

## RELATIONSHIP OF OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE, CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF EFFICACY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH WEST NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

The research investigated the Relationship of Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy among Undergraduate Students of Universities in North West Nigeria. Correlational research design was adopted. The population of this study was made up of 34,086 300L undergraduate students in the seven (7) Federal Universities in North West Nigeria. Sample of 381 undergraduate students was drawn. Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Inventory were used for data collection. Big Five Personality Inventory had a reliability coefficient of .686 while Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Inventory had .896. Inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) was used to test all the hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Findings revealed that significant positive relationship exists between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy ( $r = .375, p = .000$ ), conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy ( $r = .184, p = .000$ ). The study concluded that significant positive relationship exists among openness to experience, conscientiousness with entrepreneurial self-efficacy. It was recommended among others that: Psychologists, Counsellors and teachers should sensitize students in personality trait, self-efficacy to enhance entrepreneurial skills and interest of the students in their academic endeavours; and university lecturers should motivate their students towards openness to experience.

**Keywords:** Openness to experience, consciousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy of undergraduate students.

### **Introduction**

Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by psychologist Albert Bandura, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks and achieve specific goals. In the context of entrepreneurship, it relates to a person's confidence in their ability to start and successfully run a business. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial interest. Self-efficacy beliefs shape an individual's perception of their capabilities to start and manage a business successfully. Higher levels of self-efficacy lead to greater confidence in one's entrepreneurial abilities, making the pursuit of entrepreneurship more appealing. Conversely, individuals with lower self-efficacy may doubt their skills and be less inclined to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Self-efficacy can also influence an individual's persistence and resilience in the face of obstacles and setbacks. Entrepreneurship often involves taking risks and navigating challenging situations. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to perceive setbacks as temporary and believe in their ability to overcome them, increasing their motivation to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors (Farrukh, 2017).

Certain personality traits are often associated with higher levels of self-efficacy. For example, individuals who possess traits such as extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness tend to have higher self-efficacy beliefs. These traits are characterized by confidence, assertiveness, and a proactive approach to challenges, which contribute to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in various tasks, including entrepreneurship. Though the dimensions of personality are beyond one's

control, they strongly influence one's attitudes, expectations and assumptions and behaviour. Personality traits are the enduring set of characteristics a person demonstrates in day to day behaviour. Personality can be conceptualized as a set of personality traits which are dynamic, organized and generally enduring in nature. Traits are "habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion". One popular and extensively used personality trait model is Five Factor Model (FFM). These five factors are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism (or its opposite pole, emotional stability), and intellect (or openness to experience) (Soto, 2018).

Conscientiousness includes traits such as being hardworking, thorough, organized, responsible, careful, and persevering. Conscientiousness is tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement against measured or outside expectations. It is related to the way in which people control, regulate, and direct their impulse socio economic status, high scores on conscientiousness indicate a preference for plan rather than spontaneous behaviour, the average level of conscientiousness rises among young adults and then declines among older adults (Mangal, 2013). Conscientiousness includes traits such as being hardworking, thorough, organized, responsible, careful, and persevering (Barrick & Mount, 2011). Conscientiousness is associated with trait like being dependable, organized, reliable, ambitious, and hardworking. Conscientiousness is a behaviour trait through which people control, regulate, and direct their impulses. Conscientious people achieve high levels of success through purposeful planning, persistence and perseverance (Friedman & Schustack, 2016).

Openness to experience comprises of traits such as imaginative, curious, original, intelligent, broad minded and artistic. Openness has to do with curious, imaginative, creative, complex, refined, and sophisticated. Open individuals are intellectually curious, and appreciative of art. Closed people prefer familiarity over innovation and they often show resistance to change. Thus, individuals with higher risk preferences, extroversion, emotional stability and conscientiousness are associated with a higher probability of choosing entrepreneurship.

Chooi-Seong, et al., (2020) studied personality traits as predictors to entrepreneurial self-efficacy with gender and family background as moderators in Malaysia. The results indicated that personality traits of openness, relational, and decisive significantly predicted entrepreneurial self-efficacy respectively. Similarly, Mangal (2013) opined that openness to experience is a general appreciation for arts, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. People who are open to experience are intellectually curious, open to emotion, sensitive to beauty and willing to try new things. They tend to be, when compared to close people, more creative and more aware of their feelings. They are also more likely to hold unconventional beliefs. On contrary, Akinboye and Soaib (2016) studied factors affecting entrepreneurial self-efficacy of engineering students in Malaysia. Results obtained show that there is relationship between each personality traits and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the correlations between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability were all positive and statistically significant.

Hu et al., (2017) studied on sustainable personality in entrepreneurship: the relationship between big five personality, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intention in the Chinese Context. Survey data from 280 college students reveal that Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Interpersonal Relationship affected entrepreneurial self-efficacy, thus playing an indirect impact on entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Magdalena, Marzena and Anna (2021) investigated Personality Traits and the Sense of Self Efficacy among Nurse Anaesthetists. Regression analysis of the study showed that conscientiousness is most closely related to the sense of self-efficacy. Scholars like Friedman and Schustack (2016), Colquitt *et al.*, (2017) opined that conscientiousness is associated with trait like being dependable, organized, reliable, ambitious, and hardworking.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is expected that undergraduate students should exhibit high interest in entrepreneurial activities, participating in small, medium and large scale businesses with a view to becoming self-reliant after graduation. In Nigeria, despite its abundant human and natural resources, it is plagued with high rate of unemployment; close to 50 percent of her estimated 180 million population falls below the poverty

line. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) from its data released in the 2020 revealed that about 53.40% of youths are unemployed. This has serious implication to national development as youths who are the bedrock of every society are unemployed. To address the problem of youth unemployment, Federal Government of Nigeria introduced various entrepreneurship and vocational education initiatives aimed at attracting the interest of young people to skill acquisition and boosting employment generation.

