RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS’ PERSONALITY TRAITS AND LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract
This study explore the relationship between principals’ personality trait and leadership effectiveness. Using the Big Factor Model, the study seek to identify the commonly exhibited personality trait and to investigate the relationship between principals’ personality trait and leadership effectiveness. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of all the 44 public schools principals in Kano Municipal educational zone. Two research instruments were used as data collection tool namely: The Big Five Inventory (BFI) which was an adopted with .87 reliability index and a researcher instrument “School Leadership Effectiveness Questionnaire” (SLEQ) with .86 reliability index. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the research question while Multiple Regression was used in testing hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that conscientiousness trait (M= 39.04, SD= 2.37) was the commonly exhibited trait among school principals. It was found that principals’ personality traits and leadership effectiveness were having a multiple correlation of r= .940 while each of the BFI dimensions were found to predicted for 26%, 27%, 19%, -15% and 40% increase/decrease in leadership effectiveness for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness respectively. The study recommended that school leaders should retrait the neurotic tendencies in them and develop more positive characters such as novelty, sociable, courteousness, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Keywords: Personality trait, school leadership, leadership effectiveness

Introduction
School leaders are central in shaping the climate, outlook and the character of their staff and students within school and beyond. Sound school leadership serves as the foundation towards the effectiveness of the overall educational system. Schools with effective leaders become successful ground of teaching and learning and an arena where students are not only educated but challenged and nurtured as critical thinkers. Effective school leaders possess certain trait and utilize definite strategies and skills that guarantee their effectiveness in the discharge of their duties as leaders. The possession of the appropriate trait better equip school leaders in managing the education system to achieve a high-level performance using all available resources and facilities.

It is widely acknowledged that principals like every other individual have different interests, abilities and special personality characteristics, it is clear that the later can affect their performance directly.
Personality as an attribute makes a person unique from others. Klein (2002) views personality as an individual’s characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. It encompasses how an individual act to situations, his impressions to others and his ideal pattern of behavior. Gao and Liu (2013) describe personality traits as relatively stable characteristic that causes individuals to behave in a certain way. They are individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Eyong, David and Umoh (2014) in the same way describe personality traits as the sum total of stable characteristics in a person across different times and situations, which make him unique or distinct from others.

Personality traits as put forward by Costa and McCrea (1992) are named Extraversion, Openness to experience, conscientiousness Agreeableness and Neuroticism. They are most times referred to as The Big Five Personality Traits or Five Factor Model of Personality. The Five Factor Model structure does not implies that personality differences can be reduced to only five traits; rather that these five dimensions represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction, and each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct, more specific personality characteristics (John & Srivastava, 1999).

According to Watson and Clark (1999) extraversion refers to the level of comfort and ability to relate with others. It is the tendency to enjoy attention and experience frequent positive moods. Extroverted people are more likely to be impulsive at problem solving, talkative, and externally motivated. These people are good in active communication and with full positive energy. Judge and Bono (2000) posited that extraversion represents the tendency to be outgoing, assertive, active, and excitement seeking. Extraversion is strongly related to social leadership and leader emergence in groups (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). The outgoing, sociable, and assertive characteristics of extraverts are congruent with leadership roles that require interactions with and persuasion and motivation of others to achieve goals (House, 1977). In addition, leaders are more likely than non-leaders to have a high level of energy and stamina and to be generally active, lively, and often restless (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Buckmaster (2008) opined that extraversion is related to leadership effectiveness.

Openness to experience describes people who are not rigid in their own views and expectations toward others. It represents personality characteristics such as novelty, curiosity, imaginative, perceptive and thoughtful. Openness to Experience display appreciable correlations with intelligence (Judge & Bono, 2000). It equally correlates with divergent thinking and is strongly related to both personality based and behavioral measures of creativity (Judge et al., 2002). Judge et al indicate that creativity is linked to effective leadership, suggesting that open individuals are more likely to emerge as leaders and be effective leaders. Openness to experience is defined as “the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual’s mental and experiential life” (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Conscientiousness is indicated by two major facets: achievement and dependability. It is described as socially prescribed impulse control that facilitates task and goal-directed behavior, such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules, and planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks (John & Srivastava, 1999). In general, individuals who are responsible, organized, and willing to work hard should be more confident in the tasks assigned to them because of their will to accomplish the tasks (Judge et al., 2002). In addition, more conscientious leaders are likely to be more active in their leadership roles because of their greater tenacity and persistence in completing their tasks (Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008).
Agreeableness refers to pro-social tendencies such as trust, compliance and modesty (Klimstra, Luyckx, Germeijjs, Meeus & Goossens, 2011). It represents traits such as forgiving, courteous, emotionally supportive and tolerant. Charismatic leaders have been described as generous and concerned for others. To mentor successfully, one needs empathy (Judge & Bono, 2000). According to Wiggins (1996), the primary motivational orientation of agreeable individuals is altruism which is the concern with others’ interests and empathy for their condition. In support of these arguments, Ross and Offerman (1991) found positive relationships between several aspects of Agreeableness (i.e., compassion, nurturance) and charismatic leadership.

