

## AGREEABLENESS, OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION AS CORRELATE OF WORK ATTITUDE OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study investigated agreeableness, openness to experience, motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using the correlational research design, the study was guided by three research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses. The population of the study is 5,041 civil servants in Rivers State. A sample of 372 civil servants was drawn using stratified proportionate sampling technique. For data collection two instruments were adapted for the study the instruments are: Agreeableness, Openness to experience and Motivation Inventory (AOMI) and Workers Attitude Scale (WAS). The two instruments are non-cognitive assessment tools. The validity of the instrument was done by two test experts. Reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha. The following reliability coefficients were obtained: agreeableness = 0.64, openness to experience = 0.71 and motivation = 0.67. In the case of the work attitude instrument, the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85 . The three hypotheses were tested using p-value of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of the study showed that personality traits of agreeableness, openness to experience and motivation had a significant relationship with work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. Based on the findings it was recommended that ministry of labour and employment should take into consideration the need to motivate civil servants in order to improve their work attitude.*

**Keyword:** Agreeableness, openness to experience, motivation and work attitude.

### Introduction

The main objective of public organizations is to deliver services to people effectively and efficiently (Othman et al., 2017). Public happiness on service quality, living affordability (high income, low cost of living and house ownership), public integrity (accountability, stewardship and transparency) and economic growth are usually used to measure service effectiveness and efficiency of public organizations (Othman et al., 2017). These are the outcomes that public expect from the government spending. However, becoming effective and efficient in fulfilling public needs at lower cost (populace government) is not an easy task. This is because populace policy leads to higher fiscal deficit (Lehar et al., 2014). Higher fiscal deficit creates negative image amongst investors and credit rating agencies, which ultimately could lower the investment and economic growth. The civil service is the main instrument through which the government carries

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out its business. The civil servants are exposed to render loyal service and professional advice to tenure (Mumuja, 2012). The role of the civil service has been influenced by the social economic and political dynamics in Nigeria. Before independence the civil service is concerned with the maintenance of law and order and fostering social and economic development, but after independence, the Nigeria civil service was faced with the issues of adjustment and consolidation. Also during this period was the change that was going on in the regional administration so their attitude to work matters a lot. Over the years, management techniques are lacking and this led to the lack of interest and poor performance of civil servant with particular reference to that of Rivers State Civil Servants. Many other scholars like Robert Owen, Adams Smith, Kad Marx and Fredrik Engel came up with a lot of ideas during the period of industrial revolution of workers on the way of improving workers attitude. The civil service is the main instrument through which the government carries out its business. The civil servants are exposed to render loyal service and professional advice to tenure. The role of the civil service has been influenced by the social economic and political dynamics in Nigeria. Before independence the civil service is concerned with the maintenance of law and order and fostering social and economic development, but after independence, the Nigeria civil service was faced with the issues of adjustment and consolidation. Also during this period was the change that was going on in the regional administration.

One's personality is the product of both heredity and environment, and includes habits, disposition, tendencies, attitudes among other things of & individual (Unachukwu & Ebenebe, 2014). Ogwudire (2019) defines personality as the unique characteristics of an individual or the totality of an individual's way of life. This definition is observing the total difference in an individual that distinguishes him or her from others. Agbo & Iwundu (2015) sees personality as the total sum of characteristics or qualities or traits that make up the individual. The authors further, explain that every individual has attributes & qualities for which he is being recognized. Personality depends on the impression the society has generally about a person or the individual (Agbo & Iwundu, 2015). This definition is suggesting that personality is the quality and attribute that make up a person. Personality is the quality and attributes that make up a person. This means that there are specific things or criterion that separate one from another. Moreso, Endwell (2009) observed that personality is the value of wholeness, adjustment & distinctiveness of human difference. This simply implies that personality is the dynamic organization within the individual whose psychophysical system that determine his unique adjustment to his environment. To this end, Ikediasha (2014), agreed to this assertion as he further put that personality is the sum total of a biological innate disposition, impulses, tendencies, appetites and instincts of the individual, and the acquired disposition and tendencies acquired experience.

