

# Innovations

## Personality Super-traits and Psychosocial Adjustment of First Year University Undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study examined the impact of personality supertraits on psychosocial adjustment among first year university undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. Simple random sampling technique and Purposive sampling was used to select 300 male and female first year undergraduate participants for the study. The target population for the study was 100 level undergraduates' students in the Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka. The instrument used to collect data was an adopted questionnaire which include personality supertraits (PS) and psychosocial adjustment scale(PAS). Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the reliability index of the instrument which yielded 0.79. The data collected were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer research questions and Regression Statistics to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results of the findings showed that the five personality supertraits jointly had a positive relationship with psychosocial adjustment. The study further showed that male undergraduate student's psychosocial adjustment is higher than those of their female counterparts. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that effective counselling should be given by professional counsellors in schools to first year undergraduate students in order to help nurture the students with emotional needs that wish to share their problems in confidence with them. When planning activities in the universities for undergraduates, equal opportunities should be given to both male and female undergraduates.*

**Keywords:** 1. Personality supertraits, 2. Psychosocial Adjustment, 3. Gender, 4. undergraduates.

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### Introduction

Most undergraduates in the universities are in the period of active psychosocial adjustment. They are in the period of exploring personal relationships and independence and are also developing a sense of self identity. Most of them may want to adjust fast to the university environment outside home. It is a period of developing close, committed and secured relationships with others. Some undergraduates are involved in social behavioural problems such as truancy, absenteeism, assault, armed robbery, kidnapping, various gangsterism, cultism, prostitution, murder, burglary, rape, unwanted pregnancy, substance abuse and smoking (Achala, 2004). There are some behavioural problems exhibited by undergraduates in the school setting, for instance, such behaviours include: drop outs, stealing, fighting, bullying, shyness, promiscuity, hyperactivity, sleeping in the classroom (Okobiah, 2006).

Psychosocial adjustment refers to the interpersonal interactions and relations which influence individual's development and behaviour. Psychosocial adjustment problem is a psychological problem that

manifest in social relationship of the individual with others. Psychosocial adjustment becomes a problem when the student is unable to adjust to the expected and acceptable behaviour of the society or school environment. The transition from secondary school to university could be very challenging in the development of young students, and as such most first year university undergraduates are inadequately prepared for the psychosocial realities of university education. These students are often confronted with the adaptation challenges of living apart from family and close friends, adjusting to the new school environment, ability to take charge of one's daily living, and creating new relationships with peers, lecturers and other members of the university community. Odojin and Agamugoro, (2021).

Some student's engage in some vices such as cultism, carrying of weapons, kidnapping, and smoking, excessive drinking and drug addiction. These are some of the adjustment problems in the university, the university environment is not always safe for learning because of the maladjustment behaviour of undergraduate students in the learning environment. Many undergraduates are not psychosocially well adjusted because they are not able to interact with others or their peers positively. They engage in illicit sex, kidnapping, ritual killing, internet fraud, drug addict, they are emotionally unstable, disorganize and may also lack human feelings, such negative behavioral traits exhibited by undergraduate students could lead to violent, aggression, and bullying.

In our university system today, there is high rate of violence among students. Most of these crimes that are carried out in our society presently are mostly done by undergraduates. They involve themselves in drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, heroin, alcohol etc, they involve themselves in examination practice, they don't create time to study, they are not serious with their studies, they don't come to class, and other maladjusted behaviour, at the end of the day, and they are rusticated from the university which could lead to depression and frustration. Many students find it very difficult to interact with other people and are not able to effectively adjust to the psycho-socio environment. And as they do so, they express their feelings along negative pattern such as anger, quarrelling, disgust, distress, jealousy, fear, depression, etc. Available literature have shown that some undergraduates are unable to manifest the following emotional pattern: Love, delight, sympathy, excitement, elation, affection for both children and adults, joy, among other emotions. (Okorodudu, 1994). The researchers are attracted to investigate the variable of personality super traits as predictors of psychosocial adjustment of first year undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka.

