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Teamwork Related Personality Variables among High Performers and Low Performers

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Abstract:

Teamwork is the ability of a group of people to work well together. It involves the feeling of pride and loyalty among the members of a team, which makes them want their team to do well or to be the best.. In the present study, personality traits of members in different work teams would be subjected to factor analysis (principal component analysis with varimax rotation and confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS LISREL VIII) to locate the existence of these five traits in consonance with the Big Five Model. The results would indicate personality variables that go with the emotionally positive and negative traits, which would help to prepare guidelines for composition and training of work teams.

Keywords: Teamwork, personality traits, big five model

1. Introduction

Teamwork is a sophisticated, systematic, and organized model of human interaction based on mutual trust, skills, and cooperation of the members. It requires optimum positive synergy, distributed accountability, and complementary skills among the members that result in maximum performance. However, it has been consistently reported in the research literature that any group of persons cannot constitute a team. It has to be some personality characteristics of the members that go together to form a team. In the present study, in consonance with the Five-Factor Model (FFM), an attempt would be made to identify extreme personality traits, which are compatible or not-compatible to teamwork. The five-factor model of personality traits is comprised of four emotionally stable traits-Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). A fifth trait, Neuroticism (N) covers several aspects of emotionality.

2. Review of Literature

In one of the study the characteristics of a multidisciplinary student team project were briefly examined. The results indicate that emotional stability is negatively correlated to how a person feels about a work role. And groups with a higher average agreeableness score tended to report less conflict (Rhee, Parent, Basu, 2013). Batool, Qureshi, Hijazi (2012) found that there is a positive relationship among team personality, constructive controversy and the overall performance of the team. If the controversy is structured for the benefit of all, it significantly improves performance because it explores the different dimensions of creativity and improvements in the organization which leads to the ultimate goal of the organization (Alam, 2009). Similarly, it has been studied that constructive controversy will reduce the negative impact of individuality among the students who otherwise will be ineffective for any team (Bhattacharyya, 2010). This finding was corroborated in a study by Brown, Poole, and Rogers (2004) who found that neuroticism was associated with lower levels of ability to collaborate in groups. Most researchers (Bernstein, Radosevich, Clesca, Masco, Lynn 2008) agree that Individuals who possess higher levels of agreeableness and lower levels of conscientiousness were associated with higher levels of making decisions based on emotions. Individuals with higher levels of each of the Big Five traits were associated with individuals who made more rational and open-minded decisions.

2.1. Need of the Study

A very few trait based research has been done on teamwork. None of the teamwork based research has taken the present tool of this research which is designed to measure all aspects of managerial personality. So the present study is going to bridge this gap in the researches done. Individual Personality could cause disruptions when assigned to work in groups, teams or assigned to a leadership role. In some respect, the results of the present study are likely to address this problem.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Question

What is the best composition of individuals for work teams to ensure high-quality innovative outcomes?

3.2 Aim

To examine the team - work related personality traits of high performance team and low performance team in Management students

3.3 Objective

To assess the difference in the Personality traits of high and low performance team

3.4 Variables

Personality traits

Team work performance –

High level performance team

Low level performance team

3.5 Research Design

Post-hoc Research Design

3.6 Sample Size

240 (120 high performers and 120 low performers)

3.7 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling

3.8 The Instruments

The Management Personality Inventory (MPI)

3.9 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistic

4. Results and Discussion

The results were analyzed using SPSS package for statistical analysis.

Personality Traits	High Performance Group (N=120)		Low Performance Group (N=120)		't'- Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Fearlessness	4.16	1.51	3.74	1.62	2.16*
Flexibility	4.57	0.84	2.86	0.65	19.3**
Independence	5.43	1.97	3.17	1.45	8.66**
Preference for Difficult Tasks	3.78	1.18	1.97	0.78	10.05**
Confidence in Success	2.94	0.97	2.56	1.74	2.35*
Dominance	3.14	1.05	4.58	1.23	9.06**
Goal Setting	4.15	1.27	2.13	0.57	14.42**
Eagerness to Learn	5.19	1.67	3.15	2.63	7.55**
Competitiveness	4.53	1.87	3.67	1.57	3.58**
Compensatory Effort	4.89	1.22	2.69	1.02	13.75**
Engagement	5.63	1.23	3.69	1.15	10.73**
Pride in Productivity	5.21	1.89	4.87	2.65	1.09
Status Orientation	4.45	1.07	4.32	1.67	0.54
Flow	4.17	0.86	2.13	1.18	14.61**
Internality	5.69	1.87	3.14	1.38	13.11**
Persistence	5.18	1.67	2.58	1.83	11.30**
Self-Control	4.85	1.39	3.67	1.19	6.69**
Total (Average)	4.59	1.19	3.23	1.16	12.17**

