

# The study of the relationship between personality dimension, unethical and lateness behaviour in the workplace

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**Abstract:** Personality traits which are an enduring qualities and behaviour are one of the most crucial aspects of human life that can affect all human behaviours and work performance. Employees with different personality dimensions tend to behave in definite ways as they shoulder their responsibility in their various organizations. This study aims to investigate the relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace and to explore the relationship between personality dimensions and lateness behavior in the workplace. A total of seventy (70) bankers were selected through simple random sample from five (5) banks in Onitsha, Anambra state to participate in this study. The participants were 43(61.4%) males and 27 (38.6%) females. Their ages ranged from 21 24 to 55 years with a mean age of 32.84 years and standard deviation of 5.79. The instruments were: Big five Personality Inventory by John, 1991. Organizational Lateness behaviour scale by Koslowsky and

Dishon-Berkovits, (2008) and Unethical Behaviour tendency scale by Tang and Waterford (1997). The design of the study was a survey design while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was adopted for data analysis. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant relationship between personality dimensions and attitude to lateness behaviour in the workplace and a slight relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace. It is recommended that the management of the various organizations should take into cognition personality dimensions of the employees in their workplace during appraisal year and refer for deeper assessment workers found to have personality issues for proper professional help. More so, the management should address whatever issues that will affect the workers' personality dimensions not only to enhance the employees' performance of employees but as well to help checkmate unethical behaviours in the workplaces.

**Keywords:** personality dimension, unethical, lateness, behaviour, workplace.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Personality is the scientific study of the whole person; personality is about many things: perception and attention, cognition and memory, neurons and brain circuitry (McAdams, 2006). We try to understand the individual human being as a complex whole and construct a scientifically credible account of human individual. Personality is an organized developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems (Mayer, 2007). Okoli, Ezeme, Chime, Ozougwu, Ofojebe, Edoaka, et al. (2020) basing on Big Five personality inventory defined personality as an enduring traits or characteristics that distinguished one individual from the other. There are five (5) core dimensions of personality found at the workplace; the "Big Five Personality Characteristics". These traits reflect the most prominent ways that people differ from each other and the different goals which people are motivated to pursue. Based on these assertions, this present study is aimed at determining the relationship which personality posits over unethical behaviour and lateness in the workplace. However, personality is a major factor that influences productivity in the workplace. Personality type goes a long way in determining an individual's behaviour and attitude to work. Studies using psychological assessment have also shown similarities between categorized individuals and personality types through temperament theories. The descriptive characteristics of personality were identified by Hippocrates and Galen's four temperament theories which identify the four personality types as melancholy, phlegmatic, Choleric and sanguine; these types share remarkable similarities with the neurotic-introverts, stable-introverts, neurotic-extroverts and stable-extroverts types in Eysenck's model. Personality can be conceptualized as a set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring that influence individual's interactions and adaptations to the intrapsychic, physical and social environment (Larsen and Buss, 2002).

Unethical behaviour in the workplace refers to any action that does not conform to the standards of conduct, established by the organization (Neuman, 1997). Unethical behaviour can occur in the relationship between employees, in the way an employee goes about his business or how he uses company resources. Unethical behaviour in the workplace affects countless people every year. Workers in many organizations are subjected to insidious treatment such as harassment, discrimination and bullying. However, most research and discussion of unethical business behaviour has focused solely on its financial and legal effects and not on the health and well-being of the individuals working for the organization. This research came up in order to moderate this overlook, to draw the attention of researchers and employers to the relevance which unethical behaviour holds towards individual or workers' personality differences and well-being.

Lateness in the workplace according to (Blau, 1994) can be viewed as a "withdrawal behaviour" which is a correlate of, or precursor to, shirking, absenteeism or turnover. Job productivity depends partly on the commitment of workers. Recent researchers have demonstrated unethical behaviour in the work place in the areas of: work lateness by (Barmby, Orme and Treble, 1995), the intensity of work effort in any hour on the job (Green, 2001) and quits (Clark, 2001).

As psychology emphasizes, manifestations of work commitment, such as lateness, may reflect negative attitudes to the workplace or lack of job satisfaction may lead to late arrival at work. Such late arrival at workplace imposes direct and indirect costs on the employer as well as the direct cost of lost output and the knock-on effects of lateness in integral production systems.

