
RELATION BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to examine relation between personality traits and leadership styles. More precisely, to determine if personality traits can predict persons leadership styles.

The first concept in this research was the concept personality traits, defined through HEXACO personality model. Personality traits were operationalized through short version of HEXACO-PI-R personality inventory (Ashton & Lee, 2007). This inventory measures five personality traits: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience. This inventory is a 5-point Likert type scale with 60 items. The second concept in this research was the concept of leadership styles. In this research behavioral approach to leadership has been used. According to the authors who developed this approach, leaders manifest two different styles, or two different types of behavior: task-oriented style and relation-oriented style (Northouse, 2001). Leadership styles were operationalized through leadership style questionnaire (Northouse, 2001) which measures two different leadership styles mentioned before, task oriented and relation oriented. This questionnaire is also a 5-point Likert type scale with 20 items. Psychometric properties for both instruments were satisfactory.

The sample was convenient and it consisted of 104 respondents of both sexes (M=21; F=83), age ranged from 19 to 50 years old, with mean age of 26.09 years.

The data was analyzed using program SPSS version 20. Statistical method used in this research was linear regression, whereas predictors were personality traits and criterion variables were leadership styles.

Results show that both linear regression models (the one with task-oriented style and the one with relation-oriented style as criterion variables) were statistically significant. Statistically significant predictors for task-oriented leadership style were: Extraversion ($\beta=.303$; $p=.001$), Conscientiousness ($\beta=.238$; $p=.009$) and Openness to experience ($\beta=.240$; $p=.008$). The total percentage of explained variance of task-oriented style, taking all of the predictors into account was 25.8% of the total variance of criterion variable in question. When it comes to the relation-oriented leadership style, statistically significant predictors were following: Emotionality ($\beta=.199$; $p=.040$), Extraversion ($\beta=.227$; $p=.022$) and Agreeableness ($\beta=.246$; $p=.014$). Percentage of total variance of relation-oriented leadership style explained by all the predictors taken together was 16.5% of the total variance of the mentioned criterion variable.

From the results can be concluded that personality trait indeed are statistically significant predictors for leadership styles, the fact that can be useful in practice of professional orientation and selection of employees.

Keywords: leadership styles, personality, HEXACO, professional orientation, professional selection

INTRODUCTION

Leadership can be defined as “ability to organize and direct employees efforts to achieving seated goals and, in the same time, creating high level of motivation among all employees in the organization”^[111]. Leadership represents one of the most important constructs in work psychology. With the development of psychology of management and with higher level of importance of managers in different organizations, number of questions began to interest psychologists. Questions began from the fundamental question: is the leader born or a person becomes leader?, through question regarding what personality traits does the good leader have, and ending with question what personality traits follow which leadership style. In this research the final question has being examined.

Number of authors gave their conceptualizations about leadership styles^{[112][113][114][115][116]}. This research has been based upon a behavioral model of leadership styles. Author who developed this approach differ two types of

¹¹¹ Schin, G., & Racovita, M. (2013). IT & C support for decision making in notary offices. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 3(2), 1-9.

¹¹² Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. New York: The Free Press.

behavior: task-oriented leadership style and relation-oriented leadership style^[117]. Task-oriented people have a tendency to focus on the details. They don't put their plans in motion if all necessary conditions aren't fulfilled. On the other hand, relation-oriented people have tendency to focus on the results and freely put their plans in motion when only the main and really necessary conditions, but not all required condition, are fulfilled^[118].

When it comes to personality traits, in this research they were operationalized using HEXACO model based upon psycho-lexical paradigm and contains following six measuring subjects^[119]:

Honesty-Humility, this dimension refers to tendency of an individual not to manipulate others, not to break rules, and not to be motivated only by personal gain. On the other hand, on the other end of this dimension there are people who behave completely opposite;

Emotionality: Persons on one end of this dimension often experience anxiety and need for emotional support, they also tend to empathize with other. On other hand, at the other end of this dimension there are people who feel little worry even in stressful situations, have little need to share their concerns with others, and feel emotionally detached from others;

Extraversion: People with high extraversion enjoy social gatherings, they feel confident while leading and they feel confident about themselves;

Agreeableness (versus Anger): Persons with very high scores on the Agreeableness scale forgive the wrongs that they suffered, are willing to compromise and cooperate with others, and can easily control their temper. Conversely, persons with very low scores on this scale hold grudges against those who have harmed them, are rather critical of others' shortcomings, are stubborn in defending their point of view, and feel anger readily in response to mistreatment;

