

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF FELT ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the potential that the “Big Five” dimensions of personality determine whether or not individuals feel accountable for their job-related behaviors and if that predicts whether or not they feel satisfied with their jobs. Drawing on disparate, but relevant research from these three fields, this research proposes that the five personality dimensions differentially predict feelings of individual answerability for work-related attitudes and behaviors and concomitant levels of job satisfaction. The results suggested that four of the “Big Five” factors (i.e., conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability) predicted felt accountability and that felt accountability partially intervened between them and job satisfaction. For human resource managers, the findings suggest personality metrics are still useful selection tools because they help place more answerable, involved, employees who are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs.

JEL: M10, M12

KEYWORDS: Personality, Felt Accountability, Job Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Independence Day in the United States is a very popular holiday usually spent with family and friends. Typically, it involves cooking, socializing and, based on geographic proximity, going to the beach. One might not think a question of accountability would arise around these festivities. However, such was not the case for one governor in the northeastern US over the Fourth of July weekend in 2017. His state could not pass a balanced budget by the holiday weekend so its state parks and beaches were closed. That governor was roundly criticized in the national media when he was seen with his friends and family, celebrating on a state beach closed to the public. The media’s implication was clear: the governor did not feel accountable to shepherd the legislature to pass a budget so that local citizens, businesses and tourists could benefit. He simply took advantage of his formal position to enjoy what others could not without regard to the economic ramifications or the optics of the situation.

Prior research called accountability “the adhesive that binds social systems together” (Frink & Klimoski, 1998). Accountability is fundamental to social functioning, as well as the integration of organizations and individuals within it (Hall, Frink, Ferris, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Bowen, 2003). Scandals in corporate and political life are often defined in terms of accountability lapses. Regardless of size, societies and organizations are founded on sets of shared expectations for behavior. These behavioral norms are sometimes explicit (e.g., laws or codified written guidelines for employee behaviors), but more likely, they are informal, socially understood, prescriptions for getting along. Fundamentally, if individuals are not answerable for their behaviors, shared expectations do not exist, thus, leaving a vacuum of social order (Frink & Klimoski, 1998, 2004; Tetlock, 1985). In short, societies break down if nobody is

accountable. Unfortunately, despite the necessity for accountability, not everyone feels answerable for their behaviors.

This research is not intended to malign politicians' reputations but rather to investigate both some antecedents of feeling answerable for job duties and their possible consequences. Specifically, this research examines the effects of five ubiquitous personality dimensions (i.e., conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, openness and emotional stability) (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Goldberg, 1990, 1992) on individuals' inclinations to emotionally and behaviorally engage themselves in the proper execution of their work-related duties. Furthermore, this research then attempts to determine whether or not that enhances individuals' levels of job satisfaction.

This research will proceed as follows: it will review the current state of the literature related to the study variables of interest. It will then discuss the sample, the data derived from it and the analytic tools used to test the hypotheses. After that, the author fleshes out the strengths and weaknesses of the research as well as its implications for theory and practices. Further discussion of the directions of possible future research on the subject then follows. Finally, the researcher provides a concise concluding synopsis of the major elements of the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section covers material related to the major conceptualizations of accountability, personality and job satisfaction. For each of variables in this study, the author will discuss competing decisions and dimensions of the construct, as well as the rationale for couching them as he has in this research. The researcher also states the study's hypotheses in this section.

Accountability

Accountability, conceptually, covers a wide array of phenomena. In organizational studies, accountability includes attitudes, behaviors and associated mechanisms at play throughout the hierarchy of an organization. Accountability, for the purposes of this research, describes what Hall et al., (2003, p. 33) called:

"...the real or perceived likelihood that the actions, decisions, or behaviors of an individual, group, or organization will be evaluated by some salient audience, and that there exists the potential for the individual, group, or organization to receive either rewards or sanctions based on this expected evaluation."

Accountability correlates with or encompasses many constructs discussed in business ethics. For example, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) noted that social responsibility (CSR) (i.e., organizational actions that go beyond legal requirements to promote the "social good") is subsumed by the broader notion of accountability. It is, however, distinguishable from (CSR) in some ways. As noted above, one critical distinction is that (CSR) is typically promoted by top management or owners, whereas accountability, in most cases, drives behaviors at all levels of an organization.

Generally, the intelligibility and transparency of formal accountability systems benefits organizations. Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Falvy and Ferris (1998) noted, formal accountability systems typically reduce the likelihood of unethical decision making provided such systems are not linked to dubious practices such as increased commitment to poorly performing projects, ethically unsound courses of action (Simonson & Staw ,1992) or wasting resources (Adelberg & Batson, 1978). As such, increased accountability is relevant to the discussion of ethics, morals and values, in spite of the possibility of individuals' misguided actions. With respect to the bodies/individuals to whom employees are accountable, Schlenker and Weigold (1989) suggested that in addition to stakeholders, an important

audience to whom individuals can be accountable is themselves. According to Frink and Klimoski (1998; 2004), such self-accountability is driven by personal ethics, values, goals and family obligations. Thus, accountability can be both formal and informal as well as to others and ourselves.

Formal and Informal Accountability Mechanisms. Formal organizational accountability denotes observable, objective, external (i.e., outside the individual) mechanisms, instituted in order to monitor employee behaviors and ensure compliance (Hall, et al, 2003). These systems typically include performance evaluation procedures and accounting systems: fundamental implements of coordination and control intended to guide employees' behaviors in organizationally sanctioned directions (Ferris, Mitchell, Canavan, Frink, & Hopper, 1995; Hall & Ferris, 2011).

Multiple dimensions of accountability permeate the management, social psychology and philosophy literatures (e.g., Ferris et al., 1995; Frink & Klimoski, 1998, 2004; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). Central to most these conceptualizations, is that individuals are evaluated by their actions and feel a need to justify their behaviors (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, & Doherty, 1994). Building on this work, Hall et al. (2003) noted that accountability has both implicit and explicit expectations that individuals' decisions or actions will be subject to appraisal by some salient audience (e.g., supervisors, group members, organizations) which has the potential to either reward or punish them for their compliance. Furthermore, it is also possible also that individuals feel accountable to themselves due to a deeply held set of standards (e.g., self-avowed religious principles) (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989).

Frink and Klimoski (1998; 2004) also contended that accountability models in organizations should be conceptualized as both formal and informal in nature. They called for models of accountability to identify both external conditions (e.g., things outside the individual), and internal conditions. Furthermore, they noted that both objective and subjective factors of formal (e.g., accounting procedures) and informal accountability mechanisms (e.g., organizational norms, beliefs, values and culture) should be identified in order to better describe to what, whom, how and why individuals become answerable (Hall et al, 2003).

