Personality, Motivation, and EFL Speaking Performance: Evidence from an English Education Program

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Abstract. Studies investigating how personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance interact are still limited, particularly in the context of Pre-service English teachers in South Sumatera. Thus, this study aims to discover whether extroverts or introverts, based on their motivation levels, exhibit better speaking performance. The population consisted of 336 pre-service English teachers at a state university in South Sumatera, and a sample size of 120 students was chosen using convenience sampling technique. This study employed a quantitative correlational design, with data collection using questionnaires of motivation and personality traits and a speaking performance test and these data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, i.e. Two-way ANOVA. The results revealed that highly motivated extroverts performed slightly better than their introverted counterparts, and so did low-motivated extroverts, but their differences were not statistically significant. Moreover, the correlation analysis (p = 0.640) and Two-way ANOVA results (p = 0.356 for Personality and p = 0.774 for Motivation) demonstrated no significant correlation between personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance. These findings suggest that other than personality and motivation alone, other predictors such as linguistic competence, anxiety, and classroom dynamics might have contribution to speaking proficiency.

Keywords: Correlation, Personality Traits, Motivation Levels, Speaking Performance, EFL learners

Introduction

In today's globalized world, proficiency in speaking English has become more than just a skill—it is a gate to global opportunities. With over 1.46 billion people using English as a primary communication medium, the ability to articulate thoughts clearly in English is crucial for academic, professional, and social success (Talbot, 2023). Effective communication is essential in the 21st century, where global interactions happen remarkably. It helps not only to exchange ideas but also to collaborate (Musheke and Phiri, 2021). For students, effective communication helps them understand, assess, and analyze information efficiently while expressing their ideas clearly (Singay, 2018). Additionally, it improves career opportunities and allows people to interact with people from various cultural backgrounds (Zannah and Hidayanti, 2024). For those reasons, English-speaking skills are essential for communication, career growth, and engaging with people from diverse cultures.

However, despite the importance of speaking skills, developing them remains a significant challenge for EFL learners in Indonesia. This is because speaking is not merely the act of producing speech but Brown (1994) and Burns & Joyce (1997) state that it also involves receiving and processing information. Learners must manage multiple aspects of the language simultaneously, including pronunciation, grammar, and fluency (Normawati, Dwitiya, Sahid, & Susanto, 2023). A lack of confidence and high anxiety further compound the challenge too (Milania et al., 2022). This complexity makes speaking one of the hardest skills to master, often resulting in different students' speaking competence. Among various factors influencing speaking performance, two of them that deserve closer attention are personality traits and motivation.

The first factor that may influence speaking performance is personality traits. As Krashen (1982) explained, personality traits as psychological or affective factors can significantly impact the acquisition of language, either supporting or hindering learners' progress. According to Diener (2003) and Johnson (1997), personality traits are labels for consistent emotion patterns, emotions, and actions that differentiate individuals across situations. In addition, Holzman (2024) expands this definition by stating that personality traits include attitudes, perspectives, and moods in social interactions. Nowadays, personality traits are seen as the characteristics that can predict how people will behave and communicate in society. In this case, the better personality people have and how well they behave themselves in social interaction, the higher the possibility for them to be marked as good in communication skills. The extroversion and introversion spectrums are among the commonly recognized terms used to describe their personality.

The extroversion-introversion spectrum, introduced by Eysenck in 1947, is one of the personality dimensions that is characterized by their distinct behaviors. In his research, Eysenck defines introverts and extroverts as two personality types with distinct behaviors and ways of interacting with the world. Extroverted individuals are typically outgoing, sociable, and energized by social interactions and stimulating environments (Power & Pluess, 2015). They love gathering with a large number of people, have fast adaptation in conversations, and enjoy excitement and validation from other people. Therefore, they frequently make use every opportunity to practice a language, and this likely contribute to their speaking proficiency. (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2017). On the other hand, introverted individuals tend to be more reserved. They feel most comfortable in calm, quiet settings and often feel better by spending time alone or with just a few close friends. They frequently feel more comfortable being alone or in small, familiar groups, and this limits their chances of getting involved in speaking avtivities (Power & Pluess, 2015). Therefore, it can be concluded that extroverts might have better spoken performance than introverts.

