

The Big Five Personality Traits Effect on Average Promotion and High Status Promotion in the IEC

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Abstract

This article discusses the research results of the effect of the Big Five personality traits on promotion of human resources in the Israeli Electric Corporation (IEC) and tested if the same characteristics have the same effect throughout the entire individual career of an employee.

The research method was quantitative. Each participant in this research filled a questionnaire about his own personality traits and his own promotion level in the same large organisation. From the data gathered the effect of each trait became clear both on the average time it took the employee to achieve each promotion status and the time it took the employee to reach his final status level.

The study results showed that some personality traits had an opposite effect on average promotion time than the last status time.

Keywords: *personal characteristics, promotion, management tools, big five personality traits*

JEL Classification: L10, L20, M 12

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1. Introduction

Personality is a significant factor that influences people's behaviour at work and beyond. Fit of personality and work environment has long track studies manifesting its relevance to successful careers (Holland, 1985). Goldberg (1990) identified five main personality traits that combine all the personality traits of an individual. Career success is greatly affected by the right combination and level of the personality traits an individual has, as there is a correlation between these five main traits and career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen & Barrick, 1999). It is unknown whether or not the relevance of personality traits varies as one moves up the organizational ladder: Traditional career models assumed a tournament career system where every person aims to reach the top of the hierarchy, adopting similar career approach (Rosenbaum, 1979). Contemporary careers suggest a more dynamic system where people can move in or out of organizations and have different aims other than reaching the top of the organisation's hierarchy (Hall, 2002).

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This article reports a study about the effects of the big five traits on promotion in a large firm. It examined the promotion of the employees within the firm, and explored the role of hierarchy level as a moderator of the relationship between the personality profile and career success. Using the data from this research, clear differences were found between the effect of some of the big five traits on individuals at different organizational levels.

2. The Five Factor Model

The Five Factor Model (FFM), also known as the Big Five Personality Trait Model, details the five personality traits that affect an employee's career. The five traits include Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to New Experiences. The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between personality profile of individuals and their career success/expectations in addition, this paper will show how these relationships are influenced by the hierarchy level of those individuals.

The Israel Electric Corporation is a public and mostly (about 99.85%) government-owned company. The company controls and maintains all the aspects of electricity production and supply: the generation of electricity, transmission and transformation, distribution, and the supply and sale of electricity to Israeli households, organizations and businesses. The IEC owns and operates 17 power stations all over the country. The IEC's employs about 13,000 workers and provides services to 2.72 million customers, both industrial and house-hold customers (IEC 2018).

The cause-effect relationship between personal traits on one hand and career success including promotion at the workplace on the other hand has stimulated major debates and engendered many theories or models with various incompatible outcomes (John, Naumann et al. 2008:115; John and Srivastava 1999: 103). It has been affirmed frequently that career accomplishments and job promotion (particularly in developed economies) can be demonstrated to a great extent by the Five Factor Model (FFM) that includes the following traits: Extroversion / introversion (Power), Agreeableness or friendliness / hostility (empathy), Conscientiousness or dependability (hard work), Neuroticism / emotional stability (emotional reaction), and Openness (intellect) (Goldberg 1990: 1217). Each one of these Big-Five traits is related to many other characteristics that were clustered under each of these Five Traits. In this regard, extroversion is related to being dominant, self-confidence, ambitious, possessing leadership qualities, sociable, outgoing, entrepreneurship and ability and willingness to take an initiative in a social interaction. Agreeableness is connected with cooperation, likability, trustfulness, friendliness and acceptability by other colleagues at the workplace. Conscientiousness is associated with being diligent, dependable, striving, willing to learn the subtle details of a task, hard-working and willing to perform tasks that go beyond the minimum requirements of a job. Neuroticism/ emotional stability is associated with the absence of anxiety, immaturity, insecurity, enviousness,

jealousy, while possessing the qualities of self-restraint, self-discipline, politeness, good manners, and calmness. And finally openness is associated with creativity, intellect, being open to new experiences, new practices and challenges, new ideas and methods and being open to pursuing such new experiments (Judge, Higgins et al. 1999: 625). This is the exemplary path of how one can excel in life-through entrepreneurship, hard work, openness, friendship, stable personality and firmness to achieve one's goals at the workplace and pursue a successful career.

From all the above, it seems that the personality traits have an effect on the career of the individual, but, the question that seems reasonable to ask is "are there trait characteristics which influence differently the promotion of the lower status employees other than the higher status ones?". In order to check this question, the questionnaire asked a question about the time it took the employee to achieve his latest status and compare it to the total time the employee has been in the corporation divided by his status ranks.