Prior research noted the utility of distinguishing formal and informal accountability because not all formal systems will be uniformly applied to all employees (Frink & Klimoski, 1998; 2004). In fact, some formal systems might exist for some groups of employees but not for others. Furthermore, informal workplace norms have the potential to make a significant impact on how formal accountability requirements are interpreted and implemented (Hall et al., 2003). As such, both formal and informal facets of the accountability environment influence the nature and degree of individuals' subjectively-experienced levels of accountability. Put another way, these facets determine how accountable individuals "feel" as opposed to how accountable they might be in the objective sense, for better or worse.

Felt Accountability. As previously mentioned, much of the existing literature on accountability has treated it as an objective condition (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999). However, that lens discounts the existence and potency of the subjective experience of accountability. Specifically, the existence of objective accountability mechanisms does not guarantee that employees will either internalize or abide by their prescriptions (Frink & Klimoski, 1998; 2004). Employees might fail to recognize the existence (or importance) of objective accountability mechanisms or interpret them differently than intended. As Kurt Lewin (1936) concluded, it is not necessarily objective reality that drives cognitions and behaviors but rather individuals' subjective interpretations of it. As such, it is employees' subjective interpretations of these objective mechanisms that really matters in terms of their behavioral responses. Thus, per the phenomenological view of accountability proposed by Tetlock (1985, 1992), the utility of these drivers depends on whether or not accountability features in the environment will make individuals *feel* accountable (Hall et al., 2003; Hall & Ferris, 2011).

Just because a company has formal accountability systems, does not mean that individuals who deviate from them *feel* remorseful or answerable to its stakeholders (e.g., employees, shareholders, regulatory agencies, the community, etc.) for their consequences of their actions. Consider, for example, Richard Scrushy at Health South. He perpetrated a hoax worth 1.4B USD involving the creation of fictitious transactions intended to enhance the appearance of it's the company's earnings. Although acquitted initially on those charges, he was later convicted when caught trying to bribe his way onto the medical regulatory board in Alabama. It is possible that both personality attributes (e.g., high Machiavellianism) and cues in the accountability environment helped promote that problem. For example, organizations might create (or fail to inhibit) informal accountability norms that help executives defend illegal or unethical behaviors to employees and shareholders or at least to themselves (Hall et al., 2003). For example, executives might publically extol the virtues community within the firm and justify falsifying earnings by suggesting that it is the only way (if only in the short term) to make sure everyone maintains their employment.

Job Satisfaction and Human Resource Literature: Theory and Practice

Psychologists and management scholars developed various theories of job satisfaction. These theories usually present hierarchical models of things that promote satisfaction (Petrescu & Simmons, 2008). The sources of satisfaction can be either intrinsic or extrinsic (e.g., Herzberg, 1964). Intrinsic motivation involves both the elements of the work itself and individual characteristics like attitudes or personality (Royle, 2016). Extrinsic sources promote dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1964). Herzberg (1964) called these "hygiene" factors. They could involve any non-job specific duty ranging from relationships to coworkers and supervisors, to lighting conditions, the cafeteria menu or issues of workplace climate (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939; Luchak, 2003).

Prior research often broached the topic of job satisfaction with a professional skepticism (e.g., Freeman, 1978) because it is, by nature, subjective. As such, empirical investigation on the topic, either implicitly or explicitly, indicated that job satisfaction is comprised of multiple individual and job characteristics which constituted a utility function (Clark & Oswald, 1996; Easterlin, 2001). In fact, job satisfaction is basically a rational choice that denotes individuals' preferences for some activities instead of others (e.g., Royle, 2016).

Many human resource management (HRM) practices (e.g., working in teams, greater employee discretion over time management, involvement in decisions and equitable pay schemes) enhance employee productivity (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Boselie & Van der Wiele, 2002). Nevertheless, increased levels of job satisfaction are not likely to occur if employees believe that exerting effort in a particular direction is, informally, considered "bad" by their coworkers. If employees' aim is to maximize the return on investment of their labors (Royle, 2016), a lack of applied effort is not likely to enhance either productivity or satisfaction.

Of course, some discussion of the relationship between pay and job satisfaction is warranted. Clark and Oswald (1996) demonstrated that reported levels of well-being is only mildly correlated with income. In fact, no relationship between pay and satisfaction exists for those working in higher education (for more discussion see Hackman & Oldham, 1975) (Belfield & Harris, 2002). Contemporary research demonstrates only a weak relationship between income and life satisfaction (e.g., Layard 2006; Clark 2001). That research also indicated that despite rising wages levels, job satisfaction remained constant. Furthermore, research indicated that relative economic standing, as opposed to gross income, impacts job satisfaction most (Clark & Oswald, 1996).

A great deal of research exists on the effects of implementing pay practices (e.g., Black & Lynch, 2004; Cappelli & Neumark, 1999; McCausland, Pouliakis, & Theodossiou, 2005). For example, Bloom and

Michel (2002), compared the merits of dispersed versus compressed pay systems. Dispersed pay structures potentially induce higher levels of performance if employees work more diligently to move up the pay ladder, or fall behind due to poor individual performance (Bloom & Michael, 2002; Buccioli, Foss, & Piovesan, 2014). Ideally, this means promoting and compensating the best performers in competitive environments, and providing pay differentials for high-risk jobs.

Unfortunately, dispersed pay systems are not a panacea for all working environments and employees. Based on the tenants of tournament theory (e.g., Bloom & Michel, 2002), dispersed pay systems might also promote workforce instability, lower levels of satisfaction and, ultimately, higher turnover. By contrast, compressed pay promotes team effort and cooperation by distributing outcomes in a more egalitarian way; particularly when more people join the team (Buccioli et al., 2014). Under those conditions, compressed pay systems reduce turnover (Beaumont & Harris, 2003). Nevertheless, compressed pay can discourage effort beyond the bare minimum to remain employed and might be perceived as unfair if members are thought to be socially loafing (Bloom & Michael, 2002; Buccioli et al., 2014). Ultimately, Bloom and Michael (2002) contended that it is difficult to identify with accuracy the effect of the pay distribution within a firm on job satisfaction.

Personality

Definitions of personality abound (Mount, Barrick, Scullen, & Rounds, 2005; Saucier & Goldberg, 1998). Allport (1937) found over 50 different definitions of the term and considered it one of the most abstract concepts in the English language. Varying definitions can be found throughout the fields of theology, philosophy, sociology, law and psychology (Allport, 1937; Royle, 2016). Although some contemporary scholars of personality disagree about its meaning, there is broad agreement that it is a relatively stable set of dispositional traits that help predict behaviors (Mount et al., 2005). McCrae and Costa (1989) contended that personality is a constellation of enduring emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal and motivational styles that explain differential behaviors across situations. Funder (2006) considered personality “characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, behavior and the psychological mechanisms (whether manifest or not) behind those patterns”. Ultimately, personality is a stable base for evaluating behavior. In aggregate, personality dimensions help determine individuals’ affective, behavioral and cognitive styles. Personality dimensions also have significant predictive power for job satisfaction (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998).

