

BIG-FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS AS DETERMINANTS OF ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH IN NIGERIA: FACTOR AND PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS

Egberi, Agbarha Kelvin¹

Egberi, Onyeyime Edith²

Abstract

In this study investigated big-five personality traits as determinants of organisational growth. Big-five personality traits employed consists of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. The cross-sectional survey design was adopted and questionnaire administered to employees of services firms. Data obtained in the field survey were analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation, and correlation) and inferential (factor and principal component analysis) statistical techniques and the statistical analysis was done via STATA 13.0. Findings of the study indicated that the big-five personality traits explained 82.16% of the total variance in organisational growth. Besides, the result revealed that aggressiveness is the lowest commonality determinants of organisational growth while neuroticism and conscientiousness are the most fundamental determinants of organisational growth. The results imply that when the big-five personality traits are lowered, organisation's growth is more likely to diminish and if otherwise, increase. Given the findings of the study, it is recommended among that management of companies should take into cognizance individual employee's personality during the recruitment and selection phases as well as the appointment of managers.

Keywords: Big-five personality traits, Extraversion-Agreeableness-conscientiousness-neuroticism, Openness to experience, Organisational growth.

JEL Classification: M1, M112, M19

Introduction

In management literature, the big-five personality traits model determined the broad five personality types, which are very expedient in predicting diverse kinds of work-related outcomes like organisational growth and performance. Personality according to Draft (2008) refers to a set of indiscernible traits and practice that lie behind a relatively unwavering pattern of behaviour in response

¹ Department of Business Administration and Management, School of Business Studies, Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro.

² Department of Accountancy, School of Business Studies, Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro. Delta State, Nigeria. kelvinegberi76@gmail.com

to people or ideas in a given environment. The fact that employees originate from varied backgrounds, imply that their attitudes, values and norms will vary. These variations in the minds of Gupta and Gupta (2020) and Sev (2019) resulted in the varied personality traits of employees that determine their actions and behaviours, which in turn affect organisational growth.

Most organisations might have employees with a strong and weak personality trait that can influence the performance of employees and determine the pattern of growth in the organisation (Alkahtani, Abu-Jarad, Sulaiman & Nikbin, 2011). Thus, employee personality traits are reasonable to be expecting that it can stimulate personal attitudes and values, as empirical studies have demonstrated (Gupta & Gupta, 2020; Sev, 2019; Lounsbury, *et al*, 2007).

In the past years, the perceptions of several personality psychologists have converged as regards the structure of personality (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Burch & Anderson, 2004; Bhatti, Battour, Ismail & Sundram, 2014). However, it has been widely acknowledged that all these personality dynamics can be isolated into ‘big-five model’ in the early 1990s. The big-five personality traits dynamics encompassed neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness conscientiousness and openness to experience. Recent studies revealed that personality traits are fundamental determinants of organisational growth, likewise performance (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015; Sev, 2019; Gupta & Gupta, 2020). Organisational growth has been defined as factor relating to increase in organisation’s profit, service delivery among others.

The link between the big-five personality traits and organisational growth are more a corollary of social aspects of the work environment than ability. It thus implies that organisations should boost the positive impressions of employees if they must experience growth in profits, service delivery, customers’ satisfaction etc. (Neubert & Taggar, 2004). There is robust empirical evidences on big-five personality traits and organisational performance and growth in most developed nations (see Gupta & Gupta, 2020; Sev, 2019; Nadiah, Nor-Sara, & Noriza, 2016; Jawwad, Muhammad & Mazhar, 2014), however, there is dearth of empirical evidences on the research subject in developing nations like Nigeria.

More worrisome is the fact that these studies *inter-alia* examined the effects of big-five personality traits on organisational performance and growth using regression statistical technique, why there is absence of studies aimed at assessing the most fundamental big-five personality traits predicting organisational growth. This requires an investigation. The remaining part of this study is sectioned as follows: review of related literature, materials and methods, results, conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

Conceptual Issues

The concept of organisational growth found its meaning in management literature. Increasingly, the focus has drifted to specific issues, which we viewed as metrics of growth. According to Easterby-Smith (1997), organisational growth

comprises actual output or result of an organisation as measured against its intended output (goals/objectives). Organisational growth in the view of Storey (2001) relates to factors such as increased profitability, service delivery or obtaining the best results in important areas of the organisation. In recent times, numerous organisations have attempted to manage their growth using diverse methodologies for assessing growth like financial and non-financial growths.

