The Influence of Personality Dimensions on Organizational Performance

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Abstract

In the 21st century, one of the most critical topical issues in the study of organizational behavior is the effects of workforce diversity such as personality on organizational performance. In today's global and competitive environment, the general consensus is that organizations that capitalize on diversity are likely to perform better than organizations without the advantages that diversity brings. Workforce diversity refers to employee's individual differences and similarities. It stands for individuality that includes personality, gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, region, sexual orientation, income, marital status, work experience and perceptions that uphold organizational core values. On the other hand, organizational performance can be defined as when an organization meets its set targets putting into consideration all other personality, external and internal dimensions that influence performance.

The purpose of this study was to examine how personality dimensions impact on corporate organizational performance. A descriptive research design taking a survey approach was used. The target population of this study consisted of employees of the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) from all the four locations, namely; Nairobi, Kisumu, Busia and Kilifi. A non-probability restricted purposive judgmental sampling was used to divide the population into two homogenous sub-groups; Research Officers and Administrative staff. Both the stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 85 employees of KEMRI comprising 55 researchers and 30 administrators. A semi-structured questionnaire sent through emails. The data analysis tool used was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the findings were presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, in charts and tables.

The findings on the personality dimensions and performance showed that the conscientiousness personality trait is the most predictive of job performance at followed by openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion and emotional stability. In conclusion, the majority of KEMRI's workforce is mainly composed of a conscientiousness personality trait, which has been found most predictive of job performance at the organization. Hence personality is useful for predicting other work-related criteria, like job satisfaction and job performance. The study recommends that KEMRI should consider personality tests as part of the recruitment and selection process.

Background

In the 21st century, one of the most critical topical issues in the study of organizational behavior is the effects of workforce diversity such as personality on organizational performance. In today's global and competitive environment, the general consensus is that organizations that capitalize on diversity are likely to perform better than organizations without the advantages that diversity brings. Workforce diversity refers to employee's individual differences and similarities. It stands for individuality that includes personality, gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, region, sexual orientation, income, marital status, work experience, perceptions among others, that uphold organizational core values (Kitololo, 2005). On the other hand, organizational performance can be defined as when an organization meets its set targets putting into consideration all other personality, external and internal dimensions that influence performance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007).

Scholars, such as Kreitner and Kinicki, (2007), Chuang, *et al* (2004) and Pitts and Wise (2004), have collectively tried to explain this workforce diversity phenomena using two major theories; the information decision making and social categorization theories. According to the Information/decision-making theory heterogeneous workforce promotes work-related attitudes, behavior and hence performance of the individual's perspective (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007). On the contrary, the Social Categorization theory holds the view that homogenous (with similar characteristics) workforce leads to better performance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007). Kinicki, (2008) examines workforce diversity using four dimensions namely; personality which represents extraversion, introversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience, internal dimension which represents, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, sex, physical ability while external represents, work experience, marital status, educational background, job satisfaction, income. The fourth one is an organizational dimension which represents departments and designations (Kinicki, 2008) therefore for the purpose of this paper we will concentrate on personality dimension and how it affects or influence performance in an organization.

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) is a state corporation established under the Science and Technology Act of Parliament of 1979, and is mandated to conduct human health research in Kenya that can be applied towards the improvement of health. It has a workforce of over 1,113 employees. (KEMRI, 2004) and located in three diverse geographical locations in Kenya. These employees individually possess diverse work-group dimensions that may influence negatively or positively the performance of KEMRI. With this kind of heterogeneous workforce diversity at KEMRI there was a need to establish whether diversity hinders or enhances the organizational performance of the entire organization (Mkoji, 2009). Hence KEMRI presented a good opportunity to examine to what extent some of these dimensions at play in influence the organizational performances in the context of a developing country and more specifically, public research institution heavily supported by donor funding. Therefore, this study specifically, looked at how workforce diversity dimensions in KEMRI such as personality have influenced its corporate performance particularly in terms of organizational performance. Corporate organizations are generally concerned with their performance which creates a competitive strategic advantage in differentiating themselves from other firms and to enhance the firm's general output (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007).

