

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' CONSCIENTIOUSNESS TRAIT AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

It is often argued that big five personality especially conscientiousness is necessary for students to be successful in their academic performance and academic achievement. Researchers, educators, and, psychologists have been searching for a set of variables that predicts the patterns of students' conscientiousness trait and relationship to academic achievement. This study was conducted to find out the correlation between students' conscientiousness trait and their academic achievement among undergraduate English Language Education students. Using confidence level and confidence interval in doing the sampling selection, 79 students of English Education Department batch 2016 were chosen as the respondents out of 95 students as the total population. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of students had "high" level of conscientiousness trait with the frequency of 24 students classified as students with high conscientiousness and the level of academic achievement was "high" with the mean value of GPA on 3.34. In addition, the significance value (p-value) was on 0.007, meaning that it was lower than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and it indicated that this research had correlation. When the value of students' conscientiousness increases, the value of students' academic achievement will also increase. It means that there is a positive correlation between students' conscientiousness trait and their academic achievement.

Keywords: conscientiousness, personality, academic achievement.

Background of the research

Academic achievement has been taken into consideration as one of the main elements of educational quality. Venkateshwar and Warriar (2016) stated that academic achievement is the performance outcome of students, teacher, and school in order to achieve their educational desire. Standard examination or assessment is used to measure students' academic performance and academic achievement is the final result of learning. It is the primary indicator that learning activity has happened. It means that the students' achievement in education has accomplished the standardized result which refers to actual report in the form of Grade Point Average.

In fact, not all students can become successful as learners and get perfect academic achievement. As stated by Naiman (1995), success and failure are determined by many factors. There are several concepts contributing to the success of learning. They are intelligence, motivation, language aptitude, attitude, cognitive characteristic, and personality. Meanwhile, the success of an individual depends on one attitude, behavior and thoughts which form as one's personality (Kaur, 2014). Students have individual personality characteristic which makes them have different point of view and behavior. It means that they behave differently in various issues, education, and environment. Paunonen and Ashton (2001) pointed out that teacher can predict students' academic achievement through non-cognitive variables such as past experience, socioeconomic status, characteristic and personality.

An individual psychology condition such as personality, intelligence, and interests can be used to explain not only the students' ability academic performance, but also the learning process and which traits influence the examination outcomes (Sadeghi, Tan, and Abdullah, 2012). Hence, most of the learners have different worldview on thoughts and learning style and it causes to their performance and results in learning. As a human being, every student has different personal values. The function of their brain is different; they receive and process information variously and also their personality trait is different. It is often argued that a mix of characteristic in each person can be the tool for them to be successful in their career.

Personality traits can be observed with five dimensions or known as Big Five characteristics such as extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Nye, Orel, and Kachargina (2013) proposed that the big five traits have been used to observe people personality and behavior including job interview, academic achievement, leadership and well-being. For the purpose of this study, a special focus on the conscientiousness trait will be presented. Students with conscientiousness tend to be careful with every step they take, and they have high consideration and are very discipline. Students with high level of conscientiousness usually are diligent, hard-working, well organized, on time and ambitious while students with low conscientiousness are on the contrary (Pervin, Cervone and John, 2005).

Conscientiousness is a trait which measures the diligent level of an individual. If the conscientiousness level is high, the person is usually very careful to do their work. A person with this trait is an organized human being and usually has high self-discipline. This individual prefers to follow the rules and plans rather than acts spontaneously. Their planning method makes them successful in their works. In the opinion of Phillips, Abraham and Bond (2003), most of the studies clarify that conscientious students accomplish higher levels of academic success, both in high school and in university. Furthermore, conscientiousness has been linked to Grade Point Average (GPA), predicting that students with a high level of conscientiousness would have a higher chance of getting a higher GPA (Komarraju, Karau and Schmeck, 2011). Similarly, Chamoro and Furnham (2003) stated that conscientious people are defined as highly responsible, achievement-oriented and diligent learners. Such characteristics make them determined and resolved to gain high academic attainments. Thus, it is no surprise that conscientiousness contributed greatly to the prediction of academic achievement. Based on the explanation above, there is a hypothesis : 1. There is a positive correlation between students' conscientiousness and their academic achievement.

