TEACHERS' PERSONALITY AND SCHOOL PHOBIA AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

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ABSTRACT: *This is an ex-post facto design study used; to determine teachers' personality on school phobia among primary school pupils in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. . Two research questions and three hypotheses guided this study The population of the study consisted of 2971 primary six school pupils and 537 primary school teachers in Bayelsa State. A sample of 749 pupils and 81 teachers participated in the study. Proportionate sampling, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample size. Two instruments titled: Teacher Personality Traits Scale (TPTS) and Pupils School Phobia Questionnaire (PSPQ)) were used for data collection. The reliability indices of the instruments were established using Cronbach Alpha with coefficients of 0.83 for TPTS and test retest coefficient of 0.86 for PSPS respectively. Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD), while One-Way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Two Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Results got revealed that the highest school phobia was experienced by pupils of teachers with personality traits of extraversion.. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that employers of teachers should ensure adequacy of this personality characteristics in their would be teachers before they are employed.*

KEYWORDS: Personality, School Phobia, Traits, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Extraversion.

INTRODUCTION

The primary school is made up of mainly pupils from their early childhood (3- 5 years) to pre-adolescence age (9 -12 years). Primary education is the level where appropriate educational foundations are expected to be laid to uphold the rest of the educational system. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) defines primary education as the "education given in institution for children aged 6 to 11 plus". The National Policy on Education has as its aims and objectives

> *"The inculcation of national consciousnesses and unity, the right values and attitudes, training of the mind to understand the world around and acquisition of appropriate skills and abilities mentally and physically for meaningful existence in the society" (NPE, 2004: P 5).*

In other words, the achievement of these objectives means that a child becomes independent having acquired basic skills and knowledge, and therefore could contribute to national development. Hence, it is quite impressive that there is compulsory and free education scheme for the first nine years in Nigeria with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1991. This is in a bid to become self-reliant citizens of the nation.

Education involves human relationships and human interaction. At this stage of primary education, a pupil forms a lot of habits, his self-concepts, values, likes, dislikes, makes friends and acquires skills that will be useful for further education. He also acquires social skills with which he can relate effectively with others. But sad enough, the country's effort to attain the goal of education has become difficult. At the primary school level the child is faced with a situation where each subject he or she takes, means facing the same teacher irrespective of his or her personality. Increasing challenges are being faced by the primary school child, such as the location of the school may be different from what the pupil has been used to. Literature is replete with information on pupil's ability that is psychosocial in nature that tends to influence poor school attendance, resulting from school phobia and affecting achievement. As the child learns new motives, new needs and goals, he or she learns to understand his or herself, by developing new ways of relating with others emotionally. Most children find satisfaction and excitement going to school while other children don't admire going to school. This happens commonly at ages where children are faced with tougher school activities or examinations or may have fallen out with friends. All of this is a normal part of growing up. Absence from school which is either recurrent or of long duration is a constant problem for education authorities and school teachers.

Reber and Reber (2001) defined phobia as that fear that must persist and intense, there must be a compelling need to flea or avoid the phobic object or situation, and the fear must be irrational and not based on sound judgment. However, psychologists have identified three main types of phobias: specific or simple phobias, these are very common in children where they are essentially thought of as normal, but some phobia carry on until adult life. These specific phobias can be divided up as animals, natural environments, enclosed spaces (claustrophobia), blood phobias to mention, but a few.

Statistical survey (2003) showed that school phobia or school refusal occurs in about 5 percent of children. Between 4.1 and 4.7 percent of children aged 7-11 years suffer from school phobia. . A later study showed that internationally there is a 2.4 percent overall prevalence rate. School phobia develops in much the same way as an adult anxiety disorder. The average age for onset of school phobia is 7.5 years and for school phobia age 10.3 years. It is always difficult for a child to break away from home after an extended period of being at home, such as the school holidays or time off. Lionel (1972), Last et al (1987), outline the following as causes of school phobia: Factors such as moving to a new area, a divorce or a bereavement can cause immense stress to a child and set off disturbed, anxious behavior that can escalate into school phobia. In addition, the child's family often unintentionally reinforces school phobic symptoms.

Frisch & Frisch (1998) believed that some primary school children may have had fragments of earlier intense fears but additional ones will tend to be more rationally based and will possibly include fear being late for school, social rejection, criticism, new situations, adoption, personal danger to mention a few. Like all phobias, school phobia has emotional, physical, and behavioral manifestation (Morgan et al 2005). Most school-avoiding children do not know why they are school-phobic, and may have difficulty talking about the source of their anxiety. Aside from difficulty in separating from parents, there are some other school-related factors that can cause school phobia. They include; fear of failure, teasing by other children, anxieties over toileting in a public bathroom, a perception that teacher and other school personnel are "mean", threats of physical harm (as from a school bully) or actual physical harm, existing learning difficulties or disabilities. Non-school related causes may

include the loss of a loved one through death, divorce or moving to another location and other home problems or situations.

