

Describing Professional Purchasers' Performance Applying the 'Big Five Inventory': Findings from a Survey in Austria

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Abstract : The success of companies on globalized markets is significantly influenced by the performance of purchasing departments and, of course, the individuals employed as professional purchasers. Nonetheless, this is generally accepted in practice, in literature as well as in empirical research, only insufficient attention was given to the assessment of this relationship between the personality of professional purchasers and their individual performance. This paper aims to describe the relationship against the background of the 'Big Five Inventory'. Based on the five dimensions of a personality (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) a research model was designed. The research model divides the individual performance of professional purchasers into two major dimensions: operational and strategic. The operational dimension consists of the items 'cost', 'quality delivery' and 'flexibility'; the strategic dimension comprises the positions 'innovation', 'supplier satisfaction' as well as 'purchasing and supply management integration in the organization'. To test the research model, a survey study was performed, and an online questionnaire was sent out to purchasing professionals in Austrian companies. The data collected from 78 responses was used to test the research model applying a group comparison. The comparison points out that there is (i) an influence of the purchasers' personality on the individual performance of professional purchasers and (ii) a link between purchasers' personality to a high or a low individual performance of professional purchasers. The findings of this study may help human resource managers during staff recruitment processes to identify the 'right performing personality' for an operational and/or a strategic position in purchasing departments.

Keywords : big five inventory, individual performance, personality, purchasing professionals

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