



Personality Enhancement for Maritime Learners

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ABSTRACT

BSc Nautical Science cadets start their career as a deck cadet and can climb the career ladder to become the captain of the ship. It is a very progressive and lucrative career with high level challenges both to the person and in ship maintenance. So that the field requires highly competent and strong personalities. It is essential that they develop their personality quotient during their studies. This paper propounds different activities to enrich their language skills and personality traits.

1. Introduction.

English communicative skill is needed for everyone to be successful in understanding what was told and reply accordingly in an effective way. Effective communication skills have become mandatory as the world has shrunk as a village with Technological advancements. The globalization has brought in sharing of knowledge, skill. The business world has seen new frontiers. These changes have brought in adaptive nature, learning attitude change, time management, stress management and good interpersonal skills to be successful in career especially to the marine employees. Personality to suit the highly stressful field is also equally important to be a competent and successful marine employee. The changing and challenging global environment has thrown light on the research and creation of knowledge and skills needed for professional practice. Professionalism is always appreciated in every industry including marine.

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2. Review of Literature.

The seafarers are expected to have good communication in English and adapt to the global working atmosphere as it is the need of the hour. The maritime industry has transformed from a traditionally labour-intensive industry to a capital-intensive and modernized one. This has necessitated the maritime education to incorporate satisfactory and effective communicative skills, critical thinking and analytical skills with business ethics. In the early years, maritime education mainly focused on vocational training of deck and electronic officers on board sea-going vessels as their knowledge, skills and willingness could contribute to the reliability and efficiency of shipping operations (Gardner et al. 2007; Harlaftis and Theotokas 2004; Theotokas 2007). However, factors such as globalized trade and commerce development, technological revolution, economic growth etc. have created the necessity to redesign the curriculum of maritime education with an objective to make the mariners good communicators with needed personality traits to be successful as the mariner.

3. Methodology.

The researcher sensed the higher need for personality training and incorporated needed changes in the execution of the syllabus with tasks incorporated to give the desired result. As the

need was felt very essential that maritime education should enhance and explain, integration between human activities and the condition of the maritime environments (Fu et al. 2010; Lewarn 2002; Zhu 2006). Care was taken to align maritime programs with the needs of maritime stakeholders, giving importance to develop interpersonal, business and management skills, e.g. language skills, decision making, leadership, organizational knowledge etc., for equipping the students with the most opted skills with knowledge and professional attitudes for the maritime industry. AMET deemed to be university is one of the well-known universities in South India catering to the Marine industry with marine professionals with good standard cadets and expected personality traits, tasks were incorporated to have a substantial growth in ‘professional’ and ‘practice-based’ programs (Bourner et al. 2001), which was characterized by acquisition and learning approaches. This was given priority as Tasks were planned and executed. Maria Jesewska et al (2013) in “Personality and Temperamental Features vs. Quality of Life of Polish Seafarers” states that the quality of work life of sea farers (QWL) is affected by three major factors like: individual attitudes and needs, nature of their work, the variables of their working environment and company. To help the future seafarers adaptive to the demanding job with time and stress management, with enhanced listening skills and friendly extrovert nature, guided the researcher to incorporate tasks to inculcate and develop personality traits. Since the growing need for cadets with shipboard training was felt mandatory by shipping companies, planning of tasks was done carefully. Traits like extroversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism were felt needed and accordingly planning was done. The following activities were conducted to our cadets to improve their personality traits and they are: Self-Introduction, general speaking, watching movies in the target language, public speaking and mock interviews. ‘Big five personality test’ was conducted for a class of 40 cadets both before and after the activities and there was considerable difference in their personality traits.

3.1. Self-Introduction.

As self-introduction is the first question any candidate is asked at an interview by the Human Resource manager the students are to be active listeners and answer confidently. It shows the ability of one to meet new people confidently. Self-introduction makes one, more comfortable in speaking and it is highly useful to create the best impression. It is known as breaking the ice when meeting new people. A good self-introduction helps in placement and interviews. Self-introducing helps to maintain self-esteem. In addition, it helps to build a positive image in others and helps in making better relationship in the future.

When the cadets were asked to introduce themselves in the beginning, they uttered their name and some personal information. Most of them started like ‘my name is...’ then they were instructed to start as ‘I am ...’ so that it would sound more confident. Then they were instructed to make a brief mention about their background and assert more about their goals and their strength within 45 seconds to one minute. They were repeatedly given practice until their self-introduction was satis-

factory. There was good improvement over a period of one or two semesters.

3.2. General Speaking.

It is an important activity done by the students to enhance their communication skill in an effective way is general speaking. Every day a few students were asked to speak about the role model in their life, sports persons and the people whom they like as they have influenced their life. The students have to describe their favourite person’s characteristics, activities, and how they became an influential person in their life. This activity made them to think critically and enhanced their brainstorming skills also. The students tried to describe a movie that they have watched recently. These activities encouraged them to speak voluntarily without much reluctance.

