

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' JOB EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBUDU, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, two hypotheses were used. The survey research design was adopted and a random sample of 150 English language teachers from 30 public and private secondary schools was used to gather data. Data were collected using a self-constructed and well-validated questionnaire with 35 items designed on a four point-interval scale having a Cronbach co-efficient of 0.84. Data collected were subjected to Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The results of the test showed that agreeableness ($r=.319$, $p<.05$), conscientiousness ($r=.278$, $p<.05$), openness ($r=.237$, $p<.05$) and extraversion ($r=.352$, $p<.05$) were significant positive correlates of the English language teachers' job effectiveness. Neuroticism ($r=-.092$, $p<.05$) was not significant. Again, the personality traits, collectively, significantly predicted the English language teachers' job effectiveness ($F=5.178$, $p<.05$) and accounted for 15.2 percent of the variance in the teachers' job effectiveness. It was recommended amongst others that employment of English language teachers in the area should consider their personalities and that extrovertive English language teachers are far more effective

Key words: personality, teachers, English, Language, job, effectiveness.

Introduction

The teacher is an indispensable factor in any educational system, being the mediator between curriculum design and implementation. Recognizing this critical role of the teacher, the Nigeria National Policy on Education aptly states that no education can rise above the quality of the teacher (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The teacher executes and implements educational policies and programmes in a systematic way that makes learning meaningful. Therefore, what the teacher does and his person are crucial to the success or other wise of the system. The quality of teaching and indeed the effectiveness of the teacher is also a reflection of his personality. Psychologists (e.g. Walls, Nardi, Minden & Hoofman, 2002) have agreed that

the personality of the teacher influences his behaviors and the extent to which he performs his duty, either effectively or ineffectively.

The effectiveness of the teacher in his duty is also a reflection, to some extent, of the learners' performance in classroom and external assessments. Nigeria educational system has suffered setbacks in diverse areas. For instance, the reports of the two external examining bodies for secondary schools have shown poor performances in English language and Mathematics amongst other subjects over the years (NECO, 2013, WAEC, 2012). Studies (Ayeni, 2019, Ramsey, Calimore & Schead, 2012) have also shown that personality characteristics influence job effectiveness. The personality traits popularly referred to as the big five are extraversion, agreeableness,

conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Teacher's agreeableness is the tendency to be pleasant, compassionate, co-operative and accommodating in a school environment rather than being antagonistic and suspicious of others. It encapsulates sympathy, co-cooperativeness and helping others towards accomplishment. Poropa (2014) stated that high level of agreeableness facilitates good working relationship with others and encourages team work. Agreeableness has been found to be positively related to job performance (Cornard, 2006). Ayeni (2019) in his study showed that agreeableness as a teacher's personality also influences classroom management. Ogochi (2003) in his study stated that agreeableness is positively related to teacher- student relationship, and a good teacher- student relationship encourages learning and hence elicit high academic performance, which is an indicator of a good teacher job performance.

Furthermore, openness is lack of restriction, accessibility and/or lack of secrecy. Openness reflects an individual's broad-mindedness. Teachers with openness traits seek new experiences and intellectual pursuits resulting in curiosity, creativity and a desire for novelty and variety (Peter, 2014, Bralko, 2006). Richeadson (2014) and Poropat, (2009), stated that openness is most strongly associated with academic achievement and job effectiveness. It is the intellectual curiosity component that drives the positive correlations between openness and job effectiveness (Von Stumn, Hell & Chamorro-premudic, 2011). Therefore, openness should be related to job effectiveness. The study by Schretlen, Vander, Hulst, Pearlson and Godon (2010) indicated that openness to experience leads to gain in knowledge and skills and naturally increase with age and job performance has been shown not only linked to openness but correlated positively with creativity and originality. Therefore, teachers who possess high degree of openness characteristics are more likely to be effective in their job by being creative in their teaching; attracting students to themselves and

encouraging high academic performance from the students. In the same vein, Hazratic, Viarl, Red and Torabi (2011) studied the effect of personality traits on academic performance. Using a simple of 250 students in Iran, the results showed that openness to experience predicted intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. In the same vein, Komarraju & Karau (2005), showed that openness to experience positively predicted students' academic performance.

