

# Personality Traits and Work Engagement: A Case Study on Female Bank Employees in Banking Sector

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## Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to explore whether there is any qualifying relationship between personality traits and work engagement, also, the level of work engagement and big five personality traits among female employees in Himachal Pradesh. Relevant data through questionnaire was collected from 150 female employees working in 3 different Public sector banks namely State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank and UCO Bank in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The results of the study specified that there was a significant positive relationship between work engagement and big five personality traits. Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were significantly related to work engagement and its dimensions namely vigor, dedication and absorption whereas neuroticism was found to be negatively related to the work engagement and the three dimensions of it. The level of work engagement was high in public sector whereas extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness were average except the agreeableness trait of personality was high

**Keywords:** Personality traits, work engagement, vigor, dedication and absorption

## 1. Introduction

Organizational agility is continuously looking out for the employees who bubble, sparkle or effervesce with dynamism, enthusiasm, energy,

employees who believe in themselves and their abilities Bakker and Schaufeli, (2008). This implies that in order to achieve competitive edge organization need to have engaged employees who are willing to put in that little bit extra

for business. Bleeker & Roodt, (2002); Schaufeli & Bakker, (2004) stated the importance for managers of fostering the growth of work engagement as disengagement or alienation is the central problem of workers' lack of commitment. Literature highlighted that research on work engagement has been done in various professions like nursing (Montgomery et al., 2015) police officers (Storm K. & Rothmann S. (2003) & Louw G.J 2014), school principals, teachers (Hakanen et al., (2006); Zaidi et al., 2013 and Manikandan K. & Sarath P (2014), including banking personnel (Koyuncu et al., 2006).

The issues in work engagement among banking personnel specially the female employees has received important responses these days because of the economic pressure of inflation, the acts upon of other women's movement and the psychological need to spring up one's self identity.. This brings us to a very important question as to why certain female employees show signs of work engagement while others exhibit no signs of work engagement. Personality plays a significant role in the engagement process and it can be considered as an important variable to affect the engagement level because individuals enter the workplace with their own sets of personality characteristics. Therefore, it becomes important to study the relationship between personality traits and work engagement.

### **1.1 Work Engagement**

Engagement is an important concept to study and analyze because it is associated with the positive individual and work related outcome as focussed by Maslach et al., (2001). Engaged

employees confirm themselves quickly to changes in their surroundings, and pass easily from one activity to the other as compared to their counterparts Laangelaan et al., (2006). It is defined as a "positive, fulfilling work related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Vigor pertains to high levels of vim, dynamism, zip and mental exuberance while actively engaged in work. Vigor perhaps, is delineated as a pool of energy possessed by the employees and that could be used when dealing with demanding and stimulating situations (Shirom 2007 p. 86). Dedication refers to an intense work involvement and comprehends feeling of self-respect and personal worth, pride, enthusiasm, significance and challenge. Absorption, which is the last variable of work engagement is characterised as being totally focused on one's work as the time appears to pass quickly and one finds it increasingly hard to detach oneself from work. In short, engaged employees work hard; they are passionate about their work; and are fully plunged in their work activities (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

#### **1.1.2 Personality Traits**

Personality refers to cognition and perceptual structure of behaviour that depicts constancy or stability throughout time and across situations (e.g. Cattell 1965)

Extraversion is a personality trait, which is characterized by warmth, assertiveness, gregariousness, talkative, enthusiastic, active,

energetic, expressive etc. (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This variable consists of two components, Ambition (initiative, surgency, ambition and impetuous) and Sociability (social, exhibitionist and expressive) (Hogan 1986).

Neuroticism represents individual differences indicating general tendency to be anxious, tense, hostile, impulsive, vulnerable, self-consciousness etc. (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Any individual who scores high on Neuroticism indicates that a person is prone to have irrational ideas, being less able to control impulses, and is grappling badly with stress Rothmann et al., (2003).

Agreeableness is the propensity to be sympathetic, kind, generous, modest, compliant, altruism, considerate etc. (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Agreeableness is required to work in peace and to conclusively settle the conflicts. (Ozgun Ongore, 2014).

Conscientiousness individuals are efficient, responsible, self-disciplined, compliant, organized, and reliable (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Hence, individuals who scores high on conscientiousness should report more engagement in their work due to their sense of duty towards every role they take on. Openness to Experience is qualified by being artistic, introspective, and curious and values and intellectual matters. (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It includes traits such as imagination, curiosity, and creativity (Goldberg, 1993).

## 2. Literature

**2.1 Work Engagement:** Several research studies have been conducted by

various research groups who provided thorough insight for understanding work engagement in conceptual terms.

