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Temperamental Traits as a Predictor of Occupational Stress among Civil Servants in Rivers State, Nigeria

Nwala Gift Ojiugo1, Awonemika Caroline Arimie2

1Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling , Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt, Nigeria
2Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt Nigeria
arimie.caroline@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The study examined temperamental traits as predictors of occupational stress among civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria. This study adopted the correlational research design. Four objectives and four corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 8,946 civil servants in Rivers State. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw sample for the study. A sample of 500 civil servants was used for this study. The researcher's self-designed instruments was utilized in collecting data for the study. Simple regression analysis was used in answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that temperamental traits (sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic) taken one at a time significantly predicted the stress level of Civil Servants in Rivers State. The study recommends that newly employed civil servants should be given orientation on how to identify their temperamental and harness it to minimize the incidence of stress at the workplace. Stress is dangerous especially for the civil servants who are to implement the policies of government. There is need to organize training programmes on how to best handle stress at the work place.*

Keywords—temperamental traits; occupational stress; mental health

1. INTRODUCTION

Temperament is an aspect of personality that is concerned with emotional dispositions and reactions and their speed and intensity [1]. The term is often used to refer to the prevailing mood or mood pattern of a person. Although, the concept of temperament originated from the writings of Hippocrates and his student, Galen, the concept was however popularized by Hans Eysenck who proposed that there are four basic temperamental types namely: Sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic.

Meanwhile, viewed stress as something that has to do with the destabilization of the equilibrium of the body mechanism by external factors or variables (stressor) and the restoration of this equilibrium (homoestatsis), which are affected by stress responses [2]. As opposed to widespread belief, stress does not simply connote nervous tensions or the result of damage; stress is not something to be dodged or evaded [2,3]. It is affiliated to the state of all individuals' innate drives. According to [2], not all stress is bad, to be alive is to be under certain amount of stress, and the body functions well, even excels, under the right kind and amount of stress. However, when the boy is constantly forced to draw on inner reserves to respond to negative stressors, health suffers.

Similarly, [4] posit that small amounts or level of stress is desirable, beneficial and even healthy. Reference [5] explained that stress is not necessarily bad in and of itself; it also has some positive value. Positive stress helps to improve performance in any human activity. It also plays a factor in motivation, adaptation and reaction to environment. It also enables individuals to re-assess and re-examine their health status. It reminds individuals of the need to be careful with their lives, what they do, how they do it and when they do it.

Occupational stress has two major dimensions: physiological and psychological stress. Physiological stress is often viewed as the reaction of the body (headache, migraine, abdominal pain, lethargic, backbone, chest pain, fatigue, heart palpitation, sleep disturbance and muscle ache) to various stressful triggers at the work place that directly and negatively affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, quality of work and personal health [6]. Psychological stress is often seen as an emotional reaction (such as anxiety, and depressive burnout, job alienation, hostility, depression, tension, anger, nervousness, irritability and frustration) experienced by an individual as a result from the stressors at the workplace.

There are several sources of stress among civil servants in Nigeria in general and Rivers State in particular including personality variables and environmental sources. Temperamental traits could influence the stress levels of civil servants since it is an aspect of individual personality characteristics. Such personality characteristics are likely to influence how civil servants perceive their assigned tasks, what they do at the work place and their responses to the physical, mental and emotional or psychological demands of the job.

The interaction of the researcher with the civil servants revealed that they experience different degree of stress. The stress in most cases affects the extent to which they can handle any task assigned to them, how punctual and regular they go to work, how they attend to visitors etc. Stress also result to mental health challenges and may affect interpersonal relationships. The major problem

of this study is therefore to investigate the extent to which temperamental traits as predictors of occupational stress among civil servants in Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the extent to which sanguine temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which choleric temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which melancholic temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
4. Determine the extent to which phlegmatic temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

1.3 Hypotheses

1. Sanguine temperamental trait does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
2 Choleric temperamental trait does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
3 Melancholic temperamental trait does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.
4 Phlegmatic temperamental trait does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Temperament

Temperament is an important aspect of personality. Furthermore, temperament is a combination of mental, physical and emotional traits of a person natural predisposition [7]. Additionally, [8] asserts that temperament is an individual's characteristics level of emotional excitability or intensity and is typically recognized early in the life of an individual. According to [9] temperament cannot be observed directly because the influence of environmental factors is immediate; but there is also the hereditary component to it as can be seen in studies involving twins.

