

Openness to experience and self-efficacy as predictors of cross-cultural adjustment among selected members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of openness to experience and self-efficacy on the cross-cultural adjustment of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members in Lagos state. 345 youth corps members were selected for this study using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using three standardised psychological instruments. They include: The Cross-cultural Adjustment Scale, the General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE), and the Openness to experience subscale adapted from the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyse the five hypotheses in this study at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that openness to experience and self-efficacy accounted for 11% variance in the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corps members serving in Lagos state. Individuals who were open to experience and self-efficacious adjusted better to their new cultural environment than participants, who scored low in any of the traits. The findings of this study could help the government review the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme and introduce strategies such as cross-cultural training and support services to make adjustment easier on youth corps members.

Keywords: cross-cultural adjustment, openness to experience, self-efficacy, youth corps members

1. Introduction

Nigeria is one of the world's most culturally diverse nations, with over 250 ethnic groups and 500 spoken languages (Ajayi, 2022). Each of these ethnic groups has unique cultural beliefs and practices. The ethnic groups make up the six geo-political zones: North-Central (NC), North-East (NE), North- West (NW), South-West (SW), South-East (SE), and South-South (SS). Nigeria is often prone to inter-ethnic conflicts, a major one being the Nigerian civil war that lasted from 6th July, 1967 to January, 1970. To promote unity, and reconcile citizens after the Nigerian Civil War, the Nigerian government instituted The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). The programme is compulsory for all graduates under the age of 30 years with a BSc. or HND who intend to work in a government organisation or some private companies in Nigeria. Through the NYSC programme, graduates often termed “corp members” or “youth corpsers” are deployed to states culturally, historically, and even geographically different from their state of origin, so they can socialize with and offer professional support to people living in those regions for a year (Okafor & Ani, 2014). Being that these youth corpsers are moving from one part of Nigeria to another, they are most likely to encounter differences in cultural norms, religion, feeding habits, security, language, and climatic conditions. An individual’s ability to have an enjoyable, productive, and overall successful NYSC experience, most likely depends on how well the individual can adjust his/her behaviour to the new social and cultural environment he/she finds him/herself in. That point to the question: "How do young people participating in the NYSC programme adjust to their new cultural environment?"

Cross-cultural adjustment is the process whereby an individual learns to adapt to and function effectively in a new cultural environment (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Liu & Huang, 2015). It can be said to be the degree of psychological comfort an outsider has with a host culture. This comfort develops as uncertainty d/creases through the learning of behaviors that are appropriate in the new culture and those that are not (Black & Gregersen, 1991). It is both the process and result of acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to function effectively in a new cultural context, including the ability to communicate, understand cultural differences, and cope with the challenges of cultural transition (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Palthe, 2016).

Cross-cultural adjustment has three facets: general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment (Black & Stephens, 1989). General adjustment involves adjusting to the daily

lifestyle of the host culture; Interaction adjustment refers to the individual's level of comfort with interacting with members of the host culture; Work adjustment refers to the extent to which the individual is adjusted to and able to perform well in their job-related tasks, work roles, and work environment (Harrison et al., 1996).

Naturally, researchers have become increasingly interested in identifying factors that can predict cross-cultural adjustment. This is because the ability to adjust to a new cultural environment is necessary not only for youth corpsers, but for anyone in the world of work, especially as international assignments have become increasingly common in this globalized world (Black et al., 1991; Caie, 2009; Palthe, 2016). Lately, however, the focus has been on the role of personality traits and individual characteristics in facilitating cross-cultural adjustment. Leiba-O'Sullivan (1999) asserts that personality is an important intercultural competency that influences an individual's adaptability to a new cultural setting. Two characteristics that stand out because of their relevance to adapting to novelty are openness to experience and self-efficacy.

Openness to experience is one of the domains in the five-factor model of personality. The model remains widely supported by other researchers and consists of a set of five personality dimensions termed the "Big Five." They include Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, with each trait existing in a continuum. Openness to experience characterizes an individual's tendency to be curious, open-minded, and accepting of novel experiences (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Their imaginativeness, creativity, adventurousness, openness to unusual ideas, and non-conformity make them stand out from the other personality traits (Salmon, 2012). Owing to their tolerance for uncertainty and their preference for novelty and variety, Individuals who score high in openness to experience may be more willing to explore the host culture, form relationships with its members, and adjust to the new social norms and cues (Kealey, 1996; McCrae, 1990).

