MEASURING HOW OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE RELATES TO ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR NON-TEACHING EMPLOYEES OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Democratic elections have historically attracted a larger number of participants, leading politicians and incumbent governments to seek an understanding of personality traits that guarantee unwavering support from voters. This study specifically focuses on how openness to experience relates to electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This research aims to investigate whether openness to experience predicts electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. A total of 133 non-teaching employees volunteered to participate in the study and were randomly selected. Data was collected using two instruments: the Electoral Behavior Scale and the Openness to Experience dimension of the Personality Trait Inventory. The study adopted a correlational design and the data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment and Linear Regression Statistics. The results F (1,131) =.398, P <.05, indicated a positive and significant relationship between openness to experience and electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University. This suggests that individuals with a higher degree of openness to experience are more likely to exhibit favourable electoral behaviour. This study adds to the subject area by highlighting the importance of openness to experience as a predictor of electoral behaviour. By identifying this personality trait, politicians and stakeholders can focus on increasing awareness of electoral perceptions among individuals with high openness to experience, ultimately leading to an increased gain in electoral support necessary for successful election outcomes.

Keywords*: Electoral-Behaviour, Employees, Non-Teaching, Openness-to-Experience*

INTRODUCTION

The election, which gives citizens a significant role in the country's political decision-making process is one of the most crucial parts of political engagement (Balatif et al., 2018). In this view, group leaders are formed in such a way that followers can participate in decision-making through the electoral process. In a democratic society, electoral conduct is an important feature of public political engagement (Saud et al., 2020). It becomes vital to emphasize that without political engagement, there will be no democracy according to Bartels & Leighley, (2008a). Scholarly research on electorates' behaviour began just around 1940. Electoral behaviour has been defined by scholars as moments of intense competition for control of the government and its resources, a civil right in democratic governance (Namibia et al., n.d.), and the summoning of voters to polls to express their preferences in favour of a given set of parties and candidates (Garzia & Ferreira

da Silva, 2021). This means that electoral behaviour is an individual's willful decision to participate in all processes regarding the election from the campaign, and voting, to the result declaration. Some scholars have found a significant association between personality traits and electoral behaviour (Yildirim, et al., 2023).

It is believed that personality has long been at the crossroads of social psychology research. According to Sindermann et al., (2021b) personality traits are a collection of hierarchically organized characteristics, with openness to experience, consciousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism being one of the highest levels. Accordingly, Gerber et al., (2011a) used terms like narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism to describe certain personality traits. Other scholars described personality as a set of relatively stable features and distinguishing characteristics that provide a person's behaviour with both consistency and individuality (Nai et al., 2021a; Feist & Feist, 2009). A personality trait is described as a consistent disposition to think, feel, and behave in specific ways, according to (Bakker et al., 2021). Personality traits are unique features that remain persistent over time. Several research studies have linked personality to political beliefs and actions, such as political ideology (Gerber et al., 2011b; Gerber et al., 2020a; Nweke, et al 2022) and electoral behaviour (Laguna et al., 2021a). To a large extent, these scholars focused on the five personality traits as well as the other aspects of personality traits such as Machiavellism, and dark personality traits as stated earlier. In this regard, Nweke, et al (2022) argue that among the five personality traits, extraversion and openness to experience were found as significant correlates of electoral behaviour. Consequently, in the present study, the researcher is motivated to examine if both personality traits (extraversion and openness to experience) would predict electoral behaviour among the study participants. In this context, the researcher is motivated to investigate if openness to experience will predict electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Early scholars have established a positive association between pragmatic prejudice, gender stereotyping, candidate appraisal, information search, and gender disparities, as well as a cross-sectional data survey of voters on electoral outcomes (Cox & Morales Quiroga, 2022). Yet what is not known is whether studies examined the relationship between aspects of personality traits on voting, and political behaviour (Nai, 2022; Nai et al., 2021a; Gerber et al., 2023; Aldemir & Bayraktaroğlu, 2004; Ha & Lau, 2015a). To this end, scholars have yet to examine the role of openness to experience on electoral behaviour among university non-teaching employees. On this gap in knowledge rests the motivation for the study.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was established by (Ajzen, 1991) as a general model to predict and explain behaviour across various types of behaviours. It is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991). One of the TRA's key assumptions is that one's actions are controlled. Individuals, according to their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, act logically, according to the Theory of Planned Behaviour. These aspects aren't often actively or consciously examined during decision-making, but they do provide a backdrop for it (electoral behaviour).

