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CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND EXTRAVERSION AS CORRELATES OF SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent conscientiousness and extraversion correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia State. To carry out this study, two research questions were posed and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational research design. A total of 878 respondents drawn from the entire population of 8783 senior secondary school class II students drawn through multistage sampling techniques made up the sample for the study. Two instruments were used for the study. The researcher developed one of the instruments namely; "Personality Traits Assessment Questionnaire (PTAQ) while "School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ)" was adapted from School Adjustment Scale (SAS) developed by Ekennia (2016). These instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts, two from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and one from Measurement and Evaluation; all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The stability of the instruments was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded reliability indices of 0.83 and 0.93 for PTAQ and SAQ respectively. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha method and reliability indices of 0.78 and 0.87 were obtained respectively for PTAQ and SAQ respectively. The data obtained through the administration of the three instruments were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r R^2 coefficient of determination) to answer the research questions, while linear and multiple regression analyses were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed as follows: Conscientiousness significantly correlated

with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students. Extraversion significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 56.4% of school adjustment among secondary school students. Among the educational implications was that the extraverted students could constantly dominate classroom interactions and thereby overshadow the reserved and neurotic students. This might make other students to be more maladjusted in the school. It was thus recommended among others that government should deploy trained counsellors and psychologists in all the public secondary schools to help the students' adjust properly in schools. Also, teachers should vary their teaching methods and instructional materials to accommodate the personality differences that exist among the students for their proper adjustment in the school.
Key Words: Conscientiousness, extraversion, correlate, school adjustment.

Introduction

As a critical outcome of the educational process, school adjustment encompasses students' capacity to adapt to the academic, social, and emotional demands of the school environment. Maduka (2023), viewed school adjustment as the overall well-being and adaptation of the students to their psychological, sociological and physical environmental conditions in relation to their ability to relate cordially with others, do their school work, feel good about school work, be satisfied within themselves as well as have a positive attitude towards schooling and learning experiences. School adjustment is crucial for academic success and psychological well-being. According to Sultana (2019), school adjustment refers to an individual's state of mind and overall well-being. Similarly, Yellalah (2012) interpreted school adjustment as a continuous dynamic process that is acted and practiced by the individual to change his behaviour in order to enable him adjust with himself and others in the surrounding environment. The above definition could imply that school adjustment enables one to adapt to one's own environment and to the environment of others. According to Tommi (2022), school adjustment is that condition of a person who is able to adapt to changes in his or her physical, occupational and social environment. In other words, it is the behavioural process of balancing conflicting needs or needs challenged by obstacles in the environment. In the context of this study, school adjustment therefore could be defined as the total well-being and flexible adaptation of children to their psychological, sociological and physical environmental conditions in relation to their ability to relate cordially with others, do their school work, feel good about school work, be at peace with themselves as well as have a positive attitude towards learning experiences and schooling in general. Good school adjustment largely depends upon satisfactory insight into the events and changes that have occurred and a personal acceptance of these changes; modification of beliefs and personal goals; the acquisition of appropriate strategies to compensate as far as

possible for any residual handicaps (Oparaugo and Ebenebe 2019). The adjustment of the students in school could mean, getting along with the members of the school like teachers, principal, fellow students, school counsellors and psychologists as best as each student can. When the students are adjusted to the school, they tend to cope with academic stress, engage in the academic and non-academic activities of the school, adhere to the school rules and regulations, and become happy getting involved in the school activities. On the other hand, poor school adjustment among students may lead to all sorts of irrational and neurotic behaviours like; anxiousness, hostility, irrational fear, phobia, vulnerability and constant feeling of insecurity both in the school and at home.