In another study by Uramian, Mashayekhiam and Niriggel (2012), in the University of Malaysia, neuroticism showed negative relationship with students' CGPA. Neuroticism is consistent with negative emotional stability and temperedness. It is associated with anxiety, hospitality, depression and self-consciousness (shy). Invariably, a teacher who possesses such neurotic traits is never expected to elicit interest from the learners and could possibly predict negative relationship with students' academic performance in which case he may be ineffective in his job. Othman (2009) stated that teachers with neurotic qualities are very likely to exhibit anger, depression that affect the development of the students and their job in the school. Other studies such as Walls, Nardi, Minden and Hoffman (2002) suggested that effective teachers are significantly more emotionally stable, adaptable and practical with regulated self-control. Hence teachers who are neurotic are less likely to be effective in their job. Also, Raymond (2008), examined the characteristics of effective and infective teaching practices students and reported that excellent teachers are individual beings with character such as respectful, making classes interesting, fair in evaluation, concerned about students' success, passionate for their subjects, friendly, and open to questions and discussions and above all, well organized always. These qualities may not be possessed by teachers who are neurotic!

Finally, teachers who are extroversive showed high leadership prowess and contribute to making success in teaching. Ozer and Benet-Martinz (2004) maintained that extraversion is

an excellent prediction of effective function and general well-being of a good teacher. The sociability, assertiveness and active engagement of extroverts are beneficial for the teaching and learning environment. This evolves frequent interactions with teachers and students, which results in better understanding and makes the teacher visible (Poropat, 2014). Therefore, all the components of personality traits to some extent are related to job performance. However, the nature and degree of relationship between the personality traits and job effectiveness of the teachers remains a matter of research as this vary among study areas. Literature is inconclusive on the subject and therefore, there is the need for further research.

Objective of the study: The aim of this paper was to examine the relationship between personality traits (the big five) and secondary schools' English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State. Specifically, the study was to examine:

- I. The nature of the relationship between the big five personality traits (openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness) and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State.
- II. The predictive relationship between the big five personality traits and English Language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State.

Hypotheses

To guide the study, the following hypotheses were used:

1. There is no significant relationship between each of the big five personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State.

1. There is no significant predictive relationship between the big five personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey inferential research design. The research area was Obudu Local Government Area in Cross River State, Nigeria. Obudu is a semi-urban area, where English Language is the official language but second to the native *Bette* and *utukalu* languages. The population of the study was 361 English language teachers in the public and private secondary schools. The sample for the study was 150 English language teachers drawn randomly using the simple sampling technique from 30 secondary schools in the study area.

The instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire tagged "English Language Teachers' Personality and Job Effectiveness Scale" with 35 items defined on a four point Likert-type scale and having a Cronbach coefficient of 0.84. The instrument was administered on the teachers within one week and data collected were analyzed using the SPSS version 21.0 software.

Results

The result of the study was as follows:

Hypothesis one:

There is no significant relationship between each of the big five personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State.

To test this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used at .05 level. The result of the test and the descriptive statistics associated with each of the personality traits is presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Pearson correlation co-efficient (r) of the relationship between each of the personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State (n=150).

S/N	Personality traits	No of items	Mean	SD	r	P-value
1	Openness	5	13.51	2.12	.237*	.002
2	Conscientiousness	5	15.43	2.21	.278*	.000
3	Extraversion	5	16.02	3.53	.352*	.000
4	Neuroticism	5	21.31	4.64	-.092NS	.313
5	Agreeableness	5	16.00	3.58	.319*	.000

*Significant, NS=Not significant,

From Table 1, openness ($r = .237, p < .05$) conscientiousness ($r = .278, p < .05$), extraversion ($r = .352, p < .05$) and agreeableness ($r = .319, p < .05$) were all positive significant correlates of English language teachers' job effectiveness, however, neuroticism ($r = -.092, p < .05$) was not significant.

There is no significant predictive relationship between the big five personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness in Obudu, Cross River State. The regression analysis was used in testing the hypothesis. The results of the analysis are presented on Tables 2 and 3.

Hypothesis Two:

Table 2: Result of regression ANOVA of the predictive relationship between personality traits and English language teachers' job effectiveness.

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Regression	982.516	5	196.503	5.178*	.000
Residual	5465.224	144	37.953		
Total	6447.740	149			

Significant, $p < .05, R = .390, R^2 = .152$

From Table 2, the calculated $F = 5.178$ ($p < .05$) was significant with a positive multiple correlation co-efficient (R) of .390 and an explained variance ($R^2 = .152$) of 15.2 percent. Hence, the big five personality traits,

collectively, significantly predicted the English language teachers' job effectiveness in secondary schools in Obudu, Cross River State. The predictive weights are presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Result of the predictive effect of the big five personality traits on English Language teachers' job effectiveness.