Research Methodology

There are two variables used in this research. One, students conscientiousness personality and students' academic achievement. The research participants of this study were the students of English Language Education

Department batch 2016. Additionally, EED students who were involved as respondents in this research were the students of sixth semester. In this study, the researcher used simple random sampling to take the samples.. The researcher chose randomly all the students from batch 2016 that consist of 95 students in total as the research population. From 95 students the researcher only chose 79 students as the respondents and there was no special requirement to be the respondents of this research.

The instruments used in this research were questionnaire and a document of students' Grade Point of Average. The questionnaire was used to gather the data for the students' conscientiousness personality traits. The other instrument used in this study was students' Grade Point of Average (GPA) to determine their academic achievement level.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the results, the data was collected from 79 respondents using 23 questionnaire items. The researcher also found that there were 5 students (6.3%) with "very low" level of conscientiousness. About 21 students (26.5%) were classified as students with "low" level of conscientiousness. There were also 21 students (26.5%) in "moderate" level. Then, 24 students (30.3%) in the "high" category and 8 students (10.1%) identified as students with "very high" level of

conscientiousness. From the result, most of students had high level of conscientiousness.

Based on the finding, the students had high level of conscientiousness. It means that students have good conscientiousness trait level. Students with high level of conscientiousness are defined as hard workers, responsible for their task and achievement oriented. This is in line with McCrae and John (1992) who mentioned that people with high level of conscientiousness are associated with adjectives like organized, reliable, self-disciplined, meticulous, hard worker, perseverant and ambitious. In addition, conscientiousness is linked from an early age to persistence in the effort and desire to learn (Colquitt and Simmering, 1998). Thus, students with conscientiousness tend to set their goal in life high and succeed in the job they do.

As an aspect of trait, Tellegen and Waller (1987) have identified that conscientiousness student is seen most clearly in the need for achievement and dedication for work and they are known for their diligence and extremely attentive to details and mindfulness. It shows that students with conscientiousness have the ambition to be good in every task and they seek for achievement but they still remain to be diligent and pay attention without missing the detail and being careful to achieve their will.

The second research question of this study is about how the academic achievement level of students. The result showed that there was only one student (1.2%) in the “low” category. There were ten students (12.6%) categorized as “fair”.

The two students (2.5%) found to be in “moderate” level. Then, thirty students (37.9%) were “high” and thirty six students (45.5%) in the category “very high”. The mean value of students’ GPA was shown 3.34 so it was on “high” level. It means that most of the students had “high” level of academic achievement.

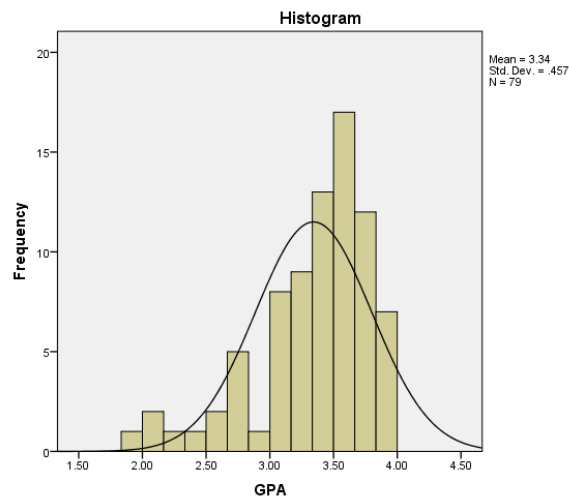


Figure 1. *Students’ GPA frequency*

Academic achievement is something that people acquire after learning activity. According to Klassen (2004) someone’s belief in their academic ability is thought to be an important factor to their academic success. It means that one should have trust in their skill, knowledge, ability and a purpose to accomplish their desired grade. Also, academic achievement could be a motivation for students to do their task better because when the result is higher than student’s expectation it would make them strive for a better result on the next test. It is in line with Wahab (2015) the academic achievement level achieved from the students’ efforts can give emotional

satisfaction and a will to do the job better. In conclusion, academic achievement is the best measure to know students' learning success

The researcher did the hypothesis to find out the correlation between students conscientiousness personality and their academic achievement. After being analysed, the result showed that there is a positive correlation between two variables.

