The Relationship between Personality Traits and Management Performance
Case Study: Middle School caretakers, in Hamedan Province, Iran

Gholamali Ahmadi, Ali Ahmadalizadeh

Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between personality traits and management performance among middle school caretakers in Hamedan school system. This is a descriptive-correlation study. Statistical society includes all middle school caretakers in Hamedan during academic year 2011-2012. About 130 subjects (61 females and 69 males) have selected randomly through stratified sampling. Two questionnaires, namely, Personality Trait Questionnaire (NEO-Five Factor Inventory with 60 items) and Management Performance Questionnaire (with 30 items) have administrated to collect data in this study. The validity and reliability of the questionnaires have measured by using Cronbach alpha at 0.96 and 0.95, respectively. Then data analysis has done and variables evaluated by Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis. Study findings indicated significant positive correlation between personality traits and management performance among middle school caretakers. In ranking the predicting variables for management performance, openness to experiences ranked the highest with neuroticism ranked next in the predictive model.
Key words: Personality Traits, Neuroticism, Extroversion, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Management Performance.

Introduction

It is clear that the existence of effective and active human resources is a critical prerequisite in organization to achieve their purposes. In a broad perspective, the successful performance various active organizations can lead to social progress. Thus human resources are considered as key factor to success the performance of organizations. Although the diversity and number of organizations are increasing, they need professional and efficient human resources in order to fulfill their predetermined objectives. Furthermore, individuals who work for these organizations are turning more complex in terms of behavior, personality traits, and motivations making their understanding all the more difficult (Shabani, B., et al, 2004). Researchers believe success or failure of organizations is rooted at the various management styles that are governing those organizations. Peter Drucker considered management as the main and critical element of an organization. Harold Koontz referred to management as a major human activity. Organizations rely on strong management as a crucial vehicle to drive them out of crisis (Dalvi and Jamshidian, 2000, P. 25). Managers must perform their responsibilities well including: directing employees, pursuing improvement, implementing strategies, and organizing various functions, development and improvement of organizational culture (Hansaker and Cook, 2009, p. 84). But in this regard, they must notice to individual differences, talents, motivations, preferences and tendencies which can influence on the management practices. In other hand, managers themselves have different opinions, knowledge, and value systems to manage their organizations (Naderian, et al, 2007).

Problem Definition

Different motivators cause to individual show different behaviors that are not same in all human. Even when two behaviors exhibit similar characteristics, they can be perceived differently by various individuals. Conversely, similar behaviors may have different motivators. Human behaviors are rooted in individual personality traits and individual reaction under influence of various conditions. The strength or weakness of this influence can appear in personal behaviors (Gohari Moghaddam, 2007).Behavior, decision making, and performance of managers are under influence of their personality (Naderian, et al, 2007). Personality traits are certain characteristics that help individuals in their endeavor to discover self and gain a better understanding of others. These personality traits help people to improve their interpersonal relationships (Alavi, 1992). Costa and McCrae (1985) identified five main personality traits, namely, neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness (O), agreeableness (A), and conscientiousness (C).

1. Neuroticism is the general tendency toward negative emotional experiences such as fear, sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, and aversion. Individuals who score high in neuroticism have tendency to the irrational beliefs, uncontrollable impulses, and poor reactions to stressful stimuli (Garoosi Farshi, 2001).

2. Extraverts are sociable individuals who prefer group activities .They is daring, active, and talkative. Extraverts welcome arousal and excitation. They tend to be joyful, energetic, and optimistic (Costa and McCrae, 1985).

3. Fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions (experiences), ideas (curiosity), values (judgments) are openness elements. But openness is rarely known as personality dimension, thus this matter has not mentioned in discussions well (Costa and McCrae 1985).

4. Agreeableness is another form of interpersonal tendency similar to extroversion. Agreeable individuals are compassionate and cooperative. They view others as having similar personality traits.

5. Conscientious individuals are objective oriented, decisive, and determined. Successful individuals, great musicians, and famous athletes show high levels of conscientiousness (Costa, McCrae, and Bush, 1986, as quoted in GaroosiFarshi, 2001).

Research Literature

Management requires organizing a set of activities in the direction of achieving defined purposes. One key matter in management is to make relations between available resources and organizational performance through active decision making and participation of others. The management in an organization intends to coordinate various resources toward achievement of organizational objectives. (Alagheband, 1995, p. 15).Management has historically incorporated in planning. Organizing, directing and coordinating tasks require planning because they materialize over time (Gilbreth, Taylor, and Gantt, 1990, p. 46). Management scholars have defined management as a collection of responsibilities that every manager should undertake. Some of them emphasized on specific responsibilities and some others have only mentioned general responsibilities for managers)

Gulick and Urwick) . Most management experts agree on four responsibilities, namely, planning (decision making), organizing, directing (leadership), and control. A manager must do his best to achieve organizational objectives. Actual performance of these functions represents the effectiveness of organization and management.

