STUDENTS' PERSONALITY FACTORS AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG GIFTED UNDERACHIEVERS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBADAN

G. A. Adelodun
Department of Special Education,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ibadan
Dradelodun2@gmail.Com
08164358664

T. Y. Okesanjo
Department of Special Education,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ibadan
Xtietoyin@Gmail.Com
07039574558

Abstract
The study investigated students' personality factors as correlates of academic performance among gifted underachievers in selected secondary school in Ibadan, Nigeria. It examined the relationship between the students' personality and their academic performance especially gifted underachievers. The population consisted of gifted underachievers in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan. A total sample of 100 gifted under achieving students were randomly selected from five out of eleven local government areas in Ibadan. A validated instrument titled International Personality Item Pool was used to elicit information from the students. Results showed that conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness jointly predict students' academic performance (p<0.05). This implied that when these five variables jointly influence students' academic performance. Openness was highly significant (t 6.880; p<0.05), and affect students' academic performance. However, there are no significant relationship between neuroticism and students' academic performance; extraversion and students' academic performance; agreeableness and students'

academic performance; and conscientiousness and students' academic performance, (p> 0.05).

Keywords: Students' personality Factor, Academic Performance, Gifted Underachievers, Five Big Factors

Introduction

Academic performance of students is highly valued in the educational sector in both the developing and developed countries. Although, measuring performance has brought a debate among scholars, howbeit, it has been widely known that students' academic grades are efficient ways of measuring academic performance. Understanding the factors influencing academic performance has always been a great concern for different parastatals in educational set up especially the educational psychologists. Many researchers are anxious to know in advance who will perform well or not in any academic activity. Therefore, identifying the factors determining academic success is a major concern for researchers for the purpose of developing an education curriculum aimed at improving levels of academic performance.

In this study, emphasis would be on academic performance of gifted underachievers. Gifted underachievers are those individuals who have been identified to be gifted and who have the potentials to exhibit superior performance on measures of expected achievement (i.e. standardized achievement test scores or cognitive or intellectual ability assessments), but their actual performance always fall below what their potentials indicate (Reis and Mc Coach, 2000).

Gifted underachievers are a fairly heterogeneous group. They exist in all communities and are often found within, but are not limited to, cultural diverse populations. Although, some underachievers may display low level of characteristics associated with underachievement, others score high on measures of these same characteristics. Therefore, checklists of characteristics of gifted underachievers have limited value. Moreover, the variability of motivational and attitudinal measures within samples of gifted underachievers tend to be higher than the variability for comparing groups of average or high achievers (McCoach and Siegle, 2003).

Students' personality factor is another very important variable of interest in this study. Personality can be defined as a dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her <u>cognitions</u>, <u>motivations</u>**,** and <u>behaviors</u> in various situations. Personality is conceptualized by many theorists as the pattern of behavior exhibited by an individual culminating in personality traits. It is often asserted that, beside cognitive abilities, a blend of personality characteristics is necessary for people to be successful in their academic pursuit. In recent years, there has been emerging consensus among personality psychologist that the myriad of personality characteristics measured by various personality inventories can be grouped under five higher order personality factors, namely: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Effort has been made below to explain the meaning of each of these five higher order personality factors otherwise known as 'five big factors'.

Extraversion implies an energetic approach to the social and material world and includes traits such as social ability, activity, assertiveness, and positive emotionality. Agreeableness contrasts a pro-social and communal orientation toward others and includes traits such as altruism, tender-mindedness, trust, and modesty. Some characteristic adaptations of agreeableness include a forgiving attitude, belief in cooperation, inoffensive language, and a potential reputation as a pushover. Conscientiousness describes socially prescribed impulse control that facilitates task and goal-directed behavior, such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules, planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks.

Neuroticism contrasts emotional stability and even-temperedness with negative emotionality, such as feeling anxious, nervous, sad, and tense. Neuroticism has facets such as anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. Openness in its own case describes the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life (John & Sriuvastava, 1999).

As mentioned in the early part of this study, the dependent variable that emphasis is being laid upon in this study is the academic performance of gifted underachievers. Many researches have been carried out on factors that could be regarded as correlates of academic

performance among gifted underachievers. However, literature revealed that little has been done on students' personality factors as correlates of academic performance of the aforementioned group of underachievers. In essence, this is actually what prompted this study.

