



PERSONALITY TRAIT, JOB SATISFACTION, AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGERS.

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Abstract: *This study examines the relationship between the Big Five Personality Traits and job performance, job satisfaction, and the role of Human Resources managers as a moderator between job performance and personality traits. Our findings show that there is a significant and positive correlation between Agreeableness (1% level), Extraversion and Openness (1% level), and job performance. Conscientiousness, on the other hand, is negatively correlated with job performance. The study also finds that Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Openness are positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. The implication is that people with these traits are more likely to be satisfied on the job relative to others. HRM is a moderator for Openness, Conscientious, and Agreeableness indicating the important roles of HRM in influencing personality traits. We recommend that potential employees should be examined on their personality traits to know if they possess the Big Five Personality that is desired by the organizations studied to enhance and improve job performance and promote job satisfaction..*

Key Words: Personality traits, Performance, job satisfaction, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, Human Resources Manager.

1.0 Introduction

Every organization is concerned about the performance of its employees and would put policies in place to promote the performance of its employees. Thus, the big question before any organization is how to set apart individuals who will do well on the job from inefficient and ineffective employees. The answer may be related in one way or the other to the type of personality traits that an employee possesses.

Recently, research investigating the relationship between personality traits and job performance is common in fields such as industry, agriculture, and medicine. Most of these researches make use of primary data in which the researchers examine the link between various personality traits and diverse aspects of job performance. Job performance is an indication of how well employees perform their tasks, how they take initiative, and their overall inventiveness in solving problems. In addition, job performance can also be measured by the way employees make use of the available resources cum the time and energy spent on their tasks (Boshoff & Arnolds, 1995; Schepers, 1994). Though job performance is very important to any organization, the growing problem faced by various organizations is traits. These problems can negatively impact on employees' performance and

the organization (Altangerel, Ruimei, Elahi, & Dash, 2015).

Personality on the other hand encompasses employees' stable feelings, thoughts, and behavioural patterns relative to other employees. We all have a unique personality that distinguishes us from other people. Good knowledge of employees' personalities gives HRM indications about how that employee is likely to act and feel in a variety of situations and whether s/he will be best suited for a particular role in an organization. An employee who is best fitted to a particular job role is likely to perform better and more likely to experience increased productivity. However, it should be known that factors aside from personality traits could affect job performance. For example, situational factors such as the characteristics of the job, the nature of the organization, and co-workers can also affect job performance (see Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Strümpfer, Danana, Gouws, & Viviers, 1998).

The working environment is rapidly changing in recent times; making it imperative for human resources managers to adopt measures to recruit workers with the right skills and knowledge consistent with the changing working environment to promote job performance and



remain competitive (Jermittiparsert, Suan, & Kaliappen, 2019).

In general, humans are created differently and with different instincts that define their personalities and reactions to changing environments. These personality traits are important in achieving an organization's objectives which is more than just profit making but also another aspect of job performance. Researches have shown that employee performance determines job performance (Beng & Muthuveloo, 2020, Alsuwailem & Elnaga, 2016). Not recruiting and placing the workers in the right job position is likely to affect job performance. Aside from job performance, researchers have given much attention to job satisfaction by analyzing employees' well-being and other job-related factors. Job satisfaction refers to the individual positive feelings towards his job (see Luthans, 2005; Robbin & Judge, 2003; Warr, 2002). Studies investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and personality traits are grossly scarce. Given the importance of job satisfaction on job performance, it is important to study this aspect of job performance.

Results of previous studies investigating the link between personality traits and job performance are conflicting. For example, Ajayi et al (2017) show that the influence of personality traits on teachers' job performance in Oyo State, Nigeria is not statistically significant. Beng & Muthuveloo (2020) and Alsuwailem and Elanga (2016) result indicate a significant and positive influence of personality traits on job performance.

