

Influence of Employee Personality and Leadership Behavior amongst General Worker Performance: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

It is well known that the oil palm plantation sector contributes to the development of the country's economy due to the increase in the market price of palm fruit in the world market. The growth of Malaysia's palm oil industry is one of the most important contributors to the country's economic stability. Low of personality and leadership behavior become one of the problems facing by workers in order to increase workers performance. Even though this issue needs more attention, but the number of studies is still inadequate especially involve general workers in plantation sector in Malaysia. Hence, the aims of this concept paper are to critically review and identify gaps in current literature on personality, leadership behavior and workers performance, provide a definition of these variables, explore the role of personality on leadership behavior and workers performance and come out with recommendation for future research. This study will conduct in Sarawak, Malaysia in the farming sector. This study will be investigated five dimensions the Big Five Personality Model which are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The research aim is to measure the influence of the five dimensions of Big Five Personality on leadership behavior and workers performance. A total of 200 of general workers from plantation sector in Sarawak will be choosing as respondents for this research. There are three questionnaires (refer Appendix 1) used there are Mini-International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), Transformational Leadership and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). Descriptive statistic and regression method via Statistical Package for Science Social (SPSS) version 26 will be using for analysis the data. The findings of this study will be a reference in order to enhance the workers performance especially in plantation sector in Malaysia. However, this study only focuses on general farm workers in Sarawak. Therefore, future studies are suggested to expand the study on the other population.

Keywords: Personality, Leadership Behavior, Job Performance, Farm Workers

Introduction

The growth of Malaysia's palm oil industry is one of the most important contributors to the country's economic stability. When the country was hit by the financial crisis in 1998, the Malaysian palm oil industry recorded sales of approximately RM22.5 billion. Next, in 2018, this industry can contribute about RM38 billion to GDP, accounting for 37% of the agricultural sector in Malaysia. Exports of oil and palm oil products were approximately RM62 billion in 2018, with a total export trade of 15.35 million tons. This shows that the Malaysian palm oil industry has a great impact and influence on the stability of the country's economy. Looking at this contribution, it is important to study this sector if there are issues that will affect the progress of this sector, especially in Malaysia.

Table 1
Key Statistics of Palm Oil Estates, 2000-2019, Malaysia

Tahun Year	Bilangan Estet Number of Estate	Kaluan Beranian Plantation Area (ha)	Koluan yang dltual Harvested Area (ha)	Pon Dua Production (tonnes)	H-11 par Yield (tonnes/ha)	HB Prt Tonnage (tonnes)	Jumlah Borgaj Obamb r:ba Tompok Number of Workers (thousands)
2000	3,622	3,155,670	2,663,010	50,981,495	19.14	004.50	265.182
2002	3,778	3,311,140	2,911,105	50,884,070	17.97	1313.50	205.444
2003	3,877	3,414,042	2,015,000	55,373,112	18.90	15-44.00	314.e.50
2000	3,040	3,508,841	3,085,200	57,386,394	18.60	1610.00	331.64-0
2005	4,069	3,028,000	3,212,305	60,616,318	18.05	1304.00	321.701
2006	4,142	3,710,319	3,256,536	63,828,106	17.20	1510.00	347.755
2007	4,253	3,634,758	3,320,092	63,111,350	17.36	2,530.80	500.031
2000	4,283	3,947,703	3,405,983	60,732,737	15.15	2,777.50	500.817
2009	4,317	4,002,124	3,477,438	66,760,810	16.63	2,365.00	502.2m
2010	4,370	4,202,381	3,505,321	64,282,738	15.03	2,701.01	440,3118
2011	4,444	4,302,283	3,625,410	71,364,441	16.50	2,100.00	421.405
2012	4,518	4,385,241	3,096,902	60,834,470	13.89	2,764.00	435.76-3
2013	4,587	4,481,447	3,001,125	72,440,105	16.37	2,371.00	442,094
2014	4,058	4,585,227	3,002,847	72,710,100	16.03	2,383.50	451.007
2015	4,987	4,750,030	4,027,000	74,434,151	16.48	2,153.50	437.405
2016	5,005	4,804,031	4,108,180	65,141,271	13.35	2,153.00	420,351
2017	5,116	4,831,337	4,100,000	72,150,700	14.80	2,783.00	430,830
2018	5,071	4,860,438	4,221,121	70,188,000	14.45	2,232.50	446,075
2019	5,110	4,800,000	4,200,000	70,000,000	14.58	2,207.90	446,075

