



TEACHERS BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

Dr. Archana V Katgeri

Associate Professor, Hansraj Jivandas college of Education, Mumbai-52

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Abstract

In an educational setting teacher plays a crucial role. Teacher has a lasting impact on the students lives. Hence it is important for the teachers to know and understand every child in their classroom. Teachers need to look at each child with the same lens irrespective of their differences. In today's global world diversity is thriving and the classrooms are full of children coming from different cultural backgrounds. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers big five personality traits and their cultural competence. The sample of the study consisted of school teachers from Mumbai region. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the big five factors of personality and cultural competence. Hence it is important for teachers to have a well-integrated personality to embrace the diversity in the classrooms.

Key Words: Big Five Personality factors, Diversity, Cultural Competence

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental aspect of education, highlighting the pivotal role of the interaction between teachers and students in shaping the quality of education. The teacher-student relationship is indeed a cornerstone of the educational process, influencing a child's academic and personal development. Your recognition of the teacher's behavior as a key factor in helping students reach their potential, regardless of various factors such as race, caste, creed, gender, social class, religion, region, language, abilities, and disabilities, is crucial for fostering an inclusive learning environment. The idea that teachers need to be culturally competent is significant, especially in the context of multicultural education. Cultural competence involves having an understanding and appreciation of different cultures, backgrounds, and identities, enabling teachers to effectively connect with students from diverse backgrounds. This competency is

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essential for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student feels valued and can thrive. It's noteworthy that teacher preparation plays a crucial role in ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work effectively with culturally diverse students. This involves not only understanding different cultures but also being able to adapt teaching methods, materials, and communication styles to meet the needs of a diverse student population. It also involves fostering a mindset of respect, openness, and continuous learning to navigate the complexities of a multicultural classroom. By prioritizing the development of cultural competence in teachers, educational institutions contribute to the goal of providing equitable and meaningful education to all students, irrespective of their backgrounds. This approach not only enhances academic achievement but also promotes social cohesion and prepares students for a globalized world where cultural diversity is a reality.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The existing studies on the big five personality traits—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—have primarily explored their impact on social behavior, adjustment, and mental health. However, the connection between these personality traits and cultural competence, particularly in the realm of education, has not been extensively researched, and there's a significant gap in the literature.

Understanding how teachers' personality traits influence cultural competence can provide valuable insights into effective teacher preparation programs. Here are a few potential connections worth exploring:

Openness to experience: Teachers with higher levels of openness might be more adaptable to different cultural perspectives. Their willingness to explore new ideas and experiences could contribute to a more inclusive and culturally responsive teaching approach.

Conscientiousness: This trait's emphasis on self-discipline and organization might be linked to a teacher's ability to structure culturally relevant lessons and navigate diverse classroom dynamics effectively.

Extraverted teachers, with their social and outgoing nature, may excel in building positive relationships with students and colleagues from various cultural backgrounds. This can foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Agreeable teachers, known for their cooperative and compassionate nature, may be better equipped to handle conflicts arising from cultural differences.

While neuroticism is often associated with emotional instability, understanding how teachers manage stress and emotions in diverse settings is crucial.

Exploring these connections can provide insights into tailoring teacher education programs that not only address the general aspects of cultural competence but also consider individual differences in personality. It could lead to more personalized and effective strategies for developing culturally competent teachers, ultimately benefiting the diverse learners they serve. Given the cultural diversity in India, such research could offer valuable guidance for teacher training programs in the country, ensuring that educators are not only knowledgeable about diverse cultures but also equipped with the personal qualities to navigate the complexities of multicultural classrooms successfully.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Relationship between Teachers Personality traits and Cultural Competence

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Dependent variables

Cultural Competence, which includes cultural awareness and cultural skill

Independent variables

Big five traits of personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism)

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

Cultural Competence: For the present study, cultural competence is defined as the capacity and belief of the teachers to know and interact effectively with the students in the classrooms with diverse cultures and needs. The cultural competence includes the teachers awareness level and their skills in handling diversity in the classroom.

Cultural Awareness: For the present study, is defined as the extent of teachers belief that differences are valuable and learning about others who are culturally different is necessary and this diversity in the classroom with respect to cultural differences, religion, gender, socio economic status and the region has an effect on the way we collaborate in the classroom.

