

# Effect Of Boss Conscientiousness On Subordinate Task Performance Of Federal Universities In South East, Nigeria

Suzan Ngozi Nwoke, Emmanuel Kanu Agbaeze

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between a conscientious boss and subordinate task performance. The study aimed to verify the argument whether a conscientious boss was actually instrumental and influential to subordinate increased task performance or not. The research was quantitative and implored inferential statistic to analyze data generated from 300 staff of five federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that a conscientiousness boss had a positive significant relationship with subordinate task performance, although it was assessed that the conscientious trait would be more productive if other factors were considered along with it. The result of this study also bears practical implications.

**Key Words:** Boss conscientiousness, subordinate task performance, Federal Universities.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Employees are considered one of the vital components of any organization, hence the need for organizations to do all within its reach to ensure that the work environment is such that would enhance their performance and this may include making sure that the right persons are positioned for different responsibilities in particular when assigning persons in boss positions. This is because the boss is expected to direct and co-ordinate the activities of their respective subordinates for the attainment of organizational set goals. This is even more crucial owing to the highly competitive business environment which makes it paramount to hire the best hands as bosses in order to bring out the best performance from each subordinate. The conscientious trait has been endorsed by several researchers as a valid and the most consistent predictor of performance Bhargat (2019) [2]. Rossberger (2014) [7] described conscientious individuals as those who value planning, possess the quality of persistence, and are achievement-oriented. Gupta & Gupta (2020) [3] stated that employees who possessed high conscientiousness were responsible, goal oriented, purposeful, self-disciplined, orderliness, planned, well organized, hard-working and so on and their self-focused nature helped them to achieve task. It therefore implied that the conscientious trait seem vital in influencing high performance. Despite this assertion on the expected positive outcome of the conscientious trait, some subordinates perceive a boss who is conscientious as being so hard, strict to a fault and tend to stretch them beyond their limit in a bid to hit a target and also rarely adding any form of humour to the work place which they consider detrimental to their performance. In order words, there seem to be a controversy on the actual effect of the conscientious trait especially that of a boss and his or her immediate subordinate task performance. Although several works has been done on the effect of personality on performance, it appears that the study on the effect of a conscientious boss on their direct subordinate task performance seem to be missing. This study intends to further investigate and validate the outcome of the conscientiousness trait on subordinate performance particularly of federal universities in South East, Nigeria. This study therefore postulated that: There is a relationship between a conscientious boss and subordinate task performance.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between a conscientious boss and subordinate task performance.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between a conscientious boss and subordinate task performance.

The remaining part of this study will be discussed under these major sections: literature review, research methodology, findings / results, discussions, conclusion, limitations and directions for further research and references.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The South-East zone of Nigeria is made up of five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) and each of these state has just one federal university (Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ikwo, Ebonyi state. University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), and Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) respectively. The population of this study comprised of all staff (academic and non-academic) from the five federal universities included in the study giving a total population of 17, 272 staff. The universities were selected because they were the only five that existed in South-East, Nigeria. A sample of 377 from the population was utilized for the study. 377 copies of structured questionnaire based on the constructs were distributed randomly to participants through the aid of research assistants in the respective universities and 300 copies were returned denoting a response rate of 80% (approximate). The liker scale was used in rating the responses. The collected data were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages. Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using linear regression utilizing SPSS version 21 in order to further verify the influence of a conscientious boss on subordinate task performance.

### Measures

Conscientiousness of a boss was measured using the Big Five Personality Model developed by McCrae et al. (2010), Task Performance was measured by adopting the scale developed by Pradhan & Jena (2016) [5]. Five questions strongly related to each construct were adopted with two of the questions negatively waded to avoid biases from responses and the questionnaire was in accordance with Likert 5-point scales.