In management literature, organisational growth embraces both financial (financial growth) and non-financial (growth in customer-base, workforce etc.) growths (Easter by-Smith, 1997). Broadly, organisational growth can be grouped as growth in human resource (turnover), productivity (quality of service and customers' satisfaction, etc.), financial accounting (return on assets, return on equity etc.) and financial markets growth (difference between the market and book value of firm's assets). However, in the context of this study, organisational growth measured from the non-financial growth perspective – growth in employee workforce, customer base, quality of service and customers' satisfaction.

Personality and Big-Five Personality Traits

The term personality has been defined in numerous ways. Simply put, personality refers to 'what an individual leaves in the minds of people'. According to Vedel and Poropat (2017), personality refers to the individual disparities in the manner we think and behave. This implies that personality describes qualities and characteristics that make one individual different from the other. Abdullah, Omar and Panatik (2016) see personality as a collection of intrinsic and extrinsic traits that may influence the behaviour of individuals. In the views of Park-Leduc, Feldman and Bardi (2015), personality traits are usually seen as descriptions of people in terms of relatively stable patterns of behaviour, emotions and thoughts. In literature of personality structure, the big-five personality traits are the most researched and employed taxonomy (Soto, 2018; Priyadarshini 2017; Park-Leduc, Feldman & Bardi, 2015; Moberg, 2001; John & Srivastava, 1999).

The big-five personality traits encompassed extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, conscientiousness and neuroticism (Vedel & Poropat, 2017). *First*, agreeableness reflects variations in compassion, acceptance and respect for people (Major, Turner & Fletcher, 2006). For instance, agreeable employees are linked with trust, altruism, compliant, co-operative and hold positive dogmas about other people. *Second*, openness to experience embodies individual variations in their intellectual curiosity, imagination and aesthetic sensitivity (Erdheim, Wong & Zicker, 2006); these employees are open to ideas that are fresh or novel, inclination for varied sensations and intellectuality (Park-Leduc, Feldman & Bardi, 2015). *Third*, extraversion is individual variation in social engagement, energy and confidence levels and are acknowledged to be sociable, self-confident, ambitious, highly active and positive towards their emotions (Abdullah, Omar & Panatik, 2016).

Fourth, conscientiousness typifies variations in productiveness and accountability. A conscientious employee tends to be reliable, punctual to work, self-discipline, diligent with a robust internal locus of control. *Fifth*, neuroticism denotes individual variations in incidence and intensity of negative emotions. Such employees are prone to experiencing anxiety, grief, insecure and emotional volatility (Soto, 2018). Prior studies (Gupta & Gupta, 2020; Sev, 2019; Nadiah, Nor-Sara, & Noriza, 2016; Maliheh, Syaharizatul, Ologbo & Chiemeké, 2016; Abubakar & Muhammad, 2015; Ayse & Tuna, 2015; Jawwad, Muhammad & Mazhar, 2014; Azizi, *et al*, 2012) have shown that the big-five personality traits have the tendency to influence organisational growth, performance and commitment.

A recent study by Gupta and Gupta (2020) found evidence that the big-five personality traits affect significantly on organisational growth and performance. Similarly, Sev (2019) provide evidence that the big-five personality traits improved organisational efficiency effectiveness, productivity, leads to better work completion and customer satisfaction among others. Moreover, Maliheh *et al.* (2016) found that while big-five personality traits of openness to experience, extroversion and conscientiousness significantly influence organisational growth in the form of individuals' knowledge sharing, agreeableness has an insignificant influence.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the theoretical framework is anchored on the Block Ego Theory (BET) postulated by Block in 2002. The underlying philosophy of BET is that expressions and containment of impulse behaviour are based on multifaceted ego structures, which determines invulnerable adaptation modes and limitations in employee personality (Block & Kremen, 2013). According to BET, an employee or individual can evolve block ego which in turn may metamorphose into an attitude that can make the employee actively involved or committed in work place or not. The attitude of committed employee or employee that is not committed is a reflection of his/her personality traits.