Individuals who are close to experience or score low in openness might end up authoritarian and have difficulty adapting to novel situations (McCrae, 2004). In addition, research has found that individuals who score high in openness tend to have high tolerance for uncertainty and are generally more receptive to cultures different from their own (Kealey, 1996; McCrae, 1990). These attributes make openness to experience a variable of interest in cross-cultural adjustment research (Ramalu et al., 2010; Floriano, 2019). However, Bandura (2012) and Fosse et al. (2015)

assert that behaviors characterized as personality traits like openness to experience can be developed and regulated by an individual characteristic called self-efficacy.

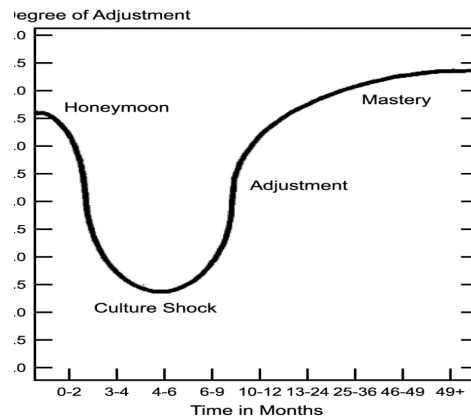
Self-efficacy, on the other hand, refers to the degree of an individual's confidence in their ability to accomplish tasks and reach certain goals (Bandura, 2008). Self-efficacy demonstrates the confidence individuals have in their ability to control their motivation, behavior, social environment, and psychological states (Bandura, 2008; Carey & Forsyth, 2009). This study shares the same perspective with researchers, who believe in a general sense of self-efficacy that predicts an individual's capacity to cope with daily struggles and their ability to adjust after experiencing a range of stressful life events (Luszczynska et al., 2005; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Cross-cultural adjustment involves coping with a great deal of uncertainty in a novel environment and highly self-efficacious individuals have confidence in their ability to manipulate the social environment they find themselves in. They also tend to view challenging situations as tasks to be mastered (Cherry, 2023) which makes them highly motivated, when it comes to accomplishing goals even when that goal is settling into a new cultural environment. It is no surprise that several studies have found a link between self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment. (Black et al, 1991; Gebregergis, 2020; Harrison et al, 1996).

However, most of the cross-cultural adjustment empirical literature and findings reviewed above, have one thing in common: they are focused on international adjustment. Cross-cultural adjustment literature is so saturated with expatriate adjustment studies that a search for literature on cross-cultural adjustment within a multicultural country like Nigeria yields little or no results.

2. Theoretical Framework

U-Curve Adjustment Theory

Figure 1



The U-Curve of Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Note. Adapted from The U-Curve Adjustment Hypothesis Revisited: A Review and Theoretical Framework by Black, J. & Mendenhall, M. (1991). *Journal of International Business Studies*, p. 227. Copyright 2009 by J. Black and M. Mendenhall.

The U-curve adjustment theory was developed by Black and Mendenhall in 1991. The U-curve theory of adjustment provides a framework for understanding the processes involved in adjusting to a new cultural environment. It is one of the most commonly used theories in explaining cross-cultural adjustment. Black & Mendenhall (1991) believed that when an individual intends to work in a new culture, a period of learning about the new environment's business and social norms is necessary before they can be productive in their jobs and personal lives. The theory postulates that cross-cultural adjustment consists of four stages:

- 1) **Honeymoon Stage:** As the name goes, in this stage, the individual may be in complete harmony with their surroundings, as though they are on a vacation. They are entirely fascinated by the new culture they find themselves in (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Lysgaard, 1955).
- 2) **Disillusionment or Culture shock stage:** As individuals stay longer in the new culture, the realities begin to set in and they begin to feel disillusioned and frustrated. This stage comes

with the realization that they lack adequate skills for coping with the daily stressors of the new cultural environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Lysgaard, 1955).

- 3) **Adjustment Stage:** During this stage, the individual gradually adapts to the host culture by learning how to behave in accordance with the cultural norms of the host culture (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Lysgaard, 1955).
- 4) **Mastery Stage:** During this stage, the individual experiences incremental changes in their capacity to effectively function in the new cultural environment (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Lysgaard, 1955).

