

Linking Personality Traits with Job Performance Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment: An Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

Job performance varies from person to person, while personality traits play an important role towards employee's job performance. Literature accords the importance of linkage of personality traits and job performance. This examine fill the literature gap by examining the mediating role of multidimensional work attitude i.e. organizational commitment in determining the relationship between individual disposition i.e. Big Five personality traits and job performance. Multidimensional organizational commitment plays an important role in establishing relationship between Big Five personality traits and job performance. Adopting cross sectional survey methods and using simple random sampling technique, data was collected from 279 school teachers and university faculty members and 253 questionnaires were considered valid for further analysis. In order to test the mediation, hierarchal regression as statistical measure is used. The results revealed that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between big fiver personality traits and job performance. Moreover, correlation results revealed that all the variables are significantly positive related to each other.

Keywords: job performance, personality traits, multidimensional organizational commitment, affective commitment

Introduction

The individual personality traits have been the focal concern of behavioral sciences since the last couple of decades like Chiaburu, Berry, Li, & Gardner (2011), Judge & Zapata (2015) and Kotov *et al.* (2010). On job individual behavior is described as a consequence of disposition – situation interaction (Michele,1977). Research on the nature and outlook of the individual traits was increased with the development of “big five personality” framework (Goldberg, 1990). This framework determines the broader spectrum of five personality attributes which predict work attitudes and behaviors.

Among the work attitudes organizational commitment is one of the mostly research phenomena due to its vital role in determining work

behaviors. Meyer & Allen (1990) presented a tripartite model of organizational commitment including affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment and conducted a meta analysis of antecedents, consequences and correlation of the above three categories of organizational commitment. Another Meta analysis on this renowned work attitude i.e. organizational commitment was conducted by Mathieu & Zajac (1990) in which they identified and discussed antecedents, correlates and consequences of organizational commitment.

An ample number of studies have revealed the antecedents associated with on job behavior and attitudes and individual displays at work, like the connection between the personality traits of big five and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In the same vein, some researchers like Zhai, Willis, O'Shea, & Yang (2013) researched and found the connection between big five personality traits and job satisfaction which revealed that these traits are considered a valuable tool in order to determine work related behaviors and attitudes.

Organizational commitment has been taken as a mediating variable in many studies which influence various work related characteristics. For example, Ferris (1981) has found that organizational commitment mediates the relation of employee performance and job-related outcomes. Rusbult & Martz (1995) have established that there is a closer link between satisfaction and intention to leave. Another researcher has given the same results by emphasizing the multidimensional concept of commitment which, in his study, partially mediates the connection between work satisfaction and turnover intention (Clugston, 2000).

A study conducted by Watts & Levy (2004) insinuates that affective commitment has partial mediation between supervisor's feedback and OCB. Guay & Shin (2013) in their study revealed that conscientiousness and agreeableness predicts job performance. The novelty of the recent manuscript is that such mediation has never been tested before in literature. Consequently, this study will fill the gap in order to examine the above stated relationship.

Scarcity of literature on this inventive topic is discussed by only one study of Erdheim *et al.* (2006) who linked big five personality inventories with tripartite framework of commitment. While the extant study will discuss the individual disposition i.e. big five personality traits on the relationship with job performance. The study will also discuss the mediating role of organizational commitment on above relationship.

Literature Review

Big five personality traits signify the five attributes of personality types i.e. conscientiousness, agreeableness, extroversion, neuroticism and openness to experience Barrick & Mount (1991). Every type is the combination of numerous traits like conscientiousness includes the attributes such as organized, careful, hardworking, responsible thorough etc. According to Gouldberg (1990) the individuals who score high in conscientiousness are mostly meticulous, risk averse and steadfast. Similarly, Barrick & Mount (1991) stressed upon the extended traits of extroversions like assertive, gregarious, loquacious, ambitious, expressive and sociable. They further stress that the agreeables have possessed the attributes of forgiving, cooperative, good natured, courteous, flexible, and trusting etc. Openness to experience too encompass variety of traits like broad minded, artistically sensitive, intelligent, original, curious, cultured and imaginative etc. (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The big five personality traits have significant effect over work attitudes.

Organizational commitment is reckoned as an attitude that is mostly characterized (1) as a strong wistfulness of an employee to be the member of particular organization as an attitude is most often defined as (2) a compliance to put forth elevated and mounting efforts (3) an absolute conviction, approval of, the traditions and objectives of the organization (Mowday, Porters & Steers, 1982). Mayer & Allen (1991) presented the most widespread description of commitment by developing a tripartite framework of organizational commitment. Affective commitment denotes the emotional association of an employee towards his organization, Continuance commitment is a kind of awareness of the price associated with leaving the workplace and normative commitment designates the emotions of commitment and obligations to remain and continue the employment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).



