

TEACHERS PERSONALITY TRAITS AND STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AGBANI EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study focused on teachers' personality traits and students' attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 1121 respondents which consisted of 189 male and 932 female teachers. Census sampling techniques was used to sample the entire population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled "Teachers' personality traits and students' attitude towards teaching and learning Questionnaire (TPTSATTLQ)". Three experts validated the instrument, two from the Department of Educational Management, while one from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Education (Measurement and evaluation option), all in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach alpha estimate was used. The computation yielded 0.81 for cluster A, 0.83 and for cluster B, 0.79. The overall reliability index was 0.81. This showed high reliability index and suitable for data collection from the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviation. The t-test statistic was employed to test the null hypotheses, with a significance level of .05. The findings of the study showed that Teachers' openness and conscientiousness. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that Teachers should cultivate an open communication environment to enhance administrative effectiveness in secondary schools.

Keywords: Teachers, personality traits, students' attitude, teaching, learning

Introduction

Teachers are the most important factor in the teaching process because the materials, methods, techniques to be used depend largely on the teacher and as such the teacher should teach and should not impose ideas thereby allowing the students express themselves. He/she is to guide and direct the teaching process because he/she is an authority therefore, teaching is expected to produce the desirable result of efficient learning and the product of any good teaching is an educated person with high understanding who is committed to his knowledge and has a cognitive perspective (Adu, Galloway & Olaoye, 2024). In today's society, teachers perform important roles. Teachers positively impact a variety of short- and long-term outcomes for their learners, including academic performance on national assessments, health, extracurricular activities, attendance to school, adult earnings, and retirement savings (Kraft, 2019 & OECD, 2020). Considering the pervasive influence of teachers, several studies have been conducted to offer a nuanced insight into the qualities that mark out, promote or inhibit their effectiveness (Gunasekara, Turner, Fung, & Stough, 2022; Nyatsikor, Sosu, Mtika & Robson, 2020). One factor that has promise for predicting teachers' effectiveness is personality traits, and this dimension has attracted research interest due to its potential to do so (Alegre, Pérez-Escoda, & López-Cassá, 2019).

Personality traits demonstrate a person's uniqueness, feelings and actions typical of an individual (Cervone & Pervin, 2022; Corr & Matthews, 2020). Classroom teachers have an array of personality traits that significantly facilitate or inhibit their effectiveness in classrooms

(Sims et al., 2021; Franz, Fackler & Paetsch, 2022). These personality traits have been found to positively or negatively influence teachers' effectiveness and competence moderated by factors such as their professional background, teaching experience, and school ethos (Nyatsikor et al., 2020). Prior studies have suggested that a teacher's personality may have an impact on the quality of classroom instruction (Eryilmaz & Kara, 2017), the success of teaching and learning initiatives, novelty and enthusiasm of the students and student's academic achievement (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Perera, Granziera & McIlveen, 2018).

Empirical evidence supports the role of teachers in the learning models, indicating that teacher characteristics are the strongest contributor to student attitude among many others (Hattie, 2019; Judge, Rodell, Klinger, Simon & Crawford, 2023). Personality traits are assumed to be particularly relevant for predicting academic performance at higher levels of education because the predictive power of cognitive ability might be reduced at this educational level due to the restricted range of intelligence scores (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn & Schuler, 2007; Furnham, Chamorro-Premuzic & McDougall, 2003). This assumption is founded on the premise that many jurisdictions, including Ghana, have systems of education where the personal touch, closeness and 'power' of teachers on their learners appear to wane as they climb up the ladder of education from early grade through to the Junior and Senior High Schools. This assumption has been given credence by several studies (Hirsh & Peterson, 2018; Chomorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2018; Marcela, 2015). The study of Fadare (2021) stated that "most often the general public has the notion that anyone that provides guidance or instruction is a teacher and as such mothers, training her young ones, army officers, training recruits in certain war skills, church pastors, or preachers, as well as lecturers are regarded as teachers." The line of difference then needs to be drawn between who a practicing teacher is in an educational setting and who actually is not. A teacher in an educational setting is a trained person who manages the teaching/learning process efficiently. A professional teacher is that trained person that engages in teaching. Thus as a teacher he/she imparts knowledge and skills to others and trains the intellect under a formal setting or controlled atmosphere which in most cases is a school. The teacher provides the service (teaching) to the clients (the pupils or learners) either as individuals or in groups within the environment of an institution known as a school which may be private or public, primary, secondary, college or tertiary. When a teacher has perfect personality traits, it improves students attitude and general capability and motivation towards learning.

