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UNVEILING RESEARCH PATTERNS IN PERSONALITY TRAITS: A SYSTEMATIC BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW

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Abstract:

Personality traits are pivotal in shaping human behavior and outcomes across diverse contexts, including education, health, work performance, and interpersonal relationships. As interest in this area continues to grow, a substantial body of literature has emerged. However, a structured analysis that captures global publication patterns, research trajectories, and scholarly collaborations remains limited. Thus, this study aims to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of personality traits research published between 2015 and 2025, to identify publication trends, influential authors, geographical distribution, thematic evolution, and international collaboration patterns. This study addresses the gap in understanding how the field has developed over the past decade by analysing 915 documents retrieved from the Scopus database. Data cleaning and normalisation were performed using OpenRefine, while Scopus Analyzer and VOSviewer software were employed to extract and visualise bibliometric indicators. The analysis revealed a consistent increase in publication output, particularly from 2020 onward. Notably, the United States, United Kingdom, and China were the most productive countries, and network visualisations demonstrated strong co-authorship ties across institutions and continents. Citation analysis identified the most influential authors and sources. At the same time, keyword co-occurrence mapping illustrated a thematic shift from trait measurement to applied domains such as well-being, academic achievement, and organisational behaviour. The findings of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual landscape and evolution of personality traits research, offering valuable insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. By uncovering key trends and research gaps, this bibliometric review serves as a strategic

guide for future investigations and fosters more informed, interdisciplinary, and globally collaborative efforts in the field.

Keywords:

Bibliometric Analysis, Personality Traits, Publication Trends, Research Collaboration, Scopus Database

Introduction

Understanding teacher personality traits is vital for improving educational outcomes, as these traits influence classroom climate, student behaviour, and instructional effectiveness (Assali, 2025; Berrezueta et al., 2023; Lukman et al., 2021). The widely accepted Five-Factor Model (FFM), comprising Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience, offers a robust framework for categorizing these traits (Berrezueta et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2018; Xu, 2024). These dimensions affect how teachers interact with students and their emotional influence and pedagogical success (Berrezueta et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2018; Lukman et al., 2021). Furthermore, a bibliometric analysis enables a systematic overview of existing research in this area, revealing trends, key contributors, and thematic patterns across time (Bardach et al., 2022; Čepić et al., 2015; Lukman et al., 2021). This approach highlights both the evolution of scholarship and critical gaps, supporting data-driven decision-making for educators, researchers, and policymakers. Previous bibliometric work has emphasised traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness due to their alignment with social expectations of teacher behaviour (Xu, 2024). Other studies explored connections between personality and student motivation, underscoring the relevance of emotional intelligence and personality in shaping academic performance (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021; Maamari, 2024; Maamari & Salloum, 2023). However, there remains a lack of integrative reviews across different educational settings.

This article is guided by five key Research Questions (RQs), each designed to explore a specific dimension of the scholarly landscape surrounding studies on personality traits, as follows:

RQ1: What are the research trends in personality traits studies according to the year of publication?

RQ2: Who are the top 10 authors based on research citations?

RQ3: What are the top 10 countries by number of publications?

RQ4: What are the popular keywords related to the study?

RQ5: What are the most co-authorship countries' collaborations among countries?

To better understand the scholarly landscape of research on personality traits, this study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis that reveals key patterns, contributors, and thematic focuses within the field. Guided by the Research Objectives (ROs), the study sets out to achieve the following ROs:

RO1: Analyse research trends in studies on personality traits based on the year of publication.

RO2: Identify the top 10 most cited authors in personality traits research.

RO3: Determine the top 10 countries with the highest number of publications.

RO4: Examine the most frequently used keywords in personality traits studies.

RO5: Explore international collaboration patterns through co-authorship among countries.

Literature Review

Notably, current literature still exhibits significant gaps. At the same time, systematic consolidation of findings across educational contexts is limited (Bardach et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2018), and the effects of negative traits, like neuroticism and authoritarianism, are under-researched (Berrezueta et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2018). Hence, additional inquiry is required into how personality intersects with professional development and traits like motivation and emotional intelligence (Bardach et al., 2022; Kusumawati, 2020; Maamari & Salloum, 2023).

