

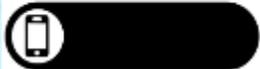
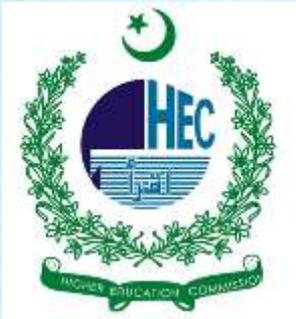
Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

**ASSESSING LEADERSHIP LEVELS AND SKILLS THROUGH
SELF-PERCEPTION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN UNIVERSITIES IN LAHORE**



**Dr Beenish Masood¹, Dr Muhammad Habib Qazi^{*2},
Uzma Arshad Mughal³**

*¹English Language Centre, Faculty of Languages and
Literature, University of Central Punjab, Lahore,
Pakistan*

*^{*2}English Department, Faculty of Languages and
Literature, University of Central Punjab, Lahore,
Pakistan*

*³Department of English, Capital University of Science
and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan*

Abstract

This study explores educational leaders' self-perceptions of their leadership level and how they interpret their roles within established leadership frameworks. This study adopts a case study approach and gathers data through an interview questionnaire. The sample consists of 25 purposively selected Heads of Departments (HODs) from five public and five private universities in Lahore. From a theoretical standpoint, the questionnaire was developed based on Lewis Goldberg's (1990) Big Five theory of personality and John C. Maxwell's leadership questionnaire to determine the leadership levels of HODs. The findings show that cooperation, discipline, and respect are key to effective leadership. Conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness were identified as important traits that support responsibility, empathy, and team cohesion. Leaders often rated themselves higher than assessments suggested, highlighting the link between personality and leadership effectiveness.

Keywords: *leadership, self-perception, personality, cooperation, conscientiousness, discipline, respect*

Introduction

Leadership levels and skill requirements have long been described as varying across organizational levels (Jacobs & McGee, 2001) and as consisting of multiple, interrelated domains (Phillips & Hunt, 1992; Zaccaro, 2001). Rather than treating these competencies as a single undifferentiated set, earlier scholarship suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on a combination of distinct yet connected skill areas that may increase in complexity as individuals move to higher managerial positions.

A synthesis of prior conceptualizations of leadership skills (Connelly et al., 2000; Kanungo & Misra, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Lau, Newman, & Broedling, 1980; Mahoney, Jerdee, & Carroll, 1965; Mintzberg, 1973; Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro, & Reiter-Palmon, 2000; Zaccaro, 2001) indicates that these competencies can be organized into four broad categories: cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, business skills, and strategic skills. Although different scholars have used varying terminology, their classifications consistently align with these four overarching domains.

On the other hand, leadership effectiveness refers to a leader's capacity to influence subordinates. Its evaluation requires that the individual being assessed occupies a leadership position. Comparative analysis among leaders may also be conducted to determine effectiveness (Hogan et al., 1994). Bass (1990), in his review, states that self-confidence reflects lower levels of neuroticism (p. 69). Social Identity Theory (SIT et al., 1986) explains that there should be congruence between leader and follower. According to this theory, a leader must align his goals with the aspirations of employees, which ultimately enhances intrinsic motivation among followers. Gaps between the targets of leaders and followers represent major hindrances to development (Schyns et al., 2007). Porter, Hollenbeck et al. (2003) illustrate that leaders characterized by high precision are effective

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

in providing support and guidance (Kirkpatrick et al., 1991). Leaders who are attentive listeners are more inclined to experiment with new ideas and encourage the exchange of ideas.

This study is, however, about the concept of leadership through leaders' self-perception. Lewis Goldberg (1990) presented his theory based on five factors of personality called "The big five". According to this, there are five factors of personality in which different people can be categorized. Similarly, John C. Maxwell presents a road map to identifying levels of leaders and documented a process through which it can be determined. This study investigates the educational leaders' self-perceptions regarding their leadership level, and how do they conceptualize their position within established leadership frameworks. For this purpose, the data is collected from Head of Departments of different universities, located in Lahore, Pakistan. It is a qualitative case study based on their in-depth semi-structured interview.

