

# Impact of Personality Traits on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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**R. Uma**

Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration  
NIFT - TEA College of Knitwear Fashion, (Affiliated to Bharathiar University)  
Mudalipalayam, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0140-271X>

**R. Radhamani**

Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration  
NIFT - TEA College of Knitwear Fashion (Affiliated to Bharathiar University)  
Mudalipalayam, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India

## Abstract

**Purpose:** Employee behaviours as measures of performance make it significant to explore such relevant behaviours and the causal factors of behaviour. One such relevant behaviour is Organizational citizenship behaviours which are proven to promote organizational effectiveness and the causal factors of citizenship behaviours are classified as organizational and individual. Among the individual factors that cause behaviour, personality traits are taken for investigating for their role in promoting organizational citizenship behaviour. The discretionary aspect of citizenship behaviour signifies that citizenship behaviours are displayed at the will of the individuals which lends credence to the antecedent ability of individual factors. Personality traits being an individual factor causing behaviour, the study has investigated the antecedent ability of two specific personality traits – agreeableness and conscientiousness.

**Research Design/ Methodology:** Descriptive research method was employed in this study. A sample size of 112 was collected using convenience sampling method. Correlation and multiple regression using SPSS version 28 was used for data analysis.

**Findings:** The results have established the personality trait- conscientiousness as a significant predictor of all the dimensions of citizenship behaviour.

**Limitations:** This work has covered academicians employed in the private arts and science colleges. Generalizability of the results to academicians in government institutions, aided institutions needs further investigation as the organizational environment differs in private and government institutions.

**Originality/Value:** With personality traits being an innate factor for causing behaviour, the study intends to examine the power of innate qualities of an individual in promoting specific behaviours.

**Keywords:** Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Organizational Citizenship behaviour, Personality.

## Introduction

Spontaneous and innovative employee behaviors as a requirement for organizational effectiveness were identified by Katz & Kahn in the year 1966. The nature of spontaneous and innovative behavior includes cooperation, protecting the organization from harm, representing favorably the organization to outsiders. Later it was Dennis W. Organ who coined the term “Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)” in the year 1988 to define the interpersonal and cooperative employee behaviors. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors have been established as significantly contributing to the profitability of the organization (Koys, 2001). The dynamism of the environment in which the organizations are functioning needs proactive employees who will volunteer to contribute for the betterment of the organization, as Citizenship behaviours are proven to be promoting organizational effectiveness (Walz & Niehoff, 1996; Kumari & Thapliyal, 2017).

With citizenship behaviours proven as instrumental in promoting organizational effectiveness, the same holds true for higher educational institutions. The success of educational institutions depends on the willingness of the staff to go beyond their stated roles (Somech & Ron, 2007). Teachers play the central role in the educational system and their personal contact with the students makes the personal characteristics of the individual staff member pivotal for the success of any educational institution. The display of citizenship behaviors depends upon the personality (traits) of an employee. With Citizenship behaviors defined by Organ (1988) as discretionary, it means that display of citizenship behaviors are not mandated by the formal job description of the organization and are voluntary. The voluntary behavior depends upon the characteristic/ trait of an individual and hence personality traits have reason enough to become antecedents of OCB. The possession of certain traits in individuals has been identified as instrumental in triggering behaviours. This research work has investigated the impact of personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) in promoting citizenship behaviour among teaching staff in private colleges. Indulgence in prosocial behavior is considered to be an innate quality; hence individual differences in traits contribute to variation in prosocial activities. Individual differences in traits/ qualities reflect in different types of behavior.

Understanding individual differences is important for organizations, as different jobs require people with different qualities and capacity. Identification and analysis of individual differences in behavior based on various individual variables which cause behavior is essential for the organization to evoke the organizationally desired behavior from an employee. Personality, being an individual variable needs to be analyzed for its predictive ability in promoting organizational citizenship behaviors, as possession of certain traits in people is proven to be associated with citizenship behaviors.

Since the emergence of the concept of organizational citizenship behavior, there have been a plethora of studies that investigated the antecedents of such behavior. Certain section of the research works concentrated on the organizational factors (job satisfaction, organizational justice, organizational commitment, leadership style) and its

impact in promoting citizenship behaviors. In these works it is premised that organizational procedures and practices shape the behavior of employees. On the other side there exists works which have taken the view that display of citizenship behavior depends upon the personal nature of the individuals and believe that personality traits are pivotal for promoting citizenship behaviors.

