Effects of the Big Five Personality Traits to the Prediction of Procrastination among Students of Colleges of Education in Gombe State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the Big Five personality traits as predictors of procrastination among Students of Colleges of Education in Gombe State, Nigeria. It explored the effects of the Big Five personality traits to the prediction of students' procrastination among the students. One corresponding hypothesis was tested in the study. Using correlational design from a population of 17166 (n=7389 female, n=9777 male), the study used a sample of 349 NCE students (n=163 female, n=186 male) through multi-stage sampling techniques. Data were collected by using the Personal Information Questionnaire (PIQ), the Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The results found that personality traits (β = .2.908; t = 5.826; p = .000) have no effects to the prediction of procrastination, among the students. The study concludes that there seem to be other reasons for procrastination that are outside the focus of the study. The study recommended that students should be encouraged to build self-confidence, commence in earnest every academic task given during their studies. Personality assessment services should be strengthened and supported to guide students on how to adapt to certain

Introduction

Procrastination, the act of delaying or postponing tasks, has been a topic of interest for researchers across various disciplines for many years. The exploration of the relationship between procrastination and personality traits has provided valuable insights into the underlying factors that contribute to this behaviour.

Early research on procrastination primarily focused on its negative consequences and its association with low academic performance and increased stress levels. However, as researchers delved deeper into the phenomenon, they recognized that personality traits play a crucial role in understanding procrastination tendencies. One of the most influential personality frameworks used in studying

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procrastination is the Five Factor Model of personality. The model proposes that personality can be described by five broad dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Among these dimensions, conscientiousness has consistently emerged as a key predictor of procrastination. Individuals low in conscientiousness tend to exhibit higher levels of procrastination due to their difficulty in initiating and persisting with tasks.

Extending beyond the model, other personality traits have also been linked to procrastination. For instance, individuals high in perfectionism tend to be more prone to procrastination as they set excessively high standards for themselves, leading to a fear of failure and avoidance of starting tasks. Additionally, individuals high in neuroticism, characterized by emotional instability and anxiety, may be more likely to engage in procrastination as a coping mechanism to avoid the stress associated with task completion.

Research has also explored the role of self-regulation as a mediating factor between personality traits and procrastination. Self-regulation involves the ability to set goals, monitor progress, and control impulses. Individuals with stronger self-regulatory skills are better equipped to overcome procrastination tendencies, regardless of their personality traits.

It is important to note that while there is a consensus on the relationship between certain personality traits and procrastination, individual differences and contextual factors can influence the manifestation of procrastination behaviours. Moreover, recent research has started to examine the role of situational factors and the interaction between personality traits and environmental cues in understanding procrastination tendencies.

Procrastination is described by Steel and Ferrari (2013) as "to voluntarily delay an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay". As posited by Schraw, Olafson and Wadkins (2017), a behaviour must be needless delaying and counterproductive for it to be regarded as procrastination. Simpson and Pychyl (2019), and Steel and Ferrari (2013) regarded procrastination as an irrational delay, whereas recent studies, by using rational choice models find out that what might appear to be irrational on the surface can be a predictable behaviour (Zarick & Stonebraker, 2019). Within a rational choice framework, procrastination is not an irrational personality trait; it is a logical, although potentially inefficient, behaviour driven by a reasoned comparison of perceived costs and benefits.

The causes and correlates of procrastination have been studied extensively. Steel and Ferrari (2013) reported in a meta-analysis that the causes and correlates for procrastination are divided into four areas: task characteristics, individual differences, outcomes, and demographics. Research looking at task characteristics examines procrastination, with an understanding that people who procrastinate voluntarily choose one behaviour or task over another. Factors associated with

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task characteristics of procrastination (task aversiveness) include timing of rewards and punishments.

Numerous problems appear to be associated with procrastination. Concerns from environmental to personal health are put off, and allowed to compound with several societal concerns such as substance abuse to be related to procrastination; procrastination could also result in unhealthy habits when it comes to sleep, diet and exercise. Procrastination weakens confidence among students as well as their expectancy of completing a task; procrastination creates anxiety and affects the achievement of goals. Hussain and Sultan (2020) found procrastination to cause higher stress, low self-esteem, depression, plagiarism, higher use of alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine and to decrease the ability to maintain healthy self-care habits like exercise and eating. Procrastination is therefore foreseeably becoming of interest to numerous fields, such as public policy and behavioural contexts.

