

The Influence of Big Five Personality Traits on Ambiguity Tolerance and Risk-Taking among Novice and Experienced Iraqi EFL Teachers

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**تأثير سمات الشخصية الخمس الكبرى على تقبل الغموض
والمجازفة لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية
العراقيين المبتدئين وذوي الخبرة**

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Abstract

Although teachers play a decisive role in shaping English language education in Iraq, little is known about how their personality traits influence essential psychological attributes such as ambiguity tolerance and risk-taking. Therefore, this study investigates the relationships between the Big Five personality traits, ambiguity tolerance, and risk-taking among novice and experienced Iraqi EFL teachers. Drawing on data from 80 teachers in state schools in Baghdad, the research employed the Big Five Inventory (BFI), the Multiple Stimulus Types Ambiguity Tolerance Scale (MSTAT-II), and a risk-taking questionnaire adapted from Nicholson et al. (2005). In order to analyze the gathered data, the researcher conducted Pearson correlation coefficients for novice and experienced teachers which later was followed by Fisher's Z tests to assess whether teaching experience had any significant effect on the calculated correlations. Accordingly, the results disclosed that Extraversion and Conscientiousness were positively correlated with ambiguity tolerance among experienced teachers, while Neuroticism was negatively related. Moreover, for the novice teachers, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were positively correlated with ambiguity tolerance. For risk-taking, Extraversion anticipated higher risk-taking in both groups, while Neuroticism predicted lower levels. Agreeableness and Conscientiousness showed significant correlation with risk-taking among novice teachers. Fisher's Z tests showed no significant differences. These findings highlight the significant role of personality in shaping teachers' responses to uncertainty and innovation in Iraqi EFL contexts and emphasize the value of integrating personality-informed insights into teacher education and professional development programs.

Key Terms: Big Five Personality Traits; Ambiguity Tolerance; Risk-Taking; Novice Teachers; Experienced Teachers; Iraqi EFL Teachers.

1.Introduction

Throughout history, education has consistently emphasized the vital role of teaching and learning. This principle holds true in Iraq, where the educational system is designed to address the challenges of a relentlessly globalizing society. The quality of teachers has a significant impact on the quality of education. Therefore, their cultivation is a top priority for all institutions seeking to improve achievement among students. In all educational environments, one of the most important issues to be considered vital is to keep the strength of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in a sufficient level to improve the needs of communities (Fomba, et al., 2023). In the classic approach used to assess the quality of teachers, a great deal of attention has been devoted to intelligence and knowledge. However, teachers' attributes that are not related to cognitive functions such as interactions with students has attracted the required attention (Temnyatkina & Temnyatkina, 2018).

Those who have had the experience of taking classes from former teachers that they remember as being particularly worthwhile instructors, often point to those teachers' personal qualities as keys to effectiveness besides mere knowledge (Walker 2008, Koutrouba 2012). Similarly, in Iraq that schools are places where students flourish under conditions of respect and support from their teacher-which also promises better academic results. Naturally, the creation of a favorable social and psychological atmosphere for learning is associated directly with the personal qualities of teachers. It is therefore natural that a comprehensive study might begin with examination of these traits alone and how they help or harm students (Breault 2013).

In order to achieve a successful teaching performance, the individual needs to possess a special mix of certain personality traits and skill sets. Teaching English in Iraq means bounding cultural and linguistic barriers while at the same time dealing with heavy demands on one's good will as a result of the job itself. As evidenced by

many research results, teacher skills, personality traits and dynamic dispositions, all significantly contribute to the success or failure of a learning environment created in or out of school (Djigić & Stojiljković, 2011). According to Soto and John, (2017) emotional aspects of teaching are really important for creating an atmosphere for student engagement and learning (and for teacher emotional control)., accordingly, this paper explores the significance of three kinds of traits and attributes that are related to Iraqi EFL teachers: Big Five personality traits, ability to cope with ambiguity, and a tendency for risk-taking. In Iraq, that is, the teacher must confront all these different cultural, social and infrastructural problems as well as a student population that has students coming from (in)different areas of the country. Research into work-related personality traits has become essential in recent years, as seen in human resource practices for personnel selection (Levy, 2011). Only recently has personnel assessment, once confined strictly to career knowledge, skills and abilities, begun to take an interest in such things as personality traits, measures for their influence on professional success (Nosidlak, 2015). Personality tests can raise your chance of success in a certain role, as long as that role is consistent with the personality stream and regulation requirements (Cervone & Pervin, 2022). Understanding these traits can be used when training or choosing an EFL teacher in Iraq, where adaptability to undefined class situations and creative ways of language instruction are essential skills.