This study was conducted in a palm oil plantation in the Kanowit district, namely at Pelita Farm, Kanowit, Sarawak. Syarikat Boustead Pelita Kanowit Sdn Bhd is located at Locked Bag NO 2, Ladang Jih, 96700 Kanowit, Sarawak, Malaysia.

Based on the literature review, the increase in oil palm production is linked to work performance. Literature studies also found that employee personality and leadership behavior have an influence on work performance. Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent of the influence of personality and leadership behavior on work performance at Ladang Pelita, Kanowit, Sarawak.

There are several problems that lead to this study. The main problem discussed in this study is about employee personality. The workers at the farm are said to often return home early after taking attendance without doing their jobs. This causes workers who are under the supervision of the leader in the farm to do their tasks carelessly, this is associated with a low level of personality in the personality model of five traits (thoroughness) which is being lazy, undisciplined, and not on time (Zawiyah & Shahlan, 2022). For example, workers entrusted to fertilize oil palm. They only distribute fertilizer for the palm trees that are only on the side of the road and the remaining fertilizer will be thrown into the raft. This situation has an impact on work performance at the Kanowit Lamp Farm, Sarawak.

In addition, the problem of leadership behavior at Kanowit Lamp Farm, Sarawak is also one of the issues discussed in this study. That is a low level of leadership. They just let the attitude of the supervisors who always come back early without doing their tasks. This happens because there are some supervisors who have kinship ties with the leaders in the farm, so they only look at this problem with one eye. This low level of leadership will cause the problems faced to be unsolved and it will have a negative impact on the organization especially in relation to work performance.

In conclusion, personality, and leadership behavior play an important role in improving work performance in organizations.

Literature Review

Employee Personality and Workers Performance

The Five Traits Personality Model has been used in personality measurement. These five traits include openness (openness to experience), conscientiousness (conscientiousness), extraversion (extrovertness), agreeableness (agreeableness) and neuroticism (neuroticism).

For the dimension of openness, a person who has high curiosity, is intelligent, has an open thinking pattern, likes imagination, and is open-minded is described as a person who likes to explore things in detail. Individuals with an open attitude are more likely to welcome new ideas and developments. Individuals who tend to have high personality traits are reported to be very sensitive and investigate new experiences with more intensity, according to (McCrae & Costa, 1991). While according to Digman (1990), this group has a lot of flexibility and creativity in their thinking. Those with limited interests and mental processes are considered to have these characteristics (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Consequently, this characteristic is often associated with the capacity to adapt during transition processes, such as when faced with changing demands and new work patterns, decision making, problem solving and other organizational changes (LePine et al., 2000). Indeed, according to Bing & Lounsbury (2000), while focusing on the process of acquiring new abilities and highlighting the development of new and creative ideas during the implementation phase of a job, these variables are observed to be very important to job performance in a unique job in a company.

Individuals with the dimension of conscientiousness are described as being always concerned, overly conscientious and trustworthy based on the Five Factor Personality

