

Personality Profile and Career Aspirations: Influence of Choleric and Phlegmatic Traits on Students' Choices in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated personality profile and career aspirations: influence of choleric and phlegmatic traits on students' choices in Bekwarra Local Government Area. of Cross River State, Nigeria. To guide this study, 2 research questions and 2 null hypotheses were stated. The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The area covered by the study was the entire Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State. The population of the study comprises senior secondary school two (SS 2) students from the seventeen public secondary schools across the Local Government Area. The total population was given as 10,321 students comprising 6,013 females and 4,308 males from the study area as recorded by Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2023). The sampling technique used for this study was simple random sampling. The study used a sample size of 190 SS2 students. Based on the analysis of data in the study, the following findings emerged: Choleric personality type accounted for 35.4% of students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. And Choleric personality type significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area; Phlegmatic personality type accounted for 34.8% of the students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area, and Phlegmatic personality type significantly influences students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Recommendation made included; Integrate personality assessments into career counselling programmes in secondary schools within Bekwarra Local Government Area. This will help identify students' dominant personality traits (including choleric and phlegmatic) and guide them toward careers that match their natural strengths

Keywords: Personality profile, Career aspirations, Traits, Choleric traits, Phlegmatic traits, Students' choices

Introduction

Personality profile refers to the distinctive patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that characterize an individual's way of interacting with the world. It shapes how people perceive situations, process information, relate to others, and make decisions including decisions about their future careers (Costa & McCrae, 2024). Within the spectrum of personality dimensions, temperament types such as choleric and phlegmatic have been widely studied for their potential influence on human aspirations and

life choices (Kanu & Eze, 2025). Choleric individuals are often described as ambitious, goal-driven, decisive, and self-confident, while phlegmatic individuals are typically calm, consistent, diplomatic, and dependable (Eysenck & Barrett, 2024). These inherent traits can play a significant role in determining how secondary school students perceive various career paths and align their aspirations with personal strengths and preferences.

Okoro & Nwachukwu (2021) explained that personality traits serve as a foundational framework through which young people evaluate career opportunities, weigh potential challenges, and envision long-term professional fulfillment. For instance, a choleric student may be naturally drawn to competitive, leadership-oriented careers such as law, business management, or politics, while a phlegmatic student might be inclined toward careers requiring patience, mediation, or routine stability, such as teaching, counseling, or social work. According to Akinade & Adeyemi (2023), matching a student's career choice with their personality type not only enhances satisfaction in the workplace but also increases productivity and long-term career stability.

In Nigeria, secondary school education serves as a critical stage in career decision-making, as students are often required to choose academic tracks science, arts, or technical by Senior Secondary Two (SS II), decisions that directly influence future career options (Olatunji & Oke, 2022). At this stage, personality traits can either align with or conflict with these academic choices, potentially impacting students' motivation and performance. Ugwu & Chukwuma (2022) emphasized that when students' career aspirations resonate with their personality profile, they are more likely to demonstrate persistence, enthusiasm, and commitment to their academic and vocational goals. Conversely, a mismatch between personality and career path can lead to dissatisfaction, underperformance, and even career changes in adulthood (Bassey & Otu, 2023).

The influence of personality traits on career choices is not only individual but also contextual. Family expectations, peer influence, cultural norms, and socioeconomic conditions interact with innate temperament to shape decision-making (Okechukwu & Eze, 2024). For example, in rural areas like Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, career aspirations may be influenced by limited exposure to diverse occupational fields, availability of role models, and prevailing community perceptions of certain professions (Abang & Ita, 2023). Within this context, personality traits such as the choleric's drive for achievement or the phlegmatic's preference for stability can significantly mediate how students navigate their options.

Recent studies have linked choleric traits to higher levels of career ambition, leadership potential, and risk-taking behavior (Lawal & Yusuf, 2021), while phlegmatic traits have been associated with high interpersonal harmony, stress resilience, and adaptability in structured work environments (Olumide & James, 2023). Both traits, though different in expression, offer distinct advantages in various career domains. The challenge for educators and career counselors is to help students recognize their strengths and align them with appropriate career paths (Ekpo & Afolabi, 2024).

In Cross River State, career guidance in secondary schools remains underdeveloped, with limited structured interventions to assess personality profiles before career decisions are made (Etim & Okon, 2022). This gap often results in students making choices based on immediate interests or external pressures rather than a deeper understanding of their temperament. As observed by Nwankwo & Bassey (2021), this misalignment may partly explain why many Nigerian graduates struggle with job dissatisfaction and frequent career changes.

