

# IMPACT OF PERSONALITY ON ABSENTEEISM MODERATING ROLE OF ETHICAL ORIENTATION

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## ABSTRACT

**This study examined the impact of big five personality traits on absenteeism with moderating role of ethical orientation. Data was collected from 150 university faculty members across Pakistan using a questionnaire. Results indicate that big five personality traits to a large extent account for absenteeism while ethical orientation plays an important role as a moderator. Implications and future research directions are also discussed.**

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational Behavior and Human Resource researchers have studied absence from work and extensive research literature exists regarding it (Johns, 2003). Conventionally, absenteeism research has been focused on the 'lack of presence' characteristic of the behavior (Patton & Johns, 2012). Previously tolerated behaviors of employees regarding absence in workplace is now unacceptable (Taylor, Cunningham, Newsome, & Scholarios, 2010) because organizations which are experiencing high absenteeism bearing expensive cost.

Various studies focused on a broader range of determinants of absenteeism such as psychosocial work factors (Niedhammer, Chastang, Taieb, Vermeylen & Thirion, 2012; Rugulies et al., 2007), Work characteristics (Griep, Rotenberg, Chor, Toivanen, & Landsbergis, 2010), work-family role conflict (Lidwall, Marklund, & Vos, 2009), and Job demand and resources (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Rhenen, 2009). Among all these, job demands and resources work as analysts to forecast absence interval and rate in term of amount of absence and frequency (Bakker, Demerouti, Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003). In addition, satisfactory psychosocial work environment strongly and independently effect sickness absence (Hansen et al., 2009). Latest work practices and faster technological innovations are altering the nature of jobs (Roelen, Koopmans, Bultmann, Groothoff & Klink, 2009) resulting in increased rate of absenteeism. For avoiding sickness absence, variables like conflict, overload and improvement of role offer slight descriptive influence (Mastekaasa, 2000).

Besides these factors, specific personality traits of the employees may be correlated with absenteeism. The history of personality is a deep-rooted as the field of

psychology. By mid-eighties, researchers started to unite manageable numbers of personality traits and models. Big Five Model of personality (Digman, 1990) was greatly accountable for the rebirth of research. Researchers in both psychology and organization behavior unified that the Big Five Model is a widely accepted framework of personality consisting of neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience (Digman, 1990), which allow to study meaningful relationships between personality traits and work behaviors.

In addition to information about personal and workplace attributes, personality act as an important descriptive factor for absenteeism (Stormer & Fahr, 2013). The main personality variables (the Big 5 personality traits) effect was approximately as much as that of job attributes in employees with psychopathology, and even more than that of job features in physically fit employees as employees with high neuroticism, low extraversion, low agreeableness, low conscientiousness and low openness to experience will leads towards absenteeism (Vlasveld et al., 2013). In contrast, both neuroticism and related psychopathology were discovered to link with employee absence (Krispijn & Bijl, 2000). Constancy of absenteeism eventually across varying environments may be because of its lasting, personality oriented determinants (Froggatt, 1970a, 1970b).

Inadequate former studies relied on the extent of the problem such as lost-time percentage and average number of spells per employee instead periods of long term sickness (Wright, 1997). Previously absenteeism was mostly assessed at team level instead of individual level (Consiglio, Borgogni, Alessandri & Schaufeli, 2013). Limited work have been done to foresee absenteeism as a result of different personality traits, more specifically in

Pakistan in term of long-term absence at both individual and team level. If variables of individual differences can be recognized to forecast absenteeism, then it may be probable to apply measures of these traits to select job candidates and in this manner absenteeism rate can be decreased (Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmidt, 2003).

Ethical orientation also plays an important role to increase advantageous attitudes regarding employment (Valentine, Greller & Richtermeyer, 2006). Ones et al. (2003) proposed that role of moderator should also be inspected in future between personality and absenteeism rather than simply focusing on their bivariate relationships. The significant aspect of this study is also to explore the moderating role of ethical orientation between personality-absenteeism relationships. In Pakistan minimum literature is available for ethical impact on the relationship of personality and absenteeism. Changing of context from developed countries to underdeveloped countries is the novelty for this study.

