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# Charismatic personality as a predictor of proactive coping among university faculty members

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite increasing interest in faculty effectiveness, limited research has examined how charismatic personality contributes to proactive coping in higher education, particularly in Middle Eastern universities. This study investigated the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping among 331 faculty members at the University of Anbar, Iraq, using a descriptive correlational design. Data were collected using the charismatic personality scale and the proactive coping scale. Pearson correlation and simple linear regression analyses were performed. Results revealed a significant positive correlation ($r=0.566$, $p<0.05$). Charismatic personality significantly predicted proactive coping, explaining 32.1% of the variance. No significant differences were found across gender or specialization. These findings suggest that charismatic personality represents an important psychological resource for enhancing proactive coping and should be incorporated into faculty professional development programs.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Universities continue to face challenges in maximizing faculty members' personal competencies [1]. The need for inspiring and influential academic figures has become even more urgent in an era characterized by rapid digital expansion and the decline of the traditional authority of the teacher [2]. In the context of higher education, charisma has become an essential factor in enhancing the effectiveness of faculty members. Experimental results show that charismatic teachers contribute to improved teaching performance, create a more supportive learning environment, and increase student motivation and engagement in the classroom [3]. Sincer and Özdemir [4] indicate that charisma positively influences organizational commitment among faculty members. Anderson [5] also highlights the role of charismatic teaching in enhancing student motivation, particularly among non-traditional learners who are facing multiple life demands. A faculty member is one of the essential pillars of the educational process, as their role extends beyond delivering knowledge to include guidance, motivation, and supporting students' intellectual and social development. Therefore, faculty members need important personal qualities, particularly charisma, which enhances students' motivation and engagement in learning [6]. Teaching is viewed as a performative art that requires special skills and teaching charisma, although research on this topic remains limited due to the complexity of the concept and the difficulty of defining and measuring its dimensions [7]. In light of rapid contemporary changes, there is an increasing need for faculty members with charismatic personalities capable of attracting and inspiring students, as charisma contributes to promoting classroom interaction and creating an effective

educational environment [8]. Furthermore, communication skills, clear vision, inspiring confidence, emotional expressiveness, and warmth are considered key indicators of charismatic behaviors among faculty members [9]. The concept of charisma comes from the Greek word "*charis*", meaning "gift" or "grace". It was initially linked to spiritual gifts such as prophecy [10].

Charisma is understood as a form of authority rooted in followers' belief in a leader's legitimacy. Over time, the concept has shifted from being viewed as a mysterious innate quality to being recognized as a set of observable behaviors and emotional characteristics that can develop and be enhanced [11]. According to Tskhay *et al*. [12], charisma is not limited to formal leaders but also appears in everyday life. House links charisma to leadership, explaining that charismatic leaders possess personal traits and behaviors that promote loyalty, inspiration, and compliance with directions [13]. On the other hand, Conger and Kanungo [14] view charisma as a relational process in which followers attribute it to distinctive behaviors in the leader.

Riggio [15] believes that charisma manifests in social and emotional skills, such as emotional expression and social interaction, and can be learned and acquired. Antonakis *et al*. [16] distinguish between charisma and its outcomes, defining it as values-based leadership expressed through symbolic gestures to inspire others. Finally, Tskhay *et al*. [12] propose two basic dimensions of charisma in everyday life: influence and friendliness/warmth. The study emphasizes that charisma is an observable behavior and does not depend on position or intelligence. Moreover, the concept of proactive coping has received increasing attention in psychological research as an advanced approach to stress management. This is particularly in light of rapid global transformations and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the need for flexible and forward-looking coping strategies to maintain mental health [17].

Proactive coping, unlike traditional coping strategies that focus on responding to stress after it occurs, emphasizes anticipating future events [18]. It builds personal resources to deal with potential future challenges [19]. Many studies have investigated the relationship between personality traits and traditional coping styles. However, interest in the role of positive personality traits in proactive coping remains relatively limited [20]. Recent findings suggest that some adaptive traits may contribute to the shift from reactive to proactive coping [21]. Proactive coping is also considered a psychological and behavioral mechanism that helps faculty members anticipate educational stressors and deal with them effectively through proactive strategies [22]. Furthermore, Greenglass and Fiksenbaum [23] highlighted its association with values such as independence, activity, and positive behavior, while Vitalia [24] emphasized the importance of expanding its concept to include compassion and psychological flexibility, thereby enhancing the balance between meeting personal needs and caring for others.

