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The Contribution of Personality Factors to Career Success in Some Organizations

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the 'Big Five' personality dimensions and career success by surveying a sample of 285 employees in a diverse set of occupations and organizations. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to examine the incremental variance contributed by the five personality traits after controlling for several career-related variables. Results showed that, as expected, extraversion was related positively to career satisfaction and that neuroticism was related negatively to salary level, promotions, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and career satisfaction. However, some results differed from expectations: conscientiousness and agreeableness were mostly unrelated to extrinsic and intrinsic career success. Examination of moderators revealed that there were no significant relationships between agreeableness and extrinsic and intrinsic career success among individuals in people-oriented occupations. Moreover, occupation type did not moderate the relationships between extraversion and extrinsic and intrinsic career success.

Key Words: personality, career success

Introduction

Career success has been an important and popular focus of investigation in the management literature. In the extensive research conducted to understand the antecedents of career success (Tharenou, 1997), demographic, human capital, industry, and organizational variables have been examined. As organizations face more complex business environments, however, career paths become increasingly ambiguous and individuals must take on increased responsibility for managing their own careers. Thus, some research has explored the effects of individual traits or behavioral styles on career success. Recently, in the Western countries, researchers have begun to understand the role of personality in career success. To date, however, there has been no prior research relating to personality and career success in Myanmar, a gap filled by the present study. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between big five personality traits and career success (intrinsic and extrinsic) after controlling for several career-related variables.

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Career success has been defined in terms of the positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experiences (Judge et al., 1999; Boudreau & Boswell, 2001; Seibert et al., 2001). Following these authors, we distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic career success. Extrinsic career success, measured in terms of salary and promotions, refers to outcomes that are both instrumental rewards from the job or occupation and are objectively observable.

Intrinsic career success was measured in terms of career satisfaction, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Career satisfaction refers to factors that are inherent in the job or occupation itself and is dependent on the incumbent's subjective evaluation relative to his or her own goals and expectations. Career satisfaction is derived from the individual's appraisal of his or her career development and advancement across many jobs (Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990). Job satisfaction has been defined as a positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job (Locke, 1976). Life satisfaction refers to a judgmental process in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own set of criteria (Shin & Johnson, 1978). A comparison is made between one's perceived life circumstances and a self-imposed standard. The degree to which one's life circumstances match up to the standard determines one's life satisfaction.

Researchers have modelled the effects of an extensive set of factors on career success. These studies have shown that a number of demographic variables are associated with career success, including age, gender, marital status, spouse employment, ethnic background, and socio-economic status. Variables based on human capital theory also have been associated with career success, including level of education, years of work experience, the number and length of employment gaps, and occupational background. Finally, differences in career outcomes have been associated with type of industry, organization size, and urban area in which the person is employed.

Only recently have researchers attended to the relation of personality and career success (Judge et al., 1999; Boudreau & Boswell, 2001; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). These studies provide initial empirical support for the relation of personality to aspects of career success. Given the high degree of consensus regarding the structure of the personality domain that has emerged among personality researchers during the past decade (Mount & Barrick, 1995), it seems reasonable to extend previous research on careers

by examining the unique contribution of the Big Five dimensions of personality to career success.

According to the emerging consensus, the five major dimensions of personality are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (e.g., Costa & Mc Crae, 1985; Mount & Barrick, 1995). Neuroticism indicates poor emotional adjustment versus emotional stability. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are characterized by high level of anxiety, hostility, depression and self-consciousness. High levels of extraversion indicate sociability, warmth, assertiveness, and activity, whereas individuals low on extraversion may be described as reserved, sober, aloof, task-oriented, and introverted. Openness to experience is defined in terms of curiosity and the tendency for seeking and appreciating new experiences and novel ideas. Individuals who score low on openness are characterized as conventional, unartistic, and narrow in interests. Agreeableness is one's interpersonal orientation, ranging from soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, and gullible at one extreme to cynical, rude, suspicious, and manipulative at the other. Finally, conscientiousness indicates the individual's degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behavior. Achievement-orientation and dependability or conformity have been found to be primary facets of conscientiousness.