The term personality is the individual's overall behaviour and the way it is organized and coordinated when he or she interacts with the environment. Personality can be described in terms of traits or types. A personality trait has been defined by Soto, Kronayer and Liang (2016) as "the characteristics aspect of an individual's cognition, affect or behaviour that tend to be stable over time and consistent across relevant situation". The most prevalent personality framework is the Big Five also known as the five-factor model of personality (Ackerman, 2019). Personality can be an aspect of individuals that distinguish them from other people. This is the traits that predisposed a person to behave in a certain way in a different situation. This assumption that people are consistent in the way they express these traits is the basis for making predictions about their future behaviour. That is why, we attribute traits to people in an attempt to understand why people behave in the way they do. Traits may therefore be thought of as classification systems used by individuals to understand other people and their own behaviour (Chell, 2007).

The "Big Five" factors of personality are five broad domains or dimensions of personality which are used to describe human personality. The Big Five factors are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Openness involves being imaginative rather than practical and being independent rather than conforming. Conscientiousness involves being organized rather than disorganized, careful rather careless, and disciplined not impulsive. It relates to how individuals regulates and directs their impulses. Extraversion consists of being sociable instead of reserved. Agreeableness consists of being softhearted not ruthless, trusting not suspicious, and helpful not uncooperative while disagreeable people place self-interest above getting friendliness with other people, hence they are uncooperative, suspicious, unfriendly, Also, low disagreeable individuals are sad to be competitive, untrustworthy and argumentative

(Baccels, 2017). Neuroticism factor is sometimes refers to as emotional stability. It is the tendency to experience negative emotion such as anger, anxiety or depression. It involves being anxious, unsecured. Fehrman, Muhammad, Mirkes, Egan and Gorban (2015) maintain that neuroticism is interlinked with low tolerance for stress or aversive stimuli. Undergraduate's students should know or discover their personality traits in order for them to be able to adjust to their learning environment.

Serious concern has been expressed about the psychosocial adjustment problems of first year undergraduate students in Nigeria universities in general and Delta State University in particular. For example, psychosocial adjustment problematic activities have become the behavioural patterns of the social life of the undergraduates, such as examination malpractice, forgery, ritual killing, internet fraud, cultism, bullying, robbery, absenteeism, substance abuse etc. All these problems require urgent attention and lasting solution. It is this situation that has led the researchers to investigate the relationship between personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment among first year undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka.

In the universities, some undergraduates are involved in multiple criminal acts referred to as a life style which are now hindering the realization of their academic dreams and aspirations which was the bedrock of their admission into the universities. In our society today, a lot of undergraduates have story of woe and regret as a result of the maladjusted behaviour. Many of these undergraduates cannot stand the test of time because they cannot relate or adjust properly with others. There is disparity in the psychosocial adjustment of undergraduates in our universities. Some adjust freely and positively and they are successful in life while there is maladjustment in others, which make them awkward, aggressive and may probably full of regrets in later life. However, since undergraduates' psychosocial adjustment is a major determinant to the success of their whole life future fulfillment as a result of influence of some variables, it becomes imperative to investigate the personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment in this research. Do personality supertraits influence psychosocial adjustment of first year university undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the joint relationship between personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment among first year undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were generated to guide this study:

- What is the joint relationship among personality supertraits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment among first year undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka?
- What is the relationship between personality traits and psychosocial adjustment among undergraduate first year students on the basis of gender?

### **Hypotheses**

- There is no significant relationship among personality supertraits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment among first year undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka.
- There is no significant relationship between Personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment among undergraduate first year students on the basis of gender.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

This section focuses on the following sub-heading, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, reliability of instrument, administration of instrument, data collection and procedure for data analysis.

### **Design**

This study adopted the correlational survey design. This design established the cause and effect relationship of variables.

### **Population**

The target population for the study was first year under graduates' students in the Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Simple random sampling technique and Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. The sample size for this study is 300 respondents. They were 300 male and female first year students from Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument for the study was an adopted questionnaire titled "Personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment". Personality supertraits was developed by Coaster and McCrae (1992) personality assessment scale while the scale of psychosocial adjustment was developed by Rogers and Dymond (1954) and was chosen for the evaluation of psychosocial adjustment. The instruments were divided into three sections. Section A measured demographic, Section B measured Personality traits consisted of 25 items and Section C measured Psychosocial Adjustment consisted of 67 items. The scale is of modified likert type of SA (Strongly Agree)=4, A (Agree) =3, D (Disagree) =2, SD (Strongly Disagree)=1.

