

**The Impact of Personality on Employee Job Performance:
An Empirical Study of Non-Academic Employees of the Universities in the
Eastern Province of Sri Lanka**

Sareena U M A Gaffoor
Dept. of Management
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
sareena@seu.ac.lk

Abstract

Personality is a potentially important predictor of work behavior. Matching people to jobs matters is very important because when people do not fit with their jobs or the organization, they are more likely to leave, it create more prolem to tha organization to replace them. Many researchers have attempted to investigate the influence of individual, group, and organizational variables on job performance, but enough researches have not been done in Sri Lanka relevant to this area.

This study is to gain a better understanding of the impact of personality on employee job performance of with reference to the non-academic employees of the universities operating in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. The conceptual model was formulated to the influence of employee personality on employee job performance. The study generated about 81 percent response rate from 190 non-academic employees who had worked at these two Universities.

Responses from the survey were statistically analyzed with the software SPSS validity and reliability of the questionnaire was satisfactory. It was found that employee personality had a strong positive correlation with employee job performance ($r = 0.558$). The result of simple regression analysis revealed that employee personality was the strongest predictor, which explains 31.1% of the variation in employee job performance. The remaining 68.9% of variation not explain by this variable. The finding revealed the employee personality was found to be the critical personal factor to improve the employee job performance.

Key Words: Personality, Performance, Big-Five Personality Dimensions

Introduction

The term 'performance' is widely spoken in any organization, which is one of the most important variables of individual behavior. Any organization in current context, they should improve the productivity of their work force in order to sustain in the market place. Therefore, individual performance is a very important area that any organization should look at

seriously to have an effective and the best performance to sustain in the global environment.

One of the prominent trends in business organizations today is the attention placed on individual personality traits as a means of predicting job performance (Carr, et. al. 2002).

Today managers are most concerned of both individual and organizational behavior, mainly, because job performance depends on individuals' behavior. Job performance has been as a single most pervasive outcome variable in the micro organizational behavior research (Staw, 1984).

Many scholars have defined job performance. Porter and Lawler (1968) have defined job performance as the accomplishment of those tasks that comprise a person's job.

Some of the important individual differences that can help explain why one person is significantly better or poorer performer than the other person. Attitudes, personality, perception and ability and skill are influencing the performance (Ivancevich and Matteson 2002).

Personality is the most important individual variable in individual behavior. Personality may be predicting the contextual component of overall performance. Results from studies using the Hogan Personality Inventory confirm that correlations between personality and contextual criteria are higher than correlations between personality and overall performance. It argues that finding such links between predictors and individual criterion elements significantly advances the science of personnel selection (Borman and Motowidlo 1997).

Psychologists explore how personality affects ability to perform well on the job. Smarter people were considered more likely to succeed on the job. Creativity, leadership, integrity, attendance and cooperation also play major roles in a person's job suitability and productivity. Personality, rather than intelligence,

predicts these qualities, said psychologist Joyce Hogan, PhD, of the University of Tulsa cited in: (<http://www.which Traits Predict Job Performance.htm> (5/6/2006)).

Personality is a potentially important predictor of work behavior. Matching people to jobs matters, because when people do not fit with their jobs or the organization, they are more likely to leave, costing organizations as much as a person's annual salary to replace them. ([http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/pub/1.0/organizational_behavior/37231\(9/9/2008\)](http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/pub/1.0/organizational_behavior/37231(9/9/2008))). Thus this research focused: Is there an impact of personality of non-academic employees on their job performance in the universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka?.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine how the personality influence on employee job performance was, and the sub objective is:

To identify the relationship of personality on employee job performance of the non-academic employees of the universities

Literature Review

Personality and Performance

Job performance can be described in general as an outcome variable of an employee. It can be viewed from different perspectives such as productivity, outcome, effectiveness, efficiency and many other variables.

A trait is an internal characteristic that corresponds to an extreme position on a behavioral dimension. Traits are consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, or actions that distinguish people from one another.

www.Prsonality\Big Five Personality Factors.htm (07/02/2008). Personality is a stable set of characteristics and tendencies that determines communalities and differences in people's thoughts, feeling and actions (Arnold and Feldman, 1986).

