

Personality Traits, Motivation, and Performance of Employees in a Pharmaceutical Company in the Philippines: Basis for Performance Improvement Plan

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The Asian Conference on Psychology & the Behavioral Sciences 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This descriptive correlational design study examined the relationship between employees' personality traits, motivation, and performance of employees in a pharmaceutical company in the Philippines. Corollary to this, it determined whether personality traits and motivation predict the work performance of medical sales representatives. A total of 125 medical sales representatives assigned at the NCR were selected for the study using stratified and universal sampling. Three instruments were used in this investigation: The Big Five Personality Test by Mcrae and Costa (2003) to identify the personality of the respondents; Work Motivation Questionnaire-A by Agarwal (2012), and the Performance Appraisal Evaluation by Getz Pharma (2018). Motivation and job performance were shown to be positively associated, as were personality traits and work performance, but motivation and personality were found to be unrelated. The strength of the relationship for the first two constructs, however, was weak. Further, results also suggested that material incentives and job situations were significant predictors of work performance. The majority of the findings are supported by the literature review, except for the link between personality traits and motivation in the context of sales, which needs further investigation. Finally, a general work performance improvement plan is recommended to further improve the performance of the medical sales representatives.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Motivation, Work Performance, Sales Representatives, Predictors of Performance

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Introduction

The Philippines is the 11th most attractive pharmaceutical market in the Asia-Pacific region and the third-largest pharmaceutical market in ASEAN, after Indonesia and Thailand. While, Filipino pharmaceuticals is one of the fastest growing industries in the country and has grown year to year.

Pharmaceutical and healthcare companies are the major employers of medical sales representatives which is the most visible person in pharmaceutical marketing while they're bottom-most position in the hierarchy, but it has the most significant responsibility in the success in the business of the company in driving sales and increasing demands in the prescription that will turn into sales in time. In the study done by Bakker, Tims, and Derks (2012) researchers concluded that employees with a proactive personality crafted their own jobs in order to stay engaged and perform well. However, personality traits may also be key indicators of other facets of an individual's life, including innovativeness and satisfaction with life and work according to Loewe et al., (2014).

Having a motivational work environment is important especially in workplaces that has a high level of stress, pressure and target to achieve. In the research study conducted by Yongsun, Barbara, and Christy (2002) results shows that motivated employees are needed and required during this generation wherein workplaces and markets are rapidly from time to time this will help the organization to survive by performing the job and work required with their full latent; hence employees will be more productive.

Work performance is crucial to business organizations and the company's overall success, business leaders have been trying to understand the factors affecting it to develop ways to further improve employees' work performance. The study of Usop et al. (2013) correlated work performance with job satisfaction. The result of the study suggested that workers who are satisfied with their jobs have high work performance. The most common variable correlated to work performance is motivation. In the study of Srivastava (2016), she maintained that for the company to optimize employee performance, there is a need for the employees to be sufficiently motivated.

Personality is another factor investigated along with work performance. Bakker, Tims, and Derks (2012) concluded that employees with a proactive personality crafted their own jobs in order to stay engaged and perform well. Among the sector that thrives on sales are pharmaceutical companies. Getz Pharma Philippines ranked 15th across the pharmaceutical companies in the Philippines. It is a multinational company domiciled in Pakistan, with a presence in more than 25 countries worldwide.

In the Philippines, Getz Pharma is currently ranked 15th across the pharmaceutical companies, it is also considered as one of the fastest-growing branded generic companies were in just five years into operation it became one of the top twenty pharmaceutical companies. Year 2015 were Getz started operations in the Philippines and it has earned reputation nationwide in the market due to its highly qualified, agile, passionate, hardworking marketing, sales workforce and support teams. With the steep competition brought about by a number of local and multinational pharmaceutical companies in the country, Getz has been looking for ways to further improve its sales to become the most profitable pharmaceutical company in the country.

The company, therefore, banks on its sales representatives to perform well to keep the company ahead of the competition. Because of the increasingly competitive environment, Organizations face a lot of challenges. Employees are expected to excel still more and maintain a highly competitive mindset considering the market competition and the volatile working environment, Much more medical representatives should maintain good personality traits, keep motivated, and strive to achieve the highest performance that will lead to the company's goal. In highly performance-based companies like Getz, it can be seen as a necessary factor in enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and performance in the workplace. Having a motivational work environment is crucial, especially in sales companies characterized to have high levels of stress, pressure, and target to achieve (Yongsun, Barbara, & Christy, 2002).

