

# Perceived Personality Traits of Deaf Students of Cagayan de Oro National High School: Basis for Intervention

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## ABSTRACT

Deafness is one of the factors which affects social, emotional, intellectual, and even the psychological aspect of a person. In general, it affects the person holistically and, thus, affects personality. Deaf students pose many challenges in their lives, difficulty in hearing, inability to express themselves and to communicate the people that surround them. The core problem is communication difficulties which are the clear barrier in the social relationships with their peers. The study was conducted to describe the perceived personality traits-related problems of the deaf students of Cagayan de Oro National High School (CNHS), Cagayan de Oro City. The study utilized the descriptive research design and survey questionnaires were given to the deaf students, parents, and teachers. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics as frequency, percentage, t-test, and ANOVA. Deaf students were neutral in four dominant personalities, conscientiousness, agreeableness,

and neuroticism. Further, the teachers were more committed than parents in the development of the deaf students' personality traits related problems.

**Keywords** — deafness; deaf students; personality traits; communication difficulties, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Every aspect of life is affected by personality. Personality is displayed through thoughts, feelings, behaviors and many other ways (Cherry, 2016). Every person has certain traits with which they are born. Personality has been a major factor in determining academic success of a student in the class. As for deaf students, they tend to isolate themselves since sign language is there only way of communication. It has then affected their interrelationship towards hearing students. Subsequently, hearing students tend to misinterpret deaf students of being snob, aloof which resulted in withdrawing themselves from the deaf students. This in return has affected the self- esteem of the deaf students and has greatly affected their personality traits.

Personality traits are either natured or nurtured. In a classroom setting, most of the personality traits are nurtured. Deaf students, develop their personality traits from their environment wherein they adapted how other deaf students act in their own way which affects their behavior (Vygotsky, 1980). It also expresses certain aspects of personality in different situations and the responses are generally stable.

There is a widespread assumption that deafness is associated with a group of specific personality characteristics. Suspiciousness and paranoid symptomatology, as well as impulsiveness and aggressive behaviors, have been reported as typical of deaf adults (Cooper & Marshal, 1976). In general, the frequency of such pathological behaviors is reported to correlate with severity and time of onset of deafness (Hindley, Hill, McGuigan, and Kitson, 1994). Deafness is a diverse condition that has far-reaching effects on social, emotional, and cognitive development. According to Theunissen et al. (2014), Deaf students have a significant difference in their levels of self-esteem compared to normal hearing children. Orth, Robins, and Roberts (2008) added that deaf has a lower level of self-esteem because, among other things, they frequently experience lower language and communication skills. One would assume that deaf students encounter more difficulties regarding their self-esteem because they often face multiple challenges, such as speech and language delays, communication

problems, and less or no access to the sound-dominated world (Polat & Güneş, 2007). These problems could potentially harm deaf students' level of self-esteem, resulting in less stable friendships and more bullying (Theunissen et al. 2014). Deaf students have low self-esteem and thus related to their deafness and less communication access to bridge the hearing people and the challenging hearing aid. Deaf people need to survive and cope with the demands of a hearing world (Jambor & Elliott, 2005).

Williams (1966), observed that deaf students are often described as “immature self-awareness, egocentric, lacking in self-confidence and initiative,” as well as having poor frustration tolerance. Higher impulsivity rates have also been reported, including motor restlessness, impulsivity, doubt and uncertainty, rigidity, and obstinacy (Lesser and Easser, 1972). While reported rates of behavior disorder vary widely in deaf students, they are usually higher than in hearing populations. While confirmed in Freeman's study in Vancouver, Canada, restlessness, possessiveness, disobedience, destructiveness, distressing habits, and being fussy and over particular to the list of the behaviors are more evident in deaf than hearing students.

