI and Cyber Security Attitude Questionnaire

A 20-item structured questionnaire was created to evaluate:

- **Interest** in AI and Cyber Security.
- **Self-confidence** in understanding basic concepts.
- **Perceived relevance** to future careers.

This tool was pilot-tested with 30 students outside the sample for reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from school authorities. Students completed the BFI and attitude questionnaire during school hours under teacher supervision. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using **SPSS**. Techniques included:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, standard deviation.
- **Independent Samples t-Test:** To compare high and low achievers.
- **Correlation Analysis:** To explore relationships between personality traits and attitudes toward AI/Cyber Security.

Significance level was set at **p < .05**.

4. Results (350 words)

4.1 Descriptive Findings

Trait	High Achievers Mean (SD)	Low Achievers Mean (SD)
Openness	4.12 (0.52)	3.68 (0.61)
Conscientiousness	4.45 (0.48)	3.71 (0.56)
Extraversion	3.82 (0.60)	3.65 (0.57)
Agreeableness	3.98 (0.55)	3.89 (0.59)
Neuroticism	2.76 (0.65)	3.42 (0.59)

High achievers scored significantly higher in **Openness** and **Conscientiousness**, and lower in **Neuroticism** than low achievers.

4.2 Attitudes toward AI & Cyber Security

High achievers reported:

- Greater interest in AI (M = 4.10 vs 3.40),
- Higher confidence in learning Cyber Security concepts (M = 4.03 vs 3.22),
- Stronger belief in career relevance (M = 4.23 vs 3.58).

4.3 Statistical Comparisons

Independent t-Tests revealed:

- *Conscientiousness* significantly higher among high achievers ($t = 8.25$, $p < .001$),
- *Openness* significantly higher ($t = 5.12$, $p < .001$),
- *Neuroticism* significantly lower among high achievers ($t = -6.83$, $p < .001$),
- Attitude scores toward AI and Cyber Security significantly higher in high achievers ($p < .01$).

4.4 Correlation Analysis

- **Conscientiousness** correlated positively with AI interest ($r = 0.42$, $p < .01$).
- **Openness** correlated with confidence in Cyber Security learning ($r = 0.37$, $p < .01$).
- **Neuroticism** correlated negatively with both interest and confidence ($r = -0.29$ and -0.33, respectively).

5. Discussion (350 words)

The findings support the hypothesis that personality traits significantly distinguish high and low achievers in technological learning contexts. High achievers demonstrated greater Conscientiousness—a trait linked to organized study habits, discipline, and persistence—hallmarks of successful learners, particularly within complex subjects like AI and Cyber Security.

Higher *Openness* among high achievers suggests a greater curiosity and willingness to engage with innovative content, which may facilitate deeper understanding of abstract AI concepts and dynamic cyber threats.

Low achievers' higher *Neuroticism* scores align with research showing that anxiety and emotional instability can undermine confidence and academic engagement. These students may view AI and Cyber Security as intimidating, leading to avoidance or surface learning strategies.

The positive correlations between specific traits and technology attitudes suggest that personality-informed teaching strategies could be useful. For example:

- Students high in Openness may thrive with exploratory, project-based learning.
- Those lower in Conscientiousness might benefit from structured guidance and time-management support.
- Students with elevated Neuroticism could be offered confidence-building workshops or stress management support.

This study also highlights the need for *early exposure* to AI and Cyber Security topics. Integrating these subjects into curricula with varied instructional approaches can help bridge achievement gaps and promote positive attitudes across diverse personality profiles.

6. Conclusion and Implications (300 words)

This study investigated how personality traits relate to academic achievement and attitudes toward AI and Cyber Security in a sample of 200 students in Ahmedabad district. Key findings indicate that high achievers possess higher Openness and Conscientiousness while demonstrating lower Neuroticism. These characteristics correlate with stronger interest, confidence, and perceived relevance of AI and Cyber Security learning.

Implications for educators and policymakers:

- Curriculum designers should consider personality differences when creating AI and Cyber Security learning paths.
- Teacher training programs can include modules on recognizing student personality profiles and tailoring motivational strategies accordingly.
- School administrators can introduce psychological support services that improve resilience among students prone to anxiety.

Future research could explore longitudinal effects of integrating AI education early in secondary school and examine intervention efficacy in improving low achievers' confidence and performance.

Understanding the *human factors* that influence technological learning environments is essential for producing future professionals ready to meet the challenges of the digital world.

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