

# **The Relationship between the ‘Big Five’ Personality and Career Success**

**Norliyana Zakaria and Halimah Mohd Yusof**

Faculty of Management

University of Technology Malaysia

Johor Bahru, Malaysia

[ana15azam@gmail.com](mailto:ana15azam@gmail.com), [imahmy@gmail.com](mailto:imahmy@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

The aim of this descriptive and correlational research is to explore the relationship between employee's personality and career achievement. This study involved 126 respondents ranging from grades 1 to 54 in the Land and Mines Office, Nusajaya, Johor. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling method. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) questionnaire was designed to evaluate the respondents' personality, while the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was developed to measure their career success. Then, the collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The results indicated that the 'openness to experience' personality trait was found high in the majority of respondents as compared to the other four personality dimensions. In addition, the respondents scored higher in intrinsic career success as compared to extrinsic career success. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation test revealed that the dimensions of agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness are associated to the intrinsic career success. However, the findings related to extrinsic career success showed a positive relationship with the conscientiousness dimension, and a negative relationship with the neuroticism dimension. Finally, the findings from this study will make a significant contribution to the field of personality and career success.

## **Keywords**

Big Five Personality, Career Success, Personality Traits, Intrinsic Career Success, Extrinsic Career Success

## **1. Introduction**

Development is very important and needed in an organization. It is required by any organization, individual, and society as a whole in order to improve ourselves or move forward in life [Peel, 1992]. Based on the empirical studies, both factors related to workers namely personality and career success are interdependent [2].

Therefore, Big Five Personality traits are applied to measure the workers' personality. It comprises five main personality dimensions [3]. Meanwhile, the career success can be explained in detail using two components, particularly extrinsic and intrinsic [4]. The Big Five Personality factors are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

The extrinsic career success includes significant achievements in career life such as the external rewards. On the other hand, the achievement of intrinsic career success covers the subjective internal satisfaction of the individual towards his or her work.

Personality is also one of the most important aspects in influencing the individual's career success or growth [5]. Meanwhile, the component of extrinsic career success is very crucial for an employee, which refers to the objective type of achievement [6]. In addition, the component of intrinsic career success refers to the individual attitudes towards his or her career, and how much the person loves his or her job [7].

## **2. Problem Statement**

This study will focus on the relationship between personality and career success among the employees. The chosen organization for this research is Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor. The first issue is there is not enough in-depth study on the declining of workers' career success especially in the aspects of lack of competence, competitive, creativity and work commitment.

The other problem in the Department of Registration PTG is the employees have different personality dimensions. Moreover, the employees in this department consist of various service schemes. This causes different employee behaviours which may influence the employees' career growth and success.

In addition, an officer of the Department of Registration PTG stated that they are facing serious problem in managing issues or cases related to personalities among the employees. This indicates that issues related to employees' personalities can adversely affect the image and reputation of the organization. Furthermore, problems arising among the civil servants are linked with career growth or promotion issues. In the government sector, the employees have difficulties in getting promoted because promotions are mainly based on seniority.

In addition, the aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic career growth are among the frequently raised and discussed issues on career success. The stress or pressure due to receiving low salary may demotivate the workers and cause them to show poor performance at work [8] (Sinar Harian, 2015).

In terms of intrinsic aspects, the indication that the productivity of an employee is declining is when they have become dissatisfied with his or her own job. Some of the negative impacts are playing truant or absent from work, drinking outside during office hours surfing the internet, abandoning the work tasks, and fake medical certificate [9]. Thus, the study is done to find out how far the personality has influenced the employee's career success in the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor.

## **3. Research Objectives**

- a) To discover the Big Five personality dimensions of the employees in the organization.
- b) To identify the level of intrinsic and extrinsic career success of the employees in the organization.
- c) To determine the relationship between Big Five personality dimensions and intrinsic and extrinsic career success of the employees in the organization.

## **4. Research Questions**

- a) What is the Big Five personality dimensions of the employees in the organization?
- b) What is the level of intrinsic and extrinsic career success among the employees in the organization?
- c) Is there a relationship between Big Five personality dimensions and intrinsic and extrinsic career success among the employees in the organization?

## **5. Methodology**

This study will use quantitative studies to answer some questions related with the relationship between the measured variables [10]. The correlation research design is selected because it can determine how far these two variables are connected with the respondents, whom are the employees at the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office

(PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for collecting data and obtaining the respondents' perception on the Big Five personality dimensions, as well as to find out the main components of employee career success in the organization.

Therefore, a pilot study was conducted before the actual survey or data collection process. In this study, the selected population comprises the employees working at the Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor. The chosen population in this research involves the employees ranging from grades 1 to 54 in three main units in the organization. The total number of population at the research location is 185 employees (PTG, December 2015). The involved units are Title Registration, Strata Title, and Revenue and Information Technology in the Department of Registration.

In obtaining the valid number of sample from the selected population, the strata sample calculation using Solvin's formula is applied [11]. Hence, the required sample size for this study is 126 employees.