As such, teacher personality impacts classroom interactions and influences student outcomes. Positive traits such as empathy, emotional stability, and patience foster effective teaching and productive learning environments (Assali, 2025; Berrezueta et al., 2023), while negative traits may disrupt communication and reduce instructional quality (Berrezueta et al., 2023). Traits like conscientiousness are linked to academic support, while agreeableness facilitates personal connection with students (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021; Kim et al., 2018). Meanwhile, emotional intelligence further strengthens teacher-student relationships (Maamari, 2024; Maamari & Salloum, 2023). Integrating personality trait assessments into teacher training and development initiatives could enhance effectiveness and engagement (Bardach et al., 2022; Maamari, 2024; Maamari & Salloum, 2023). Similarly, societal views have consistently valued conscientiousness and agreeableness in educators, though changing perceptions of openness reflect evolving educational paradigms (Xu, 2024). In sum, teacher personality traits are central to educational success. A bibliometric synthesis of global literature will provide essential insights into their influence on learning environments, identify emerging themes, and guide future research and educational policy (Assali, 2025; Bardach et al., 2022; Berrezueta et al., 2023; Čepić et al., 2015; Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2021; Kusumawati, 2020; Maamari, 2024). Figure 1 displays the mind map of the bibliometric analysis of teacher personality traits in this article.

