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Leader's Personality Traits and Employees Job Performance in
Public Sector, Putrajaya

Nadiah Maisarah Abdul Ghani^{a*}, Nor Sara Nadia Muhamad Yunus^b, Norliza Saiful
Bahry^c

^{abc}Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Bandar Puncak Alam, 42300, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract

Considering of today's unstable economic environment, required the organization to have proactive and committed employees in performing higher standard of job performance in order to successfully survive and compete with other competitors. Employees' job performance is one of the crucial elements that provide both goals and methods to achieve organizational mission. In view of this, effective leadership plays an important role on how the leaders response to employee in the working environment. Leaders who have an understanding of how individuals' personalities differ can use this understanding to improve their leadership effectiveness and lead to improve employees' job performance. The findings of this study revealed that leader's personality traits are closely related with employees' job performance.

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1. Introduction

Individualized leadership is based on the notion of the unique relationship developed by a leader with each group members. It represents how the leader behaves towards the employee and how the employee responds to the leader. Thus, these differences may affect the leader-follower interaction.

*Corresponding author . Tel : +603 3258 5143, fax: +603 3258 5000

E-mail address: nadiah3956@salam.uitm.edu.my

Differences in personality, leadership style, attitudes and so forth can immensely affect leadership effectiveness. Personality refers to the set of invisible characteristics and practices that lie behind a relatively stable pattern of behavior in response to ideas, objects, or people in the environment (Daft, 2011). People come from different backgrounds will have different attitudes, values and norms. These people, in fact, have different cultural heritages and of definitely they will reflect their own cultural heritages. These differences result in different personalities of a person that determine their actions and behaviors and affect the leader-follower interaction. Some leaders might have a strong and weak personality that can influence others performance of employee and determine the way of organization perform (Alkahtani et al., 2011). Therefore, leaders' personality traits are reasonable to be expecting that it can influence personal values and attitudes, as most recent empirical research has demonstrated (Olver & Mooradian, 2003).

In the past 10 years ago, the views of many personality psychologists have converged regarding the structure and concepts of personality (Barrick & Mount, 1991). However, it has become accepted that all of these personality dimensions can be extracted into "Big Five Model" since early 1990s (Alkahtani et al., 2011). The personality traits description referred to as the Big Five dimensions. The five personality traits dimensions described by the theory are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness.

Awadh and Wan Ismail (2012) defined job performance as the employee participation to achieve organizational goal. Job performance is one of the important dependent variables and has been studied for a long decade. Recent studies show that leaders' personality traits affect job performance. Job performance explained by the theory is a multidimensional construct, which consists of a task dimension and a contextual dimension (Bhatti et al., 2014). Job performance has been defined as the overall predictable value from employees' behaviors carried out over the course of a set period of time (Motowildo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997). Employees' job performance will affect the outcomes of the organization. Job performance also ensures the organization is functioning well and it consists of the knowledge and skills that able to guide the employees to perform variety of activities.

Neubert and Taggar (2004) argued that the relation between job performance and the Big Five personality dimensions are more a consequence of social aspects of the workplace than ability. It means that the organization should increase the positive impressions of the employees towards them. The behavioral patterns of a good leader such as the leader gives full cooperation, support, and speaks favorably could exceed the employee job performance. Therefore, this research will examine the relationship between leader's Big Five personality traits that influence employee job performance.

2. Literature review

Employee's job performance is one of the significant relationships with the goals of organization that most of the organizations need to focus on. Job performance has been investigated as the light of work like attitudes in performing job, job satisfaction and their commitment in completing the task (Fatheya Mahmood, 2008). Employee's job performance found to has positive relationship with the Big Five personality traits (Barrick, Parks & Mount, 2005). Personality can be described as the characteristics of someone act in certain way. Hence, from the good personality of leader, employee can perform the job well, easily communicate with other team members and cooperate or give hand for each other in completing job. In this study was to examine the relationship between the leader's Big Five personality traits that will result to the effective employee job performance. The Big Five personality traits are the neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness are very important in developing employee performance and increase the job performance.

Neuroticism is a tendency as fear, sadness, shame anger, guilt, depression, vulnerability and disgust (Major, Turner & Fletcher, 2006). Neuroticism's leader appears consistent negatively correlated with leadership emergence and effectiveness. Thus, the leader with high neuroticism could not predict task-based criteria, such as quality and quantity of job performance among the employees, (Niehoff, 2006). Leader exhibiting neuroticism characteristic, such as worry, nervousness and self-pity will tend to be less successful than more emotionally stable leaders because these traits tend to inhibit rather than facilitate the accomplishment of work task. It can lead to the employees' job performance become decrease at the workplace (Barrick, & Mount, 1991). Neurotic leader probably does not have positive attitudes towards work and may lack of confidence and optimism, which result in less ambition and less

focus on career goals. Therefore, a negative relationship likely exists between neuroticism and goal direction that may give impact towards followers' job performance (Malouff et al., 1990).