Hogan (1991) contended that personality has multiple and sometimes conflicting definitions and dimensions. The failure to distinguish them confuses the situation. His conceptualization is driven by individuals’ social reputations. In other words, personality is a function of the way others perceive a given individual (Hogan, 1991). This paradigm views personality from the observer's perspective and is relatively objective (i.e., verifiable and public). A second component of his definition of personality also contended that individuals behave in characteristic ways but that some of its dimensions are private and can only be inferred. This component of personality is appropriate to this research because, as noted above, feeling accountable might not be easily directly observed and is inherently intrapersonal.

Personality has implications for vocational interests, proficiency and levels of satisfaction (Royle, 2016). Various notions of vocational interests over the last several decades as they relate to personality (Dawis, 1991; Savickas, 1999). Some researchers contended that vocational interests are broader constellations of likes and dislikes that lead to consistent patterns of behavior and preferences for behaviors (Berdie, 1944; Kuder, 1997). Holland (1999) contended that vocational interests are essentially an aspect of personality. Although this research contends vocational interests are not strictly synonymous with personality, it is clear that they share with personality a similar conceptual space. Taken together, vocational interests are stable dispositional traits that influence behavior primarily through one's preferences for certain activities, types of people, specific environments, and which, ultimately, also influence levels of satisfaction at work

(e.g., Judge et al., 1998; Royle, 2016). To be clear, this research implicitly assumes, as do Human, Biesanz, Finseth, Pierce and Le (2014), that personality inclines individuals to behave in a particular, predictable way and that deviating from that path is relatively unattractive to them.

The “Big Five” Factor Model. Most contemporary researchers agree that personality can be reduced to five basic factors, hence, the "Big Five" model (Goldberg, 1990; 1992). The 5-factor structure emerged from the analyses of trait adjectives in multiple languages. Further supporting evidence came from personality inventories and expert judgement of the dimensionality of existing measures (McCrae & John, 1992). The Big Five’s dimensions are culturally neutral and generalize across populations (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Pulver, Allik, Pulkkinen, & Hamalainen, 1995; Salgado, 1997). Furthermore, as noted above, these traits remain largely unchanged over time (Costa & McCrae, 1992, 1988). Prior research also concluded that these five factors have genetic precursors (Digman, 1989). Heredity substantially impacts the generational dimensions of personality (Jang, Livesley, & Vernon, 1996) and has implications as far reaching as differentially predicting leadership ambitions (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002) and life expectancy (Friedman, Tucker, Schwartz, Martin, Tomlinson-Keasey, Wingard, & Criqui, 1995). The five factors are as follow: emotional stability (also referred to as neuroticism), extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1990; 1992).

Of the Big Five factors, conscientiousness is most universally related to enhanced job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997). Conscientiousness is comprised of three sub-components: achievement orientation (e.g., persistence and diligence), dependability (e.g., reliability and carefulness), and orderliness (e.g., organization and planning). As such, conscientious individuals demonstrate higher levels of self-control, greater achievement needs and more persistence (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). Not surprisingly, conscientiousness predicts success at work related tasks (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2008). Furthermore, research demonstrated that conscientiousness lowers the incidence of counterproductive work behaviors (Hogan & Ones, 1997), increased proactive employee involvement (Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996), enhanced retention (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1994) and reduced absenteeism (Judge, Martocchio, & Thoresen, 1997). As noted, some evidence also suggested that conscientious individuals live longer, although the mechanisms that promoted that are not fully understood (Friedman et al., 1995).

This research hypothesizes that conscientiousness promotes job satisfaction to the extent that satisfied employees are motivated (see Hackman & Oldham, 1975), and that it is at least partially incumbent that they feel answerable for their job duties. Given that conscientious individuals are planning oriented, dutiful and diligent, it follows that they would feel answerable for their job duties because they feel compelled by their internal needs to demonstrate competency (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). Only by first exerting sufficient effort to master their job descriptions would conscientious individuals feel they could appropriately answer for those duties and, therefore, enhance their levels of satisfaction (see Figure 1). As such:

Hypothesis 1: Felt accountability mediates the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction.

Extraversion is another prominent factor in psychological research given that it appears in most personality measures (even those that predate the Big Five). Obviously, it connotes sociability but also includes a broader constellation of components. Watson and Clark (1997) contended that extraverts are sociable, but might also more active and impulsive, less dysphoric, and less introspective than introverts. Extraversion usually promotes positive emotions. Extraverts are active (e.g., adventuresome and assertive) and socially oriented (e.g., outgoing and gregarious). However, others might also consider them pressuring (e.g., dominant and ambitious). Furthermore, extraverts are more likely assume positions of leadership and have more close friends (Watson & Clark, 1997). Extraverts also tend to seek

positions of authority in group settings due to their gregariousness and relative ease of ingratiation and confidence gaining (Judge et al., 2002).

Per Watson and Clark's (1997) observations, this research contends that extraversion promotes job satisfaction because of its trait positive affective component. However, this research proposes that felt accountability intervenes in that relationship. Because extraverts tend to be adventuresome and also ingratiate themselves (presumably successfully) to coworkers and supervisors, they are likely to have more training, promotions, better pay and more exciting assignments (Wayne & Liden, 1995). Furthermore, based on the tenants of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) extraverts are likely to feel answerable due to the visible frequent, friendly, interactions they have with their evaluating audience and the opportunities they have to reciprocate with gratitude and compliance. That interaction would, thus, promote satisfaction. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2: Felt accountability mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction.

Agreeable individuals cooperate well with others. Typically, they are understanding and compassionate. Others consider them likeable because they are usually good-natured, cheerful and gentle (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Unlike the other Big Five factors, agreeableness might be of little help or even a hindrance under some circumstances (e.g., extremely agreeable individuals may forego opportunities at work in order to please others) if considering job performance alone. Barrick and Mount's (1991) meta-analysis of personality indicated no consistently positive relationship between agreeableness and performance. However, agreeableness has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. This is due largely to the fact agreeable employees are generally liked and they are able to maintain positive working relationships with others. To those high in agreeableness it is often more important to get along than get ahead (Hogan & Holland, 2003). To the extent the getting along and being a member of an organization is a personal priority to agreeable individuals, enhanced job satisfaction is likely because it is easily facilitated by those objectives. Furthermore, it is possible that agreeable individuals are satisfied in their jobs only if harmony prevails (Royle, 2016). With respect to felt accountability, George and Brief (1992), noted that agreeable individuals are given to higher levels of contextual performance (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors). Prior research indicated agreeable individuals might feel they answer for others (Royle & Hall, 2012). However, they must feel answerable for their own jobs before they answer for others and take on additional organizational chores to bolster their coworkers (Royle & Hall, 2012). Nevertheless, agreeable employees would find that satisfying. Therefore:

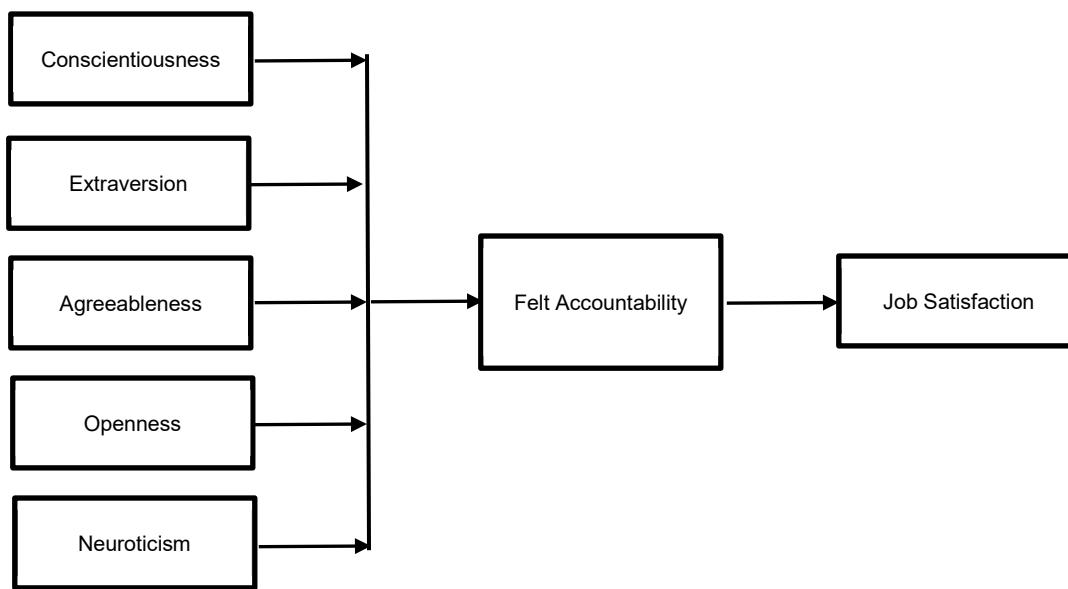
Hypothesis 3: Felt accountability mediates the relationship between agreeableness and job satisfaction.

Openness to experience has two primary components: intellect (e.g., abstract understanding and reasoning skills) and unconventionality (e.g., being imaginative, autonomous, unconventional). Prior research indicated that along with agreeableness, openness does not universally enhance job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). However, openness does have important implications for job satisfaction and even performance for certain types of jobs. For example, Francesco and Gold (2005) noted that openness predicted better performance and higher levels of satisfaction for expatriate managers. Furthermore, Lounsbury, Moffitt, Gibson, Drost and Stevens (2007) contended that open individuals are often attracted to, and find satisfying, occupations in fields that are intellectually intense, quickly changing and which demand unconventional thinking (e.g., high technology). If individuals are high in openness, are flexible, forward thinking and intellectual, they are likely to master the components of their jobs readily. If they do, it is likely they feel answerable for demonstrating their understanding of those components and imaginative enough to feel that they can build on those job duties what might be necessary in the future. This could promote both competence and autonomy, thus, enhancing satisfaction. Therefore:

Hypothesis 4: Felt accountability mediates the relationship between openness and job satisfaction.

Costa and McCrae (1988) contended that emotional stability (alternatively called neuroticism) is the most pervasive trait across personality measures. However, it might also be the one that takes the longest for individuals to perceive in others (Pretsch, Heckmann, Flugger, & Schmitt, 2014). It appears in almost every conceptualization of personality. Neuroticism encompasses two primary inclinations: a proclivity towards anxiety (e.g., instability and strain reactions), and insecurity (e.g., questioning oneself and depression). Emotionally stable individuals have low levels of both. Individuals who have low levels of emotional stability lack the ability to psychologically adjust readily and tend to be emotionally volatile.

Figure 1: The Mediating Effects of Felt Accountability on the Relationship Between Personality Dimensions and Job Satisfaction



This is the model of individuals' trait-like dispositional characteristics predicts felt accountability and individuals' levels of job satisfaction. The proposed model contends that personality dimensions differentially predict job satisfaction, but that satisfaction also occurs as a consequence of feeling answerable for one's work obligations.

Costa and McCrae's (1992) conceptualization of neuroticism (i.e., the lack of emotional stability) has six correlated components: anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability, and impulsiveness. Emotionally unstable individuals are prone to experiencing troubling emotions (e.g., anxiety, fear, depression and irritability) in circumstances and at magnitudes that others would not. Furthermore, this emotional distress often precipitates physical symptoms (e.g., hypertension, alcoholism, migraine headaches, ulcers and erectile dysfunction, etc.) (Heldon, 2003; Schermerhorn, et al., 2008). Concomitantly, emotionally unstable individuals experience lasting, pervasive, negative moods (Suls, Green, & Hills, 1998).

With respect to neuroticism, the current research employs the positive organizational behaviorist perspective (e.g., Luthans, 2002). It measures emotional stability. To that end, the researcher measured the extent to which respondents are comfortable, secure, open to positive interaction with others and deliberate in their actions. In other words, the measure of emotional stability used in this research runs counter to neuroticism. Research indicated that emotionally stable individuals are likely to feel relaxed, collegial, and satisfied with their work (Judge et al., 1998). As noted by Hall et al (2003), accountability

can be an environmental stressor because it entails that individuals be observed, judged and possibly called to defend their behaviors based on set of either explicit or implicit expectations. As such, it is likely that emotionally stable individuals are more apt to feel accountable because it is not as straining to them. Concomitantly, if they feel accountable (and behave accordingly), they are likely to feel satisfied in their work due to positive evaluations they get from others for their actions. Expressed the other way, neurotic individuals are likely to avoid feeling accountable due to perceived excessive strain so their subsequent (potentially withdrawing or unethical) behaviors would alienate them from other employees, thus, diminishing levels of job satisfaction. Therefore:

Hypothesis 5: Felt accountability mediates the relationship between emotional stability and job satisfaction.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This research proposes the relationship between personality dimensions and job satisfaction is mediated by felt accountability. To that end, the researcher attempted to determine if the variance in job satisfaction is caused independently by the predictor variables (i.e., the Big Five personality dimensions and felt accountability), or if a causal chain of events exists.

