IMPACT OF WORKLOAD ON INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE: MODERATING ROLE OF EXTROVERT

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study was to find the Impact of Workload on Innovative Performance. This study also finds out the moderating Role of extrovert. This study was conducted in service sector in different cities of Pakistan. A time lag design was used in this study because the time-lag method is more suitable method especially in case of theoretical causal study.

Methodology: At stage one; the self-reported questionnaire was used to collect the data from employee on workload and extraversion. Moreover, after one month, at stage two; a data from concerned supervisors on employee’s innovative performance were collected. The population of this study consisted of the permanent and contractual employees working in different organizations of Pakistan. A sample size of the study was (n=230) and convenience sampling technique was used.

Main Findings: Results show that there is no significant relationship between workload and innovative behavior. Moreover, extraversion was found to have no significant impact on innovative performance. However, it was found that the interaction term of workload and extraversion has a significant negative impact on innovative performance.

Implications/Applications: The present study is useful for policymakers and managers in Pakistan. As it has provided insight to employees’ behaviors, the way an employee reacts when he exposed to workload. It is up to the concerned authorities to pay keen attention to their employees and to make sure that extroverts are not embedded with workload.

Keywords: Workload, innovative performance, extrovert, behaviour, role, service.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s dynamic business environment, innovation is considered an important asset for organizations to gain competitive edge over rivals (Bordia, Kronenberg, & Neely 2005; Mahdieh, 2015; Rijal, 2016; Oetomo, Satrio, & Lestariingsih, 2016) and to grow in the market (Tellis, Prabhu, & Chandy, 2009; Yuan & Woodman, 2010; Intan, 2016; Nishiyama, 2016; Srisangkaew, 2017). Creativity and innovation are important for organizational survival and many companies strive for them (West & Sacramento, 2012; Cook, 1998; Delbecq & Mills, 1985; Kanter 1984; Van Gundy, 1987; Abdullah et al., 2015; Hilao, 2016; Varsani, 2018; Dae Au, 2016). This is the reason that most firms today search related problems, ultimately decreasing employee’s performance and innovative performance (Tellis, Prabhu, & Chandy, 2009; De Jong & Kemp, 2003).

Innovative performance is a complex behavior entailing a collection of three diverse behavioral tasks that are idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Humaidi, Shahrom, & Abdullah, 2018; Dasig Jr, 2017). Idea generation is a stage where unique and new ideas have emerged (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron 1996; Mumford, 2000; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). The second stage of innovative performance entails idea promotion. In this, once the individual has developed a novel idea, he has to promote it by engaging into social activities, or by finding a body that provides the required support to realize the idea (Galbraith, 1983). In the third stage, once the support has been found, a model should be constructed of that idea. So it can be experimented and eventually applied at a required organizational level (Kanter, 1988). Literature defines the term innovative performance as an employee commitment in innovative behavior associated with the innovative process (De Jong & Kemp, 2003; Parzefall, Seeck, & Leppänen, 2008; Bernik, Azis, Kartini, & Harsanto, 2015; Irai & Lu, 2018).

The present research analyzes the impact of workload on innovative performance. Workload has been conceptualized, as a degree to which employees have more or less work requirements (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Spector, 1987). Research on workload and innovative performance has been controversial as some scholars suggest workload as a motivator, while others insinuate it as workplace distress. In many studies workload has been taken as an important workplace stressor that is related to various harmful psychological responses including stress, anxiety and various health-related problems, ultimately decreasing employee’s performance and innovative performance (Spector, 1987; McDonald & Korakib, 1991; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013; Van Dyne, Jehn, & Cummings, 2002; Farr & Ford, 1990; Cox-Fuenzalida & Angie, 2005; Glaser, Tatum, Nebeker, Sorenson, & Aiello, 1999; Cox-Fuenzalida, Angie, Holloway, & Sohl 2006). Moreover, numerous scholars have found workload as a motivator, suggesting that workload
triggers an employee creativity and innovative performance (Bunce & West 1994; Nicholson & West, 1988; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum. 2000; Weissman, 2001; Axtell et al., 2000) as he finds his work more challenging (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & LePine 2004).