On the other hand, extraversion is one of the leader's personality traits that the most often examined in the research (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Van Hoye et al., 2009; Wolff & Moser, 2006). Extraversion (sometimes known as extroversion) refers to the extent to which individuals are confident, assertive, and energized. It is also called as extraverts (Barrick & Mount, 2005). Extraverted leader tend to be more successful because they are more likely talkative, sociable and develop a higher number of relationships (Colquitt & Le-Pine, 2009). The extraverted leader is also excellent in communication skill and effectively communicates with the employee. Besides, with extraverted leader, the job performance of the employees are enhancing when they are motivated by status striving, as indicator of job satisfaction (Barrick, Stewart & Piotrowski, 2002). Motivated by the desire to interrelate with employee, extraverted leader will lead an energetic existence and look for excitement and stimulation (Alkahtani et al., 2011). Thus, the employee is likely to perceive their leader as cheerful and optimistic.

According to McCrae and Costa, (1997) openness to experience is quite ambiguous and debatable, and further research is required on this particular dimension compared to the other Big Five personality traits. According to Mark & John (2000) that had analyzed the relationship between openness to experience and job performance, found that openness the experience trait was predicted unique variance in job performance for employees beyond both cognitive aptitude. Apart from that, leaders that were more open to experience, can handle and solve the conflict positively so that it can reduce the effect of job performance.

A part from that, another leader's personality traits, conscientiousness personality trait is the most predictive of employee job performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Conscientiousness is a competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving and self-discipline, the employee recognizes the importance of reaching a goal and expends energetic, long-suffering and untiring efforts to obtain satisfaction from performing the duty effectively (Burch & Anderson, 2004). Research into the relation between the leader's personality traits and personnel hiring provides additional evidence that conscientiousness is the most valid predictor of job performance (Schmidt & Ryan, 1993). Conscientiousness becomes the most valid predictor compare to another leader's personality traits in order to investigate employee job performance.

Last but not least, leaders with high agreeableness trait is said to have significant positive predictors of work relationships. It is a tendency to be altruistic, cooperative, compliant, caring and warm. It is because leaders with compliance and dependence aspects of agreeableness are likely to cause employees to perceived contractual obligations to stay with the organization (Colquitt and Le-Pine, 2009). Leaders with high agreeableness have value affiliation and avoid conflict at workplace. They concern for their job at workplace and they are likely to be concerned with employee's growth and development needs and are likely to be sure that employee's job performance increase (Judge & Bono, 2004).

In order to conduct this study, neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness served as five independent variables as the presumed caused and antecedent towards dependent variable. Employee job performance labeled as dependent variable that presumed effect and consequent. Therefore, this study proposes the following framework which illustrated in Figure 1.

Based on the framework, several hypotheses are tested as follow:

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between neuroticism and employee job performance in public sector, Putrajaya.
- H₂: There is a significant relationship between extroversion and employee job performance in public sector, Putrajaya.
- H₃: There is a significant relationship between openness to experience and employee job performance in public sector, Putrajaya.
- H₄: There is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and employee job performance in public sector, Putrajaya.

H₅: There is a significant relationship between agreeableness and employee job performance in public sector, Putrajaya.

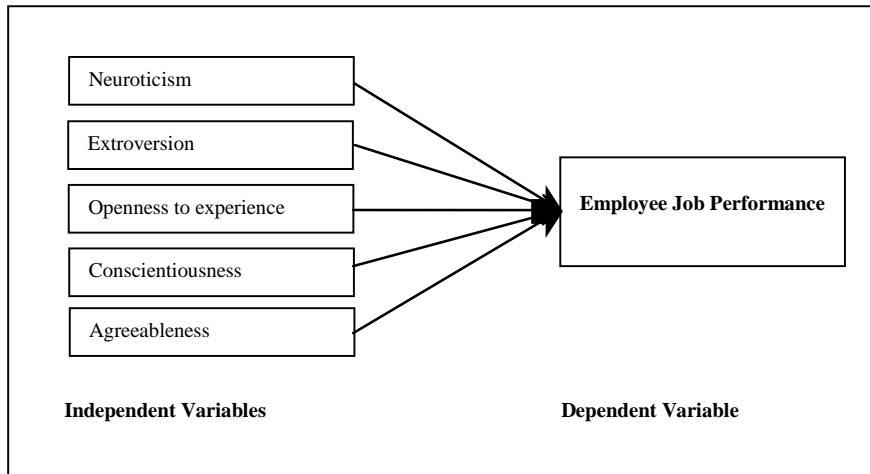


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

3. Methodology

In this study, the respondent selected were those who work as the government servant in public sector. It involved 150 respondents from lower and middle level management of government servants. The questionnaires were distributed within the public sectors in Putrajaya in view of Putrajaya serves as the federal administrative center of Malaysia.

