

# Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big Five Personality Traits and Their Self-Concept

**Hossein Navidinia**

Assistant Professor, University of Birjand  
navidinia@birjand.ac.ir

**Ahmad Zangooei**

M.A., Ministry of Education  
birnative@gmail.com

**Mohammad Ghazanfari**

Associate Professor, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad  
mghazanfari@um.ac.ir

## Abstract

The present study is an attempt to find out whether there is a significant relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their self-concept. In addition, it tried to examine if there is any significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their self-concept. 112 EFL teachers participated in this study. They were asked to complete NEO Five Factor Inventory and Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale. Data were analyzed using Correlation, Multiple Regressions, and ANOVA. Results indicated that self-concept was significantly correlated with four components of the Big-Five personality traits. It was positively related with "Neuroticism", "Openness to experience" and "Conscientiousness", but negatively related with "Agreeableness". It was also revealed that there was not any statistically significant difference among the three groups (low, mid, and high experience EFL teachers) with respect to their self-concept. The overall results of the study were discussed, and the implications for policy and practice were made.

**Keywords:** Big Five Personality Factors, Self-Concept, Personality Traits, EFL Teachers

---

Received: February 2014; Accepted: March 2015

## **1. Introduction**

The role of teachers in the success or failure of any educational system is very prominent. Teacher effectiveness is considered the main factor which affects students' academic achievement. Teacher's influences on students' gain are "additive and cumulative with little evidence which subsequent effective teachers can offset the effects of ineffective ones" (Sanders & Horn, 1998, p. 32). In addition, Sanders and Horn state that "regardless of race, students who are assigned disproportionately to ineffective teachers will be severely academically handicapped relative to students with other teacher assignment patterns" (p. 254). In a similar manner, the findings of many quantitative studies over the past 30 years show that learners registered in some classrooms learn more than those registered in other classrooms, and the explanation given by most researchers for such a difference is that some teachers are more effective than others (Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2008).

Among professions, personality traits are demonstrated to influence job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), and teaching does not sound to be an exception. As a result, the personality of teachers can be connected, to a large extent, to educational results. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), teacher efficacy is "powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teacher persistence, enthusiasm, commitment and instructional behavior, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy belief" (p. 783). Moreover, having discussed the vital role of school environment as a factor in developing learners' cognitive self-efficacy, Bandura (1994) contended that "the task of creating learning environment conducive to the development of cognitive skills rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers" (p. 11). Teachers with a high sense of efficacy about their abilities is capable of motivating their students and

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

improving their cognitive development. On the contrary, teachers with a low sense of efficacy tend to a “custodial orientation that relies heavily on negative sanctions to get students to study” (p. 11).

Self-concept is generally defined as a person’s perception of him- or herself. Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) state that such perceptions are constituted through one’s experience with and interpretations of one’s environment, and are affected particularly by reinforcements, evaluations of significant others, and one’s attributions for one’s own behavior. Recent definitions of self-concept are summarized by Bergner and Holmes (2000) as an “organized informational summary of perceived facts about oneself, including such things as one’s traits, values, social roles, interests, physical characteristics, and personal history” (p.36).

In Epstein’s (1982) view, self-concept is defined as what a person thinks of oneself. Self-concept is an integral construct which includes all the experience of individual self, and it is particularly significant to consider the individual’s self-evaluation and functioning in a social context. In addition, self-concept is a map which each individual consults for understanding himself/herself, particularly in critical moments or in situations in which he or she makes a selection (Purkey, 1988). Musek (1986) believes that self-concept controls and manages individual’s behaviors and activities.

In 1996, McCrae and Costa developed a framework in which they tentatively determined ‘personality’ with basic tendencies and the dynamic processes by which they influence other factors. Personality traits are one significant component of Basic Tendencies. Many traits can be explained by five major factors. These five factors include Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness. Good arguments have been made for differentiating the ‘Big Five’, derived from the lexical hypothesis,

from the 'Five Factor Model', derived from phrase-based questionnaires. This five factor system has been considerably successful in incorporating various personality tests and scales (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae, 1989). Many personality scales in earlier personality trait systems have been 'located' as a sub-dimension, combination of, or parallel to one of these five factors (Shafer, 2000). One of the main conclusions drawn from the literature is that five factors are considered as an adequate, although perhaps not a complete, taxonomy of traits (Shafer, 2000).