Correlations

		Questionnaire	GPA
Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	1	.303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	79	79
GPA	Pearson Correlation	.303**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	79	79

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

Table 1. *the result of hypothesis test*

Based on the table above, it was shown between two variables with total sample (N) was 79, the Pearson correlation value (r-value) was 0.303, and significance value (ρ -value) was 0.007. The hypothesis testing was analyzed by comparing significance value (ρ -value). The result showed that significant value (ρ -value) was 0.007 which was lower than 0.05 ($0.007 < 0.05$). However, the hypothesis was shown that students' conscientiousness and students' academic achievement was accepted. It means that there was a positive and significant correlation between students' conscientiousness trait and students' academic achievement.

There is a criteria correlation value such as very low, low, moderate, strong, and very strong. The detail criteria are shown in the table below;

Interval Coefficient	Correlation Level
0.00 – 0.199	Very Low
0.200 – 0.399	Low
0.400 – 0.599	Moderate
0.600 – 0.799	Strong
0.800 – 1.000	Very Strong

Table 2. *the correlation criteria*

Based on the table above, the Pearson correlation value (r-value) showed the value of 0.303 on the criteria “low” level (0.200 – 0.399). It can be concluded that there was a positive and significant correlation between students’ conscientiousness trait and students’ academic achievement, and the strength of the correlation was categorized as a low correlation.

This research extends prior related studies by developing an analysis of the relation between conscientiousness trait and academic achievement. Consistent with previous literature, in which Kappe and Flier (2012) mentioned that there was a positive correlation between conscientiousness trait and academic achievement, the result of this study conform the previous study. The positive correlation happened because students’ conscientiousness trait and students’ academic achievement was on the same level. Therefore, when the value of students’ conscientiousness increases,

the value of students' academic achievement will also increase. It was related to O'Connor and Paunonen (2007) who stated that from the Big Five personality traits, only conscientiousness has been consistently associated with academic achievement.

Conclusion

Academic achievement portrays the result of students learning activity in class. To get their desired goals, students make an effort by not neglecting their tasks and have sense of responsibility to finish their works. It is believed that students need to be well-organized, persistent, discipline, hard-worker and ambitious to get good grades and some of those traits mentioned are the criteria of conscientiousness trait. Conscientiousness trait is generally used to describe human personality, character, and behavior. Therefore many academic studies and research papers were carried out to understand conscientiousness trait and its connection to academic achievement or GPA. This study was conducted to investigate the relation between students' conscientiousness trait and students' academic achievement which measured by students' GPA. It is the quantitative research using correlation research design. The study took place at English Education Department of one private university in Yogyakarta. The total populations were 95 students batch 2016 and the final respondents were 79 students picked by rolled papers lottery. The first instrument was questionnaire about conscientiousness consisted of 23 items. The second instrument was students' GPA which the researcher got from the administration office.

The students of batch 2016 had “high” level of conscientiousness trait with the mean value 80.25. Most of the students’ score belong to “high” category $84.4 \leq x < 94.2$. For the students GPA, they had “high” level of academic achievement with the mean value of 3.34. Based on the result, students had a high level of conscientiousness and they had high academic achievement as well.

This study had the result of Pearson correlation value (r-value) on 0.303 and significance value (ρ -value) on 0.007 which was lower than 0.05 ($0.007 < 0.05$). It indicated that this study has a correlation because students’ conscientiousness was on high level and their academic achievement was on high level too. When the value of students’ conscientiousness is on the same level with the value of students’ academic achievement, it can be concluded that the hypothesis was accepted. So, there is a significant correlation between students’ conscientiousness trait and students’ academic achievement.

Suggestions

For students. It is suggested for students to be more persistent, diligent, well-organized, ambitious and responsible in studying so that the students can get better academic achievement and can achieve their goals.

For other researchers. This research can be the reference to conduct another research related to conscientiousness trait and academic achievement with another research design. It is suggested that other researchers can expand, dig the topic and

investigate more especially about the effect or the influence of conscientiousness to academic achievement.

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