### **Validity of Instrument**

The instruments were subjected to face and content validity. This was established by experts in the Faculty of Education, Delta State University. The validity effort was to ensure that it measures what it purports to measure and that the items in the content were appropriate.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

A pilot test was carried out to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability of psychosocial adjustment and personality traits questionnaire were determined using Cronbach Alpha Value. The instruments using Cronbach Alpha yielded index of 0.79. This shows that the instrument was reliable.

### **Data Collection**

The instruments were applied by the researchers and other research assistants in the classroom environment and necessary explanation were made to the students by the researchers.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected were coded and analyzed in SPSS 20 using Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer research questions and Regression Statistics to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the joint relationship among personality traits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment of undergraduate first year students?

**Table 1: Showing a correlation analysis among personality traits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment.**

Variables	Mean	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>adj</sup>	Decision
Openness to Experience	32.877	5.091	300	.429	.184	.170	Positive relationship
Conscientiousness	21.050	5.250					
Extraversion	21.543	3.454					
Agreeableness	18.347	5.974					
Neuroticism	17.480	5.339					
Psychosocial Adjustment	39.067	9.123					

The result in table 1 indicated that the mean scores of personality supertraits were 32.877, 21.050, 21.543, 18.347, 17.480, for openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism respectively and 39.067 for psychosocial adjustment. Their standard deviations are 5.091, 5.250, 3.454, 5.974, 5.339 and 9.123 respectively. The table also revealed that the correlation coefficient obtained was .429 while the R<sup>2</sup> was .184. The value of .429 implied that the five personality supertraits jointly had a positive relationship with psychosocial adjustment. The R<sup>2</sup>value of .184 indicated that the joint relationship of the five personality supertraits would only explain 18.4% of the variations in psychosocial adjustment.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between gender and psychosocial adjustment among university undergraduate first year students?

**Table 2: Showing a correlation between gender and psychosocial adjustment.**

Gender	Mean	SD	N	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>adj</sup>	Decision
Male	1.767	.426	90	.438	.192	.175	Positive relationship
Female	1.752	.415	210				
Psychosocial adjustment	39.067	9.123	300				

The result in table 2 indicated that the mean scores of male and female were 1.767 and 1.752 respectively while 39.067 for psychosocial adjustment. Their standard deviation are .426 and .415 for male and female respectively while 9.123 for psychosocial adjustment. *This shows that male first year undergraduate student's psychosocial adjustment is higher than those of their female counterparts in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.* The table also revealed that the correlation coefficient obtained was .438 while the r<sup>2</sup> was .192. The r-value of .438 implied that there is a positive relationship between gender and psychosocial adjustment among first year undergraduate's students in Delta State University, Abraka. The r<sup>2</sup>value of .192 indicated that gender would only explain 19.2% of the variations in psychosocial adjustment.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

**H01:** Personality traits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) do not significantly relate to psychosocial adjustment among first year university undergraduate students.

**Table 3: Regression analysis among personality traits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-Value
Regression	4575.829	5	915.166	13.247	.000
Residual	20310.838	294	69.084		
Total	24886.667	299			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	<b>(Constant)</b>	34.423	4.374		7.870	.000
	Openness to experience	.046	.097	.026	.475	.635
	conscientiousness	.655	.107	.377	6.141	.000
	extraversion	.387	.156	.146	2.476	.064
	agreeableness	.035	.084	.023	.417	.677
	neuroticism	.528	.091	.309	5.771	.000

Table 3 revealed the beta values for the five personality supertraits are .026, -.377, .146, -.023, and .309 for openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism respectively. These beta values indicated that conscientiousness personality trait according to the students response had the greatest relationship with psychosocial adjustment, followed by neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness personality supertraits in that order.

Table 3 also showed that the calculated t-values are .475, 6.141, 2.476, .417 and 5.771 for openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism respectively. The calculated t-value was significant at alpha level of 0.00 or above for conscientiousness and neuroticism personality supertraits. The calculated t-values were insignificant below the alpha level of .635 for openness to experience personality trait, .064 for extraversion and .677 for agreeableness personality trait. Hence, it is only the contributions of conscientiousness and neuroticism personality traits that were significant while the contributions of openness to experience, extraversion and agreeableness were insignificant.