Prior literature suggests that neuroticism may relate to career success through a number of mechanisms. A recent meta-analysis indicated a negative relationship between neuroticism and job performance (Salgado, 1997). Although the relationship between job performance and career success may be complex, one should expect neuroticism to be related negatively to extrinsic career outcomes through its association with job performance. Traits associated with low neuroticism such as optimism, self-confidence, self-assurance, achievement motivation, and decisiveness have been correlated positively with managerial advancement, occupational level, executive pay, job success. Emotional stability may be particularly important at higher organizational levels characterized by high stress and external stimulation (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Neuroticism has related negatively to job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Boudreau & Boswell, 2001), ostensibly because neuroticism is linked to the experience of negative affect (Judge et al., 1999). Neuroticism and affectivity thus appear to be stable individual differences that determine the way in which individuals react to life and work situations, so we expect this relationship

with job satisfaction and life satisfaction to generalize to intrinsic career success.

Hypothesis 1a. There is a negative relationship between an individual's level of neuroticism and extrinsic career success.

Hypothesis 1b. There is a negative relationship between an individual's level of neuroticism and intrinsic career success.

Conscientiousness has been linked positively to managerial job performance, salary, and occupational status (Judge et al., 1999; Salgado, 1997). Achievement motivation and leadership motivation also have been linked to managerial advancement. Conscientiousness is associated with being goal-directed, persistent, and well-organized, which seem likely to associate with career success. We expect these goal-setting effects to generalize to careers and career accomplishments.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between an individual's level of conscientiousness and extrinsic career success.

Extraversion associates with activity, dominance, a tendency to be energized by social situations, and the tendency to act to rectify unsatisfactory work situations, which are all linked with executive or leadership success (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Empirical research suggests extraversion positively relates to salary and to job and life satisfaction (Boudreau & Boswell, 2001), presumably because extraverts are predisposed to experience positive emotion (Judge et al, 1999). Due to extraverts' general positive reaction to events and their greater tendency to take action to deal with unsatisfactory situations, we expect a positive relation between extraversion and career success.

Hypothesis 3a. There is a positive relationship between an individual's level of extraversion and extrinsic career success.

Hypothesis 3b. There is a positive relationship between an individual's level of extraversion and intrinsic career success.

The emphasis on person-job match in theories of career development further implies, however, that some personality traits are more appropriate in certain careers or occupations than others, leading to greater extrinsic rewards and perceptions of career success. Occupations and jobs within occupations can be characterized by the degree to which they require interaction with other people. Sociability, a preference for social activity,

and interpersonal warmth are major components of extraversion. We therefore expect an interaction between extraversion and people-oriented job demands such that extraversion is related more strongly to extrinsic and intrinsic career success in jobs involving a high level of interaction with people than in jobs that do not require dealing with people. In this meta-analysis, Salgado (1997) found that extraversion was related more strongly to job performance for occupation involving a strong interpersonal component. This research suggests the value of attending to the interpersonal nature of occupations as a moderator of the extraversion and career success relation.

Hypothesis 3c. Occupational type moderate the relationship between extraversion and career success (extraversion is more strongly related to extrinsic and intrinsic career success in people oriented occupation than in occupation without a strong interpersonal components)

The relation of agreeableness to career success also may be complex. To the extent that work involves teamwork and interaction with others, agreeableness may be a positive individual attribute. It is less clear, however, the extent to which being well liked or considered a 'team player' leads to career success; nice guys may finish last. The impression management literature demonstrates the importance of being able to claim credit or shed blame and other research has shown that chameleons (high self monitors) and machiavellians (individual with a cynical and manipulative orientation towards others) tend to get ahead in their career. Individuals high on agreeableness are characterized as soft-hearted, trusting, gullible, and not manipulative, and thus would be associated with the negative pole of these personality dimensions. Moreover, Howard and Bray (1998) reported agreeableness also associates with being trusting, submissive, and complaint, which could be perceived as naïveté, docility, and a tendency to follow rather than lead.

Further, although Barrick & Mount (1991) and Salgado (1997) expected to find a positive relationship between agreeableness and job performance, especially for jobs involving a strong interpersonal component, Barrick and Mount (1991) found little evidence for any relationship between agreeableness and job performance. Furthermore, Salgado (1997) found agreeableness related positively to job performance in occupations that were not people-oriented (professionals and skilled laborers), but related negatively to performance in a people-oriented

occupation (managers). Finally, empirical evidence also supports a negative relation between agreeableness and extrinsic career success (Judge et al., 1999). Consistent with these findings, we expect agreeableness to be related negatively to extrinsic career success. We also expect a negative relationship between agreeableness and career satisfaction. Little empirical research has examined the relationship between agreeableness and affective attitude, but one should expect a negative relationship based on the theoretical arguments presented above. If agreeable people are less likely to shed blame and take credit, and more likely to be taken advantage of, they also may be more likely to be dissatisfied with the intrinsic rewards they derive from their careers.

