

**Analysis of relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency
among fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi,
Nigeria.**

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Abstract

Developing and maintaining interpersonal dependency or relationship is important for success in life. The present study was initiated to analyse the relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. The study utilized a descriptive survey design and selected 93 undergraduate students by a simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. While a standardized self-report questionnaire which had three sections was used for data collection. Three hypotheses were tested at $p < .05$ level of significance. The results show that agreeableness [$r = .889$; $p < .001$], conscientiousness [$r = .829$; $p < .001$], neuroticism [$r = .866$; $p < .001$], openness to experience [$r = .906$; $p < .001$] had a significant relationship on interpersonal dependency, while extraversion [$r = -.217$; $p > .05$] revealed no significant relationship. Further, the results revealed that there was no significant interactive influence of age and gender on interpersonal dependence [$F(1, 80) = 2.647$; $p > .05$]. Lastly, the results show that there was a significant difference between males and females on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students [$t(78) = -2.491$; $p < .05$]. In the light of the findings, the study recommended appropriate measures that can strengthen students' interpersonal interaction skills.

Keywords: Interpersonal dependency, personality traits, Undergraduate Students, Keffi

1. Introduction

Interpersonal dependency is one of the major elements and features of all peoples throughout the globe. Students' interpersonal dependency has been an issue of interest in most higher institutions of learning (Park, 2009; Song, 2008). It is a well-known fact that students at any level of education need to interact with other fellow students to develop self-identity, a sense of belonging, higher institution adaptation and increased academic or career success chances. University students in particular, being majorly within the stage of middle or late adolescence, are preoccupied with the social recognition and sense of belonging which may be attained through harmonious relationships with peers (Lee, 2011; Biordi & Nicholson, 2013). To maintain a healthy and satisfying social identity during the university education, interpersonal dependency ability is necessary since higher institution is a bridge between social, family, and work life (Kim et al., 2012; Brenner et al., 2013; Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012).

Given this, interpersonal dependency is a mutual interaction between a people and another, or within a group of people that share ideas, expectations, moment of joy, happiness, success, achievements, failures, burdens, or people that alert one another on issues, create awareness within the member of the group (Blatt & Maroudas, 1992; Huang et al., 2016). It is also refers to the amount of support that an individual gets from the other person. In the same vein, interpersonal dependency in real life emphasizes real interaction and shared activities among friends, peers, parents, and teachers (Grieve et al., 2013). Schutz (1960) alluded to interpersonal dependence as being a psychological need which involves three different levels: affection, inclusion, and control. He refers to affection as the desire for expressing emotions and being loved by others; inclusion as the hope of an individual of being accepted and recognised; while control was regarded as the desire of an individual to influence people, things, and objectives in certain aspects. High-quality interpersonal relationships have a healing effect on traumatic experience; this is why optimal physical and psychological human functioning depends on quality relationships (Carvallo & Gabriel, 2006). Moreso, healthy dependency is marked by behavior flexibility, wherein the individual relies on others when the situation is appropriate and engages in self-reliance when autonomous functioning is required. These individuals tend to see themselves as competent, and they develop strong, secure bonds with significant others (Goldin et al., 1972; Engler, 1991; Bornstein, 2005). It is also noted that interpersonal dependency

enhances overall well-being like openness, agreeableness, extraversion, etc. (Bornstein, 2012; Parameswari, 2015). Individuals with unhealthy interpersonal dependency traits tend to be more sensitive to peer pressure, less stable in their attitudes and beliefs, and have a more pronounced need for acceptance by others (Bornstein, 2009).

Conversely, students with low interpersonal relationships feel lonely (Michek & Loudová, 2014; Zhang et al., 2015), anxious (Lasgaard et al., 2011), depressed (Kenny et al., 2013; Luo et al., 2017), having difficulty adjusting to the school environment and getting along with their friends (Tirmidzi et al., 2013; Bagwell et al., 2015). This leads to conflicts, hostility (Burk & Laursen, 2005), anti-social behaviors such as aggressiveness and fighting (Santrock, 2016), and disrupt the learning process in school (Collie et al., 2016). The greater the individual's interpersonal interaction, the better adjusted they are and the more possibility they have of achieving success in their endeavours (Brenner et al., 2013).