Attitude is an internal belief that influences personal actions through ones' experience (Adu .2022). This has to do with a disposition to act or react in a particular way as the individual responds to a situation (Amoo & Rahman, 2021). In line with the above discussion, Ulug, Ozden and Eryilamaz (2021) revealed that positive attitude of teachers have positive effects on students performance and personality development while negative attitude of teachers have a negative effect on both the performance levels and personality development of students. Supporting the discussion, Melor, Wan and Noriah (2021) also posited that factors such as academic performance and students' motivation are influenced by the quality of the personality attributes towards students.

Personality refers to the unique combination of characteristics, traits, and patterns that define an individual's behaviour, thoughts, and emotions. Oke (2019) identified the following as the qualities of an ideal teacher. Mastery of subject matter: The teacher must be very current and sure of his facts as a good teacher makes the classroom atmosphere conducive from the commencement of his teaching by means of good organization and carefully planned teaching structure. Personal appearance: Although there is no prescribed rule that stipulates the teacher style of dressing, but a teacher standing in front of the students makes him or her the focus of attention and therefore should be neatly dressed. Same is applicable to a teacher that is open and conscious of his/her teaching activities.

Openness, as a personality trait, refers to an individual's propensity to be imaginative, curious, and open-minded, seeking out novel experiences and valuing artistic and intellectual pursuits (McCrae & Costa, 2017). This trait is a core component of the Five Factor Model of personality, highlighting a person's receptivity to new ideas and experiences (John & Srivastava, 2019). Teachers' openness to new ideas and their willingness to explore unconventional approaches influence their propensity for change, while the degree of organization, thoroughness, and reliability they exhibit in implementing these strategies within educational contexts is determined by their level of conscientiousness. Teachers' level of conscientiousness will determine his level of effectiveness in school administration.

Conscientiousness, as a personality trait, encompasses an individual's degree of organization, dependability, and self-discipline, reflecting a tendency to be goal-oriented and responsible (John & Srivastava, 2019). This trait, part of the Five Factor Model, is associated with being diligent, thorough, and careful in one's actions and decisions (Roberts, Jackson, Fayard, Edmonds, & Meints, 2019). Teachers' conscientiousness refers to the extent to which school teachers exhibit traits such as organization, reliability, diligence, and attention to detail in their leadership roles within educational settings. Pandey and Kavitha (2015) defined conscientiousness as a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement; planned rather than spontaneous behaviour. Conscientiousness refers to the number of goals on which one is focused (Kumar, Bakhshi & Rani, 2019). They encompass a wide range of variables that contribute to shaping the observed result. For example, in educational research, determinants of administrative effectiveness in secondary schools by teachers may include leadership style, communication skills, and organizational culture (Smith, 2018; Johnson & Brown, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of poor academic performance in secondary education is evidenced by the large number of students who find it difficult to attain credit in internal and external examinations as a result of their inability to learn effectively. Poor academic performance among students is indeed a cause for concern for all educational stakeholders. To this end, a lot of research has investigated factors that affect students' overall learning outcomes and academic performance in recent years, ranging from social to psychological factors such as students' perceptions of teachers' personalities. Even though many educationists believe that students' perceptions of teachers' personalities have a way of impacting students' learning and academic performance in school, not many empirical studies have been carried out in recent times to support this assertion, especially in Agbani Education Zone, Enugu State. The paucity of empirical studies on students' perceptions of teachers' personalities and their impact on learning outcomes, particularly among secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone, Enugu State, was one of the major concerns of the researchers that necessitated this study: students' perceptions of teachers' personalities and their impact on learning outcomes in Enugu State. The problem of this study put in question form is: What are the teachers personality traits and students' attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone, Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify teachers traits and students attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. investigate the extent teachers' openness influence students attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone.?
2. examine extent teachers' conscientiousness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone.?

Research Questions

The following research questions are been developed to guide the study

1. To what extent do teachers' openness influence students' attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education?
2. To what extent do teachers' conscientiousness influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone?

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research design is a method used to collect and analyze data to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon systematically (Nworgu, 2018). Two research questions and two hypothesis guided the study. The population for the study comprised 1121 respondents which consisted of 189 male and 932 female teachers. Census sampling techniques was used to sample the entire population in Agbani Education Zone (Ministry of Education, Enugu State, 2024). The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled "Teachers' personality traits and students attitude towards teaching and learning Questionnaire (TPTSATTLQ)". To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to three validators. Two from the Department of Educational Management and one was from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education (Measurement and evaluation option), all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was conducted on 18 males and 22 female teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. The choice of Enugu Education Zone was made because it has the same educational characteristics with the area of the study. The researcher used Cronbach Alpha statistic to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded 0.81 as the overall index. For cluster A, 0.83 and for cluster B, 0.79. This showed high reliability index and suitable for data collection from the respondents. The researcher, along with a team of five research assistants, was responsible for administering the copies of questionnaire to the respondents who are male and female teachers. Mean and standard deviation was used in answering the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at .05 level of significance. The interpretation of the test of hypotheses was based on the significance (sig.) values from the SPSS outputs. The null hypotheses were not rejected when the probability values were less than 0.05, but rejected when the probability values were greater than .05

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Teachers' openness influence students attitude towards teaching and learning?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the extent to which openness influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning.

