

# Personality Traits As Predictor of Emotional Labour Among Midwives In Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State

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## Abstract

*This study investigated personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State. A descriptive design was adopted for the study. The Big Five Personality Traits scale was used to collect data from the participants. The participants constituted 100 midwives. Three research questions were tested. The demographic age result in table 1 showed 29 (29%) were between the ages of 20-29, 37 (37%) were between the ages of 30-39, 24 (24%) were between the ages of 40-49 while the remaining 10 (10%) were between the ages of 50 and above. Result in table 2 showed 74 (74%) predicted extroversion on emotional labour among midwives, 78 (78%) predicted openness on emotional labour among midwives, 76 (76%) predicted conscientiousness on emotional labour among midwives, 76 (76%) predicted agreeableness on emotional labour among midwives, while 68 (68%) predicted neuroticism on emotional labour among midwives. Result in table 3 showed 78 (78%) predicted burnout on emotional labour among midwives, 70 (70%) predicted low job satisfaction on emotional labour among midwives, 72 (72%) predicted stress on emotional labour among midwives, 58 (58%) predicted depression on emotional labour among midwives, while 64 (64%) predicted feeling of inadequacy on emotional labour among midwives. In table 4, result showed 72 (72%) predicted extroversion on personality trait among midwives; 88 (88%) predicted openness on personality trait among midwives, 82 (82%) predicted conscientiousness on personality trait among midwives, 68 (68%) predicted agreeableness on personality trait among midwives, while, 62 (62%) predicted neuroticism on personality trait among midwives. In conclusion, based on the findings, extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism are personality traits that predicted emotional labour among midwives. Also, emotional labour among midwives include burnout, low job satisfaction, stress, depression and feeling of inadequacy. The following recommendations were: Management of hospitals should pay attention and identify the type of personality trait the midwives have at the time of selection and recruitment, as this will help in enhancing management of emotional labour. Also, Personality traits of already employed midwives should be identified so that relevant training and development programmes can be implemented to reduce emotional labour and its implications. In addition, health policy makers and government should engage career counsellors who would help educate midwives on ways of attaining career fulfillment. Furthermore, intending midwives should familiarize themselves with the various personality traits which are potent predictors of career fulfillment.*

**Keywords: Personality Traits, Emotional Labour, Predictors, Midwives, Teaching Hospital.**

## Introduction

Pregnancy and childbirth are processes in which intense emotions are experienced by women and their families. The midwifery profession requires providing emotional support during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum periods, and that involves intense emotional labour (Yoruk & Acikgoz, 2022). As the definition of midwifery is generally associated with pregnancy, birth and newborn health, emotional labour is very important in the profession due to the close interaction with pregnant women (Drach-Zahavy et al., 2016).

Midwives serve women and their families in periods of very different emotional intensity, such as during healthy or risky pregnancies, spontaneous births, and traumatic and difficult birth experiences. Whatever mood they are in, even if they do not like it or are experiencing different emotions, midwives are expected to behave as expected - assume defined roles, smile, empathize and use nonverbal communication well. Midwifery requires the adoption of emotional labour by managing emotions regarding and creating a public observable face and body image (Cagan & Gunay, 2015).

As a result of their emotional caring roles, midwives have to display certain behaviours and reflect their emotions to interlocutors. This can lead to emotional labor which is a continuous phenomenon that is above and beyond this basic level. Rayment (2015) stated that emotional labor in midwives occurs in two ways. First, midwives must seem relaxed and confident to ensure that women feel calm and safe during the birth. The other concerns emotion management in terms of protecting themselves against difficult and distressing situations and acting by following the rules of emotion approved by the hospital management while providing services.

Midwifery is inherently an emotional work. Midwives care for women at one of the most emotionally intense periods of their lives. They work during moments of birth and death, of joy, sadness and both physical and emotional pain. Yet the emotional experiences of midwives at work are often not spoken about. Midwives often tend to 'get on with the job', but the process of dealing with others' emotions, managing their own and displaying different kinds of emotion can be a challenging part of midwives' work and one for which they are not always adequately supported (Rayment, 2015).