Work altitude according to Albrarracin et al., (2009) is the interest shown or the commitment displayed by a worker in his job performance towards the realization of his organisation's goals. These values are reward system, training and development, motivation, leadership style. These values which are listed above, can affect the Work Attitude of worker (civil servants) either positively or negatively. Attitudes are the feelings and beliefs that largely determine how employees will perceive their environment, commit themselves to intended actions, and ultimately behave. Attitudes form a mental set that affects how we view something else. It has an impact on how we view and judge our surroundings at work. Managers of organizational behaviour are vitally interested in the nature of the attitudes of their employees toward their Jobs, toward their

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careers, and toward the organization itself. Job attitudes of the employees are most important to achieve the individual and organizational objectives through their performance.

Meanwhile, Onyemerekeya (2018) noted that personality is the characteristic pattern of thought, emotion and behaviour that define an individual's personal style and influence his or her interactions with the environment. This definition further expresses that personality is a construct consisting of conditions of heredity, early environmental experiences and psychological maturation. To this end, personality is perceived as the total quality and trait that make up an individual which consist of his environment, genetic and personal being.

Studies indicated that the agreeableness, openness to experience traits and motivation are not almost as influential in forecasting and describing actual behaviour as are the more several facets or primary traits (Paunonen & Ashton, 2011). Each of the trait's qualities has two separates, but interrelated, facets revealing a stage agreeableness, openness to experience and motivation below the broad domains but above the many part scales that are also part of the agreeableness, openness to experience and motivation traits (DeYoung et al., 2007).

Agreeableness trait replicates individual differences in common concern for social harmony. Individuals that are agreeable, value getting along with other people. They are usually considerate, generous, kind, helpful, trusting and trustworthy, and willing to compromise their interests with people (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). Agreeableness also absolutely predicts transformational leadership skills. Openness to experience describes a dimension of cognitive style that distinguishes imaginative, creative people from down-to-earth, conventional people. Open people are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be, compared to closed people, more aware of their feelings. Individuals with openness to diverse experiences are usually very lively, have an incredible penchant towards originality and aesthetics and listen to their hearts. That is, they pursue their inner feelings. Such persons are usually open to skill sets, new learning and experiences. Individuals who score high on openness are rather open-minded and up to date in their stance as compared to persons whose scores are low on the same parameter. Such persons are conformist, unwilling to adjust and have a traditional advance in life.

Another construct of import to this research is motivation. Motivation, for Sharma and Shirsath (2014) is a method that conducts and maintains good behaviours. When a civil servant is motivated he/she will work efficiently and effectively. It involves the biological, cognitive and emotional forces that activate some specific behaviour. Major components of motivation include activation, persistence and intensity. Activation involves decisions to initiate behaviour, while persistence is a continuous effort towards a goal. Nevertheless, it is intensity that ensures efforts necessary for the quest of the goals.

Lack of motivation at work according to Stahl (2016) has nothing to do with a foreign concept. In fact, most clients of Stahl have sought out for career coaching since they are no longer being challenged or feeling associated to their present roles. Going to work every day has become dull to the extent of being painful, and they are desperate for change. They are relieved to learn there is nothing incorrect with them, that their lack of motivation is not because they are lazy or bad civil servants, but merely a natural result not doing work that is stimulating or challenging. Along with personality, perception, and learning and attitude, Nabi, Isam, Dip and Hossai (2017) stated that motivation is a significant part in understanding behaviour. Motivation is therefore defined as a development that begins with a physiological deficiency or need that propels a behaviour or drive