Personality factors must be recognized, accepted as normal, and managed just as any other personal characteristic. Family & social, physiological early roles, early situations and cultural factors are influence on personality (Arnold and Feldman, 1986). Personality refers to the personal traits or characteristics - sociability, dominance, aggressiveness, and persistence and so on – that a person possesses. An individual's personality influences the types of activities that he or she suited for and the likelihood that the person will be able to perform effectively in a particular job or situation. Personality is another key factor influencing individual behavior and performance in organizations (Ivancevich and Matteson 2002).

Personality is a term used to describe a great many feelings and behaviors. Literally hundreds of personality dimensions or traits have been identified or suggested by psychologists over the last century. Over the last couple of decades, however, a consensus has begun to emerge that five dimensions largely describe human personality. Out of this consensus has evolved the "Big Five" personality model, suggesting that the following factors are central to describing personality (Ivancevich and Matteson, 2002).

1. **Extroversion:** refers to the tendency to be sociable, talkative, and assertive.
2. **Emotional stability:** refers to the tendency to experience positive

emotional states as calm, enthusiastic, secure (positive) versus tense, nervous, depressed, and insecure (negative).

3. **Agreeableness:** refers the person someone who gets along well with others that good-natured, cooperative and trusting.
4. **Conscientiousness:** is exhibited by those who are responsible, dependable, persistent and achievement oriented.
5. **Openness to experience:** is addressed someone in terms of imaginativeness, artistic sensitivity, and intellectualism.

There have been different theoretical perspective in the field of pesonality psychology over the years including human motivation, the whole person, and individual differences. The big Five falls under the perspective of individual diffences. The Big Five represent a taxonomy of traits that some personality pycologists suggest capture the essence of indivdual differences in personality. www.Prsonality\Big Five Personality Factors.htm (07/02/2008).

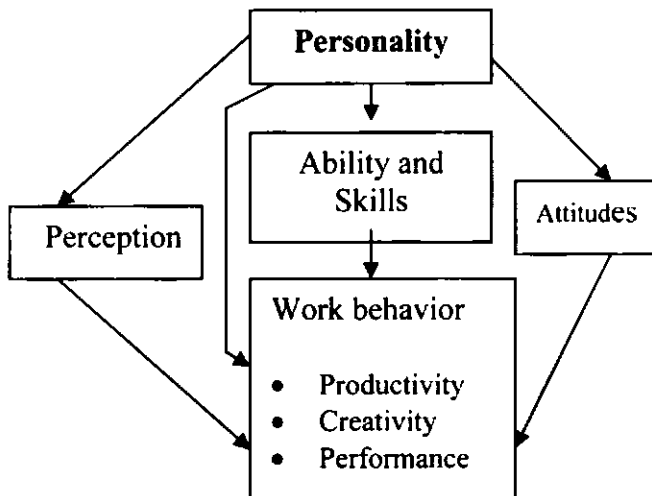
In contemporary psychology, the Big Five factors of personality are five broad domains or dimentions of personality which have been scientifically discovered to define human personality at the highest level of organization (Goldberg, 1993).

All of the personality dimensions of the five factor model: conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to new experience and emotional stability as well as locus of control were significantly related to one or more of the performance measures. (Sawyerr, Srinivas and Wang, 2009).

Personality measures are widely in employee analysis and selection because they contribute to the learning and understanding of today's employees, though many personality traits have been investigated over the years. The Big-Five

personality dimensions have emerged as the most important because of their relationship with performance (Luthans, 2002). The theoretical relationship between personality and performance shown in figure 1

Figure 1 Individual differences in the work place



Source: John M. Ivancevich and Michel T. Matteson (2002), *Organizational Behavior and Management*, p, 109.

According to Barrick et al., 2001. The results of the studies are based comprise most of the research that has been conducted on this topic in the past century. Consequently, a moratorium on meta-analytic studies of the type reviewed in the study and recommend that researchers embark on a new research agenda designed to further understanding of personality-performance linkages.

The Big-Five personality dimension include following aspects: dependable, hardworking, responsible, persevering, achievement oriented; calm, secure, unworried; cooperative, warm, caring, good-natured, courteous, trusting; sociable, outgoing, talkative, assertive, gregarious; curious, intellectual, creative,

cultured, artistically, sensitive, flexible and imaginative (Luthans, 2002).

