EMPLOYEES PERSONALITY, POLITICAL SKILLS & IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION : A LITERATURE REVIEW & SYNTHESIS

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ABSTRACT

A satisfied workforce is an asset to any organization which can be used as a competitive advantage. In this research paper an attempt has been made to understand micro-political aspects of organizational politics focusing on interactional effects of individual's personality and political skills which affects job satisfaction. While Personality of an individual consists of combination of characteristics and qualities that forms individuals characters, on the other hand Political skill is ability of the person to adjust his behavior in accordance with the situation in the way that he is able to influence others. Drawing the variables after extensive review of literature a conceptual model is made which tries to establish the relationship between different personalities, political skill and job satisfaction. In this research work it is evident that combined effects of personality and political skills leads to job satisfaction.

Keywords : Personality, political skills, job performance, job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

For many years people working in organizations have felt presence of workplace politics in their working environment. Although "I am not interested" has been the famous tagline for pretending to be task- oriented rather than being a political game player but intentionally or unintentionally everyone becomes a part of organizations political activities. Since people come in an organization with different values, thinking and interest's, diversity in perception becomes innate leading to Politics in an organizational setup. The interaction of individual's personality and Political skills influences various workplace aspects including job performance and job satisfaction.

In the field of organizational psychology, one of the most researched areas is the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Landy in 1989 described this relationship as "Holy Grail" of Industrial psychology. Numerous studies have evolved showing a logical connection between job performance and job satisfaction. In different studies by Locke (1970), Schwab & Cummings (1970), and Vroom (1964) it has been shown that there is at least some relationship between these variables. Brayfield and Crockett (1955) also found in a study that there is only a minimal relationship between one's performance and the satisfaction he attains from his job.

However, stronger relationships have also been found between above mentioned variables (Morrison, 1997) which depend upon specific circumstances such as mood and employee level within the company.

Factors like personality and political skills are valuable factors in job performance and job satisfaction relationship. Although the study of personality and politics seems to have more critics than practitioners, politics and personality are two major constructs which is used to predict job satisfaction. In a research work conducted by (Greenstein Fred.I, 1992) in the area of personality and politics it has been found that political performance depends upon the personality system of an individual although certain confinements like role of political actors, environment, social characteristics of political actor have been also

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identified in this relationship. In this study an attempt has been made to assemble the prior research outcomes and build a conceptual model focusing on interactional effects of Personality traits and political skills and its impact on the job satisfaction.

PERSONALITY

Organizational Politics are outcomes of difference in people's thinking and desires. These differences in thought process arise because of person's personality. Personality is defined as sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others. There are many Personality measures that have been used historically. The Myers-Briggs Personality theory is a theory developed by Isabel Briggs Myers and Katharine Briggs. Individuals are either born with or they develop certain preferred ways of perceiving or comprehending different incidences. MBTI sorts these differences into four dichotomies resulting into sixteen personality types. The dichotomies are Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking- Feeling, and Judging-Perceiving. A continuum was found in these dichotomies. MBTI goal is to find out which of the opposing dichotomies a person favor. Despite of the fact that this model is widely used questions have been raised by professionals about the model on numerous grounds (Block 1995; Eysenck 1992). Lately different theoretical and empirical developments emerged supporting the Big Five model. Simone & Leon in 2011 supposed that the model is feasible because it can be used to clarify a number of constructs and phenomena. Currently it is most useful model in personality research (Barrick, Mount & Judge, 2001) The Big Five Personality traits and their characteristics are mentioned below.

Table 1: Big Five Personality traits

TRAITS	DESCRIPTION
Openness	Curious, Original, Intellectual, Creative and Open to new ideas.
Conscientiousness	Organized, systematic, punctual, achievement oriented, and dependable.
Extraversion	Outgoing, talkative, sociable and enjoys being in social situations.
Agreeableness	Affable, Tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind, and warm.
Neuroticism	Anxious, irritable, temperamental, and moody.

Source: *Goldberg, L. R. (1990), An alternative description of personality: The Big Five factor structure. Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 59, 1216-1229.*

Beyond these five traits researchers have proposed various other dimensions of personality. These include Machiavellianism, Narcissism, Self-Monitoring and Proactive personality.

