Association between Personality Traits and Social Laziness: (Case Study: Staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2014)

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Abstract: One of the main predictive factors in social laziness is taking into consideration the individual characteristics and differences of the staff. Like other parts of the society, staffs possess special individual differences, talents, motivations, propensity, and inclinations. The main objective of this study was to investigate the association between personality traits and social laziness in the staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2014. The present study was a descriptive correlation one. The sample study was comprised of 203 office workers (contractual and permanent) of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staffs which were selected by stratified random sampling method. The tools for data gathering were NEO personality inventory (1985) and Saffarinia Social Laziness test. The reliability of the test was measured by Cronbach’s alpha. Descriptive statistics (percent, mean, standard deviation and variance) and Pearson correlation coefficient and regression (in the deductive level for testing the research hypothesizes) and the SPSS software (ver. 18.0) (for data analysis) were used in this study. There was a significant relationship between all the independent variables of personal traits (neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) except for openness with the dependent variable of social laziness. Also, the multiple regression results of independent variables with dependent variables of social laziness showed that, of the previous variables, the conscientiousness and extroversion variables specify social laziness significantly. On the other hand, the coefficient of determination shows that 15.7% of social laziness variance is specified by other personality traits variables (neuroticism, flexibility, and agreeableness). The results show that people's personal traits affect in many aspects their performance and ultimately their organizational performance.

Keywords: Personal traits, social laziness, staffs, university of medical sciences, Kermanshah

INTRODUCTION

Personality is a relatively consistent pattern of attributes, attitudes, or characteristics that to some extent gives people a sustainable way of conduct. Personality is a complicated psychological structure which is used to recognize individual’s behavior and in general, shows different types of human behaviors in different situations (1). Regarding the dimensions of personality, scientists have offered different opinions and classifications. Eisenk (1945) found the three top factors or dimensions including extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism, leaving places for other possible dimensions to be added in the future (2). Costa and McKarrie (1991) identified five big factors as basic tendencies which have biological grounds. These basic tendencies are particular practical and emotional preparations and are not directly affected by the environment (3). Five-factor model divides personality into five dimension of neuroticism (anxiety, depression, and hostility as well as feel self-conscious, act impulsively, and experience a sense of vulnerability, unable to accommodate aversive events), extraversion (gregarious, assertive, warm, positive, and active, as well as seek excitement), openness to experience (open to fantasies, aesthetics, feelings, as well as novel actions, ideas, and values), agreeableness (trust in other individuals, straightforward and honest communication, altruistic and cooperative behavior, compliance rather than defiance, modesty and humility, as well as tender, sympathetic attitudes), and conscientiousness (competent, methodical, preferring order and structure, dutiful, motivated to achieve goals, disciplined, and deliberate or considered). Based on the model, each individual regarding his/her personal traits can have particular attitude and tendency toward the duties and objectives of the organization (4). Therefore, individuals’ personality differences can be the source of creativity development or the root of many organizational problems affecting performance, behavior, decisions, and organizational behaviors of them (5).

As personality traits act as facets for determination of their behavior, by recognizing those behaviors, a framework could be drawn to predict individuals' behavior. Knowing the personality of individuals can help
organizational management to use qualified staff in different organizational positions. This in turn will decrease the staff displacement and increase the organizational commitment (1). Given the fact that the first and foremost part of organizational system are human resources carrying different personality traits, thus motivations, capabilities, tendencies, beliefs, and thoughts which shape most of the human personality will determine the scope of expectations of individuals from each other and the organization (4).

Personality traits affect individuals’ performance in many ways. In fact, the behavior of each person is affected by his/her personality traits. On the other hand, social laziness is one of the elements affected by personality traits. Social laziness and the low pace of society have long been reflected in sociological, psychological and management circles. In Persian dictionary, laziness means sloth, losery, inaction, negligence, and loafing (6). Some sociologists use “social laziness” and social indolence in the same place and define social laziness as the low development of a society. In these definitions, concepts such as not accepting new developments and accepting movements inconsistent with social life are considered as the definition scope of social laziness (7).

