

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Psychological Well-Being and Big Five Personality Traits: A Comparative Study of Entrepreneurs and Salaried Employees

Aswin S

Phd in Psychology, Phd Scholar Department: Psychology, IES University, Bhopal

*Corresponding Author
Aswin S

Article History

Received: 21.07.2025**Revised:** 26.08.2025**Accepted:** 17.09.2025**Published:** 04.10.2025

Abstract: *Background:* Entrepreneurs enjoy autonomy and intrinsic motivation, whereas salaried employees have more stability and regulated workplaces. The professional environments of entrepreneurs and salaried workers are different, which frequently results in variations in personality development and psychological health. *Aim:* This study aimed to compare personality traits and psychological well-being between salaried employees and entrepreneurs. *Methods:* A total of 200 participants were included in this comparison study and divided into two groups. 100 were salaried employees and 100 were entrepreneurs. The Big Five Personality Inventory was used in conjunction with approved instruments to evaluate psychological well-being. Regression models and t-tests for independent samples were used. *Results:* The psychological well-being scores of entrepreneurs were considerably higher than those of paid employees (all $p < 0.05$). Entrepreneurs were more conscientious, open, and extraverted, whereas salaried workers were more agreeable and neurotic. *Conclusion:* When compared to salaried employees, entrepreneurs showed noticeably superior psychological well-being and adaptable personality qualities. These results demonstrate how professional context affects psychological outcomes and emphasize the necessity of profession-specific approaches to resilience and well-being.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Personality traits, Entrepreneurs, Salaried employees

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs find it more difficult to balance their job and family lives than workers because their professional and personal lives [1] are frequently linked [2]. Prior studies have looked at these problems from two angles that are intrinsic to COR theory: from the standpoint of resource gains through work-life balance pleasure and from the standpoint of resource losses through work-life conflict. This is because entrepreneurs' personal lives may be impacted by stress resulting from long work hours and risk-taking behaviours [3].

According to Hilbrecht and Lero [4], self-employed people additionally have the "always-on" difficulty of being accessible to their families while attending to work-related matters; this might negatively impact their impression of work-life balance. However, quality of living has long been recognised by entrepreneurship researchers as a significant factor in understanding why entrepreneurs want to expand their businesses [5]. Positive feelings brought on by entrepreneurs' contentment with their work-life balance help them concentrate on using their own resources—such as time, effort, and energy—to meet expectations at work [6]. For entrepreneurs, striking a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives is crucial [7]. Csikszentmihalyi [8] defines experience of flow as "the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement with a sense of self-control and pleasure." When the skills required to face the demands of a work are balanced with the challenges themselves,

flow can be achieved. When people have specific objectives, perceive the importance of an activity, and receive prompt feedback on their efforts, flow is predicted to increase [9].

Workplace flow is characterised by absorption, or complete focus and immersion in the task; enjoyment, which results from cognitive and affective assessments of the flow experience; and intrinsic motivation, which describes the state of doing an activity for its own sake rather than in anticipation of an outside reward [10]. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to enhance and balance their skill set and the degree of problems they face by the feeling of flow [11]. Even if experiencing flow at work takes up a person's time and energy, the joy that comes from it creates resources, and people are willing to work hard to relive that flow.

Entrepreneurs don't have complete freedom. The nature of the business they are involved in may restrict their degrees of freedom. Schedule restrictions that increase work-role pressures and decrease the amount of time available to spend to family-role obligations may be present in some deadline-driven and/or client-centered firms. It is challenging to dedicate the necessary time to family obligations due to schedule rigidity, which is a structural source of conflict between work and family [12,13]. Schedule inflexibility may also be exacerbated by travel for business. Accordingly, entrepreneurs have less discretion to manage conflicting job demands when their schedules are rigid [14,15]