This study examines five management responsibilities, including, planning, organizing, coordinating, staffing, and evaluating.

1. Planning. Planning is defined selection of the most suitable approach among various alternatives toward achievement of organizational objectives. Planning process defines organizational objectives, sets departmental goals, and selects the proper approaches for achieving those objectives and goals. Planning is central to management activities and involves other management responsibilities (Alvani, 1999, p. 138).

2. Organizing: Organizing means as identification and classification of the required tasks, grouping of necessary activities toward achievement of organizational objectives, assignment of each group to a manager, delegation of authority for supervision, plus vertical and horizontal coordination of activities within an organization (ibid).

3. Coordinating: Coordinating is defined unifying departmental activities within an organization toward effective realization of defined objectives and goals. Departmental activities may deviate from organizational objectives if the required arrangements and provisions are not planned and projected well (Alagheband, 1995, p. 54).

4. Staffing. Staffing means the overall human relations in an organization. Proper staffing helps organizations to improve employee morale as a collection of feelings, emotions, and thoughts. Employee morale interpret to job satisfaction (Safi, 2000, p. 75).

5. Evaluating: Evaluating is required to measure the effectiveness and quality of performance. Evaluation process help managers to determine how much of objectives have been realized. Quality control also requires evaluation. Evaluation knowledge and experience should be one prerequisite for individuals who are being appointed to managerial posts (Acheson and Gall, 1999, p. 59).Leadership is required to manage above five functions. The main mission of leadership is to direct and encourage others in voluntarily pursuing and committing to leader's views (Cutler, 1990, p. 14).Leaders determine objectives and perspectives, then, organize members to voluntarily commit to those objectives and perspectives (Cheng and Filzah, 2011, p. 908).Leadership in education plays key role because of diverse activities, various implementations, and complicated objectives. Today's complicated educational system requires more attention to personality characteristics to hire more competent educational managers.This study aims to examine the relations between personality traits of educational managers and their performance in order to determine more effective personality traits on management performance.

Research Background

Kaykhanejad (2008) examined the relationship of philosophical intellect versus performance of responsibilities in middle school managers of Zahedan school system and found a significant direct relation between the two variables. The direct relationship means the higher philosophical intellect the higher performance of managerial responsibilities. Naderian Jahromi and Amir Hossieni (2007) studied the relation between job skills and personality traits and demographic information of sports managers. They found a significant relation between introversion personality traits and perceptional and technical skills. Extroversion personality traits had significant relation with human skills. Demographic variables such as age, gender, marriage status, management experience, and sports background did not have significant relation with human skills. Education and management experience influence in the perceptional skills. There is significant relation between sports experience and field of study. Khakpour (2004) studied the relation between personality traits and job performance in caretakers of Hamedan intermediate schools during academic year 2003-2004. The findings showed that job performance had significant relations with extroversion, emotional stability, and agreeableness personality traits. Job performance had no significant relations with age or job experience. He found no significant difference in job performance between female and male caretakers. Bazr Afshan Moghaddam (1996) examined the relations between personality traits and performance in elementary school superintendents. The findings indicated no significant relation between effective and non-effective caretakers and their personality traits. Byrne, et al (2005) studied the relationship between personality traits and job performance. They reported that conscientiousness as a good predictor of job performance (as quoted in Na'ami, 2005).Kurk et al (2003) analyzed the relationship between five personality traits and job performance. They reported that there was significant relation between conscientiousness and job performance. Friedson(1999) study indicated that introverts reacted better to tensions. This personality trait helps an introvert individual to perceive and assess problems as controllable. They rely on more to problem solving approaches and less to emotional strategies when facing

stressful situations than the extroverts. Yuonne (1993) examined 87 male and female managers and found gender is not effective in professional performance. Lewin (1965) study showed that extrovert managers are mostly sociable. They are more effective in establishing successful relations with colleagues, subordinates, and customers. They are more adapted to their surrounding environment.

Research Objectives
The objective of this study was to identify the relationship between personality traits and management performance in middle school superintendents working for Hamedan school system.

Research Questions
1- Is there a significant relation between personality traits and management performance?
2- Are personality traits good predictors of management performance?

