A Study on the Personal Attributes Of Service Employees Governing Career Success

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ABSTRACT
Apart from the external influencing factors, service employee’s career success has been governed by one’s personal attributes at large. Personality traits, Emotional Intelligence, Intelligence Quotient (IQ), KSA triangle (Knowledge, Skill and Attitude) and Behavior pattern and Ethics form a module of Personal Attributes. This study intends to reveal the prime extracts of Personal Attributes prominently contributing to career success of service employees. Service industry is one which is highly relied on ‘People’ component of the organization. Success of the service business relies on placing right people on right job. Discovering the personal attributes and refining them to match the nature of job would lead to work success of service employees. The study also inclines to motivate the employers to consider all the top personal attributes in screening level itself.

INTRODUCTION
Out of many basic personality traits, this study finds the four domains of personality to be comprehensive, empirical and highly influential of work success. The four broad domains of personality as per this research study supports the theory of J.M, Digman (1990) and Lewis Goldberg by proving applicability to all levels of organizational hierarchy. Openness to experience – the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety a person has.
Conscientiousness – a tendency to show self discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement; planned rather than spontaneous behavior; organized and dependable.
Extraversion – positive emotions, high energy, surgency, assertiveness and sociability.
Agreeableness – tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge. The psychological theory of Emotional Intelligence was developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer. This study seek to measure the following five components of EI empirically.
Self-awareness – the ability to recognize and understand personal moods and emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others.
Self-regulation – the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods and the propensity to suspend judgment and to think before acting.
Internal motivation – a passion to work for internal reasons that go beyond money and status which are external rewards such as an inner vision of what is important in life, a joy in doing something, curiosity in learning.
Empathy - the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people. A skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions.
Socialization – proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, and an ability to find common ground and build rapport.
Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of an individual is the hallmark of all the personal domains. Visualization, Classification, Logic Reasoning were considered by the experts / psychologists as areas of metrics that are relevant for general work environment. Other elements Verbal, Numerical, spatial have specificity to the nature of the jobs.

KSA magic triangle has the most important ingredients of work success. Knowledge and skills are imparted whereas Attitude is inherited. Concealing Attitude is impossible but refining it is always possible. Knowledge- general knowledge and specific knowledge(Aptitude) are required in right proportion as per the job requirement. Skill – encompasses of Technical skill, Conceptual skill and Human skill as a complete package to be successful in any career. Attitude includes key aspects like honesty, integrity, self confidence, cooperative attitude, energy levels, optimism and so on.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is believed that the Big-Five traits are predictive of future performance outcomes. Job outcome measures include: job and training proficiency and personnel data. Such a belief, however, is mistaken. In a 2007 article[93] co-authored by six current or former editors of psychological journals, Dr. Kevin Murphy, Professor of Psychology at Pennsylvania State University and Editor of the Journal of Applied Psychology (1996-2002).

A validation study in 1992, conducted by Paul Sinclair and Steve Barrow, involved 202 Branch Managers from the then TSB Bank. It found several significant correlations with job performance across 3 of the Big Five scales. The correlations ranged from 0.21 to 0.33 and were found across three scales: High extraversion, low neuroticism and high openness to experience.

Each of the Big five personality traits contains two separate, but correlated aspects reflecting a level of personality below the broad domains but above the many facet scales that also comprise the Big five. DeYoung, C. G., Quilty, L. C., and Peterson, J. B. (2007). Between facets and domain: 10 aspects of the Big Five. J. Pers. Soc. Psychol. 93, 880–896.

Norman Vincent Peale, author of several books on motivation and attitude said “our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but by how we react to what happens, not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life.”


OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To extract the prominent attributes in service employees leading to the career success.
2. To prioritize the elements in each domain that have to be nourished and trained for a better personality for job-fit.
3. To develop a model to facilitate the employers in their screening process.