A person's perception of behavioural control reflects his or her beliefs about factors that may restrict or encourage behaviour performance and can influence his behaviour choice. For example, if two political parties have two well-known candidates from opposing parties, one will vote for the candidate who has more talents, abilities, and willpower to lead the people rather than the candidate who will disburse funds on election day. This view is supported by the following evidence:

(Nchise, 2012) published an empirical Analysis of the theory of planned behaviour, which provides a theoretically grounded model that explains e-democracy adoption based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and tested using data from randomly selected Sub-Saharan African

nations. The findings back up the presented assumptions, underlining the importance of people's actions in democracy adoption.

Empirical Review
Openness to experience and Electoral Behaviour
Gerber et al., (2011b) published a study on the Big Five personality traits in the political realm (a component of electoral behaviour). The findings show that the Big Five personality types can predict electoral behaviour. Gerber et al., 2011b emphasized the ability of the five factors of personality as proposed by the Big Five factors in predicting electoral behaviour. However, the researchers in the present argue the factor of personality (openness to experience) will predict electoral behaviour among participants of the present sample.

Aldemir & Bayraktaroğlu, (2004) published a study that used a five-factor personality inventory to determine the effect of personality factors on voter behaviour. According to the findings, there was a substantial difference between respondents' desire to vote for a specific political orientation (a component of electoral behaviour) and rule adherence (a personality trait). This study appears different from an earlier study by Gerber et al., 2011b, in the aspect of rule adherence and electoral behaviour the researcher argues that the extraversion and openness version of the personality traits though different from the rule adherence will predict electoral behaviour among the participants of the present study.

A study on personality goes a long way, according to Nai et al., (2021b). A study of candidate personality qualities, voter profiles, and perceived likability. 1,971 respondents from the United States took part in the study. The findings show that dark candidates had personality traits such as narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (a component of electoral behaviour). This study varies from earlier studies on electoral behaviour. Furthermore, all the studies to the benefit of the researcher focused on diverse aspects of electoral behaviour, to this end, the present study differs in the factors of personality traits as in the findings of Nweke, et al.; (2022). In this regard, the researcher is of the opinion that extraversion and openness to experience will positively and significantly predict electoral behaviours among the sample participants.

A study on personality qualities and current voting (a positive component of electoral behaviour) was published by Ha & Lau, (2015a). The study used data from a large-scale nationwide survey field conducted during the 2008 presidential election in the United States of America. Personality factors had a direct impact on correct voting, according to the findings (a component of electoral behaviour). The findings of Ha & Lau, (2015a) appear similar to the present study in the area of personality traits. However, it differs concerning the type of personality factor under consideration. While Ha and Lau (2015a) were concerned with general personality factors, the present study was concerned with extraversion and openness to experience. Also, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other study examined the two factors of personality traits as the present study.

Hypothesis
1. Openness to experience will positively and significantly predict electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

METHOD
One hundred and thirty-three (133) employees who declared interest were randomly selected from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Anambra State, and participated in the study. The researcher adopted a multi-stage sampling method. A purposive sampling method was adopted to select the university of choice. A simple random sampling method was adopted to select senior non-teaching employees. This made it impossible for employees who are not senior staff to participate. Another simple random sampling was conducted to select the various departments,