This study, therefore, fills these gaps by enriching the literature and evaluating the link between personality traits and job satisfaction and job performance with human resources managers as the moderating factors. The research will help managers develop high-performing and adaptable employees to keep organizations competitive in a highly global competitive market.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the link between personality traits and job performance in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- i. To investigate the impacts of personality traits on job satisfaction.
- ii. To evaluate the roles of human resources managers (HRM) in moderating the relationship between personality traits and job performance.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the objectives of this study, this research will attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the relationship between personality traits on job performance?
- ii. What are the effects of personality traits on job satisfaction?
- iii. What are the roles of HRM in moderating the link between job performance and personality traits?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The trait activation theory posits that an individual with a given set of personality traits is the best fit for a given job type. This view is supported by Barrick and Mount (2005). They maintain that personality affects motivation via its influence on the amount of efforts put into work. When an individual's personality conforms to the job, job performance improves. We formulate our hypotheses based on this theory and research as follows:
H₀₁: there is no significant relationship between personality traits and job performance and job satisfaction.

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between the role of HRM, personality traits, and job performance.

2.0 Literature Review

Several past studies have shown the importance of personality traits to job performance and satisfaction. Akhtar et al (2015) posit that there is a significant relationship between personality traits and human resources management practices within an organization. Human resources management may evaluate the personality traits when an organization recruits employees for the organization (Ghani et al, 2016). Personality traits refer to the nature which predicts the behavior of the person.

Personality traits are unique and enduring features of a person as the situations change. The most popular personality traits are extraversion (introversion), agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness.

Previous studies on personality conducted across different times and cultures show conflicting results. Thus, there is no consensus in the literature on the impact of personality traits on job performance. For example, Chandrasekara (2019), Widiger (2017b), Bhave & Johnson (2014), and Lin et al (2014) show that people with agreeableness personality trait demonstrate social



attitude at work which help them to interact with other employees at work and thus become a team player quicker relative to other employees. This could be the reason why Kell (2019) concluded that agreeableness is an effective predictor of job performance. On the contrary, Ajayi et al (2017) investigate the relationship between job performance and personality among teachers in Oyo State. The results show that the relationship between personality and job performance is not statistically significant. Beng & Muthuveloo (2020) on the other hand, find a negative correlation between agreeableness and job performance.

This result is similar to Alsuwailem and Elanga (2016). Acaray & Yildirim (2017) conclude that conscientiousness has a positive and significant relationship with job performance. People with these personality traits are likely to be righteous, comprehensive, careful, earnest, persevering, and effective in planning. This personality is suitable for most fields or positions in an organization (Bastian, et al, 2017)

On extraversion, Acaray & Yildirim (2017) show that there is a significant association between extraversion and job performance. Extroverts are sociable, assertive, and active. They are energetic, confident, and directly involve themselves in activities (Seddigh, et al, 2016). People with these traits tend to be more proficient in training (Hudson & Fraley, 2015). Beng & Muthuveloo (2020) specifically find that extraversion and openness are positively correlated to job performance. This result is the same as Delima (2019).

However, Beng & Muthuveloo (2020) and Alsuwailem and Elanga (2016) find a negative correlation between neuroticism and job performance. Gridwichai et al (2020) find no significant impacts of extraversion and neuroticism on job performance. This is contrary to Delima (2019) which shows negative neuroticism on job performance.

On job satisfaction, in the literature suggest job satisfaction is a function of job characteristics (Loher, et al 1985), perceived support from the organization (Eisenberger, et al 1997), the relationship between the employee and the supervisor (Baruch-Feldman et al, 2002) and equal justice (Kim & Leung, 2007). Nabeel-UdDin et al (2019) find a negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction. There are conflicting results from studies examining the relationship between personality traits and job