Horgan (1991) said that personality should be viewed as a potential correlate of performance and behaviour. Hence, personality plays a role in lateness behaviour but it may be necessary to determine the situation and understand the “dynamic interacting processing system” (Mischel and Shoda, 1998) before the personality lateness link is explainable.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Unethical behaviour is universal and possibly inherent, practically in all countries of the world. In Sub-Saharan African countries and particularly Nigeria, unethical practices have attained disturbing levels. Such practice seemingly enjoys societal indifference instead of condemnation. Obasanjo (2000) stated that such acts as the use of one’s office for pecuniary advantage, gratification, influence peddling, insincerity in advice with aim of gaining advantage, less than a full day’s work for a full day’s pay. Ogundele (2000) stated that unethical behaviour is the second most important problem confronting and inhibiting the performance of indigenous organizations. This topic was chosen to understand the reason why there is severe unethical behaviour in many companies which results in employee termination in order to predict the way out. Based on these uprising problems in our present day employee-work attitude, this research is aimed at answering the following questions:

- (a) Will personality dimensions have a significant relationship with unethical behaviour in the work place?
- (b) Will personality dimensions have a significant relationship with lateness behaviour in the workplace?

### **Purpose of the Study**

- a. To investigate the relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace.
- b. To explore the relationship between personality dimensions and lateness behaviour in the workplace.

### **Relevance of the Study**

This research will add to the body of knowledge and development of the researchers, Managers and employers would be able to understand the need to be considered when designing policies on employee lateness, work ethics and human resource management policy.

Thus, this research would help practitioners know that workplace attitudes are not only dictated by policies but also the personalities of employees. Example: An individual with personality traits of “conscientiousness “shows the qualities of dependability, carefulness and responsibility (Ones, Chockalingam and Schmidt, 1993).

### **Operational Definition of Key Study Variables**

**Personality:** This can be defined as an individual’s unique and relatively consistent pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving (Pervin 1997).

**Unethical Behaviour in the Workplace:** unethical behaviour in the workplace refers to any action that does not conform with the standards of conduct established by the organization Neuman (1997).

**Lateness in the Workplace:** Lateness in the workplace can be viewed as a withdrawal behaviour which is a correlate of absenteeism, shirking and turnover in the organization (Blau, 1994).

## **2. METHOD**

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were seventy (70) bankers selected through simple random sample from five (5) banks in Onitsha, Anambra state. The participants were 43(61.4%) males and 27 (38.6%) females, aged 24 to 55 years, with a mean age of 32.84 years and standard deviation of 5.79. The educational qualifications of the participants are: undergraduates (11), graduates (49), and Ph. D holders (10).Thirty-eight (38) out of the participants were married, 30 were single while the remaining 2 were separated.

### **Instrument**

Three sets of instrument were used for the study. Big five Personality Inventory by John, 1991. Organizational Lateness behaviour scale by Koslowsky and Dishon-Berkovits, (2008) and Unethical Behaviour tendency scale by Tang and Waterford (1997). In addition demographic variables which include gender, age, level of education, marital status, religion, position and place of resident were included in overall instrument used for the study. The questionnaire used the study contains 75 items which involved the 3 (three) sets of instrument.

### The Big Five Personality Inventory.

The big five personality inventory was developed by John (1991). The BFI questionnaire is a 44-item inventory that originally uses a 5-point likert format ranging from 1(Disagree strongly) to 5(Agree strongly). However in Nigeria, Umeh, (2004), validated The Big Five among the student population in Lagos. Udoh (2012) validated the Big 5 questionnaire among the aged people with relative longevity (50) years and above in Anambra state. Nnedum (2011) conducted an exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to establish the construct validity of the Big Five personality inventory. So Nnedum (2011) validated the Big Five questionnaire among adult workers in the University organization. Specifically he reported a Cronbach Alpha validity of 0.82 for Openness to Experience, 0.83 for Conscientiousness, 0.76 for Extraversion, 0.86 for Agreeability and 0.74 for Neuroticism domains and 0.75 for Overall BIG 5 main scale respectively in Anambra State. The Big Five Personality Inventory is a reliable and valid instrument for use in this study.

