

# **Influence of Personality Traits and Demographic Variables on Decision Making Style in Crime Management among Police Personnel in FCT Abuja, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

The study examines the influence of personality traits and demographic variables on decision-making styles in crime management among police officers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. Employing a cross sectional survey design, a total of 388 officers of the Nigerian police within 3 area commands in FCT were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using validated instruments, including the Big Five Personality Inventory and Police Crime Management Decision Scale. Two hypotheses were developed and tested and the result using multiple regression analysis revealed that agreeableness ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and openness to experience ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicted effective decision-making styles. While Conscientiousness ( $\beta = .005$ ,  $t(285) = 0.088$ ,  $p = .93$ ), Neuroticism ( $\beta = -.016$ ,  $t(285) = -0.247$ ,  $p = .805$ ) and Extraversion ( $\beta = -.093$ ,  $t(285) = -1.65$ ,  $p = .100$ ) were not statistically significant predictors of decision-making. While demographic variables, gender, age, years of service (YoS), were also not jointly statistically significant,  $F(42, 248) = 1.36$ ,  $p = .082$ . Gender ( $F(1, 248) = 0.28$ ,  $p = .600$ ), Age ( $F(5, 248) = 1.05$ ,  $p = .390$ ), Years of service ( $F(6, 248) = 0.43$ ,  $p = .861$ ) did not independently significantly predict decision-making. The results indicate that psychological factors play a crucial role in shaping decision-making processes among police officers. The study recommends that Police recruitment and promotion processes should include standardized psychological assessments that evaluate traits such as openness to experience, agreeableness. Finally officers should be assigned to roles based on psychological competence and decision-making capabilities rather than based on demographic background.

**Keywords:** personality traits, decision making style, crime management, police personnel.

## **Original Research Article**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every society functions on laws, these laws establishes acceptable codes of conduct and moderates the 'dos and don'ts' of citizens. These laws ensures the security of lives and properties and maintaining law and order with the aim of ensuring a safe and secured society. One major character of law is that it also provides sanctions for its violators. These sanctions are usually enforced by the Police (Nigeria Police Act, 2020). The Police Act further spells out operational regulation for the Police Force both within and outside Nigeria. Particularly, section 4 of the Police Act provides that, "The Police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due

enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged"(Ofekeze, 2023). Police officers make many decisions every day. Some of these decisions are relatively routine and easy to make as there is much legislation and policy direction available to assist officers.

Police officers are being entrusted with significant amounts of discretion and power which they are required to justify when things get wrong and when it has resulted in violation of the victim's constitutional right. Many police decisions carry potential serious consequences when violated, for instance, arrest, and use of force, search, and seizure if it has to be done within the ambit of the law requires effective decision making (Trenholm, 2018). Although some parameters are provided during training on best practice in managing cases, there is still room for officer's discretion. Terms such as "reasonable" leave

the interpretation of the information and the decision to the officer. Officers need to provide justification after the fact, but during the event they are usually on their own, and quite often without ready access to the guidance of a supervisor (McKenna, 2002). Such a situation results in individual officer being entrusted with significant amounts of discretion and power. Many police decisions carry potentially serious consequences as they involve, for instance, arrest, and use of force, search, and seizure (Trenholm, 2018).

Police decision-making is a fundamental component of effective crime management, as it directly influences the outcomes of law enforcement activities and the safety of communities. The process of decision-making in policing is complex and multifaceted, involving the assessment of various factors, including situational variables, individual characteristics, and organizational culture. Decision-making style refers to the characteristic response pattern shown by a person when faced with a situation (Gati et al., 2019). Constant et al. (2019) suggested that it involves various approaches human use to interpret and response to problems. Decisions are a product of individual's cognitive activities and are influenced by various psychological biases. In making decisions, humans apply the rules of logic and use their expertise, experiences, and associated emotions to reach conclusions (Rutkowski, 2016). Decision-making either as a team or an individual is an interdependent process that is substantially affected by the available informations, the requirements for completing a task, and the feedback of other team members. The effectiveness of crime management among police personnel is significantly influenced by the decision-making styles adopted by officers in the field. Decision-making in policing transcends mere procedural tasks; it encompasses critical judgments that can determine the success or failure of crime control efforts. Research indicates that the decision-making process in law enforcement is complex and multifaceted, often requiring officers to assess rapidly changing situations, weigh potential outcomes, and make choices that can have immediate and long-term consequences (Kahneman, 2011).

