
CORRELATION BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF FIVE FACTOR MODEL

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Abstract: *Employee Engagement refers to “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances” (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement can be affected by the basic personality of an individual. The current research aims to study the relationship between the five personality traits of the Five Factor Model and employee engagement. The research was done on a sample of 30 working individuals between the ages of 30-55. A Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was used to study the relation between employee engagement and each personality factor. It was found that there was a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and the personality factors of Extroversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience and this was in line with the hypotheses. There was however a significant negative relationship between employee engagement and personality factor of Agreeableness which was not in line with the hypothesis. Also there was significant positive relationship between job engagement and the personality factor of Neuroticism which was also not in line with the hypothesis.*

Keywords: *employee engagement, personality, five factor model*

INTRODUCTION

Job engagement is a concept that has the potential to simultaneously serve the purposes of employee welfare and organizational performance, respectively. To the individual employee, job engagement signifies good health, well-being, optimal functioning, and favorable performance which in turn mean success to the organization (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Luthans (2003) defined positive work psychology or Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can

be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace".

Kahn's Model of Employee Engagement

Engagement research pioneer William Kahn (1990) defined engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles". People can assign variable levels of their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to their work. William Kahn (1990) tied the origins of engagement to Goffman's (1961) role behavior theory which examines individual behaviors as shaped by the "demands and rules of others" (Biddle & Thomas, 1966b). According to William Kahn (1990), individuals could either attach themselves to their roles or defend their own personal identities from such roles and thus follow their roles more or less closely. This was seen through Kahn's ethnographic studies on camp counselors and architects which showed that engagement was a changeable phenomenon, resulting from "calibrations of self-in-role" that occurred at the physical, cognitive, and emotional levels.

Physically, engagement means the channeling of one's physical energies toward the completion of a certain task (Rich, 2006). According to Rich, physical engagement is part of a continuum. It ranges from lethargy to vigorous involvement.

Cognitively, engaged individuals are thoroughly absorbed by their work (Rothbard, 2001). Rothbard thus explained that engaged individuals are able to intensely focus on the task they are occupied in by ignoring competing distracters. Contrary to this, Cognitive disengagement means a "lack of attention toward one's work tasks" (Rich, 2006).

Finally, emotional engagement means a strong connection between one's emotions, thoughts, and feelings and the job (Kahn, 1990) leading to feelings of enthusiasm and pride (Rich, 2006). The opposite of emotional engagement is "emotional absence" (Kahn, 1990), characterized by an emotional detachment from others.

A possible route to explore the personal side of engagement is the five factor model or FFM (McCrae & Costa, 1997).

Big five personality model

Big five personality traits are based on a model that essence of human nature in individual differences (McCrae & John, 1992). Personality traits are collected, summarized and defined as a

structure that involves five factors i.e. Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience. Each factor includes a broad variety of traits rather than a single trait (McCrae & John, 1992, Goldberg, 1993; John & Srivastava, 1999).

- Extraversion is an energetic approach which includes traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness and positive emotionality.
- Agreeableness includes traits such as altruism, tender-minded, trust and modesty (John & Srivastava, 1999).
- Conscientiousness consists of traits such as organization, thoroughness, and reliability.
- Neuroticism includes traits such as nervousness, moodiness, and tempera mentality.
- Openness to experience includes traits such as imagination, curiosity, and creativity (Goldberg, 1993).

Engagement and Personality

Anniq Simpson (September 6, 2017) suggests through his emerging research that five personality traits can help to predict people's level of engagement at work:

1. Conscientiousness

These consist of behaviors which epitomize an "ideal employee," i.e. people with high amounts of conscientiousness are efficient, dutiful, deliberate and achievement-oriented. Evidence shows that employees with high levels of this trait are more likely to be engaged at work. In a study by work psychologists Ilke Inceoglu and Peter Warr found that conscientiousness was the best predictor of work engagement. Highly conscientious employees were motivated by a need to achieve goals and had a strong sense of responsibility and were likely to immerse themselves in their job tasks.

2. Neuroticism

The behavioral indicators for this trait are that individuals tend to be tense, irritable, shy and lacking in self-confidence. Evidence by researcher Saar Langelaan found that those high in neuroticism were low in work engagement. According to Langelaan, neuroticism is strongly linked to "negative affect," a short-term mental state marked by fear, nervousness and anger (or low energy use). On the other hand, highly engaged employees tend to report low levels of negative affect.

3. Extroversion

People who score high on extroversion are generally sociable, enthusiastic, energetic, adventurous and outgoing. According to Langelaan and colleagues, people high on the extroversion scale are more likely to experience positive emotions, which mean they are more likely to experience positive engagement.

Another explanation is that of meaningfulness which can be defined as the positive feeling that one's work is worthwhile and important. Employees high in this factor are more likely to be engaged, because their high energy and ambitiousness lead them to attach greater meaning to their efforts at work.

4. Agreeableness

The behaviors related to this trait tend to be forgiving, warm and flexible. For this, evidence suggests that this trait has been found to be a weaker predictor of engagement than the three factors listed above. According to business psychologist Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, engaged employees tend to be efficient task completers. However, most work tasks require teamwork and it has been seen that agreeable employees do tend to encourage teamwork.

5. Openness to experience

Behavioral indicators for this trait show that people who are quite open to new experiences are often intellectually curious, imaginative, artistic and excitable. A Pakistani economist Nayyar Zaidi found that employees with high levels of openness were more likely to be engaged than their "conscientious" counterparts. Zaidi says William Kahn, the "godfather of employee engagement," saw engaged employees as innovators within their organization. Therefore, employees high in this trait are naturally innovative and thus more likely to be engaged.

Langelaan, Bakker, van Doornen, and Schaufeli (2006) found neuroticism to be positively linked to burnout, and negatively related to work engagement, and extraversion and mobility.

