

TEACHER PERSONALITY ON PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH IN BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aimed at determining if there is a relationship between teacher personality and pupil performance in Literature in English. The research was conducted using the quantitative design. A population of 37 teachers was used from the Bulawayo Metropolitan district. The 37 teachers were 'O' Level Literature in English. The sample used was 10 teachers from the population. A standard personality test and learners' performance records in Literature in English were used to collect data. Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research questions were analysed using descriptive and regression analysis. The findings show that pupils' performance in Literature in English in Bulawayo Metropolitan District is at 65, 90%. The phlegmatic temperament is the most common personality followed by the choleric, the melancholic and the sanguine had the least representation among the Literature in English teachers. The results also showed that there was a positive relationship between teacher personality and pupil performance. It was revealed that 3.8 % of the time teacher personality affects pupil performance.

Keywords: Performance, personality, Literature in English

Introduction

The study of Literature forms an integral part in the learning of pupils, as it provides learners with an additional knowledge on other subjects in the school curriculum. Literature being the mirror of society provides every lesson and issue existing within societies. Literature exposes the whole world to the pupils by enabling them to explore it within the text. Within the pages of Literature texts are found issues as vast as the different subjects' pupils study. Literature learners have the opportunity to travel the world in

their mind as they study the world's Literature. They are therefore not bound by geographical boundaries. It is only in Literature where the pupils are able to turn back the hands of time by revisiting and re – living the experiences pupils are able to learn about different cultures. In addition, they are able to experience being anyone and anything as they enter the mind of the different characters in the texts.

Performance in Literature is therefore very important if pupils are to access its benefits which go beyond the confines of the classroom and school. Literature sharpens the pupils' ability to be analytical in their thinking. The artistic nature of Literature also impels learners to be expressive. Gibson (2010) mentioned that through reading, discussing the essays, poems, stories and plays, the learner improves his writing. Pupils need to perform highly in Literature if they are to tap into the long list of benefits Literature provides.

As discovered above, the high level of Literature performance in learners will greatly benefit the learners. However, many factors hinder the performance in Literature. The teacher has the ability to positively or negatively affect the pupils' performance. The duty of the teacher is to enable pupils to reap the benefits of studying Literature in English by being conversant in his or her content. Most teachers provide the correct content and some even the appropriate methodology. However, a seemingly insignificant aspect of the teacher threatens the performance of pupils. Teachers' personality is one of those unrecognised factors that influence pupils' performance. Personality traits and temperaments govern our actions (Hamactirk, 1991). The teachers' personality therefore also governs his/her action in this case his/her teaching and hence the performance of learners.

Laye (1995:28) explained that it is important to acknowledge the power our temperament has on our behaviour. In his book *Understanding Male Temperaments*, he states, "humanly speaking, nothing has more profound influence on your behaviour than your inherited temperament". He adds that "most people today are completely unaware of this extremely powerful influence on their behaviour". Literature in English teachers therefore needs to become aware of their temperaments and its possible impact to the pupils' performance. Hamactirk (1991) noted that how a teacher feels about a learner can make a big difference in that learners' attitude and performance. The implication therefore is that pupils' performance is influenced to some extent by the temperament and personality possessed by their teacher. Though some studies have been carried out in subjects such as Sciences, Nursing and Mathematics, no such study has been carried out to examine the extent to which teachers' personality impacts pupils' performance in particularly Literature in English, it was for the reason that the researchers carried out the study.

Statement of the Problem

Until now, educators have not attributed the pupils' performance in English Literature to the teachers' personality. This research endeavoured to discover the impact of teachers' personality in pupils' Literature in English. Without this present study, the performance of pupils in Literature in English is likely to be affected if the magnitude of the teachers' personality on their performance is not examined. Further, the society will be robbed of imaginative, sharp analytical people which literature creates. Moreover, other subjects will suffer in the process, as the writing skill sharpened by the study of Literature in English will not be enhanced. Therefore, this study examined the impact in which teachers' personality has on pupils' performance in Literature in English.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the performance of pupils in Literature in English?
2. What type of personality do Literature in English teachers possess?
3. Does teacher personality influence student performance in Literature in English?

Research Methodology

The purpose of the research was to establish the extent to which teacher personality affected pupils' performance in Literature in English. The study utilized the quantitative research design since it sought to find the relationship between the two variables. The study's population was 37 Literature in English 'O' Level teachers in the Bulawayo Metropolitan. The sample comprised of 10 teachers who were randomly selected through balloting. The personality survey and pupils' performance records were used to collect data. Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive and regression analysis were used for data analysis.

Results and Findings

The results and findings of the study are presented following the research questions posed above.

Research question one

What is the performance of pupils in Literature in English?