Model. This personality is also associated with awareness, responsibility, manageability, discipline, hard work, efficiency, and systematicity, and always being in a planned and goal-oriented state (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Individuals with this dimension are also associated with neat work management and administrative abilities. They like to plan and manage time in the context of a work environment that requires a flexible response to all kinds of changes. This situation is considered beneficial during a career change because people in this position are more likely to examine and adopt acceptable behaviors that can be used for any type of new job (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The dimension of extraversion describes the quality of a person who has interpersonal interactions, needs external stimulation, assertive, likes to talk and socialize, likes to socialize, likes to be outside, has high emotional sensitivity, and has a cognitive pattern that is continuously stimulated (Costa & McCrae, 1985). According to House & Howell (1992), one of the main aspects of the personality dimension of openness is social dominance, which has to do with the stimulation of social relationships and the power of attractive initiative. Individuals with these characteristics are considered to pay more attention to the world around them and to continue to develop their self-efficacy in creating high work goals to achieve better work performance in the future. The characteristic of openness (extraversion) appears as a basic characteristic and has a great relationship with transformative leadership, according to Judge & Bono (2000). This capacity qualifies them to be referred to as leaders who are able to bring about good changes in the companies they oversee. Individuals with a low awareness score (extraversion) are found to be unskilled and social, a quiet, timid person, and prefer to separate themselves from the world (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Individuals who are defined as agreeable display characteristics such as tolerance, willingness to serve without expecting anything in return (altruism), ease of cooperation, generosity, cheerfulness, politeness, and forgiveness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Individuals with this characteristic can take advantage of 'agreeableness' to help them perform better at work. Individuals exposed to these traits, according to Barrick & Mount (1991), are likely to be successful in various job scenarios, especially those that require communication skills. Costa & McCrae (1992) emphasized that those with high levels of arousal are more likely to have high levels of passion. Meanwhile, Costa & McCrae (1992) stated that people with a high level of 'agreeableness' have a cooperative, courteous, and courteous character.

Neuroticism is a personality dimension that assesses a person's ability to withstand stress. Three meta-analyses conducted by several scholars show the disagreement of research on personality traits and leadership Hogan et al (1994); Kierstead (1998); Bono & Judge (2004), for example, all agree that personality has an impact on individual leadership. The goals and results of their studies, on the other hand, are not the same. For example, a study by Lord et al (1986) found a relationship between personality qualities and perceived leadership behavior. Meanwhile, Hakim et al (2002) found that certain

personality qualities are associated with the effectiveness and emergence of a leader. Hakim et al (2000) also found that personality characteristics and leadership behaviors interacted through all aspects of ownership.

On the other hand, a study by Judge et al. (2000) showed that there is an interaction between personality traits and leadership behaviors through all possession of personality traits on transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. This reinforces the findings of Silverthorne (2001), that the personality aspect of a leader is no longer seen

as a predictor but as the main prerequisite for being an effective leader. The NEO Personality Inventory- Revised (NEO-PIR) Costa & McCrae (1992) and the Big Five Personality Inventory have been determined to be the most frequently used instruments in personality research by psychologists and other social scientists in previous studies. Other research techniques, such as 16PF, MBTI, etc., can also be used to examine personality. Hakim et al (2000) found that many personality measures are widely used in various occupational fields, including aviation (Grant et al., 2007), politics (Schoen & Schumann, 2007), as well as entrepreneurship (Zhao & Seibert, 2006).

There are several past studies that examine the influence of employee personality on work performance. First, a study by Ayu (2014) carried out in the education sector in Selangor found that there is an influence between the personality of employees on work performance. Next, a study by Riziandy et al (2013) which was carried out in the public service sector, namely psychological officers in Malaysia, also found that there is an influence of employee personality on work performance. Openness, agreeableness, and negative neuroticism are personality traits of psychological officers with excellent adaptive work performance. This is because the psychological officer's openness component will make him more receptive to change, the agreeable aspect will make it easier for him to accept any change in the surrounding scenario, and negative neuroticism helps to stabilize emotions and the ability to deal with the issue.

According to lanalisa et al (2019) in his study carried out in the defense sector in Selangor found that there is an influence between the personality of employees on work performance. An individual's good or bad personality will affect their job happiness (Balasuriya & Perera, 2016). Selection of employees and adequate training in shaping individuals to have good basic personal values and successfully impact various areas of performance effectiveness (Rohana, 2014). Prudence and agreeableness are key personal characteristics to have in the workplace, as they encompass all levels of work complexity, training and experience required to qualify for employment (Paul, 2014).