The term "coping" comes from the Latin word '*colpus*', meaning "change". In psychology, it refers to the ability to deal with problems and difficulties [25]. Regarding its use, it began officially in psychological literature in 1967. It was then influenced by the roots of Freud's theory of defense mechanisms, which aimed to protect the individual from internal and external threats. Tian [26] distinguishes between coping and defense mechanisms, explaining that coping involves realistic and flexible responses to stress. Later, Lazarus and Folkman [27] focused on cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage stress, distinguishing between problem-oriented and emotion-oriented coping. Based on this, Aspinwall and Taylor [28] describe proactive coping as a predictive process that aims at reducing stress before it occurs, through five stages: building resources, identifying potential stressors, initial assessment, implementing coping efforts, and analyzing feedback. Schwarzer and Taubert [29] also distinguish four temporal patterns of coping: reactive, predictive, preventive, and proactive, noting that proactive coping is related to the pursuit of goals and personal growth, and not just risk management. Similarly, proactive coping is seen as a positive, multidimensional process that aims at dealing with stressors before they occur. It promotes mental health, personal development, and professional well-being, taking into account individual differences and available resources [30]. In general, these theories agree that proactive coping represents a proactive, goal-oriented strategy that depends on the availability of resources and transforms stress management into an opportunity for growth and adaptation.

Existing studies have predominantly examined charisma in relation to teaching effectiveness, leadership, and student engagement, while proactive coping has largely been investigated within occupational stress research. Few studies have integrated these constructs within higher education, and evidence from Middle Eastern universities remains scarce. Consequently, the psychological mechanism through which charismatic personality contributes to proactive coping among faculty members is insufficiently understood. Charismatic personality may enhance proactive coping because charismatic individuals possess; emotional regulation; optimism interpersonal competence confidence future orientation These characteristics facilitate proactive resource accumulation and anticipatory coping.

The objectives of the present study were to examine the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping among university faculty members and to determine the extent to which charismatic personality predicts proactive coping. Based on these objectives, the following hypothesis was

proposed: charismatic personality significantly predicts proactive coping (H1). The present study was limited to faculty members at the University of Anbar, Iraq.

## 2. METHOD

The researchers adopted the descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping. The sample consisted of 331 faculty members from the University of Anbar, selected using a stratified random sampling technique from a population of 2,383 lecturers, based on Krejcie and Morgan [31] formula. The charismatic personality scale was developed based on the theoretical model of Tskhay *et al*. [12] and adapted to the Iraqi context. Its content validity was confirmed by a panel of experts. Construct validity was examined using principal components analysis (PCA). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2$=5366.01), and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value was 0.972, indicating suitability for factor analysis. The analysis extracted one factor with an eigenvalue of 14.181, explaining 47.63% of the total variance. Reliability was confirmed using test–retest (0.90) and Cronbach's alpha (0.87). The scale consisted of 30 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 30 to 150 and a theoretical mean of 90. A proactive coping scale developed by Greenglass [30] was also adopted, and its psychometric properties were verified. Reliability was 0.91 using the test–retest method and 0.89 using Cronbach's alpha. The scale consists of 32 items, each with five response options: strongly agree, agree, sometimes, rarely, and strongly disagree. Positive items were scored (5 to 1), while negative items were reverse-scored. The total score is obtained by summing all item responses, ranging from a minimum of 32 to a maximum of 160, with a theoretical mean of 96.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To assess charismatic personality among the sample, descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test were conducted. The hypothetical mean of the scale was 90, representing its theoretical midpoint, as shown in Table 1. The table indicates that the sample members possess a high level of charismatic personality. This can be explained by faculty members' ability to persuade, influence, and lead others, which strengthens positive relationships, trust, and emotional connection with them. This is also reflected in their academic practices such as classroom management, leading research projects, participation in scientific committees, and daily interaction with students and colleagues. These practices contribute to building relationships based on respect, empathy, and trust, enhancing their personal attractiveness and leadership effectiveness. These findings are consistent with several previous studies that confirmed the positive impact of charisma among faculty members. Previous studies [1], [32], [33] found that charisma enhances student motivation, engagement, and Kuziukova *et al*. [34] highlighted its role in improving the learning environment and teaching effectiveness. Saroyan [8] emphasized that charismatic traits are a professional necessity for successful teaching. Furthermore, Sincer and Özdemir [4] reported its positive effect on organizational commitment, while Li and Nacional [3] showed its role in improving academic performance and learning outcomes. Gunasekare [9] also noted that charisma is reflected in leadership traits such as communication skills, vision, and inspiring confidence.