In spite of efforts put in place by the government, yet teeming youths are still unemployed. Moreover, the researcher through his interaction with some students observed low interest in entrepreneurial activities this may be due to certain personality traits possessed by the students which hinders the development of efficacious belief. It was against this backdrop that the researcher intends to carry out a study on relationship of openness to experience, conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to find out the:

- 1.relationship between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.
- 2.relationship between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This research employed correlational design. The population of this study was made up of thirty-four thousand and eighty-six (34,086) 300L undergraduate students in the seven (7) Federal Universities in North West Nigeria. The universities are: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Bayero University, Kano; Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; Federal University Gusau; Federal University, Dutse Jigawa, Federal University, Dutsin Ma, Katsina and Federal University Birnin Kebbi. sample of 381 undergraduate students was drawn as recommended by research advisor (2006). The researcher used multi stage sampling process.

Two instruments were used for this study. The instruments were Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used. Big Five Personality Inventory had a reliability coefficient of .686 while Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Inventory had .896. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were used to answer research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC(r) was used to test the study hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. SPSS version 25.0 was used for the analysis.

## Results

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

**Table 1: Relationship between Openness to Experience and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	p
Openness to experience	380	37.842	4.51	.375	.000
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	380	137.581	17.44		

Table 1 reveals significant positive relationship exists between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy  $r=.375$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . The correlation coefficient further implies that the higher the openness to experience, the higher the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of students and vice-versa. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria is hereby rejected.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria.

**Table 2: Relationship between Conscientiousness and Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Conscientiousness	380	28.837	4.21	.184	.000
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	380	137.581	17.44		

Table 2 reveals significant positive relationship exists between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy  $r=.184$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . The correlation coefficient further implies that the higher the conscientiousness, the higher the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of students and vice-versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy among undergraduate students of universities in North West Nigeria is hereby rejected.

## Summary of Findings

- The finding of this research indicated that significant positive relationship exists between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
- The finding of this research indicated that significant positive relationship exists between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

## Discussions

The finding of this research indicated that significant positive relationship exists between openness to experience and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This may be due to creativity and adaptability in open individuals boost confidence in entrepreneurial tasks. This finding is corroborated with the finding of Chooi-Seong, Mei-Yui, Chee-Seong and Mun-Keong (2020) who studied Personality Traits as Predictors to Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy with Gender and Family Background as Moderators in Malaysia. The results indicated that personality traits of openness, relational, and decisive significantly predicted entrepreneurial self-efficacy respectively. Similarly, the finding is also in line with the finding of Mangal (2013) that openness to experience is a general appreciation for arts, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. People who are open to experience are intellectually curious, open to emotion, sensitive to beauty and willing to try new things. They tend to be, when compared to close people, more creative and more aware of their feelings. They are also more

likely to hold unconventional beliefs. On contrary, the finding of this study disagrees with that of Akinboye and Soaib (2016) who studied factors affecting entrepreneurial self-efficacy of engineering students in Malaysia. Results obtained show that there is relationship between each personality traits and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, the correlations between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability were all positive and statistically significant. Meanwhile the correlation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and openness to experience was positive but not statistically significant. Openness to experience indicate when an individual is free and accommodative, the tendency of having high entrepreneurial self-efficacy is certain as shown in the above findings.

The finding of this research indicated that significant positive relationship exists between conscientiousness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The reason for this finding is that goal-oriented and disciplined behavior enhances belief in handling entrepreneurial responsibilities. This finding is corroborated with the findings of Hu, Zicheng, Shiwen, Xiaoyu, Xinyue and Zehui (2017) who studied the Sustainable Personality in Entrepreneurship: The Relationship between Big Five Personality, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, and Entrepreneurial Intention in the Chinese Context. Survey data from 280 college students reveal that Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Interpersonal Relationship affected entrepreneurial self-efficacy, thus playing an indirect impact on entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, the finding is further corroborated with the finding of Magdalena, Marzena and Anna (2021) who investigated Personality Traits and the Sense of Self Efficacy among Nurse Anaesthetists. Regression analysis of the study showed that conscientiousness is most closely related to the sense of self-efficacy. Scholars like Friedman and Schustack (2016), Colquitt *et al.*, (2017) opined that conscientiousness is associated with trait like being dependable, organized, reliable, ambitious, and hardworking. Conscientiousness is a behaviour trait through which people control, regulate, and direct their impulses. Conscientious people achieve high levels of success through purposeful planning, persistence and perseverance.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that significant positive relationship exists among openness to experience, conscientiousness with entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

## Recommendations

The following are recommended:

1. Psychologists, Counsellors and teachers should sensitize students on personality trait, self-efficacy to enhance entrepreneurial skills and interest of the students in their academic endeavours.
2. University lecturers should motivate their students towards openness to experience through interactions and discussions in the classroom, so as to help them develop their potential in entrepreneurial self-efficacy.
3. Students themselves should be encouraged to explore their personality strengths and build self-confidence through participation in entrepreneurship-related programs, thereby boosting their academic and entrepreneurial development.
4. Parents should support and encourage their children's entrepreneurial interests by providing an enabling home environment, positive reinforcement, and access to resources that stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and resilience.

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