

DISPOSITIONAL ROUTE TO JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract *As Henry Brooks Adams rightly said, “Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops”. Teachers are indeed one of the most important factors in developing the human resource of a nation. The present research was based on the dispositional approach to understanding job satisfaction and aimed at studying the job satisfaction and personality of primary school teachers. Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) and NEO FFI (McCrae & Costa, 1978) were used for data collection. The sample was teachers, teaching classes pre-nursery to 3rd standard, from schools in Delhi ($n_1=57$) and Rohtak ($n_2=47$). The findings revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism had a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction, whereas openness to experience did not have any significant relationship. Using hierarchical regression analysis, a model was proposed that suggests 40% of the variance in job satisfaction is accounted for by the demographic variables, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.*

Keywords: *Primary School Teachers, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism*

INTRODUCTION

It is a well-established fact that job satisfaction is one of the most important and thoroughly researched job attitudes. Different scholars have defined it differently, according to Locke (1976), “Job satisfaction can be defined as an employee’s overall evaluation of his or her job as favorable or unfavorable”. “Job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable that reflects how people feel about their jobs overall, as well as various aspects of the jobs” (Spector, 2012). “Job satisfaction essentially represents employees’ overall evaluation of their jobs, including feelings of positive affect toward their jobs or job situations” (Jex & Britt, 2008).

Since, job satisfaction is so integral to the functioning to any organisation, it is of utmost importance to discuss the predictors of job satisfaction. There are three basic approaches to understand how job satisfaction develops, namely job characteristics, social information processing, and dispositional approaches. In this paper, we will be focusing on the dispositional approach.

The latest approach in explaining job satisfaction is ‘internal dispositions’. The fundamental assumption of the dispositional approach is that certain individuals are

prone to be either satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs, notwithstanding the type of job or organisation they are working with. A research that caught everyone’s interest in the role that disposition plays in predicting job satisfaction was Staw and Ross’s (1985) study, wherein they examined the constancy of job satisfaction in a nationwide sample of working males. The research revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction at any given time and job satisfaction after seven years. Since a lot of people in the sample had shifted jobs and some individuals even changed their careers, the researchers suggested that the degree of constancy that was displayed was indicative of the fact that job satisfaction was partly determined by dispositions. Dispositions can be better understood in terms of personality and personality traits.

Allport (1937) analysed numerous definitions of personality proposed by scholars and authors of various fields like literature, philosophy, sociology, and psychology, and gave a comprehensive definition, wherein he stated that “personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment”. Funder (2001), on the other hand, explained personality as “an individual’s characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour,

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together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns”.

Luthans, in his book, described personality as “how people affect others and how they understand and view themselves, as well as their pattern of inner and outer measurable traits and the person situation interaction”.

The dispositional approach of understanding job satisfaction is a relatively recent concept, because of which emphasis on personality traits was given little weight for a long time. However, now there is substantial evidence to support the ‘Big Five’ model of personality. There is also research suggesting that the five traits of the Big Five model have a significant ability to predict job performance and have a positive relationship with job satisfaction (except for neuroticism).

Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) carried out one of the most extensive researches on disposition as a predictive factor of job satisfaction, wherein they did a meta-analysis of over 163 samples and revealed that the big five personality traits, that is, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism, together had a correlation of 0.41 with job satisfaction. The strongest correlations were between job satisfaction and neuroticism (although it was a negative correlation, where an increase in neuroticism scores causes a decrease in job satisfaction scores), extraversion, and conscientiousness.

Conscientiousness has been found to have the strongest positive correlation with job performance, which means employees who score high on the trait of conscientiousness set challenging targets for themselves, have better performance expectations, and respond nicely to job enrichment and empowerment strategies of the management or the human resource professionals; they are also less likely to be absent from work (Judge, Martocchio & Thoresen, 1998).

The other traits also have some research backing; high scores on extraversion have been found to be linked with management and sales success, employees having high agreeableness were found to be very efficient in handling customer relations and disagreements more successfully, and employees high on openness to experience had more training proficiency and made finer decisions in problem-solving training simulations (Lepine, Colquitt & Erez, 2000).