Laziness is psychologically studied as an individual characteristic and is referred to as procrastination. Psychologists (8-9) defined procrastination as “to postpone a task already intended to do”. The essence of this behavior lies in postponement, hesitation, underestimation, and indifference. Bless also defines laziness as postponing tasks that an individual should have done or willing to do. To put it closely, laziness is “postponing a task to be done in the future while that you know it must have been done now” (10). In addition, the human workforce misuse for development of a country is another consequence that a laziness-struck country is faced with. While the workforce is the most important factor for growth in any country, social laziness could be the main obstacle of development and growth (11). In social laziness situation, the group weakens the individual’s behavior. In other words, the individual makes less effort in the group while in solo situations; he/she doesn’t show that inactivity. Car pushing or tug of war games are the best examples of the mobility weakness or making less effort by the individual in social laziness. Such activities can bring about numerous whole-scale and long-term traumas and negative consequences for the individual and the society (12).

Individual’s laziness in group in the form of social laziness leads to decrease social responsibility; because the share of individuals in the group is not specified and there is no supervision on those shares (12). Despite the great importance of the problem of personality traits and laziness, no comprehensive research or article on this issue has been done and written before. Yet Djavadi Yegane and Fouladian (2011) have done the only authentic job that has directly dealt with the issue of laziness and has been the authentic reference for description of social laziness in Iran. The results of their study show that the minimum tendency of 1256 citizens of Tehran was 20%. The general results indicate that laziness scale in Iran was 36% very low and low; 49% moderate; 19.6% much; 0.5% very much. Based on that study, social laziness encompasses 20.1% of the whole society (11).

Regarding what was mentioned, one of the main predictive factors in social laziness is to consider the individual characteristics and differences of the staffs. Like other parts of the society, staffs possess special individual differences, talents, motivations, propensity, and inclinations. They have different interests and capabilities and enjoy attitude, knowledge, and value system of different kinds. In fact, staffs are different from each other in terms of individual and personality traits. These different personality traits affect their performance and behavior and this personality effect is ultimately effective on their decisions and organizational behaviors. Thus the main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between personality traits with regards to five big factors of personality structure and social laziness and the relationship between each one of those personality traits with social laziness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was a descriptive correlation one. The population of the study was comprised of all the (contractual and official) office workers of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staffs in 2014. The sample size was 203 officers at the deputies of management and human resources development, treatment deputy, student cultural deputy, educational deputy, research and IT deputy and health deputy in which 203 persons (58 male and 118 female) were determined using stratified random sampling.

Multi-stage sampling was used to prepare an appropriate sample of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staffs in Kermanshah city. For this, in the first stage, using the stratified sampling, the statistical population relevant to the existence or non-existence quality of the university was divided into five deputies of management and human resources development, treatment deputy, student cultural deputy, educational deputy, research and IT deputy and health deputy.

In the second stage, simple random sampling was utilized for choosing the statistical sample in each of the studied stratifications in a way to create equal odds for selection of the whole statistical population. The simple random on-replacement method was used for the selection of participants for answering.
The data collection tools of the study included NEO-FFOI personality inventory. This five factor inventory was first invented by Costa and McCrae (1985). Haghshenas applied it in Iran in 1996 (13). Five personality traits as follows were evaluated each using 12 items: neuroticism (anxiety, depression, and hostility as well as feel self-conscious, act impulsively, and experience a sense of vulnerability, unable to accommodate aversive events), extraversion (gregarious, assertive, warm, positive, and active, as well as seek excitement), openness to experience (open to fantasies, aesthetics, feelings, as well as novel actions, ideas, and values), agreeableness (trust in other individuals, straightforward and honest communication, altruistic and cooperative behavior, compliance rather than defiance, modesty and humility, as well as tender, sympathetic attitudes), and conscientiousness (competent, methodical, preferring order and structure, dutiful, motivated to achieve goals, disciplined, and deliberate or considered). Garousi Farshi et al obtained the reliability coefficient as 0.89, 0.73, 0.56, 0.68, and 0.87 for neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness respectively (14). Aman Elahi Fard (2005) obtained the validity of the test using simultaneous method for the five factors N, E, O, A, C as 0.66, 0.56, 0.59, 0.39, respectively and obtained the reliability of the test using retest method for the five factors as 0.87, 0.84, 0.79, 0.80, 0.82, and the Cronbach’s alpha as 0.76, 0.65, 0.59, 0.48, 0.85 respectively for the five big factors (15). All the variable items of the personality traits were regulated based on 5-options Likert Scale, in which for each question, five alternatives (completely against (0), against (1), to some extent (2), In favor (3), completely in favor (4) were considered. In order to evaluate social laziness, an inventory comprised of two variables of indifference and self-attention with 23 items normalized by Saffarinia (2010) was used in which the validity and reliability was confirmed on 887 person in Tehran (16). All the variable items of social laziness were regulated based on 5-options Likert Scale, in which for each question, five alternatives of never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), always (5) were considered.

