

The Moderating Role of Big Five Personality Factors in The Relationship Between Employee Morale and Work Commitment

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Abstract—Employee morale plays a major role in enhancing the work commitment level of an employee. The study investigates the relationship between the variables, employee morale and work commitment. The moderation effect is assessed by introducing a third variable, big five personality factors. An adapted questionnaire with five point rating scale is employed for the purpose of research. Fifty engineers working at multinational companies in India are the respondents for the study. The sampling is made on the convenience basis. Correlation and Moderator multiple regression analysis is calculated to draw the inferences. This study would serve as a guide for trainees, trainers, human resource professionals, and employees working in organizations.

Keywords—personality factors; employee morale; work commitment; employees; human resource professionals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Each and every individual is unique. We have our own qualities and possess certain set of characteristics which is called as personality. When a worker performs good, he will be called by different names such as excellent worker, hard working, talented, enthusiastic, dedicated and so on. In the mean way when the worker falls below the expectations, he will be labeled as poor performer, lazy, incapable and so on. The name by which he/she is labeled determines their personality. Corr and Matthews (2009) defined personality as a set of behaviors, cognitions, and emotions that is evolved from heredity and environment. Through earlier research studies, it is evident that the personality can neither be inherited nor acquired. Prominent researchers such as Sigmund Freud, Adler, Carl Rogers and Maslow etc., derived personality theories and made highest contribution in the field of behavioral science and psychology. One of the most eminent personality theories is Lewis Goldberg's personality theory which is also known as the big five personality factors/traits. The researcher used the acronym 'OCEAN' to describe the five factors such as (i) Openness (an open minded person), (ii) Conscientiousness (an organized person), (iii) Extroversion (social person), (iv) Agreeableness (tactful person), and (v) Neuroticism (stable person). These factors are used to assess an individual's personality.

Considering work commitment, it can be described as one's involvement or dedication in his/her job. A person belonging to this category will be very sincere in job and complete the task on time. John Meyer and Natalie Allen (1991) discovered three types of commitment namely

affectionate commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Earlier research studies portrayed many interesting facts through investigating the relationship between the variables 'personality factors' and 'work commitment'. For example a study conducted by Iqra Abdullah et al. (2013) analyzed the relationship between three variables namely personality, performance, and employee commitment towards the organization. The data was collected from three hundred and eighty four bank employees from Punjab region in India. The mediating role of the variable organizational commitment was assessed. The study revealed that the factors extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness influenced the variable employees' commitment. It was concluded that one's commitment towards the job will definitely result in increased performance.

A similar study conducted by Choi et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between big five personality traits and the different type of commitments (affective, normative, and continuance). The study employed meta analysis wherein the data of fifty independent studies was analyzed. The positive relationship was observed between the five traits and commitments (affective and normative). Comparatively, agreeableness had strong correlation than the other traits. On the contrary, negative relationship was found between the traits (openness, extroversion) and commitment (continuance). 'Culture' was used as a moderator variable and the study revealed that the moderation effect strengthen the relationship between the traits and commitments. The study concluded that the organizations should consider personality traits and culture as an important factor for predicting organizational commitment.

Farrukh et al. (2017) proceeded research in this area and examined the impact of big five personality traits on organizational commitment. The faculty members from higher education institutes in Malaysia were the respondents for the study. The study revealed that the three personality factors namely extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness had positive association with affective commitment (being affectionate towards the job). The exciting point to be noted is that the study identified no relationship between the personality factors (conscientiousness, openness) and continuance commitment (retaining in the same organization). The study concluded that the big five personality traits play a predominant role in terms of assessing an individual employee's commitment towards the organization.

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No researcher has given a specified definition for ‘employee morale’. In general, employee morale refers to an employees’ sense of satisfaction and well being towards a particular job and this concept is often related to the attributes such as profit, increased productivity, performance, and employee engagement (Britt et al.2007; Steger, 2012). For example Osho and Ashe (2006) carried out a research work with an objective to investigate the relationship between employee morale and profit of an organization. One hundred and twenty five employees working in five different engineering companies were the respondents for the study. It was found that the low morale resulted in poor performance of an employee. Again, the performance level was related to the productivity which has a direct link to the profit. The study concluded that the morale have an impact on productivity and profit.

The research studies carried out so far investigated the relationship between personality and organizational commitment from various aspects. In previous research studies, the attributes such as culture, commitment, and environment were used as moderating/mediating variables to study the relationships. No studies have assessed the relationship between employee morale and work commitment. The present study intends to identify the relationship between these variables by introducing a third moderator variable, big five personality factors. The conceptual framework of the study is given in figure 1.

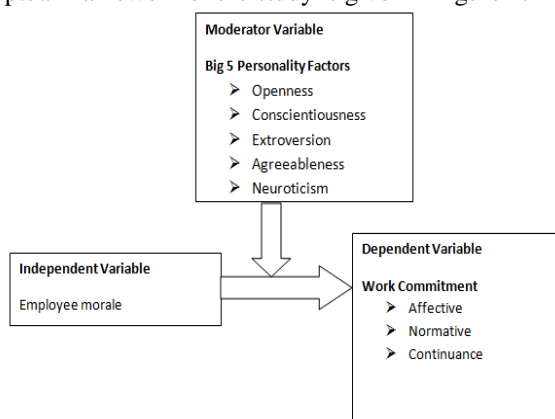


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

II. METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

Primary data for the study is collected from fifty engineers working at multi-national companies in India. The secondary source of data is obtained from earlier research studies. An adapted questionnaire with five point rating scale is used for the study. The independent variable employee morale is assessed using ten questions. The variable work commitment is assessed using three levels affective, normative and continuance. Each level had five questions. Totally fifteen questions were used for ‘work commitment’. Five questions were used to assess each personality factor. A total of twenty five questions are administered for the variable big five personality factors. The present study employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test the construct and convergent validities. The validation results are tabulated in table 1.