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that is geared at a goal incentive. Nabi, Islam, Dip and Hossain, further stated that in a systematic sense, motivation consisted of three interrelating and interdependent rudiments i.e., drives, needs and incentives. Sometimes these concepts become the yardstick of efficiency. Attitudes such as involvement and satisfaction contribute to increase the performance of the employees which is proved by various existing studies (Velnampy, 2016). Although various research have studied the issue of personality traits, motivation and work attitude, and explored many facts there is no sufficient studies as a multiple focusing on the public sector organization in Rivers State. In order to fill this gap this study tries to identify the relationship between agreeableness, openness to experience, motivation and work attitude.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The global economy is on competitive spree, that only the strong economy can survive. The National Gross Profit Index is grossly generated through tax, foreign trade, tourism, transportation, agriculture, and education among others. The civil service commission manages these. Therefore, sustainable economy can boast of effective civil servants who have a better work attitude towards his/her job and are committed to the requirements placed on them by their positions. This can only take place when the right staff are assign the right job depending on individual personality traits. Civil servants are key players in the environment of national goals in any country, and to achieve this goal, their attitude to work is important and need to be addressed.

Even when these things are put into consideration by the government, individuals also exhibit their personal trait by being late to work. Therefore, could these blames be on workers (civil servants)? If this is so what are the contributing factors to civil servants poor attributes to work. Could these problems be inherent or within them civil servants (their trait) or outside themselves or both (as regards their motivation) it is on this note that problem of this study is focused on the agreeableness, openness to experience traits, job motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study investigated agreeableness, openness to experience traits, job motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to realize the following objectives:

1. find out the relationship between agreeableness personality trait and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. investigate the relationship between openness to experience and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria.
3. find out the relationship between motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

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2. There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The design of this study was correlational intended to find out the relationship that exists between agreeableness, openness to experience, motivation and work attitude among civil servants.

### **Population for the study**

The population of the study was made up of 5,041 civil servants in public offices in Rivers State. According to Rivers State head of Service there are about 5,041 civil servants who are directly paid from Rivers State treasury.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size and as well draw the participants, their ministry and department. The population of the study was divided into different strata based on their ministry. Thereafter the researcher chooses ministry of education and ministry of works to represent the sample of the study. After that the researcher was used simple random sampling technique to select the sample for the study. The sample of the study comprised of 372 civil servants from different ministries in Rivers State. This sample was drawn from the population of the study in which the findings of the study was generalized.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments for data gathering in this research are agreeableness, Openness to experience and Motivation Inventory (AOMI) and Workers Attitude Scale (WAS). The two instruments are non-cognitive assessment tools. The Conscientious, Openness to experience and Motivation Inventory (AOMI) was adapted. The Workers Attitude Scale (WAS) is a researcher made instrument which contains 15 item scale designed to obtain civil servants' work attitude. The response format for this study is a 4 point Likert type response format. The instrument was developed through the logical approach. The two instruments were validity by two test experts. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha statistic for a measure of their internal consistency. The instruments were administered to 30 civil servant who will not be part of the sample for the study. Thereafter, the data generated from the single administration of the instruments were subjected to Cronbach alpha statistic for a measure of the internal consistency of the instruments. The following reliability coefficients were obtained: agreeableness = 0.64, openness to experience = 0.71, motivation = 0.67) and work attitude instrument =0.85. These reliability indexes are high enough to guarantee the use of the instruments.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The hypotheses postulated for the study were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics at 0.05 alpha level.

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## Results and Discussion

**Hypothesis One**  $H_{01}$  : There is no significant relationship between agreeableness and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

The null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  was tested using z-test associated with PPMC, the obtained result is displayed in table 1 below

**Table 1: Pearson Correlation of Agreeableness and Work Attitude of Workers**

Variable	r	p-value		Decision
Agreeableness				
Work attitude	0.134	0.010	0.05	Reject $H_{01}$

According to the result obtained and displayed in Table 1, it was revealed that Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded an r-value of 0.134. This result therefore implies that there is a low relationship between agreeableness and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. Furthermore, when this result was subjected to z-test of PPMC, it resulted in a p-value of 0.010, which was less than 0.05, the alpha level guiding the study. This result therefore indicates that there is a low positive and significant relationship between agreeableness and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State, thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis Two**  $H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between openness to experience and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