Personality traits are considered to be an important construct that determines individual behaviour, especially interpersonal dependency. Given this, personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics that are the embodiment of an individual. They are habitual patterns of behaviour, temperament, and emotion. Skills, on the other hand, are the learned capacity to carry out specific tasks. Personality is also a set of individual differences that are affected by the development of an individual's values, attitudes, personal memories, social relationships, habits, and skills (McCrae & Costa, 1999). In the same vein, the personality traits of the individuals render a significant contribution to facilitating communication processes. For instance, when individuals possess an extrovert nature, they take pleasure in dependence and communicating with others, whereas, when they possess an introverted nature, they do not take pleasure in social intimacy, relationship, and communicating with others (Bartel, 2019). Paying attention to the development of one's personality is regarded to be of utmost significance (McCrae et al., 1999). When individuals aim towards enhancing their career prospects and sustaining their living conditions in a well-organized manner, they need to focus on all the factors that are necessary to enrich their personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Within the educational institutions as well as within various types of employment settings, it is necessary for all individuals to possess pleasant personality traits. As pleasant personality traits are regarded to be of utmost significance in the achievement of many behavioural outcomes (McCrae et al., 1999). Given the importance

of the above, this current study aims to investigate relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency amongst fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The connection between individual characteristics and their ability to interact effectively has been a subject of interest among scholars in the public space. This is because many individuals especially students of many higher institutions find it difficult to relate effectively. On this note, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationship is important for success in life. Interpersonal dependency serves as a base for social support that plays a crucial role particularly in emotionally charged situations. It is also noted that interpersonal relationship enhances overall wellbeing of man (Kenny et al., 2012).

Owing to these facts, a number of studies have confirmed the relationship between various socio-psychological factors in relation to behavioural outcomes. For instance, Goswami (2012) studied the positive and negative quality dependency and well-being of children and reported that positive family, neighbourhood, and friends increase the well-being of children, whereas negative dependency tends to decrease their well-being. Among students, interpersonal dependency determines their achievement, and also relationship encourages performance (Aspelin, 2012). Interpersonal dependency predicts emotional distress. Students with high levels of interpersonal relationships showed low levels of emotional distress (Kenny et al., 2012). It has also demonstrated that, there is a strong association between interpersonal dependency levels and risk for major depression (Vezzali et al., 2018). Other studies examined interpersonal problems related to dependent personality disorder (Kenny et al., 2012). Despite the growing body of research on the predictors of interpersonal dependency among populations, the roles of personality traits on interpersonal dependency remain sparse in the literature. As a result, the present study aims to analyse the relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency amongst fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

Research Questions

In line with the study objective, the study answered the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students?
2. What is the gender and age main and interactive influence in interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students?
3. What is the gender difference in interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students?

Statement of the hypotheses

Based on the review of extant studies, below hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant.

1. There will be a significant relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students.
2. Gender and age will have a main and interactive influence on interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students.
3. There will be a significant difference between male and female students on interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students.

2. Literature Review

Personality Traits (The Five-Factor Model)

Personality is defined as an inborn temperament and features arising in different situations, and a combination of the characteristics of a person which separate him/her from other people (Phares, 1991). It is defined as the unique features of every human being; exhibition of characteristic adaptations; unique identifications towards life, and a set of cultural differences (Hogan et al., 1996; McAdams & Pals, 2006). As can be understood from the definitions, personality is discussed in terms of specific traits and factors.

The personality traits which were put forward by Eysenck (1967) on the basis of biological stimuli are classified as follows: extraversion, neuroticism, and psychosis. Personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics that are the embodiment of an individual. They are

habitual patterns of behaviour, temperament, and emotion. Skills, on the other hand, are the learned capacity to carry out specific tasks. Personality is also a set of individual differences that are affected by the development of an individual: values, attitudes, personal memories, social relationships, habits, and skills (McAdams & Olson, 2010; Mischel & Smith, 2004).

The Big Five Personality Traits

As a result of the increases in research on personality, personality psychologists have developed a measuring tool called the Five Factor Personality Inventory (Five-Factor Model: FFM) by using factor analyses based on adjective-driven questions. This inventory is composed of five factors namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism/emotional stability, and openness (McCrae & John, 1992; Barrick & Mount, 1993; Busato et al., 1998; Heller et al., 2002; Burke & Witt, 2004; Harris & Lee, 2004).

