The Impact of Personality Traits on Emotional Engagement: The Study on Finance Companies in Trincomalee District

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Abstract

The concept emotional engagement has gained popularity over the years. Encouraged positive outcomes of emotional engagement make organizations develop the culture of engagement at work as a priority for organization. This research investigates the impact of personality traits on emotional engagement in a context of selected Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. In this study, big five traits were used to measure various dimensions of personality which are extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. To attain the objectives, the quantitative method was used and data were collected through questionnaires. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and only 191 questionnaires were accepted by the employees of Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. The findings exhibited that, there were impact of personality traits on emotional engagement and also personality traits of Finance Companies in Trincomalee District is in high level and also emotional engagement of employees is in high level. However, dimensions of personality traits are positively and significantly correlated with emotional engagement except extroversion. Lastly, the regression analysis between personality traits and emotional engagement indicated that 91% of total variance of Emotional engagement was explained by personality traits. Results of this study suggest that the personality traits are useful tool for enhance the emotional engagement.

Keywords: Personality traits, Emotional engagement

Introduction

Work engagement is an integral factor for organizational performance and success, as it seems to have a significant potential to affect employee retention, their loyalty and productivity, and also with some link to customer satisfaction, organizational reputation and the overall stakeholder value. Every organization is facing new challenges like financial turbulence, heightened performance pressure, new technology, an increasingly diverse workforce, and globalization of business to attain the competitive advantages over others. Work engagement is a best tool to achieve it. So, organizational leaders are having ability to attract, engage, develop and retain talent in the work place.

Emotional engagement is a burgeoning psychological concept important for both Occupational Health Psychology and Human Resources Management as it has the potential to simultaneously serve their purposes of employee welfare and organizational performance, respectively (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). To the individual employee, work engagement

signifies good health, well-being, optimal functioning, and favorable performance which in turn mean success to the organization (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). In other words, "what is good for the employee's health and well-being is generally good for the organization, and often vice versa" (p.139).

Problem Statement

Personality traits and emotional engagement at workplace are yet as its initial stages and has become an area for dearth of research. So, there is an empirical study in personality traits and emotional engagement in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. Thus, there exists a clear the empirical knowledge gap. Researcher examines this problem in this study and attempts to fill this empirical knowledge gap. Therefore, the following research problem is advanced in this study. "What is the impact of personality traits on Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District?"

Research Questions

1. To what extent the personality traits exist in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District?
2. To what degree the level of emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District?
3. What is the impact of personality traits of employees on emotional engagement in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District?

Research Objectives

1. To determine the extent to personality traits, exist in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District.
2. To examine the level of emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District.
3. To evaluate the impact of personality traits of employees on emotional engagement in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District.

Methodology & Conceptualization
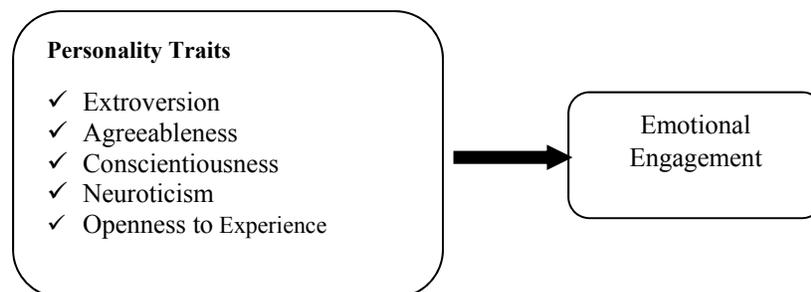
Conceptualization

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Theoretical Model
(Formed for this Research)

Definition of Key Concepts

Personality
Personality is the unique features of every human being; exhibition of characteristic adaptations; unique identifications towards life and a set of cultural differences.
Extroversion People with this trait are friendly, energetic, warm, assertive and social. Extrovert people are outspoken and talkative (Kichukk and Wiesner, 1997). So, extrovert people are outgoing, outspoken and social. People with the characteristics of agreeableness are flexible, good natured, trusting, forgiving, cooperative, tolerant and soft hearted (kichuk and Wiesner, 1997). Agreeableness is the team performance member likeability. These people are based on liking others and viewing them positively.