Day-to-day work of the police strongly lies in the maintenance of order and crime management. The sole aim is to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities which includes protections of life and properties of citizens (Scott & Varano, 2008). This effort involves intervention and suppression of all forms of behaviours that threatens to be offensive, disturb the public peace, or stem from public conflicts among individuals (Kelling & Coles, 1996). This effort by the police sometimes are complicated by two dimensional factors: the complexity of the situations or problems presented and the officer's response to those situations or problems. While sometimes the situation will always be what it is in terms of severity, complexity regardless of who experienced it, the response to it by the police is greatly influenced by officer discretion in decision-making to manage them. This decision-making reflects an officer's decision style, a habitual response pattern in decision situations. Police training in any format often lacks attention to decision styles. As such, an officer's decision style in order maintenance

decision situations is most likely tied to demographics (e.g., age, gender) and occupational self-efficacy.

Research has demonstrated that collaborative decision-making processes can lead to improved outcomes in crime management, as they allow for the integration of diverse perspectives and expertise, though this may delay the speed of reaching effective conclusion (Mastrofski, 2004). In contrast, a lack of effective decision-making can result in disjointed efforts and a failure to address crime comprehensively.

Recently there is a great distrust towards the police from Nigerians about the lack of professionalism in management of crime and civil disobedience. For example the poor handling of a suspect in Rano divisional headquarters in Kano led to the death of the suspect which later resulted to mob action by residence that ended the life of Baba Ali, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) (Muntari, 2025). Increase police unprofessional management of crime especially while discharging their duties has shown that they are corrupted by aiding and abating criminals or hiding a suspect or criminal (Ikenyei, 2020). All these act balls down to monetary gains or favours from the criminal or his/her relations. Some Police officers act unconstitutionally either due to ignorant of the law or because of the potential benefit they stand to gain. This is vividly captured as follows by Etannibi and Innocent (2000) that "Police brutality is one of the major obstacles to effective crime management in Nigeria. Instead of controlling crime to ensure peace and security of citizens, some bad eggs among them have becomes the major cause of insecurity. Some Nigeria police today are involved in unlawful shooting, maiming and killing of citizens. Often, they were laws unto themselves, maiming, killing and detaining persons arbitrarily and with impunity".

Reports have highlighted alarming issues such as police brutality, extortion, and poor case management, which are often exacerbated by the psychological profiles of officers which includes the role of personality traits, and their demographic characteristics. These traits can lead to impulsive and unethical decision-making, undermining public trust and safety. For instance, incidents of excessive force during routine operations have been widely reported, raising concerns about the psychological readiness of officers to handle high-pressure situations appropriately. Media coverage of police conduct in Nigeria has frequently spotlighted the detrimental effects of poor decision-making styles influenced by anxiety and maladaptive personality traits. The #EndSARS protests in 2020, which called for an end to police brutality, revealed how officers' poor effective crime management mechanisms can lead to violent confrontations with civilians and extrajudicial killing of protesters (Ogunyemi, 2020). Such behaviours not only reflect individual failings but also indicate systemic issues within the police force that need to be addressed. The inability to manage stress and make sound decisions under pressure can result in actions that escalate conflicts rather than resolve them, further damaging community relations.

Despite extensive research on police decision-making and its implications for crime management, there is a notable literature gap in understanding how specific psychological factors such as personality traits, and demographic characteristics affect decision-making styles among police officers in Nigeria,



particularly in the context of the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. While previous studies have addressed issues like police brutality and unprofessional conduct (Etannibi & Innocent, 2000; Ogunyemi, 2020), non-have systematically examined the interplay between these psychosocial attributes and decision-making processes among police personnel within Nigeria. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how these psychological profiles influence officers' responses to high-pressure situations, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that undermine public trust and effective crime management among police officers in Nigeria. Understanding the factors that influence decision-making styles among police personnel is crucial for developing training programs and policies that enhance their effectiveness in crime management.

## Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the influence of personality traits and Demographic factors on decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja, Nigeria

The following specific objectives will be achieved at the end of the study;

1. To examine the influence of personality traits (Extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) on decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja.
2. To investigate the influence of demographic factors (Age, gender and work experience) on decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

### The Big Five Personality Theory

Broadly, personality has been conceptualized from a variety of theoretical perspectives, and at various levels of abstraction or breadth. Each of these levels has made unique contributions to the understanding of individual differences in behaviour and experience. Amongst the very many conceptualizations of personality are: Eysenck's (1987) three dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, and psychoticism; Harkness and McNulty's five factors of positive emotionality/extraversion, aggressiveness, constraint, negative emotionality/neuroticism, and psychoticism (Harkness et al., 1995), Tellegen's (1982) three dimensions of negative affectivity, positive affectivity, and constraint; Millon's six polarities of self, other, active, passive pleasure, and pain (Millon, et al., 1996),

The Big-Five Framework is a hierarchical model of personality traits with five broad factors, believed to represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction. Each bipolar factor (e.g., Extraversion vs. Introversion) summarizes several more specific facets (e.g., Sociability), which, in turn, subsume a large number of even more specific traits (e.g., talkative, outgoing). The Big-Five framework suggests that most

individual differences in human personality can be classified into five broad, empirically derived domains.

Several researchers leaned on the Five Factor Model (FFM), as a dominant one in personality psychology (Jovanovic, 2011), and agree that individual differences in personality are captured by the dimensions of the Five Factor Model or Big Five Taxonomy (Hapmson, 2012). Much of what psychologists mean by the term personality is summarized by the FFM, and the model has been of great utility to the field by integrating and systematizing diverse conceptions and measures (McCrae & Costa, 2008).

FFM involves some assumptions about human nature and about what people are like. Noting these assumptions, illustrate the natural functioning of individuals and helps in discriminating how normal functioning is. The five personality factors of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness form the substantive nucleus of FFM. According to McCrae and Costa (2008) each of these factors are related to some characteristic adaptations which has the capacity to trigger criminal behaviour. They are characteristic because they reflect the enduring psychological being of the individual, and they are adaptations because they help.

Neuroticism (a tendency to experience dysphoric affect, sadness, hopelessness, and guilt), is related to Low self-esteem, irrational perfectionistic beliefs, and pessimistic attitudes. Extraversion (a preference for companionship and social stimulation), is related to social skills, numerous friendships, enterprising vocational interests, participation in team sports, and club memberships. Openness to experience (a need for variety, novelty, and change) is related to interest in travel, many different hobbies, knowledge of foreign cuisine, diverse vocational interests, and friends who share tastes. Agreeableness (a willingness to defer to others during interpersonal conflict) is related to forgiving attitudes, belief in cooperation, inoffensive language, and reputation as a pushover. Conscientiousness (strong sense of purpose and high aspiration levels) is related to leadership skills, long-term plans, organized support network, technical expertise The Five-Factor Model (FFM) is a widely used framework to understand personality. Here's how each trait relates to well-being:

In sum, the five personality factors Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness form the substantive nucleus of the system; FFT traces their ramifications throughout the personality system. It also provides a framework within which to understand the development and operation of psychological mechanisms (such as need for association) and the behaviour and experience of individual men and women. This model is adopted for the present study.

### Hunch theory of decision making

Hunch theory by Judge Hutcheson decision-making offers an alternative explanation of the approach embraced by judges when making decisions. This theory suggests that police officer's decisions are not solely based on legal rules or precedents but are significantly influenced by the officer's



personal experiences, emotions, and cognitive processes. Hutcheson argued that these intuitive judgments are essential in navigating the complexities and ambiguities of cases handled by police officers (Hutcheson, 1929).

