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THE EFFECT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON SALES PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION TO TEST THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL (FFM) IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	The present study investigates the relationship between the five-factor model (FFM) of personality traits and sales performance in Pakistan.
Background	Personality is a well-researched area in which numerous studies have examined the correlation between personality traits and job performance. In this study, a positive effect between the various dimensions of the five-factor model (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and open to experience) and sales performance in Pakistan is investigated.
Methodology	Pearson's correlation values as well as analysis methodologies were employed to gather descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and use the analytical hierarchy process (AHP). Cronbach's alpha value helped determine the internal consistency of the group items. Questionnaires were distributed among 600 salespersons in various cities of Pakistan from April 2015 to January 2016. Subsequently, 510 questionnaires were acquired for the sample.
Contribution	The current study contributes to the literature on personality traits and sales performance by applying empirical evidence from sales managers in three industries of Pakistan: pharmaceutical, insurance, and electronics.
Findings	The results affirmed a positive effect of the five-factor model on sales performance among various industries in Pakistan. The effect of each sub-factor from the five-factor model was examined autonomously. There is a favorable benefit to sales managers in considering FFM when making hiring decisions.

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Impact on Society	FFM offers important insights into personality traits that work well within Pakistani sales industry structure.
Future Research	A broader rendering of the effects of FFM on sales organizations in other geographical locations around Pakistan should be considered. Additionally, an extended study should be conducted to investigate the effects of FFM on female sales employees involving religious and cultural forces within that country.
Keywords	personality traits, five-factor model (FFM), sales performance, sales force of Pakistan, females, religious and cultural forces

INTRODUCTION

Sales occupations can be challenging but are a widely growing field across the world. The US Department of Labor (2015) notes that sales related employment will grow 5% between 2014 and 2024 and provide nearly a billion new jobs in that country. Concurrently, sales occupations significantly contribute to the overall workforce around the globe (Farr & Tippins, 2010). After all, the success of a business often depends on a salesperson's job performance (Erdheim, Wang, & Zickar, 2006; Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2009). Personality also plays an important role when there are differences involving unique traits and characteristics of an individual (Maslow, Frager, Fadiman, McReynolds, & Cox, 1970). Within sales occupations, one's personality is often the key component for success (Burch & Anderson, 2008). In addition, many researchers have argued that personality may perform a major role in sales and can result in higher levels of performance (Behrman & Perreault, 1982; Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985; Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2007; Sitser, van der Linden, & Born, 2013; Verbeke, Dietz, & Verwaal, 2011; Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998).

In the past, the relationship between personality traits and sales performance has been well examined (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Chow & Ong, 2015; Furnham & Fudge, 2008; Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003; Pendharkar & Pandey, 2011). Likewise, Sitser et al. (2013) explained there are five big personality traits that are valid predictors of sales performance: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Miller (2015) notes the five-factor model (FFM) is based on the assertion there is a strong connection between the personality of a salesperson and their work performance. Prior studies have investigated this notion in the retail, banking, insurance and hotel industries (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Magandini & Ngwenya, 2015; Yakasai & Jan, 2015). Sung and Choi (2009) claimed there is a nexus between personality and an individual's creativity. Additionally, Caisdy (2012) believes there is a link between fashion consciousness and prestige sensitivity. However, there was no known study that measured the impact of FFM to sales performance within Pakistani organizations.

Pakistan is the world's 6th highest populated country with 189 million people and a growth rate of 2.1% (WorldMeters, 2016). Pakistan's culture is based on numerous norms and values that are focused on being productive and creative (Evans et al., 2014). Per Evans et al. (2014), the government of Pakistan resists non-traditional cultural activities while embracing operational success in both national and multinational organizations. The current study investigates such multidimensional insights within three major industries in Pakistan: pharmaceutical, insurance, and electronics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Personality is an individual's pattern, emotion, cognition, and behavior (Goldberg & Lingle, 1985; Matthews et al., 2003; Maslow et al., 1970). It is recognized as the enduring disposition, which causes patterns of the characteristics to interact with one's environment (Goldberg & Lingle, 1985). Personality is made up of distinctive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that make an individual unique (Goldberg & Lingle, 1985). It has been described as a factor influencing an individual's interaction to the environment in complex situations (Tadepalli, Moreno, & Trevino, 1999). Per Padberg and Rinaldi (1991), several researchers have investigated the correlation of personality and sales perfor-

mance. While some researchers have expressed the positive correlation between those two factors, others believe there is no such association. So, understanding the personality of a salesperson is especially important for management to understand to improve sales efficiency and to create the long-term relationship with customers (Harris, Ladik, Artis, & Fleming, 2013).

Many researchers and practitioners have evaluated the relationship between the five-factor model and sales performance (e.g., Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2007; Fletcher, 2013; Ma, Yu, & Cheng, 2013; Salleh & Kamaruddin, 2011; Schultz & Schultz, 2016; Sitser et al., 2013; Stautz & Cooper, 2013; Sung & Choi, 2009; Yakasai & Jan, 2015). Likewise, studies from Barrick and Mount (1991), Salgado (1997), Hurtz and Donovan (2000), Gutin and Punnen (2006) believe conscientiousness is a valid predictor of sales performance together with highest predictive validity in diverse occupations.

