

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Personality traits, Emotional Intelligence on Altruistic behavior among secondary school Students in Makurdi metropolis. The study consisted of 410 students drawn randomly from 21 Government Secondary schools; The participants ranged from 9 – 20 years. The Ex-post facto research design was used and questionnaire technique adopted as a tool for data collection. 410 participants were randomly selected among students of 21 Government secondary schools in Makurdi metropolis. Data was collected using altruistic personality scale, schutte emotional intelligence scale and the big five inventory scales. Three hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression and standard multiple regression. The results showed that emotional intelligence has significant influence on altruistic behaviour among secondary school students in Makurdi Metropolis. Also, personality traits and emotional intelligence was found to have a joint significant influence on altruistic behaviour among secondary school students in Makurdi Metropolis. However, personality traits did not predict altruistic behaviour among secondary school students. It was concluded that: Personality traits did not significantly predict altruistic behaviour but Emotional intelligence significantly predicted altruistic behaviour while Personality traits and Emotional intelligence jointly and significantly predicted altruistic behaviour. Therefore, the researcher recommended that students should be able to monitor their own emotions as well emotions of fellow students. Students should also be able to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour

Keywords: *Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence, Altruistic Behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

Personality is the total quality of an individual's behaviour as it is revealed in his habits of thought, of expression, his attitudes and interests, his

manner of acting, and his personal philosophy of life (Oladimeji, 2011). Personality trait is the unique set of enduring characteristics and patterns of behaviour (including thoughts and emotions) that influence the way a person adjusts to his or her environment (Worchel & Shebilske, 1995). In other words, it is the characteristic ways that people differ from one another. According to trait psychologists, there are a limited number of these dimensions also known as the five-factor model of personality. The traits it consists of are: Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Openness to experience relates to curiosity. Conscientiousness entails responsibility, carefulness, and conformity to societal norms, Extraversion is characterised by being social, energetic, and adventurous, Agreeableness refers to avoiding conflicts, being sensitive to social cues, and being considerate. Neuroticism is characterised by a tendency to experience negative emotions. And each individual falls somewhere on each dimension, meaning that they could be low, medium, or high on any specific trait. Personality is made up of traits; identifiable and relatively stable characteristics that set each individual person apart from others. Personality is an enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that is exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts. These personality traits are implicated in behaviours and might influence how humans react to stressful situations. According to Kassin (2013) personality traits are habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion. Traits are relatively stable over time, differ across individuals and influence behaviour. Traits are propensities of an individual to behave in a consistent and constructive manner. This claim was also supported by Hilgard (2000) who described traits as Neuropsychic structure having the capacity to order stimuli into meaningful consistent form of adaptive and expressive behaviour.

Proponents of the traits model of personality view personality based on inherited traits and analysed behaviour from the individualistic perspective. Afshar, Hassanzadeh-Keshteli, Sharbafehi, Feizi, and Peyman (2015) assessed the prevalence of personality traits and their relation with psychological factors like depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. The result shows that high levels of neuroticism and low levels of agreeableness and extraversion were associated with being depressed or anxious, or having high psychological distress. Guilfund (2002) viewed personality as a person's unique pattern of traits.

Personality is concerned with the question of why some people tend to be aggressive, intelligent, achieving, depressed, psychotic, neurotic, lying, and extroverted or introverted (Eysenck, 1985).

Nehra (2014) opines that personality to a large extent on self-concept and whatever views a person holds about himself. Myers (2002) believes it is seen as an individual's relatively constructive and consistent ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Personality trait is responsible for individuals who find it easy to make friends and others who are lonely. Personality traits do not exist independently or act in isolation; they are interrelated, interacting in an organised manner. Hasset (2004) viewed personality as an individual characteristics pattern of thoughts behaviour that people have tendencies to act, think in certain ways regardless of the situation. Personality is also seen as a more or less stable and enduring organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique, which determines his unique adjustment to the environment (Eysenck, 1999). Agashua (2014) as well reported that personality traits of introversion-extroversion dimension identify strengths (profitable traits) and weaknesses, while Neuroticism dimension detects those who are most vulnerable to the stresses of academic training and law enforcement duties.