ITEMS		Male – 189		Female-932		Overall – 1,121		Dec
S/N	The following Teachers' openness influences students attitude towards learning:	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
1	transparency in decision-making.	2.66	.88	2.65	.86	2.66	.87	HE
2	encouragement of open communication.	3.01	.82	3.05	.81	3.03	.82	HE
3	willingness to accept feedback.	3.02	.82	3.01	.82	3.01	.82	HE
4	clarity in setting expectations.	3.07	.79	3.00	.83	3.03	.81	HE
5	support for professional	2.58	.91	2.61	.94	2.60	.93	HE

	development.							
6	recognition of staff achievements.	2.60	.90	2.62	.91	2.61	.91	HE
7	fairness in handling disciplinary issues.	2.54	.89	2.60	.86	2.58	.88	HE
8	inclusivity in policy formulation.	2.63	.88	2.67	.86	2.65	.87	HE
9	active listening skills.	2.58	.91	2.61	.94	2.60	.93	HE
10	openness to innovative teaching methods.	2.60	.90	2.62	.91	2.61	.91	HE
11	promotion of collaborative work culture.	3.03	.82	3.03	.82	3.03	.82	HE
12	honesty in reporting school performance.	3.04	.82	3.07	.82	3.06	.82	HE
13	transparency in financial management.	2.95	.83	3.02	.80	2.99	.82	HE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.79	.86	2.81	.86	2.80	.86	HE

Table 1 shows that items such as "honesty in reporting school performance" (mean = 3.06) and "clarity in setting expectations" (mean = 3.03) were rated highest, signifying their importance in fostering administrative effectiveness. Both male and female teachers showed similar perceptions across all items, with minimal differences in their mean scores, indicating a consensus on the impact of openness. Items like "support for professional development" (mean = 2.60) and "fairness in handling disciplinary issues" (mean = 2.58) were rated lower, though still classified as high extent (HE), suggesting areas for potential improvement. The data in Table 1 reveals that Teachers' openness is highly regarded as a determinant of administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone, as reflected by the overall cluster mean of 2.80 and standard deviation of 0.86. The low level of the standard deviation indicates that the respondents are homogenous in their responses. Overall, the findings confirmed that Teachers' openness significantly enhances administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Teachers' conscientiousness influence students attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone.

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of male and female teachers' on the extent to which conscientiousness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning.

ITEMS		Male – 189		Female-932		Overall – 1,121		
S/N	Teachers' conscientiousness influences students' attitude towards learning in the following extent:	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec
14	consistency in fulfilling responsibilities	2.99	.83	3.04	.83	3.03	.83	HE
15	timeliness in meetings.	2.97	.83	3.04	.83	3.02	.83	HE
16	taking responsibility for actions.	3.01	.79	2.99	.82	2.99	.81	HE
17	establishing clear goals for the school.	3.02	.81	3.02	.80	3.02	.80	HE
18	demonstrating dedication to the job.	2.95	.80	3.02	.83	3.00	.82	HE
19	making thoughtful decisions.	2.95	.84	3.05	.80	3.03	.81	HE
20	efficient allocation of resources.	2.99	.82	2.97	.81	2.98	.82	HE
21	effectively resolving conflicts.	2.52	.85	2.51	.88	2.52	.87	HE
22	effectiveness in communication with staff.	2.99	.83	3.04	.83	3.03	.83	HE
23	providing inspiration to students.	2.97	.83	3.04	.83	3.02	.83	HE
24	maintaining a professional	2.50	.86	2.55	.88	2.52	.87	HE

	demeanour.							
25	proactively identifying opportunities for improvement.	2.57	.86	2.58	.84	2.57	.85	HE
26	flexibility in adjusting to changes.	2.51	.91	2.56	.92	2.51	.92	HE
27	working effectively with students.	2.50	.86	2.55	.88	2.52	.87	HE
28	developing a long-term vision for the students growth	2.57	.86	2.58	.84	2.57	.85	HE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.80	.84	2.84	.84	2.82	.84	HE

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores for male and female teachers' perceptions of the extent to which Teachers' conscientiousness determines administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone. The overall mean scores for individual items range from 2.50 to 3.03, with most items indicating a "High Extent" (HE) of influence. The highest-rated areas include consistency in fulfilling responsibilities (3.03), effectiveness in communication with staff (3.03), and making thoughtful decisions (3.03). Conversely, items like flexibility in adjusting to changes (2.51) and maintaining a professional demeanour (2.52) received lower ratings but still fall within the "High Extent" category. The overall cluster mean of 2.82 with a standard deviation of 0.84 suggests that teachers generally responded to a high extent that Teachers' conscientiousness significantly determines administrative effectiveness in secondary schools. The standard deviation of 0.84 is minimal showing that the variations of the scores from the means are insignificant.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' openness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which teachers' openness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning.

