

# The Relationship between Self-Leadership, Personality and Job Satisfaction: A Review

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## Abstract

This review paper explores the relationship between self-leadership, personality and job satisfaction among employees. Self-leadership is defined as a set of self-influence strategies that have effective potential for application in various types of organization. Personality is commonly associated with individual's unique behavioral traits. Authors also discuss the Big Five Model Theory and Type A and Type B personality theory. The impacts of the constructs of the two theories on employees' job satisfaction are reviewed in this paper.

**Keywords:** self-leadership, personality, job satisfaction, employees, leadership

## 1. Introduction

According to Rigotti et al. (2008), employees with high occupational self-efficacy can successfully perform their job tasks. Employees who are the one who actually perform the job should be involved in making decisions which are directly related to them and their job. Furthermore, greater equality may inspire behavioral commitment from team members (Corrigan-Brown & Wilkes, 2012; Hyman & Mason, 1995).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is full with intense competition. Hence, highly competitive labor market can provide organization with a lot of talented workers and can create a conducive working environment for people who really interested to work (Barbuto & Scholl, 1999). Personality is important to shape our behavior in life, even through in our working life. Therefore, if we really want to know the behavior of a person to satisfy the needs of an organization, we need to know about their personality. According to Bedeian, et al. (1992), perceptions of an individual about politics in their workplace negatively influence their jobs, feelings toward their colleagues, productivity and intention of leaving.

Ali (2009) also commented that high turnover bring destruction to the organization in the form of both direct and indirect cost. According to Abbasi and Hollman (2000), employees who are most likely to leave the organization are those who are most talented and smartest within the group. Their valuable experiences, talent, skills and knowledge will go with them and resulted in deteriorating efficiency.

Many past researches have clearly identified that there are relationship between self-leadership and personality and job satisfaction of employee in their workplace (Salahudin et al., 2009; Gwavuya, 2011; Tasso et al., 2002; Ali, 2009; Park & Kim, 2009).

## 2. Literature Review

Self-leadership is defined as a set of self-influence strategies that have effective potential for application in various types of organization (Jeffery, et al. (2004). Hence, Ebben (2012) concluded that self-leadership strategies are indeed distinct from, yet related to certain personality traits. Self-leadership also can lead to effective leadership, stability and enhanced productivity in organizational context. People or individuals used self-leadership strategies to enhance their personality effectiveness through natural reward, behavior-focused and constructive thought strategies (Manz & Neck, 2004). Hence, Panja, et al. (2012) summarize that self-leadership is a normative concept that will provides certain behavioral and cognition prescription while operating within and through the theoretical contexts provided by self-regulation, social cognitive, self-control, and intrinsic motivation theories. Therefore, social cognitive career theory is the theory related to self-leadership.

### *2.1 Cognitive and Behavioral Strategies*

For this research, cognitive and behavioral strategies include and relate with behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies and constructive thought pattern strategies.

#### a) Behavior -focused strategies

Manz and Neck (2004) found that behavior-focused strategies are intended to increase self-awareness leading to the management of behaviors involving necessary but perhaps unpleasant tasks. Behavior-focused self-leadership strategies are designed to encourage positive, desirable behaviors that lead to successful outcomes while suppressing negative, undesirable behaviors that will lead to unsuccessful outcomes (Cox et al., 2003). These strategies include self-observation, self-goal-setting, self-motivation and self-explorer. According to Manz (1992) and Manz and Neck (1999), a behavior-focused strategy is to enhance the self-consciousness; increase an individual or people self-consciousness in order to the management of necessary, occasionally unlikable and behaviors.

#### b) Natural reward strategies

According to Sharon (2008), natural reward strategies helps individuals shape perceptions and build enjoyable aspects into activities they involved. Manz (1986) found that natural reward strategies focus on the inherently enjoyable aspects of a given task or activity that will create feelings of competence, self-control, and purpose by enhancing intrinsic motivation. Besides, natural reward strategies have two primary reward strategies; first is to enjoy the task that enable someone to facilitate optimal functioning and the task itself becomes naturally rewarding. The second strategy is to refocus in the task's inherently rewarding aspects and shaping the perception by focusing attention away from the undesirable facet of the assignment (Manz & Neck, 2004). Lastly, Thomas (2000) mention that doing "the right things" will make people feel good and happy.