DATA SOURCE AND SAMPLE DESIGN

The present study is based on primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected using pretested interview schedule. The primary data were collected from the respondents through the direct personal interview method. Observation method was also used. The secondary data were collected from back records of respondents profile and unpublished reports of various service organizations in Madurai. In order to carry out the study, 250 respondents working in five various fields (education, medical, restaurants, banks and retails) were randomly selected. Their performance records were analysed and observations were noted down. Simple random sampling method was adopted for sample selection. IQ test results were studied with the help of a psychologist. The reference period of the study was 2010 -2011.
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The technique adopted to identify and analyse the special personal attributes that galvanized the service employees is factor analysis. The principal factor analysis method is mathematically satisfying because it yields a unique solution to a factor problem. Its major solution feature is the extraction of maximum amount of variation as each factor is calculated. In other words, the first extracts the most variance and so on.

There are several methods available for factor analysis. But the principal factor method with orthogonal variance rotation is mostly used and widely available in factor analysis computer programme. Further orthogonal rotations maintain the independence of factors that is, the angles between the axes are kept at 90 degrees. One of the final outcomes of a factor analysis is called rotated factor matrix, a table of co-efficient that expresses the ratios between the variable and the factors that have been prepared. The sum of squares of the factor loadings of variable is called communalities ($h^2$).

The communality ($h^2$) of a factor is its common factor variance. The factors with factor loadings of 0.5 or greater are considered as significant factors. This limit is chosen because it had been judged that factors with less than 50 per cent common variation with the rotated factor pattern are too weak to report.\(^1\)

In the present study, the principal factor analysis method with orthogonal varimax rotation is used to identify the significant dimensions of perception of customers towards benefits provided by public sector bank and private sector bank.

Testing for Sampling Adequacy

Before extracting the factors, to test the appropriateness of the factor model, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was used to test the null hypothesis that the variables are intercorrelated in population. The test statistics of sphericity is based on a Chi-Square transformation of the determinant of the correlation matrix.

Another useful statistics is the Kaiser-Meyer Oklin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy. Small value of the KMO statistic indicates that the correlation between parts of variable cannot be explained by other variables and that factor analysis may not be appropriate. Generally, a value greater than 0.5 is desirable.

The correlation matrix was examined carefully and the two tests namely Bartlett’s test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer Oklin test were undertaken to test if it was judicious to proceed with factor analysis in the present study. The computed results are given in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Estimated Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</td>
<td>0.6939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx: Chi-Square</td>
<td>2284.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of Freedom</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1 it has been observed that the Bartlett’s test was significant with $P=0.000$, being less than 0.05. Sampling adequacy measured using the Kaiser-Mayer Oklin (KMO) of 0.6939 was taken as acceptable. Thus the factor analysis may be considered an appropriate technique for analysing the data.

Factor analysis was done with 26 variables (item) by orthogonal varimax rotation for the importance of personal attributes in service employees towards career success.

Results and Interpretation for the importance of Personal Attributes in service employees towards career success

The rotated factor matrix for the variables relating to importance of Personal Attributes in service employees towards career success in the study is given in Table 2.

Table 2 gives the loadings received by the factors under F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7 and F8.
Note: The principal factors method with orthogonal variance rotation is used to extract factors. From Table 2, the rotated factor loadings for the twenty six statements (variables) of importance of Personal Attributes in service employees towards career success. It is clear from Table 2 that all the twenty six statements have been extracted into eight factors namely F1, F2,F3,F4 F5 F6, F7 and F8. The factors with identified new names which influence perception of customers in public sector bank are discussed below:
Factor I (F1)
Openness to Experience (0.7850’), ‘conscientiousness (0.7314)’, ‘Extraversion (0.6751)’ and ‘Agreeableness (0.6877)’. These are the items with high loadings on factor I. The above items refer to criteria in which the employees learn new tasks. So, the Factor I is characterised as “**Personality Trait Dimension**”.