The findings of this paper will have important implications in educational industry to select professionals, more specifically teachers at university level, with such personality domains which forecasted low rate of absenteeism. For this purpose the personality-based integrity tests can be used in personnel staffing decisions to assess relevant traits for predicting volunteer absenteeism. One of the advantages of this study is to help education sector to choose teachers with such personality traits that will reduce absenteeism in their workplaces and in this manner the main purpose of knowledge generation of this education industry can be attained. It also aims to advance literature in both theoretical and empirical manner by clarifying the moderating role of ethical orientation on personality-absenteeism relationship.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Relationship between Personality and Absenteeism

The Big Five dimensions of personality such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness have received more attention than any other personality structure (Salgado & Tauriz, 2014). The overall results showed in all studies of clinical symptoms of various disorders were associated with high neuroticism, weak conscientiousness, agreeableness, and low extraversion (Malouff, Thorsteinsson, & Schutte, 2005).

Extraversion is related to the effort of the Status, conscientiousness was associated to success and the agreeableness was linked to efforts communion (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Hirschfeld, Lawson, & Mossholder, 2004; Parks & Guay, 2009). Autonomy

and self-determination are linked to the openness to experience (Mount, Barrick, Scullen, & Rounds, 2005). It was also shown that aspects of the Big Five were predictors of job related performance (Dudley, Orvis, Liebicki, & Cortina, 2006).

Personality traits may affect the perception of their environment and attitudes about their great satisfaction and employee engagement work. These great attitudes are manifested in withdrawal behaviors that demonstrate a lack of willingness to be fully present in the workplace (Koslowsky, 2009).

### Relationship between Extraversion and Absenteeism

The first factor is that the high activity extraversion, assertiveness and a tendency to social behavior (Furnham, Dissoy, Sloan, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007; Erdheim, Wang, & Zickar, 2006). Because of sociability, extroverts tend to have the trust of others (Zimmerman, 2008). They can affect their environment and are more motivated to achieve awards (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2012). Studies show that the statues extroverts get more work in the long term and seek more success (George, Helson, & John, 2011).

Lau, Au and Ho (2003) suggested that low job satisfaction related with absence from work. Extroverts achieve higher promotions, salaries, and greater job satisfaction (Sanders, 2008). For this reason, extroverts are more likely to become socialized into their organization and would be less likely to quit (Maertz & Campion, 2004).

### Relationship between Agreeableness and Absenteeism

The second factor is the agreeableness that is related to characteristics such as altruism, care and emotional support. People raised in agreeableness are more polite, adaptable, nice, cooperative, compassionate and patient (Erdheim et al., 2006). Staff with agreeable trait can help build trustworthy relations and contribute to team cohesion (Zimmerman, 2008). Their behavior is warm, liberal and supportive (Migliore, 2011). Agreeable employees admit changes more easily (Williamson, Pemberton, & Lounsbury, 2008) and can contribute towards more capable employment (Zimmerman, 2008). However, such employees, while doing a good team player, often do not have enough experience to be successful in the world of work (Sanders, 2008). High agreeableness shows resilience with others; while low agreeableness relate to compete with others, and be willing to participate (Migliore, 2011).

Aspects of compliance and trust kindness is likely to cause employees to feel high agreeableness to identify contractual obligations to remain in the organization

(Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). People high in agreeableness are more flexible and conform expectations and rules and cannot be found hurt at work can also be seen as a reflection of the expectations and flexibility. Because of conflicts or job dissatisfaction, low agreeableness workers may have their own agenda at workplace, which can lead towards increased absenteeism (Vlasveld, 2013). Among healthy employees, low agreeableness were only associated with absenteeism (Malouff et al., 2005).

### **Relationship between Conscientiousness and Absenteeism**

Conscientious individuals are more likely to perform the duties well. Execution of success in a role is likely to result in positive mood, increased self-esteem and appreciation of the partners to follow, and, therefore, facilitation (Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004). Conscientiousness is considered one of the most consistent predictors of personality and performance (Meyer, Dalal, & Bonaccio, 2009; Barrick & Mount, 2005).