For example, a student was asked to speak about a person whom he considered as the role model or the highly influential person in his life. He spoke about his neighbor who always spent his time with him and encouraged the boy in a positive manner to overcome all the difficulties of his day to day life. The speech given by him mobilised his emotional feel and he realized the goal of his life. He was able to foresee his life and recognize his short term goal and long term goals.

Another student was asked to give a movie review based on the movie that he had watched recently. He gave his views about an English movie “AVATAR”. He spoke about the technical advancements used in the movie. He was capable of analyzing with creative and critical thinking attitude and briefly explain about the movie in an appreciable manner. He analyzed about the script of the movie, scenes and gave critical comments. He admired the movie set which were made realistic.

This activity brought out:

- The critical, analytical skills to bring out the positive and negative points of the movie.
- The exploring skills and perception were kindled to make the student a perfect reviewer in an unbiased way.

3.3. Watching Movies in the Target Language.

One of the best techniques to enhance English speaking skills is watching movies in the target language. It helps them to listen to the accent of the native speakers and thus helps them to understand the target language, which leads to speak confidently with correct pronunciation. As listening is the first and foremost skill of communication, it is an effective way. In many colleges it is used as a practice to make students watch English movies with scientific inventions and wild life discovery to make them feel interested.

In the smart classroom, the students were allowed to watch “Avatar” movie. After they watched it, as a follow up action, some questions were asked to verify and confirm their understanding. The students were thrilled and gave answers relevantly. Vernacular medium students and first graduates could not understand and they asked for the meaning. It kindled their interest of watching the movie and trying to comprehend the dialogues. Some movies like Charlie Chaplin’s comedies were

also suggested for them and one movie was played. They learnt that the body language and facial expressions can also serve as the communicative tool and yielded expected result as:

- It enhanced active listening skill which is the base for speaking.
- Provided exposure to native speaker's accent which gave confidence in understanding native slang.
- It helped them to know the effective use of eye contact, facial expression and body language apart from verbal communication.

3.4. Public Speaking.

Public speaking on a given topic for 1-3 minutes will make the students confident and feel comfortable. Repeated practice will render the expected result. This gives a chance to the students to give their views with newly learnt words and what they already know. It is an easy as well as a strenuous effort to make students speak in English. Many students fail to speak in English because of lack of words to use. They do not know the right words to be used and hence avoid speaking in English. Lack of motivation, shyness, and fear of committing mistakes can be removed by motivating them. Mother tongue influence was avoided by making them try out small talks for 1 minute.

Activities like talking about cinemas, social media, my best friend, my daily routine etc. were given for the students to have trials. Initially simple topics were given. As days went by they got trained, they became confident. Later, exercises like extempore were given. The practice highly helped them to speak on a given topic within short time duration and without preparation. Advantages of Public speaking are:

- The students got exposure to brainstorming technique.
- Became confident enough.
- Learnt to talk on a topic in a coherent way and shared ideas.
- Dictionary usage developed and resulted in enhanced vocabulary.

3.5. Mock-Interviews.

A mock interview helps the candidates to gain confidence expressing their non-verbal and verbal communication skills. It also provides an opportunity for interviewees to commit mistakes and correcting them so that those mistakes are avoided in the actual interview. The mock interview will have questions based on behavior skills and aims to assess a student's capability and it is needed to conduct a mock interview session with seriousness and prepare well. It focuses on communicative skills and personality traits. The following are the mock interview questions given for the cadets for practice:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Do you think you are the right person for our company and if yes why?

3. What is your salary expectation?
4. Where do you see yourself after 10 years?
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses?
7. What is your greatest accomplishment?
8. Describe a difficult work situation and how did you overcome it?
9. What do you do to keep yourself up-to-date in your job?
10. How do you handle stress?
11. How would you handle work pressure?
12. Why do you want to work in our company?
13. Whom would you like to talk when you have problem?
14. Who was your favourite instructor in school?
15. Give me an example of a problem you solved.
16. Tell me about the most difficult decision you made.
17. What important trends do you see in our industry?
18. What salary do you expect?
19. Are you willing to relocate or travel?
20. Explain how you would be an asset to this company.
21. What motivates you?

4. Findings and Discussion.

4.1. Big Five Personality Traits.

Personality research has different theories which attempt to define and measure personality. The commonly accepted classification of personality among famous psychologists is the Big Five Personality Traits model. The five components of 'Big Five Personality Test' are: Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience. Each trait measures a unique aspect of human personality. It was conducted to assess the selected cadets' traits and trainings were incorporated for enhancing their traits.

