

EXPLORING THE OPTIMAL TRAIT PROFILE FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Abstract

The current study aims to explore the optimal trait profile for leaders and effective leadership in Pakistan. Due to the previous corporate scandals including the Axta and Forex Scam, it is imperative to explore this area. Furthermore extensive literature review has shown that not a lot of work has been done on this particular area of leadership recently in the terms the current study is aiming for, creating the perfect opportunity to step into this field. The researchers aim to identify the positive personality traits and negative personality traits which can be termed in direct relation with effective leadership (keeping in mind not just the broad terminologies but also the sub categories of the personality traits). A qualitative approach based on action research model will be adopted to conduct this research. A sample of 10 to 12 leaders in Pakistan will be selected via convenient purposive sampling to gather the respective data. One on one interviews' will be conducted in order to gather the data ensuring the confidentiality of the participants at all times. Interpretative phenomenology analysis will be conducted to extract the topic related themes. The researcher is expecting to find more in depth information regarding which specific personality traits leads to more effective leadership rather than highlighting the five broad personality trait branches including extraversion, openness to experience, neuroticism etc. Since the literature review has been so much contradictory the researcher cannot say for sure about the nature of information gathered but with the current evidence in existing literature, it is possible that the current study might yield that sub categories including emotional intelligence, communicative and conscientiousness are the most commonly used traits when discussing effective leadership.

Keyword: Effective leadership, personality traits, extraversion, emotional stability, neuroticism, interpretative phenomenology analysis.

EXPLORING THE OPTIMAL TRAIT PROFILE FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The current study aims to explore the optimal trait profile for individuals in leadership position to assist in effective leadership in Pakistan. Over the last few decades, concepts such as trait and behavioural aspects related to leadership have a high rate of influence with regards to the efforts to measure; create understanding and predictions in relation to leadership. These approaches have received significant support (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). Multiple personality traits have been identified and related to the concept of leadership and the different leadership styles. Various authors have related traits such as innovativeness and entrepreneurial qualities as two of the many personality characteristics of the effective leader (e.g, Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994, 1995; Church & Wacławski, 1998; Hogan, 1994; Howell & Higgins, 1990; Miller et al, 1982; Van Rensburg & Crous, 2000).

Trait Theories of Leadership

The trait approach is considered to be one of the earliest theories related to leadership. This approach tends to focus on the personal characteristics of leaders including physical and personality characteristics, individual competencies and values. This approach considers leaderships entirely from the individual perspective which collaborates well with the current study's aim. Implicitly this theory is based on the assumption that the targeted traits produce various patterns of behaviour, consistent in nature across different situations. Trait approach considers leadership traits to be consistent characteristics that people possess and that remain stable over time (Fleenor, 2011).

Earlier researchers found that there were only a handful of traits that makes leaders different from non-leaders. Leaders in comparison to non leaders tended to be higher than others in the following traits: dominance, self-confidence, extraversion, intelligence, height and adjustment.

Currently still a lot of work is being published stating the most important traits which are understood to be one of the key elements when studying effective leadership with the basic belief being the same as before that if the leaders do possess such traits, they will succeed in being an effective leader in any situation. Gardner (1989) studied various leaders concluding that indeed there are certain specific traits that if present in a leader will make them successful in varying situations including: physical vitality, intelligence and action-oriented judgement, high taste competence, need for achievement, ability to motivate people, courage, trustworthiness, decisiveness, self-confidence and assertiveness.

Recently, researchers have gained back their interest in trait approach to leadership again especially with the use of five-factor model of personality. It is important to note here that although critics have highlighted the need to incorporate situational considerations when it comes to studying leadership but yet there has been no situational theory of leadership due to which most leadership researchers have stopped pursuing the pure situational approach (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001).