Hunter and Thatcher (2007) in their study suggested that there is a need to study both theoretically and practically, the presence of moderators in work stress with performance relationship. The existing body of knowledge suggests that numerous potential variables, moderate the relationship of the workload with employee’s performance. Some of the variables taken as moderators in previous studies are: age, gender, education, position (Jex, 1998); Job control (Spector & Jex, 1998); Social support (House, 1981); employees’ commitment (Jamal, 1984); fairness perceptions (Janssen, 2000); personality (Jex, 1998; Rose, Murphy, Byard, & Nikzad, 2002; Arsenault & Dolan, 1983; Robertson, 1984). Moreover, in the past era research has established employee’s personality characteristics as predictor of his or her performance (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). Numerous studies have tested the moderating impact of extraversion on workload and different types of performance such as; task performance (Cox-Fuenzalida, Swickert, & Hittner 2004); vigilance performance (Rose et al., 2002); mental workload performance (Robertson, 1984). However, no study has been carried out to test the impact of workload on innovative performance of an employee with moderating role of extraversion.

Extraversion entails a personality that is enthusiastic, aggressive, optimism, affection, and friendliness. This personality type has conflicting impact on performance (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1993; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). It has been given significant attention in occupational stress studies, and it was also found to be related to individual well-being outcomes (Hart, Griffin, Wearing, & Cooper, 1996; Sutherland & Cooper, 1986). Extroversion people have greater capability to adjust themselves according to situation as compared to introvert people that are not able to adjust themselves to the repeated changes which are occurring during job (Hart et al., 1996).

The present study intends to enrich studies on workload and innovative performance by providing a verification of structural relationships among the variables along with the quantitative review. By divulging two main aspects; firstly it will identify the link between workload and innovative performance. Furthermore, it will also clarify the moderating role of extraversion. Keeping in view the importance of these constructs in an organization, the present study is significant because it will fulfill the contextual gap as no research has been conducted, on this topic in Pakistan. Moreover, the previous studies have shown that behavior of individuals varies across cultures and individuals respond differently in similar situations because of differences in culture (Geert Hofstede, 1984; Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). It will identify how workload can lead to innovative performance and to what extent extraversion moderates this relationship within the Pakistani culture.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Workload

Many organizations today tend to hire a small number of full-time employees that can effectively manage their work. Often employees are obliged to perform excessive work in a short span of time (Brett & Stroh, 2003). However, it is important for organizations to assign manageable work to its workforce so that employees don’t feel pressurized by their work. Workload has been conceptualized as, to do extra or more work in short span of time (Conley & Woosley, 2000). Moreover, when expectation from a particular person is more than the abilities of individual, it leads to work overload (Spector & Jex, 1998).

Empirical studies conducted on workload have classified it in two sets i.e. work overload and work under load. Kahn (1973) suggested that workload can be measured as quantitative and qualitative; he elaborated that workload can be measured quantitatively by amount of work performed. However, it can be measured qualitatively by simplicity or difficulty of work to be performed. Research showed that quantitative workload is foundation or cause of stress which has been persuaded by difficulty of work (Mazloum, Kumashiro, Izumi, & Higuchi, 2008).

The impact of workload has been studied across numerous professions. One study on mentors concluded that workload affects different characteristics of mentorship i.e. experience and structural (Waters, 2004) and people are not willing to become a mentor because of high workload and extraordinary time demand (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997, Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins 1997 ). Moreover, incorporate sector, it is assumed that people feel stress due to high workload and job demand; it is also true for academia, where level of stress increase due to workload (Winefield & Jarrett, 2001).

Cost related to stress is growing day by day, for example, its cost in alone Australia, has been calculated approximately around $14.81 billion a year, and absenteeism due to stress also costing $10.11 billion to employers (Williams, Eschen, Harris, Dajddour, Pratt, Shaw, & Murphy, 2010). If stress is prolonged it may cause burnout to employees. Few researchers suggest that workload negatively effects various aspects in a workplace such as employees’ satisfaction (Schaefer & Moos, 1993); work culture (Vardi, 2009); causing employee stress (Boswell et al., 2004), and various health problems (Houkes: Janssen, Jonge, & Bakker, 2003; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005; Touchmann, Totterdell, & Parker, 1999) among employees.

Researchers related to organizational environment and occupational stress identified a positive impact of workload on health and performance of employee (Miller, Griffin, & Hart, 1999). At times individuals take workload as a challenge.
Probst, Stewart, Gruys (2003) and Amabile, 1988, in Pakistan. As this study is related to Stressors (two dimensions i.e. Workload and Time pressure), Big Five Personality Trait (Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Emotional stability) and their impact on job outcomes, that’s why researcher did not limit sample size to a specific sector. This gave researcher opportunity to analyze effect of these constructs in different sectors because each sector has its own work-setting. The second reason for choosing different sectors is to tap variance among them, and increasing our confidence in generalizability of study findings.

