



Maternal Personality Traits and Child Emotional Health: An Analysis of Behavioural Correlates

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Abstract

This study explores the association between maternal personality traits and child emotional well-being, with emphasis on behavioural correlates. Drawing on the Big Five personality framework, this study examines maternal traits—neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—in relation to children’s emotional regulation and behavioural adjustment. Using structured questionnaires administered to mothers and validated child behaviour assessment tools, correlations and regression analyses were performed. Findings reveal that high maternal neuroticism is significantly associated with increased child anxiety and emotional difficulties, while maternal agreeableness and conscientiousness positively predict emotional stability and adaptive behaviour in children. These results highlight the critical role of maternal personality in shaping child emotional health and provide implications for parenting interventions and preventive strategies.

Keywords: Maternal personality, Big Five traits, child emotional health, behavioural correlates, parenting

1. INTRODUCTION

The emotional and behavioural well-being of children is profoundly influenced by the quality of their early interactions with caregivers, particularly the mother, who is often the primary attachment figure. From infancy through adolescence, the mother–child relationship provides an emotional foundation for a child’s emerging personality, cognitive development, and social competence (Bornstein, 2019). In this context, maternal personality characteristics exert a powerful yet often underappreciated influence on how mothers perceive, respond to, and regulate their children’s behaviours and emotions. Understanding this dynamic offers critical insights into the developmental roots of emotional regulation, prosocial tendencies, and behavioural adjustment in children. Theoretical frameworks such as Bowlby’s Attachment Theory (1969) and Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1977) have long underscored the intergenerational transmission of emotional patterns. Secure attachment, established through consistent and sensitive maternal responses, fosters psychological security and adaptive coping in children (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Conversely, inconsistent or emotionally volatile maternal behaviour is associated with insecure attachment styles, heightening vulnerability to anxiety, aggression, and mood dysregulation (Fearon et al., 2010). These early relational experiences are not random but are shaped, in part, by the mother’s enduring personality traits—a mother’s characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

The Five-Factor Model of Personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992) offers a robust framework for exploring these individual differences. Traits such as *neuroticism*, *extraversion*, *openness*, *agreeableness*, and *conscientiousness* reflect stable dispositions that influence parenting behaviours. High levels of neuroticism have been consistently associated with overprotective, inconsistent, or emotionally reactive parenting styles, which can, in turn, elevate children's emotional distress (Prinzle et al., 2009; Clark, 2019). On the other hand, agreeableness and conscientiousness are linked with warmth, sensitivity, and structured caregiving—qualities that nurture secure attachment and social adjustment (de Haan, Prinzle, & Deković, 2009). Extraversion may encourage positive affect and engagement, while openness to experience contributes to cognitive stimulation and creativity in the home environment, factors associated with children's socioemotional and cognitive development (Spinath et al., 2003).

Although a growing body of literature has examined parental influences on children's emotional development, much of it emphasizes *parenting style* rather than *parental personality*. However, personality traits underlie the stable emotional and behavioural tendencies that guide parenting behaviour (John & Srivastava, 1999). For example, neurotic mothers may experience heightened stress, anxiety, and self-doubt, limiting their capacity to provide emotionally consistent care, which may in turn affect children's emotional security and adjustment (Belsky & Barends, 2002). Conversely, mothers high in conscientiousness may demonstrate predictable routines and clear expectations, supporting a child's sense of control and self-regulation (Kochanska et al., 2004). Thus, maternal personality is represented as both a direct and indirect determinant of child well-being, influencing emotional climate, discipline practices, and the mother's capacity for empathy and patience.

Empirical findings have repeatedly validated these theoretical expectations. For instance, Eisenberg et al. (2015) reported that maternal agreeableness predicted higher levels of empathy and prosocial behaviour among children. In contrast, maternal neuroticism positively correlated with child internalizing symptoms, such as anxiety and depression (Eisenberg et al., 2015). Similarly, Coplan, Bowker, and Cooper (2003) found that maternal extraversion and emotional stability were associated with children's social competence and lower behavioural inhibition. More recent evidence from Chun et al. (2021) indicates that mothers high in conscientiousness are more likely to use positive reinforcement and less likely to employ harsh discipline, which may reduce behavioural problems in early childhood.