Hypothesis 4a. There is a negative relationship between an individual's level of agreeableness and extrinsic career success.

Hypothesis 4b. There is a negative relationship between an individual's level of agreeableness and intrinsic career success.

The inconsistent findings describing the relationship between agreeableness and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997) further suggest the value of examining whether the interpersonal nature of an occupation moderates the relation of agreeableness to extrinsic and intrinsic career success.

Hypothesis 4c. Occupational type moderates the negative relationship between agreeableness and career success (agreeableness is more strongly related to extrinsic and intrinsic career success in people oriented occupation than in occupation without a strong interpersonal component)

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between big five personality traits and career success (intrinsic and extrinsic) after controlling for several career-related variables.

Method

Participants

Survey booklets were handed out to a sample of 300 employees in a diverse set of occupations and organizations in Mandalay. Participants filled

out and returned booklets anonymously. The final usable sample for the present study was 285 employees, 95% response rate.

Measures

Five-factor model of personality. The personality traits of the five factor model were measured using Saucier's (1994) minimarkers. The measure consists of 40 single adjectives (8 adjectives per personality traits). Responses were made on a 9-point scale from 1 (extremely inaccurate) to 9 (extremely accurate). High scores indicate higher levels of the named trait. Recently, San Zaw Hlaing (2006) and Nwet Yee Yee Aung (2007) attempted to modify Saucier's (1994) Big Five Mini-markers scale to suit Myanmar conditions. According to their results, all of the items on each scale were significant at either .01 level or .001 level. The Test-Retest Reliability coefficients obtained were .77, .77, .75, .83, and .81 for Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness and Neuroticism respectively. Cronbach's alpha indicated acceptable reliabilities for all five scales in the current study: .56 for Extraversion, .80 for Conscientiousness, .72 for Agreeableness, .72 for Openness to Experience, and .68 for Neuroticism.

Career Satisfaction. Career satisfaction was measured with the five-item scale developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990), which asks individuals to report their satisfaction with five aspects of their career (overall success, progress toward career goals, income, advancement, development of new skills). The scale is ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). A sample item is "The progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement". Cronbach alpha for this scale was .89.

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) originally developed by Spector (1985). The JSS is a nine subscale measure of employee job satisfaction. The nine subscales are (1) Pay; (2) Promotion; (3) Supervision; (4) Fringe Benefit; (5) Contingent Rewards; (6) Operating Procedure; (7) Coworkers; (8) Nature of work; and (9) Communication. The measure consists of 36 statements to be rated by employees on a 6-point scale from disagree very much to agree very much. According to the results of test-retest reliability analysis, the reliability coefficient was found to be .61 for Pay; .62 for Promotion; .67 for Supervision; .58 for Fringe Benefits; .69 for Contingent Rewards; .64

for Work Condition; .62 for Coworkers; .59 for Nature of Work; .51 for Communication and .75 for total score. The alpha (internal consistent reliability) were as follow: Pay, .67 ; Promotion, .65; Supervision , .77 ; Fringe Benefit , .74 ; Contingent Reward, .55; Operating Procedure , .61; Coworkers , .53; Nature of work , .69; and Communication , .57 (total score = .91).

Life Satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) measure asks individuals to respond to five general statements about their life (e.g., if I had to live my life over again, I would change almost nothing). The alpha of this scale was .80.

Extrinsic career success was measured by two self-reported variables; promotions and salary.

Other career success predictors. The control variables were chosen based on previous empirical research regarding the predictors of career success (Judge et al., 1995; Seibert et al., 1999) and were measured with specific items in the questionnaire. These variables were years of work, area (1 = inside the city, 2 = outside the city), size of organization or number of employees in their organization, people occupation, and marital status (1 = unmarried, 2 = married).

Procedure

Sampling of full-time employees was pursued through a random selection of general organizational units. Three hundred full-time workers of 11 governments and 6 private sector organizations were polled, and survey were administered to all full-time workers present in the organization on the scheduled day. Surveys were conducted in groups of varying size, depending on the basis of the nature of the facility in which they were employed. Participants were instructed to complete their surveys and to return it directly to the author in the return envelopes provided. Confidentiality was ensured. Valid responses were obtained from 95% of the respondents, 285 full-time workers.