According to Jex (1998), an employee’s performance suffers when the job condition or the organization make it complex for him or her. Literature suggests that the workload can have a negative impact on employee’s performance (Cox-Fuenzalida et al., 2004). Even studies conducted in Pakistani context considered it a significant stressor as compared to others (Kazmi, Amjad & Khan, 2008).

Workload and Innovative Performance

Innovative performance has been conceptualized as a multi-stage process consisting of problem recognition, generation of ideas, building support and idea implementation (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Kanter, 1988). Research reveals that 80 percent of the ideas are instigated by employees (Getz & Robinson, 2003). Creativity is a different concept than innovation but it is an essential component of innovative behavior (Amabile, 1988). Researchers conducted in this area imply that social environment factors within the organization have an impact on employee’s creativity (Hunter, Bedell & Mumford, 2007). Employees when feel that their work is being valued by the organization they tend to be more creative.

Many researchers have tried to explore the link between innovative behavior and workload. Sonnentag and Niessen (2008), suggested that if the current workload of employees increased from their usual or routine workload, they experience stress. Moreover stress is considered harmful for employee creativity (Probst, Stewart, Gruys & Tierney, 2007). Perry-Smith and Shalley (2003), proposed, employee under work stress such as workload has more focus on job completion rather than generation of new ideas and creativity. Workload and other extrinsic pressures are considered as innovative performance barriers, consequently having negative impact on it.

A study conducted by Abbas and Raja (2011), in Pakistan, provides an unclear link between innovative performance and job stress, suggesting that psychological capital is linked positively with innovative performance and negatively with job stress. However the present research intends to study their direct effect. On the basis of literature reviewed, it may be inferred that workload hinders an individual’s innovative performance. As employees under workload try to finish their work in a given time rather than adding any creativity to it. Hence following hypothesis can be developed:

H1: Workload has a negative impact on innovative behavior.

Moderating Role of Extrovert

Workload may have a positive or negative impact on employee performance depending on the personality (Gilboa et al., 2008). Over the past era, extroversion has gained significant attention in occupational stress studies; as it is also linked with individual well-being outcomes (Hart et al., 1996; Sutherland & Cooper, 1986). The present research studies the impact of extraversion on workload and innovative behavior. Extraversion is related to warmth, enthusiastic, aggressive, optimism, affection and friendliness.

Previous research shows that extroversion is an important phenomenon in the area of research related to personality (Funder, 2006). Extroversion people have greater capability to adjust themselves according to the situation as compared to introvert people (Funder 2006) as extraversion are usually considered to be optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992), due to this they can cope with difficult issues and problems effectively as compared to others. They have positive relationship with the workplace deviance (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002).

Therefore, on the basis of the above literature, it can be comprehended that high extroversion individuals may demonstrate high levels of innovative performance in the workplace, even when workload is high. Since such individuals are related to warmth, enthusiastic, aggressive, optimism, affection and friendliness, they may easily handle heavy workloads and thereby reducing the negative effects of workload on job outcomes.

H2: Extraversion will moderate the relationship of the workload with innovative performance (such that the relationship will be weakened when extraversion is high)

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection Procedure

According to (Van Blerkom, 2008) population is the whole number of persons being studied for gathering of data and to examine the study phenomenon.

The population of this study consisted of the permanent and contractual employees working in different organizations of Pakistan. As this study is related to Stressors (two dimensions i.e. Workload and Time pressure), Big Five Personality Trait (Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Emotional stability) and their impact on job outcomes, that’s why researcher did not limit sample size to a specific sector. This gave researcher opportunity to analyze effect of these constructs in different sectors because each sector has its own work-setting. The second reason for choosing different sectors is to tap variance among them, and increasing our confidence in generalizability of study findings.
Different studies i.e., (Grant, Langan-Fox, & Anglim, 2009; Ohly & Fritz, 2010; Richardson, Yang, Vandenberg, DeJoy, & Wilson, 2008) that chose single organization or sector for data collection, admitted that this practice limited their findings and these findings could not be generalized.

