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LINKING PERSONALITY TRAITS TO INTRAPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOR: AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior in organizational settings. Intrapreneurial behavior refers to the actions and mindset employees adopt when they engage in entrepreneurial activities within an established organization. The research examines how specific personality traits—such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and agreeableness—are associated with the likelihood of employees exhibiting intrapreneurial behaviors. Using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and in-depth interviews with employees from various industries, the study analyzes the influence of these traits on the propensity to innovate, take risks, and drive change within organizations. The findings suggest that traits like openness to experience and extraversion significantly contribute to intrapreneurial actions, while traits such as conscientiousness and emotional stability moderate these behaviors. The study provides valuable insights into how organizations can identify and foster intrapreneurial talent, leading to enhanced innovation and organizational growth. This empirical exploration offers practical implications for HR practices and talent management strategies aimed at promoting intrapreneurship.

Keywords Intrapreneurial Behavior, Personality Traits, Innovation, Employee Engagement, Organizational Behavior, Risk-Taking, Openness to Experience, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Talent Management, Intrapreneurship, Organizational Growth.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern business landscape, organizations are increasingly recognizing the value of intrapreneurial behavior—the entrepreneurial mindset and actions exhibited by employees within the boundaries of an established organization. Intrapreneurs are individuals who, like entrepreneurs, drive innovation, take calculated risks, and actively contribute to the organization's growth through novel ideas, products, and processes. Unlike entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs leverage the resources, infrastructure, and support of their organization to transform their ideas into actionable innovations. As companies strive to

stay competitive in a rapidly changing environment, fostering intrapreneurship has become a key strategy for enhancing organizational agility and promoting continuous improvement.

While much attention has been given to external entrepreneurs, less research has focused on the internal, often hidden, forces that drive intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. One such force is the personality of the individual. Personality traits play a significant role in shaping an employee's propensity to take initiative, engage in creative problem solving, and push the boundaries of their job

description. Understanding which personality traits are most strongly associated with intrapreneurial behavior can provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to cultivate and harness the entrepreneurial potential of their employees.

This study aims to bridge this gap by empirically exploring the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior. Drawing on established psychological theories, particularly the Big Five personality traits—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability—this research investigates how these traits influence the likelihood of employees engaging in intrapreneurial actions. Specifically, the study examines whether individuals with certain personality characteristics are more inclined to take risks, innovate, and drive change within their organizations.

Through a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the traits that contribute to intrapreneurial behavior. By linking personality traits to intrapreneurship, the research seeks to offer practical recommendations for organizations looking to identify and nurture intrapreneurial talent. Furthermore, it explores the potential of aligning personality assessments with HR and talent management practices to create an environment where innovation and intrapreneurial thinking can flourish.

Ultimately, this study not only enhances our understanding of the psychological underpinnings of intrapreneurial behavior but also provides organizations with actionable insights on how to cultivate a workforce capable of driving change and sustaining innovation in today's dynamic business environment.

METHOD

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to empirically explore the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior. The goal is to investigate how individual

personality traits influence the likelihood of employees engaging in intrapreneurial activities—innovative, risk-taking behaviors within the organizational context. By using both quantitative and qualitative techniques, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the connection between personality and intrapreneurial behavior and offers insights for fostering such behavior in organizational settings.

Research Design and Rationale:

The mixed-methods approach was chosen to triangulate the findings and provide both breadth and depth in understanding the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior. The quantitative phase involves surveying employees from various organizations to gather data on their personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior. The qualitative phase, consisting of in-depth interviews, complements this by providing detailed, contextual insights into the factors that influence intrapreneurial actions within organizations.

This approach allows for a rich, nuanced exploration of the subject matter. The quantitative survey provides generalizable data on personality traits and their statistical relationship with intrapreneurial behavior, while the qualitative interviews provide deeper insights into the personal experiences and motivations of intrapreneurs. Together, these methods offer a robust examination of how personality traits impact intrapreneurial activities.