Schedule inflexibility and autonomy are philosophically and experimentally different, notwithstanding their correlation [7]. Therefore, the time commitment to work and family is likely to be negatively impacted by both autonomy and schedule rigidity. An individual's enthusiastic commitment in their duties, motivated by personal connections to their work and intrinsic incentives, is known as job engagement [16](Roberts & Davenport, 2002). According to Kahn and Fellows [17], it includes the idea that people fully utilise their own identities, calling forth and expressing their true selves while performing their assigned tasks. Because work is changing and employees are being recognised as whole people, the traditional definition of job engagement—which is frequently limited to task fulfilment and job-related responsibilities—is changing [18]

Entrepreneurship is often portrayed as a dynamic journey marked by both risk and reward, where autonomy and intrinsic motivation foster creativity and fulfillment. In contrast, salaried employment offers structured roles, stability, and predictable career trajectories but may limit autonomy and self-expression. Previous research highlights that entrepreneurs generally report higher subjective well-being and job satisfaction than salaried employees, though these benefits may come at the cost of stress and uncertainty.

Personality traits, particularly those encompassed in the Big Five model, play a central role in determining how

individuals engage with their work environments. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness are consistently associated with entrepreneurial success, whereas neuroticism is linked with stress and lower well-being. This study compares psychological well-being and personality traits between entrepreneurs and salaried employees to provide insights into occupationally specific patterns.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This comparative study involved 200 participants who were at least 18 years old, 100 of whom were entrepreneurs and 100 of whom were salaried employees. all sexes. Purposive sampling was carried out. Included were salaried workers (private or public, temporary or permanent) and entrepreneurs (company owners, self-employed). People who combined both roles were not allowed, nor were those who had mental illnesses.

Instruments:

-Ryff's Scales of Psychological Well-Being

-Big Five Personality Inventory

Procedure: Ethical clearance was obtained. Structured questionnaires were administered with informed consent.

Analysis: Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and linear regressions were used to analyze group differences and mediational effects.

RESULT:

The psychological well-being of entrepreneurs was significantly higher ($M = 194.9$, $SD = 17.55$) than that of salaried employees ($M = 180.5$, $SD = 21.34$), with a p-value of less than 0.001. Additionally, group comparisons showed that paid employees scored higher on agreeableness and neuroticism, whereas entrepreneurs scored better on extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness (all $p < 0.001$). (Table 1)

None of the Big Five personality traits significantly predicted psychological well-being in either group, according to regression analysis. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness were found to have weak positive relationships among salaried employees, although these did not achieve statistical significance. (Graph 1 & Table 2) Likewise, no noteworthy predictors were found for business owners. (Graph 2 & Table 3)

In general, entrepreneurs showed better psychological health and personality types that supported resilience and flexibility, while Salaried workers showed characteristics that were more in line with stability and social cohesiveness but also more vulnerable to stress.

Table 1: Comparison of Psychological Well-Being and Personality Traits between Groups

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
(Intercept)	180.5	21.34	-	-
Extraversion	0.653	0.480	1.360	0.177
Neuroticism	0.595	0.393	1.513	0.134
Agreeableness	0.550	0.587	0.936	0.352
Conscientiousness	0.653	0.504	1.295	0.199
Openness	0.590	0.442	1.335	0.185

Table 2: Salaried Employees - Regression of Personality Traits on Psychological Well-Being

Variable	Entrepreneurs (n=100)		Salaried Employees (n=100)		p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Psychological Well-Being	194.9	17.55	180.5	21.34	<0.001
Extraversion	37.8	4.39	33.1	4.69	<0.001
Neuroticism	31.3	5.02	36.2	5.81	<0.001
Agreeableness	31.5	5.19	34.6	3.80	<0.001
Conscientiousness	37.6	3.33	35.4	4.44	<0.001
Openness	36.3	4.29	33.2	5.00	<0.001