Research design used for this study was correlational in view of it appropriateness to tests statistical relationship between variables. A convenient sampling method was utilized to select 150 of the respondents and as a result, out of 150 respondents, 94 (62.7%) were female whereby 56 (37.3%) were male.

In terms of age, it was reported that 98 (65.3%) respondents' age range from 30 to 39 years old, 32 (21.3%) respondents' age range from 20 to 29 years old, 14 (9.3%) respondents' age range from 40 to 49 years old and 6 (4%) respondents' age 50 years old and above. In accomplishing this study, a fully structured questionnaire was used as an instrument with the purpose of gathering inclusive information from the respondents.

Reliability analysis was conducted by computing Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each variable. The result shows that the highest Alpha coefficient is extraversion with .908, followed by openness to experience variable with value .897, agreeableness with value.888, neuroticism with value .873 and lastly conscientiousness with value .854. According to Kline (2009), a value of 0.7-0.8 is an acceptable value for Cronbach's Alpha. Furthermore, Salkind (2014) stated that a value of 1.00 would be perfect reliability. Based on the finding, all of these variables have a value of above .8 that is closer to a value of 1.00 and this indicates the degree of reliability is very high.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Correlational Analysis

Correlational analysis was used in this study to analyze the relationship between the five main independent variables, neuroticism; extroversion; openness to experience; conscientiousness; agreeableness and employee job performance as dependent variable. Table 1 represents summary of correlation analysis and hypothesis testing for all

variables. H_1 is rejected since it does not have significant relationship between neuroticism and employee job performance with $r=-.113$, $p=.169$ that indicates no relationship between variables. This is in concurrent with Judge et al., (2002) contention that leader with high neuroticism experience adverse feelings in life and Niehoff (2006) has stated that neuroticism leader appears consistent negatively correlated with leadership emergence and effectiveness that will affect employee job performance.

Conversely, H_2 , H_3 , H_4 and H_5 are accepted and have significant relationship with moderate correlated between the extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness towards employee job performance. Relationship between openness to experience represent $r=0.499$, extraversion represent $r=0.504$, conscientiousness represent $r=0.546$ and agreeableness represent highest value of correlation with $r=0.594$. All these four variables were significant with $p<0.01$. This findings consistent with Hogan and Holland (2003) which stated that extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience are important, as it is contingent predictors that easy to get along with others like facilitating peer and team performance. Referring to Hertz and Donovan (2000), conscientiousness personality trait is the most predictive to employee job performance.

Table 1. Summary of correlational analysis and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	r-value	Strength	Result
H_1 : Neuroticism \rightarrow Employee Job Performance	-.113	Not Correlated	Rejected
H_2 : Extroversion \rightarrow Employee Job Performance	0.504**	Moderate Correlated	Accepted
H_3 : Openness to experience \rightarrow Employee Job Performance	0.499**	Moderate Correlated	Accepted
H_4 : Conscientiousness \rightarrow Employee Job Performance	0.546**	Moderate Correlated	Accepted
H_5 : Agreeableness \rightarrow Employee Job Performance	0.594**	Moderate Correlated	Accepted

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the analysis and findings discussed, it is confirmed that there are four variables of leaders' personality traits that have significant and positive relationship with employee job performance. The four variables are extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness and agreeableness has shown the highest significant correlation with employee job performance. Conversely, neuroticism found negatively related with employee job performance.

Moreover, employee job performance considered crucial in all organizations since it will affect the production and reputation of an organization. As for the employee job performance, it was found that the leaders personality play an important roles since it influence job performance between the employee and it consistent with the study conducted by Barrick, Parks and Mount (2005).

Therefore, this study provides good determinant factors for the organization to concern about leadership personality, which are extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness in order to increase level of employee job performance since personality found to be associated with followers' performance.

To sum up, it is worth noting that this study enhances our thoughtful of the leaders' differences in personality made the employees to have high sense of belonging and competent at work thus improve their job performance. Lastly, future studies should enlarge the dimension of leaders' personality traits in both public as well as private sector since both sectors have different culture and work environment.

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