Results

The demographic breakdown of the respondents is as follows: average age was 34.1 years, 58% were females, 54% were married, 51% had a Bachelor's degree as their highest degree attained, and 17 % had a Master's degree or a Ph D.

Correlations analyses

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the variables in the study. The results indicated that extraversion had a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .22, p < .001$) and career satisfaction ($r = .21, p < .001$), but not with salary ($r = .06, ns$) nor with promotions ($r = .10, ns$) and life satisfaction ($r = .06, ns$). Conscientiousness was significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .18, p < .01$), and life satisfaction ($r = .12, p < .05$). but not with salary ($r = .05, ns$), promotion ($r = .11, ns$), and career satisfaction ($r = .09, ns$). Openness to experience showed a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .19, p < .01$) and career satisfaction ($r = .14, p < .05$), but not with salary ($r = .09, ns$), promotion ($r = .03, ns$) and life satisfaction ($r = .11, ns$). Agreeableness was significantly positive correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .20, p < .01$), but not with salary ($r = .06, ns$), promotion ($r = .02, ns$), career satisfaction ($r = .10, ns$) and life satisfaction ($r = .07, ns$). Neuroticism had a significant negative correlation with salary ($r = -.16, p < .05$), promotion ($r = -.14, p < .05$), job satisfaction ($r = -.23, p < .01$) and life satisfaction ($r = -.14, p < .05$), but not with career satisfaction ($r = -.10, ns$).

Regression analyses

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to assess the unique contribution of the Big Five personality traits to career success, after controlling for the relevant variables identified in previous models of career success. Five regression equations were estimated: one for each measure of career success (salary, promotion, job satisfaction, career satisfaction and life satisfaction). We entered the control variables in step 1 (including occupational type), the personality variables in step 2, and the two hypothesized interaction terms in step 3 (extraversion-occupational type and agreeableness-occupational type). Change in R^2 at each step was considered significant if $p < .05$. When a change in R^2 was significant, we examined the beta weights for each of the forms in the step.

Table 2 provides the results of the three hierarchical regression models (one model for each dependent variable). Hypothesis 1a predicted that neuroticism would be related negatively to extrinsic career success. This hypothesis was supported. Neuroticism was a significantly negatively correlated with salary (beta = $-.16$, $p < .05$) and promotions (beta = $-.13$, $p < .05$). Moreover, the regression results did support hypothesis 1b, which predicted a negative relationship between neuroticism and intrinsic career success. Neuroticism displayed significant negative beta weights when predicting career satisfaction (beta = $-.18$, $p < .05$), job satisfaction (beta $.19$, $p < .01$) and life satisfaction (beta = $-.15$, $p < .05$).

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviation (SD), and Intercorrelations among Study Variables

Variables	Means	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Salary	1.73	0.77	-							
2.Promotion	1.10	1.29	.11	-						
3.JS	146.49	30.16	.16*	.10	-					
4.CS	17.69	4.81	.01	.20**	.54***	-				
5.LS	20.90	6.53	.02	.21***	.48***	.56***	-			
6.Extraversion	32.21	6.07	.06	.10	.22**	.21***	.06	-		
7.Con	54.73	10.41	.05	.11	.18**	.09	.12*	.58***	-	
8.Agreeableness	57.95	9.23	.06	.02	.20***	.11	.07	.52***	.67***	-
9.OE	53.36	8.84	.09	.03	.19***	.14*	.11	.56***	.68***	.60***
10.Neuroticism	36.65	10.73	.16	-.14*	-.23***	-.10	-.14*	-.24***	-.40***	-.24***
11.sex	1.61	0.49	-.25***	-.15**	.06	-.11	.03	-.23***	.03	.09
12.Age	1.95	0.96	.02	.51***	.02	.07	.22***	.03	.12	-.09
13.Education	4.36	1.56	.40	-.29***	-.06	-.22***	-.09	-.12*	.01	.09
14.MS	1.57	0.49	-.14*	.35***	.16**	.15*	.18**	.07	.09	.04
15.PO	3.04	0.70	.16*	-.11	.09	.17**	-.05	.23***	.08	.18**
16.YW	2.43	1.26	-.04	.47***	-.03	-.03	.16*	.03	.09	-.14*
17.Bonus	1.76	0.43	-.26***	-.02	-.17*	-.04	-.06	-.02	.09	.03
18.FE	1.90	0.31	-.23***	-.03	.07	.11	.07	.02	.02	.01
19.SO	2.54	1.18	-.23***	.21***	-.02	.07	-.01	.07	.06	.05