The causal factors of organizational citizenship behavior can be classified under two categories: organizational factors and individual factors. This research work has taken up individual factor for analysis. One of the individual factors is personality traits that hold importance in promoting citizenship behaviors. Personality comprises of enduring traits that are pivotal in determining the behavior of the employee. Individual specific traits and characteristics determine human behavior.

### Review of Literature

In the works involving personality and OCB, some researchers have explored the impact of all the traits advocated by the big five model of personality (extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, emotional stability and conscientiousness) on OCB. Certain sections of researchers have picked up only specific traits and have investigated their antecedent nature. The study by Elanain (2007) was in to determining the relation between the big five personality traits and OCB and the results supported the power of emotional stability, openness to experience and conscientiousness as significant predictors of organizational citizenship behaviours but not that of extraversion and agreeableness. Singh, A.K., & Singh, A.P. (2009) focussed on the predictive power of the big five personality traits in eliciting citizenship behaviours, in which agreeableness and conscientiousness emerged as the strongest predictors. The study by Mahdioune et al., (2010) also focussed on the antecedent ability of big five personality traits in eliciting OCB in which it was proven that conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience were the highly significant factors. Chiaburu et al (2011) have proven the predictive power of the personality traits advocated by the big five model in promoting citizenship behaviors. Malik et al., (2012) proved the significant relation between personality traits and OCB. The study by Golafshani, M.R., & Rahro, M. (2013)

also investigated the impact of big five personality factors in promoting citizenship behaviours and concluded that agreeableness and extraversion as powerful promoters of OCB. Patki&Abhyankar (2016) investigated the predictive ability of big five traits in promoting OCB and concluded that conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion are positively correlated with OCB.

Personality trait agreeableness was established as a significant moderator in the relation between positive affect and OCB in the work of Ilieset.al., (2006). The notion that engaging in citizenship behaviors within an organization arises out of personal choice and not out of organizational factors is proven in the study by Kumar et.al (2008). The study has concluded that citizenship behaviors are displayed by individuals on the basis of who they are. Golafshani et.al (2013) have established the effect of extraversion and agreeableness in eliciting citizenship behaviors. The work of Imeret.al., (2014) was based on the notion that the enduring quality of personality traits is powerful in promoting OCB rather than situational factors which lasts only for few minutes and their work confirmed the personality traits as significant predictor of OCB. The personality trait “extraversion” and its antecedent nature with regard to organizational citizenship behavior is proven in the work of Purba et.al (2014).

### **Theoretical Background Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

The need for spontaneous, cooperative and innovative behaviors from employees for enhancing organizational performance was underscored by Katz in the year 1966. A word to capture the spontaneous and innovative behavior and the components of such behavior remained unidentified till 1988. It was in the year 1988, Dennis W Organ coined the term Organizational Citizenship Behavior and defined it as individual behavior which are discretionary and that are not rewarded by the formal reward system of the organization, yet important for effective functioning of the organization. The components of citizenship behavior as suggested by Organ include - altruism, sportsmanship, civic virtue, conscientiousness and courtesy.

### **Personality**

The term personality has got different definitions. GordonAllport (1937) defined personality as the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. Mischel (1976) defined it as the distinctive patterns of behavior that characterize each individual’s adaptation to the situations of his/her environment. It can be taken that personality consist of behavior patterns that an individual will display across the situations or the individual’s psychological characteristics which will lead to such behavior patterns. Personality traits are considered to be a reason for causing individual behavior. Traits are defined as characteristics that lead people to exhibit behavior that tends to be similar across situations. Describing people in terms of personality traits is a method of capturing their uniqueness.

### **Theoretical Rationale for Personality as Determinant of Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

The antecedent nature of personality in promoting organizational citizenship behavior can be justified on the basis of trait theory.

### **Trait theory**

According to the trait theory, every individual is said to compose of definite predispositional attributes called “traits”. Traits are considered to be long and enduring and differ across individuals. The presence of certain specific traits in human elicits corresponding behavior ie., certain traits leads to certain behavior. Hence differences in human behavior can be attributed to the presence of traits in employee. Due to the influencing nature of personality traits in promoting specific behaviors, it can be justified that presence of certain specific traits in an employee makes them to engage in citizenship behaviors.

