

***Personality Profile as Correlates of Emotional Intelligence of Counsellors
in Secondary Schools in Selected South Western States of Nigeria***

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Abstract

This study investigated personality profile as correlates of emotional intelligence of counsellors in Secondary Schools. Two research questions and one hypothesis were raised and tested respectively at .05 level of significance. A correlational design was employed. The population of this study comprised of Students in Secondary School in selected South Western states of Nigeria. A sample size of Five hundred and Eighty (580) SSS III students was drawn from fifteen (15) secondary schools using the multi-stage sampling technique. The researcher adapted The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) and Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) as research instruments. The instruments were validated and the reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.878 and 0.922 for the two instruments. Data analyses were carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of the study revealed that counsellors in senior secondary schools possess the attributes of Big five personality dimension and competencies of emotional intelligence in a measure above average. Also, personality relates with emotional intelligence significantly and positively. Hence, the researcher concluded that personality correlates with emotional intelligence. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that it is essential that counsellors ensure conscious and continuous self-assessment so as to improve their level of emotional intelligence and the quantity of measure of personality in order to promote counselling relationship.

Keywords: personality, counsellor, counselling, emotional intelligence and efficiency.

Introduction

The total development of a client or student is dependent on the effectiveness of the school counsellor. The efficiency of any counsellor would go a long way to determine the actualisation of client's purpose of attending counselling session. Therefore, the success of school counselling programme and services depends on counsellors who are ready not to pay lip service but to diligently and dutifully

deliver the services. To be diligent and dutiful in delivering these services, is not just attained at ease rather it takes distinguished behaviours and attitudes of the counsellor which are reflections of his/her personality and emotional intelligence.

Generally, clients who patronise counselling are always on the alert and sensitive to the person of the counsellor. They may want to know whether the counsellor is responsible, discipline, considerate, intelligent, empathic and equal to the task of counselling them. The person of the counsellor is an indispensable aspect of the counselling process. This is because counselling is a helping relationship which involves two individuals (a counsellor and a client) in a communication process and the first interaction the client will have is with the appearance or disposition of the counsellor. Hence, counselling being a facilitating relationship, requires a counsellor whose level of emotional intelligence and personal qualities can afford him/her an attractive and well-disposed countenance. Corey (2005) opined that the most important instrument you have to work with, as a counsellor is yourself as a person.

Before now, humanists have advocated the importance of the person of the counsellor in the helping relationship. Self-assessment and understanding with respect to basic personality functioning, emotional patterns, and character, strengths and limitations are requisites for the successful therapist (Rogers, 1939). Rogers (1957) outlines the necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. Out of which, essential counsellor personal-emotional characteristics of the ability for genuineness, for caring, and for empathy were mentioned. In a counselling relationship, a counsellor is expected to a congruent, genuine and an integrated person. The counsellor should be freely and deeply himself, with his/her actual experience accurately represented by his/her awareness of him/herself (McConaughy, 1987).

For all-round counselling efficiency and effectiveness, it is salient that counsellors are aware of their own feelings and allow themselves to experience those feelings during the counselling sessions. In some cases, counsellors may unknowingly communicate their feelings to clients, and may not know its effects on the client. Counsellors should be careful of what is shared about their feelings based on what is appropriate for the needs of an individual client. The ability to assess what is to be shared with clients and when (ability to understand and communicate emotion and feelings) requires considerable interpersonal skill and self-awareness which are characterised by a well-adjusted personality and emotional intelligence (Alutu, Alika & Njah-Joseph, 2016).

The concept of personality is very important because understanding someone's personality helps to categorise him/her into jobs that fit his/her personality and may

enhance effectiveness in the workplace. Personality helps to describe the 'person' of an individual. Personality is an enduring pattern of perceiving, thinking and relating with one's environment. A very important model for explaining personality is the Big Five Factor personality model, which includes openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Openness depicts the inclination to be independent, imaginative and interested in diverse ideas. Conscientiousness is the tendency to be prepared, mindful, and disciplined. While the tendency to be outgoing, fun-loving and warm is regarded as extraversion. The inclination to be sympathetic, trusting, and supportive is known as Agreeableness. Neuroticism is the tendency to be apprehensive and emotionally unstable.

