

Relationship between personality and work success differs for women and men

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Abstract:

The relationship between personality and work success has been studied in-depth, as well as how each is linked to gender. However, previous research neglected how the connection between personality and success at work differ for men and women. We address this issue in order to better understand the different work outcomes of women and men. This topic is especially important in a broader context of gender equality at work, because different personality traits could promote work success differently for men and women. We examined how gender moderates the relationship between the “Big Five” personality traits Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism and work success. We consider both, objective (income, Treiman prestige scores and required skill level of an occupation) and subjective aspects of work success (satisfaction with work and income). The moderation analyses were based on data of the German Socio-Economic Panel SOEP from 2013. Controlling for gender, openness correlated positively with objective and subjective work success. Neuroticism was negatively correlated to all work success measures. Conscientiousness was positively linked to income and satisfaction but negatively to required skill level and prestige of an occupation. The relationship between Extraversion and Agreeableness were both positively related to satisfaction and Agreeableness was further negatively correlated to income. The strength of associations between some personality characteristics and work success differed for men and women. There was a stronger positive relationship for men compared to women between Agreeableness and required skill level, and between Openness and income, required skill level, and prestige. Further, there was a stronger negative relationship for men compared to women between Neuroticism and satisfaction. The relationship of work success and Conscientiousness and Extraversion was not significantly moderated by gender.