



RESEARCH PAPER

Teachers' Personality Traits at Secondary Level: A Diagnostic Study

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ABSTRACT

The current study assessed the personality traits of secondary school teachers in the Gujranwala division of Pakistan using the Big Five construct, with consideration of the most significant traits and sex differences. A stratified random sample of 624 teachers (312 males and 312 females) in three districts was drawn randomly. The information was gathered through a self-designed Teacher Personality Traits Questionnaire (TPTQ) that assessed openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The data were presented in the form of percentage frequency, mean and standard deviation. The results showed the strongest traits to be agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, and the weakest one was neuroticism. Women teachers received higher ratings in agreeableness and conscientiousness measures, and men were more open. The parity of Extraversion was held steady among both genders and was in harmony with the notion of harmonious socialization. These results suggest that secondary school teachers have qualities that allow them to be good teachers with a good classroom climate and student-centered instruction. The article proposes reflecting on personality development during teacher training, supporting emotional resilience, developing pedagogical innovations and developing group work to enhance general education effects.

Keywords: Big Five Personality Traits, Secondary School Teachers, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness, Extraversion, Neuroticism

Introduction

The performance of teachers has always been regarded as one of the most important factors that affect the learning achievements of students. Although none of the usual variables of hiring--academic qualification, training, or years of experience teaching in classrooms--can be referred to as irrelevant at this point, recent studies have shown how teacher personality traits can be considered as the predictors of teaching quality, classroom climate, and student achievement (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Kim et al., 2019). Big Five Model of personality has its broadest recognition with Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness to experience and Emotional stability (Neuroticism reversed as singular combinations) being characteristic features of this model (John & Srivastava, 1999).

There is empirical evidence that certain personality traits, namely, conscientious and non-emotional attitudes, are always linked to high teacher effectiveness in terms of classroom management, planning, and stress resilience (Kim & MacCann, 2018). The students are more motivated and nurtured in their relation to teachers as those who are agreeable and extraverted become closer (Mammadov & Avci, 2025). On the other hand, neuroticism leads to burnout and reduction in instructional quality in teachers with high scores of the trait (Perera et al., 2018).

The literature also shows that student achievements in academic performance as well as emotional welfare are influenced by the personality of teachers. A recent study with more than 100000 students reported that teacher openness to experience had a positive effect on the academic achievement of students, whereas, teacher conscientiousness and

emotional stability had a positive effect on student well-being, especially on those students with special educational needs (Lerkkanen et al., 2021). This highlights the two-track effect of teacher attributes on socio-emotional and cognitive aspects of learning.

The value of teacher personality is even more significant in the case of secondary schools, where students go through academic changes, identity crisis, and increased psychosocial demands. Good teacher-student relationships at this age are essential in maintaining motivation in learning and in ensuring the fulfilment of achievement (Hajovsky & Chesnut, 2023). The personality-based behaviors of teachers are directly related to school climate that determines the well-being and performance of students (Thapa et al., 2013).

In relation to Pakistan (and more specifically Punjab), these dynamics have recently been investigated in the existing studies. An example was one study in Lahore that indicated that females' teachers scored more on conscientiousness and extraversion; male teachers scored more on openness, with openness being highly correlated with metacognition awareness (Hardjanto and Triman, 2023). The same research in Punjab also indicated a strong positive correlation between the personality traits of teachers and their organizational commitment that proved the influence of personality variables on individual and organizational outputs (Nazir et al., 2020).

Based on these insights, it can be seen that there is a strong scope of a diagnostic study that analyses the personality traits of secondary school teachers in Pakistan. Such research activity will not only reveal the prevailing personality models but also give evidence-supported suggestions to teacher training and professional development courses. Learning personality dimensions can enable educational policymakers to promote personality traits that further teaching effectiveness, classroom climate, and the ultimate student success.

