

Influence of Personality Traits on English Language Performance of Secondary School Students in Oyo

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Abstract: The study examined the influence of personality traits on English Language performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town, Oyo State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school three (SSS 3) in Oyo. Specifically, the study targeted Senior Secondary School three (SSS 3) students from 10 secondary schools in Oyo Town. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 300 respondents from the randomly selected secondary schools in the study area. Adapted questionnaire from John and Srisava (1999) was used to determine the Personality Traits of the sampled respondents and Academic Performance Test extracted from 2017/2018 WASSCE English Language past questions was used to determine the academic performance of the students. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. The personality traits scale yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.79. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentage and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings of the study revealed that the personality trait that is predominant among the students was openness to experience and followed by extraversion personality traits. The second finding revealed that the level of academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in Oyo town was low. It was recommended among others that teachers, parents and students should be educated on the knowledge of individual differences of which personality trait plays a major role on how one react to issues and academic activities and performance in school.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Performance, English Language and Secondary School Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Individual differences seem to become the essential focus of researches and researchers' interest in the field of educational psychology especially in terms of how it affects the academic performance of students. Individual differences have been of interest to the study of learning and academic performance in the field of education. From educational psychologists' point of view, people exhibit differences when it comes to their behaviours, emotions, reaction to situations, and the same can be said of how students' respond to questions, react to situations which could be as a result of their personality traits. In essence, anything that affects the effectiveness of students' minds also affects their academic performance and behaviors.

Studies have established that no two individuals are born equal and that has led to investigations into various factors responsible for individual differences whether in business, leadership and academic performance and achievement. These

differences cut across all spheres of human life and endeavor; academic performance inclusive. In academic settings there are students whose performance are below average, there are those who fall within average and there are others whose performance is outstanding.

Academic performance is undeniably a concern among students, parents, teachers, administrators, educational psychologists and focus of other stakeholders in the field of education. It becomes imperative for educational psychologists and other stakeholders in the educational sector to find out the factors responsible for high and low academic performance of students. Sharma, Manga and Nagar (2016) opined that academic performance is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved his/her educational goals. It therefore means that, academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment results and what the student can do in and outside school with the knowledge he or she has acquired. Academic performance of students consists of scores obtained from continuous assessments, teacher-made tests, and terminal examinations and external examinations such as West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). These results usually reflect individual differences in academic ability or the level of mastery of individuals on a given task.

It is worthy of note that students' academic performance in external examinations has become a source of concern to parents, students and stakeholders in the educational sector in Nigeria. In order to find out what is responsible for fluctuating academic performance of students in external examinations year in year out, several researches have been conducted to see if teacher's skill, parental involvement, student cognitive ability, self-esteem could have negative or positive impact on student's academic performance.

Academic performance could be high, average or low as a result of several factors. In this study attention was given to the influence of personality traits. In the literature, the concept of personality traits appears to have been scarcely considered as influencing students' academic performance. This construct is not limited to a particular level or group of people; it is common to every human being, young or old, boy or girl. In a way to find out what is responsible for differences in behavior and academic performance of students, many constructs such as self-esteem, locus of control, parenting styles and teachers content knowledge and experience has been studied by several

researchers as having influences on students' academic performance. To these researchers it is very imperative to study what influence exists between students' academic performance and personality traits and which personality traits have more influence than the other.

Personality trait according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary referred to a set of emotional qualities, ways of behaving that makes a person different from other people. It further described it as attractive qualities such as energy, friendliness, and humor that make a person interesting or pleasant to be with. While trait is view as a quality that makes one person different from another. Agbakwuru (2000) described personality traits as consistent differences between the behaviours and characteristics of two or more people. It is also defined as any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual varies from another. They are the consistent traits of an individual which make him different from other individuals.

Previous researchers such as Agbakwuru (2000) McCrea and McCosta (2003) asserted that out of many theories of personality, the most widely used traits theory is called the Five Factor Model. These traits are: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. He further opined that personality traits worked directly or indirectly to influence students' academic performance. Personality traits, is an imperative construct in considering the relationships, influence, reactions and way of life of an individual to events and activities in his or her environments. Different individuals behave or react to situations in different ways because of their personality make up. Two students taught in the same class and under the same atmosphere are likely to perform differently as a result of many factors but in this study personality traits could be responsible which these researchers are interested in finding out.