Cultural Skill: For the present study, is defined as the teachers' ability to realize and agreeably discuss cultural differences, capacity to transact and affectionately connect with the students in the classroom who are culturally different from themselves with respect to cultural differences, religion, gender, socio economic status and the region. The cultural competence was measured by a tool prepared by the researcher.

Big five factors of personality:

Openness: For the present study, openness is defined as a personality dimension which reflects strong intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety. People who are

open minded tend to be, more creative and more aware of their feelings and hold unconventional beliefs in comparison to people who are close minded.

Conscientiousness: For the present study, conscientiousness is defined as a personality dimension which is characterised by being disciplined, organized, achievement-oriented, and dependable. People high on this trait show a preference for planned rather than spontaneous behaviour. It influences the way in which we control, and direct our impulses in different situations.

Extroversion: For the present study, extroversion is defined as a personality dimension which is displayed through a higher degree of sociability, assertiveness, gregariousness, excitement seeking, warmth, energy and talkativeness. People high on this trait always try to seek out motivation and the company of others.

Agreeableness: For the present study, agreeableness is defined as a personality dimension which refers to the characteristics like being helpful, cooperative, and sympathetic towards others. Agreeable individuals' value getting along with others and are generally considerate, friendly, generous, helpful. Agreeable individuals are not at all self-centered and hence are always ready to compromise their interests with others.

Neuroticism: For the present study, neuroticism is defined as a personality dimension which shows the tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression which results in emotional instability.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the cultural competence of secondary school teachers.
- 2) To study the big five factors of personality of secondary school teachers.
- 3) To study the relationship between cultural competence and the big five factors of personality of secondary school teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To measure the cultural competence of secondary school teachers.
- 2) To understand the big five factors of personality of secondary school teachers.
- 3) To ascertain the relationship between cultural competence of secondary school teachers with big five factors of personality:
 - i) Openness trait
 - ii) Conscientiousness trait
 - iii) Extroversion trait
 - iv) Agreeableness trait
 - v) Neuroticism trait

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY :

1) There is no significant relationship between Cultural competence of secondary school teachers and

- i) Openness trait
- ii) Conscientiousness trait
- iii) Extroversion trait
- iv) Agreeableness trait
- v) Neuroticism trait

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

For the present study descriptive method is used as it deals with studying the present situation of cultural competence and psychosocial variables of teachers. The correlational type was used to study the relationship between cultural competence and the big five traits of personality.

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

For the present study, the researcher obtained the list of English medium schools affiliated to SSC, CBSE and ICSE board situated in Greater Mumbai.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE USED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Sample was selected in the following manner.

In the first stage the English medium schools affiliated to SSC, CBSE and ICSE board situated in Greater Mumbai were selected by stratified random sampling technique. In the second stage the teachers were selected. The simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has been restricted only to the secondary school teachers of English medium schools of SSC, ICSE and CBSE board in Mumbai.

The present study focuses only on two aspects of cultural competence that is awareness and skills. The study is limited to Big five traits of personality openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

TOOLS FOR THE STUDY

For the present study the following tools were used by the researcher.

- A) Personal data sheet
- B) Cultural Competence scale
- C) Big five Inventory

Personal data sheet: To seek information regarding the respondents such as: -Name of the teacher, Gender, Age, Teaching Experience, School board were working.

Cultural Competence scale: This tool consisted of two parts: Cultural skills and cultural awareness. Cultural skill consisted of 11 classroom related scenarios to measure the level of cultural skills. Cultural awareness a 4-point rating scale consisted of 32 statements to measure the level of cultural awareness of the teachers.

Big five Inventory: A readymade tool was used to measure the Big five personality traits, based on Personality inventory by Oliver P. John. The tool consists of 44 statements,

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher personally visited and illustrated the purpose of the research to the principals of the schools in Mumbai. Before the administration of the tool, the researcher explained the purpose and gave clear instructions regarding the responses. The teachers were given sufficient time and freedom to think and answer. For the present study, the researcher collected the data from the teachers from 27 English medium schools, affiliated to the SSC, CBSE, and ICSE board, situated in Mumbai.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the present study, the statistical technique used was Coefficient of correlation 'r' for the following : 1) To ascertain the relationship between secondary school teachers CC and Big five factors of personality.