RESULTS

In this study, the total 203 sample size included 58 males (41.9%) and 118 females (58.1%). In age classification, 1 (0.5%) of the participants was between 18 and 23, 16 persons (7.9%) were in 24-29 age group, 37 persons (18.2%) in 30-35 age group, 53 persons (26.1%) between 36 and 41, 52 persons (25.6%) in 42-47 and 44 persons (21.85%) were more than 50 years. The highest frequency was related to 36-41 age group (53 persons), and the lowest frequency belonged to 18-23 (1 person). Regarding marital status, 160 persons (78.8%) were single and 43 (21.2%) were married. Educationally speaking, 48 persons (23.6%) high school diploma, 18 persons (8.9%) with Associate Degree, 104 persons (51.2%) holding BA, and 32 persons (15.8%) had MA and there was only 1 PhD person (0.5%). The highest rank belonged to BAs.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum grades in variables of personality traits and organizational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>3.0107</td>
<td>0.40028</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open to experiences</td>
<td>2.6133</td>
<td>0.39362</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>2.3923</td>
<td>0.51957</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>2.0041</td>
<td>0.39362</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>1.8362</td>
<td>0.56564</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>3.8056</td>
<td>0.58204</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-attention</td>
<td>3.5952</td>
<td>0.76459</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total grade of social laziness</td>
<td>7.4009</td>
<td>1.20960</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical indices such as mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum of the study’s variables including five big personality factors and social laziness are provided in Table 1. The results of table 1 indicate that the highest mean belongs to “consciousness” (i.e., 3.0107) and the lowest mean belongs to neuroticism (i.e., 1.8362). Also, the highest social laziness scale is related to “indifference” (3.8056) and the lowest mean is for “self-attention” (3.5952).

Table 2: Correlation coefficient of the personality traits dimensions with staffs’ social laziness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Personality traits</th>
<th>Social laziness</th>
<th>(r)</th>
<th>(P)</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>0.336**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>0.324**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>-0.302**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Open to experiences</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>0.289**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>Social laziness</td>
<td>0.269**</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the correlation coefficient test in table 2 indicated that there is a significant correlation between personality traits with staffs' social laziness in a way that staffs' social laziness ($r=0.269^{**}$) has relationship with neuroticism ($r=0.302^{**}$), with extraversion ($r=0.324^{**}$), with openness to experience ($r=0.289$), with consciousness ($r=0.336$) except for flexibility ($r=0.013$). Also, neuroticism has a negative and significant relationship with social laziness which means the more neurotics the people the more socially lazy they are. Other personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, consciousness) have relationships with staffs' social laziness.

The multi-variable linear stepwise regression was used in order for evaluation of the effect of independent variables (neuroticism, extraversion, flexibility, agreeableness, and consciousness) on the dependent variable of social laziness.

### Table 3: The regression analysis of social laziness variable in terms of dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Raw coefficients</th>
<th>Standard coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.247</td>
<td>3.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.228</td>
<td>3.231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SE= standard error; Sig= significance

The multi-variable linear regression analysis of social laziness variable in terms of dependent variables is shown in table 3. The data indicate that the two variables of extraversion and consciousness remained in the final model from other inserted variables (neuroticism, extraversion, flexibility, agreeableness, consciousness).