In their research study ‘Towards an optimal person-environment fit: A baseline study of student teachers’ personality traits’, authors Kok and Meyer (2018) presented a list of “desirable score” for teachers on the NEO FFI, by reviewing past literature and recognising the distinct working conditions and challenges of the teaching profession. According to the list, teachers should desirably have high scores on all the scales except for neuroticism, for which a low score is more desirable.

Kim, Jorg and Klassen (2019) conducted ‘A meta-analysis of the effects of teacher personality on teacher effectiveness and burnout’, wherein they reviewed 25 research studies with a total sample size of 6,294, which reported the relationship between teachers’ ‘Big Five personality traits’ and two of the job-related outcomes, namely teacher effectiveness and burnout. The findings suggested that on the whole, teachers’ ‘Big Five traits’ (except for agreeableness) were positively associated with teacher effectiveness and scores on emotional stability, extraversion and conscientiousness were negatively correlated with burnout, which means a higher score on emotional stability, extraversion, and conscientiousness was associated with lower chances of burnout.

In a study on ‘The relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Putrajaya’, researchers Salaudin, Mohamed and Kamal (2019) explored the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. Personality was assessed using NEO FFI, based on ‘The Big Five Model’. The findings revealed that there was a positive and high relationship between the personality traits of ‘The Big Five Model’ and job satisfaction, which means, job satisfaction could be affected by high or low scores in personality traits.

To understand the ‘Relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction among high school teachers’, Mohammadi, S (2011) administered Neo Five factor’s inventory and Job Descriptive Index on a sample of 223 (121 female and 102 male) teachers teaching at high schools in Pune, India. Some interesting findings were revealed; neuroticism negatively correlated with all job satisfaction facets except pay; extraversion, as expected, positively correlated with job satisfaction. Conscientiousness correlated well with job satisfaction. Overall, the results suggested that the Big Five personality factors can be a good predictor of job satisfaction among high school teachers. Thus, in the present study, it was hypothesised that:

H₁: Neuroticism will have a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction.

H₂: Extraversion will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₃: Openness to experience will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₄: Agreeableness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₅: Conscientiousness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

RATIONALE

At the Plenary session, Michel Saint-Lot who was the UNICEF representative in Serbia during 2018, stated that, “No country will be able to compete in the global economy

unless it invests much more and more effectively in its people, and most importantly in its children. The stock of human capital of the next generation is built through strategic investments in health, education, and protection”.

During a welcome function for ‘Bharat Yatra (2017)’ in Ranchi, led by Kailash Satyarthi, the Nobel Peace prize winner said, “Jharkhand could attain greater socio-economic development if every child in the state is educated and remains safe and healthy”.

According to the government’s national achievement survey, only 59% of grade 3 students can actually read and comprehend a passage, and good quality teaching can be a major factor in changing this scenario, by encouraging learning and upgrading the school environment (Madhavan, 2017).

Since children spend a substantial amount of their waking hours in school, it is logical to look at how the school environment affects their development and learning. A major part of school environment is the teachers. Henry Brooks Adams rightly said, “Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops”.

Hattie (2003), in his research study ‘Teachers make a difference, what is the research evidence?’, identified six factors that significantly affect the variance in students’ performance, namely: the students, home, schools, principals, peers, and teachers. He notes that next to students, teachers is the factor that explains 30% of the variance in students’ performance. The teacher factor comprises elements like what the teachers know, do, and are concerned about, and all these together are very important in the student’s learning and achievement.

All the above stated evidence clearly indicates the fact that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the human resources of tomorrow. Thus, this study explored the job satisfaction level and personality traits, which are two of the most important factors predicting quality of work outcome, in primary school teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objective

Understanding how personality correlates with job satisfaction.

Hypotheses

H₁: Neuroticism will have a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction.

H₂: Extraversion will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₃: Openness to experience will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₄: Agreeableness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₅: Conscientiousness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Sample

The sample comprised 104 primary school teachers, teaching classes pre-nursery to grade 3, from Delhi (n₁=57) and Rohtak (n₂=47). The participants were selected using purposive sampling. Around 123 responses were collected from 13 schools, out of which 19 responses were discarded for two major reasons; first, participants not falling in the inclusion criteria (teaching classes pre-nursery to grade 3 and having a minimum tenure of one year) or second, incomplete responses. The sample consisted of 95 females and nine males, and the age range of the entire sample was 21 to 54 years.

