

Influence of Teachers' Agreeableness Personality on Quality of Teacher - Student Relationship in Learning in Nakuru County, Kenya

^IPeter Maina. Kisa, ^{II}Dr. Ann Muiru, ^{III}Dr. Lucy Ngundo
^{I,II,III}Dept. of Educational Psychology, Mount Kenya University

Abstract

The importance of warm teacher-student relationship cannot be over emphasized as it is linked to promotion of communication between the teachers and students which leads to discipline and effective learning in school. Concerns have been raised by education stake holders on how some personality types of some teachers can cause this relationship to be negative and contribute to ineffective learning, communication and indiscipline. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that the teacher's agreeableness personality has on the relationship between the teachers and students in selected public secondary schools in Nakuru County Kenya. Quantitative research methodology and ex-post facto research design was used. A total of 12 (10%) schools were selected and a sample of 25 students from each of the 12 schools in Nakuru County was selected making a sample of 300 students. The findings showed clearly that agreeableness personality of teacher ($r=0.777$) created warm teacher-student relationship. The study therefore concluded that teachers' agreeableness personality indeed influences teacher-student relationship.

Keywords

Teachers' agreeableness Personality, Quality of Teacher - Student Relationship

I. Introduction

The process of learning in secondary school involves teachers developing relationship with students in learning as they carry out their crucial role of communicating knowledge and providing guidance, direction, life skills and support to them (Liu 2014; M.O.E.S.T., 2001; Arker, 2010; Mumbi, 2002; Odera & Muthiora, 2008). Warm Positive relationship between teacher and students is instrumental for effective communication and in ensuring progressive social, emotional, (Silver, Measella, Armstrong and Essex, 2005), psychological (Baker, 2006), and academic development of the learners (Cushman & Cowan, 2010). Furthermore, existence of a warm relationship between students and their teachers enables students to be positive in all educational learning processes in school which leads to improved achievement in school and reduced cases of school dropout (Omotere, 2011; Liu, 2014). According to Hens & Chambers 2002, the quality of this teacher-student relationship depends on the teacher's personality since the traits of the personality of the teacher is reflected in the way they manage their students in class, teaching approach used and these consequently influence the degree to which students will interact with them in learning. According to Craig (2015) teacher-student relationship studies make more sense when causative agent like teacher's personality is considered. According to Henson & Chambers (2002), teacher's personality is important in determining the degree of student-teacher interactions in learning.

Several studies have revealed that negative personality traits in teachers like suspiciousness, sadness, pessimism, anxiousness, aggression and shyness which are referred to as "the dark side" negatively impacted learning process in schools (Moscoso & Slagado, 2004; Liu, 2014). Muhammad (2012) in his study stated that such negative personality traits negatively affects teacher-student relationship which then creates poor communication between the teacher and students, causes gigantic damage to the mental, physiological health position of students and weakens performance of brilliant students.

Education stake holders in Kenya were greatly concerned about the situation in Nakuru county where many schools experienced

strikes, increase in indiscipline cases in 2008 and a drop in KCSE results which were attributed to teachers stressing students, poor communication and bad student-teacher relationship (M.O.E.S.T, 2001; Odera & Muthiora, 2008; Baker, 2006; NCKK, 2009; Njoroge, 2005; Mumbi, 2002; UNHCR, 2009; UNICEF, 2010).

Students in such situation undergo learning difficulties and adjustments in school; however if they are handled by a teacher with personality traits such as warmth, caring and support, they develop positive relationship, accept teachers' guidance, instructions on studies and discipline and improve in academic performance (Jamila & Stevens, 2009).

A case study among students in Guangdong province in China done by Lei Zhang (2009) investigated behavior of teacher's love in relation to student satisfaction of teacher-student relationship. He noted that teachers with agreeableness personality, exhibit care and support which is very instrumental in advancing learning process in school, promote emotional development in learners and end up contributing to the general feeling of fulfillment in school. Eryilmaz (2014) in his study in Tokyo found out that teachers with Agreeableness personality were liked by students and thus exerted more positive influence on academic achievement, affection and interactions of the adolescent student. Inceoglu & Warr (2012); Manning (2006), in their research found teachers with agreeableness personality to have higher ability to form relationships. They attributed this to the fact that agreeableness teachers are more caring loving and supportive.