To identify proactive coping among the sample, descriptive statistics and a one-sample t-test were conducted. The hypothetical mean of the scale was 96, which represents the theoretical midpoint of the scale, as shown in Table 2. The table shows that faculty members exhibit high levels of proactive coping, driven by their professional awareness and academic competence in anticipating and preparing for stressors. This finding aligns with Bekhter [21], who attributes this advanced proactive behavior to aging, maturity, and personality development (charisma), which reflects how academic experience has shaped the current study's sample. This perspective also converges with Turner [17] on the role of personality and cognitive processes in educational settings, reinforcing Aspinwall and Taylor [28] and Greenglass [30] regarding early threat detection and reinterpreting risks as manageable challenges. Furthermore, this result connects to the motivational and environmental dimensions of proactive coping. While Schwarzer and Taubert [29] and Vitalia [24] view it as a driver for growth, independence, and positivity, Samfira and Paloș [22] frame it operationally as a mechanism for educators to navigate workload and student misconduct. Similarly, Chan and Brough [19] underscore its necessity during rapid crises (COVID-19), making proactive preparation a professional imperative for resilience and adaptation.

Table 1. The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and t-value of the charismatic personality scale

| Variable | Sample | Mean | Standard deviation | Hypothesized mean | t-value | | Significance (0.05) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Charismatic personality | 331 | 116.541 | 6.322 | 90 | 76.382 | 1.96 | Significant |

Table 2. The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and t-value of the proactive coping scale

| Variable | Sample | Arithmetic mean | Standard deviation | Hypothesized mean | t-value | | Significance (0.05) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Proactive coping | 331 | 120.843 | 5.520 | 96 | 81.877 | 1.96 | Significant |

To identify the correlational relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping, the researchers used Pearson's correlation coefficient. Table 3 shows a significant positive correlation between charismatic personality and proactive coping ($r=0.566$, $t=12.578$, $p<0.05$), indicating that higher levels of charismatic personality are associated with higher levels of proactive coping. This suggests that as charismatic personality increases, proactive coping also increases. This finding reflects a clear overlap between charismatic traits and proactive capacities, as individuals with charismatic personalities tend to possess high levels of self-confidence and the ability to influence others—characteristics that are inherently associated with planning for the future and dealing with potential stressors before they occur, which represents the essence of proactive coping. Furthermore, charismatic faculty members are more capable of organizing their professional environment, anticipating potential challenges, and utilizing available resources effectively, leading them to adopt proactive strategies to maintain their academic effectiveness. Therefore, the association between these two constructs reflects an integration of personality traits and adaptive processes that require cognitive and emotional readiness to cope with future situations.

Table 3. The correlation between charismatic personality and proactive coping

| Number | Correlation coefficient between charismatic personality and proactive coping | t-value | | Significance level (0.05) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Calculated | Critical | |
| 331 | 0.566 | 12.578 | 1.96 | Significant |

To determine the significance of the differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping among the research sample according to the gender variable, the researchers used the z-test to determine the significance of the difference between the correlation coefficients between the sample scores. Table 4 shows that there are no statistically significant differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping according to gender. The researchers attribute this to the fact that both variables are associated with similar psychological and cognitive traits and competencies in males and females. So, they are not influenced by gender differences.

Table 4. Differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping according to the gender variable

| Gender | Number | Correlation coefficient between the two research variables | Standardized value | z-score | | Significance level (0.05) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Males | 244 | 0.557 | 0.626 | 0.532 | 1.96 | Not significant |
| Females | 87 | 0.598 | 0.693 | | | |

To determine the significance of the differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping among the research participants regarding the specialization variable, the researchers used the z-test to determine the significance of the difference between the correlation coefficients of the sample scores. Table 5 shows that there are no differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping based on specialization (scientific–humanities), as the calculated Z-value is smaller than the tabulated Z-value. The researchers explain this by stating that charisma enhances initiative, confidence, and influence, thus leading to proactive coping. This relationship does not change with specialization despite the influence of the academic environment on the overall level of both variables.

