

Understanding The Dynamics Between Personality, Well-Being And Job Performance: A Proposed Mediation and Moderation Model

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Abstract

In today's uncertain world, it is imperative that employees apart from task performance also demonstrate contextual performance. This is essential for the survival and growth of the organisation. Previous studies recommended moratorium on such studies which explore only the link of personality and performance. However, a need has been stressed to study other factors to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dyadic relation between personality and performance. In this paper, a conceptual model is proposed that explores the effect of the personality of the individual on his/her contextual performance in the light of various other factors like subjective well-being, length of service, values, task performance and location (place of posting) and management level. The use of various studies has been done to propose the model. The research paper has offered number of research propositions to summarise the dynamics of personality, subjective well-being and contextual performance along with number of demographic factors like task performance, management level, length of service, location, gender, age and education. The proposed model can be tested empirically in future research. The article concludes with the study implications, proposed model limitations and future studies directions in both academic and corporate world.

Keywords: Personality, Contextual Performance, Subjective Well Being, Values, Task Performance, Management Level, Length of Service Location, Gender, Age, education.

Executive Summary

Contextual performance of the individuals in an organization is an important factor which can lead to the success and survival of the organization. Though, the extant literature has explored the relationship between Personality and Contextual Performance yet there are number of variables which may affect this relationship indirectly. This research article has attempted to explore such variables through mediation and moderation to explain organizational performance in a better way. This paper proposes a conceptual model based on the extant literature and tried to understand the relationship between Personality and Contextual Performance in the light of various mediators and moderators. Moreover, the relationships between Personality and Contextual Performance are generally studied in dyadic relation or in isolation. The inclusion of the mediating variables like Satisfaction in Life, Positive Affect, Negative Affect and moderating variables like Location(place of posting), Management level, Length of Service, Values, Task Performance with certain control variables like gender, age and education to avoid

confounding variables will certainly help to understand the dynamics between personality and organizational performance.

The model lays the foundation for empirical testing of the proposed linkages and is an important contribution for understanding the personality and contextual performance link. Personality, Subjective Well Being and Contextual performance have been studied in isolation or in dyadic relations. The model will help us in broadening our understating of the effect of these constructs and study the interaction effects of these variables on the Personality Contextual Performance relation in a holistic manner. The article will help the practitioner to explore various important factors in explaining the organizational performance and will also be a good starting point for academicians to establish the relationships among various constructs. The study will certainly help the managers to make necessary changes in the organization context and provide necessary training of individuals at behaviour level.

The article concludes with the limitations of the model and directions for future research.

Introduction

In today's uncertain times, for the survival and growth of the organisations, it is imperative that all employees perform beyond the tasks and duties assigned to them. This behaviour should come out naturally and it is difficult to enforce rules and regulations in this regard. This article proposes a model for the Contextual performance and Personality, moderated, and mediated by various factors. Subjective Well Being is one such factor which is affecting the relation between Personality and Contextual Performance. Most research on personality and performance has focussed on the correlation between personality and performance only. To understand this relationship, a need is to study the intervening variables that are a link with respect to these domains (Hurtz and Donovan 2000). This study attempts to build a model between personality and contextual performance around these intervening variables.

The study attempts to fill the gap about the affect of organisational and demographic variables on contextual performance (Kalia & Bharadwaj 2019).

As per the Deloitte Insights, a report published in 2018 by Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, Well-Being has emerged as a Trend of importance as "important" or "very important" by 84% of the respondents. As per the report, there is growing support to show that performance is driven by Well-Being. The research has shown that the financial implications of productivity lost are 2.3 times more than pharmacy or medical costs. Often these costs occur at work. A Dow Chemical Company study found that "presenteeism" i.e. present with being engaged costs an average of 6,721\$ per employee per year. Consequentially, the focus on Well-Being is not limited to an employee's absence but also performance.

