

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE,
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, NEUROTICISM AND MANAGERIAL
PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL POPULATION COMMISSION,
LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

Zaccheaus Olufunminiyi Olonade

Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.

Correspondence: Zaccheaus O. Olonade (PhD), Department of Human Resources Development, Faculty of Management Sciences, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria.
E-mail: , zaccheaus.olonade@uniosun.edu.ng, zakiolonade@gmail.com , Phone: +2347033751620

Abstract

The success or otherwise of organizations is highly influenced by the efficiency and effectiveness of managers, who will directly supervise the employees productivity. To be efficient and effective, it is believed that the personality of individuals is crucial. This study, therefore, examines the relationship between openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism and managerial performance in the National Population Commission Lagos State. Descriptive research design was used and data was collected through self-administered questionnaires. A total of 101 respondents were selected for the study using stratified sampling technique. The instruments used were the Big Five Inventory (BFI) the Managerial Performance Scale (MPS). Three hypotheses were postulated and tested using multiple regression analyses. Results showed that both openness to experience and conscientiousness significantly positively predicted managerial performance, while neuroticism did not. Based on the findings, the study recommends that management and senior staff of organizations should be exposed to training programmes that will enhance their personality traits, as this will positively contribute to their effectiveness and efficiency at work. It is believed that this will improve their behavioural patterns, interpersonal relationships and facilitate effective and efficient discharge of duties and responsibilities, and enhancing their managerial performance.

Keywords: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Managerial Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Managerial performance is one of the crucial things that measure the organization's outcome and reputation (Anesukanjanakul, Banpot, & Jermittiparsert, 2019; Jermittiparsert, Suan, & Kaliappen, 2019). Managers need to improve their skills, knowledge, and ability consistently to become relevant and competitive (Jermittiparsert & Boonratanakittiphumi, 2019). Jalagat (2017) argued that

managers perform better on their duties through their improvement of competencies, thus, accomplishing the organizational goals and objectives effectively. Managerial performance in every organization is important as it depicts the overall performance of the organization. If employees in the workplace cannot work together in the organization, then managerial performance at both financial and operational level may never be accomplished. It is believed that managerial performance is a process by which managers and employees work together to plan, monitor and review employees' work objectives and their overall contribution to the organization.

Personality traits are one of the growing problems faced in workplace that always brings negative effects on the performance of both employees and the manager in the organization (Altangerel, Ruimei, Elahi, & Dash, 2015). Recently, studies (Altangerel, Ruimei, Elahi, & Dash, 2015; Olonade, 2019) have submitted that personality trait of individuals in the organization have become more dangerous and thus threatening the performance of managers of such organisation. These negative effect may not exclude the managers of National Population Commission (NPC) in Nigeria. Ozer and Benet (2006) explain that appropriate personality of an individual is very vital in determining his/her job performance. The personality of a manager determines the way he/she solves complicated problems. Duckworth and Yeager (2015) referred the personality traits as a tool, used to evaluate the manager's qualities, moral values and abilities, and his efforts towards the achievement of organizational goal. Personality traits of an employee's help to achieve the higher managerial performance, leading to achievement of the goal of the organization. There are five dimensions of personality trait which are extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience.

In this study, three (openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) out of the five personality traits were examined by the researcher. This is because these three personality traits have received a lot of attention from previous researchers, such that openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism have negatively influenced managerial performance, and affecting the accomplishment of the organizational goals. Every successful organization would rely on the efficient and effective way managers manage the employees and ensure they complete their tasks effectively. This research is therefore aimed at examining the relationship among openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism and managerial performance, using the perspective of the worker to measure the manager's performance in the organization, specifically, in National Population Commission, Lagos, Lagos State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Openness to experience refers to the number of interests to which one is attracted and the depth to which those interests are pursued. People who like to learn new

things and enjoy new experiences usually score high in openness. It indicates how open-minded a person is. A person with a high level of openness to experience in a personality test enjoys trying new things. They are imaginative, curious, and open-minded. Individuals who are low in openness to experience would rather not try new things (Ashton & Lee, 2001). They are close-minded, literal and enjoy having a routine. Individuals with a high level of openness have a general appreciation for unusual ideas and art. They are usually imaginative, rather than practical. Being creative, open to new and different ideas, and in touch with their feelings are all characteristics of these people (Amadi, Ahamefule and Ojo, 2015). Individuals who score low in openness on a career test are generally more closed-off, resistant to change, and analytical. A person who scores low in openness on a career test may excel in jobs that involve routine work and do not require creativity. Having a high level of openness is important in jobs that require creative thinking and a flexible attitude. Jobs such as advertising, research and other artistic occupations all benefit from high openness. The behavioural tendencies typically associated with openness to experience include being imaginative, cultured, curious, original, broad minded, intelligent (Digman, 1990), and having a need for variety, aesthetic sensitivity, and unconventional values (McCrae and John, 1992). **Conscientiousness** refers to the number of goals on which one is focused (Kumar, Bakhshi & Rani, 2009). It is related to dependability and volition and the typical behaviours associated with it. It includes being hard working, achievement-oriented, persevering, careful, and responsible (Barrick & Mount, 1991). A person scoring high in conscientiousness usually has a high level of self-discipline. These individuals prefer to follow a plan, rather than act spontaneously. Their methodical planning and perseverance usually make them highly successful in their chosen occupation. Conscientiousness is about how a person controls, regulates, and directs impulses. Individuals with a high level of conscientiousness on a career test are good at formulating long-range goals, organizing and planning routes to these goals, and working consistently to achieve them despite short-term obstacles they may encounter.