Different primary and secondary concerns have been found to be associated with procrastination, e.g. low achievement of students and their increased physical and psychological problems, confusion, and irresponsibility. Hussain and Sultan (2020) argued procrastination to be promoted by longer timelines of completing a task, plenty of leisure time and co-curricular activities.

Personality is expressed early in both humans and other animal species (Steel, 2017), and is stable during adulthood. The big five personality traits capture the main dimensions of individual variation. The five traits include: Extraversion, describing an energetic approach toward the world; Agreeableness, describing a pro-social and communal orientation rather than antagonism; Conscientiousness, implying a high level of control over tasks and goals; Neuroticism, being associated with anxiety and irritability for; and Openness to Experience, being related to creativity, curiosity, intellectuality, independent-mindedness etc (Terracciano, et al., 2020).

Steel (2020) reported that students in their study tended to perceive that they possessed certain characteristics leading them to repeatedly engage in behaviours of procrastination, and that it was an inborn habit. In previous research like Abramowski, (2014), several claims have been made regarding the personality of those who report procrastination: first, they are low on Conscientiousness, and second, high on neuroticism. In one study, Steel (2020) found that the largest average effect size was found for Conscientiousness (r = -.63), but neuroticism, however, showed an effect size of only moderate magnitude. Solomon and Rothblum (2014) found a relationship between procrastination and the personality correlates only with men. They concluded that this may be due to attitudinal differences toward the routine activities included in the procrastination scale.

Personality is defined as a dynamic integration which includes an individual's personal experience as well as behavioural patterns. Personality can be taken as the combination of

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conscious, concrete, habits, self experiences and that of the surrounding environment. It also includes a person's thoughts and cognitive functioning, and internal desires. An individual's personality also constitutes his patterns of behaviour, which includes both conscious and unconscious. A person's personality traits affect many other dimensions of their life.

The personality traits are the characteristics that are manifested through the behavioural patterns, thoughts, and emotions of a person. The traits of personality are considered to be stable with time. The trait perspective theory of personality is one of the most successful approaches in the study of personality. This approach focuses on the traits that form the major constitution of a person's personality. There are many theories which explain the personality traits. The roots of the history of trait perspective can be located in the ancient Greek history as well.

Zeenath and Orcullo (2012) explained personality traits regarding the body types (somatypes). He categorized the body types into: endomorphy, mesomorphy and ectomorphy. According to him, the three traits of personality are: viscerotonia, somatotonia and cerebrotonia. These body types and various traits of personality have a strong association with each other. Endomorphs are calm, high-spirited, and sociable. An ectomorph is entirely opposite to the endomorph. These people tend to be self-conscious, socially anxious, creative, thoughtful, gentle, personal and reserved. The mesomorphs lie between the endomorphs and ectomorphs. The mesomorphs are daring and courageous. They like experimenting with new things and willing to hang out with new people.

Ferrari and Tice (2014) gave a new outlook to personality trait theory. He used the term dispositions for traits. He put forward three types of dispositions; cardinal, central and secondary. The dominant and common traits in a person are known as cardinal dispositions. The central traits form the basic foundation of personality, but are less prominent. These traits are used to define an individual's personality, for example, intelligent, shy, modest, loyal, funny, sensitive etc. The secondary dispositions are less important, less consistent and less generalised. These traits may include a person's favourite food, music choices, clothing preferences etc. Allport also used an ideographic approach to understand personality and focused on recognising unique traits of an individual.

Steel (2013) gave the five-factor model of traits of personality. The five factor model personality includes the following traits of personality: emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

There has been some disagreement, however, as to what each broad trait or dimension's exact label should be (Choi & Moran, 2019). The five factors were initially labelled by Steel and Ferrari (2013)) as:

i. Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic);
ii. Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful);

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iii. Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable);
iv. Emotional Stability (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset); and
v. Culture (intellectual, polished, independent-minded).

Zeenath and Orcullo (2012) interpreted factor V as Intellect, and Charine (2015) interpreted it as Openness.

These five factors or broad traits interact to form human personality and are now generally accepted as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Sharma and Kaur, 2021). These factors eventually became known as the "Big Five" with the title emphasising that each of these dimensions represent personality at the broadest level, summarising a much larger number of specific personality characteristics (Choi & Moran, 2019). Some researchers have argued that five factors are not sufficient to explain all individual differences in personality (Solomon and Rothblum, 2014), however the five factors do not deplete the description of personality, but it simply represents the highest hierarchical level of a trait (Choi & Moran, 2019). It is only at a global level that the five factors give a complete characterisation of a person (Zeenath and Orcullo, 2012).

