Personality Traits and Workplace Deviance among Working Adults.

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between personality traits and workplace deviance among working adults of the age 20-40 years. An inferential statistics-based study was carried out and the data was drawn from an online survey of 203 working adults. Workplace Deviance Scale [23] and Neo-FFI-3 [31] were used to gather the data from online questionnaires. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness with workplace deviance. The results of Multiped Regression indicated that 25.6 % variance in workplace deviance is explained by neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Keywords — Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Personality Traits, Workplace Deviance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace Deviance is a serious issue among employees in the modern world. It is a relatively new phenomenon in the field of organizational psychology. Workplace deviance is the voluntary actions that undermine the welfare of the organization, its members, or both by going against significant organizational rules [36]. Munnoo Khan, Nasheed Imtiaz and Shamim Ahmad Ansari developed a scale to measure workplace deviance in the Indian context. In the operational definition, the authors classified workplace deviance into two categories; personal deviance and organizational deviance. Personal deviance was referred to as the deviant behavior that results from problems and personal conflicts with co-workers [23]. Unlike the definition provided by Bennett and Robinson, in this study organizational deviance was referred to the deviant behavior that results from organization's failure to meet the necessary needs of the workers. The study mentions that the workplace deviance is a result of personal and organizational deviance.

Individual variances in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behavior are referred to as personality. Gordon Allport defined personality as 'Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought" [3]. There are two main areas that personality research focuses on. The first is understanding individual differences in specific personality traits. The other is comprehending how the various components of a person interact as a whole. A trait can be defined as, "biologically based dispositions that help to shape the person's distinctive

adaptation to life and thus lead to relatively consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions" [32]. Lewis. R Goldberg came with the concept of 'Big five' which included Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Intellect [19]. These works attracted the attention of well-known personality psychologists, Robert Hogan, Paul Costa and Robert McCrae. Costa and McCrae released the initial version of the NEO-Inventory in 1978 meanwhile Hogan Personality Inventory based on the five factors described by Norman's study in 1963 was developed by Robert Hogan in 1985 [22][34]. A taxonomy of five higher-order personality qualities known as the "Big Five" is used to categorize personality traits and is believed to be the cause of individual variances. It is widely regarded as the most researched and used personality construct to date [22]. The Five dimensions in the Big five construct of personality are, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience.

The base of the neuroticism domain is the general tendency to feel unpleasant emotions like fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt, and disgust. However, neuroticism is more than just a tendency for emotional instability. Individuals with high levels of neuroticism are also more likely to have irrational beliefs, to have trouble controlling their impulses, and to handle stress more poorly than other people as the disruptive emotions hinder adaptation [10].

Though sociability is often associated with extraverts, it is simply one of the attributes that make up the extraversion domain. Extraverts are assertive, active, and talkative in

addition to enjoying social interactions and favor large groups and gatherings. They enjoy stimulation and excitement and have an optimistic outlook on life. They are positive, spirited, and happy [10].

Agreeableness is essentially a trait of interpersonal tendencies, similar to extraversion. The core of the agreeable person is altruism. The individual is sympathetic toward others, ready to assist them, and optimistic that others will return the favor. Disagreeable or antagonistic individuals are egocentric, suspicious of the motives of others, and competitive rather than cooperative [10].

The foundation of conscientiousness is found in individual variations of tendencies such as task-planning, organization, and execution process [11]. The conscientious person has a clear set of purposes, determination and strong goals. Digman and Takemoto-Chock mentioned this domain as Will to Achieve [13]. High levels of conscientiousness are linked to scholastic and professional success, but they can also result in perfectionism, obsessive cleanliness, or workaholic tendencies. People who are high in conscientiousness are meticulous, timely, and dependable. It is not necessary that people with low conscientiousness score lack moral principles, rather they are less enthusiastic in applying them and are lethargic when it comes to working towards their goals [10].