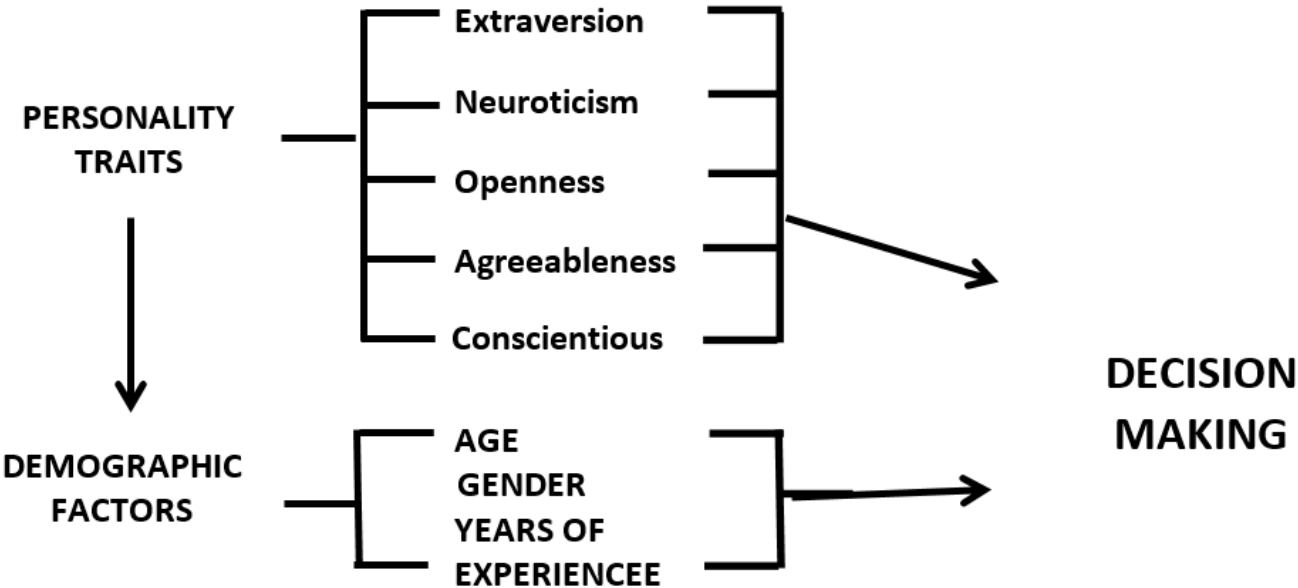
Decision-making is inherently complex, as the police must interpret laws and apply them to unique factual situations. The hunch theory acknowledges that police training often do not provide clear answers, most police officers when faced with complex cases rely on their instincts. This reliance on intuition can be seen as a necessary tool for police to fill gaps in the law and address the diversities of individual cases (Radin, 1925). The interplay between a police hunch and the legal framework creates a dynamic decision-making process. Hutcheson contends that it is difficult to reduce all human behaviours into logic since police are not technicians to determine cases mechanically (Carvacho et al., 2022). However, the decisions should be premised on an empirical and pragmatic approach, which means that police are allowed to feel and intuit on decisions that they make. When making decisions, officers

must consider all the materials presented and use their hunch or intuition to guide their determination (Chen, 2016).

Hunch's theory accounts for officer's decision-making that is perceived as similar and familiar to indirect and imprecise approaches to deciding on issues that affect individuals in their daily life. The use of terms such as intuition and hunch mean that there is potential arbitrariness and rudeness in the manner that police make decisions (Chen et al., 2016). The potential challenge with the assumption is to determine whether the police decide by guessing. It is difficult to presume that officers made a decision based on hunches alone; hence, the case requires epistemological justifications. Anything would be permitted if the hunch theory is validated arguing that police make decisions by guessing. The adoption of the hunch theory is characterized as advocating for the trope "law is a matter of what an officer had for breakfast" (Cserne, 2020). According to Olin, (2020), police decisions based on hunches save the arbitrariness, which offers compelling epistemological justification.

Research Model

Figure 1.1 Model Explain the relationship between the research variables



The proposed research model explains the influence of personality traits, and demographic variables on the decision-making process among judicial officers the model is structured around four key variables that guide the exploration of these psychological constructs and their interactions.

The first point of relationship explain how personality traits—specifically Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness—will have significant joint and independent influences on the decision-

making process among judicial officers. This suggests that each of these traits contributes uniquely to how judicial officers approach decision-making. For instance, Extraversion may enhance collaboration and communication in deliberations, while high Conscientiousness may lead to thoroughness and attention to detail in legal judgments. Conversely, high levels of Neuroticism could result in increased anxiety and indecisiveness, potentially impairing the decision-making process. By examining these traits both independently and



collectively, the research aims to provide a good understanding of how personality influences Police decision making.

## Research Method

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, a type of observational study that analyses data generated from a large population using standardised instrument within a giving period without manipulation of variables.

The target population for this study comprises all police officers under the jurisdiction of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command, which includes 36 police divisions spread across 6 area commands, serving within the six area councils of the FCT. According to internal administrative records, the total workforce comprising both male and female personnel is approximately 20,871 officers. This population includes officers of varying ranks and functions, such as those in general duty, investigations, intelligence, administration, and specialized units.

The sample size was determined using a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Based on the populations of the officers in their various division, using Taro Yamane formula a total of approximately 388 police personnel of Nigerian Police participated in the research out of which 291 were correctly filled and were analysed for this studies.

## Methods of Data collection

Data for this study were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed to elicit responses relevant to the research objectives. The instrument consisted of items describing the demographic characteristics of participants, personality traits, and decision-making style.