Testing of hypothesis 1 (i)

There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and the openness trait of secondary school teachers.

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation.

The following table shows the significance of the coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and the openness trait of secondary school teacher.

TABLE 1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF 'r' FOR CC AND OPENNESS TRAIT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

N	df	r	l.o.s	Magnitude
577	575	0.55	0.01	Moderate

Interpretation of 'r': The tabulated value for df 575 is 0.11 at 0.01 level. The coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and the openness trait of secondary school teachers is 0.55. The obtained value is greater than the tabulated value at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected

Conclusion: The obtained 'r' value is greater than the tabulated 'r' value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural competence and the openness trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and moderate in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the openness trait higher the CC also is higher.

Discussion: The present finding is supported by the previous researches by Klassen,R., Virginia,M.(2014), Hamid, R.(2008) found a positive relationship between openness and classroom management among the teachers. Harrison,N.(2012) found ethnocentrism and cultural intelligence were predicted by openness trait among the undergraduate students in UK. Openness and emotionally stable people have better verbal fluency (Sutin,R., Terracciano, A., Kitner,T., Schlessinger,D.(2011). The individuals who are high on openness trait are curious about many different things , adventurous, a deep thinker, appreciative of art, creative, have variety of experiences, aware of their feelings and hold unconventional beliefs, they like to reflect on the ideas which makes them more adapt to cultural differences. Ulu, Pinar,I., Tezer, Esin.(2010) in their study found individuals who were adaptive showed significantly high score on openness trait. Thus, the teachers high on openness trait readily embrace the diversity among the student population. They don't look at differences as threat but accept it as a challenge. The teachers who are low on openness trait prefer routine work. They don't see the differences around them as welcoming rather are stressed out in coping with the changes to be made so as to suit the needs of all students.

Testing of hypothesis 1 (ii)

There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and the conscientiousness trait of secondary school teachers.

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation.

The following table shows the significance of the coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and the conscientiousness trait of secondary school teachers.

TABLE 1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF 'r' FOR CC AND CONSCIENTIOUSNESS TRAIT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

N	df	r	l.o.s	Magnitude
577	575	0.15	0.01	Low

Interpretation of 'r': The tabulated value for df 575 is 0.11 at 0.01 level. The coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and conscientiousness trait of secondary school teachers is 0.15. The obtained value is greater than the tabulated value at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected

Conclusion: The obtained 'r' value is greater than the tabulated 'r' value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural competence and the conscientiousness trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and negligible in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the conscientiousness trait is higher the CC also is higher.

Discussion: The present findings is supported by the previous researches which found conscientiousness to be a strong predictor of close and non-conflicting relationship (Zee, M., Koomen, H., Veen, I. 2013). Also, Social behaviour is related to conscientiousness (Pincus, L., Gurtman, B., Ruiz 2012). Teachers who have high levels of conscientiousness are able to control and direct their emotions in conflicting situations. Being achievement oriented makes them more students centric irrespective of their diversity. Planning the activities in advance gives them an upper hand in catering to every student needs. Whereas the teachers who are low on conscientiousness trait are somewhat careless may not take things too seriously and adopt a casual approach. Since they tend to be lazy, may not plan their class activity beforehand which leaves them with less scope for catering to the needs of diverse student population.

Testing of hypothesis 1 (iii)

There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and the extroversion trait of secondary school teachers.

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation.

The following table shows the significance of the coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and the extroversion trait of secondary school teachers.

TABLE 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF 'r' FOR CC AND EXTROVERSION TRAIT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

N	df	r	l.o.s	Magnitude
577	575	0.14	0.01	Negligible

Interpretation of 'r': The tabulated value for df 575 is 0.11 at 0.01 level. The coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and extroversion trait of secondary school teachers is 0.14. The obtained value is greater than the tabulated value at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected

Conclusion: The obtained 'r' value is greater than the tabulated 'r' value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural competence and the extroversion trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and negligible in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the extroversion trait is higher the CC also is higher.