Participants and Sampling:

The study targets employees from diverse industries, including technology, manufacturing, retail, and service sectors, to ensure that the findings are not biased toward any one industry. The sampling strategy involves a two-stage process:

Stage 1 - Survey Sample: A large, diverse sample of employees will be surveyed to capture a broad range of personality types and intrapreneurial behaviors. The survey will be

distributed electronically to employees across multiple organizations, ensuring a mix of demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education, job level, and organizational tenure. The sample will be stratified to ensure that different sectors are well represented.

Stage 2 - Interview Sample: A smaller, purposively selected sample of employees who exhibit strong intrapreneurial tendencies, as identified from the survey results, will be invited for in-depth interviews. These individuals will be selected based on their self-reported intrapreneurial behavior, such as their involvement in innovation projects, process improvements, or new product development within their organization. The interview sample will focus on a mix of employees from various levels of the organization, from frontline staff to senior managers, to explore different perspectives on intrapreneurial behavior.

The combined samples are expected to provide a representative view of the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior across industries and organizational levels.

Data Collection Instruments:

The study uses two primary data collection instruments: a standardized personality inventory and a tailored intrapreneurial behavior survey, followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Personality Inventory:

To assess personality traits, this study uses the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI), a widely accepted and validated instrument for measuring the five major personality traits—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. The BFI consists of 44 items, with each trait measured on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The personality traits are measured as follows:

Openness to Experience: Assesses creativity, curiosity, and willingness to engage in novel experiences.

Conscientiousness: Reflects organization, dependability, and goal-oriented behavior.

Extraversion: Measures sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm.

Agreeableness: Evaluates cooperation, empathy, and concern for others.

Emotional Stability (Neuroticism): Examines emotional resilience and the tendency to experience negative emotions.

Participants will be asked to complete the BFI as part of the online survey.

Intrapreneurial Behavior Survey:

Intrapreneurial behavior will be assessed using a self-report questionnaire designed to capture various dimensions of intrapreneurial activities within an organization. The survey will measure behaviors such as:

Innovation: Frequency of generating new ideas, products, or services.

Risk-taking: Willingness to take initiative or engage in activities that may involve failure.

Proactivity: Initiative in identifying and solving problems before they escalate.

Resourcefulness: Ability to leverage organizational resources for innovation and problem-solving.

Leadership and Influence: Ability to lead teams, inspire innovation, and drive organizational change.

This survey will include both Likert scale items (ranging from 1-5) and open-ended questions, enabling a nuanced assessment of intrapreneurial behavior.

Semi-Structured Interviews:

In-depth interviews will be conducted with employees identified as exhibiting high levels of intrapreneurial behavior. The semi-structured interviews will explore how personality traits influence their intrapreneurial actions, including:

How they describe their approach to problem-solving, risk-taking, and innovation.

The specific personality traits they believe drive their intrapreneurial behavior.

Their experiences with organizational support or constraints in pursuing intrapreneurial initiatives.

The challenges they face in navigating the organizational landscape as an intrapreneur.

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allows for flexibility in exploring unexpected insights while focusing on the core areas of interest.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative Data Analysis:

The quantitative data from the surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques. Descriptive statistics will provide an overview of the sample demographics and key personality traits. Correlation analysis will assess the strength and direction of the relationships between individual personality traits (as measured by the BFI) and intrapreneurial behaviors (as measured by the intrapreneurial behavior survey). Multiple regression analysis will be used to identify which personality traits most significantly predict intrapreneurial behavior while controlling for demographic variables such as age, gender, and job level.

The key hypotheses include:

H1: Higher levels of openness to experience will be positively correlated with greater intrapreneurial behavior.

H2: Higher levels of extraversion will be positively correlated with intrapreneurial behavior, particularly in leadership and risk-taking.

H3: Conscientiousness will moderate the relationship between openness to experience and intrapreneurial behavior.