According to Carr, et. al, 2002 the research supports the possibility of predicting job performance based upon the natural preferences of behavior, driven by individual personality traits.

There has been resurgence in interest in the area of personality and performance prediction recently as meta-analytical evidence has demonstrated that certain personality traits are consistently predictive of general areas of performance and the most widely applied method in this area is the use of the Five Factor model of personality traits (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick, et al., 2001; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, and McCloy, 1990) cited in Owns, 2007. Based on this theoretical perspective the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypotheses

This study considers personality as an independent variable job performance as a dependent variable, according to that the following hypotheses were formulated.

HA1 There is an impact of employee personality on employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

HA2 There is a positive relationship between employee personality and employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

Methods

The survey was carried out in two universities (Eastern University and South Eastern University) in the Eastern province, because of the manageability and practicability. The sample size of this study was 190 (University Statistics, 2002), it was possible to collect 154 questionnaires from two universities; this size was selected by using stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on the employment categories of the non-academic employees attached to two universities. The all non-academic employees were categorized into three grades based on their jobs they perform as follows:

1. Clerical and allied grades
2. Technical grades
3. Manual and semi skilled grades

Measures:

In this study, Opatha (2002) has identified three dimensions of job performance (traits, behavior and results), which were considered to conceptualize job performance of non-academic employees of universities in the eastern province of Sri Lanka and Luthans (2002) has identified five dimensions of personality, which were considered to conceptualize personality of non-academic employees of the Universities in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka.

This study was used two structured questionnaire with five point Likert scale. The questionnaire for measuring job performance was standard questionnaire, which was originally developed by Udayakumar (2003). It contained 30 statements to measure various aspects of the job performance of employees.

The questionnaire for measuring employee personality was originally developed by the researcher. It contained 32 statements to measure various aspect of the personality of employees.

This study used two methods of analysis, which is Univariate and Bivariate analysis. The researcher aimed to find out the percentage, mean, standard deviation and the variation of the data.

Mean or the average can be found by adding up the values of the variable and dividing by the number of items. Three (3) is the mean value of these five point scale $\{(1+2+3+4+5)/5 = 3\}$, it is consider for evaluating the extent to which a respondent is satisfied with particular aspect, which is the deciding factor for interpreting variables in this study.

The correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between two variables and measure the closeness of the relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient denoted by r . The value ' r ' lies between -1 and $+1$. The magnitude of ' r ' indicates the strength of the linear relationship while the sign indicates the direction.

The P value takes to measuring the error judgment for the test. The significance level of each relation/influence will be tested at 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) significance level.

1% ($\alpha=0.01$) significance level provides a strong relationship. A very low p value was indicate the high statistical significant of the test.

Simple regression analysis was used for the purpose of prediction and making other inferences, and to determine the strength and statistical significance of the relationship between the dependent

variable and an independent variable. For the analysis the simple linear regression model can be written as,

$$Y = A + B_1X_1$$

Results

Univariate analysis

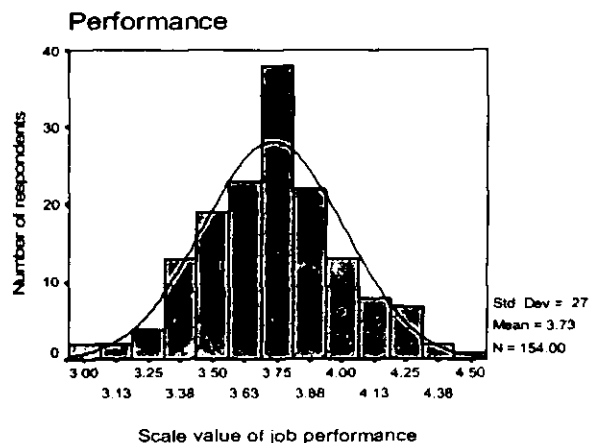
The statistics of the frequency distributions presented by table and histogram, and the results were interpreted by skewness and kurtosis of the distribution, if the distributions are highly skewed; data recorded are performed as adaptable to population.