Table 1: The Big Five Personality Dimensions

Lower End	Dimensions	Higher End
Angry, Tense, Nervous, Envious, Unstable	Emotional Stability	Calm, Relaxed, At Ease, Not Envious, Stable
Unintelligent, Imperceptive, Unanalytical, Uninquisitive, Unimaginative	Openness to Experience	Intelligent, Perceptive, Analytical, Inquisitive, Imaginative
Introverted, Unenergetic, Silent, Unenthusiastic, Timid	Extraversion	Extroverted, Energetic, Talkative, Enthusiastic, Bold.
Cold, Unkind, Uncooperative, Selfish, Rude.	Agreeableness	Warm, Kind, Cooperative, Unselfish, Polite
Disorganized, Irresponsible, Undependable, Negligent, Impractical.	Conscientiousness	Organized, Responsible, Reliable, Conscientious, Practical.

Source: Richard L. Daft (2005) The Leadership Experience, Third Edition, US: Thomson South-Western.

In today's world, the contemporary scholars in the field of leadership believe that the human personality consist of five core broad dimensions which is mostly now referred to as the "BIG FIVE" personality trait. In most theories, these five personality traits are described as extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism. "Extraversion includes certain characteristics such as excitability, talkativeness, sociability, assertiveness and high amounts of emotional expressiveness. Agreeableness includes certain attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection and many other pro social behaviours.

Conscientiousness includes high level of thoughtfulness with good impulse control and goal directed behaviours like high in conscientiousness usually tend to be organised and mindful of details. Individuals high on neuroticism tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability and sadness. Openness features characteristics such as imagination and

insight. Those high in this trait tend to have a broad range of interests” (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016) (Refer to Table 1 regarding all five dimensions and their lower end and higher end traits).

The trait model of leadership is based on the observations of both successful and unsuccessful leaders and the information can be used to predict the effectiveness of leadership. Successful leaders specifically are known to possess different interest, abilities and personality traits which turn out to be significantly different from that of the not so effective or successful leaders. A set of traits, for successful leaders have been extracted from the researches of the past three decades. It is important to note that these traits were understood to be considered as preconditions that provide individuals with leadership potential (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016). Many researches have supported the belief of the trait approach that a leader’s effectiveness is proven to be successful based on his/her capability to resolve complex organisational issues in the best possible manner resulting in the formation of a comprehensive skill-based model of leadership, advanced by Mumford and his colleagues (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000; Yammarino, 2000).

On the other hand, there are other trait theories as well such as Gordon Allport’s theory but it is criticized for being too vast. Cattell’s theory is understood to be too complex and Eysenck’s scope being criticised for being too limited. This does not mean that BIG five approach is not without any limitations. This approach has the down side of not adopting a holistic view including the impact of situational variables on leadership effectiveness (Fleenor, 2006). Still BIG FIVE theory has emerged to term the personality traits to serve as the building blocks on which personality is based or built on (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016).

Personality and Leadership Effectiveness

It is well known that traits like extraversion and agreeableness are positively correlated with leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000) on the other hand there are studies which state antecedent factors such as emotional intelligence affects leadership as well (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Barling, Slater & Kelloway, 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002). Leadership also has been known to be positively associated with integrity characteristic (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). In light of all the evidences (including the contradictory pieces of evidences) in support of various personality traits in relation to leadership and its related concept including effectiveness, it is crucial to first set the bases of the nature of relationship between personality and leadership effectiveness which paves the way for identifying the optimal trait profile for effective leadership.

“An individual’s personality is a relatively stable set of characteristics, tendencies and temperaments that have been significantly formed by an inheritance from a specific gene pool and by social, cultural and environmental factors. This set of variables determines the commonalities and differences in the behaviour of the individual” (Maddi, 1989). Personality traits consist of variety of attributes which have been studied by observation of individual’s behaviour in various group scenarios by associates, observers etc. Trait theories consist of information which describes an individual (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1991).

On the other hand exploring leadership has progressed from the four major following stages of development including: “1) observing great men, 2) defining traits and characteristics, 3) examining situational factors and 4) studying the behaviour of individuals” (Lipham, 1973). Leadership plays an important part in driving and managing their organisations through difficult times. Having an understanding of what leadership effectiveness is varies from researcher to researcher where most scholars evaluate this

concept in terms of the consequences of the actions of the leader on the followers along with other organisations stakeholders (Jabeen, Cherian & Pech, 2012). Considering the corporate scandals in Pakistan such as Axt software company (2015), Forex Scam case (2008) can see the leadership challenges in Pakistan.

