

## **The Impact of Personality Traits and Employee Work-Related Attitudes on Employee Performance with the Moderating Effect of Organizational Culture: The Case of Saudi Arabia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present conceptual study attempts to contribute new knowledge to the existing literature of personality, work-related attitudes and employee performance. Particularly, the study highlights the several definitions of personality in the contemporary literature. Further, the impact of personality traits (the big five model) and work related attitudes on employee work performance, including their inter-relationships was further discussed in an exhaustive detail. The study hypothesized that personality traits and work-related attitudes such as job involvement and organizational commitment have direct positive significant relationships with employee work performance, with the moderating effect of organizational culture in the Saudi Arabian context.*

**Keywords:** *personality, work-related attitude, employee performance, organizational commitment, job involvement.*

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study begins with the definition of personality along with the traits associated with personality. Overall, the discussion focuses on how personality traits impact the employee work performance. Further, the personality trait theories are discussed and the suitable theory for this study selected and illuminated in detail. The rationale behind this step is to get a clear picture of the main variable of this research. The study continues with explicating professional traits, another important variable, as revealed by the extant literature. Furthermore, employee work related attitudes have been extracted from the literature and explained accordingly.

Further, organisational culture is discussed, as it is envisaged a moderating variable in the present conceptual model. Finally, employee work performance in general and employee work performance from Saudi Arabian perspective has been highlighted in detail along with the proposed model, based on the theoretical foundations, as emerged from the literature.

The present conceptual paper is guided by the following main research questions: (1) what is the relationship between personality and employee performance in the Saudi Arabian context? (2) What is the relationship between work-related attitudes and employee performance in the Saudi Arabian context? (3) What is the moderating effect of organizational culture in the Saudi Arabian context between personality and work-related attitudes, with employee performance?

## 1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Personality

Personality has been considered as an important factor in the personality related studies specifically for predicting the job performance. It is a behaviour which differentiates one person from another (Beer & Brooks, 2011) and provides acumen whether a person will do some specific job, in comparison to others (Sackett et al., 2002). Moreover, the traits, relevant to personality, are considered to be stable and steady throughout the work life in a personality behaviour model (Denissen et al., 2011; Gerber et al., 2011; Myers, 1998).

Hogan and Shelton (2006) pointed out that the personality theories examine the variances and similarities in a person. The similarities can be used to predict one's performance and behaviour, as they provide the collective attributes of human nature. Whereas, the variances provide the measures of individual's performance and are used to describe human performances and behaviours. Experts in the field of personality are of the view that the individuals in fact have a stable and long term traits that affects behaviours at work (Denissen et al., 2011; Gerber et al., 2011). With reference to research on personality, some scholars captured that personality is the effective tool that predicts job performance (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006; Schulman, 2011). The technique is mostly adopted at the time of personnel selection procedure (Barrick & Mount 2000).

Studies on personality and organizational outcomes have received enormous attention by researchers in the organizational behaviour research stream. Latest studies illustrate that personality effects the environments in which individuals are living (Chen, 2004; Schneider et al., 1998; Judge & Cable, 1997; Barrick et al., 2003) and plays a significant role to select the situation in which individuals decide to stay in. According to Barrick and Mount (2005) the preference for organizational environments, the cycle of individuals one choose to interact with and the kind of activities one enjoys strongly relies on one's personality. Values of this type also relates strongly with person-organization (P-O) fit.

In this known world there is no organization which shows a subservient or unchanging behaviour and this is generated from the culture (Silverthorne, 2004). Culture determines how perfect "a person "fits" in a specific organization as the "fit" represents the feeling of comfort with that culture" (O' Reilly, 2004, p: 10 ). It is directly linked with the production of output level of an employee and determines the level of employee turnover in an organization (Rousseau & Parks, 1992; Ryan & Schmit, 1996). Culture prevails in the Organization to develop the customs for employee's behaviour which effect P-O fit which in turn affects organizational output (Silverthorne, 2004). Hence, this established the fact that employee's personality traits and organizational productivity have positive links and it also clarifies that if the employees' personal traits match the organizational culture, the organizational productivity will be increased.

### 1.2.1 Personality Related Theories

In the literature relevant to the personality research, there are some personality theories which have been considered as the key theories. These theories are;

1. Psychoanalytic theories;
2. Humanistic theories;
3. Biological theories;
4. Behavioural, Social learning and Cognitive theories; and
5. Trait theories.

Among all the above mentioned five theories, trait theory is considered as one of the most accepted and a leading personality theory which captures the salient aspects that have high propensity to lead to certain behaviours.

Traits determine a person's variances in the trend to develop a steady pattern of feelings, thoughts and actions (Myers, 1998). Theories discussing the personality traits argued that a

person's behaviour can be explained on the basis of some specific personality traits. However, there are some confusions and suspicions regarding the development of personality trait theory. The causes as identified by Mount and Barrick (1998) are;

1. It is a fact that hundreds of factors relevant to personality have so far been explored and/or is under the process of exploration. This huge number may make research findings unmanageable;
2. In many cases same traits have been defined differently, that is; similar traits having same definition but different names.