- **Machiavellianism** -According to Christie & Geis (1970) Machiavellian is one who views and manipulates someone for his own purpose. Machiavellianism has been also defined as a strategy for social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal gain, whereby the other's self interest is disadvantaged. (Wilson et al., 1996)
- **Narcissism** - The term is from the Greek myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, preventing him from forming relationship with others. The essential characteristic of Narcissists is that they have exaggerated sense of self importance. A person with narcissist personality has a great need of self importance, and requires excessive admiration.
- **Self- Monitoring** - Self monitoring refers to the extent to which a person is capable of being a monitoring his or her actions and appearance in social situations. While self monitors act as social chameleons who act according to the situation, people with low self monitors tend to act the way they feel. (Synder, M., 1974)
- **Proactive personality** - People with proactive personality identifies opportunities, show initiatives and take actions. They create positive change in their environment. They are eager to

learn and engage in many developmental activities to improve their skills. (Major, D. A., Turner, J. E., & Fletcher, T. D.2006)

Political skill

Political skill as a term was first introduced in scholarly literature by Pfeffer in 1981. Pfeffer conceptualized political skill as an individual characteristic that could effectively demonstrate political behavior to possess or develop structurally determined power. It is believed that political skill is one of the interpersonal effectiveness construct that merges social understanding with the ability to adjust behavior according to the situation that appears sincere, inspire trust and support, and effectively influence others (Ferris et al., 2005, 2007). Those who possess social competencies are able to increase their organizational or personal goals through understanding or influencing others. In scholarly literature four key dimensions of Political skill inventory (PSI) have been developed namely, social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al., 2005). The PSI is an expansion of a one-dimensional; six item measure of political skill introduced by Ferris et al. (1999) focusing on the diagnosis of political audiences and self-efficacy with building rapport.

The dimensions and their elements can be viewed in Table below:

Table 2: Political skill dimensions

Political skill dimensions	Description
Social Astuteness	Precisely observe others, understands social interactions, and sensitivity towards others.
Interpersonal influence	Adapting and calibrating their behavior to elicit particular responses, Subtle and convincing personal style.
Networking ability	Easily develop friendships and build strong beneficial alliances, highly skilled negotiators and deal makers.
Apparent sincerity	Appear to others as person with high levels of integrity, authencity, sincerity, genuineness.

Source: Derived from work by Ferris et al., 2005 Development and Validation of the political skill inventory. Journal of Management, Vol. 31 No. 1, February 2005 pp 126-152

Political skill construct is overlapping with selected personality traits and with other related constructs that measure social effectiveness like social skill and social intelligence. However, Political skill reflects its distinctiveness as a construct that is sufficiently different from others. When this political behavior was addressed as a skill set and executable business tool new door opened to dig into areas of organizations political climate which remained unexplored when politics was stigmatized as an organizational ailment.

Personality, Political skill and Job performance

DuBrin (1974) suggested that propensity to engage in politics is a joint function of individual and organizational characteristics. Employees engage in self promotional political activities when they feel that the organization is highly political in nature. Different employees based on their different thinking patterns react in different ways in a working condition which leads to politics.

In a political organization employees either are motivated to get along or get ahead (Hogan and Shelton, 1998). An individual who is friendly, complies others and cooperate with others in a positive way (Hogan & Holland, 2003) generally wants to get along on the other hand individuals who want to get ahead seek responsibility, are competitive and try to be recognized (Hogan & Holland, 2003). This socio-analytic theory suggests that personality needs social skill to demonstrate its influence, and specific personality traits are the embodiment of the motives to get along (i.e., personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability) and get ahead (i.e.,

personality traits of extraversion and openness to experience) (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). Social skill is a moderator of the relationships between motivations and performance evaluation. (Hogan & Shelton, 1998).Hence it can be said that motivation alone cannot lead to political outcomes but it's an individual's social competence skills which includes social, emotional, cognitive and behavioral skills also influences work place behavior.

Although use of personality as a predictor of performance is growing day by day, immense debate on the usage of personality as a predictor of performance is also going on. Guion and Gottier (1965) and Mischel (1968) and David- Blake and Pfeffer (1989) conducted studies and criticized personality as an ineffective predictor of job performance. However, now it has been accepted and is a well acknowledged fact that people have different personalities (Goldberg, 1993) and personality matters because it predicts and explains behaviors at work. Meta- analyses by Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Hogan & Holland, 2003; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002 has been helpful to ameliorate our knowledge domain about relation between personality constructs and job performance. These Meta - analytical studies shows that personality traits can be categorized in two sections which is "will do" and "can do" components.