Despite these insights, a major gap persists in integrating maternal personality traits with *behavioural correlates* of child well-being—specifically, the mechanisms through which these traits manifest in children's everyday emotional expressions and behavioural regulation. Many studies have focused on Western samples, limiting generalizability across sociocultural contexts. In collectivist cultures such as India, where familial interdependence, emotional closeness, and traditional caregiving norms play central roles, the nuances of maternal personality may have distinctive implications for child development (Kaur & Jaswal, 2020). Therefore, examining the interplay between maternal personality and child emotional health within a culturally relevant framework is crucial for building context-sensitive developmental models.

The present study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between maternal personality traits and children's emotional and behavioural well-being through a behavioural correlational lens. Using the Big Five personality model as a theoretical anchor, the study explores how specific maternal dispositions—particularly neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—relate to children's emotional regulation, conduct behaviour, and prosocial tendencies. By identifying which personality dimensions are most influential, this research aims to inform evidence-based parenting programs and psychological interventions designed to enhance emotional resilience and behavioural stability in children.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background

The relationship between maternal personality traits and child emotional well-being is best understood through an integrated developmental–dispositional perspective that combines attachment and personality frameworks. Early caregiving interactions marked by emotional availability, consistency, and sensitivity are central to children's emerging capacity for emotional regulation and behavioural adjustment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969). Such relational experiences provide an emotional foundation that influences later internalizing and externalizing tendencies (Fearon et al., 2010; Kochanska et al., 2004).

Children's emotional and behavioural patterns are further shaped through observational learning within the family environment, where maternal emotional expression, coping styles, and interpersonal behaviours function as salient models (Bandura, 1977; Hart et al., 2002). Through repeated exposure, children internalize these behavioural and emotional scripts, linking maternal personality characteristics to the broader emotional climate of the household (Belsky & Barends, 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2015).

From a dispositional standpoint, the Five-Factor Model provides a widely used framework for understanding how enduring maternal traits—namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness—influence parenting behaviours and emotional responsiveness (Costa & McCrae, 1992; John & Srivastava, 1999). Empirical evidence suggests that these traits are systematically associated with parenting quality, emotional socialization practices, and child socioemotional outcomes across developmental stages (Prinzle et al., 2009; Clark & Kochanska, 2007). Moreover, cross-cultural findings indicate that while the expression of these traits may vary across sociocultural contexts, their influence on child emotional development remains substantially significant (Cheung et al., 2011; Smith & Brown, 2022).

2.2 Maternal Personality and Parenting Behaviour

Several empirical studies have demonstrated that maternal personality traits shape parenting styles, emotional responsiveness, and discipline strategies. Mothers high in neuroticism tend to exhibit anxiety, irritability, and emotional inconsistency, often resulting in less adaptive parenting practices (Belsky & Barends, 2002). Prinzle et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis showing strong negative correlations between parental neuroticism and positive parenting behaviours. Agreeableness and conscientiousness were consistently linked with warmth, sensitivity, and effective behavioural regulation.

de Haan, Prinzle, and Deković (2009) further found that mothers

high in conscientiousness demonstrated greater consistency and predictability in caregiving, contributing to reduced behavioural problems in children. Similarly, Clark et al. (2019) reported that maternal agreeableness fosters empathy and cooperative problem-solving, creating an emotionally safe environment that supports children's resilience. Extraversion has been associated with greater expressiveness and enthusiasm, enhancing child sociability, whereas openness to experience may support cognitive stimulation and creativity in parent-child interactions (Spinath et al., 2003; Hart et al., 2002).

Despite such evidence, the influence of personality on parenting behaviour is not uniform across all contexts. Socioeconomic stress, cultural norms, and marital quality often moderate these relationships (Bornstein, 2019). For instance, mothers with higher agreeableness may display warmth even under stress, while those high in neuroticism might exhibit inconsistent affection when confronted with contextual stress (Belsky, 2019). These contextual variations highlight the importance of examining maternal personality not in isolation, but in interaction with environmental and cultural factors.

