



Understanding the Association between Personality Traits and Motivational Potential of Jobs - The Employees' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Interaction between human personality, traits and behaviors at work has already been studied. Existing literature increasingly highlights the importance of the relationship between personality traits and job characteristics. This study particularly explored the relationship between employees' personality traits and potential motivational factors at work. For this purpose, a sample of 184 employees was selected from various organizations of Multan City. Five Factor inventory and job diagnostic survey scale was used to measure study variables. The findings indicated that traits of personality like extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively associated, whereas neuroticism is negatively associated with the perceived motivational potential of jobs. Furthermore, the motivational potential of jobs is found to vary across the organizations; females are found to perceive their jobs more motivating as compared to males; and the job characteristics of autonomy and skill variety have been found positively related with the personality trait of openness to experience and negatively correlated with the personality trait of neuroticism. By matching core job characteristics and personality traits at the time of recruitment can be highly beneficial for best selection of employees, productivity and different outcomes related to employee's performance.

KEYWORDS

Employees' personality traits; Motivational potential of jobs; Job characteristics; Big Five personality traits

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Personality traits and human behaviors at workplace have already been studied. Berg & Feij (2003) found that performance criteria have very strong relationship with Conscientiousness. According to their findings job performance is linked with conscientiousness among different occupational groups. Innovative work behavior and personality traits and role of organization was also explored (Wood et al, 2018). Moreover, complex interrelationships were also investigated and was concluded that on the basis of personality traits and characteristics of the job, employees' work behavior can be predicted. Numerous psychologists see the big five as a critical incorporating scientific classification a typical dialect for those associated with personality research and its applications in clinical, instructive, and work-related settings (Wiggins and Trapnell, 1997).

Fincham and Rhodes, (2005) reported that neurotics are more inclined to stress or anxiety and will probably see themselves as having physical indications, for example, a throbbing painfulness. Caliendo et al., (2014) examined to what degree the personality of people impacts the entry choice and exit choice from work by using the data of German household panel. Their findings indicated that a few characteristics, for example, openness to experience, extraversion, and hazard resilience influence entry, yet extraordinary ones, for example, agreeableness or diverse parameter estimations of hazard resistance, influence exit from independent work.

Another investigation regarding worker's conduct and how to enhance the efficiency of their workers was done. It was concluded that employee's behavior got impact from a grimy, hot, boisterous, or perilous workplace. Furthermore, worker's conduct is a component of that person's inborn drives and felt needs as well as the chances they need to fulfill those drives and needs in the work environment. Moreover, Impact of a workplace on work efficiency was explored (Ratzburg, 2003; Puig-Ribera, et.al 2017; Khalid & Sheerin, 2020). The relationship of identity, student life experience, and scholastic performance was explored by Wong and Csikszentmihalyi (1991). They argued that ability controlling, introduction to work, a PRF factor, was a greater indicator of the grades as compared to experience. These discoveries upheld the thought about two sorts of motivation in academic achievement, one harmonized toward long term objectives, the other harmonized toward uninterrupted experience. A significant number of researchers expect the most imperious helper at the workplace is salary. Though, related studies highlight an alternate reason as the real impact over employee motivation—work design. How a job is

composed majorly affects worker inspiration, work fulfillment, promise to an association, non-attendance, and turnover. This raise a very important question that how to design a job so it may make employees more satisfied and productive (Katulwa, 2015). Regardless of whether work is helpful or inconvenient is generally needy upon how it is planned and designed. Job design is characterized as the substance, structure, and association of one's task and exercises (Parker, 2014; Parker, Morgeson, & Johns, 2017).

The Job Characteristics Model, outlined by Hackman and Oldham (1976), is amongst the most significant efforts to design jobs in such a way that can increase employee motivation. According to this model, it heavily depends on such possibility that the task itself which is vigorous to worker motivation. Particularly, a draining and dull occupation smothers inspiration to perform well, though a testing and challenging work improves inspiration and motivation. Variety, self-governance and choice specialist are three diverse ways to add good challenge to any job. Occupation advancement and work rotation are two altered ways of mixing it up with variety and challenge. According to this model there are five central job attributes. These characteristics include task identity, skill variety, task significance (Grant, 2008; Allan, 2017). Which affect three basic mental states: experienced meaningfulness, experienced obligation regarding results, and learning of the real outcomes), thus impacting work results (work fulfillment, non-appearance or absenteeism, work inspiration, and so forth.). The five center job qualities can be consolidated to shape a motivational potential score (MPS) for any work, which can be utilized as a file of how likely a job is to influence a representative's states of mind and practices (Tom & Benjiman, n.d). Hackman and Oldham's model of job characteristics recommends that high inspiration is identified with encountering three mental states while working: significance of the work, accountability and knowledge of the consequences. Thus, every one of these basic states have been gotten from specific attributes of the job: the significance of the work is derived from skill variety, identity of the task and task significance. Accountability is gotten from self-governance whilst knowledge of the consequences comes from the feedback.

