# IS YOUR PERSONALITY A SIGN FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

## A MODEL PROPOSAL TO PERSONALITY AND LEADERSHIP RELATIONSHIP

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*Abstract*

*Research findings show that "personality" is one of the importa nt factors which affects leadership style. The purpose of this study is to build a model representing "personality - leadership" relationship and to reveal which personality characteristic is related with which leadership style. A literature survey is made t o reveal some empirical findings on "personality" and "the role of personality on leadership performance".*

*This article covers an application made to reveal the relations between occupational personality dimensions and leadership styles. The data is obtai ned by using "SHL -OPQ / Occupational Personality Questionnaire" in two different cultures ( United Kingdom and Turkey). The total number of managers is 273 composed of 126 from United Kingdom and 147 from Turkey. The collected data is analyzed by using ANOV A and Spearman correlation methods. Important differences and similarities are found between cultures. By using these findings, a model is built which shows the relationships between the "occupational personality characteristics" and "leadership styles".*

**Key Words:** Personality, Leadership Styles, Soft Modeling, Behavior.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are inherent problems in modeling soft systems. Soft modeling methodologies aim at taking into account the limitations caused by measuring variables on a non -metric scale and try to avoid the use of numerical operations on qualitative variables. Social scientists have been more concerned with measuring qualities in order to grapple with complex configurations and the ambiguities inherent in human "perceptions" and "behaviors". From this point, a model is built (Zel 2001:157) to show the relations between "personality" and "behavior" (Model -1). In this model, there are also some other variables showing the inter -actions between "personality" and "behavior".

SOCIAL & WORK
ENVIRONMENT

PERCEIVING

SITUATIONAL
-BEHAVIOR

Feedback

LEARNING

EXPERIENCE

PERSONALITY    BEHAVIOR

APPROVAL OR
DISAPROVAL
(Feedback)

EDUCATION &
TRAINING

MOTIVES
VALUES
BELIEFS
EXPECTATIONS
ROLES

PERFORMANCE

Model-1: A model representation showing the interactions between "personality"
          and social/work environment

From a general point of view, our personality is continuously affected by our daily activities which take place in our social and organizational environment. The left side of the model represents continuous loop of perception -learning and education/training which happens in our social life. Personality is being formed mostly in this loop. The process of perceiving and learning runs continuously in both environments and this affects our personality and reflects to our behaviors. Training and education have very important effects to our personality as everything we learned changes our behavior .

The right side of the model represents the links between behavior - performance and experience which take place in the working environment. The social reflection of personality can be described as "behavior". Focusing on behaviors in the working environment, we can conclude that one's performance is strongly related with his/her personality. In this study managerial activities are accepted as "leadership behaviors (styles)".

We all have different motives, expectations, roles, beliefs and values. The combination of these, results in behavior as "individual performance" and ultimately a level which can be

evaluated by our superiors. According to our superior's approval or disapproval of our performance we understand whether we are on the right or wrong path and as a result we feedback ourselves. At the end of this process, we gain experience and learn something valuable to use in our future behaviors.

After a period of time which depends on our experience level and maturity, we jump into another process in which we learn h ow to behave in different situations. We are now experienced enough to relate the situational variables with our behaviors. Again we use feedback mechanism, continue to gain experience and learn something which also affects our personality.

It is possible to link this model with the "leadership theories". The researchers at the first period which began in 1900's, focused on the "personality" of the leaders including some physical features as well. This period is called as "traits approach". As the results of these researches were not satisfactory, the second period began in 1940's and the researchers tried to reveal the relations between the leaders' "behaviors" to understand their leadership style. This time, the findings were more satisfactory but there were still some gaps to explain the relationship between the behavio r and the leadership style of the leaders. The last period began in 1960's called "situational behavior theories (or contingency approach)". In this period, researchers tried to reveal the situational variables which affect the way the leaders behave. As a conclusion, there is no single style suitable to all situations. Today, researchers believe in the contingency theory and most of them accept that there is an important role of leaders' personalities affecting the style they choose to perform their tasks.

**Personality and Leadership**

Personality can be said to be one of the most commonly researched yet probably the least understood psychological phenomenon. However, over the last 10 years, a multitude of questionnaires and statistical techniques have enabled researchers to accumulate results from a wide range of studies that are helping to provide a much clear picture of some of the personality and leadership performance. The common result of these researches is; "one's psychological type or personality influences the way one perceives and interprets the world and thereby influences one's behavior" (McClure 1993:40). However as early as 1951, it was recognized that behavior was the re sult of a combination of both personality and environmental factors (Lewin 1951). Recently the use of personality theory to predict individual behavior has enjoyed a revival (Church 1996:24).