performance and a gross scarcity of studies on personality traits and job satisfaction. This study fills this.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative and correlational study conducted one-time using hypotheses testing approach to study the relationship between personality traits, job performance, and job satisfaction. We develop a questionnaire and pre-tested it before administering it at the macro-scale. We conducted the validity test for the survey results and used the result to determine the accuracy of the measure of various variables in this study. This enabled us to the moderate effect of Human Resources Managers.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The broad objective of the study is to examine the impact of personality traits on job performance. To achieve this objective and other objectives, this study adopts qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Both public and private sector employees and HRM of companies in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria were considered as the target population in this study. A random sampling method was adopted. The study uses close-ended questionnaires. Both electronic and manual questionnaires were adopted to allow for flexible and quick collation of responses. A total number of 55 questionnaires were emailed to the respondents and 100 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Only 92% of the respondents filled out the electronic questionnaires while 96% of the respondents filled out and returned the manual questionnaires. The total response rate is approximately 95%. In line with the standard research ethics, participation in the answering of questionnaires is voluntary and it was made clear to the respondents that the responses shall be used solely for the research purpose. We also guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of all the respondents.

The study also uses correlation to examine the association between personality traits, job satisfaction, and performance.

3.3 Variables of Study

In line with Trait Activation Theory and the objectives of this study, job performance and job satisfaction are the dependent variables while personality traits are the independent variables in this study. We used Human Resources Management as the moderating role.



This study utilizes an A- 5-point Likert scale where 1 represented strongly Disagree and 5 represented Strongly Agree. We check the reliability of the scales using

Cronbach’s Alpha. Our result indicates a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.75, which is adequate.

To measure conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and job satisfaction and performance, the study use a 5-item scale. While a 4-item scale was used to measure extraversion and agreeableness following Costa and McCrae (1991).

3.4 Measurement Instruments

We used the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) developed by Koopman, L et. al. (2011) to measure job performance. The IWPQ is based on three dimensions of job performance, Task Performance, Conceptual Performance, and Counter-Productive Work

Table 3.1: Socio-demographic of Respondents

Gender	Male 64%	Female 36%			
Age	<30yrs 32%	30-40 yrs 27%	40-50 years 22%	>50 years 19%	
Education	O’Level 12%	Diploma 21%	Bachelor 37%	Master 28%	Doctor 2%
Job Role	R&D/Education 41%	Management 23%	Equipment/IT 13.4%	Construction 8.6%	Sales 14%

Source: Authors’ computation

Since we are testing the 5 personality traits, the first hypothesis is divided into 5 subhypotheses. The result of the correlation between job performance and personality traits is shown in Table 3.2 below. From the Table, it can be seen that there is a positive and significant correlation between Extraversion and job performance. This result corroborates that of Ajayi et al (2017) and Acaray & Yildirim (2017). Similarly, Openness is positively correlated with job performance and the correlation is statistically significant at a 1% level. The correlation between agreeableness and job performance is positive

Behaviour. John and Srivastava's (1999) Big Five Inventory (BFI) which assessed the 5 personality traits using 44 questions was adopted for this research. Questionnaires are the sole instrument used to gather data in this study.

3.5 Data analysis techniques

We used simple frequency and correlation analysis for the data obtained from the field. IBM SPSS version 23 was used for both the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

4.0 Results

From Table 3.1, male respondents are the largest with 64%. The mean of the male respondents is 26-30. 37% of respondents have Bachelor's degree; this is the highest number of respondents by education. This is followed by respondents with master's degrees (28%) and diploma holders followebyosely by 21%.

and significant at 10% but not statistically significant at 1% and 5%. Contrary to the above results, conscientiousness and neuroticism are negatively correlated with job performance and the correlations are statistically significant at 1%. While the negative correlation between Neuroticism and job performance corroborates that of Beng & Muthueloo (2020) and Alsuwailam and Elanga (2016), the negative correlation between Conscientiousness and job performance confirms the results by Acaray & Yildirim (2017).



Table 3.2: Result of testing the Null Hypothesis 1a

Correlation with Job Performance		
Personality	Beta	p-Value
Agreeableness	0.31	0.08
Conscientiousness	-0.24*	0.000
Extraversion	0.35*	0.002
Openness	0.42*	0.000
Neuroticism	-0.33*	0.001

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

Note: * means statistically significant at 1% (0.01).

Table 3.3 shows the result of the correlation analysis for job satisfaction and personality traits. All five personality traits except Neuroticism have a positive

correlation with job satisfaction. However, the correlation between Agreeableness and job satisfaction is not statistically significant at 1%, 5%, and 10% levels.