Regarding the beta coefficients, it is clear that from the previous variables, consciousness variables (beta=0.247) and extraversion (beta=0.228) significantly explain social laziness. On the other hand, the determination coefficient shows that 15.7% of the social laziness variance is explained by other personality traits variables (neuroticism, flexibility, and agreeableness).

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The descriptive results of the study shows that the staffs' personality traits mean in consciousness, openness to experience, extraversion, flexibility and neuroticism was obtained as 3.01, 2.61, 2.39, 2, 1.83 respectively. The highest mean scale belonged to the consciousness and the lowest belonged to the neuroticism. With regards to the social laziness variable, the descriptive results indicate that “indifference” had the highest mean scale among other staffs while “self-attention” had the lowest mean scale.

The results show that people's personal traits affects in many aspects their performance and ultimately on their organizational performance in a way that having special personality traits affects the social laziness.

Psychology researchers believe that personality is the general series of individual’s inner and outer methods of coping with life (17). Considering the personality background of individuals while employing them in the organization can help decrease their social laziness.

In line with this study, it is proved that personality traits of individuals especially the five big factors are effective in personality and group efficiency. Bolin (2002) has shown among others that a group member having traits such as consciousness, extraversion and compatibility is negatively in relationship with social procrastination, while openness to experience and neuroticism do not have a relationship with social procrastination (18). Regarding consciousness and performance, Barrick and Mount (1991) and Schmidt and Hunter (1992) showed that there is a direct relationship between the two variables. The required awareness of the individuals' personality traits in employing them in different positions can be effective in their efficiency (19-20). The results of the present study is consistent with Esen and Bilgic (2011), Tan & Tan (2008), Kichuk and Wiesner (1997), Barry and Stewart (1997), Schmidt and Hunter (1992), Barrick and Mount (1991) and Williams and Sternberg (1998). The results of Esen and Bilgic (2011) indicated that individuals with neuroticism are more socially lazy (22, 21, 23, 24, 20, 19, 25, and 21). Salgado (1998) and Tett and Jackson (1991) found out that if individuals with neuroticism stay in a fixed condition, can have negative or positive efficiency (26-27). In addition, the results of the study of Barrick and Mount (1991) showed that extrovert individuals are employed for jobs which demand higher levels social relations such as management positions, social aid services, and salesperson (19). Kichuk and Wiesner (1997) revealed that people with more computability are more efficient than those with less computability (23). Hoffman and Jones (2005) concluded that the collective compatibility has a significant relationship with increasing the efficiency of the individuals (28). Comadena (1984) found out that openness to experience and emotional consistency is effective in increasing efficiency of the individuals placed in thought storm groups (29). Neuman et al (1999) understood that individuals with higher levels of openness to experience increase the efficiency of the group (30). Le Pine et al (2003) focused on the open to
experience groups and concluded that the efficiency increases in unpredicted dimension of contents of the
duties in groups with high cognitive capabilities and desire success and are open to experiences (31). Based on
the results and background of the study and the fact that open to experience individuals don’t show social
laziness, it is recommended to employ these people in positions with more diversity and demand learning new
and updated skills.

As an applicable conclusion, one can extend the results of the mentioned discussions to the organizational
issues and problems. Organizations and job environments can get most benefits and applications from the
abovementioned subject. One of the traditional solutions recommended for organizational and occupational
problems which are emphasized by theoreticians of occupational traits is the problem of regulating duties for
each member to tackle social laziness in the organizations. The second solution is to offer feedback to the
staffs; something easily neglected is that staffs are not provided with feedbacks, i.e., if a member understand
his undertakings which lead to a feedback (positive or negative), which means if an individual has social
laziness and makes less effort and is confronted by negative feedback or an individual is effective and receives
good feedbacks, certainly his motivation and efforts will be increased. Another point which could have
psychological aspect is celebrating the free will, power, and opinion of individuals in organizational environment
in a way to consider the true self of the individuals. If the individual is respected and his ideas as a clear-sighted
and learned person are accepted, then it could be expected that the organizational or social laziness decreases
to its minimum point in the organizations.

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