Table 1. Validation: CFA

Variables	Before CFA Total No. of Questions	CMIN/DF	P value	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA	After CFA Total No. of questions
Employee morale	10	1.489	0.688	0.996	0.907	1.000	0.017	0.000	8
Big 5 Personality Factors									
Openness	5	1.547	0.086	0.981	0.999	1.000	0.010	0.020	4
Conscientiousness	5	1.222	0.433	0.988	0.951	1.000	0.006	0.014	4
Extroversion	5	1.641	0.570	0.933	0.960	1.000	0.004	0.005	4
Agreeableness	5	1.830	0.777	0.910	0.986	1.000	0.013	0.010	4
Neuroticism	5	1.541	0.389	0.999	0.907	1.000	0.005	0.016	4
Work Commitment									
Affective	5	1.842	0.095	0.939	0.993	1.000	0.011	0.000	4
Normative	5	1.143	0.412	0.927	0.999	1.000	0.005	0.011	4
Continuance	5	1.696	0.245	0.963	0.921	1.000	0.014	0.007	4

Few questions were eliminated after validity test. Totally, the questionnaire for the final study consisted of forty questions. Eight questions, twenty questions, and twelve questions are used to measure the variables employee morale, big five personality factors, and work commitment respectively. The result of CMIN/DF (<2), p value (>0.050), GFI (>0.90), AGFI (>0.90), CFI (>0.90), RMR (<0.05) and RMSEA (<0.08) produced the recommended values suggested by the eminent researchers (Bentler, 1990; Hu and Bentler, 1999). Hence it is inferred that the parameters used for the present study accurately measures the targeted variable. The Cronbach’s alpha value is greater than 0.80 for all the variables (Carmines and Zeller, 1979) and the result is tabularized in table 2.

Table 2. Reliability

S. No	Variables	Alpha value	
1	Employee morale	0.93	
2	Big 5 Personality Factors	Openness	0.86
		Conscientiousness	0.92
		Extroversion	0.81
		Agreeableness	0.88
		Neuroticism	0.95
3	Work Commitment	Affective	0.90
		Normative	0.84
		Continuance	0.88

Cronbach’s Alpha: >0.80

The respondents of the study are limited, as it took so much of time to get back the filled questionnaires. One hundred questionnaires were circulated. The filled questionnaire received back from the respondents was fifty three, among which three questionnaires were incomplete. Therefore, the sample size is fifty. The data is collected on the convenient basis and so the adopted technique for the study is convenient sampling method. Likert scale representing ‘5’ strongly agree and ‘1’ strongly disagree is employed. In order to get a single score for each respondent,



the values are added and the calculated minimum value is forty and the maximum value is two hundred. Correlation analysis is carried out to test the relationship among the variables and the result is shown in table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Work Commitment						
	Affective		Normative		Continuance		
	r value	p value	r value	p value	r value	p value	
Employee morale	0.871	.000**	0.833	.000**	0.814	.000**	
Big 5 Personality Factors	Openness	0.816	.000**	0.810	.000**	0.800	.000**
	Conscientiousness	0.811	.000**	0.856	.000**	0.841	.000**
	Extroversion	0.824	.000**	0.843	.000**	0.777	.000**
	Agreeableness	0.890	.000**	0.831	.000**	0.826	.000**
	Neuroticism	0.865	.000**	0.873	.000**	0.886	.000**

**p<.01

A strong positive correlation exists amongst the variables. Based on the findings it is inferred that an employee morale lead to work commitment. The study undoubtedly proves the fact that a person with job dissatisfaction will never do the work with full involvement.

The moderation effect is tested using moderator multiple regression analysis. Under all the relationships, the interaction term (independent variable x moderator variable) is found to influence the dependent variable, work commitment. The moderation outcome is tabulated in table 4.

Table 4. Independent-Moderator-Dependent Variable

Variable	Beta	Sig.
Employee morale	0.614	0.010**
Openness	0.510	0.000**
Conscientiousness	0.673	0.011*
Extroversion	0.544	0.000**
Agreeableness	0.581	0.000**
Neuroticism	0.618	0.000**
Employee morale x Openness	0.532	0.000**
Employee morale x Conscientiousness	0.562	0.021*
Employee morale x Extroversion	0.590	0.000**
Employee morale x Agreeableness	0.515	0.000**
Employee morale x Neuroticism	0.501	0.000**

**p<.01, *p<.05

Conscientiousness is highly found to influence work commitment followed by the variables Neuroticism, Employee morale, Employee morale x Extroversion, Agreeableness, Employee morale x Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Employee morale x Openness, Employee morale x Agreeableness, Openness, and Employee morale x

Neuroticism respectively. Considering the interaction term, Employee morale x Extroversion highly influences the dependent variable as compared to the other moderation effects. Based on the findings, it is inferred that employee morale with big five personality traits lead to work commitment.

III. CONCLUSION

The study undoubtedly proves the fact that the employee morale can only lead to work commitment. The commitment level gets varied depending on the morale. It is evident that the moderator variable, big five personality factors play a major role in strengthening the relationship between the variables. Lack of recognition, no career growth and opportunities, and low salary are identified to be the major reasons for poor employee morale. Work commitment can never be attained through compulsion. Therefore, the present study recommends organizations to provide the environment that best matches with the valence of an employee.

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