Research Questions

This focused study is anchored on the following research question:

RQ: What are leaders' self-perceptions regarding their leadership level, and how do they conceptualize their position within established leadership frameworks?

Literature Review:

Leadership level and skill assessment has become a central concern in contemporary organizational research due to the increasing complexity of institutions and the demand for effective governance. Scholars have emphasized that leadership is not a singular trait but a multi-dimensional construct that operates at various levels—individual, team, and organizational—and requires a corresponding range of skills (Northouse, 2021). Understanding how leadership levels intersect with skill development provides insight into how organizations can evaluate and cultivate effective leaders (ibid).

One foundational framework for assessing leadership skills is Katz's (1955) three-skill approach, which categorizes leadership competencies into technical, human, and conceptual skills. According to Katz (1955), technical skills are most critical at lower management levels, where leaders engage directly with operational tasks. Human skills—interpersonal abilities and emotional intelligence—are essential at all levels, while conceptual skills become increasingly important at higher leadership levels where strategic decision-making and systems thinking are required. This hierarchical distribution of skills underscores the necessity of aligning leadership assessment tools with the leader's organizational level.

Building upon skill-based models, Mumford et al. (2000) proposed a skills-based leadership model that emphasizes problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Their model suggests that leadership effectiveness depends not only on inherent traits but also on learned competencies influenced by career experiences and environmental factors. This perspective supports the development of assessment centers and competency-based evaluations that measure cognitive abilities and social performance rather than relying solely on personality inventories.

Leadership level assessment is also influenced by transformational and transactional leadership theories. Transformational leadership, characterized by intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, has been widely associated with higher-level leadership roles (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Bass and Avolio, remains one of the most frequently used instruments to

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

assess leadership behaviors across levels. Research indicates that transformational behaviors are particularly relevant for senior leaders who guide organizational vision and change (Northouse, 2021).

Moreover, competency-based frameworks have gained prominence in leadership assessment. Boyatzis (1982) argued that effective performance is rooted in measurable competencies, which can be systematically identified and evaluated. Competency mapping enables organizations to define leadership expectations at different hierarchical levels and design targeted development programs. Similarly, 360-degree feedback mechanisms have emerged as practical tools for assessing leadership skills across levels, offering multi-source perspectives from supervisors, peers, and subordinates (London & Smither, 1995). Such tools provide a comprehensive understanding of behavioral effectiveness and leadership impact.

Recent literature also emphasizes emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical component of leadership skill assessment. Goleman (1998) posited that emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, significantly distinguish high-performing leaders from average ones. EI-based assessments are increasingly integrated into leadership evaluation processes, particularly for middle and senior management roles where relational dynamics are pivotal.

Self-perception refers to the process through which individuals form judgments and beliefs about themselves, including their abilities, attitudes, and identity (Bem, 1972).

It plays a foundational role in shaping behavior, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Baumeister, 1999). Early psychological theories conceptualized self-perception as emerging from reflective self-awareness and social interaction (Cooley, 1902).

One of the most influential explanations of self-perception is Bem's (1972) self-perception theory, which proposes that individuals infer their internal states by observing their own behavior.

According to this theory, people develop attitudes and self-concepts by interpreting their actions in context, particularly when internal cues are weak or ambiguous (Bem, 1972).

This behavioral inference model challenged earlier assumptions that attitudes always precede behavior (Festinger, 1957).

Cognitive dissonance theory further complements self-perception research by suggesting that individuals strive for internal consistency between beliefs and actions (Festinger, 1957).

When discrepancies occur, individuals may adjust their attitudes to align with observed behavior, reinforcing self-perceptual change (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019).

Thus, self-perception is closely linked to cognitive processes of justification and rationalization (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019).