Although the relationship between workforce diversity such as personality and organizational performance in the private commercial companies has been fairly well studied and documented especially in developed countries, the issue has not received adequate attention in the case of public owned donor funded organizations, particularly those located in the developing World. More specifically, this subject has not been studied adequately in Kenya and no studies have been undertaken in public research institutions supported heavily by donor funding. Although it is generally known that there is limited research work on how workforce diversity influences organizational performance particularly in Kenya's public sector, there is clear evidence that workforce diversity affects the functioning of organizations in terms of performance, positively or negatively (Chuang *et al,* 2004). Generally, most public institutions in Kenya have a diverse workforce, and an organizational culture that clearly influences how they function as organizations. Given that organization performance is shaped by the workforce dimensions in terms of performance either collectively or individually, there was a need to profile the actual dimensions at play, in terms of personality, to see whether this particular dimension influences the performance of an organization. From the literature review, it is apparent that the issue of how personality dimensions influence public owned donor funded institutions performance has not been adequately studied particularly in the developing country context. It is against this background that this study sought to how workforce diversity dimensions such as personality, has influenced KEMRI's corporate performance.

Literature Review

The concept of diversity refers to a characteristic of a group or organization. It reflects the degree to which there are objective or subjective differences between people within the group (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Conceptualization of diversity is that of a group characteristic, not an individual characteristic which deals with how differences between group members affect group functioning and performance, not how being different from others affects individual functioning (Chattopadhyay, *et al,* 2004). Workforce diversity can be examined using four dimensions namely personality, internal, internal and organizational dimensions.

In personality we are referring to the big five personality characteristics such as extraversion, introversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness to experience, while internal dimensions will include; ethnicity, race, religion, culture, sex, etc. Similarly, external dimensions are; work experience, marital status, educational background, job satisfaction, income and organizational include designation, departmental etc. For the purpose of this study and the review of the relevant literature, we will concentrate on personality and how it has generally impacted on organizational performance. Individual performance levels are a function of one's motivation and total job capability and therefore when both are high, performance will tend to be generally, high, though an individual's total job capability is a function of general job knowledge and specific job skills (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 1998).

Personality Traits and Organizational Performance

According to Kinicki, (2008), personality represents a stable set of characteristics that are responsible for a person's identity. The internal dimension or the primary dimensions of diversity are mostly outside our control but strongly influence our attitudes and our expectations and assumptions about others, thus influencing our behavior (Kinicki, 2008). Similarly, Colquitt (2009) defines personality traits as the structures and propensities inside a person that explains his or her characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behavior. Personality captures what people are like, in contrast to ability which captures what people can do (Colquitt, 2009). On the other hand traits are recurring regularities or trends in a person (Colquitt, 2009). He further identified five dimensions that describe personality these include; conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion commonly referred to us big five. Conscientiousness is associated with trait adjectives such as dependable, organized, reliable, ambitious, hard working while agreeableness has adjectives such as kind, cooperative, sympathetic, helpful, courteous, and warm (Colquitt, 2009). On the other hand, neurotism has to do with nervous, moody, emotional, insecure, and unstable character (Colquitt, 2009). Openness has to do with curious, imaginative, creative, complex, refined, sophisticated while extraversion is associated with adjective traits such as talkative, sociable, passionate, bold, dominant (Colquitt, 2009).

Personality therefore represents a process of change and it relates to the psychological growth and development of individuals. Personality factors are extremely important in today's competitive organizational settings. Often the 'wrong' kind of personality proves disastrous and causes undesirable tensions and worries in organization (Khosla, 2009). Research indicates that personality acts as a moderating factor: workplace deviance was more likely to be endorsed with respect to an individual when both the perception of the workplace was negative and emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness was low (Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004). Of the five factors, the single factor of conscientiousness is the most predictive of job performance and therefore positively influence work performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000) (Zimmerman, 2008). Personality research has focused on the five-factor model (FFM) personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1985). The FFM establishes five factors of personality (Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience) as a parsimonious model of distinguishing between differences among individuals' dispositions (Zimmerman, 2008). Because of the dominance of the FFM and trait affect models in the literature; these two sets of traits i.e. Conscientiousness and Agreeableness are partly the focus of this research.