Emotional intelligence (E.I) is defined as the ability to monitor one's own and others emotions, to discriminate among them, and use the information to assist individuals in problem solving and decision making (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Interest in emotional intelligence has not waned since it was brought into limelight by Goleman's (1995) excellent book "Emotional Intelligence" and by a subsequent lead article in Time magazine (Gibbs, 1995). Its popularity misled management consultants into promoting Emotional intelligence as key to success in variety of live situations. Such claims have also been said to be spurious and such consultants have been accused of hyping the contributions of Emotional intelligence to success in several life domains as only a few of these claims have been based on empirical data (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000). Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2002), Landy (2005) and Brackett, Mayer and Warner (2004) stated that despite such claims in the power of emotional intelligence, supporting empirical evidence is still lacking, and also that till date what emotional intelligence predicts is still not very clear and suggested that beyond these earlier studies more researcher is necessary to assess the criterion validity of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence has been related to transformational leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour (Modassir & Singh, 2008), psychological wellbeing (Landa, Martos, & Lopez-Zafra, 2010), mental wellbeing (Sharma, 2011), and workplace deviant behaviours (Winkel, Wyland, Shaffer & Classon, 2011), but there is dearth of research relating emotional intelligence competencies to philanthropic behaviour. Besides, most of these studies on emotional intelligence were carried out in a more developed economy of America and Europe (e.g., Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, & Weisberg, 2009) depending on these data alone would not account for a complete understanding of the emotional intelligence construct. Clearly, a more empirical step needs to be taken especially from other cultures beyond American and Europe so as to compare data and come to a firm conclusion on the meaning and understanding of emotional intelligence construct to be credible.

Research has also linked personality traits to altruism which can also be referred to as charitable giving. Studies reveal that the donations to charitable causes are related to individual differences in personality characteristics (Bekkers, 2006). The five-factor Model of personality, the level of generalised social trust (Bekkers, 2007; Brown & Ferris, 2007) have all been linked to charitable giving. Naturally, human beings have a tendency to help others and more altruistic behaviour may produce harmful effects hence the moderation of altruistic nature. Krueger, Hicks and McGue (2001) carried out a study to ascertain if first, altruism and anti-social behaviour are opposite ends of a single dimension, or can they coexisting the same individual? Secondly, do altruism and anti-social behaviour has the same or distinct etiologies? And thirdly, if altruism and anti-social behaviour stem from the same or from distinct aspects of a person's personality. Our findings indicate that altruism and anti-social behaviour are uncorrelated tendencies stemming from different sources whereas, altruism was linked primarily to shared (i.e familial) environments, unique (i.e non-familial) environments, and personality traits reflecting positive emotionality, anti-social behaviour was linked primarily to genes, unique environments, and personality traits reflecting negative emotionality and a lack of constraint.

Asserting that altruism is a universal value in all human societies, Rushton (1982) marked an important moment in the study of altruism by gathering in a self-report scale dimensions of helping related to reports of the past behaviour and concluding that a broad based 'altruistic personality' did

exist and that altruism could be validly and reliably measured by self-report as well as by objective methods. (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekkin, 1981; Hur, 2013)

Another personality characteristic that has received research attention relating to philanthropy is empathy (Bekkers, 2006; Bekkers & Wilhelm, 2006). It has been documented that empathy stir up an altruistic motive, the eventual objective of which is to protect or promote the welfare of the person for whom empathy is felt (Batson, 1991). Empathy refers to an emotional response related to the perceived welfare of another that results from the thought of imagining taking the position of a person in clear need (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1999). It reflects feelings of compassion, sympathy, tenderness, warmth, and concern towards the other, and personal distress, or feeling of distress and discomfort (Sze, Gyurak, Goodkind, & Levenson, 2012).

Empathic concern is an expression of the vicariously-induced arousal generated from anxiety of the other's emotional state or general situation (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). It is thought to rely on higher-level cognitive processes such as perspective taking (Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007). Lalatendu, Pratishta, Lopamudra, Dona and Madhusmita (2014) in their studies trying to interpret the intricate mechanism working behind an individual's willingness to help others; they often lose their way right into the heart of myriads of psychological concepts like disposition, emotion, intelligence and many of such significance. It is observed that the internal motivation to engage in a helping behaviour does not occur in an isolated way; rather it occurs as an important conjunction of certain significant factors. In this connection there happens to be the semblance of "emotional intelligence" and "prosocial behaviour" in academic and later professional success has been found unaccounted in literature. The role of emotional responsiveness and culture states that variability in altruistic behaviour in adults has recently been related to individual differences in emotional responsiveness to fear in others.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the present study is to ascertain the influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. Specific objectives include:

- i. To determine the influence of personality trait on altruistic behavior among secondary school students of Makurdi Metropolis.
- ii. To determine the influence of emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students of Makurdi Metropolis.
- iii. To determine the joint influence of personality traits and Emotional Intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students of Makurdi Metropolis.