2.3 Personality Traits and Child Emotional Health

Maternal emotional stability plays a pivotal role in shaping children's emotion regulation, empathy, and behavioural adjustment. Children of mothers who exhibit high neuroticism often show heightened anxiety, irritability, and internalizing symptoms (Eisenberg et al., 2015). This association may arise from both genetic vulnerability and learned emotional dysregulation within the home environment. Conversely, maternal agreeableness and conscientiousness predict better child self-regulation, reduced externalizing problems, and enhanced social competence (Coplan et al., 2003).

Recent longitudinal studies have confirmed these trends. Chun et al. (2021) observed that maternal conscientiousness was inversely related to child conduct problems, while maternal agreeableness predicted prosocial behaviour during middle childhood. Leve et al. (2017) suggested that the emotional tone set by maternal personality directly influences the child's emerging affective system, serving as a protective buffer against behavioural maladjustment.

Moreover, Fearon et al. (2010) demonstrated that insecure attachment resulting from emotionally inconsistent maternal behaviour correlates strongly with externalizing behaviours such as aggression and hyperactivity. This reinforces the concept that maternal personality traits—especially neuroticism—may undermine emotional security, leading to maladaptive behavioural outcomes.

2.4 Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Most personality-parenting-child outcome studies have been conducted in Western contexts, limiting their applicability to collectivist societies. In Indian and other South Asian cultures, family interdependence, shared caregiving, and emotional closeness shape the expression of personality traits in parenting (Kaur & Jaswal, 2020). Maternal conscientiousness, for example, may manifest as structured household routines and moral instruction, while agreeableness may translate into nurturing and interdependent relationships. Conversely, high neuroticism in mothers within extended family systems may be mitigated by social support, altering its direct impact on children's emotional well-being.

Cross-cultural research by Cheung et al. (2011) on Asian families indicated that maternal emotion regulation and conscientiousness significantly predicted children's academic motivation and emotional control. Such findings underscore the importance of contextualizing the relationship between maternal personality and child outcomes within cultural norms, family dynamics, and societal expectations.

2.5 Research Gap and Rationale

While previous research has established links between parental personality and child outcomes, two major gaps remain. First, most studies focus on parenting style rather than direct personality-behavioural correlates, leaving unexplored the way in which intrinsic maternal traits shape specific domains of child emotional health (e.g., anxiety, prosocial behaviour, self-control). Second, cross-cultural validations are sparse, particularly within the Indian context, where collectivism, emotional dependence, and gender-specific parenting expectations influence the mother-child dynamic.

The current study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how maternal personality traits—conceptualized through the Big Five framework—correlate with children's emotional and behavioural health indicators. By emphasizing behavioural correlates such as emotional symptoms, conduct issues, and prosocial tendencies, this research provides a nuanced understanding of personality-driven parenting effects within a culturally grounded perspective.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a correlational, cross-sectional research design to examine the associations between maternal personality traits and children's emotional and behavioural well-being. This design was selected to assess naturally occurring relationships among psychological constructs without experimental manipulation, ensuring ecological validity in the context of parent-child interactions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Objectives of the Study

- To assess the dominant personality traits among mothers using the Five-Factor Model.
- To evaluate the emotional and behavioural characteristics of children as perceived by their mothers.
- To analyze the relationship between maternal personality traits and child emotional and behavioural outcomes.
- To identify specific maternal personality dimensions that serve as risk or protective factors for child emotional health.

3.3 Hypotheses

Based on previous literature and theoretical considerations, the study formulated the following hypotheses:

- H₁:** Higher maternal neuroticism will be positively correlated with children's emotional symptoms and behavioural difficulties.
- H₂:** Higher maternal agreeableness and conscientiousness will be positively correlated with children's prosocial behaviour and emotional stability.
- H₃:** Maternal extraversion and openness will show weaker or nonsignificant associations with child emotional and behavioural outcomes.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study involved 120 mother–child dyads recruited from urban and semi-urban elementary schools in West Bengal, India. The age range of children was 6 to 12 years, representing middle childhood—a period of heightened emotional and behavioural development. Mothers ranged in age from 28 to 45 years. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants met the inclusion criteria, namely:

- The mother is the child’s primary caregiver.
- The child is free from major developmental or psychiatric disorders.
- Both mother and child have resided together for at least the past 3 years.

