Applying Personality Traits to Predict Loyalty and Neglect among Employees of Bank Jatim Located in 10 Big Cities of East Java (Mc Crae’s and Hofstede’s Theories on effect of Culture to Personality Revisited)

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Abstract: This study links the relationship of culture and personality on how employees behaves in organizations. The workplace behaviors are displayed in the form of Loyalty or Neglect. The hypotheses are tested through sample of 253 employees of local Javanese bank located in 10 big cities of East Java and structural equation modeling is used. Applying Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), The Big Five Factor personality in this research is labeled as Adjustment (Emotional Stability), Sociability (Extraversion), Likeability (Agreeableness), Prudence (Conscientiousness) and School success (Openness to Experience). Since Sociability (Extraversion), is positively related with Individualism while Indonesian is scored low on this dimension, this variable is excluded from the model. Besides proving the existence of the sixth trait labeled by Hofstede as Dependence on Others trait among Javanese Indonesian, the research also found the trait of Likeability (Agreeableness) which is the typical of Javanese in where they attempt at all times to maintain harmony. The finding reveals that loyalty is better predicted by dependence on others mediated through normative commitment.

Keywords: Five factor personality, Dependence on Others, Organizational commitment, Javanese Culture, Loyalty, Neglect

This study is intrigued by the opposing opinions of Hofstede (2004) - the prominent and notable culturist - and McCrae - the prominent and notable psychologist; Do cultures shape personality or does personality shape culture. This opposing opinion is a challenge for researchers which apparently needs more investigation.

Three main concepts are developed in this study; personality, commitment and the output of the commitment of the employees when they stay in an organization regardless they are satisfied or not with the working condition. Personality traits is justified with The Big Five Inventory Model, developed by McCrae and Costa, (1997). The Big Five Inventory Model holds that the common variance among almost all personality trait variables can be summarized by the factors of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. These five factors have been typically recovered from most personality inventories, and accounts for the shared variance in the trait adjectives of many languages. Cross-cultural comparisons have also shown similar developmental patterns for the five factors. In samples from 12 foreign countries and the United States, neuroticism, extraversion, and openness tend to decline from age 18 to 30, whereas agreeableness and conscientiousness tend to increase (McCrae, 2002). Finally, there is substantial evidence that the five factors are heritable (Jang, McCrae, Angleitner, Riemann, & Livesley, 1998). However, Hofstede (2007) argues that if we want to use the Big Five worldwide it should actually become a Big Sixi. Based on follow up studies of McCrae’s work in countries of East Asia and on Bondi’s analyses, and looking at other European data as well, He suggests the
inclusion of a sixth personality dimension, called ‘dependence on others’.

Meyer et al., (2002) defines three-component commitment model, continuance, affective, and normative types of commitment. The focus on attitudinal commitment in the OB literature has included the exploration of a wide range of factors thought to serve as determinants of such commitment. Most of these focus on employee perceptions or attitudes toward various aspects of their work experience (Meyer & Allen, 1993).

Since the crucial test of commitment should really be the readiness to stay as long as possible and contribute as energetically as possible, the approach derived from Hirschman ‘exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect’ (EVLN) is a useful conceptual framework for analyzing the relationships among responses to organizational commitment (Bar-Haim, 2007).

Indonesian belongs to collectivism (Hofstede, 1980) since collectivity (Extraversion), is positively related with Individualism (Hofstede & Mc Crae, 2004) and Indonesian is scored low in this dimension as the result of collectivistic culture (Halim, M. S., Derksen, J. J. L., & van der Staak, C. P. F (2004); this variable is excluded from the model.

Method

Population for this research is 253 (two hundred and fifty three) employees of 10 (ten) offices of Bank Jatim spreading in municipalities of East Java; Surabaya, Malang, Batu, Blitar, Kediri, Madiun, Mojokerto, Pasuruan, Probolinggo and Jember. Sample is classified based on ethnic, tenure and age in organization. Thus, the target populations are Javanese, at least four (4) years serving the organization indicating organizational commitment, and having ages of < 40 years. The age of < 40 falling between the range of 30 and 50 is chosen as Costa and McCrae (1982) in Ardel (2000) maintain that personality is basically stable after the age of 30 and personality assessment will produce negative stability at the age of fifty (50). Geertz (1961) divides East Java as ‘Kejawen’ (roughly means Javanist), and Mixed Population. Under this division, 192 (one hundred ninety two) respondents located in Surabaya, Malang, Batu, Blitar, Kediri, Madiun and Mojokerto belong to ‘Kejawen’, while 61 (sixty one) respondents located in Pasuruan, Probolinggo and Jember belongs to ‘Mixed Population. Due to acculturation and organizational cultures, the sample is considered homogeneous.