Extraversion involves assertiveness, the desire to be social, love of ambition, talkativeness, and aggressiveness (Barrick & Mount 2001). Individuals with a high level of extraversion, factor are positive, social, energetic, cheerful, dominant, assertive, and caring to others, while individuals with a low level of extraversion factor are defined as introverted, timid, quiet, and preferring solitude (Bond et al, 2002).

Openness to experience referred to as an individual scope of interests, and entirely open people are characterized by innovation and experimentation. They are adventurous and very creative. People with low openness struggle with abstract thinking (Atari et al., 2017).

Conscientiousness is the tendency for a person to exhibit self-discipline, and posit to obtain goals beyond expectations (Farrukh et al., 2016). People who are conscious display serious attachment to duty, manage their emotions appropriately, and regulate their impulses (Arora, 2020). Conscious people are mostly careful, hardworking, disciplined, thorough, responsible diligent, organised, committed to their employer, preserving the image of their company, and avoiding acting on impulses (Guay et al., 2016). Persons with high conscientiousness are obsessive and stubborn and people with low conscientiousness are said to be flexible, unreliable, and sloppy (Kerr et al., 2017). Extraversion is defined as a person's capacity to relate with other people comfortably (Parks-Leduc et al., 2015). They are persons mostly recognised, always

excited, sociable, and outspoken (Liu & Campbell, 2017a). Highly extroverted people become emotionally expressive and introverts are the opposite of extroverts and are persons who are reluctant to establish any relationship (Atari et al., 2017).

Agreeableness is usually used to explain how people express kindness, and warmth, and show concern for social harmony (Katic et al., 2018). Persons who show high agreeableness mostly show courtesy, are very considerate, cooperative, helpful, forgiving, tolerant, team players, trusted, generous, rarely start a conflict in relationships, and are willing to compromise to ensure others feel better (Oh et al., 2014). Most times, they are regarded as “obedient children” (Liu & Campbell, 2017a; Parks-Leduc et al., 2015). People that display a low level of agreeableness mostly are cheaters, irresponsible, argumentative, and manipulative (Guay et al., 2016). The situation where an individual experiences adverse emotion such as depression, anxiety, or anger is regarded as neuroticism (Arora, 2020).

Neuroticism defines a person’s emotional instability and in another breath a person’s emotional stability. (Ali, 2019). Individuals low on neuroticism are considered to be emotionally stable and those high on neuroticism are indicated to be emotionally unstable (Bleidorn et al., 2019). These traits constitute the “Big Five Model of personality which has obtained recognition in academia. Below is a summary of the description of traits in table 1.

Table 1

Personality Traits

Traits	Description
Openness to experience	Being curious, original, intellectual, creative, and open to new ideas.
Conscientiousness	Being organized, systematic, punctual, achievement-oriented, and dependable.
Extraversion	Being outgoing, talkative, sociable, and enjoying social situations.
Agreeableness	Being affable, tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind, and warm.
Neuroticism	Being anxious, irritable, temperamental, and moody.

Source: Korankye et al., (2021)

Interpersonal Dependency

Interpersonal dependency referred to a complex of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours revolving around the need to associate closely with valued other people. Its conceptual sources include the psychoanalytic theory of object relations, social learning theories of dependency, and the ethological theory of attachment. Similarly, interpersonal dependency refers to the amount of support that an individual gets from the other person and the level of it gets varied among people. Those who have higher interpersonal dependency are labeled as having a low self-esteem person (Diehl, 2020).

Additionally, interpersonal dependency represents a useful concept to study the social traits of gamers in relation to potential pathological gameplay. The concept itself describes how people rely on others – how their cognition, motivation, affective responses, and actual behavioural patterns are affected by relationships with others (Bornstein et al., 2009). The concept is, to some extent, similar to the concept of attachment; for instance, high levels of interpersonal dependency share some similarities with insecure attachment (Pincus & Wilson, 2001).

Bornstein et al. (2009) divided the idea of interpersonal dependency into a three-dimensional concept. The three dimensions of interpersonal dependency are healthy dependency (confidence and autonomy, desire for closeness, and situation-appropriate help-seeking) representing healthy functioning; and two representing dysfunctional functioning – destructive overdependence (characterized by weak self, fear of negative evaluation, and reassurance seeking) and dysfunctional detachment (fear of being hurt, fear of being overwhelmed by others, and consequent need for control over social situations) (Bornstein et al., 2003). Individuals with unhealthy interpersonal dependency traits tend to be more sensitive to peer pressure, less stable in their attitudes and beliefs, and have a more pronounced need for acceptance by others (Bornstein, 2009). These characteristics may be associated with negative consequences and feelings in some social contexts and situations but may be effective and useful in others.