Regarding the sample composition, the sample size of this study was 230 employees working in different organizations. Due to the following reasons, researcher chose representative sample from the organizations on the basis of convenience sampling:

- Resource constraints
- Difficulty in access to research sites
- Time constraints
- The wide dispersion of the selected industries and
- Most decisively the time lag design of the study

Approximately 300 questionnaires were circulated to the mentioned geographical locations, of which, only 230 completely filled, questionnaires were returned (response rate 76%). The sample consisted of 90% male, with an average age of 28 years. The average tenure that was recorded was 4.59 years. The sample consisted of various occupational levels including 49.1% staff level (clerical and technical staff) workers, 34.3% assistant managers, and 13.5% managers and 3% directors.

The study has been conducted through a time-lagged method, where data were collected at two different points of time. At stage one; self-reported questionnaire was used to collect the data from employee on workload and extraversion. The respondents were requested to provide their age, gender, education, and tenure information. Moreover, after one month, at stage two; supervisory reported questionnaire was circulated, to collect the data from concerned supervisors on employee’s innovative performance. Furthermore, supervisory reported questionnaire based on supervisory rating method was completed by the respected supervisor of each participant, to make the study unbiased. Both the participants as well as their supervisors returned the questionnaire separately.

Unit of analysis were employees working as a full time permanent employees from various organizations, covering the geographical location of four cities of Pakistan i.e. Haripur, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Before administration of the questionnaires participants were provided little information about the present study and were given instructions about the questionnaire. Participants were also ensured about the confidentiality of their information. Moreover, the instrument used to collect the data was made in English language, as most of the employees can easily understand it.

**Measures**

In the present research, all items to operationalize the constructs were adopted from the work of earlier researchers. On both questionnaire, variables were measured using 5-point Likert scale ranging 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

**Workload:** This construct was measured using the self-reported version of the questionnaire. It consisted of 5 items that were adopted from the work of Peterson, Ametz, Ametz, and Horte. (1995). The reliability score that was recorded after conducting the questionnaires was .809. Items of this questionnaire include “There is a need to reduce some part of my job”.

**Innovative Performance:** Innovative performance was measured by a supervisor rating scale. It consisted of 6-items that were adopted from the work of Janssen (2000). That stated that individual innovative behavior at the workplace that is based on Kanter (1988), work on stages of innovation. Two items on this questionnaire referred to idea generation, two items to idea promotion, and two items to idea realization. The reliability score was found to be 0.948. Some of the items are, “Creates new ideas for improvements”, “Generates original solutions to problems” and “Transforms innovative ideas into useful applications”.

**Extraversion:** Extraversion was accessed by using the self-reported questionnaire. That consisted of 10-items measure developed by Goldberg (1981) Examples of items included in the questionnaire for this construct were “I am the life of the party” and reverse coded items include “I don’t talk a lot”. The reliability score of this construct was found to be 0.571. However after deleting three items the score raised to 0.611.

**Control Variables:** According to Becker and Huselid (2006) only those variables should be controlled that is necessary for the analysis. Hence, after running one way ANOVA across age, gender, tenure, and education; tenure was found to have a significant impact on innovative performance (F=2.6, P=.001). Therefore, Tenure was used as a controlled variable.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 depicts mean, standard deviation, correlation, and reliabilities of variables recorded in this research.
The mean for workload was 2.88 and that of innovative performance was 3.38. Moreover, the correlational analysis showed that workload had a weak correlation with innovative behavior ($r = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$).

### Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation, Correlation and Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Age</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Gender</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-25 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Education</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-09</td>
<td>-08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Tenure</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>62 **</td>
<td>-17 *</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Workload</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>-09</td>
<td>-07</td>
<td>-06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(.809)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Innovative Performance</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-07</td>
<td>-03</td>
<td>-05</td>
<td>-15 *</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>(.948)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Extraversion</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>14 *</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-03</td>
<td>-03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>(.611)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 230; Cronbach’s alphas presented in parenthesis; For Gender was coded as “1” for male and “2” for female. $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

To test the hypothesis a multiple regression analysis was used. Where tenure (control variables) was entered in the first step followed by the independent variable i.e. workload and moderating variable i.e. extraversion. Table 2 depicts the regression results for the effect of workload and extraversion on innovative performance. Results showed no significant relation between workload and innovative behavior ($\beta = -0.003$, $p > 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.024$, $p > 0.05$). These results were inconsistent with the finding Probst, et al. (2007) and Perry-Smith and Shalley (2003) as they found, the workload to have a negative impact on innovative behavior. Hence, hypothesis one was rejected.