3. Research methodology

We have formulated the following hypothesis: The personality traits that lead to success seems to have effect all along the same individual's career. This study relies on the Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue et al. 1991: 5), which is a forty-four-questions questionnaire measuring the Big Five personality traits on a given scale. This Big Five Inventory will be supplemented by seven background questions about each worker, in addition to seven questions on the activities of IEC workers participated in the sample on the SNWs. The Big Five Inventory is universally well-known and acknowledged by many scholars in the field as a robust tool for measuring the big five traits, and is thus used in this thesis as a benchmark. All respondents filled the questionnaire individually. Each was given the questionnaire with the questions given in the same order for all participants, yet, a different order than that of the Big Five Inventory.

One of the qualities of the Big Five Inventory is that it allows separated estimation of each Big Five measurements into more specific characteristics. The 44-question Big Five Inventory was developed to permit proficient and adaptable evaluation of the five measurements at the point when there is no requirement for more separated estimation of personal characteristics (Benet-Martinez and John 1998: 730). Some elements were chosen from Big Five model definitions that had been produced through professional evaluations and ensuing factor analytical confirmation in scholars' personality evaluations.

Given that single characteristic descriptions are addressed less reliably than when they are accompanied with definitions or elaborations, the Big Five Inventory does not utilize single descriptions as factors. Instead, a couple prototypical personal characteristics descriptors filled in as central elements to which elaborative, illuminative, or relevant data was included. For instance, the Conscientiousness-related characteristic of "perseverance" filled in as an element for the Big Five Inventory definition of "Endures until the assignment is done," and the Openness-associated characteristic of being "Original" turns in the Big Five Inventory elements

into “thinking of new ideas.” Thus, the Big Five Inventory elements are short and avoid using complex sentence structures, holding the benefits of descriptive straightforward definitions, while keeping away from some of their entanglements (equivocal or various interpretations). In addition, even though it is frequently hard to discover correct single-word interpretations for a trait, the implications of explained phrases are all the more effectively comprehended by some sample participants. The Big Five Inventory is accessible to intrigued scientists and has been utilized by an extensive variety of researchers.

Moreover, there are both empirical and theoretical considerations behind looking at the Big Five Inventory in the context of the IEC. The empirical reasons stem from the requirement for succinct and clear Big Five indicators for Israeli workers employed by a state-owned, monopoly corporation. From a theoretical perspective, it is critical to examine whether the co-variation among the particular traits that characterize the Big Five in English occurs in a similar pattern or direction of their co-variation among Hebrew speakers, hence including data with respect to the cross-cultural position of the Big Five (Schmitt, Allik et al. 2007: 175). Further, past research has demonstrated that the structure of a questionnaire may be modified when translated into another language. A possible misinterpretation of discoveries from diverse researches could be confounded by the way that contrasts between various language forms of an inventory might be enlisted, given the contrasts between interpretations, languages, databases, societies, or a combination of all of them (John and Srivastava 1999: 105). I hence attempted to address these difficulties by utilizing socially-sensitive interpretation methods that will make my questionnaire understandable and relevant to the work environment and culture at the IEC. Besides, I examined bilingual elements to help mitigate the impacts of language and Big Five Inventory contrasts and enlist an average workers-understandable questionnaire to test generalization of the Hebrew version of the Big Five Inventory across the participants in my sample.

Notwithstanding it being succinct, the Big Five Inventory does not forfeit content, scope or even major psychological features (Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller 2007: 61). For instance, the eight Extroversion-associated characteristics incorporate characteristics from no less than four of the six features proposed by Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller. These characteristics include among other things being: outgoing, proactive, assertive and inspiring. In English speaking examples, moreover, the alpha reliabilities of the Big Five Inventory scales commonly go from 0.76 to 0.92 and normal over 0.78; also, the covariance among the five scales tend to be low; a large portion of them are less than 0.18, and it is uncommon for some of them to surpass 0.28 (Benet-Martinez and John 1998: 731). As far as correlation significance with other Big Five characteristics, the Big Five Inventory measures are correlated more exceptionally with other cross-cultural scales. In my research, it would be very interesting examining how close my results are to these outcomes.

Despite the fact that the Big Five Inventory scales indicate generous concurrent legitimacy with Goldberg’s factor definitions, there are some inconspicuous, yet, imperative contrasts for Extroversion and Openness (Goldberg

1990: 1220). Initial Big Five Inventory characteristics are expected to correlate with the Extroversion features of taking an initiative and outgoing, but it may not correlate well with alternate elements to be incorporated into the Big Five Inventory Extroversion-associated characteristics. Along these lines, of course, the coherent and significant relationships between the Big Five Inventory and those of Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2007) measures have a tendency to be fairly lower for Extroversion and Openness.