During the past decades, many scholars and researchers have been attracted to the study of personality and self-concept as well as their influence on human performance. Many have attempted to shed light on these concepts. Nowadays, the effect of personality traits on job performance has been well documented. Ones, Dilchert, Viswesaran & Judge (2007) assert that hundreds of the primary studies and many of the meta-analyses carried out since the mid-1980s have displayed high support for employing personality measures in staffing decision.

Furthermore, several researchers (e.g., Asp & Butler, 1975; Burns, 1982; Elexpuru, 1988) have stressed the significance of the teacher's self-concept, both for the teaching-learning process and for the progression of students' own self-concept. Nonetheless, such an interest has hardly been accompanied by studies that assess teacher self-concept and its influence on teachers' behavior and emotions (Villa & Calvete, 2001).

As a result, these two factors, personality and self-concept, sound to be the most influential traits of an effective teacher. On the other hand, while the impacts of teacher personality and teacher self-concept on their performance in the classroom have been well documented, few studies in the literature have explored the relationship between these two significant constructs. The review

### *Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

of literature for this study did not show any studies examining the relationship between NEO Five Factor Model of personality and teacher self-concept.

Therefore, the aims of the present study are, first, to examine if there is a significant relationship between an EFL teacher's Big Five personality factors and his/her self-concept. The second purpose is to explore if there is any difference between EFL teachers' teaching experience and their self-concept.

In order to investigate the problem under scrutiny, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their self-concept as teachers?
2. Is there any significant difference among "low-experienced", "mid-experienced", and "high-experienced" EFL teachers with respect to their self-concept as teachers?

There have been several studies on Big Five Personality Traits. However, as far as the researchers know, no studies regarding the relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five Personality Traits and their Self-concept have been done so far. In the next section, some important concepts and studies which are more relevant to the present study are briefly presented.

## **2. Literature**

According to Phares (1991), personality is "that pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguishes one person from another and that persists over time and situation" (p. 4). In Ryckman's (1982, p. 4) point of view, personality is the "sum of biologically based and learnt behavior which forms the person's unique responses to environmental stimuli" (p. 4).

Personality traits are important aspects of personality which are demonstrated in a broad range of significant social and personal contexts.

People have particular features which partly specify their behavior. The most common models of types include four or five broad dimensions or factors. (Clayson & Sheffet, 2006)

In recent years, many personality psychologists have been reaching to an agreement on taxonomy of personality traits, as accurate tools of depicting personality (Pervin & John, 1999). It began when personality psychologists employed natural language to create taxonomy of attributes. This included the extraction of descriptive and relevant terms from the dictionary.

The five-factor model of personality has attracted many personality psychologists' interest. The five dimensions are usually represented in the following order on the basis of previous personality scales: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Costa and McCrae (1992) described the five personality traits as follows:

Neuroticism is the opposite of emotional stability. People high on neuroticism tend to experience such negative feelings as embarrassment, pessimism, and low self-esteem. People high on extraversion tend to be sociable and assertive. Openness to experience is characterized by such attributes as open-mindedness, active imagination, and independence of judgment. People high on agreeableness tend to be tolerant, trusting, and easily moved. Finally, people high on conscientiousness tend to distinguish themselves for their trustworthiness and for their sense of purposefulness and of responsibility. (p. 46)

Rushton, Morgan, and Richard, (2007) believe that research on "effective teaching and personality characteristics which support quality teaching is not new and has been an integral part of the academic milieu for over 40 years" (p.

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

433). According to Fairhurst and Fairhurst (1995), “knowing ones temperament and personality is important for teachers so that they can recognize the differences between their personality types and their students’ learning styles” (as cited in Rushton et al., 2007, p. 434).

In their study, Ikpi, Enya, and Johnny (2014) investigated the effect of personality traits on academic achievements of secondary school to determine the extent to which students’ personality can influence their achievements. The results indicated a significant difference between the achievements of students with high level of conscientiousness and agreeableness, and those with low levels of these traits.

Ghyasi, Yazdani, and AminiFarsani (2013) attempted to find out the relationship between personality traits, as measured by the NEO Five Factor Inventory, and different learning strategies, measured by the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), that foreign language student may use to help them learn the language. Two hundred and thirty one Iranian undergraduate students of English were administered the NEO Inventory and the MSLQ. Using multiple regressions, the authors concluded that personality type was able to predict the tendency to employ different learning strategies. Particularly, students scoring high on “conscientiousness” were more likely to employ all strategies, particularly managing time and study environment. Those students who scored high on extraversion were more likely to employ peer learning and help seeking strategies.