The question above sought to find out the performance of Literature in English learners at Ordinary level. To establish their performance it is important to understand what performance is in Literature in English. It is easy to come to a quick conclusion that a learner who performs in Literature

in English is one who is able to read novels and poems and write answers to question set. True as this may be however there is much more required from the Literature in English learner who is said to be performing well in the subject. It is only natural that in order to find out what performance is in Literature in English consultations have to be made with the examiners of the subject.

The ‘O’ level ZIMSEC syllabus (2013-2018) mentions that Literature is about the appreciation of different text and genres and from various historical periods and cultures. Therefore, its aim is to develop and cultivate this love of Literature and the ability to express self. A pupil who is able to appreciate Literature and also make their own personal response after careful analysis is said to be performing.

It is important to note that what is being tested is not the pupil’s ability to write as in a language examination but it is required that that as English course and examination the learners use appropriate language. Secondly, writing is the means by which the examiner gets to understand and hear the pupil’s analysis and criticism of the text. The examiner of the Literature in English course is not focused on the learner’s writing ability but on his/her ability to relate and analyse the text.

Having received a clear picture on what perform is and what it means to perform in Literature in English we need to know what is the performance of Literature in English learners at the moment. Table 1 shows the performance of ‘O’ Level learners in Literature in English in the Bulawayo Metropolitan. The table shows the mean average percentage of the pupil’s performance as well as the standard deviation. The performance of Literature in English

Table 1: Performance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Performance	10	10	100	65.90	25.026

‘O’ Level learners in Bulawayo Metropolitan is at 65.90%. This means on average the pupils are attaining 66% in Literature in English. However the standard deviation is 25.026, which means not all learners are performing at 66%. It may seem that pupils are performing well in Literature in English however for a subject that allows pupils to freely express themselves 66% is not at all pleasing.

Research question two

What type of personality do Literature in English teachers possess?

It is important to establish the existing personality temperaments teachers have in order to understand their impact in pupil’s performance. Teachers in Literature in English possess all four temperament personalities

as some may be sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic. Table 2 shows the different personalities Literature in English teachers possess in the Bulawayo Metropolitan and the percentage number of those possessing that temperament. Table 2 also reveals that 10% of the teachers are sanguine, 30% are choleric, 20% are melancholic and 40% are phlegmatic.

It is important to understand what these personality temperaments mean in relation to pupils performance in Literature in English. In the Bulawayo Metropolitan, 40% of the Literature in English teachers are phlegmatic. Phlegmatic by nature are extroverts who have an orderly mind and are capable of analysis and deduction. This description of a phlegmatic makes him/her sound as the perfect Literature teacher. The fact s/he is extroverted should be a huge advantage for her/him since s/he will tend to be quite and allow the learner to have the centre stage but as seen from the ZIMSEC subject content and assessment objectives the ability to analyse, comment and make informed judgement is one of the key skills they desire to stimulate in pupils. Therefore, the phlegmatic should be the best teacher since s/he is highly analytical and will inculcate this skill in the pupils. This would be true if the phlegmatic temperament only made him analytical, calm and orderly. However, many attributes in the phlegmatic personality work against him making him not the best Literature in English teacher.

Table 2: Teacher's Personality

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Sanguine	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
Choleric	2	30.0	30.0	40.0
Melancholic	3	20.0	20.0	60.0
Phlegmatic	4	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

The phlegmatic is an individual who does not like to be burdened with work and would rather pursue pleasure than work. The Literature in English teacher has to be one who is hard working, who will read the text own her own before teaching the pupils. Zhen (2012:8) states that “The teacher needs to read the text well enough and form their opinion about messages in the text and select proper topic which are available to learners and may motivate them to think and express their opinions.” This shows that there is a lot of preparatory work that is to be done by the Literature in English teacher. The phlegmatic however is not the best suited for such work.

Another quality that works against the phlegmatic teacher is the fact that he is one individual who will go at great lengths to avoid confrontations. He prefers everyone to be in agreement. This will be very difficult to find in a Literature class. In Literature learners debate and by so doing they have an

opportunity to defend their view points. Zhen (2012:8) emphasised that “there is no room for a unanimous agreement in literature.” The phlegmatic who in his nature always aims at agreement and uniformity does not make a good Literature in English teacher. Therefore it is not surprising to find that pupils’ performance is not very good since 40% of the Literature in English teachers have the phlegmatic personality temperament.

In table 2 shows that 30% of the Literature in English teachers have the choleric personality temperament. The choleric is by nature an extrovert and extroverts are an outspoken group of people preferring to be heard and not to listen to others. Choleric in particular are highly opinionated Van Pelt (2008:93) actually says “he often appears opinionated, domineering and bossy.” This trait makes it very difficult for the choleric teacher to allow pupils’ to come up with their own analysis and interpretations. This is mainly because s/he will impose his own view on the learners so that they do not freely express themselves yet there are many correct answers to Literature not only what he sees as correct.

