

Students' Preferences For Lecturers' Personalities: A Study Among University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Students

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ABSTRACT

Kertas ini melaporkan dapatan kajian mengenai kecenderungan minat pelajar terhadap personaliti pensyarah. Kajian survei ini melibatkan seramai 235 pelajar Universiti Malaysia Sabah dan menggunakan soal selidik kecenderungan minat terhadap personaliti guru yang dibangunkan oleh Furnham (2003). Alat ukuran ini telah diterjemah ke dalam Bahasa Malaysia dan disesuaikan mengikut konteks lokal. Responden diminta untuk memberi markah berdasarkan ciri-ciri personaliti (30 tret) pensyarah mereka. Hasil kajian mendapati pelajar cenderung untuk menyukai pensyarah yang mempunyai tret ketelitian, terbuka dan kesetujuan tinggi tetapi bukan pensyarah yang neurotik. Keputusan juga menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan signifikan antara jantina dalam beberapa domain dan dan sub-domain personaliti pensyarah. Implikasi penggunaan personaliti dan ujian psikologi dalam merekrut dan memilih guru dan pensyarah dibincangkan.

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous studies in psychology that investigates individual differences in many aspects which related to students and lecturers. For instances, Zhang (2004) has studied the preferences for specific educational institutions, courses and teaching styles. It has been found that both students and scholars try to seek out particular educational environment for the benefits of both (e.g. Furnham, 2001; Holland, 1997). Furthermore, some studies also tried to match between preferences and styles that will eventually leads to particular desirable educational outcomes (e.g. Doyle & Rutherford, 1984; Zhang, 2004b).

Both students and lecturers have their own perception and personalities which could influence the outcomes of the teaching and learning in the universities (e.g. Bassow, 2000). The personalities of the lecturers could be one of the important factors scrutinized by the students in order to get some sort of idea regarding their lecturers. For example, it has been found that students' thinking styles do not only significantly contribute to their academic achievement, but also play a critical role in such aspects as students' self-esteem, personality and career interest. Moreover, teachers' characteristics also have a strong impact on the thinking styles they use in teaching (Zhang & Sternberg, 2002) which also could influence their students.

In addition, to knowledge and skills, the personality of a lecturer also plays an important role in the learning process (Haghdoust & Shakibi, 2006).

Furthermore, Hagdoost & Shakibi elaborated that successful lecturers communicate with their students better and effectively. They are also able to change the attitude and improve the knowledge and skills of their students. Thus, lecturers that have a strong personality can have strong effect on the behaviour and attitude of their students (Gillespie, 2002; Pelaez & Gonzalez, 2002).

Other studies such as Furnham and Chamorro-Premuzic (2005) demonstrated that student's preferences for the preferred personality traits of lecturers could be parsimoniously and reliably classified in terms of the Big Five personality traits. They found that students preferred highly conscientious, open, stable, extraverted and agreeable lecturers. They further infer to explain these findings: conscientiousness is associated with being orderly, clear, hard-working, and objective; openness with intelligence, liberalism and creativity; stability with low anxiety, depression and attention-seeking. In other words, students prefer lecturers who are emotionally adjusted, clever and hard-working.

The usage of Big Five theory in personality studies is quite apparent. The Big Five taxonomy of personality traits are referring to the five factors developed by McCrae and Costa (1987) which also known as OCEAN; the acronym for Openness (O), Conscientiousness (C), Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A) and Neuroticism (N). Openness refers to openness to experience. The characteristics of a person demonstrated an active imagination, a willingness to consider new ideas, have divergent thinking and intellectual curiosity. The second trait is conscientiousness which focusing on a person that is organized, plan oriented and determined. The third trait is extraversion which refers to an individual that is sociable, energetic, optimistic, friendly and assertive. In addition, agreeableness is consigned to the element of a person that is trusting, helpful and sympathetic. Finally, neuroticism refers to emotional stability and personal adjustment.