Several studies have been done on students and schools in Kenya such as; Investigation of causes of student unrests in learning institutions by Muthee (2013); Effect of suspensions on psychological wellbeing of learners in boarding secondary schools in Nakuru Kenya by Wanjiku (2015); Influence of workmates on teacher's planning and influence of interactions between the teachers and students on teacher's organization efficiency in Nakuru North by Kariuki, Kipchumba & Kombo (2013). Very few studies in Kenya have addressed the influence of teachers' personality on teacher-student relationship. The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate influence of teachers' agreeableness personality on teacher-student relationship basing on students view since such

study makes more sense when done from student’s perspective (Craig, 2015).

Objective of the study

To investigate the influence of teachers’ agreeableness personality on teacher - student relationship in learning in selected secondary schools in Nakuru County.

Purpose of the Study

To investigate the various ways in which teachers’ agreeableness personality influences teacher-student relationship in learning in selected schools in Nakuru County.

II. Method

Participants

The study population comprised of 12 selected Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, where the main focus in each school was on 25 students.

Sampling Procedure and Techniques

The sampling procedures used included stratified sampling which was used to sample the schools while purposive sampling was used to select the students. Further respondents were stratified on the basis of gender (boys and girls).

Research Instruments

The researcher developed the research instrument based on the study objective, research question and the related literature. A closed ended 5-point likert scale questionnaire was developed using some sections from the Inventory of Teacher–Student Relationships-IT-SR developed by Murray & Zvoch (2011) which measures teacher-student relationship basing on how students perceive it as in this study.

Procedure

Permit to carry out the research was firstly obtained from NACOSTI, the Nakuru County Education director and Nakuru County Commissioner. Then the researcher got permission to carry out the research from the Principals of the selected schools in Nakuru County. The questionnaire was then administered to the students in the selected schools by the researcher and his assistant. The researcher collected the questionnaire immediately after completion. All the students who had been sampled participated.

Research Method and Design

Quantitative research methodology was used in this study. This is because it deals with testing of stated theories and usage of statistical description to show relationship between variables (Orodho, 2003). The quantitative research data, is prevalently regarded as closed-ended, and is collected in a typical way using questionnaire where respondents are required to respond to restricted questions through which an explanation is obtained concerning the variables under study (Creswell & Clark, 2006). This is followed by the quantitative researcher deductively analyzing the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire by utilizing statistically appropriate procedure. He then contrasts the outcomes with prior predictions and results of other related studies, and then presents the end results in an acceptable criterion style that exhibits the objectives of the research (Creswell, 2002). This study employed the ex-post facto research design that entails

researching on the relationships that exist between variables and which cannot be manipulated by the researcher since their manifestation have already taken place (Orodho, 2009; Simon & Goes, 2013; Goddard, 2004; Franknel & Warren, 2000). The researcher examined the influence of teachers’ agreeableness personality on teacher –student relationship in public secondary Schools in Nakuru County.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative techniques were used to analyze and explain relationships between various variables using the data collected in the research (Orodho, 2005). The data captured by the questionnaire were coded and entered into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23 (Mugenda, 2003).

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data using percentages and frequencies. Pearson correlation was used to ascertain if a significant relationship exist between dependent and independent variables. Paired samples test was done using t-test to establish if there was a significant difference between the means of the two variables under study. (Mutai, 2000).

III. Results

The researcher started by finding out from the students, the ideal quality of teacher-student, relationship that they prefer to have for their effective learning in school and psychological wellbeing. These qualities in decreasing order are warm, Luke warm, neutral, conflict and more conflict relationship. The students did this by considering the characteristics of each of the qualities of teacher-student relationship above and selecting the one he desires most for effective learning in school. The results of this ideal quality of teacher-student relationship that the student prefers to have was important since it helped the researcher to correlate with the quality of teacher-student relationship created by teacher’ agreeableness personalities. The findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percent of Quality of Ideal Teacher-Student Relationship the Student Requires in Learning

Quality of relationship	Frequency	Percent
More conflict	2	.7
Conflict	2	.7
Neutral	3	1.0
Luke warm	8	2.7
Warm	285	95.0
Total	300	100.0

These results indicate clearly that majority of students (95%) like warm relationship (highest quality positive teacher-student relationship characterized with more support, care, love and friendship).