Statement of the problem

The problem of gifted underachievement has assumed a worrisome dimension in the Nigerian educational system. Students appear to have become desperate to achieve success in their examination not minding the approach they employ. Unfortunately however, this has exerted some form of pressure on the academic system. Examination malpractice has risen steadily to become a seemingly untamable monster. It is increasingly becoming difficult to equate competence of people with supposed academic performance as represented in their certificates. There are a significant number of causes outside of the school setting that can lead to high ability students not realizing their full potential. Important among these are those that relate to the family and the community in which one lives. For example, many gifted individuals underachieve simply because their parents do not stress the importance of academic performance and how it can translate into success in the future. These parents do not set high standards or expect their children to reach them. Another problem in vogue is the environment where the gifted underachievers find themselves where academic excellence is not valued by many students so in order to avoid such criticism and be accepted by their social group, gifted students often perform below expectations.

In recent time research seems to be approaching a consensus on the identification of the personality factors that may account for a significant proportion of variance in academic performance, such identification has focused on super-traits (e.g. Neuroticism and Extraversion) rather than primary traits (e.g. anxiety, activity, and dutifulness). Identification of the specific personality traits associated with academic performance speculative interpretations about the predictive nature of super-traits, that is, which aspects of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness are actually related to academic performance.

Furthermore, gifted underachievers have been denied the opportunity to build confidence since they have not experienced the

relationship between process and outcome, between effort and achievement. They become trapped in the underachievement cycle and as this cycle continues they feel less and less capable. They want to do better but don't know how. They lack important learning skills and sometimes have knowledge gaps. Their fear of failure increases. Their sense of efficacy decreases. They feel helpless and hopeless as the gap between where they are and where they should be widens. Persistent low grades lead to low expectations of self which lead to even lower performance.

In the light of the foregoing, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between students' personality factors and academic performance of gifted underachieving students.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the students' personality factors and academic performance of gifted underachieving students.

Research Questions
Attempts were made to provide answers to the following research questions:
1. To what extent when combined will the Independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) predict dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers?
2. To what extent will each of the Independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) predict dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers?
3. Would demographic characteristics of students have significant influence on the relationship between the joint independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and the dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers?

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling Technique
The design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design of correlative type. A random sampling technique was used in this study. There are eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ibadan, from which five local government areas were randomly selected. Furthermore, one school was randomly selected from each of the five local governments. In selecting the gifted students, the researcher depended on the teachers and peer group. In addition, Slossons' Intelligent test was also administered to screen the gifted students'. After identifying the gifted students' in order to identify gifted underachieving students among them the researcher made use of the students JSS3 final results as well as their Continuous Assessment (C.A) record in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd term of SS1. Students' whose performance dropped consistently in the JSS3 examination and for three terms in SS1 were selected to be gifted underachievers.

Twenty gifted underachieving students' were selected from each secondary school. The implication of this is that a total number of one hundred (100) gifted underachieving students' were drawn from the five selected secondary schools in Ibadan.

Instrument
The instrument that was used for this study is the questionnaire adapted by the researcher. The instrument consists of the following sections namely: demographic characteristics, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism. In addition, the extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism scale was structured in a four likert scale items.

The instruments used for personality traits and constructs was a standardized instruments from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), the authors provided their reliability test coefficient. Coefficient alphas for each dimension were provided by International Personality Item Pool (2001): extraversion (α=.87), agreeableness (α=.76), conscientiousness (α=.78), emotional stability (Neuroticism) (α=.85), and openness to experience (α=.76). This shows that the instrument were highly reliable for the study. The items in each section

were presented in a four likert scale ranging from 1-4. A respondent is expected to choose from one of the strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed, with strongly agreed having a score of four and so on.

Although the instrument was for a society alien to our own culture, the researcher pilot tested it in some chosen schools that were not part of the schools used for the real study. The Cronbach Alpha was used for the reliability analysis. A high coefficient alpha of 0.84 was obtained.