A number of research studies have showed that persons with these traits set higher goals for themselves than unconscientiously sales person and were more committed to meeting their goals (Colquitt, 2009). A study of sales persons showed that conscientious sales men were particularly valuable during their first year of employment and their ambitious nature became more critical as they gained tenure and experience. However a third research also provided a compelling evidence regarding the benefits of these traits at the University of California, Berkley's and came up with conclusions that childhood conscientiousness was strongly correlated with ratings of success five decades later. In summary, these traits are associated with typical high performance in routine conditions that surround job tasks and also have higher organizations commitment (Colquitt, 2009). Unlike conscientiousness, agreeableness is not related to job performance across all occupations and tasks. This is because communion striving is beneficial to some professions but detrimental to others. In such cases effective job performance may demand being disagreeable in the face of unreasonable request or demands. A research study done in the US revealed that agreeable participants were significantly less likely to be at home in their apartment and further more conveyed personal rapport during conversations (Colquitt, 2009). There are several reasons to believe that agreeable individuals will be less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors hence are more likely to be performers.

First, because of their adaptability and compliance, agreeable people are likely to be more understanding of negative aspects of their environment. In addition, because of the tendency to establish positive and satisfying relationships with people within their organizations (Organ & Lingl, 1995), they are apt to think more highly of their work environments and hence tend to perform well in their workplace. These positive relationships will increase the strength of the affective forces (Maertz & Griffith, 2004) that motivate individuals to stay at their jobs (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Second, due to the interpersonal aspects of agreeableness (warmth, caring, likeability), agreeable individuals are more likely to have successful relationships with others (McCrae & Costa, 1991; Organ & Lingl, 1995). As with extraverts, agreeable people are likely to have stronger ties to co-workers. These relationships are linked to constituent motivational forces (Maertz & Griffith, 2004) and the concept of job embeddings (Mitchell *et al*., 2001), which motivate individuals to stay with their organizations because of these interpersonal relationships. (Colquitt, 2009). Third, the compliance and dependence aspects of agreeableness are likely to cause employees high in agreeableness to perceive contractual obligations to stay with the organization (Maertz & Griffith, 2004). Finally, the negative side of agreeableness has been found to be a component of acting impulsively (Clark & Watson, 1999; Eysenck, 1997) and engage in spontaneous quitting (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mobley *et al.,* 1979) hence a high turnover of employees that directly impact on organizational performance. Like agreeableness, extraversion is not related to performance across all jobs or occupations. However, extraverts prioritize status striving which reflects strong desire to obtain power and influence hence care about being successful and influential (Colquitt, 2009). Research has suggested that extraverts, are more likely to emerge as leaders in social and task related groups and tend to be rated as the most effective in leadership roles by people who are following them. Other researchers have suggested that extraverts were associated with more positive events such as appraisal, sports achievements etc (Colquitt, 2009). As individuals higher in extraversion are more likely to seek out social relationships, they are more likely to have a greater number of links to others within their organizations (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Because of this, extraverts are also more likely to become quickly socialized into their organization and, due to acculturation (Louis, 1980) and social integration (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983) would be less likely to quit (Maertz & Campion, 2004; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989; Colquitt, 2009) and hence impact directly on performance positively.

While extraversion is associated with positivity, neurotism is associated with negative affectivity in terms of the general performance of an individual. A recent study by Colquitt (2009) suggests that the negative affectivity even influences more general life satisfaction. The study suggested that individuals with neurotism personality tend to be less happy with their lives in general and hence they are unlikely to perform well in tasks. As theorized with extraversion and trait positive effect, because job attitudes are considered affective in nature, low emotional stability and high trait negative affect likely to negatively impact individuals' job satisfaction. Individuals low in Emotional Stability and high in trait negative affect are more likely to encode and recall negative information (Watson & Clark, 1984; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and tend to have negative perceptions of themselves and their environment (Burke, Brief, & George, 1993; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), hence likely to affect the performance of the organization in which they are working for. The insecurity aspects of those lower in emotional stability should also cause them to be more likely to quit, especially early in their job tenure.

This is because of the stress new employees endure in having to learn and perform new job responsibilities, as well as having to become socialized into a new work environment. During this early stage, job demands are novel, ill defined, and uncertain. Those lower in emotional stability tend to be unsure about their ability to perform the job (Judge & Hies, 2002), particularly when learning the demands of a new job, and this may cause them to be prone to abandon such positions early in their tenure. Further empirical evidence supports these arguments as low levels of emotional stability have been linked to giving up on stress-inducing goals (Judge & Hies, 2002; Watson & Hubbard, 1996) and career indecision (Tokar, Fischer, & Subich, 1998; Colquitt, 2009) and hence likely to affect performance negatively in an organization. Generally, this trait is likely to be helpful in jobs that require high levels of creativity, defined as a capacity to generate novel and useful ideas and solutions (Colquitt, 2009). This trait is also associated with creative thoughts that excel at the style of thinking demanded by creativity and hence are likely to perform positively in work related contexts. In summary, these traits are associated with typical performance in routine conditions that surround job tasks and also have higher organization commitment and performance than any other trait dimension such as extraverts, openness to experience, emotional stability (neurotism) and agreeableness.