The personality traits taken up for investigation in this research work for its predictive power are:

- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

**Agreeableness**

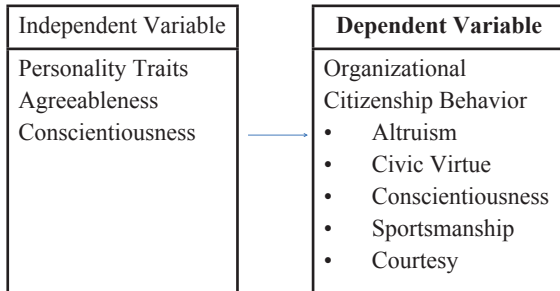
Employees who rank high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative. Agreeable employees have a high regard for cooperative and harmonious work environment and interpersonal relationship which will make them to indulge in activities to promote the same. One way of achieving the above is by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors. Agreeableness is measured on the following dimensions: sensitivity, politeness, kindness and patience.

**Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness as a trait is associated with the qualities of reliability and diligence. Employees ranking high in conscientiousness plan their work in advance and are concerned about the impact of their behavior on others. Such individuals are predisposed to engage in activities that extend beyond their stated tasks. Organizational citizenship behavior being voluntary in nature can be displayed by such individuals.

The dimensions of conscientiousness includes: building relationship with colleagues, flexible, tolerant and accommodating attitude.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relation between agreeableness and the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relation between conscientiousness and the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior.

**Research Methodology**

**Sample**

The sample for this study comprises academicians employed in private arts and science colleges in the districts of Coimbatore and Tiruppur in the state of Tamilnadu. The sample size is 112 collected by convenience sampling method.

**Instrument used for Data collection**

A well-constructed questionnaire was designed for the purpose of data collection.

**Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire**

The questionnaire on Organizational citizenship behavior employed the five dimensions (altruism, civic virtue, sportsmanship, conscientiousness and courtesy) which covered 13 attributes. A five point Likert Rating scale was used and respondents recorded their ratings on the scale of 1 to 5. (1= never, 2 = rare, 3 = sometimes, 4 = always and 5 = often).

Variable	Dimensions	Attributes
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Altruism	Frequency of help offered to coworkers with heavy workload
		Frequency of help offered in the absence of coworker
		Frequency of assistance in work related matters
	Sportsmanship	Frequency of complaining trivial matters
		Frequency of finding fault with organization.
	Conscientiousness	Frequency of maintaining above the norm attendance
		Frequency of taking extra breaks
		Frequency of following company rules when nobody is watching

	Civic Virtue	Frequency in keeping abreast of changes in organization.
		Frequency of keeping up with organizational announcements.
	Courtesy	Frequency in avoidance of creating problems to coworkers
		Frequency of considering the impact of action on coworkers
		Frequency in the involvement of abusement of the rights of coworkers.

### Personality Questionnaire

The personality traits involved in this study include agreeableness and conscientiousness. The two dimensions were tapped on 7 attributes. A three point Likert Rating scale was used and respondents recorded their ratings on the scale of 1 to 3. (1= high, 2=moderate, 3=low)

Variable	Dimensions	Attributes
Personality	Agreeableness	Degree of care displayed towards coworkers
		Degree of voluntariness in assisting coworkers
		Degree of enjoyment in helping coworkers
	conscientiousness	Degree of maintaining interpersonal relationship
		Degree of accommodation in accepting others views/ opinion.
		Degree of tolerance
		Degree of flexibility

### Reliability test

	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha value
Personality traits	7	.973
Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale	13	.975

The Cronbach's alpha values are indicative of the reliability of the measuring scales.

### Analysis

Table 1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between Personality Traits and the dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Altruism	1						
2 Sportsmanship	.779**	1					
3 Conscientiousness	.911**	.798**	1				
4 Civic virtue	.936**	.834**	.952**	1			
5 Courtesy	.902**	.871**	.922**	.934**	1		
6 Agreeableness	.742**	.899**	.764**	.732**	.843**	1	
7 Conscientiousness trait	.863**	.911**	.806**	.865**	.933**	.904**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

**Table 2 Multiple regression between personality traits and altruism**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.868a	.754	.749	1.32719

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conscientiousness trait, Agreeableness