## **6. Research Validity and Reliability**

The instrument used in measuring the personality dimension is Big Five Inventory (BFI). BFI was constructed and introduced by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991), with 44 question items for all of the Big Five dimension personalities.

On the other hand, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) instrument is used to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic components of career success with 20 item questions.

According to Miller (2011), reliability is defined as how far the measurement procedures can produce consistent results from time to time. The researchers used the Cronbach Alpha value to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Big Five personality dimensions have been proven to have high consistency and reliability (Rammstedt and John, 2007; John, Naumann and Soto, 2008). The dimensions are *extraversion* (.86), *neuroticism* (.87), *agreeableness* (.79), *openness to experience* (.83) and *conscientiousness* (.82).

The validity of an instrument refers to how far an instrument measures the item that need to be measured [12]. In this study, Pearson correlation analysis is applied to test the research hypothesis. The validity of the constructed questionnaire is measured using the correlation value between the scores of each item with the total score.

## **7. Data Analysis**

The results obtained from this study indicate that the *openness to experience* dimension trait was found high in the majority of respondents as compared to the other four personality dimensions. The dimension shows a moderate correlation in supporting the intrinsic career success among employees in the Department of Registration, PTG.

The analysis also shows *openness to experience* dimension relationship that influences the intrinsic career success, as well as *conscientiousness* dimension relationships that influences the extrinsic career success. The result of Pearson Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between *openness to experience* ( $r = .442$ ) with the intrinsic career success, and *conscientiousness* ( $r = .300$ ) with the extrinsic career success.

**Table 1:** Mean of Big Five Personality Dimension

<b>Big Five Personality Dimension</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Openness to Experience	3.47	0.390
Conscientiousness	3.20	0.288
Extraversion	3.40	0.335
Agreeableness	3.16	0.346
Neuroticism	3.10	0.357

**Table 2:** Mean of Career Success

<b>Career Success</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Intrinsic	3.32	0.496
Extrinsic	3.25	0.512

**Table 3:** The Relationship between Big Five Personality and Intrinsic Career Success

	<b>Pearson Correlation (r)</b>	<b>Sig. (2 tailed) (p)</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
Openness to Experience	.442**	.000	Moderate/Positive
Conscientiousness	.241**	.007	Low/ Positive
Extraversion	.302**	.001	Moderate/Positive
Agreeableness	.205*	.038	Low/ Positive
Neuroticism	-.103	.417	No Relationship

Note:  $p < 0.05$  (The correlation is significant).

**Table 4:** The Relationship between Big Five Personality and Extrinsic Career Success

	<b>Pearson Correlation (r)</b>	<b>Sig. (2 tailed) (p)</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
Openness to Experience	.101	.344	No Relationship
Conscientiousness	.300	.002	Moderate/Positive
Extraversion	.140	.123	No Relationship
Agreeableness	.134	.134	No Relationship
Neuroticism	-.300	.001	Negative Relationship

Note:  $p < 0.05$  (The correlation is significant).

## 8. Conclusion

This study gives better understanding and holistic view for the organization regarding the factors that affect the career success of the employees. Even the results of this research study shows the relationship between Big Five Personality and Career Success among the employees at Department of Registration, Land and Mines Office (PTG) in Nusajaya, Johor are not enough strong correlation that is because majority of the employees in the government sector at this country which is Malaysia still assume the uses of big five personality is still not important to their lives. One of the reason why this situation happened is they are not exposed to the interest or importance of the big five personality quality in enhancing their career success and life. However, it is also a good platform for the organization to have a more comprehensive view in developing a long-term strategic action plan. Other than that, it encourages the implementation of detailed personality tests which are practical or useful to the employees.

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Add acknowledgement if need

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## Biographies

**Norliyana Zakaria** is a Doctor of Philosophy candidate in Human Resource Development at Faculty of Management, University Technology Malaysia. She earned Master of Science in Human Resource Development from University Technology Malaysia and Bachelor Degree in Business Management from University Teknologi Mara. She has published a number of journal and conference papers. Her research interests include psychology, personality, stress, art therapy, job satisfaction and work performance.

**Dr. Halimah Mohd Yusof** is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Human Resource Development, Faculty of Management, University Technology Malaysia. She holds a PhD in Management from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Master in Business Administration from Preston Tech University, USA and an Honor Degree in Science (Microbiology) from Universiti Sains Malaysia. She is also a certified trainer accredited from the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, and gained a Certification in Training (Train the Trainer) by HRDF Malaysia. Dr.

Halimah also serves as a trainer for multiple seminars and workshops in various government and private organizations. Besides, she served as a Management Consultant and provided program management mentoring and training to develop project papers, program plans, cost estimation, and facilitation for e-commerce initiatives. She has provided consultation for various businesses on improving effectiveness of the overall company's performances. Lastly, Dr. Halimah is also a reviewer for the International Journal of Human Resources Management (IJHRM), Taylor & Francis (IF .89).