Thus, the Big Five Inventory fits well with my research for several reasons. First, the Big Five Inventory feature scales have already exhibited solid inner consistency, test dependability, and compatibility with all the characteristics of the Big Five trait and measures (Soto, John et al. 2011: 335). Second, the Big Five Inventory is straightforward; its five-scale methodology makes it available to more youthful respondents and to different people with generally minimal formal instruction to respondents. Fourth, the single Big Five Inventory elements evaluate normal practices, understandings, and emotions that ought to be pertinent to respondents of differing ages, cultures and industrial settings (Filiz and Battaglio Jr 2017: 8). Fifth, the Big Five Inventory can be finished within 30 minutes, a reasonable advantage for an investigation to which every respondent is required to commit a constrained measure of time.

Notwithstanding the research methodology, two other caveats of this study must be considered. To begin with, the lingual configuration is restricted by the way that contrasts between English and Hebrew results might be because of interpretation and comprehension contrasts and social variation, or some combination of the three (Benet-Martinez and John 1998: 735). Second, in light of the fact that the Hebrew questionnaire included respondents from the IEC only, the generalization of my discoveries to Hebrew-speaking workers remain to be illustrated. This study was planned to address these constraints by utilizing a translated outline, testing the psychological properties of the Hebrew Big Five Inventory among an Israeli-state owned company workers, and looking at the Hebrew Big Five Inventory with Hebrew-dialect measures of the Big Five.

4. Procedure and sample

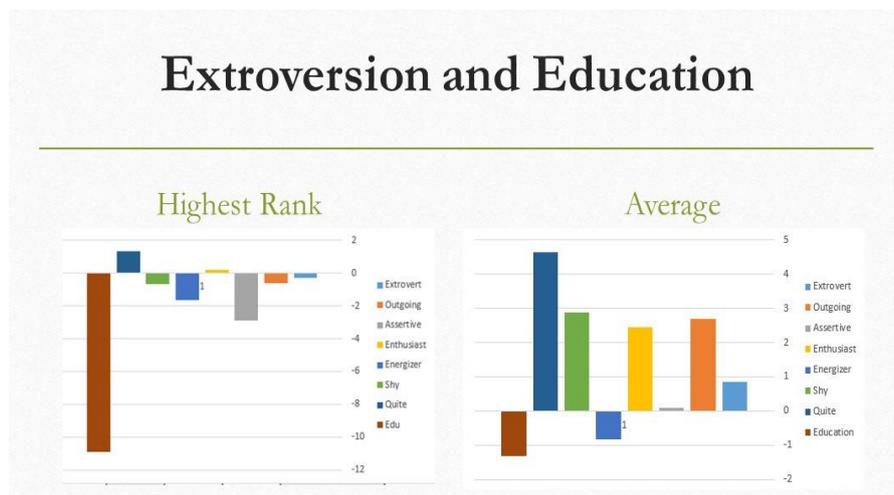
The research sampled 204 employees who filled a questionnaire. Of those employees about 172 are males and 32 are females. Only 7 employees identify themselves as belonging to a minority group. The average seniority of the employees is about 20 years (20.143 to be exact), this reflects that the average age of employees is very high at the IEC. The official average age of the IEC employees is 51.3 according to the company's Financial Reports of September 2016. The education level of the employees participated in the questionnaire varied. 36 had high school education or less, 70 had technical degree, 46 had a first degree and 51 had master degree or higher. The questionnaire itself consists of 56 questions, of them, seven relate to background questions and the rest are divided between the five personality trait questions and social media networking questions. The background questions are the ones that had the most impact on this research.

The Variables were the following: first, Dependent Variable I: “Duration of Job Promotion”, defined as the length of the period of promotion from previous status to a worker’s current status (number of months that took a worker X to be promoted from a previous status A to the current status B).

The second variable was Dependent Variable II: “Calculated Job-Promotion-Period”, defined as the average number of months that took a worker at the IEC to be promoted from one status into the next over his/her entire career. This variable is calculated as the number of years of working at the IEC multiplied by 12 (months) and divided by a worker current status: $(Tenure * 12) / Status$.

