THE EFFECTS OF BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS ON EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN PESHAWAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to measure the effects of Big Five personality traits on employee's job performance among the teaching staff in the higher educational institutes/universities in the city of Peshawar. The study employed quantitative methodology, and survey based method for data collection. Through sampling approach, data was collected from selected universities including Qurtba, Cecos, Sarhad and Iqra national university of Peshawar. Our results indicate that among the Big Five personality dimensions, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness has positive and significant effects on employee job performance. The result for extraversion is positive but insignificant and for emotional stability, result is negative and insignificant. The Big Five personality traits explain 81% change in the employee job performance. Our result implies that candidate's personality traits should be assessed during the recruitment and selection process of university teaching staff.

Keywords: Big Five, Personality, Performance, Teaching, Peshawar

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Higher education plays important role in any country's socio-economic development. In Pakistan, there is less attention given to the education sector including higher education sector. For higher education sector to perform well in Pakistan, there is an urgent need to give greater attention to the HR issues. One relevant HR issue is the selection of appropriate staff

that possesses not only necessary qualification but also the right personality and behavior required to work effectively and efficiently in the higher education sector. The current study is about investigation of role of personality traits in shaping employee's job performance in the context of higher educational sector in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan.

Problem Statement

Due to the time pressure and lack of knowledge, recruiters in higher education sector often hire such employees for teaching positions who do not possess the right personality traits or behavior for teaching at higher educational level. This concept is based on the personality-job match. To overcome this problem, there is a need for better understanding the relationship between personality traits and employee job performance in the context of higher educational sector.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to determine the effect of Big Five Personality traits on job performance of teaching staff in higher education sector. The sub-objectives of the study are as under;

- To measure the effect of extraversion on job performance among the staff of higher education sector.
- To measure the effect of agreeableness on job performance among the staff of higher education sector.
- To measure the effect of conscientiousness on job performance among the staff of higher education sector.
- To measure the effect of emotional stability on job performance among the staff of higher education sector.
- To measure the effect of openness to experience on job performance among the staff of higher education sector.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that the study fills the literature gap by investigating the role of personality traits in employee performance in this particular context. The findings can be used by the HR managers in improving staff recruitment and selection. The findings can also be used by the individuals in making better decisions about the career as academic. The findings can be used by the practitioners, academics, and so on.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of psychology, the Big Five personality traits model is well-known. The model is based on five dimensions including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Ono, 2011). The five factor model is highly influential and is validated in several management and social sciences related researches (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). The current study focuses on five main dimensions namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Their brief details are as under.

Openness to experience is about quantity of intellectual style that contributes to differentiating between visionary, inventive and conservative people (Barrick & Mount, 1993). It also gives the idea of deepness, wisdom, comprehensiveness, changeability in a person's fantasy and a strong desire to experience (Saade, 2006). According to Taylor, (2009) people possessing the trait of openness to experience are always thinking about positive vibes or more mature about thinking, and these types of people are more suitable for teaching job. On the other side, open-minded people achieve success in most of the occupation such as armed forces, sale and other careers involving interaction with people and travelling.

Conscientiousness trait is about trustworthiness and responsibility (Barrick and Mount, 1993). A high conscientiousness person controls himself easily, perform work loyally and always struggle for success. Instead of performing extraordinary work, they follow a plan. It would be a long way to meet long-term goals and make the procedure for success and always achieve a goal. A study shows that high-level conscientiousness cannot be maintained in-case of a failure, (Boyce, 2010).

Extraversion dimension is about energetic, enjoyed by people, and most often observed emotions. (Barrick & Mount, 1993). According to Ozer & Benet-Martinez, (2006), extrovert people are based on passionate possibilities to get out and they like to be the focus of the groups. Extraversion can predict effective work and well-being in a wide variety of areas. The opposite dimension of extraversion is the introvert. Introvert people will be comfortable, calm, cool and less compatible with the social world.

Agreeableness dimension is about kindness, friendliness, sensitivity, and collaborative guidance (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Agreeableness trait is about a positive approach to thinking about people as decent, responsible, and honest. For individuals having high score on agreeableness, social harmony is necessary. The agreeableness dimension is not considered useful in situations when tough goal is needed to be achieved.

Emotional stability is described as self-esteem, self-reliance, protector, endurance, and well-adjusted (Barrick & Mount, 1993). In this trait, a person is able to return to a previous good condition, and is good in adjusting to difficult situations. Individuals having high score on this trait are more stable; while, a low score means higher neuroticism and such individuals are subject to mood swings and emotional instability (Barrick & Mount, 1993). High score on emotional stability is about individuals who can maintain decorum of their behavior, while, low score means individuals may experience mood swings or cannot control their emotions (Ono, 2011).

Relationship between Personality Traits and Job Performance

Previous studies shows that Big five personality traits explains range of human behavior including job satisfaction, turnover intention, and work performance. For example, study conducted by Rothmann and Coetzer (2003) suggested the Big Five personality traits influence staff willingness to accept new work assignments. Similarly, study conducted by Bing and Lounsbury (2000) showed that Big Five personality traits significantly predicts individual's work performance. Other studies also highlighted similar results including Barrick, Mount, and Judge (2001); Boyce, Wood, and Brown (2010); Fuller, Hester, and Cox (2010); Hurtz & Donovan (2000); Kell, Rittmayer, Crook, and Motowidlo (2010); and Soto,

Kronauer, and Liang (2015). Based on the Big Five personality traits theory and previous studies findings, we propose the following theoretical framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used the quantitative approach because it suited the nature of the study. Primary data was collected by distributing the questionnaire among the teaching staff of selected universities/institutes located in the city of Peshawar. The design of the study is cross-sectional.

