

Personality traits and leadership abilities



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Admittedly, the relationship between Personality traits and leadership effectiveness has generated a lot of interest from researchers in different fields. Many a times, a consensus has been reached suggesting that an individual's successful leadership is determined by his/her personality traits (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003). In such situations, personality traits are used to measure the leadership performance of such individuals. The assessment criteria typical in such a situation are usually based on the Five-Factor framework, which is often employed as a framework account for analyzing individual traits of individuals. Other ways that have been used to identify whether an individual includes using trait approach to determine charismatic leadership (Goleman, 2004).

Over and above, the general question that needs to be explained is whether personality tests can be applied to determine the leadership abilities of individuals (Hackman, & Wageman, 2007). Although research studies have showed that aptitude with respect to leadership can ascertained through the evaluation of personality traits, the tools that can be employed to determine their personality traits are faced with common errors and therefore subjecting the findings to warrant a discussion.

Nonetheless, the extent to which personality traits can be used to predict an individual's leadership abilities is a matter that is still open to debate. Worse still, there are no proven universal characteristics or character traits used to measure leadership success of individuals. As certain clear characteristics can be seen in excellent leaders, other traits are acquired naturally. In addition to the Five-Factor Model and Charismatic leadership traits, other methods that can be used to predict leadership characters include the

application of narrow verses broader perspectives of success in leadership with respect to how personality traits are applied in leadership activities.

The Relationship between Leadership and Personality Traits

Arguably, leadership ability comprises of various skills that can be acquired throughout an individual's career. It entails the process that makes an individual to be in a position of influencing the attitudes and behaviors of others. As opposed to leaders whose role is to exert influence upon the behaviors of fellow individuals, an effective leader not only exerts influence but also accomplishes organizational goals assigned to his/her leadership role (Robbins, and Judge, 2009). Generally, leaders are concerned with creating a visionary approach to their followers and in turn improving communication and coordination channels that are essential for the completion of the organizational goals while at the same time motivating their subordinates.

There are several theories that have been put forward to aid in the measurement of leadership effectiveness. This includes but not limited to cognitive approach, situational approach, the behavioral approach, and lastly the trait approach. For purposes of the topic under discussion, the trait approach can be evaluated with respect to its concept of emphasizing an individual's abilities, personality, and other dispositions that can be used to characterize his/her personality (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003). The trait further proposes that majority of individuals with leadership capabilities are born with characteristics that are innate thereby giving them the ability to exert influence over other individuals.

The Big Five or Five-Factor Model

In addition to the issue of intelligence being the most effective trait in measuring managerial effectiveness, five dimensions that are based on personality traits can be used to identify and/or evaluate leadership traits of an individual. It is commonly referred to as the Big Five Model or the Five-Factor model, which is comprised of conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Each of these factors is made of individual clusters that enable it to acquire specific traits that are closely related. However, all of these dimensions of personality comprising the model are used to describe the personality of human beings.

Several advantages can be associated with using the Five-Factor Model as a choice of explaining leadership abilities based on personality traits (Judge, and Bono, 2000). Firstly, it enables researchers to achieve orderliness in the research field that has been in need of such a model for a long period. Secondly, findings from numerous studies can be compared side by side to using elements of meta-analysis. Lastly, the big five elements are often considered to be a common language when it comes to describing the personality of individuals given that the probability of researcher agreeing over personality aspects is very high.

Limitations of the Big Five-Factor Model

Although the Five-Factor model seems to be a convincing approach of evaluating leadership abilities based on personality characteristics, a number of conceptual and utility drawbacks limits its application. This includes but is not limited to unavailability of agreement between the different aspects that make up the model. For instance, naming of the elements that make up the

<https://assignbuster.com/personality-traits-and-leadership-abilities/>

five personality factors differ significantly in terms of defining each factor (Judge, and Bono, (2000).

Additionally, these aspects do present a broad and cumbersome situation when it comes to describing personality when applied in the field of research. This is applicable when data is collected from the field and researchers have to determine the level of detail that needs to be applied in such a situation. Narrow and broad aspects have to be defined in order for the researchers to come up with a more detailed explanation of how personality traits affect leadership abilities. Lastly, this model has been criticized for its failure to explain all aspects that relate to human personality because it does not consider factors such as manipulateness, honesty, sense of humor, and religiosity among others (Harris, 2006).

Narrow vs. Broad Personality Aspects as Applied in Predicting Leadership Abilities

In light of the evidence presented in the above analysis, it can be concluded that the application of the Five-Factor analysis to predict leadership capabilities of individuals failed to provide sufficient results. Therefore, narrow and broad personality factors can be applied in different situations to predict leadership abilities of various individuals (Harris, 2006). Narrow personality traits include primary factors whereas broad factors include global factors both, which are measured based on predictive power and utility aspects.

Admittedly, personality has been used for a long time as form of measuring the performance and behavior of individuals in the workplace scenario. As

such, narrow and broad aspects of personality do have an impact on the ability of leaders to do whatever they feel is right (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003). For this reason, a number of personality aspects, which determines the level of forcefulness that a leader will employ, realize his/her goals. In turn, an indication will be established to show how well a leader is prepared in attending to leadership priorities. The primary factors established include dominance and social boldness, both of which are very important in determining leadership skills. On the other hand, broad factors include those that affect independent leadership abilities such as openness to change and vigilance. However, they are not so important personality traits that influence leadership abilities of such individuals as compared to narrow aspects.

As it can be seen from the above discussion, understanding the factors that influence leaders to do actions that must be done in order to achieve their goals in addition to their independence. It is useful in getting an overall picture of the nature of abilities in leadership and the corresponding relationship to personality. Primary factors enable an individual to determine the qualities that will enable him or her to specify his abilities that will enable him to succeed as a leader. Additionally, the predictive power of leaders are often distinguished in terms of broad and narrow personality perspectives. In turn, competencies in different leadership scenarios can be ascertained by comparing the factors that determine their personality traits.

Conclusion

Admittedly, for a long time, personality traits have been employed to predict the extent to which an individual's leadership abilities can be ascertained. In

fact, the issue has been subjected to numerous debates but over and above all, a consensus that has been agreed upon is that personality traits do predict leadership abilities (Block, 2010). From a managerial point of view, management officials not have a say in the general performance of an organization but also do play an important role in influencing the performance of their seniors or subordinates (Robbins, and Judge, 2009).

Conversely, theories have been put forward to explain ways in which personality traits influence leadership performance. A good example is the application of the Big Five model or Five-Factor model as a method of assessing the impacts of personality traits on leadership performance. This framework has been used to account for reasons as to why individual trait differences exist. Generally, the dimensions used to construct this model differ in terms of the dimensions used to describe it but also the nature in which they are constructed. However, the model failed to consider all personality aspects that make up the general humanity perspectives. This led to the explanation of personality traits from a narrow and broad perspective. Additionally, these factors were found to influence leadership abilities of individual using primary and global factors. Generally, what matters the most is the value of a personality trait in influencing the personality trait of an individual (Hackman, & Wageman, 2007).

In light of evidence presented in this paper, the extent to which personality traits can be used to influence leadership abilities is dependent on the value of the trait in influencing the decision of the individual (Block, 2010). This can be assessed using narrow measures in order to ascertain the effect that the trait brings with respect to the choices made.