Effective leaders “are those that get results within time frames that are considered appropriate for their industries and stakeholders” (Goleman, 2000) such as Lee Iacocca assisting in recovering Chrysler Corporation and Gillette stabilizing under the effective leadership skills of Colman Mockler (Collins, 2001). According to Pierce and Gardner (2002) personality is one of those aspects related to managerial and even leadership development that it should be studied in more depth to comprehend the concept better in order to have more effectively trained managers and leaders amongst us.

“Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal: Great leadership works through the emotions” (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002, p.3)

Personality ratings by knowledgeable co-workers and even self-evaluation, of top – level leaders are difficult to obtain (Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010). However, leaders possessing characteristics such as high internal-locus of control are known to be more of a risk –taker and innovative (Miller, Kets de Vries, Toulouse, 1982). Goal –oriented trait is considered a very important trait for effective business leaders (Gerstner & Day, 1994). According to House et al (2004) visionary, intelligent, trustworthy and decisive are believed to be positive attributes for a leader to have universally irrespective of cultural considerations whereas traits including compassion, domineering, orderly and risk taking are also important traits but more culturally contingent. When studying female leaders, Helgstrand and

Stuhlmacher (1999) found that feminine leaders are seen as more collegial and feminine-individualistic leaders are also most effective. Caligiuri, Shaffer et al. (2006) and Kreitner and Kinicki (2007) are known for promoting “the view that there are numerous linkages within the “BIG FIVE” that is: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience”.

Also findings from the study by Jabeen, Cherian and Pech (2012) found that three out of the five traits (including agreeableness, openness or intellect and extraversion) of personality are indeed significant predictors of leaders and their performance whereas agreeableness and extraversion are also known to significantly predict the adjustment of leaders as well.

H1a: Traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of leaders

There is evidence from the past studies which have highlighted that when an average individual holds a position of leadership it surpasses its fellow average group members in many respects including “intelligence, scholarship, dependability in exercising responsibility, activity and social participation and socioeconomic status”(Stogdill, 1948). Hackman and Johnson (2007) on the contrary provides us with the opposite view and stated that “formidable interpersonal skills, as well as cognition, personality, motivation and expertise do not necessarily guarantee leadership effectiveness” however any individual in the role of a leader who might possess these traits will have a strong base in order to develop the required leadership prowess.

Collective results of at least twenty five studies indicated that charismatic behaviour receives more performance ratings, have higher levels of motivated staff working for them and are especially viewed as more effective leaders by their followers as well as their

superiors in the positions of leaders (House & Howell, 1992). However, although a lot of attention has been given to charismatic trait of leadership no scholarly consensus could be gathered regarding the precise application of this concept of charisma when studied in relation to leadership (Howell and House 1992). The term “charisma” has been related to various leaders including Adolf Hitler, Fidel Castro and Franklin Delano Roosevelt when talking from political perspective, regarding religious movements Jesus Christ, Jim Jones has been considered and for social movements Mahatam Gandhi, Luther King, Jr has been considered clearly indicating that it an extremely broad term that is not able to differentiate between good or moral or even evil and immoral leadership (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Johnson (2007) made a contribution in this field of research by providing explanation that interpersonal competencies including interpersonal factors such as the ability to present an appear to be related to leadership effectiveness.

Meta-analysis of almost 78 studies conducted on leadership and personality have shown links between the big five personality factors and leadership effectiveness (Jabeen, Cherian & Pech, 2012). Researches have also considered the personality traits with negative connotation and these include narcissism which is believed to have close ties with leadership (Judge et al., 2009). Where, on one hand researches provide evidence that if this trait is present in leaders they tend to be less effective (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, 2008; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006) on the other hand researches contradict the prior evidence by indicating that the presence of this “negative” trait actually makes leaders more effective (Deluga, 1997) and yet there are authors which support the idea that there is no evident relationship between the personality trait narcissism and leader effectiveness (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Judge et al., 2006; Resick, Whitman, Weingarden, & Hiller, 2009).