Per Barrick and Mount (1991), extraversion and agreeableness are dominant traits in the field of sales. Per Widmier (2002), conscientiousness has a significant correlation to organizational sales. Lawler (1985) believed that conscientiousness and extraversion are positively linked to sales performance. Tadeballi et al. (1999) posited that agreeableness and extraversion personality traits have no effect on sales performance. However, Widmier holds that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness and extraversion personality traits likely perform better in the sales environment. Likewise, the individual with a low level of the emotional stability trait may not perform efficiently in sales. Furthermore, experts have stated the positive impact of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience on sales performance (Warr, Bartram, & Martin, 2005; Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). Widmier (2002) believed that conscientiousness, as an effect of personality traits, has a positive effect on sales performance. Interest in the subject increased when specific empirical linkages were investigated between big-five personality traits and an individual's performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Held & Karp, 1971). Personality characteristics were identified and tested by various researchers, including Maslow et al. (1970), Vinchur et al. (1998), Matthews et al. (2003), and Miller (2015).

Many experts claim the five basic dimensions of personality traits should receive special attention (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991; Digman, 1990; Goldberg & Lingle, 1985; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005; Sitser et al., 2013). These are known as the five-factor model (FFM) of the personality traits and are shown in Figure 1 and subsequently explained.

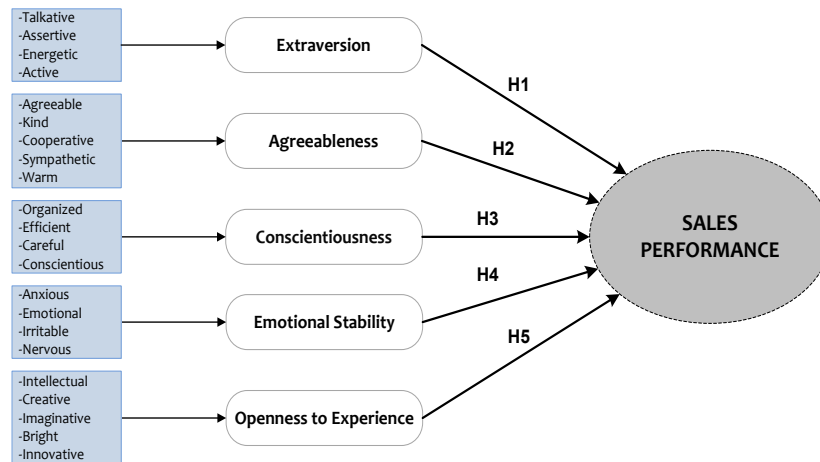


Figure 1. Study model and hypothesis development

Ahmad, Allen, Andersen, and Anglin (2001) described extraversion as an individual's tendency to be outgoing, active, and assertive. An extravert enjoys a long stay in the firm and loves being a team player (Miller, 2015). An extraverted person tends to maintain interpersonal relationships (Ma et al., 2013). Per Barrick and Mount (1991), extraverts are cheerful, energetic, and optimistic about their actions. Extravert people are active, talkative, excited, and comfortable people (Herzberg, 2003; Sung & Choi, 2009). Herzberg (2003) adds that extraverted individuals are more vigorous in their approach

to life. Furthermore, this personality trait is associated with being talkative, starting conversations, being excited, and acting bold (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Thus, the extraversion personality trait may perform a significant role in the sales function.

Agreeableness reflects the cooperation among individuals of a distinct nature who create social harmony (Beaumont et al., 2003). A person with the agreeableness personality trait is friendly and tactful (Arkin & Hassin, 1994). Barrick and Mount (1991) associated agreeableness with being courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, forgiving, cooperative, soft-hearted, and tolerant. Per Arkin and Hassin (1994), agreeableness is essential for sales people to build a good relationship with their customers. Held and Karp (1971) defined agreeableness as an individual's identifying with other's problems, taking time for others, putting people at ease, being cooperative, and acting trustworthy. In the field of sales, this personality trait is considered an important element in completing the deal.

Laporte (1992) has defined a person with the conscientiousness personality trait as an organized, punctual, and consistent. Conscientiousness is more persistent, competent, and always strives to perform timely work (Baker, Jensen, & Murphy, 1988). Moreover, conscientiousness represents how someone makes decisions and can control impulses and remain stable during sudden changes in their environment (Johnson & McGeoch, 1997). Lin (1965) stated that conscientious individuals are always focused and goal oriented. Conscientiousness is the personality characteristic that is more relevant to job performance (Johnson & McGeoch, 1997). Furthermore, per Sung and Choi (2009), the conscientiousness personality trait is based on characteristics such as being organized, efficient, careful, and conscientious. Thus, being conscientiousness has an important role for an individual who desires to work in a sales organization.

Emotional stability involves a person's ability to remain steady in all circumstances (Samuels et al., 2002; Schmitt, Realo, Voracek, & Allik, 2008). Per Schmitt et al. (2008), emotional stability is imperative for an individual. Emotionally stable people are not prone to psychological distress (Soldz & Vaillant, 1999). In contrast, employees with a low level of emotional stability can be highly distracted; a high level of instability may control their emotions and feelings in inefficient ways (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). Emotional stability is more important in various jobs, including traffic controllers, pilots, military snipers, finance managers, engineers, and sales people (Harris et al., 2013; Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007). Similarly, the emotional stability personality trait is associated with certain characteristics such as emotions, resistance to stress, nervousness, moodiness, and insecurity from competition (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Thus, emotional stability may perform an integral role to achieve an organization's sales target.