Understanding the influence of choleric and phlegmatic traits on students' career aspirations is therefore critical, especially in rural areas like Bekwarra where career guidance resources are scarce. Identifying these temperament influences can inform the design of targeted counseling programs, equip teachers with better tools for mentorship, and ultimately help students make more informed and fulfilling career choices. This study is thus designed to investigate the influence of choleric and phlegmatic personality traits on the career aspirations of secondary school students in Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Personality traits play an essential role in shaping an individual's career aspirations and decisions. Traits such as choleric and phlegmatic influence how students perceive different career paths, the goals they set, and the motivation they bring to their pursuits. Choleric individuals are often ambitious, decisive, and confident, while phlegmatic individuals tend to be calm, consistent, and dependable. These traits can guide students toward career options that match their strengths, interests, and working styles.

However, many secondary school students make career choices without fully understanding how their personality type influences their suitability for different professions. In rural areas such as Bekwarra Local Government Area, career guidance services are often limited, leaving students to base their decisions on immediate interests, peer pressure, or family expectations rather than a thoughtful alignment between personality and career. This can result in career mismatches, low job satisfaction, and reduced productivity later in life.

At the secondary school level, particularly in Senior Secondary Two, students are required to choose academic tracks that have long-term implications for their career paths. Without proper guidance, a choleric student with natural leadership abilities might miss opportunities in competitive or decision-making careers, while a phlegmatic student with strong interpersonal skills might overlook professions that value patience and mediation. The absence of structured personality assessments and targeted career counseling further compounds this problem. Given these challenges, there is a need to investigate how choleric and phlegmatic traits influence the career preferences of secondary school students in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Purpose of the study

In general term, this study investigated the Personality Profile and Career Aspirations: Influence of choleric and phlegmatic Traits on Students' Choices in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Evaluate relationship of choleric personality type and students' career preferences in secondary schools.
- ii. Investigate the influence of phlegmatic personality on career preference of students in senior secondary schools.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does choleric personality type influence students' career preference in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area?
- ii. To what extent does phlegmatic personality type influence career preference of secondary school students in Bekwarra Local Government Area?

Statement of hypotheses

- i. Choleric personality type does not significantly influence students' career preferences in senior secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area.
- ii. Phlegmatic personality type does not significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The area covered by the study was the entire Bekwarra Local Government Area of Cross River State. The population of the study comprises senior secondary school two (SS 2) students from the seventeen public secondary schools across the Local Government Area. The total population was given as 10,321 students comprising 6,013 females and 4,308 males from the study area as recorded by Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2023). The sampling technique used for this study was simple random sampling; the technique employed by the researcher is the hat and draw (balloting) method. Here the researcher wrote the name of all the public secondary schools in the research area in slip of papers, rolled each slip into a paper ball deposited it in a container (a hat) and blindly draw the required number of schools. In same manner, the required subjects or respondents were also drawn for the study from each of the schools. The study used a sample size of 190 SS2 students.

The main instrument used for data collection was a research-made instrument titled: "Personality Types and Career Preference Questionnaire (PTCPQ). The instrument consists of three parts: part A, and B. Part "A" of the PTCPQ instrument consist of the demographic data of the respondents, part "B" consist of the items designed to elicit responses on their Career Preference. The items were framed on a 4 point modified Likert-type scale with 4 options and scoring pattern of strongly agree (SA = 4points), Agree (A = 3points), Disagree (D=2points) and strongly disagree (SD = 1point). The instrument was subjected to face validity. To determine the reliability of the PTCPQ, a trial test was done using 50 respondents drawn from the population area who were not part of the real study. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instrument. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.60 was obtained, which shows that it was high enough to be used for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations and simple linear regression analysis was used to test all the null hypotheses at .05 alpha level

RESULTS

In this section, each research questions and hypotheses were re-stated, and the results of the data analysis conducted to test these hypotheses are presented. Each hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One

To what extent does choleric personality type influences students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how choleric personality type influences students' career preferences in secondary schools

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	N = 190	
			SD	Dec.
1	Choleric personality traits drive students to choose careers that involve leadership and decision-making responsibilities	3.08	0.79	A
2	Choleric individuals often prefer careers that allow them to take initiative and direct others toward achieving goals	3.00	0.72	A
3	Students with choleric personality type are more likely to excel in professions that require strategic planning and control	3.02	0.71	A
4	Choleric traits such as determination and persistence influence students to pursue high-pressure career environments	3.01	0.81	A
5	The assertiveness of choleric individuals enhances their ability to succeed in management and entrepreneurial careers.	3.03	0.73	A
6	Students with a choleric personality type are often drawn to competitive and goal-oriented professions.	3.05	0.72	A