Since three personality traits out of five personality supertraits investigated were insignificantly related to psychosocial adjustment, it was implied that there was an acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that the personality traits on separate basis, do not significantly relate to psychosocial adjustment of first year university undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The conclusion is drawn that personality traits of first year undergraduate’s students in Delta State University jointly contribute to psychosocial adjustment.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship among undergraduate first year students in the relationship between Personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment on the basis of gender.

**Table 4: ANOVA showing the relationship among personality traits and psychosocial adjustment based on gender,**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-Value
Regression	4773.705	6	795.618	11.590	.000
Residual	20112.961	293	68.645		
Total	24886.667	299			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	<b>(Constant)</b>	30.224	5.013		6.030	.000
	Opennesstoexperience	.037	.097	.020	.379	.705
	conscientiousness	-.659	.106	-.379	-6.203	.000
	extraversion	.424	.157	.161	2.699	.007
	agreeableness	-.015	.084	-.010	-.181	.857
	neuroticism	.527	.091	.308	5.780	.000
	<b>gender</b>	1.951	1.149	.091	1.698	.091

Showing a calculated F-value of 11.590 obtained at 0.05 alpha level. The p-value of .000 is less than 0.05 level of significance. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) for gender is 1.951, the standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for gender is .091, and the calculated t- value of 1.698 was insignificantly below the alpha level of .091 for gender. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between personality supertraits and psychosocial adjustment on the basis of gender. *The conclusion is drawn that gender makes no significant impact in psychosocial adjustment of first year undergraduate students in Delta State University, Abraka.*

**Discussion**

Arising from the findings from this study, the following discussions are made in relation to how the findings agree or disagree with the literature reviewed. The findings of the hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant joint relationship between personality traits of Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and psychosocial adjustment of first year undergraduate students. An undergraduate student is characterized with psychological traits inherent in him which consolidate his or her interpersonal interactions with others. Most of the undergraduates are at their adolescence age and this period is marked by emotionality as a result of social change and expectations. For undergraduates to adjust well with other colleagues, he needs to possess the above positive attributes. Those with negatives attributes may end up frustrated in the university and miss their academic goal. This means those undergraduates' attributes to academic work, whether positive or negative such as friendliness or unfriendliness, love or hatred, happiness or unhappiness are highly predetermine by these traits. This means that undergraduates with positive attributes will have positive psychosocial adjustment and will be more committed to their academics. This agrees with the work of this author (Nwaokocha, 2014) who concluded that in comparison to less-well-adjusted student, the well-adjusted students have better personality adjustment, more self-confidence, more-organized, trusting, discipline,

hardworking, independent, friendliness, goal achieving. This is a period of active psychosocial adjustment to these undergraduates, they are exploring personal relationships and independence and developing a sense of self. Undergraduates need to be guided and counseled so that they will not make mistakes that they will regret in life.

The study reveals in hypothesis two that there was a positive relationship between personality traits and psychosocial adjustment on the basis of gender. Gender as it relates to this study refers to the socio-culture dimension of being a male or female. It is argued that gender affects the psychosocial adjustment of undergraduates. The reason may be attributed to the fact that male undergraduates appear physically stronger. The result of this study revealed that the psychosocial adjustment of undergraduate's male students is higher than the female. This study is in agreement with Cataness and Vohs, 2001 that postulated that male undergraduates are more aggressive and dominant, more strongly motivated and more willing to take risk than today's female undergraduates. The finding of this study disagrees with the works of Nwaokocha, 2014, who found out that gender had no significant relationship with psychosocial adjustment of students.

### Conclusion

The results of the present study revealed a positive joint relationship among personality supertraits (Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and psychosocial adjustment of first year undergraduates in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The result further revealed that male first year undergraduates' psychosocial adjustment is higher than those of their female counterparts in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

### Recommendations

- It was recommended that effective counselling should be given by professional counsellors in schools to first year undergraduates in order to help nurture them with emotional needs that wish to share their problems in confidence with them.
- The personality supertraits of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism should be improved upon by both parents and the undergraduates themselves, making sure that the positive traits in them are upheld while those negative traits are eliminated.
- It is recommended that when planning activities in the universities for undergraduates, equal opportunities should be given to both male and female undergraduates.

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