PERSONALITY FACTORS OF THE BIG FIVE MODEL AND MOTIVATIONAL PERSISTANCE –PREDICTORS OF MANAGER'S TASK PERFORMANCE

Mihaela Man, PhD Student, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi
Constantin Ticu, Prof., PhD, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi

Abstract: In this research we aimed to deepen the analysis of the relationship between personality factors of the Big Five model and manager's task performance. The link between motivational persistence and manager's task performance were also analyzed. The results we obtained indicate that there is a positive relationship between conscientiousness and task performance, but no significant link was found between two personality factors—namely agreeableness and extraversion—and manager's task performance. Regarding the relationship between motivational persistence and manager's task performance we have concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between current purposes pursuing and task performance, but there is no link between the long term purposes pursuing and manager's task performance.We have outlined a predictive model of task performance, taking into account the personality sub-factors of the Big Five model and the motivational persistence factors.

Keywords: personality, Big Five, motivational persistence, task performance

1. Introduction

Recent studies have put the spotlight on personality traits as determinants of professional performance and the Big Five model is the one that prevails in research in the last years (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Judge & Ilies 2002, Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki &Cortina, 2006; Morgeson et al., 2007; Judge, Klinger, Simon & Wen Fen Yang, 2008). In addition to personality factors as predictors of professional performance, factors that have proven predictive ability in many studies, in this research we will focus attention on the level of sub-factors of personality too, given that, in many studies, the five personality factors were highlighted as being too general to be able to predict specific aspects of professional performance. Additionally in this paper we analyze a variable recently introduced in psychological research in the field of organizational psychology namely motivational persistence

2. The concepts of research

2.1. The Big Five personality model

In recent decades the Big Five model has been considered in the literature as being the closest to a comprehensive understanding of personality. Moreover, different operations — variants of this model, such as those proposed by Costa and McCrae (1987), Goldberg (1999)

or Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni and Perugini (1993) — provide details on facets (sub-factors) of the five main factors (meta-factors), allowing thus to create discriminative and detailed profiles of individuals evaluated (Macarie, Constantin, Ozan, Constantin and Fodorea, 2008).

In this paper references to aspects of the Big Five Model will be made in accordance with the perspective outlined in 1999 by Goldberg, and definitized in 2006 by Goldberg and his colleagues. According to the model proposed by Goldberg, IPIP-NEO, to the five personality factors are attached six facets, for example, for the factor *extraversion* facets / sub-factors are: friendliness, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity level, excitement seeking, cheerfulness; while for the *agreeableness* factor: trust, morality, altruism, cooperation, modesty and sympathy.

2.2. Motivational persistence

A key concept of this paper— a concept partially subsumed to the one of conscientiousness— is the motivational persistence. In order to distinguish the motivational persistence from persistence in task, which refers to actions scored, Constantin et al. introduced in 2007 the concept of motivational persistence. Constantin defines motivational persistence as "predisposition of a person to persist in motivation concerning the effort directed to reaching an assumed goal (once the decision of motivational implication has been made), finding the necessary personal resources for overcoming obstacles and resisting routine, stress, fatigue and other distractions" (Constantin, 2013). Motivational persistence is conceptualized as a stabile personality trait with three dimensions / facets: long term purposes pursuing, current purpose pursuing and recurrence of unattained purposes (Constantin, Holman & Hajbota, 2012).

2.3. Task performance

Task performance is "the proficiency with which incumbents perform activities that are formally recognized as part of their jobs; activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services" (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, p.73).

3. The relationship between personality and professional performance

The significant results in terms of the number concerning the analysis of the relationship between the five factors of personality and professional performance, operated in various forms, has been filtered through the many meta-analyses. The results of meta-analyses revel that conscientiousness personality factor is a predictor of professional performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tett, Jackson & Rothstein, 1991; Salgado, 1997; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Research shows that at the level of managers category predictors for task performance are the sub-factors of the conscientiousness: achievement, order and cautiousness (Dudley et al., 2006).

Regarding the extraversion personality factor, it was identified as a valid predictor for the performance of managers (Barrick & Mount, 1991), but the results provided by other meta-analyses reveal that extraversion is a valid predictor for performance only on those positions that involve interpersonal interactions (Salgado, 1997; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Personality factor agreeableness was identified as a valid predictor for managers (Salgado, 1997), but other studies show that agreeableness is a professional performance predictor only for those positions that require interpersonal interactions (Mount, Barrick & Stewart, 1998; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000).Concerning openness as a personality factor, it was not highlighted as a predictor of manager's performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). There are research findings which show that emotional stability is a predictor for all or almost all occupational categories (Salgado, 1997; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000), but there are results which restrict the relationship between job performance and emotional stability only for those positions that require interpersonal interactions (Mount et al., 1998).

The relationship between motivational persistence and task performance was analyzed in Romania by Țuțu and Constantin (Țuțu & Constantin, 2012). The data reveal that two of the motivational persistence factors are correlated with the performance (current purposes pursuing and long term purposes pursuing), having at the same time their predictive power that at the level of the performance.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Research hypotheses

Based on the above data, we decided to study on the Romanian population the relationship between personality factors of the Big Five model and motivational persistence on the one hand, and managers task performance on the other.

1st hypothesis -There is a significant positive relationship between task performance of managers and three of the Big Five factors model (*conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness*).

2nd hypothesis - There is a significant positive relationship between the sub-factors of motivational persistence (*long term purposes pursuing* and *current purposes pursuing*) and *task performance of managers.*

3rd hypothesis - *There is a valid predictive model of manager's task performance* based on the sub-factors/facets of the personality factors of the Big Five model and sub-factors of motivational persistence.