According to this theory, when individuals newly move to a new culture, they experience a honeymoon stage, where they are excited about the host culture, then disillusionment begins to set in, which causes their satisfaction with the environment to plunge until gradually they adjust to the new culture and obtain some level of mastery. Hence, the first and last stages have the highest points of adjustment, while the second and third stages have the lowest points of adjustment, indicating a U-curve pattern (See Figure 1). This finding has been supported by other researchers (Davis, 1963; Sewell & Olaf, 1961).

Applying this theory to the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers, this theory posits that when youth corpsers first arrive at their place of primary assignment (PPA), youth corpsers may be in a state of honeymoon, that is, they feel a sense of wonder, intrigue, and anticipation of the host culture. However, as they spend more time in their PPA, challenges may start to come. They may experience difficulties adapting to the security situation, level of industrialization, goods and services available, and social norms of the new cultural environment. They may start to feel disillusioned about their host culture. However, as more time passes, youth corpsers begin to adjust to the new environment and obtain a level of mastery in their understanding of the new culture.

However, the U-curve adjustment theory cannot be used to explain cross-cultural adjustment in all cases. For instance, when Klineberg & Hull (1971) examined the adjustment of 68 students in France, Brazil & US, they discovered that while a few students exhibited a U-curve pattern of adjustment, a majority of them displayed a more linear and upward pattern of adjustment, indicating that the students gradually became more adjusted to their host culture without the initial honeymoon period. This posits that some youth corpsers may not have an initial period of

love for the host culture, especially if they have heard a lot of negative things about the community and developed negative perceptions and stereotypes of the area. In this case, youth corpers' adjustment is expected to begin from the disillusionment or culture shock stage, which gradually move up to the adjustment stage, and eventually, the mastery stage, following a linear progression.

Another criticism of the U-curve theory of adjustment is that it describes the stages of adjustment without stating why or how individuals move from each stage to the next and how long each stage lasts. Social learning theory has been used by some researchers to address this issue, arguing that a person's utilization of modeled behavior affects their experience of each stage and how quickly they progress from one to the next.

Five hypotheses were tested in this study:

- 1) Youth corpers, who score high in openness to experience will demonstrate significantly greater levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpers, who score low in openness to experience.
- 2) Youth corpers, who score high in self-efficacy will experience significantly greater levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpers, who score low in self-efficacy.
- 3) Openness to experience and self-efficacy will account for significant variance in cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpers.
- 4) Female youth corpers will experience significantly higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment than male youth corpers.
- 5) Youth corpers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South-West will experience significantly higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South-South, South-East, North-East, North-West, and North-Central.

3. Methodology

To meet the objectives of this research, a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, which involves the use of questionnaires. The independent variables are openness to experience and self-efficacy, while the dependent variable is cross-cultural adjustment. A total

number of 345 participants between the ages of 16 and 30 took part in the study in which 123 were males and 222 were females. Moreover, 185 of them (53.6%) attended a tertiary institution in the South-West, 46 (13.3%) schooled in South-South, 38 (11%) schooled in North-Central, 34 (9.9%) schooled in South-East, 30 (5.8%) schooled in North-East, while the other 22 (6.4%) attended a tertiary institution in the North -West. All participants are youth corpsers, serving in Lagos state in 2023.

A battery of psychological tests was used for data collection; they are the Cross-cultural Adjustment Scale, Openness to Experience subscale adapted from the Big Five Inventory (BFI), and General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995).

1. *Cross-cultural Adjustment Scale*

The dependent variable, cross-cultural adjustment was measured using the Cross-cultural Adjustment Scale developed by Black and Stephens (1989). The measure has been used to assess adjustment in various cultural settings. It consists of 14 items, which measure three facets of adjustment, namely: general adjustment interaction adjustment, and work adjustment on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “not adjusted at all” (1) to “very well adjusted” (6) (Black & Stephens, 1989).

2. *Openness to experience subscale adapted from the Big Five Inventory (BFI)*

The Big Five Inventory is a 44-item scale developed by John and Stravista (1991) that assesses the five global personality domains, which are: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. This research made use of only the openness to experience sub-scale. The openness to experience sub-scale consists of 10 items that measure the 6 facets of openness, namely: openness to ideas, fantasy, aesthetics, actions, feelings, and values on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Disagree strongly” (1) to “Agree strongly” (5).

