

## Personality Traits and Job Satisfaction among Federal Government Staff in Rivers State

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction of federal government staff in Rivers State. Five research questions and five corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all federal government staff in Rivers State totaling 5,432 (Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Port Harcourt, 2019). A sample of 430 federal government staff in Rivers State was selected for the study through simple random sampling technique. Two instruments namely "Personality Traits Inventory" (PTI) by McCrae and Costa and "Job Satisfaction Scale" (JSS) were used for data collection. Content and face validities of the instruments were established. The reliabilities of the instruments were determined by the researcher through Cronbach alpha method. The scores obtained were high enough to justify the use of the instruments for the conduct of the study. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while the  $r$  coefficients were used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Results obtained showed that each of five personality traits had a positive significant relationship with job satisfaction except neuroticism. Based on the findings, four recommendations were made among which is that prospective employees should consider their personality characteristics before accepting any job offered to them.*

**Key words:** Personality traits, job satisfaction, federal government, staff, Rivers State

## INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction, which has been broadly studied and in recent decades, has become an important objective for corporate, as well as researchers and one of the most frequently studied work attitudes (Currivan, 2004). Job satisfaction is a reaction to a job that is originated from the assessment of a job occupant of actual outcomes with the required outcomes, (Furnham, Eracleous and Chamorro-Primuzie, 2009). On the other hand, Dessler (2014) stated that job satisfaction is the degree of needs satisfaction that resulting from and or experienced on the job. However, researchers (Peter & Siegrist, 2013) have made some impressive efforts in explaining job satisfaction and its predictors since it is related with other significant factors of the organizational behaviour which include turnover, absenteeism, performance, productivity, workplace and organizational citizenship behaviour, also, its prediction of employee behaviour and subjective wellbeing.

In an organization, job satisfaction appears to be what employees desire to have in their workplace, and that explains whether employees intend to leave or stay which always becomes the big question for any company. Job satisfaction has an impact on the overall well-being of any organization, therefore it is considered as a significant topic of organizational research that needs an ongoing basis for study since it is an important requirement for organizations that help to gain excellence in their operations. Job satisfaction in the workplace has received considerable attention due to its association with many employee attitudes and behaviours. It includes the feelings and attributes that consist of people towards their work. In the views of Cockcraft (2010), job satisfaction is related to absenteeism and turnover intention. In like manner, Bolin (2012) stated that job satisfaction is associated with motivation and performance.

In contrast, Darboe (2013) explained that job satisfaction correlates with organizational citizenship and commitment. The positive and meaningful attitudes towards one's job will mean satisfaction at work, while negative attitudes will indicate

dissatisfaction at work. Satisfaction at work will give employees the motivation to accomplish the work tasks properly and more accurately. Employees who are satisfied with their job seem to be more creative and innovative, which leads to better performance for organizations and increases profit.

However, the present researcher is of the view that an employee's personality trait may play a very vital role in predicting one's job satisfaction. The word personality is derived from the Latin word "Persona" which is affiliated to the Greek theatre in ancient times. "Persona" refers to a mask worn by Greek actors on their faces while appearing on the stage (Uzoeshi, 2005). Liebert and Spiegler in Uzoeshi (2005) stated that the ancient Roman actors wore one of several masks or persona that told the audience to expect a consistent pattern of attitude and behaviour from the player who wore it.

Chauhan (2006) stated that personality is the general characterization or pattern of an individual's total behaviour. In his own view, McCann (2012) defined personality as the totality of the outward or external characteristics of individuals. He further explained that the 'real person' is hidden behind the mask-role playing before an audience who now places value on the performance of the actor. In his own opinion, Nemechek and Olson (2009) stated that personality refers to the sum total of the behavioural and mental characteristics that are distinctive of an individual. More so, Nayak (2016) defined personality as a person's broad characteristics, traits, coping style and ways of interacting in the social environment that emerge during childhood and crystallized into established patterns by the end of adolescence or early adulthood. This pattern of traits and behaviours constitutes the individual's personality – the unique pattern of traits and behaviours that characterized the individual.

Personality refers to the characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving. In fact, five dimensions considered as these dimensions have emerged in so many different studies conducted in different ways. They are referred to as the Big Five dimensions of personality (Kumar & Bahhshi, 2010). They are extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.