Openness to experience has not been shown to correlate significantly with job performance. This may seem counterintuitive, because openness to experience is sometimes also referred to as intellect, and cognitive ability which is presumably related (Colquitt, 2009). One's openness to experience should be indicative of creativity and originality; consequently, there may be a direct but unobvious connection to job performance in terms of creating and trying new things that may improve personal productivity or otherwise maybe even affect general productivity on a greater scale-for example, a new way of doing things may improve operation of an entire company and hence positively affect the performance of an organization (Colquitt, 2009). However, more recent research (LePine & Dyne, 2001) has suggested that conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness are all related to cooperative behavior but that they are not related to task performance. Although this fortifies the case that job performance is related to the five-factor model via increased cooperativeness among coworkers, it lays siege to the role of personality by implying that actual job performance (task performance) is related to cognitive ability and not to personality (LePine & Dyne, 2001). Leadership abilities are often essential in the workplace, especially for individuals who aspire to move up into the ranks of management. Studies of Asian military units have found that neuroticism is negatively correlated with leadership abilities (Lim & Ployhart, 2004). Contrary to what the researchers hypothesized, agreeableness is negatively correlated with leadership abilities as well. Openness to experience is unrelated to leadership abilities, but extraversion is positively correlated with leadership abilities (Lim & Ployhart, 2004). This evidence is consistent with the long-standing idea that in teams there are leaders and there are followers; the leaders make decisions and the followers abide by them. Although agreeableness is positively correlated with working with a team and hence performance, it is negatively correlated with being a leader (Westerman, 2007).

Although examination of direct linkages between employee personality dimensions and performance outcomes is receiving increasing support (Hurtz and Donovan, 2000; Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996), what remains less clear is the interaction and influence of the context or place on this relationship. Are dimensions of personality directly responsible for employee success in organizations, or do preferences employees have for factors in their work environment play a more significant role in the relationship? Although selecting employees on the basis of individual dispositions may have a positive impact on employee attitudes and performance, personality-based employee selection processes are notoriously inaccurate (Arthur *et al*, 2001). And considering the increasingly large spans of control and reduced contact between employees and managers in work situations (De Meuse *et al*, 2001; Henricks, 2001), an over-reliance on employee selection processes as a means of improving performance and commitment may be a less effective approach than effectively managing work environments. In addition, many managers do not have much flexibility in their staffing patterns in the short-term, and managers must "deal with the hand they are dealt." In such situations, controlling the work environment is often the most feasible short-term option, beyond skill training, for improving outcomes (Westerman, 2007). However, a number of different studies have begun to illustrate that the effects of personality on performance may be more indirect than direct (Barrick *et al,* 1993; Gellatly, 1996; Martocchio and Judge, 1997). Recent research indicates the intervening effects of performance expectancies, self-efficacy, and goal-setting on the relationship between conscientiousness and performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). These studies illuminate a significant gap in the literature--that the research to date has disproportionately focused on the direct linkage between personality and performance, and "... if we are to truly understand the relationship between personality and job performance, we must move beyond this bivariate relationship and toward specifying the intervening variables that link these domains"(Hurtz and Donovan, 2000).

Although specific personality traits like conscientiousness (Behling, 1998) have been linked to a variety of employee outcomes, what remains unclear is the nature of the relationship between personality, work environment preferences, and performance. It is possible that personality is primarily expressed in individual preferences for work environments, and that the direct effects of personality on workplace outcomes are fully or partially mediated by such preferences. Thus, we may find that specific work environment preferences may be more substantial predictors of employee performance in organizations than the big five personality factors (Westerman, 2007). Most studies show that conscientiousness and emotional stability consistently predict job performance for all job types (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). In addition, some researchers have suggested that personality is useful for predicting other work-related criteria, like job satisfaction and job performance (Goodstein & Lanyon, 1999; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002).