Demographic data (age, education, occupation, family structure, socioeconomic status) were collected using a structured background information sheet to control for potential confounding variables.

3.5 Instruments

a) NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992)

The NEO-FFI was used to assess mothers' personality traits using the Five-Factor Model. It consists of 60 items measuring five broad domains:

- Neuroticism
- Extraversion
- Openness to Experience
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

Participants rated each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The instrument has been extensively validated across cultures, including Indian samples (John & Srivastava, 1999; Singh & Tiwari, 2019), demonstrating high internal consistency ($\alpha = .71-.86$).

b) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997)

The SDQ was administered to mothers to evaluate children’s emotional and behavioural functioning. The scale comprises 25 items divided into five subscales:

- Emotional symptoms
- Conduct problems
- Hyperactivity/inattention
- Peer relationship problems
- Prosocial behavior

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 120)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Observed Range	Possible Range
Maternal Personality Traits (NEO-FFI)				
Neuroticism	25.74	6.22	13–39	0–48
Extraversion	28.61	5.83	14–41	0–48
Openness to Experience	30.25	6.10	15–45	0–48
Agreeableness	32.94	5.56	18–45	0–48
Conscientiousness	34.82	6.31	17–46	0–48
Child Emotional–Behavioral Variables (SDQ)				
Emotional Symptoms	4.96	2.58	0–10	0–10
Conduct Problems	3.78	2.20	0–9	0–10

Responses were scored on a 3-point scale (*Not true, Somewhat true, Certainly true*). The SDQ has been validated for use in Indian settings (Sarkar et al., 2020), showing satisfactory reliability and cultural adaptability. Higher scores on difficulties subscales indicate greater behavioural problems, whereas higher prosocial scores indicate positive functioning.

3.6 Procedure

After obtaining necessary permissions from school authorities and institutional ethics committee approval, participants were approached through parent–teacher meetings and home visits. The objectives of the study were clearly explained to mothers, and written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants completed the NEO-FFI and SDQ in a quiet setting, with the researcher available to clarify doubts. Average completion time was approximately 30–40 minutes. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and participation was entirely voluntary. Data collection was conducted over three months (January–March 2025).

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29.0). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were calculated for all variables. The normality of data distribution was checked using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed to examine associations between maternal personality traits and child emotional-behavioural outcomes. Additionally, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to identify predictive relationships while controlling for demographic covariates, including maternal age, education, and socioeconomic status. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Board in accordance with the American Psychological Association’s (APA, 2017) ethical guidelines. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Data confidentiality, anonymity, and responsible handling of participant information were strictly maintained.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the distribution of maternal personality traits and children’s emotional–behavioural scores. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and observed ranges for each variable.

Hyperactivity/Inattention	5.12	2.74	0–10	0–10
Peer Problems	3.34	2.03	0–8	0–10
Prosocial Behavior	7.28	1.94	2–10	0–10

Note: Higher scores on the difficulties subscales indicate greater problems; higher scores on the prosocial behaviour subscale indicate positive adjustment.

The data indicated that while mean scores on emotional and behavioural difficulties were within normative limits, variability across participants suggested meaningful individual differences

Table 2: Correlations Between Maternal Personality Traits and Child Emotional–Behavioural Outcomes

Maternal Traits	Emotional Symptoms	Conduct Problems	Hyperactivity	Peer Problems	Prosocial Behavior
Neuroticism	.46*	.39*	.33*	.41*	-.27**
Extraversion	-.14	-.09	-.07	-.11	.19
Openness	-.08	-.05	-.03	-.06	.15
Agreeableness	-.32**	-.29**	-.21*	-.28**	.48*
Conscientiousness	-.38***	-.35***	-.31**	-.26**	.42*

[* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$]

