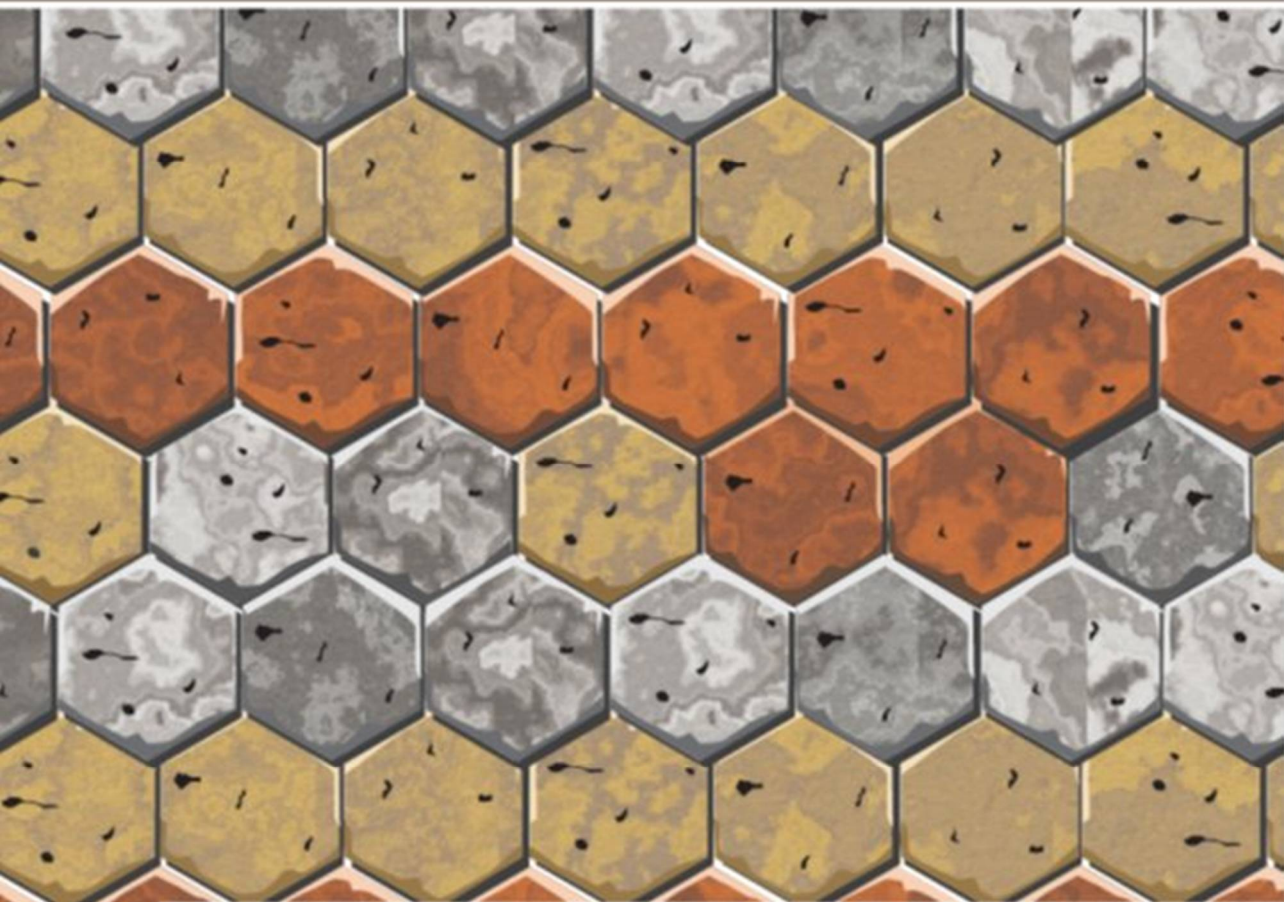


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PROACTIVE PERSONALITY, CREATIVE SELF-EFFICACY AND PROACTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Substantial evidence exists on the desirable consequences of proactive work behavior, and this strongly necessitated empirical search for plausible precursor of the behavior. Therefore, this study assessed the relationship between proactive personality (PP) and proactive work behaviour, (PWB) and the moderation role of creative self-efficacy (CSE) in the relationship. The sample comprises 245 non-teaching staff of three public tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. The participants consisted of 59% females, 41% males with age mean of 37 years (SD .75). This study is quantitative, employed cross-sectional design and collected data with self-administered survey. Established scales used for this study are: PP (Claes, Beheydt & Lemmens, 2005), CSE (Karwowski, Lebuda, & Wiśniewska, 2018) and PWB (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). Regression analysis anchored on PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2018) was applied on the data. Results indicate that PP and CSE positively predicted PWB, and that PP explained greater variance than CSE in PWB. More so, interaction statistics revealed that CSE moderated the relationship between PP and PWB. The findings lead to the plausible conclusion that PP and CSE are valuable in improving PWB.