The openness to experience scale was obtained from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), and a likert scale of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used. This was done in order to simplify and minimize the likert scale from its original level of ten to five so as to ease filling by respondents and also ease analysis by the researcher. The questions 1-10 addressed the openness scale on the questionnaire. The conscientiousness scale was obtained from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), and a likert scale of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagreed to strongly agree was used. This was done in order to simplify and minimize the likert scale from its original level of ten to five so as to ease filling by respondents and also ease analysis by the researcher. The questions 11-20 addressed the conscientiousness scale on the questionnaire.

The extraversion scale was obtained from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), and a likert scale of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used. This was done in order to simplify and minimize the likert scale from its original level of ten to five so as to ease filling by respondents and also ease analysis by the researcher. The questions 21-30 addressed the extraversion scale on the questionnaire.

The agreeableness scale was also obtained from the International Personality Item Pool (2001), and a likert scale of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagreed to strongly agree was used. This was done in order to simplify and minimize the likert scale from its original level of ten to five so as to ease filling by respondents and also ease analysis by the researcher. The questions 31-40 addressed the agreeableness scale on the questionnaire. The neuroticism scale was obtained from the International Personality Item Pool (2001) and a

likert scale of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagreed to strongly agree was used.

Procedure for Data Collection
General instruction was provided on each questionnaire, and the, respondents were given the privilege to ask questions where there might be confusion. In addition, three research assistance were employed for time constraint and also to easy the stress on the researcher. However, a training class was organized for the research assistant to ensure that they know the purpose of the study. Eventually, the questionnaires were successfully administered on the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis
The Data collected in this study were analyzed using ANOVA, ANCOVA and Multiple regression analysis.

Results
Research Question One: To what extent when combined will the Independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) predict dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers?

Table 1: ANOVA Result for Joint Relationship of Independent and Dependent Variables

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4124.298	5	824.860	12.103	.000
	Residual	4975.038	73	68.151		
	Total	9099.335	78			
b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance						

The joint relationship of the independent variables and the dependent variable was presented in table 1. The result revealed that conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness jointly predict students' academic performance ($p<0.05$). This implied that when these five independent variables are joined together, they jointly influence students' academic performance.

Research Question Two: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) to the dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Result of Relative Relationship between Element of Students' Personality and Student Academic Performance

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	43.960	8.445		5.206	.000
	Neuroticism	-.274	.301	-.082	-.910	.366
	Extraversion	.270	.221	.114	1.219	.227
	Openness	1.797	.261	.644	6.880	.000
	Agreeableness	.085	.383	.020	.223	.825
	Conscientiousness	-.058	.425	-.012	-.136	.892
a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance						

The result in table 2 reveals that openness was highly significant (t= 6.880; $p<0.05$), and affect students academic performance. Other factors such as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), which shows that there are no significant relationship between neuroticism and students academic performance; extraversion and students academic performance; agreeableness and students academic performance; and conscientiousness and students academic performance.

Research Question Three: Would demographic characteristics of students have significant influence on the relationship between the joint independent variables (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and the dependent variable (academic performance) of gifted underachievers?

Table 3: Influence of Demographic Characteristics on the joint Relationship between the personality traits and the academic performance

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Academic perform					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4317.708[a]	29	148.886	1.526	.094
Intercept	560.145	1	560.145	5.740	.020
Students personality	608.349	1	608.349	6.234	.016
School Attended	292.415	4	73.104	.749	.563
Gender	234.281	2	117.140	1.200	.310
Course of study	96.391	2	48.196	.494	.613
School Attended * Gender	129.864	4	32.466	.333	.855
School * course of study	623.768	7	89.110	.913	.504
Gender * course of study	242.333	3	80.778	.828	.485
School * Gender * course of study	685.105	6	114.184	1.170	.338
Error	4781.628	49	97.584		
Total	333772.250	79			
Corrected Total	9099.335	78			
a. R Squared = .475 (Adjusted R Squared = .164)					