Conscientiousness and Emotional stability are two of the Big five traits which predict overall performance and they affect performance in all jobs through "will do" motivational components. These findings make intuitive sense, as it would be expected that individuals who are not temperamental, not stress-prone, not anxious and not worrisome (emotional stability), and those who are hard-working, persistent, organized, efficient and achievement-oriented (conscientious), are most likely to perform well (Barrick, Mount & Judge, 2001) On the other hand performance in jobs is affected through "can do" capabilities (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998) also "can do" capabilities includes of personality dimensions like Extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience. These traits affect performance in specific niches in specific occupations and in specific criteria (Barrick et al., 2001). Extraversion leads to success in job if the job demands being sociable, gregarious, assertive, energetic, and ambitious. Extraversion is found to be significant if a portion of the job involves interacting with others

(Barrick & Mount 1991; Mount et al., 1998). If working in a team comprises is an important component of the work then agreeableness acts as a personality predictor (Mount et al., 1998). Employees who are argumentative, inflexible, uncooperative, uncaring, intolerant, and disagreeable (low in Agreeableness) are likely to be less effective at teamwork and also engage in more counterproductive behaviors. Thus agreeableness matters when the work involves interactions, help and cooperation with others. Hence, it can be said when working in a team agreeableness is single best personality predictor (Mount et al., 1998). Talking about individuals with fifth trait of Big Five i.e., openness to experience, there characteristics are that they are curious, intellectual, creative and open to new ideas. These employees deal with change and contribute more to innovation at work.

According to Hogan's socio-analytic theory social skill acts as a moderator of the relationships between personality and performance evaluation. Blickle et al., (2008) in his investigation tried to find outcomes of the interaction of specific social skill i.e., political skill with agreeableness and conscientiousness in prediction of job performance. It was found that individuals high on both agreeableness and political skill demonstrated greater job performance than those who were low on either or both. It was also found that individuals low on political skill and low on agreeableness demonstrated higher performance than those high on agreeableness. Inferences which could be drawn from the study are given below:

"High Agreeableness + High Political skill = Highest Job performance
- High Agreeableness + Low Political skill = Lowest Job performance
- Performance (Low Political skill + Low Agreeableness) > Performance (Low Political Skills + High Agreeableness)

An attempt to establish a relation between political skills and get ahead personality traits (extraversion and openness to experience) were also conducted (Blickle et al., 2009). It was found in the study that political skill acts as a moderator in get ahead personality traits and job performance relation. Individuals high on political skill and higher levels of extraversion have high performance while individuals with low political skill and higher levels of extraversion have lower levels of performance.

According to these studies interaction of openness to experience and social effectiveness or more specifically political skills leads to positive performance but it does not achieve statistical significance at conventional levels. Inferences which could be drawn from the study is

- High Extraversion + High Political skill = High performance
- High Extraversion + Low Political skill= Lowest performance

Apart from big five traits other personality types like Machiavellians and Proactive personalities also are related to Job performance and politics. Machiavellians are found more inclined to engage in political behavior (Cropanzano & Kacmar, 1995). Machiavellianism has been shown to have a positive relation to office politics (Biberman, 1985). Machiavellians are hard-headed, fact minded and egotistical in dealing with other people still they are found advantageous in some contexts. Grams and Rogers (1990) found that high Machiavellians were more flexible in influencing people than other personality types, favor using more non-rational than rational tactics, and appealed to emotions and tried to plant ideas in the mind of their target.

Individuals with high proactive personality influence their environment with their political skills. Thompson (2005) suggested that proactive employees obtain high job performance through their network building activities which is one of the dimensions of political skill (i.e., networking ability). Burt (1997) has shown that networking ability contributes to acquisition of important information and other organizational resources which ultimately lead to success. Proactive personalities to further enhance their social capital indulge in interpersonal influencing behavior which is another dimension of the political skill. Individuals with high level of interpersonal influence are able to accomplish their specific goals and they like to exercise powerful influence to elicit specific responses (Ferris et al., 2005). Similarly, it has been also found out that Social Astuteness and Apparent sincerity are also positively related to job performance. (Shi. J, Chen .Z, Zhou. L., 2011)