The demographic characteristics section captures key demographic characteristics of the respondents which includes information such as age, gender, years of service, and level of education.

Furthermore, Police Crime Management Decision Scale is a modified version of the instrument developed by Stalmeier et al. (2005). It is specifically adapted to assess the decision-making styles of police officers in the context of crime management. The scale aims to evaluate how officers approach professional decision-making by categorizing their responses into five distinct styles; analytical, intuitive, consultative, procrastinate, and impulsive decision-making. The instrument consists of 15 items adapted from the original decision-making process and evaluation scale. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). The scale was modified to reflect crime-specific scenarios relevant to police work. The internal consistency of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with reliability coefficients of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable for research purposes. The Decision-Making Process Scale, which includes 25 items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of .857, denoting very good internal consistency. This suggests that the scale items are highly consistent in evaluating the decision-making styles of police officers in crime management.

In addition, Big-Five Personality Traits Scale was used as well. This instrument assesses the personality characteristics of respondents using the 44-item Big-Five Personality Traits Scale developed by Soto and John (2009). The scale is designed to measure individual differences across five broad personality dimensions: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. These dimensions represent core traits that capture the major variations in human personality. The instrument employs a 5-point Likert response format, with response options ranging from Disagree Strongly (1) to Agree Strongly (5). To minimize response bias and enhance the psychometric validity of the scale, 14 of the items are reverse-scored. These items include statements numbered: 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27, 34, 35, 41, and 43. These include items 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27, 34, 35, 41, and 43. The scale has demonstrated strong internal consistency across the five personality dimensions, with the following Cronbach's alpha values reported: Extraversion ( $\alpha = .80$ ); Neuroticism ( $\alpha = .83$ ); Agreeableness ( $\alpha = .72$ ); Conscientiousness ( $\alpha = .74$ ); and Openness to Experience ( $\alpha = .81$ ). These reliability coefficients indicate strong internal consistency, confirming the scale's suitability for personality assessment in research contexts. These coefficients indicate high reliability, making the scale suitable for use in psychological and behavioral research. In the context of this study, the Big-Five Personality Traits Scale provides a comprehensive measure of individual personality traits, enabling the exploration of their influence on professional behavior and decision-making among respondents. The pilot test for Big-Five Personality Traits Scale short version yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .706, which falls within the range considered acceptable. This indicates that the items within the scale are reasonably consistent in measuring the underlying personality constructs.

## Procedure

Letter of introduction was submitted to the office of the commissioner of police for approval to conduct research in Abuja Police command among officers in the command. The researcher employed the services of 4 police officers who were willing to volunteer as research assistants. The research assistants were trained on research process and most importantly, the need to adhere strictly to research ethics.

The researcher randomly selected 3 police division within the FCT command. The research assistants and the researcher visited the three divisions for the study. The researchers visited each division during their monthly DPO lectures were the officers were requested to participate in the research. Officers who consented were given the research instruments which some filled and returned immediately while others requested that they should be given time to return the questionnaires.

## Result

The result of this study was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed and interpreted as found below.



**Table 1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	198	68.0
	Female	93	32.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	18–25 years	16	5.5
	26–30 years	40	13.7
	31–35 years	37	12.7
	36–40 years	67	23.0
	41–45 years	74	25.4
	46–60 years	57	19.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Years of Service</b>	1–5 years	25	8.6
	6–10 years	31	10.7
	11–15 years	60	20.6
	16–20 years	84	28.9
	21–25 years	63	21.6
	25–35 years	26	8.9
	36 years	2	0.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>	SSCE	78	26.8
	ND/NCE	86	29.6
	Degree/HND	106	36.4
	PGD and above	20	6.9
	Other	1	0.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, years of service, rank, and level of education. Regarding gender distribution, the sample comprised 198 males (68.0%) and 93 females (32.0%), indicating that male respondents constituted more than two-thirds of the total participants. Concerning age, the majority of respondents were between 41 and 45 years old ( $n = 74$ ; 25.4%) and 36 to 40 years old ( $n = 67$ ; 23.0%). Smaller proportions were observed among the youngest category (18–25 years;  $n = 16$ ; 5.5%) and the oldest groups (46–60 years;  $n = 57$ ; 19.6%). These findings suggest that most respondents were in their mid- to late-career stages. For years of service, the largest proportion of respondents had worked for 16–20 years ( $n = 84$ ; 28.9%), followed by 21–25 years ( $n = 63$ ; 21.6%) and 11–15 years ( $n = 60$ ; 20.6%). Notably, fewer participants had relatively short tenure (1–5 years;  $n = 25$ ; 8.6%) or very long