Moreover, in the study of Williams (1966), there was a similarity in the type of maladjustments in deaf and hearing children. He found a small proportion of neurotic disorders, and fewer psychiatrically disturbed children in the group with the most severe hearing loss. Reivich and Rothrock (1972) concluded from factor analysis that conduct, personality, and immaturity dimensions were strikingly similar to those consistently identified in normal populations. Only isolation and communication problems were related to deafness. On the other hand, Levine (1997) described deaf students' personality traits like impulsiveness, suggestibility, irritability, and egocentricity. However, Myklebust (1960) states that early profound deafness restricts the development of the personality. Basilier and Lundstrom (2003) however, claims that hearing people contribute to the manifestation of particular personality traits in deaf people because hearing people ‘represent their handicap’; that is, communication becomes a significant problem between hearing people and deaf people because of the lack of understanding on the part of the hearing population (Meadow-Orlans, 1980).

Lesser and Easser (1972) point up another highly significant issue which complicates the evaluation of behavioral findings of the deaf students. They emphasize that “one cannot adequately evaluate or classify congenitally deaf persons unless one includes the knowledge of the very different developmental and experiential tracks over which these children have advanced” (p. 458). They

see the impulsivity of the deaf child as closely connected to his lack of adequate communicative modalities. Furth and Youniss (1966) reiterated that the obsessive like traits of the deaf are reinforced by the usual rearing and educational practices met by the deaf. Lesser and Easser summarize their discussion that “the usual psychopathological categories are poorly applicable to children whose development from birth must follow other pathways than those with which are familiar” (p. 465).

An essential ingredient of this ‘adapting’ is what Denmark and Warren (2003) refer to as the ability of deaf students ‘to gain insight’ into their problems. Makes a point even more clearly that the naivete of the deaf cannot be taken as an indication of better emotional well-being. On the contrary, those who stated that deafness is not a handicap, those who showed the least understanding of what it means to hear, were the most disturbed’ (Myklebust, 1960). The assumption that underpins this amazing piece of deduction is profoundly deaf have psychological problems (Myklebust, 1965).

As per the researcher’s experiences in handling deaf students in the regular classroom setting, they are less mature and more dependent than their hearing classmates and peers. It has been one of the most consistent findings of Meadow (2005) that deaf persons are less mature than hearing individuals. Moreover, Padden, C. A., and Humphries, T. (1990), described deaf students as emotional immaturity in terms of egocentricity, easy irritability, impulsiveness, and suggestibility (p. 143). However, through the informal conversation of the Special Education (SPED) teachers, though immature and easily irritable but they are manageable and quick to cope up if teachers spend more time to explain using natural gestures or basic signs to the consequences of their actions. Moreover, deaf students are lovable and caring for their teachers and peers. SPED teachers are trained to communicate with learners who need special attention.

Since it is difficult to handle deaf students, aside from having a disability they have manifested extreme undesirable behaviors like being suspicious, paranoid and neurotic which becomes the objective of the study to come up with an intervention. Intervention plan that is essential for improving personality traits and involve interpersonal and intrapersonal activities like sharing one’s experiences, role play of current events which presents the pictures of worldly things and distractions, recollection of understanding the value of life deeply, morals and etiquette. Thus, the researcher believes that there is a need to create an intervention program for the deaf students in Cagayan de Oro National High School. An intervention program that would address the personality problems and improve the personality traits of the deaf students.

## FRAMEWORK

Over centuries, a range of theories and models has been described and measured by personality. Theories of Freud, 1996 and Jung, 1986 states that the dynamics of personality as a whole explained clearly. Freud's theory on the levels of consciousness in different levels explained, all our actions are influenced by these three levels. The unconscious concept that includes the collective unconscious study of archetypes was introduced by Jung.

Our personality and reactions are influenced by all these three levels. Jung extended the unconscious concept to include the collective unconscious and the study of archetypes. We inherit in our brains the collective unconscious, which is a latent memory base of our ancestors. Themes which have been part of human life throughout all time and cultures are archetypes. Some of the archetypes described by Jung are the persona, anima, and animus and the persona represents the mask and the different roles we play in our lives. It means that all of us has a feminine side, anima, while each woman has a male side, animus. All these aspects influence our behavior and form the basis of our character.