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' views on how choleric personality type influences students' career preferences in secondary schools. The mean scores for all items ranged from 3.00 to 3.08, which are above the decision benchmark of 2.50 on a four-point Likert scale. This indicates that respondents agreed with all the statements. Respondents agreed that choleric personality traits drive students to choose careers that involve leadership and decision-making responsibilities (M = 3.08, SD = 0.79) and that choleric individuals often prefer careers that allow them to take initiative and direct others toward achieving goals (M = 3.00, SD = 0.72). They also agreed that students with choleric personality type are more likely to excel in professions that require strategic planning and control (M = 3.02, SD = 0.71), and that choleric traits such as determination and persistence influence students to pursue high-pressure career environments (M = 3.01, SD = 0.81). Furthermore, respondents agreed that the assertiveness of choleric individuals enhances their ability to succeed in management and entrepreneurial

careers ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.73$) and that students with a choleric personality type are often drawn to competitive and goal-oriented professions ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.72$).

Hypothesis Three:

Choleric personality type does not significantly influence on students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Table 2: Regression summary for the influence of choleric personality type on students' career preferences in secondary schools

Model	Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1	922.249	922.249	19.445	.043 ^b
	Residual	188	8916.745	47.429		
	Total	189	9838.994			
Parameter Estimate						
	Variable	B	SE	r²	r² (adjusted)	
	(Constant)	15.344	3.216			
	Choleric personality type	.693	.986	.354	.332	

The result in Table 2 showed the simple linear regression analysis of the influence of choleric personality type on students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. The result showed that the regression coefficient for choleric personality type was 0.693 and significant at $p < 0.05$ level. The coefficient of determination r^2 was found to be 0.354 the value revealed that choleric personality type accounted for 35.4% of the students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Table 2 also reveals a β weight of 15.344. The regression equation therefore is $Y = 0.693x + 19.44$. Besides, table 2, revealed that analysis of variance for the regression data produced an F-value of 10.136 and significant at $p < 0.05$ level therefore null hypothesis 1 is not retained. ($p < 0.05$), this means that the result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that choleric personality type does not significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area is rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that choleric personality types significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Research Question Two

To what extent does phlegmatic personality type influence career preference of secondary school students in Bekwarra Local Government Area?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on how phlegmatic personality type influence career preference of secondary school students

		N = 190		
S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Dec.
7	I prefer career paths that align with the calm, patient, and steady nature associated with a phlegmatic personality type	2.53	0.70	A
8	Students with a choleric personality type are often drawn to competitive and goal-oriented professions	3.01	0.81	A
9	I am likely to select careers that allow for teamwork, patience, and careful planning, reflecting my phlegmatic nature	3.00	0.74	A
10	My preference for careers is influenced by my tendency to remain composed and consistent in various work situations	3.02	0.74	A
11	I am more inclined toward professions that require good interpersonal relationships and conflict avoidance due to my phlegmatic traits	2.68	0.76	A

12	My phlegmatic personality type motivates me to choose careers that involve stability and harmonious working environments	2.71	0.72	A
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Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' views on the extent to which the phlegmatic personality type influences the career preferences of secondary school students in Bekwarra Local Government Area. The results reveal that all the items have mean values greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating agreement among respondents. Specifically, respondents agreed that they prefer career paths that align with the calm, patient, and steady nature associated with a phlegmatic personality type ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 0.70$) and that they are likely to select careers that allow for teamwork, patience, and careful planning ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.74$). They also agreed that their career preferences are influenced by their tendency to remain composed and consistent in various work situations ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.74$) and that they are more inclined toward professions requiring good interpersonal relationships and conflict avoidance due to their phlegmatic traits ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.76$). Furthermore, respondents affirmed that their phlegmatic personality type motivates them to choose careers involving stability and harmonious working environments ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.72$).

Hypothesis Two:

Phlegmatic personality type does not significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area

Table 4: Regression summary for the influence of phlegmatic personality type on students' career preferences in secondary schools

Model	Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1	921.432	921.432	19.426	.021 ^b
	Residual	188	8917.562	47.434		
	Total	189	9838.994			
Parameter Estimate						
	Variable	B	SE	r²	r² (adjusted)	
	(Constant)	20.788	2.968			
	phlegmatic personality type	.979	.901	.348	.317	