**Table 3 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	4.079	.381		10.714	.001
Agreeableness	-.323	.172	-.209	-1.881	.063
Conscientiousness trait	1.166	.123	1.052	9.471	.001

a. Dependent Variable: altruism

Level of significance @5%

**Table 4 Multiple regression between personality traits and sportsmanship**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.928a	.861	.858	.62525

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conscientiousness trait, Agreeableness

**Table 5 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-.405	.179		-2.256	.026
Agreeableness	.404	.081	.416	4.984	.001
Conscientiousness trait	.371	.058	.535	6.404	.001

a. Dependent Variable: sportsmanship

Level of significance @5%

**Table 6 Multiple regression between personality traits and conscientiousness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.810a	.656	.650	1.23179

**Table 7 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	5.105	.353		14.447	.001
Agreeableness	.239	.160	.196	1.497	.137
Conscientiousness trait	.547	.114	.628	4.784	.001

a. Dependent Variable: conscientiousness

Level of significance @5%

**Table 8 Multiple regression between personality traits and civic virtue**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.873a	.762	.757	.99405



**Table 9 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.944	.285		6.818	.001
Agreeableness	-.320	.129	-.271	-2.485	.014
Conscientiousness trait	.938	.092	1.110	10.167	.001

a. Dependent Variable: civic virtue

Level of significance @5%

**Table 10 Multiple regression between personality traits and courtesy**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimate
1	.933a	.871	.868	.97816

**Table 11 Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.138	.281		4.057	.001
Agreeableness	-.005	.127	-.003	-.041	.967
Conscientiousness trait	1.055	.091	.936	11.628	.001

a. Dependent Variable: courtesy

Level of significance @5%

## Findings

Table 1 has analysed the personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) with the dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour. Correlation between the personality traits and the dimensions of OCB are found to be significant at 0.01 level.

From the multiple regression tables- 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 the R<sup>2</sup> values for altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue and courtesy are 0.754,0.861, 0.656,0.762 and 0.871 respectively, which indicates that the personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) accounts for 75.4 % variation in altruism, 86.1% variation in sportsmanship, 65.6% variation in conscientiousness, 76.2% variation in civic virtue and 87.1% variation in courtesy.

It is evident from tables 3,5,7,9 and 11 that the personality trait of conscientiousness (p<.05) is significant in its relation with altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue and courtesy that leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis H01. Hence there exists a significant relation between the trait conscientiousness and the

dimensions of OCB. From tables 5 and 9 it is evident that the trait agreeableness (p<.05) is significant in its relation only with sportsmanship and civic virtue and tables 3,7 and 11 indicate that the trait agreeableness (p>0.05)is non-significant in its relationship with altruism, conscientiousness and courtesy. Thus the personality trait agreeableness is significant in its relation with the OCB dimensions of sportsmanship and civic virtue and non-significant with altruism, conscientiousness and courtesy.

## Conclusion

The personality trait of conscientiousness has emerged as the strong predictor of all the key dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour among academicians. This finding is in line with the meta analytic study of Chiaburuet.al., (2011), in which the authors have established Conscientiousness as the variable with the greatest impact on OCB. Whereas the predictive power of agreeableness is weak, with its predictive ability restricted to the OCB dimensions of sportsmanship and civic virtue and not that of altruism, conscientiousness and courtesy. This difference in the predictive power of personality traits can be based on the notion that, the dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour differ in their content and so do the personality traits

(each personality trait remaining unique from others). Due to the differences in the nature of traits, the predictive power of a particular trait may be strong in promoting certain specific dimensions of citizenship behaviours and but not with other dimensions, which accounts for the differences in the predictive ability of conscientiousness and agreeableness.

### Limitation

This study involved academicians employed in private arts and science colleges. The generalizability of the results to employees in other sectors needs further analysis. This is because the requirements for citizenship behaviours from employees differ according to the needs of the sector. As advocated by the personality job-fit theory, different jobs require people with different traits to promote specific behaviours; hence the traits that promote citizenship behaviour in educational institutions may not be true for other professions.

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**Author Details:**

**R. Uma**, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, NIFT - TEA College of Knitwear Fashion, (Affiliated to Bharathiar University), Mudalipalayam, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** uma.rajagopal1@gmail.com

**R. Radhamani**, Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, Nift - Tea College of Knitwear Fashion (Affiliated To Bharathiar University), Mudalipalayam, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, India