3. *General Self-efficacy Scale*

The second independent variable, self-efficacy was measured with the General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The scale is a 10-item self-report measure that assesses optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of novel or difficult demands in life. In essence, this scale refers to personal agency i.e., the belief that one’s actions are responsible for successful outcomes. Respondents indicated

the degree to which each item describes their characteristics on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all true" (1) to "Exactly true" (4).

The data collected were analysed with the Independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. While the independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to find the difference between mean scores; multiple regressions was used to predict the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

4. Results

Test of Hypothesis

H1: Youth corpsers, who score high in openness to experience will demonstrate significantly greater levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpsers, who score low in openness to experience.

Table 1: *Independent samples T-test showing results on the influence of openness to experience on cross-cultural adjustment*

Openness to Exper	N	M	SD	t	Df	P
High	200	51.29	14.08			
				3.93	343	< .05
Low	145	45.58	12.16			

Note. Table 1 presents results on the influence of openness to experience on cross-cultural adjustment among youth corps members. It is shown that openness to experience had a significant influence on cross-cultural adjustment among youth corpsers [$t(343) = 3.93$; $p < .05$]. Further, youth corpsers with high levels of openness to experience reported higher cross-cultural adjustment (Mean = 51.29; SD = 14.08) than those with low levels of openness to experience (Mean = 45.58; SD = 12.16). Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

H 2: Youth corpsers, who score high in self-efficacy will experience significantly greater levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpsers who score low in self-efficacy.

Table 2. Independent samples T-test summary table showing results on the influence of self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment

Self-efficacy	N	M	SD	T	df	P
High	195	51.91	14.21			
				4.87	343	< .05
Low	150	44.96	11.64			

Note. Table 3 presents results on the influence of self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment among youth corps members. It is shown that self-efficacy had a significant influence on cross-cultural adjustment among youth corps members [$t(343) = 4.87; p < .05$]. Further, youth corps members with high levels of self-efficacy reported higher cross-cultural adjustment (Mean = 51.91; SD = 14.21) than those with low levels of self-efficacy (Mean = 44.96; SD = 11.64). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

H 3: Openness to experience and self-efficacy will account for significant variance in cross-cultural adjustment of youth corps members.

Table 3: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis summary table showing results on the joint and independent influence of openness to experience and self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment

Predictors	B	T	P	R	R ²	F	P
Openness to experience	.28	4.88	< .01				
				.33	.11	20.7	< .05
Self-efficacy	.10	1.73	> .05				

Note. Table 4 presents results on the joint and independent influence of openness to experience and self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment among youth corps members. It is shown that when combined, openness to experience and self-efficacy significantly predicted cross-cultural adjustment among corps members [$R = .33; R^2 = .11; F(2, 342) = 20.76; p < 0.05$]. Collectively, openness to experience and self-efficacy accounted for about 11% variance in cross-cultural adjustment. This confirms the stated hypothesis.

H 4: Female youth corpsers will experience significantly higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment than male youth corpsers.

Table 4. *Independent samples T-test summary table showing results on gender differences in cross-cultural adjustment*

Gender	N	M	SD	t	Df	P
Male	123	47.50	13.06			
				1.42	343	> .05
Female	222	49.66	13.84			

Note. Table 4 presents results on gender differences in cross-cultural adjustment among youth corpsers. It is shown that there exists no significant gender difference in cross-cultural adjustment among youth corpsers [$t(343) = 1.42; p > .05$]. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

H5: Youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South-West will experience significantly higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in other regions.

Table 5. *One-way ANOVA summary table showing results on the influence of region of tertiary institution attended on cross-cultural adjustment*

Cross-cultural Adjustment					
Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	2408.945	8	481.79	2.67	< .05
Within Groups	61072.8	339	180.16		
Total	63481.8	344			
	1				

Note. Table 6 presents results on the influence of the region of tertiary institution attended on cross-cultural adjustment. It is shown that the region of the tertiary institution attended had an influence on cross-cultural adjustment [$F(5, 339) = 2.67; p < .05$]. Further analysis is presented in Table 7

Table 7. *Post-hoc and Descriptive analysis on the influence of region of institution attended on cross-cultural adjustment*

SN	Reg.	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
1	N-C	-						51.2	12.62
								9	
2	N-E	10.04	-					41.2	14.91
		*						5	
3	N-W	5.74	4.30	-				45.5	13.15
								5	
4	S-E	6.11	3.93	.37	-			45.1	13.19
								8	
5	S-S	.81	9.23	4.93	5.30	-		50.4	19.50
			*					8	
6	S-W	1.38	8.66	4.36	4.73	.57	-	49.9	11.53
			*					1	

Note. From Table 7, the highest significant mean difference was observed between youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in North-Central and North-Eastern parts of Nigeria (MD = 10.04; $p < .05$), while the least was observed between youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South- West and North-Eastern parts of Nigeria (MD = 8.66; $p < .05$).