Extraversion describes the extent to which individuals are assertive, active, enthusiastic, energetic and dominant (Costa & McCrea, 1992). Robbins and Judge (2011) pointed out that extraverts

tend to be socially oriented (outgoing and gregarious), but also are 'surgent' (dominant and ambitious) and active (adventurous and assertive). On the one hand, social orientation can be viewed as an advantage of employees in most job environments. On the other, dominance and ambition can be seen as ambiguous. In relation to job satisfaction, there appears to be a very strong correlation between extraversion and job satisfaction.

For example, in a study of farmers by Brayfield and Marsh (2007) and a small but diverse sample study by Furnham and Zacherl (2011), extraversion is found to be strongly correlated with job satisfaction. In the meta-analysis of 163 independent samples and 334 correlations by Robbins and Judge (2011), there is a strong connection between extraversion and job satisfaction. In another meta-analysis, Ilies and Judge (2003) also found significant association between extraversion and job satisfaction. However, in a recent study of 202 full-time employees, Furnham (2009) found that extraversion does not strongly correlate or provide evidence of an association with job satisfaction. It can be seen that although the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction is inconsistent, the coefficient values tend to be significant.

Openness to experience is characterized by 'intellectance' (philosophical and intellectual) and unconventionality (imaginative, autonomous and non-conforming. In many contexts, openness to experience can be seen as a positive quality of an employee; openness to experience is also seen as an important factor for active older adults' life satisfaction (Gregory, 2010). However, openness to experience sometimes can be seen as a 'double-edged sword' in careers for those who have a high level of openness, as open people tend to be prone to job switching or unhappy in conventional occupations. Both meta-analysis and primary analysis show that openness to experience has no significant impact on job satisfaction (Ilies & Judge, 2003).

Agreeableness indicates cooperation (trusting of others and caring) and likeableness (good-natured, cheerful and gentle). Agreeableness involves pleasant and satisfying relationships with others. Furnham and Cheng (2015) have recently identified early indicators of the adult trait of agreeableness; these include parental social status, childhood intelligence, education, occupation and gender. Particularly, females appear to score higher in the trait of agreeableness than males do.

The current literature shows an unclear relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction. For example, agreeableness is found to be positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction in a meta-analytic path analysis, in a tight and collective Asian society and in the public sector. At the same time, it is insignificant in other studies (Ilies & Judge, 2003). Thus the results are not consistent, which invites further investigation with large-scale studies.

Conscientiousness refers to people's level of organization, hard work and motivation in the pursuit of established goals. Furnham and Cheng (2015) showed that parental social status, childhood intelligence, education and occupation are all modestly but significantly associated with conscientiousness. Particularly, they also indicated that females tend to score higher in conscientiousness than males do. Conscientiousness is the most consistent personality predictor of success at work across all types of employment and occupation. This may well explain why conscientiousness is positively related to job satisfaction (Furnham, 2009).

Neuroticism generally refers to a lack of positive psychological adjustment and emotional stability. Neurotic individuals might experience too much or too little external stimulation. People with a high level of neuroticism are likely to experience negative emotions, including anxiety, depression, hostility and vulnerability because they tend to put themselves into situations that foster negative impact. Noticeably implicit self-concept of neuroticism tends to have a stronger association in women than in men (Donges, 2015).

In relation to job satisfaction, neuroticism is found to be negatively associated with job satisfaction (Ilies & Judge, 2003). In Judge (2002) meta-analysis, neuroticism is most strongly correlated with job satisfaction, but in a negative manner. Ilies and Judge (2003) in another meta-analysis found that emotional stability – the reverse of neuroticism – is also strongly associated with job satisfaction. In contrast, Furnham (2009), in a study of 202 full-time workers in the United Kingdom, found that the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction is positive but insignificant. Thus the results of an examination of the impact of neuroticism on job satisfaction are controversial and further investigation into this relationship is necessary.

From the foregoing therefore, it is very clear that most past studies reviewed were conducted in foreign countries by foreign authors. The present study on the relationship between personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State was conducted to fill the existing gap.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The extent of relationship that exists between personality traits and job satisfaction of employees especially in Rivers State has remained very unclear. Hence, the problem of this study was to establish the relationship between personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Specifically, this study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
2. Determine the relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
3. Find out the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
4. Investigate the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
5. Ascertain the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the conduct of this study:

1. What is the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

2. What is the relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?
4. What is the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?
5. What is the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the conduct of this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.
5. There is no significant relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Correlational research design was adopted for the study to establish the relationship between personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism) and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. The population of the study consisted of all federal government staff in Rivers State totaling 5,432 (Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Port Harcourt, 2019). A sample of 430 federal government staff in Rivers State was selected for the study through simple random sampling technique.