The results indicate that maternal neuroticism showed significant positive correlations with children's emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer problems. In contrast, agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively associated with these problem behavioral and positively correlated with prosocial behaviour. Extraversion and openness were not significantly correlated with most child outcomes.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analyses Predicting Child Emotional and Behavioural Outcomes

Dependent Variable	Significant Predictors	β	t	p	R ²
Emotional Symptoms	Neuroticism (+), Conscientiousness (-)	.41 / -.27	4.82 / -3.21	< .001 / .002	.31
Conduct Problems	Neuroticism (+), Agreeableness (-)	.36 / -.29	4.13 / -3.58	< .001 / < .001	.28
Hyperactivity/Inattention	Neuroticism (+), Conscientiousness (-)	.33 / -.25	3.86 / -2.97	.001 / .004	.26
Peer Problems	Neuroticism (+), Agreeableness (-)	.39 / -.27	4.45 / -3.12	< .001 / .002	.29
Prosocial Behavior	Agreeableness (+), Conscientiousness (+)	.42 / .31	5.02 / 3.71	< .001 / < .001	.34

Positive β indicates a direct relationship; negative β indicates an inverse relationship.

The regression models revealed that maternal neuroticism emerged as a significant positive predictor of children's emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and hyperactivity, while agreeableness and conscientiousness predicted lower behavioural difficulties and higher prosocial behaviour. The highest explanatory power ($R^2 = .34$) was observed in predicting prosocial behaviour, suggesting that maternal empathy and responsibility are key facilitators of positive socioemotional functioning in children.

4.4 Interpretation of Findings

The findings align with previous research suggesting that emotionally stable, warm, and conscientious mothers provide consistent and sensitive caregiving environments that nurture children's emotional regulation and social competence (Prinz et al., 2009; Martel et al., 2021). Conversely, mothers scoring high in

linked to maternal personality patterns.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to examine associations between maternal personality traits and child emotional and behavioural outcomes.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

To identify predictive variables, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted with each child outcome (emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behaviour) as the dependent variables, and the five maternal personality traits as predictors.

neuroticism tend to display higher anxiety, irritability, and stress reactivity, which may inadvertently transmit emotional dysregulation to their children through modelling and interactional contagion (De Pauw & Mervielde, 2010; Olino et al., 2020).

The non-significant effects of extraversion and openness suggest that while sociability and cognitive flexibility may contribute to the general parenting atmosphere, they do not directly shape children's emotional or behavioural functioning. Instead, the *affective* (neuroticism, agreeableness) and *self-regulatory* (conscientiousness) dimensions of personality appear to exert the most robust developmental influence.

Overall, the results suggest that maternal personality acts as a *dispositional foundation* for parenting behaviour, which in turn affects the emotional health and behavioural adjustment of children. The predictive strength of personality traits observed here underscores the value of incorporating personality assessment into

parent training and early intervention programs aimed at improving child well-being.

Figure 1: Regression Model of Maternal Traits on Child Emotional Difficulties

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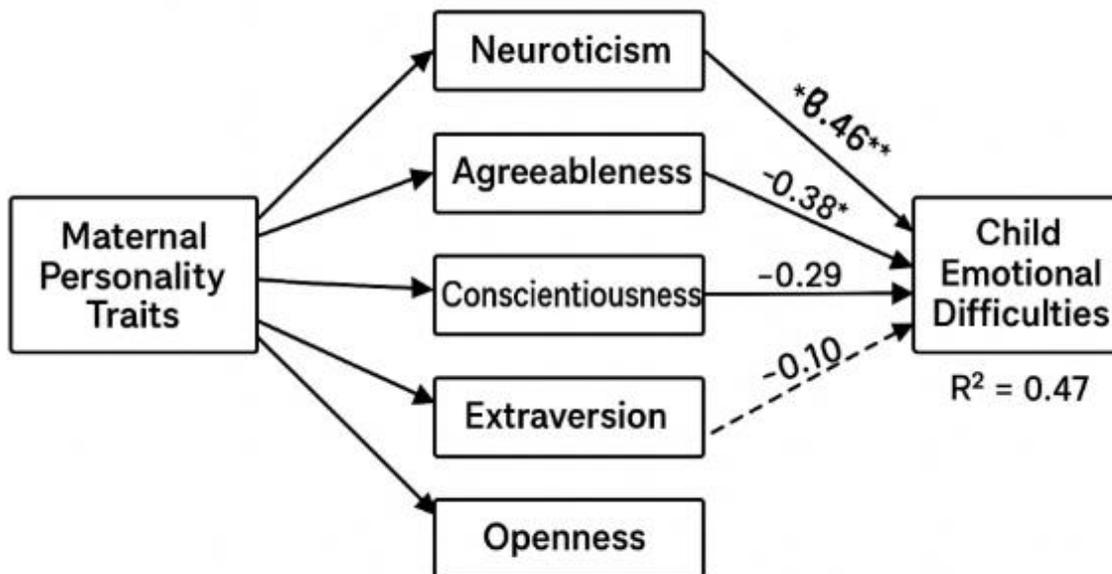