Neuroticism refers to the number and strength of stimuli required to elicit negative emotions in a person (Kumar, Bakhshi & Rani, 2009). Neuroticism is also sometimes called emotional stability. This dimension relates to one's emotional stability and degree of negative emotions. Persons who are high on this dimension are usually anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, emotional, worried, and insecure (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Neuroticism is similar but not identical to being neurotic in the Freudian sense.

Theoretical Review

The Five-Factor Model

Colquitt (2009) identified five dimensions that describe personality. These include; conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extroversion, commonly referred to as the big five. Conscientiousness is associated with trait adjectives such as dependable, organized, reliable, ambitious, and

hardworking while agreeableness has adjectives such as kind, cooperative, sympathetic, helpful, courteous, and warm.. On the other hand, neuroticism has to do with nervous, moody, emotional, insecure, and unstable character. Openness to experience has to do with curious, imaginative, creative, complex, refined, sophisticated while extraversion is associated with adjective traits such as talkative, sociable, passionate, bold, and dominant (Colquitt, 2009). Personality factors are extremely important in today's competitive organizational settings. Often the 'wrong' kind of personality proves disastrous and causes undesirable tensions and worries in organization (Khosla, 2009). Of the five factors, the single factor of conscientiousness is the most predictive of job performance and therefore positively influence work performance (Zimmerman, 2008).

Empirical Review

Previous literature has proved that openness to experience significantly associated with turnover, work drive and career discovery (Ramli, 2019). Individuals who are open to experience preferred challenges in their workplace that could trigger them. Openness personalities need participative leadership and correlated conflict management. Although they are good in job performance and excited about the new environment and autonomy (Costa & McCrae, 1992), yet they are less likely to commit to the change initiatives on their current job. Nawaz, Afzal, and Shehzadi (2013) discovered that openness employees only focused on the rewards from their new organizations without rethinking the consequences when they leave their existed company.

According to previous personality antecedents by Costa and McCrae (1992), neuroticism is one of the significant traits among other traits in personality psychology. Individuals with these traits tend to experience negative emotions such as low-confidence, anxiety, excessive worries, and pessimism, etc. Individuals with this trait have been implicated to have negative behaviours and attitudes in the work field, it was identified as a core source of negative affections in a study by Jalagat (2017). Costa and McCrae (1992) revealed that people high in neuroticism are agitated, anxious and naturally discouraged. Neurotic people frequently fill in as poor group entertainers, tend to be subversive and view the requirement for change adversely (Therasa & Vijayabanu, 2015). Obeid, Salleh, and Nor (2017) study's submitted that high conscientiousness employees tend to have a high level of commitment to their organizations because they are concern with the development of the organisation. Conscientious employees are dependable and more persistent due to their extra efforts to work, and they push themselves to give a better performance to their companies (Terrier, Kim, & Fernandez, 2016). Powell and Bourdage (2016) has found that conscientiousness significantly related to a generalized job involvement tendency. Likewise, previous scholars also found that there is a positive association between conscientiousness and affective commitment (Choi et al., 2015; Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017).

Hypotheses

1. Openness to experience will significantly predict managerial performance.
2. Conscientiousness will significantly predict managerial performance.
3. Neuroticism will significantly predict managerial performance.

METHOD

Design

Cross sectional research design was adopted for the study. Openness to experience, conscientiousness and neuroticism were the independent variables while managerial performance was the dependent variable.

Participant

The population of the study consists of all the members of staff of National Population Commission in Lagos State, which was 263 as at the time of the study. This was according to the information gotten from the State headquarters of the Commission. 101 respondents selected through the use of stratified sampling technique participated in the study. They comprised 45 (44.6%) males and 56 (55.4%) females. In terms of their age range, this study has 23 respondents whose age were below 30 years (22.8%), 45 (44.6%) out of 101 respondents have their age ranged between 31 and 40 years, 20 (19.8%) of the respondents are between 41 and 50 years of age, 13 (12.9%) respondents' age was above 50 years. Their marital status showed that 55 (54.5%) were married, 29 (28.7%) were single, while 17 (16.8%) were divorcees. In terms of academic qualifications; One (1%) of the respondent has WASC/GCE, 18 (17.8%) of them possessed OND/NCE, 46 (45.5%) of them had Bachelor's degree/HND, 17 (16.8%) has Master's Degree, while 19 (18.8%) of the respondents have other certificates. Finally, 21 (20.8%) of the respondents have spent up to five years in the organisation, 30 (29.7%) of the respondents have spent up to 10 years at work, 27 (26.7%) of the respondents have spent up to 15 years on the job, 7 (6.9%) indicated that they have spent 20 years with the organization, while 16 (15.8%) have spent up to 20 years in the organization.