Two instruments namely “Personality Traits Inventory” (PTI) by McCrae and Costa and “Job Satisfaction Scale” (JSS) were used for data collection. PTI was made up of 50 items. Each of the five personality traits was measured by 10 items. JSS consisted of 10 items. The items were responded to on a four point Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Content and face validities of the instruments were established. The reliabilities of the instruments were determined by the researcher through Cronbach alpha method. The scores obtained were high enough to justify the use of the instruments for the conduct of the study. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the research questions while the r coefficients were used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Research question 1:** What is the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

**Ho 1:** There is no significant relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Pearson correlation on the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State**

Variables	N	df	r-Value	p-val	Remark
Extraversion (X)	430	428	.71	.000	Sig.
Job satisfaction (Y)					

Table 1 shows r-value of .71 which means that there is a positive relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis one is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

**Research question 2:** What is the relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?



**Ho 2:** There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation on the relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Df	r-Value	p-val	Remark
Openness to experience (X)	430	428	.58	.003	Sig.
Job satisfaction (Y)					

Table 2 shows r-value of .56 which means that there is a positive relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis two is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

**Research question 3:** What is the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

**Ho 3:** There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Pearson correlation on the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Df	r-Value	p-val	Remark
Agreeableness (X)	430	428	.62	.000	Sig.
Job satisfaction (Y)					

Table 3 shows r-value of .62 which means that there is a positive relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis three is rejected implying that

there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

**Research question 4:** What is the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

**Ho 4:** There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Pearson correlation on the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Df	r-Value	p-val	Remark
Conscientiousness (X)	430	428	.51	.001	Sig.
Job satisfaction (Y)					

Table 4 shows r-value of .51 which means that there is a positive relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis four is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

**Research question 5:** What is the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State?

**Ho 5:** There is no significant relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State.

**Table 5: Pearson correlation on the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Df	r-Value	p-val	Remark
Neuroticism (X)	430	428	-.18	.234	Not Sig.
Job satisfaction (Y)					

Table 5 shows r-value of -.18 which means that there is a negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that

$p > 0.05$  hence, hypothesis five is accepted implying that there is no significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff**

Analysis of data on research question one revealed that there is a positive relationship extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis one is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This present finding supports Park and Kim (2012) whose study revealed positive relationship between internalized locus of control and academic achievement.

### **Relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff**

Analysis of data on research question two revealed that there is a positive relationship openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis two is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This present finding supports Park and Kim (2012) whose study revealed positive relationship between internalized locus of control and academic achievement.

### **Relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff**

Analysis of data on research question three revealed that there is a positive relationship agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis three is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This present finding supports Park and Kim (2012) whose study revealed positive relationship between internalized locus of control and academic achievement.

### **Relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff**

Analysis of data on research question four revealed that there is a positive relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p < 0.05$  hence, hypothesis four is rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This present finding supports Park and Kim (2012) whose study revealed positive relationship between internalized locus of control and academic achievement.

### **Relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff**

Analysis of data on research question five revealed that there is a negative relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State. Further analysis of data shows that  $p > 0.05$  hence, hypothesis five is accepted implying that there is no significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This present finding supports Park and Kim (2012) whose study revealed positive relationship between internalized locus of control and academic achievement.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the major findings of the study it was concluded that the; relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction among federal government staff in Rivers State ( $r = .71$ ) is high; relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction among federal government staff ( $r = .58$ ) is moderate; relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction among federal government staff ( $r = .62$ ) is moderate; relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction among federal government staff ( $r = .51$ ) is moderate; while relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction among federal government staff ( $r = -.18$ ) is very low.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Federal government should ensure that her employees are adequately motivated for greater productivity.
2. Employers of labour in Nigeria should organize periodic workshops and seminars for their employees to enhance their performance on the job.
3. Training in personality traits of workers by their employers should be given adequate attention.
4. Prospective employees should consider their personality characteristics before accepting any job offered to them.

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