However, while strong evidence supports the relationship between personality and performance, the small magnitude of the relationship has caused some researchers to question the actual utility of personality for predicting work performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). However, a study by Barrick & Mount (1993) showed that personality predicts performance better in jobs with high levels of autonomy. Despite the generally positive relationship between personality and job performance, there is no empirical evidence for this relationship in leadership/ supervisory positions (Barrick & Judge, 2001). However, it seems likely that the tasks and responsibilities for leadership positions would be related to personality traits. For instance, because leadership responsibilities are highly interpersonal in nature, and their work is carried out with high autonomy (i.e., weak situations), it seems reasonable that personality assessment would predict leader performance (Smith, 2004). Despite the general lack of evidence to support the relationship between personality and leader effectiveness, Kenny and Zaccaro (1983) reported that between 48% and 82% of variance in performance during a leaderless discussion group was due to "personality" ratings. While this finding appears contradictory to previous research, the inconsistencies may stem from limited research designs and relatively inadequate construct measurement in most previous studies. Therefore, further study is clearly warranted. Some recent research has provided evidence to support the personality- performance relationship in leadership positions.

For instance, Judge and Bono (2000) demonstrated that transformational leadership is predicted by several of the Big Five personality traits. Specifically, this study showed that Extraversion, Openness, and Agreeableness predicted subordinate ratings of transformational leadership. Additionally, this study demonstrated that personality factors were predictive of supervisor ratings of leader effectiveness. In addition, the five-factor model of personality directly addresses a problem from previous reviews of leadership (e.g., Bass, 1990)—too many traits were reviewed in order to make generalized conclusions (Smith, 2004). Conclusively therefore, of all the five factors, agreeableness was the only dimension that did not show a relationship with either leader effectiveness or emergence. Based on a regression of overall leadership on the big five traits, these authors estimated that personality only accounts for almost 25% of the variance in leadership and performance.

Judge *et al* (2002), suggest that the *big five* dimensions of extroversion and conscientiousness show the most consistent effects on leadership, while effects of openness, neuroticism, and agreeableness vary more with the study setting and context. Despite the clear advance that this line of work represents in identifying effects of personality characteristics on leadership and job performance, the big five personality dimensions may not fully represent all of the personality-based differences that can impact on leadership and job performance. For instance, Block, (1995) has criticized the five factor approach as being too global to be of much use in understanding actual behavior. Hough, (1992) makes a similar argument, claiming the big five factors are too broad to predict adequately on performance (Bartone Jarle Eid, 2009). This study will elucidate the specific factors along these personality dimensions within the context of a public donor funded research organization.

Methodology

A descriptive research design taking a survey approach was used. The target population of this study consisted of employees of KEMRI from all the four locations, namely; Nairobi, Kisumu, Busia and Kilifi. A non-probability restricted purposive judgmental sampling was used to divide the population into two homogenous sub-groups; Research Officers and Administrative staff. A stratified random sampling was before a simple random sampling was conducted to obtain the sample of 85 employees of KEMRI comprising 55 researchers and 30 administrators. Both qualitative and quantitative was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire sent through emails. The data analysis tool used was the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, in charts and tables.

Results

This study sought to determine personality of the KEMRI workforce. Therefore personality is critical because it is one of the main variables that the researcher determined before it was measured against performance. This study sought to find out which of the statements would closely or best describe their personality. The respondents were to score the statements on a scale of (1-5) where 5 best describe and 1 least describes).

Conscientiousness

The statements that stood out in describing this personality were; People depend on me to deliver (32%), I am reliable person (23%), I am hard working employee (18%), I am very ambitious person and a high performer scored (13%) while statements such as; I normally set high goals (10%) and I am organized in my work and very structured scored least (4%).

Agreeableness

The statements that stood out in describing this personality were; I am kind to people, warm and caring (28%), I cooperate with others easily (22%), I consider myself as a high performer (20%), I usually want to help o
others who are in need (18%) while I am very courageous person (5%), I disagree in the face of unreasonable request (5%) and I am more satisfied with my job scored least (2%).

Emotional Stability

The statements that stood out in describing this personality were; I am usually an emotional person (32%), I enjoy task that require generating novel and useful ideas (28%), I find it stressful to learn and perform a new job responsibility (25%), while the rest; I am unstable, unsteady; I always have negative perceptions of myself and my work and I hate work goals that are stressful each scored (5%).