Subjective Well Being

The approach of SWB has been often mentioned as the "Gold Standard" to measure happiness (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008). Experts in the field of SWB do not say that other approaches related to the study of good life are wrong. However, they give importance to the own evaluation of life by people (Diener, Oishi, Tay (2018). The structure of subjective well-being consists of life satisfaction, positive affect and absence of negative affect which is reaffirmed in various studies (Diener & Suh 1996; Shmotkin,

1998). According to the Set Point theory, SWB is stable across life and comes back to the same level, post major life events. Small variations are found for demographic variables like educational background, health, and marital status (Diener, Oishi & Lucas 2003).

Performance

Performance has been mentioned as the degree of contribution of an individual to the organization in reaching its goal" (Motowildo, Borman and Schmit 1997, p. 72).

The conduct of employees beyond their job description which helps the organization is defined as contextual performance (Borman & Motowildo, 1993). According to Campbell (1990), there are two types of actions that cover job performance: one which is specific to the job and others that remains same for all the jobs in an organization. Later, the work of Campbell (1990) was extended by Borman and Motowildo (1993) and subdivided into two different domains: task and contextual performance. Task performance defines work as per the employee's job description. The Contextual performance involves discretionary / interpersonal behavior and it enhances the context of task behavior (Motowildo & Van Scotter, 1994). Discretionary behavior in this case is behavior that is beyond expectations and formal job descriptions. Interpersonal behavior in this case is behavior that enhances the task performance like helping other colleagues. Contextual performance behavior is associated with the success and effectiveness of the organizational (Ehrhart, Bliese, & Thomas, 2006; Walz & Niehoff, 2000). Contextual performance assists the organization to adapt to rapidly changing environment and also stabilize the performance of the organizational (Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1997). Some organizations have included a contextual performance in their performance appraisal, and some are even contemplating its inclusion as selection criteria (MacKenzie, Padsakoff, & Fetter, 1991). At unit level, a positive correlation has been observed among contextual performance and effectiveness (Ehrhart, Bliese, and Thomas (2006). In group terms, Contextual performance has led to increase in task performance (Walz & Niehoff, 2000). Contextual performance is related to Organizational Citizenship behavior. Organ (1997) suggested that Contextual performance is the same construct as Organizational Citizenship behavior after incorporating changes in the definition of the construct.

Personality and Contextual Performance

Performance has been connected to Personality of an individual (Tett et al 1991). Personality can predict contextual performance more strongly than task performance (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996, and Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, 1997). Big Five factors of personality like conscientiousness, agreeableness and extroversion, are connected to contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Moreover, Agreeableness and Extraversion were more strongly related to the facilitating interpersonal aspect of contextual performance than task performance (Van Scotter and Therefore, we propose the following:

P1: Personality will be positively related to Contextual Performance of the Individual

Motowidlo (1996)). Conscientiousness and Contextual Performance have been related in various studies (Avis, Kudisch & Fortunato, 2002, Miller, Griffin & Hart, 1999). Conscientiousness has been found related to both Task and Contextual performance but is a stronger connection to Contextual performance (Bott, Svyantek, Goodman & Bernal, 2003; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001b; Hattrup, K., O'Connell, M. S., & Wingate, P. H. (1998), Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). The Meta-analysis by Barrick & Mount (1991) found a consistent relation of Conscientiousness with job performance criteria.