Hypothesis

- i. Personality traits will significantly influence altruistic behavior among secondary school students of Makurdi metropolis.
- ii. Emotional intelligence will significantly influence altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis
- iii. There will be significantly joint influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis.

Method

The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. This research design was adopted because there were no manipulations of the variables; the participants only responded to the items on the instruments as it applied to them. Convenience sampling technique was used to sample participants for the study. The reason for choosing this sampling technique was to allow participants who are secondary school students within Makurdi to volunteer their participation in the study.

Participants

The participants were strictly students in government secondary schools within Makurdi metropolis irrespective of their gender, tribe or religion. Four hundred and ten (410) students participated in the study and they included both males and females. Their ages range between 9-20 years.

Instruments

The instruments used for data collection include the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) is a 44- item inventory developed by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) to measure personality from a five- dimensional perspective. The five dimensions or subscales of BFI are:

- Extraversion: High energy and activity level, dominance, sociability, expressiveness, and positive emotions.
- Agreeableness: Prosocial orientation, altruism, tender mindedness, trust, and modesty.
- Conscientiousness: Impulse control, task orientation, goal directedness
- Neuroticism: Anxiety, sadness, irritability, and nervous tension.
- Openness to experience: it exemplifies the breadth, depth, and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life.

John (1991) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while, Umeh (2004) provided the properties for Nigerian samples. The coefficients of reliability provided by John (1991) are .80 and a three month test- retest of .85. BFI has mean convergent validity coefficients of .75 and .85 with the big five instruments authored by Costa & McCrae (1992) and Goldberg (1992) respectively. The divergent validity coefficients obtained by Umeh (2004) with University Maladjustment scale (Kleinmuntz, 1961) are Extroversion .05, Agreeableness .13, Conscientiousness .11, Neuroticism .39, Openness . - 24

The psychometric properties of the Schutte emotional intelligence scale (2009) measure emotional intelligence via 29-item scale developed by Cara and Christel (2009). Due to its accuracy, its reliability and validity as a quantitative tool for emotional intelligence assessment are largely acknowledged, the internal consistency and reliability of the scale, as suggested by Cara and Christel (2009) ranged from .85 to .88 for the majority of samples. On the basis of samples used by Shin(1992) for evaluating responses of Korean respondents, the alpha coefficients for this scale ranges from .71 to .73. On the other hand, as reported by Supple, Su, Plunkett, Peterson and Bush (2012) the alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .88. These studies yielded standardized alpha coefficient to .78 for the Korean version and .88 for the English version. However, on the whole alpha coefficient score for this scale was .87 for this global self-esteem scale. The altruistic personality scale was developed and used by Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekkin (1981) in the book, Personality and Individual Differences. In which personality was measured by a 20-item scale. Participants indicated the frequency with

which they experienced the situation described by each item using a 5-point Likert scale, cronbach's alpha was .85

PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTRATION

Prior to the administration of instruments, the ethical principles of psychological research with human participants were considered and complied to. The consent of the students was sought and granted after detailed clarifications of the purpose of the study; the confidentiality of their responses was also guaranteed. They were made to understand that, they have the right to discontinue, decline or refuse to participate or respond to responses anytime they feel like before the completion of their responses to the instruments. The instruments were administered to the participants individually by the researchers and other research assistants engaged to assist in the administration of the instruments.

The instruments were administered and collected within 2 hours of the administration since no fixed time was allocated for this purpose. The instructions on the instruments were simple and direct for the respondents to understand what they were expected to do. The researchers provide answers and explanations to the respondents on question and issues that arose from the instruments.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using inferential statistics. Multiple regression was used to test personality traits on altruism, simple linear regression to test the influence of emotional intelligence on altruism and multiple linear regressions was used to test the joint influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on altruism.

Results

Hypothesis one states that personality traits will significantly predict altruistic behavior of secondary school students. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis and the results are tabulated and interpreted as shown in table 1

Table 1: Multiple Regressions showing Result for the prediction of altruistic behavior by personality traits among secondary school students within makurdi metropolis.

