

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK VALUES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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- Abstract -

The aim of this research was to determine work values of workers who work in the manufacturing industry and analyze the relationship between work values and personality traits. Employees (N=208) completed the 85-item Five Factor Multi-Dimensional Personality Scale (Tatar, 2005), the Work Values Inventory, which was based on Super's Work Values Inventory (1969) and Wu, Lee, Liu and Os' Inventory (1996) and a demographic questionnaire. Results of this study revealed that there is a moderate level relationship between personality characteristics and work values. The results of hierarchical regression analysis indicated that conscientious and emotionally stable manufacturing industry employees give importance to intrinsic work values; agreeable and emotionally stable ones give importance to extrinsic work values. In addition, the results showed that intrinsic work values are important for white collar employees and extrinsic work values are important for blue collar ones.

Keywords: Work Values, Personality, Five Factor Personality Dimensions, Manufacturing Industry, Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Jel Classification: M10

1. INTRODUCTION

The values of the managers and workers are phenomena that have captured the interest of researchers and practitioners. Work values are viewed as a major component of organizational culture and are often described as principles responsible for successful management of organizations. Recently, however, there appears to be a resurgence of interest in the underlying attitudinal structure of individual in organizations (Tayyab and Tariq, 2001).

Work values are beliefs, attitudes, preferences and interests about work and are different from other job related constructs such as job satisfaction and motivation. In a job setting, work values serve as a basis for judgements about work conditions which affect job performance and job satisfaction (Dhanasarnsilp, Johnson and Chaipoopirutana, 2006). It is explained that work values are related with personality, job satisfaction, motivation, work performance, organizational commitment, career choice and job accordance (Berings, de Fruyt and Bouwen, 2004; Furnham, Petrides, Tsaousis, Pappas and Garrod, 2005; Meglino and Ravlin, 1998).

The role of personality traits in work related behaviors and values has received renewed interest over the past decade (Furnham *et al.*, 2005; Salgado, 1997). Research indicates that one's value of work and personality traits can predict educational and occupational success (Sarnswang, 1995). Another argument is that jobs affect the personality of those who hold them (Furnham *et al.*, 2005). Researchers have investigated the relationships between work values and job satisfaction, vocational interests, career choice and organizational commitment. Few researchers have examined the relationship between work values and personality traits in the Western World. In other cultures this subject couldn't be influential. Therefore, the present study is focused on the relationship of personality traits on work values.

2. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Work Values

The construct of work values has been variously defined as: "a subset of total values, refer those qualities, satisfaction, or rewards that individuals desire or seek from their work" (Super, 1969), "desirable modes of behavior" (Meglino and Ravlin, 1998), "the amount of importance an individual gives to a specific outcome in a workplace" (Sagie, Elizur and Koslowsky, 1996), "a person's attitudes toward work in general, rather than feelings about a specific job" (Wollack, Goodale, Wijting and Smith, 1971). Work values denote the degree of worth, importance and desirability of what happens at work (Knoop, 1994). In summary, the previously cited definitions of work values have different meanings to different people.

The formation of work values is influenced by sociological, economical and, historical factors. These influences include ethnicity, subcultures, sex roles, historical cohorts, socioeconomic status, and economic conditions (Chen, 1995). Van Pletzen (1986), mentions that work values represent a personality variable and that it is formed together with the personality of the individual (Beukman, 2005).

Three ways to describe work values are extrinsic, intrinsic (Senatore, 2003), cognitive, instrumental or affective (O'Brien and Humphrys, 1982); and the modality and system performance of work values (Sagie *et al.*, 1996). Many researchers suggest that work values can be classified as extrinsic or intrinsic (George and Jones, 1997; Nord, Brief, Atieh and Doherty, 1990). One definition describes intrinsic work values as desired end states depending on the content of work, and extrinsic values as independent content of the work (George and Jones, 1997). Examples of intrinsic work values include creativity and intellectual stimulation, examples of extrinsic work values include prestige and economic returns (Johnson, 2001).

2.2. Personality and Work Values

Personality has been an enduring concept in psychology. There are many different paradigms of personality. One of the most enduring is the trait approach to personality. According to this approach, personality is a set of enduring traits or dispositions that describe an individual (Scherbaum, 2003). Heckman (2004), defined traits as "Enduring and constant ways of thinking, acting and feeling that are believed by some theorists to be the basic units of personality".