For the present research, however, big five personality theory (also called "Big Five Model or Five Factor Model or FFM") was considered appropriate based on its relevance to the topic. This model has also been considered as the highly accepted and widely known personality model from the last almost two decades.

### **1.2.2 The Big Five Model of Personality**

Consequent from the earlier experiential effort made by Raymond Cattell (2001), the Big Five Model demonstrates that the human personality comprises of five reasonably self-determining dimensions which gives a significant and complete taxonomy for reviewing the individual's dissimilarities, and provide the actual core in the human nature due to the dissimilarities (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Mount & Barrick, 1998). for the first time assumed that in general personality could be divided and examined into five distinct but distinguishable elements. He named them as Character, Intellect, Disposition, Temper and Temperament (Digman, 1990).

In recent times, organizational researchers in the area of personality unanimously concluded that the understanding of personality facets is entirely captured by the by the five super-ordinate factors – the Big Five Model. The Big Five Model is usually characterized as:

1. Neuroticism,
2. Extraversion,
3. Openness to experience,
4. Conscientiousness and
5. Agreeableness.

This alliance of five aspects has been recognized as a 'lexical' approach in the early era of research on personality. The initiation of the lexical approach came by as a result of studies carried out on natural language trait terms (John et al., 1988). Researchers have tried to examine comprehensively the series of personality attributes by exploring English language trait names, believing that native speakers for instance, possess certain qualities that allow them to use words in differentiating core differences in individuals (Costa & McCrae, 1995).

The lexical approach captures that major dissimilarities were identified by the native speakers of some language at certain point during the evolutionary stage of language and these later on will have been encrypted into some trait terms. By encrypting such expressions, the basic aspect of personality would have been revealed.

The truth of lexical approach has been recognized by scrutinizing the language that provides a detailed nomenclature of personality traits. However, the lexical belief has been criticized by certain researchers. According to McCrae and John (1992), the research on lexical approach were preferably be appropriate to explore the structure of the personality; in this response the model developed could be affirmed, expanded or established by the studies conducted using questionnaires.

Costa and McCrae has contributed substantially to develop the elements of big five personality. An inventory have been developed to evaluate the dimensions of five traits by using five strong elements of the ranking domain, side by side they also used the inventory and the model in a multiple studies which leads to the belief that the Big Five traits are

quite universal. McCrae and Costa (1985) argued that the Big Five Model is not dependent on one personality theory rather it incorporate the scales that uses different theoretical angles. It has also been identified that Big Five are the essential and appropriate factors that explains the personality configuration globally.

By examining Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (Digman, 1990), Costa and McCrae (1976) came up with three groups of scales, two factors were named as Neuroticism and Extraversion (Digman, 1990) and the development of third factor helped to formulate a criterion of the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). N E O were than combined by using Scale A (Agreeableness) and C (Conscientiousness).

Birenbaum and Montag (1986) found five-factor solution for 16PF correlations through Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire same was later on used by Digman (1988). Costa and McCrae (1985) also used NEO-PI Big Five factor and explained that the five-factor model is also present in the (EPI) Eysenck Personality Inventory Eysenck (1964), (PRF) Personality Research Form (Jackson 1974), (MBTI) Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCauley 1985), and the California Q-Set-established by \_ (McCrae & Costa, 1985).

The big five personality traits are self-regulating personality factors that described five major personality dimensions that include Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience (Goldberg, 1992; Barrick & Mount, 1991).

### **1.2.2.1 Extraversion**

Expressive, outgoing, companionable, gregarious, chatty, confident and determined persons are called as extraverts (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extraverts have a tendency to be spontaneous, communicative, energetic, positive, and enthusiastic (Goldberg, 1990; Watson & Clark, 1997). They are longing for admiration, social acknowledgement, control and command (Costa & McCrae, 1992). If compared with other five traits, extraverts are completely associated with emotional commitment (Erdheim, Wang & Zickar, 2006).

Extraverts are capable of practicing affirmative emotions (Costa & McCrae, 1992) which in turn lead to job gratification (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000). Extravert individuals are emotionally firm and sure that's why they possess contented personality (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998) and this blissful personality is the key feature of contented life and job satisfaction (Judge et al. 2002). Extraverts are also effective analyst of job performance for professions like administrations, social relation and sales (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

### **1.2.2.2 Neuroticism**

"Neuroticism signifies variances of individual tendency to experience suffering and is defined as emotionally insecure and uneven" (McCrae & John, 1992.p:65). Neurotics possess traits including annoyed, stressed, sulky, unsociable, nervous, embarrassed, uncertain, doubtful, unconfident, fearful, and dejected (Barrick & Mount, 1991, 1993; Judge & Bono, 2000). Neurotics have no belief and faith on others (Goldberg, 1990), and have no social expertise to handle the situations that claim to take control (Judge, Locke & Durham, 1997). Again, neurotics also lack confidence and self-image (McCrae & Costa, 1991). Negative affectivity is linked with Neuroticism (Watson & Tellegan, 1988).