The teacher in the secondary school level is in a critical position in determining the level of education and how students will develop in school both academically and personally. Although the presence of professional training and subject knowledge are of health significance, the personality traits of a teacher play a significant role in influencing classroom management, engagement of students and the general learning environment. Although of above-mentioned vital importance, the study of the personality profile of the teachers in secondary schools is scanty especially in the local context of Punjab, Pakistan. The region and the teaching sector have issues like the high population within a teaching unit, lack of resources and a high level of expectation by the learners and parents that implicates the role of personality traits towards pedagogical effectiveness. Diagnostic expectations about these traits are essential to establishing and implementing targeted teacher workforce development, professional development initiatives and policy reform in regards to improving teaching quality and student outcomes. Thus, the purpose of this study is to address and describe personality traits of secondary school teachers, outline the strongest traits and gender-related tendencies that can influence the level of educational performance.

Literature Review

Personality traits in education are linked to the performance of students and the performance of teachers. Although previous studies placed much emphasis on cognitive skills and knowledge as factors of higher student and professional achievement, recent indications have revealed that non-cognitive applied elements like personality play a major role in academic studies and the workplace (Poropat, 2009; Kim & MacCann, 2018).

Teacher effectiveness is a complex concept that resides in classroom management, high-quality instruction, engagement to the students and interpersonal relations. Personality characteristics are also gaining a lot of ground as determinants of these

dimensions. To illustrate, the conscientiousness construct is continuously linked to successful classroom organization, goal-setting, and perseverance in completing the tasks (Kim et al., 2019). Highly conscientious teachers are likely to show punctuality, preparedness, and also a sense of responsibility that would enhance better results in teaching.

In the same manner, extraversion will facilitate teacher-student interaction and create a sense of enthusiasm, energy and participation in the classroom. It is usually found that Extraverted teachers are easier to approach, communicate with and more capable of creating an engaging learning environment (Mammadov & Avci, 2025). Agreeableness, entailing cooperation, empathy, and warmth, is very important in promoting positive teacher-student relationships, minimizing conflict and the building of trust. Individually, neuroticism tends to be accompanied by stress, stress, and burnout among neurotic teachers that affects both teaching and classroom climates in an unfavorable way (Perera et al., 2018).

Recent meta-analysis also demonstrated that teacher personality characteristics of conscientiousness, extraversion, and low emotional levels have a small and positive impact on teacher efficiency indicators including student gains, the scores of classroom observation, and teaching assessments (Kim & MacCann, 2018). These results prove that the personality of a teacher is not only an individual factor, it is a professional resource that can be utilized to bring better results in educational system. A teacher's personality does not only affect professional performance but a long-term effect on the academic and emotional student performance. As an example, a study has shown that students achieve better results when learning under the instruction of a teacher who was high on the openness to experience personality trait because these teachers tend to develop innovative teaching methods and encourage creativity amongst the students. Emotional stability and agreeableness show that a teacher is also more effective in fostering students emotional well-being and less agitating anxiety and an inclusive environment.

A complicating relationship in this mix is the one between teacher and student. In their meta-analysis, Mammadov and Avci (2024) found positive relationships between agreeableness and conscientiousness and positive teacher-student relationships to be the most significant. Such affiliations are important especially at the secondary level where students are in the process of identity formation and adjusting academically. The overall positive relations climates established through teacher personality contribute directly with student motivation, engagements, and persistence in the long-term academic endeavors.