From Table 7, the youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in the North-Central part of the country reported the highest cross-cultural adjustment (Mean = 51.29; SD = 12.62), while those who schooled in North-Eastern part of Nigeria reported the least cross-cultural adjustment (Mean = 41.25; SD = 14.91). Although, the region of tertiary institution attended had a significant influence on cross-cultural adjustment, the highest mean was observed in North-Central. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South-West will be more adjusted to living in Lagos state than youth corpsers, who schooled in other regions was rejected.

5. Discussion of Findings

From the results of the first hypothesis, it was revealed that youth corpsers with high openness to experience demonstrated higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment than youth corpsers with low openness to experience. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted. This implies that individuals, who possess a high level of the personality trait of openness to experience easily adjust to new cultural environments compared to individuals, who do not or who exhibit little of the trait. This finding is consistent with that of Ramalu et al. (2010) who found that openness to experience correlated with all facets of cross-cultural adjustment, and that of Sinangil and Ones (1997) who found that openness to experience has a significant positive relationship with cross-cultural adjustment. The reason why this research and so many others have found a link between openness to experience and cross-cultural adjustment lies in the conceptualisation of openness to experience. As a personality trait, openness to experience characterizes an individual's tendency to be open-minded and accepting of novel experiences (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Individuals' open-mindedness and acceptance of new experiences such as living in a new cultural environment gives them an upper hand over those who do not particularly enjoy novelty. It is also known that open individuals are filled with curiosity and this curiosity pushes them to seek experiences with members of the host culture (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Their interactions with members of the host culture give them more opportunities to receive necessary feedback about their behaviors, which will help them adjust their behavior appropriately to suit the new environment, thus facilitating their cross-cultural adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

The study also revealed that there exists a significant relationship between general self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted. This means that highly self-efficacious youth corpsers are more likely to adjust to new cultural environments than less self-efficacious youth corpsers. This finding is consistent with that of Harrison et al. (1996) whose study revealed that participants with high general self-efficacy were more adjusted to their new cultural environment than participants with low general self-efficacy. The significant relationship between general self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment comes as no surprise, because generalised self-efficacy is an operative construct that is conceptualized as optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a range of novel or difficult situations (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Although, some researchers have found that domain-specific self-efficacy such as adjustment self-efficacy

and social efficacy influences cross-cultural adjustment (Huang et al., 2020; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009), the finding of this research and that of Harrison et al. (2006) and Gebregergis et al. (2020) provides empirical evidence that even a generalized sense of self-efficacy is enough to predict cross-cultural adjustment. The reason for this is that individuals, who demonstrate high self-efficacy are optimistic and confident about their ability to control their motivation, behavior, social environment, and psychological states (Bandura, 1977; Carey & Forsyth, 2009). Unlike youth corpsers, who have low self-efficacy, youth corpsers, who demonstrate high self-efficacy believe that their ability to adjust to a new cultural environment is within their control and not due to chance or external factors. This makes them willing to put in the necessary effort and remain persistent in demonstrating new behaviors which gives them more opportunities to receive feedback from members of the host culture regarding what behaviors are appropriate and which are not, thereby facilitating their cross-cultural adjustment (Black et al., 1991; Black & Gregerson, 1991).

As hypothesised, this study also found that both openness to experience and self-efficacy had a significant influence on the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers. Openness to experience and self-efficacy accounted for 11% variance in cross-cultural adjustment. This implies that individuals, who demonstrate high levels of both self-efficacy and openness to experience adjust better to new cultural environments than individuals, who demonstrate only openness to experience or only self-efficacy. Although, past studies have explored the relationship between openness to experience and cross-cultural adjustment and the relationship between self-efficacy and cross-cultural adjustment, barely any research has examined the joint influence of openness to experience and self-efficacy on cross-cultural adjustment. Openness to experience is a personality trait and self-efficacy is an ability. Bandura (2012) and Fosse et al. (2015) maintain that self-efficacy contributes to the development and regulation of behaviors characterized as personality traits.