Relationship between Personality traits and Interpersonal Dependency

The five-factor model of personality (Barrick et al., 2001; Hogan, 1991; Hough & Furnham, 2003), including openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability, provides a meaningful theoretical framework for postulating the likelihood that certain

traits lead to the development of interpersonal relationships in a different environment. The five traits; extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and emotional stability are of interest here. These five dispositional tendencies represent core elements of interpersonal behavior and represent interpersonal traits that have been demonstrated to be positively related to social cohesion (Barrick et al., 1998; Barrick & Mount, 1993; Erdheim et al., 2006).

More specifically, each trait supports the development of social ties with others. Extraverts are described as energetic, participative, gregarious, and expressive. Because they tend to be social, assertive, and bold in nature, extraverted individuals should form and maintain interpersonal relationships at work (Miller, 1991). Employees high on extraversion enjoy socialization and developing relationships. They are therefore more likely to cultivate social interaction and build new connections. Taking a social networks perspective, Kalish and Robins (2006) provided evidence that extroverted individuals tend to construct broad, dense, heterogeneous social networks. Extraverts not only have a higher quantity of interpersonal relationships, but they also perceive those relationships to be of higher quality. Extraverted individuals feel closer to their friends and value those relationships more highly (Balmaceda et al., 2013).

Agreeable individuals are described as compassionate, flexible, fair, generous, and considerate (Goldberg, 1992). They have the tendency to be highly approachable because of their supportive nature and sensitivity. Costa and McCrae (1992) suggested that agreeable people are altruistic, sympathetic, and eager to help others, with an expectation that such behavior will be reciprocated. Such individuals strive for cooperation over competition. The formation and development of interpersonal relationships are partially a function of warmth and kindness, both attributes of agreeableness (Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Berings et al. (2004) found that agreeable individuals are central in friendship networks, perhaps due to their longing for close relationships (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2008), their ability to provide social and emotional support to others and their welcoming of new friends. Agreeable individuals are predisposed to seek out interpersonally supportive and accepting environments (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2008). Agreeable people strive to foster pleasant and harmonious interpersonal relationships (Ilies et al, 2009) and increase group harmony (Blickle, 1998). People prefer to be friends with individuals

high on agreeableness because there is less irritation in the friendship (Berry et. al., 2000). They like other people more and tend to be liked by others in return.

Emotionally stable individuals are described as confident, controlled, and well-adjusted. They have a tendency to be calm, unemotional, and secure (Barrick & Mount, 1996). These characteristics combined with their positive disposition attract others to emotionally stable individuals as a source of support. Emotionally stable individuals are pleasurable to be around because they tend to be happy (Hills & Argyle, 2001; Vitterso, 2001). In contrast, individuals low in emotional stability (i.e., high in neuroticism) often express anger, moodiness, or insecurity and are not central in their friendship networks (Klein et. al., 2004). Individuals high on emotional stability experience more positive relationships with others because they possess higher levels of tolerance, forgiveness, and even-temperateness resulting in less conflict (Berry et al., 2000; Walker & Gorsuch, 2002). Emotionally stable individuals are more likely to be liked by others, a basic prerequisite for forming and maintaining interpersonal relationships at work (Blickle, 1998).

Demographic Factors and Interpersonal Dependency

Several studies have been conducted using different approaches to establish the connection between demographic factors and interpersonal relationship. For instance, several factors, such as the situation, time, cultures, and gender styles, may affect the process of communication. Gender differences may exist due to genetic differences, cultural exchange, behavioral expectations, and training. Several factors may influence people's communication styles, which may include cover their family background and upbringing, educational background, age, and also gender. In general, men and women talk differently and in particular ways. These differences are usually associated with their gender. Male and female brains have a different structure to process information differently (Tannen, 1991). In many cases, men analytically process the information while women abstractly handle things. Each gender is thus considered to have a distinctive communication pattern, and it often causes conflicts as it is always assumed that different gender may think and act similarly.