Fig-1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model of study. Traits like: active, expressive, sociable and loquacious demonstrate Extraversion personality type (Barrick & Mount, 1991). They tend to have a strongest wish to acquire social recognition, status, autonomy and admiration (Costa & MacCrae, 1997). Organizational commitment is an enthusiasm to exercise the best and maximum efforts and potential just for the sake of organization (Mowday, Porters & Steers, 1982). According to Mayer & Allen (1991) Affective Commitment refers to the “tendency of emotional fondness to, identification with, and participation and involvement of an employee in the workplace” therefore, resulted in constructive on-job behaviors and outcomes.

An individual affectively committed to an organization will exert high level of effort which will result in positive aftermaths like job performance. According to Yousef, (2016) organizational commitment is an antecedent to determine job performance. Whereas Jarmillo *et al.* (2005) stated that AC is positively related to overall job performance. The same notion is supported by Sharma & Dhar (2016). The research conducted by (Barrick, Stewart, Piotrowski, 2002, Judge, 2001) established direct positive association between extraverts and performance). Therefore it is hypothesize that:

H1: AC (Affective commitment) mediates the relationship between Extraverts & Job Performance.

Conscientiousness individuals embraces attributes as diligent, cautious, thorough, dependable, organized, persistent (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Conscientiousness individuals figure out syntactic relationship contracts with the organization (Raja, Johns & Ntalianis, 2004). Michael Riketta (2002) find out that affective commitment has positive relationship with job performance (Jaramillo, Mulki & Marshall, 2005). The studies also confirm the positive relationship of conscientiousness with job performance like (Barrick, Mount & Judge, 2001; Guay *et al.*, 2013; Hertz, & Donovan, 2000). Therefore, it is hypothesize that:

H2: AC (Affective commitment) mediates the relationship between conscientiousness and job performance.

Neuroticism personality type encompasses the characteristics like: apprehensive, unhappy, irritated, self-conscious, arousing, worried, and unconfident (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Neuroticism has direct association with Negative Affectivity (Lemogne *et al.*, 2011). Magnus *et al.* (1993) reported that they undergo more negative emotions in life.

The pessimistic sentiments and feelings detained by neurotics individuals and famine of different new avenues i.e. alternatives force them bond to the workplace because of the fear of financial and psychological costs while switching the job. These individuals are uneasy about experiencing new work atmosphere to avoid inconsiderate experiences (Erdheim, Wang & Zickar, 2006).

Landry & Vandenberghe (2012) in their study revealed that there exists a negative relationship between continuance commitment and Job Performance. Moreover, Neuroticism negatively relates to job performance (Judge & Zapata, 2015; Tett & Rothstein, 1991). Keeping in view above arguments it is hypothesized that:

H3: Continuance commitment will mediate the relationship between neuroticism and job performance.

Methodology

For this filed study in organizational settings, data was collected through a close ended questionnaire by using cross sectional survey research method. The target population for the study was teachers working in schools and faculty working in universities in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Wah and Attock. Out of 385 questionnaires 279 questionnaires were returned which lead to response rate of 72%. About 26 questionnaires were discarded due to non completion of these questionnaires properly. Finally statistical tests were applied on 253 questionnaires. Out of 253 participants, 195 participants were male which are the 77% of total sample and 58 participants were female which were the 33% of total sample.

Results

Big Five Personality Traits were measured by using 20 items developed by Donnellan *et al.* (2006). To measure organizational commitment 18 items scale developed by Mowday Steers & Porter (1982) was used. To measure Job Performance 7 items scale developed by William & Anderson (1991) was used. Table-1 shows the reliability of all the scales adopted. After data collection first of all reliability of data was tested through Cronbach's Alpha. To test the hypothesis, hierarchal regression analysis was performed as proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986).

Table 2 presents the association between all variables, from the table it is revealed that Affective Commitment has positive association with all the variables except Openness to Experience ($r = -0.228$, $p < .01$). Affective Commitment has insignificant relationship with continuance commitment and Neuroticism. Normative Commitment also has positive

relationship with all the variables except Openness to Experience ($r = -0.121$, ns) while continuance commitment has positive association with all the variables. Job Performance has positive association between all the variables. Job Performance has high association with Conscientiousness ($r = 0.550$, $p < .01$) while has lower association with Openness to Experience ($r = 0.165$, $p < .05$).

