

Relationship Between the 'Big Five' Personality and Career Success

Norliyana Zakaria¹, Halimah Mohd Yusof^{2,*}

¹ Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Jalan Sultan Yahya Petra, 54100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

² School of Human Resources Development & Psychology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The aim of this descriptive and correlational research is to explore the relationship between employee's personality and career achievement. This study involved 126 respondents ranging from grades 1 to 54 in the Land and Mines Office, Nusajaya, Johor. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling method. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) questionnaire was designed to evaluate the respondents' personality, while the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was developed to measure their career success. Then, the collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The results indicated that the 'openness to experience' personality trait was found high in the majority of respondents as compared to the other four personality dimensions. In addition, the respondents scored higher in intrinsic career success as compared to extrinsic career success. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation test revealed that the dimensions of agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness are associated to the intrinsic career success. However, the findings related to extrinsic career success showed a positive relationship with the conscientiousness dimension, and a negative relationship with the neuroticism dimension. Finally, the findings from this study will make a significant contribution to the field of personality and career success.

Keywords:

Big Five Personality, Career Success,
Personality Traits, Intrinsic Career
Success, Extrinsic Career Success

1. Introduction

Development is very important and needed in an organization. It is required by any organization, individual, and society as a whole in order to improve ourselves or move forward in life [1]. Based on the empirical studies, both factors related to workers namely personality and career success are interdependent [2]. Therefore, Big Five Personality traits are applied to measure the workers' personality. It comprises five main personality dimensions [3]. Meanwhile, the career success can be explained in detail using two components, particularly extrinsic and intrinsic [4]. The Big Five Personality factors are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The extrinsic career success includes significant achievements in career life such as the

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: halimahmy@utm.my

external rewards. On the other hand, the achievement of intrinsic career success covers the subjective internal satisfaction of the individual towards his or her work. Personality is also one of the most important aspects in influencing the individual's career success or growth [5]. Meanwhile, the component of extrinsic career success is very crucial for an employee, which refers to the objective type of achievement [6]. In addition, the component of intrinsic career success refers to the individual attitudes towards his or her career, and how much the person loves his or her job [7].

The contribution of employees to organizational processes is the key to organizational success. Therefore, career success is important for both employees and the organization [8]. Thus, an organization has the greatest chance of success if their employees are properly directed to achieve corporate goals and they will be more motivated and produce the best work performance. The impact of being successful in their careers can be directly involved with organizational success for it to be stable in the market place with the competitiveness of the global context [8]. The success of employees and the organization, which relies on career success is very important to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of employees to achieve the goals and objectives required by the organization and employees.

Some of the previous research studies imply that personality traits have been shown to influence performance and career directions [9]. According to Boudreau, Boswell and Judge (1999) [10], understanding factors related to career success is essential to find out the relationships between individual traits and behaviours, and organizational practices. According to the viewpoint of Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller [11] said in a sense, personality is probably an important determinant of how people are going to do in their professions. The majority of past studies have revealed the big five personality factors strongly influence career success. Therefore, the majority of past foreign studies have revealed the big five personality factors strongly relate to career success. Also, there are a significant number of studies that have proven the big five personality factors strongly influence career success [9].

By considering theoretical justification through literature and practical arguments from the results generated through the pilot survey, the researchers articulate that the research problem as follows. This study will focus on the relationship between personality and career success among the employees. The chosen organization for this research is Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor. The first issue is there is not enough in-depth study on the declining of workers' career success especially in the aspects of lack of competence, competitive, creativity and work commitment. Moreover, the other problem in the Department of Registration PTG is the employees have different personality dimensions. Moreover, the employees in this department consist of various service schemes. This causes different employee behaviours which may influence the employees' career growth and success. In addition, an officer of the Department of Registration PTG stated that they are facing serious problem in managing issues or cases related to personalities among the employees. This indicates that issues related to employees' personalities can adversely affect the image and reputation of the organization.