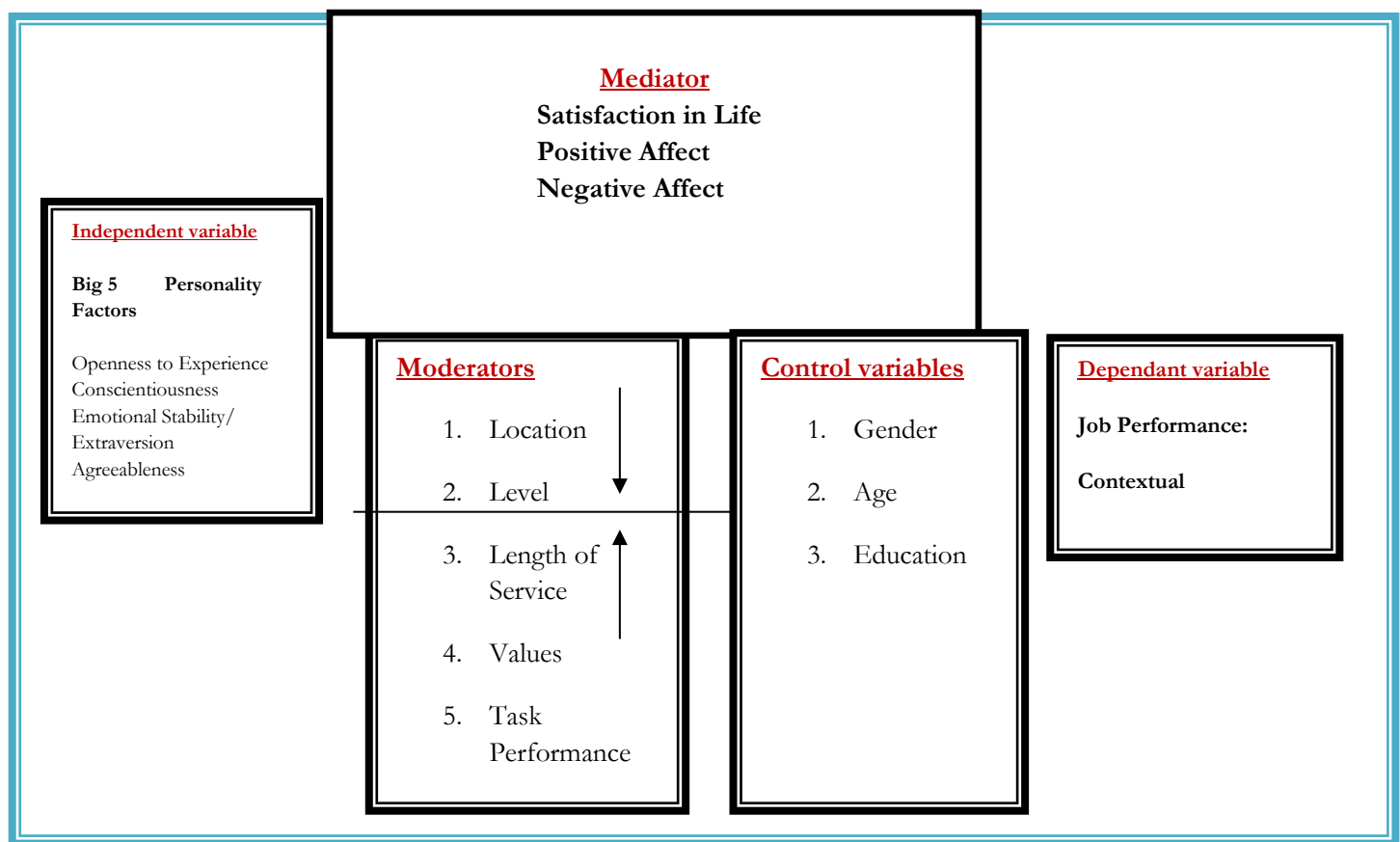


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Source: Authors' own.