For answering research question two, the data obtained from section on openness to experience was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with work attitude. Thereafter, the corresponding null hypothesis was tested using z-test associated with PPMC, the obtained result is displayed in table 2 below

**Table 2: Pearson Correlation of Openness to experience and Work Attitude of Workers**

Variable	r	P-value	$\alpha$	Decision
Openness to experience				
Work attitude	0.146	0.005	0.05	Reject $H_{02}$

Result shown in Table 4.3 indicated that Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded an r-value of 0.146. This result therefore implied that there is a weak positive relationship between openness to experience and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. In addition, when this result was subjected to z-test of PPMC, it was shown that a p-value of 0.005 was gotten, a value less than 0.05 level of significance guiding the study. This result therefore indicated that there is a weak positive but significant relationship between openness to experience and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. The null hypotheses were therefore rejected.

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**Hypothesis Three** Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State.

Research question three was answered by correlating data obtained from the section on motivation was correlated with the reported work attitude using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Thereafter, the corresponding null hypothesis was tested using z-test associated with PPMC, the obtained result is displayed in table 3 below

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Motivation and Work Attitude of Workers**

Variable	r	P	A	Decision
Motivation				
Work attitude	0.119	0.022	0.05	Reject Ho <sub>3</sub>

Result shown in Table 3 indicated that Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded an r-value of 0.119. This result therefore implies that there is a low positive relationship between motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. In addition, when this result was subjected to z-test of PPMC, it was shown that a p-value of 0.022 was gotten, a value lesser than 0.05 level of significance guiding the study. This result therefore indicates that there is a low positive and significant relationship between motivation and work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

## Discussion of Findings

### Relationship between Agreeableness Personality Trait and Work Attitude

From the analysis of hypothesis in table 1, it was shown that there is weak positive and significant relationship between agreeableness personality trait and work attitude. The relationship is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. This result implies that workers who scored highly on the section of agreeableness personality trait are prone to scoring high in their work attitude. However, the reported strong positive relationship indicates that all those who have agreeableness personality also scored high in their work attitude. This result is similar to that obtained by Akporode (2014) also found out that learning personality trait of workers shape their behaviour. Despite the similarity in results, the sample from both study differed to a reasonable extent. In the same vein this result is similar to that obtained by Hong (2017) who re-examines the relationship between the Big five personality traits and job satisfaction to establish whether its findings may challenge other literature. And he found out that there is a significant relationship between Big Five traits and job satisfaction being more complex than shown in other literature. This study differs in the designed used as the present study used correlational research design his study used ex post facto research design.

Also this study is similar to that obtained by Mirabzadeh et al., (2017) who investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and personality traits among Iran Khodro Company expert staff and found out that conscientiousness and agreeableness personality trait was significantly correlated with job satisfaction but both study differs in the sample size used.

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The result that agreeableness personality trait is positively related to work attitude is not surprising. This is because agreeableness is one of the five personality traits of the Big Five personality theory. A person with a high level of agreeableness in a personality test is usually warm, friendly, and tactful. They generally have an optimistic view of human nature and get along well with others. This could be a probable explanation for the positive relationship between agreeableness personality trait and work attitude. Nevertheless the degree of association between workers and his/her peer will determine how the individual can adjust in their work environment.

### **Relationship between Openness to Experience and Work Attitude**

From the analysis of hypothesis in table 2, it was shown that there is a weak positive and significant relationship between openness to experience and work attitude. The relationship is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The meaning of this result is that individual or workers who are mainly open to experience will find it difficult engaging to social activities. On the basis of the instrument administered, workers who reported high values on the section of openness to experiences are most likely to score low on their work attitude as tested using the instrument for the study. Conversely those who score high on the section of openness to experience are most likely to score low in their work attitude.