### Lateness Scale

The Organization Lateness Behaviour (OLB) scale was developed by Koslowsky and Dishon Berkovits (2008) to assess lateness behavior of workers in organizations. The OLB scale is a 12-item inventory that assesses workers attitude towards Lateness behavior. However, Koslowsky and Dishon-Berkoviks (2008) reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.65 among white collar employees of a large Israeli company in Israel. This instrument was revalidated in Nigerian through a pilot study which the researcher conducted using 70 (seventy) bankers from 5 (five) banks in Onitsha different from the main study. Cronbach alpha of .71 was gotten showing that the instrument is reliable and adaptable for use in the environment.

### Unethical Behaviour Tendency Scale

This scale was developed by Tang and Waterford (1997). The unethical behaviour tendency scale (UBTS) is a 12-item inventory that uses a 5-point likert format ranging from 1 (Disagree strongly) to (Agree Strongly). Tang and Weatherford (1997) reported a general cronbach reliability coefficient of 0.99. Nnedum (2008) validated the unethical Behaviour Tendency scale in Nigerian, among full time employee, MBA students, and corporate executive who attended professional courses at university of Ibadan, NnmadiAzikiwe University, University of Abuja and University of Port-Harcourt he reported a cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.99 for the unethical behaviour tendency scale. Therefore the unethical behaviour tendency scale is a reliable and valid instrument for use in this study.

### Procedure

Before the data were collected from different bank employees, the researcher wrote the names of the banks on a pieces of paper and a selection was made through simple random technique and five different banks were selected which are: First bank, Union bank, Eco bank, Diamond bank, and Guaranty Trust bank. The researcher then went to the bank managers to obtain permission. Some of the bank managers granted the researcher the permission to conduct the research while few turned the request down. On the agreed date, the researcher went to the various banks that granted their permission and conducted the research. The questionnaires were administered to the selected participants, some of the bankers were too busy to fill the questionnaire immediately and as a result of that, they were permitted to go home with the questionnaire and fill them. When the filled questionnaires were finally gathered, those that were returned was 95 out of 130 administered and out of 95 filled and returned, 70 was well filled.

### Design/Statistics

The study is survey design while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was adopted for data analysis.

## 3. RESULTS

**Table 1: summary of mean and standard deviation of personality dimensions, organizational lateness behaviour and unethical behaviour in the workplace.**

S/N	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	Extraversion	27.5286	6.84343	
2	Agreeableness	31.6429	3.21696	
3	Conscientiousness	31.7286	2.98752	
4	Neuroticism	27.6714	3.65831	
5	Openness to experience	30.7714	3.71901	
6	Lateness behaviour	42.0571	7.35219	
7	Unethical behaviour	22.3714	9.57529	

**Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient of personality dimensions and organizational lateness behaviour in the workplace**

Variable	R.cal	P. value	N
Extraversion	.10	.22	70
Agreeableness	.01	.46	
Conscientiousness	.06	.31	
Neuroticism	.00	.50	
Openness to experience	.05	.33	

Result from table 2 showed that extraversion ( $r = .10, P > .05$ ), Agreeableness ( $r = .01, P > .05$ ), Conscientiousness ( $r = .06, P > .05$ ), Neuroticism ( $r = .00, P > .05$ ) and Openness to experience ( $r = .05, P > .05$ ) all had positive but insignificant relationship with organizational lateness behaviour. The hypothesis 1 which stated that there will be a significant relationship between personality dimensions and lateness behaviour in the workplace is hereby rejected.

**Table 3: Summary table of Pearson Moment correlation coefficient of personality dimensions and unethical behaviour.**

Variable	R.cal	P. value	N
Extraversion	-.09	.23	70
Agreeableness	-.23	.03	
Conscientiousness	-.06	.32	
Neuroticism	.42	.00	
Openness to experience	.23	.03	