Note. JS= Job Satisfaction, CS= Career Satisfaction, LS= Life Satisfaction, Con= Conscientiousness, OE= Openness to Experience, MS= Marital Status, PO= People Oriented, YW=Years of Work, FE= Foreign Experience, SO= Size of Organization

N=285, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that conscientiousness would be related positively to extrinsic career success. The relationship failed to reach statistical significance for salary or for promotions. Thus hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3a and 3b predicted that extraversion would be related positively to extrinsic and intrinsic career success, respectively. The regression results showed that extraversion had a statistically significant positive relationship with career satisfaction ($\beta = .32, p < .01$), but not with salary, promotions, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The correlation results also indicated that extraversion was related positively to career satisfaction ($r = .22, p < .001$) and life satisfaction ($r = .21, p < .001$). Thus, partially supported the hypothesis 3b, but not for 3a. Hypothesis 4a and 4b predicted a negative relationship between agreeableness and extrinsic and intrinsic career success, respectively. The beta weights for agreeableness with salary, promotion, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and

Table 1~ Continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1.Salary										
2.Promotion										
3.JS										
4.CS										
5.LS										
6.Extraversion										
7.Con										
8.Agreeableness										
9.OE										
10.Neuroticism	-.23***	-								
11.sex	-.08	.04	-							
12.Age	-.02	-.07	-.11	-						
13.Education	.16**	-.02	.16**	-.35***	-					
14.MS	.03	.05	.15*	-.42***	.28***	-				
15.PO	.13*	-.02	-.16**	-.29***	.12	.18**	-			
16.YW	-.02	-.03	-.07	.71***	-.32***	-.39***	-.20**	-		
17.Bonus	.09	.03	.19**	.20***	-.02	.07	-.16*	.25**	-	
18.FE	-.7	.06	.06	-.03	-.16*	.12	-.07	-.10	-.00	-
19.SO	.02	.09	-.01	.16**	-.20***	-.11	-.04	.18**	.12	-.05

Note. JS= Job Satisfaction, CS= Career Satisfaction, LS= Life Satisfaction, Con= Conscientiousness, OE= Openness to Experience, MS= Marital Status, PO= People Oriented, YW=Years of Work, FE= Foreign Experience, SO= Size of Organization

N=285, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

career satisfaction were not significant. Thus, hypothesis 4a and 4b were not supported.

Hypothesis 3c and 4c predicted that occupational type moderates the relationship between extraversion and agreeableness (respectively), and extrinsic and intrinsic career success. When the two interaction terms were added as a set to the five regression models (see the bottom of Table 2), results revealed that both types of interaction were not significant in predicting salary, promotion, job satisfaction, career satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Discussion

Using a sample of 285 government and private employees, it was found that the Big Five personality traits explain additional variance in career satisfaction, even after controlling for a number of variables previously related to career outcomes. Intrinsic career success was associated with

Table 2 Results of Multiple Regressions

Variable	Salary		Promotion		Career Satisfaction		Job Satisfaction		Life Satisfaction	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Control variable										
YW	-0.06	-.10	0.46	.46***	-0.45	-.12	-2.48	-.11	0.35	.07
Area	4.29	-.02	0.33	.11	-1.65	-.14	-10.58	-.16*	-2.78	-.18*
SO	-0.14	-.20**	0.10	.09	0.41	.10	0.66	.03	5.63	.01
PO	0.44	.38	6.85	.04	1.88	.27	9.66	.24	1.35	.14
MS	-0.32	-.21**	-0.55	-.22***	-2.25	-.23**	-12.18	-.22**	-2.12	-.16*
Change in R ²		.11***		.37***		.12**		.09**		.06**
Big Five										
Extraversion	3.49	.03	1.40	.01	-0.29	.32**	0.92	.18	0.10	.09
Con	-1.12	-.13	-1.30	-.10	-5.91	-.11	-4.77	-.12	-3.93	-.06
Agreeableness	1.82	.18	1.80	.12	-6.11	-.10	-3.85	-.01	3.44	.04
OE	1.10	.10	-7.20	-.04	-3.24	-.05	-8.31	-.02	3.49	.04
Neuroticism	-1.21	-.16*	-1.58	-.13*	-8.29	-.18*	-0.49	-.19*	-9.46	-.15*
Change in R ²		.03		.02		.05*		.04		.03