Openness to Experience

The statements that stood out in describing this personality were; I am imaginative person (37%), I have a very creative mind (30%), I am curious and highly inquisitive (23%), the rest; I don't enjoy or even seek leadership positions scored (08) % and I am usually a refined and sophisticated person and I am considered a complex and difficult person each scored least (1%).

Extraversion

The statements that stood out in describing this personality were; I am very talkative person (22%), I am sociable and outgoing (18%), I am passionate and zealous (16%), I am very bold and brave (14%), I can be dominating person (10%) while statements such as I always prioritize status striving & desire to obtain power; I enjoy positive events; I enjoy seeking positive relationship and I enjoy leadership position each scored (5%).

Individual Performance

This study sought to find out the individual performance of the staff at KEMRI. This was measured by determining how many projects individual researchers were able to complete within a spate of ten (10) years and the number of peer reviewed publications in international and local journals in a period of ten years. This was critical because individual performance levels are a function of one's motivation and total capability (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 1998) and may in turn affect the performance of the entire organizational performance.

Individual Performance Using Number of Projects Completed

The study also sought to find out individual performance of respondents by how many projects they had completed in a period of ten years. The findings in the Table 4.3 show (65.5%) of sampled researchers completing 1-5 projects in ten years while (20%) of the respondents had completed 6-10 projects within a period of ten years. However, only (9.1 %) of the respondents completed 10-15 projects within ten years. This shows that the majority (65.5%) of KEMRI researchers sampled have so far had completed only 1- 5 projects in a period of ten years.

Individual Performance Using Number of Projects Completed

However, the findings on the number of publications in the peer reviewed journals, showed that (65.5%) of the respondents had only published less than 10 publications in the peer reviewed journals while (14.5 %) of the respondents had published over 80 publications. Others were (3.6 %) of the respondents published between 10-40 publications and (7.3%) of the respondents published between 41-80 publications in the peer reviewed publications. This means that the majority, (65.5%) of the KEMRI researchers sampled had only published less than 10 publications in a period of ten years in the local and international peer reviewed journals.

Influence of Personality Dimensions on Organizational Performance at KEMRI

According to the findings in this variable, researchers with a conscientiousness personality published a total of 28 publications, the highest number of peer reviewed journals followed by researchers with openness to experience personality who had 17 publications. Agreeableness had only four publications while emotional stability had only one publication.

Extraversion did not register any publications. The next section sought to determine whether internal dimensions such as gender, race, and religion influence performance in an organization at KEMRI.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The major findings on the locations, job levels and personality dimensions that influence performance at KEMRI, showed majority of both researchers and administrators are of the conscientiousness personality trait which is also the most predictive of job performance at KEMRI. Similarly, almost equal numbers for both administrators (50%) and researchers (53.7%) of the KEMRI workforce comprised of a conscientiousness personality. Openness to experience personality trait followed for both Administrators and Researchers with (20%) and (35.2 %) respectively. This shows that majority of the KEMRI employees' sampled have conscientiousness personality as a personality trait. This study results also confirmed that there are other factors, other than personality, internal and external dimension that influence performance. This study sought to find out actual location and grade of KEMRI staff, their personality dimensions that influence organizational performance at KEMRI. The studies found out that majority of KEMRI employees sampled are in job level (MR 9-16).

According to the findings, KEMRI workforce exhibited all the *Big Five* personality traits namely; *Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Emotional Stability and Extraversion* (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007). From the study results we were able to confirm characteristics of various personality traits. According to Colquitt, (2009), conscientiousness is associated with dependability, organized, reliability, ambitious, hard working, while agreeableness was associated with adjectives such as kind, cooperative, sympathetic, courteous and warm (Colquitt, 2009). The study was able to also confirm other characteristics of other traits such as emotional stability; nervous, moody, emotional, insecure, and unstable while openness to experience, have curious, imaginative, creative, complex, and sophisticated and lastly, extraversion, are talkative, sociable, passionate, bold and dominant (Colquitt, 2009). This also implies conscientiousness personality is associated with performance and hence confirms the findings of Colquitt, (2003) that conscientiousness trait is associated with workforce performance while agreeableness is not associated with job performance across occupations and tasks (Colquitt, 2003). However, the results showed no significant causal relationship between general personality and performance although this does not mean there is no association. Hence it is therefore clear that there are other dimensions, other than personality that admittedly influences performance at KEMRI. This study also confirmed the findings of Colquitt, (2009) which state that, like agreeableness, extraversion is not related to performance across all jobs or occupation. The study found out that extraversion scored poorly against performance. For instance, results showed, conscientiousness personality published a total of 28 publications, the highest number of peer reviewed journals followed by researchers with openness to experience personality who had 17 publications. Others agreeableness had only 4 publications while emotional stability had only one publication. However, extraversion did not register any publications.