Table 3.3: Result of testing the Null Hypothesis 1b

Correlation with Job Satisfaction		
Personality	Beta	p-Value
Agreeableness	0.19	0.142
Conscientiousness	0.51	0.000
Extraversion	0.23	0.002
Openness	0.41	0.000
Neuroticism	-0.47	0.006

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

We test the hypothesis that the human resources manager has no role in moderating the relationship between

personality traits and job performance. Based on our findings, this hypothesis is rejected. The results in Table



3.4 show that HRM positively moderates the relationship between Agreeableness and job performance and this relationship is statistically significant at a 10% level.

Table 3.4:Result of testing the Null Hypothesis 2

Human Resources Manager as Moderator between Personality Traits and Job Performance		
Personality	Beta	p-Value
Agreeableness	0.39	0.007
Conscientiousness	0.54	0.000
Extraversion	0.09	0.170
Openness	0.61	0.000
Neuroticism	-0.05	0.23

Source: Auhors' computation using SPSS

5.0 Discussion

These results corroborated in many ways with previous studies. For example, the positive correlation between Openness and Extraversion and the negative correlation between Neuroticism and job performance conforms with other studies in the literature (Ajayi et al, 2017; Sev 2019; Gridwichai, et al, 2020). The positive correlation between Agreeableness and job performance is in line with that of Frei and McDaniel (1997), even though the correlation is not statistically significant at 5%. The negative correlation between conscientiousness and job performance departs from the study by Ajayi et al, 2017 and Obeid, Salleh, and Nor (2017). According to Obeid, Salleh, and Nor (2017), employees with high conscientiousness tend to dedicate themselves to their organizations because they are interested in developing long-term relationships with their companies. The implication is that people with this personality trait perform better in their jobs. This assertion is in contrast with our findings. One possible explanation may be that the majority of the respondents are science and engineering-oriented. These set of people follow relatively rigid rules and logical procedures in

Similarly, HRM positively and significantly (at 1%) moderated the relationship between Conscientiousness and openness, and job performance.

performing their duties. Engineers, for example, disagree when non-practical issues are raised. This may slow down their performances and this also may explain why conscientiousness is negatively correlated with job performance. Another interesting finding in this study is that Agreeableness has no significant relationship with job satisfaction. The implication is that people may possess this personality trait, performing well on the job and yet not be satisfied with their job. Some managers may see this personality trait in their employees as a sign of job satisfaction because such employees rarely argue with management decision(s). This may not be so as our finding pointed out.

Our study also shows that HRM is a moderator for Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness, and job performance. People with these traits are responsible, open to learning and improving themselves, and also work hard; are more likely to be influenced by the decisions of Human Resources Managers.

5.1 Summary and Recommendation(s)

This study aims to study the relationship between the Big Five Personality Traits and job performance on one hand and job satisfaction on the other while at the same time



evaluating the role of Human Resources managers as a moderator between job performance and personality traits. Our findings show that there is a significant and positive correlation between Agreeableness (10% level), (1% level), Extraversion and Openness (1% level), and job performance. Conscientiousness, on the other hand, is negatively correlated with job performance.

The study also finds that Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Openness are positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction. The implication is that people with these traits are more likely to be satisfied on the job relative to others. HRM is a moderator for Openness, Conscientious, and Agreeableness indicating the important roles of HRM in influencing personality traits.

We recommend that companies should examine potential employees to know if they possess the Big Five Personality that is desired by the organization to enhance and improve job performance and promote job satisfaction.

5.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This study enables us to establish that Human Resources Managers are vital to the effective use of personality traits such as Conscientiousness, Openness, and Agreeableness to achieve a high level of job performance. Possession of these traits alone may not be a guarantee for high job performance; how the HRMs manage these traits in their employees will go a long way in influencing job performance. Furthermore, employing staff with Extraversion and openness will lead to high job performance and job satisfaction and by extension lead to competitive success and high profits for the company under study. Hence, training employees to possess these personality traits is essential for the organization's success.

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