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Personality traits and locus of control as predictors of work motivation

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Abstract

The present research sought to firstly, understand the role of personality traits in the field of work motivation, to understand the relationship between these variables and to understand if personality traits could attempt to predict sources of work motivation. Thereafter, the relationship between the locus of control construct and intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation, respectively, was investigated. The secondary foci were to investigate the relationship between the demographic variables of age, race and field of work, respectively, and source of motivation. The current research used existing work motivation theories as a basis for understanding and explaining the construct of work motivation and used trait theory as a background to understand personality.

Individuals from various fields, engaged in full-time work, were the sample for this research. Lecturers from various faculties at the University of the Witwatersrand, as well as, individuals in different fields of work, outside of the University, was the sample of the research. The final sample consisted of 61 individuals.

Significant positive relationships were found between intrinsic work motivation and socially proper behaviour, and between extrinsic work motivation and self-discipline. While a significant negative relationship was found between intrinsic work motivation and tension. Furthermore, it was found that sensitivity and self-discipline appear to be predictors of extrinsic work motivation. Sensitivity and socially proper behaviour were positive predictors of intrinsic work motivation, while, the personality trait of being tense and conservative was found to be negative predictors of intrinsic work motivation. In addition, significant positive relationships were found between locus of control and sources of motivation while no significant relationships were found between the demographic variables and work motivation.