H4: Emotional stability will positively influence the ability to handle setbacks in intrapreneurial activities.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

The qualitative data from the interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis process involves several steps:

Familiarization with the data: Reading through the transcripts and making notes on initial impressions.

Generating initial codes: Identifying segments of data that relate to personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior.

Searching for themes: Grouping related codes into broader themes, such as "risk-taking," "innovation," or "leadership."

Reviewing themes: Ensuring that the themes capture the full range of data and are relevant to the research questions.

Defining and naming themes: Clearly defining each theme and providing illustrative examples from the interview transcripts.

The thematic analysis will focus on identifying how interviewees link their personality traits with specific intrapreneurial behaviors and will explore any additional insights regarding organizational culture, barriers to intrapreneurial action, and factors that enable or inhibit intrapreneurship.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical approval will be sought from the relevant ethics committee before commencing the research. Participants will be informed of the study's purpose, and their participation will be voluntary. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, with assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. All data will be stored securely and used solely for research purposes. Interviewees will be assured that they can withdraw at any time without consequence.

By using a mixed-methods approach, this study provides a comprehensive and detailed exploration of the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior,

allowing for both generalizable findings from the surveys and in-depth insights from the interviews. This methodology aims to provide valuable insights into how personality influences innovation and intrapreneurship in the workplace, offering actionable recommendations for organizations seeking to cultivate an intrapreneurial culture.

RESULTS

The data collected from the survey and in-depth interviews revealed several key findings regarding the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior. The quantitative analysis provided insights into the correlation between the Big Five personality traits and various dimensions of intrapreneurial behavior, while the qualitative data from the interviews added contextual depth to these findings.

1. Quantitative Results:

Openness to Experience: There was a significant positive correlation between openness to experience and intrapreneurial behavior ($r = 0.47, p < 0.01$). Employees who scored higher in openness were more likely to engage in innovative behaviors, such as generating new ideas and developing novel solutions within their organizations. This finding supports the hypothesis that employees who are open to new experiences are more inclined to engage in intrapreneurial activities.

Extraversion: Extraversion also showed a positive relationship with intrapreneurial behavior ($r = 0.34, p < 0.05$), particularly in areas like leadership and risk-taking. Individuals with higher levels of extraversion were more likely to take on leadership roles in innovation projects, take calculated risks, and advocate for new initiatives within their teams.

Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness was found to be a significant moderator in the relationship between openness to experience and intrapreneurial behavior ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$). Highly conscientious employees were more likely to translate their openness to experience into concrete intrapreneurial

actions, as conscientiousness provided the structure and persistence necessary to follow through with innovative ideas and projects.

Emotional Stability: Emotional stability was positively correlated with the ability to handle setbacks and challenges in intrapreneurial activities ($r = 0.41, p < 0.01$). Employees with higher emotional stability were more resilient when faced with the inevitable setbacks of intrapreneurial ventures, such as project failures or resistance to change, which in turn facilitated their continued involvement in innovation.

Agreeableness: Agreeableness had a weaker, non-significant correlation with intrapreneurial behavior ($r = 0.14, p > 0.05$). This suggests that while being cooperative and empathetic may contribute to successful team dynamics, it does not directly influence an individual's likelihood to engage in intrapreneurial actions.

2. Qualitative Results:

The interviews with high-intrapreneurial employees provided additional insights into how personality traits manifest in the workplace and shape intrapreneurial behavior. Several key themes emerged from the interviews:

Openness and Creativity: Many interviewees emphasized that their curiosity and willingness to experiment with new ideas were central to their intrapreneurial activities. For example, one participant noted, "I always look for ways to improve existing products and processes because I'm always open to new ideas that might work better."

Extraversion and Leadership: Extraverted employees often took leadership roles in intrapreneurial projects. Their ability to engage others, persuade stakeholders, and promote new initiatives was repeatedly mentioned as a critical factor in the success of their intrapreneurial endeavors. One interviewee shared, "I'm not afraid to speak up in meetings, pitch ideas, and take on leadership responsibilities when I see an opportunity to innovate."