Influence of Teacher’s Agreeableness Personality on the Teacher-Student Relationship

The researcher in line with the study objective sought to investigate the quality of teacher-student relationship that a teacher with agreeableness personality type would create with students in learning. Teachers with agreeableness personality are trustworthy, kind, generous, supportive, caring, loving and can sacrifice their interests for the sake of students.

Table 2: Quality of Relationship with a Teacher with Agreeableness Personality in Learning

	1	2	3	4	5
I would interact closely, befriend, and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is caring.	1 (.3%)	2 (.7%)	2 (.7%)	38 (12.7%)	257 (85.7%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is supportive.	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	40 (13.3%)	257 (85.6%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who trusts me and is trustworthy.	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	48 (16%)	249 (83%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is kind	1 (.3%)	2 (.7%)	2 (.7%)	45 (15%)	250 (83.3%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is loving.	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	2 (.7%)	42 (14%)	254 (84.7%)
Average (N=300) (100%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.3%)	48 (16%)	249 (83%)

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of the students' responses on the quality of teacher-student relationship with a teacher who has agreeableness personality. The findings show that 83% of the students acknowledge that they can form warm (Highest quality positive relationship) with agreeableness personality teacher. This is due to the warmth, caring and likeability of teachers with agreeableness personality. This makes them able to form successful well motivating relationships with their students. Correlation analysis was done using Pearson correlation coefficient so as to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables under study as seen in table 3.

Table 3: Correlation of Agreeableness and Ideal Quality of Teacher-Student Relationship

			Ideal Quality of Teacher-student relationship	Quality of relationship that agreeableness personality creates
Pearson rho	Ideal Quality of teacher - student relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.777**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	300	300
	Quality of relationship that agreeableness personality creates	Correlation Coefficient	.777**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	300	300

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The respondents' ratings in the statements related to quality of relationship agreeableness personality of teacher creates from Table 2 and the ratings of the ideal quality of teacher-student relationship the student requires in learning of table 1 were used to compute the Pearson correlation coefficient to establish

whether there was a correlation between them. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in Table 3. There was a strong positive correlation between teacher-student relationship that agreeableness personality of the teacher creates and the ideal quality of teacher-student relationship ($r = 0.777$). The strong positive correlation implies that agreeableness personality of the teacher has great influence on creation of warm positive high quality teacher-student relationship. The study further deduced that the positive correlation implied that agreeableness is one of the key factors influencing the quality of teacher-student relationship.

For the purpose of testing the significance in the difference between the mean of ideal quality of teacher-student relationship the student requires and quality of teacher-student relationship that agreeableness personality creates, the study used the t-test statistic. The t-value at 299 df, 0.05 level of significance and 95% confidence was found to be 5.115. Since the calculated t-value was found to be greater than the critical value (1.960), it was concluded that agreeableness personality of teacher played a significant influence on quality of teacher-student relationship.

IV. Discussion

Influence of Teachers' Agreeableness Personality on Teacher – Student Relationship

It was established that the teacher-student relationship would be enhanced by teachers who showed kindness and affection, who have pro-social behaviors towards students, who are concerned with the wellbeing of students, who empathized with students and who were not manipulative on relationships and cooperated with students. Such teachers with agreeableness personality are happy and so create positive learning environment for students. They are also good at guiding students since they are kind and loving. Such support that they offer makes students to like them and form high quality relationship with them (Fredrickson and Bramigam, 2005).

The researcher therefore deduced that agreeableness personality of the teacher influenced the quality of teacher-student relationship. There was strong positive correlation ($r=0.777$) between the quality of teacher-student relationship that teacher with agreeableness personality creates and the ideal quality of teacher-student relationship that the students require in learning. This implies that the quality of teacher-student relationship is strongly influenced by the agreeableness personality of the teachers.

V. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher has drawn some conclusions from students' perspective. That agreeableness personality of the teacher creates warm (highest quality) teacher-student relationship in learning.

VI. Recommendations

- Teacher training curriculum should have an aspect where special programs are developed on how to foster positive personality of teachers that promotes high quality teacher-student relation in learning.
- School management should put into consideration the teacher's personality when allocating teachers to be in charge of various departments in school. For instance guidance and counseling may require a teacher of agreeableness personality.
- The TSC during the process of recruitment of teachers should

put into consideration the teachers' personality.

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