

---

**Personality Variables and Teachers Performance in Secondary School in Imo State**

---

**BY**

**UKAH, Genevieve Ngozi**  
**Department of Educational Psychology**  
**Imo State College of Education, Ihitte Uboma**

---

**ABSTRACT**

*The study sought to assess the personality variables and teachers' performance in secondary school in Imo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Imo State. The population of the study comprised school administrators and teachers in secondary schools in Imo State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 administrators and 120 teachers, and these gave the total of 180 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Personality Variables and Teachers' Performance Questionnaire (PVTPQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation from Imo State University to ensure that the instrument recorded accuracy for the study, while the Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.92, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study revealed that teachers' performances are the most significant contribution in the educational process that improves their skills and prioritizes their efforts in ways that improve the prospect of career advancement. The study revealed that there is significant extent to which openness to experience influences teachers' performance in Imo State. Finally, the study revealed that there is significant extent to which conscientiousness influences teachers' performance in Imo State. One of the recommendations was that the government should evaluate teachers' personality traits and their teaching performance using students since their teaching performance is one of the strong factors in students' academic performance.*

**KEYWORDS: Personality Variables, Teachers Performance, Secondary School and Imo State**

---

**INTRODUCTION**

In the era of globalization, the 21st century has become a more dynamic and highly challenging environment, as well as one associated with reforms in the educational system. Consequently, teachers' roles have evolved progressively from teacher-centered to student-centered, where teachers are required to be facilitators in the learning environment, spend more time analyzing the learners' needs, motivating students, ensuring students' interactions, and keep checking the prerequisite knowledge (Jagta, 2015). A teacher's general performance in teaching is influenced by various internal and external factors. These different teaching factors are measured and assessed in order to come up with indicators of successful teaching that would effectively regulate students' learning and serve as success indicators for a school. Various studies have proposed different criteria on how to assess teaching performance, and

they differ according to different schools' specific objectives. However, in explaining performance, there are important commonalities that need to be considered. Teacher performance is influenced by the teachers' personality characteristics (Curtis & Liying, 2001) and their efficacy beliefs in teaching (Yeh, 2006; Fislser & Firestone, 2006; Onafowora, 2005; Rogalla, 2004). A focus on the teacher's personality could be a good effort in identifying factors that influence their performance in supporting the achievement of any education goals. As stated by Polk (2006), teacher performance is influenced by the teachers' personality characteristics. Personality also plays a role as a predictor in evaluating teaching effectiveness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In achieving the national mission of an effective education system, the government has to emphasize the education system as part of the important aspects that should be focused on. For the purpose of improving the teaching methods, strategies have to be planned. However, many studies place emphasis on the performance of teachers but do not compare it to their personality and how it aids their teaching and student learning. Understanding personality might help teachers implement the strategies that will help improve their performance and help students learn effectively. Teacher performance is influenced by the teachers' personality characteristics and their efficacy belief in teaching. However, problems may arise in identifying the personality dimension of a teacher based on the model of McCrae & Costa (1997), "The Big Five: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness." Is there any relationship between these personalities and the teachers' performance and how it influences their teaching effectiveness? Thus, this study sought to assess the personality variables and teachers' performance in secondary school in Imo State.

### **Objective of the Study**

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which openness to experience influences teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State.
2. Examine the extent to which conscientiousness influences teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State.

### **Research Question**

1. To what extent does openness to experience influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State?
2. To what extent does conscientiousness influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant extent to which openness to experience influence teachers' performance in secondary school in Imo State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant extent to which conscientiousness influence teachers' performance in secondary school in Imo State.

## Conceptual Review

### Concept of Personality Variables

As Gurr et al. (2005) said, most teachers' personality characteristics enhance the students' efficiency. The importance and necessity of studying the relationship between teachers' personality characteristics and their performance in elementary, junior high, and high schools comes from the importance of educational management, their roles in pedagogical principles, and their managerial, educational, human relations, professional, administrative, and personal differences in the achievement of objectives. In fact, they are those responsible for trying to coordinate and facilitate the realization of some of the students, teachers, and parents' needs. Therefore, his/her success is connected to other people's cooperation in pedagogical processes and the use of their different potentialities. So, the success of an organization in achieving its goals and performing its responsibilities greatly depends on its teacher's performance. The more successful teachers are in carrying out their responsibilities, the more the organization achieves its objectives (Vatur, 2001).

### Concept of Openness to Experience

Openness to experience has been described as the depth and complexity of an individual's mental life and experiences (John & Srivastava, 1999). It is also sometimes called "intellect" or "imagination." Openness to experience concerns people's willingness to try new things, their ability to be vulnerable, and their capability to think outside the box (Courtney 2020).