The BET construct shrouds diverse personality attributes like active and meaningful engagement in the workplace, positive and energetic approach to work, work competency, open relationship and good interpersonal skills within the work environment, social poise and personality consistency over time, delay of gratification, understanding and moral judgment as block-ego structure that can be found in an employee (Richman, 2015). Moreover, BET suggests that the block-ego structures, particularly personality consistency, open relationship and good interpersonal skills within the workplace are key determinants that organisation must harness in order to enhance their growth strategies. Given the above assertions and empirical findings, we hypothesized that:

Ho1: The big-five personality traits are not the deep-rooted factors of organisational growth.

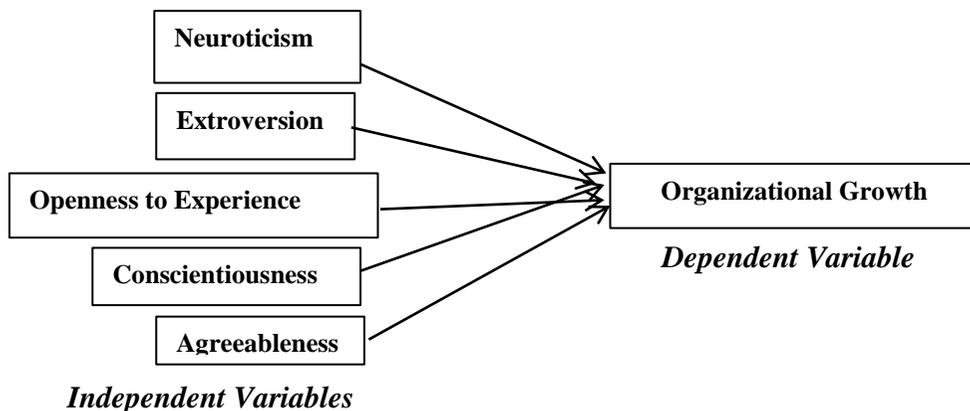


Figure 1: Conceptualized Model of the Study
Source: Conceptualized by the Researcher, 2020

Methodology

In this study the big-five personality traits (BFPT) as determinants of organisational growth was investigated. The cross-sectional survey design was used and questionnaire was the major instrument of data collection, which was administered to obtain the perceptions of respondents on the research subject. In view of this, employees of different services firms in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria in the categories of human resource manager, operations managers and other unit managers were sampled and six hundred (600) respondents formed the sample size of the investigation.

The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree(SA), agree (A), disagree(D), strongly disagree(SD) and undecided(UD). Moreover, in order to ascertain the reliability of research instrument, it was administered to sixty (60) (denoting 10 percent of the sample size) respondents who are executive officers of service firms. In this regards, a Cronbach Alpha of $r=0.84$, $p<0.05$ was obtained; according to Crobach (2004), an alpha coefficient exceeding 0.70 cut-off shows that a research instrument has good reliability. This scenario is depicted in our reliability result; an indication that the research instrument is a good measure for examining predictive ability of big-five personality traits on organisational growth.

. The factors (i.e. determinants of organisational growth) comprised of the big-five personality traits, which include extraversion (EXT), agreeableness (AGR), conscientiousness (CON), neuroticism (NEU), and openness to experience (OTE). Noteworthy is the fact that prior studies such as Gupta & Gupta (2020); Sev (2019); Nadiah, *et al.* (2016); Maliheh, *et al.* (2016); Abubakar and Muhammad (2015); and Jawwad, *et al.* (2014) used these big-five personality traits in their investigation. Thus, our study builds on these big-five personality traits in its investigation. Moreover, in order to assess whether the big-five personality traits are the determinants of organisational growth, the descriptive

(frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation and correlation) and inferential (factor and principal component analysis) statistical techniques were employed and the statistical analysis was carried out via STATA 13.0.