Enumerate research has been done to examine the potential antecedents and consequences of work engagement Koyuncu et al., (2006), Oliver (2007) and Burke et al., (2010 & 2013). Only one variable of work engagement i.e. vigor has been focussed by Shirom (2004, 2010), Sonnentag et al., (2008). Someone who's suffering from burnout have less mitigating resources like social support than those who execute their duties vigorously Geritt J. Louw G.J. (2014). The creativity and charisma among female leaders and the role of resources and work engagement among 84 female school principals and 190 teachers were examined by Bakker et al., (2013). Job resources facilitate employees' sense of self-efficacy and resiliency, and consequently foster work engagement Bakker et al., (2013).

### 2.2 Big Five Personality Traits:

Managers who are emotionally stable, open to experience and agreeable tend to perform better than those who measured lower on these dimensions Rothmann et al., (2003). Bakker et al., (2006), examined the relationship between burnout and big five personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect/autonomy whereas openness to experience was not included in the study. A large number of studies have been done on personality traits and burnout Kim et al., (2007); Kaja et al., (2015); Alarcon et al., (2009); Zellar (2000); Joseph et al., (2011). The relationship among conscientiousness, neuroticism and burnout in healthcare staff of private

hospitals was examined, leaving out the remaining three personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience) which was not included in the study Azeem S. M. (2013).

### **2.3 Work Engagement and Personality traits:**

Ongore (2014) investigated the relationship between personality traits and job engagement. Rantanen (2008) explored the relations between personality, role engagement and four dimensional typology of work life balance. Woods et al., (2013) examined the association of personality traits with work engagement. Relevance of the variables of big five taxonomy when studied in relation with engagement is yet to be determined.

For Instance Langelaan et al., (2006) considered only two of those whereas for Kim et al., (2009) considered conscientiousness to be significant.

Inceoglu & Warr (2011). Langelaan et al., (2006) studied whether burnout and work engagement could have been differentiated based on Eysenck's two-dimensional model of personality which included extraversion and neuroticism whereas agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience have not been included. Kim et al., (2009) focused on the relationship between job burnout, job engagement and the big five personality dimensions, which included Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and openness to experience. Bozionelos (2004) explored the relationship between the big five personality and work involvement. Individuals suffering from burnout have less mitigating resources like social support

that those who execute their duties vigorously (Louw G J. 2014).

Neha & Venkatesh (2015) investigated the relationship between personality and work engagement. The interactive effect of personality and employee engagement on organizational citizenship behavior has been investigated.

### **3. Objectives**

1. To measure the level of work engagement and personality trait among women employees in banking sector.
2. To find out the relationship between personality traits and work engagement

#### **3.1 Hypothesis**

H01: There is no relationship between work engagement and extraversion.

H02: There is no relationship between work engagement and neuroticism.

H03: There is no relationship between work engagement and agreeableness.

H04: There is no relationship between work engagement and conscientiousness.

H05: There is no relationship between work engagement and openness to experience.

### **4. Method**

#### **4.1 Respondents**

A survey was conducted to collect the data from 150 female employees working in three different public sector banks in the state of Himachal Pradesh namely State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank and UCO bank. The

respondents were given standard based questionnaires comprising questions related to personality traits and work engagement.

#### 4.3 Measures:

Respondents filled out the questionnaires containing statements related to work engagement and big five personality traits respectively. Work Engagement was assessed with the validated 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), whereas the big five personality traits was evaluated with the Big five Inventory (BFI). The scale characterizes big five personality traits i.e. Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience, it included total of 44 statements. Demographic attributes such as name, age, marital status, job experience, designation, salary and total work experience were measured in the first section of the questionnaire.

**4.3 Cronbach's alpha:** To measure the validity and reliability of the variables of work engagement cronbach's alpha were used. The cronbach's alpha for work engagement and big five personality traits lies between  $\alpha = .84$  to  $.61$

#### 4.4 Statistical analysis:

Firstly, mean and standard deviation were calculated for work engagement and personality. These measurement tools helped in finding the level of the work engagement and its three dimensions namely vigor, dedication and absorption, and also of the big five personality traits namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. Further, Pearson correlation method was used

to explore the relationship between the work engagement and its three variables namely vigor, dedication and absorption with the big five personality traits.

### 5. Results:

Results of the present study suggest that five factor model can be used as an important tool to find out the levels of work engagement. The hypotheses were tested with the help of bivariate correlation method.

