

## **PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN RWANDAN CONTEXT**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study intended to find out if personality dimensions affect organizational performance in Rwandan context. This paper based personality dimensions of extraversion and conscientiousness as independent sub-variables and organizational productivity as dependent sub-variable. The population of the study was employees of public and private organizations located in Kigali City, and the sample size of 40 employees was selected through a random sampling technique. The data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive and inferential statistics analyzed using a mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient. The result of Pearson correlation coefficient (.432) revealed that there was a weak positive relationship between personality dimensions and organizational performance. A conclusion was drawn that in Rwandan context, personality dimensions have a weak effect on organizational performance. Based on the findings, researchers assumed that organizational performance can be affected by factors other than personality dimensions and suggested that those hidden factors could be revealed in the future research.

**Key Terms: Personality, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Performance, Organizational Performance, Productivity.**

## INTRODUCTION

One common goal amongst organizations is achieving their goals and objectives. However, organization does not exist or survive without human elements technically known as labor that can be skillful or unskillful (Gamberoni, von Uexkull & Weber 2010). As a matter of fact, labor's actions are driven by many factors that have been debated extensively in both psychology and economic disciplines. Specifically, those actions related to labor's relationship with his/her organization in helping the organization realizing its objectives (Salzman, 2000; Blackburn, 2006).

The organizations consider the human resource as one of their main resources and should take proper actions and implement strategies to achieve their objectives in terms of the human resources. These human resources individually possess diverse work-group dimensions such as personality dimensions that may influence negatively or positively the performance of jobs assigned to them and this may affect the performance of the whole organization (Damary & Davis, 2012).

Individuals are created with different instincts that subsequently determine the personality of such a person or the way the person act or react to his/her environment. Thus, research on personality have subject of interest in the centuries and recent years as it directly and indirectly affect business organizations and global economy as a whole. Scaling down authentic works on personality next paragraph listed popular definitions of personality (Alharbi & Alyahya, 2012).

According to some researchers , personality is:

*“The coherent pattern of affect, cognition, and desires (goals) as they lead to behavior”*  
(Revelle, 2013).

*“A dynamic organization, inside the person, of psychophysical systems that create the person's characteristic patterns of behavior, thoughts and feelings”* (Allport, 1961).

Personality has been considered as an important factor related to specifically for predicting the organizational performance. Organizational performance can be defined as when an organization meets its set targets putting into consideration all other personality, external and internal dimensions that affected performance. It is an accumulated end result of all the organization work processes and activities. Personality of employees is important to make sure the organization can accomplish the process and activities successfully (Fatimah, Baiduri & Zubair, 2015).

Although the relationship between personality and organizational performance in the private commercial companies has been fairly well studied and documented especially in developed countries, the issue has not received adequate attention in the case of public owned donor funded organizations, particularly those located in the developing World. Given that

organization performance is shaped by the workforce dimensions in terms of performance either collectively or individually, there was a need to profile the actual dimensions at play, in terms of personality, to see whether this particular dimension influences the performance of an organization. From the literature review, it is apparent that the issue of how personality dimensions influence public owned donor funded institutions performance has not been adequately studied particularly in the developing country context (Damary & Davis, 2012).

In Rwanda, researchers have not found any publication about this topic, the reason why they chose to work on the effect of personality dimensions on organizational performance. The purpose of this study concentrated on personality dimensions in term of extraversion and conscientiousness and how they affect performance in an organization through productivity and it was guided by the following main research questions:

What is the perception of respondent on extraversion?

What is the perception of respondent on conscientiousness?

What is the perception of respondent on productivity?

To what extent the personality dimensions affect organizational performance?