Although introverts are likely to practice speaking less than extroverts, introverted learners can still perform well in speaking. Especially when they are well motivated, they may perform well in structured speaking activities. Marashi and Naddim (2019) revealed in their study that introverts performed better in information gap tasks, which offer more structure and allow for focused communication. Moreover, they discovered that the high motivation of introverts can improve their speaking performance. They may prefer less spontaneous conversation, so such structured tasks can facilitate them better (Marashi and Naddim, 2019).

In addition to personality traits, motivation is another frequently investigated affective factor in language learning context. Motivation, as defined by Gardner (1985), is how much an individual puts effort to learn a language due to his/her enjoyment and desire for the learning process. Motivated individuals are likely to put in more effort, have greater persistence, and possess willingness to overcome obstacles during their learning process. Furthermore, Singh (2011) and Geria (2022) argue that motivation is essential, as it encourages students to struggle for the improvement of their speaking skills despite all challenges or obstacles.

Some second language acquisition (SLA) studies support that personality traits and motivation levels significantly impact students' speaking performance. Extroverts are often more motivated to initiate conversations and perform fluently in social settings due to their comfort in engaging with others (Eysenck, 1977). Introverts, in contrary, may perform well in more structured speaking tasks. Additionally, motivated learners, with either internal or external motivation, tend to show more persistence. They are often more dedicated and consistent to improve their speaking abilities (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

A variety of findings are derived from many studies. Phương (2021) and Putri (2022) found that extroverted students were excellent in their speaking tasks due to their confidence in expressing their opinions. Similarly, Amoah and Yeboah (2021) reported that extroverts were likely to have better speaking proficiency. Additionally, in terms of motivation, Marashi and

Naddim (2019) showed that motivation had a critical role in improving introverts' performance in communication. However, some studies, such as those by Arniatika (2020) and Paradilla (2020), suggested that personality traits alone did not influence speaking performance, as knowledge and preparation also served as important roles.

In more specific quantitative research by Khoiriyah (2016) investigating the association between attitude, motivation, and extrovert and introvert students' speaking achievement, the results indicated that while personality traits were prominent, attitude and motivation had a greater influence on speaking performance. Additionally, Al Noor and Khan (2019) concluded in their qualitative study that speaking performance was influenced not only by personality traits but also by teaching methods and student engagement during class. Aljuaid (2022) also discovered that regardless of their personality traits or motivation levels, EFL learners can perform well in oral assessments.

Considering those inconsistent findings related to the interactions of personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance, another study in different context is crucial to help clarify their roles in speaking proficiency. In Indonesia, particularly in Palembang, limited research has explored how these factors are related. Besides, Aljuaid (2022) in a similar study emphasizes the necessity of improved speaking assessments for a more reliable evaluation of speaking performance, so this study employs a structured speaking assessment adapting to the IELTS speaking format. This method evaluates speaking performance across multiple stages, ensuring a more comprehensive and reliable analysis. By focusing on these aspects, this study aims to: (1) determine whether a correlation exists between personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance among English education students at a state university in South Sumatera; (2) investigate whether extroverts who are highly motivated outperform introverts who are highly motivated in their speaking performance or not; and (3) investigate whether extroverts who are lowly motivated outperform introverts who are lowly motivated in their speaking performance or not.

Materials and Method

A non-experimental quantitative correlational research approach was used in this research, with personality traits and motivation levels as the predictor variables and speaking performance as the criterion variable. The population of this study consisted a total of 336 pre-service English teachers from second, fourth, sixth, and eighth semesters at a state university in South Sumatera. Using convenience sampling, a non-probabilistic method where participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness (Creswell, 2014), 120 participants were chosen as the sample of the study as they were willing to take part in this study, as indicated by their consent letters.

