

PERSONALITY TRAITS AS CORRELATE OF PERCEIVED JOB PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated personality traits as correlates of perceived job performance of business educators in South-South Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design with a population of 130 business educators in public universities across the South-South region of Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study due to its manageable size. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire titled "Personality Traits and Perceived Job Performance of business educators Questionnaire" (PTAPJPBEQ); which were validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha statistics was used to determine its level of consistency which yielded reliability of 0.62 for job performance scale and 0.69 for personality traits items implying that the instruments were reliable. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis. The study revealed that conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits of business educators significantly correlated with their job performances. It was therefore, concluded that conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits correlate with business educators' job performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that business educators should understand their personality traits and use them effectively to impact positively on their students; that personality traits assessment should be one of the tools in recruitment and selection of business educators into public universities in South-South Nigeria by the university authorities and the government in particular.

Keywords: Personality Traits; Business Educators' Job Performance.

Introduction

Employees are generally engaged by organizations to contribute meaningfully through their knowledge, skills and competences for the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. The engagement and commitment of business educators give them opportunity to fulfil their life goals and aspirations and contribute positively to organizational goals and objectives. Business educators are lecturers that teach students courses that are business related, which includes Accounting, Marketing, Office Technology and Management in universities. Business educators equip students with requisite skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes necessary for job creation, entrepreneurship or become profitably engaged in order to be able to contribute

expressively to the economic growth of the nation through such programme as business education.

Business education is an aspect of vocational education that equips recipients with requisite skills and knowledge required for performance in the business world either as entrepreneurs or employees. The Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (2017) posited that the objectives of business education are better understood, if explained as they relate to various skill components of the goals of business education. Some of these objectives include vocational objective, exploratory objective, occupational intelligence objective, consumer education objective and personal use objective.

Vocational objectives of business education relate specifically to the preparation of students for initial employment, upgrading existing skills and retraining in new related business and office occupations. The exploratory objectives aim primarily at the middle grades and early high school and this provides opportunities for students to gain information about business. The occupational intelligence objectives recognize that all citizens should have an intelligent understanding of the various areas of work in which they can earn a living. The economic understanding objective is related to developing economic literacy in all citizens. Similarly, the consumer education objective serves a dual role: it promotes both the discriminating use of services and resources by consumers and corresponding understanding of the consumer viewpoint and how best to serve the consumer. The personal use objective relates to those business courses designed to prepare students for proper execution of their personal business affairs and the college preparation objective which recognizes that schools have an obligation to provide background preparation in business as well as to develop skills that provide students with the tools to cope more effectively with college demands and in the course of their job performance after graduation.

Job performance is a measure of the extent to which an employee carries out the various tasks involved in the job. Job performance is a way of achieving a goal or set of goals within an organisation. It is the work associated with activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are performed. It assesses whether a person performs a job well or not. In other words, job performance is the effectiveness of job behaviour in real work. Job performance is the total anticipated value from employees' behaviour carried out over the course of a set period of time, which results in employees' performance that can be seen as the method which actually contributes to organizational effectiveness.

The components of business educators' job performance can either be task or contextual performance. Task performance comprises an individual's input to organizational performance, that is, the actions that are part of the official remuneration structure and addresses the requirements as specified in job description. Task performance directly transforms raw materials to goods and services. Examples of task performance of business educators are: preparing and delivering lectures; advising students on academic, vocational and career issues; assessing and grading students' class work, assignments, seminars, projects, tests and examination papers; preparing course materials such as syllabi and textbooks; maintaining students' attendance,

records, grades and other required records; initiating, facilitating and moderating classroom discussions.

Contextual performance on the other hand, consists of behaviours that do not directly contribute to organizational performance but support the overall effectiveness through social and psychological climate where work is done. In the view of Bullock, (2013), contextual performance contributes to overall effectiveness of the organization through social and psychological climate support by cooperating with teammates, dispersing conflicts and cleaning up consultations. For instance, advisory responsibilities of lecturers to students, interactions between colleagues, student-teacher's relationship are components of contextual performance of business educators in the universities. In order to carry out these tasks successfully, the business educators must possess certain personality traits.