In the study conducted by Makinde (2014), a significant relationship between extraversion and work attitude was obtained, just as gotten from the present study. However in his study, the sample was university staff, while in the present study the sample constituted civil servant. Also the statistical technique used was different in that while the present study used simple correlational statistics, his study used factorial multivariate analysis of variance. Also this study is in disagreement with that obtained by Jamaludin (2016) investigated the correlation between personality traits and job satisfaction of police officers in Punjab, Pakistan. And the finding showed that there is negative correlation between personality traits, neuroticism, openness to experience and job satisfaction, while extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively correlated with job satisfaction. But despite the dissimilarity in the result, both studies are similar in the variables used. The findings of this result is a further confirmation of that obtained by Okaro et al., (2019). In his study he found out those workers who were high on openness to experience engage less in work attitude. However, this study differs in the instrument and variables used as the present study used work attitude and the previous used work experience.

This result is not surprising to this researcher, because workers who are open to experience will always focus on what they are going to achieve rather than engaging on activities that will not yield positive result like worker attitude.

### **Relationship between Motivation and Work Attitude**

From the analysis of hypothesis in table 3, it was revealed that there is a low positive and significant relationship between motivation and work attitude. The relationship is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The positive moderate relationship between motivation and work attitude of workers means that as score on motivation increases, there is corresponding increase in work attitude scores. On the basis of the instrument administered, workers who reported high values on the section of motivation are most likely to score high on their work attitude. Conversely those who score low on the section of motivation are most likely to score low in their work attitude. The findings of this result are a further confirmation of that obtained by Mutua

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(2013). In his study he found out that workers who were high on motivation excel well in their career. However, this study differs in the instrument used as the present study used an adapted instrument, while their study used adopted instrument.

From the analysis of hypothesis, it was revealed that conscientiousness, openness, agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism and motivation had a significant joint contribution on work attitude of civil servants in Rivers State. Furthermore with an F-ratio of 26.015, collective relationship was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significant.

This result is similar to that obtained Okaro et al., (2009) who found out that conscientiousness, openness, agreeableness, extraversion and neuroticism of workers collectively shape their behaviour. Despite the similarity in results, the sample from both study differed to a reasonable extent. Also this study is similar to the findings of Ukpong and Uchendu (2012) who found out that motivational variables such as award, praise and commendation, regular pay, regular promotion/ in service training and provision of working facilities have significant influence on civil servants working performance. Both study differed in the instrument used.

This result is not surprising to this researcher, because when an employee is well motivated that employee will show positive work attitude. And also if an employee is motivated, they are more likely to do a good job and work hard. Motivation is very important for attracting employees, retaining employees and general levels of productivity in a business. Motivated employees are more likely to be willing to work, rather than staying off.

### **Conclusion**

It is imperative to ensure that positive personality is been inculcated into civil servants in other to better their life and performance in work places, this study went ahead to review the relationship between personality traits and work attitude among civil servants in Rivers State, the findings show that civil servants personality traits have a strong relationship with their work attitude. With proper supervision, civil servants work attitude can be improved, which will in turn better their performance in their work places.

### **Recommendations**

The results obtained from this research can certainly be used very effectively to improve the present scenario of civil servant's worker attitude in our country. It will help to establish a firmer grip on not only public organizations but also in every working environment. Motivating your employees' is a delicate and purposeful challenge, which requires more than an annual review or jotting a few notes in someone's personnel. The following were recommended based on the research and survey conducted above.

1. Based on the findings above, ministry of labour and employment should take into consideration the need to motivate civil servants in order to improve their work attitude.
2. The study can also be used by administrators to bring clarity concerning how to implement different agreement between employers and employees in order to enhance employees' performance at work.
3. Government should always inspect the extent to which civil servants needs have been met in order to boast their expectation and enhance their work performance.

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4. The results can be used to compare present scenario regarding civil servant's personality traits and the optimum rate of motivation should be applied to attain organizational goals most effectively.

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