Job performance and Job satisfaction

Over many years relation between performance and satisfaction is being debated. One view, associated with the early human relation's approach, is that satisfaction leads to performance. An alternative view is that performance leads to satisfaction. However, earlier review of the literature shows that relation between performance and satisfaction in job is weak. A research (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985) found that relationship between job satisfaction and performance is just a "management fad". Yet when further research was conducted it was found out that the reason for failure in finding a strong relationship between Job satisfaction and job performance is because satisfaction is very narrowly defined (Organ,1988). Job satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept, which means different things to different people. Thus, opposite to previous reviews, it does appear that job satisfaction is, in fact, predictive of performance, and the relationship is even stronger for jobs (Judge et al., 2001). Expectancy based theories of motivation generally stipulate that satisfaction follows from the rewards produced by performance (Naylor, Pritchard & Illgen, 1980; Vroom, 1964). Like expectancy theory Locke (1970) also viewed satisfaction in job resulting from performance.

Factors mediating Political skills and Job performance relationship

Researchers have focused and found out that political skill impacts job performance. Ferris and Judge in 1991 emphasized on considering different contextual variables while studying the relation between political skill and job performance. It has been found that different aspects such as job demand, justice and perception of organizations politics play a major role in mediating relationship between political skills and job performance. Different job demands moderates the relationship between political skill and performance at job, showcasing stronger predictability of performance under conditions where opportunity to exercise interpersonal influence is there (Blickle, Kramer, Zettler, Summers, Munyon, Ferris., 2009). Justice plays an important role while discussing the relation between political skills and performance at job. A study examined the relationship between moderating effects of procedural and distributive justice on the relationship between political skill and performance. Procedural justice is fairness of processes that leads to outcomes while distributive justice is conceptualized as the fairness associated with decision outcomes and distribution of resources.

This study came up with the below mentioned findings
- Low Procedural justice and Low Distributive justice leads to positive relation between political skill and Job performance
- High Procedural justice and High Distributive justice leads to negative relation between political skill and job performance.

In this study importance of having political skill in low justice situation is highlighted (Andrews, Kacmar, Harris., 2009). I. Kapoustis et al., (2011) found out perception of organizational politics is a key variable in moderating the relation between political skills and job performance. They found that under conditions of low perceived politics political skills act as critical predictor of performance but in case of high perceived politics this relationship failed. Hence, we can also say that social context is an important aspect as they can affect the relation between different variables.

Insights obtained from different researches in the field of workplace politics and personality dimensions forms the basis of a conceptual model highlighting the relationship between political skills, personality traits and job satisfaction. The foundation of this model is laid by assembling the outcomes of various researches which may be important for one to gain satisfaction from their job.
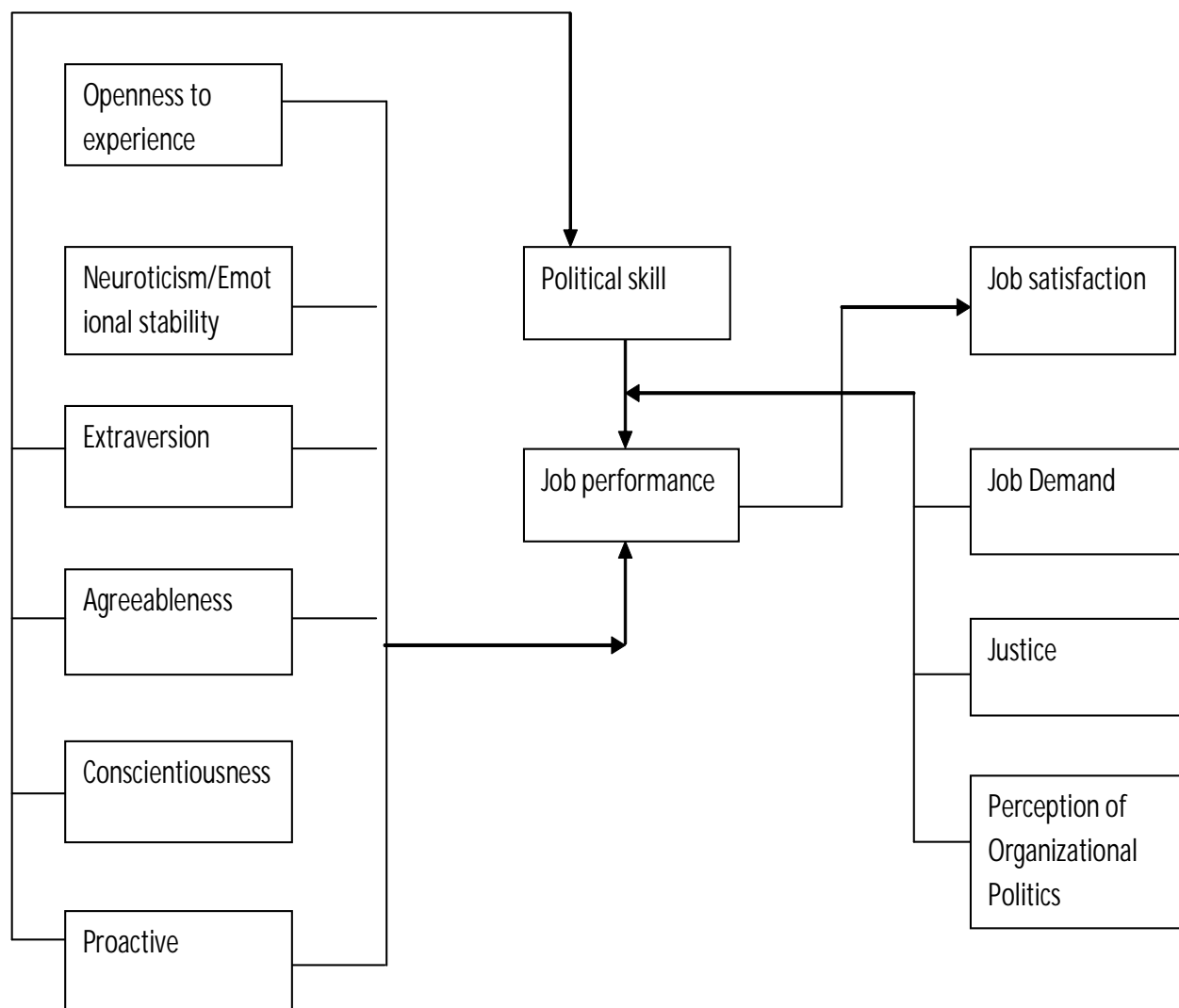
Fig 1: Interactional effects of Personality and Political skill on Job Satisfaction.