Common traits related to openness to experience include:

- Imagination;
- Daringness;
- Curiosity;
- Insightfulness;
- Preference for variety;
- Perceptiveness;
- Varied interests;
- Cleverness;
- Intellect;
- Originality;
- Creativity;
- Complexity/depth.

An individual who is high in openness to experience is likely someone who has a love of learning, enjoys the arts, engages in a creative career or hobby, and likes meeting new people (Lebowitz, 2016a). An individual who is low in openness to experience probably prefers routine over variety, sticks to what he or she knows, and prefers less abstract art and entertainment. Openness to Experience refers to the overall depth and breadth of an individual's intellectual, artistic, and experiential life. Important facets of openness include aesthetic sensitivity (vs. insensitivity), imagination (vs. lack of creativity), and intellect (vs. lack of intellectual curiosity). Highly open individuals tend to have a broad range of interests and enjoy learning and trying new things; those low in openness tend to have narrower interests and prefer familiarity and routine over novelty and variety.

### Concept of Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is a trait that can be described as the tendency to control impulses and act in socially acceptable ways, behaviors that facilitate goal-directed behavior (John & Srivastava, 1999). Conscientious people excel in their ability to delay gratification, work within the rules, and plan and organize effectively.

Traits within the conscientiousness factor include:

- Persistence; • Ambition; • Thoroughness; • Self-discipline; • Consistency;
- Predictability; • Control; • Reliability; • Resourcefulness; • Hard work;
- Energy; • Perseverance; • Planning.

Conscientious people are more likely to succeed in school and in their careers, to excel in leadership positions, and to pursue their goals with tenacity and forethought (Lebowitz, 2016a). People low in conscientiousness are much more likely to procrastinate and to be flighty, impetuous, and impulsive. Conscientiousness describes an individual's capacity to organize things, complete tasks, and work toward long-term goals. Its key facets include orderliness (vs. disorganization), self-discipline (vs. inefficiency), and reliability (vs. inconsistency). Highly conscientious individuals prefer order and structure, are productive workers, tend to follow rules and norms, and are better able to delay gratification, whereas those low in conscientiousness have difficulty controlling their impulses and are easily distracted from tasks.

### **Concept of Teachers Performance**

Teachers' performance, according to Hwang, Bartlett, Greben, and Hand (2017), can be defined as the actions they perform in schools in order to achieve educational goals. Teacher performance is a key element in the success of school effectiveness and is very important. The word "perform" means "to carry through, to achieve, to bring to completion, to execute, to accomplish, and performance is the act of performing an action or task (Didier, 2002). In contrast, Edis (1995) describes that performance as something an individual leaves behind and that lives apart from the goal. Performance is a numerical or non-numerical result that results from predetermined goals (Saruhan and Yıldız, 2012). Duze, (2012) defines teachers' performance as behavior that how he/she behaves in the process of teaching a learning environment, in such a way that teachers successfully carry out assigned action or complete their task. The teacher's performances are the most significant contribution in educational process that whatever policies may he/she lay down; eventually the teacher has to interpret and implement these policies through teaching learning process. As stated by Magno and Sembrano (2008), teacher performance includes measures of general teaching practices such as teaching methods and strategies, classroom management, planning, and organization of teaching. Curtis and Liying (2001) stated that teacher performance is influenced by teachers' personality characteristics. It means that personality has an effect on teaching practices as well as teaching effectiveness. In addition, Özgenel and Mert (2019) noted that teachers' performances positively affect the effectiveness of the school.

### **Openness to Experience and Teachers' Performance**

According to Robbins and Timothy (2017), the openness to experience dimension addresses ranges of interests and fascination with novelty, Extremely open people are creative, curious, and artistically sensitive. Openness is the degree to which a person has a broad range of interests and is imaginative, creative, and willing to consider new ideas. According to Costa and McCrae (1992), cited in Ng, Eby, Sorensen, and Feldman (2005), teachers with a high openness to experience are curious and have a wide array of interests, which predisposes them to desire new experiences by moving into different jobs and positions. Ng, Eby, Sorensen, and Feldman (2005) also revealed that such teachers have a strong need for change

and novelty, are prone to "job hopping," and have been found to display greater job instability than others. Individuals with high openness to experience can further be characterized by their intellectual abilities and flexibility, which may lead them to seek intellectual stimulation in their occupation by taking on more challenging jobs at higher hierarchical levels (Wille, De Fruyt, & Feys 2010). Openness to experience is likely to influence teacher performance trajectories through its effects on individuals' intrinsic motivation to learn. Although open teachers are not necessarily more capable than their less open counterparts, they are more likely to perform behaviors and display mindsets that facilitate long-term knowledge and skill acquisition (Rolfhus & Ackerman, 1999). Highly open teachers are more likely to explore their surroundings and experiment with new ways of doing things. Hence, according to Amirali, Joanne, and Jim (2013), although open individuals may not perform any better than their less open colleagues when first starting a job, their performance is likely to increase to a greater extent than less open individuals as they acquire a greater amount of job knowledge and respond more adaptively to their work experiences.