Neuroticism signifies variances of individual tendency to experience distress (Klimstra, Luyckx, Germeijjs, Meeus & Goossens, 2011). Individuals who score high on measures of Neuroticism lack self-confidence and self-esteem, however self-confidence is argued to be an essential characteristic of transformational leaders (McCrae & Costa, 1991). Leaders who have a high level of self-confidence and self-esteem are better able to set high performance standards and convince followers on the attainment of certain goals (Bass, 1998). More specifically, leader self-confidence plays an important role in gaining followers’ trust and in presenting a positive, compelling, and inspiring view of the future (Judge & Bono, 2000).

Considering the above, it is undoubtedly that secondary schools need individuals with proven characters as leaders. This is because every leader has one of the above mentioned trait dominating his personality which invariably determine his behavior and leadership style. Leadership has been described as a complex process by which a person sets direction and influences others to accomplish a mission, task, or objective, and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Winder, 2003). In a school setting, leadership is a process by which an individual (Principal) influences, controls and coordinated the activities of others (teachers) to achieve the desired results. A School Principal is one of the most important and influential personnel in the process of education. His vision and practices have a significant effect on school success, school climate and student achievement (Spark, 2009). Leadership effectiveness on the other hand is the quality of his leadership performance perceived by school population in general and faculty members in particular (Azhar, A.2015). Leadership effectiveness was described by Bennett (2003) as the acknowledged ability of a leader to guide, manage or coordinate a group of people to achieve pre-determined goals of an organization. What determines the Principal effectiveness is the question of vital significance to effective teaching-learning process. Bakhsh, Hussain and Hussain (2016) postulated that leadership effectiveness is well determined by personality traits.

The trait conception of leadership is purely based on the belief that effective leaders possess inborn personal traits which ultimately increases their performances as leaders (Charles, 2006). Consequently, identifying such personality traits that significantly increases school leader’s effectiveness in managing their schools is sacrosanct. This is because the success of the school in achieving its goals ultimately depends on its leaders’ performance. Hence, the importance of personality traits on school leadership effectiveness cannot be overemphasized because school leaders are positioned more than anyone else in the school system to aid both teachers and students with the sole aim of achieving the educational goals. However, it is pertinent to note that the disposition of a given trait invariably determine school
leaders’ behavior, leadership style and leadership effectiveness. Thus, examining the personality traits that contribute to leadership effectiveness is essential. This is because not all traits are effective in predicting school leaders’ effectiveness. Furthermore, a traits that appears to be effective in one context may be ineffective in another. Against this backdrop, using the Big Five Personality traits, this study seek examine the relationship between principals’ personality trait and leadership effectiveness among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state.

Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are to:
1. Find out the most commonly exhibited personality trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state.
2. Investigate the relationship between Principals’ personality traits and leadership effectiveness in Municipal educational zone of Kano State.

Research Question
Which is the most commonly exhibited personality trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state?

Research Hypothesis
There is no significant influence of principals’ personality traits on leadership effectiveness in Municipal educational zone of Kano State.

Methodology
The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consist of all the 44 Public Senior Secondary School principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state. Due to the small population size, all the 44 school principals participated in the study. Two research instruments were used as data collection tool namely: the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) which was adopted and a researcher made instrument tagged “School Leadership Effectiveness Questionnaire” (SLEQ). The BFI is a tool which classified individuals’ personality traits into five subscales consisting of 44 items (classified into; Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) on five point Likert scale. The School Leadership Effectiveness Questionnaire” (SLEQ) is a self-report assessment tool that help leaders to see how they are as leaders. The SLEQ consist of 16 items on five point Likert scale. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was used in determining the internal consistency of the instruments. The BFI have a reliability index of .87 while the SLEQ have reliability index of .86.

Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean, standard deviation, frequency counts and percentage) to answer research question and Multiple Regression analysis to test the stated null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19.
Results

Answering Research Questions

Research Question One: Which is the most commonly exhibited personality trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state?

Table 1. Commonly Exhibited Personality Trait among Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SDFrequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>29.72</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>39.04</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>35.65</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine the commonly exhibited personality trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state, descriptive statistics was used. Computed responses from the analysis revealed that conscientiousness was the most commonly exhibited personality trait with a frequency of 23 principals which represents 52.3% of the study sample with a descriptive statistics of ($M= 39.04, SD= 2.37$). This was followed by openness to experience personality trait with a frequency of 18 principals which represents 40.9% of the study sample with a descriptive statistics of ($M= 35.65, SD= 5.44$) and lastly extraversion and agreeableness personality traits with a frequency of two principals representing 4.5% of the study sample and one principal which represents only 2.3% of the study respectively. Extraversion and agreeableness were having descriptive statistics of ($M= 31.00, SD= 4.59$) and ($M= 29.72, SD= 4.85$) respectively. No school principal was found to have neuroticism trait disposition. Based on the obtained figure, senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state were found to predominantly possess conscientiousness personality trait.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of principals' personality traits on leadership effectiveness in Municipal educational zone of Kano State.