Person who shows the characteristics of conscientiousness are dependable, careful, responsible, plan full, hardworking, persevering and achievement oriented (Kichuk and Wiesner, 1997). People with the trait of conscientiousness are self- disciplined, responsible, and organized and task oriented. Openness to experience exemplified as the people who are imaginative, sensitive, intellectual, polished versus the people down to earth narrow, simple and insensitive (Reilly et.al 2002) Researchers conclude that team members who are high in openness to experience are broadminded, willing to try new things and creative (Molleman et.al 2004). Neuroticism is the extent to which a person experience negative emotions like anger, anxiety, hostility and depression. It represents the individual differences in personalities. Neuroticism represents individual differences in adjustment and emotional stability.

Physical Engagement
Thus, from the perspective of Kahn, work engagement is best described as a multi-dimensional motivational concept reflecting the simultaneous investment of an individual's physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in active, full work performance. Rich (2006) summarized emotional engagement according to the conceptualization of Kahn as a positive affective reaction to one's job. The emotional dimension of job engagement concerns employees feels about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders (Kular et al., 2008).

The big-five model of personality is most widely used in psychology (John and Srivastava, 1999). According to Inceoglu and Warr (2012), lack of studies examined the relationship between engagement and all five dimensions of personality that is, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. However, Mostert and Rothmann (2006) and Widermuth (2008) investigated relationship between all five traits and engagement.

Research Hypothesis
With the help of literature, hypothesis was generated to properly test the relationship between Personality traits and emotional engagement of employees of Finance Companies in Trincomalee. Based on the assumed causal relationship given in the conceptual model, the following research hypotheses formulated for this study are as follows:

Hypothesis: Personality traits are positively and significantly related to emotional engagement.

Methodology

Questionnaire
Based on the review of literature, variables have been identified for this research. A structured questionnaire was designed using those variables. The questionnaire was divided into part I and part II. Part I contained questions to elicit personal details of the respondents. Part II consisted of questions pertaining to personality traits and emotional engagement.
Survey instruments development Questionnaire was developed with the support of previous studies carried out by experts in the relevant subject areas.

Table I: Questionnaire Development

Dimension	No. of. Items	Adopted from Authors
	Personality Traits	
Extraversion	10	Neo et.al. (1991)
Agreeableness	09	Neo et.al. (1991)
Conscientiousness	07	Neo et.al. (1991)
Neuroticism	06	Neo et.al. (1991)
Openness to experience	12	Neo et.al. (1991)
Emotional Engagement	12	Rich et.al. (2010)

Measures
Findings of Schall (2003) on comparing four, five, six, seven and 10 point Likert scale reveal that five-point Scale provides best results and recommend its usage especially for financial sector companies. Hence, five-point Scale has been used in the survey instrument.

Sample Size
Among the 380 population of selected finance Companies in Trincomalee District 200 employees were selected for this study purpose.

Main Study
For the purpose of obtaining the data relating to various aspects, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared. Using questionnaire, the relevant data on various aspects have been collected.

The data collected in this study was done by using primary method. The data were collected from the respondents who are working as employees of Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. According to the central bank report there are 48 licensed finance companies in Sri Lanka. But in Trincomalee district has only 15 Finance Companies. This research is limited to take all the Finance Companies. Only 07 Finance Companies are selected for this study. For the purpose of this study 07 Finance Companies selected based on the convenience of the researcher.

Method of Data analysis
Data has been presented using tables. Meanwhile descriptive analysis was used for data analysis. Regression analysis is used to find out the impact of personality traits on emotional engagement. Hence under the descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviation were derived. Statistical package of SPSS 19.0 has been used for this purpose.

Results and Discussion
In this part, the results of the statistical analysis are presented in order to answer the research objectives. A comprehensive profile of the respondents, personality traits, emotional engagement and its impacts are discussed.