#### c) Constructive thought pattern strategies

Constructive thought pattern strategies deal with the creation or alternation of cognitive thought processes. According to Manz and Neck (2004), these strategies enable individuals to identify dysfunctional beliefs and create new thought patterns of changing existing thoughts into more positive one. These strategies facilitate the generation of habitual ways of thinking that positively influence performance. Constructive thought pattern strategies are often referred to as thought self-leadership. It suggests that individuals can influence and control their own thoughts through the use of specific cognitive strategies designed to facilitate the formation of constructive thought patterns that can positively affect performance (Neck & Manz, 1992). In addition, constructive thought pattern strategies may be particularly useful in increasing team members' self-efficacy beliefs for sharing leadership roles. For example, team member may be suffering from dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions and from negative self-talk relative to his ability to engage in leadership behaviors (Cox et al., 2003).

### *2.2 Personality Theory*

Personality theory was an important element of the counseling relationship that explore different culture to improve people ability to engage in effective relationships with others (Russel et al., 2002). Personality is an individual's unique constellation of consistent behavioral traits. In this research, Big Five Model and Type A and Type B personality theory has been chosen.

#### a) Big Five Model

The Big Five model is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions that include openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism or called emotional stability (McCrae & Oliver, 1992). The Big Five factors are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Big five model

Traits	Description
O Openness to experience	* Being curious, original, intellectual, creative and open new ideas
C Conscientiousness	* Being organized, systematic, punctual, achievement oriented and dependable.
E Extroversion	* Being outgoing, talkative, sociable and enjoying social situations
A Agreeableness	* Being affable, tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind and warm.
N Neuroticism or Emotional stability	* Being anxious, temperamental and moody

### Extroversion

Extroversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Therefore, extroverts can be divided into two types that are extroverts and introverts. Extroverts can get their energy from interacting with others; they like to communicate with people, full of energy, often create positive emotions and is the people who like to say "Yes" or "Let's go" to opportunities for excitement. Introverts will be the opposite meaning from extroverts. They will get their energy from within themselves, lack of energy, do not take part in activity and do not socialize (Costa & McRae, 1992). Lastly, extroversion shows energy, positive emotions, and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others.

### Agreeableness

Agreeableness was a tendency to be compassionate cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others. According to Bligh (2011), agreeableness or an individual's tendency to be able to trust, conforming and accepting, has weak relationship with leadership. Therefore, agreeableness bring advantages for attaining and maintaining popularity and it will reflects people or individual differences concerning with cooperation and social harmony. High agreeableness describes a person who will react to others with warmth and will bend to avoid conflict. While low agreeableness described as only following one's inner voice regardless of others' feelings (Costa & McRae, 1992). Hence, agreeable people will normally be helpful, friendly and cooperative. Agreeableness includes traits like kind, sympathetic and warm.

### Openness to experience

Openness to experience includes the attitude or appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity and variety of experience. Openness to experience also means people who like to learn new things and always enjoy their new experiences. High openness refers to the person with relatively more interests, consequently and relatively less depth within each interest. A person with low openness will have relatively few interests and relatively more depth in each of those interests (Costa & McRae, 1992). Therefore, openness to experience includes traits like being imaginative and having a wide variety of interests.

### Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to goal-directed behavior and a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, aim for achievement and will plan rather than having spontaneous behavior. People who have conscientiousness are reliable and prompt. High conscientiousness refers to a person who focuses intensely on his or her goals and exhibits the self-discipline associated with such focus. Therefore, low conscientiousness refers to one who is disorganized and distracted (Costa & McRae, 1992). Lastly, conscientiousness is defined as an individual's tendency to be organized, through, controlled, decisive and dependable (Bligh, 2011).

### Emotional stability or Neuroticism

Emotional stability is also called neuroticism. It is related with emotional stability, degree of negative emotions and anxiety. Emotional stability has been moderately and negatively related to leadership, and previous study suggested that most leaders tend to be low in neuroticism (Bligh, 2011). Emotional stability experience unpleasant emotions easily, like anger, anxiety and depression. According to Costa and McRae (1992), more resilient people (high on emotional stability) are less prone to experiencing negative reactions. Therefore, emotional stability included traits like moody and tense.

### b) Type A Personality

Type A is one of the personality theories and it generally refers to hard workers who are often preoccupied with schedules and the speed of their performance. The tendency of being self-critical is high among Type A individuals. Type A behavior always includes competitiveness and strong achievement-orientation. Type A personality characteristics are more of a reaction to environmental factors or tendencies toward certain behaviors. For example:

- Many jobs put heavy demands on time, making it necessary for workers to be very concerned with getting things done quickly if they're to adequately get their job done.
- Some workplace put heavy penalties on mistakes, so efficiency and achievement becomes extremely important.
- Other jobs just create more stress, making people less patient, more stressed, and more prone to "Type A" behaviors.

