

Big Five Personality Traits as Predictors of Teachers Perceived Character Education Effectiveness: Evidence from Indonesian Schools

Waode Emilya Megawati¹, Eri Sarimanah¹, Eka Suhardi¹

¹Universitas Pakuan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines the association between Big Five personality traits and teachers perceived character education effectiveness. Although prior research has established the role of personality in teaching, limited attention has been given to the relative contribution of each trait, particularly in non-Western contexts.

Methods – A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 197 teachers from Indonesian schools selected through multistage random sampling. Personality traits were measured using a validated Big Five instrument based on the Five-Factor Model, while perceived character education effectiveness was assessed through a multidimensional scale capturing implementation quality, school climate, and student character development. All measures demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$). Data was analyzed using multiple regression and relative weight analysis (RWA).

Findings – The model explained 34.6% of the variance in perceived character education effectiveness. Emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience showed significant positive associations. Among these, emotional stability contributed the largest proportion of explained variance, followed by conscientiousness and openness. Extraversion and agreeableness showed smaller and non-significant effects.

Research Implications – These findings suggest that personality traits are differentially associated with teachers' perceptions of character education effectiveness. Practically, the results suggest the potential relevance of emotional regulation, consistency, and adaptability in supporting character education practices. However, the cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data limit causal interpretation and may introduce common method bias. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and multi-source data to strengthen the robustness of these findings.

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Corresponding Author:

Eka Suhardi

Educational Management Study Program, Universitas Pakuan, Indonesia

Email: ekasuhardi@unpak.ac.id

Introduction

In recent decades, character education has gained increasing prominence within global educational agendas as systems shift beyond purely cognitive outcomes toward holistic student development. Schools are increasingly expected to foster moral reasoning, socio-emotional competencies, and responsible citizenship alongside academic achievement (Arbués et al., 2025; Kaspar & Massey, 2023). A growing body of research demonstrates that social-emotional skills are strongly associated with students' long-term academic success, well-being, and life outcomes (Sorrenti et al., 2025; Zhao & Sang, 2025). Within this broader mandate, teachers play a pivotal role, as their individual characteristics shape how character education is interpreted, enacted, and sustained in classroom contexts (Kim et al., 2019; Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). Character education has long been conceptualized as a systematic effort to promote moral development, ethical reasoning, and responsible behavior among students (Lickona, 1991; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

Among teacher-related factors, personality traits have been identified as important predictors of character education effectiveness. Early foundational research has consistently demonstrated that personality traits, particularly those within the Big Five framework, are associated with job performance across a wide range of occupations (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2002). The Big Five framework—comprising conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, and emotional stability—has been widely used to explain variations in instructional quality, classroom management, and student engagement (Bardach et al., 2022; Mammadov & Avci, 2025). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that personality traits are associated with teaching performance, although the magnitude and direction of these relationships vary across contexts (Bürger et al., 2026; Chaudhary & Singh, 2022). In particular, conscientiousness and emotional stability are frequently linked to performance-related outcomes, whereas findings for extraversion and agreeableness remain less consistent (Mammadov, 2022; Burić & Kim, 2021).

Despite this growing body of research, two important limitations remain. First, prior studies have largely focused on general teaching effectiveness rather than character education as a distinct pedagogical domain, with limited attention to character education as a distinct pedagogical domain. Character education involves not only instructional competence but also emotional modeling, ethical consistency, and interpersonal sensitivity (Berkowitz & Bier, 2021; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2022). These features suggest that the relevance of personality traits may differ from those observed in general instructional contexts. For example, emotionally demanding classroom interactions may increase the importance of emotional stability, while Openness to Experience may facilitate adaptive and reflective approaches to value-based instruction.

Second, most studies rely on conventional regression approaches that emphasize statistical significance while overlooking the relative contribution of predictors. This limitation is particularly relevant in personality research, where intercorrelations among traits may obscure their unique importance (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011). The measurement of complex constructs such as character development and educational effectiveness requires careful consideration, as highlighted in prior research emphasizing the importance of construct validity in educational studies (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). As a result, existing evidence provides limited insight into which personality traits matter most when considered simultaneously.

To address these limitations, this study focuses on the relative importance of Big Five personality traits in predicting teachers' perceived character education effectiveness. In this study, perceived character education effectiveness is conceptualized as a composite construct reflecting teachers' perceptions of implementation quality, school climate, and student character development, consistent with established frameworks in character education research (Aldridge et al., 2024; Berkowitz, 2022). This operationalization captures both process and outcome dimensions as experienced by teachers in their instructional context.

