



Evaluation of the Relationship between three Sociodemographic Factors and Conscientiousness of Cataloguers in Nigerian Academic Libraries

Bamise, Olasehinde Fadekemi

Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria
ofbamise@oauife.edu.ng | 09137155357

Abstract

The aim of this work is to examine the conscientiousness of cataloguers in relation to three sociodemographic factors (age, gender and work experience) in Nigerian academic library. 84 cataloguers from 20 academic libraries were randomly selected to participate in the study. A self-administered questionnaire with two divisions was used for the study. Section A was designed to determine the, age, gender and length of work experience of respondents. Section B consisted 9 items designed to ascertain conscientiousness displayed by the cataloguers in their workplaces. The responses were measured with a 4- point Likert scale of strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. The results showed that there were 35 (41.7%) males and 49(58.3%) females. The longest years of working experience (30 years and above) was spent by 5 (6%) respondents while the least years of working experience (less than 4 years) was spent by 40(47.6%) of them. Analysis showed that the joint contribution of age, gender and years of service to conscientiousness of the cataloguers was found to be statistically significant while only work experience could independently predict it. Productivity in the cataloguing unit will likely increase when workers with more years of experience are deployed rather than inexperienced librarians.

Keywords: Cataloging, Conscientiousness, Bibliographic Records, Demographic Factors, Academic Library.

Introduction

Review of personality traits is not new in many organizational settings as it is used for personnel selection, training, promotion and especially for team building. Personality traits reveal who exactly a person is and what can be his disposition towards issues. Personality traits are conceptual ideas which integrate aspects of what a person is like. In the field of applied psychology, it has now been generally agreed that the knowledge of individual personality and seeking to understand why employees react differently in various situations is of great importance in an organization (Christiansen and Tett, 2013). Out of the five broad dimensions of personality traits that incarcerate the entire range of human personality purported by psychology i.e. openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, conscientiousness manifests the need for achievement, self-discipline, and planned behavior. Klang (2012) stressed that conscientiousness characterizes a person who is achievement oriented. In a work place, conscientiousness was found to be the strongest predictor of job Performance. Also, the most analytical personality trait feature among the five traits in the study by Darkwah (2014) was conscientiousness with the highest preponderance (80-85%). Through the technical services provided by cataloguers, the library delivers the most efficient and highest quality service for users to identify and retrieve appropriate materials that meet their information needs (Caborero and Dolendo, 2013). In view of this, performing cataloguers are desirable, but they are few in academic libraries (Olatokun and Njideaka, 2020). However, the conscientiousness of the few cataloguers who are doing this essential job is rarely



evaluated. The aim of this study therefore, is to evaluate the conscientiousness of cataloguers due to its influences on their productivity.

Statement of the Problem

With tremendous advancement in various disciplines, the great challenge for any academic library is keeping pace with the knowledge and creation of timely bibliographic record for information accessibility; therefore, painstaking cataloguers are of high demand in today's academic libraries. To meet this demand, evaluation of conscientiousness; the relationship between conscientiousness and some of the socio-demographic factors of the cataloguers are required. Observably, there is dearth of concrete studies in this area.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To evaluate the conscientiousness of cataloguers in Nigerian academic libraries;
2. To examine the relationship between age, gender, work experience and conscientiousness of cataloguers in Nigerian academic libraries

Review of Literature

A conscientious person is that individual who is purposeful, strong-minded and determines to accomplish a seemingly impossible goal. Conscientious employees are more inspired and industrious than their counterparts. They tend to be more contented and less worried over their job (Venkatesh, Ganster, Schuetz, and Sykes, 2021). Conscientiousness reveals an employee's competence, orderliness, dutifulness, achievement striving and self-discipline. Therefore, conscientiousness can be said to have a strong relationship with job performance across all job types. Conscientiousness is a trait that describes individuals with impulse control who are highly organized, thorough, painful, efficient, responsible, reliable, and dependable, to name just a handful of characteristics associated with the trait (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). A conscientious individual is task driven, has a higher need for job achievement, is more detail oriented and always striving for the best (Penney et al., 2011). As regards proficiency in an occupation, conscientiousness is the only Big-Five trait that significantly predicts performance (Ones et al., 2007).

Conscientiousness is the tendency to display some attributes such as: hardworking, self-discipline, efficiency and ability to strive for achievement in seemingly impossibilities circumstances. Highly conscientious people enjoy planning their works than doing things spontaneously. These are the ones that persevere in the face of setback or difficulties but strive for excellence in pursuit of targeted goals. Ayodele (2013) explained conscientiousness as the tendency to show self-discipline, competence, ordered, act dutiful, and aim for achievement. Heinström (2014) recognized conscientiousness as the particular trait of an individual which creates the willingness to work hard in an organized and efficient way. Conscientiousness is the measure of the extent to which people are achievement oriented.