The nature and personality of individual human beings is said to be the root cause of their behaviour. An individual's behaviour and attitude have been identified to show durable disposition across seemingly unrelated domains (Zaidi, Wajidi, Zaidi, Zaidi & Zaidi 2012). Kashyap (2016) asserted that individual personality is essential because the employees' individual personalities refer to their dynamic mental structures coupled with coordinated processes of the mind with a view to determining their emotional and behavioural adjustments to the organization. This implies that every organisation is made up of personalities of diverse nature and forms.

Personality is the totality of how an individual reacts and relates with others. This implies that individuality and consistency of actions and reactions can define a person's personality. Personality is the totality of individual psychic qualities, which include temperament, one's mode of reaction and character. Personality traits therefore reveal people's distinctive patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours which can be both inherent and acquired to distinguish one person from another. A personality trait is a biological, psychological and social mixture that disposes a person toward specific kinds of action under specific circumstances (Kashyap, 2016).

Arif, Rashid, Tahira and Akhter (2012), affirmed that the process of learning in the classroom is accomplished and accelerated by positive effect and relaxed atmosphere. Fear of teachers can inhibit learning. By default, healthy behavioural patterns of lecturers in the universities serve as a strong factor to strengthen students' academic, moral and social experiences both on and off campus. The key to positive and active better performance in teaching business education is to possess those personality traits such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion that most suit the profession.

The most widely accepted structure of personality, among scientists and researchers, is the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality (Goldberg, 1993). The five main dimensions of personality, included in the FFM, are evidently, referred to as conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion. However, the personality traits focused or examined in this study are conscientiousness and agreeableness.

Conscientiousness is characterised by being dependable, hard-working, organized, self-disciplined, persistent and responsible. Conscientiousness is associated with task performance and creativity, while Agreeableness is characterised by being co-operative, warm, caring, good-natured, courteous and trusting. Agreeable persons to a large extent may have fruitful relationships with others and pay attention to the quality of their relationship with others through prioritizing trust and cooperation.

In order to improve their job performance, employees are expected to possess appropriate personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion which may lead to achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Whether the personality traits of business educators are actually influencing their job performance towards the goal achievement of business education programme is what this study sought to examine. The variables can however, be generalized across all occupations and work tasks.

Statement of the Problem

Business educators are important players in the educational sector because they influence educational outcomes of business education students in universities and other higher institutions offering business education programme leading to achievement of the goals and objectives of business education. The goal of business education may only be achieved if business educators exhibit appropriate personality traits. Teachers (also used as business educators in this study) are emotionally contagious; (that is, emotions they display in the classroom could influence students' behaviour). Students too, may become apprehensive and worried, when observing an anxious and nervous teacher. Thus, students' perceptions of teachers' emotions may affect their academic ability either positively or negatively. Personality traits of business educators can determine students' interest in the programme and the extent to which they learn.

There have been persistent cry about the falling standard of education but this falling standard is most times blamed solely on the students. There is no doubt, however, that teachers also play a significant part in this connection. Business education students are known to have some phobia for skill subjects which may lead to their poor academic achievements in these subjects. Since the poor academic achievement of students is sometimes linked to poor job performance by teachers, it is necessary for this study to ascertain if this poor performance can be linked to the personality traits of business education lecturers in the universities.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate personality traits as correlate of perceived job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically the study determined:

1. The level of job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

2. The correlation between conscientiousness personality traits and job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.
3. The correlation between agreeableness personality traits and job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the level of job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. What is the correlation between conscientiousness personality traits and job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
3. What is the correlation between agreeableness personality traits and job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Conscientiousness personality trait of business educators does not significantly correlate their job performance.
2. Agreeableness personality trait of business educators does not significantly correlate their job performance.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Eysenck's Theory of Personality (Eysenck 1967, 1991) to explain how employees can enhance their job performance using their personality traits. Eysenck defined personality as the sum total of the actual or potential behaviour patterns of an organism, as determined by heredity and environment. Eysenck (1967, 1991) identified three dimensions of personality. These are: **introversion/extraversion**, **neuroticism/emotional stability** and **psychoticism**. Eysenck's Theory of Personality is very relevant to this study because, if fully mastered, it will help business educators to increase their job performance. Since personality trait plays an essential role in understanding and explaining innovation actions of the individuals, understanding the three dimensions of personality postulated by Eysenck, will help business educators to properly comprehend the category their personality traits belong and enhance it for increased job performance.

