

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAIT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KANKIA EDUCATION ZONE OF KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between personality traits and academic performance of secondary school students in Kankia Education Zone of Katsina State. Two research questions and hypotheses were tested to guide the conduct of the study. The population of the study consist of 3024 SS II students in public secondary schools in Kankia zone. A total of five schools from five local governments under Kankia educational zone were randomly selected from which sample of 331 SS II students were finally drawn. The research designed used was descriptive survey research design. The instrument adapted for the study was the 44-item standardized questionnaire known as the big five personality model by Robert McCrae and paul Costa (1999). This was validated by expert in the field of measurement and evaluation. The reliability was established using split half method at 0.691 and all hypotheses were tested at 0.5 levels of significance. Results of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between academic performance of Senior Secondary school students and personality trait of conscientiousness, and also there is significant relationship between personality trait of agreeableness and students academic performance. The paper concluded that personality traits of conscientiousness and agreeableness which portrays students who are disciplined, and have the ability to manage their time and study hard influenced academic performance positively. The researcher recommended that Seminars/workshop should be arrange for teachers about personality traits and their relationship with academic performance.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Influence, Personality, Traits, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness.

Introduction

Academic performance is a major issue among students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and the community at large. Attempts have been made by researchers to unravel the complexities surrounding academic performance. Psychologists have put forward a lot of reasons why these disparities in performance exist. A lot of attention had been paid to external factors such as type of school, teaching methods, school location, instructional materials, teachers experience, and so on (WAEC, 2019). Many psychologists have consistently attempted to identify the major predictors of individual academic performance. Factors such as intelligence, self-concept, gender, study habit, maturation, home background, amongst others, just to mention a few, have been extensively explored as being responsible for academic performance, especially among secondary school students.

Personality has been defined in many ways by many psychologists who wrote on the concept. According to Feldman (1994) in Daminabo (2008), Personality is the sum total of the characteristics that differentiates people, or the stability of a person's behavior across different situations. In other words it means those qualities the individual is noted for. Traits on the other hand are "enduring dimensions of personality characteristics which differentiates people from one another" (Colman, 2003 in Daminabo 2008). Traits are therefore the sum total of stable characteristics in a person across different times and situations, which make him or her unique or distinct from others. This agrees with the definition by Mischel 1981, which refer to personality traits as consistent differences between the behaviors characteristic of two or more people. It is also defined as "any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual varies from another" (Guliford, 1999 in Agbakwuru 2000). However, there has been an increasing interest in the big five personality traits and the role they play as regards academic performance of students. Of particular interest is the role that these traits play in the academic performance of secondary school students. These traits, popularly known as the 'Big Five' include conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, extraversion and locus of control. These personality traits affect academic performance in students, either positively or negatively. There have been reported incidences of under-performance among secondary school students as evidenced by poor performances in WAEC results which, over the years have been the standard measurement of academic performance. Big Five otherwise known as CAOEL has therefore been explored in order to find possible solutions to the problem of underperformance among secondary school students. A high score on Conscientiousness shows a student who is self-disciplined, careful, thorough, organized and determined. Low scores on this trait portray indiscipline, carelessness, disorganization and indifference. That student who scores highly on this trait is expected to perform excellently well, academically and vice versa. Agreeableness describes one who is sympathetic, trusting and cooperative. Students with high scores on agreeableness are selfless, flexible and pleasant. Such students work with others easily with little or no friction. Those scoring low on this trait however find it difficult to get along with others. McCrae and Costa 1988 in Daminabo, (2008) noted this to be psychotics, which refers to a person who is skeptical, unsympathetic, uncooperative and rude. Low scores on agreeableness are expected to affect academic performance negatively.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of under-performance has assumed a worrisome dimension in the Nigerian educational system. Desperate to make it anyhow, students have devised various illegal means to succeed in examinations, even when they are not academically competent. Unfortunately, the system has buckled under the pressure. Examination malpractice has risen steadily to become a seemingly untamable monster. It is increasingly becoming difficult to equate competence of people with supposed academic performance as represented in their certificates. Many candidates are unable to defend the result they supposedly acquired honorably. Several factors have been researched into in the past as to the cause of this social malaise, but there seem to be indications that some hidden factors may be responsible that needs unraveling. This desire to see this problem curbed gave rise to this study and the researchers' aim is to see if there is a way in which personality traits can intervene, especially from the perspective of the analytical and scientific approach of measurement and evaluation. This study is therefore aimed at find out the relationship between conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits on academic performance of secondary school students in Kankia Educational Zone of Katsina State.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to:

1. Find out if there is any significant relationship between conscientiousness and students academic performance.

2. Find out if there is any significant relationship between agreeableness and students' academic performance.

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were therefore postulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and students' academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and students' academic performance.