The study of the link between personality dimensions and productivity is important for researchers for two different reasons:

First, employers are interested on a better understanding of this relationship whose anecdotal evidence shows the importance of personality in the workplace. For instance, personnel managers find attitude, motivation and personality as the most important attributes when hiring (Green, Machin & Wilkinson, 1998). Secondly, understanding to what extent personality traits impact labor market outcomes through productivity or through other mechanisms is the key to offer an adequate foundation for policy interventions because certain personality traits are more shapeable than cognitive skills (Borghans *et al.* 2008).

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Personality**

Personality has been considered as an important factor in the personality related studies specifically for predicting the job performance. It is a behavior which differentiates one person from another (Beer & Brooks, 2011) and provides acumen whether a person will do some specific job, in comparison to others (Sackett *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, the traits, relevant to personality, are considered to be stable and steady throughout the work life in a personality behaviour model (Denissen *et al.*, 2011; Gerber *et al.*, 2011; Myers, 1998).

Studies on personality and organizational outcomes have received enormous attention by researchers in the organizational behavior research stream. Latest studies illustrate that personality affects the environments in which individuals are living (Chen, 2004; Schneider *et al.*, 1998; Judge & Cable, 1997; Barrick *et al.*, 2003) and plays a significant role to select

the situation in which individuals decide to stay in. According to Barrick and Mount (2000), the preference for organizational environments, the cycle of individuals one choose to interact with and the kind of activities one enjoys strongly relies on one's personality. Values of this type also relates strongly with person-organization (P-O) fit.

### **Personality Dimensions**

Colquitt *et al.*, (2009) identified five dimensions that describe personality. These include; conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extroversion commonly referred to as big five model. This paper only concentrated on extraversion and conscientiousness:

**Extraversion** includes traits such as sociability, assertiveness, activity and talkativeness. Extraverts are energetic and optimistic. Introverts are reserved rather than unfriendly, independent rather than followers, even-paced rather than sluggish. Extraversion is characterized by positive feelings and experiences and is therefore seen as a positive effect (Clark & Watson, 1991). It was found that Extraversion is a valid predictor of performance in jobs characterized by social interaction, such as sales personnel and managers (Bing & Lounsbury, 2000; Lowery & Krilowicz, 1994; Vinchur *et al.*, 1998). Johnson (1997) found a positive relationship between Extraversion and job performance of police personnel, and explained this relationship in terms of the high level of interaction in the police service.

In general, there are at least three basic characteristics of extraversion that make it important to study. First, extraversion has emerged as one of the fundamental dimensions of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992a; Digman, 1990; Eysenck & Himmelweit, 1947; Goldberg, 1990; Norman, 1963). As such, extraversion has the potential to explain the co variation of a wide variety of behaviors, which is one of the central concerns for the field of personality (Funder, 2001). Second, extraversion predicts effective functioning and well-being across a wide variety of domains (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006) from cognitive performance (Matthews, 1992) and social endeavors (Eaton & Funder, 2003) to social economic status (Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007). Third, extraversion predicts risk and also resilience for different forms of psychopathology (Trull & Sher, 1994; Widiger, 2005).

**Conscientiousness** refers to self-control and the active process of planning, organizing and carrying out tasks (Barrick & Mount, 1993). The conscientious person is purposeful, strong-willed and determined. Conscientiousness is manifested in achievement orientation (hardworking and persistent), dependability (responsible and careful) and orderliness (planful and organized). On the negative side, high conscientiousness may lead to annoying fastidiousness, compulsive neatness or workaholic behavior. Low scorers may not necessarily lack moral principles, but they are less exacting in applying them (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003).

Conscientious is made up four (4) primary factors that define different ways that human beings manage to control their behavior. They are; Rule consciousness, Perfectionism, Seriousness and Groundedness. Rule consciousness involves adopting and conscientiously following societies' accepted standards of behavior. Perfectionism describes a tendency to be self disciplined, organized, thorough, attentive to detail and goal oriented. Seriousness involves a tendency to be cautious, reflective, self restrained and deliberate in making decisions. Groundedness involves a tendency to stay focused on concrete, pragmatic and realistic solutions. Conscientiousness refers to individuals who exhibit traits of self-control by means of being capable of planning, organizing, working strategically towards goals, and carrying out tasks (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Barrick, Mount & Stewart, 1998).