units and directorates of the university where senior non-teaching employees were found. Participants for the study were selected using an incidental random sampling method. This method provides that participants who meet inclusion criteria can join the study if the individual is willing to participate. The participants varied in age from 24 to 64 years old, with a mean age of 36.69 years and a standard deviation of 7.9467. Females made up 69.2% (92) of the participants, while males were 30.8% (41). Out of 133 participants, there were 105 (76.1%) married people, 26 (22.5%) single people, 1 (0.7%) separated person, and 1 (0.7%) widowed person among the participants. Additionally, 128 (96.4%) were Christians, 3 (2.2%) were Muslims, and 2 (1.4%) were neither Christians nor Muslims. Also, 1 (0.7%) of participants had a senior secondary certificate, 3 (2.2%) had an ordinary national diploma (OND), 6 (4.3%) had a National Certificate of Education (NCE), and 123 (92.8%) had a Bachelor of Science, Higher National Diploma, or Masters. Furthermore, 122 (88.4%) out of the participants were registered voters, whereas 11 (11.6%) were not. In addition, 27 people (19.6%) were members of a political party (as members of any political party). In addition, 71 (51.5%) of those surveyed were members of a social group (NASU, SSANU), while 62 (48.6%) were not. One hundred and three (66.3%) were registered members of religious groups while 30 (21.7%) were not.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study for the data collection on the variables. They include the Electoral Behaviour Scale (EBS), and the Openness to Experience domain of the Personality Trait Inventory. Nweke, et al., (2022) developed the electoral behaviour scale (EBS). The electoral behaviour scale is a seven-item questionnaire that examines several aspects of people's electoral behaviour. The items on the electoral behaviour scale range from strongly agree-5 to strongly disagree-1 on a five-point Likert scale. Items on the scale include; "I have frequently volunteered for political organizations in the previous 12 months", and "I have frequently voted in the past 12 months".

Nweke, et al., (2022) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.86. Furthermore, Radcliff (2013) found a positive association between voters' rights and happiness. The researcher argues that if voters' rights are associated positively with happiness, then electoral behaviour may likely share a positive and significant association with life satisfaction. Test for convergence validity revealed that EBS was positively associated with the Life satisfaction scale ($r = .03$, $p < .05$), and, Self-esteem ($r = .49$, $P < .05$). Authors of the EBS reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .76 for the scale (Nweke, et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Guttman Split-Half coefficient was .634, while the Spearman-Brown coefficient (equal length and unequal length were .666, and .689 respectively). Similarly, the correlation between forms was .499, the Cronbach alpha for the first half was .689 and the second half was .592.

Personality Trait Inventory

The personality trait inventory (PTI) was developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The PTI is a 44-item scale on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Sub-section used from the PTI were items relevant to the study which is openness to experience which include sample items such as "is talkative", "is original, comes up with new ideas" etc. These items on PTI are scored positively except for items with "R" (meaning reversed scoring). Openness to experience was measured by items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, and 14. The reliability coefficient of the personality trait inventory (PTI) for the present study was found to be .664 Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Procedure

The researchers selected Nnamdi Azikiwe University using a purposive sampling method. During the lunch break, the researchers visited offices in Administrative Building A & B (Bursary, Personnel, Registry Alumni, DVC Admin, DVC Academics, Council, Senate, Planning, SIWES,

Admissions unit), the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Education, Law faculty, Management Sciences, Engineering, and Biosciences, Environmental Sciences. These offices were visited on different days during the break time which is usually between 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm on work days. The researchers introduced themselves to the non-teaching employees, handed out questionnaires, and explained how to fill them out to the respondents. Some of the non-teaching staff were hostile to the researcher and refused to fill out the questionnaire, citing their dissatisfaction with the non-payment of salaries owing to them for over two years, and thus declined to take part in the study. While others did participate, respondents were given extra time (10 minutes) to answer the questionnaire due to restricted break time, tight work schedules, and the huge number of participants to be covered. Eight units in administrative block A, five units in administrative block B, and four departments in the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, including the dean's office, were sampled. A total of 250 copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed, only 133 questions were properly filled 117 were incorrectly filled due to a need to attend to urgent work or go for a break.

Design and Statistics
The study adopted; a correlational design. The data were analyzed using descriptive, zero-order correlation, and linear regression entry statistics. The data were managed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

RESULTS
Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the descriptive analysis and the unstandardized Beta coefficient for the impacts of openness to experience on electoral behaviour.

