

## **Teachers' Perception on Personality Traits and Social skills Development of Persons with Disabilities**

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### **Abstract**

Persons with Disabilities have problem with the development of appropriate social skills. However, social skill is essential to initiate and maintain positive social relationship among all. Previous studies focused largely on enhancing other skills areas among persons with Disabilities while functional skills development is not well researched. This study therefore, investigated Teachers' perspectives on personality traits and social skills development among persons with Disabilities in Ibadan. Bandura's social learning theory formed the bases and framework for the study. Four schools were purposively selected for the study. Forty (40) persons with various forms of disabilities were the respondents. The instruments used were Pupils Social Development Checklist ( $r=0.80$ ), Neuroticism Scale for Children ( $0.73$ ) and Personality Inventory for Children (Extroversion) ( $0.73$ ) Scales. Data were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations at 0.05 level of significance. There is a significant positive relationship between the social skills development of persons with disabilities and extraversion ( $r=.368$ ,  $p(.019) < .05$ ), but there was no significant relationship between social skills development of persons with disabilities and neuroticism ( $r=-.141$ ,  $p(.386) > .05$ ) respectively. It was therefore concluded that persons with disabilities are predisposed to display unacceptable social characteristics as a result of peculiar personality traits of an individual persons. It was therefore recommended that teachers and care givers of persons with disabilities should note and pay attention to the fact that most people behave the way they do simply because of their peculiar personality trait as there are significant impact of personality traits on social skills development.

Keywords: Traits, Social Skills, Disabilities, Development.

**Introduction**

Social skills development of persons with Disability (ID) is sacrosanct and germane to their overall development. It is therefore highly important and imperative to see to the adequate development of appropriate social skills among persons with disabilities since social skill form the bases on which other skills are leveraged. Authors have agreed and stated that social skills are behavior that can easily be learnt and abilities that are consistently needed in social interactions (Caballo, 2003). He maintains further that social skills are group of behavior often exhibited in an interpersonal context; it helps in expressing one's feelings, attitudes, wishes, opinions or rights, in an adequate manner to the situation which helps in solving immediate problem and in decreasing the possibility of future problems. Social skills are required and helpful to initiate social relationships; they are skills that individual needs to develop in making friends and to socially adjust to the environment one might find him or herself (Selvaraj & Christopher 2022).

Social Skills (SS) are identifiable set of skills that helps an individual to display social competency in any social context he finds himself. They are skills essential in building both personal and professional relationships. A display of inappropriate social behavior is common among persons with disability, this is often called social deficit. Most persons with disabilities have problem with development of appropriate SS, many reasons are responsible for this. However, these skills are necessary for individuals to know what to say at the right time, how to make right choices and how to put up an appropriate behavior in different situations or context. Social skills enable persons with disabilities access education, choose friends, and maintain effective relationship. It is certain that persons with disabilities especially those with intellectual disability need comprehensive set of social skills in order to be successful in life (Oladimeji 2017). One good thing to know about social skills is that it is a general consensus that SS are connected to successful social interactions and making healthy social relationships (Garrote 2017). They are skills that are needed by all in order to know the appropriate way and manner to communication with others especially in social gatherings.

Social skills development is central and germane to overall functioning of every individual including person with disabilities. These set of skills are critical to successful life functioning. Social skills help people to interact, communicate and socialize well with others in any context in which people find themselves. Lack of development of appropriate social skills can lead to further

social problems and behavioral challenges like maladaptive behavior, anti-social behavior, and lack of confidence in one self, depression, anxiety, and even suicidal attempt. Barati, Tajrishi, & Sajedi, (2012) averred that one of the detriments of lack of development of appropriate social skills is problem with mental health, which can further result in dropping out of school, aggression, and criminal behavior among school-age children. Lack of social skills can also result in psychopathology and behavioral problems in children with developmental disabilities. In fact, the development of appropriate social skills will enable and facilitate ability to participate and cope in the community among persons with disabilities. It can also reduce or minimize the degree of manifestation or effect of the disability on the affected individuals.