#### 5.1 Descriptive statistics

**Table 1** depicts the descriptive statistics of vigor, dedication, absorption, work engagement, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness and personality traits of women employees of public banks. The above table explicit that for public banks, average value of vigor is 22.75 with standard deviation 3.92, average value of dedication is 20.64 with standard deviation 3.68 and average value of absorption is 23.63 with standard deviation 3.78. Whereas mean of work engagement for public banks is 67.02 with standard deviation 10.10. While for public banks, average value of extraversion is 28.07 with standard deviation 4.60, average value of agreeableness is 36.58 with standard deviation 4.21, average value of conscientiousness is 35.83 with standard deviation 5.33, average value of neuroticism is 20.24 with standard deviation 5.63 and average value of openness is 38.97 with standard deviation 4.36.

However, mean and standard deviation of personality traits for public banks are 159.69 and 11.57, respectively.

**Table 2** depicts the descriptive statistics giving information about level of work engagement, personality traits and its variables among women employees of public banks. From table 2, we can conclude that majority of women employees of private banks i.e. 35.3%, are highly vigorous. Similarly, majority of 41.3% women employees of public banks are highly dedicated. Whereas 37.3% women employees of public banks, averagely absorbed in their work in banking sector and 36.7% women employees had high level of work engagement in banking sector. However level of extraversion in banking sector is average, according to 42.7% women employees of public banks. According to 35.3% women employees their level of agreeableness in banking sector is high. Although according to 37.3% women employees of public banks their level of conscientiousness in banking sector is average. Similarly, level of neuroticism in banking sector is average; according to majority of 36.7% women employees. Likewise, according to majority of 42.7% women employees of public banks, level of openness in banking sector is average. Level of personality traits in banking sector is average; according to majority of 36% women employees of public banks. Thus, it implies that overall level of work engagement is high and personality traits in public sector bank are average.

**5.2 Hypothesis Testing:** Correlation between Personality Traits and Work Engagement: The Pearson correlation method is used to find out the correlation between the work engagement and the various personality traits using SPSS statistics 23.

### 5.2.1 Work engagement and Extraversion.

The above table signifies the correlation values between the variables of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) with one of the variable of big five personality traits namely extraversion of public sector banks. Vigor is significantly positively correlated with dedication, absorption, work engagement and extraversion with coefficient of correlation 0.746, 0.680, 0.914 and 0.395, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, dedication has positive relationship with absorption (0.621,  $p < 0.001$ ), work engagement (0.886,  $p < 0.001$ ) and extraversion (0.425,  $p < 0.001$ ).

There is a significant positive relationship between extraversion and work engagement with correlation coefficient 0.447,  $p < 0.001$ . Absorption is positively correlated with extraversion and work engagement as the correlation of coefficient is found to be 0.864 and 0.373, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### 5.2.2 Work engagement and agreeableness.

The correlation values between the variables of vigor, dedication, absorption, work engagement and agreeableness of public banks. Agreeableness is positively correlated with vigor (0.368,  $p < 0.001$ ), dedication (0.260,  $p < 0.001$ ), absorption (0.398,  $p < 0.001$ ) and work engagement (0.386,  $p < 0.001$ ). Absorption had a significant positive relation with both dedication and vigor as their coefficient of correlations was found to be 0.621 and 0.680 respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). There is a significant positive relationship between dedication and vigor with correlation coefficient 0.746,  $p < 0.001$ .

However work engagement is positively correlated with vigor, dedication and absorption with coefficient of correlation 0.914, 0.886 and 0.864, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### 5.2.3 Work engagement and conscientiousness.

The correlation values between the variables of vigor, dedication, absorption, workout engagement and conscientiousness of public banks. Vigor is significantly positively correlated with dedication, absorption, work engagement and conscientiousness with coefficient of correlation 0.746, 0.680, 0.914 and 0.369, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, dedication has positive relationship with absorption (0.621,  $p < 0.001$ ), work engagement (0.886,  $p < 0.001$ ) and conscientiousness (0.363,  $p < 0.001$ ). There is a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and work engagement with correlation coefficient 0.400,  $p < 0.001$ ). Absorption is positively correlated with conscientiousness and work engagement as the correlation coefficient is 0.335 and 0.864, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### Work engagement and Neuroticism.

The correlation values between the variables of vigor, dedication, absorption, work engagement and neuroticism of public banks. Neuroticism has negative relationship with vigor (-0.342), dedication (-0.303), absorption (-0.215) and work engagement (-0.323). On the contrary work engagement has a significant positive correlation with vigor, dedication and absorption with coefficient of correlation 0.914, 0.886 and 0.864, respectively. There is a significant positive relationship

between dedication and vigor with correlation coefficient 0.746. Absorption has significantly positive relationship with dedication and vigor with coefficient of correlation 0.621 and 0.680, respectively.