Many studies had showed the significant contribution of personality factors in influencing students' academic success (e.g. Busato et al., 2000; Lounsbury et al., 2003). In addition, in Malaysia, there were studies that investigated the personality trait and other aspect of the teachers/lecturers. For example, Tong Ann Nee (1993) found that there was no significant difference between physical attractiveness and extrovert-introvert personality trait among male and female trainee teachers. In addition, Maznah Ismail (1993) found that school students ranked teachers' personality characteristics and teaching skill as the important elements that influence the students. Another study that investigated teachers' personality and its relation to job satisfaction was conducted by Wan Hamzah Wan Daud (1993) and found that there were significant correlation between job satisfaction and personality types of social, artistic and investigative among teachers. Furthermore, Rosnanaini Sulaiman (1997) also examining the same elements found that teachers with social, artistic and investigative personality have a significant job satisfaction compared to others. Based on the above studies, it is clearly found that personality and job satisfaction do indeed related to each other (Goffin, 2000; Spector, 1997).

Other studies such as Lim Leong Poh and Abdul Halim Othman (1987) aimed at examining the relationship of seven interpersonal skill dimensions to the counsellor's personality. They found that there was a relationship between the interpersonal skill and personality. They contented that specific personality scale could be used as an instrument in counsellor selection. In addition, Salmah Kasim (2004) found that teachers' personality and teachings behaviour were correlated with students' gender and other demographics factors such as ethnic background which also was an important element in students' evaluation of the quality of teachers' service in school.

Based upon the previous studies conducted locally and outside Malaysia, there are evidences that conclude the significant contribution of the personality of a lecturer on the students. Thus, exposing students to excellent role models inspires them to study better and perform well in examinations (Elzubeir & Rizk, 2001). In the present study, the aim was to explore students' preferences for lecturers' personalities. The second aim was to examine the differences in term of gender regarding students' preferences on lecturers' personalities based on the personality's domains and facets.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The populations for the study consisted of students attending University Malaysia Sabah (UMS). Approximately, two hundred and thirty five of UMS undergraduates participated in the study. The sample consisted of 154 females and 81 males. The mean age of the sample was 21.66 years (SD=0.98), with ages ranging from 20 to 26 years.

Measures

The students completed questionnaire that asking them regarding 'what do you look for in a lecturer?' developed by Furnham (2003). The questionnaire contained of a 30-item scale which derived from the work of Rushton, Murray and Paunonen (1987) that examining the personality characteristics associated with high productivity in university teachers. It consisted of 30 characteristics with trait definitions, which participants had to rate. The questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Malaysia for the convenience of the subjects through back translation procedure.

The students were asked to indicate their preference regarding lecturer personalities which was based on the 11 point scale. If they prefer positive characteristics, the subjects should response to positive score (e.g.+4, +5) and if they do not want the characteristics in their lecturers, they can circle a negative score (i.e.-4,-5). The score 0 indicate that it is not important or relevant. From that scale, the numbers were transferred into an 11-point scale, where 1 represented a low preference or dislike and 11 a high preference or like.

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Procedure

Subjects were given a brief explanation about the research. They were all tested in large lecture halls in the presence of researcher in order to ensure the test was appropriately completed. All participants were asked to be as honest as possible. The participants could ask the examiners if they have any query about the study.

Data Analyses

The analysis was designed to answer the two aims of the study. The first step of the statistical analyses was to run descriptive analyses on the data. Then, data were analysed to examine the differences in term of gender regarding students preferences on lecturers' personalities based on the personalities domains and facets as in the Big Five theory by applying t-test. The data were analyzed by using *SPSS for Windows* version 13.0.

RESULTS

Coding of Lecturers' Personality Traits

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean and SD) for all descriptors of lecturers' personality. Following Furnham and Chamorro-Premuzic (2005), the matrix is tabulated according to the Big Five personality traits, namely Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

As shown in Table 1, the highest means for preferred attributes of lecturers for the UMS students were for 'warm' (Mean=10.29, SD=0.98), followed by 'altruistic' (Mean=10.09, SD=1.10), 'dutiful' (Mean=10.06, SD=1.34) and 'gregarious' (Mean=10.03, SD=1.10) and finally 'competence' (Mean=10.02, SD=1.16). The lowest means for the UMS students were recorded for 'depressive' (Mean=2.72, SD=2.16), 'anger-hostility' (Mean=2.74, SD=2.34) and 'impulsive' (Mean=2.91, SD=2.46). It is noticeable that the lowest means for all groups were for components of the broad Neuroticism traits.

Descriptive Statistics

All Cronbach's α parameters are reported in Table 2; as can be seen, the internal consistency of ratings showed adequate reliability. Table 2 also reports the means, SDs, ranges. It is evident from the descriptive statistics that subjects' tends to prefers lecturers with high Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and low Neuroticism.