Job design researchers have demonstrated that the most grounded link between job attributes and a few attitudinal and behavioral results is a man's accomplished weightiness at work. In any case, there has been limited literature that has depicted how every single employment characteristic impacts seriousness or considered the impact that a man's dispositional attributes have on this basic mental state (Thurgood, 2016). A study was conducted in China on the relationship

between Big five, job design and organizational commitment (Cui, 2010). According to findings of the study agreeableness, openness to experience and all job design attributes were altogether connected with full of feeling responsibility, while extraversion and appropriateness/agreeableness, neuroticism were identified with continuance commitment. Meta-analytical outcomes demonstrate that these job qualities foresee employees' wellbeing and prosperity, their insights and learning, and their states of mind and behavior (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007; Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011).

Remarkably, so far, the job design researches centers their attention around generally alterable and constructive individual attributes. Notwithstanding, more steady individual attributes may likewise assume a part, as they may shape workers' directedness to specific objectives and consequently similarly fill in as predecessors and arbitrators of employment qualities (Barrick, Mount, and Li, 2013). The personality attribute of neuroticism may, for instance, make workers report higher demands of job, while extroverted workers encounter more employment resources (Bakker et al., 2010). Additionally, as of late, it was likewise demonstrated that job attributes may change workers' personality (Wu, 2016). A last thought is that specific individual viewpoints may likewise make representatives more defenseless against the negative effect of occupation requests or make it harder to profit by positive perspectives.

The motivational impacts of employment attributes may have been overlooked by industrial engineers; however, these impacts are presently the focal point of numerous job configuration changes (Wong and Campion, 1991). Motivational potential of occupation content with its motivator hygiene theory (as per inspiration cleanliness hypothesis workers are essentially spurred by development and regard needs, not by bring down level needs). There are three principle methodologies are utilized to build the motivational potential of employments: work rotation, work amplification, and occupation enhancement. This segment additionally recognizes a few different ways to execute work improvement.

Van Vianen et al., (2003) analyzed personality factors and foreseeing intentional inside and outer occupation mobility. Results demonstrated that sensation seeking added to the difference in outside employment changes, while inward employment were not identified with any of the identity factors. To quantify the connections between organizational commitment, central employment qualities and organizational citizenship, Banks, (2006) investigation found a positive relationship between authoritative duty and center occupation attributes and OCBs.

Sulea et al., (2012) also inspected the part of work engagement (WE) as an arbiter between work resources for example perceived organizational support and positive additional role behavior (organizational citizenship behavior OCB), between work requests (i.e. relational clashes at work) and negative additional role behavior (i.e. counterproductive work behavior CWB). The outcomes demonstrated that job and individual qualities differentially anticipate OCB and CWB, and that representatives' emotional motivational state clarifies, to a limited extent, these activity and individual attributes – extra role behavior affiliations.

Organizational behavior is very important in the field of business. Though, an enormous number of researches have been conducted in the discipline of organizational behavior, yet many areas still require more attention and future studies. Still there are many areas which need to be touched from related perspective. The main aim of the current study was to study the relationship between big five personality traits and motivational potential within jobs. This research is an effort to explore some relevant areas of organizational behavior particularly in south Punjab where severe lack of advanced facilities can be witnessed.

This study further examined the following objectives.

1. To examine the relationship between personality traits and motivational potential of jobs among employees.
2. To find out the level of motivational potential in the employees with different personality traits (i.e. neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness).
3. To investigate the differences on demographic variable (e.g. education, age and gender) on personality traits and motivational potential of jobs.
4. To investigate the relationship between personality traits and core job characteristics.
5. To explore the distribution of core job characteristics across different organizations.

METHOD

A cross-sectional design was employed to collect the data by using survey method. Relevant questionnaires were used to measure study variables.

Participants

The sample comprised of employees (N=184) (92 males and 92 females) working in different organizations of Multan city. Their age range was from 25 to 45 years and above. Study participants were approached at their workplaces through convenient sampling method. They belonged to diverse socioeconomic status and had different educational levels.