Key studies of Big Five Personality and commitment use standard survey questionnaires (Hogan, 1991, and Meyer & Allen, 2002). Dependence on Others, the new dimension of personality, is measured with four items: the need for guidance from parents and other authority persons, relationships with siblings and other relevant in-group members, Collectivism and Long-term Orientation.

Findings

With respect to the applicability of the theory of loyalty and neglect to the responses of Javanese to workplace commitment, the fact that most of hypotheses were supported provides initial evidence of the generalizability of the theory to Javanese workers. As such, the research confirms the following findings:

Consistent with previous cross-cultural studies in other countries, the results of the study indicated that the FFM of personality was generalizable to Javanese samples as well as the existence of the new dimension known as ‘dependence on others’. This finding holds despite the fact that there are slight differences, in mean scores on the Big Five dimensions the finding is still consistent with Schmitt, Allik, McCrae and Martinez (2007), Halim, M. S., Derksen, J. J. L., & van der Staak, C. P. F (2004). The particular pattern of differences observed higher levels of Conscientiousness (prudence) and Agreeableness (Likeability) where Conscientiousness (prudence) is found to be the most descriptive one supporting Hofstede & McCrae (2004) that prudence (conscientiousness) is associated with high power distance in a large-power-distance culture, people feel dependence on those in authority and expect direction from them. Those in authority exercise power in an autocratic or paternalistic manner. Usually, preference is extended to subordinates who are viewed as hard workers as this is a sign of loyalty that becomes the norm in collectivist culture.

The high level of dependence on others is clearly documented the existence of this trait among Javanese Indonesian. Thus, this proves the preposit-
tion proposed by Hofstede (2007) that in the area of personality research, a number of newer and older findings by Asian and European researchers suggest the need for expanding the dominant five-factor model of personality traits, known as the Big Five, with a sixth factor, Dependence on Others, in order to keep the model culturally universal.

The finding that normative commitment is the most descriptive for Javanese is supporting the finding of Hofstede (1980) that characterized the Indonesian work context as, one is the relationship between employer and employee as moral rather than calculative, implying mutual obligations of protection from the employer (irrespective of the employee’s performance), and loyalty towards the employer from the employee. The research also support the fact that people with collectivist values reflected in Javanese kerukunan and uruturun making people tend to behave according to the norms of their in-group, and the obligations and duties that are designed to maintain social harmony among the members of the in-group. In other words, they maintain normative or obligatory relationships. It has been argued that this relationship orientation may also be reflected in the employer-employee bond, and that collectivists might feel a normative attachment to their organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Overall, the correlations with normative commitment are generally higher than with affective and continuance commitments. This is in line with the main findings of earlier studies in Collectivist countries. As these earlier findings were mostly based on private sector studies, the writer concludes that the correlations between antecedent variables and organizational commitment in the local government owned corporation are very similar to those found in other sectors. Thus, the Javanese public sector does not seem to be particularly exceptional.

As expected, Conscientiousness (prudence) was positively related to continuance commitment because increased job involvement should lead to an accumulation of workplace rewards that heighten the costs associated with leaving an organization. Supporting Smithkrai (2007), for people working in banks conscientiousness is found to be the most highly correlated personality trait with success making this trait is one of the requirement demanded from employees thereby making them have a very wide opportunity to work somewhere. The writer also find relationships between Openness to Experience (school success) and continuance commitment. Since Openness to Experience can be viewed as an individual’s need for innovation, variety, and complexity and an intrinsic appreciation for experience (McCrae, 1996), people who score high on the Openness dimension are more exploratory and more willing to pursue job alternatives than those who score low on this dimension. In regard to Agreeableness, it has been related to getting along with others in pleasant and satisfying ways (Organ & Lingl, 1995), which directly relates to emotional warmth. Such emotion may increase an employee’s social identity with his or her work environment, thereby increasing his or her need to reciprocate the organization for providing a supportive social environment.

As hypothesized, Javanese with adjustment and dependence on others’ personality trait are more loyal and show greater tendency to remain in their organizations than persons who possess school success and prudence personality traits and surprisingly the one who scores high in agreeableness represent the typical of Javanese who is emphasized by Soetarto (2006) through pointing that the Javanese are often accused of being hypocrites due to their habit of saying yes when they really mean no, a habit embodied in the traditional saying ngaheng ngaheng ora kepangheng, saying yes but not doing it.