The result in table 3 revealed that the demographic characteristics of students do not have significant influence on the joint relationship between personality traits of students and their academic performance ($p<0.05$). The demographic characteristics used in this study are school attended, gender and the course of study of students. However, the result in table 3 showed that the students personality have an influence on students academic performance ($p<005$). This implies that students' demographic characteristics do not have a significant effect on the joint relationship of students' personality traits and academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study for research question one revealed that, students' personality factors do affect students' academic performance however their demographic characteristics do not have significant influence on the joint relationship between personality factors and academic performance. The result of this study corroborates that of Starr (2002), Díaz (2003), Schacter & Thum (2004), Komarraju, Steven, and Ronald (2009) that personality and personality traits of students play important roles on students' academic performance. Also, among the gifted underachievers, openness and extraversion traits are major factors that affect student academic performance. This could be because openness individuals as stated by Gupta (2008) are those that are imaginative, creative, cultured, original, broadminded, intelligent, and artistically sensitive. The result of this study buttressed Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) and John, Ekaterina and Ekaterina (2013) that, openness to experience is related to as task performance and creativity. Academic performance could be referred to task performance. This also bolstered why Lim and Ng Abdullah (2012) clearly noted that, at the education level, academic performance is more related to the openness to experience dimension. De Raad and Schouwenberg (1996) argued that students who have higher extraversion perform better academically because of higher energy levels, along with a positive attitude that leads to a desire to learn and understand.

Furthermore, for research question one; there was a joint relationship of the conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness of students on their academic performance. This also corroborated Starr (2002), Díaz (2003), Schacter & Thum (2004), Komarraju, Steven, and Ronald (2009) that personality and personality traits of students play important roles on students' academic performance. The result of this findings also supported John, Ekaterina and Ekaterina, 2013) in their study, big five personality traits and academic performance in Russian Universities that, extraversion was significant to academic variables such as academic performances and learning among others.

For research question two openness was highly significant and affects student's academic performance. One of the following studies categorized mainly according to educational level supported this findings .The first category consisted of research that focused solely on

primary students, such as the large scale study carried out by Laidra, Pullnann and Allik (2007). The second category included studies that involved a combination dimension of primary and secondary students, such as research done by Gray and Watson (2002) as well as Noftle and Robins (2007). The third category involved research that focused mainly on university students (Lieven, Coetsier, Fruyt, & Maeseneer, 2002; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003a; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003b; Nguyen, Allen & Fraccastoro, 2005). At the primary level, Laidra et al. (2007) sampled a total of 3,618 primary and secondary students (male, n=1,746; female, n=1,872) in the Republic of Estonia, Northern Europe. Two instruments were employed in the study. These findings suggest that students who are conscientious and open to learning experiences are more likely to attain academic success than those who are lacking in these two personality traits. The literature reviews also suggest that primary school students' academic performance is more related to the openness domain, while secondary school students' performance is more affected by the conscientiousness domain (Laidra et al., 2007). The findings also revealed that students' performance at the primary level was more associated with openness to experiences, i.e. primary school children who are keen to explore new learning experiences have greater academic success which corroborated the result of this study. (Laidral et al., 2007).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Students' personality factors are important variables to be considered to enhancing students' academic performance. This implies that school administrators, school heads, principals, vice principals and teachers should consider understanding and developing students' personality to enhancing their academic performance. Also, parents and guardians should to understand and develop their children personality to enhance their academic performance in school. In addition when students have the extraversion and openness traits affect each other and this may also have affection students' academic performance. There is therefore an urgent need for:

a) Academic underachievement at times to be best handled psychological therapy. Psychological tests are therefore needed to make therapy p [potent and result oriented. Examples of

such psychological tests include: study habit inventory (SHI), student problem inventory (SPI), Slosson intelligent test (SIT), adolescent personal data inventory (APDI), Academic performance 5 – factor inventory and a host of others. When these tests are administered on the students, one would be able to discover where their problem lies.

b) Meaningful academic performance must take place in an emotionally loaded environment. It does without saying that efforts should be made to foster good and positive interpersonal relationships among the various personnel associated with teaching learning situation. It is therefore recommended that relationship networking skills like: contact, formation, starting , sustaining and nurturing friendship, asking for obligation, assertiveness, basic influencing skills, conflict resolution skills, problem solving skills and the likes should be imbibed by all to promote good academic performance

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