4.2. Measures

a) *The task performance questionnaire* we have elaborated in an earlier stage and comprises seven items. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient is .958.

b) *The Big Five$^{©plus}$ personality inventory* was developed by Constantin et al., (2013). The questionnaire has a total of 240 items, and allows the evaluation of the five meta-factors and 30 facets / factors subsumed to the 5 meta-factors.

c) *Motivational Persistence Scale (*Constantin, 2013) allows the evaluation of motivational persistence and aims at the identification of three factors: long term purposes pursuing (LTPP); current purposes pursuing (CPP) and recurrence of unattained purposes (RUP).

4.3. Participants

In the evaluation sample were included 72 managers from the public utilities field. From the aspect of the distribution of employee's hierarchical level 9% are top managers, 72% are middle managers and 19% are managers of third level (team leaders). The average age of the subjects is 48 years (SD 9.70).

5. Results

5.1. Hypothesis testing research

        In order to verify the first hypothesis we calculated the Pearson r correlation coefficients between task performance and factors of the Big Five model of personality

(conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness). According to the results there is a significant positive relationship between the personality factor conscientiousness and task performance (r = 0, 26, p < 05). Managers with a high level of conscientiousness tend to have a high level of task performance. Data referring to the analysis of relationship between task performance on the one hand and extraversion and agreeableness on the other hand, did not reveal any significant relation.

There is a significant positive relationship between the sub-factors of motivational persistence (*long term purposes pursuing* and *current purposes pursuing*) and manager's task performance (hypothesis 2). Calculating Pearson r correlation coefficients between task performance and sub-factors of motivational persistence — long term purposes pursuing (LTTP) and current purposes pursuing (CPP) — we have identified a significant positive relationship between motivational persistence sub-factor (CPP) and task performance (r = 0, 47, p < 01). Data concerning the relationship between (LTTP) and managers' task performance did not reveal any significant relation. We conclude that those managers who have the ability to remain focused on daily activities, on activities that require voluntary control, manifesting resistance to obstacles and temptations, who can compensate for depleted resources and need to complete the tasks that are started and are ongoing, obtained a high task performance.

To verify the 3rd hypothesis we performed a multiple regression analysis. Potential predictors were associated in blocks, so thereby for the task performance dependent variable the first block of variables introduced was represented by sub-factors: (CPP), depression and imagination and in the second block was inserted the sub-factor personality: self-efficacy. The results show that the model 1, which includes variables (CPP), depression and imagination, explains best task performance of managers; so managers who have high scores on the sub-factor (CPP) and low scores on sub-factors: imagination and depression tend to have a high performance in task. Model 1 obtained a value of $R^2_{ajustat}$ = .359, which means that the model explains 35.9% of the variance in manager's task performance. Thus managers who are hard to demoralize, to discourage or to distress, who are generally positive, cheerful, stating that they are satisfied with the life they have, who remember rather positive events of the past, look with confidence in the future and have the ability to remain focused on daily activities that require voluntary control, who resist to obstacles and temptations, who are able to compensate for depleted resources; doubled with a need to complete the tasks that are started or that are ongoing and who are more oriented to facts than to fantasy, who look realistically

at things and have a tendency towards factual aspects, who relax doing various practical activities and always look for realistic and immediately applicable solutions to the faced problems, tend to achieve a high task performance.

	Variables	B	Standard error B	BETA
MODEL 1	current purposes pursuing (CPP)	,575	,165	,368*
	depression	-,839	,465	-,192**
	imagination	-1,653	,453	-,350*
MODEL 2	current purposes pursuing (CPP)	,500	,185	,320*
	depression	-,651	,510	-,149
	imagination	-1,690	,455	-,358*
	self-efficacy	,373	,411	,116
	* significant at level 0,01 ** significant at level 0,05			

Table 1 - Table with data resulted in the hierarchical multiple regression of predictors of managers' task performance

6. Discussions

The results obtained from the analysis of the relationship between personality factors and professional performance have revealed that there is a linkage between personality factor conscientiousness and task performance of managers, in accordance with results obtained by other researchers' data: Barrick and Mount,1991; Tett et al., 1991, Salgado, 1997; Mount et al., 1998; Hurtz and Donovan, 2000; Dudley et al., 2006. For this professional category we have started from the premise that there is a significant positive link between task performance and personality factor agreeableness in the context of the high level of interpersonal interaction evaluated in the job evaluation process and from the findings of the meta-analysis conducted by Salgado (1997), but the results do not confirm this hypothesis, supporting rather the results according to which agreeableness is not a valid predictor for managers' category (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The obtained predictive models revealed that imagination, sub-factor openness, is a valid predictor for task performance. The relationship

of personality sub-factor depression and task performance is a negative one, depression being a predictor of task performance under the circumstances of any significant relationship between performance and neuroticism. Results concerning the relationship between task performance – motivational performance revealed that related to the previous results (Tutu & Constantin, 2012) at the level of manager category the sub-factor (LTPP) has any significant relationship, aspect in contrast with the findings of researches conducted so far, but in concordance with the precedent ones provided at the level of (CPP) sub-factor, which is a predictor of task performance.

Conclusions

At the end of the data analysis approach and discussions regarding the integration of results in the actual context provided by research so far we could conclude that conscientiousness factor was identified as being in positive relationship with task performance, the results being entailed in data provided by meta-analyses aiming at the deepening of this relationship. Regarding the relationship between agreeableness and extraversion and the performance of managers, the data does not reveal any significant links. As a conclusion we could state that on the evaluation sample of managers the task performance has as predictors the variable of motivational persistence (current purposes pursuing), the depression and the imagination.

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