Furthermore, problems arising among the civil servants are linked with career growth or promotion issues. In the government sector, the employees have difficulties in getting promoted because promotions are mainly based on seniority. In addition, the aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic career growth are among the frequently raised and discussed issues on career success. The stress or pressure due to receiving low salary may demotivate the workers and cause them to show poor performance at work [12]. In terms of intrinsic aspects, the indication that the productivity of an employee is declining is when they have become dissatisfied with his or her own job. Some of the negative impacts are playing truant or absent from work, drinking outside during office hours surfing the internet, abandoning the work tasks, and fake medical certificate [13]. Thus, the study is done to

find out how far the personality has influenced the employee's career success in the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor.

2. Methodology

This study will use quantitative studies to answer some questions related with the relationship between the measured variables. The correlation research design is selected because it can determine how far these two variables are connected with the respondents, whom are the employees at the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor.

Big Five Inventory (BFI): Big Five Inventory [14] is a self-report measure designed to measure personality traits of manufacturing sectors employees. The scale consists of 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality [15]. The dimensions include extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and openness to experience. Each of the factors is then further divided into personality facets. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert type self-report scale anchored by "disagree strongly =1" and "agree strongly=5". There are 28 positive items and 16 reverse-scored items. The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .798$).

BFI was constructed and introduced by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991), with 44 question items for all of the Big Five dimension personalities. On the other hand, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) instrument is used to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic components of career success with 20 item questions. According to Miller (2011), reliability is defined as how far the measurement procedures can produce consistent results from time to time.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ): MSQ [16] is designed to measure an employee's satisfaction with his or her job. The 20 MSQ-short version items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 "very dissatisfied with this aspect of my job", 2 "dissatisfied with this aspect of my job", 3 "can't decide if I'm satisfied or dissatisfied with this aspect of my job", 4 "satisfied with this aspect of my job" and 5 "very satisfied with this aspect of my job"). Item responses are summed or averaged to create a total score – the lower the score, the lower the level of job satisfaction. The Short Form requires about 5 minutes. This form consists of 20 items from the long-form MSQ that best represent each of the 20 scales. Factor analysis of the 20 items resulted in two factors--Intrinsic and Extrinsic Satisfaction. Scores on these two factors plus a General Satisfaction score may be obtained. The short-form MSQ uses the same response categories used in the 1977 long form. Normative data for the three scales for six selected occupations are in the manual.

The researchers used the Cronbach Alpha value to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Big Five personality dimensions have been proven to have high consistency and reliability. The dimensions are extraversion (.86), neurotics (.87), agreeableness (.79), openness to experience (.83) and conscientiousness (.82). The validity of an instrument refers to how far an instrument measures the item that need to be measured [12]. In this study, Pearson correlation analysis is applied to test the research hypothesis. The validity of the constructed questionnaire is measured using the correlation value between the scores of each item with the total score.

The conceptual framework gives direction to the study and consists of the existing literature review. All the variables of the study have been identified based on literature. In this framework, career success worked as the dependent variable, and the big five personality factors worked as the independent variable, which consists of five dimensions of the study. The study has investigated to determine the impact of big five personality factors on staff-level employee's career success in a leading apparel firm in Land and Mines Office (PTG), Nusajaya, Johor. Figure 1 is shown the conceptual framework for the relationship of personality factors on career success.