Primary data were collected using some instruments, namely questionnaires of personality traits and motivation and a speaking performance test. For the personality traits questionnaire, the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, namely EPQR-S was used. The EPQR-S consists of 12 yes/no questions for each dimension. Through a pilot study in Aljuaid's (2022) study, both the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were 0.97 and 0.96, indicating strong reliability. For the motivation level questionnaire, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was used (Gardner, 1985). This questionnaire was tested in Aljuaid's (2022) pilot study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were 0.97 and 0.96, indicating high reliability. In terms of the speaking performance test, it includes three sections, namely two interviews and one independent speaking task. To fulfill its validity and reliability, the speaking test was adapted directly from official IELTS Speaking Sample Tasks, documented as valid tools for evaluating real-world English communication skills (IELTS, 2023). Furthermore, two experts with high English proficiency, degrees in English education, and great experiences in teaching speaking were requested to validate the test. Their evaluations were

tested for reliability using SPSS through Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) analysis. The result indicated moderate to good reliability.

To analyzed the collected data, descriptive statistics was employed prior to inferential statistics. The normality tests, homogeneity tests, and linearity tests were carried out to check the necessary assumptions for further analyses. After these were tested, correlation, regression, and Two-Way ANOVA tests were employed to address the research objectives. By using SPSS 25, all tests were conducted.

Results and Discussion
Results
Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics for the three variables gives information about the central tendency and variability of the data. First, the mean score of the personality traits was 6.45, the median was 7.00, and the mode was 11, indicating a slightly left-skewed distribution. The variability was reflected by a standard deviation of 3.66 and a variance of 13.39, with a range of 12. Second, the mean of motivation level was 94.75, the median was 94.00, and the mode was 90, suggesting a slightly symmetrical distribution around the mean. In terms of variability, the standard deviation was 9.13 and the variance was 83.39, with a broader range of 72 (from a minimum of 78 to a maximum of 150), indicating moderate dispersion of scores. The last variable, speaking performance data showed the mean of 61.89. The median of 62.00 and the mode of 63, with multiple modes existing in the data. The results also showed the standard deviation of 6.69 and the variance of 44.82. The range of 40 (from 43 to 83) indicated moderate variability in speaking performance.

Results of Personality Traits Questionnaire

The study utilized the 12 items from the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQR-S) with "yes" or "no" responses to assess the personality traits of pre-service teachers. Out of 120 participants, 61 were classified as extroverts (50.83%) and 59 as introverts (49.16%). In summary, over half of the participants exhibited extrovert traits.

Results of Motivation Levels Questionnaire

The results of all 30 items from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), using a five-point Likert Scale, revealed that 63 participants fell into the high motivation level category (52.5%), while 57 others fell into the low motivation level category (47.5%). In summary, most of the sample demonstrated a high level of motivation.

Results of Speaking Performance Test

The pre-service teachers' speaking performance scores were derived from their speaking performance tests. The result revealed that 3 students were at very good user level (2.5%), 31 of them achieved the good user level (25.8%), 65 students were classified as competent users (54.2%), 19 students fell into the modest user level (15.8%), and 2 others were categorized as limited users (1.7%). In conclusion, the distribution of their speaking performance scores demonstrated that the most of them were categorized in the competent user level (54.2%), demonstrating a solid grasp of the language in familiar contexts.

Inferential Analyses
Normality Test

The normality test results using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that all three variables—Personality, Motivation, and Speaking—did not follow a normal distribution. The significance values for Personality (0.001), Motivation (0.000), and Speaking (0.028) were

lower than 0.05. Therefore, the data were not normally distributed. However, as Petrus (2019) points out, with a large enough sample size (over 30 or 40), violations of the normality assumption usually do not lead to big issues. This means that parametric test are possible to employ despite the fact that perfectly normal dataset is not fulfilled. Furthermore, Field (2013) argues that as the sample size grows, the power of the test increases, and minor violations of assumptions like normality become less significant. Field (2013) also emphasizes the importance of checking the normality of unstandardized residuals in regression analysis since they represent the actual prediction errors. If these residuals are not normally distributed, it can affect the validity of the model's inferential statistics. Therefore, a non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to calculatethe normality of the unstandardized residuals. The result of the normality tests using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the unstandardized residuals indicated normal distribution of the data. The test statistic was 0.052, and the p-value was 0.200. Because this p-value was higher than 0.05, the residuals followed a normal distribution.