“Personality traits play a crucial role in various social and personal contexts, showcasing distinct patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that differentiate individuals from one another across time and situations” (Phares 1991 as cited in Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2018, p. 4), whereas according to Ryckman (1982 as cited in Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2018) it is defined as “a combination of biologically rooted and learned behaviors, shaping unique responses to

environmental stimuli". Matsumoto, Yoo, and Fontaine (2009, p. 549), similarly refer to it as "relatively stable individual differences in consistent patterns of behavior". These definitions open up new perspectives on personality traits as potential predictors of teacher performance-a domain worthy of exploration in Iraqi EFL education. One of the most accepted models in personality psychology, the Five Factor Model or Big Five has gained great prominence as a reliable taxonomy for one's character (Pervin & John, 1999 cited in Soto & John, 2017). The model consists of five independent variables, terms derived primarily from natural language sources: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, and Neuroticism. "Nearly all personality measures can be subsumed under the Five-Factor Model" (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Western and other evidence has shown that this model-with its proven perspicacity across different cultures and periods of time - promotes research in personality affecting teaching effectiveness for EFL tutors (Angelini, 2023. 57).

Ambiguity Tolerance (AT) has been researched for over 70 years across diverse areas of study principally including psychology, sociology and education. This has resulted in many definitions all with implications for the Iraqi EFL context. McLain, et al. (2015, p. 302) noted that AT is the individual or group's perception and response to ambiguous situations or events in which they encounter new, complex or conflicting cues. In language education, AT means being able to confront new and ambiguous situations without getting confused (Ellis, 1994, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014), a skill essential for Iraqi EFL teachers who are managing increasingly diverse classrooms. Risk-taking, another chief variable, is the willingness to engage in activities that involve uncertain outcomes but also have an emotional aspect. In teaching, a teacher's willingness to take risks is essential for creating new and effective practices even if it goes against the grain of education

systems where standardization triumphs (Creely, Henderson & Henriksen, 2019). In various educational settings where educational policy may emphasize uniformity, encouraging risk-taking could actually bring creativity to teaching even though wrong turns or facing up to challenges bear their own concise dues of experience (Petroski, 2006, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 167).

Teaching in Iraq is clearly one of the most difficult and sought-after professions around, both in terms of emotional commitment as well as precision education. It may appear to others that the teacher has a simple job, but this is in fact a major misunderstanding. For every lesson, teachers face many challenges including mutual understanding in speech, listening, reading and writing which is a critical issue demanding equal attention from teachers as students alike (Benevene, De Stasio & Fiorilli 2020). The complexity of the job comes from a combination of factors, including teachers' emotions, personality traits, psychological states and interpersonal techniques as well also the different pedagogical knowledge belonging to their students. Teaching becomes even more difficult than usual in second/foreign language (L2/FL) education, where the teachers must deal with several difficult problems at once (Li, 2021). Psycho-emotional factors, linguistic differences, and cultural considerations require Iraqi EFL teachers to find their way upon a paper-thin approach layer by layer (King & Ng, 2018). It is thought that personality factors such as extroversion, risk-taking, and anxiety could influence the attitudes of teaching styles in particular kind; so teachers need be aware of their personality type (Fatemi, Ganjali & Kafi 2015,p. 147).