As compare to other individuals, neurotics experience more adverse feelings in life (Magnus et al., 1993). That's the reason they are found to be negatively related with job satisfaction (Judge et al., 1999; Judge et al., 2002) and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Generally persistence commitment is negatively correlated to professional performance (Meyer et al., 1989) and neurotics are positively aligned with persistence commitment (Erdheim, Wang & Zickar, 2006). Meta-analysis by Meyer et al. (2002) showed that persistence commitment is negatively interrelated with complete performance and Neuroticism also negatively interrelated with professional performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tett & Burnett, 2003).

### **1.2.2.3 Conscientiousness:**

"This type contains traits like diligent, attentive, vigilant, comprehensive, responsible, systematized and determined" (Barrick & Mount, 1991.p:104). High conscientiousness personalities are logical, reliable, and risk averter (Goldberg, 1990). These persons are responsible, reliable, determined, cautious, and thorough, who focus on success which is also very significant characteristic for performing work tasks (Barrick & Mount. 1991, 1993).

This is the reason conscientiousness persons are best related with job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002) and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991) in all the traits. Conscientious people forms long-standing work exchange relations and search for such atmosphere where they have better chances for achievement and success (Raja et al., 2004). Conscientiousness individuals are among the best to lead to significant job performance (Barrick et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2002 ) because of their work participation and their characteristic of being able to take the opportunity to get formal and informal rewards (Organ & Lingl, 1995). Erdheim et al. (2006) also echoed a positive link between affective commitment and conscientiousness.

### **1.2.2.4 Agreeableness**

Agreeable defines the features such as self-sacrifice, helpful, nurturance, gentle, and emotional support at one end of the dimension, and enmity, indifference to others and self-interest on another end (Digman, 1990). Agreeable consist of traits such as polite, flexible, naive, helpful, supportive, merciful, kind, and open-minded (Barrick & Mount, 1991) and tend to be generous, calm, trusting, truthful, and sincere (Judge & Bono 2000).

Personality psychologists posit that Agreeableness is the utmost divisive personality trait of the Big Five model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Between agreeableness and job performance the correlation is very weak (Barrick & Mount, 1991) and similar is the case with the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002). This facet of big five model is related with normative commitments significantly (Erdehim et al., 2006).

### **1.2.2.5 Openness to Experience**

"Openness to Experience is correlated to technical and innovativeness, deviating approach, and political moderation" (Judge et al., 2002; McCrae, 1996; Feist 1998). "The social propensity generally related with Openness to Experience comprise of being creative, cultivated, curious, open-minded, intellectual having a need for diversity, aesthetic and sensitivity" (Goldberg, 1990; Digman, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). Persons who are extraordinary in openness to experience have the propensity to better suite other dimensions (Costa & McCrae, 1988; McCrae, 1996).

Openness to Experience is also referred to as 'double-edged sword' because it prompts personalities to have intense good feelings as well as intense bad feelings (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). It represents the influence of openness directed towards affective responses such as subjective well-being (Judge et al., 2002). This may have accounted for the special reason why the openness to experience dimension is shown to have a weak relationship with satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002).

However, studies by Barrick and Mount (1991) echoed a positive relationship between the openness to experience dimension and job performance for "training proficiency criterion" which seems to suggest that these individuals are innovative, caring and insightful (Judge and Bono, 2000). Further, these kinds of individuals have a very optimistic approach for training and learning experiences (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

According to McCrae and Costa, (1997) and Raja et al. (2004) openness to experience is quite ambiguous and debatable, and further research is required on this particular dimension compared to the other big five personality traits. When done successfully, it can

increase the impact of the openness to experience dimension to organizational performance (Raja et al., 2004).

Evidences from the previous studies showed that some of the personality attributes are rewarded while some are penalized. According to the research findings of Semykina and Linz (2007) there is a positive relationship between an internal locus of control (LOC) and the earning through performance. Heineck (2007) observed that from UK perspective the relationship between agreeableness and performance is negative whereas “openness to experience” has a good acceptance and is rewarded positively, hence effect the performance positively. Moreover, the conscientiousness and performance showed a nonlinear slope.

In another study Nyhus and Pons (2005) and Mueller and Plug (2006) used the FFM of personality. The study conducted by Mueller and Plug (2006) analysed both intellectual and non-intellectual abilities of an employee. On the other hand the study conducted by Nyhus and Pons (2005) suggested that the emotional strength, i.e. inverse neuroticism, has a positive association with performance (both males and females), whereas, the agreeableness showed negative relationship with rewards to female employees.