Conscientiousness: Persons with very high scores on this scale organize their time, work in a disciplined way toward their goals, strive for accuracy and perfection in their tasks, and deliberate carefully when making decisions. Conversely, persons with very low scores on this scale tend to show opposite behaviors;

Openness to Experience: Persons with very high scores on the Openness to Experience scale are inquisitive about various domains of knowledge, use their imagination freely in everyday life, and take an interest in unusual ideas or people, people on the other end of this dimension show opposite characteristics.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

There have been many studies regarding relation between personality traits and leadership styles. Most of them used Big Five personality model, in this research, on the other hand, HEXACO personality model has been used, and the study has been conducted on teachers from elementary school and high school. Study of Mousa Khaireddin^[120] showed that there is no connection between personality traits from Big Five model and leadership styles. Another

¹¹³ Vaill, P. (1978). Toward a behavioral description of high-performing systems. In McCall, Morgan W., Jr., & Lombardo, Michael M., *Leadership: Where else can we go?*, pp. 103-125, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

¹¹⁴ Peters, T. J., and Waterman, R. H., Jr. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies*. New York Harper & Row.

¹¹⁵ Bennis, W. and Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper & Row.

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¹¹⁷ Fayyaz, H., Naheed, R., & Hasan, A. (2014). Effect of Task Oriented and Relation Leadership Style on Employee Performance; Moderating Impact of Communicator Competence. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research – An Open Access International Journal*, 3, 1-9.

¹¹⁸ Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. (1982). A comparative analysis of situationalism and 9,9 management by principle, *Organizational Dynamics (Spring 1982)*, 20-41.

¹¹⁹ Ashton, C. M., & Lee, K. (2007). *Empirical, Theoretical and Practical Advantages of the HEXACO model of Personality Structure*, Retrieved from: <http://differentialclub.wdfiles.com/local--files/5fm/Ashton%202007%20HEXACO%20Model%20JPSP.pdf> on November 13, 2017 from the world wide web.

¹²⁰ Khaireddin, M. (2015). The Impact of Big Five Personality Traits on Leadership Styles: An Empirical Study Applied on the Branch Managers of Banks Working at the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Management*. 10(9), 193-206.

study, conducted on women physical education teachers^[121] showed that there is a correlation between personality traits and leadership styles. Study in question used leadership styles concept different than one we used in this research, because of which details of this study will not be shown here. One of studies^[122] regarding relation in question in this research found following: personality variables gregariousness, cooperativeness, morality, assertiveness and conscientiousness were correlated with people oriented leadership behavior. Personality traits like altruism, assertiveness, cautiousness and cooperation were correlated with task oriented leadership styles. Thus extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness were related with both people and task oriented leadership styles, because in this study facets of those personality traits were measured. Neuroticism is not related with people and task oriented leadership style. Openness to experience is not showing any relationship with people oriented and task oriented leadership styles. Many other studies also found connection between personality traits and leadership styles^{[123][124]}.

Some authors state that there are differences between leadership styles of man and woman, more precisely, that there are some leadership styles specifics when sex is taken into account^{[125][126][127]}. In contrast to them, many researches deny the existence of sex differences in leadership^{[128][129][130][131][132]}. In the present research, the role of the sex in leadership style will also be checked.

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the research

The aim of this study was to examine relation between personality traits and leadership styles. More precisely, to determine if personality traits can predict persons leadership styles. And also, to examine to role of gender in leadership styles.

Instruments

The first instrument used in this research was the short version of HEXACO-PI-R personality inventory^[119]. This inventory measures five personality traits: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience. This inventory is a 5-point Likert type scale with 60 items.

Sample

The sample was convenient and it consisted of 104 respondents of both sexes (M=21; F=83), age ranged from 19 to 50 years old, with mean age of 26.09 years.

RESULTS

The data was analyzed using program SPSS version 20. Statistical method used in this research was linear regression, whereas predictors were personality traits and criterion variables were leadership styles.

¹²¹ Farsani, E. M., Azadi, A., Farsani, A. F., & Aroufzad, S. (2013). Relationship between leadership styles and personality traits among woman physical education teachers. *European Journal of Sports and Exercise Science*, 2(1), 17-21.

¹²² Tatlah, A. I., Nizami, R., & Siddiqui, A. K. (2012). Influence of Personality Traits on Leadership Styles: A Secondary Level Study. *Romanian Journal for Multidimensional Education*, 4(3), 163-174.