In today's globalized world, English is an important language that everyone needs to speak (Erfanpour, 2013). As the focus of this study, Iraq has made English a subject from primary, intermediate and high school to professional training institutions that is obligatory in both public and private (Chen, Cheng, Zhang, 2008). Teachers are key to success or failure in this educational system with their results

having a direct impact upon students' achievements. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) assert that the personality of teachers is closely related with educational outcomes. It is important, then, that differences between these teacher types and learners' style factor be recognized if good teaching is to take place (Fairhurst & Fairhurst, 1995, as cited in Rushton et al., 2007). Over the years, studies have concluded that a teacher's personality is closely connected with their teaching effectiveness (Tiwari, 2021). Language teaching benefits from teachers with ambiguity tolerance as it helps them cope with uncertainty (Kianinezhad, 2024), while risk taking is associated with greater professional satisfaction (Altılgan, 2021). Despite extensive studies, research gaps exist in the fields of teacher personality traits, ambiguity tolerance and risk taking, especially in Iraqi EFL contexts. Studies tend either to concentrate more on students than teachers (Funder, 2001, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) or to investigate personality traits without comparing inexperienced and practicing educators (Abood et al., 2020). This study aims not only at resolving these gaps but also looking into the linkages between the Big Five personality traits and ambiguity tolerance and risk-taking among novice and experienced Iraqi EFL teachers. Its findings could provide inputs for teacher training, selection and classroom practice, thus benefiting educators, administrators and learners.

The study poses four research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their ambiguity tolerance?
2. Is there a significant relationship between EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits and their risk-taking ability?
3. Is there a significant difference between novice and experienced teachers regarding the relationship between their personality traits and ambiguity tolerance?

4. Is there a significant difference between novice and experienced teachers regarding the relationship between their personality traits and risk-taking ability?

2. Literature Review

“Personality is generally referred to the most unique and most individual aspect of oneself that is psychological in nature, excluding cognitive functioning, but is rather emotional or motivational characteristics which direct a person’s thoughts and actions” (Nosidlak, 2015, pp. 155-168). However, this complexity particularly highlights how unique EFL teachers in Iraq are as they adapt to the diverse needs of students with diverse cultural contexts. In considering personality, the complexity of which is what makes each person unique, everybody can think in terms of individual differences, the aspects of personality that are stable in the lifespan and tend to occur across situations. According to scholars, personality is made up of multiple traits that reflect an individual’s behaviors, emotions, and characteristics. Individual differences (IDs) refers to those characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other (Dörnyei, 2018). Educational psychology has cast the spotlight on individual differences that may have a profound effect on the language learning process and are a key focus of study contributing to the clarification of a link with teacher effectiveness in Iraq, where teacher efficacy has been found to cover the fate of student outcomes.

In recent years, efforts have been made by personality psychologists to develop a consensus taxonomy of personality traits as a valid way to describe people (Pervin & John, 1999, cited by Soto & John, 2017). One popular explanation for individual behaviour is the five-factor model (the so-called Big Five), which has

attracted considerable interest from researchers. As Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003) explain, a large body of evidence would suggest that almost all personality measures can be summarized by a combination of the Five-Factor Model (FFM), Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience and Neuroticism (Goldberg, 1990, in Soto & John, 2017). Rather than assuming to provide a complete personality theory, the Big Five classification was designed to find functional relations among various personality traits and is supported by research of human differences and psychology in general (Goldberg, 1993, cited in Soto & John, 2017). According to John and Robins (1998; Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2018), the Big Five stands as a model for the connection between personality and academic-related behaviors, a construct that is particularly relevant to educational settings including the practice of EFL teaching.

For example, Extraversion reflects sociability and energy, Agreeableness denotes cooperation and compassion, Conscientiousness indicates Organization and dependability, Openness to Experience describes creativity and curiosity, and Neuroticism signifies emotional instability (McCrae & Costa, 2017). In language education context, Extraversion may promote interaction in classrooms, Agreeableness may help in classroom cooperation, Conscientiousness in lesson planning, Openness in innovation, and Neuroticism may question the emotional stability. Also, according to Ackerman and Heggestad (1997, cited by Soto & John, 2017), there is a relationship between openness as a personality trait and creativity implying that teachers with high Openness could display innovative teaching practices. According to Nofle and Robins (2007), an openness to learning and enjoyment of the process may be better predictors of educational outcomes like classroom environment and student engagement. Because neuroticism refers to a person's tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety and sadness

(Eysenck, 1967; cited in Judge & Bono, 2016), it may hinder teachers' ability to control classroom environments in demanding educational workplaces.