INSTRUMENTS

Five-Factor Inventory

Five-factor inventory by Fincham & Rhodes (1999) have been used to measure personality traits of study participants (employees). It measures five components of personality, i.e. neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness. This Inventory consists of sixty adjectives with 5 preferences or choices for responses ranging from strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), neutral (2), agree (3) to strongly agree (4). Reverse items have the value from four to zero are: 1, 3, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 24, 27, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 42, 44, 45, 46, 48, 54, 55, 57, and 59. Rest of the items has the value from zero to four. The scale scoring has a range from minimum zero to maximum 48. For each dimension of personality there are 12 adjectives and has its separate total score. While calculating the scores for extroversion, score on these items; two, seven, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52 and 57 are added. When the neuroticism needs to be measured, score on these items: one, six, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46, 51, 56, are added. Ultimate score for openness to experience is the total of score on these items: three, eight, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 53, and 58. Score for agreeableness is the sum of score on these items: four, nine, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, and 59. A person's conscientiousness score is the sum of his score on these items: five, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60.

Job Diagnostic Survey Scale

Job diagnostic survey scale was developed by Hackman & Oldham (1975). The scale was designed to measure the motivational potential of jobs. The scale measures motivational potential of jobs on the whole and besides this it measures five core job characteristics: skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy, and job feedback. The scale contains 15 items and the final score of the scale can be gathered after computation of all fifteen items. The scale is divided into two portions. First portion consists of five items and it has three options for responses from very little, moderate and very much. The second portion consisted of 10 items and response options

are very inaccurate, uncertain and very accurate. The first portion's response options have the value from one to seven. The second portion's item no six, eight, 10, 12 and 14 are given one score for very inaccurate option, four for uncertain and seven for very accurate. While resting items are scored reverse.

Item no three, six and nine measure the skill variety of the job. Task identity is calculated by item no 2, 7 and 12. Task significance is measured by item no 4, 10 and 15. The items which assess autonomy are: one, 11 and 14 while job feedback is calculated by item no five, eight and 13. The score on each core job characteristic (3 items) item is added and then divided by three. This answer is considered as the score of the specific core job characteristic. After calculating the answers of all these five job characteristics, the five core job characteristics were combined into a single index of motivating potential score (MPS) with the help of this formula:

$$MPS = \left(\frac{SV+TI+TS}{3} \right) \times \text{Autonomy} \times \text{Job Feedback}$$

Procedure:

The study was conducted as per ethical standards of APA. The study followed a correlational survey research design and the sample was approached personally through convenient sampling. Participants were approached by visiting different organizations of Multan. Informed consent, confidentiality and privacy were assured to all the participants before administer the research questionnaires on the employees. Instruction to properly fill the questionnaire was also given to respondents and they were requested for genuine responses. Total 200 questionnaires were distributed, however, only 184 were included in the study as 16 were found to be incomplete during data screening. Average time for completion of questionnaire was recorded to be 15 minutes. After data collection and screening, final data of 184 respondents was entered in SPSS and analyzed for hypotheses testing by computing descriptive, correlation, t-test and ANOVA analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Different statistical analysis was carried out on the basis of the objectives of the study.

Table 1: Correlation between personality traits and MPJ (N = 184)

Personality Traits	Motivational Potential of Jobs
Extroversion	.26
Openness to Experience	.17

Agreeableness	.17
Conscientiousness	.18
Neuroticis	-.15

Note: MPJ= *Motivational Potential of Jobs*

Table (1) showed positive correlation between personality traits: extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness and motivational potential of their jobs. While neuroticism is negatively correlated with motivational potential of jobs.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and t-test for the Scores of Employees' Personality Trait (Extroversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, neuroticism) on Motivational Potential of Jobs

Variables	n	Mean	SD	t-statistic	P-Value
Low Extroverts	42	93.20	64.51	-2.90	0.002**
High Extroverts	60	154.47	121.16		
Low Openness to Experience	101	106.15	72.92	.18	0.428
High Openness to Experience	19	102.96	56.81		
Low Agreeableness	142	120.44	95.26	-.86	0.195
High Agreeableness	8	151.13	145.26		
Low Conscientiousness	75	94.39	80.71	-1.75	0.041*
High Conscientiousness	16	132.51	67.88		
Low Neuroticism	38	131.48	85.76	2.36	0.01**
High Neuroticism	30	89.47	51.27		

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; p = non-significant; * $p < 0.05$

Table 2 illustrates that employees who score high on extroversion trait are significantly different from the employees who scored low extroversion on the level of motivational potential of their jobs. Results also shows that employees with high level of conscientiousness has a significant difference on the level of motivational potential of jobs as compared to employees with low level of conscientiousness. Significant difference was also found neuroticism on the level of motivational potential of jobs. No significant difference was found on openness to experience and agreeableness on the level of motivational potential of jobs.