The results showed no significant causal relationship between general personality and performance although this does not mean there is no association. Hence it is therefore clear that there are other dimensions, other than personality that admittedly influences performance at KEMRI. Similarly, this study also could not confirm the findings by Barrick, *et al*, (2001) that stated that specific personality traits namely conscientiousness and emotional stability consistently predict job performance. This is so because, although the conscientiousness personality in this study predicted performance consistently, the same was not the case for emotional stability personality who consistently underperformed as discussed above. The study confirmed research work by Hurt & Donovan, (2000) and Zimmerman, (2008) that, two of the five traits mentioned above, conscientiousness is the most predictive of job performance and therefore positively influences workforce performance. The study further confirmed that the researchers who performed well (published the highest number of scientific papers) were from conscientiousness personality. However, this study could not corroborate sufficiently with research by Colquitt, (2009) stating that the agreeableness trait is not related to job performance across all occupations and task since the trait showed poor performance in both researchers and administrators. Likewise, the study found out that the majority of the personality composing KEMRI's workforce is mainly conscientiousness traits that are dependable, responsible and achievement oriented workforce (Colquitt, 2009). This is so because the respondents with the highest publications and those that completed the highest number of projects were all from respondents with conscientiousness personality.

Another important finding of this study is that there was no significant and clear evidence that showed general personality directly influencing performance of individual and therefore the organization at large, though certain personalities exhibited higher performance than the rest such as conscientiousness. This study also confirms findings of several diversity management researchers (Goodstein & Lanyon, 1999; Judge, *et al* 2002) that suggested that personality is useful for predicting other work-related criteria, like job satisfaction and job performance.

The findings indicated that majority of administrators (50%) and researchers (53.7%) of the KEMRI workforce are comprised of a conscientiousness personality. Openness to experience personality trait followed for both Administrators and Researchers with (20%) and (35.2 %) respectively. Others who followed in order are Agreeableness with Administrators at 13.3% and Researchers at (7.4%); Extraversion had Administrators at (10%) and Researchers (1.9%) while Emotional stability came last with Administrators at (6.7%) and Researchers at (1.9%). This shows that majority of the KEMRI employees' sampled have conscientiousness personality as a personality trait. Another major finding on whether the parameters set out in this study to measure their performance were actually agreeable or not. These parameters were number of publications and number of projects. The results showed that the majority (60%) of the respondents agreed. The study showed that the majority (65.5%) of KEMRI researchers sampled have so far had completed only 1- 5 projects in a period of ten years. Based on the findings discussed, several conclusions can be derived. Generally, this study's results showed that, out of a total of 85 respondents sampled, showed that majority of the researchers and administrators are in the senior level MR 9-16 in the KEMRI structure while the rest were in job level (junior) MR: 1-8.

According to the findings of this study, we can conclude that conscientiousness is the major dimension that influences performance at KEMRI followed by openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion and lastly emotional stability in that order confirming Kreitner & Kinicki, (2007) literature. The majority of KEMRI's workforce who are mainly in Nairobi followed by Kisumu, Kilifi then Busia are mainly composed of the conscientiousness personality, which has been found most predictive of job performance at the organization; hence personality is useful for predicting other work-related criteria, like job satisfaction and job performance. Therefore it is fair to conclude that KEMRI has a potential to be the centre of excellence in human health research, because it has the right kind of workforce. KEMRI should deal with the following issues; poor leadership, secure financial support from the government, improves the morale of staff and avoids political interference. The study recommends that KEMRI should consider personality tests as part of the recruitment and selection process. That research should be undertaken to establish actual relationship between personality and performance particularly to what extend it does influence performance and how? This is because this research only established that there is a relationship between personality and performance but never established the actual relationship.

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