Ambiguity tolerance (AT) is defined as the ability of an individual to endure ambiguous or contradictory situations without discomfort (Kamran, 2011). McLain (1993, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) presents AT as a personality type that shapes reactions to vague stimuli, which in context of language learning facilitates to overcome linguistic vagueness (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). According to Budner (1962, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014), AT, which is the ability to have multiple interpretations of an ambiguous situation and see them positively rather than negatively, is an integral quality for EFL teachers, as they often work with highly variable students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the case of Iraq. On the other hand, Risk-taking refers to the act of doing complex things that have unknown outcomes (Nicholson, et al., 2005). Zuckerman (1994, cited in Dörnyei, 2018) relates risk-taking to sensation-seeking, hypothesizing those high on the Extraversion dimension take risks more often than those low on it, a valuable but underreported trait in employers teaching innovative educational uses of ICT in environments where regular approaches are widely accepted.

Recent studies have tried to demonstrate how the Big Five personality traits impact teaching effectiveness which holds specific importance for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational settings. According to Propat (2016) teaching performance benefits from Conscientiousness and Extraversion because these traits support organizational skills and interpersonal engagement. Kim et al. (2019) revealed that learning environments become more supportive when teachers exhibit Agreeableness and Conscientiousness traits since these characteristics help build effective student-teacher relationships in educational settings. Studies show Openness to Experience enables teaching adaptability and innovation (Kaufman,

2016) yet Neuroticism tends to diminish teacher resilience in challenging educational environment (Lahey, 2021). These traits establish basic principles for teacher efficacy assessment but their effects may change depending on work experience and other psychological variables.

The teaching environment requires teachers to demonstrate both ambiguity tolerance (AT) and risk-taking abilities in order to deliver effective teaching results (Kamran, 2011). EFL teachers who possess ambiguity tolerance (AT) skills remain composed when facing linguistic and cultural uncertainties in their diverse classroom environments (McLain, 1993 as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014). According to Budner (1962 Richards & Rodgers, 2014) AT describes the positive acceptance of diverse perspectives which proves beneficial when teaching students from different backgrounds in cases like Iraq. Risk-taking as defined by Nicholson et al. (2005) includes taking actions with unpredictable results and this behavior facilitates instructional experimentation as described by Ely (1986, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These constructs work together with personality traits to develop adaptive teaching practices.

Experience acts as a filter to differentiate between newly hired and seasoned English as a Foreign Language teachers. Rushton et al. (2007) established that expert teachers show higher levels of conscientiousness which develops through practice yet novices depend on openness to change. Abood et al. (2020) explain that work experience lowers Neuroticism while emotional stability affects AT and risk-taking behavior differently based on career progression. Professional satisfaction in teaching has a relationship with risk-taking according to Altılgan (2021) yet this relationship needs further examination within the specific socio-educational environment of Iraq.

The research demonstrates several important knowledge gaps in this field. Research studies primarily study learners instead of teachers (Funder, 2001 as cited in Dörnyei, 2018) and there is limited examination of the simultaneous effects between the Big Five traits and AT and risk-taking in EFL teaching specifically within Iraqi educational contexts. Research that studies novice versus experienced teachers together remains infrequent which restricts the understanding of how teaching experience modifies the traits' impact. The study fills knowledge gaps by studying the relationships between the Big Five traits, ambiguity tolerance, and risk-taking among Iraqi EFL teachers with varying experience levels to provide novel insights about teacher psychology and effective teaching practices in Iraq's EFL education system.

