

# Investigating the Relationship Between Personality Traits and Job Satisfaction Among Nurses Working in Hospitals Affiliated to Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences

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## Introduction

Expert and efficient workforce is the worthiest asset in any country. In spite of limited natural resources, several countries have achieved progress and prosperity by employing skilled workforce (1). Studies indicate that more important than finance and facility, it is active workforce satisfied with their jobs that help organizations achieve their goals. Job satisfaction paves the way to main job values (2). Both the increasing shortage in expert workforce and the high rate of turnover among nurses have turned into international problems, making nurses retention doubly important (3,4). Therefore, increased motivation and, above all, job satisfaction have been considered by many researchers.

As an overall impression of one's job, job satisfaction has a direct effect on the individual, social, and organizational life of individuals as well as a determining role on their

mental and physical health. Some theories see job satisfaction as a personal attitude and positive emotional reaction of people towards their jobs (5). Others see it as a two-dimensional construct in coordination with internal and external satisfaction dimensions (6) or as satisfaction/lack of satisfaction, dissatisfaction/lack of dissatisfaction (7). Researchers have reported significant correlations between job satisfaction and psychosomatic symptoms such as headache and stomach upset (8-11), anxiety (12), and depression (13,14).

Several factors may influence job satisfaction including income and benefits, perceived system justice, organizational promotion, job circumstances, equality in the relationship between individuals and their supervisor, social relations and the nature of the job. In the literature of job satisfaction, there is often a differentiation between situational and attitudinal job satisfaction.

## Abstract

**Background and Aim:** Nurses' job satisfaction has a main role in elevating the quality of healthcare services delivered to patients. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between personality traits dimensions (i.e., neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness) and job satisfaction among nurses working in the hospitals affiliated to Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Science in 2011.

**Methods:** This correlational study was conducted on 300 nurses working in the hospitals affiliated to Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences who were selected through stratified random sampling method. The measures for data collection consisted of Job in General Scale (Ironson et al) and the revised Neo Big 5 personality traits inventory. The data were analyzed by SPSS 16 using Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression.

**Results:** Findings showed that job satisfaction has a significant negative relationship with neuroticism, but there was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction, extroversion, and conscientiousness ( $P < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis indicated that among the personality dimensions, extroversion and neuroticism are two that can predict job satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** Considering nurses' personal characteristics at the time of recruitment can lead to their higher job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Neuroticism, Extroversion, Conscientiousness, Nurses

While situational factors represent job features (some of which were mentioned above), attitudinal factors involve individuals' personal traits (15). Personality is one factor to affect job satisfaction. It involves some aspects of human life which allows predicting a person's behavior under specific conditions (1). Researchers such as Al-Mashaan (16) and Kirkcaldy et al (17) have emphasized the role of control, type A personality, and neuroticism in job satisfaction. Veronique (18), Judge et al (19), and Witt (20) have focused on the role of the dimensions of the Big-Five factors model in job satisfaction. Bhatewara found that there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and neuroticism but a positive correlation between job satisfaction and other personality factors such as extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness exist (21). Palmour 1969 (quoted by Ahadi 2009) claims that job dissatisfaction decreases an individual's lifetime (22). As the healthcare sector has a major role in health protection and social development, any effort to promote nurses' job satisfaction can elevate healthcare providers' efficiency and the services offered by them. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between personality dimensions (including conscientiousness, extroversion, and neuroticism) and job satisfaction.

### Methods

In this correlational study, the statistical population included all the nurses who worked at the hospitals affiliated to Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, totaling 3000 according to the Nursing Office Report in 2011. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table (23), 326 persons were selected by stratified random sampling method for hypothesis testing. For the purposes of sampling, first 6 out of the 8 hospitals were randomly selected. Afterwards, the required sample was selected according to the ratio of nurses in each hospital with due consideration of the number of employees in each unit and the percentage of nurses in each unit. From the returned questionnaires, 311 were usable. That is to say, the response rate was 95%. Tools for data collection included Ironson et al's. Job in General Scale and the revised Neo Big 5 personality traits inventory.

### The Revised Neo Big 5 Personality Traits Inventory

This measure is a short form of the revised Neo 5-factor inventory of personality which is used for measuring the five trait factors: neuroticism (N), extroversion (E), openness to experience (O), agreeableness (A) and conscientiousness (C). This study focuses on neuroticism, extroversion, and conscientiousness. Quoting from Ashoori et al (24), Habibi et al reported an internal consistency from 0.86 to 0.90 for the five factors. In Iran, Gharabaghi reported the inventory's reliability as 0.83, 0.75, 0.8, 0.79, and 0.79 for neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, respectively. Upon correlating its scales

with Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire, Bakhshipor reported the questionnaire's validity for neuroticism as 0.72 and extroversion 0.70 (24).