A Pre-test was required to classify cadets' personality level and it was administered to all the 40 cadets to understand their personality types. For this purpose, a personality test based on Big Five Personality Traits was chosen. Standard questionnaire was used and their answers were recorded. Through this test, students' personality is categorized such as: Extroversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Neuroticism (N) and Openness to experience (O).

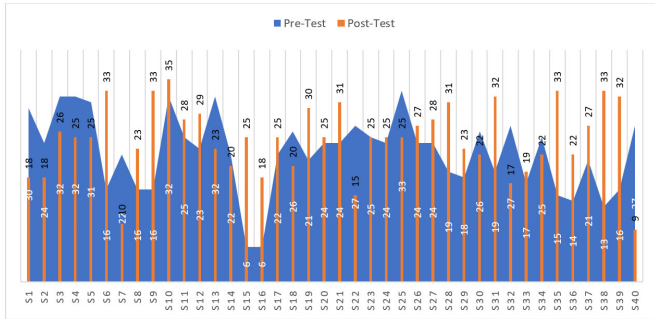
4.1.1. Extroversion (E).

Extroversion (E) is the personality trait of sociable nature, being friendly with everyone and seeking help outside. Extroversion includes the friendly and assertive nature. High scorers are found to be very social while low scorers show unwillingness to mix with others and doing their work alone. With the standard questionnaire of Big Five Personality, a test was conducted the scores were recorded and analysed.

The following chart shows that the extroversion of the sample students with the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean value of post-test scores on sociability has increased from 22.40 to 24.68 of pre-test. The standard deviation for the post-test was 6.21, and it was 6.65 for the pre-test. The minimum score for

the pre-test level was 9 with the maximum score of 33, and it was 9 for the post-test with the maximum score of 35. The analysis clearly indicates that the post-test scores of extroversions are better than the pre-test score.

Figure 1: Test scores of Extroversion graph (S1-S40 No. of students).



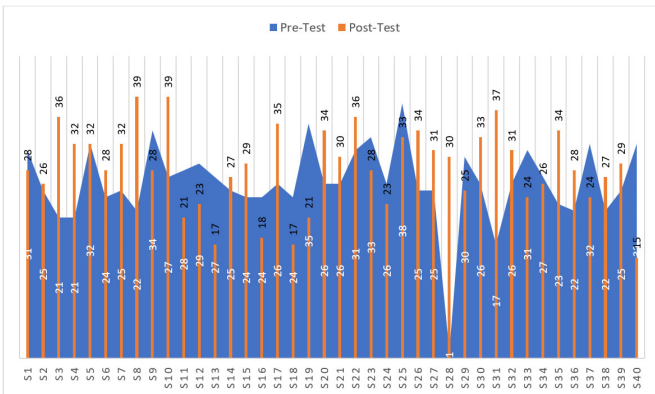
Source: Authors.

4.1.2. Agreeableness (A).

Agreeableness (A) reflects how individuals adjust themselves with others in a group or society. People with low agreeableness are more different. High scorers are polite, like others and liked by others. Their traits include being kind, affectionate, and sympathetic. High agreeableness is desirable for marine professionals. The students’ responses were recorded and calculated.

The following chart depicts the agreeableness of the sample students with the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean value of post-test scores on the agreeableness has raised from 26.20 of pre-test to 28.50 in post-test. The standard deviation for the pre-test was 5.96, and it was 6.06 for the post-test. The minimum score for the pre-test level was 1 with the maximum score of 38, and it was 15 for the post-test with the maximum score of 39. It is interesting to identify that the post-test scores of agreeableness are better than the pre-test score.

Figure 2: Test Statistics of Agreeableness graph (1-40 No. of students).



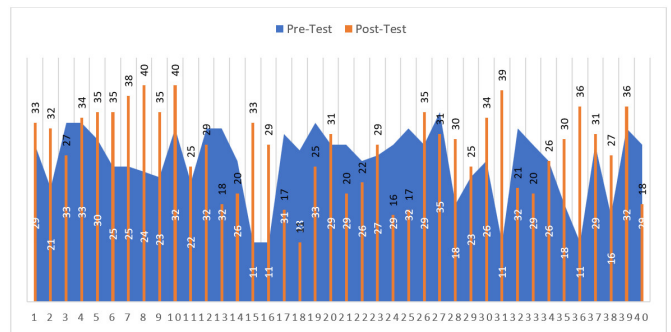
Source: Authors.

4.1.3. Conscientiousness (C).

Conscientiousness (C) is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking. High scorers are those who adhere rules and more ethical. Cadets with high score are highly suitable for marine field. Mariners need to be organized, methodic, reliable and prompt. The students’ answers were recorded, tabulated and calculated.

