

A Study on the Personality Traits of Managers and Supervisors in Private Sectors

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the different personality of managers and supervisors and to explore some differences among different type of functional fields. A Personality Trait Inventory (PTI) was used in this research. This questionnaire was constructed only based on the trait approach. It comprised eight domains of personality traits (Assertiveness, Sociability, Achievement Oriented, Cooperativeness, Stress Tolerance, Adaptability, Initiableness, and Dominance). Item analysis study and reliability analysis study were done and they were quite satisfied results. The Chronbach Alpha (α) for eight sub- scales were .51 to .68 and the test-retest reliabilities were .66 to .87. One hundred and forty eight managers and supervisors from both service and manufacturing job were selected as the sample of this research. Data were analyzed by Pearson Coefficient Correlation and using t test, with the aid of SPSS software at $p \leq .05$ level. The findings showed that the traits measured were positively correlated each other, but Cooperativeness was correlated with only Adaptability and Initiableness. Male managers and female managers significantly differed on the traits of Assertiveness, Sociability, and Stress Tolerance. There were significant differences on the traits of Stress Tolerance and Adaptability between managers from services oriented jobs and those from manufacturing oriented jobs. There were no different personality traits between office/HR managers, sale & marketing managers, finance managers and production managers. But managers from office/HR, finance, sale & marketing and production departments were significantly different those from Warehouse on the trait of Dominance. Moreover production managers were also significantly different those from finance on the Dominance trait. All differences were significant at .05 to .001 levels. Finally it can be concluded that there were some differences, but not the all, between service job and manufacturing job and across functional fields of sales, production, finance, warehouse and office/HR. Moreover this research suggests that more research will be necessary to conduct regarding the personality and other related organizational factors.

Key words: Personality Trait, Functional Field

Introduction

In business organizations, managers generally play the role of leaders and thus much has been written in recent years about the leadership role of managers. Management and leadership are both important to organizations. Effective managers have to be leaders because there are distinctive qualities associated with management and leadership that provide different strengths for the organization. So personality of managers is one of the important sources for organizational effectiveness. Personality is a set of enduring traits and characteristics that relate to a person's emotions, motivations, interpersonal interactions, and attitudes. Much discussion and research has taken place over the years attempting to classify personality types and their functionality in an organizational setting. Personality is meaningful to management, because employees' personalities may dictate how well they perform their jobs. Personality may indicate how hard a person will work, how organized they are, how well they will interact with others, and how creative they are. Employers recognize that experience, education, and intelligence may not be the only indicators of who the best hire might be. Additionally, understanding one's own personality characteristics may improve one's ability to develop as an employee and manager. Therefore, it is important to understand the different facets of personality and the ways in which they can be measured. There are a number of different ways in which personality has been categorized, and different opinions exist about the number of dimensions of personality. Research into the human personality has been conducted for many decades, and much of this work has focused on defining personality and understanding how

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many dimensions of personality there are. One primary area of agreement about personality is that it is a trait. Because personality is a trait, this also means that a person is likely to behave similarly in a variety of situations. This does not mean that a person cannot or will not adapt to a change in circumstances (e.g., behavior at work versus behavior in social situations), but that, on average, a person demonstrates similar personality across all situations and may behave differently from those with dissimilar personality characteristics.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "great man" leadership theories were highly popular. These theories asserted that leadership qualities were inherited, Great man were born, not made. Early in the twentieth century, the great men theories evolved into trait theories. That is used to refer to people's general characteristics, including capacities, motives, or patterns of behavior. Traits theories did not make assumptions about whether leadership traits were inherited or acquired. They simply asserted that leaders' characteristics are different from nonleaders. Ralph Stogdill concluded that a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits. Stogdill believed this because the research showed that no traits were universally associated with effective leadership and that situational factors were also influential. Over one hundred studies on leader traits were conducted during 20th century. In the majority of studies, the general approach was to compare leaders with non-leaders to see what traits best differentiated between them. A smaller number of studies compared successful leaders with less successful leaders or correlated measures of traits with measures of leadership effectiveness. Success and leadership effectiveness were sometimes measured in terms of group performance, and sometimes in terms of career advancement.