Openness to experience refers to an individual's willingness to listen to others' ideas and perspectives (Borghans, Duckworth, Heckman, & Ter Weel, 2008). This trait is described as an individual who is intellectually curious, open to new ideas, and possesses a creative cognition style (Johnson & McGeoch, 1997). Openness is related to a person's ability to absorb information and consider new experiences in life (Matthews et al., 2003). This trait helps empower individuals by opening them up to new ideas and motivates them toward the successful implementation of that awareness (Baker et al., 1988). Per Beaumont et al. (2003), such people are artistic and highly curious. This trait is further associated with characteristics such as the use of creative ideas, understanding complicated ideas, spending time with others, as well as being curious and good-natured (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

METHODOLOGIES

The researchers fashioned their study around five primary hypotheses.

H1: Salespeople with extraversion personality trait perform at higher levels than lower levels of extraversion personality trait.

H2: Salespeople with agreeableness personality trait perform at higher levels than lower levels of agreeableness personality trait.

H3: Salespeople with Conscientiousness personality trait perform at higher levels than lower levels of conscientiousness personality trait.

H4: Salespeople with emotional stability personality trait perform at higher levels than lower levels of emotional stability personality traits.

H5: Salespeople with openness to experience personality trait perform at higher levels than lower levels of openness to experience personality trait.

Primary data were collected through questionnaire distribution among a sampling of the sales force of Pakistan. The data were gathered by researchers visiting organizations and approaching salespersons to ascertain their interest in being a part of the study. Data were also collected by sending out group email and online distribution of the surveys to sales people. Potential subjects were responsible for product sales to distributors, retailers, customers, and consumers.

The questionnaire was comprised of two sections: the first part was demographic information while the second part was an evaluation of the effect of the five-factor model (FFM) on sales performance. Six hundred questionnaires were randomly distributed to salespersons from April 2015 to January 2016. Of those surveys, 545 surveys were returned to the researchers. Forms were reviewed for completion of all parts and questionnaires not filled out completely were not included in the study. A sample of 510 surveys was acquired for final data analysis.

The questionnaires were distributed among first-line field salespersons within the pharmaceutical, insurance, and electronic industries in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Ten major cities of the Punjab cities were approached including Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Kasur, Sahiwal, Okara, Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, and Rawalpindi, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Cities

DATA COLLECTION CITIES		
Rawalpindi/Islamabad	Multan	Gujranwala
Lahore	Okara	Kasur
Faisalabad	Sahiwal	
Sialkot	Gujrat	

Secondary data were compiled through an extensive literature review with the aid of prior research, books, and web sources. Several relevant articles were accessed from official databases and impact factor journals. Subsequently, the higher intention was granted to the articles as published after 2000. Some research papers published before 2000 were also considered to obtain theoretical background for the present study. Seminal work in the study area were consulted including *The Big Five Personality Factors: the Psychological Approach to Personality* (De Raad, 2000), *Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior* (Ajzen, 2005), and *The Traveling Salesman Problem and its Variations* (Gutin & Punnen, 2006). Likewise, *Building a Winning Salesforce: Powerful Strategies for Driving High Performance* (Zoltners et al., 2009), and *Sales Management: Analysis and Decision making* (Ingram, LaForge, Avila, Schwepker, & Williams, 2012).

The questionnaire was validated by a pilot study using a small sample size (n=30) of the general sales force population. A pilot study is a small preliminary analysis that evaluates the feasibility of the selected research tools and can improve the study design before performing the actual project (Van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001). The sample results of the pilot study utilizing Cronbach’s alphas for dependent and independent variables are shown in Table 2.

The outcome values presented in Table 2 are closely associated with the findings of Sung and Choi (2009) for extraversion ($\alpha=.72$), agreeableness ($\alpha=.82$), conscientiousness ($\alpha=.75$), emotional stability ($\alpha=.75$), and openness to experience ($\alpha=.80$). In comparison, the current study reported Cronbach’s alpha value for the dependent variable ($\alpha=.77$), which are closely associated with the study of Ingram, Lee, and Lucas (1991) with Cronbach’s alpha value ($\alpha=.78$) and the study of Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka (2007) with Cronbach’s alpha value ($\alpha=.83$). Hence, the piloted work of the current study

affirmed a higher reliability for each measure of sales performance. It addresses the values of the dependent and independent variables above the established 0.70 cutoff point as suggested by Nunnally (1978). The complete data for the current study were gathered (n=510) and all resulting values for Cronbach's alpha are illustrated in Appendix A.

Table 2. Cronbach's α value in pre-testing

SR. #	VARIABLES	CRONBACH'S α
	Independent Variables (IV)	
1	Extraversion	.87
2	Agreeableness	.81
3	Conscientiousness	.74
4	Emotional Stability	.70
5	Openness to Experience	.78
	Dependent Variable (DV)	
6	Sales Performance	.78

Note. n=30

The measurement items for sales performance were adopted from the Ingram et al. (1991) model based on six self-reported scales: (1) achieving quantity and quality objectives of the sales; (2) controlling unnecessary expenses; (3) following organizational policy and providing organizational information; (4) developing and using technical knowledge; (5) giving high-quality sales presentations; and (6) working well with all personnel of the organization. These scales were further associated with the behavioral dimensions of Behrman and Perreault (1982). Subsequently, these items were also adopted by Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka (2007). Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka noted that no bias was recorded previously in the self-report measures of Ingram et al. (1991).