Personality traits	Name of the researcher
Conscientiousness leads to increase in Job performance	Anderson & Viswesvaran 1998, Barrick & Mount 1991, Salgado 1997, Tett et al., 1991
Emotional stability leads to increase in Job performance	Anderson & Viswesvaran 1998, Barrick & Mount 1991, Salgado 1997, Tett et al., 1991
Extraversion leads to increase in Job performance	Barrick & Mount 1991, Mount et al. 1998
Agreeableness leads to increase in Job performance	Barrick, Stewart, Neubert and Mount 1998
Openness to experience leads to increase in Job performance	Horton, 1992; Raudsepp,1990
Proactive personality leads to increase in Job performance	Thompson 2005

Table 3: Relation of Personality traits to Job performance

Personality traits	Name of the researcher
Agreeableness is related to Political skills	Blickle et al., 2007
Conscientiousness is related to Political skills	Blickle et al., 2007
Extraversion is related to political skills	Blickle et al., 2010
Proactive is related to political skills	Thompson 2005

Table 4: Relation of Personality traits to political skills

CONCLUSION

Personality and job performance has always been an area of interest of research scholar. A number of studies have already been conducted in this area. A tidy sum of evidence exists today showing relation between personality and performance at job. Research work showing the relation between personality, political skill and political skill, performance also exists. In this paper all these relations have been put together and are presented in a form of model. The study provides insight to different human resource managers about employment of political skills leading to employee performance at job and hence job satisfaction. It has been showcased in the report that different personality traits give different job outcomes when blended with political skill. This study is also an effort to change the mindset of managers that politics is always harmful. In this study it is evident that combined effects of personality and political skills leads to job satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS

Although different dimensions of personality has been substantiated as key actors in the study, one of the limitations of this study is that relation between all personality dimensions and political skill was not available as it is not examined yet. Constraint in data collection was faced; because resources were limited and all secondary studies accessible.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Various studies have established the relation between personality traits like extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and proactive and political skills of employee but more study needs to

be done to determine the relationships between personality traits like openness to experience, neuroticism, narcissism, Machiavellianism, and openness to experience. Sub dimension of political skills and personality traits relation is also an important area which has not been explored yet and needs a hatful of research. In succeeding researches political skill of individuals can also be evaluated through peers and based on that further studies can be conducted. It is recommended to examine the social context in which political skills are practiced in future as it may act as an important factor on which various job outcomes are based.

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