

Relationship between Personality Factors and Job Satisfaction among High School Teachers

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the Big Five personality factors and job satisfaction variables among high school teachers in Pune (India) in 2008. A sample consisted of 121 female and 102 male teachers teaching at high schools in Pune, India were randomly selected. The Neo-Five Factors Inventory (NEO-FFI) by Costa and McCrae (1992) and Job Descriptive Index (JDI) by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) were used. To analyze the data Pearson correlation was used. The results showed that neuroticism predicted (low) job satisfaction on all the job satisfaction facets except pay. Extraversion predicted satisfaction with people at work. Openness predicted (low) job satisfaction in general and satisfaction with promotions and people at work. Agreeableness predicted satisfaction with people at work. Conscientiousness predicted satisfaction with work. The results indicated that the Big Five personality factors can well predict the job satisfaction among high school teachers.

Keywords: personality factors, job satisfaction, teachers

A number of recent studies have looked at personality traits and job satisfaction correlation (e. g., Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Hart, 1999; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Wille, Fruyt, & Feys, 2010; Templer, 2012). One of the most recent models for studying personality is the Five-Factor Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1980). In recent years, it has become the dominant model in dispositional trait psychology (Patrick, 2010). Many factor-analytic theorists believe that there are five to eight

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major dimensions of personality (Botwin & Buss, 1989; Digman & Inouye, 1986; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Norman, 1963; Johnson, Rowatt, & Petrini, 2011). According to the FF Model Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are the main domains of personality. Neuroticism has been considered as a general tendency to experience negative affects and it captures the disturbed behavior and thoughts that accompany emotional distress. Any person prone to any one of these emotional states probably will experience other emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Neuroticism includes more than susceptibility to psychological distress, perhaps due to the interference of disruptive emotions with adaptations. People high in neuroticism tend to have irrational ideas, they are less able to control their impulses, and they cope more poorly with stress than other people.

Sociability is the core of extraversion; therefore, extraverts enjoy company of others. Openness to experience is associated with adjectives like broad interests, daring, etc. Agreeableness is a dimension of interpersonal tendencies. Conscientiousness includes morality, hard work and striving for excellence. Carbone and Cigrang (2001) found that personality variables played an important role in distinguishing satisfied employees from the dissatisfied. In a study designed to compare the effect of congruence and personality on job satisfaction, Tokar and Subich (1997) found that congruence did not predict job satisfaction, but the Big-Five personality dimensions did contribute significantly to the prediction of job satisfaction.

There is a lot of research on job satisfaction (Borgen, 1991; Lent, 2008; Wille, Fruyt, & Feys, 2010) in different disciplines (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Spector, 1997; Gui, Barriball, & While, 2009). Locke (1983, p. 1300) defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. This definition appears to be the most referenced and generally accepted description, characterizing the necessary components needed to depict what is meant by the broad construct of job satisfaction (Morgan,

McDonagh, & Ryan-Morgan, 1995). Job satisfaction is positively related to life satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993), organizational commitment (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005), organizational citizenship behavior (Hoffman, Blair, & Meriac, 2007), and job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). It is negatively related to absenteeism (Hacket & Guion, 1985), counterproductive work behavior (Dalal, 2005), and employee turnover (Carsten & Spector, 1983). In a related study by Hosseini Largani (2007) from Iran, the simple and multiple relationships were found between the five-big personality factors and job attitudes.

Some studies from India have shown that job satisfaction differences are noticed among male and female primary school teachers and there is positive correlation between job satisfaction and stress coping skills (e. g., Bindhu & Sudeeshkumar, 2006; Kumar & Patnaik, 2002). Miller, Mire & Kim (2009) investigated sources of job satisfaction among police officers and found that years of experience and the job characteristic factors of autonomy and feedback were the most important predictors of job satisfaction in this sample of police officers.

Lounsbury, Moffitt, Gibson, Drost, & Stevens (2007) investigated personality traits in relation to job and career satisfaction among information technology professionals and found that personality can partly explain job satisfaction. Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002) showed in their meta-analysis that the Big-Five personality trait of neuroticism is negatively related to job satisfaction, while extraversion and conscientiousness are positively related to it. Also, Connolly and Viswesvaran (2000) showed in their meta-analysis that negative affectivity (neuroticism) and affectivity (extraversion) are related to job satisfaction. Templer (2012) conducted a meta-analytic study on the relationships between job satisfaction and the Big Five personality traits including extraversion and their findings are in line with our results. Patrick (2010) was found a positive correlation between extraversion and job satisfaction among management faculties.