Development of appropriate social skills help can be of assistance in helping an individual to display an acceptable behavior during general interactions and also help them to easily achieve their individual set goals (Allen, Bellack, Mueser, Susan, Gingerich and Julie 2004). They are set of verbal and non-verbal skills such as greeting others, being polite, sharing, taking turns, asking for help, using gestures to communicate and making friends. Smith, (2007) defined social skills as the ability to perceive and interpret social situation, generate appropriate social responses and interact with others. It is essential to teach persons with disabilities social skills because it will reduce their maladaptive behaviors and also improves their quality of life. Social skills are essential in building and sustaining lasting relationship with others. Social skills are important as it helps one communicate more effectively and efficiently. Developing appropriate social skills help in building, growing and maintaining more meaningful relationships with family members, colleagues, clients and even make new and meaningful connections.

Social skills serve as predictor of future success among children and adolescents especially individuals with disabilities. Lack of development of appropriate and needed social skills will significantly and negatively impact on interactions ability and academic performance of the affected person. It is then good to note that no skill is brought from heaven therefore, social skills can be learned. They are skills that can be acquired and developed through various means, for instance, getting engaged with others which can be done by constantly practicing conversation with friends, family and close co-workers or associates, interacting with people on daily basis by increasing the number of words spoken to people we get in contact with, asking open-ended questions which can get people talking and relate better with others. This can lead to constantly

maintaining eye contact while talking with people regularly which can easily lead to the development of listening skills which is equally germane in the development of appropriate social skills. None of the above attitude is innate; they are either developed or learnt at a point in time in one's life. It grows progressively depending on the environmental factors or the determination of the person learning to display such a skill.

Personality traits are perpetual dispositional factors and tendencies that are unique to individuals in different context, they are consistent and stable strong enough to control an individuals' behavior. These factors are not easily influences as they are relatively stable throughout one's life and mostly influence one's action and reactions in most situations of life. They are parts of major dispositional factors. They are internal factors that are always present with us in every situation. They refer to individual characteristics that can influence how a person behaves or conforms to situation at any time. However, Tohver, (2020) averred that although this trait is generally stable, but can change over time across the lifespan which may happen sometimes rapidly following major life changes. This corroborates the fact that SS can be learned and developed by any one especially by persons with disabilities. Personality traits and social skills are closely related and therefore can have impact on various aspects of one's life. This study explored the relationship between two personality traits (extraversions and neuroticism) and social skill development of persons with disabilities.

Extraversion comes with traits that make development of appropriate social skills easy for any individual. Some of the traits peculiar to an extrovert are, being energetic, outspoken, having leadership role, assertiveness, quick to attend to issues, easily mix with people as they are often quick to approach others. Extraversion has been recognized by contemporary Psychology as a major personality trait and variable that is observed as personality dimension that describe other personality traits ranging from sociability and liveliness to dominance and adventure seeking (Saklofske, Eysenck, Eysenck, Stelmack & Revelle 2012). Extraversion is a personality trait used to describe an individual's optimism, enthusiasm, and preference for socializing and extraverted individuals have a high level of social competence (Pour & Taheri 2019). An extrovert has the generic culture of easy association and interaction with everyone he or she comes in contact with as it is not a difficult task for an extrovert to ask questions where it is necessary or to even request

for favor or assistance. It therefore so easy for an extrovert to display appropriate social skills on which he can leverage to easily access needed assistance in any social gathering.

Extraversion has been linked with a wide range of human behavior, from academic achievement and occupational performance to antisocial behavior and risk taking. This has actually established the fact that development of appropriate social skills will not be a difficult task for an individual with this trait as the platform for development has been set while for an individual with contrary personality; there will be need for interventions as early as possible to help such an individual to develop the needed social skills. According to (Jang 2001), who was the first person to define this construct, he is of the opinion that extraversion is the outward turning of psychic energy towards the external world. An extraverted individual does not have a hidden attitude, he or she comes out straight expressing his or her mind as it relates to immediate situation or occurrence, and no one can force his idea or feelings on an extroverted individual. They often display the mind of their own and go along with the outcome as it unfolds.