Personality which is one of the most used concepts in psychology is used to capture all the individual dispositional variables like that of a teacher. Personality according to Sokan & Akinde (1996) signifies the functioning of the whole person, the unique organization of the individual that distinguishes him from other fellows. Sherman (1979) defined personality as "Characteristic pattern of behaviors, cognitions and emotions which may be experienced by the individual/or manifest to others. No wonder Farrant (1975) describes personality as the projection of ourselves to others. He stressed that it is not what we think about others to be like but ourselves as others to see us. In the words of Allport (1967), personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines his characteristic behavior and thought".

The Trait theorists approach believes that traits are components of every individual person. A trait refers to any distinguishable and relatively enduring way in which an individual varies from others. Traits are often used as adjectives which can be applied to individuals in consistent ways such as pleasant, helpful and warm person or lazy and aggressive person. All these traits associated with an individual's personality can determine pupil's school status either to attend or refuse to attend (school phobia) due to the child's perception of fears associated with school.

The Big Five-factor model of personality traits is a model in the descriptive sense only, coined by Lew Goldberg. The Big Five Factor model of personality traits constitutes five broad dimensions of personality that include: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

However, Chacko (1981), asserted that the teacher personality would be incomplete in his personality description. These could make wrong impression on the child's mind to see the teacher as aggressive. This could make the children refuse to go to school. But on the whole the place of the teacher is so important that it could not be dispensed with. Behavior, emotion and the like are important and make impression on the child's mind.

While there is a significant body of literature supporting the five factor personality model, researchers don't always agree to the exact labels of each dimension. However, the five categories are described as follows;

- Extraversion: (Surgency) This trait includes characteristics such as excitability, sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and high amounts of emotional expressiveness, kind and affectionate, seek comfort of others, sympathetic.
- Agreeableness: This personality dimension includes attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection and other prosocial behaviours. Cooperative, compassionate rather than antagonistic and suspicious towards others.
- Conscientiousness: common features of this dimension include high levels of thoughtfulness, with good impulse control and goal-directed behaviours discipline, aim for achievement. Those high in conscientiousness tend to be organized and mindful of details. Planned rather than spontaneous behaviour.
- Neuroticism: Individuals high in this trait tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability and sadness. Infact a tendency to experience negative emotions easily such as depression and anger.

- Openness to Experience; This trait features characteristics such as imagination and insight, curious and those high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests.

These dimensions according to Big-five factor model represent broad areas of personality. The researcher has demonstrated that these groupings of characteristics tend to occur together in many people. For example individuals who are sociable tend to be talkative. However, these traits do not always occur together. Personality is complex and varied and each person may display behaviours across several of these dimensions (Kendra & Cherry 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of teachers' personality on school phobia among school pupils' in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Specifically the study is intended to examine the followings:

1. Determine the influence of teachers' personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion on school phobia among male and female school pupils' in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The understated research questions guided this study.

1. How do teachers' personality trait of conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion, influence school phobia of school pupils'?

2. How do teachers' personality trait of conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion, influence school phobia of male and female school pupils'?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

1. There is no significant influence of teachers' personality trait (of conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion), on school phobia of primary school pupils'

2. There is no significant influence of teachers' personality trait (of conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion), on school phobia of male and female primary school pupils in Bayelsa State.

3. There is no significant interaction effect of TPT and Gender on school phobia among male and female pupils.

METHOD

This is an expost facto research designed to determine the influence of teachers' personality traits on school phobia among primary school pupils in Bayelsa State, Nigeria   The

population of the study consisted 2,971 (1,503 male and 1,534 female) primary six pupils and 81 (36 male and 45 female) teachers in all the 32 primary schools in the State. A sample of 749 pupils and 81 teachers drawn from 32 primary schools drawn using random purposive and proportionate sampling techniques was used for the study. Two research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Two research instruments were used for data collection. They included 'Teacher Personality Trait Scale' (TPTS) and 'Pupils School Phobia Scale' (PSPS). TPTS is a 45 items instrument, adopted from McCrae Big Five Personality Test (1987) and used to measure personality traits of openness to experience, conscientiousness; extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The data obtained from TPTS was used to categorize the teachers into the five distinct personality groups. The PSPS is a 26 items instrument adapted from Kearney (2006). The two instruments were rated on a 5-point Likert scale of Strong Agree (5-point), Agree (4-point), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3-point), Disagree (2-point) and Strongly Disagree (1-point). Teacher Personality Traits Scale (TPTS) and Pupil School Phobia Scale (PSPS) were validated by experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability co-efficients of the two instruments were determined through Crobach alpha and test-retest which produced reliability co-efficients of 0.83 and 0.86 respectively. The data collected for this research were analysed using Mean (x), Standard Deviation (SD), One way and two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

RESULTS

Results got after data analysis were presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Influence of

Teachers Personality Traits (TPT) on Pupils School Phobia.