¹²³ Gracia, M., Duncan, F., Carmody-Bubb, M., & Ree, J. M. (2014). You Have What? Personality! Traits That Predict Leadership Styles For Elementary Principals. *Psychology*, 5, 204-212.

¹²⁴ Hassan, H., Asad, S., & Hoshino, J. (2016). Determinants of Leadership Style in Big Five Personality Dimensions. *Universal Journal of Management*, 4(4), 161 – 179

¹²⁵ Loden, M. (1985). *Feminine leadership or how to succeed in business without being one of the boys*. New York: Times Books

¹²⁶ Sargent, A. G. (1981). *The androgynous manager*. New York: Amacom.

¹²⁷ Hennig, M., & Jardin, A. (1977). *The managerial woman*. New York: Anchor Press. HEXACO Personality Inventory, Retrieved from: <http://hexaco.org> on 13th November 2017 from the world wide web.

¹²⁸ Brown, S. M. (1979). Male versus female leaders: A comparison of empirical studies. *Sex Roles*, 5, 595-611.

¹²⁹ Hollander, E. P. (1985). Leadership and power. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (3rd ed, Vol. 2, pp. 485-537). New York: Random House.

¹³⁰ Bass, B. M. (1981). *Stogdill ~ handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research (rev. ed.)*. New York: Free Press.

¹³¹ Nieva, V. E., & Gutek, B. A. (1981). *Women and work: A psychological perspective*. New York: Praeger.

¹³² Kanter, R. M. (1977a). *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

Table 1: Regression – task-oriented leadership style

Model	Predictor	R ²	β	p
1		.258		.000
	Honesty		-.049	.602
	Emotionality		.087	.333
	Extraversion		.303	.001
	Agreeableness		-.150	.107
	Conscientiousness		.238	.009
	Openness to experience		.240	.008

From the table above it can be seen that there are three statistically significant predictors of task-oriented leadership style, Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience, all three with positive correlation. Which means that people who have higher level of Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience have tendency to manifest task-oriented leadership behavior.

Table 2: Regression – relation-oriented leadership style

Model	Predictor	R ²	β	p
1		.165		.007
	Honesty		.050	.617
	Emotionality		.199	.040
	Extraversion		.227	.022
	Agreeableness		.246	.014
	Conscientiousness		.174	.071
	Openness to experience		.143	.131

From the table above it can be seen that there are three statistically significant predictors of task-oriented leadership style, Emotionality, Extraversion and Agreeableness, all three with positive correlation. Which means that people who have higher level of Emotionality, Extraversion and Agreeableness have tendency to manifest relation-oriented leadership behavior.

Table 3: differences between man and women on leadership styles

	Task-orientation	Relation-orientation
Man	3.67	4.04
Woman	3.74	4.27
p	.643	.034

Man and woman differed one from another on relation-oriented leadership style and the differences were in favor of woman.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Results in this research are partial confirmation of results from study of Tatlah, Nizami i Siddiqui^[122]. In their research correlation between task-oriented leadership style and personality traits Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. In this research statistically significant predictors of task-oriented leadership style were: Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience.

When it comes to relation-oriented leadership style, results in this research are also partially similar to those from those from study of Tatlah, Nizami i Siddiqui^[122]. Results from their study point out the correlation between this leadership style and Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. In this research statistically significant predictors of this leadership style were: Emotionality, Extraversion and Agreeableness. When it comes to differences between man and woman, our results are in accordance with results from previous studies which state that there are gender differences when it comes to dominant leadership style^{[125][126][127]}. In conclusion, results from this research could mean that task-oriented leaders are open towards other people, are oriented towards work, accuracy and discipline and that they are open to new things. This is in accordance with description of task-oriented

people like people who are focused on details and don't start their plain if not all conditions for them are fulfilled. Relation-oriented people, in this research, are seen as more emotional, also open towards other people and more prone to cooperative behaviors, as the people who are indeed worried about the outcome of some work but more than that, people who are interested in other people, in all employees not only in work they are doing.

Also, differences between man and woman were found. Woman are more prone to relation-oriented leadership style, which is in accordance with common knowledge that woman have higher empathy and interest in other people, their feelings and their well-being.

In the end, from the results can be seen that there are some differences between results from this research and previous studies. This can be assigned to different personality models, most of previous studies used Big Five model, this research used HEXACO personality model. For further research usage of different personality models and their comparison when it comes to their relation to the leadership style is suggested, in order to check results from this research and previous studies.

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