### **Personality Related Theories**

Hogan and Shelton (2006) pointed out that the personality theories examine the variances and similarities in a person. The similarities can be used to predict one's performance and behavior, as they provide the collective attributes of human nature. These theories are (1) Psychoanalytic theories; (2) Humanistic theories; (3) Biological theories; (4) Behavioral, Social learning and Cognitive theories; and (5) Trait theories.

**Psychoanalytic theories:** Freud (1923) saw the personality structured into three parts (i.e. tripartite), the id, ego and superego (also known as the psyche), all developing at different stages in our lives. These are systems, not parts of the brain, or in any way physical. The id is the primitive and instinctive component of personality. It consists of all the inherited (i.e. biological) components of personality, including the sex (life) instinct – Eros (which contains the libido), and aggressive (death) instinct - Thanatos. It operates on the pleasure principle which is the idea that every wishful impulse should be satisfied immediately, regardless of the consequences. The ego develops in order to mediate between the unrealistic id and the external real world (like a referee). It is the decision making component of personality. The ego operates according to the reality principle, working our realistic ways of satisfying the id's demands, often compromising or postponing satisfaction to avoid negative consequences of society. The ego considers social realities and norms, etiquette and rules in deciding how to behave. The superego incorporates the values and morals of society which are learned from one's parents and others. It is similar to a conscience, which can punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt (Freud, 1920).

**Humanistic theories:** Seeded into Knowles's philosophies of adult learning, humanistic theory's primary focuses are peoples' needs, self-concept/esteem, and values (Huitt, 2006). Edwards (as cited in Huitt, 2001) describes humanism as "a school of thought that believes human beings are different from other species and possess capacities not found in animals." Personal goals are one of the main properties of humanistic theory (Huitt, 2001).

**Biological theories:** Eysenck (1952, 1967, 1982) was the one of the first theorists to attempt to relate biology to personality. He suggested that human brain has two sets of neural mechanisms, extatary and inhibitory and developed a very influential model of personality. Based on the results of factor analyses of responses on personality questionnaires he

identified three dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. According to Eysenck, the two dimensions of neuroticism (stable vs. unstable) and introversion-extroversion combine to form a variety of personality characteristics.

**Behavioral, Social Learning and Cognitive theories:** According to Bandura, observational learning plays a primary role in the acquisition, maintenance, and modification of behavior. He suggests instead that imitative learning often occurs in the absence of external reinforcement. We acquire behavior without performing it overtly and without being reinforced for it. We simply watch the behavior of others, represent it cognitively (that is, symbolically), and then perform it under the appropriate conditions. The focus is on the ways in which behavior is learned when the person is exposed to single and multiple models with varying personality characteristics (Ryckman, 2006).

**Trait Theories:** Trait theory of personality emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and the internal cognitive and motivational processes that influence behavior. For example, intelligence, temperament, habits, skills, attitudes, and traits. Allport (1937) believes that personality is biologically determined at birth, and shaped by a person's environmental experience. His definition of personality refers to the individual's characteristic, or unique, behavior and thought. He maintained that all the traits we apparently share with others are, at base, idiosyncratic and acknowledged that this aspect of the definition is very broad, but he wanted to take into account the fact that we not only adjust to our environment by behaving in certain ways, but we also reflect on it. Allport's view of personality emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and the internal cognitive and motivational processes that influence behavior. These internal processes and structures include the person's physique, intelligence, temperament, reflexes, drives, habits, skills, beliefs, intentions, attitudes, values, and traits (Ryckman, 2006).