3. Method

The current study adopted a quantitative design in order to explore the correlation between Iraqi EFL teachers' Big Five personality traits, ambiguity tolerance, and risk-taking, specifically contrasting novice teachers with experienced ones. EFL teachers from state schools in Baghdad Al-rusafa-3\Directorate General of Education were asked to participate in the study and were selected through convenience sampling among those who were available and willing to take the study. Forty males and forty females were included as gender balanced sample. The teachers were divided into two categories of novice teachers (fewer than 7 years, $n = 40$) and experienced teachers (7 years or more, $n = 40$). This cutoff was selected according to Huberman's (1989) teacher career cycle model, claiming that teachers usually make a significant transition from the early career investigation stage to a stabilization phase between 5 and 7 years of experience. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 55 years, with educational backgrounds primarily in English teaching .

Multi-instruments were used to collect data. Demographic data such as age, gender, level of education, and teaching experience were collected via a demographic questionnaire to aid accurate classification of participants into their respective groups. Second, the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, and Kentle, 1991) assessed the five personality traits (i.e., Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, and Neuroticism) using a Likert-scale format that has demonstrated reliability and validity in personality research. Third, the researcher used McLain's (1993) Multiple Stimulus Types Ambiguity Tolerance Scale-II (MSTAT-II), a 13-item measure of ambiguity tolerance, assessing the extent to which participants are comfortable in ambiguous situations that had previously demonstrated utility in educational settings. Fourth, the researcher measured a tendency toward risk-taking using a questionnaire which was adapted from Nicholson et al. (2005) and examined the willingness to participate in uncertain behavior via a small set of Likert scale items adopted to a teaching context.

This questionnaire was distributed in person at the school visits among the participants, which took two months in early 2023. Participants were informed about the study, their participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured. Step and Missteps Step 4 Instructions were given to each participant in English and Arabic to improve understanding, and completed forms were collected immediately to prevent variation. All data collection instruments were pre-tested with a small pilot group of teachers to determine how clearly they understood the wording, and procedures were carefully designed to maximize reliability.

SPSS and MEDCAL Statistical softwares were used for data analysis. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the association between Big Five traits and ambiguity tolerance, and between Big Five traits and risk-taking

for novice and experienced groups separately. Fisher’s Z test was applied to compare the correlation coefficients between the two groups to assess for significant differences in correlation based on experience.

3. Results

After getting assured that the data didn’t significantly deviate from a normal distribution and regarding the quantitative nature of the scores, the researcher utilized parametric methods to explore the data more efficiently. First of all, for inspection of any possible correlation, the obtained data were analyzed using Pearson moment correlation tests.

Table 1: The Correlation between Personality Trait and Ambiguity Tolerance among Experienced Teachers

		Experienced -Extroversion	
Experienced -ATS	Pearson Correlation	.519**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
			Experienced -Agreeableness
	Pearson Correlation	.140	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.358	
			Experienced -Conscientiousness
	Pearson Correlation	.351*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
			Experienced -Neuroticism
	Pearson Correlation	-.438**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
			Experienced -Openness
Pearson Correlation	.010		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.947		

According to the results depicted in Table 1 which examined the relationship between personality traits and experienced teachers' tolerance of ambiguity, it was revealed that the correlations between Extraversion and Conscientiousness with teachers' tolerance of ambiguity were positive statistically significant ones while the correlation between Neuroticism and ambiguity tolerance was a negative statistically significant relationship one since the significance levels were lower than the criteria set for current study i.e. $p < .05$. In addition, no statistically significant correlation was found between Agreeableness and Openness to Experience personality traits of experienced teachers' and their ambiguity tolerance. To determine the degree of obtained correlation coefficient, Cohen's (1988) classification of magnitude of correlations was referred as follows:

Weak relationship	$r = .10$ to $.29$
Moderate relationship	$r = .30$ to $.49$
Strong relationship	$r = .50$ to 1.0

According to the above classification of correlation coefficient and the acquired correlation coefficient i.e. $r = .51$, $.35$ and $-.43$, it was observed that the correlation between extroversion and ambiguity tolerance was a strong positive one while there was a moderate positive correlation between teachers' Conscientiousness and ambiguity tolerance. Furthermore, the third correlation index for the relationship between neuroticism and ambiguity was found to be a moderate negative one. In the next part of the data analysis, the score from the novice teachers' group were analyzed.

To continue with the analyses, the statistical results of testing the possible correlation between personality traits with ambiguity tolerance of novice teachers are abridged in Table 2.

Table 2: The Correlation between Personality Trait and Ambiguity Tolerance among Novice Teachers

		Novice -Extroversion	
Novice -ATS	Pearson Correlation	.623**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
			Novice -Agreeableness
	Pearson Correlation	.426*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
			Novice -Conscientiousness
	Pearson Correlation	.414*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
			Novice -Neuroticism
	Pearson Correlation	-.361*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
			Novice -Openness
Pearson Correlation	.210		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.226		

According to the results abridged in Table 2, it was revealed that the correlations between novice teachers' Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and their tolerance of ambiguity were statistically significant and positive ones while the correlation between Neuroticism and ambiguity tolerance was a negative statistically significant relationship one since the significance levels were lower than the set alpha level for current study i.e. $p < .05$.

According to Cohen's (1988) classification of magnitude of correlations and the acquired correlation coefficients i.e. $r = .62, .42, .41$ and $-.36$, it was observed that the correlation between extroversion and ambiguity tolerance was a strong positive one while there was a moderate positive correlation between teachers' Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and ambiguity tolerance. Furthermore, the fourth correlation index for the relationship between neuroticism and ambiguity was

found to be a moderate negative one. To continue with the analyses, the obtained data from risk-taking and personality questionnaires were analyzed.

Table 3: The Correlation between Personality Trait and Risk-Taking Ability of Experienced Teachers

		Experienced -Extroversion
Experienced -RTA	Pearson Correlation	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	Experienced -Agreeableness	
	Pearson Correlation	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.491
	Experienced -Conscientiousness	
	Pearson Correlation	.258
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.087
	Experienced -Neuroticism	
	Pearson Correlation	-.310*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038
	Experienced -Openness	
	Pearson Correlation	-.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.710

As reported in Table 3, both Extraversion and Neuroticism had statistically significant correlations with risk-taking. More specifically, Extraversion was positively correlated with teachers' Risk-taking ability, whilst Neuroticism was negatively correlated. These correlations held statistically significant values, as the significance levels were below the threshold for this study ($p < .05$). Of the personality traits examined, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience of experienced teachers were not found to have a significant relationship between any of these traits and ability to take risks. Extraversion ($r = .60$), and Neuroticism ($r = -.31$) show a strong positive correlation, and a moderate negative correlation with teachers' risk-taking ability respectively.

Table 4: The Correlation between Personality Trait and Risk Taking Ability of Novice Teachers

		Novice -Extroversion	
Novice -RTA	Pearson Correlation	.486**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
			Novice -Agreeableness
	Pearson Correlation	.516**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
			Novice -Conscientiousness
	Pearson Correlation	-.386*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	
			Novice -Neuroticism
	Pearson Correlation	-.409*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	
			Novice -Openness
Pearson Correlation	.302		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.078		

The findings indicate statistically significant positive correlations between novice teachers' Extraversion and Agreeableness and their risk-taking ability. Contrariwise, a statistically significant negative correlation was observed between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness with their risk-taking ability, as the significance levels were below the predetermined threshold ($p < .05$). Additionally, no statistically significant correlation was found between novice teachers' Openness to Experience personality trait and their risk-taking ability.

Based on this classification and the acquired correlation coefficients (i.e., $r = .48, .51, -.38$ and $-.40$), it was evident that the correlation between Agreeableness and risk-taking was strongly positive, while there were moderate positive correlations

between novice teachers' Extroversion and risk taking. Furthermore, the correlations between Conscientiousness and Neuroticism with risk-taking among novice teachers was observed to be moderately negative.

Furthermore, the study addressed whether there is any significant difference among novice and experienced teachers regarding the relationship between their personality traits and ambiguity tolerance.

Table 5: Comparing the Significance of Difference between Correlation Coefficients of Novice and Experienced Teachers Groups

Comparing the Correlation Coefficient between Experience and Novice Teachers		
	Test Statistic z	Probability p
Extraversion - Ambiguity Tolerance	-.66	.255
Conscientiousness - Ambiguity Tolerance	-.315	.376
Neuroticism - Ambiguity Tolerance	-.391	.348

After the statistical confirmation of some of the correlations between ambiguity tolerance and experienced and novice teachers' five personality traits, Fisher's z test via MEDCAL Statistical software was used to spot the existence of any difference between the achieved correlation coefficients. According to the results, the difference between the correlation coefficients of Agreeableness personality traits and ambiguity tolerance, the difference was significant since the correlation in experienced group was not statistically significant. In addition, no significant correlations was observed between teachers Openness to Experience and their ambiguity tolerance in none of the groups. Accordingly, only the significant correlations for Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism were compared. Based on the calculations done on the coefficients it was revealed that z statistic for comparing the correlation coefficients of the Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism in groups equaled .66, .31 and .39 and the p values were .25, .37 and

.34 respectively which were higher than the set value for this research indicating that no significant differences existed between the correlation coefficients of experienced and novice teachers. So, it was concluded that the correlations between personality traits and ambiguity tolerance of teachers is not affected by experience.

As it was revealed that teachers' personality traits can be a predictor of their risk-taking ability, the difference of the correlations between novice and experienced teachers was investigated to clarify the effect of experience.

Table 6: Comparing the Significance of Difference between Correlation Coefficients of Novice and Experienced Teachers Groups

Comparing the Correlation Coefficient between Experience and Novice Teachers		
	Test Statistic z	Probability p
Extraversion - Risk-taking Ability	.752	.226
Neuroticism - Risk-taking Ability	.485	.314

Using a similar procedure, after the statistical confirmation of some of the correlations between risk-taking ability and experienced and novice teachers' five personality traits, the researcher headed to compare the groups using Fisher's z test via MEDCAL Statistical software to spot the existence of any difference between the achieved correlation coefficients. It is worth mentioning that since the correlations between Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness personality traits and teachers' risk-taking ability in among both experienced and novice teachers were not statistically significant, no comparison was done between them. However, considering the significant of correlations between neuroticism and extroversion and teachers' risk-taking abilities, pairwise comparisons were done and based on the calculations done on the coefficients it was revealed that z statistic for comparing the correlation coefficients of the Extraversion, and Neuroticism in

groups equaled .75, and .48 and the p values were .22, . and .31 respectively which were higher than the set value for this research indicating that no significant differences existed between the correlate coefficients of experienced and novice teachers. So, it was concluded that the correlation between personality traits and risk-taking ability of teachers is not affected by their experience.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present research aimed to identify the relationship between Iraqi EFL teachers' personality traits according to the Big Five model and their ambiguity tolerance and risk-taking and the differences between novice and experienced teachers. The results showed that there are statistically significant relationships and the results do not differ according to the teachers' experience. Among experienced teachers, Extraversion and Conscientiousness had a positive relationship with ambiguity tolerance, while Neuroticism had a negative relationship, consistent with Gray's (1991) behavioral approach system theory, where extraverts seek novelty and conscientious individuals adapt to uncertainty. In accordance with Eysenck (1990), Neuroticism had a negative link with ambiguity tolerance, as it increases the discomfort in ambiguous situations. There were no significant correlations for Agreeableness or Openness to Experience. Among novice teachers, there were positive correlations between Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, and ambiguity tolerance, and negative correlation with Neuroticism, which indicated that the cooperative tendencies (Agreeableness) of novices may facilitate their adaptability.

Regarding risk-taking, there was a positive correlation between Extraversion and risk-taking ability among experienced teachers in line with Zuckerman's (2007) synthesis of his earlier sensation-seeking theory (1979), and a negative correlation with Neuroticism, which is the aversion to uncertainty (Carver & Scheier, 2012).

There was no significant relationship between Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness and risk-taking. Among novices, there was a positive correlation between Extraversion and Agreeableness and risk-taking, and negative correlation with Neuroticism and Conscientiousness, indicating that caution may constrain novices' risk-taking. There was no significant correlation between Openness and risk-taking in either group. Fisher's Z tests indicated that there were no significant differences in the correlation coefficients between novice and experienced teachers for most traits, except for Agreeableness with ambiguity tolerance, suggesting that experience has a moderate effect on this relationship.

The findings are consistent with earlier studies. According to Barrick and Mount (2005) Extraversion and Conscientiousness are good for job performance and can be applied to teaching, and in line with Costa and McCrae (2006) Neuroticism has a negative effect on job performance. The fact that the correlations are stable across experience levels is consistent with Roberts et al. (2020) who argued that personality traits are relatively stable over time. The differences in Agreeableness and risk-taking between the two groups may be due to the fact that novices rely on cooperation, whereas experienced teachers have established confidence.

In conclusion, this study shows that the relationship between the personality traits, ambiguity tolerance, and risk taking of EFL teachers is complex. Openness to Experience may help adapt to change, and Neuroticism may increase anxiety, which could affect classroom management. These dynamics are influenced by experience in a subtle way, with novices displaying broader trait correlations. These insights can contribute to understanding how personality affects teaching effectiveness in Iraqi EFL contexts, and addressing the gaps in teacher-focused research.

Pedagogically, these findings have some implications for teacher training. Adding modules on personality traits, ambiguity tolerance and risk-taking may help to prepare

educators for diverse classrooms. Encouraging reflective practice may assist teachers in using their traits to improve student outcomes, and thereby enhance professional development across career stages. More research is needed to explore longitudinal trends and cross-cultural comparisons to further develop these insights.

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تأثير سمات الشخصية الخمس الكبرى على تقبّل الغموض والمجازفة لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيين المبتدئين وذوي الخبرة

المستخلص

على الرغم من الدور المحوري الذي يلعبه المعلمون في تشكيل تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق إلا أن المعلومات المتوفرة حول كيفية تأثير سمات شخصياتهم على سمات نفسية أساسية مثل تقبّل الغموض والمجازفة لا تزال محدودة. لذا تبحث هذه الدراسة في العلاقة بين سمات الشخصية الخمس الكبرى وتقبّل الغموض والمجازفة لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيين المبتدئين وذوي الخبرة. وبالاستناد إلى بيانات من 80 معلماً في مدارس حكومية ببغداد استخدم البحث مقياس السمات الخمس الكبرى (BFI) ومقياس تقبّل الغموض لأنواع المحفزات المتعددة (MSTAT-II) واستبياناً للمجازفة مُقتبساً من دراسة نيكلسون وآخرون (2005) لتحليل البيانات المُجمّعة أجرى الباحث حسابات معامل ارتباط بيرسون للمعلمين المبتدئين وذوي الخبرة و تمّ استخدام اختبارات فيشر Z لتقييم ما إذا كان لخبرة التدريس أي تأثير يُذكر على معاملات الارتباط المحسوبة. وبناءً على ذلك كشفت النتائج عن وجود ارتباط إيجابي بين الانبساط والضمير الحيّ وتقبّل الغموض لدى المعلمين ذوي الخبرة بينما كان الارتباط سلبياً مع العصابية. علاوة على ذلك و بالنسبة للمعلمين المبتدئين ارتبط الانبساط والقبول والضمير الحيّ إيجابياً بتقبّل الغموض. أما بالنسبة للمخاطرة فقد تنبأ الانبساط بمستويات أعلى من المخاطرة لدى المجموعتين بينما تنبأت العصابية بمستويات أقل وأظهرت كلٌّ من القبول والضمير الحيّ ارتباطاً دالاً إحصائياً بالمخاطرة لدى المعلمين المبتدئين. ولم تُظهر اختبارات فيشر Z أي فروق دالة إحصائية.

تُبرز هذه النتائج الدور المهم للشخصية في تشكيل استجابات المعلمين للغموض والابتكار في سياقات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، وتؤكد على أهمية دمج رؤى مستمدة من الشخصية في برامج إعداد المعلمين وتطويرهم المهني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سمات الشخصية الخمس الكبرى؛ تحمل الغموض؛ المخاطرة؛ المعلمون المبتدئون؛ المعلمون ذوو الخبرة؛ معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيون.