Conscientiousness in Cataloguing Workplace

Cataloguing is an intellectual task which demands that practitioners should be proactive. In other words, cataloguers must always be mentally alert so as to apply cataloguing standards accurately and consistently. A cataloguer identifies the subject of a document and decides appropriate words or phrases that best describe the subject that can be conceivably used by a researcher as search terms in the catalogue. Murray (2010) emphasised that cataloguing actually involves a lot of creativity. Bello and Mansor (2012) identified the activities of a cataloguer at which creativity must be demonstrated among which are: original cataloguing, authority control, copy cataloguing, descriptive and subject cataloguing, appropriate uses of



standard cataloguing tools such as: Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Machine-Readable Cataloguing, Library of Congress Classification, and Library of Congress Subject Headings. Cataloguing demands that a cataloguer understands significant bibliographic elements determined from databases, matching records and proof read (Valente, 2009). Cataloguing produces a catalog of bibliographic records in an academic library. Library patrons identify and retrieve appropriate materials that will meet their information needs only by the technical services provided and delivered with most efficient and highest quality by cataloguers.

In copy cataloguing, the cataloguer uses his/ her discretion in a situation where cataloguing in publication data do not comply with Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules. In such situations, adjustment is to be made. The cataloguers need to analyze the content of a material and provide appropriate subject headings and a suitable classification number for such advanced copy cataloguing. In addition to a good grasp of specific subjects and a thorough knowledge of standard cataloguing codes, cataloguers need to know which rule to use, when and how to thoroughly apply them (Whitmell, 2009). To process electronic resources requires a great level of mental alertness. Cataloguers may sometimes need to spend more time than necessary on some of the resources so as to find alternative means of creating access points for them. Atinmo (2007) identified that some electronic resources are not often provided with standard bibliographic information required by AACR2.

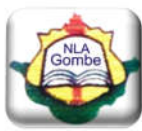
Oketunji and Iyoro (2009) identified some libraries where cataloguers are involved in other tasks. Multi-task stretches the work load of cataloguers in such libraries. Although, it is the normal practice in an academic library for a senior or more experienced cataloguer to vet the work of less experienced cataloguer, this can also result into having accumulation of materials which have not been fully processed. In a situation where errors were made particularly when cataloguing rules are being misapplied by the previous cataloguers, re-cataloguing of such materials is necessitated. For effective management of the workload by the cataloguers, serious planning and effort should be made to develop strong time-management and organizational skills. At this point, conscientiousness comes to play. To a non-conscientious bibliographic record provider, the exercise can be laborious and consists entirely complex, impenetrable rules and time-consuming. McShane and Steen (2012) stressed that people who have low conscientiousness are frequently careless and make irresponsible employees.

Methodology

Descriptive survey was adopted for this study. 84 cataloguers from 20 academic libraries during a Cataloguing and Classification National Conference were randomly selected for the study. A structured self-administered questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. To remove prejudice, the questionnaire was handed over to each consented participant through the registration desk. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A consists items on the respondents' age as at the last birthday, gender and the years of work experience of the respondents classified as: under 4 years, 4 - 9 years, 10 - 14 years, 15 - 19 years, 20 -29 years and 30 years and above. Section B was designed to ascertain conscientiousness displayed by the cataloguers in their workplaces in Nigerian academic libraries. The responses were measured with a 4- point Likert scale of strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree =2 and Strongly Disagree = 1.

Data Analysis

Responses from the participants were coded, imputed and analysed with SPSS for Windows version 20.0, (SPSS Inc. Chicago Illinois, USA). Secondary data analysis was conducted in the section of the questionnaire which involved the use of Likert's scale of measurement. Weight values were assigned to the responses according to their ranks. Values 1,2,3,4 were allotted



“Strongly Disagreed”; “Disagreed”; “Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed”. The total weight value (TWV) was obtained by the sum of the products of frequency responses (F) and the respective weight value (W) as expressed mathematically thus: $TWV = \sum F_i \cdot W_i$ where TWV is the total weight value, F_i is the frequency of respondents rated variable i ; and W_i the weight assigned to the rank of the variable in the Likert’s scale. The score for each variable (VS) was arrived at by dividing the TWV for each item by the total number of respondents which is expressed as: - Variable score (VS) = TWV/N where N= number of study population. In this instance, N is 84 participants. Variables scores ranged from 1 to 4. The closer the value score to 4, the higher the significance of the variable to the participants. The mean (M) was calculated by the addition of all the scores divided by the number of variables.

