

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY TOWARDS WORK ENGAGEMENT: A PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract: *The objective of this research is to introduce a conceptual framework about the relationship between personality and work engagement mediated by thriving at work in the context of Generation Y. Indonesia's now and future workforce is dominated by Generation Y. In the bonus demographic condition, the future workforce is forced to increase the ability to adapting and compete. Thriving at work was introduced as the condition when the individual sense a vitality and learning. Individuals have their characteristic that might be different between one and another — considering that individual has their uniqueness that might affect their level on work engagement. Thriving appear to be an experience that might bridge between the characteristic of the individual to be connected into their engagement to the profession or in this research called work engagement. Among all engagement concept, this research is focused on work engagement which describes as the level of individual engagement to the professions. While personality is described as the dependent variable which are two concepts named five-factor model and proactive personality.*

Keywords: *Work Engagement, Thriving at Work, Personality, Proactive Personality, Generation Y*

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1. Introduction

Generational differences are still being debateable by people since the new generation has been entered society and bring their uniqueness. According to U.S. Census Bureau (2014) and Pew Research Center (2014) generations now has been divided into four categories which are baby boomers, generation X and generation Y or often called by millennial generations since during the Generation Y birth the technology environment is growing very fast. Every generation has its unique characteristics. For example, the baby boomers that often have the idealistic trait, conservative thinking which lead this generation to taken more risk compared to the other generation (Hasanuddin & Purwandi, 2016). After baby boomers, there are generation X which are the children of baby boomers generation. This generation has still held some value inherited by their parent. Generation Y is reported to less likely to put their resources and energy to work task because they tend to have lower work centrality since they concern on work-life balance and personal life.

In 2015, more than 33% of Indonesian population was the young age between 15 – 34 years, in the more urban area the percentage can be much higher which also known as Generation Y or Millennials. In 2020, Indonesia will rely on this generation since lots of precedents generation will be retired. Generation Y in 2020 predicted will be in around 83 million people, or 34% of the total population in Indonesia that predicted will reach 271 million (Hasanuddin & Purwandi, 2016). Generation Y will be the determination of how Indonesia's economy faces in the future

direction. Generation Y workforce is reported to be different and have their uniqueness. As one of the crucial assets in the organisation, selecting the right individuals in the right places are considered essential. The organisation is needed the individual who be able to survive able to compete, showing proactive performance while engaging to their role at the same time committed to performing at high standards (Chungtai and Buckley, 2011). Therefore is still being a critical aspect in determining how to maximising work engagement in the individual to improve and maximising individual potential.

To address the challenges, researchers have been investigated many possibility by which to improve the engagement such as leadership, health promotion and personal resources (Young et al., 2018). However, none of the factors above gives a relatively high impact on improving individuals engagement (Young et al., 2018). Akhtar et al., (2015) have been suggested the potential of pre-employment strategies for effectively improving engagement, such as considering using personality traits on the selection systems. Among lots of personality assessment from previous literature, it was found that proactive personality, conscientiousness and extraversion found to be the strongest predictor of engagement (Young et al., 2018) although it is possible to found new interesting from this research which differs from previous one.

In order to strive in the changing and unpredictable situation, suggested personality traits also still need an additional factor that might enhance the engagement of the individual. Thriving at work is the individual condition when they sense vitality and learning at the same time. The workforce is expected to be able to compete. Using thriving, individuals are continually growing and develop their selves into a better person. From previous research, it has been found that thriving is positively related with the work engagement. It because if the individuals do not sense positive energy and learning to learn it might be because they are not into the work and might not feeling engaged in their work. Further, this research is aim to develop the model on how the personality might affect the sense of energy and learning to engage Generation Y workforce in creating a better quality of Indonesia's future workforce.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Work engagement

Work Engagement is a positive state of work-related that characterised by vigour, dedication an absorption. Work engagement is different conceptually from job embeddedness, job satisfaction workaholism or organisational commitment (Wojcik-Karpacz, 2018). When exploring the work engagement concept, it must be remembered that this concept is not stand alone and have dimensions that represent key functions of the concept. The different terms of engagement understood in the different context of the employee work role (Simpson, 2009). The engagement terms have been used for almost 18 years starting from Kahn (1990) with his engagement. Work engagement has three dimensions that also used in their measurement scale, which are vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour are referring to the high level of energy and mental flexibility during working (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006; Wojcik-Karpacz, 2018). The vigour dimensions are usually related to the substantial contribution of the individual which makes this dimension are more visible compared to the rest of the dimensions. Individuals who have a higher level of vigour tend to be willing to invest more effort during their work performance. While dedication is referring to being fully involved in the work. Individuals who are feeling dedicate to their work will experience a perception of enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge (Wojck-Karpacz, 2018). The last dimension is absorption which referring to having intense focused and happily interest in the work. Individuals who are

feeling absorptive are feeling time passed quickly during their working time and feeling challenging to separate their life with their work.

