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The effect of personality and gender on individuals' propensity for corruption and corrupt behavior

Beitragsart (Extended Abstract)

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Abstract
This study analyzed the influence of Big Five personality traits and gender towards the propensity for corruption and corrupt behavior. The results were analyzed from a sample of 134 students from different universities. Gender and personality traits showed a positive significant relationship. Women have a higher level of neuroticism and conscientiousness. In addition, they are more compatible as men. Further results show a significant correlation between gender and the propensity for corruption. Furthermore, the relationships to corrupt behavior are investigated in this experiment.

1 Introduction

In cooperation with the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ) at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, the Aalen Management Institute (AAUF) from the Aalen University of Applied Sciences investigates whether personality or gender affects the propensity for corruption. Since the 1990s, the five-factor model of personality (Big Five model) has been the most widespread and widely accepted model for describing the overall personality (De Raad, 2000; Goldberg, 1990; John, Naumann & Soto, 2008). Accordingly, the "Big Five" model should serve as a basis for research and capture the personalities of the test persons. It contains five abstract basic dimensions of personality, which are sufficient to describe differences between people accurately: extraversion, compatibility, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (Rammstedt, Kemper, Beierlein & Kovaleva., 2012; Sharpe, Martin & Roth, 2011). Measuring respondents' propensity to corruption is more complicated because there is no common definition. Various studies assess the extent of corruption using different measurement methods depending on the definition to be used. For example, Kozako, Safin & Rahim (2013) use Counterproductive Work Behavior to measure the propensity to corruption. In contrast, Agbo and Iwundu (2016) developed the Corruption Propensity Scale (CPS) to measure the susceptibility to corruption based on actions that are identified by laws as corrupt acts. Another well-known measurement method is the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International. This measures the extent of perceived corruption at the country level (Transparency International e.V.). [1] Depending on the perspective, corruption can be defined differently and this requires a different measuring method. In the following experiment, the Hanoverian Corruption Scale (HKS 38) by Litzcke, Linssen and Hermanutz (2014) was thus used to determine the individual's propensity for corruption. The authors developed the HKS 38 as a specific and economically usable measuring instrument for recording attitudes towards corruption. It comprises a total of 38 items. The questionnaire of the HKS 38 was adopted identically for this experimental research. The study aims to be able to provide an empirically grounded statement as to whether personality and gender have an effect on the propensity to corruption and corrupt behavior.

2 Methodology

The experiment is divided into two parts. In the first part, general information and characteristics of the test persons are collected (questionnaires 1-3), while the second part records the behavior of the test persons in a specific, given situation (questionnaires 4-6). Questionnaire 1 asks for general information about the respondents, such as gender, age, or course of study. Questionnaire 2 is the Big Five Inventory 10 (BFI-10) according to Rammstedt et al. (2012), which is used to measure the five personality dimensions. Questionnaire 3 uses the Hanover Corruption Scale (HKS 38) according to Litzke et al. (2014) to measure attitudes towards corruption.

In the second part, a fictitious company case forms the core of the experiment. In questionnaire 4, the test person must indicate the company case variant assigned to him or her. In questionnaire 5, the respondents are asked to choose one of several possible options for action based on the given enterprise case. The decision had to be made on whether to fulfill the task or not. In addition, the participants could decide whether to remain silent about the incident, report it internally, or even report it to an external law enforcement agency. If a respondent decides to report the case to an external criminal prosecution authority, a fictitious reporting form is used to check whether the intention is accompanied by a corresponding action. Questionnaire 6 is used to record the social desirability of the participant's response behavior using the short scale Social Desirability-Gamma (CFE-G) according to Kemper et al. (2012).

The exact procedure of the experiment is illustrated in the following figure 1.