### **Conscientiousness and Teachers' Performance**

Of the Big Five personality traits, only conscientiousness has consistently been associated with academic achievement (Noffle & Robins, 2007; O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007; Poropat, 2009). It combines various traits that are crucial for successful leadership, teaching, and learning; for example, self-discipline, ambition, persistence, diligence, and dutifulness. The narrow traits of conscientiousness can predict academic achievement better than the broad trait (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001). Duckworth and Seligman (2005) found that self-discipline accounted for more than twice as much variance as intelligence in school achievement and learning behavior. However, this result could be partly due to the fact that the study was conducted in a selective school and the consequential range restriction of intelligence. Andreas (2012) found that the personality traits that have a correlation with job performance are extroversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. His findings revealed conscientiousness as the strongest predictor of job performance. It explains that individuals who are persistent, dependable, organized, and goal-directed tend to be higher performers, specifically in education. Judge et al. (2002) mentioned conscientiousness as a focus on how people approach their work. People with high conscientiousness have a sense of duty and obligation to their work and have high job performance, career success, motivation, and job satisfaction.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, and the study was conducted in Imo State, one of the 36 states of the federation. The population of the study comprised school administrators and teachers in secondary schools in Imo State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 60 administrators and 120 teachers, and these gave the total of 180 respondents that constituted the sample size for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Personality Variables and Teachers' Performance Questionnaire (PVTPQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation from Imo State University to ensure that the instrument recorded accuracy for the study. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.92, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

**Result and Discussion**

**Hypothesis One:** The null hypothesis states that there is no significant extent to which openness to experience influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State. In order to answer the hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was performed on the data (table 1).

**TABLE 1: Independent t-test analysis of the extent to which openness to experience influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State**

EXPERIENCE	N	X	SD	t
OPENNESS	108	17.33	1.32	19.62*
NON- OPENNESS	72	14.00	8.92	

**\*Significant at 0.05; df = 178; N = 180; critical t = 1.960**

The above table 1 indicates that the calculated t-value (19.62) was higher than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance with 178 degrees of freedom. Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that openness to experience significantly influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State. The result was in agreement with the research finding of Lebowitz, (2016a), an individual who is high in openness to experience is likely someone who has a love of learning, enjoys the arts, engages in a creative career or hobby, and likes meeting new people. Also, individual who is low in openness to experience probably prefers routine over variety, sticks to what he or she knows, and prefers less abstract arts and entertainment. Teachers with high openness to experience are curious and have a wide array of interests, which predisposes them to desire new experiences by moving into different jobs and positions (Ng,Eby, Sorensen, Feldman, 2005). The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

**Hypothesis Two:** The null hypothesis states that there is no significant extent to which conscientiousness influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State. In order to answer the hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was performed on the data (see table 2).

**TABLE 2: Independent t-test analysis of the extent to which conscientiousness influence teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State**

CONSCIENTIOUS	N	X	SD	t
CONSCIENTIOUS	117	16.69	1.78	7.26*
NON-CONSCIENTIOUS	63	14.71	1.68	

**\*Significant at 0.05; df = 178; N = 180; critical t = 1.960**

The above table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value (7.26) was higher than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance with 178 degrees of freedom. Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that conscientiousness influences teachers performance in secondary school in Imo State. The result was in agreement with the research finding of Andreas (2012) who stressed that conscientiousness as the strongest predictor of job performance. Individuals who are persistent, dependable, organized, and goal directed tend to be higher performers, specifically in education. Also, Duckworth and Seligman (2005) found out that individuals high in conscientiousness are likely to be successful in school and in their careers, to excel in leadership positions, and to doggedly pursue their goals with determination and forethought in the same vein individuals low in

conscientiousness are much more likely to procrastinate and to be flighty, impetuous, and impulsive (Lebowitz, 2016a). The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

## CONCLUSION

Teacher's performances are the most significant contribution in educational process that improve their skill and prioritize their efforts in ways that improve the prospect of career advancement and also influenced their personality characteristics. Teachers possessing openness to experience strongly relate to divergent thinking and creativity, and one of its facets is the generation of new ideas, which contributes massively in achieving positive educational goals. Conscientiousness is a strongest predictor of job performance. Individuals who are persistent, dependable, organized, and goal directed tend to be higher performers, specifically in education. Therefore, study reveals that there is significant extent to which openness to experience influence teachers performance in Imo State. There is significant extent to which conscientiousness influence teachers performance in Imo State.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations was deemed necessary:

1. Government should evaluate teachers' personality traits and their teaching performance using students since their teaching performance is one of the strong factors in students' academic performance.
2. Institutions should use multidimensional approaches to assess the teachers' performance (knowledge of subject matter, organization and delivery skills of course material and the student learning assessment).
3. Institutions should seek additional resources to support teaching and learning resource centers and programs emphasizing teaching excellence.