Conscientiousness is composed of six smaller parts. The first aspect refers to the skill level of a person in dealing with the world. The second aspect, the command refers to the level of a single organization and control. The third component, duty, refers to the tendency of an individual to be reliable and trustworthy. The fourth aspect of the effort to achieve, focuses on the number of people who work hard to achieve their goals. The fifth aspect, self-discipline, it refers to a person's ability to perform tasks in the face of obstacles, such as boredom and distractions. The sixth aspect, the deliberation focuses on the amount of people who think before they act (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007). Research has shown that the six aspects of conscientiousness are differential predictive for other features. For example, a negative relationship exist between conscientiousness and fluid intelligence (Moutafi, Furnham, & Paltiel, 2005; Moutafi, Furnham, & Crump, 2006).

Low conscientiousness and absenteeism shows that workers with a great responsibility, planning and persistence have less absenteeism among low-skilled workers (Vlasveld, 2013). Therefore, Conscientiousness expected job absences (Lounsbury, Steel, Loveland, & Gibson, 2004).

### **Relationship between Neuroticism and Absenteeism**

The fourth factor is the neurosis that is associated with stress, irritability, and increased levels of anxiety (Sanders, 2008). The highly neurotic people are anxious, depressed, angry, emotional and insecure (Erdheim et al., 2006). They see the negative side of things and more can

be considered neutral events as problematic; therefore tend to live less well - being and satisfaction and stress (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2012). High scores on this factor showed reactive emotional behaviors associated with negative emotions such as anger or low morale; while low scores reflect the tranquility and the ability to manage stress (Migliore, 2011). In addition, neuroticism was directly related to transactional contracts, breach of contract perceived and experienced violation (Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004).

A negative relationship exists between neuroticism and satisfaction (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999) and between neuroticism and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991) in a wide variety of jobs. High level of anxiety, an important aspect of neurosis is negatively related to performance in complex tasks. Job satisfaction was negatively related to the number of sick leave days (Roelen, Koopmans, Notenbomer & Groothoff, 2008). Cote (2005) hypothesize that people who have negative emotions (i.e., sadness and anger), are less likely to receive social support from colleagues and more likely to have interpersonal conflicts, which increases the levels of stress and increased their intention to leave. Happy employees are healthier and have a longer life expectancy.

Connolly and Myers (2003) also argue that job dissatisfaction has been associated with symptoms such as anxiety, depression and poor physical and psychological health, which have conjoined consequences for the absenteeism and commitment. Neuroticism has been shown to be associated with somatic symptoms medically unjustified, which may also lead towards absenteeism (Cuijpers et al., 2010). High neuroticism has confirmed work outcomes as absenteeism (Michon et al., 2013). In addition, neurotic people tend to be too many compromises that brings them take their work very seriously, for example, the work, even leisure time, but not necessary. While most of the company would lead to the absence of mental or physical illness (Vearing & Mak, 2007). Neurotic people feel a lot of pressure in their work that the absence may be considered as coping strategy.

### **Relationship between Openness to Experience and Absenteeism**

The last factor is the openness to experience, cope with change, innovation, new experiences and learning (Williamson et al., 2008). People with a greater openness to experience are creative, civil, curious, novel, open and intelligent mind (Erdheim et al., 2006). High scores on this factor showed great mental curiosity with creative thinking, while low scores indicate intent limited and cautious approach (Migliore, 2011).

People high in openness are more in line with the expectations and standards and are more flexible, and cannot be reported illness at work can also be considered to meet the expectations and the flexibility of thought. According to the workers may also reflect openness have their own agenda, perhaps due to conflicts or job dissatisfaction, which can lead to high level of absenteeism (Vlasveld et al., 2013) .

Hardy, Woods and Walls (2003) found that job satisfaction is related to the number of days of absence, and the frequency of absences. Low openness to experience were associated with absenteeism among physically fit employees. As stated by Malouff et al. (2005), lower openness reflects classic, rigid and not open to new experiences. Direct effects on turnover suggest that individuals who are high in openness to experience can participate in spontaneous exit (Zimmerman, 2008).