Tools Used

Neo Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FFI), developed by Robert E. McCrae and Paul Costa Jr (1978), was used to measure personality traits. The questionnaire has five personality factors, namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. There are a total of 60 items, with 12 items for each of the personality factors. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4, where 0 represents ‘strongly disagree’, 1 is ‘disagree’, 2 ‘neutral’, 3 ‘agree’, and 4 represents ‘strongly agree’. Out of the 60 items, 27 items are negatively worded and are required to be reverse scored; for such items, 0 represents ‘strongly agree’ and 4 represents ‘strongly disagree’.

The reliability of the scale was established by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficients for the dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are 0.90, 0.78, 0.76, 0.86, and 0.90, respectively. Thus, the scale has high reliability.

As NEO FFI was developed as a shorter version of the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO PI-R), when NEO FFI was correlated with NEO PI-R, there were significant positive correlations, thereby providing evidence for both convergent and discriminate validity of the scale.

The Job Satisfaction Scale, developed by Paul E. Spector (1985), is a 36-item scale. The scale has nine subscales, namely pay, promotional opportunities, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work, and communication.

The scale has a summated rating format, with six agree-disagree response options, which are: disagree very much, disagree moderately, disagree slightly, agree slightly, agree moderately, and agree very much. Roughly half the items are written in a positive direction and half are worded negatively, and as Spector said in his paper, “each item is an evaluative statement, agreement with which would indicate either a positive or negative attitude about the job”.

The scale has a good internal consistency reliability, wherein the alpha coefficient for each of the subscale is above 0.50; in fact, all subscales, except two, had coefficients above 0.70 and the total scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91. The scale also has high test retest reliability, which ranges from 0.37 to 0.74 for the subscales, and is 0.71 for the entire scale.

In addition, the scale has provided good evidence for discriminant and convergent validity when correlated with Job Descriptive Index developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin in 1969.

Procedure

The research questionnaire was made, which consisted of two standardised questionnaires: Job Satisfaction Scale (Spector, 1985) and NEO FFI (McCrae & Costa, 1978).

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1: Correlation between Total Job Satisfaction Score and the Big Five Factors of Personality

	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Job Satisfaction	-.381**	.342**	.118	.451**	.554**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the five personality traits and total job satisfaction. Except openness to experience, all the four traits have significant correlation with job satisfaction at 0.01 level of significance. Extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have a positive significant correlation, whereas neuroticism has a negative significant correlation.

Table 2 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the five personality traits and the nine subscales of job satisfaction. Neuroticism has a significant negative correlation with all the subscales, except operating conditions. So, the first hypothesis is accepted.

H₁: Neuroticism will have a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction.

The first page of the questionnaire had information about the purpose of the study and an informed consent form; participation was voluntary.

The researcher then began the data collection, by personally going to schools and meeting the principals. The researcher met the principals and explained to him/her the purpose of the study and sought permission to collect data, after which the data was collected. Some data was also collected online, wherein the researcher created a Google Form and sent it to three resource persons, who further shared it with teachers or principals of different schools.

Once the required data was collected, the responses were fed in an Excel sheet. Scoring was done according to the scoring procedures described for the two scales. Finally, the data was analysed using quantitative data analysis methods on SPSS.

Analysis of Results

The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version. Pearson’s product moment correlation was calculated, and hierarchical regression analysis was carried out to find out the unique variance of various predictors.

Extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness also have a significant positive correlation with a majority of the subscales, except pay and operating conditions, promotion and operating conditions, and pay, promotion, and operating conditions, respectively. Thus, the following hypotheses are accepted.

H₃: Extraversion will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₄: Agreeableness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

H₅: Conscientiousness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Operating conditions did not have any significant correlation with either of the personality traits.