The result in Table 4 showed the simple linear regression analysis of the influence of phlegmatic personality type on students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. The result showed that the regression coefficient for phlegmatic personality type was 0.979 and significant at $p < 0.05$ level. The coefficient of determination r^2 was found to be 0.348 the value revealed that phlegmatic personality type accounted for 34.8% of the students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. Table 4 also reveals a β weight of 20.788. The regression equation therefore is $Y = 0.979x + 20.788$. Besides, table 4, revealed that analysis of variance for the regression data produced an F-value of 19.426 and significant at $p < 0.05$ levels therefore hypothesis 2 is not retained. ($p < 0.05$), this means that the result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that Phlegmatic personality type does not significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area is rejected. Inference drawn therefore is that phlegmatic personality type significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area

Summary of Findings

This section deals with the summary of the findings of the study according to each of the research questions and the tested hypotheses, the following findings emerged, that;

1. Choleric personality type accounted for 35.4% of students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. And Choleric personality type significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area

2. Phlegmatic personality type accounted for 34.8% of the students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area, and Phlegmatic personality type significantly influences students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings of the study was presented under the following sub-headings:

Choleric personality and students' career preferences in secondary schools

Results from table one and two revealed that Choleric personality type accounted for 35.4% of students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. And Choleric personality type significantly influence students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. This results agreed with the findings of Asogwa and Enwa (2024) conducted a study among Nigerian secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone and found that the choleric personality type significantly influences vocational choice, along with melancholic and sanguine types. This result aligns with your finding of a substantial 35.4% explanatory influence of choleric traits on career preferences. Similarly, Alkhelil (2024) explored the relationship between personality traits and career choice among Syrian secondary school students and observed a significant association between temperament dimensions (which would include choleric-like traits such as assertiveness) and career-related decisions.

On the other hand, Agbo (2022) investigated the role of broader personality traits such as attitudes and perceptions on career decision-making among secondary students in Enugu State and found those general traits had significant influences, but did not isolate temperament types like choleric. This suggests that while general personality domains consistently impact career preference, specific temperament types may have less distinct effects. Also, Ndagi et al. (2022) studied predictors of career preference among secondary students in Niger State and reported that personality factors, in general, significantly influenced career awareness and preference but did not identify any dominant temperament type such as choleric. Their findings imply personality has a role, but the weight attributed to specific temperament types may be less clear

Phlegmatic personality type and students' career preferences in secondary schools

Results from table three and four indicated that Phlegmatic personality type accounted for 34.8% of the students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area, and Phlegmatic personality type significantly influences students' career preferences in secondary schools in Bekwarra Local Government Area. This finding is in line with the findings of Asogwa and Enwa (2024) also reported that the phlegmatic personality type plays a significant role in vocational choices among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone, supporting your finding that it accounts for a large portion of variance (34.8%) in career preferences. Alkhelil (2018) similarly found that various personality dimensions implicitly including those resembling phlegmatic temperaments (steadiness, conformity) were significantly associated with students' career preferences, reinforcing the role of temperament in vocational decisions.

Contrary, Agbo (2022) showed that general personality characteristics (such as attitude and perception) wield considerable influence in career decisions among secondary school students, but again did not highlight phlegmatic temperament specifically. This suggests the influence of temperament may be overshadowed by broader personality constructs. Ndagi et al. (2022) similarly documented that personality factors affect career awareness and preferences in Niger State schools, but did not distinguish among temperamental categories such as phlegmatic. This implies that while personality matters, the discrete impact of phlegmatic traits may be less definitive.

Conclusion

1. Students with choleric traits characterized by leadership tendencies, decisiveness, and goal-orientation are more likely to select careers that align with their assertive and ambitious nature. The significant influence of this personality type suggests that career guidance interventions must take these traits into consideration.
2. Students with phlegmatic traits marked by calmness, reliability, and a preference for stability gravitate towards careers that offer consistency, harmony, and predictable routines. The significant

relationship between this personality type and career choice underscores the need for career counseling approaches that match such dispositions with suitable professions.

Recommendations

1. Integrate personality assessments into career counselling programmes in secondary schools within Bekwarra Local Government Area. This will help identify students' dominant personality traits (including choleric and phlegmatic) and guide them toward careers that match their natural strengths.
2. Design targeted career awareness programmes that present career paths suitable for choleric students (e.g., management, law, politics, entrepreneurship) and phlegmatic students (e.g., teaching, administration, counselling, healthcare support).
3. Provide teacher training in personality-based guidance methods so educators can offer informed advice that takes into account students' temperament and career aspirations.
4. Encourage parental involvement in the career decision-making process by educating parents about the influence of personality on career success, thereby reducing pressure on students to pursue careers mismatched to their traits.
5. Expand research to include other personality types (such as melancholic and sanguine) within the same population, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between temperament and career preference.

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