Table 1 Statistics of the distribution of Employee Job Performance

	Employee Job Performance
N	154
	0
Mean	3.7329
Std. Error of Mean	2.199E-02
Median	3.7333
Mode	3.73
Std. Deviation	0.2729
Variance	7.448E-02
Skewness	0.093
Std. Error of Skewness	0.195
Kurtosis	0.284
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.389
Range	1.47
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	4.47

Source: Survey data

Figure 2 Histogram of Employee Job Performance



Source: Survey data

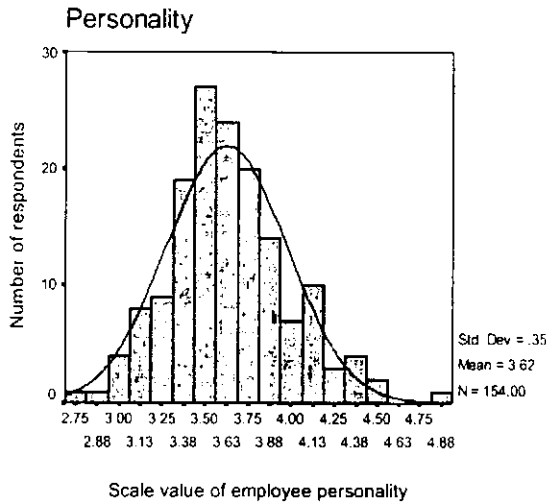
Table 1 and figure 2 shows the skewness and kurtosis of the distribution is .093 and .284; the data recorded for the employee job performance are normally distributed because the frequency polygon of the histogram is bell shaped.

Table 2 Statistics of the distribution of Employee Personality

	Employee Personality
N	154
	0
Mean	3.6224
Std. Error of Mean	2.817E-02
Median	3.5938
Mode	3.50
Std. Deviation	0.3496
Variance	0.1222
Skewness	0.411
Std. Error of Skewness	0.195
Kurtosis	0.612
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.389
Range	2.09
Minimum	2.75
Maximum	4.84

Source: Survey data

Figure 3 Histogram of Employee Personality



Source: *Survey data*

Table 2 and figure 3 shows the skewness and kurtosis of the distribution are .411 and .612, which indicate that the data recorded for the employee personality are normally distributed, because the frequency polygon of the histogram is bell shaped.

		Performance	Personality
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.558
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	154	154
Personality	Pearson Correlation	.558	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	154	154

Correlation Analysis

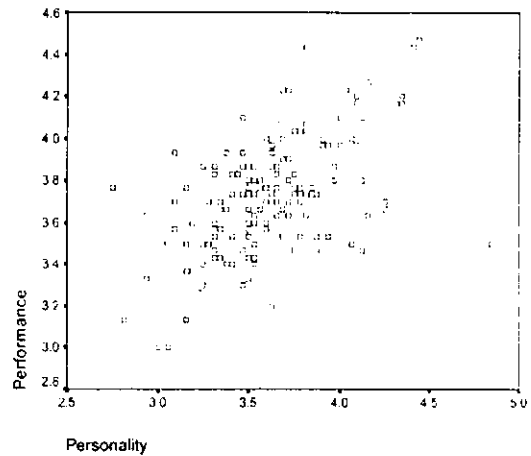
Table 3 Correlation between Employee Personality and Employee Job Performance

Source: *Survey data*

A strong positive correlation between employee personality and employee job

performance with r value is 0.558, it's significant at p 0.000 level

Figure 4 Scatter Plots between Employee Personality and Employee Job Performance



Source: *Survey data*

The figure 4 shows scatter plots between employee personality and employee job performance indicate a strong positive correlation with less scattered points.

Simple regression analysis

Regression between Employee Personality and Employee Job Performance

The statistics and curve fit of the simple regression between employee personality and employee job performance are shown in table 4 and figure 5.