On the basis of the above model, the following is proposed

P1b: *An employee's Personality factor (Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, Emotional Stability Extraversion and Agreeableness) will be positively related with his/her Contextual performance*

Subjective Well Being as a mediator in Personality - Contextual Performance Relationship

Subjective Well Being is very relevant for understanding relations between personality and contextual performance. The review of Gallup studies of organisational functioning has found an

omnipresent link between well-being of the employees and an range of business unit outcomes (Harter, Schmidt, & Creglow, 1998). In organisations where employees have greater satisfaction in workplace, more development of self and good relations at work report better satisfaction level of customer, productivity, profitability and lower attrition rates (Keyes et al 2000). Employees high on well-being perform better in work and are healthier (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Physical health is impacted by Subjective Well Being (Diener and Chan, 2011) and a greater level of engagement at work (Lyubomirsky, 2005). A relationship which is statistically significant has been found between job satisfaction and performance (Bryson, Forth, and Stokes, 2017). Diener et al. (2002) did an analysis on a longitudinal data from in 1976 from participants among the best colleges in the country. In this study, on a five point scale, participants reported their cheerfulness on entering the college. After nineteen years annual income was reported by these participants and link was found between the cheerful disposition and income. In 1976, the participants in the top 10% of cheerfulness earned in 1995 an average of \$62,681. The bottom 10% in cheerful earned on an average of \$54, 318 and this was quite low when compared with the upper cheerfulness band. Studies have also shown that Seniors give better performance rating to happy people (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999) and get more prominent jobs (Roberts, Caspi & Moffitt, 2003), higher income, (Diener, Nickerson, Lucas & Sandvik, 2002) and have more probability to get married (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis & Diener, 2003). Higher satisfaction in marriage was also reported by happy people (Ruvolo, 1998).

Proudfoot et al (2009) randomly conducted a training program with 166 employees in a British insurance firm. The objective of the training program was to employee's level of job satisfaction and self-esteem apart from the reduction in the psychological distress. After around four months, it was found that productivity and SWB had improved among the intervention group. The productivity after two years, measured using sales figures, of the majority of the participants was higher than the average for their division (increase from 29% to 65%).

However, the literature also indicates the relation of happiness with various life outcomes may not be linear. So effectively, happier may not always be better (Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2009). This

may be due to the fact that happiness indicates the comfortable situations around and happy individuals may end up making lesser efforts to changes life circumstances (Schwarz, 1990).

According to Dr. Alice Isen (2001), persons experiencing mild positive emotions have more probability to help others, providing solutions to problems (Isen, 1987) apart from thinking flexibility (Ashby et al. 1999).

The extensive review of 225 papers by Sonja Lyubomirsky, Laura King, and Ed Diener (2005) across three class of studies (longitudinal, cross-sectional, and experimental) found preliminary evidence that happiness precedes many desirable outcomes in life and various outcomes of success. The study also pointed out that happy people did better in life outcomes as work, love, and health (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener, 2005). With similar results, Oswald et al. (2015) reported a lab experiment among the students in which an increase in subjective well being lead to increase in tests scores.

Tenney, Poole & Ed Diener (2015) conducted a meta-analysis wherein it was pointed out that the relationship from Subjective Well Being to Performance varies from small to moderate. In this meta-analysis, they point out the seven mediators in this relationship like better health, lower turnover, lower absenteeism, more self-regulation, positive relationships, powerful motivation, and increased creativity.

The recent research indicates that Subjective Well Being is beneficial for work performance apart from citizenship, health & longevity, supportive social relationship, and resilience (Diener, Oishi, and Tay, 2018).

As per the Dynamic Equilibrium Model, each person has a baseline level of Subjective Well Being which does not change significantly across life (Headey & Wearing (1992). As per Lyubomirsky (2005), a person's happiness is determined by genetics (50%), 40% from Intentional activities, and 10% comes from life circumstances.

Personality was found to predict equally Satisfaction in Life and Positive affect. However, negative affect is predicted less by personality (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). As per the study, satisfaction in life satisfaction and negative affect are predicted by neuroticism. Agreeableness and Extraversion predicted Positive affect. Life satisfaction had a strong correlation with Conscientiousness. A weak correlation was found in the study between Openness to Experience and

Agreeableness with Subjective Well Being. The study suggested the need to study the personality and Subjective Well Being in non-western countries as it was well established in western countries. Emotional stability, extraversion, and conscientiousness were also found to predict Subjective Well Being (Brajša-Žganec et al., (2011))

A study in India found Personality factors to predict Satisfaction in life positive affect and negative affect and accounting for 17%, 35%, and 28% variance respectively. Satisfaction in life was predicted by Conscientiousness. Negative affect predicted neuroticism and Positive affect was predicted by extraversion.