Participants and Procedures

The author collected the data for this research in 2015, drawing on students in organizational behavior, career development and human resource management classes. The researcher gathered his information from three different classes. Two of these classes (i.e., one course in human resource management and one in career development) were taught face-to-face. The other course in organizational behavior was taught online. Students received extra credit for participating. They came only from these courses and no other instructor collected these data. The researcher set specific criteria for eligible respondents: they must be full-time working adults with at least three years of experience. Students were allowed to complete surveys for themselves only if they met those requirements. Typically students did not meet the specifications and enlisted the support of others who did. Often, these respondents were friends or family members. The researcher gathered responses and ran the preliminary analyses using Qualtrics online analytic software. Preliminary analyses indicated that of the 106 different students enrolled in these three class, 69 of them either participated directly by answering a survey or recruited others on their behalves.

To do this, the researcher generated a web address and sent it to students to disseminate to research confederates. Of course not all students elected to participate in the data collection effort, ostensibly, because they either did not need extra credit or they lacked interest in the study's aims. The researcher acquired the names, addresses (both mailing and IP), contact phone numbers and places of employment for all subjects. He did this in order to help eliminate any ineligible submissions from students seeking to obtain extra credit who did not meet the criteria. He also reserved the right to contact respondents if he suspected that submissions were not completed in good faith or required additional information. 379 individuals started the survey. Of those, 303 (80%) submitted their responses. Only four of those 303 were incomplete. The author "list-wise" deleted those responses in the analyses. As such, the final, usable, sample size was 299. There were 182 female respondents (61%). The average respondent age was 37. The average respondent's organizational tenure was 7.4 years. By way of occupations, the sample included nurses, project managers, bankers, self-employed entrepreneurs and sales professionals.

Measures

To ensure the appropriateness of the scales used in this study, the researcher conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), before reporting any results. The data were subjected to principal component

analysis with an orthogonal (Varimax) rotation. He then applied Kaiser's Rule (i.e., retaining factors with eigenvalues over one), to estimate the amount of variance extracted in the construct by the principal factor (Pallant, 2004; Kaiser, 1974). In general, the value of that first factor should exceed 1.0 with other eigenvalues remaining relatively weak (Pallant, 2004; Kaiser, 1974). These analyses confirmed the predicted factor structures, thus, no items were deleted from any scale in this research. Appendix 1 lists the results of the factor analyses, the amount of variance extracted by the first factor, the coefficient alpha values of the scales, as well as the names of the authors who created them.

Personality. This research employed Goldberg's (1992) scales to measure the "Big-5" personality dimensions. It measures each of five aspects of personality (i.e., conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, emotional stability, and agreeableness) using nine-item scales. Typical items include, "I am always prepared," for conscientiousness; "I feel comfortable around other people," for extraversion; "I have a vivid imagination," for openness; "I am relaxed most of the time," for emotional stability and "I sympathize with others' feelings" for agreeableness.

Job Satisfaction. This researcher measured job satisfaction using a five-item scale developed by Judge, Locke, Durham and Kluger (1998). The scale employs a five-point response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Representative items include, "I feel real enjoyment in my work" and "most days I am enthusiastic about my work."

Felt accountability. This research used an eight item measure created by Hochwarter, Perrewé, Hall, and Ferris (2005). It employs a five-point response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Representative items include, "I am held very accountable for my actions at work and co-workers, subordinates and supervisors closely scrutinize my efforts at work" and "the jobs of many people at work depend on my success or failure."

Control variables. In order to help minimize the potentially spurious effects of demographic differences, the researcher applied control variables. Accordingly he controlled for, age, gender, race and organizational tenure given their previously demonstrated influences (Sheridan & Vredenburg, 1978).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test for mediation, this study used Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step regression procedure. In the first step, the independent variable must be significantly related to the mediator variable (i.e., felt accountability regressed on the personality factors and control variables). In the second step, the independent variable must be related to the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction regressed on the five personality factors and controls). In the final step, the mediating variable should be related to the dependent variable with the independent variable included in the equation (i.e., felt accountability added back into the regression equation). If the three conditions hold, at least partial mediation occurs. If the beta-weight of the independent variable (i.e., personality) becomes non-significant in the third step but the mediator (i.e., felt accountability) remains significant, then full mediation occurs. If the beta-weight of the independent variable remains significant but diminishes (particularly when the significance level drops) in the third step but the mediator remains significant as well, then the relationship is partially mediated.

Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations and correlations among study variables. The two largest correlations between variables in this sample are between two controls- age and organization tenure ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$) and agreeableness and job satisfaction ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$). It is not surprising that age and organizational tenure correlate highly (e.g., Sheridan & Vredenburg, 1978). However, the strength of association between agreeableness and job satisfaction might be problematic. This correlation indicates a potential problem of multicollinearity because it exceeds the 0.60 benchmark noted by Cohen, Cohen,

West and Aiken (2003). However, the analyses will go forward because it is plausible that those who are very cheerful and good-natured are likely to enjoy their jobs (and most everything else). No control variable was significantly related to either felt accountability or job satisfaction.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	36.51	13.42	---										
2. Gender	---	---	-0.12	---									
3. Ethnicity	---	---	-0.19	0.08	---								
4. Tenure	7.37	8.02	0.63	-0.06	-0.19	---							
5. Job Satisfaction	3.17	0.94	-0.06	0.07	-0.00	-0.04	---						
6. Felt Account	3.75	1.07	-0.07	-0.04	-0.09	0.01	0.28	---					
7. Conscientious	3.35	0.91	-0.02	0.07	0.07	-0.09	0.36	0.29	---				
8. Extraversion	3.08	0.99	-0.06	0.05	0.20	-0.05	0.32	0.01	0.42	---			
9. Agreeableness	2.86	0.91	-0.08	0.07	0.07	-0.05	0.65	0.24	0.58	0.64	---		
10. Openness	2.94	0.88	0.01	0.08	0.07	0.10	0.18	0.16	0.32	0.34	0.38	---	
11. Emo Stability	2.72	0.95	-0.06	0.08	0.05	-0.06	0.27	0.14	0.52	0.45	0.47	0.31	---

*All bolded correlations indicate significance levels of $p < 0.05$ or stronger (2-tailed). $N = 299$

The first panel in Table 2 provides the results for the first step which indicates that the mediating variable, felt accountability, was significantly negatively related to conscientiousness ($b = 0.31, p < 0.001$). As such, it is legitimate to proceed to the second step. The second panel provides the results for this step and shows that conscientiousness is significantly related to the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction) ($b = 0.37, p < 0.001$). Conscientiousness explained 12% of the variance in job satisfaction. Step three of Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure, requires that the mediating variable (i.e., felt accountability) must relate to the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction) with the independent variables included in the equation. The third panel in Table 3 provides the results of the final step. Results indicated that felt accountability was a significant predictor ($b = 0.20, p < 0.001$) of job satisfaction, but that conscientiousness was also still significant ($b = 0.13, p < 0.05$). Had the standardized beta weight for conscientiousness become insignificant in the third step, felt accountability would fully mediate the relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). However, a decline in the significance of the standardized beta weight of an independent variable between steps two and three with the mediator included in the regression equation indicates a case of partial mediation. Thus, analysis indicated that felt accountability partially mediated the relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction.