Gibson (2010:2) says this about Literature “many topics in our subject do not have an obvious right answer.” When this happens the learners cease to do what is essentially literature since literature is about expression. Long (2004:33) proposed that “the first significant thing is the essentially artistic quality of all literature. Art is the expression of life truth and beauty but which remains unnoticed until brought to attention by some sensitive human soul.” This proves that literature is about expression; the learners own expression. Longs’ view of Literature also highlights that the ability to express is only possible when awakened by a sensitive human soul. A definite negative in the choleric personality is his insensitivity. Laye (1975) concurred that, the choleric is cold and unsympathetic as well as insensitive. Van Pelt (2008) also stated that choleric does not sympathise easily and can be insensitive to the needs of others which makes the choleric teacher unable to bring to attention the beauty of Literature to his/ her learner.

Another disadvantage the choleric Literature in English teacher is his/ her argumentative nature. The choleric is a good debater who will strive to have his opinions heard. He is a free talker though he dislikes long details and prefers to get straight to the point. His/ her argumentative nature makes him a poor listener to the opinions of his learners. S/he is like to present his/ her own argument, his / her own analysis and own interpretation of the literature text. S/he will not give his learners room to discuss and develop their own ideas so that they build up their confidence and ability. The fact that s/he is the one arguing and s/he is the one who claims to have all the correct answers paralyses his learners. The learners then learn to be passive and patiently wait to absorb all the knowledge from their “all knowing” choleric teacher. Such a teacher kills every quality a

pupil should have in learning Literature in English. Gibson (2010:2) says “One of the reasons why English Literature continues to be such a popular ‘O’ level subject is that teenagers relish the chance to debate, to negotiate meaning rather than simply absorb it.” This is true with every Literature learner at any level. Pupils want to be free to talk and not just absorb what the teacher says, Literature needs its learners to evaluate texts, analyse, interpret and relate to them on their own and in their own way. The choleric teacher does not allow this.

From the table above 10% of the Literature in English teachers are sanguine. Though 10% seems like an insignificant percentage its effects have far reaching effects. When closely looking at the sanguine personality and its ineffectiveness in the teaching of Literature one will understand that 10% is a great number as just one teacher will have hundreds of pupils pass through his/ her hands. The teacher either builds or destroys those pupils ability to perform in Literature in English.

The sanguine personality is the first of the extroverts and s/he loves talking. He is an individual who loves to take a centre stage. This trait in his/her personality does not make him a good Literature teacher. Literature in English is a subject that allows pupils to take a centre stage in participates in class activity. Zhen (2012) stated that discussions are a most effective way in a Literature class where learners can easily be motivated and involved in the class activity. Unfortunately in a sanguine teachers class that would be very difficult. Sanguines in their nature take centre stage. Pupils would not be given the opportunity to be active. The sanguine teacher’s learners are bound to be passive listeners and watchers rather than active listening. Learning theorists such as the cognitivists and constructivists advocate for pupils involvement in the learning process and the sanguine does not allow that.

The most disturbing attributes of the sanguine is the desire to talk for hours on end. They have a weakness of not being able to give other people a chance to speak as they are ever talking. Gibson (2010:19) says “A talkative learner is only a problem if the other learners feel blocked.” If a talkative learner can talk to the extent of blocking other pupils then how destructive can a teacher be? The teacher being the manager of the class will naturally block the learners as he will continually give himself the floor to speak. S/he will make it a point that the pupils listen to him/her and by so doing s/he blocks learners from talking, expressing and airing their views. In such a class pupils cease to be Literature learners but spectators of a Literature lesson.

The sanguine compulsiveness that compels him to dominate conversation makes him a poor listener. S/he loves listening to his/her own voice and therefore has a difficult time to listen to pupils’ own interpretation

of the literature texts. He is prone to have a lot of barriers to listening. S/he cannot wait until the pupils finish talking so that s/he may also talk. S/he is therefore busy thinking of what s/he will say after the learner has stopped talking instead of listening. Listening is the active process of receiving, constructing meaning from and responding to spoken and or non-verbal messages. Looking at this definition and the characteristics of a sanguine one can conclude that listening can be a big challenge for a sanguine teacher. S/he is not in a position to guide pupils after hearing their views since s/he would not have heard them.

Another disadvantage of a sanguine teacher is highly emotional expressiveness. Sanguine love to express their emotions a requirement needed in the analysis of Literature in English. Sadly, sanguine love to express their own emotions and have their own emotions to be heard and felt. Long (2004) echoed that a quality of Literature is the fact that it appeals to our emotions and imagination; it is not much what it says as what it awakens in us that constitutes its charm. It is a pity that the learners in a sanguine teacher class have their emotions and imaginations awakened but cannot express them. They are so fired up with emotions and then that desire dies out. Eventually they lose the love of Literature. When that happens there is no way pupils can perform well.