Active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attention to inner feelings, preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independence of judgment are all components of openness to experience. Individuals who are open have a greater variety of life experiences than those who are closed, and they are curious about both the inner and outer worlds. They are more open to unconventional values and novel ideas, and they are more sensitive to both positive and negative emotions than closed people. Low scorers in this domain typically exhibit conventional conduct and conservative outlooks. Their emotional reactions are somewhat muted, and they prefer the familiar than the novel [10].

Colbert and Mount conducted a study which found relationship between perceptions of the developmental environment and organizational deviance was stronger for employees with low consciousness or emotional stability, and the relationship between perceived organizational support and interpersonal deviance was stronger for employees with low consciousness or emotional stability [9]. A study indicated that distinct personality qualities predict counterproductive work behavior. The findings of the zero-order correlations indicated that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability have significant associations with counterproductive work behavior [33]. Another study concluded that employees who are less conscientious and agreeable participate in deviant behavior more frequently than their more conscientious and agreeable peers [17]. In another research, the findings

revealed that neuroticism has emerged as a significant predictor of organizational deviance in both the public and commercial sectors [39]. Kluemper And Mclarty conducted a study which showed that three traits (conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability) measured by self-reports are significantly negatively correlated with both self-rated and less-studied supervisor-rated deviance [25]. In a study conducted by Abdullah and Marican, the findings revealed that surgency has a positive association with organizational deviance and interpersonal deviance [1]. Another research was carried out previously, which discovered that agreeable personality traits are adversely connected to workplace deviance [24].

There exist multiple researches on personality traits and workplace deviance across the globe. However, it is an important to understand the nature of how personality traits impact workplace deviance after the post-covid phase in India. Openness to experience and extraversion which is a personality trait is not studied as much with workplace deviance in the Indian context. Previous research on these variables suggested that there is a need for more research to examine the relationship between personality traits such as extraversion, and emotional stability have on workplace deviant behavior [17]. Another study has pointed out the need for analyzing neuroticism and workplace deviance on a larger population [39]. The implications of these previous research point out the research gap which exist currently there by showcasing the importance of studying the topic.

Need and Significance of the Study

Deviant workplace behavior is not a new topic for discussion in the corporate world, but the factors that contribute to it are always guiding new angles to look at as time and circumstances change [4]. Employees can be observed acting in a variety of fruitful ways at the workplace in order to accomplish a common objective. As employees spend a lot of time engaging with one another at work, some employee actions are unpredictable. Therefore, controlling employee behavior is a top priority for the concerned authorities. As a result, employers prefer to deal with people who uphold the tasks, obligations, and responsibilities of their positions rather than causing harm to the company. Such conduct that endangers the organization is undesirable and regarded as deviant [38]. Personality tests are currently one of the major tools that are being used during the recruitment process. The most well-researched and widely recognized personality assessments are those based on the Big Five Model. These can be used as recruitment tests because of the reliability and validity that the empirical evidence on them guarantees [35]. Studying the relationship between workplace deviance and personality traits can be a helpful factor in the recruitment process as it might help us in reducing workplace deviance later in the organization. An organization has the chance to

lessen deviant behavior at work through the research of workplace deviation.

II. METHOD

The study is a correlational study which follows a non-experimental research design. The objective of the study is to find the relationship of five personality traits on workplace deviance among working adults. The target population for this study are working adults between the age group of 20 to 40 years. The sampling technique used in the research was Exponential non-discriminative snowball method which was carried out by sending out questionnaires to adults who are working, who then were asked to send to other participants relevant to the study. The researcher selected participants from all parts of India. A total of 208 samples were randomly selected, among which 203 were only selected as some did not meet the inclusion criteria. The method of data collection was through questionnaires. Remaining samples were rejected and were done on the basis of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Out of the 203 samples were 105 Male and were 98 females.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Adults of both Males and Females gender
- Adults between the age 20 and 40
- Adults working in India
- Adults working in Private sector

Exclusion Criteria:

- Adults who are part of Government sector employees.
- Employees who are older than 40 years of age.
- LGBTQ+ Adults

Operational Definition

Workplace Deviance:

Personal and organizational deviations lead to workplace deviation. Deviant behavior that arises from issues and interpersonal disputes with coworkers is referred to as personal deviance. Deviant conduct that arises as a result of an organization's failure to provide for the basic needs of its employees is referred to as organizational deviance.