The relation of personality with subjective well-being has been found to be related in a study in Sweden with no difference between self-employed and regular workers (Berglund et al., (2016).

Thus, we propose:

P2: *Subjective Well Being will mediate the relationship between Personality and Contextual Performance*

Moderating role of Values, Management Level, Length of Service, Location and Task Performance

The relation between Big five factors and Contextual performance has been often found modest and therefore points to the role of various moderators in this relationship (Borman, Hanson & Hedge, 1997).

Tenney & Diener (2016) pointed out that there are many ways in which one could measure both Subjective Well Being and Performance along with the inclusion of so many variables once could include like (sex, age and socio-economic status, etc), hence there are considerable researcher has degree of freedom (i.e. research process choices). Values are beliefs of the individual that motivate people to act by make choices. They provide a framework for human behaviour. People have inclination to follow the values that they are raised with. People also generally believe that their values are “right”. Values vary across individuals and cultures. Values are accepted as universal predictors of human decision making. In this regard, in an study Asakawa & Csikszentmihalyi (1998) reported that when Asian American students did activities related to their future, they

were likely to be happy whereas Caucasian students were enjoyed activity that was important for the moment. In another study Oishi & Diener (2001c) found that Asian Americans persisted to master the task whereas European Americans had a tendency to change task when they were not able to do well.

Factors like impaired health, personal value, and the motivational system can impact the relationship between Well-Being and performance (Warr, & Nielsen (2018). According to Diener, Oishi & Lucas 2003, it appears that there is differences in values, goals and culture between individuals leads to distinct predictors of Subjective Well-being. They further suggest that people globally want to achieve things thereby representing an important goal for future research. However, the major criticism of extant cross-cultural research is the inadequate focus on within cultural variation (Matsumoto 1999, Hong et al 2000). Scollon et al (2002a) found the difference between individuals to account for more variance than culture.

The researcher of Subjective Well Being focussing on personality traits, often ignore changes within the Subjective Well Being that occurs within individuals of a particular personality (Oishi, Diener, Suh, Lucas (1999). People experience different levels of enhancement in subjective well-being depending on their actions being consistent with their values (Oishi et. al 1999). The model proposed in their paper points out to the moderating influence of values in the determination of subjective well-being. Christopher (1999) argued that since the definition of well-being is culturally rooted, there cannot be a value-free assessment of well-being. Thus, we propose

P3: *Individual values will moderate the relationship between Personality and Contextual Performance*

Managers and professional staff had a greater correlation between performance and Well-Being than lower grade officers in a study by Sheridan and Slocum (1975) in a steel company. In the study, the relationship between wellbeing and performance correlations were found to average 0.23 for managers and .10 for machine operators. The average correlation of task performance and overall job satisfaction was .23 for professional/managerial staff versus 0.15 for other workers (Petty et al 1984). The Meta-analysis by Judge et al. (2001) reported an average correlation

between job performance and job satisfaction of 0.26 and .018 for highly complex job and low complexity jobs respectively. Thus, we propose

P4: *Management Level will moderate the relationship between Personality and Contextual Performance*

In the existing literature, when studying the relationship of personality and contextual performance, the moderating effects of location (place of posting) of the employees, his/her length of service in the organisation, and task performance have not been studied. Our notion is that these factors are important in moderating this relationship. Our notion is that Contextual Performance will be demonstrated if the Task performance of the individual is high. Further, the study of these variables as moderators is an important area that has not been studied in this context.