The findings that employees who are described as practical but willing to consider new ways of doing things and seek a balance between the old and the new, enjoy academic activities and values educational achievement for its own sake (school success) and employees who are described as conscientious and well organized, have high standards and always strive to achieve their goals (prudence) will display a degree of neglect that is, remaining in the organization but exhibiting passive withdrawal behaviors such as reporting sick because they do not feel like working, coming in late because they do not feel like working, putting less effort into their work than may be expected of them, putting not enough effort into their work, and missing out on meetings because they do not feel like attending them support the notion that national culture is determinant of workplace
behavior (Hofstede, 2004) and situation is such a powerful determinant of social behavior (Triandis, 1985).

Since Dependence on others is positively correlated with normative commitment, this variable is also found to be the better predictor for loyalty behavior. This due to the typical of collectivist who tend to need for guidance from parents and other authority persons, maintain relationships with siblings and other relevant in-group members, be affected by Collectivism and Power Distance as well as the effect of Long-term Orientation. The high score for Javanese employees is consistent with Hofstedeis (2007) finding that individuals in countries holding this value may well, on average, score themselves higher on a personality factor independence on others. In collectivist cultures, culture, a person is viewed as interdependent with others and behavior is a consequence of being responsive to one’s social roles and relationship.

Discussions

The finding that culture shapes personality is not surprising as in the 14th century, the great Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun in his book Al- Mudawwanah (1377/1968) had argued that the mind in its original state is ready to absorb any influence, good or bad: “As Mohammed has said: “Every child is born in a natural state. It is his parents who make him into a Jew, Christian or Zoroastrian. Magaddimah, a protagonist to the study of history which was completed in 1378 introduced what he believed to be a new science, which he called islam al-‘umran al-bashari (science of human social organization) or Ilm al-iljima al-insani (science of human society). His central concern was the explanation of the rise and decline of states and societies. An understanding of the relationships between the state and society, group feeling or solidarity and the question of the development of society requires an understanding of the nature of society which Ibn Khaldun approaches by a way of the study of the constituent elements of society, such as economic life and urban institutions, and solidarity or group feeling (asabiyyah), which is the primary factor effecting societal change (Alatas, 2007).

Though not hypothesized, the findings shows that negative correlation between neglect and loyalty is not significant. Thus within Javanese setting one cannot directly assumes that people who behaves negligently cannot be changed into the loyalty one. What needed is the proper and appropriate leadership style to change this behavior. Javanese due to their nature cannot be managed directly to the achievement of organizational objective, but their engagement should be requested in such a humble way by giving an example as a long time ago been postulated by Ki Hadjar Dewantara with the concept known as Ti Pakarti Utama I - three pre-eminent attitudes: Ing Ngarso Sung Tuloro, Ing Madyo Mangun Karso, Tut Wuri Handayani (one has to set an example, when one is in a front position, to stimulate when in the middle, and to support when at the rear).

Conclusion

Given that certain personality traits are related to the individuals feeling about their job and commitment to the organization necessitates the inclusion of personality tests in the selection of individuals within this field, certainly this information can help in the recruitment of employees in narrowing the search for the ideal candidate. In an industry, whose employees report high turnover, intentions to quit, and low satisfaction with ones job and components of the job, the development of a profile of the right employee is warranted. The results of this study imply that though conscientiousness (prudence), as one trait, may be part of the candidates profile seen as desirable trait shown in prior research, but if not well treated, they will display neglect behavior.

Recommendations

The culture of workers has an influence on their workplace behavior that should not be ignored. Non Javanese workers may likely to express their dissatisfaction with their job by voicing their concerns to management. Therefore, it is particularly important for managers who have come to rely on employees to tell them when things aren’t quit right to recognize that this propensity may be much diminished in Javanese cultures. The Javanese employees are likely to favor more indirect non-confrontational responses to something not to please them in work place.
Managers must be careful not to use self-referent criteria when evaluating the behavior of their subordinates. Using the rule of thumb that would cause me to behave that way may cause managers to wrongfully interpret the motives for non-confrontation behavior such as neglect and respond inappropriately or try to encourage culturally inappropriate behavior such as voice. In order to anticipate and explain employee responses to such situational contingencies managers must get to know employee values and beliefs, and personality that are the product of culture.

In Javanese work setting, relationships within organizations should be managed carefully by a harmonious managerial style, especially in multietnic, multicultural and multinational organizations or corporations, avoiding cultural clashes or ethnic conflicts that cause failure to achieve the organizations' objectives. Relationships are important to Javanese and in some cases not properly executed, such as doing it at/ with a wrong time, occasion, person, culture, and ethnic. For Suwarisih Warnaen (2002) their isensitivity and trusworthiness, and Franz M. Suseno (1993) emphasized that the in harmony and respect of the Javanese are a unique attitude and behavior that should be considered by managers as these could support the process of interpersonal relationships, communication and relationships within the organization.

REFERENCES


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