The five-factor model of personality traits was adopted from the study of Sung and Choi (2009) and was based on five dimensions: (1) extraversion; (2) agreeableness; (3) conscientiousness; (4) emotional stability; and (5) openness to experience. Each dimension of the five-factor model was estimated through sub-items such as being talkative, assertive, energetic, and active. Agreeableness was also measured through five items: being agreeable, kind, cooperative, sympathetic, and warm. Conscientiousness was determined with four elements: being organized, efficient, careful, and conscientious. Emotional stability was accessed through four items: being anxious, emotional, irritable, and nervous. Similarly, openness to experience was measured through five items: being intellectual, creative, imaginative, bright, and innovative. All sub-items were adopted from the study of Sung and Choi (2009), as illustrated in Appendix B.

Analysis methodologies were based on descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and the analytical hierarchy process (AHP). The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-21), Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Visio were employed for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were applied to describe the data and obtain the demographic information of the respondents. Correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variables (DVs), adopted from previous studies (e.g., Pendharkar & Pandey, 2011; Salleh & Kamaruddin, 2011). Likewise, the analytical hierarchy process was employed to measure the intensity of each attribution of personality adopted from the study by Jadhav and Sonar (2009). Analytical hierarchy processes enrich the researcher's decision by evaluating the effect of each personality trait independently and in a more open fashion. Furthermore, the analytical hierarchy process empowers the researcher's decision with cleared and flexible outcomes (Alonso & Lamata, 2006; Awan, 2010; Jadhav & Sonar, 2009; Saaty & Vargas, 2001).

Cronbach's alpha values determine the internal consistency of the group items. This test is widely used to estimate the reliability of the research constructs and indicates inter-correlation among the items of variables (Peterson, 1994). The decision of Cronbach's alpha values varies from '0' to '1'.

The higher values of alpha are highly desirable while the lower values are less acceptable. Values of Cronbach’s alpha should be greater than .7, as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Many experts have measured the reliability of Cronbach’s variables over the past decades, including Sung and Choi (2000), Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka (2007), and Ingram et al. (1991).

Additionally, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was employed to estimate Pearson’s correlation values. The coefficients of Pearson’s correlation estimate the association among two variables (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2013). Taylor (1990) notes the Pearson’s coefficients are limited from -1 to +1 in which the higher positive value indicates a stronger relationship and the lower value expresses a weak association. According to Rumsey (2002), “r” indicates direction and association among the variables in Pearson’s correlation. Likewise, Taylor (1990) explained that positive values are present when the first variable increases and there is a corresponding increase in the second variable.

The analytical hierarchy process is a technique that can be adapted to organize and analyze complex business decisions based on mathematical models. With the implementation of the analytical hierarchy process in the current study, numerical weights in term of priority were derived hierarchically. This yielded a greater understanding for the researchers concerning each sub item of the research variables. The current study also adopted an online calculator for analytical hierarchy processes to assess priority values in a comprehensive way, which have been utilized successfully in past studies (Alonso & Lamata, 2006; Awan, 2010; Jadhav & Sonar, 2009; Saaty & Peniwati, 2013; Saaty & Vargas, 2001).

RESULTS

The characteristics of respondents were based on four attributes: gender, age, work experience, and salary packages. In this research, 82.4% were males and 17.6% were females, which indicates a higher ratio of the male respondents than females. Since Pakistan is a Muslim country, most women do not prefer sales jobs because of religious values. For example, sales work requires visiting multiple regions to meet and communicate with different people. Pakistani women do not like to meet strangers because of Islamic and social limitations. Another consideration is women need to manage both home and work responsibilities; therefore, it is not considered feasible for them to sort out both responsibilities at the same time. Demographic information on the subjects is addressed in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Findings

VARIABLES		MALE		FEMALE	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male and Female	420	82.4%	090	17.6%
Age	20-25 Years	190	45.2%	065	72.2%
	26-30 Years	127	30.2%	013	14.4%
	> 31 Years	103	24.6%	012	13.4%
Work Experience	< 5 Years	275	65.5%	035	38.9%
	5-10 Years	050	11.9%	030	33.3%
	11-15 Years	055	13.1%	015	16.7%
	>15 Years	040	9.5%	010	11.1
Salary Package	10000-20000 PKR/PM*	260	61.9%	030	33.3%
	21000-30000 PKR/PM*	085	20.2%	025	27.8%
	31000-40000 PKR/PM*	045	10.7%	020	22.2%
	>41000 PKR/PM*	030	7.1%	015	16.7%

Note. n=510

*PKR= Pakistan Rupee and PM= Per Month.

The results of mean and standard deviation are presented in Table 4. Average values enlighten the central tendency of the frequency distribution (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Whereas, standard deviation (SD) affirms variation of the variables in which higher values of standard deviation indicate the greater magnitude and lower values shows less variation (Leech et al., 2005). The current analysis reveals the values of mean and standard deviation such as extraversion (mean=5.67; standard deviation=1.21), agreeableness (mean=5.10; standard deviation =1.01), conscientiousness (mean=5.04; standard deviation =1.32), openness to experience (mean=5.01; standard deviation =1.43), and emotional stability (mean=4.25; standard deviation =1.19). Likewise, the values of sales performance indicate mean=5.70 and standard deviation =1.41. Furthermore, the description of the results is addressed in Appendix-A.

Table 4. Values of Mean and standard deviation

CONSTRUCTS	MEAN	SD*
Extraversion	5.67	1.21
Agreeableness	5.10	1.01
Conscientiousness	5.04	1.32
Emotional stability	5.01	1.43
Openness to experience	4.25	1.19

Note. Higher values show greater magnitude about each variable.

*SD= standard deviation

7-Points Likert Scale ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’ was employed.