Table 1

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

The total average rating of the low performance team about all the 17 traits is only 3.23 while that of high performance team is 4.59. This significant difference in the average of personality traits confirm that the traits measured by the MPI are team work related personality variables. The combined standard deviations for each of the two groups do not vary (1.16 and 1.19 respectively for low, and high performance team) suggesting that both the groups are homogeneous with respect the observed personality traits. Such things are likely because all of them are students of the same batch in the same institution. It is observed in the results that high performance team has significantly larger means for 15 personality traits, while the low performance team has a larger mean in the trait of dominance and an equal mean in the trait of Status orientation.

It is very clearly observed in the two result tables and in the Figure 1 (where comparative data are presented) that the high performance team has much higher mean scores on 9 traits compared to the low performance team. The traits are independence, Goal setting behavior, Eagerness to learn, Compensatory efforts and activities, Engagement schedule, Flow in the work, feeling of Internality among the members, Persistency characteristics of the members, and their Self control. Dominance behavior is the trait in which the low performance team has a higher mean score.

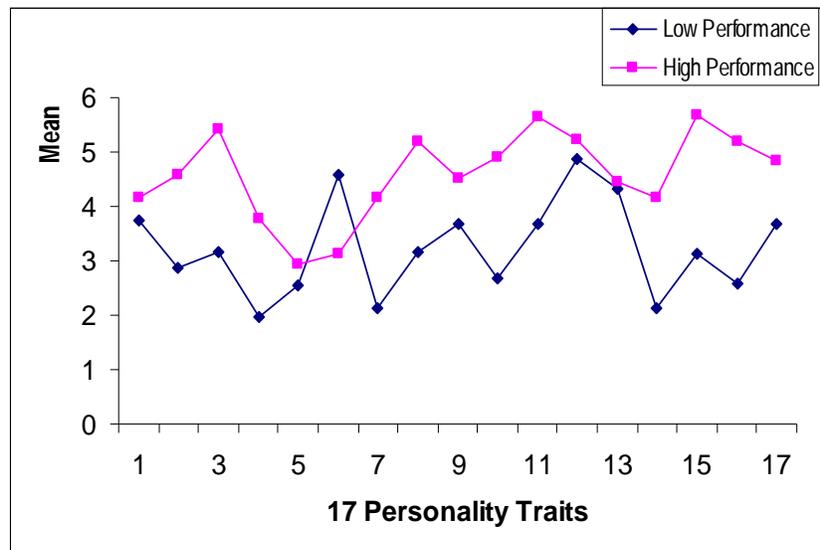


Figure 1: Comparison of Mean Scores for the High- and Low Performance Teams on the 17 Personality Traits

5. Conclusion

The descriptive statistics of the team-work related personality variables lead to the following conclusions.

- It is observed from the results that the high performance team has much higher mean scores on 9 traits compared to the low performance team.
- The traits are independence, Goal setting behavior, Eagerness to learn, Compensatory efforts and activities, Engagement schedule, Flow in the work, feeling of Internality among the members, Persistency characteristics of the members, and their Self control.
- Dominance behavior is the trait in which the low performance team has a higher mean score.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The population size of this study was limited, a large sample may show the different impacts regarding the interpretation of this study's results. This study was unable to cover all the areas regarding individual personality. It is advised that a longitudinal study should be done next time. Only one college sample has been taken. A multidiscipline team work should have been considered. The influence of personality and ability in project teams that span more than one semester was not studied in this work, and would be of interest in longer term projects.

7. Implications

- The study would help to understand the traits important for high team performance.
- Understanding the positive roles of extraversion and other factors in team composition in addition to ability can help form or guide effective teams.
- The study would help to develop intervention and training programme in order to improve innovations and teamwork among employees and Managers.
- The findings in this study illuminate associations between personality and teamwork for a type of task that is commonly assigned as a group project at many organisations.

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