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The Relationship between Self Monitoring Personality and Career Success: Study on Management Postgraduate Students in Selected National Universities in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

As a significant determinant of career success, this study is to discuss the relationship between self-monitoring and career success by undertaking study on Management postgraduate students in selected national universities in Sri Lanka. There are relatively little research that has examined the interaction of person-based factors such as self-monitoring. This appears to be a fruitful area for research, examining the impact of self-monitoring on career success. The main objective of this research is to find out whether there is a significant relationship of self-monitoring personality on career success. The research problem of the study is “whether there is a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and career success. The data were collected using convenient sample of 128 second year postgraduate management students within the selected national universities in Sri Lanka through a structured questionnaire which consisted of 30 questions with five point Likert scales, six point Likert scales and ratio scales. Data were analyzed using univariate analysis, correlation and regression analysis. The finding of the study is that self-monitoring personality of management postgraduate students was positively and strongly correlated with career success. Self-monitoring personality was positively correlated with objective career success of the management postgraduate students within the selected universities in Sri Lanka. Compared to the objective career success, less strong and positive significant relationship exists between self-monitoring personality and subjective career success of the sample. As per the regression analysis, 46 % of the variance in the career success of management postgraduate students has been accounted for by independent variable. It is concluded that self-monitoring personality is one of the major factors which affects career success of the individual and professionals those who have achieved significant career success and are highly self-monitored.

Keywords: *Self-monitoring, Career Success, Objective Career Success, Subjective Career Success*

Introduction

Personality is one of the important factors which determine career success of the professionals. To attain the best rewards in career life, personality influences significantly and particularly self-monitoring personality (Day et al. 2002). It follows that self-monitoring is a variable of interest in the study of career success. Self-monitoring is a personality trait

denoting to an individual's propensity to observe and control his or her expressive behavior according to situational appropriateness (Snyder 1974).

Career success is generally defined as: "... *the extrinsic and intrinsic outcomes or achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences*" (Judge et al. 1995). As Snyder and Copeland (1989) pointed out that, high self-monitors are enthusiastic and able to modify and mode an image to match position into which they hope to be promoted. Effective impression-management tactics may increase an evaluator's liking of the employee, resulting in inflated performance ratings (Villanova & Bernardin 1989). Self-monitoring, then, may be linked to such important skills as boundary spanning, leadership, conflict management, information management, and impression management which are the skills to be possessed by an employee who wants to be successful in his/her career path. Thus self-monitoring behavior of an employee could be identified as an influencing factor to the career success and this research is aimed to discuss that relationship of self-monitoring behavior on career success.

Problem Background and Problem of the Study

The empirical studies reveal that employees have achieved their career success during their tenure in corporate world is a function of various factors like presence on management radar, managing subordinates like managing your boss, over delivering the results and maintaining a healthy work life balance. So, professionals need to be a well-rounded to be eligible for promotion. Hence one needs to be good at self-monitoring personality to get ahead in the corporate world. It is argued that being a high self-monitor is a double-edged sword for ratings of performance. Being a social chameleon lets one to be a friend to many and this may get the high self-monitor plus mark in terms of performance ratings and career achievements. The cost, however, is that the boundary-spanning social chameleon is more likely to grow outgoing negative ties that are, in turn, unfavorable for work performance (Snyder & Gangestad 1982).

Taken together, these findings illustrate that self-monitoring is related to both positive and negative results of career. Also research studies related to these subjects are not undertaken in the Sri Lankan context and there is an unclear conclusion to the topic with reference to the some literature. Consequently, the research question that we examined was "*Whether there is a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and career success*".

Research Framework

According to the research findings and the literature, there is a positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and objective career success and negative relationship or no relationship between self-monitoring personality and subjective career success. So this research is going to find out the overall impact in terms of career success with following hypothesis.

H₀: *There is no significant relationship between self-monitoring behavior and career success.*

H₁: *There will be significant positive relationship between self-monitoring level and career success.*

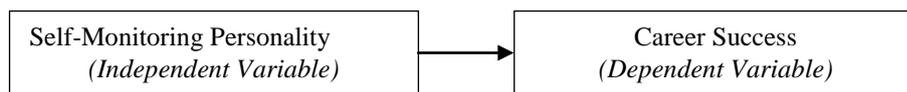
H₂: There will be significant positive relationship between self-monitoring behavior and objective career success.