From a theoretical perspective, this study draws on trait activation theory as an interpretive framework. Although situational cues are not directly measured, the theory provides a useful lens for understanding how emotionally and socially demanding teaching contexts may differentially activate personality traits (Hardikar et al., 2024; Li & Wilt, 2025). Accordingly, character education is treated as a context in which traits related to emotional regulation, behavioral consistency, and cognitive flexibility may be particularly salient.

Accordingly, this study proposes a conceptual model in which Big Five personality traits are associated with teachers' perceived character education effectiveness, with particular emphasis on their relative contributions within this domain. Building on this framework, the following hypotheses are proposed. Conscientiousness, which reflects organization, responsibility, and goal-directed behavior, is expected to support the consistent implementation of character education practices. Teachers high in conscientiousness are more likely to plan, monitor, and sustain value-based instructional activities. Therefore:

H1: Conscientiousness is positively associated with perceived character education effectiveness.

Emotional stability is also expected to play a central role, as character education often involves emotionally demanding interactions requiring patience and regulation. Teachers with higher emotional stability are better able to manage stress and maintain supportive classroom environments that facilitate character development. Therefore:

H2: Emotional stability is positively associated with perceived character education effectiveness.

Openness to Experience, characterized by cognitive flexibility and receptiveness to new ideas, may enable teachers to engage students in reflective discussions and adapt instructional approaches to complex moral and social issues. This adaptability is particularly relevant in character education contexts. Therefore:

H3: Openness to Experience is positively associated with perceived character education effectiveness.

In contrast, the roles of extraversion and agreeableness remain less clear. Extraversion may facilitate social interaction and classroom engagement, while agreeableness reflects empathy and interpersonal warmth that can support teacher-student relationships. However, these traits may not directly translate into structured instructional practices required for effective character education, and their effects may be context-dependent. Accordingly:

H4: Extraversion is associated with perceived character education effectiveness.

H5: Agreeableness is associated with perceived character education effectiveness.

Given the intercorrelations among personality traits and inconsistent findings in prior research, this study also examines the relative contribution of each trait. Accordingly, the following research question is proposed:

RQ: Which Big Five trait shows the greatest relative contribution to perceived character education effectiveness?

By integrating multiple regression with relative weight analysis, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how personality traits are associated with perceived character education effectiveness. The study focuses on character education as a distinct pedagogical domain and applies relative weight analysis to clarify the relative importance of personality traits within this context.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the association and relative contribution of Big Five personality traits to teachers' perceived character education effectiveness. Data were collected between July and December 2025 in public junior high schools (SMP Negeri) in Bogor, Indonesia. The target population consisted of 816 civil servant teachers (PNS) working in 21 public junior high schools across six districts in Bogor. A multistage sampling procedure was applied.

In the first stage, approximately 50% of schools were selected from each district, resulting in a total of 10 schools and 387 eligible teachers. In the second stage, the

required sample size was determined using the Yamane formula, yielding a sample of 197 teachers. In the final stage, proportional random sampling was applied within each selected school to determine the number of participants based on the size of the teacher population in each school.

A total of 197 teachers participated in the study. The demographic characteristics of participants are as follows:

- a) Gender: 29.1% male, 70.9% female
- b) Age: ≤30 years (14.2%), 31–40 years (15.7%), 41–50 years (27.4%), >50 years (42.6%)
- c) Teaching experience: ≤10 years (23.9%), 11–20 years (27.4%), 21–30 years (36.0%), >30 years (12.7%)
- d) Homeroom teacher status: 61.9% yes, 38.1% no

Data were collected using a paper-based (offline) survey. Participants completed the questionnaires anonymously without writing their names; instead, identification codes were used to ensure confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study prior to data collection.

To reduce the risk of common method bias, several procedural remedies were applied. These included ensuring respondent anonymity, using different response formats for predictor and outcome variables (Likert and frequency-based scales), and separating the measurement of independent and dependent variables within the questionnaire. Despite these efforts, the use of a single-source, self-report design may still introduce common method variance.

