A Study on Personality as Predictor of Dedication Component of Work Engagement

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Abstract

True success of any organization largely depends upon the human resource which is the most potential asset of any organization. Organizations are putting efforts to attract and enhance the level of engagement among their employees. More dedicated the employees are at workplace, more strongly they will be able to contribute towards their organization effectively, thereby leading to high engagement. Recent research has illustrated personality as the suggestive cause of engagement (Simmons, 2010). The paper attempts to explore about personality as predictor of dedication which is one of the significant component of work engagement. To attain the objective, the study made use of two standardized questionnaires. Measurement of personality was done using the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire which was devised by Cattell in 1949 and the measurement of dedication was done using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Analysis and interpretations of the study have been obtained using statistical technique of Multiple Stepwise Regression. For running Multiple Stepwise Regression Analysis the study included dedication as the single dependent variable and five second order personality factors namely extraversion, anxiety, tough poise, independence and superego/control as the independent variables. The study results depicted that model consisting of superego/ control, independence and tough poise provides the best combination of personality factors as predictor of dedication among the IT sector employees. The paper not only adds to the existing body of research in the area of engagement and personality but also puts an emphasis on the creation of model consisting of personality and dedication which can be utilized by the organizations to well tune and make their hiring and selection process more effective.

Key words: Dedication, Engagement, Independence, Personality and Tough poise.
**Introduction**

The concept of work engagement is increasingly becoming popular among the academicians and practitioners as a way to enhance the employee satisfaction, commitment and loyalty at the workplace. Organizations are also putting thrust to enhance the level of engagement among their employees. Employees who are high in dedication always feel more involved in the task which is assigned to them and are able to generate deliverables more effectively. When employees are effectively and positively engaged with their organization, they form an emotional connection. This affects their attitude not only towards their colleagues and the organization’s clients but also improves customer satisfaction and service levels. Such employees always exhibit higher engagement and commitment towards their organization. Recent research has illustrated personality as the suggestive cause of engagement (Simmons, 2010). Work Engagement concept takes into account three components namely vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Though there have been many studies which illustrate the relationship between engagement and personality, however, very few studies have been found which demonstrate the role of personality as predictor of work engagement as well as its components. The purpose of the present study is to explore how personality acts as predictor of dedication which is one of the significant component of work engagement. Besides this, the study also focuses on the creation of an integrated model of personality and dedication. This model can be utilized by the IT organizations in tackling the challenge of high employee attrition rate and managing their talent retention and engagement in the best possible manner. This can also be of great use for organizations for hiring and selecting only those employees whose personality values and characteristics are well in alignment with the culture and values of the organization.
Simultaneously, this will also provide a major benefit to organizations in determining the best role-fit for the job-profiles available in their organization.

**Survey of existing literature**

**Work Engagement**

Kahn (1990) referred to engagement as a situation where people express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during work role performance. Engagement contains aspects of effort, involvement, flow, mindfulness and intrinsic motivation. Kahn concluded from his study that individuals who experienced engagement at work were those who were more likely to feel a sense of psychological safety in their jobs. Kahn (1992) also introduced a similar construct which he termed as psychological presence that implies one who is connected to work, open to oneself as well as others, feeling complete rather than fragmented. In this context, he further emphasized that those jobs that limit the extent to which individuals use different skills and make important contribution may actually cause limitation in the psychological presence of individuals. Therefore, he referred engaged people as those people who put more effort into their work as they are identified with it. Britt (1999) defined engagement as a construct that includes components of responsibility and commitment. He stated that individuals are more likely to be engaged when their job guidelines are clear and they feel that they have personal control over their job performance as well as when their training is relevant to their work. Britt (2003) later on discussed about job engagement as an individual’s commitment to doing well in one’s job as the person feels that the job is central to their identity. An engaged state is described as being absorbed in the job performance. Job engagement can also be described as a motivational state that is related to the identity –relevance of a task rather than the “importance” of a task. Rothbard (2001) defined engagement as attention devoted to and absorption with work. Attention can be
defined as cognitive availability which is the amount of time that an individual spends thinking about a work or family role. Absorption can be understood in terms of intensity of focus or being pre-occupied or engrossed in a task. Rothbard differentiated between engagement with work related matters from engagement with family related matters. Maslach and Leiter (1997) stated that engagement refers to energy, involvement, and professional efficacy, which are considered to be the direct opposites of burnout dimensions (i.e., exhaustion, cynicism, lack of professional efficacy), so engaged employees have high levels of energy, are enthusiastic about their work, and they are often fully immersed in their job so that time flies (Macey & Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Steele and Fullagar (2009) described engagement as very similar to the psychological construct of flow that consist four core components which include optimal balance between challenges and skills, goal clarity, unambiguous feedback and self-determination. They considered flow of engagement as transitory rather than a long –lasting state. Hence, it was hypothesized that it should be malleable or easy to change.