Many personality traits have been found to be related to leader ship success. However, one of the problems surrounding personality traits is that, researchers have used different terms to describe similar patterns of behavior. Stogdill (1948) reviewed research on personality and emergent leadership in a variety of unst ructured groups. He concluded the measures of dominance, extraversion, sociability, ambition or achievement, responsibility, integrity, self - confidence, mood and emotional control, diplomacy and cooperativeness positively related to emergent leadership (Hogan 1994:497). More recent studies of personality and leadership emergence reached similar conclusions (Hogan, 1978; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord et.al., 1986; Rueb & Foti, 1990; Stogdill, 1974; Zaccaro, Foti & Kenny, 1991). In another research of Stogdill's (1974), some strong evidence show that certain personality dimensions are consistently

related to rated leadership effectiveness. Stogdill found that extroversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness and agreeableness were positively related to rated effectiveness. Bentz (1985, 1987, 1990) reported similar findings from his research on executive selection at Sears.

A meta-analysis of the relationship between personality traits and leadership perceptions conducted in the 1980s, for example, found that several traits including intelligence, masculinity - femininity and dominance were in fact consistently significantly related to leadership (Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986). Further, in their review published in the "Handbook of Industrial and Organisational Psychology" on leadership studies, Yukl & Van Fleet (1992) identified high energy, stress tolerance, integrity, emotional maturity and self -confidence as being the key individual traits related to managerial effectiveness and advancement. These recent re search findings support the idea that there is a relationship between personality and leadership.

"Personality" is accepted as a phenomenon. This is why we need to make the "personality -leadership" relationship clear to understand which personality chara cteristic is related with which leadership style. The purpose of this study is to make the first step to build a model representing this relation (as shown in Model -2).

Although there has been some debate in the field as to the validity of using any type of personality measure for studying organizational performance-related outcomes (e.g. Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996), a meta -analysis of validation studies of personality measures (Schmitt, Gooding, Noe & Kirsch, 1984) has reported a somewhat modest $(r=0.21)$ but consistent relationship between such assessments and a variety of performance criterion ratings. More recent work has also supported such linkages, thus dispelling the notion that these two sets of variables should not be examined in consort.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In the context of the Model -1 (page.2) and the theoretical background , a hypothesis can be formed as in the following:

$H_1$: "There are certain personality characteristics affecting our leadership style".

Are there some common personality characteristics observed both in Turkish and British managers? Can we accept these personality characteristics as a guide to understand their leadership style? To answer these questions , the links between the occupational personality dimensions and leadership styles is searched by using the data collected from 273 managers from two different cultures; Turkey (n=147), United Kingdom (n=126). The managers from Turkey are from three different sectors; public, private and military, the managers from United Kingdom are from two different sectors; private and military. Demographic characteristics of the managers are shown in Table-1 and 2.

| FEATURES | | PUBLIC SECTOR | PRIVATE SECTOR | MILITARY SECTOR | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GENDER | Male | 30 | 34 | 40 | 104 |
| | Female | 17 | 16 | 10 | 43 |
| TOTAL : | | **47** | **50** | **50** | **147** |
| AGE | 25-35 | 18 | 8 | 28 | 54 |
| | 36-45 | 17 | 30 | 13 | 60 |
| | 46-55 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 33 |

Table-1 : Demographic features of Turkish managers

| FEATURES | | PRIVATE SECTOR | MILITARY SECTOR | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GENDER | Male | 47 | 45 | 92 |
| | Female | 21 | 13 | 34 |
| TOTAL : | | **68** | **58** | **126** |
| AGE | 25-35 | 23 | 31 | 54 |
| | 36-45 | 30 | 21 | 51 |
| | 46-55 | 15 | 6 | 21 |

Table-2 : Demographic features of British managers

The data was obtained by using Saville & Holdsworth's "Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) Factor Model". The "OPQ F actor Model" measures personality at three levels. First are six factors five of which describe the "big five" factors (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, emotional stability ) plus an "achievement" factor. The next level is 16 -Factor (16PF). Third is the deductively rather than factor analytically - derived "concept model" consisting of 30 scales which are structured into the three major groupings; relationships with people, thinking style and feelings and emotions. Blake -Mouton's "managerial grid" and Hersey -Blanchard's "maturity theory" form the basis of the leadership styles used in the questionnaire. Four of these leadership styles are based on the fundamental "task vs. people" interaction while a fifth reflects leadership "negotiati on" basis (SHL-OPQ Expert System). If related with Model-1, "behavior" is accepted as "leadership behaviors (styles)". These leadership styles are described briefly below;

*L-1 / Directive Leadership Style:* Maintains responsibility for planning and contro l. Issues instructions in line with own perception for priorities.