Keywords: personality, proactivity, self-efficacy and workplace behaviour

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Introduction

The thinning employment opportunities, downsizing and stiff competition among organizations for competitive advantage demand employee proactive behavior. As the organization needs proactive employees for effective functioning, employee needs proactive behavior to sustain their employment. Proactivity leads to improve performance, promotes career success, enhance job satisfaction for the individual and effectiveness for the organization (Parker, Wang, & Zhang, 2020; Wegwu, & Alonge, 2021). In several theoretical presentations proactive personality (PP) has been assumed a precursor of proactive work behavior (PWB) (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Hou, & Huang, 2021). In this understanding, proactive personality is defined as a behavioral tendency toward taking personal initiative in creating a favorable environment (Mustofa, Purnomo, Darmawati, & Helmy, 2020; Wang, Zhang, Thomas, Yu, & Spitzmueller, 2017). It is a stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations (Hua, Zhao, & Hou, 2020). Wu, Deng and Li, (2018) made a call for empirical assessment of the relationship between PP and PWB, but a review of the extant literature showed that to date empirical treatment of that concern is substantially lacking. Subjecting theoretical propositions to empirical investigation for the advancement of knowledge and practice is a cherished scientific activity. Consequently, this study aimed to contribute in filling this gap as it ascertained both the direct and moderating relationship between PP, CSE and PWB

Proactive personality and proactive work behavior

The concern for the role of personality in employee behaviour is historical with a huge literature. This interest has justification largely in the emerging understanding that personality is malleable over time (Zhang, 2020). In organizational behavior literature one of the highly studied personality traits is proactive personality. Trait in the context of personality implies a relatively stable, consistent, and enduring internal characteristic of an individual that is deduced from their pattern of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and habits (APA, 2015). PP refers to an individual relatively stable disposition, tendency, inclination and propensity to take action that causes changes and influence the environment. (Mustofa, Purnomo, Darmawati, & Helmy, 2020). It includes individual traits such as being self-initiated, change-oriented, and visionary (Choi, Ullah, & Kang, 2021). The growing appearance of PP in organizational behavior literature anchored largely on the associated positive outcomes. For instance,

PP positively relates with job crafting, work engagement and flow at work.(Callea, Caracuzzo, Costanzi, Urbini, 2022), career adaptability, and career growth potential (Wang, Mei, Xie,Zhao, & Yang, 2021), and job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (Hsiao, & Wang, 2020). The proactive person is the individual who expresses the appropriate behaviour, not in response to problem that has occurred, but before the occurrence of the problem. Proactive work behavior refers employee-initiated and future-focused actions that aimed at changing the current situation before a problem emerges (Smithikrai, 2019). It is about employee act of “taking initiative in enhancing current situations or creating new circumstances. Such behavior has been associated with organizationally desirable outcomes such as innovative work behavior (Nurjaman, Marta, Eliyana, Kurniasari, & Kurniasari, 2019) and career success (Ling, Bandar, Halim, & Muda, 2017).. The discussion about PP and PWB centered on whether there is a relationship between what an employee is and what the employee does. The proposed direct relationship between PP and PWB is anchored on behavioral concordance model and the extant empirical literature. In the context of this study, behavioral concordance model (Cote, &Moskowitz, 1998) proposed that people high in PP are more likely to engage in proactive behavior. In terms of previous research findings, PP directly predict innovative work behaviors (Pan, Song, & Wang, 2021), PWB (McCormick, Guay, Colbert, & Stewart, 2019), employees’ creativity (Karimi, Malek, & Farani, 2021), individual improvisation (Wu, & Ma., 2019), and voice behavior (Elsaied, 2019; Wijaya, 2021). These reported observations are most likely because of certain characteristics that are associated with PP such as the comparatively strong inclination to search for information, opportunities, exceed formal responsibilities, to accepta culture that is change-oriented, and less constrained by situational forces (Mustofa, Purnomo, Darmawati, &Helmy, 2020) which have the potential to positively impact PWB.

