



## The Relationship between Personality Big-5 and Integrity among Leader in Northern University of Malaysia

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### *Authors' contributions*

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author MD designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript and managed the analyses of the study. Author SM managed the literature searches, checking on grammar and also the arrangement of the sentences. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to emphasize the relationship between BIG-5 personality and integrity among leaders in the Northern University of Malaysia. The integrity issue can be observed by the increasing public complaints on government service delivery systems. Public complaints can become a measurement index to the quality level of service delivery system as it is an expression of public dissatisfaction towards government services. One of the main challenges for the public servant is to improve the awareness of integrity among public servants especially the leaders. Previous research shows that the main factor that contributes to the integrity is the personality of the individual. Besides that, previous research also shows that the relationship between personality BIG-5 and integrity is not consistent. The study used quantitative methods with 5-point Likert scale measurement. The Big Five Inventory consists of 25 items as measurement and 25 items for integrity scale. The subjects of this study are 30 leaders from the Northern University of Malaysia.

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The use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0 will be implemented in the acquisition of the results through reliability test, description analysis, and correlation. The findings show that personality Big-5 has a relationship with integrity.

*Keywords: Integrity; public complaints; personality BIG-5; leaders.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The public sector has merged as an essential part of society in the past decade and is considered critical to public services success in the long term [1]. Lack of integrity behaviour in government departments will tarnish the public trust towards them [2]. Various efforts have been taken by the government in order to ensure that all of the public servants carried their duty with high integrity, thus reducing the number of offences made by the public officials. A public complaint is an expression of civil dissatisfaction towards the quality or treatments of services received from government officials or agencies. According to the report of the Public Complaint Bureau [3], the numbers of complaints increased because of the unethical behaviour among public official. Technically, the increasing numbers of public criticisms designate that the decline of integrity level, especially where the lodge and investigation of complaints have its merit [4,5]. According to the National Integrity Plan [6] and National Anti-Corruption Policy [7] reports, the main factor that contributes to the fraud, corruption and unethical behaviour is individual personality among the public servant. The highest number of public officials that commit unethical conduct is among leaders.

Leaders play a significant role in promoting and enhancing subordinates' performance; hence they are thought as one of the main characters in determining organisational effectiveness [8,9]. Personality traits are related to the behaviour and attitudes, and most of the personality research in the last 20 years had used the five-factor model (Big-5) [10,11,8] as a framework for organising and comparing the result from different personality instrument. The five-factor model includes five dimensions which are: Emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and extraversion. Researchers have found that some of the personality Big-5 scales are related to ethical behaviour. For example, some studies found that conscientiousness is related to integrity [12] but a negative relationship with counterproductive work behaviour [13,14].

Besides that, researches have also found a relationship between agreeableness and various behaviour relating to ethical leadership such as ethical decision making [15], integrity behaviour [10], as well as the negative relationship with counterproductive work behaviour [14]. Based on some previous research, the relationship between personality Big-5 and personality has revealed that there are inconsistencies within the study so that the research gap is thought-provoking to be studied [11,12,16].

This study was conducted in the Northern University of Malaysia as according to [17], two of unethical cases in the Northern University of Malaysia have been reported with each of the cases involved RM190,000 and RM14 million. These cases have raised serious concern not only from university management but also from the public. According to [18], one of the unethical cases have been reported which involved RM1.48 million. Thus, there is a crucial need to ensure the establishment of high standard integrity among the Northern University of Malaysia employees especially their leaders [19].

### **The objective of this study is:**

- 1) To determine the relationship between personality Big-5 and integrity.

### **The contributions of this study are:**

- 1) The study expected to vary the sources for academicians regarding personality and integrity topic.
- 2) This study is also applicable to leaders in organizations to improve their personality and integrity behavior.

### **The limitations of this study are:**

- 1) This study only focuses on leaders in the Northern University of Malaysia.
- 2) The small sample size reduced the opportunity for the data to be analyzed with conclusive or significant results.

The personality Big-5 are the independent variables and the integrity is the dependent variable. The hypotheses are:

H<sup>0</sup>- There is no significant relationship between personality Big-5 and integrity.

H<sup>1</sup>- There is a significant relationship between personality Big-5 and integrity.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study as it is conducted through a survey method using a self-administered questionnaire as the main instrument of the study. This study also used random sampling for subordinates and leaders which possessed the pay grade 29 and above in the administrative department. The quantitative technique is more appropriate in this study because the researcher can arrange the questions that are asked, narrow the scope of the study, collect data obtained from the participants and also can apply analytical numbers using objective statistics and to avoid bias. This study was conducted using 50 subordinates and leaders as the subject. The researcher approached the subordinates and leaders personally by asking for their assistance from the administrative department in the Northern University of Malaysia. The instrument used for this study were questionnaires. A set of questionnaires for the respondents is divided into 3 sections, Part A (demography), Part B (integrity) and Part C (personality Big-5). The use of the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) by [20] had been applied as the measurement. An example from the scale is "I can be trusted with confidential information". The personality Big-5 is measured through self-rating based on 25 items adapted and adopted from [21]. The personality Big-5 consists of five scale dimension that is neuroticism, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness. An instance from the scale is "Who likes to make a cooperation with others?" This study uses the Likert Scale consists of five (5) priority points that are 1-strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-uncertain, 4-agree, 5- strongly agree. Through these various scales, the researcher can identify the agreement or disagreement that can be obtained from the respondents beyond the scale provided.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive analysis was conducted based on the respondents' demographics. Among the

questions in the demographic section were gender, age, race, education level, monthly income, position/grade, working period, status, and religion such as shown in Table 1.