Ghoreyshi (2013) tried to investigate whether Iranian EFL students’ personality traits affect their foreign language speaking confidence in the classrooms. Two hundred and seventeen Iranian EFL learners were participated in the study. Multiple regression analysis indicated that learners’ foreign language speaking confidence is positively influenced by their

personality trait. The results also showed that favorable social conditions in the classrooms and classroom climate affected learners' speaking confidence.

De Feyter, Caers, Vigna, and Berings (2012) investigated the effect of the Big Five personality factors on academic performance. They took advantage of hierarchical, moderated mediation and mediated moderation regression analyses on longitudinal data which were collected from 375 students of a University college in Belgium. The results indicated a positive indirect effect of neuroticism on academic performance at higher levels of self-efficacy, complemented by a positive direct effect of neuroticism at lower levels of self-efficacy. This study also revealed that conscientiousness positively influenced academic performance indirectly through academic motivation, and that it is a condition for the indirect effect of extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness.

In his study, Author (2009) attempted to investigate the relationship between English language teachers' personality, as measured within the framework of Five-Factor personality Model (FFM) by NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), and teacher efficacy beliefs, measured by Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). One hundred and sixty eight English language teachers teaching to senior and junior high school students participated in the study. The findings showed that two of the NEO-FFM variables, extroversion and conscientiousness, significantly predicted teacher efficacy beliefs. The findings also indicated that in regard with the facets of teacher efficacy beliefs, extroversion was the most significant predictor for classroom management and conscientiousness came out to be the most significant predictor for instructional strategies as well as student engagement.

### *Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

In sum, the review of the relevant studies indicated that the relationship between EFL teachers' personality traits and their self-concept has received limited attention in the literature. In this regard, the current study is an attempt to cast more light on this issue in order to fill the aforementioned gap.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Participants**

The participants of this study were 112 male and female English language teachers who were teaching English language either at public schools or English language private institutes in Birjand City, Iran. 58 of the participants were males and 54 of them were female teachers with an age range of 26 to 38 years old. The participants were chosen based on convenience sampling.

### **3.2. Instrumentations**

The instruments employed in this study are as follows: (a) The NEO Five Factor Inventory (b) Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale (TSCES).

#### **3.2.1. The NEO Five Factor Inventory**

NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) was employed for measuring the personality of individuals, on the basis of the five-factor model of personality. This questionnaire is the reduced version of 240-item NEO Personality Revised (NEO-PI-R). Since the 240-item NEO-PI-R was too lengthy, McCrae and Costa (1992) developed the 60 item version of the instrument based on item factor analysis. NEO-FFI is one of the most frequently used instruments in the assessment of Big Five Factor and encompasses 60 statements which provide a concise measure of the five

domains of personality including (a) neuroticism, which refers to adjustment or emotional stability, impulse control, and ability to cope with stress; (b) extroversion, which measures sociability, assertiveness, and talkativeness; (c) openness to experience, an index of one's imagination, sensitivity and curiosity and preferring variety; (d) agreeableness, which is a measure of interpersonal tendencies and involves being sympathetic, helpful, trusting, and cooperative; and (e) conscientiousness, which measures the degree of control one has over impulses and refers to being organized, purposeful, and self-controlled (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The NEO-FFI is the most widely used measure of personality traits, and has good reliability, internal consistency, and validity (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Each of the five dimensions is evaluated by 12 statements scored in both directions. For each statement, the participants rate themselves on a five-point Likert scale from 0 to 4, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Cronbach alpha coefficients of the personality dimensions of this questionnaire based on a normative sample of employed adults' scores are reported by Costa and McCrae (1992) as: .86 (Neuroticism), .77 (Extroversion), .73 (Openness), .68 (Agreeableness), and .81 (Conscientiousness).

### **3.2.2. Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale (TSCES)**

The TSCES (Villa & Calvete, 2001) was used to measure teachers' self-concept. The questionnaire consists of 33 items. Twenty six of the items represent positive self-concept and seven of them indicate negative self-concept. The TSCES is on the basis of the theoretical dimensions which were proposed by Volpi (1996) as well as of a previous scale of teacher self-concept (Villa, 1992).