Results

Table 1: Bio-Data of the Respondents

Ranks	Variables	Respondents	Frequency N=600	Percent (%)
1	Gender	Male	368	61.3%
		Female	232	38.7%
		Total	600	100%
2	Age	21-25years	56	9.3%
		26-30years	194	32.3%
		31-35years	216	36.0%
		36years and above	134	22.4%
		Total	600	100%
3	Marital Status	Single	162	27.0%
		Married	378	63.0%
		Others	60	10.0%
		Total	600	100%
4	Category of Respondents	Human resources Mgr.	234	39.0%
		Operations Mgr.	178	29.7%
		Other Units Mgr.	188	31.3%
		Total	600	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The result as presented in Table 1 shows that 368(61.3%) of the respondents are male while 232(38.7%) are female. 56(9.3%) of the respondents were within the age range of 21-25years, 194(32.3%) 26-30years, 216(36.0%) 31-35years while 134(22.4%) 36years and above. Also, it was revealed that 162(27.0%) and 378(63.0%) of the respondents are single and married respectively while 60(10.0%) represents other marital status. In addition, it was found that 234(39.0%) and 178(29.7%) of the respondents are human resources manager and operations manager respectively while 188(31.3%) are other unit managers.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Big-5 Personality Traits as Determinants of Organizational Growth

Factors	Obs.	Mean	Standard Dev.
EXT	600	3.4120	0.4389
AGR	600	3.5164	0.4503
CON	600	3.3171	0.3943
NEU	600	3.2573	0.5729
OTE	600	3.3069	0.6203

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Presented in Table 2 is the descriptive statistic of big-5 personality trait extraversion (EXT), agreeableness (AGR), conscientiousness (CON), neuroticism (NEU), and openness to experience (OTE) as determinants of organisational growth. All the big-5 personality traits beat the mean benchmark

of 2.50, with AGR being the highest value. The mean respondent answered with a scale value of above 2.50, indicating that respondents perceive the big-5 personality factors as the determinants of organisational growth.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Factors	EXT	AGR	CON	NEU	OTE
<i>EXT</i>	1.0000				
<i>AGR</i>	0.1254	1.0000			
<i>CON</i>	0.1129	0.1254	1.0000		
<i>NEU</i>	0.0062	0.1070	0.1172	1.0000	
<i>OTE</i>	0.1732	0.0507	0.0555	0.3651	1.0000

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Presented in Table 3 are correlation coefficients of big-5 personality traits impelling organisational growth. The correlation matrix indicated that all the factors (*AGR, EXT, CON, NEU & OTE*) are carrying the right signs (positive). This finding is consistent with Sev (2019); Hogan and Holland (2003) which suggest that extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness are vital, as they are contingent predictors facilitating organisational growth. This is an indication that the predictors of organisational growth follow a-priori expectation. Besides, none of the correlation coefficients of the factors of organisational growth exceeded 0.8, thus implies that there is the absence of multi-collinearity among pairs of the determinants of organisational growth.

Table 4: Eigenvalue of the Factors

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Eigenvalue	0.6689	0.6481	0.5637	-0.2328	-0.3200

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The eigenvalues of the factors show the strongly related fundamentals for assessing the dynamics for predicting organisational growth. In this study, there were five (5) variables found with their eigenvalues (Table 4). The first 3-factors (factor-1, factor-2 and factor-3) were found using eigenvalue greater than one rule. These 3-factors with factor loading of 0.5 and above are selected based on the suggestions of Hair and Black (2006), that factor loading above 0.5 are significant to assess the minimum loading required constituting an item.

Table 5: Factor Loading Estimates

S/N	Factors	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	Does questions <i>EXT2a-2d</i> load on <i>EXT</i>	0.1125	0.3702
2	Does questions <i>AGR 3a-3d</i> load on <i>AGR</i>	0.1551	0.2126
3	Does questions <i>CON4a-4d</i> load on <i>CON</i>	0.2857	-0.3513
4	Does questions <i>NEU5a-5d</i> load on <i>NEU</i>	0.6073	-0.1060
5	Does questions <i>OTE6a-6d</i> load on <i>OTE</i>	0.4953	0.1820

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Presented in Table 5 are the factors loading estimates. It was found that five (5) variables are strongly related with some explicit factors and this remarkably denote the extent to which those variables load on the factors. This result is similar to findings of prior studies (Gupta & Gupta, 2020; Sev 2019;

Abubakar & Muhammad, 2015), which found relatedness between the big-five personality traits and organisational growth and performance.

