Personality Traits among Information Technology Officers and the Expectations of Human Resource Personnel

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the importance assigned by Human Resource personnel to the personality traits of Information Technology officers. The extent to which these traits were evident among Information Technology officers was determined and compared to their level of importance among Human Resource personnel. The well-known 16 Personality Factors model was used and data was collected by questionnaire from 84 Information Technology officers working at operational levels in organizations and 64 Human Resource personnel with experience in the recruitment of Information Technology officers. For most of the traits the findings showed reasonable agreement between the level of importance of the traits according to the Human Resource personnel and the extent to which traits were evident among the Information Technology officers. However, there were differences with respect to the four traits Friendliness, Introversion, Sensitivity, and Intellect and the practical implications of these findings are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Human Resource Personnel, Information Technology Officers, Intangible Skills, Personality Traits

INTRODUCTION

Human resource (HR) personnel have classified the wide range of skills that employers expect of employees as Expertise, Tacit, Secondary, and Intangible skills as shown in Table 1 (Choi and Lee; 2014).

These categories in Table 1 are not mutually exclusive and there are relationships between skills which “blur” the boundaries. In addition, the skills in these categories are seen to vary along two dimensions: how tangible they are in terms of their assessment; and how closely related they are to specific work activities. Secondary and Expertise Skills are more tangible than Intangible and Tacit skills which means that they may be defined and assessed using established instruments and procedures while the assessment of the less tangible skills is less precise and more subjective. Expertise and Tacit skills are seen as being more closely related to specific work activities than Secondary and Intangible skills which are much harder to align with specific work activities but are believed to have a positive impact on an employee’s performance especially their ability to relate cooperatively with others.

This study was concerned with Intangible skills and proposed that psychological personality traits offered a means of assessing these skills (Rychman, 2008). The study involved HR personnel as individuals with experience in employee recruitment processes and IT officers working at operational
levels in organizations. The purpose of the study was to address three research questions and the practical implications of the findings:

**Research Question 1:** From the perspective of HR personnel in organizations in Thailand: (a) what is the absolute and relative importance of each of a set of personality traits for IT officers employed in those organizations; and (b) what are the differences and similarities between the views of male and female HR personnel;

**Research Question 2:** If the personality traits of IT officers employed in organizations in Thailand are assessed: (a) to what extent is each trait evident among the IT officers, and (b) are there any differences between male and female IT officers?

**Research Question 3:** What are the results of comparing the importance of personality traits identified by HR professionals (research question 1) with the extent to which these traits are displayed among IT officers (research question 2)?

Related literature is considered next followed by the details of the research design and methodology. Sections on data preparation and analysis lead to a discussion of the findings and the conclusion.

**RELATED LITERATURE**

In this study the focus was on the importance of Intangible skills represented by personality traits as they were perceived by HR personnel and evident among IT officers working at operational levels in organizations. Over a long period of time numerous studies conducted in a wide variety of contexts have confirmed the importance of investigating an employee’s personality as a means of assessing their Intangible skills and determinants of their suitability for employment as well as their ability to manage and lead others (e.g. Potgieter and Coetzee, 2013; Benoliel and Somech, 2014; Burns et al., 2014; Caliendo and Kritikos, 2014; Choi and Lee, 2014; Guchait et al., 2014; Holtrop et al., 2014; Levashina et al., 2014; Vecchione et al., 2014). In relation to IT professionals, personality traits as indicators of Intangible IT skills have been investigated in the context of organizations in technically advanced societies (e.g. Lee et al., 2001; Cappel, 2002; Morello, 2005; Plummer et al., 2005; Bullen et al., 2007; McAdams, 2007; Pinkowska and Lent, 2011) and in developing nations (e.g. Srinutapong, 2007; Winley et al., 2007; Wongwuttiwat et al., 2008; Wongwuttiwat, 2009; Winley and Lau, 2012; Winley and Wongwuttiwat, 2012; Lau et al., 2013; Winley and Wongwuttiwat, 2013). Most studies
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