

Do Personality Factors Predict Job Satisfaction?

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Abstract

Consumer goods retailing is a fast-moving and results-orientated industry and, as such, places high demands on people occupying managerial positions in the retail stores. The objective of this research was to determine the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction of South Africa Retail Store Managers. Although relationships between personality traits and work related behaviours have been frequently investigated, there were very few studies conducted for the occupational class of retail store managers. A cross-sectional survey design was used with a purposive selected sample taken from managers (N=95) of South African Retail Stores. The 15 FQ+, Core Self-Evaluations Scale, Job Diagnostic Survey and a Job Performance Questionnaire were administered. Results indicated that Extraversion, Emotional Stability and Core Self Evaluations are statistically significant predictors of Job satisfaction. One of the primary limitations affecting the results is the sampling approach. It must also be noted that responses collection are subject to the response error that is usually present in the studying utilising questionnaires as a primary means of collecting data. Furthermore sampling was not controlled in respect of the race group of the participants, thus making it impossible to make comparisons between such groups. The findings of this study provided other retail organisations some insights into identification of those personality traits that predict job satisfaction of the store managers. The research identified important

personality traits may be identified during the recruitment and selection process to predict future success of retail store manager candidates.

Keywords: Personality traits, job satisfaction, retail management, extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, neurotism, and locus of control, Big five personality factors, job satisfaction, organisational behaviour.

Introduction

Consumer goods retailing is a fast-moving and results-orientated industry and, as such, places high demands on people across all levels in the business. Most importantly, however, it requires exceptional performance from people occupying managerial positions in the retail stores (Broadbridge 2002; Skakon, Kristensen, Christensen, Lund & Labriola 2011). Although relationships between personality traits and work related behaviours have been frequently investigated, there were very few studies conducted for the occupational class of retail store managers both within the international and South African context. Researchers find the trend very surprising provided the distinct nature of salesperson's duties and job responsibilities which entail multiple roles and functions, as well as high stress levels in comparison to employees in other professions (Brashear, Lepkowska-White & Chelariu 2003; Singh 1993; Skakon *et al.* 2011).

According to Lush and Serpkenci (1990), the store manager has a strong influence on achievement of organisational objectives, such as meeting sales target, making profit, maintaining high store standards, providing excellent service to the customers. Lush and Serpkenci (1990) further stressed that the store manager fulfil many roles such as a merchandiser, a salesperson, a financial officer, a marketer, and a supervisor of other employees. Such environment calls for the recruitment and selection function within organisations to find candidates that would fit well into the teams and perform to the highest expectations. Consequently, the ability to identify personality traits that determine future success of the job applicants as retail store managers is paramount in the process of candidates' selection.

Given that a number of studies (Bono & Judge 2003; Judge, Erez, Bono & Locke 2005; Morrison 1996; Van den Berg & Feij 2003) have shown

that the level of job satisfaction is partially determined by some of the personality traits, there is a need to find the personality traits that influence the job satisfaction of retail store managers. This study suggests investigating the relations of personality traits (*Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, and Core Self-evaluations*) to *Job Satisfaction* for the occupational class of retail store managers in South Africa. The rationale for the study arises from a belief that by using these personality traits as predictors of job satisfaction, the present study may contribute to optimisation of personnel recruitment and selection processes in the retail industry.

Theoretical Framework

Relation of Big Five Personality Traits to Job Satisfaction

Locke (1975) affirmed that many authors agree that job satisfaction is an emotional reaction to the work experience. He linked job satisfaction to the positive emotional experiences resulting from performing the job whereby positive attitudes towards one's job are associated with high levels of job satisfaction. Cranny, Smith & Stone (1992:1) similarly viewed job satisfaction as an affective reaction to one's job, arising from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, expected, or deserved.

Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990) stressed that just as satisfaction can be defined in terms of positive experiences, dissatisfaction is associated with negative attitudes towards a job. Later, Chan, Pan and Lee (2004) provided a more generalised view of job satisfaction by moving away from linking satisfaction to positive or affective reactions alone and referring to it as an employee's *overall assessment of work-related experiences, which is influenced by individual values, ideals and beliefs*.

Davis (2004) pointed out that as such job satisfaction may be viewed as a multidimensional concept which includes a set of favourable or unfavourable feelings in terms of which employees perceive their jobs. Bowen, Cattell, Distiller and Edwards (2008) also referred to a review by Brunetto and Farr-Wharton where they identified the following components that may influence overall job satisfaction: the work itself, salary level, conditions of service, performance appraisal procedures, opportunities for

advancement, the nature and extent of supervision, and relationships with co-workers (Bowen *et al.* 2008).

As far as the relation of personality traits to job satisfaction is concerned, Van den Berg and Feij referred to a few studies showed that personality served as a determinant of attitudinal or affective job outcomes such as job satisfaction (Van den Berg & Feij 2003). For example, Judge, Higgins, Thoresen and Barrick (1999) in their longitudinal study found that the Big Five personality traits measured in childhood predicted job satisfaction in late adulthood. More specifically, it was confirmed in their study that Neuroticism is negatively related to job satisfaction ($r=-0.22$). However, this relationship became insignificant in a regression analysis when other Big Five traits were added into the regression equation (Judge *et al.* 1999).

The other results of their study showed that Conscientiousness nevertheless remained as one of the best predictors of job satisfaction (Judge *et al.* 1999; Salgado 1997; Furnham, Petrides, Jackson & Cotter 2002; Bowling 2010; Borman, Penner, Allen & Motowidlo 2001; Dalal 2005; and Organ & Ryan 1995). Conscientiousness was positively associated both with the intrinsic and with one of the extrinsic job satisfaction factors.

Van den Berg and Feij (2003) referred to a review by Judge, Heller and Mount where they showed that Extraversion is related to job satisfaction across the studies. Accordingly, Judge and Bono also reported a correlation between Emotional Stability and Job Satisfaction of 0.24 (Judge & Bono 2001).

Meeusen, Brown-Mahoney, van Dam, van Zundert and Knappe (2010) utilised the MBTI's (Myers Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) personality dimensions to determine job satisfaction and found that the use of the MBTI for effective selection of Dutch nurse anaesthetists is questionable. They also found that four personality factors, comparable to the Big Five Model dimensions namely Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness and concluded that the Big Five Model are more appropriate. This is confirmed by McCrea and Costa (1989) who found similar results.

Furnham, Eracleous, and Chamorro-Premuzic (2009) demonstrates that personality and demographic variables can be significantly related to both job satisfaction and motivation as defined by Herzberg *et al.*'s (1959) two-factor theory. Heller, Ferris, Brown, and Watson (2009) confirmed that

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work personality was a good predictor of job satisfaction. This study differentiates between home and work personality.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Emotional stability is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction

H2: Extraversion is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction

Relation of Core Self-evaluations to Job Satisfaction

In terms of job satisfaction, Judge, van Vianen and de Pater (2004) believe that the core self-evaluations trait is the best dispositional predictor of job satisfaction. Judge and Bono (2001) found an average correlation of 0.32 between the four individual core traits and job satisfaction. However, when these individual traits are converted in one broad core self-evaluations factor, this correlation dramatically increases to 0.41 (Judge & Bono 2001). It can be concluded that the overall core concept is a more consistent predictor of outcomes rather than the individual traits. Furthermore, Judge *et al.* (2004) refer to a study conducted by Judge and Heller, which confirmed that core self-evaluations traits were more strongly related to job satisfaction than the Big Five traits or positive/negative affectivity.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following research hypothesis is formulated:

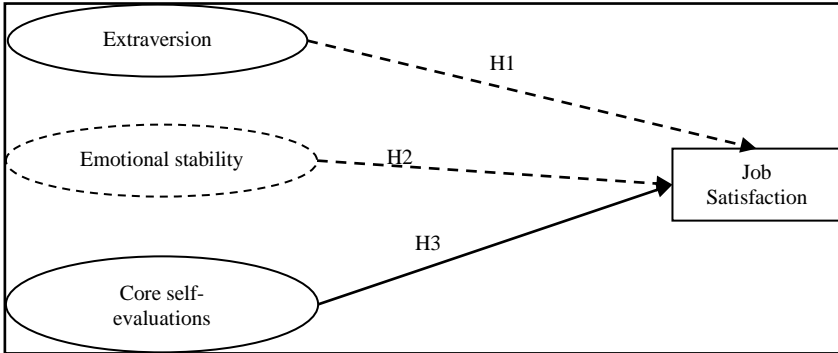
H3: Core self-evaluations is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction

Towards a Model for Personality and Job Satisfaction

In the light of the above discussion, the research proposes the following model relating personality traits and job satisfaction for retail store managers.

Previous research suggested a few models where the relationship between personality traits (including Core-self evaluations) and job satisfaction was mediated by other variables (Ilies & Judge 2004; Judge *et al.* 2005; Van der Berg & Feij, 2003). For example, Van der Berg and Feij found

Figure 1 – Resulting Model Relating Personality Traits, Core Self Evaluations, Job Satisfaction and Job Performance for the Occupational Class of Retail Store Managers



mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between Extraversion and propensity to leave, and between Neuroticism and propensity to leave (Van der Berg & Feij, 2003). On the other hand, Judge *et al.* (2005) reported that Core self-evaluations were positively related to job satisfaction, which as shown by MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne (1998) was related to job performance (Abdel-Halim 1980; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky 1985; MacKenzie *et al.* 1998).

Method

A quantitative, ex post facto research approach was followed. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data and attain the research goals. This design is ideally suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correlation research and to assess the interrelationships between the variables in the research (Shaunessey & Zechmeister 1997).

Sample

The participants of the study were store managers from one of the South African retail chains. A total of 147 questionnaires were distributed to a

purposive selected sample of Managers of all stores of this retail organization in Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. 95 questionnaires were returned which gives a 64.6% response rate. In this sample the majority of the participants were African (71.6%), while White and Coloured participants were represented by 22.1% and 6.3% respectively. Participants were primarily female (56.8%) and had an educational qualification of Grade 12 (62.1%).

Measuring Instruments

The 15FQ+ (Psytech, 1992), Core Self-Evaluation Scale (Judge, Locke & Durham 1997) and Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldman 1975) were administered.

15 FQ+ Extraversion, Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness were measured by the 15 FQ+ Questionnaire. The 15FQ+ uses a self-report format and consists of 200 items. Respondents have to indicate on a three-point scale how closely the items describe their personal behaviour. The alternatives offered are 'agree', 'unsure' and 'disagree'. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for a professional sample on the standard form ranged from 0.77 to 0.83 for the 16 traits and 5 broad factors. Similarly, test-retest reliabilities varied from 0.77 to 0.89 (The 15FQ+ Technical Manual, 2009).

Core Self-Evaluation Scale (Judge, Locke & Durham 1997): The Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES) was used for the purpose of measurement core self-evaluations trait. The CSES consist of 12 items and measure *Self-esteem, Generalised self-efficacy, Neurotism, and Locus of control* on a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is 'strongly disagree' and 5 is 'strongly agree'. Previous studies showed that an average alpha coefficient reliability of 0.84 (Judge *et al.* 1997).

Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldman 1975): *The Job Diagnostic Survey* (JDS) contains 14 items that measure satisfactions along the following specific dimensions: *Pay* (2 items), *Job security* (2 items), *Social* (3 items), *Supervisory* (3 items); and *Growth* (4 items). The first four of these are Work Context Satisfaction, while Growth Satisfaction is related to intrinsic features of the job reflecting the degree to which a person is satisfied with opportunities for personal growth and development on the job. A seven-point response scale from 1 to 7 is used, where 1 is 'extremely

dissatisfied' and 7 is 'extremely satisfied'. Hashim (2012) found a Cronbach alpha equal to 0.933 for the JDS and Baker, Fitzpatrick and Griffin (2011) a Cronbach's alpha of 0.84.

Research Procedure

The Human Resource Director of one of the South African retail companies that provided respondents for this study was asked for permission to conduct the study and use the data. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed directly to store managers by post as well as administered during store visits and training sessions. A cover letter soliciting cooperation was attached to the questionnaires. The letter informed the participants about the aim of the study, stated that participation was voluntary and explained that results will be treated confidentially by the researchers. The questionnaires were coded to identify the stores and the store managers in charge of those stores, but were otherwise anonymous to ensure confidentiality. Respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaires in a sealed envelope provided, either to the person who distributed them, or directly to the researchers.

Data Analysis

The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS (2011) to produce descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis of the measuring instruments, correlation coefficients, exploratory factor analysis for each construct, as well as other Linear Models, including Multiple Regression analysis. A 90% confidence interval level was used for all significance testing in this study. Goodness of fit measures such as chi-squared test, GFI, AGFI, NFI was used to evaluate how well the model fit the data (Tabachnic & Fidell 2001).

Results

Factor and Reliability Analysis

Prior to the testing of hypotheses, the psychometric properties of the Core Self Evaluation Scale (CSES) and Job Diagnostic Scale (JDS) were examined. These included the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) to determine the

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sample adequacy and sphericity of the item-correlation matrix, exploratory factor analysis to discover and identify the dimensions of the measurements and reliability analysis using Cronbach alpha coefficients to give the measure of accuracy of the instruments and to determine how repeatable the results are. The Core Self Evaluation Scale and Job Diagnostic Scale obtained a Measure of Sampling Adequacy of 0,759, 0,838 and 0,900 respectively which according to the guideline of higher than 0.6 (Hair, Anderson, Babin & Black 2010) is adequate for factor analysis. Next, exploratory factor analysis using Principal Axis Factoring extraction method was performed on the measurements. Results revealed one underlying factor structure for the Core Self Evaluation Scale and Job Diagnostic Scale. The factors were labelled core self-evaluations and job satisfaction.

The descriptive statistics and reliabilities of the factor per measurement are reported in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients: CSES and JDS

Scales	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Core Self-Evaluations	3.300	8.398	0.045	-1.058	0.734
Job Satisfaction	5.170	13.025	-0.732	-0.112	0.881

Table 1 indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficients compare well with the guideline of 0,70, demonstrating that a large portion of variance is explained by the dimension (internal consistency of the dimensions) (Field, 2009). No factor analysis was performed on the 15FQ + measure because of the small sample size. Based on the validity and reliability of the measurement in previous studies, the theoretical subscales of Extraversion, Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness were used for further analysis.

Testing of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested by means of linear regression analysis. The results are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Regression Analysis between the Personality Types and Job Satisfaction

Model	Unstan- dardised Coefficients	Standar dised Coeffi cients	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR ²
H1: Emotional stability is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction							
	B	SE	Beta			.304 ^a	.093
(Constant)	59.388	4.526		13.122	0.000		.083
Emotional Stability	.800	.260	.304	3.080	.003		
H 2: Extraversion is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction							
	B	SE	Beta			.101 ^a	.010
(Constant)	68.971	4.080		16.906	0.000		.000
Extraversio n	.102	.104	.101	.983	.328		
H 3: Core self-evaluations is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction							
	B	SE	Beta			.435 ^a	.189
(Constant)	45.759	5.917		7.734	0.000		.181
Core self- evaluations	.675	.145	.435	4.662	.000		

The results in Table 2 indicate:

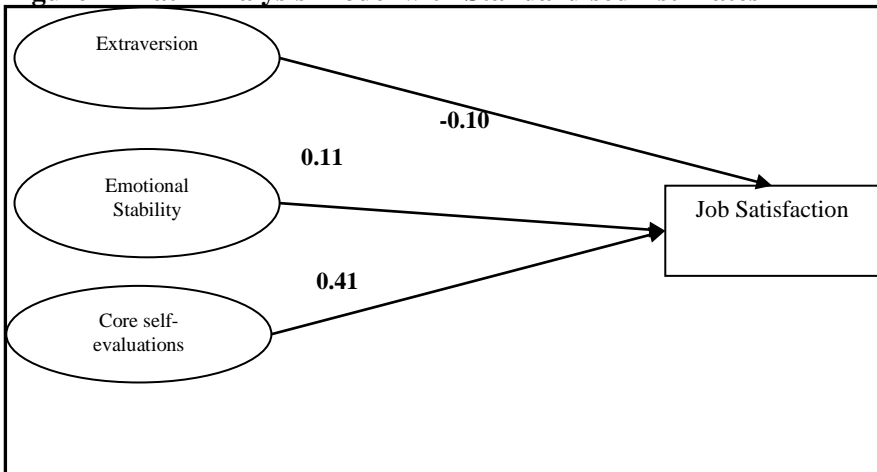
- In terms of Hypothesis 1: Emotional stability is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction. Emotional stability however explains 9% of the variance in job satisfaction and is considered low. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.
- In terms of Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant relationship between Extraversion and Job Satisfaction. Hypothesis 2 is rejected.
- In terms of Hypothesis 3: Core self-evaluation is a statistically significant predictor of job performance. Core Self Evaluations

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explains 19% of the variance in job satisfaction. Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Having investigated the individual hypothesised relationships between the constructs, the next step was to estimate and overall model, which would include all the constructs and account for mutual interactions between them. Results indicated that the model did fit adequately to the data $\chi^2 = 2.2041$, $\chi^2 / df = 3$, GFI = 0,99; AGFI = 0,95; CFI = 0,95, NFI = 97 and RMSEA = 0,00. The model is given in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 - Path Analysis Model with Standardised Estimates



It should be noted that the relationship between Emotional stability and job satisfaction was significant when tested individually, yet a combined model produced a lower effect (0.11) thus indicating that Core-self evaluations play a dominant role in the relationship, as its addition to the model reduced the effect of Emotional stability. Since the two measures have a significant covariance (0.45 with a t-value of 0.45), it may be argued that only emotional stability has a marginal impact on satisfaction in the presence of Core self-evaluations. Perhaps this phenomenon could be explained by existence of strong associations between Emotional stability and Core self-evaluations as reported by Bono and Judge (2003). As an interpretation to

this fact they suggested a possibility that Core self-evaluations could include some measurement of emotional stability (Bono & Judge 2003).

Furthermore, it is evident that the effect of Extraversion on job satisfaction is also marginal, considering its low coefficient (-0.11 with t-value of -0.99). Since the individual regression of extraversion on job satisfaction also yielded insignificant results, but with a positive effect, the appearance of a marginal negative effect for this relationship in the combined model may be indicative of the fact that the estimation procedure is adjusting for the combined positive effect of emotional stability and core self-evaluations.

Discussion

The purpose of the research was to investigate the relationships of personality traits (Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, and Core Self-evaluations) and job satisfaction for the occupational class of store managers in the context of South African retail industry. The study attempted to address the management dilemma at hand and aimed to predict job satisfaction of retail store managers by analysing personality traits. The results of the research are discussed per hypotheses.