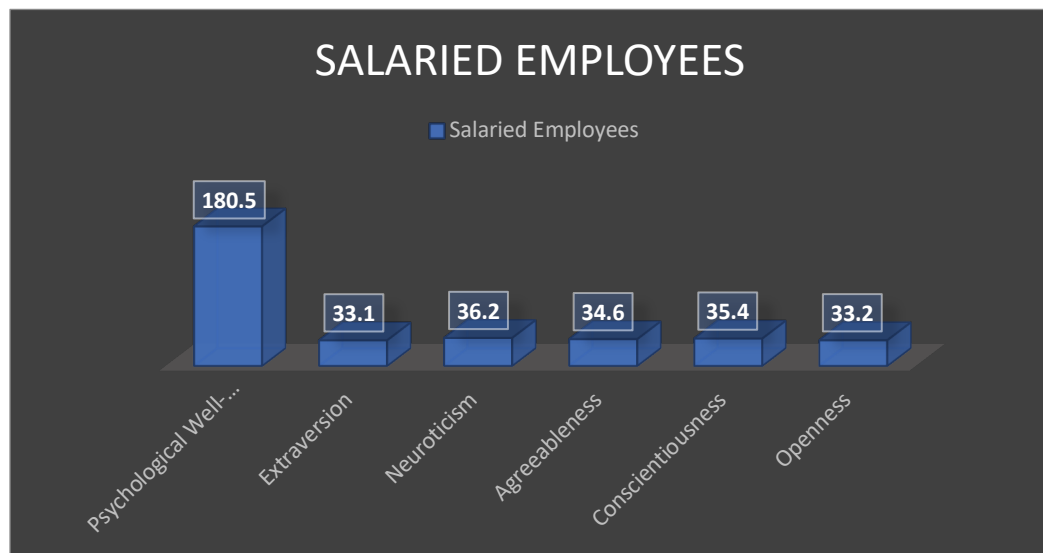
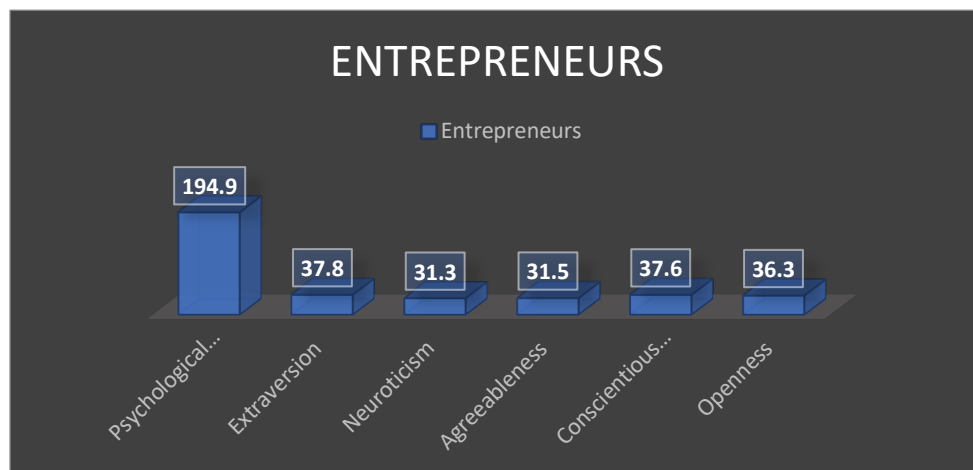


Table 3: Entrepreneurs - Regression of Personality Traits on Psychological Well-Being

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
(Intercept)	194.9	17.55	-	-
Extraversion	-0.037	0.717	-0.052	0.959
Neuroticism	-0.043	0.671	-0.064	0.949
Agreeableness	-0.113	0.263	-0.430	0.668
Conscientiousness	-0.008	0.935	-0.009	0.993
Openness	-0.049	0.631	-0.078	0.938

DISCUSSIONS

Entrepreneurs reported significantly higher psychological well-being ($p < 0.001$). Payroll jobs offer financial security and stability, but they can also be stressful due to repeated tasks, a lack of autonomy, or pressure from superiors.