Concept of Job Performance

Job performance is defined as an aggregate of employee behaviours that have some expected value to organizations (positive or negative). Pradhan and Jena, (2017) and Liu and Batt, (2010) pointed out that job performance refers to how resourcefully individuals take actions and contribute with behaviours that are in line with an organization's objectives. Salgado and Tauriz, (2014) viewed job performance as the overall effectiveness and efficiency of getting things done. To Giao, Vuong, Huan, Tushar and Quan (2022), job performance represents the ability of an employee to do his/her work and achieve his/her goal within the structure of a job in a certain period of time.

Employee's job performance is very crucial in all organizations since it will affect the production and reputation of an organization (Ghania, Yunus & Bahry, 2016). Ramlall cited in Darkwah (2014), also established that a good employee performance is necessary for the organisation, since an organisation's success is dependent upon the employee's creativity, innovation and commitment. Bhatti, Battour, Ismail and Sundram (2014), described job performance as a multi dimensional construct, comprising task dimension and contextual dimension. Goodman and Svyantek (1999), also concurred that job performance consists of a task or in-role behaviour, and contextual or extra-role behaviour. Corroborating the above fact, Jiang, Wang and Zhou (2009) also maintained that Conscientiousness is associated with Task and Contextual Performance.

Task Performance: Motowidlo and Borman as cited in Aniyé-Ranor (2024), refer to task performance as those essential outcomes and behaviours that directly serve the goals of the organization. Task or in-role performance emphasizes the instrumentality of performance for organizational goals (Kalia & Bhardwaj, 2019). The authors added that task performance is also the proficiency (i.e competency with which one performs central job tasks). It contributes directly or indirectly to individual and organizational performance (Behrman & Perreault, (2017)). **Contextual Performance:** Contextual or extra-role performance is defined as discretionary behaviours on the part of an employee that are believed to directly promote the effective functioning of an organization without necessarily directly influencing an employee's productivity (Borman & Motowidlo, (2018)).

Conscientiousness Personality Trait and Job Performance

Conscientiousness is a competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving and self-discipline, the employee recognizes the importance of reaching a goal and expends energetic, long-suffering and untiring efforts to obtain satisfaction from performing the duty effectively (Frenzel, Becker-kurz, Pekrun, Goetz & Ludtke, 2018). This trait measures a person's reliability and dependability. Someone who scores higher in this area is more goal-oriented, tends to control impulses and is usually very organized. They are likely to see success in school and excel as a leader. Those who score lower in this area are more likely to be impulsive and procrastinate on assignments (Florida Tech, 2020). It is from this angle that Nichoff (2016), sees conscientiousness personality trait as the most predictive of employee job performance.

Abbas and Raja (2019), in their views equally maintained that employees high in conscientiousness would find meaning in pursuing their tasks. They further pointed out that such employees are task-oriented and problem-focused, have high achievement

motivation, and are highly concerned about the accomplishment of their targets. This could be the reason Judge, Bono, Ilies and Gerhardt, (2020), opined that men with a high degree of conscientiousness seem to earn higher wages and are more likely to be promoted than other men.

Conscientiousness is the personality dimension that correlates the strongest out of all personality dimensions, with overall job performance, across occupations (Salgado and Tauriz, (2014);, Wihler, Meurs, Momm, John and Blickle, (2017). While Shazia, Naveed and Yilmaz (2016), in their opinion similarly stated that a high conscientious individual would have greater achievement in academic and professional life than individual that score low on conscientiousness. An individual who score low in Conscientiousness is characterized as careless, sloppy and inconsistent in his/her approach (Wihler, Meurs, Momm, John and Blickle (2017).