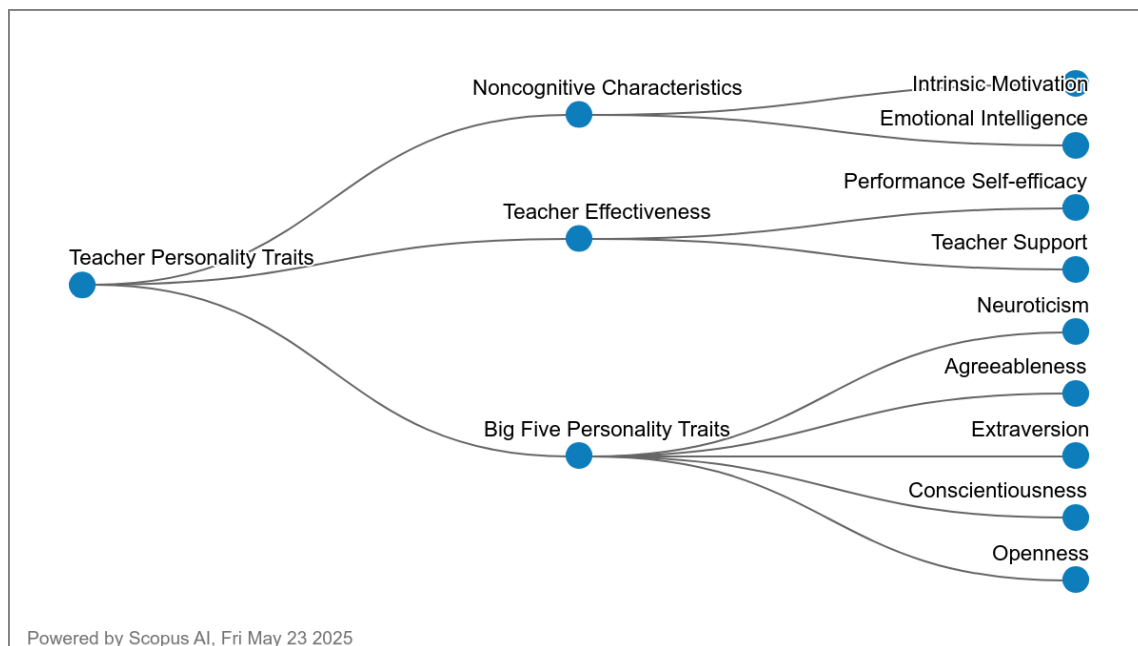


Figure 1: Mind Map of the Bibliometric Analysis on Teacher Personality Traits

Methodology

Bibliometrics refers to the combination, management, and analysis of bibliographic information obtained from scientific publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). In addition to general descriptive statistics such as publishing journals, publication year, and main author classification (Wu & Wu, 2017), it comprises complex techniques like document co-citation analysis. Conducting a successful literature review requires an iterative process involving identifying appropriate keywords, searching the literature, and thoroughly analysing the results to build a comprehensive bibliography and yield reliable findings (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Therefore, this study focused on top-tier publications, as they provide valuable insights into the theoretical perspectives shaping the evolution of the research domain. To ensure data reliability, the Scopus database was used for data collection (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). Moreover, to ensure the inclusion of high-quality publications, only articles published in rigorously peer-reviewed academic journals were considered, with a deliberate exclusion of books and lecture notes (Gu et al., 2019). Notably, Elsevier’s Scopus, known for its extensive coverage, facilitated the collection of publications spanning from 2015 to December 2025 for subsequent analysis.

Data Search Strategy

The study employed a screening sequence to determine the search terms for article retrieval. Study was initiated by querying Scopus database with online TITLE (personality AND traits) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, “SOC”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “English”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Personality Traits”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Personality”)). The final search string is provided in Table 1; refinement included 915 articles, which were used for bibliometric analysis. From January 2015 to May 2025, all articles from the Scopus database relating to personality traits were incorporated in the study.

Table 1: The Search String

Database	Search String
Scopus	TITLE (personality AND traits) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, “SOC”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “English”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Personality Traits”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Personality”))

Table 2 outlines the specific criteria for identifying and selecting relevant studies during the literature search phase. These criteria ensured that the selected studies were aligned with the ROs and maintained the quality and relevance of the data analysed. Key factors included the language, timeline, document type, and subject area, among others. Applying these criteria helped to focus the bibliometric analysis on the most pertinent and reliable sources related to personality traits research.

Table 2: The Selection Criterion Used in the Search Process

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2015 – 2025	< 2015
Document type	Article	Besides articles
Subject Area	Social Science	Besides Social Science
Keyword	Personality, Personality traits	Besides personality, Personality traits

Data Analysis

VOSviewer is a widely used bibliometric analysis tool developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University, Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). It is designed to visualize and interpret scientific literature through network-based maps and clustering. The software supports the analysis of co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence, offering users an in-depth view of research trends and structures. With its interactive interface and ongoing updates, VOSviewer allows researchers to efficiently manage and explore large bibliometric datasets. Additionally, its flexibility in customizing visual outputs and compatibility with major bibliometric databases enhance its appeal as a valuable resource in scholarly investigations.

A notable strength of VOSviewer is its ability to convert complex bibliometric information into easy-to-understand visual representations. By emphasizing network visualization, the software excels in clustering similar items, identifying keyword patterns, and creating density maps. Its user-friendly design accommodates both beginners and advanced users, facilitating accessible and effective exploration of research landscapes. With regular enhancements and robust analytical features, such as metrics computation and support for multiple data types like citation and authorship networks, VOSviewer remains a key tool for academic researchers aiming to uncover relationships and insights within their fields.

For this study, datasets containing publication details such as year, title, authors, journal, citations, and keywords were retrieved from the Scopus database, covering the period from 2015 to 2025. These datasets were analysed using VOSviewer version 1.6.19. Through its clustering and mapping capabilities, the software generated visual maps that reflect the structure and interconnectedness of the data. Unlike traditional Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), VOSviewer employs the Visualization of Similarities (VOS) technique, which positions items in a low-dimensional space based on their association strength. Diverging from MDS, which primarily engages in the computation of similarity metrics like cosine and Jaccard indices, VOS utilizes a more fitting method for normalizing co-occurrence frequencies. This includes the Association Strength (AS_{ij}), and it is calculated as (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j}.$$

This method allows for a more accurate depiction of item relatedness by accounting for statistical independence in co-occurrence analysis (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

Results and Findings

What Are the Research Trends in Personality Traits Studies According to the Year of Publication?