The human personality includes individual behaviour and appearance or societal motivation, inner organizing force and organization of measurable traits. These are unique characteristics of a person that influence individual behavior. Personality is the complex term concerned with individual behavior, appearance, measuring traits, situations and environments (Subburaj et al., 2017). A number of studies reveal a direct relationship between personality and emotional labour (Cano-García et al., 2015; Fontana & Abouserie, 2021; Mills & Huebner, 2022). According to Cano-Garcia et al. (2022), there is a role of personality and contextual variable in emotional labour.

Many contemporary personality psychologists believe that there are five basic dimensions of personality, often referred to as the "Big 5" personality traits. These five primary personality traits are extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Extroversion is sociability, agreeableness is kindness, openness is creativity and intrigue, conscientiousness is thoughtfulness, and neuroticism often involves sadness or emotional instability. Understanding what each personality trait is and what it means to score high or low in that trait can give insight into personality without taking a personality traits test. It can also help better understanding of others, based on where they fall on the continuum for each of the personality traits (Kendra, 2022).

Severe stresses, depending on the type of personality pattern, can either interfere with the behavioral patterns and reduce self-awareness or protect people against these problems. As midwives play an important role in family and community health, by increasing the job satisfaction of midwives, the quality of care and satisfaction of pregnant mothers can be increased (Mehdizadeh et al., 2018). Occupational stressors are risk factors for a wide range of mental disorders, including psychological distress, anxiety, depression, tension, and thinking about or performing suicide. In some studies, associations have been found between occupational stressors and a variety of health-related behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol consumption,

physical inactivity, unhealthy eating habits and overweight (Roozbehani et al., 2020).

Paying attention to personality traits, the way of establishing interaction with clients and the way of coping with stressful job aspects are among the factors that can be important given the job description of midwives. People's behaviour depends on their personality traits. The personality traits of midwives might be a source of creativity and development or the source of conflict, failure, and inevitable organizational problems (Bosworth et al., 2021). In addition, another factor which could be effective in selecting strategies to cope with stress is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence increases the ability and skill of people to cope with environmental pressures, and this ability to understand and manage feelings can be effective in behaviour and making decisions (Tabari & Ghorbani, 2019).

Giving the requisite attention to the health and welfare of women, is one of the most important tasks of health care managers and planners, and providing midwifery care has a direct effect on the health of mothers and infants and the community (Mollart et al., 2018). According to Kheirkhah et al. (2018), only a few studies have been conducted so far on the relationship between personality traits, emotional intelligence, and job stress of midwives. Therefore, this study on personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives will pave way for a better understanding of the phenomena under study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Midwives manipulate and manage feelings and emotions in order to function within a highly emotive environment and to provide care as a good midwife. Some newly qualified midwives are susceptible to emotional vulnerability before they develop to manage their emotions effectively. The unique working conditions of midwives require emotional work and affect their health and well-being, which may result in emotional labour.

Several studies have been conducted on burnout, job satisfaction and stress among midwives but very few have been conducted to evaluate the relationship between personality traits and emotional labour among midwives. It is against this background that the researcher is embarking on this study to establish a link between personality traits and emotional stress among midwives. This gave rise to the topic personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Do personality traits predict emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State?
- ii. What is the level of emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State?
- iii. What are the types of personality traits among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State?

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **The Big Five Theory of Personality Traits**

This study is anchored on the Big Five Theory of Personality Traits. Originally developed in 1949, the big five personality traits is a theory established by D. W. Fiske and later expanded upon by other researchers including Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae & Costa (1987). The Big Five Personality Traits model, or the Five Factor Model of personality is the most widely accepted taxonomy of personality among industrial-organizational psychologists. The Five Factor Model breaks personality down into five components: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness, and Stress Tolerance. Personality tests that are based on this model measure where an individual lies on the spectrum of each of the five traits. Each trait measures a unique aspect of human personality.