Males and females are distinguished based on their communication patterns (Tannen, 1991). It was found that males use conversation to establish status and power, which belongs to a "report"

type talk, while women tend to use conversation to create intimacy, which is considered as “rapport” type talk (Tannen, 1991). Therefore, the male performs competitive conversation, while the female presents a more cooperative one. In terms of problem-solving, males share a direct approach, while females tend to establish intimacy, show concern, and empathy. When it is related to the order of thinking, males look for solutions, and they often utilize their power to accomplish the problem-solving task while females usually use problem-solving to strengthen relationships. In general, male performs a higher percentage of presenting information, giving direction, providing answers, and direct disagreement than female do (Tannen, 1991)

3. Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted a descriptive survey research design where a self-report questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents on the studied variables. The study’s independent variable is personality traits. While interpersonal dependence is the dependent variable.

Participants, sample, and sampling techniques

The study participants were fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Simple random sampling using a stratified sampling technique was used to select Ninety-three (93) undergraduate students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Their demographic characteristics depict that 69 (74.2%) of the participants were males and 24 (25.8%) were females. Among the sampled participants, 57 (57.0%) were below the age of 30 years while 40 (43.0%) were from 30 years and above. On their ethnic group, 67 (72.0%) were Hausa/Fulani, 9 (9.7%) were Yoruba, 16 (17.2%) were Igbo while 1 (1.1%) of the respondents did not indicate his/her ethnicity. On their religious affiliations, 36 (38.7%) of the respondents were Christians while 57 (61.3%) were Islam. Moreover, 53 (57.0%) of the respondents were single, 37 (39.8%) were married, 2 (2.2%) were divorced and 1 (1.1%) did not indicate marital status. On the highest level of education, 29 (31.2%) of the respondents had SSCE, 23 (24.7%) had ND/NCE and 41 (44.1%) had B.Sc. as their highest educational level.

Measures

The instrument for data collection was a structure-validated questionnaire that consisted of three (3) sections. **Section A**, elicited personal information of the participants such as age, sex, religion, marital status, and academic levels. **Section B** was the Five Factor Personality Inventory (FFMP Scale) which was developed by John and Srivastava (1999), with 44-items measuring an individual on the dimensions of FFMP traits comprising conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion. The scale was a 5-point Likert scale response format, with responses ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (5). Some of the items were negatively phrased, these items are denoted by 'R', the participant's personality characteristics were determined by adding up all responses on each domain to a sum score with a score range from 8 to 50 points. The scale is scored based on its subscale. According to the author, the internal consistency for each domain ranges from 0.70 to 0.95, while in this study, the psychometric coefficient of the sub-scales reported in Cronbach alpha included conscientiousness as .60, agreeableness as .77, neuroticism as .58, openness to experience as .62 and extraversion as .69. **Section C**, Interpersonal Scale (SI): This is a 10 - items sub-scale of the sense of competence scale (SCS) developed by Janosik et al. (1987) designed to elicit data about one's interpersonal and intellectual competencies. The items are scored on a four-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The reliability coefficient for the 10-items interpersonal subscale was .79. Using Cronbach's alpha model, the reliability coefficient for the SCS was calculated at 0.78 (Janosik, et al, 1987). Azeez (2008) reported a linear relationship between the scale and emotional intelligence ($R = .079$). Ayodele (2010) found a high correlation between the scale and relational factors. This value was adjudged high and therefore, the instrument was considered reliable and appropriate for this study.

Procedure

The study took place among fresh undergraduate students at Nasarawa State University in Keffi, Nigeria. Proximity, convenience, and heterogeneity of students informed the choice of this setting. Questionnaires were administered to the undergraduate students of the above institution. For the ethics of the study, the selected participants were educated on the purposes of the study. Also, the participants were informed that the information gathered will be treated with the utmost

confidentiality and for research purposes only. The participants were also told that there was no right or wrong answer and as such should be honest in their responses. Consequently, a total of 110 copies of questionnaire were distributed, out of which 100 were returned; in the process of screening 93 questionnaires were found useful for the data analysis. This gave a response rate of 90%, and considered as good for this type of research.