In contrast, researchers in various aspects of psychology have advocated the significance of emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence of counsellors cannot be undermined because it is capable of contributing to a balanced and well-adjusted disposition of the counsellor. To support this idea, Rolinda, Tengku, and Noriah (2016) found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among school counselling head teachers and Rolinda (2009) established that counsellors possess measures of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a collection of competencies involved in using emotion as a guide to shape thoughts and behaviour in order to accomplish a task and according to Goleman (2006), the five key competencies of emotional intelligence involve the competencies of (i) self-awareness, (ii) self-regulation, (iii) motivation, (iv) empathy and (v) social skills.

Literature highlighted the importance of personality and emotional intelligence by revealing that they predict and relate with different aspects of human endeavour such as managerial effectiveness, leadership counsellor efficiency, counselling effectiveness and happiness among others (Njah-Joseph, 2017). In addition, they have been found to help individuals to record high achievements in both the work place and their personal life as well as to contribute meaningfully to the performance of their organization (Kappagoda, 2013; Mustaffa, Nasir, Aziz & Mahmood, 2013).

Literature on emotional intelligence and personality revealed a relationship between emotional intelligence and Big Five factor model of personality though the extent differed. According to Andi (2012) analyses from the literature has proven that the correlations between measures of emotional intelligence and the Big Five Factor personality are moderate to high. According to Petrides et al. (2010), a stronger relationship was reported between emotional intelligence and big five personality. Bracket and Mayer (2003) found a high significant correlation between emotional intelligence and Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, but a moderate relationship with Openness to experience. Sala (2002) found that

emotional intelligence has significantly correlated with Extraversion, Openness to experience, and Conscientiousness. According to Besharat (2010), the correlation between emotional intelligence and the dimensions of extraversion and conscientiousness is significant and positive. Moreover, he found negative relationship between emotional intelligence and neuroticism.

In addition, a strong relationship was found between the emotional intelligence dimensions and the big five personality dimensions, particularly extraversion and neuroticism (Van Der Zee, Thijs & Schakel, 2002). Hundani, Redzuan and Hamsan (2012), and Shulman and Hemeenover (2006) found that all the big five personality dimensions correlated with emotional intelligence. While Matthews et al (2006) found that emotional intelligence positively correlated with extraversion and negatively correlated with neuroticism. Equally Christopher, Kamlesh and Brett (2011) found a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and all the measures of Big five personality model except Agreeableness.

Statement of the problem

The availability of counsellor in our secondary schools has been an issue of concern which has since lingered, though efforts are being put in place to arrest the challenge. The increase in enrolment of individuals in counselling degree programmes and mandatory assignment of counsellors to most public secondary schools gave a sigh of relief. However, an issue of indispensable concern is personal-emotional attributes of these counsellors because these attributes provide the medium through which the counsellors relate with the experiences outside him/her and the client's issues and challenges. Hence, this study is poised to find out whether counsellors in secondary schools possess the personal-emotional characteristics essential for effective delivery of counselling services.

Research questions

1. What is the personality profile and emotional intelligence of counsellors in Secondary Schools?
2. Is there any relationship between personality profile and emotional intelligence of Counsellors in Secondary Schools?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between personality profile and emotional intelligence of Counsellors in Secondary Schools

Methodology

The correlational research design was employed in this study. This choice was based on the fact that this research design enabled the researcher to examine the relationship between personality and emotional intelligence. The population of this

study constituted all students in Government owned Secondary Schools in selected South Western states of Nigeria. The selected states are Ondo, Ekiti and Osun state. The senior secondary school three (SS III) students were chosen because they had spent three years at the junior secondary level and two years at the senior secondary school level and they must have had contact with counsellors either through individual or group counselling. This would have availed them the ample time to interact with the counsellor, hence can identify some of the characteristics of the counsellor. As third party, the students' assessment of the counsellor is relatively free of preconception or bias. Therefore, offering the researcher an objective description of the counsellor. A sample size of Five hundred and eighty (580) senior secondary school students was drawn from fifteen (15) secondary schools which were purposively selected on the grounds that students in these schools had counsellors who offered both group and individual counselling. The sample of the study was selected using the multi-stage sampling technique.