Table 1: Aspects of lecturers' personalities preferred by overall students based on the Big Five

Big Five	Descriptor	Mean (SD)
Extraversion	<i>Warm</i> : Friendly, sociable, cheerful, affectionate, outgoing	10.29 (0.98)
	<i>Gregarious</i> : Pleasure-seeking, talkative, spontaneous	10.03 (1.10)
	<i>Assertive</i> : Aggressive, self-confident, forceful, enthusiastic, confident	8.77 (1.49)
	<i>Activity-oriented</i> : Energetic, hurried, quick, determined, aggressive, active	8.70 (1.52)
	<i>Excitement-seeking</i> : Pleasure-seeking, daring, adventurous, charming, spunky, clever	8.97 (1.62)
	<i>Positive emotions</i> : Enthusiastic, humorous, praising, spontaneous, pleasure-seeking, optimistic, jolly	9.91 (1.22)
	<i>Fantasy life</i> : Dreamy, imaginative, humorous, mischievous, idealistic, artistic, complicated	8.36 (1.60)
Openness	<i>Interested in aesthetics</i> : Imaginative, artistic, original, enthusiastic, inventive, idealistic, versatile	8.99 (1.49)
	<i>Interested in feelings</i> : Excitable, spontaneous, insightful, imaginative, affectionate, talkative, outgoing	9.43 (1.39)
	<i>Action-oriented</i> : Interests wide, imaginative, adventurous, optimistic, talkative, versatile	9.29 (1.38)
	<i>Ideas-oriented</i> : Idealistic, interests wide, inventive, curious, original, imaginative, insightful	9.39 (1.23)
	<i>Values-oriented</i> : Unconventional, flirtatious	9.12 (1.58)
	<i>Trusting</i> : Forgiving, trusting, peace-loving	9.54 (1.34)
	<i>Straightforward</i> : Uncomplicated, undemanding	9.79 (1.20)
Agreeableness	<i>Altruistic</i> : Warm, soft-hearted, gentle, generous, kind, tolerant	10.09 (1.10)
	<i>Compliant</i> : Flexible, undemanding, not headstrong, patient, tolerant, not outspoken, soft-hearted	9.72 (1.27)
	<i>Modest</i> : Not a show-off, unassertive, non-argumentative, un-self confident, non-aggressive	7.64 (2.78)
	<i>Tender-minded</i> : Friendly, warm, sympathetic, soft-hearted, gentle, kind	9.46 (1.65)
	<i>Competence</i> : Efficient, self-confident, thorough, resourceful, confident, intelligent	10.02 (1.16)
Conscientiousness	<i>Orderly</i> : Organised, thorough, efficient, precise, methodical	9.94 (1.15)
	<i>Dutiful</i> : Defensive, non-distractible, non-careless, not lazy, thorough, non-absentmindedness, not fault-finding	10.06 (1.34)
	<i>Achievement striving</i> : Thorough, ambitious, industrious, enterprising, determined, confident, persistent	9.98 (1.34)
	<i>Self-disciplined</i> : Organised, efficient, energetic, thorough, industrious	9.83 (1.45)
	<i>Deliberate</i> : Hasty, non-impulsiveness, careful, patient, mature, thorough	9.33 (1.80)
Neuroticism	<i>Anxiety</i> : Anxious, fearful, worrying, tense, nervous	3.62 (2.74)
	<i>Anger-hostility</i> : Irritable, impatient, excitable, moody, tense	2.74 (2.34)
	<i>Depressive</i> : Worrying, pessimistic, moody, anxious	2.72 (2.16)
	<i>Self-conscious</i> : Shy, timid, defensive, inhibited, anxious	4.09 (2.65)
	<i>Impulsive</i> : Moody, irritable, sarcastic, self-centred, loud, hasty, excitable	2.91 (2.46)
	<i>Vulnerable</i> : Not confident, careless, not clear thinking, anxious	7.70 (1.35)

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for preferred lecturers' personalities

	<i>M</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Extraversion	0.60	41.00	66.00	56.66	4.62
Openness	0.70	36.00	66.00	54.58	5.49
Agreeableness	0.65	36.00	66.00	56.24	6.01
Conscientiousness	0.85	28.00	66.00	59.16	6.26
Neuroticism	0.86	12.00	56.00	23.77	10.64

Personality Domains and Facets Across Gender

Table 3 shows the comparison of male and female students on their mean *t* scores for the personality domains and facets. On personality domains, it was found that female students had a significantly higher mean than male students on Conscientiousness ($t=-2.16$, $p<0.05$). Extraversion ($t= -2.29$, $p<0.05$) and Neuroticism ($t=2.46$, $p<0.05$). There were no significant differences between gender means on Openness and Agreeableness.

