

## Big Five Personality Traits and Job Involvement among Teachers

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**<sup>1</sup>OKONKWO EJIKE A., <sup>2</sup>UGWU ESTHER O. AND <sup>3</sup>ENEASATO BENJAMIN O.**

<sup>1&2</sup>Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu,

<sup>3</sup>Department of Political Science, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu  
E-mail: [aejyke@yahoo.com](mailto:aejyke@yahoo.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the big five personality traits as predictors of job involvement among teachers. One hundred and seventeen (117) teachers comprising 31 males and 86 females between 24 to 10 years were drawn from five government secondary schools in Enugu using Multi-stage sampling. John, Dondhue and Kentte (1991) 44 – item big five personality traits inventory and Lodahl and Wegner (1965) 20-item job involvement scale were administered. The study was a cross-sectional survey. Regression analysis revealed that big five personality traits jointly predicted job involvement at  $p < .05$ . The findings also revealed that extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness independently predicted job involvement at  $P < .05$  while agreeableness and neuroticism did not. It was concluded that in order to enhance the job involvement of teachers, candidates high on extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness should be considered during selection and placement of teachers.*

**Keywords:** Big Five, Personality Factors, Job Involvement, Teachers

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### INTRODUCTION

Job involvement is the degree of psychological identification an employee has with his/her role in the workplace and reflects the significance the individual attaches to having and performing work (Khan & Nemati, 2011). Job involvement constitutes an important motivational variable that is of interest to organization, especially in the new economy, which imposes the need for full mobilization of the human resources. Employees with high levels of job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the work they do (Robbin, Judge & Sangh, 2009). Job involvement is influenced factors such as job characteristics and individual variables. Thus, personal characteristics predispose and individual to become more or less involved in their jobs. The link between job involvement and personality characteristics represents the employee's response to the psychological stimulation that characterizes the job (Liao & Lee, 2009). Some researchers (e.g. Mud-rack, 2004) assume that higher job involvement is attributed to an employee's personal inherent attributes such as the big five personality factors which include extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. These personality factors have been observed to greatly determine how people perceive their jobs and their relationship with the work environment, the job itself and how they are committed to their jobs. Extraversion captures one's comfort level with relationship (Robbin, Judge & Sangh, 2009). Because extroverted personality is sociable, assertive, gregarious, talkative and ambitious (Cooper 2003), such people often meet their aspirations and exhibit their

talents in their work environment. Studies (e.g. Stelmuck 2007) have shown that introverts exhibit greater sensitivity to job involvement because they have lower pain threshold than extroverts. This explains why relationship between extraversion is positively related to job involvement. Agreeableness describes someone who is good natured, cooperative and trusting, eager to avoid conflict which forms positive correlation between agreeable personality and job involvement. Conscientiousness personality is dutiful, well organized, dependable and goal achievement striving (Burch & Andreson 2004). Openness to experience which is the ability to be imaginative, curious, unconventional, broad minded and cultured (Clarke & Roberson, 2005). Individuals who exhibit this personality dimension are always open to new ideas and want to improve themselves as well as their jobs. Neurotic people show low emotion and instability, and are more likely to experience stress and emotional breach down as and when they encounter a new challenging job. Teaching responsibilities require high degree of job involvement in order to bring out the best in students. Considering this, therefore, it is pertinent to pay attention to the personal attributes (e.g. personality) of teachers which are likely to influence their job involvement, hence this present study.

### **RELATED LITERATURE**

Job involvement is related to three variables which include the dispositional approach held by the individual, the situational determined approach held and the influence of the interaction between these approaches (Rabinowitz & Hall 1977). In this model no single class of variable shows a stronger relationship with job involvement than any other, that is dispositional and situational variables have equal importance in explaining job involvement. Thus, personal characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, external and internal control characteristics and other personality attributes interact with work factors in determining job attitudes such as job involvement. In relation to the role of personality factors such as the big five personality factors in job involvement, empirical studies (e.g. Smithkrai, 2007) reported a positive relationship between extroverted personality and job involvement. Eswaran, Islam and Yusuf (2011) found that extroversion is positively related to job involvement. In a study, participants high in agreeableness factor were found to be cooperative, helpful, altruistic and highly involved in their job (Digman, 1990), and high level of agreeableness was positively related to job involvement (Eswaran, Islam & Yusuf 2011) which likely increased work efficiency and involvement (Barrick & Mount, 1991). And relationship between big five personality and job involvement was investigated among 219 white collar workers. The hierarchical regression revealed that scores on agreeableness were negatively related to scores on work involvement and total hour worked in a week (Bozionelos, 2004). Eswaran, Islam and Yusuf (2011) found no relationship between neuroticism and job involvement while Liao and Lee (2009) found a negative correlation between neuroticism and job involvement. Individual who exhibit this personality dimension are always open to new ideas and want to improve themselves as well as their jobs (Clarke & Roberson 2005). A review of studies involving 15 European communities found that conscientiousness was a valid predictor of performance across job and occupational groups (Salgado, 1997). In relation to job involvement, cross cultural research (Honk, 2004) has demonstrated that the big five factor personality factors have been found consistently in more than 35 nations including China, Israel, Japan,