According to Martey, and Aborakwa-Larbi (2016) opined that Conscientiousness and openness to experience are two traits considered as having positive influence on academic performance in the literature by several researchers. Conscientiousness is the trait that is associated with intelligence, self-discipline, punctuality and general competence while openness to experience is the proactive seeking and appreciation of experience and being intellectually inquisitive and having a strong will for variety. It was also observed that conscientiousness is the trait that is related to intelligence, exhibiting a lot of self-discipline, hard work, and general competence; and as such believes to be the personality dimension that correlates the strongest, out of all personality dimensions, with overall academic performance (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Extraversion is essentially characterized by sociability, spontaneity and adventurousness. People high in extraversion tend to seek out opportunities for social interaction, where they are often the life of the party. They are comfortable with

others, gregarious, and prone to action rather than contemplation (Lebowitz, 2016). Another personality trait is Agreeableness which is primarily a dimension of interpersonal tendencies. Students with agreeableness trait are tender hearted, helpful and take to others advise which may also influence academic performance of such students.

While neuroticism is seen as a general tendency to experience negative affects such as fear, sadness, guilt and distrust. Students might have different personality traits which will show in their relationships and by extension in their academic performance. Individuals with high score on neuroticism are prone to experiencing psychological distress, maladaptive and unrealistic ideas, while high scores on this domain do not indicate the presence of any clinical disorder and at risk of receiving a psychiatric diagnosis (Terracciano, Costa & McCrea, 2006). Harnessing these traits among students could bring meaningful learning and influence students' academic performance which will in turn improve academic performance and our educational standard mostly among secondary school students who are the focus of this study.

In a study by Eyong, David and Umoh (2014) who investigated the influence of personality traits on academy achievements of secondary school students in Cross River State. The finding revealed that the students that are highly conscientious performed better than their counterparts who are low on the trait. Also, the finding revealed that students who are highly agreeable performed significant better than their counterparts who are not. In the same vein, Martey, and

Aborakwa-Larbi (2016) carried out a study on assessing the impact of personality traits on academic performance among tertiary students in Ghana. The main objective of the study was to investigate the association between the personality traits (extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and academic performance. The findings revealed that, there was a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and the personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience; however, extroversion and neuroticism have no significant relationship.

Statement of the Problem

In the words of Basil (2007), academic performance of students in external examinations by West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is a trend that is posing huge problems to students, parents, government and stakeholders in education. Year in year out many students fail English language which is one of the necessary criteria for gaining admission into higher institutions of learning.

The performance of secondary school students in WASSCE has become a thing of concern for stakeholders in education. Table 1 showed the performance of students in WASSCE from 2010-2018

Table 1: Number of Students that Got 5 Credits and above Including English Language and Mathematics in the May/June WAEC 2010-2018

Year	Total Valid Entry	No. of candidates that got 5 credits & above including Eng Lang & Maths	Percentage of candidates that got 5 credits & above including Eng Lang & Maths
2010	1,351,557	337,071	24.94%
2011	1,540,250	587,630	38.93%
2012	1,672,224	649,156	38.81%
2013	1,543,683	555,725	36.00%
2014	1,692,435	529,425	31.28%
2015	1,593,442	616,343	38.68%
2016	1,544,234	878,040	52.97%
2017	1,559,162	923,486	59.22%
2018	1,572,396	786,016	49.98%

Source: WAEC Reports 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

As shown in Table 1, in 2010, 1,351,557 students sat for the examination in which 24.94% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2011, 1,540,250 students sat for the examination and 38.93% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2012, 1,672,224 students sat for the examination and 38.81% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2013, 1,543,683 students sat for the examination and 36.00% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2014, 1,692,435 students sat for the examination and 31.38% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language.

Also, in 2015, 1,593,442 students sat for the examination and 38.68% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2016, 1,544,234 students sat for the examination and 52.97% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. In 2017, 1,559,162 students sat for the examination and 59.22% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language while in 2018, 1,572,396 students sat for the examination and 49.98% students had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language. This shows a fluctuation in the rate of students that had five credits and above including Mathematics and English Language in the May/June WAEC examination. One question that bothers these researchers is what could be responsible for this trend in academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria and Oyo town in particular?