In stage one, the researcher purposively selected a major urban town from the State on the grounds that most urban towns had schools with guidance counsellors who offer counselling services. This gave three urban towns; Akure, Ado-Ekiti and Ilesa. In stage two, the researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique in selecting five (5) secondary schools with guidance counsellors from each urban town, summing up to fifteen (15) secondary schools. Stage four also involved a purposive selection of forty (40) students who had received counselling services through group or individual counselling in the selected secondary schools.

The researcher adapted two instruments in order to elicit information from the respondents, namely; the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) and Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ). The Personality of the Counsellors was measured with The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) adapted from John and Srivastava (1999). Originally, the inventory comprised 44-items on the personality facets. But the researcher devised a short version of 25 items. Items 1-5 measure Extraversion, items 6-10 measure Agreeableness; item 11-15 measure Conscientiousness and items 16-20 measure Neuroticism while items 21-25 measure Openness. The scale was designed with the response based on a 4-point scale of the Likert, which is strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4).

The second instrument was the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ). This is a Likert-type and self-report questionnaire designed by London Leadership Academy (n.d) but modified by the researcher and was used to measure emotional intelligence. The original form had fifty (50) items and five (5) subscales including: social skill, empathy, self-motivation, self-regulation, awareness. A brief version of the instrument structured by the researcher, with twenty-five (25) items and five (5)

subscales was used in this study; and would yield EI score for each of the five subscales. Each item consisted of a 4 point Likert scale with a response of: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4). Experts validated the instruments. This is to ensure that the instruments meet the criterion for face and content validity. The reliability of the instruments was established using the Cronbach's alpha statistics which gave reliability coefficients of 0.88 and 0.92 for Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) and Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) respectively.

The researcher personally visited the schools sampled for the study to administer the instrument to ensure utmost response from the respondents. The researcher explained the instructions and the items to the students. And also ensured that only students who have had contacts with the counsellor either through individual or group counselling took part in the study. This helped to obtain desired and optimum response. Four research assistants participated in the administration and retrieval of the instruments. In some of the schools, the counsellors served in the capacity of research assistants, while in other cases, some of the teachers, after being persuaded, volunteered to assist. The completed instruments were retrieved from the students on the same day while some were subsequently retrieved. A total of Five hundred and Eighty (580) completed instruments were successfully retrieved. The research question was answered using mean, standard deviation and percentage while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics (PPMC)

Presentation of results

Research Question 1: What is the personality profile and emotional intelligence of counsellors in Secondary Schools?

Table 1: Personality Profile

| Personality | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Percent (%) |
|-------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------------|
| Extraversion | 580 | 13.08 | 3.36 | 65.0 |
| Agreeableness | 580 | 12.01 | 2.56 | 60.0 |
| Openness | 580 | 13.84 | 3.61 | 69.2 |
| Neuroticism | 580 | 11.90 | 3.13 | 59.5 |
| Conscientiousness | 580 | 11.45 | 2.82 | 57.5 |

Table 1 shows the personality profile of counsellors in secondary schools. Extraversion (Mean=13.08, Std=3.36, percent=65.0%); Agreeableness (Mean=12.01, Std=2.56, percent=60.0%); Openness (Mean=13.84, Std=3.61, percent=69.2%); Neuroticism (Mean=11.90, Std=3.13, percent=59.5%); Conscientiousness (Mean=11.45, Std=2.82, percent=57.5%). The findings indicated that counsellors scored above 50% which implies that they possess the attributes of The Big Five personality dimension in average measure, scoring highest in

attribute of openness, followed by extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness.

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence of Counsellors

| Intelligence profile | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Percent (%) |
|----------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------------|
| Self-awareness | 580 | 13.19 | 3.56 | 65.9 |
| Self-regulation | 580 | 12.89 | 3.11 | 64.4 |
| Self- Motivation | 580 | 14.09 | 3.55 | 70.4 |
| Empathy | 580 | 13.51 | 3.69 | 67.6 |
| Socialskills | 580 | 13.72 | 3.87 | 68.6 |