Furthermore, the study also reported that through conscientiousness, male employees acquire more benefits especially at the early stages of work engagements. Likewise, Flossmann et al. (2007) conducted a study to assess the role of personality traits to employee success, in German context. The authros focused on the locus of control (LOC) measures. Flossmann et al. (2007) reported that personality is crucial even at the times when different traits like experience and education are controlled. They were of the opinion that the success is influenced from the beginning since the personality formulation started from the early child hood under the parents and educational influence.

Evidence regarding the association between intellectual capabilities, personality traits and work related outcomes are quite few. Osborne Groves (2005) observed that the job performance of females in US has a negative association to externality whereas; withdrawal and aggressiveness have a negative impact on the performance of British females. Similarly, the intellectual abilities of US females are positively related with their performance but same was not true for the females in the UK with the inclusion of personality traits.

Furthermore, Mueller and Plug (2006) showed that the FFM variables of openness, and a smaller portion of emotional stability are associated positively to the performance of male employees whereas, female employees get a premium or reward for conscientiousness and openness. It was also observed that the non-agreeableness or antagonism is also different for men and women.

In her recent study, Cebi (2007) used the Rotter-scale and achievement test scores to study the relationship between determining factor of education and market outcomes in US employees. It was revealed that when the scores of cognitive ability are incorporated, educational performance could not be significantly determined by locus of control (LOC). Cebi's (2007) finding seems to suggest that the internal locus of control (LOC) is rewarded in the market. The author argued that:

*“... locus of control is in fact capturing a distinct aspect of ability not related to cognitive ability” (Cebi, 2007, p. 930).*

Heckman et al. (2006) also used the same scale as was used by Cebi (2007). Their study depends on the measures of self-esteem and LOC in order to examine the factors effecting market outcomes, and to describe the uncertain attitude of young ones. They observed that both intellectual; and non-intellectual abilities are essential for economic and social accomplishment. However, their study which is explaining earning variance through “achievement test scores” shows that it gives similar results in case of measure of personality traits. They posit that:

*“a change in non-cognitive skills from the lowest to the highest level has an effect on behaviour comparable to or greater than a corresponding change in cognitive skills” (Heckman et al., 2006, p. 412).*

The sketch presented in the above mentioned conceptual thoughts and outcomes from empirical studies conducted previously in the area of employee’s work related attributes and their personality traits as determinants of performance support to set up the expected outcomes of this research. As captured in the review of literature of previous studies, the present study proposes that employee’s personality traits either have no association with performance or have a positive relationship with performance.

Similarly, work related attitudes are also expected to have a positive relationship with the performance. Therefore, on the basis of this we can also expect that the FFM traits;

- Openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness have a weak association with performance,
- Extraversion are positively related with performance, and
- Neuroticism are negatively related with the performance

### **1.3 BIG FIVE MODEL OF PERSONALITY AND JOB PERFORMANCE**

Hogan et al. (1996) after evaluating the personality-professional performance specified that well-created methods of ordinary personality are effective tools to judge the wide variety of professional performance, they usually do not result in adverse effect for smaller groups, and also they can be related to performance described in terms of efficiency. For different professional groups, this has also been confirmed by the meta-analyses of personality measures that these are the effective predictors of work performance (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Ones & Viswesvaran, 2001).

Five occupational groups were examined by Barrick and Mount (1991) in their meta-analysis which were; professional group, police group, managers group, sales group, skilled/semi-skilled group and three criteria of performance on job i.e., job aptitude and expertise, training aptitude and expertise, and personal records. They used Digman’s (1990) personality terms and classifications which are extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience.

To study the relationship of personality to job performance criteria, an acknowledged taxonomy is used which shows that this study differs from the prior studies. It was not used to conclude the overall strength of the personality but was used to improve the understanding about the interrelationships of Big Five personality dimensions to the selected professional groups and standard types.

The worth mentioning result in the study is that the Conscientiousness was found to be a reliable and valid forecaster for all standard types and for all professional groups studied. Secondly for two professions, manager and sales, Extraversion was observed to be an effective forecaster. Ranked by supervisors in another meta-analysis, the Conscientiousness was also shown as an effective forecaster in the performance on the job (Frei & McDaniel, 1998).

In one of the criterion types known as training expertise, the Openness to Experience was observed to be an effective forecaster. The justification of these findings is that on this dimension generally the persons with the high scores are anticipated to have optimistic approaches toward learning experiences. McCrae & Costa (1987) argued that when the individual comes in the training program, a key success factor would be the approach of that person. This aspect is highly related to cognitive capability.

Hence, it is possible that motivation to learn along with the capability to learn is measured by Openness to Experience. Furthermore Hurley (1998) observed that agreeableness and extroversion are completely connected with the employees’ job performance rankings, which are given by managers. In agreeableness and emotional stability there are certain

inconsistencies. Frei and McDaniel (1998) stated that both the components were forecasting factors of supervisor while grading the performance on the job.