### 5.2.4 Work Engagement and Openness to experience.

The correlation values between the variables of vigor, dedication, absorption, workout engagement and openness of public banks. Vigor is significantly positively correlated with dedication, absorption, work engagement and openness with coefficient of correlation 0.746, 0.680, 0.914 and 0.385, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, dedication has positive relationship with absorption (0.621,  $p < 0.001$ ), work engagement (0.886) and openness (0.389). There is a significant positive relationship between openness and work engagement with correlation coefficient 0.424,  $p < 0.001$ . Absorption is positively correlated with openness and work engagement as correlation coefficient is 0.355 and 0.864, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### 5.2.5 Work Engagement and Personality Traits.

The correlation values between the variables of vigor, dedication, absorption, workout engagement and personality traits of public banks are presented by table 3. Personality traits had a positive relationship with vigor (0.439,  $p < 0.001$ ), dedication (0.430,  $p < 0.001$ ), absorption (0.476,  $p < 0.001$ ) and work engagement (0.505,  $p < 0.001$ ). Likewise Absorption is significantly positively correlated with dedication and vigor with coefficient of correlation 0.621 and

0.680, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Work engagement has positive relationship with vigor, dedication and absorption with coefficient of correlation 0.914, 0.886 and 0.864, respectively i.e. ( $p < 0.001$ ). There is a significant positive relationship between dedication and vigor with correlation coefficient 0.746, ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### Conclusion:

The present study was conducted in banking sector which is one of the emerging and an impressive sector for the youth of country especially the females but the tremendous change in the sector has developed a need to study work engagement and the role played by the big five personality traits. The result of the present study suggests that there is a significant positive relation between work engagement and big five personality traits. The level of work engagement was found to be high in the banking sector which implies that the female employees working in this sector are satisfied with their job and are fully vigorous, dedicated and are absorbed. Though the level of personality traits were average but agreeableness was found to be high which implies that the respondents are more motivated and positive towards resolving the conflicts. Thus, the present study may help in future reviews and this study in other institutes need to be done.

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**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Vigor	150	22.75	3.92	12.00	30.00
Dedication	150	20.64	3.68	10.00	25.00
Absorption	150	23.63	3.78	13.00	30.00
Work Engagement	150	67.02	10.10	38.00	85.00
Extraversion	150	28.07	4.60	16.00	39.00
Agreeableness	150	36.58	4.21	25.00	45.00
Conscientiousness	150	35.83	5.33	14.00	45.00
Neuroticism	150	20.24	5.63	8.00	34.00
Openness	150	38.97	4.36	29.00	50.00
Personality Traits	150	159.69	11.57	129.00	184.00

**Table 2: Level of Work Engagement & Personality Traits**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Normal Range
Vigor	Low	45	30.0%
	Average	52	34.7%
	High	53	35.3%
Dedication	Low	41	27.3%
	Average	47	31.3%
	High	62	41.3%
Absorption	Low	43	28.7%
	Average	56	37.3%
	High	51	34.0%
Work Engagement	Low	46	30.7%
	Average	49	32.7%
	High	55	36.7%

Extraversion	Low	41	27.3%	Below 26
	Average	64	42.7%	27-29
	High	45	30.0%	Above 30
Agreeableness	Low	49	32.7%	Below 34
	Average	48	32.0%	35-38
	High	53	35.3%	Above 39
Conscientiousness	Low	46	30.7%	Below 33
	Average	56	37.3%	34-37
	High	48	32.0%	Above 38
Neuroticism	Low	52	34.7%	Below 17
	Average	55	36.7%	18-22
	High	43	28.7%	Above 23
Openness	Low	42	28.0%	Below 37
	Average	64	42.7%	38-41
	High	44	29.3%	Above 41
Personality Traits	Low	47	31.3%	Below 154
	Average	54	36.0%	155-161
	High	49	32.7%	Above 162

**Table 3: Correlation between Work Engagement & Personality Traits**

	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Work engagement	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness	Personality
Vigor	1	.746**	.680**	.914**	.395**	.368**	.369**	-.342**	.385**	.439**
Dedication		1	.621**	.886**	.425**	.260**	.363**	-.303**	.389**	.430**
Absorption			1	.864**	.373**	.398**	.335**	-.215**	.355**	.476**
Work engagement				1	.447**	.386**	.400**	-.323**	.424**	.505**
Extraversion					1	.266**	.461**	-.475**	.306**	.591**
Agreeableness						1	.560**	-.295**	.346**	.714**
Conscientiousness							1	-.593**	.405**	.711**
Neuroticism								1	-.238**	-.172*
Openness									1	.695**
Personality										1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).