Mostert and Rothmann (2006) and Widermuth (2008) investigated the relationship between all five traits and engagement and found that extraversion is a strong predictor of positive wellbeing (Diener and Lucas, 1999) and neuroticism of negative well-being (Keyes et al., 2002).

Another research by Kim et al. (2009) found that only conscientiousness was significant. Finally, for the big five dimensions, emotional stability and conscientiousness were found to be the only two unique predictors of job engagement (Inceoglu and Warr, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

Rationale:

Past researches have studied the relationship between LOC and self- esteem. This was observed in a study done by Ozgur Ongore (2013) where the components of job engagement scale had any relationship with the five traits of the five factor model. The current study aims to find the relationship between job engagement and the five traits of the five factor model namely Neuroticism, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness and to see if any relationship exists between these five factors and job engagement.

Objective:

To understand the relationship between job engagement and the five traits of the five factor model.

Variables:

There are two variables in this research i.e. job engagement and the traits of the five factor model.

Hypotheses:

H₁: There will be a positive relationship between employee engagement and the personality factor of Extraversion.

H₂: There will be a negative relationship between employee engagement and personality factor of Neuroticism.

H₃: There will be a positive relationship between employee engagement and the personality factor of Agreeableness.

H₄: There will be a positive relationship between employee engagement and the personality factor of Openness to experience.

H₅: There will be a positive relationship between employee engagement and the personality factor of Conscientiousness.

Sample Description:

A convenience sample was used to study this research. The questionnaires were prepared in the form of a Google document and then shared through Whatsapp. A total of 30 working individuals were given the questionnaire of which 12 individuals were female and 18 individuals were male. A statistic of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to find the relationship between the two variables.

Test Description:**Job Engagement Scale:**

The Job Engagement Scale was given by Rich, LePine and Crawford in 2010 and consists of a total of 18 items. It measures three dimensions namely physical, emotional and cognitive dimension. The reliability of the scale has cronbach alpha of 0.95 and is significantly related to job satisfaction, value congruence, perceived organizational support, core self-evaluations, task performance and organizational citizenship behavior.

NEO-Five Factor Inventory:

The NEO- Five Factor Inventory was given by Paul T Costa and Robert R McCrae and consists of a total of 60 items. It measures five dimensions i.e. neuroticism, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. This scale has a very good reliability and validity and has been widely to measure personality of individuals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 30 individuals completed the questionnaire and it was found that almost all of them were high on job engagement. To find the relationship between job engagement and each trait of the five factor model, a pearson's product moment correlation was done. Table 3 shows the r of job engagement with each factor of personality. On computing the correlation for job engagement and personality factor of neuroticism, the r was 0.14. The critical values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels were 0.306 and 0.423 respectively which was found to be significant with the r

value of job engagement and neuroticism. However it was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between job engagement and neuroticism and the results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables. Thus the results are not in line with the hypothesis.

On computing the correlation for job engagement and personality factor of extroversion, the r was 0.18. It was found to be significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level. Thus a significant positive relationship exists between job engagement and extroversion.

The correlation for job engagement and personality factor of openness to experience, the r was 0.12. It was found to be significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level. Thus a significant positive relationship exists between job engagement and extroversion.

The correlation for job engagement and personality factor of agreeableness was -0.06. It was found to be significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level. However it was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between job engagement and neuroticism and the results showed that there was a significant negative relationship between the two variables. Thus the results are not in line with the hypothesis.

Finally the correlation for job engagement and personality factor of conscientiousness, the r was 0.36. It was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus a significant positive relationship exists between job engagement and extroversion.

LIMITATIONS

The sample size was small and a convenience sample was used. Thus it cannot be generalized. Another limitation was that the subjects found the questionnaire too long which might have affected their responses.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research can be done on a bigger sample size and on a sample which represents the whole population.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: NEO-FFI Scores

Sr no	Male/ Female	NEURO TICISM	EXTROV ERSION	OPEN NESS TO EXPERI ENCE	AGREE ABLENESS	CONSCIEN TIOUSNESS
1	M	64	51	41	26	40
2	F	66	27	28	25	25
3	F	58	57	48	44	41
4	M	48	58	43	38	36
5	F	41	55	47	40	45
6	M	60	44	48	25	28
7	F	48	51	57	57	45
8	M	59	60	62	40	73
9	M	56	53	53	40	53
10	M	44	62	46	52	50
11	F	52	41	50	34	60
12	M	67	44	65	34	50
13	M	56	48	36	52	40
14	F	53	57	42	29	41
15	M	75	44	38	50	67
16	F	41	53	42	34	52
17	F	45	50	40	42	45
18	M	61	41	36	36	45
19	M	51	48	50	32	46
20	M	57	55	52	52	55
21	M	57	50	52	32	45
22	F	55	46	40	29	45
23	M	52	56	52	34	57
24	F	52	46	38	53	45
25	M	48	72	55	58	55
26	F	52	34	43	25	52
27	F	40	50	40	38	45
28	M	64	41	41	40	55
29	M	56	58	45	42	52
30	M	61	50	72	38	55

Table 2: Job Engagement Scale Scores

JOB ENGAGEMENT SCALE
72
80
77
72
78
64
36
87
90
86
72
79
66
81
90
86
49
57
72
81
75
54
72
72
84
88
72
67
75
76

Table 3: Correlation

Correlation	r	Significance
Job Engagement and Neuroticism	0.14	Significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level
Job Engagement and Extroversion	0.18	Significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level

Job Engagement and Openness to Experience	0.12	Significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level
Job Engagement and Agreeableness	-0.06	Significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level
Job Engagement and Conscientiousness	0.36	Significant at 0.01 level