H2a: There will be a significant negative impact of negative traits on the effectiveness of leaders

Chinese managers are not known to consider communication as important to other traits when considering effective leadership (Neelankavil et al., 2000). On the contrary to this belief, Casimir and Waldman (2007) found that Australians rates traits such as bossiness, communicative, friendly, humorous, participative and respectful towards others much more than Chinese did. Also Kanodia and Sacher (2016) found the following traits as core in this area of study:

Table 2: Core personality traits related to effective leadership

Articulate : Communicate effectively with others	Outgoing: Talks freely , gets along well with others
Perceptive: Discerning and insightful	Conscientious : Is thorough, organized and careful
Self - confident : Believes in oneself and one's ability	Diligent: Is industrious, hardworking
Persistent: Stays fixed on the goals , despite interference	Sensitive: Shows tolerance, is tactful and sympathetic
Determined: Takes a firm stand, act with certainty	Empathetic: Understands others, identifies with others
Trustworthy: Is authentic, inspires confidence	Courageous: have courage to take initiative and risk
Self Assured: Secure with self, free of doubts	Participative
Dependable: Is consistent and reliable	Democratic
Friendly: Shows kindness and warmth	Shows Integrity & Be responsible

Even though there is proof of certain leadership traits and practices are understood to work universally however this is also evidence stating that the practical implementation of these traits varies across different cultures (Den Hartog et al, 1999; House et al, 2004). For example, according to Trevor-Robert et al. (2003) leaders in countries like Australia and New Zealand are expected to be egalitarian, however high socially oriented traits and less task-

oriented traits are expected from the leaders in Australia. Cultural aspect including individualism-collectivism has an impact as well when it comes to managerial perceptions, attitudes and behaviours (Neelankavil et al., 2000). Cross cultural differences are known to exist while studying traits as it is considered quite important for effective leadership (Casimir & Waldman, 2007) and also cultural backgrounds plays an influential role in the perception of the importance placed to various traits when considering effective leadership. Brodbeck et al's (2000) study based on the European samples showed that the traits which are regarded important when it comes to leadership are to a certain extent determined based on the demands of the leadership role, along with cultural interpersonal norms.

It is also to be kept in mind that the current work environment is highly characterised by globalisation along with concepts of constant changes in the market, technologies and work – force and its related expectations (Gordon-Brown & Bendixen, 2002; Horwitz, Kamoche & Chew, 2002; Van der Colff, 2003). In all of these changes that are taking place in the form of cultural patterns, structures, policies, procedures and technologies (Krants, 2001) leadership is central. It is known and understood that talented leaders can assist or lead an organisation on how to overcome the challenges due to the changing times. They can play an active part in directing and providing guidance to employees and teams on how to successfully overcome any obstacles they might face. They can also influence to a great extent their subordinates' and stakeholders' behaviour and therefore create a work environment which will be primed for success (Barling, Christie & Hopkins, 2010).

However currently leadership literature provides information in regards to so many personality traits but not one set of specific traits which makes it difficult to comprehend which direction leaders should move towards in order to show high levels of effective leadership from trait and behavioural perspectives (internal factors) which leads to the main purpose of the current study, that is, to identify one set of trait profile of a leader which is

optimal in nature. So far studies have identified various leadership traits such as extraversion, creativity, innovativeness, conscientiousness, charisma etc but the present study will extract the optimal traits to introduce one profile which will assist organisations in setting a set benchmark for their leaders to fulfil before they are given the charge to lead the organisation.

Research Questions

The research questions for the current study are as follows:

- 1) Is there a relationship between traits and effective leadership?
- 2) Which set of traits play a part in increasing effective leadership?
- 3) Which personality traits have a negative impact or effect on effective leadership?
- 4) Is it possible to combine set of traits to create a universal model of an effective leader?

Method

Study design

The current study aims to identify the most important traits in order to create one trait profile for effective leadership. Prior studies have identified personality traits but not one specific trait profile to assist leaders in the matter. The previous confusing literature which is based on western countries seem irrelevant keeping in view that the current study is focusing on effective leadership in Pakistan due to which is it imperative that research be conducted in this area where one uniform trait profile could be created for all leaders.