Meanwhile, the term temperament originated from the Latin word "temperare" meaning to mix. In the ideal personality, the complementary characteristics were exquisitely balanced among warm-cool and dry-moist [10]. In four less-ideal types, one of the four qualities was dominant over all the others. In the four types, one pair of qualities dominated the complementary pair, for example, warm and moist dominated cool and dry. These four were the temperamental categories which Galen named sanguine choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic.

i) **Sanguine Temperamental Trait:** Sanguine temperamental trait explains individuals with unique characteristics. According to [9], sanguine persons tend to be extroverted, active, cheerful, optimistic, outgoing and talkative. Such individuals may be buoyant, carefree, love adventure or pleasure and are interested in variety and entertainment. Sanguine persons love or enjoy being part of a crowd [11]. However, such persons have a hard time doing nothing and engage in more risk seeking behaviour. Reference [9] asserts that sanguine persons have problems with romantics and other relationships. They are also likely to have problem with addictions. Their constant cravings can lead to over eating and weight problems as well as sleeping problems which also may negatively affect relationships such as marriage. In addition individuals with sanguine personality may have a hard time doing nothing and engage in more risk seeking behaviour.

ii) **Choleric Temperamental Trait:** Choleric temperamental type is the most active of the four temperaments [12]. Hence, choleric person is restless, quick to anger, practical, logical, analytical and very courageous [9]. Furthermore, choleric persons are the most ambitious of all the temperaments [13]. Choleric persons are competitive, goal-oriented, motivational and decisive [9]; combined with their dominant, result-oriented outlook make them natural leaders [14]. Choleric persons are believed to be violent, vengeful and short tempered [11]. The strength of choleric persons included self-confidence, active and extroverted [15]. They also enjoy taking risks; find it easy to make decisions both for themselves and for others. They are usually very creative, steadfast and may sometimes be compassionate and empathetic to others.

iii) **Phlegmatic Temperamental Trait:** Individuals who have phlegmatic traits tend to be relaxed, quiet and easy going. Phlegmatic persons are usually people-oriented [9]. Such individuals seek interpersonal harmony and close relationship which makes phlegmatic people loyal spouses and loving parents [9]. Phlegmatic persons usually like to preserve their relationships with old friends, distant family members and neighbours. According to [9], one advantage they possess their ability to avoid interpersonal conflicts and always try to mediate between others to restore peace and harmony. Additionally, phlegmatic persons are usually introverted, thoughtful, reasonable, calm, patient, caring and tolerant. In addition, they tend to have a rich inner life and be content with themselves [16]. Also, they tend to be steadfast, consistent in their behaviour and thus have steady and faithful friends. This is because phlegmatic persons never get easily upset and hardly get angry. Phlegmatic person (whether man or woman) is the easiest type of person to get along with and is by nature the most likeable of all the temperaments [17].

iv) **Melancholic Temperamental Trait:** Melancholic persons have a tendency to be depressed, slow and pessimistic [9]. People with melancholic temperament are diligent and accurate, introverted individuals, task-oriented, thoughtful, always alone or isolated and analytical thinkers. Being task-oriented, they work better when they are alone or in small groups [13]. They do not like when someone interrupts or distracts them, so they choose activities that will bring them less publicity. A melancholic personality leads a self-reliant individual who are thoughtful, reserved and often anxious [18]. They often strive for perfection within themselves and their surroundings, which leads to tidy and detail-oriented behaviour.

2.2 Stress

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain [19]. It is the body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Stress is a physical, mental or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. It further explained that stress can be external (from the environment, psychological or social situations or internal illness or from a medical procedure). It is observed that stress can initiate the "fight or flight" response: a complex reaction of neurologic and endocrinology systems. Reference [2] identified three stress situations based on the duration of the event. The first is known as the "short stress situation" which consists of events lasting from few seconds to a few hours. It is noted that short stress situation can be negative if it is allowed to continue for a long period of time. The second situation is called "moderate stress situation". This is made up of stress evens that last for many hours to a few days. The third stress situation is the "severe stress situation". These are persistent and lingering stress situations. This type of stress is however, dangerous.

According to [2], there are four variations of stress. These are good stress (eustress), bad stress (distress), over stress (hyper stress) and understress (hypo stress). However, not all forms of stress is bad [2,3]. Individuals require low or moderate stress to perform optimally in any activity. This indicates that the worst type of stress is high level stress. This type of stress is correlates negatively with performance or academic achievement.

Moreover, job stress may lead to organizational ineffectiveness due to the following reasons (i) the giving or receiving capacities of the parts are not adequate for the actual demands of the system (ii) the nature of help given or received by each part is unexpectedly altered (iii) the time available to perform the functions is too little or too much (iv) the number of resources necessary to accomplish the task has been radically increased or decreased and (v) when new functions arise unexpectedly and spontaneously [2,3,9}.

Another factor responsible for occupational stress is work pressure. This is the tendency in every work in which the worker feels that he may not be able to perform up to expectation. When performing one's duties or work, there is the tendency that one will make mistakes, underachieve or fail. This tendency inherent in every work situation will always push the individual into working harder, be more careful or cautious to avert any of the negative events (making mistake, underachieving or failing). This striving to avert problems imposes much pressure on the individual there-by giving way for stress [20].