In terms of job performance and advancement, the concern for the appropriateness of social behavior displayed by high self-monitors makes them interpersonally competent (Snyder, 1987). Previous research has suggested that self management has positive effects on job performance (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982) and it is clear the high self-monitors show superior performance. The effect may be due to high self-monitors' ability to more effectively manage impressions than low self-monitors. As Snyder and Copeland (1989) pointed out, high self-monitors "may be particularly willing and able to tailor and fashion an image to match the position into which they hope to be promoted". So researcher developed the H₂ as above.

H₃: There will be significant positive relationship between self-monitoring behavior and subjective career success.

Day et al (2002) found no empirical or theoretical evidence between self-monitoring and job satisfaction. Several results for job satisfaction indicated a weak, negative relationship with self-monitoring. Unlike the results of the other attitudinal variables, the 95% confidence interval for the estimated effect size included zero, suggesting that there is no reliable relationship between self-monitoring and job satisfaction. The conceptual framework of the study is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from Day, DV & Kilduff, M 2003, 'Self-monitoring personality and work relationships: Individual differences in social networks', Personality and work: Reconsidering the role of personality in organizations, pp. 205–228.

Method

Study Setting

This study was conducted in a quantitative design by collecting data through a questionnaire and the two variables were identified and tested based on the hypotheses developed. This study focuses on hypotheses testing and identifying correlation between variables. Correlational study was undertaken since research was investigated whether there is an impact of self-monitoring personality on the career success. Data were collected with minimum researcher interference and study setting is going to be none contrived, since investigation was done to establish correlational relationship using the same natural environment (field experiment). Unit of analysis is measured through individual level by looking at the data gathered from each individual and treated each employee's response as one data source. A cross sectional study was undertaken since data were gathered just once over a time and it is difficult to prepare longitudinal research due to the time limitation.

The target population of the research was, management post graduate students studying in 2nd year in selected national universities in Sri Lanka. From this particular target population, the researcher is interested in a sample of 128, 2nd year present students on management stream at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colombo, Postgraduate Institute of Management through convenience sampling method. The percentage of the population sample size was 21.62%.

Measures

The research was based on primary data. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Questionnaire method was used due to the fact that it was the most suitable since professionals are very busy people and it is difficult to contact them individually to gain significant information in the research area. The anonymity of the respondents was considered to be very crucial. And also, the questionnaire method was the only possible method of gathering more reliable information while assuming the anonymity of the respondents.

This study used already developed standard questions to measure subjective career success dimension of the career success, which test validity and reliability as used by many researchers and scholars. The questions used to measure dimension of subjective career success under career success variable was a standard questionnaire, originally developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley in 1990 which is known as career satisfaction scale. The career satisfaction scale ($\alpha=.88$) assesses the individual career development against an implicit, self-set standard. The scale comprises five items rated on a five-point, reverse-coded Likert scale (1=not at all to 5=very much scale). Researcher originally developed the other questions which were used to measure objective career success dimension of the individuals.

Also self-monitoring personality was measured according to a well-accepted standard questionnaire originally developed by Lennox & Wolfe in 1984. It contained 13 statements to measure the self-monitoring level of the individual. Lennox and Wolfe (1984) found the internal consistency of the entire scale to be .75, the seven items measuring ability to modify self-presentation to be .77, and the six items measuring sensitivity to expressive behavior of others to be .70 (Lennox & Wolfe 1984).

Validity and Reliability

The internal item consistency reliability was examined with Cronbach's Alpha test (Kottawatta 2014). The results are given in Table 1, which suggests that internal reliability of each instrument was satisfactory.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

| Variable | Instrument | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Career success | Careers Success | 0.964 |
| 2self-monitoring personality | Self- Monitoring | 0.921 |

The content validity of the instrument was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables of the literature (Kottawatta 2014) and indirectly by the high internal consistency reliability of the instruments as denoted Alphas (Kottawatta 2014). Table 2 depicts the reliability of the instruments through component matrix.

Table 2: Component Matrix^a

| | Component |
|--|-----------|
| Self-Monitoring | .794 |
| Objective Career Success | .957 |
| Subjective Career Success | .930 |
| Career Success | .985 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | |

1 component extracted.

The construct validity of the variables of the study was ensured by the fact that the correlation and regression analysis support the hypotheses formulated linking the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Techniques of Data Analysis

Data collected from primary (questionnaire) source were analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS (version 16.0) for validity, reliability, and relationship testing. The data analysis included univariate and bivariate analyses.