Methodology

The research design used in this study is the ex-post facto research design. Population of the study comprises all the senior secondary students in government owned secondary schools in Kankia educational zone. A total of three thousand and twenty four (3024) senior secondary school students (SSS 2) formed the population of the study. The sample-size of 331 students' were obtained based on the recommendation of Krejce and Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size. Out of which two hundred and nineteen (219) students were males while one hundred and twelve (112) students were females. One school was randomly selected from each of the five local governments under Kankia educational zone. These include GGSS Kanti, GGSS Dudunni, GGSS Ladan, GSSS Tsuntsaye, and GSSS Matazu.

The instrument for this study is the 44-item standardized questionnaire on "The Five Factor Model, otherwise known as the Big Five Personality Model by McCrae and Costa (1999). The modified sample of the instrument was validated by experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Psychology. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test -retest reliability method. Spearman rank reliability coefficient and Guttman options of the split-half technique were used and the result gave a reliability coefficient of 0.591 and a standard alpha of 0.575.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance. To test this hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used.

Table 1: Relationship analysis of conscientiousness personality traits and Academic performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	r-value	Pvalue	Decision
Ach.	331	45.450	16.974			
				0.711	0.02	Significant
Cons.	331	32.755	4.793			
Total	662					

There was positive relationship between conscientiousness personality traits and academic performance, in which r is 0.711. The p- value (0.200) > 0.05 we therefore retained the null hypothesis one and conclude that there significant relationship between conscientiousness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance. This means that the academic performance of senior secondary school students influenced by their conscientiousness personality traits. This finding is in #sagreement with the work of Conard & Norman (2005), Muhammad (2017) who found significant influence between conscientiousness personality traits and students' performance. The research work of Grey & Watson (2002) was also in agreement with the work of Conard & Norman (2005). Blickle (1996) and Entwistle

(2009) also found that students with conscientiousness personality traits perform better in the examinations.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence between agreeableness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance. To test this hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used.

Table 2: Influence on analysis of agreeableness personality traits and academic performance.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	r-value	P-value	Decision
Ach.	331	45.450	16.974			
				0.155	0.005	Significant
Agre.	331	34.780	5.242			
Total	662					

Analysis in table showed that there is positive relationship between agreeableness personality traits and academic performance, in which $r = 0.155$. The p -value (0.005) < 0.05 we therefore, reject the null hypothesis two and conclude that there was significant relationship between agreeableness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance. This means that academic performance of senior secondary school students is influenced by agreeableness personality traits. This research work is in line with the finding of Furnham et al (2009); they found significant influence between agreeableness personality traits and academic performance of students.

Discussion of Findings

The Null Hypothesis one: Revealed that there is significant relationship between conscientiousness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance was rejected. This means that students' academic performance was influenced by the conscientiousness personality traits of students. The result indicated that academic performance of students was influenced by conscientiousness personality traits. Statistical analysis in table indicated that r calculated is 0.71 and p -value is 0.02. From the analysis, it clearly indicated that positive influence between academic performance of student and conscientiousness. Similarly the p -value 0.02 is < 0.05 . In view of this the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence between conscientiousness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance was rejected. This finding is in agreement with the work of Conard & Norman (2005) in the research work "how personality and behaviour predict academic performance" who found significant influence between conscientiousness personality traits and students' performance.

The Null Hypothesis two which stated that: there is no significant influence between agreeableness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance was rejected. This means that students' performance had significant influence with agreeableness personality traits of senior secondary school students. The total number of students is 331 who responded to agreeableness personality trait questionnaire with mean score 34.780 and the standard deviation of 5.242 and the number of respondent for the academic performance is 331 with mean score 45.450 and standard deviation of 16.974. Furthermore the, r -value is 0.155 and the p -value is 0.005 which is < 0.05 . This clearly shows that there is significant relationship between academic performance and the agreeableness personality trait of students.

Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is rejected. The finding is in line with the finding of Furnham et al (2009), in the journal of research in personality titled "Personality, intelligence and approaches to learning as predictors of academic performance" they found significant relationship between agreeableness personality traits and academic performance of students in a study of American college students.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected, analyzed and the findings derived. The following conclusions were made: There was a significant positive difference between the academic achievement of students who are highly conscientious and those who are not. Students who are highly conscientious performed significantly better than their counterparts who are low in conscientiousness. Conscientiousness which portrays students who are disciplined, well organized, and have the ability to manage their time and study had influenced academic performance positively. There was significant relationship between agreeableness personality traits exhibited by students and their academic performance. This means that academic performance of senior secondary school students was influenced by agreeableness personality traits.

Recommendations

Based on the finding in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Incentives should be arranged by parent, teachers and educational stakeholders to accompany success to encourage continuous positive performance. This will serve as positive reinforcement.
2. Teachers should endeavor to be close to their students through interaction outside the classroom.
3. Government should motivate teachers, and students through encourage sponsorship of programs to encourage conscientious students to further their education.
4. Students should learn the act of cooperating first with siblings at home and then with their peer in school.
5. Parents should do everything possible to discourage siblings, rivalry as this does not encourage agreeableness.

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