tenure (36 years;  $n = 2$ ; 0.7%). This indicates that a significant portion of the sample had substantial professional experience. Regarding educational attainment, most respondents possessed a degree or Higher National Diploma qualifications ( $n = 106$ ; 36.4%) or National Diploma/National Certificate in Education ( $n = 86$ ; 29.6%). Additionally, 78 respondents (26.8%) held Secondary School Certificates (SSCE), while 20 respondents (6.9%) reported having Postgraduate Diplomas or higher. A negligible proportion fell into other categories ( $n = 1$ ; 0.3%).

Two hypotheses were stated and tested in this study. The first hypothesis states that Personality traits (Extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) will have significant joint and independent influence on decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression presented in Table 4.2

**Table 1.2: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the influence of personality traits on decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja.**

DV	Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	95%CI	$\beta$	t	p
Decision Making	Constant	.375	.141	9.348	5,285				.000
	Extraversion					[-1.474, .129]	-.093	-1.651	.100
	Agreeableness					[-.299, 1.884]	.175	2.711	.007



	Conscientiousness					[-.565, .618]	.005	.088	.930
	Neuroticism					[-.666, .518]	-.016	-.247	.805
	Openness					[.983, 2.482]	.279	4.552	.000

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether the set of personality traits—extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience—significantly predicted the decision making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja. The regression model tested is statistically significant,  $F(5, 285) = 9.35$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that the combination of predictors accounted for a significant proportion of variance in decision-making outcomes. The model yielded a multiple correlation coefficient of  $R = .375$ , demonstrating a moderate positive relationship between the predictor variables and decision-making. The coefficient of determination,  $R^2 = .141$ , suggested that approximately 14.1% of the variance in decision-making was explained by the five personality traits.

This finding indicates that personality traits jointly contribute to understanding the decision-making behaviors of Police officers. The examination of the individual regression coefficients revealed differential contributions of each predictor variable. Extraversion was not a statistically significant predictor of decision-making,  $\beta = -.093$ ,  $t(285) = -1.65$ ,  $p = .100$ . The 95% confidence interval for the unstandardized coefficient ranged from  $-1.47$  to  $0.13$ , indicating that the effect size was small and not reliably different from zero. Agreeableness demonstrated a statistically significant positive influence on decision-making,  $\beta = .175$ ,  $t(285) = 2.71$ ,  $p = .007$ , with a 95% confidence interval for the unstandardized

coefficient ranging from  $0.30$  to  $1.88$ . This suggests that higher levels of agreeableness were associated with higher levels of effective decision-making. Conscientiousness was not a significant predictor,  $\beta = .005$ ,  $t(285) = 0.088$ ,  $p = .930$ , and the 95% confidence interval ( $-0.57$  to  $0.62$ ) included zero, indicating no reliable contribution to the model. Neuroticism did not significantly predict decision-making,  $\beta = -.016$ ,  $t(285) = -0.247$ ,  $p = .805$ , with a 95% confidence interval between  $-0.67$  and  $0.52$ , also indicating a non-significant effect. Openness to experience emerged as the strongest significant positive predictor in the model,  $\beta = .279$ ,  $t(285) = 4.55$ ,  $p < .001$ , and a 95% confidence interval for the unstandardized coefficient ranging from  $0.98$  to  $2.48$ . This finding suggests that greater openness to experience was strongly associated with more effective decision-making processes.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that while the overall model significantly predicted decision-making among judicial officers, only agreeableness and openness to experience exhibited significant unique contributions. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were not significant independent predictors in this analysis.

The second hypothesis states that Demographic variables (Age, gender, and work experience) will significantly influence decision-making making style in crime management among Police officers in FCT Abuja. This hypothesis was tested using univariate analysis presented in Table below.