Germany, Spain, Nigeria, Norway and so many nations, hence the need for this study in Nigeria among teachers, thus, this present study has hypothesized that big five personality will jointly and independently predict job involvement.

## METHOD

### Participants

A total of 117 participants comprising 31 male and 86 female teachers between the ages 24 to 60 years with a mean age of 36.55 and standard deviation of 7.94 were selected from Community Secondary School Ugwuaji, Independence Day Secondary School, Maryland Secondary School and New Layout Secondary School, Enugu using Multi-stage sampling. These teachers comprised 66 married females, 27 unmarried females, 23 married males and 1 unmarried male. Their educational qualification ranged from National Certificate of Education (NCE) to Masters Degree in Education (M .Ed). All the teachers had spent at least one year in the schools as teachers.

### Instrument

Two instruments comprising John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) 44-item big five personality inventory and Ladahl and Kejner (1965) 20-item job involvement scale were administered to measure extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism and openness dimensions of personality and job involvement.

### Big Five Personality Inventory

This 44-item inventory with five subscales measuring extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience has direct scoring for all the items and the subscales should be scored separately and analyze separately. John *et al*(1991) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Umeh (2004) provide the properties for Nigerian samples.

| Scale                 | American | Nigerian |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| A = Extraversion      | 28.45    | 27.10    |
| B = Agreeableness     | 29.20    | 28.73    |
| C = Conscientiousness | 29.10    | 28.60    |
| D = Neuroticism       | 23.43    | 24.48    |
| E = Openness          | 38.07    | 36.18    |

John *et al*(1991) reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.80 and 3-month test-retest of 0.85. Big five inventory has convergent validity coefficients of .75 and .85 with big five personality instruments authored by Costa & MCrae (1992) and Golberg (1992) respectively. Umeh (2004) using Kleinmuntz (1961) university maladjustment scale reported divergent coefficients of extraversion .05, agreeableness, .13 conscientiousness, .11, neuroticism .39, and openness to experience .24. The Nigerian norms or mean scores are the bases for interpreting the scores. Scores equal or higher than the norms indicated that the participant manifested the specific personality type while scores lower showed that the participant did not manifest the specific personality type.

### Job Involvement Scale (JIS)

This 20-item inventory measuring the extent to which a person is attached and engrossed in his or her job has direct and reverse scoring for the items as determined in the manual. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) provided the psychometric properties for American sample while Mogaji (1997) provided the properties for Nigerian sample. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) reported  $M(n=70)$  of 42.62 and Spearman-Brown internal reliability coefficients of .72 and .80 for females and males respectively, test-retest reliability of .90 after 72 days interval. Mogaji (1997) reported mean ( $n=600$ ) of 41.76. Concurrent Validity was obtained by correlating job involvement scale scores with Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) job descriptive index scores. The Nigerian norms or mean scores are the bases for interpreting the scores. Scores equal or higher than the norms indicated that the participant demonstrated high job involvement while scores lower showed that the participant demonstrated low job involvement.

### Procedure

The researchers administered a total of 124 copies of the questionnaires within 3 weeks. This administration was carried out in various schools in Community Secondary School Ugwuaji, Independence Day Secondary School, Maryland Secondary School and New Layout Secondary School. The exercise was conducted after been permitted by the authorities, of these schools. The vice principals administration served as research assistants who helped in the administration and collection of the questionnaire. To this end, 122 copies of the questionnaires were returned while 5 copies were discarded due to error and incomplete response to some of the items. Hence, 117 (94.35%) copies were scored and analyzed in testing the hypothesis.