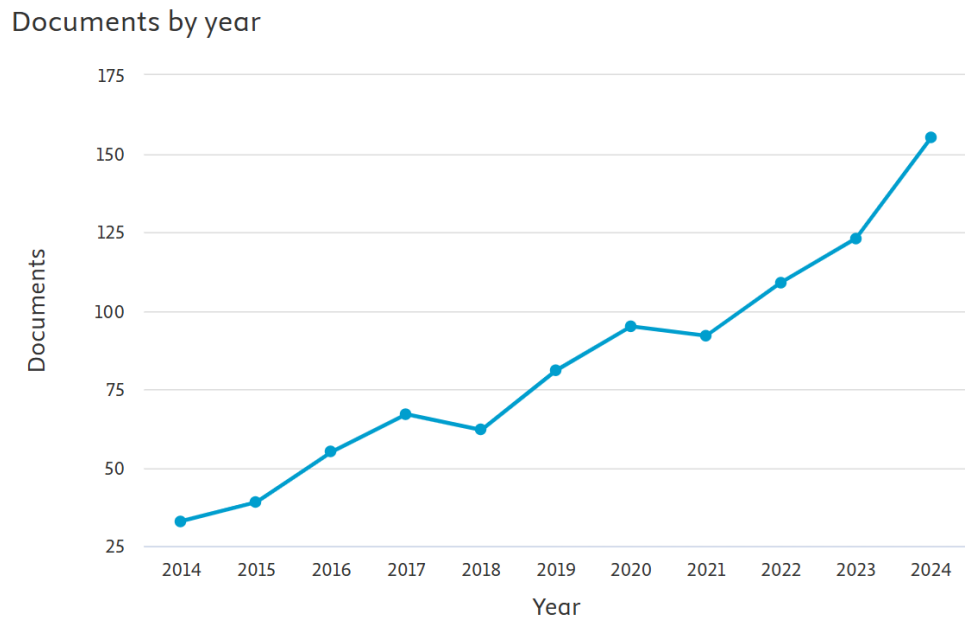


Figure 2: Plotting Document Publication by Years

Figure 2 is a line graph that illustrates the trend of document publication on “personality traits” over the past decade, based on Scopus-indexed results, revealing a noticeable upward trajectory. From 2015 to May 2025, the number of publications gradually increased from 33 to 67. This modest rise suggests a growing yet nascent academic interest in the field. The early phase reflects foundational explorations where researchers began to systematically investigate the role and significance of personality traits across various disciplines, particularly in education, psychology, and organizational studies.

From 2018 to 2021, the growth continued steadily, with publication counts rising from 62 to 92. This phase may indicate a consolidation period, where research frameworks and methodologies become more robust, contributing to more empirical studies and diversified applications. Notably, the decrease in 2020 (81 publications) could reflect a temporary disruption, possibly due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which affected academic productivity and research dissemination timelines across many fields.

A sharp increase is observed between 2022 and 2024, with publication numbers surging from 109 in 2022 to 155 in 2024. This dramatic rise in recent years underscores an intensified scholarly focus on personality traits, likely driven by emerging trends in digital psychology, artificial intelligence, and data-driven educational assessment. The spike also reflects the interdisciplinary relevance of personality research in addressing contemporary societal challenges. Overall, the publication trend highlights the growing academic importance and evolving discourse surrounding personality traits in the 21st century.

Who are the Top 10 Authors Based on Citations by Research?**Table 3: The Most Cited Article by Author**

No.	Authors	Title	Year	Source Title	Cited by
1	Hudson N.W.; Chris Fraley R. (Hudson & Chris Fraley, 2015)	Volitional personality trait change: Can people choose to change their personality traits?	2015	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	285
2	Buckley P.; Doyle E. (Buckley & Doyle, 2017)	Individualising gamification: An investigation of the impact of learning styles and personality traits on the efficacy of gamification using a prediction market	2017	<i>Computers and Education</i>	257
3	Tang J.-H.; Chen M.-C.; Yang C.-Y.; Chung T.-Y.; Lee Y.-A. (Tang et al., 2016)	Personality traits, interpersonal relationships, online social support, and Facebook addiction	2016	<i>Telematics and Informatics</i>	246
4	Smiderle R.; Rigo S.J.; Marques L.B.; Peçanha de Miranda Coelho J.A.; Jaques P.A. (Smiderle et al., 2020)	The impact of gamification on students' learning, engagement and behavior based on their personality traits	2020	<i>Smart Learning Environments</i>	244
5	Möttus R.; Kandler C.; Bleidorn W.; Riemann R.; McCrae R.R. (Möttus et al., 2017)	Personality traits below facets: The consensual validity, longitudinal stability, heritability, and utility of personality nuances	2017	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	227
6	Anusic I.; Schimmack U. (Anusic & Schimmack, 2016)	Stability and Change of Personality Traits, Self- Esteem, and Well- Being: Introducing the Meta-Analytic Stability and Change Model of Retest Correlations	2016	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	203