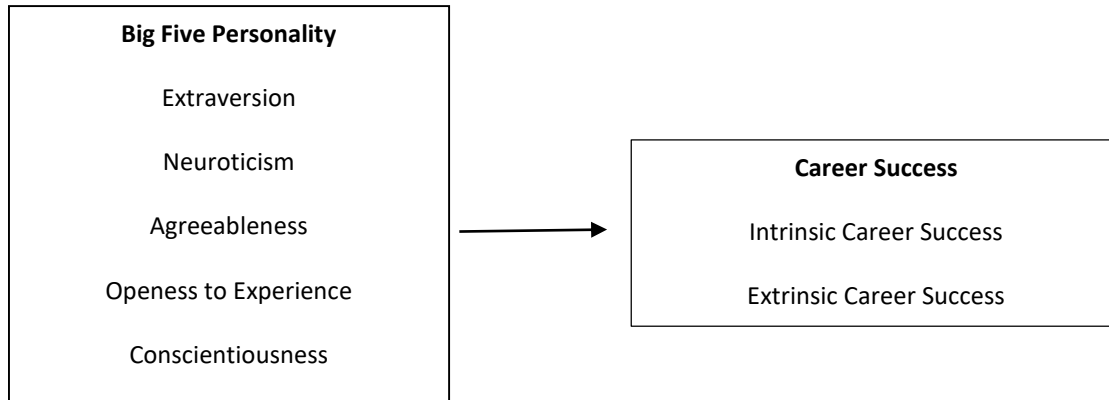


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

Researchers chose to use stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is used when the population is heterogeneous or homogenous uniform can be made through a process of stratification. This technique is very useful in the selection damped by comparing each individual segment of the population and work to improve the efficiency of statistical samples. In this study, the sampling process was divided strata based on three departments as mentioned earlier. There is diversity across strata but there is homogeneity within each sub-group.

Table 1
 Respondents Population and Sample

Grade Position	Population (N)	Sample (n)
1-17	143	97
22-27	27	18
32-36	6	4
41-48	8	6
51-54	1	1
Total	185	126

Therefore, a pilot study was conducted before the actual survey or data collection process. In this study, the selected population comprises the employees working at the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor. The chosen population in this research involves the employees ranging from grades 1 to 54 in three main units in the organization. The total number of population at the research location is 185 employees (PTG, December 2015). The involved units are Title Registration, Strata Title, and Revenue and Information Technology in the Department of Registration. In obtaining the valid number of sample from the selected population, the strata sample calculation using Solvin's formula is applied. Hence, the required sample size for this study is 126 employees.

3. Results

The results obtained from this study indicate that the openness to experience dimension trait was found high in the majority of respondents as compared to the other four personality dimensions. The dimension shows a moderate correlation in supporting the intrinsic career success among employees in the Department of Registration, PTG. The analysis also shows openness to experience

dimension relationship that influences the intrinsic career success, as well as conscientiousness dimension relationships that influences the extrinsic career success. The result of Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between openness to experience ($r = .442$) with the intrinsic career success, and conscientiousness ($r = .300$) with the extrinsic career success.

Table 2
Table Mean of Big Five Personality Dimension

Big Five Personality Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation
Extraversion	3.40	0.335
Neuroticism	3.10	0.357
Conscientiousness	3.20	0.288
Openness to Experience	3.47	0.390
Agreeableness	3.16	0.346

The first objective of this study (Objective 1) was to identify the Big Five personality dimensions that influence the personality of employees in the Registration Department, Nusajaya Land and Mines Office. Therefore, the researchers used descriptive statistics of mean score and standard deviation (Std Deviation). Based on Table 4.2 as a whole, the personality level of the respondents is at a moderate mean level that is $M = 3.47$, $SP = 0.390$ on the dimension of openness to experience, conscientiousness dimension that is $M = 3.20$, $SP = 0.288$, extraversion dimension that is $M = 3.40$, $SP = 0.335$, agreeableness dimension i.e. $M = 3.16$, $SP = 0.346$ and neuroticism dimension i.e. $M = 3.10$, $SP = 0.357$. Therefore, the Big Five personality dimension that is identified as possessed by the majority among employees in the organization is the dimension of openness to experience.

Table 3
Mean of Career Success

Career Success	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation
Intrinsic	3.32	0.496
Extrinsic	3.25	0.512

Table 4
The Relationship between Big Five Personality and Intrinsic Career Success

	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2 tailed) (p)	Relationship
Extraversion	.302**	.001	Moderate/Positive
Neuroticism	-.103	.417	No Relationship
Conscientiousness	.241**	.007	Low/ Positive
Openness to Experience	.442**	.000	Moderate/Positive
Agreeableness	.205*	.038	Low/ Positive

Note: $p < 0.05$ (The correlation is significant)

The second objective of this study (Objective 2) was to identify the level of intrinsic and extrinsic career success of the employees in the organization in the Registration Department, Nusajaya Land and Mines Office. Statistical findings showed that intrinsic career success ($M = 3.32$, $SP = 0.496$) had an insignificant mean score value with extrinsic career success ($M = 3.25$, $SP = 0.512$). Thus, the main focus of employee career success in this organization was on intrinsic career success but did not show

a significant level of score difference. It can be concluded that respondents are more inclined towards intrinsic career success but do not reject towards extrinsic achievement in their career.

