



Leadership qualities and Personality traits of Higher Secondary School students

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Abstract

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Leadership is an activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives. It involves achievement of organizational goals and working with people. Leadership lifts a person's vision to high sight, raises a person's performance to a high standard, and builds a personality beyond its normal limitation. The five factors model of personality is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience. Present study was conducted to find the relationship between leadership qualities and personality traits of higher secondary school students. Pearson's coefficient of correlation was calculated for the variables for the data collected from 603 higher secondary school students of Kerala state. Significant but very low relationship was found between certain personality traits and some leadership qualities.

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Education is the process of human resource development which prepares the future generation to play their respective role in the society. It is a fact that the stability of a civilization depends on the wisdom with which it distributes its wealth and allots its burdens of labors and on the variety of instruction it avails to the children. India as a developing country has an emerging economy. Many developed countries have moved from managerial to entrepreneurial and India is now promoting entrepreneurship as a career choice for young.

Anyone who analyses the economy of India can understand the need for such a shift from the old concept of white collar jobs to self-employment to decrease the underemployment as well as the unemployment among educated youth in India. But academic qualifications do not ensure entrepreneurship among students. An entrepreneur needs many qualities like problem solving skill, creativity, persistence, communication, teamwork etc. which comes under life skills. Life skills make one successful in life and these skills in a social set up comes under the concept of soft skills.

Soft skills enable student to build, develop and manage teams, increasing their career prospects. An important soft skill is leadership which has got much attention in recent years. Leadership is an activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives. It involves achievement of organizational goals and working with people. Leadership lifts a person's vision to high sight, raises a person's performance to a high standard, and builds a personality beyond its normal limitation (Drucker, 1993).

Development of qualities of leadership through education is not a new concept. Secondary Education Commission (1953) emphasized development of leadership qualities for successful functioning of democracy. Greenwald (2010) has opined that there is a common perception that America is suffering a crisis of leadership and hence many universities and colleges are offering leadership studies/programs. According to him, leadership is like any scientific discipline, consisting of a set of skills, methodologies and ideas that can be taught, but it should inform all aspects of life.

Some personality traits may lead people into leadership qualities. The personality pattern is molded early in life. Within the personality pattern are both common and unique



traits. The combination of the two contributes to the individuality of the person which can explain the variation in the personality pattern of different people and that of the same person at different times in the life span.

The five factors model of personality is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experience. Investigation into the five factor model started in 1949, research increased in the 1980's and 1990's, offering increasing support for the five factors model. This personality traits show consistency in interviews, self description and observations, as well as across a wide range of participants of different ages and from different culture.

Judge, Bono, Ilies and Gerhardt (2002) in a meta analysis of the qualitative and quantitative studies on leadership and personality traits have reported many studies revealing negative relationship between neuroticism and factors related to leadership like self confidence and self esteem. The result of studies on the relationship between extra version and leadership were found to be consistent. Openness is reported as a strongly related variable both to personality based and behavioral measures of creativity, a strong link of effective leadership. Regarding agreeableness, co-operativeness and interpersonal sensitivity are related to leadership and also makes an agreeable personality. But agreeable person will be more modest and leaders are not expected to be so. Also need for affiliation is negatively related to leadership and hence the relation of agreeableness and leadership is ambiguous. Conscientiousness is related to overall job performance and competence in a task which results in better capacity to lead other to do the job resulting in a successful leader. Conscientious people have persistence, which is essential for effective leadership and hence a relationship is expected between the two. They have highlighted the need of further studies on leadership qualities and personality traits among students. A review of the studies in the area of leadership and personality trait revealed that different studies used different types of instrument with different components. Hence present study is to find out the relationship between leadership qualities and personality traits among higher secondary school students.

Objective

1. To find out the nature and extent of relationship between the Leadership Qualities and the Personality Traits of secondary school students of Kerala. The ten leadership qualities included in the study are Vision, Ability, Enthusiasm, Stability, Concern for others, Self confidence, Persistence, Vitality, Charisma and Integrity measured through a self rating scale.

Hypothesis

1. There is significant relationship between the Leadership Qualities and Personality Traits of higher secondary school students of Kerala.

Method

Participants

The population under study is higher secondary school students of Kerala and 630 students selected through stratified sampling technique considering type of school, gender, and subject of study as strata were the participants. Nine schools were selected randomly from the list of higher secondary schools in three revenue Districts of Kerala viz. Kozhikode, Malappuram and Kannur.

Instruments

1. Self rating scale on leadership qualities (Prasanthini & Vijayakumari, 2017) was used to measure the leadership qualities of the participants. It is a '10' point self rating scale with one item each for ten leadership qualities based on the work of Manning and Curtis (2007). The qualities measured are Vision, Ability, Enthusiasm, Stability, Concern for others, Self-



confidence, Persistence, Vitality, Charisma, and Integrity. The respondent is asked to rate his quality in the scale against each item. The respondent can mark his position in the scale on the specific leadership quality. The rating scale is valid to measure the leadership qualities as the description, both English and Malayalam of each quality is given in the scale itself to avoid confusion among respondents. The qualities were selected based on the works of Manning and Curtis (2007) and hence the rating scale measures the relevant leadership qualities. The reliability of the scale was ensured by cross checking the response of self rating and the responses made on the same by their peers with respect to his behaviour. For this, ten students were asked to rate the qualities of his friend. Then the rating was compared. Then the responses were analyzed, it was found that the peer rating is almost the same as that of self rating. The rating scale was administered for a second time for ten students after one month of first administration. The ratings were compared for each respondent and they were found to be similar. Hence the rating scale can be considered as a reliable one. The face validity of the instrument was assured by experts in the field.