Self-concept clarity has also been identified as a central dimension of self-perception (Campbell et al., 1996). Individuals with high self-concept clarity possess stable and consistent beliefs about themselves, which are associated with greater psychological well-being (Campbell et al., 1996).

Conversely, low self-concept clarity is linked to anxiety, depression, and susceptibility to social influence (Baumeister, 1999).

Social comparison theory provides another perspective on self-perception, emphasizing that individuals evaluate themselves in relation to others (Festinger, 1954).

Upward and downward comparisons influence self-esteem and perceived competence (Wood, 1989). In contemporary digital contexts, social media has intensified opportunities for social comparison, thereby shaping modern self-perception processes (Vogel et al., 2014).

Self-perception is also deeply embedded in social identity frameworks (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Group memberships contribute significantly to how individuals define and evaluate themselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Cultural contexts further moderate self-perception, with collectivist cultures emphasizing interdependent self-construals and individualist cultures emphasizing independent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Recent research highlights the role of metacognition and self-reflection in refining self-perception (Morin, 2006). Neuroscientific studies suggest that specific brain regions, particularly in the medial prefrontal cortex, are involved in self-referential processing (Heatherly, 2011).

These findings indicate that self-perception is not only socially constructed but also biologically grounded (Heatherly, 2011).

In conclusion, the literature demonstrates that assessment of leadership levels and skills through self-perception is a dynamic and multi-layered construct shaped by behavioral inference, cognitive consistency, social comparison, identity processes, and cultural context (Bem, 1972; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Ongoing research continues to explore how technological environments and cross-cultural perspectives influence the development and stability of self-perception across the lifespan (Vogel et al., 2014). Effective assessment systems integrate these perspectives to ensure alignment between leadership level, required competencies, and organizational objectives. Future research continues to explore culturally responsive assessment models and the integration of digital analytics in leadership evaluation processes. (Rookie, 2017).

Methodology

This study employs a case study method and collects data using an interview questionnaire. The study comprised 25 purposively sampled Heads of Departments drawn from five public and five private universities. The sampling strategy aimed to ensure representation of both male and female participants, as well as inclusion of individuals with varying levels of administrative experience. Since the study was identifying leaders' self-perceptions regarding their leadership level, so the population was supposed to be on key leadership position. In depth semi structured interviews were conducted with the Heads of Departments. There were ten questions. All questions were open ended. The interviews were conducted till the saturation point was reached. For interviews, appointments were taken well in advance to ensure the successful completion. The research was completed in 4 weeks.

From theoretical perspectives, we developed a questionnaire drawing upon Lewis Goldberg's (1990) Big Five theory of personality and John C. Maxwell's Leadership questionnaire to identify leadership levels of 25 Heads of Departments. Maxwell questionnaire has three parts. First part asks the leaders about their leadership level. Second part asks their subordinates about the leadership levels of their heads. Third part asks the leaders about the perception of their subordinates. Since this study is focused on a single aspect which is leaders' self-perceptions regarding their leadership level, and the way they conceptualize their position within established leadership frameworks, only the first part of the questionnaire was utilized.

For the interpretation of the data, thematic analysis was done by generating themes and dividing different themes under different categories so that the interpretation of the data becomes easier.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Data Analysis

The data was collected using the following interview questions:

Sr No.	Themes
Question No. 1: What kind of leader are you?	Co-operative and disciplined.
Question No. 2: Do you think your subordinates respect you?	Majority is respected.
Question No. 3: What personality trait do you think dominates your leadership skill?	Majority is conscientious.
Question No. 4: Do you think personality has got anything to do with your leadership skill?	Majority agrees that personality is linked with leadership.
Question No. 5: Can you tell me your leadership level if I give you five Options?	Majority is on level 4.
Question No. 6: What kind of personality produces better leaders?	Extroversion and agreeableness are the key themes.
Question No. 7: Leaders are born or made?	Leaders are born according to majority.
Question No. 8: How can you reach the top hierarchy of leadership level?	Hard work, evolution and adaptability are key themes.
Question No. 9: Can personality type be changed?	Majority replied in affirmative.
Question No. 10: A change in personality will be associated to a change in leadership level or not?	Majority says that personality affects leadership level.