In addition, high extraversion and low neuroticism (Van den Berg & Feij, 2003) and negative affectivity (Watson & Slack, 1993) predict job satisfaction measured two years later.

The purpose of the present research is to investigate which personality traits can affect job satisfaction among high school teachers.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Neuroticism is negatively correlated with the overall job satisfaction as well as with all the facets of job satisfaction.

2. Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness are positively correlated with overall job satisfaction as well as with all the facets of job satisfaction.

Method

This study was based on the method of correlation. The participants of the study were 223 high school teachers (males 102, and females 121), from Pune (India) who were selected randomly. The teachers ranged in age between 25 and 55 years. All the participants were married, and had a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 25 years of teaching experience and were from English Medium Schools.

Variables and Tools

The following two scales were used to collect the data:

1- *Neo-Five Factors Inventory (NEO-FFI)* by (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Hoekstra, Ormel, & De Fruyt, 1996)

The FFI is a sixty-item version of the NEO-PI-R. It provides a brief, comprehensive measure of the five domains of personality. It is useful when time available for testing and global information on personality is considered sufficient. The domains it measures are Neuroticism, Extroversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. It requires a sixth grade reading level and consists of five 12 item scales that measure each domain. The NEO-FFI may be administered individually or in groups.

The NEO-FFI scales showed correlations ranging from 0.75 for C, to 0.89 for N. When it correlated with the domain scales of the NEO-PI-R in the ABLSA sample, correlation coefficients were 0.92 for N, 0.90 for E, 0.91 for O, 0.77 for A and 0.87 for C. The alpha coefficient was 0.86, 0.77, 0.73, 0.68 and 0.81 for N, E, O, A, and C scales, respectively.

2- *Job Descriptive Index (JDI)* by Smith, Kendall, & Hulin (1969). Job satisfaction was assessed in five subscales (pay, promotion, supervision, coworkers and nature of work) and with the 72 items in the form of adjectives. Respondent can mark either “yes, no, or can’t say” for each item. The validity of JDI was studied under a program which was conducted for a period of five years in which several job situations and samples were studied (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969). The factor analysis and the cluster analysis indicated high discriminant and convergent validities. A number of studies have also indicated correlations of JDI with important situational, personal and behavioral variables indicating individual as well as organizational differences. Thus, the validity of JDI is established in a variety of settings ranging from 0.61 for coworkers to 0.80 for supervision. The reliability of JDI was tested using a sample of approximately 1600 cases. The alpha coefficients for each subscale are obtained in the range from 0.86 to 0.91 pointing to a sound reliability of the measure.

In the current work for our studied sample in India the reliability coefficient of JDI calculated using Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 to 0.92 for each subscale. The validity of the JDI was confirmed by the Indian experts.

Results

The descriptive statistics and the inter correlations among all the variables for the total sample are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables (N= 223)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Neuroticism	31.7	6.18											
2.Extraversion	42.3	4.97	.01										
3.Openness to experience	39.3	4.47	.00	.00									
4.Agreeableness	37.5	4.56	.00	.01	.00								
5.Conscientiousness	43.1	3.92	.01	.00	-.01	.01							
6.Nature of work	27.5	3.77	-.42***	.24***	.02	.24***	.33***						
7.Pay	14.6	2.08	.04	-.01	-.02	-.05	-.08	.23*					
8.Promotion	15.6	2.59	-.29***	.23***	-.05	.16*	.26***	.35**	.31**				
9.Supervision	30.5	5.20	-.25***	.11*	-.06	.12*	.20**	.16*	.21*	.28***			
10. Coworkers	33.5	7.03	-.28***	.22***	-.12*	.27***	.27***	.12*	.16*	.21**	.28***		
11. Overall Job Satisfaction	30.4	3.29	-.35***	.21**	-.07	.19**	.27***	-.35***	.19**	.21**	.27***	.18**	

*P<.05

**P<.01

***P<.001

From the mean values reported in Table 1, it is seen that Conscientiousness among the high school teachers was high (43.1) exhibiting tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement. They were also high on Extraversion (42.3) and Openness (39.3) indicating their positive emotions, urgency, and the tendency to seek stimulation and the company of others and also appreciate art, emotions, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. They showed moderation in Agreeableness (37.5), which indicates their compassionate and cooperative tendency to some extent. The teachers were found to be lowest in Neuroticism (31.7) which is a good sign and indicates that they have fewer tendencies to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability, Sometimes called emotional instability.