On the other hand, in recent years trait theory has become a more and more popular tradition is related to genetics and neurological processes are the basis of personality. The central personality traits can be related to genes for some studies of twins raised apart has shown that 50% of experiences in childhood days are another ground for the formation of personality. Part of a complex system which makes it impossible to predict reactions with certainty, that individual is unique in his/her character (Bouchard, Malina, & P'Russe, 1997).

There is a set of five broad trait dimensions or domains, often referred to as the "Big Five": Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism (sometimes named by its polar opposite, Emotional Stability), and Openness to Experience (sometimes named Intellect). Highly extraverted individuals are assertive and sociable, rather than quiet and reserved. Agreeable individuals are cooperative and polite, rather than antagonistic and rude. Conscientious individuals are task focused and orderly, rather than distractible and disorganized. Neurotic individuals are prone to experiencing negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and irritation, rather than being emotionally resilient. Finally, highly open individuals have a broad rather than narrow range of interests, are sensitive rather than indifferent to art and beauty, and prefer novelty to the routine. The Big Five/FFM was developed to represent as much of the variability in individuals' personalities as possible, using only a small set of trait dimensions. Many

personality psychologists agree that its five domains capture the most important, basic individual differences in personality traits and that many alternative trait models can be conceptualized in terms of the Big Five/FFM structure (Jackson, Soto, Graham, Carter, & Howell, 2013).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study determines the current perceived personality traits of the deaf students that need to be intervened or improved as a basis of higher rates of success in the field of education. Thus, the researcher believes that an intervention plan could address the undesirable behavior that would address the personality problems of deaf students.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive research design. Survey questionnaires were given to the deaf students, parents, and teachers to describe the perceived personality traits-related problems of the deaf students. These involved the Big Five personality test or the five-factor model that evolved from an analysis of the terms which are used to describe personality. After which the data were gathered and analyzed. Frequency and percentage, t-test, and ANOVA were employed to determine the significant difference between the deaf student's profile and perceived personality traits.

### Participants

The participants of the study were all Grade 7, 8, and 9 deaf students of Cagayan de Oro National High School. These students were chosen by their respective advisers as per observation in and out of the classroom and based on their anecdotal record.

The number of deaf students per Grade level:

Grade 7	- 10
Grade 8	- 10
Grade 9	- 10
Total:	- 30

## Instrumentation

The study used survey instruments to describe the perceived personality-traits related problems of deaf students. These were adapted from Dr. Lewis R. Golberg's Big Five Personality Test (1992) and Dr. Sol J. Dalonos (2013). But the researcher further modified the tool to make it suitable and friendly to the respondents.

The questionnaires were of three (3) sets for the deaf students, parents, and teachers. The Big Five Personality Test was used for the deaf students and another set for parents and teachers committed to their children/students. The deaf students' questionnaire was consists of 50 questions, 10 per Big Five personality category in Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroverted/Introverted, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. For the parents and teachers, it consists of 20 questions respectively on their commitment to their children and students.

Table 1. The Reliability Analysis Results for the Three Instruments Used in the Study

Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Parents	0.763	Valid
Teachers	0.731	Valid
Students	0.874	Valid

## Data-Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of this study, a formal letter of request was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent for approval to conduct the study. As soon as the approval was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent, the letter was then endorsed and forwarded to the principal and teacher- deaf students pose many challenges in their lives, difficulty in hearing, inability to express themselves and to communicate the people that surround them. The core problem is communication difficulties which are the clear barrier in the social relationships with their in-charge.

The researcher personally facilitated the conduct of the gathering of data as well as the pilot testing of the tool. After the pilot testing, the researcher conducted the survey to Cagayan de Oro National High School. The study conducted after the classes were recited to avoid disruption. With the help of the principals/school head, the questionnaires were then retrieved. An interview was set for the parents and teachers to the personality-related problems of deaf students.

**Scoring Procedure**

The scores ranged from 1 to 5, 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest. The individual score is listed and describes as follows:

5 – The students agree the most personality related traits problems of a deaf individual.

4 – The students agree at least 4 personality related traits problems of a deaf individual.

3 – The students agree at least 3 personality related traits problems of a deaf individual.