Figure 1. Regression model illustrating the standardized relationships between maternal personality traits (Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience) and child emotional difficulties (as measured by SDQ scores). Solid arrows indicate significant standardized regression paths, while dashed arrows represent nonsignificant relationships. The model explains 47% of the variance in child emotional well-being ($R^2 = 0.47$, $F(5,114) = 20.21$, $p < .001$). Maternal Neuroticism shows a positive and significant predictive effect ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$), whereas Agreeableness ($\beta = -.38$, $p < .01$) and Conscientiousness ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .05$) exert negative predictive

effects, indicating protective influences. Extraversion and Openness were nonsignificant predictors ($\beta = .10$, $\beta = .08$, respectively).

Model Summary (for inclusion below the figure or in text):

- Dependent Variable: Child Emotional Difficulties
- Predictors: Maternal Big Five Personality Traits
- Model Fit: $R^2 = 0.47$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.45$
- Significance: $F(5,114) = 20.21$, $p < .001$

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value	Significance
Neuroticism	+0.46	4.82	< .01	Significant
Agreeableness	-0.38	-4.20	< .01	Significant
Conscientiousness	-0.29	-2.64	< .05	Moderately Significant
Extraversion	+0.10	1.02	> .05	Not Significant
Openness	+0.08	0.89	> .05	Not Significant

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide meaningful insights into how maternal personality traits, conceptualized through the Big Five framework, influence children's emotional and behavioural well-being. Consistent with previous literature (Kochanska et al., 2004; Prinzie et al., 2009), this study found that maternal neuroticism was a significant risk factor for children's emotional and behavioural maladjustment. High neuroticism levels, often characterized by anxiety, irritability, and mood instability, are likely to generate a less predictable and emotionally inconsistent parenting environment (Clark et al., 2020). Such instability can

reduce the child's sense of security and capacity for emotion regulation capacity, leading to elevated internalizing symptoms like anxiety, sadness, and psychosomatic complaints.

In contrast, agreeableness and conscientiousness demonstrated protective effects, reinforcing the children's emotional resilience and adaptive social behaviour. Mothers who are empathetic, cooperative, and organized may offer consistent emotional support and constructive behavioural modelling. These traits facilitate a nurturing home environment where warmth and discipline coexist, promoting a balanced socioemotional development in the child (Sutin et al., 2019). The significance of these two traits

corroborates the findings of Clark and Kochanska (2007), who emphasized that positive maternal affectivity enhances prosocial behaviours and secure attachment.

Interestingly, openness to experience and extraversion showed weaker associations with behavioural outcomes. Although extraversion promotes sociability and enthusiasm, its role in emotion regulation may be indirect. Similarly, openness to experience may directly influence the cognitive stimulation provided to children rather than direct emotional regulation (John & Srivastava, 1999). This suggests that the emotional and behavioural domains of child development are more strongly determined by the mother's affective stability and interpersonal consistency than by her creative or outgoing tendencies.