Agreeableness Personality Trait and Job Performance

Agreeableness is a tendency to be altruistic, cooperative, compliant, caring and warm (Ghania, Yunus, & Bahry, 2016). Agreeableness shows how well someone can get along with other people. It consists of traits such as polite, warmth, caring, likeability, flexible, naive, helpful, supportive, merciful, kind and open-minded while tending to be generous, calm, trusting, truthful, and sincere (Northouse, 2016). People scoring high in this trait are usually well-liked, sympathetic and affectionate, and those who score lower are perceived as blunt, rude and sarcastic (Florida Tech, 2020). Persons with high agreeableness have value affiliation and avoid conflict at workplace (Ghania, et. al., 2016). In addition, persons with high agreeableness, especially leaders in organisations are more concerned about their job at workplace and are likely to be concerned about employee's growth and development needs and are likely to be sure that employee's job performance increase ((Northouse, 2016).

Organ, and Ryan, (2016), found that employees with higher agreeableness are satisfied in the context of their work relationship. However, the result of the study of Golparuar, & Javadian, (2018), revealed that individuals who score low on agreeableness may demonstrate the type of involvement in their work that is detrimental to work performance. For instance, they may be primarily involved in informal network building as a means to advance their careers at the expense of engaging in productive activities (Bozgeyikli, 2017). Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt, (2020), also added that "extremely agreeable individuals may sacrifice their success in pleasing others". This is in line with the findings of Bartram's research cited in Baptiste (2018), which revealed that persons with high levels of agreeableness strived for unity among their group and assumed positively of persons in the work setting. According to Golparuar, and Javadian (2018), low agreeableness includes antagonism and selfishness; thus, those with low agreeableness trait may perform their duties in order to satisfy antagonistic and egotistical needs by means of advancing their careers.

On the contrary, Huang, Cropanzano, Shao and Zhang, (2017), in their study found that agreeableness personality trait did not influence job performance. Witt, Burke, Barrick and Mount, (2020), and Salgado and Tauriz, (2014), found that agreeableness is not a

strong predictor of job performance. Their findings are in contrast with the findings of Lorincova and Tomkova, (2020), who found that customer service personnel have high agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Methodology

Correlational research design was adopted for the study. Correlational research design measures two or more variables and assesses the relationship between them. This design is considered appropriate for this study because it determines the relationship between personality traits and the perceived job performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

The population for the study comprised one hundred and thirty (130) business educators in public universities across the South-South region of Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study due to its manageable size. A structured and validated questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection from the respondents. To determine the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire, the instrument was administered to 20 business educators of the Department of Business Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, which is outside the area of study but in South-West Nigeria. Thereafter, the Cronbach alpha statistics was used to determine its level of consistency which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.62 for job performance scale and 0.69 for personality traits items implying that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was rated on a four-point scale ranging from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Data collected from the respondents were analysed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule: The decision rule for the research questions was based on mean value of 2.50 such that any mean value equal or greater than 2.50 was regarded as high while any mean value less than 2.50 was regarded as low. More so, r-value was used such that calculated r-value between 0.00 to 0.30 was regarded as low/weak correlation, 0.31 to 0.60 was regarded as a moderate/average correlation and 0.61 to 1.00 was regarded as high correlation. On the basis of the hypotheses, the probability value (p-value) was used, such that if p-value was equal to or less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected but if the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was retained.

Findings

Research Question One: What is the level of job performance of business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation showing the level of business educators' job Performance

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Achieve the objectives of the job	130	2.88	1.013	Agree

2	Demonstrate expertise in all job-related tasks	130	3.10	.832	Agree
3	Fulfill all the requirements of the job	130	2.80	1.121	Agree
4	Could manage more responsibility than typically assigned to me	130	3.01	.222	Agree
5	Feel suitable for a higher level role	130	2.91	.831	Agree
6	Competent in all arrears of the job	130	2.77	.624	Agree
7	Handle tasks with proficiency	130	3.10	.371	Agree
8	Performs well in the overall job by carrying out tasks as expected	130	3.00	.667	Agree
9	Plan and organizes to achieve objectives of the job and meet deadlines	130	3.20	.632	Agree
10	Help other employees with their work whenever they are not around	130	3.10	.316	Agree
11	Volunteer to do things not formally required by the job	130	2.25	.516	Disagree
12	Take initiative to orient new employees to the organization even though not part of my job	130	2.69	.917	Agree
13	Help others when their work load increases	130	2.34	.316	Disagree
14	Make innovative suggestions to improve the overall quality of the organization	130	3.30	.483	Agree
15	Willingly attends functions not required by the organisation, but helps in its overall image	130	2.81	.675	Agree
Cluster			2.88	0.27	Agree

Note: SD (Standard Deviation), N (Sample Size)

In response to research question one, the Table shows the level of business educators' job performance. However, items 1 to 10, 12, 14 and 15 show high level of job performance with mean ratings ranging from 2.69 to 3.34 while items 11 and 13 show a low level of 2.25 and 2.34. The aggregate mean indicates a mean of 2.88. With these results, the above mean score shows that the level of business educators' job performance is relatively high.