Personality Traits:

A largely steady, consistent, and persistent internal characteristic drawn from an individual's pattern of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and habits. The five major personality traits are:

Neuroticism*:* The tendency to feel unpleasant emotions, such as rage, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and despair, is known as neuroticism. Individuals with high degrees of neuroticism react badly to environmental stress, perceive everyday events as dangerous, and may find even slight irritations to be utterly overwhelming.

Extraversion*:* The trait of extraversion is the tendency to find satisfaction largely outside of oneself. Extraverts are often sociable, enthusiastic, chatty, forceful, and enjoy social situations. Being with other people gives extraverts energy and makes them thrive. Friendliness, assertiveness, openness, positivity, and excitement seeking are among the extroverted sub-traits.

Openness to experience*:* Openness is a person's capacity for being or becoming open-minded, innovative, creative, and insightful. People that are more open-minded typically appreciate variety, look for new experiences, and are interested and aware of their surroundings. Less flexible people typically shy away from change, detest disturbance, and concentrate on a small number of niche interests.

Agreeableness*:* The ability to prioritize the needs of others over one's own is referred to as agreeableness. People who are more agreeable are more likely to be empathic, enjoy assisting others, and enjoy working with those who require more assistance.

Conscientiousness*:* Individuals that are conscientious are typically organized, show self-control, and have excellent time management skills.

Tools Used

- *Workplace Deviance Scale*

The Workplace Deviance Scale includes a 12-item scale of organizational deviance (deviant behaviors that are directly harmful to the organization) and a 7-item scale of interpersonal deviance (deviant behaviors that are directly harmful to other individuals within the organization). Internal reliabilities of.81 and.78 were discovered for these scales, respectively [23].

- *Neo-FFI-3*

The NEO-FFI-3 is a 60-item self-report instrument used to assess the five personality domains: N, E, O, A, and C (12 items per domain). The NEO FFI includes self-descriptive statements to which participants respond using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores for each domain are calculated by adding the results of the 12 item responses [31]. Internal consistency of the test ranges from .72 and .88 in the adolescent and adult sample [30].

Ethical Considerations

The data regarding personality traits and social workplace deviance will only be taken from the participants after they have given their consent. The participants were provided with the options of choosing to continue in the questionnaire. The data taken from the participants will be strictly confidential and won't be shared with any external sources or be misused. After collecting data through the experiment, the participants were debriefed about the whole experiment and research in order to provide a complete

understanding of the purpose of the research and what it is trying to establish. The participants were allowed to withdraw from providing information at any time during the research process.

Statistical Techniques

The obtained data was statistically analyzed using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences, with the help of IBM SPSS 25.0 and Microsoft Excel 2016. Different statistical methods were employed for different purposes. The collected data were analyzed by using inferential statistics. In order to find if there was any significance between workplace deviance and personality traits, the normality was obtained using the Kurtosis and Skewness tools. In order to understand the relationship between the variables Pearson correlation was carried out. Further Multiple Regression was conducted to understand the effect of personality traits on workplace deviance.

III.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The current study aims to understand the relationship between the five personality traits on workplace deviance among working adults between the age group 20 to 40 from India. The samples were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The data was collected through online mode using google forms. The scales used to collect data were workplace deviance scale [23] and Neo-FFI-3 [31]. The data obtained from the research tools were statistically analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS 25.0 and Microsoft Excel 2016. The scores obtained by the participants were coded in Microsoft Excel 2016.While coding the scores, the t scores of the personality traits were interpreted as 'very low', 'low', 'average', 'high' and 'very high' and each of these interpretations were coded as 1,2,3,4, and 5 respectively. Similarly, for workplace deviation, the scores were interpreted as 'extremely low', 'low', 'below average', 'average', 'above average', 'high' and 'extremely high'. These interpretations were coded as 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 respectively. The coded scores were analyzed using IBM SPSS 25.0.