Creative self-efficacy as a moderator

Creative self-efficacy refers to how much individuals believes in their ability to produce creative outcomes. (Karimi, Malek, &Farani, 2021). It is the extent of employee’s confidence in performing various and complex problems creatively while carrying out the duties associated to their job. Extant nomological network essentially offered the foundation for the proposed relationships (direct and moderation) of CSE explored in this study. At direct level of analysis, CSE positively

enhance innovative work behavior (Zainai, & Lara., 2021) and creative performance (Choi, Ullah, & Kang, 2021) and these predicted outcomes are all elements of PWB. And at the level of third variable CSE mediates the positive relationship between a proactive personality and creative performance (Choi, Ullah, Kang, 2021, Karimi, Malek, & Farani, 2021), teachers' innovative work behavior (Mustofa, Purnomo, Darmawati, & Helmy, 2020). Consequently, it is argued that although PP could lead to PWB, but that depends on the degree of CSE in the employee. Some elements such as confidence, motivation associated with CSE positioned it for the proposed moderating role (Suyoto, Prasetyo, Naibaho, & Sumed, 2019).

Hypotheses

- 1 Proactive personality has a positive influence on proactive work behavior
- 2 Creative self-efficacy has a positive influence on proactive work behavior
- 3 Creative self-efficacy moderates the influence of proactive personality on proactive work behavior

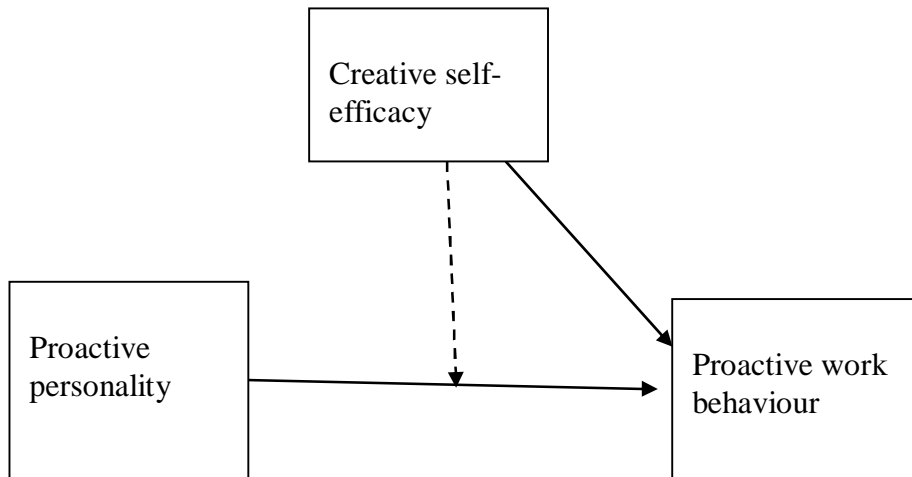


Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the present study and it depicts the relationship between PP, CSE and PWB. It is a recursive causal model as it does not express feedback effects (Nayebi, 2020). That is, PP and CSE influence PWB, not the other way round. More so, the model depicts CSE as a moderator variable in the relationship between PP and PWB.

Method

Sample and procedure

The sample comprises 245 non-teaching staff of three public tertiary institutions in Delta State Nigeria. The participants consisted of 59% females, with academic qualification ranging from ordinary level to post graduate certificates, and age mean of 37 years (SD. 75). The sample was limited to non-management member of the staff as there exist much overlaps between some aspects of PWB and job description of this category of organizational member. Data were collected with self-administered questionnaires which the participants received and responded to at their workplaces. However, before administering the survey, permission was obtained from the offices of the registrars of the institutions. And with the assistance of some clerical staff of the institutions the survey was administered to 300 employees. Within a period of 7 days 276 surveys were retrieved. This gives a response rate of 92%. However, after excluding invalid data as a result of substantial incomplete response to the items, a total of 145 respondents were used for the data analysis.