Recent evidence indicates that Five Factor Model (FFM) personality variables are significantly related to various job criteria (Cook, 2005). Barrick and Mount (1991); Tett, Jackson and

Rothstein (1991); Salgado (1997), found that measures of the five factor model of personality are valid predictors of performance. The relationship between personality traits and vocational interests and preferences has been the subject of several recent studies (De Fruyt and Mervielde, 1997; Lindley and Borgen, 2000). Schneider and Dachler (1978) found that a worker's feelings regarding his job might be a product of specific personality traits (Furnham *et al.*, 2005). Reference has already been made to the relationship that exists between values and personality but few studies have looked at personality correlates of work values, although some researchers have looked at personality and job satisfaction (Furnham, Forde and Ferrari, 1999). Beukman (2005) refers to Guth *et al.* (1965), who underlined the relationship between values and personality. Guth *et al.* (1965) summarized this relationship as follows: "Values are not only closely related to personality, they are part of it, values serve as a guidance system used by a personality when faced with choices of alternatives, values form a very stable feature of an individual's personality, especially if some values are clearly dominated by others".

3. PURPOSE of the RESEARCH

In this research, our aim was to examine the relationship between work values (intrinsic and extrinsic) and personality characteristics. The purpose of this research is, first, to understand the work values of manufacturing industry employees and then to find how personality traits affect the work values. Main Hypotheses of the research are as follows:

H1: There will be a positive relationship between personality traits and intrinsic work values.

H2: There will be a positive relationship between personality traits and extrinsic work values.

4. METHOD

4.1. Participants

Participants were manufacturing industry employees from 10 firms operating in different areas. Individuals participated on a voluntary basis and did not receive a reward for participation. All the participants were adults, we assumed that they would know which aspects of work are personally important for them. Two hundred and eight of the 410 questionnaires turned back. 68% of the respondents were male; 66% married; 53% white collar; 37% had a bachelor's degree; 37% graduated from high school and 26% from primary school. 64 % were manufacturing employees; 11 % from marketing department; 11% clerical personnel and others were from maintenance and repair department. 8% were managers, 9% chief-managers and 21% foreman. Their mean age was 32.03 years and length of experience was 7.48 years.

4.2. Measures

Work Values. The Work Values Inventory was adapted from Hsieh (2006). It was based on Super's Work Values Inventory (1969) and Wu, Lee, Liu and Os' (1996) Inventory. The questionnaire consisted of 75 items and 15 dimensions: "Altruism, aesthetics, creativity, intellectual stimulation, achievement, independence, prestige, management, economic returns, security, surroundings, supervisory relations, associates, way of life, variety". Aesthetics dimension was not suitable for manufacturing industry, so it was excluded from questionnaire. All items were translated from English to Turkish by two experts. Number of items was reduced by

Hambleton Method (Şencan, 2005). As a result, Work Values Inventory with 14 dimensions, 42 items was obtained. Each statement of work value was evaluated in terms of relative importance on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from one (not important at all) to five (very important). The psychometric characteristics were very satisfactory, with Cronbach alphas above 0.89 for all domains (see Table 4).

Personality Traits. FFM personality traits were assessed with the shortened form of Five-Factor Multi-Dimensional Personality Scale (85-item) developed by Tatar (2005). Multi-Dimensional Personality Scale was developed by Somer, Tatar and Korkmaz (2001). They started with 924 IPIP items and developed a personality inventory which is constructed of 15 sub dimensions based on Five-Factor Personality Model. The development of the scales was based on item-factor analyses and internal consistency procedures. The results supported reliability and alphas changed between 0.65 and 0.84.

Additionally a demographic questionnaire was used to collect brief information about participants' gender, age, marital status, position, occupation, education level, department and length of experience.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of work values are given in Table 1. As can be seen from Table 1, achievement has the highest score of work values ($X=3.92$). It is followed by supervisory relations and intellectual stimulation. Economic returns is the lowest ranked value ($X=2.88$). It can't be said that intrinsic work values are more important for manufacturing employees because two of the highest scored values are intrinsic, two are extrinsic.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics of personality traits are reported in Table 2. Openness to experience ($X=4.01$) had the highest score in personality dimensions and neuroticism ($X=2.45$) the lowest one. We can say that manufacturing employees are open to experience and are agreeable persons.