Table 6: Measuring Commonality

S/N	Factors	Uniqueness	Commonality $\Sigma(\text{loading})^2$ or $1(-\text{uniqueness})\%$
1	EXT	0.5867	41.33%
2	AGR	0.6550	34.50%
3	CON	0.5396	56.04%
4	NEU	0.3908	60.92%
5	OTE	0.4772	52.28%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 portrays how much a single variable has in common with all factors and the percentage of a variable’s change explained by the factor. *First*, a relatively high commonality value indicates that a variable has much in common with other variables taken together. On the other hand, a relatively low commonality implies that the variable does not support an established link with the other variables. The result shows that *NEU* (60.92%), *CON* (56.04%), *OTE* (52.28%) and *EXT* (41.33%) are the highest commonality variables while *AGR*(34.50%) is the lowest commonality variable. This indicates that big-5 personality traits dynamics of *NEU*, *CON*, *OTE* and *EXT* have much in common with organisational growth taken together.

Table 7: Explained Variance

S/N	Factors	Proportion	Explained Variance
1	Factor 1	0.4477	
2	Factor 2	0.6039	0.8216
3	Factor 3	-0.0100	or
4	Factor 4	-0.0234	82.16%
5	Factor 5	-0.1966	

LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(10)=79.64$ Prob.> $\chi^2=0.0000$

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From table 7, it can be seen that factors-1-5 have been explained by 82.16% of the total variance. The above result suggests that the big-five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) are determinants of organisational growth; hence, they influence the manner in which organisation experience growth. The findings are consistent in part with prior studies of *Sev* (2019); *Abdullah, Rashid and Omar* (2013); *Moon, Kim and Armstrong* (2014); *Hogan and Holland* (2003) that the big-five personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and openness to experience greatly influence organisational growth and performance.

Our results are similar with prior studies in view of the fact that big-five personality traits, according to *Gupta and Gupta* (2020), determine the actions/behaviours of employees, which in turn affect organisational growth. The high commonality of the loading factors between neuroticism and conscientiousness portend the reasons for the variation in the growth pattern of

organisation. Besides, there are employees with strong and weak personality traits, which according to Alkahtani, *et al.* (2011); Lounsbury, *et al.* (2007) possibly determines the pattern of organisational growth. Consequently, there is evidence that the big-five personality traits of employees are reasonable to stimulate personal attitudes and values, which in turn affects organisational growth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, big-five personality traits as determinants of organisational growth were investigated. The big-five personality traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Thus, we hypothesized that these dynamics are the deep-seated factors of organisational growth. *First*, the eigenvalues of the factors showed that the big-five personality traits are strongly related fundamentals for predicting organisational growth. *Second*, the big-five personality traits influence the manner in which organisation experience growth. *Third*, the big-five personality traits have explained 82.16% of the total variance in organisational growth, hence an indication that they predict organisational growth. Impliedly, big-5 personality traits have much in common with organisational growth taken together.

More importantly, our study contributes to knowledge by establishing that aside the fact that the big-five personality traits of employees determine organisational growth, certain big-five personality traits, which encompassed neuroticism and conscientiousness are the deep-seated determinants with aggressiveness as least determining factor of organisational growth. Therefore, the most fundamental issues facing most organisations in harnessing growth remain matter relating to personality of employees (in particular, neuroticism and conscientiousness). Besides, when big-five personality dynamics are lowered, organisation's growth is more likely to diminish and if otherwise, increase. The findings have diverse implications for both management and researchers.

Given the findings of the study, it is recommended that management of companies should take into cognisance individual employee's personality during the recruitment and selection phases as well as the appointment of managers. More so, training programme aimed at shaping the personality of the individual employees should be done on a regularly basis. This will expose employees and managers on the best personality traits to exhibit in the work place in order to promote organisational growth.

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