Steel (2020) argued that there is still much more yet to learn about the tendency to procrastinate as a function of individual differences. One current trend in procrastination research has been building connections between procrastination and personality traits.

According to the differential psychology perspective, procrastination is understood as a personality trait (Ozer & Sackes, 2020). Procrastination has been conceptualized as a weak point of personality and illustrates an extreme variant of a personality trait, namely conscientiousness. As Abramowski, (2014) argued, procrastination can be conceptualized as a paucity of conscientiousness if viewed from a personality perspective. This approach to understanding the effects of personality on procrastination has received attention as an alternative way to understand maladaptive ways of being in the world.

Hussain and Sultan (2020) reported that individuals who demonstrated conscientiousness were found to be less likely to procrastinate. Conversely, those who demonstrated low levels of conscientiousness were reported to have a higher tendency to procrastinate. In active procrastination, this means that students who exhibit low emotional stability may delay in submitting assignments and delay in exam preparation, as they may feel unable or unlikely to meet the expectation.

Steel and Ferrari (2013) students with high emotional stability may have higher chances of academic success, which may be protective against procrastination. Extraversion is a personality trait which is quite similar to emotional stability; however it is more susceptible to an expressed, sociable, optimistic, outgoing, energetic and exciting orientation. It was found that students who exhibit higher levels of extraversion have lower coping skills for

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academic performance. Hence, it might lead them to have a higher tendency to procrastination (Diazh et al., 2008). Lastly, most of the previous studies indicated that openness to experience and agreeableness are not related to procrastination. It is not clear why these two personality traits were not associated with procrastination, and hence further studies are necessary.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) was established by Decree No. 3 of 1989, amended by Act No. 12 of 1993 to regulate the production of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers for Basic Education. The mandate ascribed to the Commission by the law includes, inter alia, the laying down of Minimum Standards for all programmes of teacher education and accrediting their certificates and other academic awards. In response to this mandate, College of Education were established and run by the Federal government, State governments and even private settings where in Gombe State, a total number of five (5) Institutions that aimed at awarding NCE.

Statement of the Problem

Procrastination, that is common in school setting, where students tend to delay academic tasks such as assignments and curricular activities until the last minute, occurs with students of varying personality traits. The students procrastinate on a wide variety of activities and circumstances, whether it is putting off completing a task, writing an assignment, or even reading for examinations.

In Colleges of Education in Gombe State, NCE students have been running from one place to another when it comes to submission of assignments, projects, or even information regarding the commencement of examinations. This could not be unconnected to their procrastinatory behaviours they have been exhibiting. Experiences have shown that the tendencies to procrastinate had no boundaries among students.

Could this problem be attitudinal or behavioural? Does students' action to procrastinate have a relationship with their personality traits? This study explored the place of personality traits in the prediction of procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The study explored the effects of the Big Five personality traits on the prediction of students' procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Big Five personality traits to the prediction of students' procrastination among undergraduates NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State.

Methodology

The study employed a correlational design. The population of this study comprised all the NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State students in the 2021/2022 academic session, totalling seventeen thousand one hundred and sixty-six (17,166).

Through multi-stage sampling, the study used 349 of the samples for analysis and interpretation.

A Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) adapted and used during the study. Construct validity of the instrument was established through confirmatory factor analysis by the researcher. Multiple regressions were used to analyse the hypothesis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS 23.0) was used to perform the analysis at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Regression Summary on the effects of the Big Five personality traits on the prediction of procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State

Personality Traits	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Conscientiousness	3.743	1.298	.144	2.884	.004
Extraversion	3.633	1.255	.148	2.895	.004
Agreeableness	8.757	1.538	.300	5.694	.000
Emotional Stability	-1.747	1.186	-.080	-1.474	.142
Openness to Experience	3.587	1.576	.119	2.276	.023

The results as shown in Table 1 indicate that the partial correlation coefficient as indicated by the Beta values has no contribution to the explanation of the variability of NCE students' procrastination. The raw standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their relative effect as shown in Table 1 shows that agreeableness has the strongest effect in the model (β = 8.757; t = 5.694; p = .000) followed by extraversion and conscientiousness (β = 3.633; t = 2.895; p = .004) and (β = 3.743; t = 2.884; p = .004), then openness to experience (β = 3.587; t = 2.267; p = .023) whereas emotional stability (β = -1.747; t = -1.474; p = .142) was found to be significant at .05 levels.