Table 1: Shows the results of the descriptive analysis

S/N		Mean	STD	Min	Max
	Age	36.699	7.694	24	64
	Marital status	1.263	.490	1	4
	Religion	1.052	.283	1	3
	Educational qualification	3.766	.638	1	4
	Registered voter	1.075	.264	1	2
	Reg Member of Political Group	1.797	.403	1	2
	Gender	1.69	.464	1	2
	Membership with Social Group	1.421	.495	1	2
	Membership with Religious Group	1.165	.372	1	2

The results of Table 1 show that age had a mean of 36.699 and a standard deviation of 7.694. Marital status had a mean of 1.263 and a standard deviation of .490, as shown in the table and as shown for other variables measured in Table 1.

Table 2: Standardized Beta Coefficient results for independent effects of openness to experience, on electoral behaviour

Predictor variable	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Df1(df2)	F	β	Sig.
Model 1 EB	.068	.005	.015	1(131)	2.994		
A. Openness to experience						.398*	.036

**p<.01, * p<.05, EB =Electoral Behaviour

The results of the linear regression analysis enter method show that the independent variable contributed 15%, to the understanding of electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The Model is significant at F (1,131) =.398, P <.05. The result of the Beta Coefficient shows that Openness to Experience positively and significantly predicted electoral behaviour (ß =.398, P<.05) in this study.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined openness to experience and electoral behaviour among senior non-teaching employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State, Nigeria. However, the current study discovered a link between openness to new experiences and electoral behaviour. Previously, research has found favourable and significant links between personality traits and electoral behaviour (Nai, 2022; Nai et al., 2021a; Laguna et al., 2021b). These findings, however, were focused on traits of personality other than the Big Five personality assessments. The result, of the study lays support to the current hypothesis. This shows that participants in the current study were more concerned with the ability for active imagination, sensitivity to inner sentiments, preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and confronting authority.

Individuals are predisposed to reality and how things should be done. For example, it is usual for electorates to question procedures throughout the electoral process when they suspect something is wrong. These electorates are brave, experienced, and focused and can reason deductively. Such people can organize petitions and demonstrations if they believe things are not going according to their expectations. Understanding the relationship between openness to experience electoral behaviour may be explained by the theory of planned behaviour.

Attitude, subjective norms, and personality factors, according to (Ajzen, 1991) have an indirect effect on task performance. Personalities (openness to experience) may establish a capacity for a positive attitude, according to the theory of planned behaviour. It becomes simpler to overcome subjective norms against task-related behaviours when this favourable effect is evoked in an electorate. This may cause the individual to assess their capacity in terms of the resources required to engage in task-related tasks such as electoral behaviour. When the outcome of such an appraisal is positive, it predicts better results than subjective behavioural intention, especially when based on personal conviction. This leads to the step of devising plans or tactics for achieving the desired behaviour.

It is expected that perceived behavioural control is a better predictor of behavioural intentions in the goal-oriented behaviour hypothesis. Thus, participants in the present study were open to experience and were eager to participate in electoral behaviour because they were willing to elect candidates who had competence and integrity. It was recommended that politicians and stakeholders within the school be encouraged to seek electoral support among employees with openness to experience trait as this trait was found to align with electoral behaviour. Practical implications are that individuals with the trait are disposed to electoral behaviour. Empirical implications are that the present study has contributed to the body of knowledge on electoral behaviour. The theoretical implication is that the theory of planned behaviour can be used in the understanding of electoral behaviour. Using the theory of planned behaviour, the current study shows a nuanced knowledge of election behaviour. This study, according to the evidence, sheds further light on the importance of openness to experience as a personality trait that predicts electoral behaviour. Accordingly, openness to experience predicted the electoral behaviour

among the participants of the present study partly because the participants of the study were educated to the level of first degree. Now it would not be out of place that one attributes the level of openness to experience to the educational status of the participants. This variable has widened considering that the openness to experience is the better trait that is dispositional geared toward more curiosity and gross determination to gain insight through intellectual engagement which is possible through constructive social interaction. On this basis, non-teaching employees with the openness to experience trait are ready and willing to participate in electoral processes to reveal their convictions about the common good rather than selfish goals.

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