TPT	N	$\overline{X}$	SD
Conscientiousness	112	90.41	20.08
Openness to Experience	128	106.76	14.79
Neuroticism	88	109.24	18.42
Extraversion	231	111.04	12.66
Agreeableness	190	94.87	19.37

Table 1 showed the Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) ratings of pupils in school phobia due to teachers' personality traits. The mean (x) phobia score of the pupils based on the teachers' personality, indicated that pupils taught by teachers with personality trait of extraversion obtained the highest mean score (x = 111.04), followed by those whose teachers have personality trait of neuroticism (x = 109.24), then openness to experience with a mean score of (x = 106.76), followed by agreeableness with a mean score of (x = 94.87), and the least phobia was exhibited by pupils of teachers with personality traits of conscientiousness (x = 90.41).

Table 2:   Mean ($\overline{\text{x}}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) of influence of TPT on Male and female pupils' School Phobia

TPT	GENDER	N	$\overline{\text{X}}$	SD
Conscientiousness	Male	61	82.79	20.95
	Female	51	99.53	14.59
Openness to Experience	Male	69	96.51	12.37
	Female	59	118.75	5.32
Neuroticism	Male	39	107.72	23.38
	Female	49	102.45	18.14
Extraversion	Male	109	111.08	10.35
	Female	122	111.85	11.28
Agreeableness	Male	101	94.73	19.81
	Female	89	95.03	18.97

Table 2 above showed the Mean (x) ratings of the male and female pupils on school phobia due to teachers' personality traits. Female pupils taught by teachers with the personality traits of Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, Extraversion and Agreeableness exhibited (99.53, 118.75, 111.85 and 95.03 respective higher levels of school phobia than their male counterparts (82.99, 96.51, 111.08, 94.73) respectively. However, the male pupils taught by teachers with personality trait of neuroticism expressed greater (107.72) school phobia than their female counterparts (102.45)

Table 3:   One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the influence of Teachers' Personality Traits (TPT) on pupils' school phobia.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Df	Mean Square (MS)	F-ratio	F-critical	Result
Between Groups	50225.792	4	12556.48			
Within Groups	211822.448	744	284.708	44.103	1.92	S
Total	262048.240	748	284.708			

Table 3 showed that the calculated F-value of 44.103 is greater than the critical F-value of 1.92 at dfs of 4 and 744 and 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis one was therefore rejected. This implied that there was significant influence of teachers' personality traits (of conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion agreeableness), on school phobia of school pupils, in favour of extraversion personality trait.

Table 4:   Two-Way (ANOVA) of influence of Teachers' Personality Traits (TPT) on school phobia of male and female school pupils.

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Df	Mean Square (MS)	F-cal	F-critical	Result
Corrected Model	75740.616[a]	9	8415.624	33.381	2.34	S
Intercept	6769630.788	1	6769630.788	26852.133	4.03	S
VarTPT	45528.267	4	11382.067	45.148	1.90	S
GenderTPT	746	1	746.053	2.959	1.90	S
VarTPT and GenderTPT	23936.131	4	5984.033	23.736	1.90	S
Error	186307.624	739	252.108			
Total	8191512.000	749				
Corrected Total	**262048.240**	**748**				

From Table 4 above, it was observed that all the F-calculated values were respectively greater than the F-critical values, at 0.05 alpha level and dfs of 1 and 748.   The null hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected. This indicated that Teachers' Personality Traits were significant factors of school phobia among male and female pupils.

Table 5: Scheffe's Post-Hoc Pair-Wise Comparison of Teachers' Personality Traits on school phobia of male and female pupils

TPT	GENDER	N	$\overline{X}$	
Conscientiousness	Male	61	82.79	
	Female	51	99.53	*
Openness to Experience	Male	69	96.51	
	Female	59	118.75	*
Neuroticism	Male	39	107.72	
	Female	49	102.45	*
Extraversion	Male	109	111.08	
	Female	122	111.85	
Agreeableness	Male	101	94.73	
	Female	89	95.03	

Key *: Indicates pairs of means which are significant at 0.05 alpha level.