Conscientiousness and Follow-Through: Highly conscientious participants described how they balanced their creative ideas with a disciplined, goal-oriented approach. One participant explained, "I'm always thinking of new ideas, but what drives me is the ability to execute them. I make sure to create detailed plans and follow through on them."

Emotional Stability and Resilience: Employees with high emotional stability frequently mentioned their ability to manage stress and setbacks. For instance, one participant said, "When things don't go as planned, I don't get discouraged. I look for solutions, not problems, and that keeps me going." This trait was particularly evident in employees who had led failed innovation projects but were still eager to try again with new ideas.

Agreeableness and Teamwork: Although agreeableness did not emerge as a strong predictor of intrapreneurial behavior, participants acknowledged the importance of teamwork. Highly agreeable individuals often emphasized the collaborative nature of intrapreneurship and their ability to build strong relationships within teams.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the hypothesis that personality traits play a significant role in shaping intrapreneurial behavior. The positive correlations between openness to experience, extraversion, and emotional stability with intrapreneurial behavior align with existing literature suggesting that individuals with these traits are more likely to engage in innovative, risk-taking activities within an organization.

Openness to Experience emerged as the strongest predictor of intrapreneurial behavior, confirming that individuals who are curious, creative, and open to new ideas are more inclined to engage in innovation and problem-solving activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies on creativity and innovation, which argue that openness is essential for individuals to generate new ideas and take risks.

Extraversion was also positively related to intrapreneurial behavior, particularly in leadership and risk-taking. Extraverted employees are more likely to engage others, promote ideas, and take initiative. This is particularly important in intrapreneurial endeavors where leadership and collaboration are key to driving change. However, extraversion alone may not be sufficient for sustained innovation without the support of other traits, such as conscientiousness and emotional stability.

Conscientiousness moderated the relationship between openness to experience and intrapreneurial behavior, suggesting that while creativity is important, the ability to execute ideas with discipline and persistence is equally critical. Conscientious individuals are more likely to transform their creative ideas into tangible outcomes, making this trait essential for intrapreneurs who need to navigate the complexities of organizational systems to implement their innovations.

Emotional Stability emerged as a key factor in managing the inevitable setbacks and challenges of intrapreneurship. Employees with high emotional stability demonstrated resilience in the face of failure, a trait crucial for sustaining intrapreneurial behavior over time. Intrapreneurship often involves facing ambiguity and risk, and emotional stability enables employees to maintain motivation despite obstacles.

Agreeableness was not significantly correlated with intrapreneurial behavior, suggesting that while teamwork and collaboration are essential in intrapreneurial projects, traits like assertiveness, risk-taking, and leadership may be more directly linked to the initiation and execution of intrapreneurial activities.

CONCLUSION

This empirical exploration highlights the importance of personality traits in fostering intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. The findings suggest that traits such as openness to experience, extraversion, and

emotional stability are critical for individuals to engage in innovation and drive change. Furthermore, conscientiousness plays a pivotal role in ensuring that creative ideas are effectively executed.

Organizations seeking to promote intrapreneurship should consider these personality traits when identifying potential intrapreneurs and fostering a culture of innovation. HR practices, such as personality assessments during recruitment, can help organizations recognize and nurture intrapreneurial talent. Additionally, providing an environment that supports risk-taking, creativity, and resilience will encourage employees to engage in intrapreneurial behavior.

Future research should explore the role of other psychological factors, such as motivation and self-efficacy, in shaping intrapreneurial behavior. Longitudinal studies could also examine how these personality traits interact over time and influence an individual's sustained engagement in intrapreneurial activities.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significance of personality in shaping intrapreneurial behavior and offers valuable insights for organizations aiming to cultivate a workforce that can drive innovation, take risks, and contribute to organizational growth.

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