In order to validate the three personality dimensions, i.e., neuroticism, extroversion, and conscientiousness, three researcher-made items were used on a 7-point Likert scale from completely disagree=1 to completely agree=7. The obtained correlation coefficient between each scale score (neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness) and the general question were calculated separately. The general item demonstrates how an individual estimates him/herself in terms of each personality dimension on a 7-point Likert scale. For example, for "extroversion," the item was "I know myself a sociable person." Then, the correlation of the answer to this item was assessed with the whole items of that scale. If there was a good correlation, the validity of the scale was confirmed; otherwise, the results were not credible. This general item resembles validation through a parallel form and assesses its correlation with the form. In this line, the obtained correlation coefficient between the scores of neuroticism scale and the general item made by the researcher was 0.64 ( $P < 0.001$ ). The questionnaire reliability was calculated as 0.78 and 0.79 by Cronbach alpha and the split-half technique. The correlation coefficient between the score of extroversion scale and the general question was 0.51 ( $P < 0.001$ ). Also, the reliability for this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha and the split-half technique was 0.67 and 0.63, respectively. The correlation coefficient between the score of conscientiousness scale and the general question was 0.47 ( $P < 0.001$ ). Reliability for this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha and the split-half technique was 0.84 and 0.80.

### Job in General Scale

In this study, job satisfaction was assessed by Ironson et al (1989) Job in General Scale which is a job satisfaction scale. This scale assesses the general feelings of the respondent to the job and includes 18 items with answers in *yes* or *no* and *I don't know* format. This test was translated and applied by Arshadi for the first time. The validity of the scale was 0.69, and the reliability coefficients by Cronbach alpha and split-half techniques were respectively 0.91 and 0.87 in Arshadi's study. Arshadi quotes that Ironson et al reported the Cronbach alpha as 0.91 for this scale on their sample of 1149 individuals (26).

In the present study, a one-item researcher-made measure was used for construct validation of the scale on the 7-point Likert scale from completely disagree=1 to completely agree=7. The correlation coefficient between this scale's score and the general question was 0.69 ( $P < 0.001$ ), and its reliability coefficients using Cronbach alpha and split-half technique were 0.88 and 0.88, respectively. The data were analyzed by SPSS 16 using Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression.

### Results

From the participating nurses, 46 nurses (14.8%) were

female and 265 (85.2%) were male. The nurses' age and tenure means were  $33.19 \pm 7.03$  and  $9.41 \pm 6.08$  years, respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the nurses' personality traits and job satisfaction are presented in Table 1.

The results of Pearson correlation test showed that there are significant negative correlations between neuroticism and extroversion ( $r = -0.49$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and between neuroticism and job satisfaction ( $r = -0.35$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). There were significant positive correlations between job satisfaction and extroversion ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and between job satisfaction and conscientiousness ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). There were also significant negative correlations between neuroticism and conscientiousness ( $r = -0.33$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and a significant positive correlation between extroversion and conscientiousness ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ; Table 2).

According to the stepwise regression analysis, the multiple correlations between personality dimensions and job satisfaction were significant ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $P \leq 0.01$ ). Extroversion predicts job satisfaction as much as 0.16, while neuroticism negatively predicts job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.19$ ) (Table 3).

## Discussion

The results of the present study showed a significant positive relationship between extroversion and job satisfaction. This finding is in line with Judge et al (27), Veronique (18) and Judge et al (19) studies. There will be a high level of job satisfaction if the nurses are active, energetic, warm-hearted, and sociable. The two features of extroversion, i.e., positive thinking and high level of energy lead to reduced conflict. Because of high levels of energy, extrovert persons work more in a shorter time and

**Table 1.** Mean and Standard Deviation of the Nurses' Personality Traits and Job Satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Neuroticism	32.83	7.2
Extroversion	39.95	5.8
Conscientiousness	47.34	6.7
Job satisfaction	41.39	8.5

**Table 2.** Matrix of Correlation Between Personality Traits and Job Satisfaction ( $P < 0.01$ )

	1	2	Job Satisfaction
1. Neuroticism	-	-	- 0.35
2. Extroversion	- 0.49	-	0.40
3. Conscientiousness	- 0.33	0.39	0.19

**Table 3.** Regression Coefficients of the Three Personality Traits

Variable	R	Rs	$\beta$	t	F	P
Extroversion	0.40	0.16	0.40	7.71	59.48	<0.001
Neuroticism	0.43	0.19	- 0.20	- 3.41	36.59	<0.001

experience less fatigue in the workplace. Furthermore, these persons focus on the positive aspect of a situation, which helps them feel less stressed. Characteristics such as thoughtful action, effective organization, and time management help people to do more work, while lack of work flexibility acts as a prohibition. Therefore, nurses who have high levels of conscientiousness may experience dissatisfaction under work pressure and lack of work flexibility.

In this study, the significant negative correlation between neuroticism and job satisfaction suggests that the greater an individual's neuroticism, the lower his/her job satisfaction. This finding is in line with Witt (20), Veronique (18), Judge et al (19) and Al-Mshaan's studies (16). Anxiety, tension, insecurity, defensiveness, and worry are some traits of an individual with neuroticism, which result in conflict. In this study, neuroticism and extroversion account for an overall 19% of job satisfaction.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings and the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction, it is important to consider nurses' personality traits at the time of recruitment. Individuals with lower levels of neuroticism but higher levels of extroversion and conscientiousness are preferred for this job. For this purpose, the personality tests are helpful. The results of this kind of selection lead to recruit nurses who are agreeable, uplifting, and circumspect. It may also lead to lower rates of absence from workplace and job quitting.

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