The importance of school adjustment of the students in the realization of their aim of going to school cannot be overemphasized. This is why adjustment of the students is the major concern of school psychologists; hence, lack of it has a negative implication to the students' academic achievement (Ejichukwu, & Anyaemene 2022). Hence lack of it may result development of negative personality and maladaptive behaviours ranging from risky sexual behaviours, drug abuse, examination malpractice, stealing, and alcoholism among others as defensive mechanisms to cope with adjustment issues in school. In the view of Bunker (2021), school adjustment helps to maintain peace and harmony in home, school, and society and in the country. When there is peace and harmony in the country, the students could be motivated to learn. According to Abdomalaki (2022), lack of motivation is a psychological symptom of underdevelopment. Thus, when the students are well adjusted to their school environment, they tend to be motivated to work towards achieving their aim of going to school which may be geared towards self-development and subsequently national development. When the students are adjusted in the school, they tend to think rationally, act purposefully and deal effectively with their environment by manipulating the environment to favour them and contribute their own quota towards the economic and technological development of the nation.

Nowadays, most secondary school students are faced with school adjustment issues that may hinder their academic success in one way or the other. According to Akpama as cited in Ejichukwu and Anyamene (2022), the reason might be traced to their experiential background as most of them are faced with neglect from parents/guardians, unstable homes, emotional neglect and improper home training. These problems tend to make the students to remain in the state of psychological disequilibrium which invariably may result to negative personality and poor school adjustment. This however, is capable of pushing them into more problems like prostitution, drug abuse and alcoholism as unrealistic ways to achieve school adjustment.

The challenge that calls for the school adjustment of secondary school students in Abia state could be poor academic achievement. Evidence has shown that in the year 2015, Abia State came first in the result published by West African Examination Council (WAEC) in the May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) with 63.94%. This however, made the then governor Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu to award seventeen (17) students scholarship from each Local Government Area of Abia (www.blueprint.ng, 2022). In the year 2016, Abia came out strong again at 81.54% (Lawal 2020). It is noteworthy that the status quo has not remained the same. For instance, in the year 2021, as cited in Sub-editor (2022), Abia state came out 10th in the list of states with best WAEC results. Teachers, parents, curriculum experts and educators are worried over the declining academic achievement of students in Abia State. Not only that, evidence has also shown that most students who do well in WAEC in Abia state are mostly private schools (Maduka, 2023).

In an effort to solve the problem of school adjustment some researchers suggested that conscientiousness and extraversion have the potentials of correlating with school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia State.

Conscientiousness deals with individual who tend to be diligent, disciplined, well organized, punctual, and dependable. A person who scores high in conscientiousness is productive in a variety of occupational areas and with greater longevity (Jackson, Wood, Bogg, Walton & Harns, 2020). However, the reverse is the case of those who score low in conscientiousness. Students who are conscientious tend to adjust easily in school than those students who are not conscientious. Home environment is an important factor in the students' level of conscientiousness and school adjustment. Positive interactions between child and parents may shape both conscientiousness. Again, disorganized home environments may hinder development of conscientiousness. On the other hand, access to resources and opportunities may influence the trait. Parental well-being also affects children's personality development and school adjustment.

Studies have also been conducted on conscientiousness and school adjustment of students. For instance; Verbree, Hornstra, Maas and Meii (2022) reported that conscientiousness predicted gender gap in academic achievement of students in Dutch. Dumfart, and Aljoscha, (2022) found out that intelligence and conscientiousness alone accounted for approximately 40% in the variance of school achievement. Maduka (2023), reported that Conscientiousness significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students.

Extraversion is the personality trait that explains how socially active an individual could be. According to Watson, Stasik, Ro and Clark (2013), individuals who score

high in extraversion are characterized as outgoing, sociable, upbeat, friendly, assertive, and gregarious. They are referred to as extraverts or positive emotionality in some trait models. They talk a lot to draw the attention of others. Extraverted individuals are likely to adjust better in the school than those students who are not extraverted. Home environment is an important factor in the students' level of extraversion and school adjustment. Positive interactions between child and parents may shape extraversion. Again, disorganized home environments may hinder development of extraversion. On the other hand, access to resources and opportunities may influence the trait. Parental well-being also affects children's personality development and school adjustment.

Several studies have also been conducted on extraversion and school adjustment. For instance; Anyaemene, Ejichukwu and Azuji (2019) reported that Extraversion, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience significantly predicted the social adjustment of the secondary school students. Rettew, McGinnis, Copeland, Nardone, and Bai, (2021) found significant higher levels of extraversion to be related to decreases in mood as the pandemic progressed in contrast to those with lower extraversion, for whom there was a slight increase in mood over time. Tamannaeifar and Rezaei (2020) reported a significant relationship between academic adjustment and neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness. Also, Maduka (2023), reported that extraversion significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 56.4% of school adjustment among secondary school students.