In addition, a study by Nabil et al (2019) conducted in the education sector involving sports officials at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor found that there is an influence of employee personality on work performance. Performance in the workplace is complex, and employee personality affects the scalability of performance. The many tasks completed each day contribute to regular job performance in general. A study by Asyikin (2016) conducted in Kelantan involving community development department officials found that there is an influence of employee personality on work performance. In recent times there have been several programs organized to improve the level of employee personality in support of the vision and mission of the top management of an organization.

Based on the studies of Ayu (2014); Riziandy et al (2013); lanalisa et al (2019); Nabil et al (2019); Asyikin (2016) show that there is an influence between employee personality on work performance. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis: -
H1 : Employee personality has a positive and significant influence on work performance.

Leadership Behavior and Workers Performance

As stated by Ahmad Rusli in his paper Leaders in Educational Leadership (1999), leaders are human individuals who are entrusted to lead their followers towards achieving a set goal. Likewise, with Miftha Thoha in his book Organizational Behavior (1983: 225), a leader is someone who has the ability to lead, meaning that he has the

ability to influence other people or groups regardless of the form of the reason. According to Stodgill (1974); Bass (1985), leaders are seen as a mechanism in determining the direction and achievement of an organization. Gholamreza et al (2009) also define organizational effectiveness as a benchmark that shows the leadership effect of a leader in the organization. Bass (1990) described the need for a leader to have certain personality traits to reflect his uniqueness in order to be able to offer confidence and influence to his followers in order to be considered a successful leader based on previous studies. In this regard, Van Schaack & Glick (1982) found that a successful personality is defined as someone who is creative, passionate, compassionate, and curious.

There are several past studies that examine the influence of leadership behavior on work performance. The first is a study by Suzyanty & Riza (2020) which was carried out in the construction sector in Selangor and found that there is an influence between leadership behavior on work performance. Next, a study by Suhailie (2019) that examined the influence of leadership style on the performance of private higher education institutions found that leadership has a direct relationship with the success of an organization. Leaders determine the values, culture, and motivation of employees individually and in teams through the development of strategies, as well as the mechanism by which the plan is implemented and evaluated (Anderson, 2016). Leaders can also influence people around them to mobilize shared views (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). As a result, leaders play an important role in driving the growth of an organization's performance to achieve the desired results.

In Ibrahim's study (2017) which was carried out in the education sector in Melaka, it was found that there is an influence of leadership behavior on work performance, that is, the principal's leadership behavior on teacher work performance. In his study, Ibrahim (2017) found that the main factor of leadership behavior. The principal in this study is the principal's motivation ($F = 13.663, p < .001$). It was followed by principal communication ($F = 13.378, p < .001$).

However, both factors have a high mean value, that is, the principal's motivation has a mean value of 3.99 while the mean value for the principal's communication is 3.83.

In addition, Dalila et al (2021) in their study titled "the relationship between headteacher leadership behavior and teacher workload on teacher work performance" found that in order to increase teacher job satisfaction, leadership behavior factors, organizational commitment and efficiency teachers should be given the best attention, this shows that there is an influence of leadership behavior on work performance. A study by Syarifah et al (2018) in his study involving the education sector in Malaysia found that the character of leaders who try to influence, encourage, and empower people to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organization where they work based on the objectives and vision set is known as leadership, and this shows that there is an influence of leadership behavior on work performance.

Based on the studies of Suzyanty & Riza (2020), Suhailie (2019), Ibrahim (2017), Dalila et al (2021), Syarifah et al (2018) show that there is an influence between behavior on work performance. Therefore, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis:-

H2 : Leadership behavior has a positive and significant influence on work performance.