### *Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

The items of the questionnaire represent six dimensions: Competence, Interpersonal Perceptions, Satisfaction, Risk and Initiative, Self-acceptance, and Relationships with Pupils. Participants were requested to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a 6-point Likert-type scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Disagree), 4 (Slightly Agree), 5 (Agree), 6 (Strongly Agree). The alpha coefficient for the Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale was .89 with the following values for the subscales: .85, .77, .67, .74, .70, and .74, for Competence, Interpersonal Perceptions, Satisfaction, Risk and Initiative, Self-acceptance, and Relationships with Pupils respectively.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

The data collection for this study took place in Fall2014 at various public schools and English language institutes in Birjand City, Iran.

Before administering the research instruments, the researchers explained the project to the participants of the study in order to be sure that they understood the aims and procedure of the study and they are willing to participate in it voluntarily. The NEO-FFI and TSCES were administered so that the personality types and self-concept profiles of the participants could be prepared. The participants were also assured that the results would be kept confidential. They were given ample time to go over the questionnaire items and answer them.

The process of data collection lasted for four weeks. After that, the collected data were entered into SPSS. For data analysis, Correlation, Multiple Regressions, and ANOVA were used.

## 4. Result

### 4.1. Reliability of Instruments

In order to make sure that the questionnaires were reliable, an analysis was done employing Cronbach's Alpha to estimate the reliability indexes of the instruments.

**Table 1. Results of Reliability of Instruments**

Questionnaire	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-concept	33	.652
Big-five	60	.80

As Table 1 shows, both instruments, self-concept and Big-five, enjoy a relatively high reliability ( $\alpha = .652$  for self-concept;  $\alpha = .80$  for big-five).

### 4.2. Test of Normality

In order to ensure the normality of data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted for all data (Table 2.). Null hypothesis of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is the normality of the data. If the obtained P-Value is more than 0.05 then the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 2. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Instruments**

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test							
		Self-concept	neu	ext	ope	agr	con
N		112	112	112	112	112	112
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	106.92	18.28	31.86	29.86	32.57	33.28
	Std. Deviation	7.03	2.61	5.89	3.74	3.97	4.48
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.19	.26	.24	.19	.31	.26
	Positive	.14	.26	.19	.19	.31	.27
	Negative	-.19	-.21	-.24	-.12	-.20	-.18
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.98	2.75	2.51	1.99	3.30	2.82
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.12	.09	.07	.09	.06	.07
a. Test distribution is Normal.							
b. Calculated from data.							

*\*Note: neu stands for Neuroticism; ext stands for Extraversion; ope stands for Openness to experience; agr stands for Agreeableness; con stands for Conscientiousness.*

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big...*

As table 2 shows, data are normal because  $p$ -value is greater than .05 for all data ( $p=.121$  for self-concept;  $p=.087$  for Neu;  $p=.072$  for Ext;  $p=.094$  for Ope;  $p=.061$  for Agr;  $p=.067$  for Con.).

### 4.3. Inferential Statistics

To answer the research questions of the study inferential statistics were used.

#### 4.3.1. First Null-hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>1:“There is no significant relationship between EFL teachers’ Big Five personality traits and their self-concept as teachers”.

To test the first null-hypothesis, Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis was employed.

*Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Self-concept and the Big-five Components*

	Self-concept	neu	ext	ope	agr	con
Mean	106.92	18.28	31.85	29.85	32.57	33.28
N	112	112	112	112	112	112
Std. Deviation	7.03	2.61	5.89	3.73	3.97	4.48

Based on Table 3, means of these participants in self-concept and the Big Five components i.e., neu, ext, ope, agr, and con are 106.92, 18.28, 31.85, 29.85, 32.57, and 33.28, respectively.

**Table 4. Correlations between Self-concept and the Components of Big-five**

		concept	neu	ext	ope	agr	con
Concept	Pearson	1	.44**	.80**	.77**	.24*	.42**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00	.00	.00	.01	.00
	N	112	112	112	112	112	112

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

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 4 shows, self-concept is significantly correlated with the five components of the Big-Five: (neu ( $r=.44$ ,  $p=.00$ ); ext ( $r=.80$ ,  $p=.00$ ); ope( $r=.77$ ,  $p=.00$ ); agr ( $r=.24$ ,  $p=.01$ ); con ( $r=.42$ ,  $p=.00$ ) since  $p$ -value is less than .05 in each correlation conducted. Accordingly, the first null-hypothesis is rejected.

#### 4.3.1.1. Regression Analysis for Null-Hypothesis One

A stepwise regression was conducted to see how much of the variability in the self-concept is predicted by the five sub-scales of the Big-Five.