Results

84 volunteers completed the questionnaire. Predominant there were 52 (61.9%) males and 32(38.1%) females. Majority of the respondents i.e. 35 (41.7%) of them fell within the age range of 25 to 29 years; 30 to 39 years of age were 29 (34.5%) while those below the age of 25 years were 2 (2.4%).

Table I: Work Experience of Cataloguer in Years

	Work experience (years)	Frequency	Percent
1	Under 4 years	40	47.6
2	4 - 9 years	25	29.8
3	10 - 14 years	4	4.8
4	15 - 19 years	5	6.0
5	20 -29 years	5	6.0
6	30 years and above	5	6.0
	Total	84	100.0

Table I reveals 40 (47.6%) respondents with the least number years of working experience of less than 4 years were the predominant category 4 to 9 years of experience were 25 (29. %) while 10 to 14 years were 4 (4.8%).

Table II: The Variable Scores of the Respondents’ Conscientiousness

S/N	Traits	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TWV	VS
		Rank=4	Rank=3	Rank=2	Rank=1		
1.	I am organized	156	135	0	0	291	3.5
2.	I enjoy planning my work in detail	140	147	0	0	287	3.4
3.	I keep my desk clean	80	99	68	0	254	3.0*
4.	I am goal oriented	132	153	0	7	285	3.4
5.	I am persistent in the accomplishments of the work I start	136	150	0	0	286	3.4
6.	I persevere until the job is done	88	186	0	0	274	3.2
7.	I enjoy working on the most difficult task	120	66	64	0	250	2.9*
8.	I do not procrastinate but strive to meet the deadline	196	96	6	0	298	3.5
9.	I possess a good impulse control	56	210	0	0	266	3.2
Weighted average							3.3

*Variable scores below the weighted average



Table II shows the variable scores of the respondents' conscientiousness. that "I am organized" (3.5), "I do not procrastinate but strive to meet the deadline" (3.5), "I enjoy planning my work in detail" (3.4), "I am goal oriented" (3.4), "I am persistent in the accomplishments of the work I start" (3.4), were the traits above the weighted average of 3.3. "I keep my desk clean" (3.0) and "I enjoy working on the most difficult task" (2.9) were the traits below the weighted average.

Table III: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing Joint Contribution of Demographic Factors in raising Conscientiousness of Cataloguers in Nigerian Academic Libraries

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.607a	.369	.345	2.40010	.369	15.572	3	80	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Work Experience (in years), Gender, Age in Years

Table III revealed a coefficient of multiple correlation $R=.607$ and a coefficient determination R^2 of .345 which implies that 35% of the variance was accounted for by age, gender and years of service when taken together. The test of significance of the composite contribution was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. Analysis of variance for the regression yielding F-ratio of 15.572 significant at 0.05 level. This shows that sociodemographic factors (age, gender and years of service) have a positive relationship with conscientiousness while other factors may account for the remaining variance.

Table IV: Summary of Regression Showing the Relative Contribution of Demographic Factors in raising Conscientiousness of Cataloguers in Nigerian Academic Libraries

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	29.348	1.129		25.994	.000
Gender	.772	.554	.127	1.394	.167
Age in Years	.090	.323	.030	.280	.780
Work Experience (in years)	1.094	.218	.555	5.028	.000

Table IV shows the relative contributions of the demographic factors were taken . Only work experience ($\beta=.555$, $t=5.028$, $p < .05$) could significantly predict the conscientiousness of the respondents while gender ($\beta = .127$, $t=1.394$, $p > .05$) and age in years ($\beta =.030$, $t = .28$, $p > .05$) could not.

Discussion

Studying conscientiousness, one of the big 5 personality traits is underpinned by the conclusions in the field of applied psychology; where it has now been generally agreed that the knowledge of individual's personality and efforts to understand why employees react differently in various situations are of great importance in any organization (Christiansen and Tett, 2013). This research evaluated the relationship of conscientiousness to three sociodemographic factors; age, gender and years of work experience.



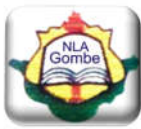
The majority of the cataloguers evaluated were relatively young and have spent less than four years in cataloguing practices. We observed that this is probably due to the fact that in most academic libraries in Nigeria, newly employed librarians are usually deployed to the cataloging section. This is really for no obvious reasons rather than to begin a career at a unit perceived as having the most tedious job description that will require manning by young and agile employees. It is with respect to this that they are usually enjoined to attend available workshops and conferences which are expected to expose them to so many aspect of the job and also serve as out-of-the-job training ground.