Table 2 shows the emotional intelligence of the counsellors in secondary schools. Self-awareness (Mean= 13.19, Std= 3.56, percent= 65.9%); self-regulation (Mean= 12.89, Std= 3.12, percent= 64.4%); self-motivation (Mean=14.09, Std= 3.56, percent= 70.4%); Empathy (Mean= 13.51, Std= 3.69, percent = 67.6%); Social skills (Mean= 13.72, Std = 3.87, percent= 68.6%. The findings indicated that counsellors scored above 50% which implies that they possess the competencies of emotional intelligence in above average measure, scoring highest in motivating oneself competency, followed by social skills, empathy, self-awareness and self-regulation.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the Big five personality attributes and emotional intelligence attributes of the Counsellors.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of the Big five personality attributes and emotional intelligence attributes, (N = 580)

| | Extraversion | Agreeableness | Openness | Neuroticism | Conscientiousness | Self-awareness | Self-regulation | Self-motivation | Empathy | Socialskills |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|--------------|
| Extraversion | - | | | | | | | | | |
| Agreeableness | .56** | - | | | | | | | | |
| Openness | .57** | .47** | - | | | | | | | |
| Neuroticism | .36** | .41** | .38* | - | | | | | | |
| Conscientiousness | .26** | .41** | .22** | .43** | - | | | | | |
| Self-awareness | .43** | .27** | .48** | .23** | .11** | - | | | | |
| Self-regulation | .37** | .26** | .39** | .21** | .19** | .62** | - | | | |
| Self-motivation | .36** | .31** | .47** | .19** | .15** | .61** | .60* | - | | |
| Empathy | .38** | .35** | .44** | .27** | .15** | .58** | .56* | .61** | - | |
| Social skills | .34** | .34** | .46** | .29** | .17** | .51** | .51* | .59** | .74** | - |

** = P < 0.05 (Significant results)

In Table 3, the Pearson correlations between counsellor's attributes of personality and emotional intelligence are summarized. It shows that the correlation coefficients 'r' between the extraversion and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills are 0.43, 0.37, 0.36, 0.38 and 0.34 at $p < 0.05$ and this implies that the relationship between the attribute of extraversion and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills is significant and positive. The table also reveals that correlation coefficients 'r' between the agreeableness and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills are 0.27, 0.26, 0.31, 0.35, 0.34 at $p < 0.05$. This represents a positive and significant correlation between the counsellor's attribute of agreeableness and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills.

In addition, it shows the correlation coefficients 'r' between openness and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills are 0.48, 0.39, 0.47, 0.44, 0.46, and $p < 0.05$. This implies that the relationship between counsellor's personality attribute of openness and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills is positive and significant. It shows the correlation coefficients 'r' between neuroticism and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills are 0.23, 0.21, 0.19, 0.27, 0.295 at $p < 0.05$. This means that the relationship between neuroticism and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills is positive and significant.

Finally, Table 3 shows that the relationship between Conscientiousness and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills has correlation coefficient $r = 0.11, 0.19, 0.15, 0.15, 0.17$ at $p < 0.05$. This depicts a positive and significant correlation between counsellor's personality attribute of conscientiousness and self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills.

Hence the null hypothesis that says "There is no significant relationship between the Big five personality dimensions and emotional intelligence attributes of the Counsellors" is rejected. As a result, it can be concluded that the relationship between the big five personality dimensions and emotional intelligence attributes of the Counsellors is significant and positive. These findings indicate that the counsellor's attributes of personality correlates positively and significantly with attributes of emotional intelligence though some of the correlations are not very strong while some are moderate. Openness is the only trait of personality that has a fairly stronger relationship with attributes of Emotional intelligence while conscientiousness has the weakest correlation with attributes of emotional intelligence.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the personality profile of counsellors in secondary schools: extraversion (65.0%); agreeableness (60.0%); openness (69.2%); neuroticism (59.5%); conscientiousness (57.5%). The findings indicated that counsellors scored above Fifty percent (50%), which implies that they possess the attributes of The Big Five personality dimension in average measure, scoring highest in attribute of openness, followed by extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness. This finding relates with that Alutu et al. (2016) who found that counsellor trainees possess congruence, accessibility, integrity, knowledgeable, empathy, communication skills, acceptability which may be found in the big five personality dimension.