**Dedication as Component of Work Engagement**

Past studies and researches have depicted various conceptualizations to understand the meaning of engagement in conceptual terms, however, among all, the most useful and frequently used conceptualization in the academic literatures with widely demonstrated antecedents and known associated outcomes is the Schaufeli’s conceptualization which takes into consideration three components as vigor, dedication and absorption. This construct of Engagement utilizes factor-analytical approach. According to this engagement can be defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind which is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). Dimension of vigor can be defined as high energy and mental resilience while working. Dimension of absorption can be defined as concentration and immersion in work.
Dimension of dedication is characterized by strong psychological involvement, combined with enthusiasm, pride and a sense of challenge. This dimension of work engagement, in turn, shares some conceptual similarity with the more traditional concept of job involvement (or commitment) which has been defined as the degree to which an employee psychologically relates to his or her job and to the work performed therein (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005). Job involvement is also considered a function of how far the job can satisfy an employee’s present needs (Kanungo, 1982; Mauno and Kinnunen, 2000). Both dedication and job involvement are regarded as rather stable phenomena, while the actual difference between them has not been clearly argued. Nevertheless, dedication seems to be a broader phenomenon—at least with respect to its operationalization—than job involvement; the former includes feelings of enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge, while the latter focuses solely on the psychological importance of the job in an employee’s life.

**Personality Inventories**

In the past 60 years, much has been written on the subject of personality and many varied and interesting techniques and instruments were developed in an attempt to evaluate the personality (Downie, 1967). Aiken (1994) explained that personality assessment developed partly from research on individual and group differences. He further stated that personality inventories measure adjustment and temperament and consist of items concerning personal characteristics, thoughts, feelings and behavior. Anastasi & Urbina (1997) mentioned that personality tests are instruments for the measurement of emotional, motivational, interpersonal and attitudinal characteristics. Nadelson (2001) stated that personality tests seek to determine the various traits that make individuals unique, common or somehow in between.
At an individual level, personality inventories have been used for career assessment (Ward, Cunningham & Wakefield 1976). While at the organizational level, personality inventories have been used to explore counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior (Spector & Fox, 2002), teamwork (Peeters et al., 2006), and job performance (Tett et al., 2003). Among various personality inventories, the Sixteen Personality Factors inventory (16PF) is one of the most widely used in the world today. Abrahams (1996) believed that Cattell’s sixteen factor theory is one of many in which an attempt is made to describe the personality of people. The Institute for Personality and Ability Testing (IPAT) has developed an enormous database for the 16PF over the past thirty years. After more than a decade of research; it was first published by Dr. Raymond B. Cattell in 1949 (Conn & Rieke, 1994). Cattell yielded 16 primary personality factors: Warm (factor A), Conceptual Thinking (factor B), Emotionally Stable (factor C), Assertive (factor E), Lively (factor F), Rule-Conscious (factor G), Socially Bold (factor H), Sensitive (factor I), Suspicious (factor L), Practical (factor M), Private (factor N), Apprehensive (factor O), Open to Change (factor Q1), Self-reliant (factor Q2), Perfectionistic (factor Q3) and Tense/Driven (factor Q4) (Russell & Karol, 1994). To facilitate the scoring of 16PF, the sixteen primary factors have been condensed into five bipolar second order factors. Hence, through factor analysis, Cattell derived five additional factors, which became known as the original “big five.” The commonly used names of the factors are Introversion Vs. Extraversion, Low Anxiety Versus High Anxiety, Receptive Versus Tough-minded, Accomodating versus Independence and Unrestrained Versus Self-controlled (Russel & Karol, 1994).

**Link between Personality and Engagement**
Howard and Howard (2001) depicted from his study that firstly extraverts are more likely to be energized by people interactions and to enjoy being “in the thick of action” and secondly, extraverts are more likely to effectively motivate others, work as members of a team and act diplomatically. It was also revealed through this study that extraverts are often more energetic, enthusiastic and action oriented than average. Langelaan et al. (2004) conducted study on employees from various organizational backgrounds and this study supported significant negative relationship between need for stability and engagement and significant positive relationship between extraversion and engagement. Rich (2006) surveyed fire-fighters and results from the study demonstrated a significant and moderate correlation between consolidation and engagement. Further researches also provided with the finding regarding the role of extraversion in the engagement. Recent research (Simmons, 2010) has also identified personality traits as suggestive cause of engagement enhancers. Thus, much of the research is thus being promoted to enhance the engagement levels of employees in the organizations by the consultancy firms, through evaluation of all those factors which impact employee engagement.

**Methodology**

**Objective of the study**

This study sought to explore an answer to the following researchable question

What is the combination of personality factors that act as predictor of dedication among IT sector employees?

**Sample**

For the purpose of measurement of dedication and personality factors, questionnaires were administered among the IT sector companies located in Delhi NCR. The sample size consisted of 150 employees from the IT Sector. Primary data was obtained using the questionnaire method
and the secondary data which was collected from various published sources such as websites, magazines and journals was utilized to do the survey of existing literature in detail.

**Instrument**

In accordance with the objective of the study, two standardized questionnaires were utilized namely:

**Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire**

Measurement of personality among the IT Sector employees was done using the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire Form A. Raymond Cattell developed the 16 PF in the year 1949 using the factor-analysis of items that were designed to measure the personality source traits. The sixteen personality factor questionnaire is embedded within the broader fabric or the network of general psychological theory. This questionnaire was administered among the respondents. The questionnaire consist of 187 items for measuring and evaluating the sixteen primary factors namely Factor A, Factor B, Factor C, Factor E, Factor F, Factor G, Factor H, Factor I, Factor L, Factor M, Factor N, Factor O, Factor Q1, Factor Q2, Factor Q3 and Factor Q4. At the time of administration of 16 PF Questionnaire, full detailed instructions were provided to the respondents along with the test booklet and answer sheets. Later on for the purpose of documenting all the responses, all the answer-sheets were hand scored with a set of scoring stencils as per 16 PF norms. Using the hand scoring method, responses were first of all obtained as raw-scores which were then converted to sten scores using the stencils key. Once these primary factor scores were obtained, these were then fitted into the second order factor equations to get the composite scores of five second-order factors as per the guidelines of the 16 PF Manual. The second order factors that were obtained were extraversion, anxiety, tough poise, independence and superego/control.
The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

To measure the dedication component of IT employees, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was utilized as an instrument. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) contains a total of 17 items based on Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). All 17 items use the same frequency scale from 0-6; 0 being “never” to 6 being “always”. Each item referred specifically to measuring one of the three constructs; vigor, dedication and absorption. Since, the scope of the study was limited to study the personality as predictor of dedication, hence only dedication component was computed using UWES. Dedication was assessed by five items that refer to deriving a sense of significance from one’s work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one’s job and feeling inspired and challenged by it:

I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

I am enthusiastic about my job.

My job inspires me.

I am proud on the work that I do.

To me, my job is challenging.

Those who are high on dedication strongly identify with their work because it is experienced as meaningful, inspiring and challenging. Besides, they usually feel enthusiastic and proud about their work. Those who score low do not identify with their work because they do not experience it to be meaningful, inspiring, or challenging; moreover, they feel neither enthusiastic nor proud about their work.

Statistical Analysis

Multiple stepwise regression analysis was done to reveal an overall predictive model consisting of dedication and five second order personality factors. For running multiple stepwise regression
on the data, dedication score was taken as the single dependent variable and the five second order factors of personality namely extraversion, anxiety, tough poise, independence and superego/control were taken as the five independent variables.

Results

Model summary and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are as shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively. Table 3 represents Coefficients.

Table 1

Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.400&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.154</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.224</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>1.15766</td>
<td>.064</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.506&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>1.13710</td>
<td>.032</td>
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</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control

b. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control, Independence

c. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control, Independence, Tough poise

d. Dependent Variable: Dedication
Table 2

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>40.536</td>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>1.441</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>253.813</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regression</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>28.404</td>
<td>21.195</td>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>1.340</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>253.813</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Regression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>253.813</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control

b. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control, Independence

c. Predictors: (Constant), Superego and control, Independence, Tough poise

Dependent Variable: Dedication
# Table 3

## Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.651</td>
<td>.275</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superego and control</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>4.441</td>
<td>.578</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superego and control</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.055</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.700</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superego and control</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>-.245</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tough poise</td>
<td>-.185</td>
<td>.073</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Dedication
Using Step-wise regression Analysis, three models were obtained which are best fitted from Table 3. Three resulting models and their regression equations are as detailed below:

**Model 1**

This model explains about 16% co-efficient of determination \((R^2)\) between superego-control and dedication.

\[
Dedication = 2.651 + 0.302(\text{superego and control})
\]

**Model 2**

This model explains about 21.3% co-efficient of determination between superego-control, Independence and dedication.

\[
Dedication = 4.441 + 0.284(\text{superego and control}) - 0.267(\text{Independence})
\]

**Model 3**

This model explains about 24.1% co-efficient of determination between superego-control, Independence, Tough poise and dedication.

\[
Dedication = 5.700 + 0.227(\text{superego and control}) - 0.245(\text{Independence}) - 0.185(\text{Tough poise})
\]

**Discussion**

Results clearly indicated that among all the models, Model 3 shows the best combination of personality factors which act as predictor of dedication amongst IT sector employees. This model has an accuracy of 24.1%. The regression equation of Model 3 as obtained is:

\[
Dedication = 5.700 + 0.227(\text{superego and control}) - 0.245(\text{Independence}) - 0.185(\text{Tough poise})
\]

Firstly, for each unit increase in superego and control, dedication increases by 0.227 assuming all other variables to be constant. This implies that employees with higher superego strength and control are more dedicated at workplace because their personality is such that they tend to conform to the expectations that others have of them as well as to the expectations that they have
of them about themselves. Such employees are quite reliable for IT organizations as they have internalized the rules in which they function. Besides this, such employees are self-disciplined and do not take such actions which distort the rules of the culture and environment in which they work.

Secondly, for each unit increase in independence, dedication decreases by 0.245 assuming all other variables to remain constant, this implies that employees who are high on independence factor are not so dedicated as such employees tend to be aggressive and daring. Though, they exhibit greater initiative but they do not like working in a group and getting support from others. Therefore, in some of the cases where team work is required, they may not show enthusiasm and feel a sense of pride while working together in a team or on a project, which may affect work engagement.

Thirdly, for each unit increase in tough poise, there occurs decrease in dedication by 0.185 assuming all other variables to remain constant. This implies that employees with higher degree of tough poise have less dedicated than those employees who are emotionally sensitive. As employees who are high on tough poise, being bold and decisive, rely more on facts and do not get influenced by feelings of others. As a result, while talking quick decisions, they do not give much thought or analyze the situation and problem present before them, which may affect their dedication and hence engagement at work.

The findings of the study indicated that out of the five second order factors superego-control, independence and tough-poise act as predictors of employee engagement. On the other hand, the remaining two personality factors i.e. extraversion and anxiety were found to be statistically insignificant.

**Conclusion**
The purpose of the paper was to explore personality as predictor of dedication which is a vital component of work engagement. More dedicated an employee is at workplace, more enthusiastic he will feel at workplace. To determine the impact of personality on dedication, the study was conducted among IT sector employees where retention and talent management has always been seen as the major HR challenge. The study utilized two standardized questionnaires namely the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for the measurement of dedication and The Sixteen Personality Questionnaire for the measurement of personality. The analysis and findings of the study have been obtained using statistical tool of regression analysis. The regression analysis was run on the data consisting of five second order factors of personality namely extraversion, anxiety, tough poise, independence and superego/control as five independent variables with dedication as the single dependent variable. The study findings revealed that superego-control, independence and tough-poise act as predictors of employee engagement and the remaining two personality factors extraversion and anxiety do not impact the dedication level of the IT sector employees. Thus, the study contributes and adds value to the existing literature. Still there is requirement of significant research and investigation to be conducted in the field of personality and work engagement. This study can be further extended by taking into account various external factors that many impact level of work engagement in the organizations and how personality influences various antecedents of work engagement. Additional research is needed to test and refine the integrated model of engagement and personality in other sectors as well. In particular, research may also be conducted to better investigate the processes through which personality factors impact the employee engagement. Qualitative research might also be particularly useful in knowing which of the personality traits impact the engagement to get in depth understanding of
primary traits of an individual. Research on what processes actually regulates the impact of personality on engagement can also be investigated.

**Practical Implications of Research**

Besides studying personality as a predictor of dedication, the research also puts an emphasis on the use of an integrated model of personality factors and dedication. This integrated model of personality factors and dedication can prove to be highly effective tool by the IT organizations where talent retention and engagement has always been seen as the topmost HR challenge. This model can enable organizations to hire only those employees whose personality and values matches with culture and values of the organization and simultaneously will also help in determining the best role-fit. Besides this, the research can be further extended within the organization while taking into account external factors that may also impact involvement and dedication of employees at workplace. By working on this, organization can take vital steps to create an environment more conducive for employees.

**References**