No significant determinants of well-being among paid workers were found by regression analysis, underscoring the possible impact of workplace support, leadership style, and organisational atmosphere on mental health.

According to a study by Jung et al., [19] businesses should have a vision that allows people to grow and evolve while also providing for their physical and spiritual well-being. Employees and businesses alike can consider self-acceptance as a way to reduce work and family stress.

Second, life satisfaction is negatively impacted by work and family obligations. Employees must think and act positively and not negatively when taking on work and family responsibilities. To reduce role conflicts, employees must communicate positively both at work and at home.

Third, job load and life satisfaction operate as mediators between employment instability and these factors. The worker who recognised job insecurity was content with life despite having a heavy workload: Employees that are overworked may be less likely to keep their jobs. Low job instability may result in a lower level of life satisfaction for the employee. Life satisfaction is negatively impacted by both job burden and employment instability, which reduces uncertainty about job instability. The job burden of a group experiencing job instability might resolve the issue. Nowadays, businesses don't provide crucial tasks to temporary or part-time employees: Employees who are able to shift their social standing can be more productive by taking on more work. The affirmative effect will be examined in future research.

Fourth, family load mediated life satisfaction and meaning in life, while job burden mediated environmental mastery and life satisfaction. The most significant positive aspect of life is self-acceptance, and load issues can reduce life happiness by affecting not only environmental mastery but also life purpose. To have a positive attitude towards them, the employees will look back on their own. Businesses will assist workers in adopting a positive outlook in order to reduce the workload. [19]

In our study, the agreeableness and neuroticism scores of salaried staff were higher. In professional settings, greater agreeableness may foster harmony and

teamwork, but it can also stifle boldness. Increased neuroticism could be a sign of stress at work or a lack of control over results. In contrast, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness—qualities essential for creativity and self-direction—were greater among entrepreneurs.

These findings align with the research of Bateman & Crant et.al., [20] who discovered that proactivity overlaps with the need for dominance and achievement, as well as the findings of Chan et.al., [21] and Luca et.al., [22], who found positive correlations of proactivity with specific entrepreneurial traits (Entrepreneurial motivation, Leadership) and personality factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, and Openness to experience). [22]

Additionally, according to Tett and Burnett' Trait Activation (TA) hypothesis, certain personal characteristics can be triggered by dependent stimuli, which makes them more pertinent and suitable. According to this notion, the current study discovered that the association between Flow and ES was modified by Psychological Flexibility (PF). [23]

Even though the study's goal was to investigate mediation, not many significant trends showed up.

It was implied that personality may have an impact on particular cognitive and engagement outcomes in controlled settings. Regression analyses, however, did not reveal any significant predictors for psychological outcomes, indicating that personality affects may be overshadowed by outer job situations.

In terms of psychological outcomes and characteristics linked to self-control and creativity, entrepreneurs routinely fared better than paid workers. Salaried workers exhibited characteristics that were in line with social cohesiveness, sensitivity, and conformity—qualities that are helpful in stable settings but may be restrictive for psychological autonomy and involvement.

The findings affirm that entrepreneurs enjoy higher psychological well-being. Elevated conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion support entrepreneurial adaptability and goal orientation, while lower neuroticism enhances resilience.

On the other hand, the increased agreeableness and neuroticism of salaried workers reflect conformity, teamwork, and alignment with structured roles, but they also signal a greater vulnerability to stress and a decreased capacity for cognitive flexibility.

These findings highlight the necessity for context-specific therapies by demonstrating occupational

disparities in psychological dynamics. Strategies to increase autonomy and decrease stress may improve the well-being of salaried employees. Even if their baseline well-being is higher, entrepreneurs can reduce their risk of burnout by receiving training in stress management and financial planning.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that entrepreneurs and salaried employees differ significantly in terms of psychology and personality. Higher levels of agreeableness and neuroticism were found in salaried workers; these qualities are advantageous in organized employment but less supportive of resilience and autonomy. Psychological results are significantly shaped by the occupational situation. Customized interventions can maximize well-being for all categories, such as stress-reduction techniques for business owners and autonomy-boosting activities for salaried workers.