**Table 5. Results of Model Summary for Self-concept and Big-five Components**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.94 <sup>a</sup>	.89	.89	2.37

a. Predictors: (Constant), con, ext, agr, neu, ope

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big...*

**Table 6. Coefficients for Self-concept & Big-five Components**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	37.80	4.935		7.66	.00	28.02	47.589
Neu	1.69	.30	.63	5.59	.00	1.09	2.28
Ext	-.14	.19	-.12	-.75	.46	-.52	.24
Ope	1.27	.27	.67	4.67	.00	.73	1.81
Agr	-1.20	.29	-.68	-4.15	.00	-1.77	-.63
Con	1.32	.20	.84	6.67	.00	.93	1.71

a. Dependent Variable: self-concept

As Table 6 shows, four components of the Big-Five including “Neuroticism”, “Openness to experience”, “Agreeableness”, and “Conscientiousness” account for a significant amount of variability in the dependant variable, self-concept ( $p < .05$ ). The largest Beta accounts for most of the variability. Here “Conscientiousness” accounts for the highest variability, accounting for .84 of the variability in the dependant variable for every one unit of change in itself. The relationship and the direction of the prediction are negative or reverse for the “Agreeableness” component since the Beta is -.68 indicating a negative direction between this component of the Big-Five and self-concept. Other components including “Neuroticism”, “Openness to experience” and “Conscientiousness” are directly and significantly correlated with self-concept. Only “Extraversion” does not have any significant effect on the dependent variable “self-concept” ( $p > .05$ ).

### 4.3.2. Second Null-hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no relationship among EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience with regard to their self-concept as teachers.

To test the second null-hypothesis, one-way ANOVA was employed. Table 7 summarizes descriptive statistics for the three groups, i.e., EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience.

**Table 7. Results of Descriptive Statistics for the Three Groups**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
low	28	108.50	6.55	1.24	105.96	111.04	95.00	116.00
mid	40	106.35	7.58	1.20	103.93	108.77	89.00	116.00
high	44	106.45	6.82	1.03	104.38	108.53	94.00	116.00
Total	112	106.93	7.03	.66	105.61	108.24	89.00	116.00

As Table 7 shows, 28 participants were categorized as low-experienced (below 5 years of EFL teaching experience), 40 participants as mid-experienced (between 5 to 10 years of EFL teaching experience) and 44 participants as high-experienced (more than 10 years of EFL teaching experience) EFL teachers. Means of low, mid, and high-experienced EFL teachers in self-concept are 108.5, 106.35, and 106.45, respectively.

**Table 8. Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.838	2	109	.435

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

As the table 8 displays,  $p$ -value is more than .05(.435), so the null hypothesis of Levene test which is the equality of variances, is accepted. Therefore, ANOVA can be employed.

**Table 9. Results of One-way ANOVA for Self-concept**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	92.42	2	46.21	.93	.40
Within Groups	5397.01	109	49.51		
Total	5489.43	111			

As Table 9 shows, there is not any statistically significant difference ( $F=.93$ ,  $p=.40>0.05$ ) among three groups with respect to self-concept. Accordingly, the second null-hypothesis is accepted indicating that “there is no relationship among EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience with regard to their self-concept as teachers.”

## **5. Discussion**

The first research question of this study was about the relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their self-concept as teachers. This question was answered on the basis of the teachers' performance on The NEO Five Factor Inventory and Teacher Self-concept Evaluation Scale. As it is indicated in tables 3 and 4, the participants' performance showed a significant relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their self-concept as teachers.

The regression analyses clarified the nature of the relationships between the Big Five traits and self-concept. Self-concept was significantly correlated with four components of the Big-Five personality traits. It was positively related

with “Neuroticism”, “Openness to experience”, “Agreeableness” and “Conscientiousness”. These results may suggest that teachers who are responsible and intellectually curious may have higher perceptions of themselves, be hard-working, and competitive.

The findings of many studies in the literature have confirmed the positive impacts of teacher self-concept on different aspects of teacher performance (Ross & Gray, 2004; Di Fabio, Majer, & Taralla, 2006). However, studies addressing the relationship between Big Five Personality Traits and their Self-concept are lacking in the literature and therefore more studies are needed to be done in this regard.

Conscientiousness (the main predictor of teacher self-concept in the present study) has been substantiated to be the main predictor of job performance across different professions. Ones et al. (2007) assert that “evidence suggests that conscientiousness is the single best, generalizable Big Five predictor of job performance” (p. 1002). Moreover, while they proved that for various professions, various combinations of Big Five produce the best level of validity, they stated that apart from conscientiousness, there sounds to be no other personality traits that predict overall job performance with similarly consistent validities across various occupations.