### c) Type B Personality

Type B personality is exactly different or opposite of Type A. Type A personalities may be more creative, imaginative and philosophical than Type B personalities. Therefore, Type B personality generally lives at a lower stress level and are typically work steadily, enjoying achievements but not becoming stressed and enjoy exploring ideas and concept. Stress can be dealt much easier for Type B personality. These individuals do not suffer from anxiety, and hence have lower the risk of suffering from ailment such as heart disease. Lastly, Type B personality prevails in individuals who are calm and have an easy-going attitude and they are fun-loving and relatively less competitive.

#### *2.3 Relationship between Self-Leadership and Job Satisfaction*

Javadi, et al. (2013), has tested the relationship between self-leadership strategies and job satisfaction at an educational organization in Isfahan. 180 employees were selected but only 164 employees completed the questionnaire. This study had showed that the behavior focused strategies, natural reward strategies and constructive thought pattern strategies had a significant effect on job satisfaction and self-leadership. The findings showed that self-leadership can be considered as a predictor of job satisfaction. Besides that, the results also stated that having self-leadership characteristic can influence on enhancing job satisfaction. So, training the self-leadership skills for employees is a good way to increase their job satisfaction (Javadi et al., 2013).

John (2005) has investigated the relationship of self-leadership behavioral-focused strategies and job satisfaction. The questionnaires were completed by 304 employees from a manufacturing organization in Australia. This study was conducted to examine whether organizations should develop and deliver training programs to allow their employees to apply self-leadership strategies at work and to improve employees' job satisfaction, confidence and performance outcomes. The results suggested that organizations must create more complex empowerment interventions and job satisfaction mediates the relationship between self-leadership behavioral-focused strategies and team performance (John, 2005).

Heather and Roseanne (1989) conducted a study to evaluate the interaction of self-leadership and work structure in predicting job satisfaction. A total of 76 employees from two divisions of a large manufacturing firm in mid-Atlantic region were chosen in this research. The survey found that satisfaction was higher for employees with high self-leadership. However, satisfaction was higher for employees with low self-leadership who worked in high structure environments. (Heather & Roseanne, 1989).

In addition, Ali Mohammad and Mohammad Hossein (2006) found that there is a relationship between leadership type and job satisfaction. 814 employees from the first line, middle line and senior managers of hospitals in Iran were chosen in this research. The sample was chosen based on a stratified random sampling. According this research, employees demonstrated less satisfaction with salary, benefit, promotion and communication and more satisfaction with factors like nature of the job, workers and supervision type factors. These results suggested that employee job satisfaction normally depends upon leadership style of management.

#### *2.4 Relationship between Personality and Job Satisfaction*

Adrian, et al. (2002) examined the relationship between personality traits and aspects of job satisfaction. 30 male and 52 female full time employees from three different companies in positions ranging from administration to senior management took part in this study. The researchers concluded that personality traits does not have a strong or consistent influence either on what individuals perceive as important in their job environment or on their level of job satisfaction (Adrian, et al., 2002).

Rothmann and Coetzer (2002) had investigated on the relationship between personality dimensions (Big Five Model) and job satisfaction in a pharmaceutical organization in South Africa. The samples were collected from 159 employees in a pharmaceutical organization and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and NEO Personality Inventory Revised were used as measuring instruments. They found that job satisfaction has a negative relationship with neuroticism, and it has a positive relationship with extroversion and agreeableness; as well as facets of conscientiousness.

Selin and Pinar (2011) had also studied on the relationship between personality traits (conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) and job satisfaction in insurance companies. Survey data were collected from 218 employees. They found that organizations should focus more on developing employees' justice which is the underlying relationship between personality and job satisfaction. Besides, this study also demonstrated that the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction were completely mediated by procedural justice, therefore the relationship between extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism and job satisfaction were partially mediated by procedural justice (Selin & Pinar, 2011).

Sampath (2012) conducted a study to investigate the impact of the Five factor model of personality on job satisfaction of non-academic employees' in Sri Lankan universities. The data was tested using correlation coefficient and regression analysis. A total 150 non-academic employees from the University of Rajarata, Wayamba and Sabaragamuwa was chosen in this study. From the survey, extroversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness of non-academic employees had significant positive relationships with their job satisfaction. Second, significant negative relationship was reported between neuroticism and job satisfaction. Third, openness to experience had insignificant relationship with job satisfaction. As a conclusion, the five factor model had an important influence on non-academic employees' job satisfaction.