Thus, we propose:

P5: *Factors like location, length of service and Task Performance will moderate the relationship among Personality and Contextual Performance*

Control Variables

The study focuses on factors like Gender, Age, and Education as control variables. In some studies, gender is found to have minimal or no connection with the Subjective Well Being of an individual. Subjective Well-Being has not been found related to Gender (Diener et al., (2000); Pavot et al., (2004)), 1% variance in the subjective Well-Being has been accounted by Gender (Harring, Stock, & Okun (1984)). However, in another study, gender is found to moderate the link between one of the components of personality (extraversion) and subjective well-being. In comparison to men, among women gender is a more significant predictor of subjective well-being in women (Yuan, Jijun & Chengting (2015)). With regard to performance, the effect of gender on performance has been varied. In one study, employee's performance is found to be affected by gender (Yammarino and Dubinsky 1988). Another study by Ogunleye and Osekita(2016) says that gender is not found to have a considerable effect on performance.

With regard to education, the general perception is that higher education will lead to better performance. Some studies point that higher job performance is not guaranteed by higher level

education (Kahya, 2007). Task Performance was found to be negatively related with education and contextual performance was weakly but positively correlated with education (Kahya(2007)). This study points to the fact job performance may not be guaranteed by higher education.

As per the study (Mathieu & Zajac (1990), with increase in the age of the employee's increases, the option of leaving the current organisation, and joining another reduces. Due to this, they find the current job better. Within the organisation, the performance is expected to increase with a certain age and then gradually reduce (Adio and Popoola, 2010). The meta analysis by Ng and Feldman (2008) pointed age was not related to task performance. However, it was found to be related to citizenship behaviour.

Due to the above factors, gender, education, and age have been considered as control variables.

Implications for Research and Practice

Barrick, Mount, and Judge (2001) suggested new outlooks to get a deeper understanding of the personality and performance link. They even recommended a moratorium on the meta-analysis which studies only the personality and performance link. The proposed model deepens the understanding of this relationship as this relationship is studied along with the mediating/moderating effects of various variables.

The exploratory model is proposed in the article. The foremost research implication will be to test empirically the proposed connections and operationalise the model. The model may be used to study the combined effect of moderators /mediators instead of analysis in isolation of the individual effect of each moderator /mediator. For example, the combined mediating/ moderating impact of the mediators/ moderators will provide us a different perspective than studying the individual effect of mediators like Subjective Well Being and moderators like location, management level, length of service, values and task Performance. Also, the model anchors on the control variable like gender, age and education of the participants.

The model also attempts to bridge the gap in the existing literature as quantitative studies based on this model can answer what Tenney, Poole & Diener (2016) mention as the question that is the optimal amount of well being required by an individual.

Limitations of the Proposed Model

Although the model identifies four important factors which mediate/ moderate Personality and Contextual Performance relationship, the model does not include inputs from a job situation (supervisor behaviour ,task demands, relations with colleagues, the availability of feedback etc.) and from within-person variables, such as task-relevant ability and health. These are often not measured in the wellbeing and performance study and may contribute as ‘third’ variables (Warr & Nielson et al. 2018). Challenge will also come in collecting data of Task Performance which is generally kept confidential within the organisation.

These limitations shall offer guidance to future researchers after incorporating the mediators/moderators excluded in our study. This model can also answer the question of how much Subjective Well Being will lead to optimal performance and can be an important learning in the corporate world.

Conclusion

The article also identifies and explains two broad categories of factors like Subjective Well Being and factors like location, management level, length of service, values, and task performance that may act as mediators/moderators to Personality and Contextual performance relationship in an organisation. The model also enriches our knowledge of these variables acting as 'third variables' to influence this relationship and can be used to test the hypothesis of decreasing marginal utility of performance with respect to well being. This model enables study of the link between components of Subjective Well Being such as cognitive and affective with various facets of personality and contextual performance and lays the foundation for testing the model which can broaden the understanding of the personality performance relationship.

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