Results of Pearson’s correlation show a positive relationship between the five-factor model (FFM) and sales performance, as illustrated in Table 5. On the other hand, extraversion has a significant relationship to the sales performance ($r=.710^{***}$, $p < .01$). Respectively, agreeableness has a significant correlation ($r=.702^{***}$, $p < .01$), openness to experience has a moderate correlation ($r=.592^{**}$, $p < .01$), and conscientiousness has a moderate relationship to the sales performance ($r=.699^{**}$, $p < .01$). However, emotional stability has a weak correlation to sales performance ($r=.411^*$, $p < .01$). The results of the present study are closely associated with previous studies (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Laporte, 1992; Lawler, 1985; Tadepalli et al., 1999; Widmier, 2002).

Table 5. Values of Person’s Correlation Analysis

SR. #,	VARIABLES	VALUES
1	Extraversion	.710***
2	Agreeableness	.702***
3	Conscientiousness	.699**
4	Emotional Stability	.411*
5	Openness to Experience	.592**

Note. $p < 0.01$; ***Higher Correlation; **Moderate Correlation; *Weak Correlation

The results of the analytical hierarchy process allow an understanding of the intensity of each factor related to global relative weighted indexes, as provided in Table 6. The greater values are considered higher affecting factors while lower values are less affecting factors of sales performance. This interpretation decision is adopted from the study of Saaty and Vargas (2001), Jadhav and Sonar (2009), and Awan (2010).

The impact of each personality characteristics is shown graphically. Whereas extraversion personality trait has a major impact on sales performance (0.3432), the agreeableness personality trait has a significant effect (0.2625) but comparatively less than the extraversion identification. Likewise, conscientiousness stands at the 3rd position (0.2054) with a positive effect but it has less than the extraversion agreeableness personality traits. Similarly, the openness to experience trait stands in the 4th place with an analytical hierarchy process (AHP) global weights index value of 0.1964. Finally, emotional stabil-

ity is a least affecting factor of the sales performance with analytical hierarchy process (AHP) global weights index value 0.1544, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Table 6. Results of analytical hierarchy process

SR. #,	VARIABLES	AHP*
1	Extraversion	0.3432
2	Agreeableness	0.2625
3	Conscientiousness	0.2054
4	Openness to experience	0.1964
5	Emotional stability	0.1544

Note. Values are presented in descending order where higher values indicate a greater effect and lower values indicate a smaller effect
 *AHP= analytical hierarchy process.

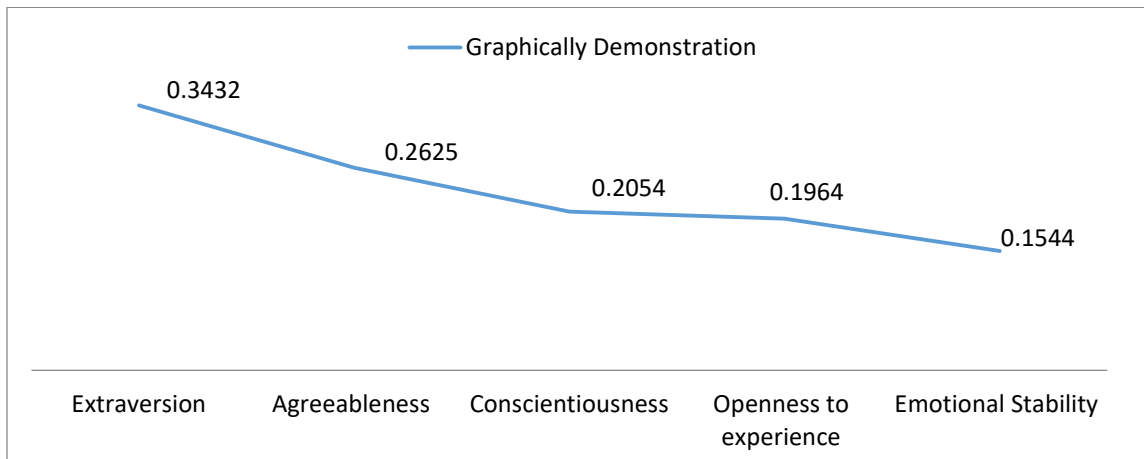


Figure 2. Graphically demonstration of the five-factor model (FFM)

Results of the analytical hierarchy process (AHP) revealed the intensity of each factor of the five-factor model (FFM) autonomously. The correlation analysis indicated a relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable, as presented above in Tables 5 and 6 and in Figure 2. We sought to test the following research hypothesis based on the current analysis methodologies and findings.

In hypothesis one, it was proposed that salespeople with the extraversion personality trait perform at higher levels than those with extraversion. The results confirmed a strong positive association between extraversion and sales performance with a Pearson’s correlation value ($r=.710^{***}$, $p < .01$) and an analytical hierarchy process value (0.3432). The results indicated that salespeople with a high level of the extraversion personality trait significantly perform at higher levels than those who were tested at lower levels in Pakistan. Thus, hypothesis one was supported.

In hypothesis two, it was proposed that salespeople with high levels of agreeableness perform better than those with lower levels of that personality trait. Results portrayed a strong positive relationship between agreeableness and sales performance using Pearson’s correlation value ($r=.702^{***}$, $p < .01$) and an analytical hierarchy process value (0.2625). The results revealed that the agreeableness personality trait has a strong positive effect on sales performance but not to the same effect as the extraversion personality trait. Thus, results supported the hypothesis that salespeople with agreeableness personality trait significantly perform at higher levels than lower levels of the agreeableness personality trait. Hypothesis two is then also supported.