In terms of Hypothesis 1: *Emotional Stability is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction*

According to the simple linear regression analysis there is enough evidence to suggest that Emotional Stability positively affects job satisfaction. Conversely, since Neurotism is the opposite end of Emotional Stability, it may be said that there is enough evidence that Neurotism negatively affects Job Satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis is not rejected. However, due to the fact that the proportion of variance in satisfaction explained by this variable is negligible, Emotional Stability cannot be considered as the determinant of job satisfaction. It can be concluded that Emotional Stability plays a role, but other factors need to be taken into account in order to explain changes in job satisfaction. This finding is corroborated by the one by Judge and Bono (2001) which also confirmed positive relationship between Emotional stability and job satisfaction, while Judge *et al.* (1999) found in their study that Neurotism is negatively related to job satisfaction.

In terms of Hypothesis 2: *Extraversion is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction*

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The above hypothesis was rejected in the study. The regression's t-test revealed that no significant relationship can be established between Extraversion and job satisfaction. These results are contradictory to the findings by Judge, Heller and Klinger (2008).

In terms of Hypothesis 3: *Core self-evaluations is a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction*

Enough evidence was observed not to reject the hypothesis. Regression analysis showed that there was a positive relationship between Core self-evaluations and job satisfaction. The reported r-square of this linear model was 0.19, which suggests that Core self-evaluation accounts for 19% of the variation in job satisfaction. A number of studies (Judge & Bono 2001; Judge *et al.* 2004; Judge & Heller in Judge *et al.* 2004) had also confirmed the positive relationship between Core self-evaluations and job satisfaction.

Implications for Managerial Practices

Selecting the right people in an attempt to fulfil the management needs inevitably requires psychological assessments at the onset of the process. The use of any instruments, as well as other ways of measuring job applicants against the objective criteria for specific jobs, such as structured and unstructured job interviews, case studies, role plays, reference checks, and bio-data, raises further questions pertaining to the objectivity, reliability and validity of such methods, especially in the South African context. The findings of this study provided other retail organisations some insights into identification of those personality traits that predict job satisfaction of the store managers. The study may also contribute to optimisation of personnel recruitment and selection processes as well as talent management strategies in retail industry.

Future Research

In order to address some of the limitations and gain further insight into the relationships between Core self-evaluations, job satisfaction and personality aspects in the South African context, future studies should attempt to collect a sample that is representative of more retail trade organisations in the country. A bigger sample would also enable the researchers to utilise more advanced

techniques of estimation, such as a Structural Equation Model (SEM). Such studies should be aimed at refining the conclusions drawn in this study and may explain differences between some of the findings contemplated in the literature review and empirical measurements presented in this document. It may further be suggested to investigate the differences in behaviour of retail store managers with different demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, age and educational background.

Combining different measurements of personality traits and dimensions such as MBTI, Discus, Big Five Model, 16-PF into a final model for job satisfaction. In addition more research that would apply the developed model to other industries and / or occupational classes in South Africa is needed in order to expand the body of knowledge on this topic.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations affecting the results is the sampling approach. This study used purposive sampling method, characterised by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample (Kerlinger & Lee 2000). Since the study focused on applying the theoretical models in the context of South African retail stores, store managers of one specific retail chain were approached. Although it may be argued that retail store managers may be expected to behave in a similar fashion, it is necessary to note that only managers of one organisation were subjected to the survey, which may play a role if the results are to be extrapolated to a wider retail audience.

It must also be noted that responses collection are subject to the response error that is usually present in the studying utilising questionnaires as a primary means of collecting data. Furthermore sampling was not controlled in respect of the race group of the participants, thus making it impossible to make comparisons between such groups. Most of the participants fell into the African race group, thus extrapolation to other race groups should be done with caution as it is not known if different race / ethnic groups exhibit different response or behavioural patterns.

Conclusion

In closing, the findings showed that the model suggested and empirically

tested in this study can be applied as a predictor of job satisfaction for the occupational class of retail store managers in the South African context. The results obtained in the study together with the recommendations for future research can contribute into optimisation of the recruitment and selection processes and employee retention strategies in the retail industry.

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Do Personality Factors Predict Job Satisfaction?

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