Thriving at work

The idea of "thriving at work" is become one of the most recent topics that got attention ultimately in the positive organisational behaviour area (Paterson, Luthans & Jeung, 2014). Thriving at work first introduced by Spreitzer et al., (2005) as the joint experience between vitality and learning. Their lots of previous research that discuss vitality and learning separately, but Spreitzer et al., (2005) argue that considering them to be feeling both. At the same time will give beneficial outcomes for individuals and organisations. Thriving firstly introduced by Spreitzer et al., (2005) which define as the psychological state that demand the 'joint and simultaneous experience of vitality and learning' (Jiang, 2017). Thriving individuals are tending to be experiencing energised, alive and improving the capability of their job by consistently learning things related to their job (Porath et al., 2012). Individuals who have to thrive at their work are consistently learning, acquisition knowledge and always looking for new opportunities for improving their skills and knowledge.

Personality

According to Funder (2013, p.5), personality is described as patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour shown by an individual. The definition of personality makes it a different mission to explain the whole person (Funder, 2013, p.5). Several approaches use in order to explain personality patterns that used to describe the individual called by Funder as the primary approach. The basic approach is consist of (1) trait approach (2) biological approach (3) psychoanalytic approach (4) phenomenological approach (5) learning and cognitive approach. From several approaches, this research focuses on the trait approach to personality because the focal topics are to a conceptualisation of individual differences and also measuring the individual differences. Trait approach also references as the personality approach (Funder, 2013, p.6).

Although there are so many personality concepts used in the organisation or work context, this research is using two concepts of personality named the five-factor model of personality and proactive personality. Previous literature (Young et al., 2018) has been used meta-analysis approach to determine which personality that found to be more engaged and the result shows that five-factor model of personality and proactive personality are included in the findings of the research. Among five personality traits mention in the five-factor model, only extraversion and consciousness that related to thriving at work used in this research because previous research (Hennekam, 2016) find that only extraversion and consciousness have a higher impact on thriving at work.

Hypothesis Development

Consciousness, extraversion and thriving at work

Theoretical and empirical research has successfully demonstrated the thriving through its dimensions which are vitality and learning that can be beneficial both for individual and also organisations (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007; Abid et al., 2018). Thriving is defined as the state where the individual experience both learning and vitality during their working performance (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Porath et al., 2012). Individuals who are active and have a purpose at work are more likely to feel thriving at work. Neissen et al. (2012) focus on the research in order to find the antecedents factors of thriving at work. The study is examining the role of personality traits and found that personality might contribute to the tendency of individual to

feeling thrive at work compare than others. According to Templer (2011), the five-factor model of personality has become a typology of personality in the field of organisational behaviour than frequently being examined which includes traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness. According to the result of Hannekam (2016) which found that from five traits in the five-factor model only conscientiousness and extraversion that have a positive correlation with thriving at work. Neuroticism, agreeableness and openness found to be had a negative correlation. Previous studies by Bozionelos (2004) found the reason on why agreeableness might have a negative correlation with thriving at work is because they lack political behaviour which allows them to create self-development leading to low level of learning. For openness of experience, the negative correlation can be caused by the lack of the need for action to transform their curious attitude into their action exploration of behaviour (Hannekam, 2016). It means that people who have the openness of experience have the attitude to seek new things, explore opportunity but it does not turn out to real action. While in thriving, vitality or energy is become an important aspect. To be noted that research by Hannekam (2016) is focused on older workers aged 50 or above in the Netherlands which different context with this research which focus on younger workers age 38-20.

H₁: Agreeableness is significantly related to thriving at work

H₂: Conscientiousness is significantly related to thriving at work

H₃: Extraversion is significantly related to thriving at work

H₄: Neuroticism is significantly related to thriving at work

H₅: Openness to experience is significantly related to thriving at work

Proactive Personality and Thriving at Work

Proactive personality has the tendency to create initiation and maintaining actions that allow them to influence the surrounding (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Jiang, 2017). Proactive personality becomes an essential enabler of thriving because the high level of initiation that proactive personality can create positive changes and able to see opportunities in order to create self-improvement (Porath et al., 2012). Fuller and Marler (2009) also found that proactive personality individuals have greater possibilities to increase the quality of social relationship which also allow them to create several opportunities. The founding is relevant to the research finding by Crant (2000) which found that proactive personality also creates a positive environment and using similar energy as mention in thriving which also known as vitality.