7	Barnett T.; Pearson A.W.; Pearson R.; Kellermanns F.W. (Barnett et al., 2015)	Five-factor model personality traits as predictors of perceived and actual usage of technology	2015	<i>European Journal of Information Systems</i>	201
8	Bellem H.; Thiel B.; Schrauf M.; Krems J.F. (Bellem et al., 2018)	Comfort in automated driving: An analysis of preferences for different automated driving styles and their dependence on personality traits	2018	<i>Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour</i>	180
9	Denissen J.J.A.; Luhmann M.; Chung J.M.; Bleidorn W. (Denissen et al., 2019)	Transactions between life events and personality traits across the adult lifespan	2019	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	178
10	Arpaci I.; Karatas K.; Kusci I.; Al- Emran M. (Arpaci et al., 2022)	Understanding the social sustainability of the Metaverse by integrating UTAUT2 and big five personality traits: A hybrid SEM- ANN approach	2022	<i>Technology in Society</i>	173

The Scopus analysis of the top ten most cited authors in the domain of personality trait research highlights a strong scholarly interest in understanding the applications and evolution of personality across multiple contexts (refer to Table 3). The most cited work is by Hudson and Fraley (2015), titled *Volitional Personality Trait Change*, published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, with 285 citations. This foundational study explored whether individuals can deliberately alter their personality traits, addressing a critical question in trait stability and personal development. This is followed by Buckley and Doyle's (2017) article on personalised gamification approaches, which was cited 257 times. It underscored how personality traits influence the effectiveness of educational technologies.

A recurring theme in the most cited works is the integration of personality traits into digital and behavioural research contexts. Tang et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between personality traits and Facebook addiction, while Smiderle et al. (2020) examined how personality influences learning outcomes through gamification, both highly cited, with 246 and 244 citations, respectively. These studies reflect the interdisciplinary reach of personality research, especially its relevance in technology-mediated environments. Additionally, the study by Barnett et al. (2015) on the FFM and technology use (201 citations) and Bellem et al. (2018) on personality in automated driving (180 citations) underscore the practical significance of personality traits in human-computer interaction and transportation systems.

Several high-impact publications appeared in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, affirming its position as a key outlet for advancing theoretical insights. Articles by Möttus et al. (2017), Anusic and Schimmack (2016), and Denissen et al. (2019) delved into trait structure, stability, and their interaction with life events, with citations ranging from 178 to 227. These works highlight the ongoing interest in the core mechanisms and longitudinal personality patterns. The most recent entry by Arpaci et al. (2022), which integrated Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) with the Big Five to explore Metaverse sustainability, reflects the field's expansion into novel digital environments. Collectively, the citation data underscores both the theoretical depth and practical relevance of personality trait research in contemporary academic discourse.

What are the Top 10 Countries by Number of Publications?