Model	Unstandardized β	S.E	β	t-value	p-value
Constant	14.025	5.053	-	2.775	.006
Openness	.252	.275	.081	.918	.360
Conscientiousness	.322	.275	.108	1.171	.243
Extraversion	1.112	.567	.597	1.981*	.042
Neuroticism	-.095	.110	-.067	-.862	.390
Agreeableness	-.651	.556	-.354	-1.171	.244

*Significant, $p < .05$

From Table 3, only one of the personality traits was a significant direct predictor (extraversion) while others were insignificant predictors, that is, one of the personality traits (extraversion) was a significant direct predictor which has direct impact on the English language teachers' job effectiveness. Extraversion ($\beta = .597$, $p < .05$) was the strongest significant direct predictor of the English Language teachers' job effectiveness, closely followed by agreeableness ($\beta = -.354$, $p > .05$), which was a strong but in significant indirect predictor variable. Also, conscientiousness ($\beta = .108$, $p > .05$) was an important direct predictor although in significant.

Discussion of findings

The outcome of the study showed that four of the big five personality traits (agreeableness, ($r = .319$, $p < .05$), conscientiousness ($r = .278$, $p < .05$), extraversion, ($r = .352$, $p < .05$) and openness ($r = .237$, $p < .05$) were significant correlates of English Language teachers' job effectiveness. Furthermore, the joint predictive strength of the big five personality traits on English Language teachers' job effectiveness ($F = 5.178$, $p < .05$) was significant with an explained variance of 15.2 percent, meaning, that collectively 15.2 percent of the English language teachers' job effectiveness is accounted for by the personality traits and therefore, the personality traits were significant predictors of the teachers' job effectiveness.

These findings are supported by earlier works such as Hatite (2009) and Henson (2013) which showed that teachers' job effectiveness was associated with different factors including personality traits. From the study, extraversion was the strongest positive correlate of the teachers' job effectiveness. More so, on Table 3, it was the strongest positive (direct) predictor showing that an effective English Language teacher in the study area need to be extrovertive in this case. Courtney (2017) had maintained that extroversion is a strong significant predictor of leadership and success among work people of all jobs, teaching of English language notwithstanding. Furthermore, Oser and Bent-Martinez (2004) affirmed that extraversion is

an excellent factor of effective teachers. Also, the findings of this study are supported by the works of Scheepers, Lombarkts, Aken, Heineman and Anah (2014) on the influence of personality on effective teaching. They also found that conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and openness affect teaching performance although among Physicians. The finding of this work also corroborates the works of Seheeper et al (2014) which showed that different personality traits have different effects (positive and negative) on the different aspects of teaching performance.

Furthermore, Ayeni (1999) showed that personality affects the teachers' job performance in classroom management, (which of course is an indicator of the effectiveness of the teacher) and equally stated that effective classroom management requires a conscientious teacher. In the same vein, he showed that there was a positive relationship between agreeableness and classroom management teachers. Studies (e.g Noftle & Robin, 2007) have shown that teachers who show empathy, co-operative and helpfulness towards their students elicit best performances from the learners. This character is what is expected of effective English Language teachers.

Finally, neuroticism was the only negative and of course insignificant correlate, indicating that an effective English Language teacher must not be neurotic. Buala and Mamman (2015) have also corroborated that neuroticism was not significantly related to teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion

Based on the data evidence from this study, it is concluded that there exists a statistically significant relationship between personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and openness) and English Language teacher's job effectiveness in secondary schools in Obudu, Cross River State. Neuroticism was not significant and could not predict English Language teachers' job effectiveness. Extraversion was the strongest direct predictor variable in the model while

collectively the personality traits were significant predictors and accounted for 15.2 percent of the variation in the English language teachers' job effectiveness. Therefore, English Language teachers who are extroversive are highly effective in their job while those who are neurotic are not effective.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended;

- I. Employment of English Language teachers in schools in Obudu, Cross River State should consider the teachers' personality traits. Extroversive English language teachers are more effective in their teaching jobs.
- II. Personality development on the existing English Language teachers is highly advocated through seminar, workshops and counselling. Schools proprietors should leverage on this mechanism to improve on the existing English language teachers.
- III. Well-experienced English Language teachers should mentor newly employed teachers in the subject to ensure balanced personalities and job effectiveness.

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