### Design/Statistics

Cross-sectional survey design was used. Multiple regressions were applied as a statistical test using statistical package for the social science (SPSS) for data analysis and testing the hypothesis.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Summary Table of Means on Big Five Personality Factors as Predictors of Job Involvement among Teachers.**

| Variables              | Mean  | N   |
|------------------------|-------|-----|
| Job involvement        | 40.67 | 117 |
| Extraversion           | 32.73 | 117 |
| Agreeableness          | 30.18 | 117 |
| Conscientiousness      | 28.76 | 117 |
| Neuroticism            | 22.47 | 117 |
| Openness to experience | 45.21 | 117 |

From the table above, the mean score of 40.67 indicated the teachers were involved in their job. Similarly, teachers personality variables scores showed that extraversion was most involve with a mean score of 32.73, agreeableness with mean score of 30.18, conscientiousness with mean score of 28.76, neuroticism with mean score of 22.47) and openness to experience with mean score of 45.21.

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Table on Big Five Personality Factors as Predictors of Job Involvement.**

| Criterion Variable | Predictor Variables    | B     | Beta  | T      | P     | Confidence Limit |             | R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | F    | P    |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------------------|-------------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|------|------|
|                    |                        |       |       |        |       | Lower Bound      | Upper Bound |       |                |                         |      |      |
| Job Involvement    | Extraversion           | -.395 | .120  | -3.28  | <.001 | -0.634           | -.157       | 0.417 | 0.174          | 0.137                   | 4.68 | <.05 |
|                    | Agreeableness          | .109  | .197  | .553   | >.381 | .282             | .500        |       |                |                         |      |      |
|                    | Conscientiousness      | .442  | 0.207 | 2.140  | <.035 | -0.33            | 0.851       |       |                |                         |      |      |
|                    | Neuroticism            | .040  | .039  | 1.046  | >.298 | -0.36            | .117        |       |                |                         |      |      |
|                    | Openness to Experience | -.038 | .017  | -2.286 | <.024 | -0.71            | -.005       |       |                |                         |      |      |

As shown in table 2, big five personality factors (extraversion+ agreeableness+ conscientiousness + neuroticism + openness to experience) jointly predicted job involvement,  $R^2= 0.174$ ,  $F (3, 63) = 4.68$ ,  $p<.05$ . These significant results indicated an association between the predictor variables (big five personality factors) and the criterion variable (job involvement),  $R = 0.417$ . Together, big five personality factors accounted for 13.7% variation in job involvement. Moreover, the regression coefficient and population regression for extraversion,  $b = -.39$  ( $t= -3.28$ , conscientiousness = .44 ( $t = 2.14$ ) and openness to experience,  $b = -.04$  ( $t= -2.29$ ) were found to be significant. Thus, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience significantly predicted job involvement independently while agreeableness and neuroticism did not.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the big five personality (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience) jointly predicted job involvement. Thus, this result has confirmed the hypothesis which stated that the big five personality factors will jointly predict job involvement. Moreover, the findings revealed that extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience independently predicted job involvement while agreeableness and neuroticism did not. In other words, high scores on extraversion were found to be associated with high scores on job involvement. This prediction of job involvement by extraversion is in line

with previous studies. This outcome could be attributed to the sociable and friendly nature of extroverts which might have predisposed the teachers who served as participants in this study to be friendly and relate positively with their students, teachers and other staff in their respective schools resulting in their involvement with their job responsibilities. Similarly, conscientiousness predicted job involvement, thus, an indication of positive association between conscientiousness scores and job involvement scores. This result is in agreement with previous studies (e.g. Liao & Lee, 2009)) which found conscientiousness to be a predictor of job involvement and conscientiousness employees high on psychological identification with their jobs. Because conscientious teachers are responsible, dependable and persistent therefore, likelihood of not being involved in their jobs will be very low. In addition, openness to experience predicted job involvement, thereby supporting previous findings (e.g. Liao & Lee, 2009) which found openness to experience to enhance job involvement. For teachers in Enugu Metropolis, openness to experience is an important variable in predicting job involvement. Thus, that a teacher is curious, fascinated by novelty, sensitive and imaginative is likely to relate positively with high job involvement. There is every tendency that a teacher's curiosity will lead to continuous activities on the job which might enhance job involvement.

### **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study which have shown that extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness significantly predicted job involvement among teachers have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings have added to the existing literature and also provided a guide for further studies concerning personality and job involvement among teachers. Practically, these findings have shown the importance of assessing the personality dimensions of candidates at the point of recruitment and selection of teachers. Thus, in line with the findings, candidates who are high on extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience should be considered while those high on agreeableness and neuroticism should be avoided in order to enhance job involvement among teachers. This will help to enhance job involvement of teachers resulting in efficiency and productivity. And finally, increased efficiency and productivity of teachers will enhance the overall performance of students.

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