

Job Experience and Big Five Personality Dimensions

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Using a sample of engineers ($N=80$), the correlation between job experience and the personality dimensions was estimated. The results showed very small correlations. Based on these results, we suggest that composites created with job experience and personality measures can be useful for personnel selection.

1. Introduction

The prediction of job performance and other behaviors related to productivity are of interest for the organizational researchers and many personnel decisions are based on measures of constructs such as general cognitive ability, personality dimensions, and job experience (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Salgado, 1999). However, the predictive validity of these constructs showed important differences. For example, general cognitive ability was found to be the best single predictor of job performance in both the United States and Europe for all occupations (Bertua, Anderson, & Salgado, 2005; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Salgado, Anderson, Moscoso, Bertua, De Fruyt, & Rolland, 2003) and hundreds of validity studies have been conducted in the last 80 years. However, for many years, personality measures were considered poor predictors of organizational behaviors. This belief was mainly due to the small correlations found between personality characteristics and the organizational criteria (e.g., job performance) and in part due to the strong criticisms made by the situationist view of personality. However, over the last 15 years, many studies have shown that the Big Five personality dimensions are relevant variables for explaining many organizational behaviors and processes (Salgado & De Fruyt, 2005). Several organizational areas of interest include job performance, training success, teamwork, deviant behaviors, turnover, job satisfaction, leader emergence, leadership effectiveness, and transformational leadership behaviors (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Judge, Bono, & Locke, 2000; Ones,

Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993). There are currently many cumulative summaries that allow concluding that traits are relevant variables for predicting and explaining these organizational behaviors (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Salgado, 2002, 2003). For example, job performance is related to Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability, and training success is mainly related to Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness. For teamwork, the dimensions with a strong relation are Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. In the case of deviant behaviors, the best predictors of the absence of these dysfunctional behaviors are Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. For turnover, the most related dimensions are Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Leadership behaviors were examined in relation to the emergence of leaders, the effectiveness of leaders, and the transformational leadership. In the three cases, the Big Five showed to be relevant variables related to these organizational behaviors. For example, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness were found to be related to the emergence of leadership. The effectiveness of leaders was associated with Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness. Lastly, Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness were related to transformational leadership behaviors. The conclusion is that the dispositional variables of personality are currently thought to be relevant explanatory causes of many organizational behaviors and processes.

Job experience has been perceived for many personnel managers as one of the better predictors of job

performance. Job experience is typically defined as the number of years of previous experience on the same or similar job. Schmidt, Hunter, and Outerbridge (1986) found that, on average, the validity of job experience for predicting job performance is .18, but the validity magnitude can be .33 when experience on the job is < 5 years. Schmidt and Hunter (1998) conjectured that job experience is essentially a measure of opportunity to learn and that its correlation with general mental ability, the best single predictor of job performance, is 0 (see Schmidt *et al.*, 1986; Salgado & Anderson, 2002; Salgado *et al.*, 2003). For this reason, Schmidt and Hunter (1998) concluded that job experience showed incremental validity over general mental ability.

Psychologists have now empirical evidence about the criterion validity of general mental ability, Big Five personality dimensions, and job experience. We also know the multivariate validity of the combinations of GMA with a second predictor, such as emotional stability, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, or job experience. We know the correlation between all these last variables with GMA and, consequently, its incremental validity. However, at present, the relationship between job experience and the Big Five personality dimensions remains unexplored. This is a relevant issue because many organizational decisions are based on three or more variables and, therefore, it is necessary to know the correlation among these variables. Thus, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship among job experience and the Big Five personality dimensions.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The sample included 80 individuals (41 males and 39 females) applying for five managerial jobs at a Spanish public service company. The jobs were of a technical director and four jobs of territorial directors. All the applicants were included in this study and, therefore, the response rate was 100%. The average age of participants was 35.4 years ($SD = 8.4$). All the participants had a master's degree in engineering. A personality questionnaire and a job experience measure were included as a part of the selection process.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Personality

The Personality Inventory of Five Factor (IP/5F; Salgado, 1996, Salgado & Moscoso, 2003) was used in this research. The IP/5F is a Spanish personality questionnaire developed under the Five Factor Model of personality and it was extensively used for personnel

selection purposes. This 200-item questionnaire was developed using rational methods (e.g., content analysis; items related to job performance), as well as factor analysis, in order to measure the 'Big Five' personality dimensions. For improving the factorial validity of the questionnaire, the items were grouped into facets based on the item content. There are 29 facets, seven for emotional stability, six for extroversion and conscientiousness, and five for openness and agreeableness, respectively. The items had three answer alternatives: Agreement (A), Indecisive (I), and Disagreement (D). Internal consistency for emotional stability, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness was .91, .87, .84, .71, and .86, respectively. Test-retest reliabilities 1 year later were .91, .90, .79, .65, and .72 for emotional stability, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, respectively. Convergent and discriminant validity evidence was found using the Spanish version of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the EPI (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964), the 16PF (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsouoka, 1970), the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI, Hogan & Hogan, 1995), and the Description in Cinq Dimensions (D5D, Rolland & Mogenet, 2001). Convergent and discriminant validity evidence was also found using behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS). For example, correlations between IP/5F and the NEO-FFI in factors measuring the same construct were .70, .88, .55, .55, and .58 for EE, E, O, A, and C, respectively. In another sample, using BARS, the correlations were .72, .66, .58, .38, and .69 for EE, E, O, A, and C, respectively.

2.2.2. Job experience

This variable was assessed as the number of years of previous experience on the same or similar job. The number of years ranges from 2 to 23. Each year of experience was scored as .15 in this selection process and the maximum possible score was three points.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the observed intercorrelation matrix for all variables. As can be seen, job experience showed a positive but non-significant correlation with emotional stability, extroversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. Agreeableness correlated negatively, although the correlation was non-significant. It is interesting to mention that the magnitude of these correlations is similar to the corresponding correlation between general mental ability and the Big Five personality dimensions, and also similar to the correlation between general mental ability and job experience.

Table 1. Correlation between job experience and the Big Five personality dimensions

	JE	ES	EX	OE	A	C
JE	–					
ES	.054	–				
EX	.010	.344	–			
OE	.143	.088	.495	–		
A	–.114	.136	.053	.040	–	
C	.012	.349	.173	.142	–.032	–

N = 80; JE, Job Experience; ES, Emotional Stability; EX, Extroversion; OE, Openness to experience; A, Agreeableness; C, Conscientiousness.

4. Discussion

This study provides an examination of the relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and job experience. The empirical evidence has shown that the relation is near to zero for conscientiousness, extroversion, and emotional stability; the relation is very small for openness to experience, and the relation is negative for agreeableness. These results suggest that job experience is independent of Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, and Extroversion in this sample.

The present study suggests that creating personality plus job experience composites may be useful for making personnel decisions because each variable contribute independently to the prediction of job performance and training success. This study has two limitations: the first limitation is the sample size which is relatively small in comparison with the typical sample sizes in validity studies (see Salgado, 1998) and the second limitation is that we have used only one occupational group. Therefore, more studies should investigate the correlation between job experience and personality with occupations of different complexity level.

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