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	p-value	Decision
Male Teachers	189	2.79	.86	1,119	.01	H ₀₁ not rejected
Female Teachers	932	2.81	.86			

The t-test analysis presented in Table 3 compares the mean scores of male and female teachers regarding the extent to which Teachers' openness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning. Male teachers have a mean score of 2.79 (SD = 0.86), while female teachers have a slightly higher mean score of 2.81 (SD = 0.86). The p-value of 0.01 indicates a statistically significant difference at 1087 degree of freedom, but the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is not rejected, suggesting the difference is not practically significant. Thus, the results imply that the mean scores of male and female teachers are very similar in this context. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' conscientiousness serves as a determinant of administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' conscientiousness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning.

Group	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	p-value	Decision
Male Teachers	189	2.80	.84	1,119	.00	H ₀₂ not rejected
Female Teachers	932	2.84	.84			

The t-test analysis in Table 4 compares the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' conscientiousness influences students attitude towards teaching and learning i. Male teachers have a mean score of 2.80 (SD = 0.84), while female teachers have a slightly higher mean score of 2.84 (SD = 0.84). The p-value of 0.00 indicates a statistically significant difference at 1087 degree of freedom, but the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is not rejected. This suggests that while the difference between the mean scores is statistically significant, it is not considered meaningful or impactful in this context.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that Teachers' openness significantly influence students attitude towards teaching and learning. This suggests that the ability of Teachers' to demonstrate openness fosters a positive and productive school environment, which enhances overall students attitude. Therefore, Teachers' openness is an essential personality trait that influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning. The finding aligns with the works of Kouzes and Posner (2017), Nworgu (2018), DuFour and Eaker (2018), and Ugwulashi (2019), who all emphasized the importance of Teachers' openness on students' attitude towards teaching and learning. These scholars argue that openness in leadership fosters trust, collaboration, and effective communication, which are crucial for achieving organizational goals. According to their views, when Teachers' exhibit openness, it encourages a culture of inclusiveness and transparency that enhances decision-making and problem-solving processes. This shared perspective underscores the critical role of openness in promoting a conducive environment for teaching, learning, and overall school management. Teachers', are therefore, encouraged to exhibit a high level of openness in their administration for purposes of effectiveness. Openness in administration does not only enhance inclusivity but also collaborative work ethics. The hypothesis tested showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' openness influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning.

The findings of the study revealed that Teachers' conscientiousness significantly influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning. This indicates that Teachers' who demonstrate high levels of responsibility, organization, and diligence are better equipped to manage school activities efficiently and achieve institutional goals. Consequently, conscientiousness emerges as a vital leadership attribute that contributes to creating a structured and productive school environment. The finding aligns with the works of Obi (2016), Ogundele and Olatunji (2017), Olayiwola (2018), and Eze (2020), who independently asserted that Teachers' conscientiousness significantly contributes to students' positive attitude towards teaching and learning in secondary schools. These scholars emphasized that conscientious Teachers', through their sense of responsibility, organization, and commitment, create a structured and efficient school management system. Their research highlighted how such Teachers enhance administrative outcomes by maintaining high standards and ensuring accountability in school operations. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the critical role of conscientiousness as a leadership quality essential for fostering an environment conducive to achieving educational goals. Conscientiousness is a major ingredient of leadership. In this trying period of school administration orchestrated by poor funding and population explosion in secondary schools, Teachers are expected to demonstrate adequate level of conscientiousness in

their administration. Conscientiousness enhances clear goal setting, thoughtful, decision making and good conflict management, all of which enhance effectiveness in school administration. The hypothesis tested showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent to which Teachers' conscientiousness influences students' attitude towards teaching and learning in Agbani Education Zone.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Teachers' personality traits significantly influence students' attitude towards learning. Specifically, openness, and conscientiousness were found to be strong determinants of students' attitude towards teaching and learning. Teachers' who exhibit openness tend to be more adaptable and innovative, which contributes positively to their leadership effectiveness. Similarly, conscientious Teachers' display strong organizational skills and a commitment to their roles, enhancing overall school management. Extroversion in Teachers' fosters strong interpersonal relationships, improving communication and school community engagement. Therefore, personality traits play a crucial role in shaping the leadership styles and administrative outcomes in secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings.

1. Teachers should cultivate an open communication environment to enhance students attitude and interest towards learning
2. Teachers should demonstrate conscientiousness by being detail-oriented and goal-driven to improve students' sense of belonging in teaching and learning.

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