1. What type of leader they are?

For the answer to question 1, majority of the HOD's i.e., 20 expressed that they are principled leaders who like to follow rules and set a good example for their team. This emerged as the most important theme that leaders feel they are strict because they have to get the work done. They feel that being the good guy is the most difficult thing to achieve when you are a leader. It is next to impossible to please everybody. Some of the people will always be unhappy with the leader and he/she have to learn to live with it. It becomes a problem when everybody is unhappy with the leader. A leader has to be emotionally stable and very well grounded person so that he/she can deal with all the emotional pressure that the team bring for him/her. Another most important theme that emerged is the theme of merit. A leader should maintain this vibe in the organization that people are valued and respected only because of the merit and not because of any personal relationship with the leader. This will send a unanimous message of stability and trust throughout the organization. Another important theme was the impact of positivity in the leader. If a leader is positive and knows how to ignore some of the innocent mistakes of the employees, they will have a sense of trust and faith. Another important theme is the theme of cooperation. The leader needs to create an atmosphere of cooperation to bring the best out of the team. The leader should be aware of the fact that employees will have human problems and they will sometimes be needful of taking off and they will feel sick occasionally too, and at that time, if the leader cooperates with them, the organization will win lifetime of faithful team members.

2. Do their subordinates respect them?

For question 2, majority of the 19 HOD's replied that their subordinates respect them and they feel highly valued by their team members. They feel that they have won the respect of their team by

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

their hard work and that it is a feeling of great accomplishment for them. A minority of 5 leaders replied that their team members do not respect them and they do not actually care about that. They are working to gain respect, rather their main job is to get the team to produce results and the team is producing results so their job is done. They feel that it can be good to have some respect coming their way in the process too but they can live without it. A small minority of 3 leaders said that it does not matter whether their subordinates respect them or not because their self-worth is not dependent upon external affirmation and praise. According to the perceptions of the leaders, 10 leaders claimed that they were conscientious and they truly cared for the progress and development of their team. This shows that they have a strong conviction upon their efforts and feel that they are doing the best that they can in the given situation.

3. What personality trait dominates their leadership skill?

7 leaders feel that they have extraversion as their dominant trait because they feel that they love their people and feel that they have built long lasting connections with their team. They trust their social skills immensely. 3 HOD's mentioned Openness as their leading trait because they feel that they always welcome change and feel thrilled by new projects. New challenges inspire them to set new goals for them. 3 HOD's expressed that are agreeable. They tend to tailor their reactions to make them aligned with people's expectations. This brings a lot of applause from people and they are very well liked by their team. It was mentioned by one HOD that Neuroticism is the dominant trait in this case. Anxiety and stress are experienced by the leader upon trivial events. This shows a less stable mental condition to deal with stressful situations.

4. Do they think personality has got anything to do with their leadership skill?

In reply to question 4, majority of 18 leaders believe that personality has great impact upon the leadership level of a person. They shared examples by saying that leaders who are sociable and outgoing are more popular amongst people and they get the work done quite easily as compared to leaders who are less popular amongst people. They feel that personality is the center stone for all other skills. A personality where the leader tries to please his team, is flawed because a leader's job is not to make his team fall in love with him but to get his team to produce better results. He can eventually get his team to like him for his merit but not the other way around. 6 leaders said that personality does not have an impact upon the leadership level of a person because leadership is inherent and if one person does not have those characteristics, then he/she cannot become a good leader. 2 Leaders said that they believe it has zero to not effect at all.