Agreeableness is a measure of an individual's tendencies with respect to social harmony. This trait reflects how well the individual gets along with others, how cooperative or skeptical they are, and how they might interact within a team. A midwife with the personality trait of

high agreeableness will be highly cooperative with pregnant women no matter the level of emotional labour she may be contending with.

Conscientiousness is a measure of how careful, deliberate, self-disciplined, and organized an individual is. Conscientiousness is often predictive of employee productivity, particularly in lower-level positions. When a midwife is highly conscientious, he/she is more likely to be careful and organized in dealing with pregnant women and postpartum mothers even in the face of high emotional labour.

Extroversion is a measure of how sociable, outgoing, and energetic an individual is. Individuals who score lower on the extroversion scale are considered to be more introverted, or more deliberate, quiet, low key, and independent. A midwife that is an extrovert will be sociable and outgoing. In the event of emotional labour, such midwife will be energetic and lively in the discharge of his/her responsibilities.

Openness measures the extent to which an individual is imaginative and creative, as opposed to down-to-earth and conventional. When a midwife has the personality trait of openness, he/she is likely to be creative and imaginative in dealing with emotional labour that may arise as he/she carries out his/her duties.

Stress tolerance measures the ways in which individuals react to stress. A midwife that has high stress tolerance will have high capacity to handle emotional labour that results from attending to his/her clients.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

This study made use of descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate for this study since it used questionnaire for collecting data from the respondents without any form of intervention from the researchers to determine personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State.

### **Setting**

This study was carried out in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, Benue State. The tertiary health institution is located in a suburb of Makurdi, the state capital of Benue state along Gboko road. It is bounded by the River Benue to the north, a settlement called Gyado Villa to the east and the second campus of the Benue State University to the west. Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi, was established alongside the College of Health Sciences. However, it became operational in January 2012.

The health institution has fourteen departments namely; Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Family Medicine, Histopathology, Haematology, Chemical Pathology, Community Medicine, Anaesthesia Microbiology, Radiology, Accident and Emergency, Paediatrics and Ophthalmology.

### **Participants**

The participants comprised of 100 Midwives at the Benue State University Teaching hospital, Makurdi (BSUTH). The researchers used the entire population for the study since they were of a manageable size.

### **Sampling technique**

The researchers did a pre-assessment survey in order to identify the population for the study. Since the population was of a manageable size as suggested by Nwana, (2016). No sampling was done.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument that was used in this study was a questionnaire. It was made up of sections A, B, C and D. Section A was made up of Demographic Data while section B, C and D comprised of the main questions which were designed on a Likert scale in order of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

**Validity of Instrument**

The validity of the instrument was established by examining the questionnaire critically for content relevance and clarity of statement. The questions were formulated by the researchers to measure what they are supposed to measure.

**Reliability of Instrument**

In order to ascertain the reliability of the items on the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted among 20 randomly selected midwives in Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi, who do not belong to the study population but share similar attributes with the participants of the study. The responses made were collected and found. The instrument was used for official collection of data for the study.

**Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to fill and return almost immediately. This was after obtaining due permission from the hospital authorities to use their midwives as respondents for the study.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures and presented in simple frequency tables and their percentages shown.

**Ethical Consideration**

The researchers adhered strictly to ethical codes of conduct guiding research. Permission was obtained from the hospital authorities to carry out the study on their midwives before proceeding to the respondents to get their consent. The essence of the research and its importance was explained to the respondents who were assured of confidentiality and privacy of information provided. Participation was voluntary as falsification of data and plagiarism were avoided.