The estimated regression equation for the conscientiousness-felt accountability-job satisfaction relationship is as follows:

$$Job\ Satisfaction = \beta_1(Age) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3(Org.\ tenure) + \beta_4(Ethnicity) + \beta_5(Conscientiousness) + \beta_6(Felt\ Accountability) \quad (1)$$

Table 2: Mediation Results for Conscientiousness

Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable				
Variable	F	df	Adjusted R ²	β (Standard)
Mediator: Felt Accountability Conscientiousness	7.51***	5	0.10	0.31***
Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction Conscientiousness	9.10***	5	0.12	0.37***
Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (IAFO) with the Independent Variable Included				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction Felt Accountability Conscientiousness	9.59***	6	0.15	0.20*** 0.13*

The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship between conscientiousness weakens but remains significant in the presence of felt accountability, partial mediation occurs. Significance levels are indicated as follows: †p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. All results include age, gender, tenure, and ethnicity as control variables. N=299

Table 3 provides the results for the study’s second test hypothesis. It indicated that the mediating variable, felt accountability, is not significantly related to extraversion (b = 0.03, p < N/S). Thus, no further calculations are warranted.

The estimated regression equation for the extraversion-felt accountability-job satisfaction relationship is as follows:

$$Job\ Satisfaction = \beta_1(Age) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3(Org.\ tenure) + \beta_4(Ethnicity) + \beta_5(Extraversion) + \beta_6(Felt\ Accountability) \tag{2}$$

Table 3: Mediation Results for Needs for Extraversion

Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable				
Variable	F	df	Adjusted R ²	β (Standard)
Mediator: Felt Accountability Extraversion	1.47	5	0.01	0.03 N/S

The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest no mediated relationship between extraversion, felt accountability, job satisfaction exists. Significance levels are indicated as follows: †p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. No further steps necessary. N=299

Table 4 provides information for the study’s third hypothesis. It indicated that the mediating variable, felt accountability, is significantly positively related to agreeableness (b = 0.25, p < 0.001). The table’s second panel indicated that agreeableness also significantly predicted dependent variable (job satisfaction) (b = 0.66, p < 0.001). Agreeableness accounted for 42% of the variance in job satisfaction.

In the third step, the mediating variable (i.e., felt accountability) was still related to the dependent variable (job satisfaction) with the agreeableness included in the equation. The third panel demonstrates that felt accountability still a significant predictor (b = 0.13, p < 0.01) of job satisfaction, but that agreeableness still remained significant (b = 0.62, p < 0.001) with felt accountability entered in the equation. In between the second and third steps, the independent variable’s standardized beta weight drops along with its significance levels, thus, felt accountability partially mediated the relationship between needs for openness and job satisfaction.

The estimated regression equation for the agreeableness-felt accountability-job satisfaction relationship is as follows:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = \beta_1(\text{Age}) + \beta_2(\text{Gender}) + \beta_3(\text{Org. tenure}) + \beta_4(\text{Ethnicity}) + \beta_5(\text{Agreeableness}) + \beta_6(\text{Felt Accountability}) \quad (3)$$

Table 4: Mediation Results for Agreeableness

Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable				
Variable	F	df	Adjusted R ²	β (Standard)
Mediator: Felt Accountability	5.18***	5	0.07	
Agreeableness				0.25***
Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	42.01***	5	0.42	
Agreeableness				0.37***
Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (IAFO) with the Independent Variable Included				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	9.59***	6	0.44	
Felt Accountability				0.62***
Agreeableness				0.13*

The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship between agreeableness weakens but remains significant in the presence of felt accountability, partial mediation occurs. Significance levels are indicated as follows: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All results include age, gender, tenure, and ethnicity as control variables. N=299

Table 5 provides information for the study's fourth hypothesis. It indicated that the mediating variable, felt accountability, is significantly positively related to openness ($b = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$). The table's second panel indicated that openness also significantly, positively, related to the dependent variable (job satisfaction) ($b = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$). Openness explained 2% of the variance in job satisfaction.

In the third step, the mediating variable (i.e., felt accountability) was still related to the dependent variable (job satisfaction) with the independent variables included in the equation. The third panel demonstrates that felt accountability was a strong predictor ($b = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) of job satisfaction, but that openness still remained significant ($b = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$) with felt accountability entered in the equation. In between the second and third steps, the independent variable's standardized beta weight drops along with its significance levels, thus, this relationship is partially mediated. Felt accountability partially mediated the relationship between needs for openness and job satisfaction.

The estimated regression equation for the openness-felt accountability-job satisfaction relationship is as follows:

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = \beta_1(\text{Age}) + \beta_2(\text{Gender}) + \beta_3(\text{Org. tenure}) + \beta_4(\text{Ethnicity}) + \beta_5(\text{Openness}) + \beta_6(\text{Felt Accountability}) \quad (4)$$

Table 5: Mediation Results for Openness

Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable				
Variable	F	df	Adjusted R ²	β (Standard)
Mediator: Felt Accountability	2.48*	5	0.03	
Openness				0.16**
Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	2.27*	5	0.02	
Openness				0.18**
Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (OBSE) with the Independent Variable Included				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	6.40***	6	0.10	
Felt Accountability				0.29***
Openness				0.13*

The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship between openness and job satisfactions weakens substantially but remains significant in the presence of felt accountability, partial mediation occurs. Significance levels are indicated as follows: †p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. N=299

Table 6 provides information for the study’s fifth hypothesis. It indicated that the mediator, felt accountability, is significantly related to emotional stability ($b = 0.13, p < 0.01$). The table 6’s second panel noted that openness also significantly related to the dependent variable (job satisfaction) ($b = 0.26, p < 0.001$). Emotional stability explained 6% of the variance in job satisfaction.

In the third step, felt accountability was still related to the job satisfaction with the emotional stability (and controls) included in the equation. The third panel indicates that felt accountability was a strong predictor ($b = 0.27, p < 0.001$) of job satisfaction, but that emotional stability still remained significant ($b = 0.22, p < 0.001$) even with felt accountability in the equation. Because, between the second and third steps, the independent variable’s standardized beta weight dropped, this relationship is partially mediated. Felt accountability partially mediated the relationship between needs for emotional stability and job satisfaction.