On evaluation of the librarians' conscientiousness, scores of two variables were observed below the mean score: viz "I keep my desk clean" and "I enjoy working on the most difficult task". This may probably be due to the fact that most of the respondents were young and relatively inexperienced which make it difficult to enjoy difficult cataloguing tasks and to keep their tables clean. Some of the times they may require clarifications and verifications of senior colleagues before they can clear their tables.

Age was found to have a joint contribution to conscientiousness; advancement in age has been said to best describe personality development in life. As individuals develop and get mature in managing jobs and life endeavours, personality becomes improved over the years. Harris, Brett, Johnson and Deary (2016) supported this conclusion that character changes progressively during life time, which implies that personality in people of advanced age differ from that of younger ones. A ground breaking study by University of Houston (2018) which reviewed the personality of 1795 volunteers from age 16 through 66 over a long period of 50 years using same volunteers from the start to conclusion established that people who are more conscientious than their peers at 16 will continue to be more conscientious at 30, at 50, and at 65, etcetera. The study indicates that conscientiousness does not diminish with age and emphasized that environment and experience play a significant role in the manner at which personality improves as people age.

Gender too was found to contribute to conscientiousness. Although in librarianship, institutions are considered gender neutral entities where gender issue does not play any role. Nevertheless, the concern of management of any organization is to ascertain that the correct persons are hired for a job. Unfortunately, at recruitment no applicant will portray an undesirable trait that could tantamount to his /her disqualification. Therefore, the level of a worker's conscientiousness come to the fore in the course of his /her daily routines as this trait was found to be predictive of job performance than cognitive ability for certain jobs. In Costa et al. (2001), women score somewhat higher than men on some facets of Conscientiousness, such as order, dutifulness, and self-discipline but this was not found to be steady through cultures, and no significant gender difference has typically been found in Conscientiousness at the Big Five trait level. However, digging dip into some aspects of conscientiousness such as Industriousness and Orderliness, DeYoung et al. (2007) found a significant gender difference for Orderliness, such that women score higher than men.

Findings also show that years of work experience contribute jointly to conscientiousness in the respondents. In 2013, Ng and Feldman (2013) established among employees, a positive correlation between numbers of years spent on a job and inventive behaviors. This connection suggests that cataloguers who have been working in this capacity longer than others may become more innovative, creative and capable of implementing changes where necessary. It suggests that expertise and mastery of the job improve over time, because employees gain job experience, which improves personality trait, knowledge and skills needed to complete a task.



It should be brought to mind that cataloguing requires the application of a comprehensive but flexible set of rule with a broad range of proficiencies and knowledge base of which the courses taken in Library schools may not be sufficient enough to prepare a cataloguer for the task. A cataloguer gets improved on the job with experience over the years. This experience takes him to places beyond the certificate. In libraries where available resources are not all automated such as Nigerian academic libraries, there is need for cataloguers to demonstrate ability to work on all materials especially the seemingly difficult ones without pushing aside; this is because every unprocessed book is kept away from its user.

Findings from this study revealed that among other factors, years of work experience will significantly predict the conscientiousness of the respondents. This invariably shows that librarians with more years of cataloguing experience will be required for better productivity in this department because of the greater conscientiousness attributed. It is also not surprising that conscientiousness is one of the big 5 personality traits used in many organizational settings for personnel selection, training, promotion and especially for team building.

Conclusion

Most of the respondents were young and relatively of few years in cataloguing practice experience. They acknowledged that they didn't enjoy difficult task and generally unable to keep their work table clean. Sociodemographic factors like age, gender and work experience have joint relationship with conscientiousness but only years of work experience could independently predict conscientiousness in this category of workers. Simply put, productivity in the cataloguing unit possibly will increase when workers with more years of experience are deployed rather than inexperienced librarians.

Recommendation

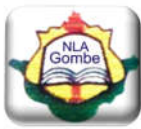
This study recommends that cataloguers should spend more time in cataloguing practices to mature their personality trait of conscientiousness for expertise and maintenance of dependable records in the library. To enhance efficiency and increase productivity also in the unit; the practice of deploying newly employed and young librarians to cataloguing units should be discouraged which is hinged on the fact that this study has shown that conscientiousness vis-à-vis productivity is determined by years of working experience. Institutional library management should also take cognizance of personality traits of applicants and newly recruited professionals such that right people will be assigned for the right job for best results.

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