### 1.3 Summary of univariate analysis the influence of Demographic variables (Age, gender, and work experience) on decision-making among Police officers in FCT Abuja, Nigeria

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Corrected Model	14037.417 <sup>a</sup>	42	334.224	1.356	.082	.187
Intercept	846270.794	1	846270.794	3434.545	.000	.933
GENDER	68.038	1	68.038	.276	.600	.001
AGE	1290.585	5	258.117	1.048	.390	.021
YoS	631.287	6	105.214	.427	.861	.010
GENDER * AGE	1043.368	4	260.842	1.059	.378	.017
GENDER * YoS	1151.604	5	230.321	.935	.459	.018
AGE * YoS	4883.749	17	287.279	1.166	.293	.074
GENDER * AGE * YoS	1041.168	3	347.056	1.409	.241	.017
Error	61107.126	248	246.400			
Total	2776813.000	291				
Corrected Total	75144.543	290				

a. R Squared = .187 (Adjusted R Squared = .049)



A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the influence of demographic variables, gender, age, years of service (YoS), on decision-making among judicial officers in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The overall model was not statistically significant,  $F(42, 248) = 1.36$ ,  $p = .082$ , although the  $p$ -value approached the conventional threshold of .05, suggesting that the combination of predictors explained some variance in decision-making but not at a statistically reliable level. The model accounted for approximately 18.7% of the variance in decision-making, as indicated by  $R^2 = .187$ , while the adjusted  $R^2$  of .049 suggests the model had limited predictive value after adjusting for the number of predictors. Gender was not a statistically significant predictor of decision-making,  $F(1, 248) = 0.28$ ,  $p = .600$ , with a partial  $\eta^2 = .001$ . This effect size indicates that only 0.1% of the variance in decision-making was attributable to gender differences, reflecting a negligible practical impact. Age did not significantly predict decision-making,  $F(5, 248) = 1.05$ ,  $p = .390$ , with a partial  $\eta^2 = .021$ , meaning that age accounted for just 2.1% of the variance in decision-making scores, which is considered a small effect.

Years of Service was also not significant,  $F(6, 248) = 0.43$ ,  $p = .861$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .010$ , indicating only 1.0% of the variance was explained by years of service, again reflecting a trivial effect. The interaction between Gender and Age did not significantly predict decision-making,  $F(4, 248) = 1.06$ ,  $p = .378$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .017$ , showing that only 1.7% of variance was explained by the combined effect of gender and age.

The Gender  $\times$  Years of Service interaction was also non-significant,  $F(5, 248) = 0.94$ ,  $p = .459$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .018$ , indicating minimal explanatory power. The Age  $\times$  Years of Service interaction did not reach statistical significance,  $F(17, 248) = 1.17$ ,  $p = .293$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .074$ , which nonetheless was larger than other effects but still considered a small effect size. The interaction among Gender, Age, and Years of Service was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 248) = 1.41$ ,  $p = .241$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .017$ , accounting for only 1.7% of variance in decision-making.

The intercept was statistically significant,  $F(1, 248) = 3434.55$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .933$ , indicating a very large effect and confirming that the overall mean level of decision-making scores was substantially different from zero. Taken together, these results demonstrate that neither gender, age, years of service, nor their interactions exerted statistically significant influences on decision-making among judicial officers. Although the overall model explained a modest proportion of variance (18.7%), the contributions of individual predictors and their interactions were negligible, as indicated by the small partial eta squared values.

## Discussion of findings

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of personality traits and demographic variables on decision-making styles in crime management among police officers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, the findings of the first hypothesis, which

examined whether personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) significantly influence decision-making styles among police officers. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant,  $F(5, 285) = 9.35$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a multiple correlation coefficient of  $R = .375$  and a coefficient of determination  $R^2 = .141$ . This finding implies that personality traits jointly accounted for approximately 14.1% of the variance in decision-making style among the police officers surveyed in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This result affirms that, collectively, personality traits serve as important psychological predictors of how police officers make decisions.

A probable explanation for this outcome is that no single personality trait exclusively governs decision-making behavior. Rather, it is the combined influence of multiple traits that contributes to shaping decision-making approaches. For example, an officer who is both agreeable and open to experience may be more inclined to engage in rational, ethical, and creative problem-solving. This interpretation is supported by Judge et al. (2002), who found that the Big Five personality traits collectively explain significant variance in job-related behaviors, including decision-making and performance. Similarly, Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2009) observed that the combined influence of personality traits significantly predicted decision-making styles among professionals, emphasizing the importance of examining personality as a multidimensional construct. However, this finding stands in contrast to the Situational Strength Theory proposed by Mischel (1977), which posits that in structured and highly regulated environments such as law enforcement situational cues often override the expression of individual personality traits. According to this view, institutional factors such as command hierarchies, formal protocols, and operational procedures may exert a stronger influence on officers' behavior than their dispositional characteristics.