In Table 2, the results showed that self-awareness (65.9%), self-regulation (64.4%), self-motivation (70.4%), empathy (67.6%), social skills (68.6%) were possessed by the counsellors above 60%. This finding is similar to that of Rolinda, Tengku and Noriah (2016) who found that counselling head teachers obtained a high percentage of scores for seven domains of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, social skills, spirituality and maturity) and Mustaffa, Nasir, Aziz and Mahmood (2013) who found in their study that majority of the secondary school counsellors have moderate level of emotional intelligence. Results on self awareness, self regulation, self motivation and social skills contradict previous results reported by Rorlinda (2009) whose findings revealed an average score in EQ in the four domains. In this study's findings, self-motivation is possessed more by the counsellors but in the study of Mustaffa, Nasir, Aziz and Mahmood (2013), social skill is possessed more than other competencies.

In Table 3, the relationship between counsellor's attributes of personality and competences of emotional intelligence are summarized. It shows that the correlation between the attribute of extraversion and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills is significant and positive. It also reveals that correlation for the relationship between the counsellor's attribute of agreeableness and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills implies a positive and significant correlation.

In addition, it shows the correlation coefficient 'r' between counsellor's personality attribute of openness and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills is medium-strong, positive and significant. Moreover, the correlation coefficient 'r' between neuroticism and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills indicates a positive and significant correlation. Finally, in Table 3, a positive and significant relationship was established between counsellor's personality attribute of Conscientiousness

and self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills.

These findings indicate that the counsellor's attributes of personality correlates positively and significantly with competences of emotional intelligence though some of the correlations are not very strong while some are weak. Meanwhile, Andi (2012) documented that analyses from the literature has shown that the correlations between mixed model-based emotional intelligence measures and traditional measures of personality that assess the Big five are moderate to high. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Petrides, Vernon, Schermer, Ligthart, Boosma and Veselka (2010); Hundani, Redzuan and Hamsau (2012); Shulman and Hemeenover (2006) who reported a stronger relationship between emotional intelligence and big five personality dimension; that conscientiousness, openness, extraversion and agreeableness are positively correlated with emotional intelligence and that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with the extraversion and openness domain of personality. But Kappagoda (2013) found that English teachers' emotional intelligence significantly and positively correlated with personality types of extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience but had not significantly correlated with conscientiousness and neuroticism. Christopher, Kamlesh and Brett (2011) revealed direct relationships between emotional intelligence and all the personality traits except Agreeableness.

Openness, extraversion and agreeableness were more strongly correlated with emotional intelligence than neuroticism and conscientiousness. Openness is the only trait of personality that has a relationship with attributes of Emotional intelligence while Conscientiousness has the weakest correlation with competences of emotional intelligence. This did not agree with the results of Petrides, et al (2010) who investigated the relationships between trait emotional intelligence and the Big Five personality dimensions and found that Neuroticism was the strongest correlate of EI trait, followed by extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience as well as Hundani et al. (2012) who found that conscientiousness is the only personality trait that has stronger relationship with emotional intelligence.

Bracket and Mayer (2003) differed in their findings, that there is a high significant correlation between emotional intelligence and neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness but moderately related with openness. Andi (2012) contradicts the finding of this study because conscientiousness which has the weakest relationship with attributes of emotional intelligence was found to strongly correlate with EI followed by agreeableness, extraversion, openness, and neuroticism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that counsellors in secondary schools possessed attributes of personality and competence of emotional intelligence in a measure above average. Hence, the researcher recommended that it is essential that counsellors ensure conscious and continuous self-assessment so as to improve their level of emotional intelligence and the quantity of measure of personality in order to promote counselling relationship. Seminar and workshops should be organised periodically on personality development to sensitise counsellors on the importance of personal-emotional skills that will enhance their effectiveness. Counsellors should make efforts to have an understanding of their own emotional intelligence and use it to enhance their communication skills with their clients so as to create a conducive environment for efficient counselling practice. The findings of this study imply that the curriculum for the training of guidance Counsellors should include and comprehensively emphasize the relevance of attributes of big five personality model and measures of emotional intelligence. Moreover, counsellors in training should be availed the opportunity to exercise their emotional intelligence competence through practicum so as to improve counselling experiences.

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