Keeping in view the aims and objectives of the study, action research design will be adopted by the researcher to carry it out. This collaborative design assists in work and community situations and focuses on practical and solution driven approach instead of testing theories (Gall, 2007; Kemmis, Stephen & McTaggart, 2000; Peter & Bradbury, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

The current study will be conducted as a qualitative research using interpretative phenomenology analysis methodology. This methodology is chosen with a small sample size. The following detailed analysis of this method is time consuming where the aim is to state something specific regarding the interpretation and establish understanding regarding the target sample instead of supporting a general suppositions or ideologies (Smith and Osborn, 2007).

It is not claimed that interpretative phenomenology analysis is opposed to generic claims about a larger population; rather, it is only committed to examining the special cases painstakingly rather than leaping to general conclusions. Furthermore, it is understood as an idiographic mode of analysis which mainly holds the opposite belief to nomothetic approach which strangely is known to be predominant in psychology (Smith, 1996).

Interpretative methodology analysis is known to be interpretive and phenomenological in nature and usually requires the researcher reflexivity throughout the project. It considers the researcher as pertaining a central role in the entire research process, including conducting and recording the observations being made during the analysis of the selected sample's account, "are mainly the products of interpretation" (Willing, 2008). Therefore, explaining the aim of the current study of being an explorative piece of research as IPA has been chosen, i.e, qualitative approach.

Highlighting the Ontological and Epistemological framework through qualitative study, a clear vision through which the perceptions of reality and truth are taken into account is important (Willing, 2013). The problem solving approach is focused on by qualitative or descriptive researches. The research paradigm described is interpreters where individuals seek to gather knowledge in order to find a relationship between different concepts through

reading, thinking or analysing thoroughly. Furthermore in order to bridge the gap between the two variables the researcher adopts this approach with methods such as interviews.

In order to develop the paradigm for the current study, the Ontological approach by the researcher entailed focus on the social constructivist approach as it is believed by the researcher that multiple realities could or already exists and also that the socially constructed interpretations are mediated by beliefs. Thus, the interpretation of each individual varies followed by their individual concepts of truth as reality, depending upon their viewpoint.

Since the research involves multiple individual interpretations, there are bound to be more than one truth or reality paving the way for constructionism. Furthermore, being subjective it is stated that when dealing with multiple realities and in order to understand them, there is information to be gathered from individuals one-by-one. Also, it will consider how the chosen individuals extract meaning out of their world and experiences and in this case, traits which could make these chosen individuals more effective leaders.

On the other hand it is imperative to note that the chosen analysis method is dependent on the extent of data provided by the participants and their willingness to reveal it. Furthermore, it includes the researcher's own interpretation which could be based on their individual beliefs and experiences, i.e, double hermeneutic. "The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith, 2008, p53). Therefore, IPA is understood to be idiographic in nature as it known to focus on the understanding of a specific experience from a specific perspective in a specific context (Smith et al, 2009).

Although in the beginning thematic analysis approach seemed to be the most suitable technique as it consists of "highlighting the most salient constellations (theme) of meanings present in the data" (Joffe, 2012). However keeping these features in mind it was quite

apparent that it will not assist the researcher in fulfilling the main aim of the study that includes focusing on the meaning in a specific contextual way.

Participant Selection

For Interpretative analysis method the sampling criterion consist of small and purposive samples (Reid et al, 2005; Hefferon & Gil- Rodriguez, 2011) of mainly less than 10 to 15 individuals who provide the enriched data based on their personal experiences. Also, the selected sample has to be homogenous, i.e, it should be closely defined with the current research (Smith et al. 2009). The participants are selected based on the information they have at their disposal to contribute to the study in relation to the phenomenon under study as they are understood to be the representatives of a perspective and not a population (Smith et al, 2009).

“Purposive sampling is a technique which is widely used in qualitative research for identifying and selecting the information rich-cases for effective use of limited resources” (Patton, 2002). Also it consists of appropriate identification and selection of individuals who are known to have expertise or sufficient knowledge related to the phenomenon being studied at the moment (Cresswell & PlanoClark, 2011). Thus, the participants will have to fulfil the following inclusion criteria to be selected for the current study:

- Minimum educational degree of Bachelors in their field of expertise
- Minimum work experience of 10 years with their current organisations.
- Full –time workers
- Residents of Pakistan

For this study the researcher is going to interview a minimum of 10 to 12 individuals (including males and females) from different fields as the main concern is the leader's trait profile not the external factors of the field of their organisations.