Factor II (F2)

‘In the second factor, Self awareness (0.6349)’, ‘self regulation (0.7322)’, ‘Internal motivation (0.5831)’ , ‘Empathy (0.5615) and ‘Social skills (0.7112)’ have the highest significant positive loadings. As the above items refer to the result orientation in employees, Factor II is named as “**Emotional Intelligence Dimension**”.

Factor III (F3)
‘Logical reasoning (0.7042), ‘Pattern recognition (0.7812) ’, ‘Spatial ability (0.6123), ‘Visualization (0.7912), ‘Classification (0.6516),’ have the highest significant positive loadings. As the above items relate to the intellectual and exploration part, Factor III is named as “**Intelligence Quotient Dimension**”.

Factor IV (F4)

In the fourth factor, ‘General Knowledge (0.7112)’, and ‘Specific knowledge (0.7742)’ have the highest factor loadings. As the above items are related to know-how of the job, Factor IV is characterised as “**Knowledge Dimension**”.

Factor V (F5)

In the fifth factor, ‘conceptual skill (0.6011)’, ‘Technical skill (0.6147) and ‘Human skill (0.7141)’ have the highest loadings. As the above variables relate to the problem solving and decision making, Factor V is characterised as “**Skill Dimension**”.

Factor VI (F6)

In the sixth factor, ‘Integrity (0.6792)’, ‘Team spirit (0.7713)’ and ‘Optimism (0.7272)’ have significantly positive loadings. As these items are the services offered by the banks, Factor VI is termed as “**Attitude Dimension**”.

Factor VII (F7)
‘Appropriate words (0.7915)’, Facial Expression (0.7672), Action (0.6012) are the variables with highest loadings on Factor VII. Factor VII is characterised as “**Behavioral Dimension**”.

Factor VIII (F8)
‘Value system (0.7836)’ is the sole variable with highest loadings on Factor VIII. As the variable is related to the morality and ethics, FACTOR VIII is characterised as “**Ethics Dimension**”.

TABLE 3
VARIABLES WITH THE HIGHEST FACTOR LOADINGS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES IN SERVICE EMPLOYEES TOWARDS CAREER SUCCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Name of Newly Extracted Dimension</th>
<th>Selected Variable</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Personality trait</td>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>0.7850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>Self regulation</td>
<td>0.7322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
<td>Visualisation</td>
<td>0.7912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Aptitude</td>
<td>0.7742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>Human Skill</td>
<td>0.7141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Team spirit</td>
<td>0.7731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td>0.7672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Value system</td>
<td>0.7836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A model has been developed based on the research study.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES INVENTORY MODEL

CONCLUSION
All of the human actors who play a part in service delivery influence the consumers’ perception of service. In addition to mental and physical skills, these positions require extraordinary levels of emotional labor, frequency demand and ability to handle inter-personal and inter-organizational conflict, and call on the employee to make real-time trade-offs between quality and productivity on the job. These stresses and trade-offs can result in failure to deliver services as specified. This study helps individuals discover oneself so that they can identify their inherited attributes and introspect the suitability of the attributes to the chosen profession. This exercise would help them refine and train themselves for being career-fit. Out of all the inherited attributes, IQ is the one area that is fixed. Emotional Intelligence, Personality Traits and Attitude can be refined through consistent training. Knowledge and Skills can be imparted comfortably.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
- The Personal Attributes Inventory Model can be administered by employers to job applicants.
- Human Resource Departments might use the model for Screening as well as Training and Development process.
- HR strategies might have a similar pattern of impact on people with similar attributes.
- The perception of organization’s ideas, policies and strategies by the employees would be in a preferred manner as conceived by the management, thus reducing the GAP.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDIES
1. Research studies on Environmental factors and Organizational factors governing performance of service employees could be undertaken.
2. Catalytic effects of personality traits over other causal factors of work success can be taken for future research.
3. Studies on personal attributes and stress management could be an area of study suitable for current scenario.
4. Studies on personal attributes enhancing successful dual role play by women employees would be on limelight in the modern era.
References


5. Culver, Dick. A review if Emotional intelligence by Daniel Goleman Implications of Technical Education