

Effect Of The Big Five Personality Traits On Job Satisfaction And Organizational Commitment In The Healthcare Industry: The Case Of Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of the big five personality traits on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among healthcare workers in Kenya. The study utilized a correlational descriptive study design and collected data using a self-administered questionnaire. In all, 252 healthcare workers comprising Medical doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, and Lab Technologist participated in the study. Using descriptive statistics and multi-linear regression analysis, the study showed significant relations between the Big Five personality traits with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Openness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism have a positive relation with organizational commitment while extraversion and Neuroticism also have a positive relation with job satisfaction. More so, a positive relationship was found between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This finding suggests that employees who exhibit the traits of openness, neuroticism, extraversion and conscientiousness turn to find a greater sense of commitment and job satisfaction to the Healthcare organizations. The implication of the results will be useful to hospital administrators and the healthcare industry in general.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction; Organizational Commitment; Personality Trait; Healthcare Industry

INTRODUCTION

The committed employee is loyal to the organization's values and proud of being a member of its work team. In this sense, organizational commitment is a positive psychological state of attachment that pushes the employee's performance upward to successfully turn the firm's strategic vision into a reality (Porter et al, 1974, quoted by Hawass, 2012). The foundation of this study is the belief that employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the healthcare industry are linked with personality traits. The healthcare industry is a place where little mistakes can lead to an unacceptable loss of life and property. Due to its sense of strong mission, the healthcare industry must build its workforce that is strongly dedicated with high level of job satisfaction and commitment in order to provide quality care to patients (Baker et al, 2005). It is crucial to understand employee personality traits and how they affect organization outcomes in the healthcare industry. External influences in the work environment of the healthcare industry are moderated by the personal predispositions of the individual (Turska-Kawa, 2013), which significantly neutralizes the direct impact of the influencing agent and raises the importance of the personality factor. The study of personality determinants finds important applications in various areas of commitment in the healthcare organization. According to Peryin & John (1999), each level of these personality traits has a unique contribution to the understanding of individual differences in behavior and experience. The individual's personality can define how he or she views the world around him, reacts to situations, and interacts with others in the organization (Michaud, 2013).

Decades of researches have correlated mood at work to generalized emotional states encountered on the job (George & Brief, 1992). More so, moods have been shown to predict one's impression of a situation and one's own

actions (Clark & Isen, 1982). Evidence has been accumulated over the years that all personality measures can be categorized under the umbrella of a 5-factor model of personality (Goldberg, 1990). The study specifically linked traits from the 5-factor model of personality to multiple dimensions of commitment in the healthcare organization. The study also examined the relationship between general commitment in the healthcare organization and the five personality traits.

Organizational Commitment And Personality Traits

Personality embodies a person's feelings, thoughts, and behavioral patterns. Every employee has a unique personality that differentiates him or her from the other. To manage effectively, it is helpful to understand the personalities of different employees. On the other hand, an employee's commitment to the organization and job satisfaction play a central role of their retention in the field of healthcare practice, as a dissatisfied employee will be more likely to leave the healthcare field. The stress and demand that are exerted on the healthcare practitioners is such that turnover could be extremely high if employees are not satisfied with their job.

Extraversion

Extraversion is the dimension of personality associated with dominance, self-confidence and search for excitement. Extravert traits include being outgoing, talkativeness, social poise, assertiveness, and enjoying being in social situations (Carpenter, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2010). Extraverts show a high level of positive emotions and interpersonal connections (Bakker et al, 2006). While individuals low in extraversion appear quiet or reserved, those high in extraversion are cheerful and energetic (Pervin & John, 1990), possibly because they engage in more activities to overcome stressful conditions. Further, extraverts can easily find new job alternatives because of their diverse social connections (Erdheim et al., 2006).

Openness

Openness experience refers to the intelligence, curiosity and imagination of the individual. It represents the degree to which a person is curious, original, intellectual, and creative and how an individual can produce original ideas (Bakker et al, 2006). People high in openness seem to thrive in situations that require flexibility and learning new things. They are highly motivated to learn new skills and they do well in training settings (Lievens, Harris, Van, Bisqueret, 2003). They regard successful work accomplishment as a matter of personal identity and pride (Rostan, 1998). Creative people prefer a work environment characterized by autonomy, minimal distractions and reduced time constraints (Mumford, 2002).