Personality traits were measured using a Big Five instrument based on the Five-Factor Model. The instrument consisted of:

- a) Conscientiousness (5 items)
- b) Agreeableness (6 items)
- c) Extraversion (7 items)
- d) Openness to Experience (8 items)
- e) Emotional Stability (7 items)

Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All dimensions demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70.

Perceived character education effectiveness was conceptualized as the degree to which systematic, comprehensive, and planned efforts in schools successfully promote students' moral development, ethical decision-making, and value-based behavior.

This instrument consisted of 34 items that met the validity criteria based on pilot testing on 30 respondents and covers three dimensions: implementation quality (process evaluation), school climate, and student character development. The construct was treated as a reflective composite representing teachers' perceived evaluations across three dimensions rather than a formally validated multidimensional latent structure. Example items include statements such as "Teachers consistently model moral values in classroom interactions" and "The school carries out activities to improve teacher competence in fostering student character."

Although the instrument demonstrated high internal consistency, its construct validity has not been established through advanced techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis. Therefore, the measure should be interpreted as an exploratory operationalization of perceived character education effectiveness.

Responses were measured using a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The scale demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.919$). Item validity was assessed using Pearson product-moment correlation based on pilot testing. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with all scales meeting acceptable thresholds ($\alpha > 0.70$). These procedures indicate that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for subsequent analysis.

Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis to examine the association between personality traits and perceived character education effectiveness. To assess the relative contribution of each predictor, RWA was employed to partition the explained variance among correlated predictors. All analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 27). Control variables were not included in the regression model due to the exploratory focus of the study and considerations related to sample size. However, demographic factors such as age, teaching experience, and school context may also influence perceived effectiveness and should be considered in future research.

Results

1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables. Overall, the variables show adequate variability relative to the theoretical scale range as indicated by their standard deviations. Skewness and kurtosis values fall within acceptable ranges, suggesting no substantial deviations from normality. These results indicate that the data are appropriate for subsequent parametric analyses.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Conscientiousness	21.70	2.16	-0.006	-1.13
Agreeableness	23.80	2.82	0.180	-0.284
Extraversion	28.50	3.84	-0.874	3.99
Openness to Experience	32.30	3.62	0.254	-0.352
Emotional Stability	27.30	3.40	0.100	0.136
Perceived Character Education Effectiveness	146.00	14.50	-0.698	0.472

Note. N = 197.

2. Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix among the study variables. All Big Five personality traits showed positive correlations with the outcome variable, with correlation coefficients ranging from .405 to .486. Moderate intercorrelations among predictors are also observed, supporting the use of Relative Weight Analysis (RWA) to account for overlapping variance among predictors.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Conscientiousness	—					
2. Agreeableness	.564**	—				
3. Extraversion	.603**	.527**	—			
4. Openness to Experience	.569**	.504**	.528**	—		
5. Emotional Stability	.481**	.477**	.517**	.503**	—	
6. Perceived Character Education Effectiveness	.486**	.405**	.467**	.470**	.469**	—

Note. N = 197. **p < .01.

3. Assumption Testing

Prior to regression analysis, diagnostic tests were conducted to evaluate model assumptions (Table 3). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated no significant deviation from normality (p = .098). The Breusch–Pagan test yielded a marginally non-significant result (p = .052), suggesting no strong evidence of heteroskedasticity.

Multicollinearity diagnostics showed that all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 2.0 and tolerance values exceeded 0.50, indicating no serious multicollinearity concerns. No extreme outliers were detected based on standardized residuals. Overall, the assumptions for regression analysis were considered adequately satisfied.

Table 3. Normality Test

Test	Statistic	p-value
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	0.0875	.098

Table 4. Heteroskedasticity Test

Test	Statistic	p-value
Breusch–Pagan	11.0	.052

Table 5. Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
Conscientiousness	1.99	0.501
Agreeableness	1.71	0.583
Extraversion	1.89	0.529
Openness to Experience	1.76	0.568
Emotional Stability	1.60	0.627

4. Multiple Regression Analysis

The overall regression model was statistically significant, explaining 34.6% of the variance in perceived character education effectiveness ($R^2 = .346$; adjusted $R^2 = .329$; $F(5,191) = 20.2$, $p < .001$). The regression coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df1	df2	p
1	0.588	0.346	0.329	20.2	5	191	<.001

Table 7. Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	53.662	9.532	—	5.630	<.001
Conscientiousness	1.227	0.552	0.184	2.224	.027
Agreeableness	0.252	0.393	0.050	0.643	.521
Extraversion	0.517	0.303	0.137	1.709	.089
Openness to Experience	0.662	0.310	0.166	2.137	.034
Emotional Stability	0.861	0.314	0.203	2.743	.007

Note. N = 197.