Table 1 Result of Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	n	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE
Workplace_deviance	203	-0.016	0.171	-0.29	0.34
Neuroticism	203	-0.214	0.171	0.031	0.34
Extraversion	203	0.125	0.171	-0.003	0.34
Openness_to_Experience	203	0.089	0.171	1.067	0.34
Agreeableness	203	0.026	0.171	-0.549	0.34
Conscientiousness	203	0.027	0.171	-0.189	0.34

The normality of the data was analyzed by checking the skewness and kurtosis values. The values of skewness and Kurtosis falls between the recommended range of -1 to 1 and -3 to 3 [40]. Therefore, Pearson correlation was conducted in order to understand the correlation between the variables. Further Multiple Regression was conducted

on the variables which indicate that there was a significant relation between the variables.

Table 2 Result of Pearson correlation for workplace deviance and personality traits

Variable	n	M	SD	1
1. Workplace Deviance	203	4.04	1.195	-
2. Neuroticism	203	3.55	0.868	.453**
3. Extraversion	203	2.99	0.853	-.266**
4. Openness to Experience	203	3.04	0.726	-0.105
5. Agreeableness	203	2.42	0.831	-.253**
6. Conscientiousness	203	2.95	0.943	-.367**

Note. ** indicates that correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table 2, we can infer that the correlational coefficient of neuroticism and workplace deviance is 0.453. This indicates that there exists a significant positive correlation between neuroticism and workplace deviance. Hence H_{01} is rejected. When we analyzed extraversion and workplace deviance it was inferred that there exists a significant negative correlation between the two. Hence H_{02} is rejected. The correlation coefficient of Openness to Experience and workplace deviance is -0.105. This indicates that there exists a no significant negative correlation between the two. H_{03} is accepted as the result is not significant. The correlation coefficient of agreeableness and workplace deviance is -0.253. This suggests that there is a significant negative correlation between the two. Therefore, H_{04} is rejected. The correlation coefficient of Conscientiousness and workplace deviance is -0.367. This implies that there is a significant negative correlation between the two. Hence H_{05} is rejected.

To understand the impact of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness on workplace deviance, linear regression analysis was carried out. Through the correlation test, it was evident that openness to experience had no significant relationship with workplace deviance, thus it was not considered for regression analysis.

Table 3 Result of Multiple Regression

Variable	β	SE	95% CI		P
			LL	UL	
Neuroticism	0.329	0.097	0.262	0.644	0.000
Extraversion	-0.078	0.095	-0.297	0.079	0.254
Agreeableness	-0.103	0.094	-0.333	0.036	0.115
Conscientiousness	-0.161	0.092	-0.386	-0.023	0.027

Note. Dependent Variable = Workplace deviance

R Square = .255

Adjusted R Square = .240

F = 16.971

P = 0.000

Table 3 indicates the results of multiple regression analysis which was used to assess the impact of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and

consciousness on workplace deviance among working adults. The R^2 value for regression model is 0.255, this indicates 25.5% variance in workplace deviance is explained by neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The adjusted R^2 value is 0.240 which indicates that R^2 will increase if another independent variable is added to this model. The F ratio value is 16.971 (p = 0.000) which implies that the regression model for the overall respondents is significant. On examining the P values, we can infer that high neuroticism and low conscientiousness are significant predictors of workplace deviance.