Barrick and Mount (1991) observed Agreeableness as an unimportant forecaster for the performance on the job. In case of Emotional Stability, the associations with performance on the job were comparatively on the lower side. Perhaps one of the descriptions, according to Barrick and Mount (1991), was that the extremely 'neurotic' persons are incapable to work successfully on their own and, resultantly, there is a less chance of including them in the labour force. In general, the researchers specified that individuals have "self-selected out" tailored on their own benefits or the knowledge of their emotional stability.

Tett et al. (1991) have also reported that there exists an overall correlation between personality and job performance. In contrast to the results of Barrick and Mount (1991), Tett et al. (1991) observed that Agreeableness and Openness to Experience have close association with job performance. Salgado (1998) found that Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability are related with the job performance.

According to Salgado, along with the Openness to Experience as shown by Barrick and Mount, Agreeableness also has a strong relationship with criteria of training. Further, Nikolaou and Robertson (2001) observed that the experts in the field of personality have wrongly categorized few scales into the Big Five. The other motive possibly be the absence of validity, appeared due the weak relationship between the specified scales observed during the measurement of the factors.

Therefore, Salgado (2003) once again compared the validity of the Big Five while considering five factor model (FFM) based and non-five factor model (FFM) based inventories. It was observed that the FFM-based inventories have high validity. Hence, it was suggested that the FFM should be used while assessing the performance of the employee.

It has also been observed that the scales of personality are related to job performance (Sackett et al., 1998). For example, sales executives having high extraversion generally show good performance at job, as the sales job requires a great deal of social contacts, and an introverted sales executive is observed to be non-suitable as compare to an extravert.

Similarly, the employee in the accounts section with high neurotic attitude would have a high value for the company. Researchers like Sinha (2005) have found that personality and productivity are highly correlated for the jobs where interpersonal interactions are high. Based on the above discussion we put forward the following propositions:

H1a: Extroversion will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1b: Openness to experience will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1c: Conscientiousness will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1d: Agreeableness will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1e: Neuroticism will have a negative impact on employee work performance

#### **1.4 EMPLOYEE'S WORK RELATED ATTITUDES**

The review of the literature reveals that the employees acquire professional experience during their job years. The professional experience developed the employee's work related attitude, and in which manner the individual handles the problem.

By the following approaches experiences could be gained; concentration, motivation, and readiness to work tirelessly to enhance the performance (Ericsson, 2001). Professional experience cannot be measured by the numbers of years a person worked or number of assignments a person completed but it is the particular expertise and abilities that a



professional used to complete the job productively. It is the 'experience' that affects the employee approach in resolving the problem and provides the method to handle the task. For example, learners' performance are generally linked with a "depth-first" approach that explore sub-solution in depth, whereas the professionals could use the tactics of top-down and breadth-first approaches (Cross, 2005). When the employee starts accepting challenges of taking problems and develops the attitude to expose him to various types of problems, he starts gaining experiences which would affect his work related attitudes (Cross, 2005).

This study has been developed to test the impact of employees' personal traits, professional traits, and work related attitudes on work performance. While reviewing the literature it has been revealed that the most part of the previous literature focused to check the ability of the job involvement to foresee the turnover and absenteeism, while concentrating on the relations between organizational commitment and job involvement (Brown, 1996; Huselid & Day, 1991).

This idea was presented by Blau and Boal (1987), which concentrated to develop the association between organizational commitment and job involvement as work-related attitudes to employee's specific work related behaviours. The framework used high and low arrangements of organizational commitment and job involvement to find out those work related behaviours (Blau, 1986; Blau & Boal, 1989; Martin & Hafer, 1995; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990).

Prior research work discussed the association between organizational commitments as an organization related attitude and absenteeism, whereas some studies examined the relationship between job involvement as a job related attitude and absenteeism (Sagie, 1998). Gellatly's (1995) also observed that the behaviour of an employee is a result of work-related attitudes. Blau (1986), Blau and Boal (1989), Mathieu and Kohler (1990), concluded that the work related attitudes such as job involvement and organizational commitment has a positive relationship with employees work behaviours.

Along with job involvement and organizational commitment another work-related attitude that comes under discussion in the literature is the intention to change the organization. However, this factor could not gain much acceptance of the researchers. Sagie (1998), Blau (1986), Blau and Boal (1989), Mathieu and Kohler (1990), and Morrow (1983) also consider organizational commitment and job involvement as variables of work-related attitudes. Therefore, in this research we also consider job involvement and organizational commitment, as variables of this work related attitudes.

#### **1.4.1 Job Involvement**

The attitude of job involvement was initially presented by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). Several studies to explore the personal and situational factors have been conducted in different work environments. Job involvement has been identified by researchers to be the role player in terms of motivating employee in an organizational perspective (Lawler, 1986). It has also been observed that the job involvement is the factor that provides competitive advantage to the organizations (Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1994).