**PRESENTATION OF RESULTS****Table 1: Showing the number of questionnaires distributed and returned**

<b>Questionnaires</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Distributed	100	100
Returned	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2023*

**Section A: Demographic Data****Table 1.1 Showing demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
20-29	29	29
30-39	37	37
40-49	24	24
50 and above	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	52	52
Married	36	36
Separated	4	4
Widowed	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Highest Qualification</b>		
RM	20	20
RM/RN	22	22
BNSc	46	46
MSc	12	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	84	84
Islam	13	13
Others	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Tribe</b>		
Tiv	92	46
Idoma	66	33
Igede	28	14
Others	14	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Working Experience</b>		
1-5 years	30	30
6-10 years	28	28
11-15 years	19	19
16-20 years	15	15
21 years and above	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 1.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi. The result shows that out of a total of 100 (100%) respondents, 29 (29%) were between the ages of 20-29, 37 (37%) were between the ages of 30-39, 24 (24%) were between the ages of 40-49 while the remaining 10 (10%) were between the ages of 50 and above. Marital status; 52 (52%) were single, 36 (36%) were married, 4 (4%) were divorced while 8 (8%) were widowed. Highest qualification; 20 (20%) had RM, 22 (22%) had RM/RN, 46 (46%) had BNSc while 12 (12%) had MSc. Religion; 84 (84%) were Christians, 13 (13%) were Muslims while 3 (3%) belong to other religions. Tribe; 92 (46%) were Tiv, 33 (33%) were Idoma, 14 (14%) were Igede while 14 (7%) belong to other tribes. Working experience; 30 (30%) had experience of 1-5 years, 28 (28%) had experience of 6-10 years, 19 (19%) had experience of 11-15 years, 15 (15%) had experience of 16-20 years while the remaining 8 (8%) had experience of 21 years and above.

**Table 2: Showing personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives**

Items	Frequency			Percentage (%)		
	Agree SA + A	Disagree D + SD	Total	Agree SA + A	Disagree D + SD	Total
Extroversion is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives	74	26	100	74	26	100
Openness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives	78	22	100	78	22	100
Conscientiousness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives	76	24	100	76	24	100
Agreeableness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives	76	24	100	76	24	100
Neuroticism is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives	68	32	100	68	32	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Findings from table 2 above, examined personality traits as predictor of emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi and out of 100 (100%) respondents, 74 (74%) agreed that extroversion is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives, 78 (78%) agreed that openness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives, 76 (76%) agreed that conscientiousness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives, 76 (76%) agreed that agreeableness is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives, while 68 (68%) agreed that neuroticism is a predictor of emotional labour among midwives

**Table 3: Showing emotional labour among midwives**

S/N	Items	Frequency			Percentage (%)		
		Agree SA + A	Disagree D + SD	Total	Agree SA + A	Disagree D + SD	Total
1	Burnout is an emotional labour among midwives	78	22	100	78	22	100
2	Low job satisfaction is an emotional labour among midwives	70	30	100	70	30	100
3	Stress is an emotional labour among midwives	72	28	100	72	28	100
4	Depression is an emotional labour among midwives	58	42	100	58	42	100
5	Feeling of inadequacy is an emotional labour among midwives	64	36	100	64	36	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Findings from table 3 above, examined emotional labour among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi and out of 100 (100%) respondents, 78 (78%) agreed that burnout is an emotional labour among midwives, 70 (70%) agreed that low job satisfaction is an emotional labour among midwives, 72 (72%) agreed that stress is an emotional labour among midwives, 58 (58%) agreed that depression is an emotional labour among midwives, 64 (64%) agreed that feeling of inadequacy is an emotional labour among midwives.