Conceptual Framework

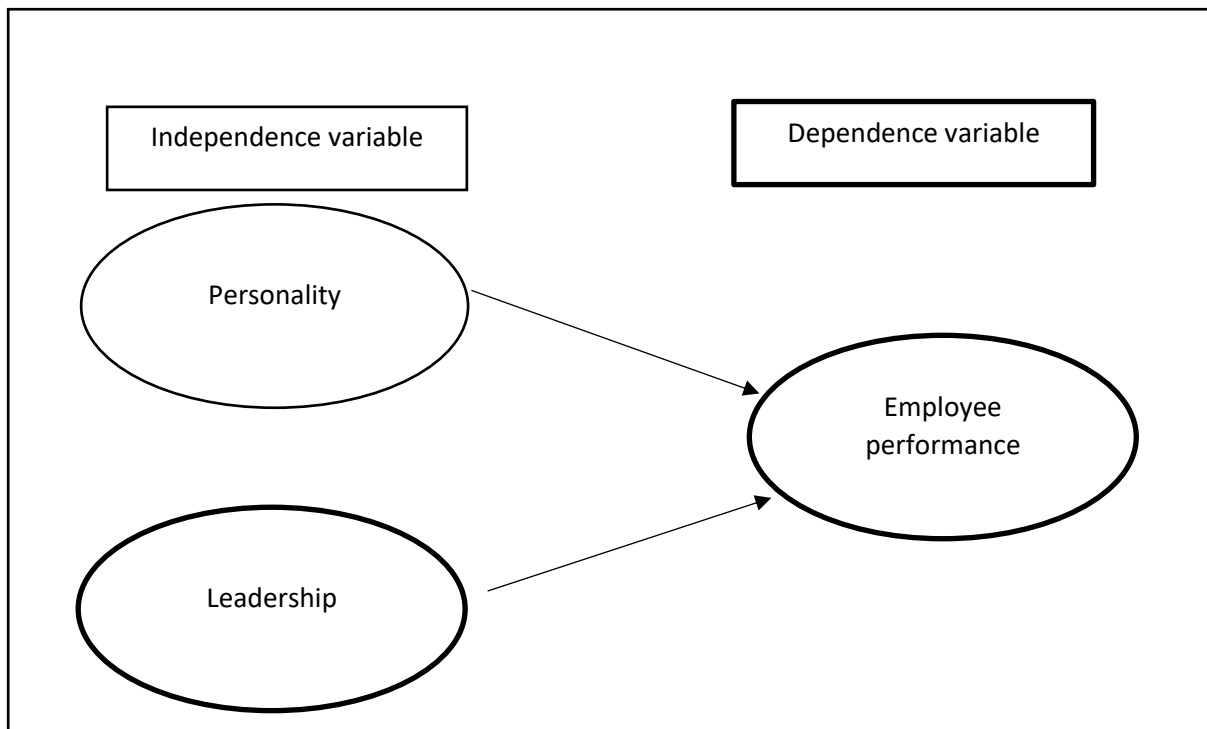


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual study framework in Figure 1 shows the influence of personality, leadership behavior on employee performance. Personality acts as an independent variable in this study. It consists of five dimensions namely openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Leadership behavior in this study also acts as an independent variable. Work performance in this regard acts as a dependent variable. Overall, this study aims to examine the influence of personality and leadership behavior on work performance among workers at Ladang Pelita, Kanowit, Sarawak.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to examine the extent to which employee personality and leadership behavior influence work performance in the plantation sector in Malaysia. Expected findings for this study are employee personality and leadership behavior are predicted to influenced work performance. For example, employees that have high in extraversion traits in the Big Five Personality and positive leadership behavior like follow the rules, obey and careful at workplace will influence high work performance comparing with employees that have low in extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience and negative leadership behavior. This expected finding was supported by previous studies (Suzyanty & Riza, 2020; Suhailie, 2019; Ibrahim, 2017; Dalila et al., 2021; Syarifah et al., 2018; Ayu, 2014; Riziandyetal., 2013; Ianalisa et al., 2019; Nabil et al., 2019; Asyikin, 2016). Therefore, the existence of employee personality and positive leadership behavior in the organization is predicted to be able to increase the level of work performance. The findings of this study will be a reference in order to enhance the workers performance with consider importance aspect like employees' personality and leadership especially in plantation sector in Malaysia.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Please mark (/) in the box provided to represent yourself

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age under 20 years 21-30 years 31-40years 41-50years 50 years above
3. Religion Islam Hindu Buddha Christian Others. Specify
4. Nation OMalay Chinese Indian Others. Specify
5. Section / Workplace Unit:
6. Level of education: Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) OSijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) Certificates (ILP, IKM) Others. Specify.....
7. Length of services less than 1 year 1- 3 years 3- 6 years 6- 9 years 9 years above

SECTION B : PERSONALITY

Please **CIRCLE ONLY ONE** answer option for each item based on a scale of 1 to 5 that corresponds to your agreement with the statements below.