Research instruments

Proactive personality traits was assessed with Claes, Beheydt and Lemmens' (2005) 6 items, shortened version of Bateman & Crant's (1993) 17- item scale. Sample items on the scale are "if I see something I don't like, I fix it" and "I am always looking for a better way to do things". The scale has wide adoption in the literature that includes translation from the original language (English) to other languages (Akin & Özcan, 2015). A-five point Likert scale format that ranged from 1=strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= undecided, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree was adopted. Both the shortened and the original version of the scales are widely adopted with reports of satisfactory reliability and validity characteristics (Farooq, Khalil, & Tufail, 2019; Hu, Wang, Zhang, & Bin, 2018). CSE was measured with Karwowski, Lebuda, and Wiśniewska's (2018) 6 item scale anchored on a five- point Likert scale format that ranged from 1 – Untrue of me, 2 – Somewhat untrue of me, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Somewhat true of me, 5 – True of me. Samples of the items are "I know I can efficiently solve even complicated problems" and "I trust my creative abilities". There were reports of satisfactory psychometric properties of the scale (Karwowski, Lebuda, and Wiśniewska, 2018; Shaw, Kapnek, & Morelli, 2021). PWB was assessed with Griffin, Neal, and Parker. (2007) 3 items scale. This measure was reported on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=never; 2=rarely;

3=Neutral; 4=often; 5=always. The three items are “I initiated better ways of doing my core tasks” “I come up with ideas to improve the way in which my core tasks are done” and “I made changes to the way my core tasks are done” The scale authors and other users (e.g. Cui, & Li., 2021; Suyoto, Prasetio., Naibaho, & Sumed, 2019) reported satisfactory psychometric indices

Design and statistics

Data were collected at single point in time; therefore the study design was cross-sectional. It is also a correlational research as it provides some indication as to how variables are related to one another (Salkind, 2022). The distribution of the survey followed purposive convenience sampling technique as the targeted institutions and participants were used based on availability.. Purposive convenience sampling technique is satisfactory as it enables selection of sample based on the researchers' judgment and preference that are congruence with study objectives. Regression analysis (complemented with PROCESS macro for SPSS) was used to test the hypotheses. Regression analysis was appropriate as this study predicted PWB from PP and CSE. More so, the PROCESS tool is gaining much popularity among researchers and has been adjudged the most preferred techniques for assessing moderation and mediation (Field, 2018). Since regression analysis is a parametric statistical test several assumptions associated with its usage were observed in the design and preliminary data analysis. These precautions include the collection of data that were independent of each other, which met the separate response requirement. The use of Likert scale format which met the demand for interval level of measurement. And scatter plots on the data revealed linear relationship between the study variables

Common method variance

Some procedural control of common method bias was implemented in the design. The study focal variables were presented to the participants in different sheets of paper. This is to ensure physical gap that hinders participant's flow of thought from one variable to the other. Different anchoring options were applied to each of the measure. PP was on “agreement”, CSE was based on “reflection” while PWB was on “frequency”. Through the covering letter, the participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. This aimed at encourage participation and honesty in response. More to

the procedural control measures, common method variance diagnostic statistical procedure (the Harman single-factor test) was applied on the data sets. The test shows that factors with Eigen value equal to 1 and above accounted for 74% of the total variation with the first factor explaining 31% of the total variation. As the first factor did not account for up to 50% of the total variation the data sets are most likely not affected by common method bias (Martínez-Córcoles, & Zhu, 2020; Rodríguez-Ardura, & Meseguer-Artola, 2020)..

Control variables

Gender was dummy coded (male = 1, females =0) and age (in years as reported by participants) were treated as control variables in this study. Theories and empirical literature informed the choice of the covariates. Socio-cultural theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) offered explanation for the influence of gender and age on social behavior. More so, informed by the reported positive association between gender, age and PWB several extant studies treated the demographics as covariates (Choi, Ullah,; & Kang, 2021; Karimi, Malek, & Farani, 2021). Testing for covariates is needful since it reduces omitted variable bias in model specification (Cooper, Eva, ZareaFazlelahi, Newman, Lee, & Obschonka, 2020).

Results

The standard deviations, coefficient alpha and intercorrelation coefficients of the study variables are presented in Table 1. The observed means for the variable were of 3.27, 3.24 and 3.28 for PP, CSE and PWB respectively. Since the adopted measures were anchored on five point scale the mean statistics are considered moderate. The intercorrelation statistics on the variable were .19, .32 and .22 and they were positively and significantly related. The moderate correlation coefficients essentially implied that the data sets do not have issues of colinearity.