Neuroticism is another psychological factor to be considered in this study. It is one of the Big Five enduring personality trait which is used to categorize people alongside extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. Neuroticism is a fundamental domain of personality that has serious impact and implication on public health; it has a wide array of psychopathology and physical health care concerns. It has been discovered that the level of neuroticism in an individual will determine to a large extent the level of social skills development of such an individual. Individuals with high levels of neuroticism tend to have less positive self-view which is one key associated factor in development of an appropriate social skill development. They also tend to feel sad and lonely compare to those with lower level of neuroticism (Nielsen & Knardahl 2015). Therefore, the development of appropriate social skills is not as easy and consistent among the individuals with neuroticism as it is among the extraverted individuals with disabilities.

Individuals who have mild or low trait of neuroticism have tendency to display stable behavior, they find it easy to adjust to their environment, this equally helps an individual to easily pick up appropriate social skills. Those who on the other hand have higher level of neuroticism often display behavior like anger, negative emotions, anxiety, self-injurious behavior, depression, suicidal ideation, feelings of self-doubt, self-consciousness, easily stressed or upset, being shy,

they also display dramatic changes in feelings, lack of resilience, they get worried about so many things, they magnify minor problems, they display feelings of fear or guilt over minor things, and have difficulties controlling urges or emotions at the moment.

Considering what could be responsible for having the high score of neuroticisms in an individual compares to another, it was discovered that it could be as a result of brain function. Balada, Lucas, Blanch, Blanco & Aluja, (2019) averred that neuroticism, is associated with reduced oxygen level in the lateral prefrontal cortex following exposure to unpleasant images. This lateral prefrontal cortex is an area of the brain which plays a role in variety of cognitive processes. Cuncic, (2023) also posited that childhood trauma could also be the cause, he is of the opinion that having trauma later in life does not seems to increase neuroticism level, but when an individual is exposed to some unpalatable experiences at a very young and tender age it might cause an individual to score higher in neuroticism than another. Ogle, Rubin, & Siegler, (2013) also reiterated that neuroticism does not reliably change following exposure to traumatic events in middle adulthood, but life-threatening traumatic events encountered early in life always have pronounced impact on adulthood personality than recent traumatic experience

### **Statement of Problem**

Every individual is expected to develop and display appropriate social skills including persons with disabilities, unfortunately, there are several challenges that persons with disabilities are often confronted with. These problems ranges from academic to physical, psychological, emotional, social and many more. However, lack of the development of appropriate social skills has complicated the problems of persons with disabilities. Researches on the relationship between social skills development and personality traits especially extraversion and neuroticism together are very few. There is an insignificant attention in the area of social skills development of persons with disabilities as major researches focus on other areas of skills development especially academic and vocational skills development among these groups of individuals.

It is good to note that the development of social skills among persons with disabilities will help in the development of every other area of skills which will enable them to navigate through life without any complication. Social skills development will improve the quality of life and help persons with disabilities improve on their social competence and build relationships that will be

of use to them. The development of appropriate social skills will also bring about a positive outcome in their day-to-day interactions with their immediate environment. It is against this backdrop that this study focused on investigating the relationship between personality traits (extraversion and neuroticism) and social skill development among persons with disabilities

### **Objective of the Study**

Specifically, the objective of this study is:

- 1) Find out the relationship between the independent variable (Personality Traits: extraversion and neuroticism) and the dependent variable (social skills development of persons with disabilities).

### **Research Question**

What is the significant relationship between the Psychological Factors (Extraversion and Neuroticism) and social skills Development of Persons with Disabilities in Ibadan?

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive and inferential research statistics that investigated teachers' perception on Personality traits and social skills development of persons with disabilities. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample forty (40) persons with disabilities from four schools. Extraversion and neuroticism inventories and social skills development checklist were adapted and validated with reliability coefficient ranging from 0.82 to 0.85. The class teachers and assistance answered the instruments for the student to have accurate answers due to the disability status of some of the respondents. One research question was raised and answered at 0.05 level of significant. The data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations.