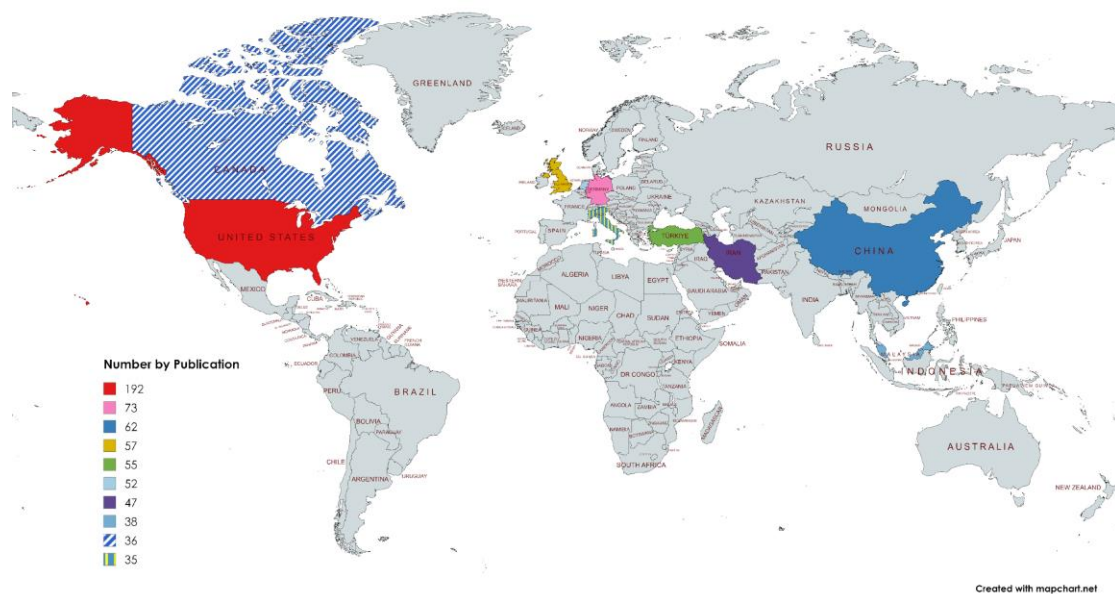


Figure 3: Publication by Countries

Figure 3 presents the distribution of document publications by country in the field of personality traits, based on Scopus data from 2014 onward, highlighting the United States as the most dominant contributor, with 192 publications. This overwhelming lead suggests that American institutions and scholars have maintained a central role in shaping and advancing research in personality psychology. Notably, the United States has long been a hub for psychological research, supported by a substantial number of universities, research centres, and funding bodies that prioritize personality and behavioural studies, particularly those aligned with the FFM and its applications.

Germany (73 publications) and China (62 publications) follow as the second and third highest contributors, respectively. Germany's strong research output can be attributed to its well-established psychological research tradition and numerous research institutions, such as the Max Planck Institutes. Meanwhile, China's growing presence in this domain reflects its increasing investment in psychological and educational research, supported by national policies that encourage publication in international journals. The United Kingdom (57), Turkey (55), and the Netherlands (52) also demonstrate significant output, each contributing robustly

to the global dialogue on personality traits through diverse theoretical and applied research agendas.

Of particular interest is the appearance of Malaysia in the top ten, with 38 publications. This indicates a growing regional interest and scholarly contribution from Southeast Asia in personality research. Countries like Iran (47), Canada (36), and Italy (35) completed the list, demonstrating that personality trait research is indeed a global endeavour. These international spread highlights both the universality of personality constructs and the varied cultural contexts in which they are studied. Concurrently, these findings provide a foundation for future collaborative opportunities and underscore the need to consider cross-cultural perspectives in developing and applying personality theories.

What Are the Most Popular Keywords Related to the Study?