Table 1: mean, standard deviation, alpha and intercorrelation of the study variables (N = 245)

	Variable	M	Sd	No of item	Alpha	1	2
1	Proactive personality	3.27	.04	6	.75	1	
2	Creative self-efficacy	3.24	.38	6	.78	.19**	1
3	Proactive work behavior	3.28	.52	3	.81	.32**	.22**

** < .001

Test of direct effect

Table 2 shows independent effect of PP and CSE on PWB. The statistics in the table supported hypotheses 1 and 2. For hypothesis 1, (Table 2, second, third, and fourth rows) PP has a significant and positive effect on PWB ($b = .25$, 95% CI [.16-.34], $t = 5.40$, $p < 0.001$). The b-statistics indicates that a one-unit increase in PP leads to .25 unit increase in PWB. The R² statistics indicated that PP account for less than 1% variance in PWB and also indicated that the effect of PP on PWB is of small magnitude. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) result indicates a statistically significant regression, and this means that PWB can be predicted from PP. The model indicates a good cross-validation as the difference between R² and adjusted r² was small and this implies applicability of the model to other samples from the same population. For hypothesis 2, (Table 2, five, sixth and seventh rows) CSE has a significant and positive effect on PWB ($b = .16$, 95% CI [.07- .25], $t = 3.50$, $p < 0.001$). The b-statistics indicates that a one-unit increase in CSE leads to .16 unit increase in PWB. The R² statistics indicates that CSE account for less than 1% variance in PWB and also indicate that the effect of CSE on PWB is of small magnitude. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) result indicates a statistically significant regression, and this means that PWB can be predicted from CSE. The model indicate a good cross-validation as the difference between R² and adjusted r² was small and this implies applicability of the model to other samples from the same population.

Table 2: Simple regression on the effect of PP and CSE on PWB

	<i>b</i> (95%CI)	Se	β	T	<i>P</i>
Constant	2.44(2.13- 2.75)	.16		15.61	.001
Proactive personality	.25{.16-.34}	.04	.32	5.40	.001
	$F(1;243)=29.24, p = .001, r^2 = .108, \text{adjusted } r^2 = .104, DW = 1.73$				
Constant	2.71{2.41-3.01}	.15		17.66	.001
Creative self-efficacy	.16{.07-.25}	.04	.22	3.50	.001
	$F(1;243)= 12.31, p = .001, r^2 = .048, \text{adjusted } r^2 = .044, DW = 2.21$				

Multiple regression analysis revealed that jointly PP and CSE has R (.36) and R^2 (.13). The latter statistics implies that the two variables jointly account for 13% variance in PWB. However semi-partial correlation statistics of .09 and .03 for PP and CSE respectively indicate that PP explained more variance in PWB than CSE does.

Test of the moderation effect

Conditional effect statistics show that when CSE was high (+1SD), there was non-significant relationship between PP and PWB ($\beta = .15$, 95% CI $\{-.07, .39\}$, $t = 1.33$, $p = .19$), but when CSE was low (-1SD) there was a significant relationship between PP and PWB ($\beta = .69$, 95% CI $\{.46, .92\}$, $t = 5.88$, $p = .001$). The difference between the squared multiple correlation of the "main effect only" model (.43) and the squared multiple correlation (.36) of the interaction model produced squared semipartial correlation of .07. This statistic indicates the strength of the interaction effect. That is, the interaction of PP and CSE accounted for 7% of the variance in PWB.

Table 3: moderation effect of CSE on PP and PWB Relationship

	<i>b</i>	Se	T	P
Constant	3.12{2.91-3.34}	.11	28.74	.001
Proactive personality	.42{.27-.57}	.08	5.39	.001
Creative self-efficacy	.18{.02-.34}	.08	2.23	.03
PP xCSE	-.71{-1.14--.28}	.22	-3.27	.001
Age	.06{.00-.12}	.03	1.83	.07
Gender	.05{-.07-.17}	.06	.76	.45
	R = .43; $r^2 = .18$; $F(5; 238)$, 10.75, $p = .001$			

Figure 2 below shows the slope analysis of the moderation effect. The slope revealed that when CSE was 1SD below the mean, PP impact on PWB was stronger compared to when it was 1SD above the mean. In other words, the positive effect of PP on PWB was more potent when CSE was low than when it was high. The interaction was obtained by plotting the estimates plus and minus 1SD of the means of CSE to represent high versus low CSE in PWB, respectively.