5. Results of the research

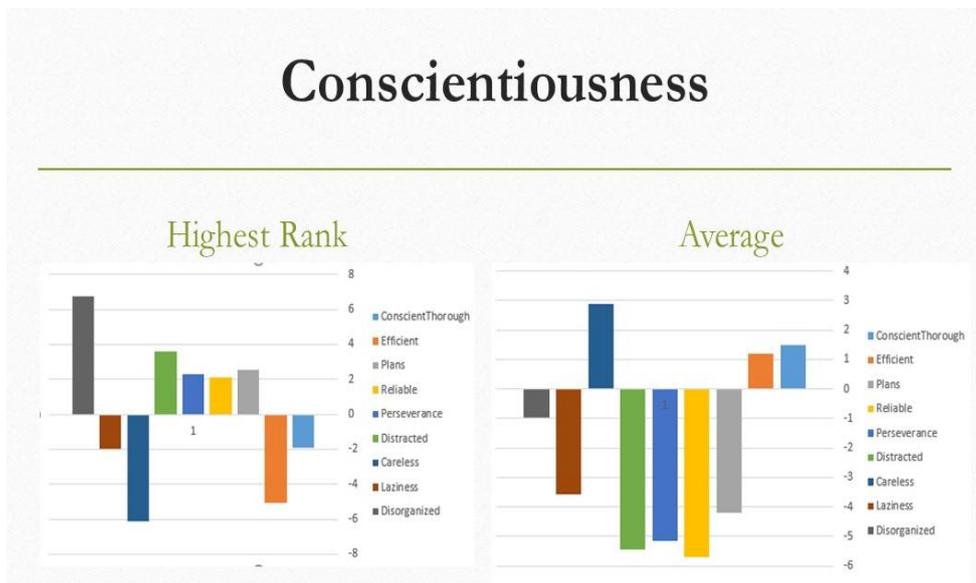
The research results indicate clearly that some characteristics don’t affect the average promotion time the same as the highest level promotion (see figures below). In fact, the results show some dramatic differences between effects of some characteristics. While the characteristic of rudeness, disorganized, distracted, preservice, reliable, planning, worrying and routine seems to promote faster on the average, they tend to promote slower in the higher ranks. Shyness, assertive, outgoing, assertive, aloof, quarrel, unselfishness, careless, efficient, consistent, relaxed, stable, tense, moody, artistic interest, deep thinking and artistic tendencies have the opposite effect; they tend to slow the average promotion rate but help to obtain the highest promotion level.



Agreeableness



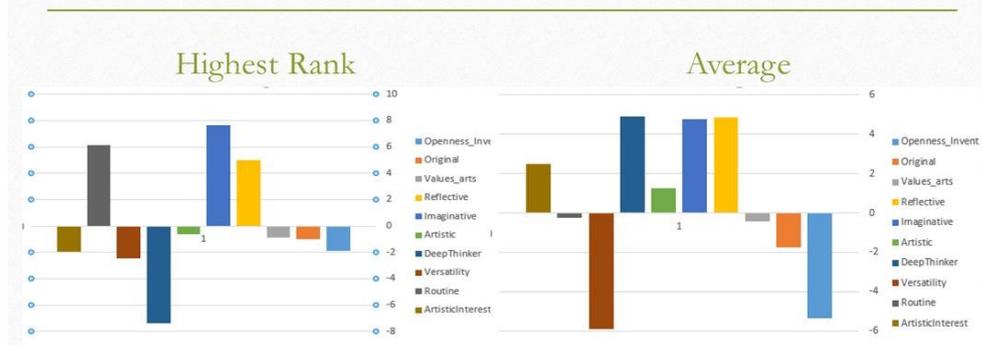
Conscientiousness



Emotional Stability



Openness



6. Discussion

This might surprise some to discover that a trait or a characteristic that served them well and got them promoted to some extent became a burden on the highest level status. A person who used to treat his fellow employees rudely and found it hasten his promotion might find himself on a certain status with no apparent reason for why he doesn't get the next promotion as fast as he used to. Using this research results, a person who wants to optimise his status advancement has to work on his attitude and his other traits and change them according to his current status.

7. Theoretical contributions and future research

While it is obvious that some traits effect positively on an individual's career and some have the opposite effect, this research indicates that the effect of some traits change over the years and the status of the individual so it seems that an individual who wants to have a greater chance of being promoted needs to work on himself and change his own personality characteristics that will suite best for the promotion status he aims for, depending on his own current promotion status.

We consider that the firm who will embrace this research can use these finding in order to make a personality test for the employees on each status level and thus have a better chance of anticipate the employees who will be promoted. Our results differ from the original opinion that such test is done only at the beginning of the employee's career in the firm, it seems best to do such a test on each promotion level of the employee and to compare the results to his own starting ones and his colleagues.

We would suggest undertaking a similar research in other government owned companies in order to check if these results will re-occur. Furthermore, we would make the same research on private owned companies to figure the status in the private sector and compare it to the government owned sector. In addition, we would suggest the organisation to make a personality trait test for each promotion status level and indicate what the best traits for each such level should be, thus having a way to predict the end status level of each individual.

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