Even in the area of research studies, teachers' individual performance is increasingly being considered, the research aspect of this has been very little in Pakistan. It is interesting that the small body of literature that exists, is often focused on the individual components of personality such as metacognitive awareness or organizational commitment, but a wholesome diagnostic profile of the personality traits of secondary teachers has been lacking. Also, there is a lack of evidence of how gender or teaching experience and subject specialization as demographic factors influence these characteristics at a local level. It seems that there is a rising role of secondary teachers within the state of Punjab, in areas such as curriculum implementation, large class sizes, issues of diversity among the students, and so on; therefore, diagnostic research on teacher personality attributes is very timely and indeed needed. The research will be informative to the teacher education programs, to professional development activities, and policymakers of how to incorporate measures to leverage the teacher, with their personality strengths, acting as an asset to overcome the challenges.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The descriptive survey design has been used to diagnose the personality traits of secondary school teachers at Gujranwala Division. The sampling unit consisted of all teachers who were employed in 1, 125 government secondary schools in six districts. An equal-number stratified random sampling method was used to select three districts (randomly) including Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin and Sialkot. Four teachers per school (26 male and 26 female schools) were selected randomly in each district and a total of 52 schools (26 male and 26 female)) were selected in each district. This provided a sample population of 624 teachers in 156 schools which balanced about the districts and gender hence increasing validity and generalizability of results.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a Teacher Personality Traits Questionnaire (TPTQ) as the main tool of data collection. It was based on the model of the Big Five Personality Traits which focused on dimensions of openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert-scale in which the personality traits can be measured in a systematic and quantifiable way with the teachers. The instrument was piloted and validated by piloting to have reliability and appropriateness in regards to its cultural setting.

Data Analysis

Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were employed as descriptive statistics to diagnose the prevalent personality traits amongst secondary school teachers.

Table 1
Proportion of big five personality traits among Teachers at the secondary level

Personality Traits	Frequency	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Openness to Experience	184	29.5	4.69	.42
Conscientiousness	141	22.6	4.73	.27
Extroversion	88	14.1	4.68	.30
Agreeableness	198	31.7	4.77	.28
Neuroticism	13	2.1	4.74	.13
Total	624	100.0		

The results demonstrated that agreeableness trait was dominant (31.70%, $M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.28$) among teachers, showing higher interpersonal sensitivity, cooperation, and empathy that helps to develop good teacher to student and peer relationships. The second most prevalent characteristic was openness to experience (29.5%, $M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.42$) which pertains to the ability to be curious and creative and open to new pedagogical initiatives. Conscientiousness explained 22.6 % ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.27$), which reflects teacher responsibility, organization, and professional diligence in moderating well organized learning environment. Extraversion was also 14.1 percent ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.30$), which implies that a group of teachers exude energy, sociability, and assertiveness that help them maintain high levels of classroom dynamic. Lastly, neuroticism was the least recorded (2.1%, $M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.13$), and this indicates that the teachers practice emotional stability and resilience and are thus able to cope when under extreme pressure.

Table 2
Proportion of big five personality traits among Male Teachers at the secondary level

Personality Traits	Frequency	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Openness to Experience	101	32.4	4.66	.47
Conscientiousness	65	20.8	4.70	.28
Extroversion	47	15.1	4.67	.35
Agreeableness	93	29.8	4.77	.28
Neuroticism	6	1.9	4.72	.14
Total	312	100.0		

These findings indicated that the most frequent character trait in male teachers was openness to experience (32.4 %, $M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.47$), which showed that the male teachers

were curious, creative individuals and they were willing to implement innovative teaching methodologies. Agreeableness was next (29.8%, $M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.28$), which suggests getting along with others, sympathy and interpersonal orientation that builds good relationships and classroom harmony. Conscientiousness also contributed 20.8 percent ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.28$), with features of dependability, responsibility and good classroom management. Extraversion was 15.1 percent ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 0.35$), which reflects the enthusiastic, sociable, and active interactions with the students. Lastly, neuroticism was the least occurring (1.9%, $M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.14$) revealing that the majority of male teachers are not neurotic, and they can keep their emotional sides stable, highly resilient to cope with stress and classroom demands.