### **Result**

- 1) What is the significant relationship between the Psychological Factors (Extraversion and Neuroticism) and social skills Development of Persons with Disabilities in Ibadan?

**Zero-order correlation showing the significant relationship between psychological factors and social skills development of persons with disabilities**



	Social skills development	Extraversion	Neuroticism
Social skills development	1		
Extraversion	.368* (.019)	1	
Neuroticism	-.141 (.386)	-.372* (.018)	1
Mean	45.0500	30.9750	35.7750
S.D	11.88395	5.46545	5.79340

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The table above showed that there is a significant positive relationship between the social skills development of persons with disabilities and extraversion ( $r=.368, p (.019) <.05$ ), but there is no significant relationship between social skills development of persons with disabilities and neuroticism ( $r=-.141, p (.386) >.05$ ) respectively. Hence, psychological factor (extraversion) influenced the social skills development of pupil with intellectual disability in the study.

### Discussion

The findings of this study are discussed on be basis of the research question raised

**Research question:** Relationship between the independent variable (Psychological Factors: extraversion and neuroticism) and social skills development among persons with disabilities.

There is a significant positive relationship between social skill developments of persons with extraversion traits. This finding corroborates the findings of McCrae et al (2002) and Watson et al, (2005) which maintain that extraverted individuals often display positive emotional stability and have tendency for sociability. They easily mix with people and interact without any iota of fear or sense of withdrawal. The finding of this study is also in tandem with the work of Diener, (2009) which reported that extroverts generally have a greater extent of involvement and enjoyment in social interactions, they are often present in social gatherings either to see what is going one, enjoy themselves, contribute in a way or to learn few things. Also, the findings of this study are in line with that of Eaton & Funder, (2003) which reiterated that extroverts display more



sociable behaviors and demonstrate more socially appropriate interactions and conversation techniques, they know what to say and the right way to say it, for instance, they smile easily, learn to nod their head to show acceptance, and easily maintain physical contact when engaging in social interactions. The findings of this study also agree with the findings of Goodwin & Engstrom (2002) which states that majority of studies reveals that being an extraverted individual positively predicts the quality of life, especially lives of persons with disabilities if they can learn and display appropriate social skills in social context, they often find themselves. However, the findings of this study negate that of Harandi et al., (2020) which states that some studies showed that extraversion can negatively predicts quality of life in persons with disabilities. It is often said that too much of everything will always have side effect. It is possible that persons with disabilities might fall in wrong hands if their being free with every dick and harry is not under proper guide and check.

Further, the result from this study shows that there is no significant relationship between social skills development of persons with disabilities and neuroticism. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Lang & Farmer, (2007) which maintains that neuroticism may act as an underlying vulnerability factor in the development of depressive symptoms. The findings also negate that of Denissen & Penke, (2008) which states that Neuroticism has major implication for social relationship and that it can cause a great harm and reduce a persons' self-esteem due to social exclusion. They found out that neuroticism is correlated with intensity of peoples' negative reactions to social threats. It is therefore necessary to know what constitutes lack of appropriate social skills and guide against such by helping every individual to develop appropriate social skills.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between two personality traits, extraversion and neuroticism and social skills development of persons with disabilities. The development of appropriate social skill is germane to the overall development of persons with disabilities. Social skills are also essential for interpersonal relationships among all. However, Persons with disabilities have problems with the development of social skills that will be of great importance in their day-to-day activities at home, school and in the community at large. It was established that there was a significant positive relationship between social skill developments of persons with extraversion traits. Also, there is no significant relationship between social skills development of

persons with disabilities and neuroticism. This shows that there is a strong relationship between personality traits and the development of appropriate social skills in persons with disabilities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) There should be an understanding of the concept of personality traits by teacher, parents and professional that work with person with ID. This will enable the improvement in area of cordial relationship, understanding of individual differences such that will help promote mutual understanding of how an individual person behaves the way he or she does.
- (2) Persons with disabilities should be given the same opportunities like their counterpart without disabilities to go to any length in their relationship with their immediate environments, peers with and without disabilities such that will facilitate the development of appropriate social skills irrespective of the pronounced personality trait they often display.

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