Statistical methods

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis. For the study, three hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis one was analysed using zero-order correlation test and hypothesis two was analysed using univariate analysis. The reason for choosing this type of statistic is to enable the researcher to test the main influence and the interaction influence of the independent variables to the dependent variable. The third hypothesis was tested using an independent t-test to determine the mean difference between male and female students. All the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 2:

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

S/No	Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sex	Male	69	74.2
		Female	24	25.8
		Total	93	100.00
2	Age	Below 30 Years	57	57.0
		30 Years and Above	40	43.0
		Total	93	100.00
3	Ethnic Group	Hausa/Fulani	67	72.0
		Yoruba	9	9.7

		Igbo	16	17.2
		Missing	1	1.1
		Total	93	100.00
4	Religion	Christianity	36	38.7
		Islam	57	61.3
		Total	93	100.00
5	Marital Status	Single	53	57.0
		Married	37	39.8
		Divorced	2	2.2
		Missing	1	1.1
		Total	93	100.00
6	Highest Level of Education	SSCE	29	31.2
		ND/NCE	23	24.7
		B.Sc	41	44.1
		Total	93	100.00

Hypothesis One

This hypothesis states that there will be a significant relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependence among fresh undergraduate students. This hypothesis was tested using zero-order correlations and the result is presented in table 3:

Table 3

Summary of Zero Order Correlations Showing the Relationship between Personality Types and Interpersonal Dependence among Fresh Undergraduate Students in Nasrawa State University, Keffi

Variables	E	A	C	N	O	ID	Mean	SD
Extraversion (E)	-						27.57	6.936
Agreeableness (A)	-.085	-					18.54	6.42
Conscientiousness (C)	-.138	.594**	-				19.42	8.99
Neuroticism (N)	-.210	.814**	.551**	-			17.61	5.96
Openness (O)	-.087	.790**	.667**	.783**	-		18.70	6.09
Interpersonal Dependence (ID)	-.217	.889**	.829**	.866**	.906**	-	90.23	28.64

** = Sig at .001

The result in table 3 shows that there was no significant relationship between extraversion and interpersonal dependence among fresh undergraduate students [$r = -.217$; $p > .05$]. On the other hand, the result shows that there was a significant positive relationship between agreeableness and interpersonal dependence [$r = .889$; $p < .001$], a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and interpersonal dependence [$r = .829$; $p < .001$], a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and interpersonal dependence [$r = .866$; $p < .001$] a significant positive relationship between openness to experience and interpersonal dependence [$r = .906$; $p < .001$] among fresh undergraduate students.

Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis states that gender and age will have a main and interactive influence on interpersonal dependence among fresh undergraduate students. This was tested using univariate analysis and the result is presented in table 2.

Table 4**Summary of Univariate Analysis Showing the Main and Interaction Effects of Gender and Age on Interpersonal Dependence among Fresh Undergraduate Students**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	η
Gender	2885.206	1	2885.206	3.826	.044	.048
Age	1.383	1	1.383	.002	.966	.000
Gender*Age	1996.319	1	1996.319	2.647	.108	.034
Error	57314.678	76	754.140			
Total	716064.000	80				

The result in table 4 shows that there was a significant main influence of gender on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students [$F(1, 80) = 3.826; p < .05$]. On the other hand, there was no significant main influence of age on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students [$F(1, 80) = .002; p > .05$]. The result further showed that there was no significant interaction influence of gender and age on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students [$F(1, 80) = 2.647; p > .05$].

Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis states that there will be a significant difference between male and female students on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students. This hypothesis was tested using an independent t-test and the result is presented in table 3.

Table 5**Summary of Independent t-test Showing the Difference Males and Females on Interpersonal Dependence among Fresh Undergraduate Students**

DV	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	df	p
Interpersonal Dependence	Male	69	85.47	28.81	3.78	-2.491	78	<.05
	Female	24	102.77	24.62	5.25			