Tesdimir, et al. (2012) has examined the effects of the personality traits and job satisfaction among professional sales representatives working in the pharmaceutical industry in Turkey. 450 sales persons from Turkish pharmaceutical companies were chosen in this study. This study showed that personality traits can be an important factor and make a difference in job satisfaction. For example, manager can utilize the personality traits as a screening in recruiting to select and retain good personal sales representative. Personal sales representative who had an extra or more pharmaceutical experience will have higher job satisfaction. The results showed that personal sales representative who had a higher education level will had lower job satisfaction.

Harold (2010) also found that personality traits in relation to job satisfaction of management educators. The study evaluated Big Five personality traits and general job satisfaction. 175 management faculty members from 25 business schools were chosen in this study. However, this study showed that personality tests is useful in the hiring processes like hiring the right candidates; as job satisfaction, almost leads to higher level of productivity and effectiveness.

Richardson, et al. (2009) had examined the relationship between personality traits (Big Five Model) and job satisfaction. The research proved that business majors scored higher for conscientiousness, emotional stability, extroversion, assertiveness and tough-mindedness but scored lower for agreeableness and openness to experience. Therefore, all personality traits except agreeableness and touch-mindedness correlated significantly and positively with job satisfaction (Richardson et al., 2009).

Lavanda (2013) also demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between personality and job satisfaction amongst workers in Bahamas. The sample was collected from 384 workers in the New Providence. The study found that the internal locus of control is highly correlated with job satisfaction. The results indicated that there is a positive impact from an individual personality on job satisfaction (Lavanda, 2013).

Mi Hwa Jung and Myung Suk Koh (2012) had studied on the effects of preceptor nurses' self-leadership on role recognition and job satisfaction. 171 preceptor nurses who worked in one of the three general hospitals in Seoul were chosen in this study. Role recognition was found to be important but they also found that to improve preceptor's job satisfaction, special training programs should or must be added or provided to enhance all preceptor's self-leadership.

### *2.5 Conceptual Framework*

Base on the above literature review, a conceptual framework is developed as shown in Figure 1. It shows the dependent variable (DV) that is job satisfaction and two independent variables (IV) that are self-leadership and personality. These independent variables are found to be associated with the level of job satisfaction among employees.

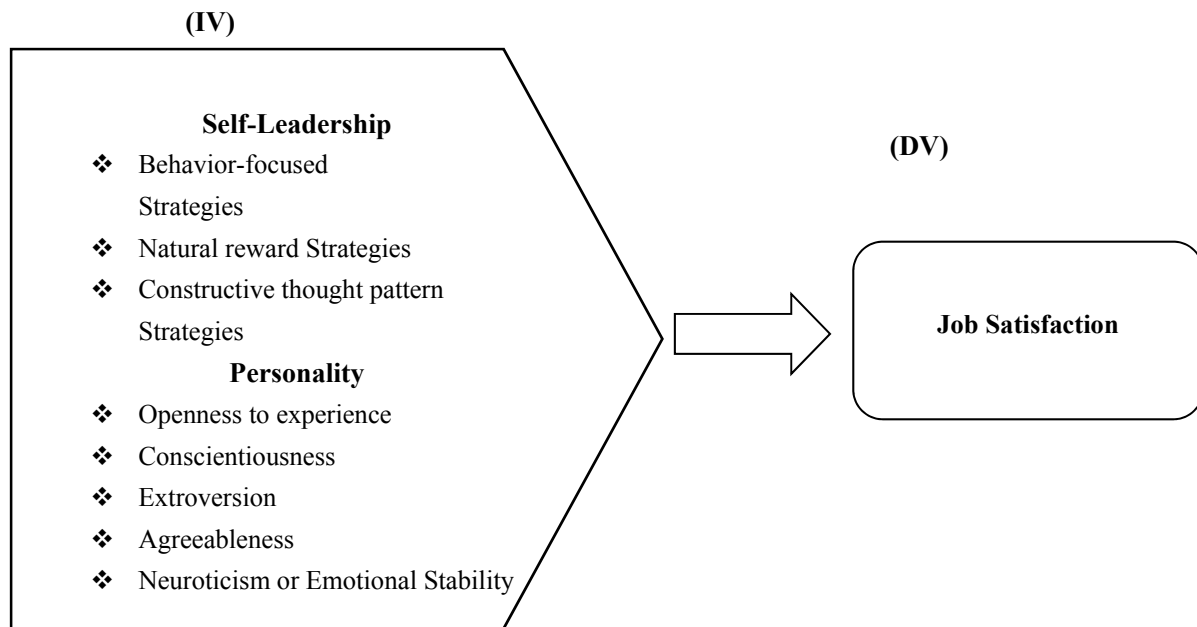


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework

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