In a review by Stogdill (1948) of 124 trait studies conducted from 1904 to 1948, a number of traits were found to differentiate repeatedly between leaders and non-leaders. A leader with certain traits could be effective in one situation but ineffective in a different situation. Furthermore, two leaders with different patterns of trait could be successful in the same situation.

There are so many causes for differences among successful managers. Managers probably vary depending upon the functional field of sales, production, etc., and they probably vary with level of responsibility. There may be differences because of company policy or tradition Gordon (1959) has written that the personality of the heads of corporations today is vastly different from that of fifty or seventy-five years ago. It has also been asserted that a manager can be a success on the job but use a different pattern of performance from another who is equally successful. These then are some of the variables that make it difficult to generalize about successful business managers. They point to the necessity of looking at the situation as well as the personality and performance of managers.

Recent research has made clear explanations that successful leaders are not like other people. The evidence indicates that there are certain core traits which significantly contribute to organizational leaders' success. Traits alone are not sufficient for successful leadership – they are only a precondition. Leaders who possess the requisite traits must take certain actions to be successful. Possessing the appropriate traits only makes it more likely that such actions will be taken and be successful. Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (1996) and Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) commented that any trait's effect on leadership behavior will depend on the situation. House and Aditya (1997) concluded that there were few universal traits associated with effective leadership. Richardson and Hanawatt (1944) found with the Bernreuter Personality Inventory that supervisors were better adjusted and mentally healthier than the general population. Adjustment and dominance were correlated with management status (Meyer & Pressel, 1954). Thirteen traits were measured for 240 managers and compared with male college student (Yoder, 1958). Although in some instances they were almost the same,

managers were higher than students on all traits except flexibility. Managers were highest in dominance, confidence, and poise. Porter and Ghiselli's study found that the top management personnel were higher initiative scores than the general population.

Many researchers have examined a variety of different personality traits related to managerial effectiveness and advancement. The choice of traits and the labels used for them varied from study to study, but overall the results have been fairly consistent across different research methods. Based on the Stogdill's research findings, the most relevant aspects of effective managers' personality studied in large organizations were gathered for the purpose of this study. They were (1) assertiveness (2) Sociability (3) Achievement Oriented (4) Cooperativeness (5) Stress Tolerance (6) Adaptability (7) Initiableness and (8) Dominance.

Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are:

- (1) To identify the different personality of managers and supervisors from private sectors
- (2) To explore some differences among different type of functional fields.

Methods

Samples

The personality test was administered to hundred and forty eight managers and supervisors from a variety of private companies and factories. The companies and factories were divided into two groups — those concerned with providing service and those concerned with manufacturing. The subjects in this study comprised hundred and eight managers, and forty supervisors. Among them fifty nine participants were males and eighty nine participants were females. Data were collected from private organizations in Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyitaw. The total number of respondents was 148, out of which 106 were from service organization and 42 were from manufacturing organization. The organizations were divided according to their nature of work. Hotels, banks, entertainment enterprises, tour & travel agencies, cosmetic distributions, etc were assigned as the service organizations. Garment factories, construction works, steel industry, forestry products factories, etc are assigned as the manufacturing organizations.

Questionnaire Development

The test used in this study, Personality Traits Inventory (PTI), was intended to study some personality traits of managers. The traits in PTI were chosen from the "Leader's Traits and Skills" proposed by Stogdill (1974). It involved eight dimensions to measure personality traits. They are (1) Assertiveness (Ast) (2) Sociability (Soc) (3) Achievement (Ach) (4) Cooperativeness (Cop) (5) Stress Tolerance (Str) (6) Adaptability (Adp) (7) Initiableness (Ini) and (8) Dominance (Dom). PTI comprised 57 statements which will measure eight personality traits. Each trait dimension comprised 9, 8, 6, 4 items respectively. Item total correlation method was used to compute for each scale. All items from eight sub-scales were significant at .05 level.