The estimated regression equation for the emotional stability-felt accountability-job satisfaction relationship is as follows:

$$Job\ Satisfaction = \beta_1(Age) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3(Org.\ tenure) + \beta_4(Ethnicity) + \beta_5(Emotional\ Stability) + \beta_6(Felt\ Accountability) \tag{5}$$

Table 6: Mediation Results for Emotional Stability

Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable				
Variable	F	df	Adjusted R ²	β (standard)
Mediator: Felt Accountability	2.15†	5	0.02	
Emotional Stability				0.13*
Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	4.42***	5	0.06	
Emotional Stability				0.26***
Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (OBSE) with the Independent Variable Included				
Dep. Var.: Job Satisfaction	7.71***	6	0.13	
Felt Accountability				0.27***
Emotional Stability				0.22***

The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship between emotional stability and job satisfactions weakens substantially but remains significant in the presence of felt accountability, partial mediation occurs. Significance levels are indicated as follows: †p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. N=299

The hypotheses noted above, have with one exception (i.e., extraversion), all been partly validated. As such, a discussion of both theoretical and managerial implications of these findings is in order. For the purposes of this research, of the Big-Five dimensions, three (i.e., agreeableness, emotional stability and

conscientiousness) will be discussed relative to their implications for theory and the other two (i.e., extraversion and openness) will be covered in the section on managerial implications.

Theoretical Implications

This work helps broaden and develop the construct of felt accountability. Heretofore, research has not investigated whether feeling answerable for one's own work attitudes and behaviors is driven by a personality trait in route to feeling more satisfied with one's job. These findings indicated that, indeed, felt accountability promoted job satisfaction and had hereditary antecedent. To this point, felt accountability has been somewhat limited to its demonstrated influence on promoting strain, constraining unethical behaviors and making better use of organizational resources (e.g., Hall et al., 2003; Simonson & Staw, 1992; Adelberg & Batson, 1978). In essence, that couches accountability in a vein that is somewhat negative for individuals and positive for organizations. These findings indicate that feeling answerable for one's work behaviors can be positive for both individuals and organizations. Specifically, if accountable individuals' job satisfaction increases then they will likely perform those jobs better as well (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001).

These findings also augment the state of the personality literature by both reinforcing the field's assumptions current assumptions (e.g. Royle, 2016) that agreeable individuals are satisfied with their jobs when harmony prevails) and extending them by adding that felt accountability is partly responsible for that phenomenon. Furthermore, these findings help reinforce, across contexts, Hair and Graziano's (2016) assertion that agreeableness is the most important personality dimension to consider when trying to describe the notion of the ideal or "ought" self. In other words, agreeableness promotes feeling answerable because that is what most individuals believe they ought to do in order to be an ideal employee.

With respect to emotional stability, this research ties two findings together. Feeling accountable can promote strain (Hall et al., 2003). That strain is something neurotic individuals would find disagreeable and which would promote job dissatisfaction (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Consistent with Bolger and Zuckerman's (1995) contention, this research contends that emotionally stable employees, relative to others, experience both differential exposure and reactivity (i.e., they find fewer objectionable things/people in the environment and they react less severely if such things are present) when appraising whether or not to care about feeling answerable for their attitudes and behaviors at work. Because feeling accountable is less straining to them, they embrace it because they feel they "ought" to (Hair & Graziano, 2016). If they subsequently engage in behaviors that promote the organization's aims they both validated what they "ought" to do and it makes them to commendable others to whom they are accountable (Hall et al., 2003). Under both circumstances, that promotes job satisfaction.

Prior research indicated that conscientiousness influences individuals' appraisals of, and reactions to, job stressors (Liu, Liu, Mills, & Fan, 2013; Gartland, O'Connor, & Lawton, 2012). Specifically, conscientiousness related positively to the secondary appraisal phase (i.e., the assessment of one's coping abilities in the face of stressors) (Lazarus, 1991; Gartland et al., 2012; Penley & Tomaka, 2002). In other words, individuals felt more capable of coping if they were conscientious. Furthermore, those high in conscientiousness demonstrated more intention—behavior consistency due to higher levels of goal-orientation and responsibility (Rhodes, Courneya, & Hayduk, 2002). If individuals believe feeling accountable is straining (e.g., Hall et al., 2003) but they are goal oriented and responsible (i.e., conscientious), they are likely to embrace being answerable because they think they can cope appropriately and enhance their aggregate levels of job satisfaction by overcoming challenge stressors (i.e., a type stressor that is difficult but possible to overcome) and meeting their needs for competency (Cavanaugh et al., 2000).

Managerial Implications

The implications for managers are clear: measuring personality is still useful for HR decisions and is likely to remain so in the future (Crant, 2006; Royle, 2015). This research reinforces the utility of employee personality testing as practical tool for predicting individual's willingness to answer for their assignments and predicting the likelihood that they will be satisfied jobs. In short, managers should consider, when selecting applicants or reassigning current employees to other positions, the administration of personality tests. Furthermore, based on the relative strength of openness in these data (i.e., its intellectual component) tests of general mental are also advisable.

In this research, extraversion failed to predict felt accountability. Although the findings failed to validate hypothesis two, there are still some practical implications that might come from that lack of confirmation. Consider Hall and colleagues' (2003) contention that feeling accountable can mean evaluating oneself and taking a measure of how well one holds to one's own standards. In effect, this is a performance evaluation, albeit one done on oneself. DeYoung, Quilty and Peterson (2007) noted that extraversion has two components assertiveness and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, they noted also that those high on assertiveness also tend to demonstrate a lot of bias when evaluating performance. It is likely they do that with evaluations of themselves as well. It is possible they would claim to feel accountable when in fact they do not properly conceive of it. Bernardin, Thomason, Buckley and Kane (2016) reaffirmed this conclusion and added that even if enthusiasm (extraversion's jovial dimension) is added in and concurrently analyzed, bias is likely to occur for both those individuals very high and very low on extraversion. As such, measuring extraversion, particularly assertiveness, might still prove useful by informing managers which employees might be less likely to feel accountable.

The data in this study partially verified the predicted relationship between openness, felt accountability and job satisfaction. The most obvious implication for managers is the reaffirmation that openness is a desirable trait to have in employees because it has a direct effect on job satisfaction. Commensurate with contemporary research, these findings indicated that openness enhances individuals' satisfaction with work (and in life generally) (Schimmack, Oishi, Furr, & Funder, 2004; Judge et al., 1999). Furthermore, it appears to help validate findings that openness inclines individuals to educate themselves (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Hair & Graziano, 2016). Not only are open individuals given to learning things, they also enjoy it (Hair & Graziano, 2016). Managers might then rightly believe that employees high in openness, would be given to learning the things for which they are responsible and enjoying it. According to these data, it appears that they also feel answerable for what they learned because they are smart and found it enjoyable to master the components of their job descriptions.