As shown in Table 5, emotional stability ($\beta = 0.203$, $p = .007$), conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.184$, $p = .027$), and openness to experience ($\beta = 0.166$, $p = .034$) showed significant positive associations with perceived character education effectiveness. In contrast,

extraversion ($\beta = 0.137$, $p = .089$) and agreeableness ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = .521$) were not statistically significant.

5. Relative Weight Analysis

To further examine the relative importance of predictors, RWA was conducted (Table 6). RWA decomposes the total explained variance (R^2) into the proportional contribution of each predictor, considering both unique and shared variance.

The results show that emotional stability contributes the largest proportion of explained variance (27.5%), followed by conscientiousness (25.9%) and openness to experience (22.5%). Extraversion contributes a moderate proportion of the explained variance (18.5%), while agreeableness contributes the least (5.7%).

Although extraversion was not statistically significant in the regression model, its relative weight suggests that it still contributes meaningfully when shared variance is considered. This highlights the added value of RWA beyond traditional regression coefficients.

Table 8. Relative Importance of Predictors

Predictor	β	r (Y)	sr^2	RWA (%)	Rank
Emotional Stability	0.203	0.469	0.095	27.5%	1
Conscientiousness	0.184	0.486	0.090	25.9%	2
Openness to Experience	0.166	0.470	0.078	22.5%	3
Extraversion	0.137	0.467	0.064	18.5%	4
Agreeableness	0.049	0.405	0.020	5.7%	5

Note. RWA = relative weight analysis; sr^2 = semi-partial correlation squared.

While standardized beta coefficients (β) and semi-partial correlations (sr^2) indicate the direction and unique contribution of predictors, RWA provides a more comprehensive estimate by incorporating both unique and shared variance.

The results indicate that emotional stability, conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience are significant predictors of perceived character education effectiveness, with emotional stability emerging as the most influential factor. Relative Weight Analysis further demonstrates that all personality traits contribute to the model to varying degrees, highlighting the importance of considering both statistical significance and relative importance when examining the role of personality in educational contexts.

Discussion

This study examined the association and relative contribution of Big Five personality traits to teachers' perceived character education effectiveness. The findings indicate that emotional stability, conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience are significant

predictors, with emotional stability showing the largest relative contribution. In contrast, extraversion and agreeableness demonstrate weaker or non-significant roles. These findings reinforce the importance of examining personality traits within specific pedagogical domains rather than assuming uniform effects across teaching contexts (Bardach et al., 2022; Mammadov & Avci, 2025). The present findings are also consistent with foundational evidence suggesting that personality traits play a significant role in performance-related outcomes (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2002), although their relative importance may vary depending on the specific domain.

The strong contribution of emotional stability suggests that the ability to regulate emotions and maintain psychological balance may be particularly relevant in the context of character education. These findings can be interpreted within the broader framework of character education, which emphasizes not only interpersonal relationships but also moral consistency and behavioral regulation (Lickona, 1991; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Character education often involves managing morally complex and emotionally demanding classroom situations, which require patience and consistency in responding to student behavior (Berkowitz & Bier, 2021; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2022). However, this interpretation remains inferential, as the present study does not directly measure emotion regulation or classroom processes. Therefore, emotional stability should be understood as a proxy indicator rather than a directly observed mechanism.

Conscientiousness also shows a meaningful contribution, likely reflecting the importance of structured implementation and consistency in character education practices. Previous studies have shown that conscientious teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of planning, persistence, and goal-directed behavior, which are critical in sustaining educational programs (Burić & Kim, 2021; Mammadov, 2022). In the context of character education, such consistency may be particularly important given its long-term and process-oriented nature.

Openness to Experience further contributes to perceived effectiveness, suggesting that cognitive flexibility and receptiveness to new ideas support reflective discussions and adaptive teaching strategies. This is consistent with research indicating that openness is associated with innovative teaching approaches and responsiveness to complex learning situations (Bürger et al., 2026; Chaudhary & Singh, 2022). Given that character education often involves nuanced moral reasoning and context-dependent decision-making, openness may facilitate more dynamic instructional practices.