The result in table 5 shows that there was a significant difference between males and females on interpersonal dependence among undergraduate students [$t(78) = -2.491; p < .05$]. Observation of the mean difference shows that female undergraduate students (Mean = 102.77; SD = 24.62) significantly scored higher on interpersonal dependence than their male counterparts (Mean = 85.47; SD = 28.81). Based on this result, hypothesis three which stated that there will be a significant difference between male and female students on interpersonal dependence among fresh undergraduate students was therefore accepted.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study aims to examine the relationship between personality traits and interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, three research hypotheses were tested. Thus, hypothesis one states that there will be a significant positive relationship between personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness) and interpersonal dependency. This hypothesis was tested using correlational analysis and the results was revealed in parts. For instance, there was no significant relationship between extraversion and interpersonal dependency [$r = -.217; p > .05$]. On the other hand, the result shows that there was a significant positive relationship between agreeableness and interpersonal dependency [$r = .889; p < .001$], a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and interpersonal dependency [$r = .829; p < .001$], a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and interpersonal dependence [$r = .866; p < .001$] and a significant positive relationship between openness to experience and interpersonal dependency [$r = .906; p < .001$]. Based on these results, hypothesis one was confirmed. The reason could be that there is the likelihood that certain traits lead to the development of interpersonal relationships among students. More specifically, each trait supports the development of social ties with others. This agrees with some studies that personality information plays an important role in characterizing behaviours as well as helping parents, teachers, and students or individuals to realize their potential strengths and weaknesses (MOE, 2013). Similarly, it supports other information that personality trends also have a role and are the basis of self-assessment and emotion in career choice (Fabio et al., 2012). Individual personalities, especially important learners, are understood and known for involving real life.

Hypothesis two proposes that gender and age will have a main and interaction influence on interpersonal dependency among fresh undergraduate students. From the results, it shows that there was a significant main influence of gender on interpersonal dependency [$F(1, 80) = 3.826$; $p < .05$], while there was no significant main influence of age on interpersonal dependency [$F(1, 80) = .002$; $p > .05$]. The result further showed that there was no significant interaction influence of gender and age on interpersonal dependence [$F(1, 80) = 2.647$; $p > .05$]. Given this, the hypothesis was not supported. The likable explanation may be that gender and age are not significant regarding interpersonal relationships. Also, this may be due to the fact that similar family environments and opportunities are received by both adolescent boys and girls. This corroborates (Kartik & Audichya, 2018), who indicate that demographic factors are not significant concerning interpersonal bonding among or across gender and age.

Hypothesis three of the study states that there will be a significant gender difference on interpersonal dependency. The hypothesis was tested using a t-test for the independent sample and the result, therefore, shows a significant mean difference between male and female students. With these findings, the result was accepted. The probable explanation may be that boys show high preference for wanted control than girls and it is rare for boys to be emotionally close in their relationship. This fact could also mean that male students tend to show a positive attitude in the communication reflected by positive feelings and positive thoughts. While female students tend to perceive the problems that happen to them negatively, which might be caused by their lack of self-confidence, the preferable solution is to provide guidance that can assist the students in accepting problems and giving them the motivation that their issues can be solved.

This view is in agreement with with (Bakken & Romig, 1992)'s proposition; who explain that girls have a greater tendency to value close relationships. And also, relies on relationships as a resource. Girls are also concerned about maintaining harmonious relationships. However, other studies disagreed, by arguing that boys and girls might report similar degrees of closeness to their parents and a similar amount of conflict (Steinberg & Silk, 2002), nowadays, most families are moving towards practicing androgyny and do not discriminate against their children to communicate and bond with people in a different manner just because they belong to different

sexes; as families are moving beyond the traditional attitudes and behaviours and breaking the stereotypes (Kartik et al., 2018).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, interpersonal dependency as a socio-psychological concept which is related to the way people communicate or relate with each other, as well as the amount of interpersonal support and comfort which one gains from others is important in human daily lives. In view of this importance, we recommend that:

1. There is a need for students to learn and re-learn the skills of interpersonal relationships and effective communication.
2. It is also recommended that university management should establish an enlightening interpersonal dependency program where skills in interpersonal relationships and communication can be taught so that students can be successful both at school as they exhibit interpersonal and social skills, courteousness, respectful communication, and networking skills.
3. Further, the school's management should endeavor to put in place mechanisms 'can-do attitude' for those who always rely on others.

Limitations of the study

This study has contributed immensely to knowledge; however, several limitations may have influenced the results. First, the nature of the sample was restricted by the use of undergraduates. The average age of the sample tends to be significantly lower than the general population. The cross-sectional nature of the sample also limits the ability to generalize such findings. Secondly, using self-report measures may cause problems with social desirability bias, fatigue, and recall bias. Also, the assessment of personality traits and interpersonal dependency habits among the students was based on the individual's own assessment of his/her self and therefore responses could be biased.

Further, using an abridged version of the interpersonal dependency scale reduced its reliability. Finally, breaking the students into two gender groups reduced our sample size, which may have a negative impact on the power to find statistically significant relationships among variables. Future studies utilizing a larger sample size may wish to investigate this issue further.

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