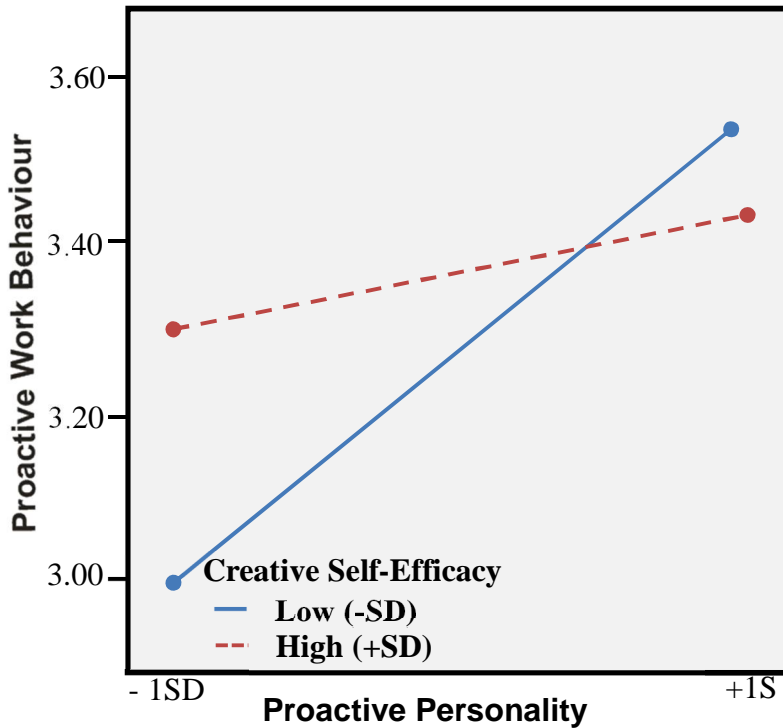


Figure 2: Interaction effect of PP and CSE on PWB

Discussion

Proactivity among employee is of much value for effective organizational functioning. This understanding is leading to substantial empirical concern for the nomological network of PWB. This study examined the direct and interaction effect of PP and CSE in PWB. Consequently, three related hypotheses were generated and tested. Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed a positive effect of PP and CSE on PWB, while Hypothesis 3 proposed a moderation effect of CSE on the relationship between PP and PWB. For hypothesis 1, PP positively and significantly influence PWB. The results suggest that an increase in the levels of PP would significantly increase the levels of PWB. This result parallel that of (Elsaied, 2019; Wijaya, 2021; McCormick, Guay, Colbert, & Stewart, 2019; Wu, Deng, & Li, 2016).. The finding also aligned with behavioral concordance model (Cote, & Moskowitz, 1998) which proposed that people higher in proactive personality are more likely to engage in proactive behavior. This result is expected since several features of PP such as self-confidence, future focused and self-control are also characteristics of PWB. This explanation has support in the research finding that energetic personality traits relates with choosing a setting with the possibility of energetic behavior and that a sociable personality trait relates with choosing a setting with the possibility of direct social interaction (Gormy, 1983). More so, PP predicted PWB as the former is measured in this study as a specific and limited trait, and such measurement of personality predicts behavior better (McAndrew, 2018). For hypothesis 2, CSE positively and significantly influence PWB. This finding extend and update some related extant studies (e.g., Choi, Ullah, & Kang, 2021; Jan, Zainai, & Lata., 2021). This implies that more of CSE in an employee will lead to more exhibition of PWB. One possible reason for this finding is that largely PWB is creativity in a broader sense. For instance, several representations of PWB such as personal initiation, taking charge, voice behavior embedded creativity. Another plausible explanation for the observed finding is the nomological nature of CSE. As example, CSE has positive relationship with employee innovative behavior (Supriatna, 2019) employee creativity (Kim, 2019) and all these are element of PWB. Although both PP and CSE positively influence PWB, the former contributes more to PWB than the latter. A plausible explanation for this finding is that PP share more characteristics with PWB than CSE does with PWB. Hypothesis three on the moderation role of CSE in the relationship of PP and PWB was confirmed. CSE moderated the positive relationship of PP

and EPWB. However, the slope analysis show that the impact of SC on PP and PWB relationship was stronger when CSE was low than when it was high. The direction of result on the moderation test is unexpected and surprising as the opposite appears to be more appealing since CSE is essentially a sense of confidence regarding a specific task. And a sense of confidence is the driving force for almost every aspect (e.g., personal initiation, voice and taking charge) of PWB. However, one plausible account for the unexpected direction of the moderation result is that PP and CSE belong to the same domain (personality) of human composition. The result implies that PP does not need much, but less of a related characteristic (e.g. CSE) to be activated.