Th results of the current study is in relation with the findings of studies done previously. In a previous research, which focused on analyzing the relationship agreeable personality trait possess on workplace deviance, the authors after undertaking the correlation and regression analysis found that agreeableness has a negative relationship with workplace deviance [24]. Another study used Pearson correlation analysis to understand the relationship agreeableness and conscientiousness have on workplace deviance. The result of study provides an understanding that there was a significant negative correlation between agreeableness and workplace deviance on workplace deviance [17]. Another study which was conducted in India, using the initial version of NEO–FFI developed by Costa and McCrae in 1992 along with Workplace deviance scale developed by Bennett and Robinson in 2000. The results from the study indicated that the 58% of workplace deviance was linked to neuroticism in private sector organizations [39]. However, the results of the current study pointed out that there exists a significant negative correlation between extraversion and workplace deviance. This result is contradictory to the result of the study conducted by Abdullah and Marican, which had a finding that extraversion has a positive effect on workplace deviance [1]. The current study stipulates that high neuroticism and low conscientiousness are significant predictors of workplace deviance. Bennett & Marasi have mentioned that stress, negative emotions, and negative affectivity have a significant impact on workplace deviance [6]. Individuals who are high in Neuroticism handle stress more poorly than other people as the disruptive emotions hinder adaptation [10]. The current findings on the relationship neuroticism has on workplace deviance goes hand in hand with these theoretical backgrounds. Previous research suggested that people with low conscientiousness engage in organizational deviance due to their propensity to disregard orders, avoid performing their jobs, and put forth less effort [33]. The results of the same study are similar to the findings of the current study which found that low conscientiousness is a significant predictor of workplace deviance. The current study also indicates that extraversion and agreeableness have a significant negative correlation with workplace deviance. The features of extraversion are

assertiveness, activeness, enjoyment of social interactions and optimistic outlook on life. The characteristics of agreeableness are altruism, sympathy towards others and readiness to assist others [10].

Results of the current study indicated that 25.6 % variance in workplace deviance is predicted by neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Therefore, organizations can assess these personality traits especially during the process of recruitment, which can eventually help in reducing the workplace deviance among the employees. Since these personality traits are accountable for 25.6 % variance in workplace deviance, further research can be carried out on workplace deviance with other factors in order to examine the effect of their effect.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to the results of Pearson correlation test and multiple regression analysis on the variables, the findings were equivalent to the objective which aims to find the relationship of five personality traits on workplace deviance among working adults. Thus, we can conclude that, there exists a positive significant relationship between neuroticism and workplace deviance, and a negative significant relationship between extraversion and workplace deviance. Openness to experience does not have a significant relationship with workplace deviance. Agreeableness and conscientiousness also possess a negative significant relationship with workplace deviance. A major finding of the study is that, 25.5 % variance in workplace deviance is explained by neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The current study also points out that neuroticism and conscientiousness are significant predictors of workplace deviance. These findings are significant to understanding personality traits at workplace and the improvements that can be brought as a form of change in areas that are concerning for each employee

V. IMPLICATIONS

The research will provide the corporate sector with an understanding of how personality traits can have a relationship as well have an impact on workplace deviance. It will also help working adults to form an understanding of why they might indulge in certain behavior or not due to their personality traits at workplace environment. The findings will also add to the current literature on working adults as a population to understand personality traits and workplace deviance in the Indian context. The findings obtained will help the corporate sector to recognize the importance of various factors, like, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience agreeableness and conscientiousness. The present study will help the working adults understand the relation between their own personality traits and behaviors indulged at work in order to

improve in areas of interest

about the organization, absenteeism, insulting or being part of any negative behaviors. Furthermore, it is vital for the organization to note that their employees do need new solutions and strategies in the area of improving areas mentioned above to stimulate better work environment and change it through understanding personality traits of their employees. Moreover, on the basis of present study, the employers can explore the factors of personality traits and workplace deviance. A strong workplace environment reflects greater employee performance which needs to be understood from the core of each individual in terms of their personality.

Limitations

As the employees were asked to participate in the study voluntarily via google forms, there may be challenges that the participants might have faced while filling the form such as, large item size of the questionnaire, physiological and psychological state of the participant while participating in the study. Further observations during the collection of data was not possible as they were through online mode of collection. These may have affected and posed as a constraint to the data collection. Due to time and resources constraints, the sample size of the study was spread across different parts of India. Focus on one geographical area was not possible due to the time constraints

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