Hypothesis three suggested salespeople with higher levels of the conscientiousness personality trait perform higher levels than lower levels. The results revealed a positive relationship between the con-

conscientiousness personality trait and sales performance with a Pearson's correlation value ($r=.699^{**}$, $p < .01$) and the analytical hierarchy process value (0.2054). The outcome was a positive relationship between the conscientiousness personality trait and sales performance. Thus, the results affirmed that the salespeople with greater levels of the conscientiousness trait perform significantly better than sales people levels of that trait. Accordingly, hypothesis three is supported.

Further, it was suggested by hypothesis four that salespeople with emotional stability personality trait perform at higher levels than those with lower levels of that trait. All the results indicated a positive relationship between emotional stability and sales performance using both the Pearson's correlation value ($r=.411^*$, $p < .01$) and the analytical hierarchy process value (0.1544). Test result analysis suggests salespeople with a higher emotional stability personality trait perform at higher levels than people with lower levels of the trait. Consequently, hypothesis four is supported by the results findings. However, emotional stability personality trait has a less positive correlation than extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience personality traits.

Finally, it was proposed in hypothesis five that salespeople with high levels of the openness to experience personality trait performed at stronger levels than salespeople who tested with lower levels of the openness to experience trait. Analysis of the results indicated there is a positive correlation between the openness to experience personality trait and sales performance using Pearson's correlation value ($r=.592^{**}$, $p < .01$) and the analytical hierarchy process value (0.1964). All results indicated that salesperson with a higher level of the openness to experience personality trait perform at greater levels than those who tested at a lower trait level. Thus, the hypothesis five of the present study was also supported. However, the results of the testing indicated that the openness to experience trait has a less positive impact than extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness but that trait has a higher effect than the emotional stability personality one.

DISCUSSION

Many researchers and practitioners have claimed that a capable sales force is essential for an organization to enhance its sales performance (Casidy, 2012; Sung & Choi, 2009). The findings of the current study suggest the five-factor model of personality traits has a positive effect on sales performance within Pakistan. In contrast, it is revealed that extraversion personality trait has a higher impact than agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. However, emotional stability is the least influencing factor than remainder attributes of the five-factor model.

Furthermore, the present study confirmed there is a positive correlation between the five-factor model and sales performance in its many sub-dimensions; although the intensity level of each attribute is quite dissimilar. It is important for sales management to hire candidates who perform at a higher level in the organization. Such choices might be evaluated through personality assessment using the following salient characteristics:

- *Extraversion* was touted a highly desirable personality by sales managers in Pakistan because individuals with this ability are more talkative, energetic, assertive, and active. The results of the present study support prior studies in this area (Barrick & Mount, 1991, 1993; Sung & Choi, 2009). Barrick and Mount (1991) hold that a sales person with an extraversion personality trait is a better performer in the sales field relatively than those with the other qualities.
- The *agreeableness* personality trait was determined as a productive quality but was viewed less in importance than extraversion by Pakistani sales managers. However, agreeableness is highly desirable when compared to openness to experience, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. The findings of the present study are consistent with the prior studies (Arkin & Hassin, 1994; Warr et al., 2005).
- *Conscientiousness* was viewed as a desirable personality trait by sales management in Pakistan. However, it was deemed less important than extraversion and agreeableness. The results of the current study affirmed that the conscientiousness personality trait might perform better in the

sales occupation. This finding complement previous studies in this area (Gutin & Punnen, 2006; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Salgado, 1997; Widmier, 2002;).

- The *Openness to experience* personality trait was viewed as an efficient behavior but was determined by Pakistani sales managers to be less important than extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Moreover, openness to experience was deemed more desirable than emotional stability. Our results revealed a candidate's openness to experience has a positive correlation to sales performance. Previous studies agreed that openness to experience is also a valid predictor of sales performance (Warr et al., 1979; Warr et al., 2005).
- The current research also determined there is a positive effect between *emotional stability* and sales performance, which supported the findings of the Widmier (2002). However, sales managers in Pakistan did not rank it as a top attribute and found it to be the least positive correlation on sales performance.

The current study has certain theoretical contributions to the literature on sales performance and personality traits. For example, prior studies narrowly examined the trait effects concerning just a few dimensions of FFM but did not make a nexus to multiple personality contexts combined with distinct measurement constructs. Still, replication of the present research is possible by utilizing additional empirical evidence and examining the relationship of the entire five-factor model on sales performance.

The researchers of this study hold it is critical for Pakistani sales management to judge an individual's personality traits before hiring them as a salesperson. Therefore, certain trait assessments should be considered outside of FFM including the Myers-Briggs personality assessment, projective tests, behavioral assessment techniques, self-reporting methods, as well as other evaluation methods and techniques suggested in previous studies (Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2007; Farr & Tippins, 2010; Pendharkar & Pandey, 2011). Moreover, personality identification training programs should be made available to educate and enrich best practices among the existing sales force as well as set benchmarks for new sales members who will be hired in the future.

This study suggests some managerial considerations for sales management to screen and recruit potential salespeople by understanding their personalities before the final decision is made to hire a high value candidate. It is imperative for sales managers in Pakistan to choose appropriate scales to evaluate energetic sales performers to determine potential superior sales outcomes from an individual. Our research determined that the extraversion and agreeableness personality traits have greater possible sales outcomes for individuals who desire to work in the industry, followed by openness to experience, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. The study findings acknowledged the extraversion personality trait is what sales manager look for in potential candidates while low levels of emotional stability may not be a suitable for those who desire to work in the sales industry in Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study discovered personality traits of an organization's existing sales force might be enhanced through different methods and training initiatives. Many researchers have previously considered personality assessment and development methods as an aid to increase performance. Several self-report psychological methods could be adopted to help improve an individual's personality. In fact, all personality assessment techniques might helpful to evaluate the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, norm, and values of an individual.

