

## **“A Review of Personality and Performance: Identifying Boundaries and Future Research Directions”**

Nader Arvand

*International Business School (IBS), UTM, Malaysia*

### **I. Introduction**

The personality impacts on job performance has been paid attention since 1965, when Guion and Gottier (1965) [1] reasoned that personality tests could not reliable and valid predictors for showing what would happen as volunteers' performance. Since then, many scholars have denied this claim and offered meta-analytic methods such as Big Five model of personality as ways for analyzing traits. The paper has argued that personal qualities strongly influence an individual's manner in an organization. The main objective of the paper is to clarify needs for further researches. In order to accomplish the paper objective, the importance of criteria defining would be explained first, and then the literature of personality-performance relationship is reviewed. Finally, it is demonstrated that varying level of one particular trait affects the expression of other qualities in someone's character.

### **II. Theories**

There are many views claim that the personality effect on performance can be observed in the motivation level in an employee behavior. This sense can be defined as the intensity of determination to do voluntary actions in a workplace. In general, there are three motivational intentions that affect someone's behavior in any organization or even place. Communion-striving refers to promote relationships, and status-striving refers to facts of being more powerful and noticeable than other staff. The third motive is accomplishment striving which refers to task achievement. These mentioned motives influence on what an employee choose to do as the main goal and the amount of endeavor he or she makes to reach the goal. Schneider in 1987 proposed a model of ASA (the written abbreviation of attraction-selection-attrition) which claims that people are more likely to be attracted to groups and organizations comprising people like them. High Conscientiousness is counted as the basic trait that underlies choosing difficult goals, being self-discipline and more proactive and exerting more endeavors [2]. The Emotional Stability (Neuroticism) is the other factor that associated with making great efforts to achieve goals. Employees high in Emotional stabilities are concerned about completing any job they are given, and they are less being influenced by negative emotions such as depression and hopelessness even if they carry low level of Emotional Stability.

Agreeableness is the sense of willing to support colleagues and can be highly related to communion striving motive. The Openness to Experience is another personality trait that is the least understood trait of the Big Five, as there is no prediction of its impacts on outcomes. The only point towards this trait is that individuals high in Openness to Experience are likely to be motivated by the quality of being new, unusual, and interesting. They direct their performance at pursuit of creative and innovative methods, even where current methods work efficiently.

The Extraversion trait could be associated with eagerness and willingness levels bestowed to status striving. In fact, the concept through which Personality produces effects in job performance is motivation. The reason why employees want to compete and endeavor mobilizes them to pursue organizational goals. Frequently, goals are set by strategists and top managers where changing business environment forces them to sometimes redefine goals. These renewed goals also must be fitting to current job requirements well, which seems impractical in many cases.

### **III. Job performance: Defining job criteria**

Standard measures or criteria must represent the most important requirements necessary to well performing the particular job. To prepare valid personality measures, the starting point is the especial attention to those performance measures that demonstrate employee conduct. The measures defined and selected should be under

the control of the individual. If the sales volume is the performance criteria, then the results reflect the difference between salesperson in skills or abilities. Similarly, if employees of one local branch are being compared to their colleagues of an international branch in terms of performance, size and location of sales territory are factors which are beyond the control of employees. In contrast, the differences in motivation and personality can be noticed by the levels by which employees are different in developing and maintaining positive relationships with customers. Nowadays, task performance is measured by considering three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behaviour. Task performance refers to executing and completing of all functions required, but no more or less. The present competitive business environment highly necessitate employees who go above job requirements listed in their job descriptions, so this contextual performance can be valued as equally as task performance. Even a smile, and for instance, hand-delivering mails to people standing outside their home are contextual performances of a postman. All behaviours that intentionally or unintentionally go against the organizational goals are counterproductive ones result from motivations and personality traits. They often come to work late and leave early, and more seriously, make negative impacts on others.

All in all, the Big Five help improve performance prediction validity and are more valid when all 5 factors being considered together.

#### **IV. Trait interactions**

The theory developed by Goldberg, L. R. (2003) [3] argues that the Big Five affect performance through the level of motivation and eagerness they arouse. The term motivation can be defined as resources comprise time, effort, and attention that an employee presents to achieve goals. Thus, five personality traits are related to various organizational goals. The interactions of Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness with other traits would be explained as just these two factors are most linked to the workplace [4]. The low-level of Emotional Stability may make the employee to show less enthusiasm and consequently allocate less time and effort to jobs, so the Emotional Stability may be counted as determinant trait which strongly influences other 4 traits arousal or what you do and how you behave. Therefore, the traits interaction would be assessed in following sample points:

- **Conscientiousness × Emotional Stability:** employees who score high in Conscientiousness use all they have as resources (time, energy, and mind) and concentrate on completing the target-oriented jobs. When this trait is accompanied by high Emotional Stability trait, the person has the right mix of personal qualities to improve an organization's profitability. In contrast, conscientious staff with low Emotional Stability cannot perform as well as former group, because their personal resources are frequently consumed by continuous feelings of worry about their work or personal life.
- **Extraversion × Emotional Stability:** the high-level of extraversion term refers to extrovert persons, and low-level to introvert employees. The surprising point among four possible combinations in this interaction is that people who score high in Extraversion and low Emotional Stability do positively in terms of well-being. The logic behind the case is that sociability related to Extraversion serves these people as a resource which makes it easier for them to cope with their negative emotions successfully.

#### **V. Conclusion**

It is concluded that broader mixes of Big Five analysis should be employed, that is, considering all five traits simultaneously in one person under the aim of predicting his or her performance. There would be 3 levels as low, moderate, and high degrees of each trait, so there are 243 (3<sup>5</sup>) possible characters mathematically. In practice, it is suggested that current methods of performance measuring do not consider the whole number of different manners that are be affected by someone's character. The more comprehensive research studies should be conducted to assess the interaction of all possible traits mixes as none of the Big Five traits would be shared separately or works in isolate.

## **References**

- [1]Guion, R. M., & Gottier, R. F. (1965). Validity of personality measures in personnel selection. *Personnel Psychology, 18*, 135–164.
- [2]Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationships between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*, 268–279.
- [3]Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative “description of personality”: The Big-Five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*, 1216–1229.
- [4]Hattrup, K., O’Connell, M. S., & Labrador, J. R. (2005). Incremental validity of locus of control after controlling for cognitive ability and conscientiousness. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 19*, 461–481.