Table 2: Correlation between the Subscales of Job Satisfaction and the Big Five Factors of Personality

	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Pay	-.262**	.159	-.019	.279**	.188
Promotion	-.233**	.248*	-.011	.096	.192
Supervision	-.300**	.233*	.131	.321**	.517**
Fringe Benefits	-.281**	.219*	.024	.361**	.396**
Contingent Rewards	-.290**	.317**	.079	.285**	.397**
Operating Conditions	0.64	-.108	-.049	.100	-.034
Co-workers	-.450**	.378**	.167	.530**	.608**
Nature of Work	-.346**	.352**	.154	.382**	.595**
Communication	-.309**	.312**	.232*	.437**	.549**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from Table 2, openness to experience had a significant positive correlation with the subscale communication at 0.05 level of significance. However, it had no correlation with any other subscale or the total job

satisfaction score. Therefore, the following hypothesis is rejected.

H₃: Openness to experience will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Table 3: Correlation between Compound Variables and the Big Five Factors of Personality

	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Recognition for Work	-.351**	.313**	.027	.340**	.395**
Social Support	-.394**	.345**	.200*	.481**	.627**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlation between the five personality traits and the compound variables developed by the researchers. The compound variable social support has a significant correlation with all the five traits; negative with neuroticism and positive with the other four.

As for recognition for work, there is a significant positive correlation with extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, significant negative correlation with neuroticism, and no correlation with openness to experiences.

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Factors Contributing to Job Satisfaction

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² change
A	.467 ^a	.218	.170	.218
B	.618 ^b	.382	.337	.164
C	.638 ^c	.407	.357	.025

Model A: The demographic variables, i.e., place of residence, level of educational qualification, gender, tenure, age, and type of school were the predictors.

Model B: In addition to the demographic variables, conscientiousness is also a predictor.

Model C: Neuroticism was added as the predictor, along with demographic variables and conscientiousness.

The dependent variable for all the three models is total job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explore the job satisfaction level and personality traits of primary school teachers, and to analyse the interaction between the two constructs.

Job satisfaction, as defined by Locke (1976), is “an employee’s overall evaluation of his or her job as favorable or unfavorable”. Luthans described personality as “how people affect others and how they understand and view themselves, as well as their pattern of inner and outer measurable traits and the person situation interaction”.

The Job Satisfaction Survey, developed by Paul E. Spector (1985), was used for measuring the level of job satisfaction and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FFI) was used to assess the personality traits. Pearson’s correlation was computed to check for correlation between various subscales of job satisfaction and the factors of personality.

It was hypothesised that:

H₁: Neuroticism will have a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction.

The Pearson’s Product Moment correlation between the two was $-.381^{**}$, indicating that there is a significant negative relationship between the two constructs, which means that

if an individual's score on neuroticism is high, the scores on job satisfaction will be low, and vice versa. Neuroticism also had significant negative correlations with all the facets of job satisfaction, except operating conditions. Thus, the first hypothesis was accepted.

The second hypothesis stated that:

H₂: Extraversion will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

The correlation value for these two variables was .342**, suggesting significant positive correlation. In addition, extraversion showed a significant positive correlation with the facets of the job satisfaction scale, other than two facets, namely pay and operating conditions. So, H₂ was also accepted.

Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) reported similar findings, wherein they did a meta-analysis of over 163 samples and revealed that the strongest correlations were between job satisfaction and neuroticism (although it was a negative correlation, that is, with an increase in neuroticism scores, job satisfaction scores decreases), extraversion, and conscientiousness.

H₃: Openness to experience will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

The correlation between the two was .118, meaning no significant correlation between the two constructs. Openness to experience did not show any significant correlation with the facets of job satisfaction, other than for communication, with which it has a significant positive correlation at 0.05 level ($r=.232^*$). Thus, the third hypothesis was rejected.

The fourth hypothesis was:

H₄: Agreeableness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

The value of correlation was .451**, implying significant high positive correlation between the two variables. Agreeableness also has significantly positive correlation with most of the facets of job satisfaction, aside from the facets of promotion and operating conditions. Hence, the fourth hypothesis was also accepted.

For the last factor of NEO FFI, it was hypothesised that:

H₅: Conscientiousness will have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction.

Their correlation value was .554**, suggesting high significant positive correlation. Conscientiousness also has high significant positive correlations with most of the subscales of job satisfaction, except pay, promotion, and operating conditions; in fact, with operating conditions it actually had a non-significant negative correlation. Still, the hypothesis was accepted. Mohammadi (2011), in her

study 'Relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction among high school teacher', also found that conscientiousness correlated well with job satisfaction.