### 3 RESULTS

#### Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The validity of the instrument was ascertained using content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Below is indicated the result of reliability in Table 1. The value of 0.808 obtained for boss conscientiousness and 0.823 for subordinate task performance were regarded as good which implied that the instruments were reliable and valid for the study.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Boss Conscientiousness	0.808
Subordinate Task Performance	0.823

#### Linear Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was conducted to verify and confirm the influence of a conscientious boss on subordinate task performance. Tables 2, 3, 4

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	BC <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: STP

Table showed that the dependent variable was Subordinate Task Performance (STP) while the independent variable was boss conscientiousness (BC).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.431 <sup>a</sup>	.185	.183	1.60305

a. Predictors: (Constant), BC

Table 3 showed the model summary of the regression result which indicated that a conscientious boss has a significant

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	219.	1	219.270	85.326	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	963.669	375	2.570		

### 7.3 REFERENCES

#### DISCUSSION

Table 3 with R squared, = 0.185, revealed that 18.5% of the variation in subordinate's task performance was explained by a conscientious boss of federal universities in South- East, Nigeria. This implied that the remaining 81.5% of subordinate task performance could be resulting from other factors which a conscientious boss should not overlook such as making the work environment more interesting for subordinates. Data in tables 3 and 4 for the regression analysis, with F85.326 and P<0 .05, indicated that the model had a good predictive capability and was a good fit for the data. The result of the t-statistics of 9.237 revealed that a conscientious boss was a statistical significant predictor of subordinate task performance which was also confirmed by the P – value of 0.000 < 0.05 and this led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the conclusion that a conscientious boss had a positive significant relationship with subordinate task performance. This means the more a boss expresses conscientious behaviours at work place the more subordinate are spurred to perform more in their respective assigned task. The findings was in line with most previous studies, for instance (Hassan et al. 2016) found that conscientiousness had a strong relationship with and a valid predictor of employee task performance. Alsuailem&Elnaga (2016) [1] also found conscientiousness to be positively correlated with productivity and performance. Peral &Geldenuys (2020) [4] also supported the finding in their study. Remos – Villagrasa et al. (2020) [6] stated that conscientiousness was the main personality trait to predict performance. The result of the study also bears practical implications: for optimal performance from subordinates a boss should not only rely on imbibing the conscientious trait but should make effort to also establish a good relationship with subordinates in order to bring out the best task performance from them as was postulated by the social exchange theory. This is particularly important for bosses in federal universities in South- East, Nigeria, for as the saying goes all work and no play makes the workplace a dull place which may be detrimental to optimal performance.

#### LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the course of the study, the following limitations were acknowledged; firstly the scope of the study was only limited to south-east, Nigeria neglecting other zones which may compromise the validity and generalization of the result. Furthermore, the use of only Federal Universities may affect its external validity. Despite these acknowledged limitations, the study still holds significant implications for federal

universities that desire optimum task performance from subordinates in various units and departments.

## CONCLUSION

The study found that a conscientious boss had a positive significant effect on subordinate task performance of federal universities in South- East, Nigeria. From a practical perspective, the result of the study holds implication for federal universities; nonetheless its implication for other industries may be further verified.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alsuwailem, A. &Elnaga, A.A. (2016). "Exploring the Relationship between Personality and Job Performance" "New Approach". *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 5(12), 43-53
- [2] [Bhagat](#), K.K. &[Wu](#), L. Y. (2019).The Impact of Personality on Students' Perceptions towards Online Learning. [Australasian Journal of Educational Technology](#) , 35(4):98-108
- [3] Gupta, N. & Gupta, A.K. (2020). Big Five Personality Traits and their impact on Job Performance of Managers in FMCG Sector. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE)*, 8 (5), 3104 – 3109
- [4] Peral, S. L. &Geldenuys, M. (2020). The Indirect Relationship Between Personality and Performance through Job Crafting Behaviour. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 46 (0), 1 - 12
- [5] Pradhan, R. K & Jena, L.K. (2017). Employee Performance at Workplace: Conceptual Model and Empirical Validation. *Business Perspectives and Research*, 5(1), 69–85
- [6] Ramos- Villagrasa, J.P., Fernandez- del- Rio, E. &Barrada, R.J. (2019). Assessing Job Performance Using Brief Self-Report Scales: The Case of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire. [RevistadePsicologiadelTrabajoydelasOrganizaciones](#) , 35(3), 195-205
- [7] Rossberger, R. J. (2014). National Personality Profiles and Innovation: The Role of Cultural Practices. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 23 (3), 1 -6