

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

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Abstract

Warm teacher-student relationship is important since it is linked to enhancement of communication between the teachers and their students and also promotes discipline and effective learning in schools. Education stake holders are concerned at 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 neuroticism personality has on the relationship between the teachers and their 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 neuroticism personality of teacher ($r=0.251$) created conflict teacher-student relationship. The conclusion of the study was that indeed teacher-student relationship is influenced by teachers' neuroticism personality.

Keywords

Teachers' Neuroticism Personality, Quality of Teacher - Student Relationship

I. Introduction

Teacher-student relationship is crucial in the learning process in secondary schools (M.O.E.S.T., 2001). The quality of this relationship, determines the effectiveness of the teacher carrying out his role of communicating knowledge, providing guidance, direction, life skills and support to the students (Liu 2014; Arker, 2010; Mumbi, 2002; Odera & Muthiora, 2008). Warm Positive relationship between the teacher and students is instrumental for effective communication and in ensuring progressive social, emotional, (Silver, Measella, Armstrong and Essex, 2005), psychological (Baker, 2006), and intellectual 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 promotes improved performance in school and decline in cases of school dropout (Omotere, 2011; Liu, 2014). According to Hens & Chambers 2002, the quality of this teacher-student relationship is determined by the teacher's personality since the personality traits of the teacher is reflected in the way they manage their students in class, teaching methodology 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 the personality of the teacher is considered. According to Henson & Chambers (2002), teacher's personality is instrumental in determining the degree of teacher-student 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.

The ministry of education and other 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). These situations make students to 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 teacher-student relationship, accept teachers' guidance, instructions on studies and discipline and progress well in their academic performance (Jamila & Stevens, 2009). Kisa (2019) in his study found that students would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is caring, supportive, and trustworthy and that these results into warm teacher-student relationship which enhances communication and promotes discipline.

Teachers with neuroticism personality have unstable emotions, are anxious, get easily irritated, and are sad (Norris, Larsen, 2008). Teachers with higher score in neuroticism express more feelings of anger, envy, guilt, and depressed mood (Norris, Larsen, 2008). Fiske, Gilbert, & Lindzey, 2009 stated that they get easily stressed even by stressors of low intensity, in most cases they get threatened easily by minor normal occurrences and easily get hopeless and frustrated. They further noted that teachers with neuroticism personality exhibit shyness, self-consciousness, low ability to control urges, they delay to respond when gratified and that neuroticism is a risk factor for the "internalizing" mental disorders such as phobia, depression, panic disorder, and neuroses.

In Greece, a study was carried out by Kokkinos (2007) on job stressors, personality and burnout in school teachers in Cyprus. His study investigated the relative contributions of these variables on teacher burnout namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. In his study emotional exhaustion was predicted by feelings of stress in managing student misbehavior in school. In his findings Neuroticism was positively correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r = .50, p < .001$) and depersonalization ($r = .29, p < .001$), and negatively correlated

with personal accomplishment ($r < .26$, $p < .001$).

In his findings, burnout occurred more in teachers with neuroticism personality since they were high in emotional exhaustion and got stressed easily when handling student issues. This consequently led to students avoiding being close to them.

In Tokyo a research on perceived influence of teachers' personality type on their psychological well-being, interactions and intellectual success of students was done by Eryilmaz (2014). He used the big five theory to investigate the liked, neutral and disliked teachers and the effect on students interactions and having affection. The mean in his findings of liked teachers of neuroticism personality was very low (17.09). Based on his findings, he observed that teachers with neuroticism personality were not liked by majority of students and so had negative influence on academic achievement, affection and interactions of the adolescent student.

In Guangdong province in China a study done by Zhang in 2009 sought to investigate satisfaction of the relationship between teachers and students from student perspective. He found that 5.2% were very satisfied, 47% were satisfied about the relationship, 39% considered the relationship to be general, 8.5% were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the relationship. He recommended that it is important that an investigation be made to establish characteristics of teachers and students that can lead to creation and establishment of positive interactions between teachers and learners in school set up.

In Kenya several studies have been done on students and schools such as; 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); 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); 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' neuroticism personality on teacher-student relationship basing on students view since such study makes more sense when done from student's perspective (Craig, 2015).

Objective

To investigate influence of teachers' neuroticism personality on teacher-student relationship 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; Frankel & 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 teachers' neuroticism personality. 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 Neuroticism Personality on Teacher-Student Relationship

The researcher sought to investigate the quality of teacher-student relationship that a teacher with neuroticism personality type would create with students in learning as stated in the objective of this study. Teachers with neuroticism personality display anger, envy, depression, sadness, anxiety, bad moods, and aggression. The students were required to relate these traits to their teachers and to determine the quality of relationship they would form with such teachers in learning.