In order to test this phenomena in Pakistani scenario of education sector, the current study has the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1. There is a negative relationship between extraversion and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 2. There is a negative relationship between agreeableness and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 3. There is a negative relationship between conscientiousness and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 4. There is a positive relationship between neuroticism and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 5. There is a negative relationship between openness to experience and absenteeism.*

### **Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between Personality and Absenteeism**

The ethical orientation is the set of beliefs that guide a person to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, moral from immoral, aiding in the selection of an appropriate mode of behavior. Duchon and Drake (2009) define morality as the ability to make a judgment about the right and wrong organizational behavior, to adopt measures in accordance with the law. However, unethical behavior could be a consequence of the self-perception of a company; a consequence of how you define it.

Over the past two decades, a number of research studies have examined the ethical orientation of students, officials and other employees of different organizations and professions (Collins, 2000; Loe, Ferrel, & Mansfield, 2000). There is an ethical problem arises when a decision made on one or more alternative that are inconsistent with ethical standards, or codes (Hunt & Hansen, 2007). When an immoral action received,

high idealists were more likely to lie as compared to low idealists (Allmon, Page, & Roberts, 2000). To help develop an understanding of global ethics, it is necessary to inform people around the world and existing ethical perspectives to identify the determinants of ethical guidelines (Karande, Rao, & Singhapakdi, 2002). Ethical orientation for employees can also influence interpretations and attitudes of organizational procedures and practices (Alder, Schminke, Noel, & Kuenzi, 2008). From the ethical leaders have the potential to affect a wide range of individual results, organizational and social, it is more specifically important to understand the factors that influence the perception of the Executive Ethical Leadership (Jordan, Brown, Trevino, & Finkelstein, 2013).

Values-based congruence is positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negatively associated with intention to quit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Kinnicki, Mckee-Ryan, Shriesheim, & Carson (2002) found that job satisfaction is positively related to the commitment, motivation and life satisfaction and negatively related to work and non-work stress, intention to leave, absenteeism and the actual rotation. Prottas (2008) suggests that employees and organizational performance can be affected by workers' perceptions of their managers to act in a reliable and ethical treatment of employees. Workers may need to impose physical or mental pain to another person as a way to help this person, another person, a working group, organization or society in general (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005).

Selection and development of managers who have work ethic is important that the ethical misconduct can be costly and damaging to the reputation of managers and organizations. The instruments for measuring the Big Five are often used in selection (Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2011). Ethical Leadership and its development and promotion at all levels of management are high for many organizations, as it is expected that this type of leaders to have positive effects (Brown, Trevin, & Harrison, 2005). Until now, research on the effects of ethics and related files of leadership behavior shows predominantly positive relationships with a variety of attitudes and behaviors of followers, such as commitment, satisfaction with the leader, trust the effectiveness of alleged leader and organizational citizenship behaviors (Brown et al., 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2009; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010). Research shows that personal characteristics affect the influence of the leader (Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008). The theory does not predict individual differences play a role in ethical issues (Brown & Trevin, 2006).

The previous literature has proposed various individual differences that are related to ethical leadership, including moral development, concern for people, reliability and accountability (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Trevin, 2006; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Integrity always correlate with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability (Marcus, Hoft, & Riediger, 2006; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Dilchert, 2005). These three features are important for leaders to be perceived as ethical (Brown & Trevin, 2006). Although three of the five main traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability) are important to the history of ethical leadership (Brown & Trevin, 2006; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009).

### **Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between Extraversion and Absenteeism**

Extraversion was not a predictor of unethical behavior. Highly socially responsible leaders are recognized as more ethical. Furthermore, Mayer et al. (2009) found that moral identity is associated with ethical leadership. The agreeableness and justice refers to the element that reflects the simplicity of being honest, sincere and honest in dealings with others behaving fairly (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). Zhao and Siebert (2006) include the people depicting the agreeableness trait are those who are co-operative and prefer positive interpersonal relationships. Highly agreeableness person is bounded to fear. The fear of being punished for not following the law, policy or procedure, is a decent honest trustworthy person. Thus, it employees high on this score ignore in being engaged in unethical behaviors.

### **Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between Agreeableness and Absenteeism**

Agreeableness has strong relationship with job satisfaction and the lack of agreeableness is related to deviant behavior such as antisocial behavior in non-professional settings (Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). Low agreeableness shows low score on issues such as modesty, respect, cooperation and trust (Malouff et al., 2005). People who depict agreeableness traits are those who have a fear of being punished for not complying with laws and it makes a person honest, decent and trustworthy (Zhao & Siebert, 2006). Agreeableness and fairness reflects honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness in dealing with others which implies behaving fairly (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) found that there is a positive relationship exist between agreeableness and ethical leadership.

