

The Mediating Role Of Positive Affectivity In Relationship Between Personality And Performance

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Extensive Summary

1. Introduction

Today, employees and employee attitudes underlie the management concept. Even with quite well physical and technical facilities, it is quite hard for the corporations to sustain in intensively competitive markets unless they attract the qualified stuff or keep them in their business. Well-performing employees may provide a competitive advantage. Therefore, previous studies have mostly focused on this concept. Knowledge about the performance, precursors, outcomes and related concepts are significant issues in reducing ambiguities in business life. There are various individual and organizational factors effective in performance. In present study, individual factors were focused on and the concept was assessed with regard to personality (extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, emotional stability) and emotional aspects. Present literatures point out the effects of personality attributes of an individual on performance. In other words, personality can be a precursor variable to influence performance of the individuals. However, it may be quite hard to influence specific, special and balanced system of personality of individuals created through the genetic characteristics of the individual, influenced by the family, surrounding environment and culture. Therefore, an intermediary variable can be employed in this relationship since individual differences may influence perception of the cases and emotional statuses. Emotions also underlie the behaviors. Through taking personality and moods of the individual into consideration, desired behaviors can also be influenced. Thus, it was thought that emotions (positive affectivity) could play an intermediary role in relationships between personality and performance (task performance and contextual performance). In this sense, objectives of the present study were set as to determine the relationships among personality, emotion and performance and to identify the intermediary role of positive affectivity in relations of personality with behaviors. Along with these objectives, initially the concept of personality was mentioned and significance of personality in organizational behavior was pointed out. Then positive affectivity was pointed out and the significance of

emotionality in organizational life and sources of emotions were mentioned. Task performance and contextual performance were mentioned in the last section. The bases of each concept, significance of these concepts in organizational life, their precursors and outcomes were focused on. The relationships among the concepts were also taken into consideration through the end of the literature section. Finally, along with the objectives of the study, the intermediary role of positive affectivity in relationships between personality and performance (task performance, contextual performance).

2. Method

2.1. Selection of research sample

Research universe was constituted by manufacturing operations in Kayseri Organized Industrial Region. According to information received from the Directorate of Kayseri Organized Industrial Region, there are about 40.000 employees working in the region. The samples size for a universe of 40.000 individuals at 0.99 confidence level and 0.05 tolerance limits was identified as 422 individuals. Questionnaires were applied to 457 individuals selected through convenience sampling method.

2.2. Scales

Five-factor personality scale: The scale called as “Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)” developed by Gosling et al. (2003) was used. There are 10 statements as “I think myself as extrovert enthusiastic person” in the scale and statements were graded with a 5-point Likert scale (1 corresponding to totally disagree and 5 corresponding to totally agree).

Positive affectivity scale: In Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale developed by Watson et al. (1988), to what extent the individual is interested, active and vigilant are related to positive affectivity dimension and to what extent the individual feels anger, disgust, guilt and fear are related to negative affectivity dimension. This scale has two dimensions as of positive and negative affectivity and there are 10 statements in each dimension. In present study, the positive affectivity section the scale was employed. The statements were scored with a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 representing very little and 5 representing very much. In a pilot study, scale reliability for positive affectivity was calculated as 0.858.

Performance scale: The scale developed by Smith, Organ and Near (1983) was used to measure contextual performance and the scale developed by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) was used to measure task performance. In performance scale, there are 14 contextual performance statements and 8 task performance statements. Again- 5-point Likert scale was used in which 1 representing never and 5 representing always. In a pilot study, reliability level was calculated as 0.803 for contextual performance and as 0.863 for task performance.

To respond the questionnaire questions, self-report method was used. Since required reliability levels were reached in a pilot study, same scales and methods were employed in basic research. Software packages were used for correlation, regression and intermediary variable regression analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

Intermediary role of positive affectivity in relationships between conscientiousness dimension of personality and task performance was accepted. The effect of conscientiousness on task performance was identified as $R^2=0,064$. Together with intermediary role of positive affectivity, effect of conscientiousness on task performance was identified as $R^2=0,112$. It is possible to increase task performance of the individuals through increasing positive affectivity of the individuals.

When the intermediary role of positive affectivity in relationships between conscientiousness and contextual performance was assessed in accordance with the approach of Baron and Kenny, it was seen that positive affectivity played a role in this relationship. In other words, conscientiousness is related to contextual performance and positive affectivity. Besides, positive affectivity is also related to contextual performance and beta coefficients decreased when the positive affectivity got into action. Ultimately, the intermediary role of positive affectivity in relations between conscientiousness and contextual performance was accepted. Such a finding points out that the conscientiousness individual might exhibit greater conceptual performance with increasing positive affectivity levels.

The hypothesis inquiring intermediary role of positive affectivity in relations between openness to experience and task performance was also accepted. The effect of openness to experience on task performance ($R^2=0,037$) increased when the positive affectivity got into the action ($R^2=0,086$). When the openness to experience was combined with positive affectivity, it was able to yield higher task performance levels.

Beta coefficients also revealed the intermediary role of positive affectivity in relations between openness to experience and contextual performance. Openness to experience had significant effects on contextual performance ($R^2=0,024$). Openness to experience is a precursor variable for contextual performance. Such an effect increases when combined with positive affectivity ($R^2=0,060$). As it was in task performance, when the individuals open to experience had positive affectivity, their task performance also increase.

As to conclude, performance is significant issue to be pointed in organizational behaviors and business life. It is also quite significant to point out or focus on precursors related to or influencing the performance. Behaviors may be influenced or underlined by inner world and surrounding environment of the individuals. In other words, individuals exhibit behaviors with the effects of both internal and external stimulants. Surrounding environment or external environment is out of the scope of the present study. The characteristics directly directed to individual itself are considered as personality and emotions. Analysis on personality of an individual provide aids in understanding behaviors and especially the interactions of the individual with the other people within an organization (Gordon, 1993, p. 79). In modern management approach, there is a need to know the individuals and to presume their developments and changes. Human factor has a special place in businesses as compared to the other factors. Significant progress is achieved in businesses only with the proper analysis of the personality of the individuals within an organization and with the proper individual-organization integration. Managers also wish to have information as much as possible about their employees, individual differences among them and their personal characteristics. Understanding their personal characteristics may help them in assessing

the differences among them (Nelson and Quick, 1994, p. 99). Assessing and identifying personality of an individual may also help in presuming the behaviors and interactions of the individuals within an organization. The primary objective of the present study was to determine the relations among personality, emotions and performance and to identify intermediary role of positive affectivity in relations between emotions and performance. Intermediary role of positive affectivity was identified in this relation for some dimensions. Executives should spend effort to improve positive affectivity in organizational life. Besides personality assessments in recruitments, positive affectivity of the individuals should also be assessed. Selection of positive team members may improve team performance. Present findings provide significant outcomes for executives or managers. In brief, despite some limitations, present findings may provide significant contributions to human resources management literature and practices.