Discussion: The present findings is supported by the previous researches which found extroversion to be a strongly related to the verbal fluency and social behaviour of the individuals in the study. Thus, teachers who are high on extroversion trait are able to strike a better rapport with their students and effectively interact with them.

Testing of hypothesis 1 (iv)

There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and the neuroticism trait of secondary school teachers.

The statistical technique used to test this hypothesis is Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation.

The following table shows the significance of the coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and the neuroticism trait of secondary school teachers.

TABLE 1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF 'r' FOR CC AND NEUROTICISM TRAIT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

N	df	r	l.o.s	Magnitude
577	575	-0.17	0.01	Low

Interpretation of 'r': The tabulated value for df 575 is 0.11 at 0.01 level. The coefficient of correlation between cultural competence and neuroticism trait of secondary school teachers is - 0.17. The obtained value is greater than the tabulated value at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: The obtained 'r' value is greater than the tabulated 'r' value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural competence and neuroticism trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found

to be negative and low in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the neuroticism trait is low the CC is high.

Discussion: The present finding is supported by the previous findings by researchers Prinzie,P., Stams,G., Deković, M., Albert,H., Belsky, J. (2009) who found that low levels of neuroticism were related to more warmth and autonomy. The study reveals that the teachers who are high on neuroticism trait generally have low Cultural competence. As teachers, they experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression and so are unable to handle situations requiring control on ones' emotions and impulses.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. There is a significant relationship between cultural competence and the openness trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and moderate in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the openness trait higher the CC also is higher.
2. There is a significant relationship between cultural competence and the conscientiousness trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and negligible in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the conscientiousness trait is higher the CC also is higher.
3. There is a significant relationship between cultural competence and extroversion trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and negligible in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the extroversion trait is higher the CC also is higher.
4. There is a significant relationship between cultural competence and agreeableness trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be positive and low in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the agreeableness trait is higher the CC also is higher.
5. There is a significant relationship between cultural competence and neuroticism trait of secondary school teachers. This relationship is found to be negative and low in magnitude. In other words, it can be said that as the neuroticism trait is low the CC is high.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY: The present study proved that the big five personality factors play an important role in developing the cultural competence of the teachers. Hence having a good well integrated personality will help to be a better person to embrace the diversity. Thus, following are few suggestions based on the findings of the study to enhance the big five factors of personality among the teachers:

Understanding ourselves and others: As rightly said by Aristotle knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. A deeper understanding of our self with reference to our beliefs,

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thoughts, values will help us to collaborate and interact with others in a better way. Being yourself is most important. Understand the personality traits of others so that you can fit together and work in coordination.

Having a Positive Outlook: Keeping a positive outlook towards the environment around you will help you to work and connect in a healthier way.

Voice out your Opinion: Never shy out from voicing your opinion when it might be conflicting with others. What is important to note is to amicably project your thoughts.

Valuing and Respecting others: Listening to others opinion will help you to deal with them in a better way.

Using Humour: Having a good sense of humour is welcomed and appreciated by most of them. People with a good sense of humour are able get along well with others. Adding a funny perspective will help to lighten the situation and everyone loves such personalities. Being too serious will actually create a wider gap between you and the world.

Embrace newness: Be open to new ideas and increase your horizon of knowledge and interests. Cultivate the habit of reading and exploring. Don't be contented with what you have. Move out of your comfort zone and accept the challenges. Being open to changes makes you more adaptable and increases the survival chances.

Emotional Stability: People with high emotional stability have a better chance of dealing with workplace difficulties.

Conclusion: Our personality plays a big role in our lives. It is like a passport to get into the new world and understand others. A well-integrated person definitely has a better chance for succeeding in any given situation in comparison to others. We know the world is full of different people and we need to appreciate this diversity rather than looking at it as a problem. Teachers are constantly dealing with such diversity in their classrooms. Hence it is important for them to accept it and make every child feel valuable in the classroom. Being close-minded will pose a great threat to their behaviour with the children. Acceptance or rejection by the teacher has a great impact on the child's overall personality. Thus, maintaining a balance between the big five factors will help to be more competent in your approach in accepting diversity.

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