*L-2 / Delegative Leadership Style:* Minimal personal involvement. Believes in delegation of task and responsibility.

*L-3 / Participative Leadership Style:* Favors consensus decision makin g. Prepared to take time over decisions. Ensures involvement of all relevant individuals.

*L-4 / Consultative Leadership Style:* Pays genuine attention to opinions / feelings of subordinates but maintains a clear sense of task objectives and makes the fin al decisions.

*L-5 / Negotiative Leadership Style:* Makes "deals" with subordinates. Influences others by identifying their needs using these as a basis for negotiation.

Raw scores evaluated by the computer are in standard-ten scale form. The first four scores (1, 2, 3, 4) are accepted as a low score while the last four scores (7, 8, 9, 10) are accepted as a "high score" (Table -5). ANOVA and Spearman correlation methods are used to examine the relationships between the occupational personality dimensions and leadership styles. The strength of the relationships between the dimensions and the leadership styles are obtained by ANOVA "F ratio". But F ratios do not give information about the direction (negative or positive) of the relationship. So, it is used Spearman correlation coefficient which gives the direction of the relationship. These two statistical finding is combined in one table which we can see the strength and the direction of the relation together.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| LOW | | | | | | HIGH | | | |

Table -3 : Standard-ten scale

The significance level of the F ratios is found as "2,491" from the statistical tables (Lindley 1984:53). The F ratios between the leadership styles and the occupational personality dimensions whic h are higher than 2.491 are the ones which have strong (significant) relations and the ones which are lower than 2.491 are the ones which have weak relation (not significant). These relations for Turkish and British managers are shown in Table -4 and Table -5.

| | OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS | F | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | <F |
| R-1 | Persuasive | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 5 | | | |
| R-2 | Controlling | 3 | | | | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | |
| R-3 | Independent | 5 2 | 4 | 3 | | 1 | | | | |
| R-4 | Outgoing | 5 | 1 | 4 | | 2 | | | 3 | |
| R-5 | Affiliative | | | 2 5 | 4 | | | | 3 1 | |
| R-6 | Socially Confident | | 1 2 | 5 4 | | | 3 | | | |
| R-7 | Modest | 3 | 2 5 | 4 | | | 1 | | | |
| R-8 | Democratic | | | | | 1 | 5 | | 2 | 34 |
| R-9 | Caring | | | 5 4 | 3 | | 2 | 1 | | |
| T-1 | Practical | | 1 | 5 4 | 3 | 2 | | | | |
| T-2 | Data Rational | | | 41 | | | 3 5 | 2 | | |
| T-3 | Artistic | 3 5 | 2 | 1 4 | | | | | | |
| T-4 | Behavioral | 43 | 1 | | | | 2 | 5 | | |
| T-5 | Traditional | 5 | 1 2 4 | 3 | | | | | | |
| T-6 | Change Oriented | 3 1 | 5 4 | | 2 | | | | | |
| T-7 | Conceptual | | 2 5 4 | 3 | | 1 | | | | |
| T-8 | Innovative | | 4 | 2 5 | 3 1 | | | | | |
| T-9 | Forward Planning | 3 | 14 | 5 | | | | 2 | | |
| T-10 | Detail Conscious | | | 1 4 2 5 | | 3 | | | | |
| T-11 | Conscientious | 3 4 | 2 1 | 5 | | | | | | |
| F-1 | Relaxed | | | 3 | 4 | 1 5 | | 2 | | |
| F-2 | Worrying | 1 | 4 2 | 5 | 3 | | | | | |
| F-3 | Tough Minded | 1 3 | 5 | | 2 | | 4 | | | |
| F-4 | Emotional Control | | | 12 35 | | | 4 | | | |
| F-5 | Optimistic | 5 | | 4 1 | | 3 | 2 | | | |
| F-6 | Critical | 5 2 | | | 1 4 | | 3 | | | |
| F-7 | Active | | 53 4 | 1 | 2 | | | | | |
| F-8 | Competitive | | | 2 | 4 | | 3 | 1 5 | | |
| F-9 | Achieving | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | | | | 1 | |
| F-10 | Decisive | 4 | 3 | 1 5 | | | 2 | | | |

*Black (dark) colored numbers indicate strong relationships, red (light) colored numbers indicate weak relationships.