Methodology
This study used descriptive-correlation method. Statistical society included all 189 middle school caretakers in Hamedan school system. The size of study sample was determined to be 130 by Morgan table. Sample was selected randomly using stratified sampling. This study used NEO-FFI for examining personality traits. This questionnaire had 60 items divided into five areas (neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and Conscientiousness), each having 12 items. This study used Kaykhanejad researcher-made questionnaire (2008) for examining management performance. This questionnaire had 30 items divided into five areas (planning, organizing, coordinating, staffing, and evaluation) each having 6 items. Cronbach alpha was used to evaluate validity and reliability of the questionnaires at 0.96 and 0.95 respectively. This study used both descriptive and inferential methods for data analysis. Descriptive method used statistical measures such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation to describe available data. Inferential method used statistical tests including Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, and one-way analysis of variance to evaluate study questions.

Research Findings
Question 1: Is there a significant correlation between personality traits and management performance?
Table 1 provides descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for personality traits and management performance obtained from the study sample.

Table 1.Descriptive Statistics Personality Traits versus Management Responsibilities			
	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personality Traits	Neuroticism	49.08	4.89
	Extroversion - Introversion	40.75	4.61
	Openness to New Experiences	49.80	3.87
	Agreeableness	49.73	5.14
	Conscientiousness	49.31	4.62
Management Responsibilities	Planning	26.29	3.33
	Organizing	23.96	2.43
	Coordinating	23.80	3.44
	Staffing	25.51	3.12
	Evaluating	23.80	3.81

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine question one. Table 2 shows the results of inferential statistics.

Table 2.Pearson Correlation Coefficient Personality Traits versus Management Responsibilities					
	Management Responsibilities				
Personality Traits	Planning	Organizing	Coordinating	Staffing	Evaluating
Neuroticism	0.648	0.509	0.611	0.489	0.552
Extroversion - Introversion	0.583	0.341	0.622	0.466	0.379
Openness to New Experiences	0.707	0.529	0.704	0.580	0.582
Agreeableness	0.534	0.415	0.535	0.516	0.503
Conscientiousness	0.611	0.441	0.613	0.476	0.536
p = 0.000					

Table two shows the significant relations between personality trait and management responsibilities at 99 percent level of confidence (p<0.01).
Question 2: Are personality traits good predictors of management performance?
This study analysis has performed by step-by-step regression method. Table 3 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 3.Regression Analysis Personality Traits versus Management Responsibilities							
Step	Variable	R	R²	F	β	t	Sig
1	Openness to New Experiences	0.70	0.49	127.20	0.70	11.27	0.000
2	Openness to New Experiences	0.75	0.57	85.56	0.50	7.03	0.000
	+ Neuroticism			16.74	0.34	4.74	
	N = 130			p< 0.01			

Ranking of predictable variables for management performance shown openness to new experiences could predict 49 percent of management performance variance. In the next step, neuroticism was added to the predictive model. Standard beta coefficient in regression model was measured 0.50 for openness to new experiences and 0.34 for neuroticism respectively. Both of them are significant at 99 percent level of confidence ($p > 0.01$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Since management plays a critical role in an organization, so organizations rely on strong management to encounter the problems and organization crises. The study of the first research question showed significant correlation between personality traits and management performance. This significant correlation is at 99 percent level of confidence ($p > 0.01$). Therefore, we can conclude that personality traits have significant direct relation with management performance. This conclusion conforms to the results reported by similar studies (Kalantari, 2007; NaderianJahromi and Amir Hosseini, 2007; Khakpour, 2004; Bazafshan Moghaddam, 1996; Byrne, et al, 2005; and Kurk, et al., 2003).The study of the second research question conducted by the predictive model and indicated the function of openness to new experiences to success management performance. In the next step, neuroticism was added to the predictive model. Standard beta coefficient in regression model was measured 0.50 for openness to new experiences and 0.34 for neuroticism respectively. Both of them are significant at 99 percent level of confidence ($p > 0.01$). Openness to new experiences and neuroticism could predict a relatively higher percentage of management performance among personality traits under study this conclusion conforms to the results reported by similar studies (Kalantari, 2007; Naderian Jahromi and Amir Hosseini, 1999; Khakpour, 2004; Bazafshan Moghaddam, 1996; Byrne, et al, 2005; and Kurk, et al., 2003).Therefore, this study can infer that personality traits influence in management performance. Managers with positive personality traits are more successful managers than other colleagues. They can make higher contribution to achievement of educational objectives and plans. They can make better relation with school employees, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. Due to the results of this study, organizations, especially educational institutions should consider personality trait of the candidates for managerial positions before making their final decision to hire them. This approach can guarantee better performance for our school system. It is recommended that organizations ask psychologists and specialists to administer personality tests on employees in order to select those who have more competency for managerial positions and then they must be taught more to prepare them for the managerial positions.