5. Can they tell their leadership level if you give them five options?

In their answer to question 5, 11 leaders expressed that they feel they are on level 4 which is "People Development". There is a little discrepancy because in leadership test, no leader turned out to be on level 4. This means that reality is different than the perceptions of leaders about their leadership level. 6 leaders projected that they are on level 5 which is "Pinnacle". This is the highest point of leadership which a leader can have. Only 4 leaders said that they were on level 3 which is Production. Whereas in the results for questionnaire, majority of leaders were on level 3. Only 4 leaders said that they were on level 2 but this number was bigger in the results for leadership questionnaire. In the results of leadership questionnaire, 19 leaders turned out to be on level 2 which is more than what the leaders perceived for themselves. This shows that their level according

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

to them is one level higher than what their level actually is in reality according to Maxwell's leadership questionnaire.

6. What kind of personality produces better leaders?

According to question 6, majority of the leaders said that they have extraversion as their central trait because they feel that they are nice to people in their team and like to maintain happy and normal social relationship with them. Second big majority said that they are agreeable and Openness with their team members. Only 2 leaders said that they are conscientious leaders. This result is having minor differences from the results of Big Five personality test where 47 leaders turned out to be Openness and 30 leaders were having agreeableness as their central trait. 24 leaders were identified in Extraversion. Only 8 leaders were identified in Conscientiousness. This part is similar to the results of interviews where conscientiousness turned out to be in lesser leaders, according to their opinion too.

7. Leaders are born or made?

In their answer to question 7, 15 leaders claimed that leaders are born and they cannot be made no matter how hard one tries to train. They feel that leadership has some inherent values and those values cannot be acquired. They said that the difference between these approaches is as if one person who learnt a skill can be equal to another who mastered a skill. They said that there is no amount of training which can turn a person who is a follower into a person who leads. Some even mentioned that leaders who are born are "Natural leaders" and those who are made are "Artificial Leaders". This explains how different people would feel about leaders who did not have the inborn capability to lead. On the other hand, 11 leaders proclaimed that leaders are made and they are not born. Their main claim resided over the fact that birth is a natural process and it should not be the decisive point to determine whether a person can be a good leader or not. They said that association of leadership with birth is questionable and illogical. They claimed that leaders can be made through a process of observation, training, learning and teaching. There is no skill that cannot be acquired through hard work. They also mentioned that charisma and influence also play a vital role in creating leaders, and shaping their personalities. They also mentioned that leadership is more of a matter where you are supposed to be in the right place at the right time because many a times people are good leaders but they do not have the position where can excel at their talent. They also said that leadership is a choice and this choice can be made by anyone at any time, no matter if the person is a born leader or not.

8. How can you reach the top hierarchy of leadership level?

In their reply to question 8, majority of the leaders said that adaptability is the key to moving up on the scale of leadership level. They mentioned that circumstances change and it is the job of a leader to adapt to change before everybody else and be ready to help others too. This is vital to their role as a leader that they need to take the team along with them in order for the organization to reach its full potential. Adaptability turned out to be the leading theme for leaders if they want to grow and enhance their leadership skill. Second major theme for leadership growth is accepting feedback as a tool to determine the errors of leadership and using it to fix those errors. This is extremely crucial to move from one leadership level to another because leadership has direct outcomes in terms of people development and organizational development. If people development and organizational development is hindered somehow or slow, the people in the organization are the first ones to know

about it, making their honest and impartial feedback, crucial to the leader's growth and development. Another major theme which emerged was that intrinsic motivation plays a significant role if a leader wants to go through a period of growth and development. Not all leaders feel this desire to change their leadership level, which is why they remain on the same level of leadership, most of their life. But if a leader is intrinsically motivated to be at the highest level, this motivation works as a catalyst to his struggle. Another important theme is to evolve with time and keep working hard. Being a leader is not the end but a beginning in itself. There is a whole new world of learning which awaits a leader. This realization strengthens the leader and brings about a conviction that he/she can be more than what he/she is right now.