Table-4 : Relationships between personality dimensions and leadership styles for Turkish managers.

| OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS | | F | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | <F |
| R-1 | Persuasive | | | | | 24 | 1 3 | | 5 | |
| R-2 | Controlling | 4 | 3 | 52 | | | | | 1 | |
| R-3 | Independent | | 25 | 34 | | | 1 | | | |
| R-4 | Outgoing | 2 5 | 1 | 4 | | | | | 3 | |
| R-5 | Affiliative | | 5 | 2 | | | | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| R-6 | Socially Confident | 4 | 21 | | | 3 5 | | | | |
| R-7 | Modest | | | | 2 | 4 | 53 | 1 | | |
| R-8 | Democratic | | | 5 | | | 1 | | 234 | |
| R-9 | Caring | | | 5 | 4 | | 1 | 32 | | |
| T-1 | Practical | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 5 | | | | | |
| T-2 | Data Rational | 4 | 15 | 32 | | | | | | |
| T-3 | Artistic | 2 | 43 | 1 | 5 | | | | | |
| T-4 | Behavioral | | | | 4 | 5 3 | 1 | 2 | | |
| T-5 | Traditional | | 4 | 3 2 | 1 | | 5 | | | |
| T-6 | Change Oriented | 12 | 43 | | 5 | | | | | |
| T-7 | Conceptual | 3 5 | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | | | |
| T-8 | Innovative | 2 | 34 | 5 | 1 | | | | | |
| T-9 | Forward Planning | | | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | | |
| T-10 | Detail Conscious | | | 2 | 1 | | 34 | 5 | | |
| T-11 | Conscientious | 4 | | | 2 | 3 5 | 1 | | | |
| F-1 | Relaxed | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 2 | | | | | |
| F-2 | Worrying | | 3 | 5 | 12 | 4 | | | | |
| F-3 | Tough Minded | 5 | 31 | | | | 2 | 4 | | |
| F-4 | Emotional Control | 3 | 2 5 | 1 | | 4 | | | | |
| F-5 | Optimistic | 5 | 41 | 3 | | | 2 | | | |
| F-6 | Critical | 2 | 4 5 | | | | 3 | 1 | | |
| F-7 | Active | | 5 | 3 | 41 | | 2 | | | |
| F-8 | Competitive | | 2 | 5 | 34 | | | | 1 | |
| F-9 | Achieving | | 4 3 | | 2 | 5 | | | 1 | |
| F-10 | Decisive | | 1 | 34 | 5 2 | | | | | |

*Black (dark) colored numbers indicate strong relationships, red (light) colored numbers indicate weak relationships.

Table-5 : Relationships between personality dimensions and leadership styles for British managers.

## 3. A NEW MODEL PROPOSAL

The findings of this research show that some personality characteristics have close relation with leadership behaviors /styles (as shown in the Model-1). By using the findings of the research, Model-2 is formed to represent these relations. The purpose of forming Model-2 is to obtain clues about a person's leadership style by using only his/her personality characteristics. This information will be useful for managers in promotion/assignment decisions, building teams etc. When we combine the findings shown in Table-4 and Table-5, we can see that some of the personality dimensions strongly and /or weakly related (red-black colors) with the leadership styles for both cultures. These relations are shown in Model-2.
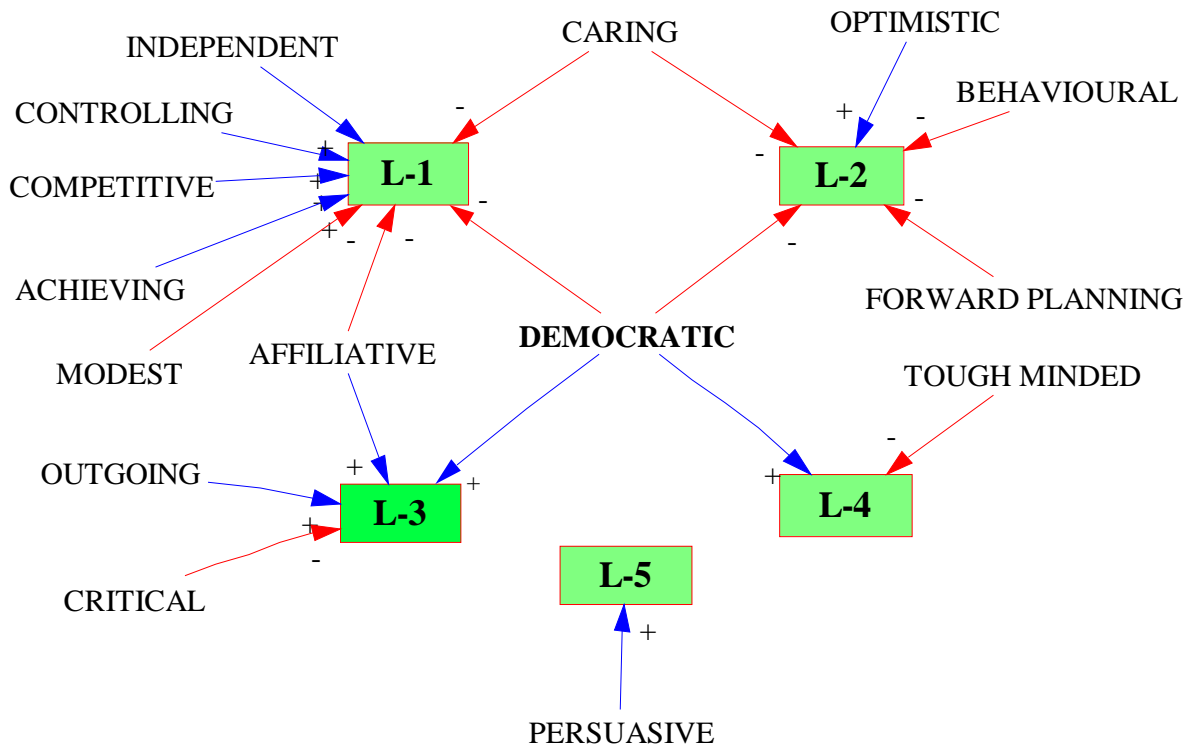