Among all the above mentioned five theories, trait theory is considered as one of the most accepted and a leading personality theory which captures the salient aspects that have high propensity to lead to certain behaviors. Traits determine a person's variances in the trend to develop a steady pattern of feelings, thoughts and actions Theories discussing the personality traits argued that a person's behavior can be explained on the basis of some specific personality traits (Myers, 1998).

### **Performance**

The authors, Lebars & Euske (2006) provide a set of definitions to illustrate the concept of organizational performance:

Performance is a set of financial and nonfinancial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of objectives and results;

Performance is dynamic, requiring judgment and interpretation;

Performance may be illustrated by using a causal model that describes how current actions may affect future results;

Performance may be understood differently depending on the person involved in the assessment of the organizational performance (e.g. performance can be understood differently from a person within the organization compared to one from outside);

To define the concept of performance is necessary to know its elements characteristic to each area of responsibility;

To report an organization's performance level, it is necessary to be able to quantify the results.

### **Organizational Performance**

Although the concept of organizational performance is very common in the academic literature, its definition is difficult because of its many meanings. For this reason, there isn't a universally accepted definition of this concept. In the 50s organizational performance was defined as the extent to which organizations, viewed as a social system fulfilled their objectives (Georgopoulos & Tannenbaum, 1957). Performance evaluation during this time was focused on work, people and organizational structure. Later in the 60s and 70s, organizations have begun to explore new ways to evaluate their performance so performance was defined as an organization's ability to exploit its environment for accessing and using the limited resources (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967).

The years 80s and 90s were marked by the realization that the identification of organizational objectives is more complex than initially considered. Managers began to understand that an organization is successful if it accomplishes its goals (effectiveness) using a minimum of resources (efficiency). Thus, organizational theories that followed supported the idea of an organization that achieves its performance objectives based on the constraints imposed by the limited resources (Lusthaus & Adrien, 1998 after Campbell, 1970).

### **Productivity**

Simply put, productivity is efficiency in production: how much output is obtained from a given set of inputs. As such, it is typically expressed as an output-input ratio. Single-factor productivity measures reflect units of output produced per unit of a particular input. Labor productivity is the most common measure of this type, though occasionally capital or even materials productivity measures are used (Syverson, 2011).

Importantly, therefore, Bloom and Van Reenen (2007) document that higher-quality management practices (and higher scores) are correlated with several measures of productivity and firm performance, including labor productivity. Management is an unmeasured input in most production functions, and hence is embodied in the productivity measure. Similarly, the productive effects of inputs like (non-management) labor and capital can also enter productivity if there are input quality differences that standard input measures do not capture.

### **Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Organizational Performance**

Hayes *et al.* (1994) found that supervisor ratings of specific performance criteria and overall job effectiveness were related positively to Conscientiousness. In a sample of sewing machine operators, Krilowicz and Lowerey (1996) found significant positive relations between operator productivity and traits corresponding closely with Conscientiousness and Extraversion.

Lioa *et al.* (2004) argued that the more conscientious and agreeable individuals have more efficient operations than the others. Zimmerman *et al.* (2012) declared that the extroverts are characterized by their enjoyment in interaction with the supervisors and they are found to achieve the compensations and higher positions. The extroverts are gregarious, assertive and have positive emotions to the others. It is further declared that the extroverts have more experiences in the organization in terms of achieving higher social integration (Zimmerman, 2008).

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, a correlation research design taking a survey approach was used. The target population consisted of employees from public and private organizations taking place in Kigali city and a probability random sampling technique was used to select a population sample of 40 employees. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires (following Likert Scales) given to respondents. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the lecturer of Organization Behavior course has been consulted and approved it.

The data analysis tool used was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in the form of statistical frequencies and percentages, and tables. Researchers used also mean evaluating the strength or weakness in respondents' perception, standard deviation showing homogeneity or heterogeneity of data, and Pearson correlation coefficient to analyze and interpret the data through the perception of respondents on extraversion, conscientiousness, and productivity to come up with establishing the relationship between personality dimensions and organizational performance.