At the individual level, the analysis revealed that only two personality traits openness to experience and agreeableness had significant independent influence on decision-making style. Openness to experience emerged as the strongest positive predictor ( $\beta = .279$ ,  $t(285) = 4.552$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that officers high in openness characterized by imagination, intellectual curiosity, and a willingness to consider alternative perspectives are more likely to adopt adaptive, flexible, and reflective decision-making styles. This aligns with the findings of Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2009) and Zhang and Highhouse (2020), who reported that openness is positively associated with intuitive and rational decision-making through enhanced cognitive engagement and creativity. Similarly, agreeableness was found to be a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = .175$ ,  $t(285) = 2.711$ ,  $p = .007$ ). Officers' high in agreeableness those who are cooperative, empathetic, and considerate were more likely to demonstrate ethical, socially responsible, and consensus-oriented decision-making styles. This result is in line with the work of Judge and Bono (2001) and Okoro and Idemudia (2017), who emphasized that agreeable individuals are more





likely to incorporate interpersonal and moral considerations into their decision-making processes.

Hypothesis two stated that *there will be a significant influence of demographic variables (age, gender, and work experience)* on decision-making style in crime management among police officers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. To test this hypothesis, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 1.3. The corrected model, which includes all the demographic variables and their interactions, accounted for 18.7% of the variance in decision-making style ( $R^2 = .187$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .049$ ). However, the model did not reach statistical significance at the conventional level ( $F(42, 248) = 1.356$ ,  $p = .082$ ), indicating that demographic factors collectively did not significantly influence the decision-making style of police officers. The lack of significant findings may suggest that decision-making in policing is less influenced by surface-level demographic variables and more strongly determined by psychological, cognitive, or organizational factors such as training, personality traits, emotional intelligence, or situational stressors. Several studies support the non-significance of demographic variables in predicting decision-making styles in structured organizations like the police force: Van Velsor & Hughes (1990) emphasized that demographic traits often show weaker relationships with decision-making than psychological constructs such as cognitive style, emotional regulation, or personality. Rausch (2002) also noted that while age and work experience may affect perceived confidence in decisions, they do not significantly change the quality or style of decision-making in formal institutions due to rigid procedural constraints. Despite these findings, some empirical studies have shown a moderate effect of age and work experience on decision-making in other contexts: Salthouse (2012) posited that cognitive aging can influence decision strategies, with older individuals relying more on experience-based heuristics, while younger individuals may be more analytical or reactive.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the influence of personality traits and demographic variables on decision-making styles among police officers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The overarching aim was to determine the joint and independent influence of personality traits alongside demographic factors, in predicting how officers' approach operational decisions in crime management. The findings revealed that personality traits collectively accounted for 14.1% of the variance in decision-making styles, with openness to experience and agreeableness emerging as significant independent predictors. Officers high in openness demonstrated adaptive, flexible, and reflective decision-making, while those high in agreeableness tended toward ethical, socially responsible, and consensus-oriented choices. Conversely, demographic variables such as age, gender, and work experience did not significantly predict decision-making

styles, indicating that cognitive and dispositional characteristics may be more critical determinants of decision quality than surface-level personal attributes in structured policing environments.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance decision-making effectiveness among police officers and to guide forensic psychology practices within law enforcement:

1. Police recruitment and promotion processes should include standardized psychological assessments that evaluate personality traits such as openness to experience, agreeableness. This will ensure that officers with desirable psychological profiles are identified and positioned in roles that require sound judgment and ethical decision-making.
2. Given that demographic variables such as age, gender, and years of service did not significantly predict decision-making styles, it is recommended that police institutions adopt evidence-based deployment strategies. Officers should be assigned to roles based on psychological competence and decision-making capabilities rather than tenure or demographic background.
3. Law enforcement agencies should consider establishing dedicated forensic psychology units to provide ongoing psychological support, conduct risk assessments, facilitate behavioral analysis, and oversee training interventions related to decision-making and ethical conduct.
4. Further forensic psychological research should be encouraged to explore the complex interactions between personality traits and demographic factors in police decision making. Insights from such research can inform national policies on police reform, training curricula, and occupational standards for ethical law enforcement practice.
5. To enhance officers' practical decision-making skills, scenario-based training modules that simulate real-life crime management situations should be adopted. These exercises should be designed to reflect psychological insights and assess how officers apply reasoning, emotional control, and ethical judgment in high-pressure environments.

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