Table 3a: Means and Standard Deviations of Big Five Personality Traits (N = 184)

Big Five	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Neuroticism	184	18.83	5.53
Extroversion	184	27.89	5.21
Openness to Experience	184	23.94	4.64
Agreeableness	184	26.39	5.08
Conscientiousness	184	31.23	6.74

Table 3b: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Employees' **Education** for Their Scores on Big Five

Big Five	Sources of Variation	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Neuroticism	Between Groups	248.81	4	62.20	2.08	.085
	Within Groups	5350.95	179	29.89		
	Total	5599.77	183			
Extroversion	Between Groups	113.74	4	28.43	1.04	.384
	Within Groups	4860.08	179	27.15		
	Total	4973.82	183			
Openness to Experience	Between Groups	150.15	4	37.53	1.76	.138
	Within Groups	3804.19	179	21.25		
	Total	3954.34	183			
Agreeableness	Between Groups	3.22	4	.80	.03	.998
	Within Groups	4728.81	179	26.41		
	Total	4732.03	183			

Conscientiousness	Between Groups	512.29	4	128.07	2.98	.022*
	Within Groups	7803.18	179	43.59		
	Total	8315.47	183			

Table 3b represents the results of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), employees with different educational backgrounds score differently on Big Five personality dimensions. No significant difference was found on the personality traits except conscientiousness among employees with different educational levels

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations and *t*-Value for the Scores of **Males and Females** on the Personality Trait and Motivational Potential of Jobs (*n*= 92, 92)

Variables	Groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
agreeableness	Males	26.29	4.81	-0.41	0.321
	Females	26.64	5.31		
extroversion	Males	28.31	4.94	0.93	0.175
	Females	27.60	5.27		
neuroticism	Males	18.23	5.77	-1.41	0.0795
	Females	19.39	5.25		
Openness to experience	Males	23.85	4.74	-0.45	0.326
	Females	24.16	4.43		
Conscientiousness	Males	30.85	7.15	-0.79	0.213
	Females	31.65	6.30		
Motivational potential of jobs	Males	105.49	75.49	-2.50	0.01**
	Females	140.38	110.11		

Table 4 illustrates that there is no gender difference on personality traits while significant difference was found on the level of motivational potential of their jobs. Difference in the mean scores of women and men also suggest that female employees have higher level of the motivational potential of job scale as compared to male employees.

Table 5: One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Employees' Age for Their Scores on the Scale of Motivational Potential of Jobs (*N* = 184)

Scale	Sources of Variation	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Motivational Potential	Between Groups	25038.10	3	8346.03	0.91	0.438

Within Groups	1653139.58	180	9184.10
Total	1678177.68	183	

Table 5 demonstrates nonsignificant difference among employees of different age groups on the level of motivational potential of their jobs. It indicates that the employees with different ages have similar level of motivational potential of their jobs.

Table 6: *One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Employees' Organizations for the Level of Motivational Potential of Their Jobs*

Groups	Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Organizations	Between Groups	125818.00	5	25163.60	2.88	.016**
	Within Groups	1552359.67	178	8721.12		
	Total	1678177.68	183			

Table 6 shows significant difference among employees of different organizations on the level of motivational potential. It is clear from the findings that employees of different organizations have different levels of motivational potential in their jobs.

Table 7: *One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Core Job Characteristics of Their Jobs*

Groups	Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Autonomy	Between Groups	19.44	5	3.88	2.06	.072
	Within Groups	336.00	178	1.88		
	Total	355.45	183			
Task Identity	Between Groups	24.22	5	4.84	2.76	.020*
	Within Groups	311.60	178	1.75		
	Total	335.82	183			
Skill Variety	Between Groups	22.94	5	4.59	2.61	.026*
	Within Groups	312.76	178	1.75		
	Total	335.71	183			
Task Significance	Between Groups	7.73	5	1.54	.74	.590
	Within Groups	369.26	178	2.07		
	Total	376.99	183			
Job Feedback	Between Groups	11.54	5	2.30	1.36	.238
	Within Groups	300.19	178	1.68		

Total	311.73	183
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* $p < 0.05$, $p = n.s$

Results revealed that significant differences on task identity and skill variety among employees of different organizations was found. Results conclude that different organizations have different levels of task identity and skill variety, but they are equal in autonomy, task significance and job feedback.

