

## **Influence of Employee Personality on Career Success in Nandi Hekima Sacco Limited, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** *Although researchers have argued that personality influences an individual's performances in terms of improved knowledge of the job, literature available give inconsistent findings. This research was intended to establish the relationship between personality and career success. The study adopted a survey research design. Questionnaires were used as the major data collection instruments and analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Scientists. The results of this study showed a positive relationship between career success and personality ( $F=16.075$ ,  $R^2=0.341$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). The results of this study indicate that management should consider employee personal reputation as an integral component of career success and by extension organizational success.*

**Keywords:** *Personality, career success,*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Personality indicates an individuals' ability to sustain a reputation. Because reputation is built over time (Ferris, 2003), individuals consistently exert a level of social influence over time. If they portray an image that is not a picture of who they are but feel must portray to gain benefits of the reputation, they are depressed as a result of surface acting. Riggio & Reinhard (2003) highlighted that, individuals high in neuroticisms are more likely to show negative emotions at work, suggesting that, highly neurotic individuals lack the capacity to engage in reputation building.

Credibility of an individual is enhanced by reputation of the individual. Related work on credibility examining characteristics of authentic leaders (Avolio, Gardner & May, 2004) such as positive emotions and self-efficacy suggested that, the characteristics aid in perceiving authenticity. Low neuroticism and self-efficacy are dimensions of core self evaluations which are measures used to evaluate personality construct aid in perceived credibility by others (Harvey, Martinko & Gardner, 2006).

Five-dimension personality model presented by Goldberg termed as big-five model is used in personality research (Goldberg, 1998). The big-five personality model include, openness to experience which is the inclination to be imaginative, independent and interested in variety. Secondly, extraversion which is propensity to be fun-loving and warm. Thirdly, Agreeableness, which is the tendency to be sympathetic, trusting and supportive. Fourthly, conscientiousness, which is the affinity to be prepared and disciplined. Lastly, neuroticism, tendency to be anxious, emotionally stable and self-blaming (Goldberg, 1998). Research on personality suggests a significant relationship between personality type and career success. In practice, wrong career choices are made due to ignorance of specific personality type of individuals (Hirsch, & Akos, 2010).

Agreeableness is a trait that holds people to be accommodating and helping (Burch & Anderson, 2008) them resolve issues by creating win-win situations through their flexible attitudes (Cattell & Mead, 2008). People with this type of personality trait are friendly, generous in negotiations and highly social (Mount, 2005). People who rank high in this trait attain cooperation and social harmony and help others built their future while people with low level of agreeableness are unfriendly, selfish, and do not care for others concerns. They are self-centered and believe that others work on their own personalities and are less likely to help them develop their personal interests.

People who are open to experience tend to be highly spatial, imaginative and creative in their intellect. They are sensitive to inner thoughts and have the capability to analyze matters differently (Cattell & Mead, 2008). They are curious to know hidden things and to be deductive from different angles (Mount, 2005). People who are deficit of openness to experience trait are more conventional in their problem solving approach and do not try new tactics to solve a particular problem (Burch & Anderson, 2008). They love to stick to status quo. Individuals with extraversion trait are more talkative, interact with every one so frankly and seek excitement in every bit of life (Cattell & Mead, 2008). Introverts on the other hand are less open with others. Research suggests that, this personality dimension have a healthy role in predicting career success (Judge, 1999).

Conscientiousness on the other hand is a personality trait that has been proven to have high influence on career success in any organization (Burch, 2008). People with this type of trait tend to be very careful about their future planning (Burch & Anderson, 2008) and they tend to be predictable and risk free. This type of individuals work in a way that they have no flaw and do everything right. People with level of conscientiousness trait are not inclined to concise ways of doing things such that their work would be free of faults (Grandey, 2003).

Neuroticism trait of personality has been associated with individuals who possess pessimistic approach, who always react over mistakes and faults made by them. Such individuals easily get stress, tend to be emotional and anxious (Hussain, Abbas, Shalзад & Bulkhari, 2011). Most of the time, these individuals are hopeless and emotional when expressing their feelings. They lack emotional intelligence and easily caught by mental disorder and depression (Burch & Anderson, 2008). People with this trait usually fail to achieve success in their careers including intrinsic and extrinsic success (Judge, 2002). People with low neuroticism are optimistic, emotionally stable and have more strength to face stressful situations soundly (Roberts & Robins, 2002). They seem not to react in stressful environments (Cattell & Mead, 2008).

Managerial positions demand strong social interaction ability and readiness to accept changes in external environment. It also requires socially dominant behavior to adapt to frequent changes and get things done effectively and efficiently. Empirical evidence show that people who can control their activities and perform their tasks under stress and pressure, can manage their planned tasks according to their own will and mental satisfaction (Ackerman & Beier, 2003). Managers give directions to others to get things done and it's for this reason that they need to be more social, warm and able to interact and negotiate with others. They need to match their personalities with the need to be highly efficient in time, resources and ability management.

Junior managers and new employees require personal efficacy initiative to reach to the climax of career success. Initial stages in work environment requires openness to experience and beginners always need to have great social interactions and propensity to be dominant in their moves and need to be creative to achieve optimal outcome in their step forward (Zhao & Seibert, 2006). In this way, they will be more likely to be effective in coping with hindrances and difficulties they may face (Aldridge, 2000).

Work environments demand that individuals help each other to move up the professional ladder (Barrick & Mount, 2005). Considering others is not possible without a high ranking in personality traits. Personality help individuals to be more accommodating and helping on the cost of their personal resources (Cattell & Mead, 2008). Personality traits help individuals move beyond their self-interest and restrict them from becoming selfish (Howard, 2005). Self-centered people are not likely to be successful in their professions as there is a great need to be social, friendly interactive and be familiar with others to accommodate others in crucial moments (Cattell & Mead, 2008). Extraversion helps individuals to become inclined to getting success through social services and to have satisfaction for themselves (Ackerman, 2003).

During the development of LMX relationship, personality plays an important role in the initial interaction. This is the extension of previous research on the impact of big-five personality characteristics on LMX relationship quality, which has received little attention (Liden & Wayne, 2006; Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007). Personality characteristics of extraversion and agreeableness have been found to influence social (Dar & Johns, 2004). Empirical evidence shows that extraversion and agreeableness are salient characteristics which can be reliably judged by strangers within a short time of interaction (Carney, Colvin & Hall, 2007). Studies have examined leader-member exchange from leader perception members' point of view but quality of a social relationship is dependent on personality of both parties.

Empirical supported linkages between personality and career success showed that personality leads individuals to possess jobs of interests. Personality also influences individuals' performances on the job in a way that will lead to higher job compensation, increased responsibilities and promotions into higher organizational ranks (Judge, Chad, Carl & Murray, 2007). Personality has also been found to influence ways in which individuals engage in social interactions that may lead to outcomes ranging from improved knowledge on the job and visibility of an individual in the organization. Although literature on personality is extensive the results are relatively inconsistent (Judge, 2007). The study was intended to provide an appraisal of the influence of personality a dimension of personal reputation on career success.

Career success refers to real or perceived achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences (Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995). Career success can be viewed as intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic career success is observable and consists of highly tangible outcomes such as pay and ascendancy. Intrinsic success is individual's appraisal of his/her success and most commonly expressed in terms of job, career or life satisfaction (Judge, Higgins & Chad, 2005).

Career success is determined by factors such as combination of specific competencies and a performance record, along with network development, organizational politics and reputation building. Career success is not only determined by traditional factors including job-related skills and performance records but also by networking, politics and social effectiveness (Sorensen & Feldman, 2005). Political perspectives of

organizational politics argue that performances, promotions, compensation which manifest career success are strongly affected by organizational politics.

Today's competitive environment calls for social effectiveness to facilitate effective interpersonal interactions and career progression (Ferris, Treadway, 2005). Socially effective individuals pose social awareness that enable them to adjust and calibrate behavior to different situations in a genuine and sincere manner. The competencies of these individuals inspire others and as such performances and career success evaluations decisions makes through linkages such as reputation (Perrewe, 2007).

Personal reputation build by socially effective individuals tend to be effective because they make use of network-building activities and influence tactics to transmit signals that establish a favorable image to recipients (Ferris, 2007). It has been suggested that, socially effective individuals form strong relationships with supervisors in order to get rewards associated with their personal reputations. Social activities of employees play an important role in shaping perceptions and assessment of their characters and potentials. Perceptions influence the degree to which individuals are successful in their careers through their ability to obtain organizational resources such as rewards and positions (Judge, 2007). Empirical evidence shows that, there is a link between career success and tactics of influence (Ferris, 2003) although consideration has been give to ingratiation and self-promotion.

Organizational politics especially those linked to human resource decisions are so prevalent such that perceptions of raters exhibit more influence on decisions than the target employees behavior and aggregate contribution (Ferris, Basik & Buckley, 2008). From organizational politics perspective, careers can be seen as political campaigns (Inkson, 2004) involving contact hunting, self promotion (Higgins et al., 2003) and use of influence tactics (Ferris, 2007). The success of such campaigns depends on individual competencies that enable the effective management and projection of positive image across work environments that influence the assessment of performance and career potential. Empirical evidence show social effectiveness to be related to salary, promotion, and career satisfaction (Ng, 2005) yet the research is limited in scope and focused on general organization politics.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was used in the study to predict the past and present reputations of employees in Nandi Hekima Sacco. Regression analysis and other statistical tools were applied. Primary data was collected using questionnaires that formed the primary source of data.

### 2.1 Model specification

Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the significance, direction and strength of this relationship. Simple linear regression was then done to test the strength of the cause and effect relationship between personality and career success. The most frequent personality trait was determined by carrying out multiple set response analysis. The regression equation ( $CS = \beta_1 + \beta_2 PER + E$ )

Where CS= Career success,  $\beta_1$ = Y Intercept,  $\beta_2$ =Gradient of the regression, PER= Personality

The data was then analyzed with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and the results appropriately interpreted.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Employee Conscientiousness Personality

The respondents were asked to rate their perception on the evaluated employee's personality using a likert-scale. Multiple responses are captured in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1: Personality Conscientiousness of Employees**

The Employee:	Freq (n)	Percent of Cases (%)
Has authority to delegate tasks	8	26.7
Supervisor turns to the employee on some situations	15	50.0
Is regarded highly by the supervisor	7	23.3
Easily develop good rapport with most employees	12	40.0
Is genuine with what she/he say	14	46.7
Good at using connection to make things happen	19	63.3
Pay attention to people	9	30.0
Is good at sensing motives of others	9	30.0
Has network of others at workplace who can call for support	9	30.0
Accept responsibility for failure		
Is imaginative	9	30.0
	10	33.3

The results in Table 3.1 show that, the desired personality to enhance career success is using connection to make things happen (63.3%). The least desired personality is being regarded highly by the supervisor (23.3%). Using connection to make things happen is a personality trait that reflects an individual as being accommodating. It also shows that, such an individual is friendly and social.

### 3.2 Correlation of Personality and Career Success

Correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between personality of evaluated employees and career success. The correlation coefficient (r) measured the strength and direction of the relationships between personality of evaluated employees and career success. The results are as shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2** Correlation of Personality and Career Success

Correlation		Personality	Career Success
Personality	Pearson Correlation	1	.718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	34	34
Career Success	Pearson Correlation	.718**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	34	36

The results in Table 3.2 show that there is a strong positive correlation between personality and career success ( $r=0.718$ ,  $p=0.0000$ ) which is statistically significant at 99% confidence level. For individuals to be efficient, they need to match their personalities with their careers. The findings support this argument as it shows a strong relationship between personality and career success that personality explains 78% variation in career success. The values of the coefficients  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  were found to be 0.615 and 0.751 respectively from the regression output in Appendix 1.

The model relating career success and social astuteness took the form:  $CS = 0.615 + 0.7512PER$ . This model has a high correlation of determination,  $R^2 = 0.516$ , which meant that 51.6% of the variation in career success is explained by the personality of the employee. This model is significant ( $F = 34.105$  and  $p = 0.000$ ) which is less than the significance level of 0.01, and  $t=5.840$  that is greater than the threshold of 2 for t-values) while  $\beta \neq 0$ . Hence the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that, at 99% significance level, that there is a significant positive linear relationship between career success and personality of the evaluated employee.

### Summary

Findings of this study were in support of empirical evidence by Zhao and Seibert (2006) suggesting that, operational level managers as well as new employees need to be open to experience for them to gain great social interactions and propensity to be dominant in their moves and to be effective in handling hindrances and difficulties.

Operational and middle level management employees need to identify their personalities and match them with career choices. This is because empirical evidence by Hirschi, 2010 shows a significant relationship between personality types and career choices that has significant consequences on career development of an individual. The findings showed a statistically significant positive relationship between personality and career success showing that, personality influence performances of an individual in a manner that, the individual gains competitive advantage when it comes to rewards related to career success such as addition of duties and upward mobility.

Personality has been found to influence performance and career choice of an individual. The findings of this study made a contribution to the body of knowledge that, openness to experience trait of personality is commonly used by new and operational level managers to strengthen the quality of their relationship with parties in the organization. They also use this trait to develop resistance to unwanted workplace influence and to endure challenges they encounter while delivering the duties. Also, career choices are determined by personality of an individual.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Personality has significant influence on career development of an individual. Individuals who are open to experience, accommodating and helping are associated with good personal reputations and are likely to use flexible attitudes and try different approaches to solve problems.

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**Appendix 1**

**Regression output of Personality Traits and Career Success**

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.718a	.516	.501	.597

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality

ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.154	1	12.154	34.105	.000a
	Residual	11.404	32	.356		
	Total	23.559	33			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality

b. Dependent Variable: Career Success

ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.154	1	12.154	34.105	.000a
	Residual	11.404	32	.356		
	Total	23.559	33			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality

b. Dependent Variable: Career Success

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