Based on what the items were trying to understand, the subscales of pay (example: 'I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do'), promotion (example: 'Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted'), contingent rewards (example: 'I do not feel the work I do is appreciated'), and fringe benefits (example: 'I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive') were combined into a new variable named 'recognition for work'.

In the same way, based on the content of the items, the subscales of supervision (example: 'My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates'), co-workers (example: 'There is too much bickering and fighting at work'), and communication (example: 'I often feel that I do not know what is going on in the organisation') were combined together into a new variable labelled 'social support'. Ideally, a factor analysis should have been used for this purpose, but because of lack of time, the subscales were combined on the basis of an analysis of what the items were targeted at exploring. Both recognition for work and social support had very high positively significant correlation with overall job satisfaction score.

Regression analysis was also conducted to understand which of the personality factors best predicted the outcome variable, that is, job satisfaction. Hierarchical regression analysis was used, which allows for addition of new variables in each step. In the first step, only the demographic variables like place of residence (Delhi and Rohtak), level of educational qualification, gender, tenure, age, and type of school (private and government/semi-government/run by Army) were added to the model using the 'enter method', wherein, if a variable does not have a significant contribution in predicting the outcome variable, it is still retained in the model. The value of R² for the demographic variables was .218, which means that all the demographic variables put together had a 21.8% variance in predicting job satisfaction.

In the next block, personality factors were added to understand the unique contribution of personality variables in explaining variance in job satisfaction scores. The 'stepwise method' was employed and conscientiousness was added to the model because it had the highest correlation with job satisfaction; the value of R² change was .164, suggesting that 16.4% of the unique variance in total job satisfaction was predicted by the personality factor of conscientiousness. Lastly, neuroticism was added in the model and it had a R² change value of .025, which implies that 2.5% of the unique variance in predicting job satisfaction was accounted for by neuroticism.

The demographic variables, conscientiousness and neuroticism, together had R² value of .407, which means all of them together can predict 40.7% of variance in the outcome variable, job satisfaction.

The analysis of variance, i.e., ANOVA, was calculated and the F-ratio values for the three models were 4.505, 8.490, and 8.155, which were all significant at $p < .001$. This indicates that there is less than 0.1% chance that the F-ratio happened by chance. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model proposed in this paper is significant. The R squared value suggests that 40% of variance in job satisfaction is accounted for by predictors, which indicates a decent model.

Some limitations of the present study are that although purposive sampling was employed for data collection, the data was collected from the schools that gave permission to the researcher for doing it, thus the randomness of the data cannot be guaranteed.

Secondly, both the questionnaires used were developed by foreign authors and have been standardised for the foreign population. Thus, the norms cannot be considered a true average in the Indian context.

Despite being assured that the responses would not be shared with any person in authority from the participant's school, a limitation could be the fact that for a majority of the participants, the data was collected within the school premises, after taking due permission from the Principal, due to which the chances of the participants 'faking good' cannot be ruled out, which in turn would have affected the results and findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Future research in this area should use qualitative data, like interviews or actual work sample, to check if the personality traits and job satisfaction actually translate to good job performance in reality. Secondly, personality factors can be explored in more detail by using Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), as it provides suggestions of professions, and for people with particular personalities. This information, along with a semi-structured interview, can be used to explore how well-adjusted and motivated people feel in their profession; the difference between people who have the personality to be a teacher and the people who do not can also be understood.

IMPLICATIONS

This study has great implications for schools, as it brings to light the importance of personality traits in the profession of teaching in India, thus, encouraging schools to use some form of personality testing during recruitment, like most other organisations do today. Additionally, the results may have implications for the schools from which data has been collected. The findings of JSS can be used by each school to improve the areas in which the teachers are least satisfied, which in the long run, will not just elevate their

job satisfaction, but also the productivity of the school in providing better human resources to the country.

CONCLUSION

It was found that there is a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism has a significant negative correlation with job satisfaction, whereas openness to experience did not have any significant relationship with job satisfaction. And 40% of variance in job satisfaction is accounted for by predictors (demographics, conscientiousness, and neuroticism).

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