At the facets level, females scored significantly higher means than males on Extraversion traits, for instance on E1: Warm, E2: Gregarious, and E6: Positive Emotions. They also scored a significantly higher means on Openness traits, which is on O4: Action Oriented and O5: Ideas Oriented. Female students also had a significantly higher means on Agreeableness trait, A4: Compliant and A6: Tender-Minded. It was followed by higher means scored by female than male students on Conscientiousness traits, namely C1: Competence, C2: Orderly, C3: Dutiful and C4: Achievement Striving.

Female students also scored lower in mean than male students regarding Neuroticism characteristics of preferable lecturer's. For instance, N2: Anger-Hostility, N3: Depressive, N5: Impulsive. This is to show that female subjects do not prefer lecturers with Neuroticism signs such as Anger-Hostility, Depressive and Impulsive more than their male counterpart. Overall results suggest that male and female students are similar on 18 facets and different on the remaining 12 facets.

DISCUSSION

The major purposes of the study were to explore students' preferences for lecturers' personality, and to examine the preferences of lecturers' personality domains and facets based on genders. For the first aim, the results of this preliminary study showed that preferred personality traits of lecturers' could be classified in terms of the Big Five personality traits. Participants all showed a preference for highly conscientious, extraverted, stable and agreeable lecturers, but not for lecturers who showed neurotic traits. In general, these findings are consistent with those of a previous study conducted with British participants (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2005), which showed that students preferred lecturers with higher Conscientiousness, Openness and lower Neuroticism.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and male-female mean t scores of the Big Five domains and facets

Domains	Male (n=81)		Female (n=154)		t scores	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Extraversion	55.71	4.89	57.15	4.41	-2.29	0.02 *
Openness	54.02	5.66	54.87	5.38	-1.12	0.26
Agreeableness	55.54	6.34	56.61	5.81	-1.29	0.19
Conscientiousness	57.95	6.27	59.79	6.17	-2.16	0.03 *
Neuroticism	26.11	10.66	24.56	10.19	2.46	0.03*
<i>Facets</i>						
E1: Warm	10.06	1.18	10.41	0.83	-2.60	0.01*
E2: Gregarious	9.73	1.18	10.18	1.03	-3.04	0.00*
E3: Assertive	8.52	1.46	8.90	1.49	-1.88	0.06
E4: Activity-Oriented	8.88	1.53	8.60	1.51	1.30	0.19
E5: Excitement - Seeking	8.89	1.55	9.01	1.65	-0.55	0.57
E6: Positive Emotions	9.64	1.43	10.05	1.06	-2.44	0.01*
O1: Fantasy Life	8.32	1.66	8.38	1.57	-0.25	0.80
O2: Interested in Aesthetics	8.99	1.40	8.99	1.53	-0.003	0.99
O3: Interested in Feelings	9.35	1.34	9.48	1.42	-0.70	0.48
O4: Action Oriented	9.02	1.43	9.44	1.32	-2.19	0.02*
O5: Ideas Oriented	9.15	1.38	9.52	1.12	-2.21	0.02*
O6: Values Oriented	9.20	1.41	9.07	1.66	0.57	0.56
A1: Trusting	9.48	1.42	9.58	1.30	-0.52	0.60
A2: Straight Forward	9.69	1.13	9.84	1.23	-0.92	0.35
A3: Altruistic	9.94	1.28	10.16	0.99	-1.48	0.14
A4: Compliant	9.48	1.33	9.85	1.22	-2.13	0.03*
A5: Modest	7.80	2.80	7.55	2.77	0.65	0.51
A6: Tender-Minded	9.15	1.74	9.62	1.58	-2.10	0.03*
C1: Competence	9.79	1.29	10.14	1.07	-2.22	0.02*
C2: Orderly	9.77	1.29	10.04	1.06	-1.73	0.08
C3: Dutiful	9.91	1.37	10.13	1.32	-1.17	0.24
C4: Achievement Striving	9.88	1.26	10.03	1.38	-0.84	0.39
C5: Self-Disciplined	9.56	1.60	9.97	1.34	-2.12	0.03*
C6: Deliberate	9.05	1.89	9.48	1.72	-1.75	0.08
N1: Anxiety	3.93	2.79	3.45	2.70	1.25	0.21
N2: Anger-Hostility	3.15	2.48	2.52	2.22	1.97	0.05*
N3: Depressive	3.17	2.33	2.48	2.02	2.36	0.01*
N4: Self-Conscious	4.48	2.67	2.88	2.62	1.65	0.10
N5: Impulsive	3.44	2.64	2.64	2.31	2.42	0.01*
N6: Vulnerable	7.94	1.53	7.57	1.23	1.89	0.52