On the other hand, according to the individual perspective, job involvement is thought to be the most important factor for the personal growth and job satisfaction at the workplace, along with the motivational and goal-centric behaviour (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Khan, 1990; Lawler & Hall, 1970). Brown (1996) observed that the higher involvement of the employee in the job increases the effectiveness and productivity of the organization. Job involvement can be increased by involving employees completely in their work and also by making the job a valuable experience (Brown, 1996).

Job involvement is a key aspect in the lives of the people on the job. On the job activities consume a large amount of time and develop a highly important characteristic in the lives of working class (Brown, 1996). It effects the people while motivating them and keep them

deeply involved in their work or sometimes it make people fed up of doing same job and hence people try to detach themselves from their work emotionally and mentally.

Therefore, Argyris (1964) and Levinson (1976) argued that the degree of participation or alienation from the work would affect the quality of overall experience. While explaining the idea of 'state of involvement' Argyris (1964), Kanungo (1982) and McGregor (1960) pointed out that involvement represents the complete participation of a person in his job, whereas alienation refers a loss of uniqueness and parting of an individual from the job place.

#### **1.4.2 Organisational Commitment**

There are differences among the scholars (Cohen & Kirchmeyer, 1995; Dunham, Grube, & Castañeda, 1994; Hackett et al., 1994; Iverson & Roy, 1994; Jaros et al., 1993) regarding the definition of organizational commitment. However, majority of the research scholars' were of the view that the commitment is the combination of two distinctive but interrelated factors. The scientist of the behavioural sciences named these factors as behavioural and attitudinal commitment.

Organizational commitment is considered to be an individual's affirmative alignment toward the organization; therefore, the definition of the organizational commitment could be a situation where an employee's identification is with the organization and he/she desires to continue his association with the organization to fulfil the organizational goals. Attitudinal commitment (also identified as effective organizational commitment) develops the employees' loyalty with the organization (Porter et al., 1974).

The notion of organizational commitment has been acknowledged considerably both from the scientists of the behavioural studies and from the managers. The experts not only explained the theoretical concept of organizational commitment but also tried to find out the basic outcomes and antecedents (Buchanan, 1974; Hall & Schneider, 1972; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Kanter, 1968; Mowday et al., 1974; Porter et al., 1974; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Randall, 1990; Salanick, 1977; Sheldon, 1971; Staw, 1977; Steers, 1977; Stevens et al., 1978; Dunham et al., 1994).

In the work of aforementioned researchers, commitment has been considered as the one of the most important aspects to recognize on the job behaviours of an employee. There are very few studies conducted to explore different perspectives of organisational commitment (Dunham et al., 1994). Most of these studies have looked into the behavioural or attitudinal perspective of organizational commitment. The attitudinal perspective is one of the highly explored variables in behavioural studies (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Riketta (2002) while identifying the reason of high level of research interest in attitudinal perspective pointed out that the organizational commitment has a great impact on almost all the behaviours related to the organization like; staying with the organization, attendance and performance, etc. These findings of Riketta (2002) are in line with the work of Matheiu & Zajac (1990); Meyer & Allen (1997); Mowday et al. (1982) and Randall (1990).

Etzioni (1961) assumed that the commitment towards the organization depends upon the nature of employee's association with the organization. The association may be a moral, calculative or alienative. Similarly, Kanter (1968) proposed three different commitment such as; continuance, cohesion, and control commitment.

Staw (1980) and Salanick (1977) also pointed out that while examining the organizational commitment one should view the organizational commitment through the perspective of organizational behaviour (attitudinal view) and through the perspective of social psychology (behavioural view). Further, Meyer and Allen (1984) discussed a three-factor model that combined sub-factors of commitment such as affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

From the conceptual framework of this study, job involvement and organizational commitment are captured as work-related attitudes to employee's job performance along with the five factor (Big Five) model of personality traits. Therefore, these variables (job involvement and organisational commitment) are envisaged as independent variables.

Based on the above argument, the present study hypothesises that:

H2a: Job involvement will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H2b: Organisational commitment will have a positive impact on employee work performance

### **1.5 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

The term "culture" is originated in the field of social anthropology from the work (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Organizational culture as defined by Kotter and Heskett (1992) is a continuum or scale that is stretching from a point of invisibility and depth to a point of visibility and shallow surface. Culture of the organization is helpful in shaping the organizational strategies, its leadership styles and its relationship with the customers. It is also helpful in knowing about how knowledge can be gathered, dispersed, used and organized (Alvesson, 2002). According to Alvesson (2002, p. 5):

*"culture is a frame of reference of beliefs, expressive symbols and values, by means of which individuals define their environment, express their feelings and make judgments"*

Cooke and Szumal (1993) defined culture as the long-term beliefs and joint behavioural expectations in an organization. Studies on organizational culture have received enormous attention by researchers in the human resource management field and have remained the topic of high interest (Lok et al., 2007). It has also been considered as a highly argued paradigm that has been hypothesized, explained and tested empirically (Alvesson, 1993; Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Martin & Frost 1999).