Population and Sampling Issues

In this research, the target population was the teaching staff of universities. Convenience sampling was used to collect data from teaching staff in selected universities in city of Peshawar.

Research Tool

The measures for the Big Five personality traits were adapted from Teh et al., (2011). In this measure, all five dimension of personality were measured by 6 items each. Job performance is measured by 6 items adapted from Seng et al., (2013).

Data Collection

Data was collected from selected universities including Qurtba, Cecos, Sarhad, and Iqra national university of Peshawar. Data collected from these university lecturers, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, professors, head of department, and research assistants.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was assessed using the Cronbach alpha (>0.70 as cut of value) and validity was established using the face validity method.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues including privacy of the participants, no deception, no force, voluntary participation were followed.

RESULTS

Demographic details are as under.

Table 1
Demographic Details

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	32	45.7
Female	38	54.3
Qualification		
Bachelor	8	11.4
Master	30	42.9
MS/MPhil	18	25.7
PhD	14	20.0
Job Role		
Assistant Lecturer	12	17.1
Lecturer	26	37.1
Senior Lecturer	4	5.7
Assistant Professor	6	8.6
Associate Professor	2	2.9
Professor	6	8.6
Administrative staff	14	20.0

45.7% of respondents were male and 54.3% of respondents were female. In terms of qualification, 42.9% were master degree holder, 25.7% were MS/Mphil degree holder, and 20% were holding PhD qualification. Job role wise, 37.1% were lecturers, 17.1% were assistant lecturers, 8.6% were assistant professors, and 20% belonged to the administrative staff.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is as under.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Openness to Experience	1.29	4.67	3.13	.58	06	.896
Conscientiousness	1.65	4.19	2.92	.81	06	.791
Extraversion	1.55	4.23	2.69	.78	06	.762
Agreeableness	1.33	4.43	2.97	.63	06	.832
Emotional Stability	1.83	4.57	3.23	.43	06	.724
Job Performance	1.59	4.23	3.79	.55	06	.903

The descriptive statistics indicate that in the sample, the openness to experience was medium level ($M=3.13$, $SD=.58$); conscientiousness was medium level ($M=2.92$, $SD=.81$); extraversion was low ($M=2.69$, $SD=.78$); agreeableness was medium level ($M=2.97$, $SD=.63$); and emotional stability was above average level ($M=3.23$, $SD=.43$). The reported job performance was close to higher level ($M=3.79$, $SD=.55$). All variables had Cronbach alpha of above 0.70 so it indicate good level of reliability.

Table 3
Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.807	.300		-2.691	.009
Openness. to. Experience	.215	.072	.237	2.978	.004
Conscientiousness	.398	.111	.270	3.573	.001
Extraversion	.124	.091	.121	1.362	.178
Agreeableness	.704	.121	.620	5.819	.000
Emotional. Stability	-.220	.127	-.195	-1.731	.088

R= .900
Rsquare = .810
Fstat= 54.436 (.000)

The openness to experience has positive and significant effects on employee work performance ($\beta =$, $P < .05$); conscientiousness had positive and significant effects on employee work performance ($\beta =$, $P < .05$); extraversion has positive but insignificant effects on work performance ($\beta =$, $P < .05$); agreeableness has positive and significant effects on work performance; and neuroticism had negative and insignificant effects on work performance ($\beta =$, $P < .05$). The Rsquare shows that the personality dimensions explained 81% change in the dependent variable of employee work performance. The Fstatistics suggest that model is fit and significant (Fstat=54.43, $P < .05$). Thus, our results show that openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness has positive and significant effects on workers performance.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to measure the effects of Big Five personality traits on employee's job performance in the context of teaching staff in private universities in city of Peshawar. Our results indicate that among the five dimensions of Big Five personality, the openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness has positive and significant effects on job performance. These results are consistent with the findings of previous studies including Rothmann and Coetzer (2003); Bing and Lounsbury (2000); Hurtz and Donovan (2000); Soto, et al., (2015); and Kell, et al., (2010).

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study lead to this conclusion that Big Five personality traits are important predictor of job performance of teaching staff. Therefore, it may be used as criteria in teacher's selection. The findings also lead to this conclusion that personality traits are important predictor of success in certain careers which in this case is the teaching career.

Recommendations of the Study

The recommendations of the study are as under.

- The HR function of universities/higher educational institutes may include personality traits as criteria in recruitment and selection process of teaching staff.

- Individuals possessing more suitable personality traits for teaching positions may be preferred in selection process.
- There may be proper development of personality traits which can be used in recruitment and selection process.
- Career counselors may also assess personality traits and give guidance regarding career selection in the light of the personality assessment of individual.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include small sample size, cross sectional design, and sole reliance on quantitative methodology. Furthermore, the study only used single model for personality traits i.e. Big Five and used single outcome variable which is job performance. A future researcher may use bigger sample size drawn from more diverse industries. Use of mediation and moderation along with other dimensions of personality traits may also be an avenue of future research.

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