Personal Information
Overall view of the age level of employees, about between 25-30 years employees having (45%) higher level of work engagement. In this results shows more often than not all of the employees have good work engagement. The reason is 25-30 age level of employees is more willingness to do work. This is their introduction stage of employment. Because, employees shows their talent and skills in this years of age.

Among 191 respondents, 57% males have higher levels of work engagement. Other than, 27% of female respondents have higher levels of work engagement. In work engagement of employees as male are high influences than female. The reason is most of the female are don't like to work financial institutions.

In overviews of educational qualifications, employees who have up to Advance level qualifications they have higher levels of work engagement. The reason of that people who were joining after A/L, they have higher experience than other people. When we considering the work experience, employees who have 3 to 6 years work experience they have higher levels of work engagement than others.

Analysis of Reliability
The first step in the measurement of validation involved computing co-efficient alpha for each set of measures to test reliability. Chronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability of a multi item scale. The co-efficient of Chronbach alpha is shown in table II. Since all the values above 0.70, the construct of this questionnaire is reliable. In sum, the evidence suggests that our scale has adequate measurement properties.

Table II: Reliability Analyses

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha value
Personality Traits	0.759
Extroversion	0.810
Agreeableness	0.761
Conscientiousness	0.778
Neuroticism	0.818
Openness to Experience	0.784
Emotional Engagement	0.724

(Source: Survey Data)

Summary of the findings on Personality traits

Table III. Summary of the findings on personality traits

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
Personality	**3.64**	**.289**
Extroversion	3.43	.402
Agreeableness	3.95	.429
Conscientiousness	3.51	.388
Neuroticism	3.46	.462
Openness to experience	3.87	.343

(Source: Survey Data)

As presented in table III, Employees of Finance Companies in Trincomalee District having high level of personality traits since the mean value of personality traits construct is 3.64.

It shows companies in Finance Companies sector has to take steps to each employees change their attitudes related to work and retaining them through the good personality traits. So, employees have to more concentrate to develop their personal characteristics which will be high influenced on employees' positive attitudes and behaviors. Regarding agreeableness, it has the mean value of 3.95. The influence of agreeableness in the dimension of personality indicates as high. Most of the respondents consist of agreeableness personality about the work.

Engaged individuals tend to be helpful, trusting, considerate, and likes to cooperate with others. Moreover, they are kind to almost everyone. The reason could be the attitude of the agreeableness is the tendency to be trusting, compliant, caring, considerate, generous, and gentle. Such individuals have an optimistic view of human nature (Ongore, O. 2013). Conscientiousness affects work engagement through internal motivational process.

Reason is that conscientious individuals are more likely to have high levels of achievement orientation and are less affected by external interferences (e.g. family), and thus exhibit more energy at work (Halbesleben et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009). Therefore, this study is consistent with the previous study. Extroversion has the lower mean value of 3.43. Because, extraversion implies an energetic approach and includes traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness and negative emotionality. Different Finance Companies employees have different personality but in overall views it has higher impact.

Summary of the findings on Emotional engagement

Table IV. Summary of the findings on emotional engagement

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
Emotional Engagement	4.84	0.399
Enthusiastic about job	4.77	0.708
Interested in job	4.9	0.397
Proud of job	4.83	0.474
Feel positive about job	4.86	0.529

(Source: Survey Data)

As in table IV, Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District is at higher level because mean value of work engagement is 4.84. Furthermore, out of four dimensions of emotional engagement, mean values Enthusiastic about job (4.77), Feel positive about job (4.86) and Proud of job (4.83) are lower than the values of Interested in job (4.9). Meanwhile employees who are working in Finance Companies have to be achieved their targets through more interest, positive thinking and enthusiasm about job.