Moreover, extraversion was found to have no significant impact on innovative performance ($\beta = 0.065$, $p > 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.024$, $p > 0.05$). However, it was found that the interaction term of workload and extraversion has a significant negative impact of innovative performance ($\beta = -0.142$, $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.043$, $p < 0.05$).

### Table 2: Regression Results for Workload, Extraversion, and Innovative performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Tenure</td>
<td>-1.63 *</td>
<td>.022*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Workload</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Workload x Extraversion</td>
<td>-.142 *</td>
<td>.043*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 230; Standardized Coefficients are reported. Gender was coded as “1” for male and “2” for female. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Furthermore, to test the hypothesis two, the values of the moderator (High and low) were plotted. The plots of the interaction are depicted in fig 1. The graph illustrates that low extraversion was significant ($\beta = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$); and the slope for high extraversion was also significant ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = 0.05$). This means that introverts are more creative when they are given a high workload. And high extraversion individuals tend to be less creative when they are under high workload. On the other hand, when high extraversion are given low workload they tend to perform better than the low extraversion individuals. Hence, results provide the evidence for acceptance of hypothesis 2.

### DISCUSSION

From the literature review, it can be comprehended that innovation plays a key role in organizational success. It is necessary for organizations today to assign manageable work to their employees, only then they can depict innovative performance. Otherwise, employees with workload tend to complete their work in a given deadline. Rather than depicting any innovation in their performance. The present study intended to investigate the impact of workload and the innovative performance among employees in Pakistan.

The findings of the present research revealed that workload has no effect on innovative performance in Pakistan among the full time working employees. The finding is inconsistent with the findings of Probst, et al. (2007) and Perry-Smith and Shalley (2003), their study suggested that workload has a negative impact on employee’s performance. The reason behind the finding of the current study can be that in Pakistani culture, employees hold the option that there exists no relationship with the amount of work a person has to perform with diverse ways of performing that task.
Another finding of the study is that extraversion mediated the relationship between workload and innovative performance by weakening it. High extraversion when given workload can reduce the innovative performance. Extraversion individuals are those who are enthusiastic, aggressive, optimism, affection, and friendliness. When they are exposed to workload, their main interest is to get it done in the required time. They don’t have time to be innovative in their approach to work, as they prefer more to be around people and are prone to boredom. On the other hand, the findings suggest that introverts show innovative performance when they are given workload. These findings are inconsistent with the findings of Furnham and Bachtiar (2008). They concluded in their researches that extroverts are more creative than introverts. However, under workload they both act vice versa. This finding supports Furnham (2008) arousal theory that assumes extroverts have a low level of encouragement as compared to introverts, whenever they are exposed to external stimulation that affects their work. Moreover, introverts have the ability to avoid external stimulation. And same has been concluded in the current study that introverts have the ability to manage the workload and to depict the innovative behavior. Whereas extroverts don’t have the ability to manage the external stimulation and once they are exposed to workload their level of creativity tends to decline.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study is useful for policymakers and managers in Pakistan. As it has provided insight to employees’ behaviors, the way an employee reacts when he is exposed to workload. It is up to the concerned authorities to pay keen attention to their employees and to make sure that extroverts are not embedded with workload. To make sure that employees are not allocated work that is beyond their capacity, the authorities should devise certain policies, so that innovative behavior can be enhanced among the employees.

LIMITATIONS

There are a few limitations to the study. First off, the data was collected from Haripur, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad region that limits the scope of study to a certain geographical area. So there is a need to conduct the study at a broader level with a larger sample size. Secondly, workload and extraversion were reported by the employee, there can be an element of business. On the other hand, innovative performance was reported by the supervisor.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There is a dire need to explore some other factors that can be included in the present model like time pressure, OCB, and other Big Five personality traits (Agreeableness, emotional stability, consciousness, etc.). Moreover, the variables in the present study might have different impact on industries. There is a need to study these variables industry-wise. This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge about these constructs and role of Big Five between workload and innovative performance. In decisions related to hiring and selection personality is playing pivotal role, that why organizational behavior researchers are concentrating more on exploring the personality traits (Raja & Johns, 2010).

REFERENCES