REFERENCES

- Lewin-Epstein N, Yuchtman-Yaar E. Health risks of self-employment. *Work and Occupations*. 1991 Aug;18(3):291-312. .
- Aldrich HE, Cliff JE. The pervasive effects of family on entrepreneurship: Toward a family embeddedness perspective. *Journal of business venturing*. 2003 Sep 1;18(5):573-96. .
- Parasuraman S, Purohit YS, Godshalk VM, Beutell NJ. Work and family variables, entrepreneurial career success, and psychological well-being. *Journal of vocational behavior*. 1996 Jun 1;48(3):275-300. .
- Hilbrecht M, Lero DS. Self-employment and family life: constructing work-life balance when you're 'always on'. *Community, Work & Family*. 2014 Jan 2;17(1):20-42. .
- Marcketti SB, Niehm LS, Fuloria R. An exploratory study of lifestyle entrepreneurship and its relationship to life quality. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*. 2006 Mar;34(3):241-59. .
- Lanivich SE. The RICH entrepreneur: Using conservation of resources theory in contexts of uncertainty. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. 2015 Jul;39(4):863-94. .
- Greenhaus JH, Collins KM, Shaw JD. The relation between work-family balance and quality of life. *Journal of vocational behavior*. 2003 Dec 1;63(3):510-31. .
- Csikszentmihalyi M. Beyond boredom and anxiety. Jossey-bass; 2000. .
- Csikszentmihalyi M, Csikszentmihalyi M. Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. New York: Harper & Row; 1990 Mar. .
- Bakker AB. The work-related flow inventory: Construction and initial validation of the WOLF. *Journal of vocational behavior*. 2008 Jun 1;72(3):400-14. .
- Csikszentmihalyi M. Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life. Hachette UK; 2020 Mar 3. .
- Bowen DD, Hisrich RD. The female entrepreneur: A career development perspective. *Academy of management review*. 1986 Apr 1;11(2):393-407. .
- Kaplan E. Women entrepreneurs: Constructing a framework to examine venture success and failure. *Frontiers of entrepreneurship research*. 1988;643. .
- Loscocco KA, Roschelle AR. Influences on the quality of work and nonwork life: Two decades in review. *Journal of vocational behavior*. 1991 Oct 1;39(2):182-225. .
- Pleck JH, Staines GL, Lang L. Conflicts between work and family life. *Monthly Lab. Rev.*. 1980;103:29. .
- Roberts DR, Davenport TO. Job engagement: Why it's important and how to improve it. *Employment Relations Today*. 2002 Oct 1;29(3):21. .
- Kahn WA. Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of management journal*. 1990 Dec 1;33(4):692-724. .
- Jawad M, Naz M, Rizwan S. Leadership support, innovative work behavior, employee work engagement, and corporate reputation: Examining the effect of female in not government organizations. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*. 2023 Mar;30(2):708-19. .
- Jung MH. The effect of psychological well-being on life satisfaction for employees. *산경연구논집 (JIDB)*. 2017 Oct;8(5):35-42. .
- Bateman TS, Crant JM. The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates. *Journal of organizational behavior*. 1993 Mar;14(2):103-18. .
- Chan KY, Uy MA, Chernyshenko OS, Ho MH, Sam YL. Personality and entrepreneurial, professional and leadership motivations. *Personality and individual differences*. 2015 Apr 1;77:161-6. .
- Luca MR, Robu A. Personality traits in entrepreneurs and self-employed. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov. Series VII: Social Sciences• Law*. 2016:91-8. .
- Tett RP, Burnett DD. A personality trait-based interactionist model of job performance. *Journal of Applied psychology*. 2003 Jun;88(3):500. .