Neuroticism

Neuroticism describes the person who is dramatically affected by negative life events (Bozionelos, 2003). They reflect feelings of distress and nervousness and it is the most pervasive trait across personality measures (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, Barrick, 1999). They are depressed, tense and worry a lot about different life circumstances. Similarly, they are in short of positive psychological adjustment and emotional stability (Judge et al., 2002). In general, individuals higher in neuroticism possess more negative views of themselves and of others.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness represents the helpful, forgiving and trusting personality and they often show respectable work behavior (Organ and Lingl, 1995). Also, Judge et al (1999) found that people who score high in agreeableness 'prioritize' relationships with others over work and career success.

Conscientiousness

This dimension represents the individual who works efficiently and tends to be a reliable worker. The conscientious employee perseveres until the task is finished (John and Srivastava, 1999). That is why this individual is considered the most consistent predictor of performance across jobs.

Theoretical Framework

From a wider perspective, the study is built on the framework of Holland's theory (Holland, 1985) - which has been widely and extensively researched - that individuals gravitate toward, are satisfied with, and persist in occupations and settings where there is a good fit between their personality and the environment in which they work (Schneider, 1987). Further, the foundation of the study is also built on the belief that the big five personality traits are linked with employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the healthcare industry. George and her colleagues (George, 1989, 1991; George & Brief, 1992; George & Jones, 1996) reported significant findings demonstrating that positive and negative moods of employees influence their feelings about work and their behaviors on the job.

METHODS

The study adopted descriptive correlational study design where relationships between the big five personality traits, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were examined. We used a sample of 252 healthcare workers in Kenya drawn from public and private health facilities as well as from non-governmental organizations. Medical doctors, nurses, clinical officers, pharmacists, medical laboratory technologists and health counselors, who had worked in their respective organizations for more than six months, were eligible for participation.

Disproportional stratified random sampling was employed where participants were selected as per the four levels (Strata) of healthcare structure in Kenya. According to Kenya Health Policy (2012-2030), the healthcare in Kenya is structured as follows:

- Tier 1 - community health units and non-governmental organizations offering preventive and minor treatments services
- Tier 2 - primary care level, providing outpatient health services and they receive patients from Tier-1
- Tier 3 - county level which provides primary referral services, offering curative and rehabilitative services
- Tier 4 - National referral hospitals providing secondary and specialized services

A questionnaire with closed-ended questions was self-administered by the research assistants during the regular work hours to the randomly selected participants after obtaining an informed consent from them. The questionnaire comprised of four items: 1) the demographic profile of the participants, 2) five-factor personality traits, 3) dimensions of organizational commitment, and 4) job satisfaction in a five-point Likert type scale that was used to measure the objectives of the study. Employees on probation were excluded from the study; i.e., those with less than 120 days within the organization/institutions. The data analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA).

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the characteristics of the sampled participants while multi linear regression was used to test the relationship/effect of the big five personality traits on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the healthcare workers in Kenya.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents a multi linear regression analysis indicating a relationship between personality traits and organizational commitment. The study utilized 252 respondents from the healthcare industry with the highest percentage (67.6%) working as nurses. The rest are lab technologists (12.4%), medical doctors (7.1%), midwives (6.2%), pharmacists (4.0%), and counselors (2.6%). About 57% fall within the age bracket of 31-40 years with 71% female and 29% male. Also, 66% indicated that they are given the opportunity to utilize their skills and talents at work and 65% said their supervisors give feedback for them to improve and achieve their goals. On the other hand, 34% said that they have experienced some degree of discrimination and tribalism at their place of work.