Table 1: *Reliability Statistics*

S. No.	Variables	Cronbach's(α) Reliability
1.	Extraversion	0.82
2.	Agreeableness	0.76
3.	Openness to Experience	0.73
4.	Neuroticism	0.72
5.	Conscientiousness	0.72
6.	Affective Commitment	0.83
7.	Continuance Commitment	0.81
8.	Job Performance	0.73

Table 3 represents the statistical analysis to test hypothesis 1. In first step main effect was tested by using regression analysis between job performance (dependent variable) and Extraversion (independent variable). The results revealed that Job Performance and Extraversion has significant relationship with ($\beta = 0.382$, $p < .001$). In step two, mediation effect was tested between job performance (dependent variable) in relationship with Affective Commitment and Extraversion.

Table 2: *Correlation Matrix*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1							
2	.112	1						
3	.288**	.357**	1					
4	.410**	.451**	.482**	1				
5	.141	.537**	.484**	.589**	1			
6	.322**	.502**	.468**	.431**	.543**	1		
7	-.228**	.357**	.186*	-.126	.248**	.296**	1	
8	.468**	.434**	.458**	.550**	.286**	.619**	.165*	1

1=Affective Commitment, 2= Continuance Commitment, 3= Extraversion, 4= Conscientiousness, 5= Neuroticism, 6= Agreeableness, 7= Openness to Experience and 8= Job Performance, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When intervening variable affective commitment was entered into the equation the effect of Extraversion on job performance was reduced to ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < .01$) for entire sample. Later, Sobel Test was also calculated and value of sobel test is 3.17 with a 0.01 significance level.

Table 3: *Mediation Analysis- Hypothesis 1*

Main Effect	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step-1			
Extraversion	.382***	.210	.205
Mediation Effect			
Step-1			
Affective Commitment	.269***	.333	.325
Step-2			
Extraversion	.294**	.333	.325

Dependent Variable: Job Performance

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 4 represents the statistical analysis to test hypothesis 2. In first step main effect was tested by using regression analysis between job performance (dependent variable) and Conscientiousness (independent variable). The results revealed that Job Performance and Conscientiousness has significant relationship with ($\beta = 0.473, p<.001$). In step two, mediation effect was tested between job performance (dependent variable) in relationship with Affective Commitment and Conscientiousness. When intervening variable affective commitment was entered into the equation the effect of Extraversion on job performance was reduced to ($\beta = 0.370, p<ns$). Later, Sobel Test was also calculated and value of sobel test is 3.44 with 0.001 significant level.

Table 4: *Mediation Analysis- Hypothesis 2*

Main Effect	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step-1			
Conscientiousness	.473***	.303	.298
Mediation Effect			
Step-1			
Affective Commitment	.214***	.373	.366
Step-2			
Conscientiousness	.370	.373	.366

Dependent Variable: Job Performance

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

Table 5 represents the statistical analysis to test hypothesis 3. In first step main effect was tested by using regression analysis between job performance (dependent variable) and Neuroticism (independent variable). The results revealed that Job Performance and Neuroticism has significant relationship with ($\beta=0.260, p<.001$). In step two, mediation effect was tested between job performance (dependent variable) in relationship with Continuance Commitment and Neuroticism. When intervening variable continuance commitment was entered into the equation the effect of

Neuroticism on job performance was reduced to ($\beta=0.068$, $p < ns$). Later, Sobel Test was also calculated and value is 4.13 with 0.001 significant levels.

Table 5: *Mediation Analysis- Hypothesis 3*

Main Effect	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step-1			
Neuroticism	.260***	.082	.076
Mediation Effect			
Step-1			
Continuance Commitment	.244***	.192	.183
Step-2			
Neuroticism	.068	.192	.183

Dependent Variable: Job Performance

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

The result shows that Affective Commitment mediates the relationship between Extraversion and Job Performance. Therefore Hypothesis 1 is accepted. Affective Commitment also mediates the relationship between Conscientiousness and Job Performance. Therefore Hypothesis 2 is accepted. The result also reveals that Continuance Commitment mediates the relationship between Neuroticism and Job Performance. Therefore Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Conclusion

The extant study has investigated the most researched dispositional factor i.e. Big Five Personality Traits in relation with job performance with a mediating role of multidimensional organizational commitment. The results revealed that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between big five personality traits and job performance. The affective commitment is most significantly mediates the personality-performance relationship as it mediates the relationship between extraversion-job performance and conscientiousness-job performance. Continuance commitment mediates the relationship between big five personality traits-job performance relationship.

Future Research Directions

Future research can also investigate the other dispositional factors i.e. narrow traits to determine the above relationship. Future research can also investigate the mediating role of work attitudes on job behaviors like OCB (organizational citizenship behavior), CWB (Counterproductive Work Behavior) and retaliation. Future research can also explore the mediating

role of other work attitudes like job satisfaction and job involvement instead of organization commitment.

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