Instruments

The instrument used for this study was a standardised questionnaire. Two instruments were employed in this study; the Big Five Inventory Scale (BFI) and the Managerial performance Scale (MPS).

Personality traits were measured by using a 15-item scale adapted from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) of John, Donahue and Kentle (1991). Each of the 15-item was rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sampled items include: "I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well, and gets nervous easily (neuroticism)", "I see myself as someone who has few artistic interests (openness to experience)", "I see myself as someone who does a thorough job (conscientiousness)". John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) reported a reliability coefficient of Cronbach Alpha of 0.80, for the original scale.

A test retest reliability coefficients of Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, 0.78 and 0.81 were obtained for neuroticism, openness to experience, and conscientiousness respectively in the present study. High score on each of the scales indicates a high level of the variables measured and vice versa.

Managerial performance was measured using Managerial Performance Scale (MPS) developed by Buchanan (1974). The MPS has 15 – items scored on a 1 to 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Sample items were “managerial talent is a very important requirement and a major challenge in organization”. “Essential requirement of a good manager is to motivate the employees to move towards high performance”. Buchanan (1974) reported Cronbach alpha of .94. A reliability coefficient of .90 was obtained in the current study. Employees that score high on this scale have high level of managerial performance and vice versa.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher at the premises of National Population Commission, Lagos State. The participants were assured of confidentiality with emphasis on the fact that they are not required to provide any information that could be used to identify them. After explaining the purpose of the research to the participants, 110 copies of questionnaire were administered, and 101 questionnaires were completely filled and used for the research. The data collected was analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis. All analysis was carried out using SPSS 20.0 package.

RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Multiple Regression Analysis showing Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism as predictors Managerial Performance of NPC Lagos State

	β	T	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	df	P
Variable			.80	.64	.64	723.24	1,69	P<.01
Openness to experience	.64	.47						P<.01
Consciousness	.58	.32						P<.01
Neuroticism	.66	.18						P>.01

Table 1 above revealed a joint prediction of openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism on managerial performance ($p < .01$, $F = 723.24$, $R^2 = .64$). The predictor variables jointly contribute 64% of the variance in the managerial performance, while the remaining 36% could be due to the effect of

extraneous variables. Furthermore, the relative contribution of each of the independent variables was shown. The result of hypothesis one indicated that openness to experience positively predicted managerial performance ($\beta=.64, t=.47, p<01$). This inferred that the hypothesis formulated was accepted. Result of hypothesis two showed that conscientiousness positively predicted managerial performance ($\beta=.58, t=.32, p<01$). This also implied that the hypothesis formulated was accepted. However, the result of hypothesis three revealed that neuroticism did not predict managerial performance ($\beta=.66, t=.18, p>01$). Thus 3 was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis which stated that openness to experience will significantly predict managerial performance was accepted. It is evident that there is a statistically significant relationship between openness and managerial performance of staff of the organization under study. This shows that the organisation selected for the study gives emphasis to being open to learning new things, giving innovative ideas and adapting to change, as these become indispensable for successful managerial performance. The finding was in line with Neeema and Ashish (2020) which claims statistically significant positive correlation between openness to experience and work performance of managers of FMCG sector. The reason for the results of the present study might be due to the demand of the participants' job, which sometimes requires a creative and imaginative attributes.

The second hypothesis which states that conscientiousness will significantly predict managerial performance at the National Population Commission Lagos State, was accepted. The result is in agreement with Obeid, Salleh, and Nor (2017) which submitted that the employees who have high conscientiousness tend to be committed to their organizations because of their concern to develop a long-term relationship with their companies. Further, the present study agrees with the submission of Terrier, Kim, & Fernandez, (2016) which concluded that Conscientious manager are dependable and more persistent due to their extra efforts to work, and they push themselves to give a better performance to their companies.

The third hypothesis which states that Neuroticism will significantly predict managerial performance at the National Population Commission Lagos State was rejected. This may be due to the fact that highly neurotic people are not likely to rise to the managerial positions in their organisation. It is likely so because they tend to experience negative emotions such as low confidence, anxiety, excessively worries, pessimism, and depression. This is in line with the position of Costa and McCrae (1992) which revealed that people that are high in neuroticism are agitated, anxious and naturally discouraged. Therasa and Vijayabanu, (2015) also submitted that Neurotic people frequently fill in as poor group entertainers, tend to be subversive and view the requirement for change adversely. To further support the result, Jalagat (2017), in his study concluded that due to the negative

behaviours and attitudes of the Neurotics in the work field, Neuroticism was identified as a core source of negative affections

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that openness to experience and conscientiousness have significant effect on the managerial performance in organisations. Neuroticism did not predict managerial performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that organization should continuously engage in training and retraining of its workforce especially those in managerial and management levels. This will expose them to improved behavioural patterns and interpersonal relationships, so as to exhibit positive traits that would facilitate effective and efficient discharge of duties and responsibilities while also enhancing their collective performance.

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