Participant recruitment

Participants for the study will be approached through email and telephone, utilizing the researcher's extensive social networking, to get appointments for the main interviews. In case of any queries and concerns from the participants, the researcher will make sure to resolve them before the beginning of the interview. Providing sufficient information regarding the purpose of the study will be of high priority as the data gathered will to a certain extent depend on it. As soon as the participants confirm their willingness and availability, researcher will confirm the dates and travel to Pakistan to conduct the interviews in person.

Setting

The interviews will be conducted at the venue which is most convenient for example, conference rooms or office place of the participants. Confidentiality of the information shared during the interview will be of utmost importance by the researcher.

Data Collection

The interviews will be designed in a semi structured format which will assist the researcher in building rapport, allowing "greater flexibility of coverage and gives a change for the study to go to novel areas and tends to produce a richer data" (De Vaus, 2014).

In order to allow the participants to provide maximum amount of information and express their opinions freely, the researcher will design the interview questions in open ended form. The duration of the interviews will be minimum of up to 90 minutes which could definitely vary depending upon the responses of the participants. No set order of questions

will be followed by the researcher as the focus will be on the uniqueness of information being gathered during the interview. This way the participants will be given the opportunity to be the expert in the area under study and openly share their experiences and opinions. For example, the questions probing for more information includes:

- 1) Can you please elaborate a bit more about that....?
- 2) Why do you say that....?

One thing researcher will try to avoid is integrating the information related to the area of the study and their own personal interpretations during the entire data collection process.

In order to gain experience and improve the interviewing skills and critical self – analysis, the researcher will be conducting pilot testing. Before the taped interview will begin, researcher will acquire the consent of the participant (Appendix 1), providing all the relevant information related to the study and informing them about their respective rights including withdrawing from the study whenever they want. The researcher will make sure the participants are aware of the step by step process of the interview so they know what to expect. The interviews will be taped using a digital audio device for later on transcription of the data and recording purposes as well. A unique code will be assigned to each participant by the researcher in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. The unique code will further be utilized for marking the tape and the transcripts as well. Researcher will be making notes of their own as well during the interview to have a deeper analysis of the data for the study.

Data Analysis

All the data gathered via interviews will be in verbatim form. The first step of analysis would be of transcribing the entire interview. Following this the researcher will go over the

entire transcribed interviews turn by turn while listening to the audio tapes of the interviews along with the notes that were taken by the researcher. The transcripts will then be analysed keeping the IPA principles in mind. Each transcript will then be reviewed critically turn by turn before identifying and clustering of the themes.

During the analysis procedure, researcher will highlight the main arguments which will be relevant to the study simultaneously noting down areas that seemed to have some importance to the participant. During this process of content analysis, the researcher will “highlight any similarity and discrepancy that might be present in the data as every line would be scrutinised for data analysis procedure” (Smith, 2008). After the completion of the transcription of the interview it will be possible for the researcher to extract themes from the data, simultaneously looking for connections across. Once all the above mentioned steps have been followed for one interview, the entire process will be repeated for all the interviews conducted. This will allow enough flexibility to identify the reoccurring themes in the data and also identify different independent ones. Reid et al. (2005) stated “IPA is the exploration of lived experiences coupled with the specific and reflective process of interpretation. The inferences drawn from the data are made cautiously and with the alertness of the context of the study.

Ethics and Risk Assessment

The selected participants will be provided with all the necessary information in detailed form including the aim of the study. Time will be provided to all participants to establish full understanding regarding the purpose of the consent form and for signing it. During the interview, confidentiality clause will not be compromised or breached in any manner. The researcher will make sure about the autonomy of the individuals until and unless approved consent and data is anonymized appropriately. In case of participants to let go of

their anonymity, the researcher will try to honour their requests. Also a full committed stance will be adopted by the researcher regarding professional development by learning and acquiring competence in research and different interview techniques. In the case of any individual experiencing any personal or health concerns, appropriate support will be approached to run interference with competency.