Descriptive Statistics of Influence of Teacher's Neuroticism Personality on Teacher Student Relationship

The percentages and frequencies of students' responses were as in table 2.

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

	1	2	3	4	5
I would interact closely, befriend, and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is sad most of the time.	256 (85.3%)	35 (11.7%)	5 (1.7%)	3 (1%)	1 (.3%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who displays anger and aggression.	251 (83.7%)	33 (11%)	7 (2.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4 (1.3%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who easily gets stressed.	247 (82.3%)	32 (10.7%)	14 (4.7%)	5 (1.7%)	2 (.7%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who has depressed mood.	256 (85.3%)	35 (11.7%)	5 (1.7%)	3 (1%)	1 (.3%)
I would interact closely, befriend and gladly take instructions from a teacher who is irritable	250 (83.3%)	34 (11.3%)	8 (2.7%)	5 (1.7%)	3 (1%)
Average (N=300) (100%)	251 (83.7%)	33 (11%)	7 (2.3%)	5 (1.7%)	4 (1.3%)

These findings indicate that 83.7% of the students sampled form more conflict (very low quality) relationship with teachers of neuroticism personality. 11% of the students feel that teacher with Neuroticism personality will create conflict (low quality) relationship with them. Only 3% feel such teachers will create positive teacher-student relationship.

According to Lesly (2013), some students like tough hash teachers since they are disciplinarians and so create silent environment for studies. Xinghua& Lin (2007) in their research found that negative teacher-student relationship was linked to aggression traits of personality of teachers and that it made students stressed. 85% of the students did not like stressed teachers since they stressed them and so found it hard to relate with them just as in this study.

Inferential Statistics of Influence of Teacher's Neuroticism Personality on Teacher-Student Relationship

The respondents' ratings in the statements related to quality of relationship a teacher with neuroticism personality will form with students from table 2 and those of ideal quality of teacher-student relationship that students require from table 1 were used to compute the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the correlation analysis were as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Correlation of Neuroticism and Quality of Teacher-Student Relationship

			Quality of teacher-student relationship	Quality of relationship that neuroticism personality creates
Pearson rho	Quality of teacher-student relationship	Correlation	1.000	.251**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	300	300
	Quality of relationship that neuroticism personality creates	Correlation	.251**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	300	300

From the correlation analysis it was established that there was a weak positive correlation between neuroticism and the quality of teacher-student relationship in the various secondary schools ($r = 0.251$). The weak positive correlation implies that some levels of quality of teacher-student relationship can be associated to neuroticism personality of the teachers in those schools.

This result is in agreement with those of Zaidi et al (2012) who found a low correlation of $r=0.07$ with teachers of neuroticism and their work engagement which leads to negative relationship with students. The findings also agree with those of Garcia *et al.*, (2011), who found neuroticism to be the weakest among the personality traits in 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 and quality of teacher-student relationship that neuroticism 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 73.605. Since the calculated t-value was found to be greater than the critical value (1.960), it was concluded that neuroticism personality of teacher played a significant influence on quality of teacher-student relationship.

IV. Discussion

The study established that the quality of teacher-student relationship is less enhanced with teachers who showed emotional instability when dealing with student issues, who experience anger, envy and show depression, who take minor frustrations as very difficult, who have trouble controlling urges when dealing with student issues who delay gratification and who interpret ordinary situations as threatening. It was further established that there was a weak positive correlation between the quality of teacher-student relationship that teachers with neuroticism personality creates and the quality of teacher-student relationship the student requires in learning ($r = 0.251$).

Teachers with neuroticism personality are suspicious when handling students and are always antagonistic in the manner in which they handle learning issues in school. They are also sad and express very little humor in their class interactions (Tkach&Lyubomirsky, 2006). As a result the class environment becomes very stressful and communication between the teacher and students deteriorate. The students end up suffering from boredom and anxiety and form very low quality relationship with the teacher in learning while the teachers end up suffering from job dissatisfaction and burnout. The study deduced that generally neuroticism had less influence on enhancing the teacher-student relationship.

V. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher has drawn some conclusions from students' perspective. That neuroticism personality creates more conflict (lowest 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 and not neuroticism personality.

The TSC during the process of recruitment of teachers should put into consideration the teachers' personality.

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