Furthermore, in this study, extroversion did not have any significant effect on self-concept meaning that being social and assertive may not be an indicator of higher self-concept. This does not support the findings of the study by Rushton et al. (2007). In order for identifying the effective teacher personality traits, Rushton et al., employed the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) and Beiderman Risk Taking (BRT) scale to 58 teachers. In their results, they maintained that “adaptation and acceptance of change are becoming common factors necessary for success in public education”, and ENFP (extroversion,

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

intuition, feeling, perceiving), and ENTP (extroversion, intuition, thinking, perceiving) personality traits “accept these factors more readily and are, therefore, an asset to the field of education” (p. 440). Finally, they suggest that the ENFP types are the best teachers in the State of Florida.

Furthermore, the findings of this study is not compatible with the results of Barrick and Mount’s (1991) study, who explored the relationship between Big Five personality dimensions and job performance criteria for five occupational groups. They indicated that extroversion was the most important FFM variable for two occupations involving social interaction. Similarly, investigating the relationship between FFM of personality and team performance, Rothstein and Goffin (2006, p. 165) proposed that, extroversion is the best predictor of team related behavior. In their review, 11 of the 15 published studies reported significant correlations between extroversion and various measures including team performance, which is not in line with the results of the present study.

Because of the significant role of personality factors in individual job performance, many studies have been done in this regard. Ones et al. (2007) contend that plenty of the initial researches carried out since the mid-1980s have demonstrated high support for employing personality measures in staffing decision. In addition, they stated that personality construct is capable of predicting and explaining attitudes, behaviors, performance, and other outcomes in organizational settings. Besides, personality testing can enhance staff fit and decrease turnover (Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). As a result, as personality features influence performance in many fields, it sounds reasonable to claim that the teaching profession is not an exception.

In another study, Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) tried to determine the relationship between personality dimensions and job performance. The results showed that Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness to Experience and

Conscientiousness were related to task performance and creativity. Three personality dimensions, namely Emotional Stability, Openness to Experience and Agreeableness, explained 28% of the variance in participants' management performance.

On the basis of the Five- Factor Model (FFM), Poropat (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of personality- academic performance relationships, with cumulative sample sizes ranging to over 70,000. The findings showed that academic performance significantly correlated with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience. It was also found that correlations between conscientiousness and academic performance were largely independent of intelligence.

Bidjerano and Yun Dai (2007) explored the relationship between the big-five model of personality and the use of self-regulated learning strategies. The findings indicated that the personality trait of Intellect made an independent contribution to the variance in student GPA, while effort regulation mediated the effects of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness.

Roohani and Forouzandeh (2013) tried to examine Iranian EFL learners' personality profiles to find the relationship between personality types and poetry comprehension, the predictors of poetry comprehension and the role of gender in poetry comprehension. The collected data analyzed through Pearson product-moment correlation, multiple regression, and independent t-test statistics. The findings showed that the judging and perceiving personality types were the most and least reported personality types, respectively. Moreover, there existed no significant relationship between several types of personality and understanding English poetry. Furthermore, there were a significant positive correlation between the judging type of personality and English poetry comprehension and a significant negative one between

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

perceiving type of personality and English poetry comprehension among the participants.

Sadeghi, MohdKasim, Hoon Tan, and Abdullah (2012) attempted to investigate the relationship between learning styles, personality and reading comprehension performance. The findings indicated that there was a relationship between personality types and/or traits of the learners, the way they establish their learning styles and their academic success in school and university both at an undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

In their study, Komarraju and Karau (2005) explored the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and individual differences in college students' academic motivation. The findings indicated that there was a complicated pattern of significant relationships between the Big Five traits and the 16 sub scales of the AMI. Stepwise (forward) multiple regressions clarified the relationships between personality and three core factors of the AMI (engagement, achievement, and avoidance). Specifically, engagement was best explained by Openness to experience and Extraversion. Achievement was best explained by Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience. Finally, avoidance was best explained by Neuroticism, Extraversion, and by an inverse relationship with Conscientiousness and Openness to experience.