Variable	Salary		Promotion		Career Satisfaction		Job Satisfaction		Life Satisfaction	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Personality × OT										
Extra × OT	-9.16	-.04	5.37	.01	-5.23	-.32	-0.34	-.37	-4.90	-.23
Agreeable × OT	-4.93	-.31	-5.34	-.02	2.21	.22	0.10	.19	6.84	.05
Change in R ²		.01		.00		.01		.01		.01
Final R ²		.15		.39		.18		.14		.10
Final Adjusted R ²		.08		.35		.13		.09		.04

Note. YW=Years of Work, SO= Size of Organization, PO= People Oriented, MS= Marital Status. Con= Conscientiousness, OE= Openness to Experience, OT=Occupational Type.

N=285, *B and beta significant at $p < .05$, ** B and beta significant at $p < .01$.

extraversion and, with more consistency, neuroticism. Specifically, individuals who were higher on extraversion experienced higher levels of career satisfaction than did those lower on extraversion. Individuals who were less neurotic experienced higher levels of job satisfaction, life satisfaction and career satisfaction than their more neurotic counterparts.

Extrinsic career success was associated only with neuroticism. Individuals who were less neurotic received higher salaries and more promotions than their more neurotic counterparts. Moderated regression analysis involving extraversion and agreeableness failed to find any significant effects against extrinsic and intrinsic career success, suggesting that these effects are consistent across occupation requiring different levels of interpersonal interaction.

Neuroticism was related most consistently to career success, exhibiting negative relationships with salary, promotions, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and career satisfaction. Consistent with our hypothesis and research by Turban and Dougherty (1994), the negative relationship of neuroticism to intrinsic career success implies that individuals who score higher in neuroticism evaluate their careers more negatively, perhaps due to a general tendency toward negative affective reactions. Myanmar employees who score higher in neuroticism may place themselves in situations where failure, anxiety, and disappointment are likely and Myanmar organization also may accept positive self-image (low neuroticism).

The positive relationships found between extraversion and intrinsic career success are consistent with previous research on career success (e.g.

Seibert & Kraimer, 2001) and further highlight the important role that extraversion plays in career satisfaction of persons in people-oriented and non-people-oriented occupations. Although being in a people-oriented occupation may moderate the relationship between the extraversion and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997), in this research no such pattern was found for career success. Perhaps extraverted persons may display a general tendency to react more positively to a range of situations (Watson & Clark, 1997), including their career situations, leading to greater intrinsic rewards. Or as a more substantive explanation, extraverted persons may be more likely to take corrective action when their career situations are not to their liking (Crant, 1995). Future research needs to examine the mechanisms behind the positive relations of extraversion to extrinsic and intrinsic career success.

Contrary to the expectations and empirical evidence provided by Judge et al. (1999), it was found that there was no support for the hypotheses that conscientiousness and agreeableness are related to the five measures of extrinsic and intrinsic career success, salary, promotion, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and career satisfaction. These hypotheses were based on the notion that agreeableness (negatively) and conscientiousness (positively) are related to job performance and that job performance is related positively to extrinsic and intrinsic career success.

Finally, the results of the control variables examined in this study generally are consistent with previous career research. Specifically, years of work experience was related positively to promotion (Stroh et al., 1992; Whitely et al., 1991); size of organization was related positively to salary (Judge et al., 1995); and residing in a major metropolitan city was related positively to job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Seibert et al., 1999). The one finding with respect to our control variable that contradicted previous research is the non-significant relationship found between years of work and salary (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Judge et al., 1994). Overall, the general consistency between the findings in the present research and those of the previous research lends credence to the present report that the Big Five personality traits explain significant variance in career success beyond that accounted for by the control variables.

Limitations and Future research

When considering the generalizability of the present findings, potential limitation must be noted. The predominantly less than 40 years old sample (73%) precludes generalization to persons of other age groups. Future research should examine personality and career success with a more diverse sample. A second limitation is the cross-sectional design of the study and the corresponding inability to draw causal conclusions. Yet, considerable research has been conducted on the longitudinal stability of the personality constructs examine in this study. Finally, we relied on self-report data to access dependent variables of this study. The limitations of self-report data are well-known (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), and future research should attempt to include other sources of data for the dependent variables of interest. This is one of the first studies to take a comprehensive personological approach to the effects of personality on career success in Myanmar. The results in the present research are thus preliminary, but suggest several additional opportunities for future research. As discussed above, more theoretical work needs to be done to understand the intervening processes through which personality affects career outcomes.

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