The success of an exceptional firm depends on employees' performance. Therefore, it is essential for an employment recruiter to hire the best performer. In contrast, a poor performer may be detrimental toward organizational success. The sales force of any organization is a crucial asset that endeavors to generate maximum revenue to its owners. Without motivated sales people, the overall objectives of the organization might be affected in a negative way. Therefore, understanding the personality of potential employees can be a useful tool during the selection process. Hence, the organi-

zation can enhance its sales efficiency by evaluating the personality traits of their top candidates before the hiring manager makes their final selection. This study used the insights of the five-factor model (FFM) to investigate its connections to increased sales performance among multiple industries in Pakistan.

Besides, the present study has certain limitations. First, the sample size was small and adopted from a single province of Pakistan (East-Punjab), which limits the generalizability of the current study. Second, experienced salespeople may furnish better feedback on sales related inquiries than the current sample provided. Only 10% of the sampled salespersons were determined to be well-experienced in our survey. Third, a small number of females in the identified population (17%) responded to us, which did not allow the researchers to determine if there were any differences among that demographic segment. Finally, the current study did not examine any moderating effect between the relationship of the five-factor model to sales performance.

Future recommendations for researchers and practitioners include:

- Each specific dimension of the five-factor model should be examined to include a broader sample of Pakistani sales people.
- A more experienced and skilled sales force should be considered to obtain feedback on FFM in organizations in other geographical locations around Pakistan to ensure a greater level of generalizability.
- A broader study should be conducted to investigate the effects of FFM on female sales employees in the absence of religious and cultural forces in specific regions of Pakistan.
- Research should be conducted to evaluate the moderating effects of specific variables including cultural values, social classes, buying trends, purchasing power, and other personality traits in Pakistan.
- Using the results of this study to compare and to contrast results related to other countries with similar religious and cultural challenges of Pakistan.

This study depicts the significance of specific personality traits in which extraversion seemed to be the most prominent trait in the sales industry. Similarly, many researchers and practitioners have argued that such persons are highly energetic and are more likely to bring higher levels of sales. It is noted that agreeableness is also an attractive personality trait in sales behavior but is relatively less influential than the extroversion one. The influence of conscientiousness and openness to experience personality traits were assessed to provide empirical evidence for sales organizations in Pakistan. Our study determined emotional stability is not a persuasive personality trait and organizations may want to reevaluate candidates who are tested as bringing such traits into an organization.

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Appendix-A

Results of mean, standard deviation (SD), and Cronbach's alpha's

EXTRAVERSION*															
	EX-1			EX-2			EX-3			EX-4					
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α			
SP1**	5.60	1.90	.80	5.43	1.81	.84	5.81	1.34	.82	5.75	1.06	.79			
SP2**	5.71	1.65		5.65	1.32		5.35	1.54		5.77	1.54				
SP3**	5.81	1.80		5.14	1.44		5.23	1.32		5.6	1.23				
SP4**	5.72	1.33		5.54	1.32		5.60	1.76		5.87	1.75				
SP5**	5.52	1.10		5.72	1.15		5.91	1.26		5.82	1.50				
SP6**	5.72	1.43		5.61	1.83		5.65	1.75		5.81	1.64				
TOTAL	5.68	1.13		5.65	1.60		5.59	1.10		5.77	1.01				
AGREEABLENESS*															
	AA-5			AA-6			AA-7			AA-8			AA-9		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
SP1**	5.01	1.21	.77	5.02	1.77	.83	5.1	1.80	.82	5.02	1.72	.78	5.03	1.72	.80
SP2**	5.04	1.03		5.12	1.91		5.07	1.32		5.01	1.81		5.01	1.74	
SP3**	5.04	1.63		5.06	1.32		5.06	1.44		5.02	1.78		5.07	1.66	
SP4**	5.02	1.03		5.02	1.42		5.04	1.56		5.01	1.82		5.04	1.69	
SP5**	5.05	1.11		5.03	1.44		5.02	1.73		5.02	1.76		5.03	1.71	
SP6**	5.02	1.83		5.05	1.71		5.07	1.77		5.04	1.82		5.06	1.75	
TOTAL	5.03	1.01		5.05	1.02		5.06	1.01		5.02	1.01		5.04	1.00	
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS*															
	C-10			C-11			C-12			C-13					
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α			
SP1**	5.08	1.21	.78	5.14	1.33	.81	5.08	1.39	.80	5.27	1.41	.79			
SP2**	5.03	1.28		5.25	1.32		5.03	1.37		5.13	1.39				
SP3**	5.01	1.22		5.09	1.31		5.05	1.38		5.11	1.35				
SP4**	5.05	1.36		5.19	1.37		5.05	1.36		5.24	1.38				
SP5**	5.04	1.29		5.08	1.35		5.02	1.37		5.07	1.35				
SP6**	5.03	1.34		5.21	1.29		5.07	1.34		5.08	1.33				
TOTAL	5.04	1.42		5.16	1.53		5.05	1.05		1.15	1.28				
OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE*															
	O2E-14			O2E-15			O2E-16			O2E-17			O2E-18		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
SP1**	5.01	1.92	.78	4.8	1.89	.74	4.56	1.86	.80	5.46	1.91	.72	4.99	1.89	.75
SP2**	5.03	1.88		5.01	1.87		5.02	1.81		5.45	1.89		5.01	1.88	
SP3**	5.04	1.81		5.02	1.47		5.01	1.79		5.17	1.87		5.02	1.81	
SP4**	5.02	1.77		5.05	1.85		5.07	1.88		5.43	1.85		5.05	1.87	
SP5**	5.03	1.82		5.04	1.84		5.02	1.82		5.28	1.88		5.03	1.84	
SP6**	5.05	1.69		5.02	1.81		5.02	1.90		5.61	1.96		5.02	1.86	
TOTAL	5.03	1.99		5.99	1.01		5.95	1.88		5.04	1.12		5.02	1.15	
EMOTIONAL STABILITY*															
	ES-19			ES-20			ES-21			ES-22					
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α			
SP1**	4.03	1.82	.74	4.9	1.88	.71	4.67	1.87	.75	4.25	1.84	.72			
SP2**	4.02	1.80		4.05	1.83		4.9	1.86		4.11	1.87				
SP3**	4.09	1.89		4.12	1.82		4.53	1.89		4.5	1.82				
SP4**	4.05	1.90		4.04	1.90		4.27	1.83		4.12	1.80				
SP5**	4.02	1.86		4.07	1.81		4.4	1.81		4.5	1.81				
SP6**	4.03	1.82		4.08	1.84		4.23	1.83		4.02	1.87				
TOTAL	4.04	1.16		4.21	1.10		4.50	1.45		4.25	1.05				