Taking personality traits into consideration, the results of this study lend supports to the findings of Ikpi, Enya, and Johnny (2014), Ghyasi, Yazdani, and AminiFarsani (2013), Ghoreyshi (2013), Roohani and Forouzandeh (2013), De Feyter, Caers, Vigna, and Berings (2012), Sadeghi, MohdKasim, Hoon Tan, and Abdullah (2012), Poropat (2009), Navidnia (2009), Bidjerano and Yun Dai (2007), Komarraju and Karau (2005), Hassanzadeh, Gholami, Allahyar, and Noordin (2012) since personality traits has played a significant role in learning and learning.

The second question of the study was to examine the possible differences among EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience with regard to their self-concept as teachers. As it was shown in tables 7, 8, and 9, there was no statistically significant difference among three groups of teachers with respect to their self-concept. As a result, there was no difference among EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience with regard to their self-concept as teachers. In other words, experience might have no effect in teachers' perception of their own characters and capabilities.

To the researchers' knowledge, because no studies in regard with the difference among EFL teachers with low, mid, and high experience and their self-concept have been conducted so far, more studies are needed to be done in this regard to confirm or reject the findings of this study.

## **6. Conclusion**

Generally, in many educational systems, emphasis has been mostly on learners; their preferences, styles, personality traits, self-concept, etc., and the expression and acknowledgment of such features in teachers have been less investigated. Considering the significant role of teachers in the students' success of failure, more studies are needed to be done on teachers' characteristics.

The present study tried to pay attention to this gap by examining the relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their self-concept. Also, it tried to examine if there is any relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their self-concept. Results indicated that self-concept was significantly correlated with four components of the Big-Five personality traits. It was positively related with "Neuroticism", "Openness to experience" and "Conscientiousness", but negatively related with "Agreeableness". Findings also indicated no statistically significant difference among the three

### *Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

groups (low, mid, and high experience EFL teachers) with respect to their self-concept.

The results of the study may help teachers to be more aware of their personal world and its influence on their daily practice. They can also be beneficial for teacher evaluators and teacher educators to be more informed of teachers' individual differences, and school principals to take into consideration personality and self-concept as important factors in teacher recruitment. Also, schools and teacher training centers can hold personality development programs for providing training in self-concept skills in order to prepare teachers for a successful practical teaching.

The study had certain limitations as well. Firstly, the data in the study were collected through questionnaires. Even though the two questionnaires used in this study are highly reliable, there is a caveat in the self-rated scales that the data may be self-inflated. Therefore, the results are reliable to the extent that the participants provided true and reliable answers which truly reflected their perceptions. Secondly, data were collected from 112 EFL teachers teaching in Birjand city at the eastern part of Iran. To be more generalizable, future studies with more participants from different contexts are needed.

Considering the significant role of teachers in the success or failure of students, and the prominent influences of their personal characteristics on their performance, we hope that this line of research be continued by other interested researchers.

## References

- Asp, D. N., & Butler, J. H. (1975): The effects of teachers' inferred self-concept upon student achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 68, 386-389.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press.
- Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The Big Five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*. 44, 1-23.
- Bergner, R. M., & Holmes, J. R. (2000). Self-concepts and self-concept change: A statue dynamic approach. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 37, 36-44.
- Burns, R. (1982). *Self concept development and education*. London: Holt Education.
- Clayson, D., & Sheffet, M. (2006). Personality and the student evaluation of teaching. *Journal of Marketing Evaluation*, 28, 149-160.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Four ways five factors are basic. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 13, 653- 665.
- De Feyter, T., Caers, R., Vigna, C., & Berings, D. (2012). Unraveling the impact of the Big Five personality traits on academic performance: The moderating and mediating effects of self-efficacy and academic motivation. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 22(4), 439-448.
- Di Fabio, A., Majer, V., & Taralla, B. (2006). Correlations of teacher self-efficacy: Personal characteristics and attitude toward the job. *Psychologie du travail et des organizations*. 12, 263–277
- Elempuru, I. (1988). Teacher self-concept and his/her assessment of the students' self-concept. In A.Villa (Ed.), *Perspectives and problems of the teaching profession* (pp. 250-255). Madrid: Narcea.