In order to retain high sales performers, Getz Pharma ensures to provide benefits and incentives to its employees to maintain and attract highly qualified sales representatives and for them to be motivated to perform. The factors investigated in this present study are similar to the work of Seibokaite and endriulaitiene (2012) who found out that personality type predicts work motivation, which in turn, could predict work performance. The paper of Nuckcheddy (2018) likewise revealed a similar result that personality predicts motivation through personal emotional stability, level of aggression, and extrovert or introvert characteristics of workers. It was also found that personality predicts work performance.

The study concluded that personality is a factor that should be considered by management as they strive to improve the motivation of workers and optimize their work performance. Getz Pharma has been striving to improve employees' motivation and work performance through various awards and incentives. However, despite these company efforts, very few medical sales representatives get an excellent marks in their performance evaluation. While others are exhibiting personality traits that seem to match the job, they nevertheless perform less than par.

In 2017, Getz Pharma embarked on an ambitious goal "To be among the Top 10 Pharma Companies in the Philippines by 2020." It is currently in the 15th spot among pharmaceutical companies in the Philippines. In order to achieve this, medical sales representatives have to work harder and exceed sales targets. However, this goal was never realized due to the pandemic and restrictions in going out, and aside from that, the company's target since 2017 was not achieved. It was also observed that sales representatives seemed to lose their momentum. Those who were extraverted and enjoyed going out could not do so anymore as often prior to the pandemic. Thus, sales performance had been affected and motivation ran low.

Getz Pharma again resets its goal last 2021 to get into the top 10 largest pharma companies in the Philippines by 2022-2023 with sales reaching Php 6.2 Billion. While the pandemic is still raging, it has to find ways on how to keep sales representatives motivated, raise work performance levels, and put to good use the differences in personality types of sales representatives and make it work to the company's advantage. Given this context, this study attempts to investigate the relationship between employees' personality traits, motivation, and work performance. Corollary to this, it likewise aims to determine whether personality traits and employee motivation predict the work performance of medical sales representatives.

Conclusion

The results are reviewed from two different perspectives. The first perspective examined the results from the general standpoint of how the results relate to the previous literature in the field and how the results can be applied generally to the wider field of interest. The second perspective is to interpret the results in detail to understand their meaning relative to what was expected and potential reasons for the actual results.

1. The personality traits of medical sales representatives that predicted performance are agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion. Conscientiousness and extraversion are two of the most important traits to look for in hiring salespeople.
2. Sales representatives' level of motivation were generally described as above average. However, they had high motivation in terms of job situation and psychological work incentives. They have above average on organizational orientation, materials incentives, and workgroup relations, while they have average motivation on dependence.
3. Medical sales representatives demonstrated that they had met 96 percent to 105 percent of their performance goals, including both key performance indicators and behavioral indicators.
4. There was a statistical relationship between personality and performance, and motivation and performance. This supports the literature reviewed suggesting that personality and motivation interact to affect job performance. The result is supported by various studies that revealed that if employees are more motivated, then their performance increases. Still, other studies also reinforce the result of the present study that the motivation behavior of the supervisors enhances salespeople's motivation and performance. As supported by the literature, the Big Five is a very strong indicator of job performance and productivity.
5. Motivation and personality traits predicted performance. Aspects of motivation such as material incentives and job situation predicted performance. This result is supported by other findings which revealed that material incentives correlate with a higher level of performance and outcomes from employees seeking to obtain the rewards. Further, material rewards were more effective in increasing performance. Moreover, other researchers have asserted that performance may be influenced by motivation and personality.
6. There was always room for improvement no matter how good employees' performance are. As a result, general improvement plans have been offered to narrow performance gaps or boost the company's sales representatives' performance and motivation.

Acknowledgments

The researcher heartily expresses his profound gratitude first to the Almighty God, the Source of wisdom, strength, and courage for the completion of this research study. Likewise, he is indebted to the following for making this investigation possible: Dr. John Mark Distor, his adviser, for sharing his knowledge and expertise in the field of research and for being always accommodating even beyond his official time; Dr. Nicolas Mallari, Dr. Pricila Marzan, and Dr. Aimee Rose Manda, the panel of evaluators, for extending their insightful ideas and recommendations toward the completion of this study; Getz Pharma Philippines

Incorporated for its unparalleled generosity and kindness, particularly to Mr. Averell B. Gaspar, General Manager, Mr. Oscar Medenceles, Head of the Human Resource Department and to all Getz Pharma Medical Representatives who actively participated in the survey; The researchers and scholars whose literature and studies were referred and examined in accomplishing this investigation; Josefina Silvestre (Mother), Isagani Silvestre (Father), and Eden Macanlalay (Mother-in-law), the researcher's family members, for the supporting him indefatigably; Christine Kate Silvestre and Adriel Joash Silvestre, the researcher's wife and son, for their moral support and drive in pushing him to flourish. Their unwavering love aided the researcher in finishing this investigation.

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