Reliability Analysis

For PTI, not only Cronbach's alpha reliability but also test-retest reliability method was calculated to determine its reliability. In finding reliability of subscale Ast, the reliability coefficient of alpha was .52 and test-retest reliability was .76. When computing reliability coefficient for subscale Soc, coefficient alpha was .68 and test-retest reliability was .87. Reliability coefficient (alpha) of subscale Ach was .52 and test-retest reliability was .76. Alpha

value of subscale Cop was .53 and test-retest reliability was .66. Alpha coefficient of subscale Str was .51 and test-retest reliability was .73. In finding reliability of subscale Adp, the reliability coefficient of alpha was .51 and test-retest reliability was .70. Coefficient alpha of .63 was found in computing the reliability of subscale Ini and its test-retest reliability was .80. Alpha coefficient of subscale Dom was .64 and test-retest reliability was .82.

Procedure

Each item comprised two responses, Yes and No and the score given was '1' for 'Yes' and '0' for 'No'. For negative statement, the score was '0' for Yes and '1' for No response. At the next stage the test was administered and it took about half an hour to complete the whole test. The data analysis was done by descriptive statistics, t test and the correlation technique.

Results and Discussion

The following tables showed the results of the present study.

Table 1. The Pearson correlation (r) of eight personality traits of managers

Trait	Correlation	N	Soc	Ach	Cop	Str	Adp	Ini	Dom
Assertiveness (Ast)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148	.322** .000	.593** .000	.077 .351	.230** .005	.251** .002	.611** .000	.324** .000
Sociability (Soc)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148		.319** .000	.081 .331	.346** .000	.141 .087	.271** .001	.033 .691
Achievement Oriented (Ach)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148			.052 .531	.364** .000	.279** .001	.699** .000	.419** .000
Cooperativeness (Cop)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148				-.098 .237	.232** .004	.183* .026	.087 .293
Stress Tolerance (Str)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148					.118 .152	.362** .000	.006 .940
Adaptability (Adp)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148						.317** .000	.128 .122
Initiativeness (Ini)	Pearson r Sig. (2-tailed)	148							.383** .000

* Correlation significant at .05

** Correlation significant at .01

According to the Table 1, there were inter correlations between the traits of assertiveness, sociability, achievement oriented, stress tolerance, adaptability, and initiativeness. But the trait cooperativeness did not correlate others and surprisingly it negatively correlated with stress tolerance, but it was not significant.

Table 2 showed the differences on the personality traits between male and females managers. Males were significantly higher scores on the traits of assertiveness, sociability, and stress tolerance with the t value 2.24, 2.97, and 2.34 respectively. They were significant at .03 to .003.

As shown in Table 3, the comparisons of mean scores and t values were shown. Service oriented managers were significantly higher scores on the traits of stress tolerance and adaptability with the t value 2.10, and 3.40 respectively. They were significant at .04 and .001.

Table 2. Comparison of Mean differences between male and female managers

Traits	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Assertiveness (Ast)	Male	59	4.27	1.460	146	2.243	.026
	Female	89	3.74	1.370			
Sociability (Soc)	Male	59	4.81	2.145	146	2.971	.003
	Female	89	3.78	2.038			
Achievement Oriented (Ach)	Male	59	6.17	1.577	146	1.201	.232
	Female	89	5.87	1.463			
Cooperativeness (Cop)	Male	59	3.66	0.779	146	-0.108	.914
	Female	89	3.67	0.687			
Stress Tolerance (Str)	Male	59	6.29	1.894	146	2.349	.020
	Female	89	5.52	1.995			
Adaptability (Adp)	Male	59	5.03	1.364	146	0.001	.999
	Female	89	5.03	1.162			
Initiativeness (Ini)	Male	59	6.63	1.541	146	1.247	.214
	Female	89	6.27	1.808			
Dominance (Dom)	Male	59	5.17	2.061	146	1.116	.266
	Female	89	4.80	1.932			

t value of means difference

p significant level

Table 3. Comparison of Mean differences between Service group and Manufacturing group