Strengths, Weaknesses and Directions for Future Research

As with most research, this work has both strengths and limitations. To its credit, this paper attempts to address a common criticism of accountability research: namely, that it is collected in such a way as to lack a sense of realism and, therefore, external validity (Frink & Klimoski, 1998, 2004). Frink and Klimoski (1998, 2004) accordingly, strongly urged researchers to study real employees in their actual daily working environments. The findings in this research are bolstered because they come from a sample of working adults in actual organizations. Another attribute of this research is that it draws from a wide range of actual employees and occupations.

Gathering information on working adults also helps curtail other common criticisms about the kinds of subjects used in samples and the pressure to publish. The pressure to "publish or perish" often requires scholars to collect multiple data sets (Steelman, Hammer, & Limayem, 2014). Naturally, one practical, but potentially problematic, solution is to enlist students as study subjects (Steelman et al., 2014). Research indicates a fairly stable proportion of publications (i.e., between two thirds and three quarters) in social psychology are made up of student samples (Gordon, Slade, & Schmitt, 1986; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). The inability to generalize results due to the potential that student samples are

meaningfully different from the population at large (i.e. the lack of ecological validity) makes the derived findings questionable (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Indeed, these data are partly composed of student responses and some of those effects might persist. However, it was rare for students to be the actual survey respondents. Those students also had to be full-time working adults with at least three years of experience to participate. This helped alleviate threats to the ecological validity of the findings due to the sample.

One potential limitation to these findings occurs because these data came from a single source (i.e., self-reports on a single survey). This research did not estimate a common method variance (CMV) factor using structural equation modeling. It is, therefore, impossible to determine the extent to which CMV might have influenced these findings (Widman, 1985; Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). Indeed, CMV is potentially problematic for the validity of this study. Table 1 indicates some potential for limitedly inflated relationships between study variables (Cohen et al., 2003). Although it is still possible that external artifacts generated some of the observed effects, based on the magnitude of the correlations, common method variance is not likely present (Cohen et al., 2003).

Another potential drawback of this research relates to its sampling procedure. Specifically, the researcher cannot rule out selection bias because students seeking extra credit might have relied too heavily on close associates and family members. They likely believed that these individuals would help them out as a personal favor. This introduces the possibility that these friends and family gave only a superficial treatment to the study's aims because they were only involved to appease the student soliciting their aid. As such, this is a convenience sample so generalizing these findings is tenuous.

A potentially fruitful avenue for future research would necessitate gathering a sample from a single organization of significant size. This would allow the researcher to attempt to replicate findings, investigate more boundary conditions and consider additional mediators. If such an organization's compliance could be secured, future studies should include job performance measures, specifically those using supervisor-subordinate dyads. For example, with respect to conscientiousness, it is likely that meeting competency needs (Cavanaugh et al., 2000) promotes job satisfaction. However, without having job performance data, it is impossible to be completely certain that good job performance does not cause the increase in job satisfaction (e.g., Judge et al., 2001). This research included no self-reports of job performance because of the potential for misreporting or the influence of a self-serving bias (i.e., that poor job evaluations are a result of supervisor bias as opposed to poor employee performance) (Ross, 1977). Furthermore, not all of the organizations in this sample would administer performance evaluations in the same way.

Future studies should also discuss boundary conditions related to personality that might affect the current findings. For example, further analysis of the differences in organizational culture and structure would be useful. A common consideration in cross-cultural research is the distinction between collectivistic v. individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist societies (e.g., most of Asia) maintaining harmony and putting the well-being of the group ahead of the individual is integral to social functioning. Individuals who do not do so risk being shunned or facing some other sanction (Gelfand, Niishi, & Raver, 2006). Triandis and Suh (2002) noted that agreeableness is of particular importance to cultures that heavily emphasize interpersonal harmony.

One might ask then, are agreeable individuals more inclined in a collectivist culture to feel accountable because they fear social discord more than Americans and believe being answerable promotes cohesion and, thus, job satisfaction? Would extraverts, who typically strive for status and leadership roles in groups (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2002) be more likely in collectivist organizations/cultures to feel accountable than they did in this American sample because they are less inclined to signal their desires to assert themselves as leaders? Finally, if conscientious individuals feel answerable because of a

sense obligation and attention to detail, would collectivism predict that they do so, primarily, to promote the group and only then would they feel satisfied in their own jobs?

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The objective of this research was to examine the influence of felt accountability on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and job satisfaction. Specifically, this research assessed the relative importance of feeling one should account for one's job-related attitudes and behaviors and its impact on satisfaction. The research results suggested that feeling answerable was partly responsible for the influence of personality dimensions on job satisfaction. The effects were consistently positive across four (i.e., conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness and agreeableness) of the Big-Five dimensions. The sample consisted of 299 respondents. These were full time working adults primarily from the Southeast United States (particularly Georgia, Florida and Tennessee). This was a convenience sample gathered with the help of students participating in an extra credit opportunity. Although students were not typically respondents, they recruited those known to them to have been working for at least three years at the equivalent of 40 hours per week. The researcher used mediated regression analysis to explain the intervening potential of felt accountability on personality and job satisfaction. The findings indicated that, although significant, the Big Five dimensions (with the exception of extraversion, which failed to prove significant) only partially mediated that relationship.

There are useful theoretical and managerial implications from this work to consider. For example, theory is expanded by demonstrating that felt accountability can function as a challenge stressor and, as such, actually promote job satisfaction if properly attended to and overcome. The primary managerial implications are straightforward: managers should still view the assessment of personality and general mental ability (i.e., the intellectual component of openness) as useful tools for HR decision-making (e.g., Crant, 2006; Royle, 2015).

Naturally limitations to these findings exist. No common method variance (CMV) factor using structural equation modeling was estimated in this research. Therefore, the researcher cannot determine the extent to which CMV might have tainted the results (Widman, 1985; Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). The correlations between study variables also indicate some potential for limitedly inflated relationships between study variables (Cohen et al., 2003). Furthermore, the research could include some selection bias because students seeking extra credit might have implored friends and family for help and they might then have given only a cursory treatment to the studies aims as a way to appease students seeking their assistance quickly.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Scales, Sources, Reliabilities, and Factor Analyses

Variable Name	Scale Author	Coefficient α	Eigenvalue of the 1 st Factor	Variance Explained by 1 st Factor
Emotional Stability	Goldberg (1992)	0.71	3.93	0.44
Openness	Goldberg (1992)	0.80	3.42	0.39
Agreeableness	Goldberg (1992)	0.91	3.57	0.40
Extraversion	Goldberg (1992)	0.83	4.67	0.52
Conscientiousness	Goldberg (1992)	0.80	3.50	0.39
Job Satisfaction	Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger (1998)	0.81	3.19	0.64
Felt Accountability	Hochwarter, Perrewé Hall, & Ferris (2005)	0.85	2.42	0.36

The appendix identifies study variables, scale authors and measures. It reports coefficient alpha values for each scale, the Eigenvalue of the first factor and the amount of variance it extracted. All scales were measured with a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree".

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