H₆: Proactive personality is positively related to thriving at work

Thriving at Work and Work Engagement

Work engagement receives more intention in the context of organisational behaviour and positive organisational (Macey et al., 2009). According to Schaufeli et al., (2006) work engagement describe as a favourable work-related condition that characterised by the sense of vigour, dedication and absorption. Thriving is sharing a similar theoretical background as work engagement as the vitality context in thriving and vigour in the work engagement which become an essential element in positive work life (Bakker et al., 2008; Spreitzer et al., 2010). The difference between the concept is by creation and the utilisation of the resources (Abid et al., 2018). Work engagement determines the level to which individual utilise their resources (vigour, absorption and dedication) while thriving at work is identifying what their work has given to them in the context of personal growth. Research by Abid et al., (2018) found that thriving at work is positively related with work engagement because the more individuals spend

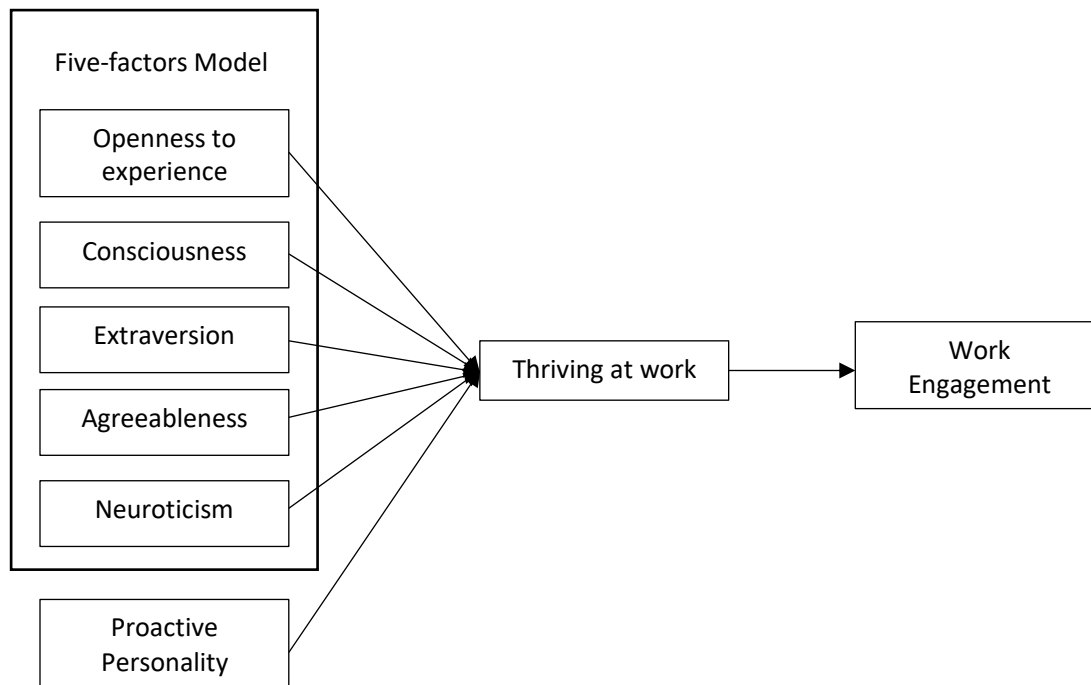
their energies and efforts to gaining more skills and knowledge (thriving), the more they are engaged with their work

H7: Thriving at work is positively related to work engagement

3. Conceptual Framework

Using the conceptual approach, this research reviewed previous theoretical and empirical literature which discuss five-factor models, proactive personality, thriving at work and work engagement. Previous articles have been analysed, reviewed and synthesised which resulted in Figure 3.1. The research model is presented in the figure below. In detail, the proposed framework is comprising consciousness, extraversion, neuroticism and proactive personality as independent variables, thriving at work as the mediating variables and work engagement as dependent variables:

Figure 3.1: Proposed Conceptual Framework



4. Conclusion and Implications

As a concept, work engagement has been known and used for many years using different terms. The concept of work engagement that known today has been evolved in several decades. As for thriving at work which becomes recent topics that got attention ultimately in the positive organisational behaviour area. The recent condition of Indonesia workforce that very much needed in the future become an essential point on why this conceptual might give a contribution. This conceptual paper contributes to introducing personality assessment as a way to improve engagement using thriving at work to mediate the relationship between personality and work engagement. If the proposed framework empirically validated, there will be new insight on building and increasing work engagement from a personality perspective.

This research also can be impactful for the practical. Because it can contribute and giving another perspective on hiring new individuals in the organisation, the benefit of this research can be implemented in the pre-assessment stage of potential employees. This research also can

be a start of understanding and unleash potentials of an individual that can maximise their skills, passionate and values which is also directly can giving positive impact to the organisations.

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