Traits	Organization	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Assertiveness (Ast)	Service	106	4.02	1.427	146	0.897	.371
	Manufacturing	42	3.79	1.423			
Sociability (Soc)	Service	106	4.30	2.161	146	1.020	.309
	Manufacturing	42	3.90	2.070			
Achievement Oriented (Ach)	Service	106	6.03	1.515	146	0.533	.595
	Manufacturing	42	5.88	1.517			
Cooperativeness (Cop)	Service	106	3.65	0.744	146	-0.479	.632
	Manufacturing	42	3.71	0.673			
Stress Tolerance (Str)	Service	106	6.04	1.171	146	2.101	.037
	Manufacturing	42	5.29	1.942			
Adaptability (Adp)	Service	106	5.25	0.984	146	3.407	.001
	Manufacturing	42	4.50	1.627			
Initiativeness (Ini)	Service	106	6.40	1.760	146	-0.180	.858
	Manufacturing	42	6.45	1.596			
Dominance (Dom)	Service	106	4.80	2.011	146	-1.407	.162
	Manufacturing	42	5.31	1.893			

t value of means difference

p significant level

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation across functional fields

Trait		Functional Fields				
		Sale & Marketing N = 39	Office / HR N = 55	Finance N = 29	Production N = 17	Store & Warehouse N = 8
Assertiveness (Ast)	Mean	4.03	3.93	3.86	4.06	3.88
	SD	1.31	1.56	1.41	1.52	1.13
Sociability (Soc)	Mean	4.49	4.31	4.10	3.47	3.75
	SD	2.15	2.28	2.14	1.59	2.05
Achievement Oriented (Ach)	Mean	6.00	6.00	6.03	5.94	5.75
	SD	1.50	1.52	1.57	1.56	1.58
Cooperativeness (Cop)	Mean	3.62	3.65	3.69	3.65	4.00
	SD	0.81	0.70	0.81	0.61	0.00
Stress Tolerance (Str)	Mean	5.92	6.15	5.52	5.24	5.50
	SD	1.91	1.87	2.20	1.86	2.57
Adaptability (Adp)	Mean	5.05	5.13	4.97	5.06	4.50
	SD	1.12	1.28	1.08	1.43	1.77
Initiativeness (Ini)	Mean	6.18	6.51	6.41	6.82	6.00
	SD	1.96	1.78	1.59	1.02	1.60
Dominance (Dom)	Mean	4.95	5.11	4.72	5.59	3.25
	SD	2.05	2.24	1.39	1.46	1.98

Table 4 indicated that the mean scores and standard deviations of eight personality traits obtained by managers across functional fields.

The difference (*t*) values and their significant level were shown in table (5). There were no differences across functional fields on the traits of assertiveness, sociability, achievement oriented, cooperativeness, stress tolerance, adaptability, and initiativeness because the values were not significant at the 5% level. But sale, office, finance, and production managers were higher on dominance than store/warehouse managers. The *t* values were 2.145 to 3.332 and they were significant at .04 to .003. The trait was also significantly different between production managers and finance managers. The *t* value -2.001 was significant at the 5% level.

Discussion

It is a time that reforming process speed up throughout the nation. All responsible persons worked out to improve political sectors as well economic sectors. To be well-developed economic sectors, private sectors are main streams and need to be achieved. So, the excellent competency of personnel from private sectors would be essential need. The skills and personality of managers are also important to manage subordinates and to achieve organizational goal and objectives. Thus, this paper intends to study personality of managers and supervisors. There is a great diversity of personalities among successful business managers. This has been documented among the major functional fields of sales, production, accounting and office, where there were some differences, although more similarities were emphasized in the reports than differences.