It is also observed that many of these students have written English language examination twice or thrice mainly because they need it to get admission into higher institutions of learning. In order to find lasting solution or to ameliorate this problem studies have been conducted by researchers at different stages on various variables such as, school resources, family background, parenting styles, teacher's effectiveness, self-concept and host of others. There are scanty of studies on

what influence personality traits can have on students' academic performance in English language. This study therefore is set out to investigate the influence of personality trait on academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of personality traits on English Language of secondary school students in Oyo Town. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the personality traits predominant among secondary school students in Oyo Town
2. determine the level of academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town
3. determine the influence of personality traits on academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town

Research Question

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the personality trait predominant among secondary school students in Oyo Town?
2. What is the level of academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town?
3. Is personality trait influencing academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of personality traits on academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research designed adopted for this study was a descriptive survey design. The population for this study was all SSS3 students in Oyo Town, Oyo State. The target population comprises all senior secondary school three students. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 300 respondents from the randomly selected ten (10) secondary schools in Oyo Town. The research instrument used to elicit data from the respondent was adapted from John and Srisvastava (1999) personality traits scale. The research questionnaire was a four-point Likert type rating scale of Very True of Me (VTM), True of Me (TM), Not Much True of Me (NMTM), Not True of Me (NTM) in response to each item. The personality traits were Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience. The scoring was done based on the items picked. The respondents were rated high in any of the traits in which they have highest score.

The instrument was given to 3 experts in the field of Educational Psychology for face and content validity. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated before the final draft and the administration of the questionnaire on the respondents. Reliability of the personality trait scale was

ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. The instruments yielded reliability coefficient value of 0.79.

The second instrument for this study was English language test which consists of 50 objective questions drawn from the WASSCE May/June 2017/2018 past questions to measure students' academic performance in English Language was a standardized test and the psychometric property of the test has been determined. This test was administered on the respondents to measure their academic performance in English language. Each item of the objective test attracted two (2) marks to make a maximum mark of one hundred (100) marks. Scores from fifty (50) and above was considered high while scores below fifty percent (50%) low. The scores of the students on this test was used to determine their academic performance in English language and compared to what their responses was on the questionnaires.

The data elicited from the respondents were subjected to descriptive statistics of percentage and inferential statistic of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significant

III. ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND TESTING HYPOTHESIS

Research Question 1: *What is the personality trait predominant among secondary school students in Oyo Town?*

In order to answer this research question, participants' responses on the personality traits questionnaire were collated. The data collected from the sampled students were summed. The summary of the results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of Personality Traits among Secondary School Students in Oyo Town

Profile of Personality Traits	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extraversion	80	26.7
Agreeableness	64	21.3
Conscientiousness	20	6.7
Neuroticism	16	5.3
Openness	120	40.0
Total	300	100.0

Result in Table 1 concerned the responses of the participants to items that sought information on the personality traits of secondary school students in Oyo Town. The result on Table 1 indicated that 80 (26.7%) of 300 secondary school students in Oyo Town were extraversion personality trait, 64 (21.3%) of 300 secondary school students were agreeableness personality traits, 20 (6.7%) of 300 secondary school students were conscientiousness personality traits, 16 (5.3%) of secondary school students were neuroticism personality traits, while 120 (40.0%) of 300 secondary school students were openness personality traits. This implies that the majority of sampled students have openness to experience personality trait in Oyo Town.

Research Question 2: *What is the level of academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo town?*

In order to answer this research question, participants' responses on the English Language Performance Test were collated. The data collected from the sampled students were summed up and Students whose scores between 0 – 49 were classified as having low academic performance, while scores between 50 – 100 were regarded as high academic performance in English Language.

The summary of the results are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage Analysis of Level of Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Oyo Town, Oyo State.

Academic Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High Level of Academic Performance	102	34.0
Low Level of Academic Performance	198	66.0
Total	300	100.0

Results in Table 2 presented the responses of the participants to items that sought information on the academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo town. The result on Table 2 indicated that 102 (34.0%) of secondary school students in Oyo Town had high level of academic performance, while 198 (66.0%) of 300 secondary school students in Oyo town had low level of academic performance. This implies that the level of academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in Oyo town was low.