df = 233, * p < 0.05 (two tailed significance)

Overall participants gave higher rating on conscientiousness and openness. This result is also consistent with the finding from Zhang and Stenberg (2002). It shows student prefer lecturer who has conscientiousness personality traits which are dutiful, competence, achievement striving, orderly, self-disciplined and deliberate. Whereas for openness, the preferred personality traits such as interested in feeling, ideas oriented, and action oriented which could be the idealistic for lecturers in dealing with students (Furnham, 2003). All of these elements help the lecturers to be more dedicated on their job and responsibility. It basically becomes important personality traits to students (Furnham, 2003). Besides that, neuroticism becomes less favourable lecturers' personality among students. This finding is similar to a study done by Furnham (2003).

Some of the personality characteristics identified clearly quite similar with others such as helpful and sympathetic are related to the four attributes, e.g. conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness and extraversion, as in Wright (2005) study. Whereas in Rothman, Basson and Rothman (2000) study, it is clearly showed that the extraversion personality traits was preferred at higher educational institutions than other types of personality. Meanwhile, in Haghdoost and Shakibi (2006) study, all the personality characteristics could be grouped into the four types personality characteristics proposed by McCrae and Costa (1987). Their study also demonstrated that in overall subjects dislike neurotic types of lecturers. The characteristics of neurotic such as depressive, anger and hostile, and impulsive would dampen the students' interest and might influence their academic success. Indeed et al. (1956) found that students did not prefer their lecturer who exhibits the symptoms of anger, depression and self-conscious such as shy, timid and anxious. Furthermore, Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2003) suggested that if the lecturers had neurotic personality traits which are mainly a consequence of the anxiety and impulsiveness traits, it may be counterproductive for students study habit.

In addition, Wright (2005) cited a report by Ramsden (2003) found that students in Australia identified lecturers' personality characteristics such as helpful, sympathetic, creating interest and motivation as their preferable and good choice of good teaching. Furthermore, Forrester-Jones (2003) and Nonis and Hudson (2004) also echoed the similar findings which agreed with Brown (2004) that lecturers' personality is important for good teaching which influenced the students' academic success. Furthermore, Haghdoost and Shakibi (2006) found that characteristics such as honesty, compassionate, respectful, pragmatic and energetic were the preferred personality traits provided by their subjects which also quite similar to the Big Five adjectives checklist used in this study.

For the second aims of the study which investigate gender differences on lecturers' personality found that female students scored higher in several personality domains and facets compared to their male counterparts. For instance, female rated and highly preferred lecturers that possessed certain personality traits such as warm, gregarious, shows positive emotions toward them, action oriented and ideas oriented. They also preferred lecturers who have personality characteristics such as compliant and tender-minded. Female students rated more highly for lecturers who are competent in his or her field of

study, and self-disciplined. In addition, female students do not prefer lecturers who show signs of neurotics compared to male students. This finding clearly demonstrated the effect of genders regarding preferences for lecturers' personalities.

Female students also rated lecturers' personalities such as warm, gregarious and other qualities such as tenderness, responsiveness and sympathy as to be feminine characteristics compared to male students (Basow & Silberg, 1987; Costa et al., 2001). Basow (2000) also found that female students would like their professor which has been described as caring, helpful, knowledgeable and fair. She also found that the worst professor characteristics were disorganized, unclear, indifferent and rude/mean. The present study supports Bassow (2000) findings.