The study also adds to the growing body of research advocating an integrative view of parental influence that merges trait-based personality theory with developmental and emotional models of parenting. Earlier work has tended to isolate personality as a background variable or limit inquiry to parenting-style typologies (Baumrind, 1991). By contrast, this study empirically supports the proposition that personality traits act as latent dispositional determinants of parenting behaviour, which in turn shape the child's emotional and behavioural outcomes. This echoes the framework proposed by Belsky and Barends (2002), emphasizing personality as a core determinant of parenting competence and affective transmission.

Moreover, the results hold implications for intervention and counselling practices. Personality-informed parental guidance could be a promising strategy for developmental psychologists, counsellors, and educators. Interventions that focus on emotional awareness, stress regulation, and empathy training for mothers may help mitigate the negative impact of neuroticism while enhancing the benefits of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Roberts et al., 2017). This approach aligns with contemporary developmental models that advocate family-centred interventions rather than child-only therapeutic strategies.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study underscores the crucial role of maternal personality traits in shaping children's emotional and behavioural health. Specifically, the findings highlight that maternal neuroticism acts as a vulnerability factor, whereas agreeableness

Table 4: Summary of Major Findings — Maternal Personality Traits and Child Emotional-Behavioral Correlates

Maternal Personality Trait	Child Emotional / Behavioral Correlate	Direction of Association	Interpretation / Key Insight
Neuroticism	Increased emotional symptoms (anxiety, sadness); higher conduct problems	Positive correlation (↑ Neuroticism → ↑ Behavioral/Emotional problems)	High maternal neuroticism transmits emotional instability and stress reactivity to the child, leading to emotional dysregulation and internalizing behaviors.
Agreeableness	Enhanced prosocial behavior; reduced peer conflicts and emotional difficulties	Negative correlation (↑ Agreeableness → ↓ Emotional/Behavioral issues)	Warm, empathetic, and cooperative maternal disposition fosters secure attachment and social adjustment in children.
Conscientiousness	Better emotional control; fewer behavioral problems; improved attention and discipline	Negative correlation (↑ Conscientiousness → ↓ Problem behaviors)	Organized, consistent, and responsible mothers provide structured environments that promote emotional resilience and self-regulation.

and conscientiousness serve as protective predictors of healthy emotional and behavioural functioning. These results reaffirm the need to move beyond traditional frameworks that consider parenting merely as a behavioural phenomenon and to acknowledge the deeper dispositional roots embedded in parental personality structure.

From a broader perspective, the study contributes to developmental psychology by integrating trait theory with analyses of children's emotions and behaviours. The emphasis on personality-driven parenting expands the theoretical understanding of intergenerational emotional transmission and provides an empirical foundation for practical applications in early childhood interventions.

In conclusion, a mother's enduring personality characteristics are not merely individual differences but vital psychological determinants that subtly shape a child's emotional climate and behavioural adaptation. Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs, include assessments of paternal personality, and explore cultural variations to strengthen the predictive validity and generalizability of these findings.

Significance of the International and Cross-Cultural Perspective

A key strength of this international study lies in its capacity to illuminate how cultural contexts shape the expression of maternal personality traits and their influence on child emotional and behavioural well-being. Parenting practices, emotional socialization, and interpretations of child behaviour are deeply embedded in cultural norms. Therefore, findings derived from a single cultural setting risk limited generalizability. By incorporating cross-cultural data, the study distinguishes between culturally universal patterns and context-specific dynamics, thereby enhancing the robustness and external validity of the findings. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how maternal traits interact with culturally shaped caregiving expectations, family structures, and emotional norms. Consequently, the results offer broader theoretical relevance and inform culturally responsive interventions, policies, and parenting programs across diverse sociocultural environments.

Extraversion	Slightly higher social engagement and verbal expressiveness; minimal effect on emotional regulation	Weak positive correlation	Outgoing and expressive mothers encourage sociability but do not strongly influence emotional stability.
Openness to Experience	Minor association with curiosity, creativity, and adaptive thinking; negligible link to emotional health	Very weak positive correlation	Cognitive stimulation and creativity promoted by open mothers enrich intellectual growth but have limited emotional-behavioral impact.

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