Testing Hypothesis

H₀₁: *There is no significant influence of personality traits on academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town.*

In order to answer this research question, participants' responses on the personality traits questionnaire and English Language Performance Test (ELPT) score were collated and subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The data collected from the study was analyzed as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: One-Way Analysis of Influence of Personality Traits on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Oyo Town

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	1205.491	4	301.373		
Within Groups	19429.175	295	65.862	4.58	0.00
Total	20634.667	299			

Results in Table 3 show F-value of 4.58 and p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 ($0.00 < 0.05$). Since 0.00 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant influence of personality traits on academic performance of Secondary School Students in Oyo Town. To ascertain where the difference lies, post hoc analysis was performed using Duncan multiple test. The result is reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Duncan Multiple Test of Homogeneous Means on Influence of Personality Traits on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Oyo Town

Personality Traits	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Openness	161	60.91		
Extroversion	9	68.44		
Neuroticism	18	70.66		
Conscientiousness	32		73.56	
Agreeableness	80			78.44
Sig.		0.39	0.06	1.00

As shown in Table 4, the significant difference noticed in Table 3 was majorly contributed by students with agreeableness personality trait who had the highest mean score of 78.44 followed by students with conscientiousness personality trait with mean score of 73.56. Students with neuroticism personality had mean score of 70.66, students with extroversion personality trait had mean score of 68.44, while the students with openness personality had the least mean score which was 60.91.

IV. DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This study investigated the influence of personality trait on academic performance of secondary school students in Oyo Town. The first finding of the study revealed that secondary school students in Oyo town have different personality traits. The personality trait that is predominant among the student was openness to experience, followed by extraversion personality traits. This result is possible where students have high score in the instrument used to measure the personality traits.

The result of this study revealed that the level of academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in Oyo town was low. This means that the majority of the sampled students' performance in English Language was low. The plausible reason for this result is that students understanding and use of English language was very poor and that the schools might lack qualified trained English Language teachers. This might be that the teachers teaching English Language are teachers employed to teach other English related subjects. The finding of this study is in support of the earlier finding of Sa'ad (2015) who found that the academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in South West is low. This result is in variation with that of Elewetu (2017) who found that the academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara State was high. The variation observed between this study and that of Elewetu (2017) might be as a result of the difference in the locale of the studies and the years the studies were carried out. While the present study was conducted in Oyo Town, Elewetu (2017) study was conducted in Ilorin, Kwara State. This finding negated that of Kumari (2014) who reported that the

level of academic performance of secondary school students was average.

The finding from the hypothesis of this study revealed that the personality traits have significant influence with students' academic performance. The study further revealed that students with agreeableness personality trait have the highest influence with academic performance followed by students with conscientiousness while students with openness to experience have low influence with academic performance in secondary school students in Oyo Town. This finding is similar to that of Ghazi, Shahzada and Ullah (2013) whose study revealed that conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits were found high while extroversion, neuroticism and openness to experience personality traits were found low among secondary school students.

On the contrary, Olowookere, Alao, Adekeye and Ayorinde (2017) reported that conscientiousness positively correlated with academic performance and that neuroticism negatively contributed to academic performance while extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness were found to be unrelated to academic performance. In addition, Martey, and Aborakwa-Larbi (2016) whose finding revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and the personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience; however, extroversion and neuroticism have no significant relationship.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that personality trait of secondary school students in Oyo town was openness to experience personality traits and that agreeableness and conscientiousness were the two favorable personality traits that have influence on academic performance of secondary school student. Furthermore, the academic performance of students in English Language was low in Oyo Town.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the discussion and conclusion of this study the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. It was recommended that teachers and students should be educated on the knowledge of individual differences of which personality trait plays a major role on how one react to issues and academic activities.
2. Seminars/workshop should be organized for students and teachers about personality traits and it influence on students' academic performance.
3. Parents and other stakeholders in the field of education should be educated on the need to know the different personality traits or individual differences that exist among students and if possible parent should make it a point of duty to teach their wards to imbibe the qualities of conscientiousness

and agreeableness as these qualities might be helpful to them in their academics and life pursuits

4. Government should employ qualified trained English language teachers to teach English in secondary schools in Oyo Town and in Oyo State at large.

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