Table 1: Personality Traits And Organizational Commitment

Likelihood Ratio Tests				
Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	200.741	31.539	2	.000
Openness	175.255	6.053	2	.048
Conscientiousness	185.257	16.055	2	.000
Extraversion	169.579	.378	2	.828
Agreeableness	170.172	.971	2	.616
Neuroticism	191.099	21.898	2	.000

The results showed that openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism personality traits correlate positively with organizational commitment. Pearson correlations analysis (Table 2) also showed that extraversion personality trait correlates positively ($r = 0.127$, $p < 0.45$) with job satisfaction. More so, neuroticism correlates with job satisfaction ($r = 0.269$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness did not show any positive correlation. Klaus (2012) found, in his study, that all personality scales correlated significantly with job satisfaction, with the strongest correlations for agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism with openness scoring the weakest correlation.

Table 2: Job Satisfaction And Personality Variables

Correlations							
		Job Satisfaction	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.085	.083	.127*	-.051	.269**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.180	.193	.045	.426	.000
	N	248	248	248	248	248	248
Openness	Pearson Correlation	.085	1	.170**	.157*	.218**	.269**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.180		.007	.013	.000	.000
	N	248	252	252	252	252	252
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	.083	.170**	1	.483**	.361**	-.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.193	.007		.000	.000	.114
	N	248	252	252	252	252	252
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	.127*	.157*	.483**	1	.259**	-.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.013	.000		.000	.437
	N	248	252	252	252	252	252
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	-.051	.218**	.361**	.259**	1	-.157*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.426	.000	.000	.000		.013
	N	248	252	252	252	252	252
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	.269**	.269**	-.100	-.049	-.157*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.114	.437	.013	
	N	248	252	252	252	252	252
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)							
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)							

Table 3 presents Pearson correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Table 3: Job Satisfaction And Organizational Commitment

Correlations			
		Job Satisfaction	Professional Commitment To The Organization
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	248	245
Professional Commitment To The Organization	Pearson Correlation	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	245	248

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results showed that those who are satisfied with their job also turn to having a high organizational commitment, which, in a way, is the emotional attachment people have toward their organization of work. There is definitely a high degree of similarities and overlapping that can be found between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bauer & Erdogen, 2010) because those things that make one satisfied with his or her work are almost the same that makes one more committed to the organization. Assessing the work environment fully cannot yield job satisfaction. Connolly & Viswesvaran (2000) have shown that job satisfaction is not purely environmental and is partially due to our personality. Some people have a disposition to be happy in life and at work regardless of environmental factors.

DISCUSSION

In the healthcare industry, it is relevant to know which personality traits strongly predict health worker satisfaction and commitment. In this study, conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism personality traits correlate positively with organizational commitment. This means that healthcare workers who possess these traits to some degree will show commitment to the organization. Levy & Lounsbury (2010) suggest that performers who are extraverted and conscientious are effective at managing general stress - and performance stress, in particular - and find a greater sense of satisfaction with their job. Those with the conscientiousness personality trait are naturally organized and hard-working and are a top predictor of job performance and success (Judge et al., 2002). It is the most stable trait (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999) with mental ability for career success across the life span. It has been proven that the conscientiousness trait is consistently associated with higher level of job performance, greater frequency of desirable on-the-job behaviors, and fewer problematic work behaviors (Barrick et al., 2001; Salgado, 1997). In this sense, the personal qualities of the conscientious employee can strongly drive his or her personal attitudes toward the organization.

Meyer & Allen (1996) indicated that commitment, as a psychological state, has at least three separable components reflecting:

- A desire (affective commitment): The affectively committed individual has a desire to stay in the organization. The employee feels a strong sense of belonging to the organization and he or she is emotionally (Hawass, 2012) attached to it. In other words, the organization represents a 'great deal of personal meaning' to the individual. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) emphasize that the employee develops a psychological attachment to the organization when he or she recognizes the relevance or congruence of organizational values to one's own values. This means that the emotional tie gets stronger when the employee derives his/her personal identity from working with an organizational entity.
- A need (continuance commitment): This is based on the calculation of the person's conduct to realize the extent to which he or she needs to stay in the organization. If the available job choices after leaving the organization are scarce, the individual may develop a sense of commitment. Therefore, continuance commitment to an organization develops when an employee perceives the costs of leaving it to be higher than the expected gains.
- Obligation (normative commitment): Some employees regard commitment to a specific organization as an

obligation. Normative commitment reflects the psychological state through which an employee perceives staying in the organization as a morally right choice, regardless of the amount of satisfaction the firm gives the employee (Marsh and Mannari, 1977). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that normative commitment increases when an individual internalizes the values of the organization and also when the individual feels that staying is a return of favor to the organization that has provided him/her many benefits and inducements over the years.