9. Can personality type be changed?

In their answer to question 9, majority of the leaders felt that personality can change over the period of time but this change is gradual and requires a lot of effort. 19 leaders mentioned that personality can change owing to new life experiences occurring over a period of time. They also expressed that if people go through emotional trauma or certain triggering/life changing scenario, their personality goes through a series of changes. They also said that people tend to take social roles for longer periods and they too bring about a change in their personalities. On the contrary, 7 leaders suggested that personality cannot be changed. One of the leaders gave reference to Dr. Sigmund Freud's quotation where he says that personality is set at a very young age of 5 and that it remains stable and fixed throughout our life. This makes sense when we connect it to the other perspective where some leaders suggested that personality remains stable until it is hit by a major life-changing event. There is a link of belief system to this approach as well. Some leaders suggested that if a person believes that his intelligence is fixed, he will not make any effort to work on his intelligence because of his belief system but on the other hand, if a leader believes that his intelligence is changeable, he will surely work on himself to enhance or improve it. This suggests that personality is imbedded in the belief system and the perception of self. One leader gave the reference of a research study in which some students had higher grades and enjoyed working in class because they believed that their brain will form new connections when they will be exposed to new knowledge. Their beliefs helped them cope with challenging areas of study and achieve greater success. They were not afraid of new or complex concepts, rather they were welcoming towards new experiences, only because of their belief system. They also gave some pointers as to the ways in which personality can be changed. Those pointers are change in habits, change in belief system, appreciation of the effort and positive reinforcement.

1.0 Will the change in personality be associated to a change in leadership level or not?

In their reply to question 10, 19 leaders said that a change in personality is definitely going to bring a change in leadership level. They expressed that Extraverts are very good leaders because the charisma in their personality makes people easily follow them and get inspired by them. They also said that a person who senses and learns from past experiences and makes his decisions keeping those in mind, can be a better leader. This provides them with a leverage to make better decisions in future. 8 leaders said that a change in personality cannot be a change in leadership level. They said that leadership is a skill and personality has hardly any impact upon this skill. They mentioned that a good leader should be able to detach his personality from his leadership role so that he can excel at his leadership role. They also said that personality is an integral part of a person's identity but it

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

is not all. There is more to a person than the kind of personality he/she was born with.

Discussions

In this section, we present the thematic discussion based on the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Cooperation

Cooperation emerged as a leading theme in question 1 of the questionnaires. Majority of leaders suggested that an air of cooperation always reduces the environment of stress and employees work in a friendly environment. They also suggested that cooperation is the key element of successful team work. If team members cooperate with each other, the collective output of the organization increases. One interviewee said that his main focus is on collective well-being and task management for the organization. He works hard so that he earns his salary and proudly justify it. Another interviewee said that he is a great manager and a team player. He takes his team forward together. Another interviewee said that she is a leader who projects unity in the group. She wants her subordinates to work in a team and support each other in the accomplishment of company's targets.

Discipline

Another important theme is the theme of discipline. An interviewee said that she is a disciplined kind of leader who inculcates discipline, punctuality and ethics in her staff. She wants them to meet deadlines and come up to the mark. An interviewee said that he is a leader who wants to get things done at any cost. He does not take no for an answer when meeting the deadlines. He wants to play autocratic at such times. His main focus is on collective well-being and task management for the organization. He works hard so that he earns his salary and proudly justify it. He said that he sets employee expectations and monitors their performance. An interviewee said that he is a transformational leader who inspires his subordinates to bring the best in them. Similarly, another interviewee said that she is a strict leader who cannot tolerate people who try to make excuses and do not fulfill their job requirements. She said that she has no patience for incompetent people and she feels that people should invest on themselves to increase their performance.