One of the most notable findings is the relatively low contribution of agreeableness, despite its theoretical relevance to empathy, cooperation, and interpersonal warmth. This apparent paradox warrants further theoretical and empirical examination. First, the outcome variable in this study focuses on perceived effectiveness in implementation, school climate, and student development, which may emphasize structured practices and

self-evaluative judgments rather than relational quality alone. As a result, traits related to organization and emotional regulation may be more salient than interpersonal warmth.

Second, agreeableness may overlap with other traits, particularly emotional stability and conscientiousness, reducing its unique contribution in multivariate analysis. Such overlap is well-documented in personality research and can obscure the distinct role of individual traits (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011). Third, the institutional context of schools may prioritize consistency, discipline, and emotional control over interpersonal expressiveness, especially in structured educational settings.

Finally, measurement-related factors cannot be ruled out. The agreeableness scale used in this study, although reliable, may not fully capture the specific relational dimensions most relevant to character education. Future research should consider more context-sensitive measures of interpersonal functioning.

A similar pattern is observed for extraversion. While extraversion is associated with social interaction and classroom engagement (Mammadov & Avci, 2025), its role appears less central when compared to traits related to emotional regulation and consistency. Notably, the relative weight analysis indicates that extraversion still contributes meaningfully to the overall variance when shared variance is considered. This underscores the importance of distinguishing between statistical significance and relative importance, particularly in models involving correlated predictors (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2011).

The findings are broadly consistent with trait activation theory, suggesting that certain personality traits become more relevant in contexts characterized by emotional demands, structured implementation, and adaptive teaching requirements (Hardikar et al., 2024; Li & Wilt, 2025). However, it is important to emphasize that this study does not directly test situational activation mechanisms. Therefore, the results should be interpreted as consistent with, rather than extending, trait activation theory.

More broadly, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the influence of personality traits may vary across pedagogical domains. While prior research has largely focused on general character education effectiveness (Bardach et al., 2022; Bürger et al., 2026), the present findings suggest that character education places greater emphasis on emotional regulation and consistency than on sociability alone.

The findings suggest that personality traits are associated with how teachers perceive the effectiveness of character education practices. However, given the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the data, these results should be interpreted with caution and should not be used as a direct basis for personnel selection or policy decisions.

Instead, the results may inform professional development efforts by highlighting the potential importance of emotional regulation, consistency, and adaptability in supporting character education implementation. These insights may be particularly relevant for designing training programs aimed at enhancing teachers' capacity to manage emotionally and morally complex classroom situations.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Second, the reliance on self-reported measures raises the possibility of common method bias and social desirability effects, particularly given that all variables were collected from the same respondents at a single point in time.

Third, although the outcome measure demonstrates high internal consistency, its construct validity remains limited, as it has not been tested using advanced measurement models such as confirmatory factor analysis. As highlighted in prior research, the measurement of psychological constructs requires careful validation to ensure interpretability (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015), which remains a limitation in the present study.

Fourth, the study does not include control variables such as age, teaching experience, or school context, which may influence both personality expression and perceived effectiveness. This omission may limit the robustness of the findings.

Additionally, the absence of measured mediating variables (e.g., emotion regulation, classroom climate, or teacher burnout) restricts the ability to explain the underlying mechanisms of the observed associations.

Conclusion

This study examined the association and relative contribution of Big Five personality traits to teachers' perceived character education effectiveness. The findings indicate that emotional stability, conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience are more strongly associated with perceived effectiveness compared to other traits, with emotional stability showing the largest relative contribution.

These findings suggest that personality traits related to emotional regulation, consistency, and cognitive flexibility may be particularly relevant in the context of character education. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously, given the cross-sectional design, the use of self-reported measures, and the limited assessment of construct validity. Accordingly, the results reflect patterns of association rather than causal relationships.

In practical terms, the findings highlight the potential relevance of supporting teachers' emotional regulation, consistency in instructional practices, and adaptability in value-based education contexts. Nevertheless, these implications should not be directly

translated into personnel selection or policy decisions without further evidence from longitudinal and multi-source studies.

Future research should examine the mechanisms underlying these relationships by incorporating mediating variables such as emotional regulation, classroom climate, or teacher burnout. In addition, the use of longitudinal designs, validated measurement models, and broader contextual variables will be important for strengthening the generalizability and explanatory power of future findings.

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