2 – The students agree at least 2 personality related traits problems of a deaf individual

1 – The students agree at least 1 or none of the personality related traits problems of a deaf individual.

Scale	Range	Description
5	4.5 – 5	Agree
4	3.5 – 4	Slightly Agree
3	2.5 – 3.4	Neutral
2	1.5 – 2.4	Slightly Disagree
1	1 – 1.4	Disagree

**Data Analysis Procedure/Statistical Treatment**

Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. The questionnaires were then coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. The presentation of data proceeds considering the order of sub-problems indicated in the Statement of the Problem.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Most of the students are young adults and male predominantly than female. All deaf students are profoundly deaf based on their audiological results from the audiologist. These test results were pre-requisite upon enrolment to categorize them according to their level of hearing loss.

Moreover, parent education is essential in order for the parents to understand better the hearing difficulty of their children and motivated to get involved in their education. Based on the survey, most of the parents were high school graduates;

there were a college graduate, college level, and elementary level respectively. According to Mukari (1990), parents with any other family member need enough information to make important decisions for their children. Parents can even feel that they do not have the necessary skills to parent a deaf child. Significantly, the background of the parents can affect the deaf child's achievements in school. Professionals need to be able to adjust to each set of parents when discussing their child's deafness. Mukari (1990), added that lack of knowledge among parents could be related to factors such as the distance from and availability of support services, ethnicity, educational status, the availability of financial resources, and potentially individual levels of commitment from the parent. Musselman and Kircaali-Iftar (2013) found that the level of the parents' education, the strength of the family's commitment to the mode of the child's education, the parents' level of involvement in their child's education, and the ability of the family to allocate roles in forwarding their goals for the child related to outcomes for children with deafness are pivotal to lead them successful and live with values.

However, there is a danger in ignoring other factors that play into the school placement of a student such as family income, which could restrict the access to social and medical services, or the educational level of mothers, which might affect their likelihood to learn and use signed communication and support the child's academic efforts (Stinson and Kluwin, 2003). Most of the parents family income ranges from 2,500-4, 999, with 33.3% (n-10). For family income from 10,000-14,999; 26.7% (n-8); 5, 000-9,999 16.7% (n-5); 15, 000-20, 000 10% (n-3) respectively; and 2, 499 below 3.3% (n-1).

In the five models of personality traits, openness trait got the highest mean which implies that the students 'slightly agree' on this personality trait. According to Goldberg (1993), openness refers to a person's ability to look for new experiences. Not only that, but the capacity to make room for them and visualize the future creatively. Deaf students are creative in nature most especially in visual imagery. They may be more creative in the figural domain because of strengths in their visual-spatial skills (Blatto-Vallee, Kelly, Gaustad, Porter, & Fonzi, 2007; Marschark & Wauters, 2011). However, deaf students afraid to take risks not because they cannot do a certain thing but for the people that cannot understand them. Goldberg (1993) said that people who are highly open to experience are imaginative and appreciate art. They cooperate well with other people. They are also curious and prefer variety to the routine. Those with a low score in this category are people closed off to new experiences. They display all the opposite traits. In other words, they prefer safety and convention. It's hard for

them to adapt to new things, which is why they prefer a rigid schedule. They tend towards technical activities and show little interest in the abstract.

For the other four personality traits, the students are just 'neutral,' with neuroticism having the lowest meanwhile conscientiousness was having the highest mean among them. Conscientiousness is one of the personality traits that refers to the capacity for self-control and the ability to act effectively (Goldberg, 1993). For deaf students, they find difficulty in controlling their selves because of their problems in communication. They can follow instruction through guidance, but it will take time most especially in understanding things quickly. Such problems may either be resolved constructively or lead to a behavior disorder. Goldberg (1993) reiterated that people who score high in this factor are often organized. Others see them as trustworthy and meticulous. At the extreme end, people with this trait are perfectionists and can be workaholics. They have a strong need for success.