Discussion

The study investigated the ability of a set of the Big Five personality factors to predict procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State. The results confirmed the findings of previous studies regarding the important role played by the agreeableness factor in the predictability of procrastination. It was found that agreeableness was the essential factor among the Big Five factors of personality regarding the ability to predict procrastination. Agreeableness was the only factor which made a significantly unique contribution to predicting procrastination.

The finding is also in substantial agreement with the findings of

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Sepehrian and Lotf (2021), who report that "in essence trait procrastination is the lack of conscientiousness". This result is not very surprising because there exists what might be called a theoretical agreement among researchers regarding the strong negative relationship between both procrastination and conscientiousness. Steel and Ferari (2013) proposes that "procrastination is conceptually representative of low conscientiousness and self-regulatory failure. Consequently, it should show strong associations with these variables". He reported that the findings of their research indicated that the majority of unique variance in procrastination scores was predicted by the conscientiousness factor. It was found that self-discipline, which is one of the most essential facets of conscientiousness, was the strongest facet level predictor of procrastination (Hussain and Sultan, 2020). However, Gallego and Pardos (2013) report that self-efficacy for self-regulation is more significant than self-regulation itself as a predictor of the tendency to procrastinate. Steel and Ferrari (2013) found that procrastination was significantly correlated with low conscientiousness in facets of competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation. Consequently, we can argue that conscientiousness is the most essential factor in the prediction of academic procrastination.

Regarding the extraversion factor, although the table of correlation shows a significant relationship between procrastination and extraversion, the coefficient table indicates that extraversion does not make a significantly unique contribution to predicting academic procrastination. The present results were consistent with earlier research (Hussain and Sultan, 2020) but in contrast with other studies that found a significant relationship between procrastination and extraversion (Watson, 2021). Extraversion could thus be considered one of the most interesting factors regarding its relationship with procrastination, although simultaneously be perceived as the most problematic factor (Steel, 2013).

Regarding emotional stability, although the result of the multiple regression analysis showed a significant relationship between academic procrastination and emotional stability, the contribution of this factor to predicting academic procrastination was not statistically significant. This result indicated that emotional stability does not play a significant role in the prediction of academic procrastination. Emotional stability is potentially the most contested factor regarding its relationship with procrastination, since although some researchers found a significant relationship between procrastination and this factor (Hussain and Sultan, 2020), other researchers reported no significant relationship between procrastination and emotional stability (Steel, 2013). Steel and Ferrari (2013) reports a significant correlation between procrastination and emotional stability facets such as anxiety, depression, self- consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. The relationship between extraversion and

emotional stability in a recent study could be due to an overlap with other factors in the model.

Openness to experience was not significantly correlated with procrastination, indicating that this factor did not make a significant contribution to predicting procrastination. The present results were consistent with several previous research findings (Hussain and Sultan, 2020). However, regarding openness, Sepehrian and Lotf (2021) report that although there is no significant relationship between trait procrastination and openness, procrastination is related to fantasy, which is one of the major components of the openness factors.

Results from the study have shown a significant relationship between procrastination and several personality characteristics. This was in line with Gallego and Pardos (2013) who conducted research to examine the relationship among procrastination, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-efficacy for self-regulation, reporting that although the result showed a significant positive relationship among procrastination and these four variables. The results indicate that agreeableness was most predictive of procrastination tendency.

Relationships between the Big Five factors and academic procrastination have been investigated by several researchers (Poropat, 2019). Steel and Ferrari (2013) found that "total procrastination was related to both the low conscientiousness facets (competence, order, dutifulness,

achievement striving, self-discipline, deliberation) and the neuroticism facets (anxiety, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability)". Although the result of the study showed agreeableness among them have the relation to the prediction of procrastination, there were other four factors like openness to experience and conscientiousness that does not predict procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State.

Findings of the Study

The study found out that the Big Five personality traits have no effects on the prediction of procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State.

Conclusion

The study concludes that personality traits have made significant contributions to the prediction, or otherwise, of procrastination among NCE students in Colleges of Education in Gombe State. Those traits that had no effect on the prediction of procrastination significantly had uncopied a larger portion in the explanation of the predictability of NCE students' procrastination. However, it could be certain that there exist other factors outside the focus of the study that might have predicting effects on NCE students' procrastination in Colleges of Education in Gombe State.

Recommendation

The study recommended that personality assessment services should be strengthened in the Guidance and Counselling Unit and supported by the management of the Colleges of Education to enable students to

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understand some personality types or traits, receive guidance on how to overcome certain personality traits as well as their implication to their academic pursuit.

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