Respect

It emerged as a dominant theme that majority of the leaders are well respected by their subordinates. Their teams can discuss their problems with their leaders freely and without hesitation. They empathize with their subordinates on a humane level. They said that respect is won through hard work and personal merit but leadership comes with tough decisions at times and it is not humanly possible to please everyone so there might be people around who do not respect them because of their personal clash. Interviewee said that his subordinates respect him abundantly and he receives a lot of love from his people. His subordinates even invite him to their parties and he receives gifts from them too. An interviewee said that his subordinates respect him because he is professional and finds individual merit to be the key ingredient of a better employee. He contains a professional and ethically correct demeanor in order to be respected by his employees. He treats them as colleagues and his job is to get the system running.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is the leading theme in the personality part of the research. One interviewee said that she is conscientious and she likes to take responsibility for her actions. This provides her with a good feeling and she feels responsible. She is a person who believes upon equality and human rights. She considers that all working people should be given respect for the work they do, and the criteria for respect should not depend upon the position. An experienced interviewee said that he is very conscientious. He has high levels of thoughtfulness, good impulse control, and goal-directed behavior which makes him a better leader. He believes on karma and the philosophy of the world being round. What goes around, comes around is his motto.

Personality's Impact

Major theme which emerged in this study was the impact of personality on the leadership level. Many leaders commented that better personality leads to better leadership level. Interviewees said that personality is deeply entwined with leadership style of a person. They feel that if they are outgoing, their leadership skills get a huge impact because they can reach out to their employees and lead them closely. Interviewees also said that personality guides the path of leadership. It works like fuel for leadership. Further, it was added that personality is how a person behaves and behavior ultimately leads to a person's way of dealing with people. All leadership strategies are based upon the personality of a leader. They set direction, build an inspiring vision, and create something new. Leadership is about mapping out where you need to go to "win" as a team or an organization; and it is dynamic, exciting, and inspiring.

Level Identification

Majority of the leaders considered themselves to be on level 4 of leadership even though in the research it was identified that they were mainly on level 3 of leadership questionnaire. An interviewee says that she sets examples in front of her team so that they can follow her footsteps. This removes any ambiguity which can arise through confusion. Interviewee said that he considers himself to be on level 4 which is people's development. He elaborated that people who are good with public dealing and managing human resource are most likely to be better leaders. An absolute flow of work needs to be achieved through good leadership skills. He works for the collective gain of his organization. He said that he has proven his capabilities by working for the organization and his people know that he is worthy.

Extraversion

Extraversion appears to be the leading theme in personality determination. Majority of the leaders who are on better leadership levels, belong to the personality type named as "Extraversion". It means that the leader is outgoing, interactive and friendly. Interviewee said that leader should be open and approachable by his people and this quality can make people better leaders. This way, employees feel a sense of belongingness with the organization and it helps them build a trustworthy relationship. A leader who realizes that people hail from different backgrounds and have different mentalities, accepts the difference and takes it as positive. If employees feel hesitation while discussing their problems with the leader, it is a failure for the leader in terms of developing a warm

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

atmosphere for people to flourish. She said that a leader should be approachable and welcoming. Extraversion is one quality which is crucial to leadership skills. Most of the successful leaders have a firm and composed personality. Extraversion is the central trait of good leaders because they have to put their foot down in various situations and live with the fact that people might not like them for the decisions they make. All good leaders need to have this trait (Extraversion) in order to be more productive.

Agreeableness

Theme of agreeableness is important in the context of personality and leadership. A big majority of the sample agreed that agreeableness is central to good leadership skills. Agreeable people make better leaders because they are flexible. A personality which does not threaten people and creates a comfort zone for people to reach out their leader. This way, employees feel a sense of belongingness with the organization and it helps them build a trustworthy relationship. Being agreeable is the best characteristic which can produce better leaders. He said that empathy is a great trait for success in coming years. A leader should be very empathetic towards his team and their problems.

Born Leaders

Majority of the leaders agreed that leaders are born and they are not usually made. One of the interviewees said that leaders are definitely born because a leader who has temperament issue can only tame it but cannot make it go away forever. He further quoted that leaders are born because most people are unable to change their personalities even after a lot of training. He further added that genetics has a huge impact upon leadership skills of an individual. There are some people who are born to be leaders just like some people might be born to be doctors, engineers or architects. He said that leaders have certain aura in their personalities which help them lead people. He said that he can quote many historical examples in which nurture failed to produce the results which nature could produce.