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

- Epstein, S. (1982). The Self-concept: A review and the proposal of an integrated theory of personality. In E. Staub (Ed.), *Personality: Basic issues and current research* (pp. 82-132). Englewood Cliffs, New York: Prentice Hall.
- Fairhurst, A. M., & Fairhurst, L. L. (1995). *Effective teaching effective learning: Making the personality connection in your classroom* (1st ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Davis-Black.
- Ghoreyshi, M. (2013). The nexus between Iranian EFL students' Big Five personality traits and foreign language speaking confidence. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 601-611.
- Ghyasi, M., Yazdani, M., & AminiFarsani, M. (2013). The relationship between personality types and self-regulated learning strategies of language learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 2(4), 74-82.
- Hassanzadeh, V., Gholami, R., Allahyar, N., & Noordin, N. (2012). Motivation and personality traits of TESL postgraduate students towards the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in second language teaching. *English Language Teaching*, 5(4), 74-86
- Ikpi, E. E., Enya, D. B., & Johnny, U. A. (2014). The Influence of Personality Trait on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Cross River State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19(3), 12-19.
- Komarraju, M., & Karau, S. J. (2005). The relationship between the Big Five personality traits and academic motivation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 39, 557-567.
- McCrae, R. R. (1989). Why I advocate the Five Factor Model of personality: joint factor analysis of the NEO-PI with other instruments. In D. Buss, & N. Cantor, *Personality psychology: Recent trends and emerging directions* (pp. 237-345). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1989). The structure of interpersonal traits: Wiggins's circumplex and the five-factor model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 586-595.

- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1996). Towards a new generation of Personality theories: theoretical contexts for the Five Factor Model. In J. Wiggins, *The Five Factor Model of personality: Theoretical perspectives* (pp. 51-87). New York: Guilford Press.
- Miller, R., Murnane, R., & Willett, J. B. (2008). Do teacher absences impact student achievement? Longitudinal evidence from one urban school district. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 30*, 181-200.
- Musek, J. (1986). Self as motivational power of personality. *Psychology, 19*, 45-59.
- Navidnia, H. (2009). Psychological characteristics of English language teachers: On the relationship among big five personality traits and teacher efficacy beliefs. *JELS, 1*(1), 79-99.
- Ones, D., Dilchert, S., Viswesraran, C., & Judge, T. (2007). In support of personality assessment in organizational settings. *Personnel Psychology, 60*, 995-1027.
- Pervin, L. and John, O. (1999). *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research* (2nd Edition). The Guilford Press.
- Phares, E. J. (1991). *Introduction to Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Poropat, A. E. (2009). *A meta-analysis of the Five-Factor Model of personality and academic performance*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Griffith University, Nathan, Australia.
- Purkey, W.W. (1988). *An overview of self-concept theory for counselors*. AnnArbor, Michigan: ERIC Clearinghouse on counseling and personnel services.
- Roohani, A., & Forouzandeh, F. (2013). On the relationship between personality types and English poetry comprehension. The 1st Conference on Language Learning & Teaching: An Interdisciplinary Approach (LLT-IA).
- Ross, J., & Gray, P. (2004). *Transformational leadership and collective teacher efficacy transformational leadership and teacher commitment to*

*Uncovering the Relationship between EFL Teachers' Big..*

*organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy.*

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego.

Rothmann, S., & Coetzer, E. (2003). The big five personality dimensions and job performance. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(1), 68-74.

Rothstein, M., & Goffin, R. (2006). The use of personality in personnel selection: What does current research support? *Human Resource Management Review*, 16, 155-180.

Rushton, S., Morgan, J., & Richard, M. (2007). Teacher's Myers-Briggs personality profile: Identifying effective teacher personality traits. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 432-441.

Ryckman, R. (1982). *Theories of personality*. (2nd ed.) Monterey, CA, Brooks: Cole.

Sadeghi, N., MohdKasim, Z., Hoon Tan, B., & Abdullah, F. S. (2012). Learning styles, personality types and reading comprehension performance. *English Language Teaching*, 5(4), 116-123.

Sanders, W., & Horn, S. P. (1998). Research findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) database: Implications for educational evaluation and research. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 12, 247- 256.

Shafer, A. B. (2000). Relation of the Big Five to Biodata and aspects of the self. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 43, 1017-1035.

Shavelson, R. J., Huber, J. J., & Stanton, J. C. (1976). Self-concept: Validation of Construct Interpretations. *Review of Educational Research*, 46, 407-441.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. (2001). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy belief of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, article in press. Retrieved on May 6, 2008, from: [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

- Villa, A. (1992). *Self-concept and education. Theory, measurement, and pedagogical practice*. Vitoria: Servicio de publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco.
- Villa, A., & Calvete, E. (2001). Development of the teacher self-concept evaluation scale and its relation to burnout. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 27, 239-255.
- Volpi, F. (1996). *Teacher self-esteem*. Madrid: CIPA.