Table 2

Effects of gender and marital status on work values are analyzed by t-test. The results of the t-test analysis indicated that females give more importance to surroundings ($X_{female}=3.77$ versus $X_{male}=3.43$, $p<.05$). There were significant differences in altruism and independence between married and single employees. Married ones ($X_{altruism}=3.73$, $X_{independence}=3.52$, $p<.05$) had a higher concern related to these values than singles ($X_{altruism}=3.43$, $X_{independence}=3.10$, $p<.05$). White Collars were higher in valuing intrinsic values creativity ($X_{white}=3.89$ vs $X_{blue}=3.29$, $p<.05$), intellectual stimulation ($X_{white}=3.92$ vs $X_{blue}=3.35$, $p<.05$), and "management" ($X_{white}=3.63$ vs $X_{blue}=2.92$ $p<.05$). Effects of educational level, position and department on work values are analyzed by One-Way ANOVA and the results are given in Table 3. According to One-Way ANOVA and Scheffe analyses employees having a bachelor's degree had significantly higher levels in creativity, intellectual stimulation and management than those who had primary school degree. Managers

scored significantly higher than workers in creativity, prestige, management, economic returns, and security. Managers scored higher than Foremans in prestige, and management.

Table 3

There were significant differences in prestige, management, and surroundings between repair-maintenance personnel and clerical/ managerial personnel. Repair-maintenance personnel had lower scores on these values. There was a significant difference in supervisory relations between manufacturing personnel and marketing/sales personnel. Maintaining a collegial relationship with understanding and sympathetic supervisors for marketing/sales personnel. In terms of age, younger group scored less than the older group in altruism ($X_{18-28}=3.99$ vs $X_{40-53}=3.47$; $F=3.09$, $p=0.00$). Years of experience did not have effect on work values.

5.2. Correlation Analysis

The relationship between work values and FFM domain traits was measured by Pearson's correlation coefficient. Correlations of intrinsic values with traits were similar with correlations of extrinsic ones. Correlations between traits and work values were low to moderate, and were changed between $r=0.001$ (extroversion with altruism) and $r=0.325$ (extroversion with prestige). Independence wasn't correlated with any trait. There was a low but meaningful relation between extroversion and intrinsic values creativity, intellectual stimulation, management and intermediate relation between prestige and extroversion.

There was low but meaningful relations between agreeableness and five intrinsic, six extrinsic work values. Agreeableness was correlated intermediately with achievement (intrinsic) and associates (extrinsic).

Conscientiousness was correlated with six intrinsic and five extrinsic work values. The relation between intellectual stimulation and conscientiousness was higher, it means that high conscientious employees give importance to challenging, non monotonous works that give chance to use their abilities.

Neuroticism had a negative relationship with both intrinsic and extrinsic work values. Intellectual stimulation showed the highest relation with neuroticism. As neuroticism is a motivational barrier that prevents people to reach career goals, it's not surprising that it affects intellectual stimulation negatively.

Intellectual stimulation was highly correlated with openness to experience. Openness involves active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity (Costa and McCrae, 1992), so we expected this relation.

5.3. Regression Analysis of Work Values and Personality

Hierarchical multivariate regression analysis was used to measure the effect of personality traits on intrinsic and extrinsic work values. Intrinsic and extrinsic work values were dependent variables; personality traits, age, position and gender were independent variables. In the first step of analysis, in order to find the degree of multi-collinearity, diagnostics such as variance inflation factor (VIF) and condition index were used. (Hair, Anderson, Tahtam, and Black, 1998). VIF and condition index values of independent variables were smaller than 2 and 30 respectively. It can be said that

multi-collinearity problem doesn't exist (Gujarati, 1995). In the second step, meaningfulness of coefficients in the regression model was investigated. The findings of the hierarchical regression analysis where intrinsic work values were dependent variables, were given in Table 4.

Table 4

In model 1, personality traits were entered as a block. % 43.7 of the variance of intrinsic work values were explained by personality traits. It was seen that personality traits conscientiousness and neuroticism were effective on intrinsic work values. β Coefficient of neuroticism is found to be negative which means that the less Neurotic a person is the more important for him to value intrinsic work values. In the second model gender, occupation and education were used as control variables. From these variables, only occupation was associated with intrinsic work values. It was seen that intrinsic work values were more important for white collar employees. Together, staff characteristics and personal variables explained 47.1% of the variance in intrinsic work values.

Table 5

Results of hierarchical regression analysis, where extrinsic work values were dependent variables, were given in Table 5. In model 1, agreeableness and neuroticism were two personality traits that affected extrinsic work values. In model 2, from control variables gender, occupation and educational level only occupation associated with extrinsic work values. It can be said that blue collar employees give more importance to extrinsic work values. Personality traits explained %34.8 of extrinsic work values and they explained %37.7 of the variance together with gender, occupation and educational level.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of this study are important in several ways. Firstly, we were able to demonstrate similar results with the studies which tried to explain the relationships between personality traits and work values (Berings *et al.*, 2004; Furnham *et al.*, 2005). The results showed that when reliable and valid scales are used, personality traits are predictors of intrinsic and extrinsic work values. As a result of regression analysis conscientiousness and neuroticism were found to be effective on intrinsic work values. This finding means that employees who are conscientious, highly motivated and who obey the rules give importance to intrinsic work values. As conscientiousness is related with high work performance, better work related behavior and less problematic behavior (Barrick, Mount, and Judge, 2001; Hartman, 2006), we can say that conscientious manufacturing sector employees have more chance to be successful. Neuroticism is an unwanted behavior in career development. Neuroticism had a negative relationship with intrinsic work values that emotionally stable employees valued them. Another finding is that importance given to the extrinsic work values increase when agreeableness score increase together with a decrease in neuroticism score. This means that tolerant, optimistic, calm, emotionally stable and self-confident employees give importance to extrinsic work values.

Secondly, in other studies work values are used only as intrinsic and extrinsic but in this study all dimensions of Super's Work Values Inventory are used and relationships of them with personality traits are investigated. Results of correlation analysis also showed that conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness had low to intermediate relations with eleven work values.

Extroversion was related with four work values and “neuroticism” with eight. These results are similar to the study of Berings *et al.* (2004). There are few studies in the literature which examined the relationship of work values and personality traits but none used the same work value dimensions. The conclusions of their studies are as follows: (i) Berings *et al.* (2004) indicated that all work values were predicted by FFM traits. They also found low to moderate correlations between FFM traits and work values (Structure, Rationality, Autonomy, Influence, Creativity, Community, Team, Competition, Earnings, Stability, Innovation, and Stress avoidance) not exceeding 0.44.; (ii) Furnham *et al.* (2005) concluded that there are robust associations between certain personality traits (agreeableness, extroversion, openness) and Mantech’s (1983) work values (work relationships, influence and advancement, financial and working conditions, autonomy and use of skills).

Thirdly, it is found that most important intrinsic work value for manufacturing industry employees was achievement it means that they want to feel accomplishment in doing a job well. Supervisory relations was the most important extrinsic value so we can say that maintaining a collegial relationship with understanding and sympathetic supervisors is also important for them. As economic returns was the least ranked value it can be said that material things and earnings are the least important sides of the work for manufacturing industry employees. The least important intrinsic value was management which is a value that permits one to plan and assign work to others. Neuroticism had the lowest score of personality traits and openness to experience had the highest. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are likely to be rigid, unadaptable, and timid (Judge and Cable, 1999). Barrick *et al.* (2001) said “Being anxious, hostile, personally insecure and depressed is unlikely to lead to high performance”. Tokar, Fischer, and Subich, (1998) indicated that neuroticism correlates with career indecision, less job satisfaction, lower personality-job congruence, more negative perceptions of occupational stressors and strain and poorer job performance ratings. Individuals who score high on openness to experience are described as imaginative, original, unconventional, and independent. Evidence consistently demonstrates that openness to experience is positively related to creativity and divergent thinking (Judge and Cable, 1999). Under the light of these suggestions personality scores could be accepted as positive. As a result, we can say that manufacturing industry employees included in this study are open to experience, conscientious, agreeable and prefer a job which require a considerable amount of thought and reasoning, a fair, agreeable boss, and want to have enjoyable working relationships with colleagues. Instead of economic rewards, feeling accomplishment, self-advancement and growth is more important for them.

Fourthly, according to t-test results females give more importance to “surroundings” which is an extrinsic value. Similarly Drummond, McIntire and Skaggs (1978); Harris and Earle (1986) found that females’ extrinsic value scores are higher than males’. White collars were higher in valuing some intrinsic values. This finding supports the results obtained by regression analysis. Pennings (1970) indicated that value systems of white collar workers are different than blue collar ones and their work value system is predominantly intrinsic. According to One-Way ANOVA analysis employees having a bachelor’s degree had significantly higher levels in some work values. These results concord with the literature that education is positively correlated with work values. Managerial/clerical personnel generally ranked work values higher. Ali and Al-Kazemi (2005) similarly found that managers scored high on work values. There was a significant difference in

supervisory relations between manufacturing personnel and marketing/sales personnel but in the study of Dhanasarnsilp *et al.* (2006), there was no significant differences between work values of manufacturing personnel and sales personnel. As it is said before, the findings of age impact on work values are divergent and inconclusive. In our study there was a difference in altruism between younger and older groups.

Finally, there are few similar studies in the literature that emphasize the importance of work values in manufacturing industry. We may suggest managers, select agreeable, conscientious and emotionally stable employees, according to personality tests. As there exists no other study that investigated the relationship of work values with personality traits, these results are new for the Turkish manufacturing industry.

7. LIMITATIONS and SUGGESTIONS for FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some limitations of the research to be considered. First, due to lack of financial and human resources, a limitation of this study is associated with the fact of respondents of a single country, which may limit the generalizability of the results to some degree. Second limitation arises from the implication of the survey. The questionnaire to which employees were asked to respond was relatively long. This probably led to a lower response rate.

It is recommended that: (i) The study could be repeated for manufacturing industry, by using a bigger population; (ii) The study could be applied in a different sector; (iii) Work values could be used as moderator variables and their relationship with personality, performance or success.

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Table 1. Work Values

Work Value Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation
Altruism	3,63	1,04
Creativity	3,58	1,13
Intellectual Stimulation	3,63	1,11
Achievement	3,92	1,00
Independence	3,37	1,15
Prestige	3,37	1,17
Management	3,25	1,19
Economic Returns	2,88	1,40
Security	3,62	1,08
Surroundings	3,54	1,11
Supervisory Relations	3,83	1,07
Associates	3,77	1,06
Way of Life	3,54	1,12
Variety	3,54	1,07

Table 2. Five Factor Personality Traits

Five Factor Personality Traits	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extroversion	3,49	0,67
Agreeableness	3,93	0,53
Conscientiousness	3,97	0,46
Neuroticism	2,45	0,76
Openness to Experience	4,01	0,52

Table 3. Effect of Work Values

Work Values	Education (Mean)				
	Primary School	High School	University	F	
Creativity	3,26	3,48	3,90	5,715*	
Intellectual stimulation	3,37	3,47	3,99	6,649*	
Management	2,98	3,11	3,60	5,435*	
	Position (Mean)				
	Worker	Foreman	Chief	Manager	F
Creativity	3,34	3,73	4,30	4,19	6,794*
Prestige	3,17	3,48	3,39	4,39	6,181*
Economic returns	2,68	2,98	3,17	3,74	3,483*
Management	2,95	3,44	3,96	4,29	10,979*
Security	3,45	3,83	3,72	4,23	3,553*
	Department (Mean)				
	Manufacturing	Marketing	Managerial/ Clerical	Maintenance/ Repair	F
Prestige	3,38	3,49	3,69	2,67	3,634*
Management	3,20	3,65	3,52	2,77	2,682*
Surrounding	3,46	3,81	4,01	3,06	3,875*
Supervisory relationships	3,70	4,43	4,02	3,71	3,661*

* p<0.05

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results for Intrinsic Work Values

Variables	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	
	Model 1	Model 2
Extroversion	0,056	0,048
Agreeableness	0,117	0,142
Conscientiousness	0,218*	0,261*
Neuroticism	-0,197*	-0,171*
Openness to Experience	0,093	0,086
Occupation		0,292*
Gender		0,100
Educational level		0,085
Model F	11,120*	14,691*
R ²	0,437	0,471
Change in R ²	-	0,034*

*p<0,01

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results for Extrinsic Work Values

Variables	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	
	Step 1	Step 2
Extroversion	0,006	0,021
Agreeableness	0,221**	0,237**
Conscientiousness	0,102	0,149
Neuroticism	-0,169*	-0,150*
Openness to Experience	0,090	0,120
Occupation		0,214**
Gender		0,035
Educational level		-0,082
Model F	10,875**	12,447**
R ²	0,348	0,374
Change in R ²	-	0,026*

*p<0,05; **p<0,01