Most of these reports were from studies conducted outside Nigeria while some were conducted within Nigeria. Many of those conducted within Nigeria do not seem to have addressed the issue of school adjustment of students in Abia state, talk more of investigating conscientiousness and extraversion as correlate of school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia state. Hence, the need to determine the extent conscientiousness and extraversion correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia state motivated this study.

Statement of the Problem

Every Nigerian school child is supposed to be constantly adjusted in the school so as to be able to face his or her academics and other issues that may require proper adjustment. The ability to adjust in all ramifications could lead to the child's academic success which invariably leads to proper adjustment of students in the school.

Nowadays, secondary school students seem inadequately prepared for the academic, emotional and psychological realities of the secondary education due to early

childhood experience, family background, insecurity issues, personal issues, mental health issues, peer group influence, social media influence, self-efficacy issues and other personality related issues. All these issues tend to destabilize and affect their adjustment in school as well as negatively affect their academic performance.

Teachers, parents, curriculum experts and evaluators are worried especially when it is suspected that this poor school adjustment may also affect the economic and technological development of the nation. Efforts have been made by researchers by suggesting that conscientiousness and extraversion have the potentials of correlating with school adjustments among secondary school students. The extent conscientiousness and extraversion could correlate with the school adjustment of Nigerian students who operate in different socio-cultural circumstances is yet to be determined. The problem of this study therefore put in a question form is: To what extent do conscientiousness and extraversion correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia state?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent conscientiousness and extraversion correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students' in Abia State.

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Find out the extent conscientiousness correlates with school adjustment among secondary school students.
2. Investigate the extent extraversion correlates with school adjustment among secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent does conscientiousness correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students?
2. What is the extent to which extraversion correlates with school adjustment among secondary school students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant correlation between conscientiousness and school adjustment among secondary school students.
2. Extraversion does not significantly correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students.

The study adopted a correlational research design. A total of 878 respondents drawn from the entire population of 8783 senior secondary school class II students drawn through multistage sampling techniques made up the sample for the study. Two instruments were used for the study. The researcher developed one of the instruments namely; "Personality Traits Assessment Questionnaire (PTAQ) while "School Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ)" was adapted from School Adjustment Scale (SAS) developed by Ekennia (2016). These instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts, two from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and one from Measurement and Evaluation; all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The stability of the instruments was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability indices of 0.83 and 0.93 for PTAQ and SAQ respectively. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha method and reliability indices of 0.78 and 0.87 were obtained for PTAQ and SAQ respectively. The data obtained through the administration of the three instruments were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r R^2 coefficient of determination) to answer the research questions, while linear and multiple regression analyses were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study are presented below

Research Question 1

To what extent does conscientiousness correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Conscientiousness and School Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Source		Conscientiousness	School Adjustment
Conscientiousness	Pearson correlations	1	0.843
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	878	878
School adjustment	Pearson Correlations	0.843	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	878	878
	R^2	.711	

* Correlation Significant at 0.05 level, N = Number of respondent

Data in Table 1 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .843 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.81- 1.00. This indicates that conscientiousness to a very high and positive extent correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of .711 indicates that 71.1% of the variance observed in school adjustment among secondary school students was accounted for by conscientiousness. Consequently, conscientiousness predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia State.

Corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is;

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and school adjustment among secondary school students.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis between Conscientiousness and School Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Variables	Term	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F –cal	Sig	Decision
Conscientiousness and school adjustment	Regression	122.524	1	122.524			
	Residual	3491.310	877	3.981	30.777	.000	S
	Total	3613.833	878				

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 2 showed that there was significant correlation between conscientiousness and school adjustment among secondary school students. The calculated f-value of 30.777 in respect of the correlation between conscientiousness and school adjustment among secondary school students is greater than f-critical value of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 877 at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant correlation between conscientiousness and school adjustment among secondary school students was rejected. Consequently, conscientiousness was a significant correlate of school adjustment among secondary school students.