### **Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between**

### **Conscientiousness and Absenteeism**

Highly conscientious people tend to think before they act and strictly fulfill their legal obligations and responsibilities (Costa and McCrae, 1992). The responsible, reliable and voluntary elements of conscientiousness make people to perform right thing, not only for themselves but also for others. It is expected that high conscientiousness leaders behave in a consistent manner and treat subordinates consistently (Mayer, Nishii, Schneider, & Goldstein 2007). Executives with high conscientiousness are less likely to show favoritism among employees. In this way, they follow the rules and work without problems.

The literature has ever reported a positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethics through both academic and professional scenario. Williams et al. (2010) also found that high conscientiousness is negatively related with self-reported cheating. Work related ethic was positively correlated with success, linked to the centrality of the person in the hard work to produce desirable results (Mudrack, 1992). This pattern of results suggests that the high conscientiousness includes proactive components and, therefore, provides evidence of the ethical dimension of the discriminant validity of work (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002).

With regard to the moral/ethical aspects, Christopher, Zabel, & Jones (2008) found that the sense of duty and competition would provide morality or ethics. Having the ability to face the world allow one to live honestly. Willingness to complete may indicate a strong ethics of respondents (Cokley et al., 2007). Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) found a positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical leadership.

### **Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between Neuroticism and Absenteeism**

Neurotic people tend to be less reliable and more prone to high levels of stress, motivation of unethical behavior can give more in their desire to avoid the failure of success (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013). High levels of neuroticism surveillance with high levels of perceived stress led to an increase in the perception of bullying in the workplace of employees (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2011). Deviation and the interpersonal work has a strong relationship with high levels of neuroticism (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007). Xu, Yu, and Shi (2011) found high levels of neuroticism and a negative relationship to ethical leadership.

Neurotic leaders are less likely to communicate honestly and openly about their expectations for their subordinates (Kalshoven et al., 2011). Brown and Trevin (2006) suggest a negative relationship between neurosis and ethical leadership and, they also expect less perception of ethical behavior with neurotic individuals.

## Ethical Orientation as a Moderator between Openness to Experience and Absenteeism

Kalshoven et al. (2011) have suggested that openness to experience was not related to ethical behavior. Added individualization is characterized by fairness and ensure that individuals are protected against damage. This value is significantly associated with openness to experience. Moral behavior varies according to five main bases: damage (minimum damage to others), justice (maximizing fairness for all), in group loyalty (the importance of team work), authority (respect for the rule and the hierarchy) and purity (avoid unpleasant entities). These five aspects of morality, in turn, are connected to form two major factors of moral order individualization-total score on the harm and fairness and binding-the total score for authority, loyalty to the group, and purity (Graham et al., 2009). Lewis and Bates (2011) predicts a negative association between openness and binding and a positive link between openness and individualization.

Based upon the past studies, the following study has concluded that ethical orientation can act as a moderator which can influence the relationship between personality traits and absenteeism. Hence, the current study has incorporated following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 6. Ethical orientation moderates the relationship between extraversion and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 7. Ethical orientation moderates the relationship between agreeableness and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 8. Ethical orientation moderates the relationship between conscientiousness and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 9. Ethical orientation moderates the relationship between neuroticism and absenteeism.*

*Hypothesis 10. Ethical orientation moderates the relationship between openness to experience and absenteeism.*

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample and Procedure

The sample comprised of employees working in well-established private and public sector universities located in Pakistan. A total of four universities, including Iqra University, Allama Iqbal Open University, International Islamic University and Quaid-e-Azam University, were selected. Research access was possible by using personal contacts. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers working in above mention universities. From 300 questionnaires, 170 were returned and only 150

were completed to use in the study from which 60 responses were returned from Iqra University, 25 from Allama Iqbal Open University, 30 from Quaid-e-Azam University and 35 from International Islamic University. 82 percent respondents were males. Overall response rate was 50 percent. Education levels ranged from bachelor to receiving a Ph.D., with 10 percent of the respondents having bachelor certificate and the remaining 90 percent having Masters, MS or PhD degrees.