Table 5. Differences in the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping according to the specialization variable

| Specialization | Number | Correlation coefficient between the two research variables | Standardized value | z-score | | Significance level (0.05) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Scientific | 197 | 0.526 | 0.583 | 0.646 | 1.96 | Non-significant |
| Humanitarian | 134 | 0.469 | 0.510 | | | |

To determine the extent to which charismatic personality contributes to predicting proactive coping among faculty members, the researchers used simple linear regression analysis. The results showed that the correlation coefficient was (R=0.566), while the coefficient of determination was ($R^2$=0.320), indicating that charismatic personality explains 32% of the variance in proactive coping. The F-value was statistically significant at the 0.05 level with degrees of freedom (1, 329), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the calculated F-value for the regression analysis is greater than the tabulated F-value. This shows that the charismatic personality influences the variance in proactive coping. Through the values of the regression coefficient (beta), the standard error, and the relative contribution values of the standard (beta), it is possible to calculate the significance of the charismatic personality in proactive coping.

Table 6. The F-value for simple regression analysis of the degree of the independent variable in relation to the dependent variable

| Source of variation | Sum of squares | Degrees of freedom | Mean squares | F-value | | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Regression | 3224.475 | 1 | 3224.475 | 155.292 | 3.84 | 0.05 |
| Residual | 6831.356 | 329 | 20.764 | | | |
| Total | 10055.831 | 330 | | | | |

Table 7 shows that charismatic personality predicted proactive coping (β=0.566, $R^2$=0.321, t=12.462, p<0.05). The model explained 32.1% of the variance in proactive coping. This finding suggests that charismatic faculty members are more likely to anticipate occupational challenges through confidence, future-oriented thinking, and effective interpersonal influence. These characteristics may facilitate resource accumulation before stress occurs, consistent with the proactive coping model proposed by Aspinwall and Taylor. Unlike previous leadership studies that emphasized instructional outcomes, the present findings demonstrate that charisma also contributes to psychological resilience among academics.

Table 7. Beta coefficient values and the standard error of charismatic personality in the total variance of proactive coping

| Variables | Beta coefficient (B) | Standard error | Beta coefficient (beta) standard | t-value | | Significance level 0.05 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Calculated | Critical | |
| Constant | 63.217 | 4.631 | - | 13.651 | 1.96 | Significant |
| Charismatic personality | 0.494 | 0.040 | 0.566 | 12.462 | 1.96 | Significant |

## 4. CONCLUSION

The results showed a significant relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping, indicating that charismatic traits help faculty members deal more effectively with professional challenges. The findings also confirmed that charismatic personality can predict proactive coping, although it is not the only influencing factor. These findings have practical implications for university leadership, faculty development, teacher training, organizational psychology, and institutional policies by highlighting the importance of developing charismatic traits and proactive coping skills to enhance academic effectiveness and psychological resilience. The study was limited to faculty members at the University of Anbar and employed a cross-sectional design based on self-report measures, which may introduce common method variance and limit the generalizability of the findings within the Iraqi cultural context. Therefore, causal relationships cannot be inferred. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, structural equation modeling (SEM), and examine potential mediating and moderating variables to better understand the relationship between charismatic personality and proactive coping. Comparative studies across different countries and cultural contexts, as well as intervention-based studies, are also recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of programs aimed at enhancing charismatic personality and proactive coping among faculty members.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

| Name of Author | C | M | So | Va | Fo | I | R | D | O | E | Vi | Su | P | Fu |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ammar Ahmed Harb | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Abdul Kareem Obaid Juma | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |

C : **C**onceptualization
M : **M**ethodology
So : **So**ftware
Va : **Va**lidation
Fo : **Fo**rmal analysis
I : **I**nvestigation
R : **R**esources
D : **D**ata Curation
O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft
E : Writing - Review & **E**diting
Vi : **Vi**sualization
Su : **Su**pervision
P : **P**roject administration
Fu : **Fu**nding acquisition

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research project was formally approved by the University Co Council of the University of Anbar accordance with the official administrative order issued by the College of Education for Humanities (Administrative Order No. 1373, dated 1 August 2025), based on the resolutions of the University Council session.

## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data underlying the results of this research are available from the corresponding author, [AAH], upon a reasonable request.

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