Descriptive analysis showed that 12 respondents were male with 40.0% while female with 60.0% were 18. Besides, 12 (40.0%) of leaders aged 26-40, 17 (56.7%) aged 41-55 and 1 respondent with 3.3% aged 56 above. For the respondents' race, Malay is 29 (96.7%) and Chinese is 1 (3.3%). For education level, those who have certificate is 2 (6.7%), Diploma is 4 (13.3%), Bachelor's Degree is 9 (30.0%), Master's Degree is 14 (46.7%) and Doctor of Philosophy is 1 person (3.3%). For monthly income, those who obtained below RM3000 is 2 (6.7%), RM3000-RM4500 is 11 (36.7%), RM4500-RM6000 is 10 (33.3%) and RM6000 above is 7 (23.3%). For respondents' position or grade, grade 29-40 is 11 (36.7%) and grade 41 and above is 19 (63.3%). For working experience, 6-10 years is 9 (30.0%), 11-15 years is 8 (26.7%), 16-20 years is 6 (20.0%), 21-25 years is 3 (10.0%), 26-30 years is 3 (10.0%) and 31 years and above is 1 (3.3%). For the status, 3 individuals are single (10.0%) and married is 27 (90.0%). For the religion, Muslim is the majority with 29 peoples (96.7%) and 1 person is non-Muslim (3.3%).

The use of Cronbach's alpha values to identify the reliability of the tested questionnaire is used to assess the extent to which items in a set were acceptable and related to each other. Reliability analysis was used to measure the level of understanding of the question among respondents. Furthermore, according to [22,23], values and ranging from 0.6 and above are good and reliable. According to [23], Cronbach's alpha was calculated in terms of the average correlation between items measuring the concept. Cronbach's alpha values indicated by the pilot study need to be statistically positive and acceptable for at least 0.7 to be considered reliable and valid so that researchers can continue further analysis. Table 2 shows the Cronbach's alpha values for the Integrity survey questionnaire is 0.944 while personality Big-5 is 0.868. Cronbach's alpha values for all variables were greater than 0.7, indicating valid and reliable survey questions.

The study was conducted to observe the correlation between the dependent variable on integrity and the independent variables of personality Big-5. Correlation is a statistical technique used to indicate the strength of the

variables and is used to study the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. A correlation test was performed with a 5% 2-tailed significant level. Test results have shown that personality Big-5 has a positive relationship with integrity. Correlation for integrity and personality Big-5 was 0.568 with a p-value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ . Thus, the hypotheses are accepted. This study responses

for the objectives is that there is a significant relationship personality Big-5 and integrity. For future research, this study suggests that the researchers should focus on leaders in other organization because integrity is a behavior which is connected to all people even whether they are in an organization or not. Furthermore, the qualitative study or mixed-method can be done in future studies to vary the results.

**Table 1. Descriptive analysis**

Demographic	Status	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	12	40.0
	Female	18	60.0
Ages	26-40 Years	12	40.0
	41-55 Years	17	56.7
	> 56 Years	1	3.3
Race	Malay	29	96.7
	Chinese	1	3.3
Religion	Islam	29	96.7
	Buddha	1	3.3
Education Level	Certificate	2	6.7
	Diploma	4	13.3
	Degree	9	30.0
	Master	14	46.7
	PhD	1	3.3
Monthly Income	< RM3000	2	6.7
	RM3000-RM4500	11	36.7
	RM4500-RM6000	10	33.3
	> RM6000	7	23.3
Position/ Grade	29-40	11	36.7
	41 and above	19	63.3
Working Experience	6-10 years	9	30.0
	11-15 years	8	26.7
	16-20 years	6	20.0
	21-25 years	3	10.0
	26-30 years	3	10.0
	31 years and above	1	3.3
Status	Single	3	10.0
	Married	27	90.0

**Table 2. Reliability statistics**

	Cronbach's alpha	N
Integrity	0.944	30
Personality Big-5	0.868	30

**Table 3. Correlation coefficients**

		Integrity
Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	30

		<b>Integrity</b>
Personality Big-5	Pearson Correlation	0.568**.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	30

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

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The positive relationship between personality Big-5 and integrity emphasizes the importance of ethical behavior in organization and that means, personality Big-5 scale is related to the ethical practice. The findings of this study have several important theoretical implications. First, to cross-fertilize personality and integrity research streams [11], suggest that researchers should conduct more studies that focus on personality Big-5 and integrity or unethical conduct in multiple ways. Therefore, this study takes initiatives to focus on the leaders' personality. Secondly, our study also helps in the understanding of personality as the Big-5 scale can improve the moral performance of the governments' officers in the public sector especially in the Northern University of Malaysia. The findings of this study also defined that the culture or climate can be one of the factors to influence ethical or integrity behavior. The culture of Malaysia and public sector organization are totally different from other countries and organization, therefore this result suggests that culture can affect personality and integrity.

This study should extend the discussions regarding the personality to subordinates as well apart from the leaders. It also needs to be examined at a wider level. This condition is influenced by several factors which indirectly becomes a limitation to the research. For instance, the limitation of research subjects only focusing on the leaders in the Northern University of Malaysia, hence we cannot obtain an overview of government officers' integrity as a whole. Therefore, we propose that further research should expand the research target and develop the research measurement.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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