The Scheffe's post hoc test of multiple comparisons showed that the mean difference between pupils of teachers of TPT of conscientiousness and openness to experience was significant in favour of openness to experience. The mean difference in phobia between pupils of teachers with conscientiousness and extraversion was significant, in favour of extraversion. The mean difference between pupils of extraversion and agreeableness was significant, in favour of extraversion.

Again, from Table 5 it was observed further that the interaction effect of personality traits and gender on pupils school phobia was significant since the F-calculated value for TPT by gender(23.736) is greater than the F-critical value of 1.90 at dfs of 1 and d 748 and 0.05 alpha level. The hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected. This implied that there is significant

interaction effect of Teachers' Personality Traits and Gender on School phobia among male and female pupils.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the findings of this study, it was found that

- Teachers' Personality Traits had influence on school phobia of pupils in favour of extraversion personality trait.

- The influence of Teachers' Personality Traits on school phobia of pupils was found to be statistically significant; in favour of teachers' extraversion personality trait.

- Influence of Teachers' Personality Traits on school phobia of male and female pupils was statistically significant; in favour of female pupils.

Discussion of Findings

The influence of teachers' personality traits on school phobia among pupils was investigated in this study. Findings indicated that The result shows that pupils taught by teachers with personality trait of extraversion are the highest school phobic, this was followed by pupils of teachers with trait of openness to experience then the, least phobia was experienced by pupils of teachers with trait of conscientiousness. On the low range according to Raymond Cattel 16 personality factors (16PF) is that the extraverted teacher is less friendly, maybe sluggish in demeanour, shy, prefer to be with small groups of well-known people. This conform with, Moore (1993) study who found out in a national sample of high school pupil that impressions of the teachers as ''like'' or ''smart'' significantly predicted pupils' attitudes to school. Also, Gage (1979) suggested that enthusiasm is a characteristic of effective teaching and can be generalized across, pupil and classroom. Fennman & Sherman (1995), found out in their studies that pupils of teacher who were well organized, warm, cheerful, achievement-oriented and enthusiastic tended to have more positive attitudes towards school, thus will like to be in school.

Statistical test of One-Way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that there was significant influence of Teachers' Personality Trait (TPT) on school phobia among school pupils (F-calculated =44.103> F-critical of 1.92). The null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that teachers' personality trait was a significant factor of pupils' phobia towards school. The Scheffe's post hoc test of multiple comparisons shows that the mean difference between pupils of teachers of TPT of Conscientiousness and Openness to experience was significant (p=.003) and in favour of openness to experience. The mean difference in phobia between pupils of teachers with conscientiousness and extraversion was significant, in favour of extraversion. The mean difference between pupils of teachers of TPT of extraversion and agreeableness was significant, and in favour of extraversion. This result is consistent with an earlier study of Younges (2000) who studied common teachers' personality factors as related to pupil school phobia. The result showed that need for school achievement and shyness are positively, related to school phobia while the other fear and extraversion has negative relationship with school phobia. Fennema (1995), indicated that the personality and behaviour of the teacher is very important in the formation of pupils' attitudes to school.

Results also showed that female pupils taught by teachers with personality trait of openness to experience had the highest school phobia, this was followed by pupils of both sex taught by teachers with trait of extraversion, the least phobia was experienced by male pupils of teachers with trait of conscientiousness. Females are generally shy and like attention and with this kind of natural disposition will like a teacher who is warm, friendly and excitable in character towards them, in other to bring effective learning outcome in the pupil. It may also signify that what many people like in a teacher may be what most children are looking for in relationships in general, acceptance and positive regards. Akilaiya et al (1998), posit that a teacher is one who is able to bring out effective learning outcome in a learner. Some studies have found out that teachers with warm and enthusiastic personality towards their pupils and subjects are correlated with pupil's phobia.

When put to statistical test, the result was that there is significant influence of teachers' personality trait of conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism and extraversion on school phobia of the male and the female primary school pupils in Bayelsa State(F-calculated of 23.736 > F-critical of 1.90). The interaction effect between gender and TPT over school pupils mean phobia was statistically significant. The null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that pupil's gender and its interaction with TPT were significant factor of pupil's school phobia. Pupils' gender and its interaction with TPT being significant factor of pupils' school phobia could be contrary to Albano (2000) and Eysenck (1980) who suggestion that some people are born with genetic disposition or temperaments which may be translated into school phobia when exposed to stressful life situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made; which in included that

1. Employers of teachers should consider the personality characteristics in their would- be teachers before they are placed on the job.

2. Teachers should be made aware of the effect of some of their personality traits on the learners' behaviours and how to identify and help children experiencing phobic towards school.

3. Schools should provide counselling for both teachers and pupils at primary school level to help teachers manage their personalities and to help pupils experiencing school phobia overcome their problem..

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