Research question 2: What is the extent to which extraversion correlates school adjustment among secondary school students?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Extraversion and School Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Source		Extraversion	School Adjustment
Extraversion	Pearson correlations	1	.751
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	878	878
School Adjustment	Pearson Correlations	.751	1
	Sig (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	878	878
	R^2	.564	

* Correlation Significant at 0.05 level, N = Number of respondent

Data in Table 3 indicated a correlation coefficient (r) of .751 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.61- 0.80. This indicated that extraversion to a high and positive extent correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .564 indicates that 0.56.4% of the variance observed in school adjustment among secondary school students was accounted for by extraversion. Therefore, extraversion predicted 56.4% of school adjustment among secondary school students

Corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is stated thus;

Hypothesis two

Extraversion does not significantly correlate with school adjustment among secondary school students.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Extraversion and School Adjustment among Secondary School Students

Variables	Term	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F –cal	Sig	Decision
Extraversion and school adjustment	Regression	337.681	1	337.681			
	Residual	2916.152	877	3.325	101.558	.000	S
	Total	3253.833	878				

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The data in the Table 4 above showed that there was a significant correlation between extraversion and school adjustment among secondary school students. The

calculated f-value of 101.558 in respect of the correlation between extraversion and school adjustment among secondary school students is greater than f-critical value of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 877 at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant correlation between extraversion and school adjustment among secondary school students was rejected. Consequently, extraversion significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students.

Summary of Major Findings

It was found from the analyses of the study thus:

1. Conscientiousness significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students.
2. Extraversion significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 56.4% of school adjustment among secondary school students.

The findings of this study indicated that conscientiousness significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students. The findings of this study are in support of the findings of the study by Verbree, Hornstra, Maas and Meii (2022) on conscientiousness as a correlate of the gender gap in academic achievement in Dutch. The study reported that conscientiousness correlated gender gap in academic achievement in Dutch. The study also found out that conscientiousness fully mediated the gender gap in achievement, even when controlling for prior achievement in high school. The findings of this study also agree with the findings of the study by Dumfart, and Aljoscha, (2022) which reported that intelligence and conscientiousness alone accounted for approximately 40% in the variance of school achievement. Similarly, the findings of this study conform to the findings of the study carried out by Maduka (2023) that Conscientiousness significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 71.1% of school adjustment among secondary school students.

The findings of this study further showed that extraversion significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students as it predicted 56.4% of school adjustment among secondary school students. The findings of this study are also in line with the findings of some earlier studies such as Rettew, McGinnis, Copeland, Nardone, and Bai and Rettew (2021), Tamannaeifar and Rezaei, (2020), Anyaemene, Ejichukwu and Azuji (2019). The study by Rettew, McGinnis, Copeland, Nardone, and Bai and Rettew (2021) showed that extraversion was higher. The study by Tamannaeifar and Rezaei, (2020) on predicting academic

adjustment based on personality traits and psychological capital in Kashan indicated that personality trait of extraversion predicted the academic adjustment of students in Kashan. The results concluded that there was a significant relationship between personality traits and psychological capital and academic adjustment.
The study by Anyaemene, Ejichukwu and Azuji (2019) reported that extraversion, significantly predicted the social adjustment of the secondary school students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that conscientiousness with 71.1%; and extraversion with 56.4% significantly correlated with school adjustment among secondary school students in Abia State.

Educational Implications

1. Students with personality trait of conscientiousness might be more organized and disciplined than students with other personality traits. In the classroom situation, they might not want to exhibit a behaviour that would affect others. They may be coming to school on time and regularly attend their classes. Other students may become envious of such students especially when the teachers always use them to set good examples.
2. The extraverted students could constantly dominate classroom interactions and thereby overshadow the reserved and neurotic students. This might make the neurotic students to be more maladjusted in the school.

Recommendations

1 Parents should use their children with personality trait of conscientiousness to set good examples at home with the aim of modifying the behaviours of their children who may be less organized and cautious.

2 Teachers should vary their methods of teaching and use of instructional materials to accommodate both the extroverted students and the reserved ones so that the extroverts wouldn't overshadow the reserved students or dominate classroom activities.

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