Evaluate yourself as a whole in the present, not as you wish to be **in** the future.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

1	I have a vivid imagination	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am interested in abstract ideas (eg: general ideas and non-specific ideas)	1	2	3	4	5
3	I enjoy understanding abstract ideas (eg: general ideas and non-specific ideas)	1	2	3	4	5
4	I have a good imagination	1	2	3	4	5
5	I do work in an organized manner	1	2	3	4	5
6	I like to follow instructions from superiors and colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
7	I always put things back in their proper place	1	2	3	4	5
8	I do my work quickly	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am the main pillar of this farm	1	2	3	4	5
10	I talk a lot	1	2	3	4	5
11	I like to meet different groups in a ceremony	1	2	3	4	5
12	I like to stand out	1	2	3	4	5
13	I sympathize with other people's feelings	1	2	3	4	5
14	I am interested in other people's problems	1	2	3	4	5
15	I feel other people's emotions	1	2	3	4	5
16	I am interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
17	I have frequent mood swings	1	2	3	4	5
18	I'm not relaxed most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am easily offended	1	2	3	4	5
20	I often feel depressed	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Please **CIRCLE ONLY ONE** answer option for each item based on a scale of 1 to 5 that corresponds to your agreement with the statements below.

If you are not directly involved, **please provide feedback based on your opinion as a general worker.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Bil	Intellectually stimulating attitude					
1	His ideas have forced me to rethink some of my own ideas that I <i>never</i> questioned before	1	2	3	4	5
2	Allows me to think about old problems in new ways	1	2	3	4	5
3	Has given me a new way of looking at things that used to puzzle me	1	2	3	4	5
	Individual consideration					
4	Give personal attention to members who seem neglected	1	2	3	4	5
5	Knowing what I want and trying to help me get it	1	2	3	4	5
6	You can expect him to show his appreciation when you do a job well	1	2	3	4	5
7	Satisfied when I meet agreed standards for good work	1	2	3	4	5
8	I get credit with him by doing my job well	1	2	3	4	5

9	Treat each subordinate individually	1	2	3	4	5
10	Makes me think we can achieve our goals without him if we have to	1	2	3	4	5
	The ideal influence attitude					
11	Gets <i>everyone</i> around him excited about the task	1	2	3	4	5
12	I have full faith in him	1	2	3	4	5
13	Be a model for me to follow	1	2	3	4	5
14	Create loyalty to the organization	1	2	3	4	5
15	Be an inspiration to us	1	2	3	4	5
16	Inspire loyalty to him	1	2	3	4	5
17	Makes me feel good to be around him	1	2	3	4	5
18	I am ready to believe in his ability to <i>overcome</i> any obstacle	1	2	3	4	5
19	Encourages me to express my ideas and opinions	1	2	3	4	5
20	Have a special gift for seeing what is really important for me to consider	1	2	3	4	5
21	In my mind, he is a symbol of success and achievement	1	2	3	4	5
22	Having a sense of mission, he conveyed to me	1	2	3	4	5

PART D: WORK PERFORMANCE

Please **CIRCLE ONLY ONE** answer option for each item based on a scale of 1 to 5 that corresponds to your agreement with the statements below.

If you are not directly involved, please **provide feedback based on your opinion as a general worker.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

1	I manage to plan my work so that it is completed on time	1	2	3	4	5
2	My planning is optimal	1	2	3	4	5
3	I keep in my mind the results I need to achieve in my work	1	2	3	4	5
4	I can separate the main issues from the side issues at work	1	2	3	4	5
5	I know how to set the right priorities	1	2	3	4	5
6	I can perform my work well with minimal time and effort	1	2	3	4	5
7	Collaboration with others is very productive	1	2	3	4	5