Result from table 3 showed that extraversion ( $r = -.09, P > .05$ ) and Conscientiousness ( $r = -.06, P > .05$ ) had negative and insignificant relationship while Agreeableness ( $r = -.23, P < .05$ ) had negative but significant relationship. Whereas Neuroticism ( $r = .42, P < .05$ ) and Openness to experience ( $r = .23, P < .05$ ) had positive and significant relationship. Thus hypothesis 2 which stated that there will be a significant relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace is partially accepted because not all personality dimensions were significant with unethical behaviour.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that there was no significant relationship between personality dimensions and attitude to lateness behaviour in the workplace. This means that in workplace, personality dimension has nothing to do with attitude to lateness behaviour. The result of this study does not agree with the previous findings, Rosse and Hulin (1985) and Hanisch and Hulin (1990, 1991) argued that lateness is a behavioural outcome of certain organizational attitudes such as dissatisfaction. Accordingly, the employee arriving late to work is consciously or unconsciously expressing negative feelings or dissatisfaction with the organization. Again considering the personality dimension of Big Five-conscientious individuals are described as careful, reliable, and hardworking and organized. This is a personality trait with a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement against measures or outside expectations but people who score low in conscientious are likely to live otherwise lacking in self-discipline, dutifulness which lateness will likely be one of them.

On the second hypothesis which stated that “there will be a significant relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace”, the hypothesis was partially accepted. The finding of this study agrees with report of Zhen, Zeng and Jiang (2023) in the study of personality traits and unethical pro-organizational behaviours of sales staff: the mediation of performance pressure, where they affirm that personality traits of the sales staff had significant positive effect on performance pressure and unethical pro-organizational behaviour. According to them, the distinct personality traits of salespeople will cause them to form different levels of performance pressure, at which time, they are more likely to produce negative emotions and behaviour, and thus trigger to unethical pro-organizational behaviour.



## 5. CONCLUSION

This research project was embarked upon to study the relationship between personality dimension, unethical and lateness behaviour in the workplace. The participants were drawn from (5) banks in Onitsha, Anambra state to participate in this study. The participants were 43(61.4%) males and 27 (38.6%) females. The self-evaluation questionnaire used in this study was without serious modification after a pilot study and tallies with the hypothesis. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant relationship between personality dimensions and attitude to lateness behaviour in the workplace. This means that in workplace, personality dimension has nothing to do with attitude to lateness behaviour. However, the result of this finding revealed that there is slight relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace. It is recommended that the management of the various organizations should take into cognition personality dimensions of the employees in their workplace during appraisal year and refer for deeper assessment workers found to have personality issues for proper professional help. More so, the management should address whatever issues that will affect the workers' personality dimensions not only to enhance the employees' performance of employees but as well to help checkmate unethical behaviours in the workplaces. It is plausible that these findings have come from a particular data set, yet the present study gives a direction for the necessity of more integrated research in this field.

### Implication of Study

The implication is that employers should consider the contributions of employees during decision and policy making in order to avoid dissatisfaction and at the same time non-challant attitude to work which results in lateness behaviour in the workplace. The result also implies that non involvements in decision making process breeds unethical behaviour in the workplace. Hence the need to give them sense of belonging in order to increase performance and commitment at the workplace. Again that personality is partially implicated; it shows that personality, personality assessment is vital before recruitment and when necessary during appraisal of workers to ascertain the personality traits of workers for proper placement and rehabilitation.

### Limitation

The research has shown that there was no significant relationship between personality dimensions and attitude to lateness behaviour in the workplace and that there is slight relationship between personality dimensions and unethical behaviour in the workplace. However the result should be viewed within the context of the limitations posed by the method and sample size. The nature of work demand of bankers was also a source of limitation as filling the bulk of research questionnaires makes most of them unwilling to participate in the study. This study focused solely on bankers alone, thereby excluding other industrial workers from other organizations.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the management of the various employees in their workplace should devise a means of assessing the performance of employees so as to help checkmate unethical behaviours in the workplaces and enhance employee's well-being and good adjustment behaviour serves of psychologists are need occasionally for psychological assessment and follow-ups. The outcome of this study has also provided a fertile ground for extensive work in organizational lateness behaviour in the workplace.

### Suggestions for Future Research

It is recommended that future researchers in this field the relationship between personality dimension, unethical and lateness behaviour in the workplace need to focus only on one organization but rather consider all together multiply organization with diverse organizational structures. Again, the researcher should go beyond the need personality and behaviour to address the causal factors, prevention and intervention program.

### Compliance with ethical standards

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare that they have no grant/financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately affected their report of the findings of this research.

**Statement of informed consent:** The participation was on voluntary basis and informed consent was obtained from the individual who participated in this case report.

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