Model-2: Strong and weak relations between occupational personality characteristics and leadership styles of both cultures' managers.

By using the model shown above, we can say that, the managers who are "directive" at both cultures are likely to have high score at "controlling", "achieving", "competitive" and "independent" dimensions. On the other hand these managers have low scores at "affiliative", "caring", "modest" and "democratic". On the opposite, the managers who are "participative" are likely to be "outgoing", "affiliative" and "democratic" while on the other hand not "critical".

The managers who are "delegative" have high scores on "optimistic" dimension in common. On the other hand these managers are not likely to be "democratic", "caring", "forward planning" and "behavioral". The managers who are "consultative" have high scores on "democratic" dimension while they have low scores on "tough -minded" dimension.

"Persuasive" dimension is the only common dimension for the "negotiative" leadership style. It can be regarded as a sign of validity of the OPQ as persuasion is the basic talent managers need for negotiating with the subordinates. British managers' low score on "neg otiative style" can be related with the low score of the "persuasive" dimension, as they appear not to negotiate at work.

From a different point of view we can comment on these relations as; cultural differences (British and Turkish cultures only) don' t affect some of the relations between personality and leadership styles. From this point of view, it is tried to form a model valid for both cultures including strong and weak relations together. And this model is only valid for a limited time period which is academically about one year as personality is believed to change during this period of time.


## 4. CONCLUSIONS

"There are certain personality characteristics affecting our leadership style " is the hypothesis of this study and the findings carry enough evidence to accept $H_1$. In Model-1, "personality" is shown as one of the criteria affecting our behaviors (leadership style). Model -2 is built to reveal the details of "personality ". As the results of the research belong to two different cultures it is found that some personality characteristics are "denominator" for both cultures. It is also true for each culture separately. Either universally or culturally, by using a model like Model-2, a feedback system can be formed to help managers in their managing activities.

The sample of the research is quite reasonable to draw conclusions from the findings. We can conclude from the results described above that individual differences in personality do seem to have a highly significant impact on leadership behaviors in the workplace.

Some personality characteristics directly affect our leadership behaviors. For example "being democratic" is one of the key personality dimensions for "participative" and "consultative" leadership styles which both are high on "conce rn for people" dimension at "managerial grid". Interestingly this relation is exactly the opposite for both "directive" and "delegative" leadership styles which are high on "concern for work" dimension on "managerial grid".

Most of the conclusions of the researches stated in the introduction , focus on the relationship between personality characteristics and leadership in general. In this study, there are similar findings with most of the researches (Hogan, 1978; Kenny , Zaccaro, 1983; Lord et.al., 1986; Rueb, Foti, 1990; Stogdill, 1974; Zaccaro, Foti , Kenny, 1991   Yukl, Van Fleet 1992) . In addition, Model -2 supplies a detailed interaction network of personality characteristics and leadership styles.

It is tried to balance the level of the manager s in each culture by choosing managers mostly from middle and top management levels as a certain level of experience was needed to comment better on their leadership styles. Further research is necessary in this area to see whether the results from our sma ll sample are confirmed by the use of larger groups  and also in different cultures. It could also be interesting to extend the research into comparison between different levels of management including lower levels and managers from other nationalities.

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