Generally and broadly it has been agreed that the culture of the organization offers a 'social glue' that provides distinctiveness, coherence, and a specific track to the organizations. Organizational culture is considered to be a set of values shared among the employees and the factors that offer a mutual understanding by which employees deduce and figure out the environment pertained by the organization and also lead their intellect, approach and attitudes (Schein, 1985).

According to Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) organizational culture and commitment are strongly correlated. The reason behind this rationale was the fact that the organization's culture comprises of a group of values shared throughout the organization, these groups of values would be about the nature and worth of employee-organization commitment and association. Moreover the organizational culture influences employee approaches and assertiveness with reference to engaging firm and commitment. Dawson (1999), Degeling et al. (1998, 2001) and Lok and Crawford (1999) argued that the public sector organizations are usually big, multifaceted and multicultural.

From the review of literature it has been observed that 'good' or 'valuable' cultures or sometimes identified as 'strong' cultures are regarded as norms valuable for the organization, for the clientele, and for the human being and are generally recognized as 'good' performance. In the words of Baker (1980, p. 10):

*"Good cultures are characterized by norms and values supportive of excellence, teamwork, profitability, honesty, a customer service orientation, pride in one's work, and commitment to the organization. Most of all, they are supportive of adaptability – the capacity to thrive over the long run despite new competition, new regulations, new technological developments, and the strains of growth."*

Strong cultures, as described by Baker (1980), are the one which includes all good and valuable stuff in pacific co-existence. Moreover, Deal and Kennedy (1982) Trice and Beyer

(1985) argued about focusing on positive qualities, attitudes, and activities observed to be valuable for the attainment of corporate objectives as per management desires.

In Saudi Arabia, the organizational environment and culture can easily be categorized into two distinct segments. First, Saudi nationals controlling highly paid administrative jobs in public sector organizations with guaranteed employment and enjoying all fringe benefits like health care, educational scholarships, and other different financial benefits (Madhi & Barrientos, 2003;\_Sadi & Al-Buraey, 2009). Second, majority of non-Saudis are working with the private sector organizations. These employees hold temporary Saudi residence with restrictive work visas. Due to strict Sharia laws, Islamic values and Arab cultural norms are followed strictly (Dadfar et al., 2003).\_Furthermore, according to Hofstede's (1980) in the Saudi culture power distance, uncertainty prevention, and collectivism can easily be identified as dimensions of organizational culture (Alkhaldi & Wallace, 1999; Robertson, et al., 2001).

According to Al-Raisi et al. (2011) due to the ad-hoc culture in the Arab organizations, organizational culture is required to be addressed. Presently the Arab organizations are resistant and are obstructive to give importance to the employee's personal and work related attitudes as a key determinant of the organizational performance (Al-Raisi et al., 2011). The Arab culture is observed to be a highly resistant against change, as they dislike anything that forces them to change the status quo. Review of the existing literature reveals that the impact of personality traits has not been studied widely in the context of Arab nations (Al-Raisi et al., 2011) especially in the context of Saudi Arabia. The major portion of the research work in the area of job performance and satisfaction has been done in USA and UK. Satisfaction is observed to be the most important factor of employee's work related attitudes that is strongly related with perceived discrimination (Ozer & Gunluk, 2010).

Some experts in the field of human resource management have also examined the association between job satisfaction and personality traits (Furnham et al., 2002) whereas, few researchers studied the interconnectivity among the satisfaction and reward, however, very few efforts have been made to examine the relationships between the big five personality traits, work related attitudes and job performance.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between these variables and hence fill the existing gap that has been identified during the literature review. Therefore, the main aim of this research is to concentrate and to examine critically the impact of work related attitudes, big five personality traits, and professional traits on improving the affectivity of the output of the employees of public sector organization in Saudi Arabia. The research will also try to find out the moderating role of Saudi Arabian organizational culture which will be helpful in understanding the role of typical Arabian cultural attitudes on employee performance.

H3: Organisational culture will moderate the relationship between work related attitudes and employee work performance

## **1.6 PERFORMANCE**

Performance is the important term used in the modern organizational structure. It has been identified from different meanings. According to process view, performance is defined as the conversion of efforts into productivities in order to achieve some particular results.

Font (2002) explained performance in term of 3Es (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) of some specific activity. He was of the opinion that the performance tells the relationship between the effective and minimal cost (economy), it also tells the relationship between cost and productivity (efficiency) and also between productivity and obtained results (effectiveness). Rafik & Shuib (2005)\_gives the organizational context of performance and defined it as the degree to which an employee participates for the achievement of organizational goals.

Ibrahim (2004) defined job performance as an important activity that provides both the goals and methods to achieve the organizational goals and also provide the achievement level in term of out-put. El-Saghier (2002) considered it as an effort of an employee to achieve some specific goal. On the other hand Al-Edaily (1995) has defined the performance as the actual results measured by the organization objectively.