Table 2. Multiple Correlation between Personality Traits and Leadership Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.940</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td>2.61229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, R-value .940 represents the multiple correlation between principals’ personality traits and leadership effectiveness. The R-square value of .883 represents the total variability of the dependent variable (Leadership Effectiveness) as explained by the independent variables (Personality traits). Based on the R-Square value of .883, it follows that 88% of the total variability in school leaders’ effectiveness is explained by their personality traits dispositions. Furthermore, result of the analysis of
variance (ANOVA) was used to measure the fitness of the regression model. Based on the F-statistic value 57.343 with a P value of .000, it follows that the regression model fit the data at hand because the P value (sig.) is at .000 which is far less than .05 which is the region of rejection.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Personality Traits Dimensions and Leadership Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>44.349</td>
<td>10.723</td>
<td>4.136</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.404</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>2.784</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>4.311</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>2.879</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.499</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>-.153</td>
<td>2.421</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>4.834</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Leadership Effectiveness

Table 3 above, shows the contribution of each of the independent variables (personality traits) on leadership effectiveness. From the table, Extraversion has a coefficient of \( \beta = .267, t(2.782) p=.008, p < .05 \). Agreeableness \( \beta = .278, t(4.311) p=.000 p < .05 \), Conscientiousness \( \beta = .194, t(2.879) p=.007 p < .05 \), neuroticism \( \beta = -.153, t(-2.421) p=.020 p < .05 \) and Openness to Experience \( \beta = .402, t(4.834) p=.000 p < .05 \). Based on the obtained coefficients, holding other factors constant, each of the BFI dimensions will account for 26%, 27%, 19%, -15% and 40% increase/decrease in leadership effectiveness for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience respectively.

Discussion of Findings

This study explores the relationship between principals’ personality trait and leadership effectiveness. The purpose of the study was to find out the commonly exhibited personality trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state and to investigate the relationship between principals’ personality traits and leadership effectiveness in Municipal educational zone of Kano State. Findings of the study revealed that conscientiousness personality trait was the commonly exhibited trait among senior secondary school principals’ in Municipal educational zone of Kano state. The findings was in line with the work of Adeniyi (2014) that conscientiousness was the most commonly exhibited personality traits among secondary school principals. The result is encouraging based on the assertion of Ng. Ang and Chan (2008) that conscientious leaders are likely to be more active in their leadership roles because of their greater tenacity and persistence in completing their tasks.

Findings of the study equally revealed that a significant relationship exist between principals’ personality traits and leadership effectiveness. This was based on the computed multiple correlation value r= .940. It was equally found that 88% of the total variability in school leaders’ effectiveness was explained by their personality traits. Furthermore, each of the personality traits dimensions were found to have considerable impact on school leaders’ effectiveness. Holding other factors constant, they were found to account for 26%, 27%, 19%, -15% and 40% increase/decrease in leadership effectiveness for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience respectively.
The findings are in line with the work of Bakhsh, Hussain and Hussain (2016) that leadership effectiveness is well determined by personality traits. This corroborated early review of traits and leadership effectiveness conducted by Stogdill (1974).

Specifically, Stogdill found positive relationships between leadership and agreeableness (i.e., friendliness), conscientiousness (i.e., achievement), extraversion (i.e., dominance, assertiveness, and sociability), and openness (i.e., self-confidence). Furthermore, the work of O’Neil (2007) found that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence were significant predictors of leadership effectiveness at discrete points in time. Similarly, the work of Sayyed, Azizollah, Zaman, Zahra and Mohtaram, (2011) postulated that a negative relationship exist between neuroticism scores and principal’s job performance. In other words, principals with a high emotional stability scores had better performance in above dimensions, than neurotic principals. Thus, school principals’ with high disposition of neuroticism trait will be less effective on their performance as leaders. This is because Individuals who score high on measures of Neuroticism lack self-confidence and self-esteem.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that conscientiousness personality trait was the commonly exhibited trait among senior secondary school principals in Municipal educational zone of Kano state while their personality traits has significant bearing on their effectiveness as leaders. Furthermore, among the Big Five dimensions, openness to experience serves as the best predictor of school leaders’ effectiveness. Agreableness, conscientiousness and extraversion traits equally have considerable positive effect on school leaders’ effectiveness while neuroticism traits negatively impacted on school leaders’ effectiveness. Thus, personality traits as openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness and extraversion have considerable positive effect on school leaders’ effectiveness while neuroticism traits would negatively impacted on school leaders’ effectiveness.

Recommendations
Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School leaders should persevere in their quest for effectiveness in leadership and should engage in unique leadership development programs that will further enrich them with the much needed leadership character that are more encompassing than conscientious trait.

2. School leaders should retract the neurotic tendencies in them and develop more positive characters such as novelty, sociable, courteousness, self-confidence and self-esteem. This is because leaders who have a high level neuroticism lack self-confidence and self-esteem which ultimately affect their effectiveness as leaders.

References