Table 5. The difference (t) values and significant level (p) across functional fields

Traits	Functional Feilds	Office / HR		Finance		Production		Store & Warehouse	
		t	p	t	p	t	p	t	p
Assertiveness (Ast)	Sale	.321	.749	.494	.623	-.083	.934	.303	.763
	Office			.188	.851	-.305	.761	.091	.928
	Finance					-.445	.659	-.024	.981
	Production							.304	.764
Sociability (Soc)	Sale	.381	.704	.729	.469	1.749	.086	.889	.379
	Office			.401	.690	1.409	.163	.654	.515
	Finance					1.057	.296	.416	.680
	Production							-.374	.712
Achievement Oriented (Ach)	Sale	.000	1	-.092	.927	.133	.895	.425	.673
	Office			-.098	.922	.139	.890	.434	.666
	Finance					.195	.846	.453	.653
	Production							.285	.778
Cooperativeness (Cop)	Sale	-.250	.803	-.373	.710	-.144	.886	-1.323	.192
	Office			-.207	.836	.040	.968	-1.387	.171
	Finance					.188	.851	-1.077	.289
	Production							1.628	.117
Stress Tolerance (Str)	Sale	-.563	.575	.812	.420	1.249	.217	.538	.593
	Office			1.377	.172	1.757	.083	.869	.388
	Finance					.444	.659	.019	.985
	Production							.295	.771
Adaptability (Adp)	Sale	-.299	.766	.316	.753	-.021	.983	1.140	.260
	Office			.580	.563	.188	.852	1.234	.222
	Finance					-.250	.347	.930	.359
	Production							.343	.408
Initiativeness (Ini)	Sale	-.848	.399	-.527	.600	-1.279	.207	.242	.810
	Office			.241	.810	-.691	.492	.763	.449
	Finance					-.951	.347	.650	.520
	Production							1.569	.130
Dominance (Dom)	Sale	-.354	.724	.509	.612	-1.161	.251	2.145	.037
	Office			.842	.402	-.827	.411	2.220	.030
	Finance					-2.001	.052	2.422	.021
	Production							3.332	.003

Results of this study showed male managers were significantly higher mean scores on the traits assertiveness, sociability and stress tolerance than female groups. Results of some studies indicated that sex differences in personalities may be due to biological influences (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972). Other findings indicated that the differences may be due to early experiences that occur in sex-segregated play groups in which girls and boys play different styles and use different methods of influencing one another (Maccoby, 1988). The comparison of personality trait differences between service oriented managers group and manufacturing oriented managers group revealed that service managers were significantly higher average score on the trait stress tolerance and adaptability than manufacturing managers. Managers from service jobs have to contact with superiors, subordinates, customers and other responsible persons from another work situations. They have to use interpersonal skills more than managers from production jobs. Besides working in the office, they have to work with people

outside the office. Because of having more responsibilities, they must have to tolerate the stress they have encountered and to adapt the situations they experienced.

The different personality traits of managers across functional fields were explored in this study. There were no differences on the trait assertiveness, sociability, achievement oriented, cooperativeness, stress tolerance, adaptability, and initiativeness, but differed in dominance. Sale & Marketing managers, Office/HR managers, Finance managers and Production managers were significantly higher of trait dominance than Store/Warehouse managers. Research conducted by Huttner, Levey, Rosen and Stopol (1959) reported that sale executives were highly dominant, sociable and extroverted personality. Further sale managers were more different than any other group of managers in optimism and dominance. The personality of production managers were studied by Rosen and the finding was similar to the personality of sale managers. So the finding of this study showed no differences between sale group and production group. Huttner, Levy, Rosen and Stopol (1959) concluded that administrative and accounting executives were more constricted, less sociable, and more withdrawn than other executives they studied. Rosen (1959) concluded that group of administrative and accounting executives was so different in personality from production managers and sales managers. But the findings of this study showed that there were no differences across sales group, office group, production and finance group. The result also indicated that the production managers were higher score on the trait of dominance than finance managers. While production managers have worked up from the bottom of the company more than the other major managers, the average accounting and finance manager is very able, especially with numbers. Moreover finance manager has little imagination and creativity and he values independence in the work situation and does not like to interact with others (Randle, 1956). However the findings of this study did not support there were significant differences among some traits of managers across functional fields. It could be due to the weakness of samples, due to fail other related factors into account and due to the nature of personnel selection and working situation.

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