The data analysis and interpretation of results based on mean, standard deviation, and pearson correlation. According to Aggresti and Flanklin (2009), to evaluate the centre of distribution, a mean between 1.00- 2.50 is weak while that between 2.50- 4.00 is strong. To evaluate the dispersion of data, a standard deviation below .5 indicates low dispersion of data (homogeneity) whereas that above .5 indicates big dispersion of data (heterogeneity).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Through a structured questionnaire, each of the 40 respondents from public and private institutions located in Kigali city was asked to express how extraversion, consciousness, and productivity are perceived at workplace. The findings revealed that the perception of respondents on extraversion indicated the mean of each statement varying

between 2.50- 4.00, which showed that all respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied by team work, emotionally expressive in their workplace, their interpersonal skills contributed highly in job satisfaction, satisfied by their achievements through teamwork, feel a position where there is a good deal with social interaction, enjoyed interacting with their coworkers, usually the energizers at parties, very snappy when they were stressed, and had more good qualities than bad ones. All standard deviations for each statement was below .5 and this indicates homogeneity of data except the standard deviation of ninth statement of .52563 which was above .5 indicating heterogeneity of data collected from respondents.

Regarding perception of respondents on consciousness, the results portrayed the mean of each statement varying between 2.50- 4.00 too, which revealed that all respondents strongly agreed that they were well organized to perform any task assigned to them, were hardworking to finish their task on time, were accomplishment strivers in their workplace, they felt responsible of their job performance in the organization, they learnt more to get their job well performed for the organization interest, they did not engage in risky behaviors like smoking, drinking and drugs, and risky sexual behavior, they were risk averters while performing their task in their organization, they were loyal and committed to their organizations, they were vigilant and systematic while performing any task they were assigned to, and they were finally diligent and attentive while performing work tasks. All standard deviations being below .5 indicated homogeneity of data collected from respondents.

Finally, the finding on the perception of respondents on productivity illustrated the mean of each statement ranging between 2.50- 4.00, which demonstrated that all respondents strongly agree that the manager reevaluates performance in term of productivity based on employee personality, the manager hires mostly extraverts and conscientious employees capable to perform different tasks that are core roots of organizational financial productivity, that extraverts and conscientious employees have a contractual commitment to organizational productivity and that in case conflicts incurred to harm organizational productivity, extravert employees are mostly useful to conflict resolution within the organization. All their standard deviations were below .5 which proved homogeneity of data collected from respondents.

The remaining statements having also means between 2.50- 4.00 revealed that respondents strongly agreed that to achieve organizational productivity, the manager hires employees whose personality mostly is extraversion and/ or conscientiousness, that to achieve organizational productivity, the manager allocates employees in their works that match with extraversion or conscientiousness personality dimensions, that conscientious employees play a measure role in organizational productivity of your organization, that extravert employees are maximally productive in customer care services of their organizations, that extraversion and conscientiousness personality dimensions are the main factors affecting organizational productivity within their organizations, and that the stability of conscientious employees into the organization enables them to achieve organizational productivity as planned. All

their standard deviations were above .5 that displayed heterogeneity of data collected from respondents.

In order to identify the extent to which the personality dimensions affect organizational performance, researchers determined the correlation between personality dimensions and organizational performance using Pearson correlation coefficient as it is seen in the table below:

**Correlation**

		<b>Personality Dimensions</b>	<b>Organizational Performance</b>
<b>Personality Dimensions</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.437
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.126
	N	40	40
<b>Organizational Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.437	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.126	
	N	40	40

*Source: Primary data (2015)*

From the table above, results in the statistical sum of the numerical data from the perception of respondents on extraversion, consciousness and productivity analyzed using SPSS software provided the result of Pearson correlation of .437 revealing that there is positively weak correlation between personality dimensions and organizational performance.