3. METHODS

The study adopted correlation research design. Correlational research is also used in predicting one variable from another. It is in this perspective that the study adopted correlational research design in order to predict the stress level of civil servants in Rivers State from their emotional intelligence and temperamental traits. This research design enabled the researcher to predict occupational stress among civil servants in Rivers State from their temperamental traits. The population of the study comprised 8,946 civil servants from the 26 ministries, parastatals and agencies in Rivers State (Rivers State Civil Service Commission, 2020). The population comprised of male and female civil servants in the state. The sample of the study comprised 500 civil servants drawn from the ministries, parastatals and agencies in Rivers State. The Temperamental Traits Questionnaire has four sub-scales as follows: Sanguine Scale, Melancholic Scale. Simple regression coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses. Analysis was done with aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

4. RESULTS

Hypothesis One: Sanguine temperamental type does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 1a: Analysis of the Extent to which Sanguine Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	-.605	.366	.364	1.115

Table 1a shows that R^2 is .366; $p < .05$. This result reveals that there is moderate negative relationship between sanguine temperamental trait and occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The coefficients table (see appendix) indicates the extent to which sanguine temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The result reveals that as scores on sanguine temperamental trait increases, there is a decrease in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 1b: Anova Summary Table of the Simple Regression Analysis of Sanguine Temperamental Trait on the Occupational stress of Civil Servant in Rivers State

Model		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F_{cal}	p-value	Remarks
1	Regression	125.921	1	125.921	13.099	.000	H_0 is rejected $p < .05$
	Residual	1355.433	141	9.613			
	Total	**1481.354**	**142**				

a. Predictors (Constant): Sanguine Temperamental Trait
b. Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

Table 1b shows that sanguine temperamental trait accounted for 36.6 percent of the variance on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State (0.366 x 100). However, Table 1b shows that the F-ratio is significant ($F_{cal} = 13.099$, Df = 1/498; $p < .05$). Hence, hypothesis seven was rejected. This result indicates that sanguine temperamental trait significantly predicts the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: Choleric temperamental type does not significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State

Table 2a: Analysis of the Extent to which Choleric Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.405	.164	.162	0.914

Table 2a indicates that R^2 is .164; $p < .05$. This result reveals that there is a low relationship between choleric temperamental trait and occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The coefficient table (see appendix) shows the extent to which choleric temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The result shows that as scores on choleric temperamental trait increases, there is a slight increase in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 2b: Anova Summary Table of the Simple Regression Analysis of Choleric Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational Stress of Civil Servant in Rivers State

Model		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F_{cal}	p-value	Remarks
1	Regression	88.976	1	88.976	10.705	.000	H_0 is rejected $p < .05$
	Residual	864.448	104	8.312			
	Total	**953.424**	**105**				

a. Predictors (Constant): Choleric Temperamental Trait
b. Dependent Variable: Occupational stress

Table 2b reveals that choleric temperamental trait accounted for 16.4 percent of the variance on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State (0.165 x 100). However, Table 2b shows that the F-ratio is significant result shows that choleric temperamental trait significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three: Melancholic temperamental type does not significantly predict the occupational stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State.

Table 3a: Analysis of the Extent to which Melancholic Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	0.695	.483	.481	1.633

Table 3a shows that R^2 is .483; $p < .05$. This result reveals that there is a high positive relationship between melancholic temperamental trait and occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The coefficient table (see Appendix) shows the extent to which melancholic temperamental trait predicts the occupational stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State. Table 4.9a also shows that when the scores on melancholic temperamental trait increases, there is a corresponding increase in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 3b: Anova Summary Table of the Simple Regression Analysis of Melancholic Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational stress of Civil Servant in Rivers State

Model		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F_{cal}	p-value	Remarks
1	Regression	133.687	1	133.687	13.353	.000	H_0 is rejected $p < .05$
	Residual	700.84	70	10.012			
	Total	**834.527**	**71**				

a. Predictors (Constant): Melancholic Temperamental Trait
b. Dependent Variable: Occupational stress

Table 3b indicates that melancholic temperamental trait accounted for 48.3 percent of the variance on the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State (0.483 x 100). However, Table 3b indicates that the F-ratio is significant ($F_{cal} = 13.353$; Df = 1/498; $p < .05$). Hence, hypothesis nine is rejected. This result shows that melancholic temperamental trait significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Four: Phlegmatic temperamental type does not significantly predict the occupational stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State.