### Measures

All measures were obtained from a "self-report" questionnaire. To measure the independent variable that is personality traits, scale adopted by Rammstedt, and John (2007) having reliability of .735 has been used. The scale is a short version of Big Five Inventory. For instance, items included as "Is outgoing, sociable" for extraversion, "Does a thorough job" for conscientiousness, "Gets nervous easily" for neuroticism, "Is generally trusting" for agreeableness and "Has an active imagination" for openness to experience. To measure the dependent variable that is absenteeism, the questionnaire adopted by Katou and Budhwar (2006). Respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement or disagreement with statements as "Remaining absent from the job will be the first option if something important comes up". Coefficient alpha for this scale was .716. For mediator that is ethical orientation, scale of Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPO) of Forsyth (1980) were used with reliability score as .756 having items such as "Influential", "Principled", and "trustworthy". Each scale included in the questionnaire measures the responses on seven-point Likert scale where 1 represent strong disagreement and 7 represent strong agreement with the items excluding personality traits with five-point Likert scale. To make it easy for analysis all scales converted on five-point Likert scale where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree". Questionnaire is in English language as university teachers are able to understand it so there is no need to translate into native language.

### Control variables

Age, gender, qualifications and experience were used as control variables because they have impact on personality, absenteeism and orientation of ethics. To check the actual relationship these variables serves as control variables.

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables such as personality traits, absenteeism

and ethical orientation. The mean for absenteeism was 2.91 and ethical orientation was 3.93, extraversion was 2.98, conscientiousness was 2.97, neuroticism was 2.88, agreeableness was 3.07, and openness to experience

was 3.72. The correlation between absenteeism and extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness was  $-.167^*$ ,  $-.166^*$ ,  $-.098^*$ ,  $-.193^*$  and  $-.237^{**}$  ( $^{**}P < .01$ ,  $^*P < .05$ ) respectively.

**TABLE 1**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities**

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Absenteeism	2.91	1.13				
2. Ethical Orientation	3.93	.40	-.265**			
3. Extraversion	2.98	.90	-.167*	.041*		
4. Conscientiousness	2.97	.77	-.166*	.105*	.461**	
5. Neuroticism	2.88	.77	-.098*	.143*	.429**	.382**
6. Agreeableness	3.07	.79	-.193*	.045*	.443**	.560**
7. Openness to Experience	3.72	.98	-.237**	.314**	.404**	.497**

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Regression Analyses**

Hierarchical regression analyses is performed to test the hypotheses. In the first step age, gender, qualification, and experience were entered as control variables in regressions. The hypotheses predict that extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness will be negatively related to absenteeism and neuroticism will be positively linked with absenteeism. To test these predictions, we regressed absenteeism on the Big Five traits (see Table 2). Conscientiousness and neuroticism were positively related with absenteeism. However, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness were negatively related with absenteeism. Thus hypothesis  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_4$  and  $H_5$  accepted and  $H_3$  rejected.

**TABLE 2**  
**Hierarchical Regression analysis for Personality traits, absenteeism and ethical orientation**

Predictor	Absenteeism		
	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1			
Control Variables		.145	
Step 2			
Extraversion	-.024*		
Conscientiousness	.010*		
Neuroticism	.034*		
Agreeableness	-.049*		
Openness to experience	-.146*	.180	.036

\*\*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*  $P < 0.05$ ;  $n = 150$

**Ethical Orientation as a Moderator**

Moderated regression analysis was used to

examine the interactive effects of ethical orientation and personality traits on absenteeism. Controlling for extent of ethical orientation, this test examined that the specific personality traits react more strongly in terms of absenteeism. First, control variables were entered into the model. In the second step, we entered personality traits along with ethical orientation to predict absenteeism. Then, in the last step, the interaction terms between ethical ownership and personality were entered.

The results, presented in Table 3, shows that interaction terms for extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness have a negative and neuroticism and agreeableness have a positive and insignificant impact on absenteeism.