Variable	R	Rdf	F	β	t	sig
Constant	.122	.015	5,405	.718		1.199
.611						
Openness	-.009	-.144	.885			
Conscientiousness				-.003	-.046	.963
Extroversion				-.112	-1.697	.091
Agreeableness				.073	1.096	.274
Neuroticism				.36	.557	.578

Criterion variable: Altruistic behavior

The results presented in table 1 showed that personality traits did not significantly predict altruistic behavior $F(5,405) .718, P>.05$. Individually, openness ($\beta= -0.009, p>.05$), conscientiousness ($\beta= -0.003, P>.05$), extroversion ($\beta= -0.112, p>.05$), agreeableness ($\beta= 0.073, p>.05$) and neuroticism ($\beta= .036, p>.05$) did not make significant contribution to altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. With this result, hypothesis one was not upheld. With regards to the individual dimensions of personality traits, the results clearly showed that;

Agreeableness insignificantly and positively related to psychological distress ($\beta= -.73 p>.05$). This means that students who are high on agreeableness are more likely to be altruistic. Openness to experience on the other hand made insignificant negative contribution to altruism ($\beta= -.009, p>.05$) are more likely to be altruistic. Conscientiousness made an insignificant and negative contribution to altruism ($\beta= -.003, p>.05$). This means that conscientious students are more likely to be altruistic.

Extroversion made a significant negative contribution to altruism ($\beta= -.112, p>.05$). This implies that extraverted students are less likely to be altruistic. Finally, Neuroticism did not make a significant positive contribution to altruism ($\beta= -.036, p>.05$). This means that the higher the students level of neuroticism, the greater the chances of being altruistic.

Hypothesis two states that emotional intelligence will significantly predict altruistic behavior among secondary school students within Makurdi metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression and the result is presented in table 2

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression showing the prediction of Altruistic behavior Emotional intelligence among secondary school students within Makurdi metropolis.

Variable	R	Rdf	F	β	t	sig	
Constant	.961	.924	1,409	3036.972	-16.611	.000	
Emotional intelligence					.961	55.109	.000

The result in table 2 revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted altruistic behavior $F(1,409)= 3036.972, P>.01$. Further observation shows that emotional intelligence accounted for 92.4% of the variance in altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. Based on this finding, hypothesis two was confirmed.

Hypothesis three stated that there will be a joint influence of personality trait and emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regressions and the result is presented in table 3

Table 3: Multiple linear Regressions showing joint prediction of Altruistic behavior, personality traits and emotional intelligence among secondary school students within Makurdi metropolis.

Variable	R	Rdf	F	β	t	sig.	
Constant	.963	.927	2,408	1530.544	-3.349	.000	
Personality traits					-.057	-3.272	.001
Emotional intelligence					.963	55.314	.000

The result in table three shows that personality traits and emotional intelligence jointly and significantly predicted altruistic behavior $F(2, 408) = 1530.544, p>.01$. The result further indicated that personality traits and emotional intelligence jointly accounted for 96.3% of the variance in altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. With this result, hypothesis three was upheld.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of personality traits, emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior in Makurdi metropolis. With regards to this, three hypotheses were formulated and tested. Hypothesis one, which stated that personality traits will significantly predict altruistic behavior of

secondary school students was tested but not upheld. This indicates that there is no significant influence of personality traits on altruism among secondary school students. The study does not tally with the study of Subhashini and Hemalatha (2013) on altruism and personality type among higher secondary school students which showed a significantly positive relationship. Reason that the research was carried out using different population/race with varying cultures. It was hypothesized that emotional intelligence will significantly predict altruistic behavior among secondary school students. The hypothesis was tested and confirmed. The findings is consistent with the result of petrides (2009) which showed significant positive relationship can be identified between employees emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing behavior among employees of Hungarian Organizations. This means emotional intelligence is a determining factor in altruism.

It was well hypothesized that there will be a joint influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on altruism. The hypothesis was tested and upheld. The finding is consistent with the work of Ajai and Avinashi (2010) that believed personality traits and emotional intelligence are significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. This denotes that when personality cooperates with one's emotional intelligence, altruism becomes natural.

However, in this study, the involvement in altruistic behavior was by both male and female students and they were all exposed to similar conditions without any preferential treatment given based on personality traits or emotional intelligence. Therefore, this may be accounted for why both personality traits and emotional intelligence influenced altruism in different ways.

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION

The study examined the influence of personality traits and emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior among secondary school students within Makurdi metropolis. The results of the study indicated that personality traits did not significantly predict altruistic behavior among secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. This implies that the personality traits of students don't contribute to their altruistic behavior. Meanwhile, the result of the second hypothesis indicates that there is significant influence of emotional intelligence on altruistic behavior of secondary school students. The result of the third hypothesis shows personality traits

and emotional intelligence jointly and significantly predicted altruistic behavior. This implies personality traits in conjunction with emotional intelligence motivate altruism. With regards to the findings of this study, the researcher therefore recommended that students should be able to monitor their own emotions as well as emotions of fellow students. That is, they should be able to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathically. It was also recommended that the students should be able to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.

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