Table 4a: Analysis of the Extent to which Phlegmatic Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	-.679	.461	.459	1.422

Table 4a shows that R^2 is .461; $p < .05$. This result reveals that there is a high negative relationship between phlegmatic temperamental trait and occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The coefficient (see Appendix) shows that extent to which phlegmatic temperamental trait predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. Table 4.9a also reveals that when there is increase in the scores on phlegmatic temperamental trait, there is a decrease in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

Table 4b: Anova Summary Table of the Simple Regression Analysis of Phlegmatic Temperamental Trait Predict the Occupational Stress of Civil Servant in Rivers State

Model		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F_{cal}	p-value	Remarks
1	Regression	131.974	1	131.974	13.203	.000	H_0 is rejected $p < .05$
	Residual	1769.294	179	9.996			
	Total	**1901.266**	**178**				

a. Predictors (Constant): Phlegmatic Temperamental Traits
b. Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

Table 4b indicates that phlegmatic temperamental trait account for 46.1 percent of the variance on the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State (0.461 x 100). However, Table 4a shows that the F-ratio is significant ($F_{cal} = 13.203$; Df = 1/498; p <

.05). Hence, hypothesis ten is rejected. This result reveals that phlegmatic temperamental trait significantly predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

a) Sanguine Temperamental Trait and Occupation Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

The result of research question six and hypothesis six (Tables 1a and 1b) showed that sanguine temperamental trait to a moderate negative extent predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. This result indicated that as scores on sanguine temperamental trait increases, there is a decrease in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. Table 1b further indicated that sanguine temperamental trait accounted for 36.6 percent of the variance of occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State and this is statistically significant ($p < .05$). Moreso, Table 1b showed that the calculated F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study is that sanguine temperamental trait significantly predicts the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The finding of this study is in agreement with [21] that sanguine temperamental trait significantly influence the occupational stress of married women in New York. Also, this result is in agreement with [22] that sanguine temperamental trait significantly relate to the occupational stress of military personnel in Netherland.

b) Choleric Temperamental Trait and Occupation Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

The result of research question seven and hypothesis seven (Tables 2a and 2b) revealed that choleric temperamental trait to a low negative extent predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. This result showed that scores on choleric temperamental trait increases, there is a decrease in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. Individuals with sanguine temperamental trait does not have dull moments, they keep busy and enjoy what they do and this enable them to overcome stress). Table 2b further revealed that choleric temperamental trait accounted for 16.4 percent of the variance of occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State and this is statistically significant ($p < .05$). Moreso, Table 2b revealed that the calculated F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study is that choleric temperamental trait significantly predicts the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The finding of this study is in agreement with [23] that choleric temperamental trait significantly influence the occupational stress of teachers in Australia. Also, this result is in agreement [24] that choleric temperamental trait significantly influence the occupational stress of Nurses in Turkey.

c) Melancholic Temperamental Trait and Occupation Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

The result of research question eight and hypothesis eight (Tables 3a and 3b) revealed that melancholic temperamental trait to a high positive extent predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. This result indicates that scores on melancholic temperamental trait increases, there is corresponding increase in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. Table 3b further showed that melancholic temperamental trait accounted for 48.3 percent of the variance of occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State and this is statistically significant ($p < .05$). Moreso, Table 3b revealed that the calculated F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study is that choleric temperamental trait significantly predicts the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The finding of this study is in agreement with [25] that melancholic temperamental trait significantly relate to the occupational stress of lawyers in Poland. This result is because individuals with melancholic temperamental trait are easily discouraged, unstable and suspicious. They usually experience mood change. In addition they are usually anxious.

d) Phlegmatic Temperamental Trait and Occupation Stress of Civil Servants in Rivers State

The result of research question nine and hypothesis nine (Tables 4a and 4b) revealed that phlegmatic temperamental trait to a high negative extent predict the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. This result showed that scores on phlegmatic temperamental trait increases, there is a decrease in the scores on occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. Table 4b further revealed that phlegmatic temperamental trait accounted for 46.1 percent of the variance of occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State and this is statistically significant ($p < .05$). Moreso, Table 4b revealed that the calculated F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study is that phlegmatic temperamental trait significant predicts the occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State. The finding of this study is in agreement with [26] that there is a significant relationship between phlegmatic temperamental trait and occupational stress of workers in the Republic of Ireland.

6. CONCLUSION

Temperamental traits are very important in the daily activities of individuals. Temperamental traits are important in understanding individuals' complex behaviours and attitudes. In order to reduce mental health problems both at home and at the workplace, individuals need to manage their temperament.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Civil servants with melancholic temperamental traits should be encouraged to regularly go for counseling.

ii. New employed civil servants should be given orientation on how to identify their temperamental and harness it to minimize the incidence of stress at the workplace.

iii. Stress is dangerous especially for the civil servants who are to implement the policies of government. There is need to organize training programmes on how to best handle stress at the work place.

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