**Table 4: Showing types of personality traits among midwives**

S/N	Items	Frequency			Percentage (%)		
		Agree SA + A	Disagree SD + D	Total	Agree SA + A	Disagree SD + D	Total
1	Extroversion is a type of personality trait among midwives	72	28	100	72	28	100
2	Openness is a type of personality trait among midwives	88	12	100	88	12	100
3	Conscientiousness is a type of personality trait among midwives	82	18	100	82	18	100
4	Agreeableness is a type of personality trait among midwives	68	32	100	68	32	100
5	Neuroticism is a type of personality trait among midwives	62	38	100	62	38	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Findings from table 4 above examined the types of personality traits among midwives in Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi and out of 100 (100%) respondents, 72 (72%) agreed that extroversion is a type of personality trait among midwives; 88 (88%) agreed that openness is a type of personality trait among midwives, 82 (82%) agreed that conscientiousness is a type of personality trait among midwives, 68 (68%) agreed that agreeableness is a type of personality trait among midwives, 62 (62%) agreed that neuroticism is a type of personality trait among midwives.

### **Discussion**

From the data presented in table 2, it was observed that extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism are predictors of emotional labour among midwives. In agreement with the above findings, Mollart et al. (2018) asserted that midwifery is about human relationships, and the development of coping and interpersonal skills are necessary to deal with the sometimes-stressful nature of midwives' work. Personality traits play a significant role in predicting emotional labour among midwives. Also, Tarcan et al. (2017) stated that midwives serve women and their families in periods of very different emotional intensity, such as during healthy or risky pregnancies, spontaneous births, and traumatic and difficult birth experiences. Whatever mood they are in, even if they do not feel like it or are experiencing different emotions, midwives are expected to assume defined roles, smile, empathize and use non-verbal communication well. These are predicted by personality traits.

The findings from the data analysed in table 3, shows that burnout, low job satisfaction, stress, depression and feeling of inadequacy are emotional labours among midwives. Supporting the findings, Yoruk and Acikgoz (2022) stated midwives' working conditions affect their overall health and may cause burnout, low job satisfaction, and stress. It was stated that the unique working conditions of midwives require emotional work and affect their health and well-being, which may result in burnout and stress. In agreement, Grandey (2022) stated that midwives may have to emotionally labour with co-workers and supervisors to get their work done, and to perform emotional labour, midwives may use deep acting to modify their inner emotions, like pump themselves up before going out on the work floor, doing pep talks, surface acting, faking a smile when they are tired or when facing a rude, upset client.

From the data presented in table 4, it was observed that extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism are types of personality trait among midwives. The above findings are in line with the submission of Kheirkhah et al. (2018) which asserted that neuroticism, openness and agreeableness are types personality traits among midwives. Also, in support of the findings, Molavynejad et al. (2019) stated that extroversion and conscientiousness are types personality traits among midwives.

### **Nursing/Midwifery Implications**

Nurses/Midwives have an important role to play in managing emotional labour. Some of these roles are:

- i. Identifying their personality traits and taking necessary measures to them for emotional labour.
- ii. Managing emotional labour such that it does not have adverse effects on their work.
- iii. Ensuring that hospital administrators provide relevant training and education on how to develop to imbibe traits that enables dealing effectively with emotional situations and assignments.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The following are likely limitations of the study:

- ◆ Personality and emotional labour were measured through the self-reported questionnaires instead of observation which would have minimized response bias.
- ◆ Respondents in the study were midwives from a public tertiary health institution, so the results may not be generalized to midwives private health institutions.

- ◆ Another limitation is time and cost constraint. The generalization of research can be increased with more time and financial resources. More financial resources and time will allow including other nearby health institutions.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism are personality traits that predict emotional labour among midwives. Also, emotional labour among midwives include burnout, low job satisfaction, stress, depression and feeling of inadequacy.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made by the researcher:

- i. Management of hospitals should pay attention to and identify which type of personality midwives have at the time of selection and recruitment, as this will help in enhancing management of emotional labour.
- ii. Personality traits of already employed midwives should be identified so that relevant training and development programmes can be implemented to reduce emotional labour and its implications.
- iii. Health policy makers and government should engage career counsellors who would help educate midwives on ways of attaining career fulfillment.

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