Similar to the above findings, criteria such as good communication skills, caring, empathy, well organized are also mentioned and preferred by students concerning their lecturers' personalities (e.g. Conant, Kelley & Smart, 2003; Paswan & Young, 2002). Furthermore, Basow, Phelan & Capotosto (2006) also found that lecturer's characteristics such as enthusiasm, stimulation of interest, knowledge, dedication, caring, availability, fairness, interactivity, openness, clarity and organization preferred by students especially female students more than male. Some of the lecturers' personality characteristics in Bassow et al. (2006) study were similar with the present study.

Nevertheless, there is one question still remain. Why there is a different in preference of lecturers' personalities by male and female students? Basow et al. (2006) argued that male and female students may prefer different teaching styles or lecturers' qualities which also similar to what Centra & Gaubatz (2000) has found in their study. They contended that male and female students have different set of criteria in rating their preferred lecturers' personalities which can be thought as their beliefs system. They argued that previous experiences feed belief systems and then influence perceptions and interpretations of situations. In short, male and female students probably perceived their lecturers in response to whether positive or negative interpretations of previous encounters with the lecturers.

Apart from that, the personality of a lecturer is not the only factors that affect students learning process (Haghdoust & Shakibi, 2006). Others studies found that the enhancement of students' knowledge and skill did not only based on the personality of their lecturers but also depend on many factors such as lecturers teaching styles (Rushton et al., 1987; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2005). Factors such as students' interpersonal environment, which include interactions with peers has a greatest impact on students' changes in their aspirations, values, attitudes, beliefs and actions (e.g. Whitt et al., 2001; Chepchieng, 2004; Chepchieng et al., 2006).

Thus, lecturer-student contact in and out of classroom is also very important in enhancing student motivation and involvement in all facets of life (Newton, 2002). This is perhaps due to the students' identification with lecturers as role models, which has been accredited as tool to the acquisitions of good learning skills and functional behaviour (e.g. Ngara, 1995; Ronning, 1997; Elzubeir & Rizk, 2001). Several studies has demonstrated that lecturer's personality interact with the personality of students and has significant impact

on the students' attitude toward the lecturers and the course itself (e.g. Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993).

Nevertheless, both parties play an important role in disseminating not only knowledge but also social interaction to both. For instance, Feldman & Prohaska (1979) found evidences that by being perceived as a warm individual, a teacher can influence students' ratings not only for his or her personality, but also his or her teaching abilities. They further noted that such expectations are communicated to the teachers by the students, and in turn, influence the teachers attitudes and behaviour.

In addition, the evaluation made by the students regarding their lecturers is perhaps one of the most important ways of generating essential information for course improvements and also beneficial for making lecturers aware of their strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and interactions with students (Dia, 1998). Thus, lecturers and students both have some sort of reciprocal relationships which could affect the outcome of the knowledge and the product of the students that the lecturers produces in the university.

CONCLUSION

The present study found that students would prefer lecturers' who has pleasant personalities such as openness, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and disliked neurotic types of lecturers' personality. Nevertheless, the study also without any limitations, one example is focusing on lecturers' personalities only and without investigating students' personalities probably has masked substantial individual differences in students' preferences for lecturers' personalities (e.g. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2005). Furthermore, it is also interesting to examine lecturers' preferences for students' personalities. Indeed, there must be a reason to think that these may be quite similar to those found in the present study, i.e. lecturers may prefer extraverts over introverts and conscientious over less conscientious students (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2002).

However, the present study has implications for vocational guidance as well as selection. In overall, many students hold strong belief about their lecturers which can be seen in the choices and avoidance of courses, as well as in course appraisal forms. Thus, the personality of the lecturer inevitably influenced how they prepare and deliver the lectures, tutorial and other classes. As a result, school and universities should concentrate more attention to the personality traits of lecturers (Rushton et al., 1987).

In addition, the usage of Big Five personality theory offers many advantages especially several studies has already documented the advantages of the theory in several settings such as roles in the choice process, aiding in the development of rapport, the choice of intervention and counselling (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Thus, the Big Five especially the NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) could well used in Malaysian context that could gather greater understanding not only on personality issues but relationship with other psychological and social aspects.

Nevertheless, the findings need to be taken rather cautiously before making any judgments. The study provides implication to the Ministry of

Higher Education. It may be that schools and universities should pay more attention to the personality traits of lecturers, and perhaps personality and psychological test should be apply in selecting lecturers. In addition, the responsible agency should also take note that they need to investigate the personality of students who apply for a place in the universities, rather than focusing too much on their academic achievements.

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