## REFERENCES

- Amirali, M., Joanne, E. & Jim B. (2013). Openness to Experience as a Predictor of Job Performance Trajectories. *Applied Psychology* 62(1), 239-256
- Andreas, K. (2012). *The Relationship between Personality and Job Performance in Sales: A Replication of Past Research and an Extension to a Swedish Context*. Available at: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:542263/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Courtney (2020). The role of personality in organizational life: issues and evidence. *Journal of Management*. 18, 185-213
- Curtis, A. & Liying, C. (2001). Teachers' self-evaluation of knowledge, skills and personality characteristics needed to manage change. *Asia- Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 29(1),139-143
- Didier Noyer, (2002). *Manager less performances*. Insep Consulting Editions, Paris.
- Duckworth and Seligman (2005). Self-Discipline Outdoes IQ in Predicting Academic Performance of Adolescents. *Psychological Science* 16(12)
- Duze, C. O. (2012). Leadership Styles of Principals and Job Performance of Staff in Secondary Schools in Delta State of Nigeria. *An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 1(2), 224-245
- Edis, M. (1995). *Performance Management and Appraisal in Health Service*. Kogan Page, London. 24pp
- Fisler, J. L. and Firestone, W. A. (2006). Teacher learning in a school-university partnership: Exploring the role of social trust and teaching efficacy beliefs. *Teachers College Record*, 108(1), 1155-1186
- Gurr, D. Drysdal, L. and Mulford, B. (2005). Successful principal leadership: Australian case studies. *Journal Educational Administration*, 43(6), 539
- Hwang Y. S., Bartlett B., Greben M., Hand K. (2017). A systematic review of mindfulness interventions for in-service teachers: a tool to enhance teacher wellbeing and performance. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 64(1), 26–42.
- Jagtap, P. (2015). Teacher role as facilitator in learning. *Scholarly research journal for humanity science and English language*, 3(17), 3903-3905.
- John, O. & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement and theoretical perspectives. In: Pervin LA, John OP (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed.) New York: Guilford pp.102-138.
- Judge, T., Bono, J., Ilies, R., and Gerhardt, M. (2002). Personality and Leadership: A Qualitative and Quantitative Review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 87(4) 765–780
- Lebowitz, S. (2016a). *The 'Big 5' Personality Traits Could Predict Who Will and Won't Becomea Leader*. Business Insider



- Magno, C. & Sembrano, J. (2008). The Role of Teacher Efficacy and Characteristics on Teaching Effectiveness, Performance, and Use of Learner-Centered Practices. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 16(1), 73-90
- Ng, T.W.H., Eby, L.T., Sorenson, K.L., & Feldman, D.C. (2005). Predictors of objective and subjective career success: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 58(1), 367-408.
- Noftle, E. & Robins, R. (2007). Personality Predictors of Academic Outcomes: Big Five Correlates of GPA and SAT Scores. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93(1):116-30
- O'Connor, M. & Paunonen, S. (2007). Big Five personality predictors of post-secondary academic performance. *Personality and Individual Differences* 43(5):971-990
- Onafowora, L. L. (2005). Teacher Efficacy Issues in the Practice of Novice Teachers. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 28(1), 34-44
- Özgenel, M. and Mert, P. (2019). The role of teacher performance in school effectiveness. *International Journal of Education Technology and Scientific Researches*, 4(10), 417-434.
- Paunonen, S. & Ashton, M. (2001). Big Five Predictors of Academic Achievement. *Journal of Research in Personality* 3(5) 78–90
- Polk, J. A. (2006). Traits of effective teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 107(1), 23-30.
- Poropat, A. E. (2009). A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(2), 322–338.
- Robbins, S. P. and Timothy J. (2017). *Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Rogalla, M. (2004). Future problem solving program coaches' efficacy in teaching for successful intelligence and their patterns of successful behavior. *Roeper Review*, 26(1), 175
- Rolfhus, E.L., & Ackerman, P.L. (1999). Assessing individual differences in knowledge: Knowledge structures and traits. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91, 511–526.
- Saruhan, S. C. and Yıldız, M. L. (2012). *İnsan Kaynakları Yönetimi*. İstanbul: Beta Yayıncılık
- Vatur, J. (2001). *A study of relationship between principals' personality characteristics and environmental conditions and their administrative performance in schools*. The thesis of M. A. Islamic Azad university of Khorasgan (In Persian).
- Wille, B., De Fruyt, F., & Feys, M. (2010). Vocational interests and Big Five traits as predictors of job instability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76, 547-558.
- Yeh, Y. (2006). The interactive effects of personal traits and guided practices on preservice teachers' changes in personal teaching efficacy. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 37(1), 513-521