However, in the personality trait as agreeableness, deaf students are neutral. Though deaf students are friendly and helpful, empathic (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), and able to inhibit their negative feelings (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1999) but rejected by peers and friends because of their inability to communicate with them. For the deaf students to communicate the hearing peers, they made it simply using homemade signs and natural gestures. According to Goldberg (1993), those who score high in this factor are understanding and tolerant with other people. They are very good at understanding the needs and feelings of others. Those on the opposite end of the spectrum are difficult and combative. They enjoy debate and arguments and try to impose their views on others. Hostility is their trademark. These kinds of people are very good at competitive activities and get energy from being in front of people.

Moreover, deaf students are neutral in personality traits as extroverted or introverted. Vandenhoff (2011) stated that those who are extroverted are well supported by parents, friends, and peers. They enjoyed and wanted to be the company of others. They liked to have company, and they feel comfortable in a group setting. They work well in teams and are optimistic and enthusiastic. When they are with other people, they are like fish in water. On the opposite end, introverts students prefer to relate to the world by first taking it 'inward' (Papadopoulos, 1992). They wanted to work better alone. They generally feel a certain mistrust or caution with other people. They prefer small circles of friends and they feel uncomfortable in large groups (Vandenhoff, 2011). In this spectrum on this personality continuum, no psychologically healthy individual

is a complete introvert or extrovert all the time. Rather than a fixed trait, it is a fluctuating state of being (Senechal, Coco, Bryan, & Holman, 2011).

The personality trait neuroticism of deaf students is still on the neutral side. This personality trait addresses the ability or inability to deal with difficult situations in life. Equally early hearing loss and become deaf could affect personality development (Chess, S. and Fernandez, P., 1980). They are prone to anxiety and depression and tend to have poor coping strategies which can adversely affect all chronic conditions. Further, they are more likely to report physical illness and discomfort which may primarily account for the association between neuroticism and many illnesses. However, a key component of neuroticism is somaticizing unhappiness and stress (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2009). Goldberg (1993) reiterated that people who score high in this factor tend to behave unpredictably. They don't display consistent behavior and their reactions vary widely, though it's not clear why. On the other side, people are stable, prudent, and moderate. They behave this way even in times of crisis. People like this are calm and sure of their ability to handle hard things and mistakes. They are generally positive and stay positive regardless of hardship.

There is no significant difference in the students' perceived personality traits when they are grouped according to their gender, age, parents' educational attainment, and family income. This means that they have a comparable perception of their personality traits when grouped according to their profile.

Male and female students, younger and older students, students' whose parents have low and high educational attainment, and students' with low and high family income have similar perceived personality traits.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, the following conclusions are drawn about the personality traits of the deaf students. The students perceived personality traits related problems as neutral in the four dominant personalities like agreeableness, extroverted, neuroticism and slightly agree on openness. Neutral because they do not display consistent behavior and their reactions vary widely because of their inability to communicate with peers, friends, parents, and teachers as well. This is correlated with their severity and time of onset of deafness. While the personality traits related problems of deaf students are closely connected to the lack of adequate communicative modalities, it is true that they appeared to become rude because of their problems of communication. The problems exhibited by the

deaf students can be resolved constructively by the usual rearing and educational practices for the deaf students. Otherwise, if not properly addressed this would lead to a behavior disorder.

On the other hand, they are generally positive and stay positive regardless of hardship. Those on the opposite end of the spectrum are difficult and combative. Thus, the intervention plan is essential to help them realize that the inability to hear and communicate would not be the reason to have personality problems. This would help them to battle the hardships due to their communication problems. But they cannot do it alone; they need people to help and motivate them to become a better person. Based on the results, parents and teachers were completely committed in the education of deaf students that will be of great help in improving their personality traits.

### **TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH**

The result of the study could be translated through a journal article for international publications, newsletters, radio, social media, and other media for information dissemination and to revisit the institutional policies. Additionally, both the external and internal stakeholders might be able to translate it into a more comprehensive administrative policy and enhanced intervention program that could increase the interest of prospective internal stakeholders and professionals towards further studies. Finally, it can be translated by sharing this with present and future employees to clarify the administrative policies in the workplace.

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