2. NEO-Five Factor Inventory (FFI). This personality inventory was developed by McCrae and Costa (1987) to measure the five dimension of the Personality. The Inventory has 60 items, 12 under each of the five subscales viz., Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to experiences. Each statement of the scale has five possible responses viz., Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Score 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were given to the responses respectively for each statement. The total of the scores under each subscale was then calculated to get the score in each personality trait. The range of correlation with validimax factor of NEO - P1 are .75 for C to .89 for N. Internal consistency was ensured using coefficient alpha the values being .86, .77, .73, .68 and .82 for N, E, O, A and C respectively. The authors claim that NEO - FFI scales carry with them some portion of the demonstrated validity of the full scales.

Procedure

The participants were directly contacted by the investigators after getting permission from heads of the institution and concerned teachers in charge. The students were informed about the confidentiality of data and they were made familiar with the instruments. The procedure of marking their responses to the items was made clear to them. After completing responses data sheets were collected back and the responses were scored as per the scoring procedure. Incomplete data sheets were rejected resulting in a final sample of 603 students. After tabulating data were undergone statistical analysis as per the objective and hypothesis of the study.

Results and Discussion

To find out whether there is significant relationship between leadership qualities and personality traits Pearson's Product Moment Co-Efficient of Correlation was calculated for each case. Values are given in table 1.

Table 1
Correlation of Leadership Qualities and Personality Traits

Variables	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness to Experience	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Vision	-.059	0.097*	-.013	0.046	0.099*
Ability	.046	0.089*	.036	0.068	0.081
Enthusiasm	.027	0.102*	0.055	0.049	0.039
Stability	-.102*	0.008	0.006	0.031	0.001
Concern for other	-.171*	-0.081	-0.007	0.000	-0.019
Self confidence	-.026	0.017	-0.044	0.061	0.039
Persistence	-.043	-0.061	-0.034	0.039	0.059
Vitality	-.023	0.019	-0.049	0.054	0.094*
Charisma	.089*	0.064	-0.007	0.076	0.054
Integrity	-.048	0.006	0.013	0.054	0.052

* $p < .01$

The correlation co-efficient obtained for 'Vision' with the five personality traits show that the leadership quality 'Vision' is significantly related only to Extraversion ($p \leq .05$, $r = .097$ which is greater than .088, the value required for significance at .05 level for $n=603$) and Conscientiousness ($r = .099$). The relationship of 'Vision' with 'Neuroticism', 'Openness to Experience' and 'Agreeableness' are not significant even at .05 level. The positive value obtained in the case of Extraversion and Conscientiousness shows that these personality traits are positively related with the leadership quality 'Vision'. The magnitude of the correlation co-efficient shows that the extent of relationship in both case is negligible.

Leadership qualities 'ability' and 'Enthusiasm' are significantly related to 'Extraversion' and the positive value in each case shows that the variables are positively related. The magnitude of the correlation co-efficient shows that the extent of relationship is negligible. Relationships of 'ability' and 'Enthusiasm' with all the other personality traits are not significant at .05 level.

Concern for others and Stability are significantly related to Neuroticism ($p \leq .05$). The negative value shows that the two variables are negatively related but the extent of relationship is low. All other personality traits are found to be not significantly related to these leadership qualities.

Charisma and 'Neuroticism' are significantly related at .05 level. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient shows that extent of relationship is very low. That is Charisma and Neuroticism are found to be significantly positively related and there exist a very low relationship between the two variables. The leadership quality 'Charisma' is found to be not significantly related to any of the other four personality traits. Self confidence, Persistence and Integrity are found to be not significantly related to the Personality traits.

Vitality and Conscientiousness are significantly related at .05 level. The positive value shows that the two variables are positively related. That is as one variable increases the other also increases and as one variable decreases the other also decreases. The magnitude of the correlation co-efficient shows that the extent of relationship is negligible. That is though vision and extraversion are found to be significantly positively related the relationship is negligible.

Negligible to low relationship was observed among certain leadership qualities and the personality traits. Neuroticism is found to be negatively related with stability and concern for others which is explainable by the definition of neurotic behavior itself.. Extraversion is positively related with vision, ability and enthusiasm, Conscientiousness is positively related to vision and vitality. In all these cases the extent of relation is very low or negligible, may be due to the large sample size. Openness to experience and agreeableness are found to be not related to any of the personality traits. These findings are partially agreeing with the findings of Chai(2015) and Judge et. al.(2002). In this study also Extraversion is found to be the most correlated personality dimension with leadership qualities.

Conclusion

As certain personality dimensions are found to be significantly related to leadership qualities, personality development programmes are to be included intensively in the school curriculum. Higher secondary education must include life skill training especially the soft skills. To be successful in entrepreneurial approach India need people with leadership qualities and the appropriate personality traits.

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