Table 4 Statistics of regression between Employee Personality and Employee Job Performance

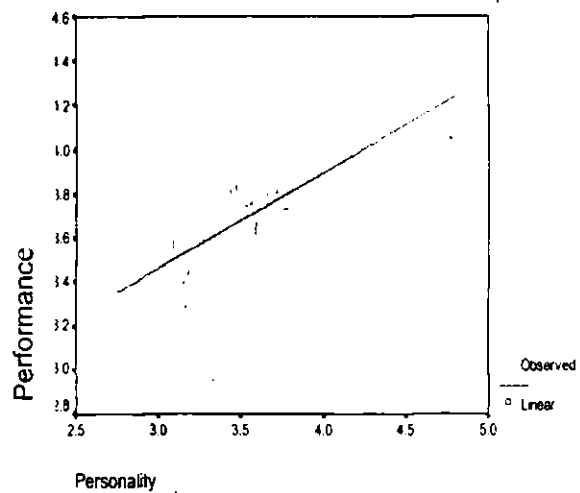
Method	Linear
Multiple R	0.55776
R Square	0.31110
Adjusted R Square	0.30657
Standard Error	0.22726
Sum of Square	7.85039
Mean Square	0.05164
F	68.64105
Signif. F	0.0000
B-EPy	0.43544
B-Constant	2.15555
Beta	0.5577
T	8.285
Sig.T	0.0000

Source: *Survey data*

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Employee job performance} = 2.15555 + 0.4354 (\text{employee personality})$$

The b value (slope of the equation) of the regression is 0.4354, which is significant at 1% (Sig.t = 0.000). R² (coefficient of determination) is 0.311, it mean 31.1% of the variation in employee job performance is explained by the variation in employee personality. The F value is 68.641, that are significant at 1% (p = 0.000), this means that employee personality has significantly explained 31.1% of the variation of employee job performance.

Figure 5 Curve Fit for Employee Personality and Employee Job Performance

Source: *Survey data*

The curve fit shows a linear relationship between employee personality and employee job performance

Test of Hypotheses

The hypothesis 1 states as:

H_{A1} There is an impact of employee personality on employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

The null hypothesis was formulated as:

H₀: There is no impact of employee personality on employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka (r≤0; b≤0)

The alternative hypothesis was formulated as:

H_A: There is an impact of employee personality on employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in

Eastern Province of Sri Lanka ($r > 0$; $b > 0$)

Correlation analysis explained a strong positive correlation between employee personality and employee job performance, $r = 0.558$ significant at $p=0.000$. The simple regression coefficient b is 0.435 significant at $t= 0.000$. According to the results of both tests;

Reject H_0

Accept H_A since $r > 0$, $b > 0$ and $r > 0.5$

Conclusion:

There is an impact of employee personality on employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

The hypothesis 2 states as:

H_{A2} There is a positive relationship between employee personality and employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

The null hypothesis was formulated as:

H_0 : There is no relationship between employee personality and employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka ($r \leq 0$; at $P > \alpha$)

The alternative hypothesis was formulated as:

H_A : There is a positive relationship between employee personality and employee job performance of non-academic employees in the

Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka ($r > 0$; at $P < \alpha$)

Correlation analysis explained a strong positive correlation between employee personality and employee job performance, $r = 0.558$ significant at $p=0.000$.

Reject H_0

Accept H_A since $r > 0$, $P < \alpha$) and $r > 0.5$

Conclusion:

There is a strong positive relationship between employee personality and employee job performance of non-academic employees in the Universities in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

Discussion

There is a positive relationship between employee personality and employee job performance

1. The Pearson's correlation coefficient $r=0.558$ between these two variables, this is significant at $p = 0.000$ level, it is a strong positive correlation, because it is greater than 0.5 .
2. Based on the simple regression analysis, R^2 is 0.311 and b value is 0.435 . Therefore,

Employee personality has a positive impact on employee job performance.

Therefore, employee personality is a strong significant predictor of employee job performance.

The scale of employee personality of the respondent in the sample, they have high personality with the mean value of 3.62 and standard deviation of 0.35 . Based on this, the non-academic employees attached

to the SEUSL and EUSL (96.1%) were high personality employees, and this significantly leads to improve their job performance.

Conclusions

The employee personality was the strongest predictor of employee job performance. The employee personality explains 31.1% of the variation in employee job performance. The remaining 68.9% of variation not explain by this variable, it may be explain by the other individual, group, and organizational level variables.

The findings of this research imply the job performance could be improved by creating high personality of non-academic employees.

High personality considers extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness characteristics, these characteristics influence with the employee job performance. If the University considers these characteristics, the non-academic employees create good performance.

The findings of this study will assist the administrators of these Universities (SEUSL and EUSL) in developing suitable strategy in order to enhance the increased level of job performance of the non-academic employees who were known as inefficient employees.

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