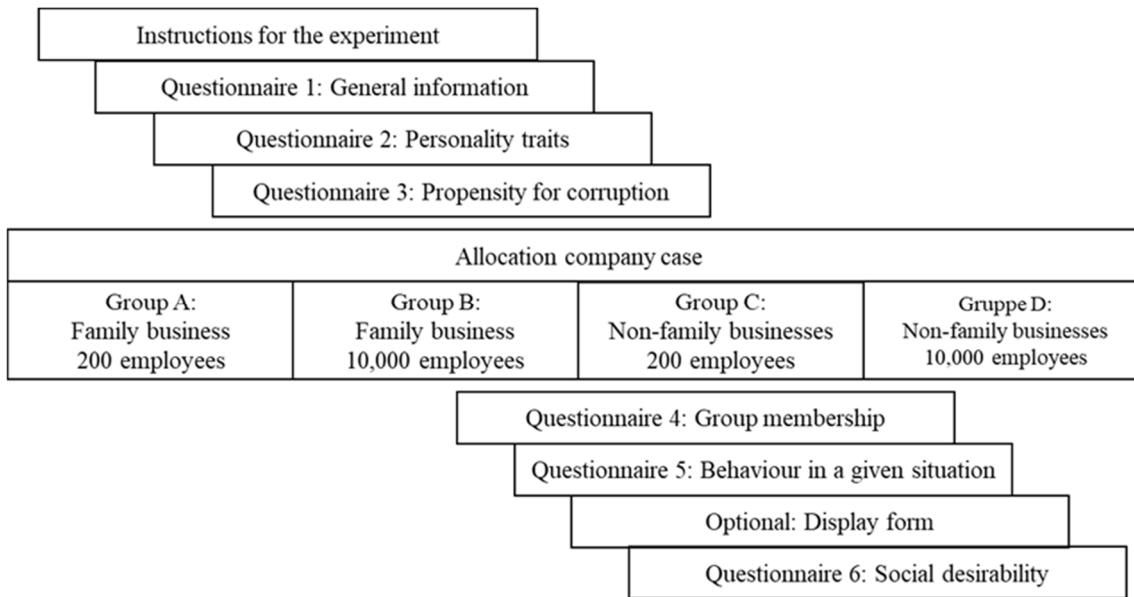[1] Transparency International e.V.: Research – CPI – Overview. Retrieved from 21. Februar 2018 (englisch).

Figure 1: procedure of the experiment

3 Empirical results

The experiment was carried out during various lectures between January and March 2020. The test persons were students from different courses of study at different universities. The total number of participants was 137. Of these, 134 data were fully evaluable.

First of all, the relationship between gender and personality traits of the test participants was analyzed. The results are shown in figure 2.

correlation

		Extraversion	Compatibility	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Gender	Pearson correlation	.154	.207*	.240**	.359**	.058
	Sig. (two-sided)	.076	.016	.005	.000	.508
	N	134	134	134	134	134

**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).

*. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided).

Figure 2: correlation gender x Big 5

As the first correlation results according to Pearson show, there are significant linear relationships between gender and some personality traits. This can be interpreted as follows: Women proved to be more conscientious and neurotic. Moreover, women are more compatible than male test persons.

correlation

			Gender	Propensity for corruption
Spearman-Rho	Gender	Correlation coefficient	1.000	-.188[*]
		Sig. (two-sided)	.	.030
		N	134	134
	Propensity for corruption	Correlation coefficient	-.188[*]	1.000
		Sig. (two-sided)	.030	.
		N	134	134

*. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided).

Figure 3: correlation gender x propensity for corruption

Figure 3 shows the results of the correlation between gender and the propensity for corruption. The relationship is negatively correlated and can be interpreted that women are less prone to corruption than men.

4 Conclusion

After initial investigations have confirmed a connection between gender and personality and an effect between gender and propensity for corruption, further investigations will be carried out to examine the results for connections between gender, personality traits, propensity for corruption and corrupt behaviour. For compliance practice, these findings are particularly important in the context of mixed teams and, above all, the increased gender diversity in corporate practice. Research into the propensity for corruption of men and women could also provide aspects for the processing and prevention of compliance violations. In this context, the personality traits conscientiousness, tolerance and neuroticism will be examined in particular, as these have proven to be very significant in the present analysis.

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