It has been revealed from the studies conducted by Barrick & Mount ,(1991); Barrick et al. (2001), Judge et al. (2002), Barrick et al. (2002), Hogan & Holland (2003), Erdheim et al. (2006) that big five personality traits play a very significant role in developing employees' performance which results in increased organizational output.

Hence, the idea that big five personality traits have a positive relationship with the performance at work gains a remarkable support (Barrick et al., 2005). To judge and to govern the individuals' job performance is the most challenging task and is consider as the most difficult applied problems in the organization (Austin & Villanova, 1992; Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1970).

Although, employee's performance is important to gauge his work level in his working environment but it is very subjective to assess him with these types of attributes. As identified by Viswesvaran (1993), very few studies have been conducted to develop a generalized theory to assess the performance. It was supposed that the level of performance varies from job to job. Therefore, job performance may be measured by using number of performance indicators.

Performance during a job can be measured while considering the output or through examination of proper implementation of processes and procedure. In some cases job performance assessment is very easy because performance objectives and goals are vibrant whereas, the jobs for which the goals and objectives are not clear are difficult to assess or measure the performance, for example; the research work.

### 1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the arguments in the literature as captured in the previous sections, the Figure 1.0 below shows the conceptual framework of the study.

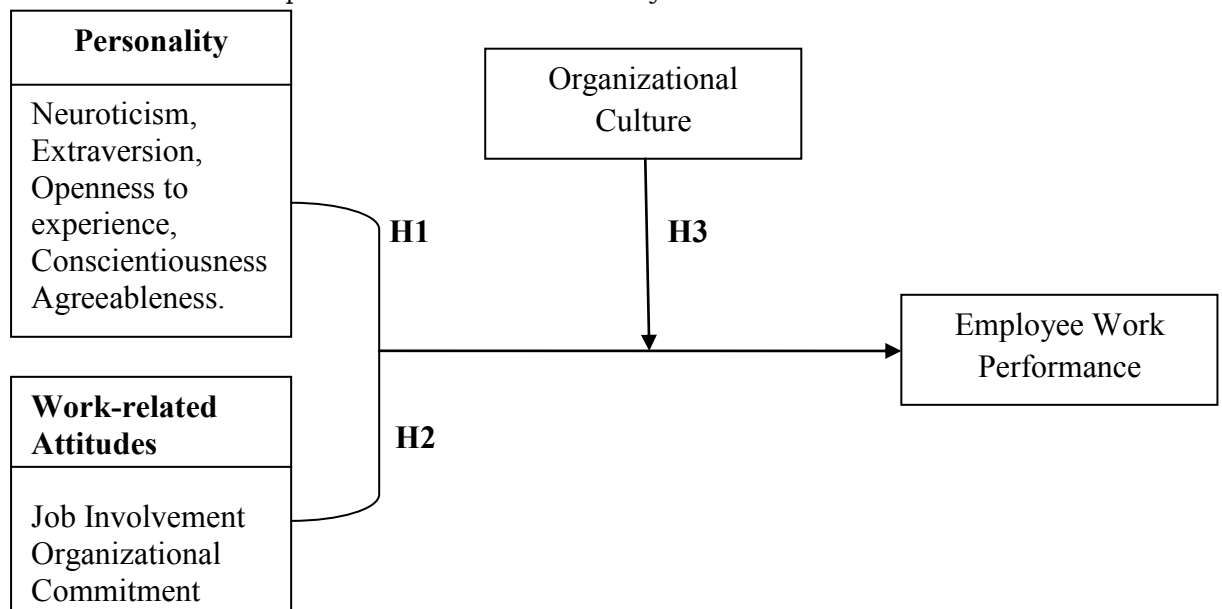


Fig. 1.0 Conceptual Framework of the Study

### **1.8 HYPOTHESES**

H1a: Extroversion will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1b: Openness to experience will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1c: Conscientiousness will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1d: Agreeableness will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H1e: Neuroticism will have a negative impact on employee work performance

H2a: Job involvement will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H2b: Organizational commitment will have a positive impact on employee work performance

H3: Organizational culture will moderate the relationship between work related attitudes and employee work performance

### **1.9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The present conceptual study attempts to contribute new knowledge to the existing literature of personality and employee performance by conducting an in-depth literature review on the subject matter. It was hypothesized that there exist positive direct significant relationships between personality and employee performance and also between work-related attitudes and employees performance, with the moderating effect of organizational culture.

In the future, it is strongly encouraged that an empirical research is carried out to ascertain the authenticity of these relationships. When done successfully, it will not only enrich the existing literature of the discipline theoretically, but it will also practically enlighten researchers, practitioners, human resource managers and government officers towards using the findings of the study to justify their efforts in designing appropriate learning and performance improvement interventions so that job can be structured in relation to personality traits of employees which can lead to improving employee performance, which in turn can lead to organizational productivity and development.

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