Conclusion

The findings highlight that cooperation, discipline, and respect lie at the heart of effective leadership. Participants shared that cooperation not only creates a supportive work environment but also reduces stress and boosts overall productivity. Discipline was linked to punctuality, meeting deadlines, setting clear expectations, and keeping track of performance, while respect was seen as something earned through professionalism, ethical behavior, and treating team members with humanity. Conscientiousness stood out as a key personality trait, reflecting responsibility, self-control, and a focus on achieving goals. Leaders also emphasized that personality shapes leadership style and decision-making, with extraversion and agreeableness valued for fostering trust, empathy, and team cohesion. Interestingly, while many leaders rated themselves highly, evaluations suggested slightly lower leadership levels, reinforcing how personality traits strongly influence leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

References

- Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (3rd ed.). Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage Publications.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1999). *The self in social psychology*. Psychology Press.
- Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 1–62). Academic Press.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). *The competent manager: A model for effective performance*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavalley, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(1), 141–156.
- Connelly, M. S., Gilbert, J. A., Zaccaro, S. J., Threlfall, K. V., Marks, M. A., & Mumford, M. D. (2000). Exploring the relationship of leadership skills and knowledge to leader performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(1), 65–86.
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford University Press.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative “description of personality”: The Big-Five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(6), 1216–1229.
- Harmon-Jones, E., & Mills, J. (2019). *Cognitive dissonance: Reexamining a pivotal theory in psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Heatherton, T. F. (2011). Neuroscience of self and self-regulation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 62, 363–390.
- Hogan, R., Curphy, G. J., & Hogan, J. (1994). What we know about leadership: Effectiveness and personality. *American Psychologist*, 49(6), 493–504.
- Jacobs, T. O., & McGee, M. L. (2001). Leadership and the development of executive skills. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12(1), 3–34.
- Kanungo, R. N., & Misra, S. (1992). Managerial resourcefulness: A reconceptualization of management skills. *Human Relations*, 45(12), 1311–1332.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- Katz, R. L. (1955). Skills of an effective administrator. *Harvard Business Review*, 33(1), 33–42.
- Kirkpatrick, S. A., & Locke, E. A. (1991). Leadership: Do traits matter? *Academy of Management Executive*, 5(2), 48–60.
- Lau, A. W., Newman, A., & Broedling, L. A. (1980). The nature of managerial work: A comparison of public- and private-sector jobs. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23(3), 515–529.
- London, M., & Smither, J. W. (1995). Can multi-source feedback change perceptions of goal accomplishment, self-evaluations, and performance-related outcomes? *Personnel Psychology*, 48(4), 803–839.
- Mahoney, T. A., Jerdee, T. H., & Carroll, S. J. (1965). The job(s) of management. *Industrial Relations*, 4(2), 97–110.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253.
- Mintzberg, H. (1973). *The nature of managerial work*. Harper & Row.
- Morin, A. (2006). Levels of consciousness and self-awareness: A comparison and integration of various neurocognitive views. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 15(2), 358–371.
- Mumford, M. D., Marks, M. A., Connelly, M. S., Zaccaro, S. J., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2000). Development of leadership skills: Experience and timing. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(1), 87–114.
- Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Phillips, J. S., & Hunt, J. G. (1992). Strategic leadership: A multiorganizational-level perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 3(2), 87–107.
- Porter, C. O. L. H., Hollenbeck, J. R., Ilgen, D. R., Ellis, A. P. J., West, B. J., & Moon, H. (2003). Backing up behaviors in teams: The role of personality and legitimacy of need. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(3), 391–403.
- Schyns, B., Felfe, J., & Blank, H. (2007). Is charisma hyper-romanticism? *Leadership*, 3(1), 63–88.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (2nd ed., pp. 7–24). Nelson-Hall.
- Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206–222.
- Wood, J. V. (1989). Theory and research concerning social comparisons of personal attributes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(2), 231–248.
- Zaccaro, S. J. (2001). *The nature of executive leadership: A conceptual and empirical analysis of success*. American Psychological Association.