Individuals with both openness to experience and self-efficacy benefit from the positive attributes associated with each characteristic. The interplay between openness to experience and self-efficacy creates a virtuous cycle wherein open individuals are more likely to develop self-efficacy through successful experiences and high self-efficacy fosters openness by bolstering confidence. This combination enables individuals to engage in active exploration of the new

cultural environment, interact with members of the host culture, and overcome potential challenges. This is most likely why individuals, who possess both characteristics are more adjusted than youth corpsers, who demonstrate high levels of openness to experience or self-efficacy.

However, unexpectedly, female youth corpsers did not demonstrate higher levels of cross-cultural adjustment compared to male youth corpsers. This implies that no gender difference was detected in the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers. This finding is consistent with past studies where no statistically significant difference was found between genders and adjusting to a new cultural environment (Eze & Awolusi, 2018; Koveshnikov et al., 2013). However, it is inconsistent with Nolan and Liang's (2022) research, where females were shown to demonstrate higher levels of general adjustment than men, and Selmer and Leung's (2003) study where females demonstrated higher levels of interaction and work adjustment than males. It should be noted, however, that these studies only found gender differences in either of the facets of cross-cultural adjustment (general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment) and did not examine gender differences in cross-cultural adjustment as a whole as this research did. Another reason for the lack of identifiable gender difference in the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers in Lagos state could be the cultural context in which this study was carried out. Unlike some more rural parts of Nigeria, Lagos state has a relative gender-egalitarian perspective and fewer pronounced gender role differences. It is possible that both men and women received similar levels of support and acceptance, leading to comparable cross-cultural adjustment outcomes.

Lastly, this study showed that the region of tertiary institution attended has an influence on cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers in Lagos state. However, youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in the South-West were not more adjusted to living in Lagos state than youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in other regions (North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, and South-South,). Unexpectedly, it was youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in North-Central who were most adjusted to living in Lagos state. This contradicts the concept of cultural novelty or cultural distance. Over the years, researchers have theorised that the higher the similarity between one's home culture and the new cultural

environment, the easier it would be for one to adjust to the new cultural environment (Church, 1982; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Toriborn, 1982). Therefore, it was hypothesised that since Lagos state is in the South-West, youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in other South-West states (Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states) will be more adjusted to living in Lagos state than youth corpsers, who attended a tertiary institution in other regions. However, the findings of this research disprove this claim and are consistent with the findings of Selmer (2006) whose study on Western business expatriates in China, did not find any support for the concept of cultural novelty. The relationship between cultural novelty and cross-cultural adjustment continues to be a debate among researchers with findings often conflicting. Nonetheless, Brewster (1995) argued that adjusting to a similar culture is almost the same, or even more trying than adjusting to an entirely different culture. This is because, in a host culture that is very different from one's home culture, the individual is conscious of the difference and takes the necessary measures to ease their adjustment. However, when the culture is similar, the individual expects adjustment to be easy and does not take the necessary precautions or engage in the learning required for cross-cultural adjustment to take place. Also, even when problems ensue, because they are not aware of the cultural differences, they may attribute those problems to other factors instead of the novelty of the host culture (Selmer, 2006).

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to examine openness to experience and self-efficacy as predictors of cross-cultural adjustment among youth corpsers serving in Lagos state. Out of the five hypotheses developed in this study, three were accepted and two were rejected. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

Openness to experience has a significant influence on cross-cultural adjustment.

Self-efficacy has a significant influence on cross-cultural adjustment.

Openness to experience and self-efficacy significantly predicted cross-cultural adjustment.

There were no gender differences in cross-cultural adjustment

The region of tertiary institution attended was found to influence cross-cultural adjustment.

Recommendations

The findings in this study have both basic and practical significance. First, the findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on cross-cultural adjustment. This study reveals the possible individual characteristics (openness to experience and self-efficacy) that can facilitate the cross-cultural adjustment of youth corpsers. By doing so, it sheds light on the challenges of the NYSC scheme on the part of the individuals, who are sent to serve. The government could introduce cross-cultural training and support services for youth corpsers, before they are deployed to cultural environments very different from their home culture. The cross-cultural training and support services can provide guidance and mentoring that can help youth corpsers navigate the challenges of adjusting to a new cultural environment.

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