The correlations between personality factors and job satisfaction presented in Table 1 show that Neuroticism was significantly correlated with all the facets of job satisfaction and with the overall satisfaction, except for the pay facet.

In fact, pay was the only facet, which did not correlate with any of the personality factors. The correlations for Neuroticism ranged from the minimum of -0.25 for satisfaction with supervisor to the maximum of -0.42 for satisfaction with nature of work. All the correlations were negative and highly significant.

Opposite to the Neuroticism, Extraversion was positively correlated to all the facets of job satisfaction (again, except pay). Although the relationship was significant, it wasn't as large in the magnitude as that of Neuroticism. Here, almost all the correlations ranged from 0.21 to 0.24.

Openness did not show any significant correlations with the facets of job satisfaction except for satisfaction with people at work where it showed a negative correlation of -0.12, which was significant but the magnitude was small. Thus, considering it separately, openness doesn't show any major relationship with job satisfaction.

Agreeableness showed positive correlations with all the facets of job satisfaction (except for pay). Agreeableness is more associated with positive interpersonal tendencies than any other personality factor.

Moreover Table 1 shows that like most of the other personality factors, Conscientiousness too was positively related to job satisfaction (except for pay). Almost all the correlations ranged from 0.20 to 0.33.

Discussion

Job satisfaction has a cognitive as well as an affective component to it. Neuroticism not only points to negative emotionality but also to the tendency to perceive things negatively (Emmons, Diener & Larsen, 1985; Ashton & Lee, 2005). The results show that the higher one is on Neuroticism, the less one feels satisfied with all the important aspects of job like work, people, promotions and supervisor.

Extraversion is not just a trait that is associated with outgoingness and social interaction. As against Neuroticism, extraversion includes positive emotionality. It comes with traits like optimism, cheerfulness and assertiveness, a much useful virtue in corporate life.

The positive correlations of Agreeableness with all the facets of job satisfaction reflected in the results, yielding the highest correlation of agreeableness with satisfaction with coworkers. This was the exact reversal of the results with openness. The positive outlook of agreeable people towards others, and to an extent towards situations, which is reflected in their being uncritical and compliant, goes with being satisfied with different aspects of job. Reporting dissatisfaction, in a way means to be critical and skeptical of the situation and put oneself before others and express against the organization. Similar findings were reported by Lounsbury, Moffitt, Gibson, Drost, & Stevens (2007).

From the point of view of work, conscientiousness is the most relevant personality domain. It induces a set of traits crucial for effective work behavior. Substantial amount of research already exist which links conscientiousness with work performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991,

Acuña, Gómez, & Juristo, 2009). This particular aspect was reflected in the results related to job satisfaction too. The highest correlation of conscientiousness with the job satisfaction facets was found to be satisfaction with the work facet. Conscientiousness and satisfaction with work go together.

Apart from the explanation based on job performance, some other dominant characteristics associated with conscientiousness can be considered in order to understand the high correlations of conscientiousness with job satisfaction. Conscientious people like to work, but liking for the work itself is associated with the qualities of the conscientious people (Organ & Lingl, 1995). These qualities include self discipline and high motivation. Dutifulness and other work related characteristics are closely associated with conscientiousness and thus, working can be pleasurable experience resulting in higher job satisfaction (Williamson, Pemberton, & Lounsbury, 2005).

Conclusion

In the current study the relationship between the Big Five personality factors and job satisfaction variables among the high school teachers in Pune (India) were examined. The results showed that except Neuroticism and openness all the other personality factors, namely Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, had positive correlations with job satisfaction. The teachers showed the highest personality traits on Conscientiousness. Neuroticism predicted (low) job satisfaction on all the job satisfaction facets except pay. Openness predicted (low) job satisfaction in general and satisfaction with promotions and people at work. The findings of this study demonstrate the role of personality in job satisfaction. It also suggests that it is not enough to reinstate teachers to ongoing status, but poor work environments, pay and lack of promotion opportunity need to be addressed.

Limitations of the study

The current study focused on the high school teachers in India. The primary school teachers were not considered in this investigation. Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited. The role of experience and creativity in teaching job as well as other personality factors should also be taken into account.

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