Note. M= Means; SD= Standard Deviation; a= Cronbach's Alpha

**Dependent Variables (DV)

*Independent Variable (IV)

Appendix-B

(Questionnaire Items)

The five-factor model (FFM) of personality traits and sales perform in the context of Pakistan
7-point Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to Strong Agree (7)

Five-Factor Model of the Personality* , <i>adopted from the Sung and Choi (2009)</i>	
(i). Extraversion	
EX-1	The effect of Talkative personality trait
EX-2	The effect of Assertive personality trait
EX-3	The effect of Energetic personality trait
EX-4	Effect of Active personality trait
(ii). Agreeableness	
AA-5	The effect of Agreeable personality trait
AA-6	The effect of Kind personality trait
AA-7	Effect of Cooperative personality trait
AA-8	Effect of Sympathetic personality trait
AA-9	Effect of Warm personality trait
(iii). Conscientiousness	
C-10	Effect of Organized personality trait
C-11	Effect of Efficient personality trait
C-12	Effect of Careful personality trait
C-13	Effect of Conscientious personality trait
(iv). Openness to experience	
O2E-14	Effect of Intellectual personality trait
O2E-15	Effect of Creative personality trait
O2E-16	Effect of Imaginative personality trait
O2E-17	Effect of Bright personality trait
O2E-18	Effect of Innovative personality trait
(v). Emotional stability	
ES-19	Effect of Anxious personality trait
ES-20	Effect of Emotional personality trait
ES-21	Effect of Irritable personality trait
ES-22	Effect of Nervous personality trait
Sales Performance** , <i>adopted from the Ingram et al. (1991)</i>	
SP-1	Achieving quantity & quality sales objectives
SP-2	Controlling unnecessary expenses
SP-3	Follow Firm's Policy & Information Provision
SP-4	Developing and use of technical knowledge
SP-5	Giving high-quality sales presentation
SP-6	Working well with all organizational individuals

** Dependent Variables (DV)

* Independent Variable (IV)

BIOGRAPHIES



Abdul Waheed is a Ph.D scholar under China Scholarship Council (CSC) at University of Science and Technology Beijing, Donglinks school of economics and management, Beijing-China. He has obtained the degrees of BBA (Hons) and MBA-II/MS with specializations in marketing from Bahaududin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan-Pakistan in 2006-10 and 2010-12, respectively. He has performed the duties as a Lecturer marketing for more than two years at Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic University, AJ&K, Pakistan. He had been working as a Principal for one year at Mohi-Ud-Din Islamic Inter College, AJ&K, Pakistan. Despite, Waheed is honorary Director Marketing & Promotion at four educational institutes of the Pakistan. His teaching and research interests include Sales Management, Promotion Management, Supply Chain Management, and e-Marketing (eM).



Jianhua Yang is a Professor and Ph.D. tutor at University of Science and Technology Beijing, Donglinks School of Economics and Management, Beijing- P.R. China. He has obtained the degrees of BS Engineering and MS System Engineering from the East China Institute of Technology in 1987 and 1990. Yang has received the Ph.D. degree in Management Sciences from the Nanjing University of Science and Technology in 2002. His teaching and research interests include Operation Management, Information System Management, Supply Chain Management, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), System Analysis and Service Management. Apart from, Yang has supervised numerous national and international research scholars.



Dr. Jon Webber is married and has four children and a number of grandchildren. He is the President/CEO of Webber Impact Management, Inc., a global consulting and training firm specializing in ethics, leadership, team building, coaching, management, and organizational behavior. He is internationally recognized for his seminal work in common sense leadership and corporate social responsibility. He assists senior level managers and organizations in seeing the “big picture” of where they really are now and where they could be in the future if they dare dream the possibilities that are within their reach. Dr. Webber is involved in leadership development and research projects in Europe, Africa, and Asia. He has been a senior faculty member at many of the top ten online universities in the world. He is a published international author.