Employees of Finance Companies in Trincomalee District are having high work demands and high control. Therefore, higher work engagement of them in the companies. The result was consistent to empirical evidence in the literature (Demerouti et al. 2001), which reported that high-work demands and high control were associated with higher engagement. This is caused by the higher level of emotional engagement contribution made by employees. It has resulted in the significantly higher level of emotional engagement. As such mind interested in job and proud of work to such activities are at higher level of employees. This has led to the higher level of work engagement.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.956[a]	.914	.912	.148

a. Predictors: (Constant), Openness To Experience, Extroversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness

Table V. Multiple regression model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	
Constant	1.030	.163	.000
Extroversion	.341	.051	.000
Agreeableness	.917	.052	.000
Conscientiousness	.953	.063	.000
Neuroticism	-.014	.090	.875
Openness to experience	.530	.098	.000

Dependent Variable: Emotional Engagement
(Source: Survey Data)

R square between components of personality traits and emotional engagement 0.914, F statistic between components of personality traits and work engagement 393.803. In addition, r square statistic is 0.914 which means that 91% variance in work engagement can be attributed to the variance in personality traits. Hence it can be derived that personality traits significantly impact emotional engagement in the Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. From the results, it is further observed that Personality traits found to be the most significant related factor affecting emotional engagement. So Agreeableness had a notable influence on the emotional engagement

However, Mostert and Rothmann (2006) and Widermuth (2008) investigated relationship between all five traits and engagement. In this study the outcome or value of dependent variable (emotional engagement) depends on one independent variable (personality traits). Therefore, to quantify the effect of different independent variables on the behavior of dependent variable, it is necessary to apply the technique of multiple regressions (Cooper & Schindler, 2007; Levin & Rubin, 1991).

Hypothesis Testing
'Personality Traits' (t = 6.338) is positively and significantly contributed in the prediction of Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies. Results of this study confirm that Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience Impact Emotional Engagement, which is similar to the study of Mostert and Rothmann (2006) and Widermuth (2008).

Based on the regression analysis, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which means that all the study variables significantly impact Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. That is, variable Personality traits positively significantly impact Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies. Therefore, it is concluded that the variables taken for the study have positive impact on Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District.

Conclusions

Findings
It can be ascertained from this study that Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience contribute significant and positive contribution in the prediction of Emotional engagement.

Suggestions
This research focuses personality traits are at high level in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. Therefore, Finance Companies need to develop good personality traits to attract the qualified and efficient employees and also retain them. Meanwhile Emotional engagement of employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District is at high level. According to finding among the five personality traits of different employees, Agreeableness has the high influence. Agreeableness is needed to work in peace and resolve the conflicts. Agreeable employees can be more positive and motivated to resolve the problems and conflicts.

Therefore, agreeable employees can be more engaged to their job because they can save their energy and flow it to their work roles (Ongore, O., 2013).Highly engaged employees will definitely make an organization more successful in terms of financial and non-financial parameters.

Furthermore, it has been found that Personality traits impact emotional engagement of the employees in Finance Companies in Trincomalee District. Meanwhile dimensions of Personality traits identified by Wollard and Shuck (2011) are impact work engagement. Hence

developing these components will establish emotional engagement of employees in the companies.

Thus their engagement towards the job and organization is at higher level. In addition, emotional engagement is critical to business success. In the current scenario the Finance Companies in Trincomalee District have to comprehend that high levels of emotional engagement will lead to improve employee commitment and involvement towards job thus creating a motivated workforce that will work together to achieve the common goals of the organization.

Directions for Further Research
Researcher has suggested some areas for future research first, this research has designed cross sectional basis, and it means that data was collected from respondents at single point of time. Therefore, there is a bias about causal relationship between variables. Thus, future research will be recommended to use longitudinal designs in order to avoid causal relationship biases in future. Second, this research has mainly used self- report questionnaires to collect the data. So, that responses may be affected by social desirability response bias.

So, it is recommended for the future research in this area which will be used multiple sources such as quantitative or qualitative data like archival data from organizational records. Furthermore, this study concerns the generalizability of the findings. The data were collected form only permanent employees of in Finance Companies sector thus, the findings of this study may not generalize to Finance Companies sector in other contexts or other cultures; research in other settings or geographical areas might yield different results. So, it recommended using the present findings across different context.

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