DISCUSSION

This research investigated the relationship between Big Five personality traits and the level of Motivational Potential of jobs. The first objective of the study was to explore the relationship between personality traits and motivational potential of jobs among employees. Results demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between all personality traits, except neuroticism which has negative relationship, with motivational potential of jobs (table 1). It reflects that if employees will have more tendencies towards the personality trait of neuroticism than they will report lower level of motivational potential in their jobs and vice versa. The personality attribute of neuroticism may, for instance, make workers report higher demands of job, while extroverted workers encounter more employment resources (Bakker et al., 2010). Similarly Berg and Feij (2003) investigation concluded that perceived feedback played a role as mediator between achievement motivation and job performance. They further elaborated relationship of extraversion, work stress, neuroticism, work self-efficacy, autonomy, skill variety, and feedback with job satisfaction. Another assumption of the study was to find out the level of motivational potential in the employees of different personality traits. Results illustrated that employees who are highly extroverts, open to experience, and agreeable, conscientious show high level of motivational potential in their jobs as compared to the employees who are low in these personality traits (table 2). The results of the study further revealed that employees showed low motivational potential in their jobs as compared to employees who are high scorers on neuroticism (table 2). Previously enough number of investigations reviewed the personality–motivation area for example link between job-relevant personality traits, transformational leadership, and job performance through perceived meaningfulness at workplace (Mitchell, Thompson, & George-Falvy, 2000; Frieder, Wang & Oh, 2018).

Furthermore, it was assumed that there might be differences on demographic variable (e.g. education, age and gender) on personality traits and motivational potential of jobs. Results of the

study depicted insignificant difference on the basis of educational level on the personality traits (table 3). To explore the gender difference data was analyzed and no significant difference on personality traits was found (Table 4). It does mean that male and female employees do not differ on the scores of the personality traits of agreeableness, extroversion and neuroticism. The current study implies that gender is not the determinant of the personality traits. Results moreover found that female employees rated their jobs more motivating as compared to males (table 4). It can be concluded that in modern world females show more concern regarding their jobs and work as compared to males. Now females have better opportunities, so they take advantage of these opportunities and gave better results in jobs than males and this aspect make them responsible. Mostly females score weakly mild high on personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness, where score low on emotional stability. (Stanek & Ones, 2018). The differences can be generalized because these personality measures are consistent (McCrae et al., 2005) and in countries where people prefer gender equality and in the good developed countries also show large differences (Schmitt et al., 2008). Another objective of the study was to explore the differences among employees with different age groups on motivational potential levels in their jobs. No significant age difference was found (table 5). Employees' age is not found to be affecting the level of the motivational potential of their jobs. Ackerman, Bowen, Beier & Kanfer (2001) investigation focused on the gender and individual differences on the abilities, self-concept, personality, interest, motivational traits.

Results revealed that there is insignificant difference on motivational potential of jobs among employees of different organizations (table 6). It is clear from the findings that different organizations have different levels of motivational potential in their jobs. So we can infer from the results that different organizations have different levels of motivational potential in their jobs. Some organizations have more motivational potential in their jobs as compared to some other organizations. Previously impacts of the High-Quality was explored and relationship between workplace and Job Performance (Tran, Nguyen, Dang, & Ton, 2018).

Results related to core job characteristics depicted that different organizations have no difference on autonomy, task significance and job feedback, but significant difference on task identity and skill variety (Table 7). Job characteristics theory suggested that every job consisted of five core job characteristics such as task significance, task identity, autonomy, skill variety and feedback that depend on the specific motivational potential. This theory also suggested that there is a link

between job characteristics and critical psychological states, which shows positive outcomes of job such as job satisfaction, high quality work performance and low absenteeism (Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

This research explored the relationship between employees' Big Five personality dimensions and Motivational Potential of jobs. Some personality traits like extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively correlated while neuroticism is negatively correlated with motivational potential of jobs. Motivational potential of jobs was different among different organizations. No significant difference was found on personality trait on the comparison of demographic variables e.g. educational background, gender and age. Core job characteristics of autonomy, task significance and job feedback are similar across organizations, but the characteristics of task identity and skill variety are different in different organizations.

LIMITATIONS

This study was restricted to one city, for generalizability of results larger sample size from different organizations should be included. It would be advantageous to use psychological tests and for in-depth understanding qualitative investigation should be done. The demographic variables of job designation, tenure and the level of job satisfaction should also be taken into account.

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