Null Hypothesis One: Conscientiousness personality traits of business educators do not significantly correlate with their job performance.

Table 2: Pearson's r showing the correlates of conscientiousness personality traits and job performance of Business Educators

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	R	p-value	Decision
Conscientiousness Trait	130	3.41	0.49	-0.83	.001	Significant
Job Performance		3.25	0.98			

$\alpha=0.05$, p-value .001 < α 0.05, significant

Table 2 shows significant correlation between conscientiousness personality traits and business educators' job performance. The Table shows mean scores of 3.41 and 3.25, as well as standard deviations of 0.49 and 0.98 for conscientiousness trait and job performance respectively. The correlation coefficient between conscientiousness trait and job performance is -0.83 which is negative and high. However, testing at an alpha

value of .05, the null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value of 0.001 is less than alpha value of 0.05. Thus, conscientiousness personality traits of business educators significantly correlate their job performance. This implies that when business educators are dependable, self-disciplined, hard-working, organised, responsible and creative in their teaching, this could lead to high productivity. This finding corroborates with that of Powell and Bourdage (2016) who revealed that conscientiousness is significantly related to a generalized job involvement tendency. On the contrary, however, the study of Rusbadrol, Mahmud and Arif (2015), did not find any correlation between personality trait of conscientiousness and job performance. This could be due to the fact that on the low end of conscientiousness, an individual is seen as lazy or careless on the job, while on the high end of conscientiousness, an individual may be seen as over-careful and rigid.

Null Hypothesis Two: Agreeableness personality traits of business educators do not significantly correlate with their job performance.

Table 3: Pearson’s r showing the correlates of agreeableness personality traits and job performance of Business Educators

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r	p-value	Decision
AgreeablenessTrait	130	2.87	0.31	.321	.04	Significant
Job Performance		3.25	0.81			

$\alpha=0.05$, p-value .04 < α 0.05, significant

Table 3 reveals significant correlation of agreeableness personality traits and business educators’ job performance. The Table depicts mean scores of 2.87 and 3.25, as well as standard deviations of 0.31 and 0.81 for agreeableness and business educators’ job performance respectively. The correlation coefficient between agreeableness and business educators’ job performance is 0.321 which is positive and low. However, testing at an alpha value of .05, the null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value of 0.04 is less than alpha value of 0.05. Hence, agreeableness personality traits of business educators significantly correlate their job performance. Business educators that are co-operative, warm, caring, good-natured, courteous and trusting may tend to develop cordial relationship with their students and this may help students to learn fast under a conducive atmosphere while a business educator that is low in agreeableness personality trait may create fear in the minds of the students which may hinder teaching and learning process and outcome. This finding is in agreement with that of Tuteja and Sharma (2017) who found that agreeableness is the second strongest personality trait with positive correlation with job performance. The authors argued that co-operative nature of agreeable individuals affects performance positively. However, Witt, Burke, Barrick and Mount, (2020), and Salgado and Tauriz, (2014), found that agreeableness is not a strong

predictor of job performance. Furthermore, Chu, Lee and Huang (2013), in their study found that agreeableness personality trait does not influence job performance. However, the reasons for the various authors' views could be due to different factors responsible for their studies such as location, population sample among others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits of business educators significantly correlate with their job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The fact that dimensions of personality traits of business educators significantly predict their job performance, business educators should understand their personality traits and use them effectively so as to impact positively on their students.
2. Since conscientiousness and agreeableness personality traits of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria significantly correlate with their job performance, the university authorities and government should look out for individuals with these traits during recruitment process.
3. Agreeableness personality traits of business educators significantly correlate with their job performance in public universities in South–South Nigeria to a high extent. Therefore, university managements should find ways to retain their valuable employee by promoting their personality traits towards improved job performance.

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