References

1. Acheson, K. and Gall, D. M., (1999), Educational and Institutional Management: Application of Management Theories in Planning, (M. R. Behrangi, Trans.), Tehran: Kamal Tarbiat Publishing.
2. Alagheband, A. (1995), Introduction to Educational Management, Tehran: Be'that Publishing.
3. Alavi, A., (1992), Organization and Management Psychology, 1st Edition, Tehran: Public Management Training Center.
4. Alvani, S. M. (1999), Decision Making and Strategic Planning, Tehran: Samt Publishing.
5. BazrafshanMoghaddam, S. M., (1996), Study of the Relation between Personality and Management Effectiveness, Master's Thesis in Psychology, TarbiatMoallem University of Tehran (Tehran Teachers Training University).
6. Cheng, weihin. &filzahmd .isa (2011) Leadership Styles, Management Styles and Personality Traits of Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Malaysia: Annual Summit on Business and Entrepreneurial Studies
7. Costa, P. T. and McCrae, R. R. (1992) NEO- PI(R): Professional Manual Odessa, F1: Psychological Assessment Resources.
8. Dalvi, M. R.; Jamshidian, M.; and Pour Hakim, R. (2000), Introduction to Organization and Management: Concepts, Principles, Processes, Theories, and Applications), Isfahan: Simin Publishing.
9. Fayol, H., Taylor, F. and Gilbreth, L. (1990) The Role of Managers, 3rd Edition, New York: Harper and Row
10. Friedson, E. (1999) Professions and the Occupational Principle: Friedson (ED) Profession and Their Prospects (pp 19-27). Beverly Hills (A: sage)
11. GaroosiFarshi, M. T., (2001), A New Approach in Personality Evaluation, Tabriz: Jame'ehPajooh Publishing.
12. GohariMoghaddam, M., (2007), The Relation between Personality Traits and Leadership Style in Superintendence of Intermediate Boys and Girls Schools, Masters' Thesis, Azad University, Tonekabon Campus.
13. Hunsaker, P. and Cook, C. W. (2009) Management and Organizational Behavior, 3rd Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill
14. Kark, R., Shamir, B., Chen, G. (2003) The Two Faces of Transformational Leadership: Empowerment and Dependency. Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(2), pp 255-296.
15. Khakpour, A. (2004), Study of the Relation between Personality Traits and Job Performance of Hamedan Intermediate Schools Superintendence in Academic Year 2003-2004, Master's Thesis, ShahidBeheshti University, Tehran.
16. Khaykhanejad, M., (2008), Study of the Relation between Philosophical Mentality and Its Dimensions versus Management Performance in Intermediate Schools Superintendence in Zahedan, Masters' Thesis, Sistan and Baluchistan University.
17. Kotter, J. P. (1990) What Leaders Really Do, Harvard Business Review, 68, May- June Issue.
18. Lewin, K. (1965) A Dynamic Theory of Personality, New York: McGraw-Hill.
19. McCrae, R. R. and Costa, P. T. Jr. (1985). Updating Norman's Adequate Taxonomy: Intelligent and Personality Dimensions in Natural Language and Questionnaires, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 24, pp. 107-127.
20. McCrae, R. R. and Costa, P. T. Jr. (1977) Validation of the Five-Factor Model of Personality across Instruments and Observers, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52:81
21. Na'ami, A. Z. (2005), Study of Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction in Employees of Khuzestan Steel Mill, PhD. Thesis in Psychology, ShahidChamran University, Ahwaz.

22. NaderianJahromi, M. and Amir Husseini, S. E., (2007), Study of the Relation between Personality Traits and Demographic Information of Sports Managers versus Their Job Skills, Olympic Quarterly, 15 (3)

23. Safi, A. (2000), Educational Organization and Management, Tehran: Arasbaran Publishing.

24. ShabaniBahar, Gh., Amir Tash, A. M., MoshrefJavadi, B., and Tondnevis, F. (2004), Study of the Relation between Personality Traits and Sports Managers' Effectiveness in Iran Universities, Sports Education Journal and Sports Science and Exercise Journal , Spring Issue, No. 3, pp. 12-30.

25. Yuonne, M. (1993) Sex Role Orientation: Coping Strategies and Perspective for Woman Administrator, Educational Management and Administration, 21(2)

Gholamali Ahmadi, Department of Education Management, Faculty Member, Shahid Rajaei University, Tehran, Iran

Mojtaba Ebrahimi, PhD Candidate, Department of Education Management, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran