

Influence of Personality Factors on Job Satisfaction among Secondary School Counsellors in Selangor

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Abstract -- This research is designed to identify school counsellors' personality factors and to determine whether these factors determine the counsellors' work satisfaction. Furthermore, the research is also designed to gauge the counsellors' level of work satisfaction. 310 secondary school counsellors from 10 different districts in the state of Selangor were randomly selected as respondents. The research uses the quantitative approach. Data is obtained through a translated questionnaire taken from BFI and JDI. The reliability factor of the instrument is between 0.73 to 0.80. 142 counsellors (45.8%) of the respondents recorded a high degree of job satisfaction; 143 (46.1%) recorded average satisfaction while 25 (8.1%) respondents stated a low level of satisfaction. The results of the research also indicate that, with reference to the relationship between personality factor and job satisfaction, two out of five personality factors (namely *agreeableness* and *neuroticism*) show significant relationship with job satisfaction. All relationships show a positive correlation except for the relationship between agreeableness and neuroticism factors and job satisfaction. The results also indicate a significant influence of personality factor towards the counsellors' job satisfaction. The implication of the study is also discussed and proposed in this article.

Keywords – School counsellors, Personality factor, BFI, JDI

I. INTRODUCTION

In this ever changing post modernism era, every individual is directly or indirectly vulnerable to the socialization influence and new traditions. It is the same with the personality of a counselor together with the need for guidance and counseling in schools have since developed rapidly. To ensure that the development of the country is achieved at its equilibration on human capitals, it is crucial that the efficiency of guidance and counseling is upgraded at the satisfaction of the counselor.

The research on job satisfaction among school counselors and teachers attracts researchers from various countries. The decrement of job satisfaction level among teachers can cause the depreciation of work quality and increase the psychology chaos and work stress among teachers (Tillman and Tillman, 2008). These aspects can influenced energy, motivation and the willingness of teachers to maximize their teaching potentials (Shulz and Teddlie, 1999). At the same time, stress issues among the school

counselors had been the biggest and crucial issues in the community. (Kyriacou, 1987). The negative effect due to the stress is no longer a private issue that burdens the worker alone but it has also become the problems for the employers, organizations and even the government as well as setting a very negative effect on mental and physical health. (Chua Bee Seok, 2004). In terms of relationship and job satisfaction it has vice-versa connections. In the teaching career, teachers had reported their high stress level that has caused low job satisfaction. (Galloway, *et al.*, 1984; Ma and MacMillan, 1999).

The level of professionalism and teachers' integration can be upgraded if they can maximize the job satisfaction and minimize work stress in their career. There were previous researches that showed job satisfaction and stress connected with one's personality. For example, in one of the long term research, Filak and Sheldon (2003) found out that personality of an individual during childhood influenced their job satisfaction when they work. Those findings made other researchers to continue doing research on this matter. (Judge et al, 2002) various models and theories had been formed to search the relationship between personality and job satisfaction. (Brief, 1998 and Motowidlo, *et al.*, 2006). Holand(1973) also suggested that matching personality and work environment will bring the increment of job satisfaction in the career that an individual had chosen.

Other than that, the findings of the research showed that personality not only predicted the job satisfaction (Brief, 1998; Azlina and Sew Lee, 2008), but the work stress as well. Personality influence towards job satisfaction can be seen through various models that put personality as a predictor or the main predictor for job satisfaction. These models explain that interaction among various personality traits and a particular job had genetic factors that cause individual differences in facing psychological reaction. For example, an individual that have neurotic character will have the tendency to live in their wrongs, easily get upset and prone to work stress as well as lacking the ability handling it.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There were various definitions that have been given to describe the word personality. One of the definitions is looking at the personality as traits (thinking, feelings and behavior) that differentiate individuals. There were few theories that attempted to describe the main human traits such as trait theorist Carl Jung and Hans Eysenck. Contemporary researchers suggested that one new trait theory through the findings from factor analysis methods and this theory known as five factors or big five (Costa & McCrae, 1996). There

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were five main traits in this theory which is known as OCEAN. OCEAN stands for Openness to experience, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism.

The research from overseas have conducted a lot of observation on the traits personality and the relationship with job satisfaction (Boudreau, *et al.*, 2001; Judge, Heller and Mount, 2002).and work stress (Ali, 2003; Cook, 2005). Whereas most of the researches focus the relationship between job satisfaction and work stress within the work environment only (Manthei, and Solman, 2008; Mohd Kamal, 2005; Faseha, 2005; Lim, 2005; Abdul Rahim, 2002). This research is done to find the relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction among the secondary school counsellors in the state of Selangor.

Purpose of the Research

Especially, this study hoped can:

1. Identify the personality factor level among school counsellors.
2. Identifying the relationship between personality factor (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) with job satisfaction among school counsellors.
3. Identify influence between personality factor with job satisfaction among school counsellors.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research design is a map that showed how a research is being conducted in detail. It was a reference frame about things that related with sampling measurement and data analysis. (Sabitha Marican, 2005) this research is in descriptive explanatory research and in the form of observation using quantitative approach monitoring the influence of counselor personality factors in secondary school towards job satisfaction. This observation is done among the counselors in secondary schools in Selangor.

Generally, the sum of a secondary school counselors in Selangor until the month of April 2010 is 1662. According to the Sample Size Determination Table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the appropriate sample is 310 counselors in secondary schools in Selangor. This sampling method in this research is a simplified random sampling. This sample is a ratio in 10 districts in Selangor which is in Klang, Kuala Langat, Kuala Selangor, Hulu Langat, Hulu Selangor, Sabak Bernam, Gombak, Sepang, Petaling Perdana and Petaling Utama.

In this research, counselors' personality factors in secondary schools was the independent variable whereas job satisfaction was the dependent variables. The instrument used to measure the personality is the big five inventory (BFI) introduced by John, Donahue and Kenttle(1991). The questionnaires consisted 44 items that measured five personalities dimensional OCEAN, they are Openness to

experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

This instrument was chosen to identify personality traits that existed in an individual with career and in this research, was the school counselor. Part B consisted of questionnaires JDI. This questionnaires was design by Cornell (1950) that translated into the Malay language by Ariffin (1981) in back translation which is suggested by Brislin (1973). The questionnaires in JDI consisted of five main aspects of job satisfaction that measured with 72 items. The items that measured by JDI is salary, work environment, promotion, colleagues and observation.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research data had been analyzed according to the purpose and hypotheses of these findings using SPSS. The mean score is used to determine the level of personality factors as well as the job satisfaction. This value is then compared with a standard table of comparison to simplify findings interpretation. The Pearson correlation test is used to examine the relationship between personality factors and job satisfaction. To observe how far these personality factors can influence job satisfaction for counselors, repetitive regressive test is being used.

For the purpose of determining the relationship among the variables in this research, there were few hypotheses. To ascertain whether the hypotheses is being accepted or rejected, the Pearson correlation analysis method is used. The significant level that being used is $\alpha = 0.05$. Even though the strength level among the variables will be translated using the correlation interpretations (Cohen) which is:

<i>r</i>	Strength
.10 - .29	Low
.30 - .49	Medium
.50 - 1.00	High

Adapted from Cohen (1988)

TABLE I : LEVEL DISTRIBUTION PERSONALITY FACTORS

Variable	Frekuensi	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Openness to experience</i>				
Medium	253	81.6	3.36	.36
High	57	18.4		
<i>Conscientiousness</i>				
Medium	101	32.6	3.89	.44
High	209	67.4		
<i>Extraversion</i>				
Medium	254	81.9	3.45	.35
High	56	18.1		
<i>Agreeableness</i>				
Medium	66	21.3	4.09	.45
High	244	78.7		
<i>Neuroticism</i>				
Low	118	38.1	2.48	.40
Medium	192	61.9		

Table 1 showed that 254 counselors were in medium level and 56 counselors possessed high extraversion factors. The extraversion frequency mean found were 2.45. While the standard deviation collected from the distribution data for sub construct is .35. Agreeableness factor which is in medium level comprising 66 counselors and 244 possessed high agreeableness level. The standard deviation for agreeableness factor is .45 and the mean at 4.09. Conscientiousness factors showed 209 counselors were in high level and 101 was in medium level. The mean for conscientiousness is 3.09 and the standard deviation is .44. Other than that neuroticism showed 192 counselors in the medium and 118 in low level. The standard deviation for neuroticism is .40 and the mean from neuroticism frequency is 2.48. Openness factor showed 253 counselors in the medium level and 57 counselors in high level. Mean from the openness frequency is 3.36 while the standard deviation from distribution data for sub construct is .36.

The findings of this research also showed the mean score for agreeableness and conscientiousness was in high level, whereas the extraversion dimensional openness and neuroticism are in medium level. These findings describe that school counselors do not favor to find faults in others, do not start any argument, reasonable and good hearted, co-operating with each other, possessed the instinct of forgiveness, tactful, helpful and not self-centered. These characteristics are along with the research findings. Perlman and McCann (1998) on student Pet Peeves about teaching, which is a teacher that possessed high agreeableness dimensional will always have excellent rapport among teachers and students, memorizes their students' name and calls them if given the chance, liberal and flexible during teaching and learning process.

These findings also showed that school counselors possessed high conscientiousness dimensional. The respondents stated that they were trusted workers, thorough and always complete their work, do their work carefully,

hardworking, making plans ahead and sticking to it, efficient, organized and not easily distracted. Definitely, a teacher who have high conscientiousness dimensional will always make a thorough lesson plan, various daily lesson plan and systematic in preparing examination item (Perlman and McCann, 1998). For extraversion dimensional, the characteristics of the respondents such as high spirited, energetic, approachable and strict personality were still in medium level. Perlman and McCann (1998) stated that teachers that score the highest in this dimensional have the initiative to improve their communication and able to run his or her teaching with good impression, active and simulating.

These respondents also have openness dimensional that only stay at the medium level. In other words, they are less initiative to gain experience, less curiosity over things and not broad minded. For neuroticism trait, even though the mean score is 2.48 which lie in the range of medium level, this value actually are very close to the low level. Most of the respondents stated the characteristics such as easily distracted, stressed and always worried over something, though at the same time they seem to be cool, can handle stress, emotionally stable, not easily have hard feelings and cool even in crucial situations.

TABLE II : CORRELATION BETWEEN PERSONALITY FACTOR AND JOB SATISFACTION

Personality Factors	r	p
<i>Openness to experience</i>	.04	.43
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	.09	.12
<i>Extraversion</i>	-.04	.48
<i>Agreeableness</i>	.23**	.00
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.18**	.001

** Correlation is significant at 0.05

Table 2 showed the correlation between personality factor and job satisfaction. Agreeableness factors have a low positive relationship with job satisfaction. These factors connected with beliefs, help and individual pro-social. High Agreeableness factor can increase the job satisfaction and this supported the findings by Mohd. Kosnin & Tan Sew Lee (2008). This relationship is significant $r=.23, p=.000$. Neuroticism factors also showed the negative relationship with job satisfaction. Individual that showed Neuroticism characters is emotionally unstable and worries connected with low job satisfaction as stated by Puspa (2007). The relationship between Neuroticism and job satisfaction is significant $r=-.18, p=.001$. Whereas the Extraversion factors have negative and weak relationships and are not significant. Lastly, Conscientiousness factor and Openness to experience have weak and positive relationship with job satisfaction among respondents and not significant.

Other than that, research also showed that two out of five personality factors that were Agreeableness and Neuroticism had significant relationship with job satisfaction. All these relationships were positive except the relationship between Agreeableness and Neuroticism factors and job satisfaction.

These findings are along with the previous research. Findings that showed the significant relationship between job satisfaction and teachers personality (Boudreau, et al., 2001; Judge, et al., 2002).

The connection between personality factors and job satisfaction can be seen from the characteristics in a good teacher. Agreeableness factors that have characteristics such as good hearted, tactful or polite, friendly, sympathetic, cooperative and enjoy being approach can make a school counselor to achieve job satisfaction. Whereas the characteristics in Extraversion factors such as high spirited, energetic, approachable need by a teacher when facing the challenges in educational world so that he or she is functional and impressive.

In addition to that, school counselors that possessed Conscientiousness have the independence, organized, trusted, responsible consistent and hardworking characteristics. This personality can help them to face educational challenges like social problems, the losing of faith and the society needs. Finally a school counselor that has low Neuroticism factor possessed stable emotional and can face social challenges such as truancy, disobedient, smoking and more. Working environment that enjoyable, creative and healthy as well as having the positive perception can help the school to achieve their job satisfaction.

TABLE III: INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY FACTOR TOWARDS JOB SATISFACTION

Variable	b	Beta	t	p
Constant	212.81			
Openness to experience	20.07	.16	2.44	.015
Conscientiousness	-34.66	-.33	-3.67	.000
Extraversion	-36.57	-.28	-4.05	.000
Agreeableness	51.12	.51	5.67	.000
Neuroticism	-21.25	-.19	-3.05	.003

F= 9.99 Sig-F= .000 R= .38 R²= .14

Table 3 showed the influence of personality factor towards job satisfaction. Regression analysis showed personality factors describe variations in job satisfaction as 14 percent $F(5, 304) = 9.99, p < 0.01$. All these personality factors have unique significant contribution in describing the respondents job satisfaction and agreeableness factors have the largest contribution to describe variations in respondents job satisfaction (beta=.51, $p < 0.01$) followed by conscientiousness factor (beta=-.33, $p < 0.01$), Extraversion (beta=-.28, $p < 0.01$), Neuroticism (beta=-.19, $p < 0.01$) and Openness to experience (beta=.16, $p < 0.01$).

According to the various regression test, findings showed all these personality factors have unique and significant contribution in describing respondents job satisfaction with agreeableness factors have the largest contributions in describing variations in respondent's job satisfaction.

Other factors that brought the Agreeableness factors as a predictor to job satisfaction are in accordance with its characteristics:

- (i) Agreeableness factors are in correlation with pro-social motives that purposely to get good product for oneself and others. (Beersma and De Dreu, 2002).
- (ii) These factors brought the need for affiliation which is behavior as thinking of an individual that take affective positive relationship important. (Atkinson, et al., 1954).
- (iii) Agreeableness factor is in correlation with the need for intimacy which is the need to create a close relationship pattern and interaction or frequent communication with others. The groups that have agreeableness characteristics can be trusted, co-operative, rationale and moved by others. (Costa and McCrae, 1992).
- (iv) Harmony relationship that perceived encouraged them to make a positive attribution (Graziano et al., 1996) and tend to minimize the negative effects in all conflicts (Kinnunen et al., 2003).

The Agreeableness characteristics as listed above caused the school counselor satisfied with their colleague, observation, working environment, salary, promotion and other related aspects. They too can tolerate with distress that possible in facing overloaded with school work, working environment and interpersonal relationship in the school.

In Neuroticism factors, previous research (Cook, 2005; Boudreau, et al., 2001; Brief, 1998) showed that emotional stability factor or low Neuroticism have the highest correlation relationship and the best predictor towards job satisfaction. Neuroticism factor as a predictor to the job satisfaction and teachers' work stress is in accordance with these characteristics:

- (i) The tendency to see negative aspects of their work. This characteristic makes them less successful in their work and less experience the job satisfaction. Their cognitive process was based on negative perception, which is focused and memorized negative aspects. The more of the negative remembrance, the more disturbances towards the career achievement and this makes them less experience the job satisfaction (Larsen, 1992).
- (ii) They tend to be worried and afraid. These negative emotions will avoid them from doing the task and the chance of experiencing job satisfaction will also decrease. These circumstances also are related to low efficacy aspects in oneself with the expectation that they will fail in doing any task. The impact is that they choose a task that required less satisfaction, (less autonomy, less identity routine, not important and easy to handle) befit to their characteristics which is less career oriented (Costa and McCrae, 1992).
- (iii) Easily influenced by woes and stress as well as not functional effectively. They cannot handle work stress and influence their ability to perform better (Judge and

Bono, 2001). Their emotional that were less stable will influence their achievement and work performance and easily get stress at work.

The description above showed that if the school counselor have low Neuroticism factors, they will also have stable emotion and more confident as well as positive in whatever challenges in their profession. Moreover, according to Bolger (1990), Neuroticism factor can influence the strategy to handle stress. As a conclusion to this, we can say that neuroticism and agreeableness factors can be used to predict job satisfaction and work stress among schools counselor. Other than that, this finding is along with the previous research that showed the significant influences between personality factor and job satisfaction. (Azlina Mohd. Kosnin & Tan Sew Lee, 2008).

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As to conclude, personality showed an individual to be more socially effective because he or she was seen as someone who possessed attractive personality, worse or no personality at all. Personality is seen as unique and differentiates individuals. These aspects were called individual differences. In addition to that, as any other career that is needed to enhance their knowledge and skills, counselors could as well occupied themselves with technology skills. This is due to the difficulty for the counselor to prepare the best guidance as well as creating more values in counseling service. The increment of knowledge among counselors gets along with the current need that must always be given priority. A counselor who is rich with knowledge and skills were relevant and important in knowledge-based society.

From the study, it was found that many personality factor school counselors are rooted in their job satisfaction. Perhaps, school counsellor not only need to know and realizing this personality factor interest, even they also need to implement this element in conducting counselling process when interacts with client. Many studies which found method and pattern of interaction between students with counselors play an important role in ensuring excellence and student self-development. Counselor should be intelligent in ensuring this element is applied and at the same time able to move student create excellence in their academic (Azlina & Tan, 2008).

Hence, personality factor assist counsellors understand colleague show and their environment from various aspects. Personality is behaviour that of direction and trait which provides structure, uniqueness and motivation that becomes feature to someone's job satisfaction. In summary, this study can help strengthen counselling services management. Counselor can understand that how important it is personality factor in implementing development counselling that move towards form personality that is more stable and extrovert in prevention aspect, enrichment and recovery.

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