Theoretical contribution

The present study offered some theoretical contributions to the extent body of knowledge. First, this study is a response to yet Wu, Deng and Li'S (2018) unattended observation of lack of study and call for studies on the relationship between PP and PWB. Considering the valuable organizational outcomes of PWB and the several theoretical proposition of PP and PWB relationship the need for empirical investigation of the relatedness of the variables becomes obvious. And by implication this study contributes to the separate extant literature on PP, CSE and PWB and the scanty literature on the three variables taking as a whole. Secondly, the literature shows scarcity of empirical test of behavioral concordance theory, and this signifies lack of sufficient understanding on the value of the theory. The present study contributes to addressing this gap by testing the theory through the examination of the relationship between PP and PWB. The findings that PP positively influences PWB offered support to behavioral concordance theory. Third, analysis of moderation in the relationship between personality traits and employee behavior is a valuable and common feature of organizational behaviour literature. However, the trend in the literature was the use of situational factors as moderators in personality and behavior relationship (Dalal, Meyer, Bradshaw, Green, Kelley, & Zhu, 2014; McCormick, Guay, Colbert, & Stewart, 201). The present study pioneered the introduction of personality factor as a moderator in personality and behavior relationship. This is a concern for personality strength in personality and behavior relationship. Therefore, this study has widened the knowledge on the moderation of personality and behavior relationship. Fourth, the findings of this study parallel some related previous studies; PP and

CSE positively predict PWB, and CSE has a moderation effect on the relationship between PP and PWB. Therefore, the results make contribute in the accumulation, external validity and application of the literature. And finally, the scales for PP, CSE and PWB were created in environments essentially different from the one of the present study. However, through the implementation of scale adoption procedure the reliability and validity of the scales were assessed. By the confirming results obtained, this study contributed to the literature on the psychometric properties of the scales, and their adequacy in the Nigerian context.

Implication for Practice

There are some practical implications from the present study. First, direct effect and simple effect statistics showed that PP and CSE positively influence PWB. That is, PP and CSE have the potential to drive PWB. Essentially, PWB is a sought after employee's experience as it has much organizationally desirable outcomes (Harshitha. & Senthil, 2021; Parker, Wang, & Zhang, 2020; Wegwu, & Alonge, 2021). Importantly, results of the present study implicate PP and CSE in enhancement of PWB. And since personality traits are malleable (Bleidorn, 2021; Steiger, Flickiger, Ruegger, , & Allemand, 2021) management of universities should institute policies and programmes that could enhance PP and CSE for PWB among their administrative staff. There are several documentations (e.g., Roberts, Luo, Briley, Chow, Su, & Hill, 2017) of successful personality interventions. Second, simple slope statistics indicated that low level of CSE strengthened the positive influence of PP on PWB. The lesson that could be deduced from this observation is that commitment on enhancing PWB through CSE should have CSE deemphasized. That is, human resource practitioners in higher institutions should not upwardly manipulate PP and CSE at the same time in their effort to enhance PWB.

Limitation and suggestion for future studies

There are some design limitations of the present study that should be considered in the interpretation and adoption of the findings. First, the data used in this study came from single source (self-report). Although some procedural control of common-method bias was implemented in the design of the study, the possibility of the bias in the study cannot be completely ruled out. It is therefore suggested that future studies adopt multisource (self-report, others report) in data collection. The model for the present study is of one

independent, moderation and dependent variables. Although the moderation variable was complemented with control of some demographics, the research model is a simple one which could be considered under-specified. Consequently, framework that would include more variables is recommended for future research. Such framework could be moderated mediated analysis. The sample for this study is non-teaching staff of public-owned tertiary institutions. For more inclusive application of findings future study should examine the same concern among teaching staff in privately- owned tertiary institutions.

Conclusion

Proactive work behavior among employees is substantially linked to valued and desirable organizational outcomes. These associated feats necessitated efforts aimed at enhancing the behavior among employees. Consequently the present study ascertained the pattern of relationship PP and CSE have with PWB among non-teaching staff of selected public tertiary institutions. Relevantly, this study revealed that PP and CSE are precursors of PWB and that CSE has greater influence on PWB when PP and CSE interacts. The implication of these findings is that human resource management strategy aimed at the enhancement of PWB should considered PP and CSE. However, a message discernable from the moderation result is that for any intervention aimed at strengthening PWB, PP and CSE should not be enhanced together.

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