Table 3
Proportion of big five personality traits among Female Teachers at the secondary level

Personality Traits	Frequency	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Openness to Experience	83	26.6	4.72	.36
Conscientiousness	76	24.4	4.75	.26
Extroversion	41	13.1	4.69	.25
Agreeableness	105	33.7	4.77	.29
Neuroticism	7	2.2	4.76	.13
Total	312	100.0		

The results indicated that the trait agreeableness was the most common in female teachers (33.7 %, $M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.29$) as the factor of cooperation, empathy and high interpersonal sensitivity that enhances teacher-student association and interactive classrooms. Openness to experience was the second (26.6%, $M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.36$) characteristic feature of females as teachers as they are creative, adaptive, receptive to new innovative approaches in teaching. In the second position there was conscientiousness (24.4%, $M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.26$), which refers to reliability, organization and professional responsibility to help facilitate classroom control and learning structure. Extraversion had a lower frequency (13.1% $M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.25$), indicating that female teachers also give a percentage of likable and animated teachers. Lastly, the least used scale was neuroticism (2.2%, $M = 4.76$, $SD = 0.13$), indicating that female teachers are not the most emotionally insecure and uncertain, as they do not take stress or classroom difficulties personally but deal with them productively.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the secondary school teachers mostly have an agreeable disposition, openness to experience, conscientiousness and a medium demeanor in extraversion and neuroticism. These qualities corroborate with known studies in the model of the Big Five personalities, and they highlight personalities that are appropriate in teaching. Conscientiousness, which includes such qualities as organization, dependability, and goal-orientation has repeatedly demonstrated consistent predictive validity of professional performance in a range of measures in numerous fields (Barrick & Mount, 1998). In education, conscientious teachers have better classroom management, better lesson planning and instructional competence and this explains why the variable is found on top among both male and female teachers in this study.

High levels of openness to experience, especially among men teaching at schools, are quite indicative of intellectual interests and flexibility towards the new pedagogic models. Openness has a close dependency with creativity, innovation and flexibility in learning environment and it was a strong indicator to academic achievements and innovation with teaching practice (Poropat, 2009). The fact that they were very agreeable when they had high scores, particular in the female teachers, shows empathy, cooperation and warm character traits important to build positive classroom environments and enhanced teacher-student relations. Existing literature has already established that teachers with high

agreeableness establish better contact with the students and enhance satisfaction in the classroom and have positive impact on student outcomes (Huang et al., 2023).

Neuroticism is the least common component among the teachers and this signifies stronger emotional stability. The presence of a stable emotional teacher is more set to handle difficult situations and efficiently and easily control stress and peaceful learning conditions, which is good both for teachers and learning outcomes. Evidence has indicated that neuroticism is a low trait associated with reduced levels of burnout and greater job satisfaction in the case of teachers (Fabbro et al., 2020).

Conclusions

The results on the male, female, and a combination of males and females' groups of teachers show that agreeableness was the strongest significantly showing cooperative, supportive and empathetic nature of the teachers. The openness to experience immediately ranks after followed by conscientiousness showing that teachers are open-minded, innovative, and able to maintain their professional obligations. The scoring of Extraversion was in the middle range in both genders indicating equal tendencies towards interpersonal communication and excitement about teaching. Notably, neuroticism was the lowest factor meaning that teachers are very stable and can withstand stress in a demanding setting. In gender terms, women teachers showed themselves to be slightly more agreeable and conscientious than men; and men teachers tended to be more open. These findings collectively indicate that personality traits among secondary school teachers are mostly in a positive place to facilitate a good pedagogy and classroom control as well as the development of the students.

Recommendations

Teacher education programs need to take modules that will help develop such traits as agreeableness conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Teachers can improve in the classroom; this can be done through workshops on empathy, cooperation, flexibility and thinking outside of the box. The low neuroticism rates should be used to provide professional development programs that enhance emotional stability, stress coping and management development to sustain the well-being of teachers in schools and enhance classroom atmosphere. Teaching strategies like project-based learning, adoption of technology in the classroom, and the flipped classroom should be encouraged in teachers who are highly open and conscientious teachers. Schools should be able to resource, train and mentor creative and adaptable delivery of instructions. School administrations must exploit the traits of agreeableness favoring school teachers because the latter cherish teamwork, peer reviews, and consensus building. This can empower professional relationships and have a positive impact on learning outcomes by the students.

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