Openness, on the other hand, correlates positively with job satisfaction. Those with the openness personality trait are open to new experiences and ideas; they are creative, curious, and imaginative. They also have an advantage when they enter into a new organization. Their open-mindedness could lead them to seek a lot of information about the organization's values and benefits and they may discover, at an early stage, the advantages and disadvantages for them in the organization. This could enable them to make a quick and early adjustment to the organization to their advantage. Open people are highly adaptable to change; but on the other side, they could be prone to becoming easily bored or impatient with routine work.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that neuroticism strongly correlated to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Most studies found that neurotics correlate negatively with job satisfaction and organization commitment, but employees who score high in neuroticism are expected to have higher continuance commitment to the organization. In the literature of Furnham, Petrides, and Tsaousis (2005), it has been found that the neurotics are more powerfully motivated by and attracted to hygiene factors, such as job security (permanent job), benefits (good vacation, sick leave, etc.), pay (the amount of money that is paid), and work conditions (comfortable and clean). As a result, neurotics will stay with the organization because of their investment made in the organization. Neurotics may also develop fear of the costs linked with leaving their current position. That is to say, if negative events occur in neurotics' jobs, they may feel more anxious about facing a new work environment that could offer even harsher experiences (Erdheim et al., 2006). Hence, there should be a positive correlation between neuroticism and continuance commitment.

Job satisfaction is another variable that correlates highly with organizational commitment. It is the extent to which an individual enjoys his or her job (Stamps, 1997), and healthcare workers who are satisfied with their job also turn to be happy and will likely stay in their organizations. Studies (Al-Hussanini, 2008; Gregory, 2007; Jahangir & Shokrpour, 2009; Wu & Norman, 2006) have shown that a high level of job satisfaction contributes to a high level of organizational commitment amongst employees. This high level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction with the personality traits that showed positive correlation in this study could also be explained from the fact that 66% of the employees indicated that they are given the opportunity to freely utilize their skills and talents and also 65% receive prompt feedback from their supervisors for self improvement. More so, 66% are given some degree of independent, autonomy and space at work to do their work which creates a positive environment for workers in the healthcare sector to feel a sense of being in control and have a sense of responsibility.

LIMITATIONS

The results of this study must be viewed in the light of some limitations. First, a larger sample size is needed to better ensure the generalizability of the current study findings. Second, the study was applied only to the Kenyan culture. The following questions could be asked: 1) "Are the same psychological constructs found in cultures as diverse as Kenya and other cultures?" and 2) "Are traits organized in a similar fashion across cultures?" Accordingly, further studies are needed to confirm the generalizability of the current findings in the healthcare context. However, the study provides an initial but, to some extent, deep-down insights regarding the personality traits of committed healthcare workers in the Kenyan culture. Evidence has been found that the personality trait plays an important role in the development of organizational commitment in the healthcare industry. The study is a cross-sectional that leaves the inferences of causality questioned. Future longitudinal studies are recommended to realize the differential impact of personality traits on work-related issues across time in the healthcare industry.

CONCLUSION

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are at the core of the healthcare industry since this will ensure high quality service delivery. Evidence from researches points to specific determinants and correlations of job satisfaction and productivity. Dissatisfaction with one's job may result in higher employee turnover, absenteeism, slowness and grievances. Improved job satisfaction, on the other hand, results in increased productivity and organizational commitment. It should be noted, though, that the results of this study do not reveal a causal relationship. The result of the study gives more insight into the degree to which these personality traits correlate with job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the healthcare industry. Several practical implications are suggested by the findings of this study. Personality traits that make individuals successful in their careers in the healthcare industry are likely to help the healthcare organizations be successful in their endeavor. Secondly, this could be helpful to the managers of the healthcare industry to focus their attention on those personalities that showed positive correlation to manage them appropriately for achieving the mission and vision of their organizations.

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