Expected Results

Findings from this qualitative study will dictate the entire format and nature of the optimal trait profile of leaders for effective leadership due to which it is not possible at this point to specify this in detail beforehand. However keeping the literature review in mind, it is expected that the specific traits identified might be related to the dimensions of the broad personality trait branches including extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness but as mentioned earlier the researcher is expecting to get more detailed information to identify the exact traits rather than just broader terms identified in prior studies.

Conclusion

Whether leadership is to be considered related to arts or science is still an on going debate as to a certain extent these concepts are interconnected. “Leadership is an art as it requires the application of special skills and techniques and at the same place it is a science as that special skills can be inherited traits or can be developed implied skills” (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016). Be whatever science or art, it can be safely concluded that leaders around the globe do exhibit certain traits or characteristics which play an important role in them being effective leaders. This optimal trait profile can assist organisations to a very large extent at the time of talent acquisition for their organisation. If the candidates are tested on the bases of

the identified traits it will make the decision more convenient and accurate in line with their purpose of hiring the best candidate to lead their organisation.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When initiating a research study it is important to assess which research method, quantitative and qualitative, and their consequent analytical techniques are more aligned with the aims and objectives of the study than the other. The first and foremost issue to begin with is to understand the nature of our study, whether the researcher aims to conduct his/her study on an existing theory which reflects the deductive approach or create their own theory which will have sufficient supporting evidence in the collected data. Although it has been suggested (Yin, 2014) that if the research has related it self to an existing theoretical framework in order to formulate its leading research questions and aims, one may further more use the same theoretical propositions which might assist in developing a framework to help organise and assess our collected data. However this comes with its own share of landmines for a researcher as it is possible that the chosen theoretical framework might be too constraining in relation to the issues that are highlighted in the data, and not allow the researcher to explore the expressed data by the participants. On the other hand inductive approach seems to be a more complicated method to start with as it includes gathering the data first, followed by identifying relationships between the collected data and later on develop the questions, hypothesis or research to test; which seems to me to put all the data collection efforts at risk as it could lead to not sufficient evidence in the collected data to formulate a new conceptual framework.

I, as a researcher, will be focusing on qualitative method mostly as it does provides a great opportunity to understand the data in a more meaningful manner which is the main aim of my study as this area of effective leaders and their personality has been a very contradictory and vague when it comes to related information of the data of the prior literature. Qualitative research in other words is related to interpretivist philosophy as the data is subjective in nature and is based on the socially constructed meanings expressed by the

selected participants of the study (Berelson, 1952). Therefore qualitative is to a certain extent related to social constructionism concept as it leads to the belief that it partially “shared the meanings and realities that are dependent on people’s interpretation of the events that occur around them” (Haynes, 2012). Thus, research conducted with this method will be a lot more dependent on the social interaction of the participants due to which the data gathered will be more varied and complex in nature in comparison to quantitative data which is easy to comprehend based on numbers.

The reason I, as a researcher, prefer qualitative data is because it provides an ideal platform to gather data which is rich and as closer to its actual reality as possible whereas quantitative data can be thin abstraction or description of the topic as it is not in as much depth as qualitative data (Brekhus, et al. 2005; Dey 1993). Keeping in mind the current topic I find qualitative method easier to use as it will provide me with the data which is derived from words and images which have multiple meanings and not just plain numbers. This further provides me with the leeway to explore the gathered data in more detail rather than just associate the prior literature with the findings of my study.

Qualitative and quantitative data differ a lot based on their nature. The most basic and well understood difference that of quantitative data being mainly based on the meanings which have been derived from mere numbers only where as qualitative data is based on meanings which are expressed via words, both in spoken and textual manner, and even supporting imagery. Also, the collection of results of qualitative which is in non standardised data form in nature requires the data to be classified into categories whereas the collection of results in quantitative data is based on standardised data in numerics. Lastly, qualitative analysis is conducted via conceptualisation whereas quantitative analysis is conducted via diagrams and statistics. Keeping the differences in mind, it is clear that my choice is qualitative data as I would be requiring meaningful data related to leaders’ personality and its

contribution to effective leadership which can not be expressed and restricted to numerical form only.