Results

To investigate the responses for independent and dependent variables of the professionals, univariate analysis was used. The results of the univariate analysis are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Univariate Analysis

| | Career Success | Objective Career Success | Subjective Career Success | Self-monitoring personality |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mean | 3.1966 | 2.6373 | 3.9797 | 4.7764 |
| Median | 3.0833 | 2.7857 | 3.6000 | 4.7692 |
| Mode | 4.08 | 3.43 | 5.00 | 4.85 |
| Std.Deviation | .81184 | .87952 | .79757 | .49311 |
| Variance | .659 | .774 | .636 | .243 |
| Skewness | -.113 | -.285 | .006 | .931 |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .214 | .214 | .214 | .214 |
| Kurtosis | -1.493 | -1.313 | -1.345 | .879 |
| Std.Error of Kurtosis | .425 | .425 | .425 | .425 |
| Range | 2.83 | 3.00 | 2.60 | 2.08 |

According to Table 3, level of self-monitoring personality, career success, objective career success and subjective career success of postgraduate students are normally distributed. As per means, self-monitoring personality of the professionals is at a higher level. Career success

of the sample also depicts a higher level. From the total career success, subjective career success obtains higher mean value compared to the objective career success.

The bivariate analysis, Pearson’s Correlation between self-monitoring personality, career success, objective career success and subjective career success are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: The Pearson’s Correlation between Independent Variable and Dependent

| | | Self-Monitoring Personality | Objective Career Success | Subjective Career Success | Career Success |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Self-Monitoring | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .677** | .614** | .679** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Objective Career Success | Pearson Correlation | .677** | 1 | .837** | .975** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| Subjective Career Success | Pearson Correlation | .614** | .837** | 1 | .938** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| Career Success | Pearson Correlation | .679** | .975** | .938** | 1 |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

According to Pearson’s correlation coefficients of self-monitoring personality, objective career success, subjective career success and overall career success of the 2nd year postgraduate student’s all independent variables are positively and significantly correlated with career success. However, objective career success is the dependent variable with the highest correlation coefficient from the overall career success variable when compared with the other variables. Linkage of self-monitoring personality with career success of 2nd year management postgraduate students within the selected universities in Sri Lanka is significantly positive.

The results of simple regression analysis of the independent variable against the dependent variable are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of Regression Analysis

| Variable | Careers Success | Objective Career Success | Subjective Career Success |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Method | Linear | Linear | Linear |
| R Square | .462 | .677 | .377 |
| Adjusted R Square | .457 | .459 | .372 |
| F | 108.032 | 106.866 | 76.222 |
| Significance | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| B-Constant | 1.119 | 1.208 | .993 |
| b-Value | .679 | .677 | .614 |

According to Table 5, all the independent variables are positively related with the dependent variable in respect of the both employee categories.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis, it was found that self-monitoring personality were positively and significantly correlated with the career success of the professionals who are in the top of their career ladder. Hence there are statistical evidences to support to accept all the three hypotheses formulated for the study. The first hypothesis was: there is a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and career success. It was confirmed that self-monitoring personality of the professionals who are in the middle and top level of the career has a positive and significant relationship with their career success. The second hypothesis was: there is a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and objective career success. The statistical testing supported to accept that self-monitoring personality of the professional who are in the middle or top of their career has a positive relationship with their objective career success. The third hypothesis was: there will be significant positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and subjective career success. It was substantiated that there is a positive relationship between self-monitoring personality and subjective career success of the professionals who are in the middle or top of their career in Sri Lanka.

According to the results of the regression analysis, the R Square (R²) of the career success is 0.462, which means that 46.2% of the variance of career success is explained by self-monitoring personality, 67.7% of the variance of objective career success is explained by self-monitoring personality and R 37.7% of subjective career success is explained by self-monitoring personality which is significant at 1% (Sig. F = 0.000), suggesting that the three dependent variable factors have moderately explained. Therefore, according to the results of the test, hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the data support the hypothesis that high self-monitoring personality of the professionals who are in the middle or top of their career in Sri Lanka will significantly explain the their career success.

The findings of this research study shall be important on a theoretical as well as practical scenario. As this research model proves to be an explanatory model of the career success, the findings of the study are important to improve career success of the professionals.

As a major way of enhancing the career success of the professionals, the programs related to enhancement of the self-monitoring personality needs to be implemented successfully. Motivation, ability, attention to cues, use of ability and behavioral consistency (Snyder 1974) are the few skills to be upgraded to enhance self-monitoring personality of the professionals. So individually an employee should consider these factors and enhance the self-monitoring personality to achieve career success in their professional life.

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