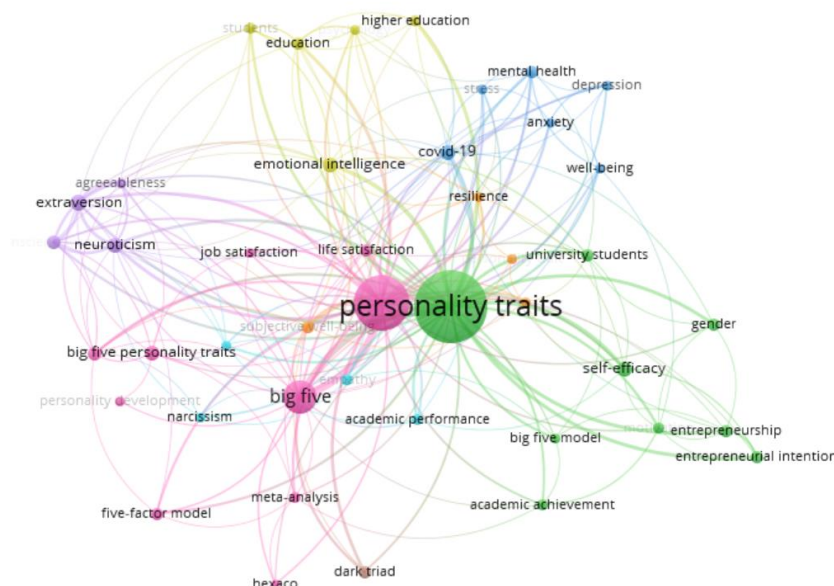


Figure 4: The Most Popular Keywords

Figure 4 presents the keyword analysis from the VOSviewer results, revealing that “personality traits” is the most dominant term, with the highest occurrences (488) and total link strength (284), underscoring its central role in the scholarly discussion. Closely related terms such as “personality” (284 occurrences), “big five” (98), and “extraversion” (21) also indicate high frequencies and link strengths, reinforcing the foundational role of the FFM in this field. These keywords are heavily interlinked with others, suggesting a strong conceptual cohesion around trait theory in psychological and behavioural studies. The terms “conscientiousness” and “neuroticism,” key dimensions of the FFM, also demonstrate substantial link strength, indicating their frequent co-occurrence with a broad range of other psychological constructs. The presence of keywords such as “mental health” (13 occurrences, 23 link strength), “depression” (9, 15), “anxiety” (9, 15), and “well-being” (9, 16) signals a prominent research theme connecting personality traits to emotional and psychological outcomes. Similarly, the emergence of terms like “resilience,” “stress,” and “self-efficacy” indicates a shift in focus toward personal coping mechanisms and their predictive relation to stable personality characteristics. Moreover, the inclusion of “covid-19” (20, 38) also demonstrates that recent global events have prompted targeted research exploring the psychological impact of crises,

particularly how personality traits moderate individual responses to stress and uncertainty. Educational and occupational domains are also well-represented in the keyword map. Terms such as “academic performance,” “academic achievement,” “motivation,” “entrepreneurship,” and “job satisfaction” reflect a significant scholarly interest in the role of personality traits in influencing performance outcomes in learning and work environments. The presence of “university students,” “higher education,” and “students” highlights a demographic focus, suggesting that much of this research is conducted within academic institutions. Together, the keyword analysis paints a comprehensive picture of a research landscape where personality traits intersect with education, health, motivation, and societal challenges. This offers rich opportunities for multidisciplinary exploration.

What is the Co-Authorship by Countries' Collaboration?