The following chart illustrates the Conscientiousness of the sample students with the pre-test and post-test scores. The mean value of post-test scores on the Conscientiousness has increased from 25.93 to 28.25. The standard deviation for the post-test was 7.496, and it was 6.708 for the pre-test. The minimum score for the pre-test level was 11 with the maximum score of 35, and it was 11 for the post-test with the maximum score of 40. The analysis clearly identifies that the post-test scores of Conscientiousness are better than the pre-test score.

Figure 3: Test scores of Conscientiousness graph (1-40 No. of students).



Source: Authors.

4.1.4. Neuroticism (N).

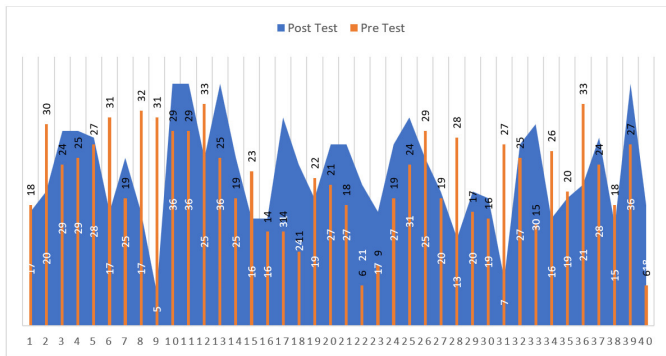
Neuroticism (N) is the personality trait of being emotional. Neuroticism is also known as Emotional Stability. This relates to one’s emotional stability and degree of negative emotions. People those who score high on neuroticism often experience emotional instability and negative emotions. This includes those with mood swings. The cadets’ emotional quotient was also tested and recorded with the answers given.

The following chart illustrates the Neuroticism of the sample students with the pretest and posttest scores. The mean value of post-test scores on the neuroticism has decreased from 22.08 to 21.62. The standard deviation for the post-test was 10.64, and it was 7.18 for the pre-test. The minimum score for the post-test level was 25 with the maximum score of 36, and it was 6 for the pre-test with the maximum score of 33. The analysis clearly finds that the post-test scores of neuroticisms are lesser than the pre-test score, which is a progressive result.

4.1.5. Openness to Experience (O).

Openness to Experience (O) is the personality trait of seeking new experience and intellectual pursuits. High scorers may day dream a lot. Low scorers may be very down to earth. People who like to learn new things and enjoy new experiences

Figure 4: Test Statistics of Neuroticism graph (1-40 No. of students).

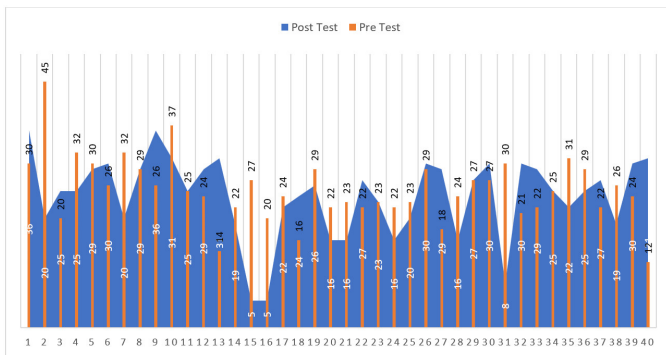


Source: Authors.

usually score high in openness. Openness includes traits like being proactive and creative having a wide variety of interests.

The following graph exemplifies the Openness to experience of the sample students with the post-test and pre-test scores. The mean value of post-test scores on the Open to experience has declined from 25.25 to 24.07. The standard deviation for the post-test was 7.36, and it was 5.96 for the pre-test. The minimum score for the post-test level was 5 with the maximum score of 36, and it was 12 for the pre-test with the maximum score of 45. The analysis clearly finds that the post-test scores of Openness to experience are slightly lower than the pre-test score.

Figure 5: Scores of Openness to Experience graph (1-40 No. of students).



Source: Authors.

Conclusions.

To conclude the study analysis for big five personality test, pre-test score was subtracted from the post test score. The Big

Five Personality Test of sample students, 60 percent of the students are better in post-test than the pre-test score of extroversion. 57.5 percent of the students are better in posttest scores of agreeableness and it was similar for Conscientiousness. 62.5 percent of the students are better in pretest scenario than the post-test on Neuroticism and for Openness to experience it was 47.5 percent in pre-test which is better than post-test scores. The figure clearly illustrates that except Neuroticism and Openness to experience, other tests on Extroversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, post-test scores are much better than pre test scores and it proves the trainings given is successful. The above mentioned table shows different personality traits of marine cadets which can be used to understand and define cadets’ personality types accurately from the point of view of pre-test and post-test results proving the trainings as successful.

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