**Conclusion**

This study investigated the relationship among personality dimensions and organizational performance in Rwandan context. The researchers examined the extent to which personality dimensions (consciousness and extraversion) affect organizational performance (Productivity) from respondents’ perceptions. The finding revealed that there exist a positive weak relationship between the cited personality dimensions and organizational performance as indicated by Pearson correlation coefficient of .437. Based on the findings, researchers assumed that organizational performance can be affected by factors other than personality dimensions and suggest that those hidden factors could be revealed in the future research.

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## Appendix

### Research Questionnaire

#### PART A: Biographical Information

This section includes 5 questions. Please tick the correct answer.

**1. Gender**

a) Male  b) Female

**2. Marital status:**

a) Single  b) Married  Others

**3. Age range (years)**

a) 25-30  b) 31-40  c) 41-50  d) 51 and above

**4. Qualification**

a) Advanced Diploma  b) Bachelor  c) Masters  d) PhD

**5. Working experience**

a) Between 3-5 years  b) Between 5-10 years  c) 10 years and above

**PART B: Perception of the respondents on personality dimensions**

**Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree, 3- Agree (A), 4-Strongly Agree (SA)**

No	Assertions on extraversion	SD	D	A	SA
1	I am satisfied by team work	1	2	3	4
2	I feel secured while performing my work in group.	1	2	3	4
3	I am emotionally expressive in my workplace.	1	2	3	4
4	My interpersonal skills contribute highly in job satisfaction	1	2	3	4
5	I am satisfied by my achievements through teamwork.	1	2	3	4
6	I feel a position where there is a good deal with social interaction	1	2	3	4
7	I enjoy interacting with my coworkers	1	2	3	4
8	I am usually the energizer at parties	1	2	3	4
9	I am very snappy when I'm stressed	1	2	3	4
10	I have more good qualities than bad ones	1	2	3	4
<b>Assertions on conscientiousness</b>					
1	I am well organized to perform any task assigned to me.	1	2	3	4
2	I am hardworking to finish my task on time	1	2	3	4
3	I am an accomplishment striver in my workplace.	1	2	3	4
4	I feel responsible of my job performance in the organization	1	2	3	4
5	I learn more to get my job well performed for the organization interest.	1	2	3	4
6	I do not engage in risky behaviors like smoking, drinking and drugs, and risky sexual behavior.	1	2	3	4
7	I am a risk averter while performing my task in my organization.	1	2	3	4
8	I am loyal and committed to my organization.	1	2	3	4
9	I am vigilant and systematic while performing any task I am assigned to.	1	2	3	4
10	I am diligent and attentive while performing work tasks.	1	2	3	4

**PART C: Perception of the respondents on Productivity**

**Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2- Disagree, 3- Agree (A), 4-Strongly Agree (SA)**

No	Assertions on Productivity	SD	D	A	SA
1	The manager evaluates performance in term of productivity based on employee personality.	1	2	3	4
2	To achieve organizational productivity, the manager hires employees whose personality mostly is extraversion and/ or conscientiousness.	1	2	3	4
3	To achieve organizational productivity, the manager allocates employees in their works that match with extraversion or conscientiousness personality dimensions.	1	2	3	4
4	The manager hires mostly extraverts and conscious employees capable to perform different tasks that are core roots of organizational financial productivity.	1	2	3	4
5	Conscientious employees play a measure role in organizational productivity of your organization.	1	2	3	4
6	Extravert employees are maximally productive in customer care services of your organization.	1	2	3	4
7	Extraversion and conscientiousness personality dimensions are the main factors affecting organizational productivity within your organization.	1	2	3	4
8	Extraverts and conscientious employees have a contractual commitment to organizational productivity.	1	2	3	4
9	The stability of conscientious employees into the organization enables them to achieve organizational productivity as planned.	1	2	3	4
10	In case conflicts incurred to harm organizational productivity, extravert employees are mostly useful to conflict resolution within the organization.	1	2	3	4

**THANK YOU!**