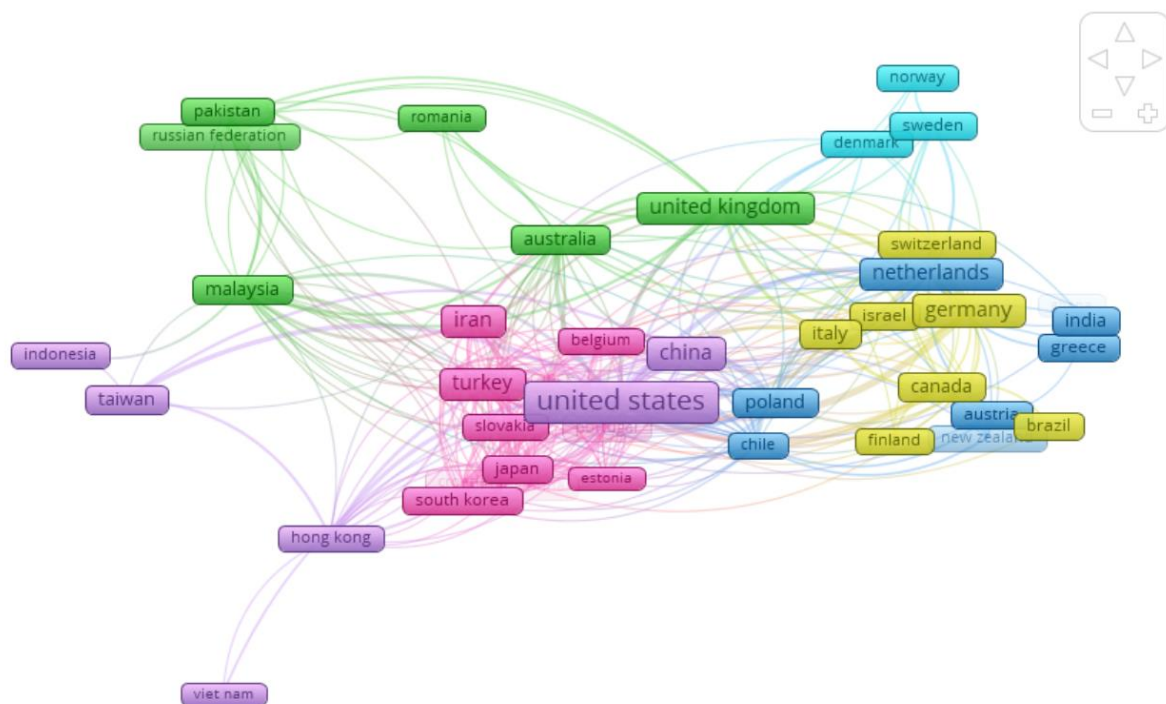


Figure 5: The Co-Authorship by Countries' Collaboration

Figure 5 illustrates the co-authorship data from VOSviewer, which highlights the extensive international collaboration in personality traits research, with the United States emerging as the most central contributor. It leads both in the number of documents (187) and total citations (4,268), along with the highest total link strength (137), indicating a robust and widespread network of international research partnerships. Germany (69 documents, 2,354 citations, link strength 61) and China (62 documents, 1,148 citations, link strength 55) followed closely, reflecting their significant academic output and global engagement. These three countries form the core of high-impact and collaborative scholarship in the field.

Other nations also demonstrate notable patterns of collaboration. Australia and Canada each produced 36 publications with total link strengths of 53 and 30, respectively, while the United Kingdom (52 documents, 973 citations, link strength 45) remains a consistent global partner. The Netherlands (53 documents, 1,244 citations, link strength 49) and Iran (47 documents, 512 citations, link strength 37) highlight the significance of both Western European and Middle

Eastern contributors. Meanwhile, Malaysia's strong performance (35 documents, 475 citations, link strength 41) signals increasing research engagement from Southeast Asia. These figures suggest that mid-level economies are increasingly integrating into global research networks.

Interestingly, countries with fewer publications, such as Estonia (5 documents, 380 citations, link strength 25) and Chile (9 documents, 323 citations, link strength 33), exhibit high citation impacts and link strengths, implying that the quality and collaboration intensity of research can outweigh sheer quantity. This global distribution of co-authorship indicates a maturing research ecosystem in personality traits studies, characterized by strong intercontinental partnerships. Such collaborations enhance the methodological and cultural diversity of findings and foster a richer, more globally relevant understanding of personality constructs.

Conclusion

This bibliometric review offers a panoramic view of global scholarship on personality traits between 2015 and 2025, illuminating the intellectual evolution, thematic priorities, and collaborative networks within the field. By analysing 915 articles indexed in the Scopus database, the study reveals a steadily growing academic interest in personality traits, particularly after 2020. This upward trajectory underscores the field's increasing relevance in addressing complex education, psychology, technology, and organizational behaviour issues.

The analysis identified key contributors, including highly cited authors such as Hudson, Fraley, Buckley, and Möttus, whose work has shaped theoretical and applied dimensions of personality research. The United States, Germany, and China emerged as global leaders in both output and collaboration, while emerging contributors such as Malaysia signal a broader geographic diversification of scholarship. Keyword co-occurrence mapping reflected an intellectual shift from trait measurement to applied domains such as mental health, education, and technological engagement, reinforcing the interdisciplinary nature of personality research. Furthermore, the study highlighted extensive international co-authorship networks, emphasizing the collaborative and borderless character of contemporary psychological inquiry.

Ultimately, this review contributes significantly to the understanding of how personality trait research has matured over the past decade. It identifies high-impact works and leading voices in the field and unaddressed areas such as the impact of negative traits, contextual diversity, and integration with professional development. As such, this study serves as a valuable roadmap for future research directions, advocating for more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and culturally responsive investigations. It also provides a strategic foundation for scholars, educators, and policymakers seeking to harness personality insights to enhance individual and institutional outcomes in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

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