**TABLE 3**  
**Moderator Regression analysis for Ethical Orientation**

Predictor	Absenteeism		
	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1			
Control Variables		.145	
Step 2			
Extraversion	-.048		
Conscientiousness	.015		
Neuroticism	.000		
Agreeableness	-.099		
Openness to experience	-.051		
Ethical Orientation	-.217	.220	.075
Step 3			
Extraversion X Ethical Orientation	-.105	.224	.004
Conscientiousness X Ethical Orientation	-.330	.229	.009

Neuroticism X Ethical Orientation	.015	.221	.001
Agreeableness X Ethical Orientation	.109	.223	.003
Openness to experience X Ethical Orientation	-.361	.225	.005

\*\*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*  $P < 0.05$ ;  $n = 150$

## DISCUSSION

Objective of the study was to explore the relationship between personality traits and absenteeism by analyzing moderating role of ethical orientation. Results of the study indicates that four hypotheses are accepted having a negative relationship between extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and absenteeism and a positive relation between neuroticism and absenteeism. Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, (2004) stated that a negative relationship exist between relational contracts and neuroticism and a positive relationship between relational contracts and extraversion. So neurotic employees lead towards more absence as compared to extraverted employees. Happy extravert, agreeable and non-neurotic employees perform well in their job-setting and experience higher job satisfaction in collectivistic Asian society (Templer, 2012) and if employees are more satisfied with their jobs, then absenteeism will be reduces. So it confirms hypothesis as there is a negative relationship exist between agreeableness, extraversion and absenteeism and a positive relationship between neuroticism and absenteeism. Employees with low openness to experience were more associated with absenteeism (Malouff et al., 2005), thus confirming the results regarding openness to experience. In short, these results support the prior findings and literatures.

Whereas a positive relationship exist between conscientiousness and absenteeism instead of negative relationship. As Lounsbury, Steel, Loveland, and Gibson, (2004) confirms that conscientiousness expected absenteeism due to a great responsibility, planning and persistence. So a positive relationship can exist between conscientiousness and absenteeism.

More worrisome, the data did not support hypotheses 6 to 10 concerning the role of moderator i.e., ethical orientation on the relationship of personality big five inventory and absenteeism. In Pakistani context, employees are less concerning about job ethics. They only follow ethics when they are bound in their jobs and observed by superior authority. So in this scenario ethics are unable to strengthen or weaker their relationships between specific personality types and absenteeism. Pakistan is a highest score country on power distance (Ayca et al., 2000), one of the culture dimension of Hofstede (1980). Heine, Lehman, Markus, and Kitayama

(1999) assumed that people try to find positive self-regard which may harm interest and violate rights of others. An extensive positive personal characteristics found with those who self-regard or who have a strong superiority sense (Taylor & Brown, 1988). Higher levels of self-regard were more stereotypically masculine i.e., assertive, tough, and focused on material success (Bond, Kwan, & Li, 2000). So superiority in terms of power distance may be a reason due to which people in Pakistani context emphasize low in terms of ethical orientation.

Another reason is that individuals are biased when they have to evaluate themselves. No one declare him or her as less innovative or hard worker. Moreover, they don't admit that they are least concerning about their work. So responses also affect nature of study as stated by Ayca et al. (2000) that Pakistan is an under-researched country.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size. Whereas sample size of 150 reduced power of statistical analyses and limited generalizability. Secondly, data is gathered using questionnaire only, mixed methods validate results more specifically. Thirdly, data is collected by different teachers at university and college level about their performance, and individuals can be biased as no one declare him/her as a bad performer. Fourthly, it is industry specific as only focused on education industry and lastly, this is not a longitudinal research.

Policy makers in education sector can use this study to improve employee's performance by providing decentralized structures and give employees a sense of psychological ownership with organization. As in case of centralized structures autonomy is concentrated at top management levels and in this case employee's performance can be affected due to lack of psychological ownership.

The findings of this paper will have important implications in educational industry to select professionals using personality-based integrity tests in personnel staffing decisions to assess personality traits that leads towards volunteer absenteeism.

In the future, researchers will consider multiple sources of information when making assessments of personality big five traits and absenteeism. Along with personality traits other variables such as workload, stress, and autonomy can be used to check impact on absenteeism. This relationship can be validated in future using moderator i.e, ethical orientation in other context to confirm results of this study.

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