When it comes to data collection methods, it is obvious to anybody with research knowledge that quantitative data collection can be considered a less complicated procedure as one uses standardised published tools for the purpose, although the sample size in quantitative researchers requires a lot more participants due to which the results from such studies is considered to be more generalizable than qualitative as it involves only a number of participants. Quantitative data collection techniques are more convenient as a number to options are available to researcher including interviews, surveys, and telephonic interviews as well. However, I consider gathering qualitative a more tedious and complex process as the researcher needs to conduct one on one interviews and then spend further time in transcribing and understanding your data in order for you to extract themes for your analysis and also it gives the researcher an opportunity to come up with more important ideas when they go back over the interviews conducted. When considering the data collection techniques, I believe that in order to gather an enriched and meaningful set of data, following a tedious data collection process, including interview sessions and transcription of them, of qualitative research is a small price to pay.

When it comes to analysis there are various techniques at our disposal such as using SPSS software to run any statistical analysis such as correlation or predictive analysis of the variables of the study or one can use qualitative analytical techniques including thematic analysis, template analysis, analytic analysis, deductive explanation building, pattern matching, grounded theory method, narrative analysis and discourse analysis. In order to obtain frequency and descriptive details regarding the data, quantitative methods seems to be more useful as they give precise and numerical information which is time efficient as well as useful. When it comes to understanding a rich and complex data, which I as a researcher am

expecting keeping in mind my topic of interest, I would be prefer using qualitative analytic methods. In the following table are the details provided of the basic understanding and features of some of the main methods used when conducting specifically a qualitative study.

Qualitative Method	Features	Evaluation
Thematic Analysis	Main purpose of searching themes in the data Involves coding the data to identify themes and patterns. “Thematic Analysis offers a systematic yet flexible and accessible approach to analyse qualitative data” (Braun & Clarke 2006). Provides a logical and organised way to analyse data. Develops and also tests different explanations and theories based on the patterns or relationships in the data. It draws and verifies conclusions made in the study.	Suitable to use in various qualitative researches, Can be used to induce theory, kind of similar to grounded theory method. More adaptable. Can be used in both inductive and deductive method of research.
Template Analysis	Researcher only codes a certain proportion of the collected data before creating the initial list of codes and themes – known as coding template (King, 2012). Coding Template is the hierarchical list of codes and themes and is understood to be central in this method. It is a stand along analytical technique instead of being a part of a wider pool of methodological approach.	Provides systematic and flexible approach to analysing data. Adopts a higher level of structure in far more earlier stage than even thematic analysis. Allows the researcher to undertake the stages of analysis in a more inclusive manner. Considered to be restrictive due to the use to coding template (King, 2012).
Analytic Induction	“the intensive examination of a strategically	Analytical procedures are not have

	selected number of cases so as to empirically establish the causes of a s specific phenomenon” (Johnson, 2004). It puts emphasis on a cycle of creating and testing propositions that are generally grounded in the collected data instead of choosing to utilise already existing knowledge and theory.	known to be fully developed or formalised. Have the ability to lead to find well-grounded explanations. Limited representativeness and generalizability. Since the cases included are chosen, the final explanation can’t be used to predict what may be found in the other cases.
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Keeping the features of the techniques above I prefer using Thematic Interpretative analysis as it provides me with flexibility to identify themes in my data. It also provides researcher freedom to use any of the two methods (deductive and inductive) for their study unlike others which are somewhat restrictive such as template analysis which apparently follow the same procedures as thematic interpretative analysis but restricts the researcher with the code template.

As the nature of my study for my DBA involves specific individual’s and their personality traits, it is not convenient to gather data through questionnaires as I would be requiring a lot more in depth information and insight into the personality traits of effective leaders to come up with one optimal trait profile which can be helpful to every leader or organisation. For this purpose A deductive qualitative method is my choice of method with personal interviews as my choice of data collection and thematic interpretative phenomenological analysis as my preference for conducting analysis to find the answers to research questions.

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