Homogeneity Test

Three homogeneiy tests were conducted. Firstly, for the homogeneity test of personality traits and speaking performance, the significance value from Levene's test was 0.000, indicating below the significance level of 0.05. This demonstrated that the two datasets did not share the same distribution. Secondly, for the homogeneity test of motivation levels and speaking performance, the value of Levene's test was 0.361, indicating that the datasets shared the same distribution. Finally, for the homogeneity test of personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance was 0.000, indicating did not have the same distribution.

Though two of the three datasets did not share the same distribution, the authors proceeded with parametric analysis. First, as Field (2005) suggests, if homogeneity tests do not show significant results, this indicates that the effect sizes in the samples are consistent, which implies that the population effect sizes are also consistent. Additionally, Nordstokke et al. (2011) note that this variation could be due to differences in measurement scales, such as one variable being measured on a Likert scale (motivation levels), another on a binary scale (personality traits), and a third using a different scoring method (speaking performance). Furthermore, Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) explain that homogeneity of variance tests can be problematic with large sample, as they often detect minor differences in variance as statistically significant, even when these differences are not practically meaningful.

Linearity Test

The linearity test was performed to examine if the relationships among three variables were linear. ANOVA was employed to assess linearity. The result showed that the significance value for the Deviation from Linearity between personality traits and speaking performance was 0.888 (>0.05) meaning that the relationship was linear. For Linearity between motivation levels and speaking performance, the value was 0.897 (>0.05) meaning that the relationship was linear

Correlation Analysis

For the first research question, the writers used the Multiple Regression Analysis test for the correlation analysis. Table 1 shows the results of the correlation between predictor variables (personality traits and motivation levels), and a criterion variable (speaking performance).

Table 1.
The Result of the Correlation Analysis

				St	Change Statistics				
		A	d. Error		R	]			Si
	Squar	djusted R	of the	Square	Chang			g. F
odel	e	Square	Estimate	Change	e	f1	f2	Change
			-	6.	.0	.			.6
	087ª	008	.009	726	08	448		17	40

a. Predictors: (Constant), Motivation, Personality

b. Dependent Variable: Speaking Performance

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, where the sig. F change value was 0.640 (greater than the significance level of 0.05), showing that there was no significant correlation between the predictor variables (personality traits and motivation levels) and the criterion variable (speaking performance). Therefore, conducting a regression analysis was not necessary.

Two-Way ANOVA Analyses
To answer the second and third research questions, Two-way ANOVA tests were employed to discover whether the highly motivated extroverts outperformed the highly motivated introverts and whether the lowly motivated extroverts outperformed the lowly motivated introverts in their speaking performance. Table 2 shows the results of Two-way ANOVA test:

Table 2.
Two-Way ANOVA Results

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Speaking_Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	73.715ª	3	24.572	.542	.655
Intercept	458381.834	1	458381.834	101009.038	.000
Types_Personality	38.904	1	38.904	.858	.356
Levels_Motivation	3.763	1	3.763	.083	.774
Types_Personality * Levels_Motivation	34.109	1	34.109	.752	.388
Error	5259.876	116	45.344		
Total	465003.000	120			
Corrected Total	5333.592	119			

a. R Squared = .014 (Adjusted R Squared = -.012)

Based on the results of the Two-way ANOVA test, the significance values for the Personality Category (Introverts and Extroverts) and the Motivation Category (Low Motivation and High Motivation) were 0.356 and 0.774, respectively. Both values were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference in speaking test results based on personality types and motivation levels. In other words, there was no significant difference in speaking performance scores between introverts and extroverts, as well as between lowly motivated and highly motivated participants.

Although the difference was not significant, there is still a very small gap between highly motivated introverts and highly motivated extroverts, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.
Two-Way Anova Results Based on Mean

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Speaking_Scores				
Types_Personality	Levels_Motivation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Introvert	Low Motivated	60.96	5.680	28
	High Motivated	61.68	7.054	31
	Total	61.34	6.394	59
Extrovert	Low Motivated	63.17	5.057	29
	High Motivated	61.75	8.386	32
	Total	62.43	6.984	61
Total	Low Motivated	62.09	5.439	57
	High Motivated	61.71	7.697	63
	Total	61.89	6.695	120

The results indicated that while the mean for highly motivated introverts was 61.68, the mean for highly motivated extroverts was 61.75, indicating that highly motivated extroverts outperformed highly motivated introverts by a gap of 0.07. Moreover, the mean for low-motivated introverts was 60.96, while the mean for low-motivated extroverts was 63.17. This also indicated that extroverts outperformed introverts by a gap of 2.21.

Discussion

This study found no significant relationship among personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance among the pre-service English teachers in one state university in South Sumatera, Indonesia. Furthermore, the combination of personality traits (extroverts vs. introverts) and motivation levels (high vs. low) did not significantly affect their speaking performance. These results are similar to previous related studies which also reported no significant differences in speaking performance between different personality traits (Al Noor & Khan 2019; Samand et al., 2019). Furthermore, motivation cannot solely and directly influence EFL learners' speaking performance (Aljuaid, 2022; Beni, 2020). Paradilla et al. (2020) reported that ESL student's speaking performance is not that influential without including their learning

strategies to improve their speaking skills. Collectively, these findings suggest that speaking performance in a foreign language is influenced by various factors beyond personality traits and motivation.

Turning to the analysis of highly motivated students, a closer examination reveals only a slight difference between extroverts and introverts. Extroverted students scored a mean of 61.75, slightly higher than introverts, who scored a mean of 61.68. However, the minimal gap of 0.07 is not statistically significant, suggesting that high motivation levels do not give extroverts a substantial advantage over introverts in speaking performance. For lowly motivated participants, the results showed that extroverts (mean = 63.17) performed slightly better that introverts (mean = 60.96) with a difference of 2.21. Although this difference was higher than the difference of the highly motivated group, it was still insignificant. This finding implies that while extroverted participants might perform slightly better, their advantage is not that much when everyone has low motivation levels. It indicates that personality alone is not enough to contribute to better speaking performance and implies the need to consider other factors that might play a role. Tahang at al. (2024) argues that the negative relationship between extroversion and speaking skills implying complex relationship between personality and communication. Even though extroverted individuals may be more active in socializing, this does not definitely make them better speakers. Their speaking performance can be affected by anxiety, pressure to fit in, or not paying enough attention to how they speak. Furthermore, Astuti (2024) explains that introverted individuals may benefit from their tendency to think carefully and prepare well, which can help them learn a language more effectively.

The lack of significant results overall implies the complexity of speaking performance in EFL contexts. Other than personality and motivation, several other factors might serve important roles. For instance, psychological problems such as anxiety, shyness, confidence, and fear of making mistakes can negatively infulence speaking performance (Hafis & Widya, 2021; Alrasheedi, 2020). Moreover, lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of exposure to English, and lack of speaking practice outside the classroom are major problems (Alrasheedi, 2020). Areta and Purwanti (2021) also mentioned knowledge of the speaking topics, preparation time, and frequent practice contribute to speaking skill improvement.

Finally, the finding of this study may also be influenced by methodological issues, such as sample size or intruments of the study because they might not completely describe the dynamic and contextual nature of psychological impacts.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between personality traits, motivation levels, and speaking performance among pre-service English teachers at one state university in South Sumatera, Indonesia. The results revealed no significant correlation among these variables. In addition to this, the findings discovered that highly motivated extroverts performed slightly better than their introverted counterparts, and so did lowly motivated extroverts, but their differences were not statistically significant. These results suggest that speaking performance cannot be adequately explained by personality traits or motivation levels alone. The findings imply the importance of other critical factors, such as linguistic competence, opportunities for practice, and other psychological barriers. Future research is recommended to use longitudinal studies to investigate relationship among pesonality, motivations, and other influential factors to understand how speaking proficiency develop among EFL learners.

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