The last personality temperament possessed by Literature in English teacher is the melancholic temperament which represented 20% of the sampled teachers. This is a temperament that many misunderstand. They tend to think these are the sad, gloomy and apologetic group of people. However the melancholy makes the best Literature in English teachers. The first attribute about the melancholic is that s/he is extroverted. An extroverted teacher will not compete with learners in order to be heard. He has the ability to allow pupils to express themselves and formulate their own views. Literature demands that.

The melancholic character is given to an exceptional analytical thinking and has a very inquisitive mind. ZIMSEC subject content and assessment objectives (2013- 2018) outlines that high marks are awarded for analysis. Zhen (2012) commented that teachers need to thoroughly read the texts and come up with their own opinions to motivate pupils to come up with their own views. The melancholy teacher has no problem in reading and deeply analysing the text. The fact that s/he is introverted means/he will not impose his view on the learners. S/he will quietly listen to their views. Learners have the opportunity to discuss debate and express themselves thereby cultivating their love for Literature. The melancholic teacher will analyse every aspect of a novel and leave no stone unturned, yet the sanguine loves detail in his own story telling. Indeed the melancholic teacher is a blessing to have as a Literature in English teacher.

The melancholic has a special attribute that is very unique from the other temperament personalities, though he tends to be self-conscious about himself and quiet he sometimes swings from highs to lows. Van Pelt (2008:94) says “Sometimes the melancholic is withdrawn but sometimes he is outgoing an extroverted.” The melancholic teacher is balanced therefore as there are times he is extroverted as he can lighten the mood in the classroom. This gives pupils the opportunity and freedom to be free. The melancholic also is sensitive Van Pelt (2008:94) says “He is a gifted perfectionist with an extremely sensitive nature.” The melancholy’s nature of being a perfectionist is not a disadvantage as he is not highly opinionated like the choleric. S/he does not enforce perfectionism as he is highly sensitive. S/he ensures that his pupils’ do a good thorough analysis in a subtle manner. Peoples do not feel like they are in a military camp in the hands of a melancholic teacher. His/her sensitivity also allows him/her to awaken the love of Literature in them. Long (2004) stated, that it is only a sensitive human soul that will awaken the ability to view the beauty of Literature and the ability to express it.

Research question three

Does teacher personality influence learner performance in Literature in English?

It was important to establish if the teachers’ personality has an impact in learner performance in Literature in English. Since personality affects one’s behaviour it is bound to affect the Literature in English teachers teaching and in turn the pupils’ performance. Table 3 the variables entered are the teachers’ personality which is the independent variables and the pupils performance which is the dependant variable. This means that pupil’s performance in Literature in English is affected by the teachers’ personality. The table below is the model summary. It is explaining the extent in which teacher personality has on pupils’ performance giving a numerical value.

Table 3.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std Error of the estimate	Standardised coefficients Beta	Sig
1	.278a	.077	.038	25.498	.278	.081

a) Predictors: (constant). Personality

According to table R Square is= .038 which means 3.8 % of the time teacher personality influences learners’ performance in Literature in English. The Beta column shows the value of .278 which means the learners’ of the melancholic teacher perform better in Literature in English than those of choleric, phlegmatic and sanguine teachers.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to determine the impact teacher personality has on the performance of learners in Literature in English. It was established that teacher personality does have an impact on pupil performance. Based on the findings, the melancholic teacher should take up the greater number of Literature in English classes as s/he is best suited to teach the subject. In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

- The performance of the learners is at 65, 90% and it needs to be improved to an impressive distinction grade. It has been established that teacher personality does affect pupil performance therefore the more appropriate personality temperament should be chosen to teach Literature in English. If more teachers that are melancholic teach Literature in English, the performance of pupils is bound to improve.
- The findings also revealed that the melancholic personality temperament best suited to teach Literature in English only constitutes to 20% of the total number of teachers. It is recommended that personality temperament should play a vital role in the selection of teachers who are to train in the teaching of Literature in English. This will enable the teachers with the personality suited to teach Literature in English to be the ones teaching the subject.
- From the findings, it is also revealed that 3.8% of the time personality of the teacher does influence pupil performance. It is recommended that teacher personality too, should be used as a factor to consider when selecting teachers who are to teach Literature in English. Personality tests should be given, used, and not just qualifications to determine teacher selection. It is also recommended that teachers already teaching Literature in English should be aware of the personality temperaments they possess to minimize the negative impact their temperament has.

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