Based on the results of correlation analysis in Table 4 shows extraversion dimension has a positive relationship at a moderate level that supported the intrinsic career success among employees in the Registration Department, PTG when the value of correlation coefficient recorded $r = .302$ with p value = $.001$. While the agreeableness dimension was found has a positive relationship at a low level that supported the intrinsic career success among employees in the organization when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .205$ with a value of $p = .308$. Furthermore, it was found that the conscientiousness dimension has a low positive relationship supported intrinsic career success among employees when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .241$ with a value of $p = .007$. Nevertheless, it was found that the neuroticism dimension had no relationship in supporting intrinsic career success in the study organization when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .103$ with a value of $p > .05$. The last dimension, openness to experience, was found to have a moderate positive relationship in supporting intrinsic career success in the organization when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .442$ with a value of $p = .000$.

As the conclusions from the results of this analysis, it was found that the dimension of openness to experience practiced as a whole recorded a higher value than other Big Five personality dimensions by showing a moderate correlation supporting intrinsic career success among employees in the Registration Department, PTG as noted in Table 4.

Table 5

The Relationship between Big Five Personality and Extrinsic Career Success

	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2 tailed) (p)	Relationship
Extraversion	.140	.123	No Relationship
Neuroticism	-.300	.001	Negative Relationship
Conscientiousness	.300	.002	Moderate/Positive
Openness to Experience	.101	.344	No Relationship
Agreeableness	.134	.134	No Relationship

Based on the results of correlation analysis in Table 5 shows the Big Five personality dimension is significant with extrinsic career success practiced among employees in the Registration Department, PTG found that extraversion dimension has no relationship in supporting extrinsic career success among employees in the organization when the coefficient value the correlation recorded $r = .140$ with a value of $p = .123$ which is greater than $p < 0.05$. While the agreeableness dimension was also found has no relationship in supporting extrinsic career success when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .134$ with a value of $p = .134$ which is greater than $p < 0.05$. Nevertheless, the conscientiousness dimension was found has a positive relationship supporting extrinsic career success when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .300$ with a value of $p = .002$. Neuroticism dimension has a relationship but was negative with extrinsic career success when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = -.300$ with a value of $p = .001$. The last dimension, openness to experience, was found has no relationship in supporting extrinsic career success in the study organization when the value of the correlation coefficient recorded $r = .101$ with a value of $p = .101$ which is greater than $p < 0.05$.

Conclusions from the results of this analysis, it was found that the conscientiousness dimension practiced as a whole recorded the highest value compared to other personality dimensions with a

moderate level of correlation in supporting extrinsic career success among employees in the Registration Department, PTG as noted in Table 5.

4. Conclusions

This study gives better understanding and holistic view for the organization regarding the factors that affect the career success of the employees. Even the results of this research study shows the relationship between Big Five Personality and Career Success among the employees at Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor are not enough strong correlation that is because majority of the employees in the government sector at this country which is Malaysia still assume the uses of big five personality is still not important to their lives. One of the reason why this situation happened is they are not exposed to the interest or importance of the big five personality quality in enhancing their career success and life. However, it is also a good platform for the organization to have a more comprehensive view in developing a long-term strategic action plan. Other than that, it encourages the implementation of detailed personality tests which are practical or useful to the employees.

Therefore, researchers suggest considering this area, as employees can identify their own personality traits, and then it can improve by themselves to succeed in their careers. Organizations should facilitate the employees by giving financial motivation and training programs by conducting on this key area. Neuroticism is negatively influence the personality and comes as a negative outcome. The staff-level employees were moderately scored to the neuroticism. Therefore, staff-level employees have experienced an unfavorable level of neuroticism. Further, it really needs knowledge and practice about experiences for the proper knowledge about personality factors and the impact of it on career success as well as for others. This current study shows that big five factors can be applied to appropriate jobs and to identify employees who do not fit into the organization. In order to enhance career success, selection and training should emphasize the traits that are strongly related to career success.

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