PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIPSTYLE IN THE LEADERS OF ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: *The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship of personality traits (engagement and altruism) and transformational leadership style in the leaders of organizations.*

Design of the study: *Correlation research design*

Place and Duration of the study: *Jan to Dec, 2019, Karachi, Pakistan*

Sample and Method: *The sample included 213 leaders (team-lead to CEO) working in different industries of Pakistan, having supervisory experience of at-least two years. In this study two measures were used. For personality evaluation, HEXACO personality inventory [60 item scale] was used (Ashton & Lee, 2009) and for assessing the leadership style, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-6S) was used (Bass & Avolio, 1992). SPSS was used to perform statistical analyses.*

Results and Conclusion: *The findings of present study revealed that personality traits [engagement (r=.43, p<.05) and altruism (r=.18, p<.05)] have significant positive relationship with transformational leadership style in the leaders of organizations. However, correlation between transformational leadership and altruism is weaker than transformational leadership and engagement thus the findings of this study may conclude that engagement (personality trait) impacts the transformational leadership more than altruism.*

Keywords: *Altruism; Leadership; Engagement; Transformational*

INTRODUCTION

In the field of organizational psychology, the role of leadership is known as a vital element in the success of organization (Allen & Meyer, 2010; Baker, 2014; Bushra et al., 2011). Leadership is defined as the process of making others understand and agreed for the task to be performed and how to be executed effectively, along with the procedure of assisting individuals and groups to exercise collective work for achieving shared goals (De Vries, 2008). Among different leadership styles, the transformational leadership style is considered as most effective (Judge & Bono, 2000).

In 1985 Bass generated theory of leadership explaining three types of leadership (Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire), which was inspired originally by Burn's theory (Allen & Meyer, 2010).The transformational leadership had gained attention of numerous researchers because of the modern developing ideas associated with it (Phaneuf, et al., 2016). Transformational leadership is indicated as the relationship of a leader and followers for attaining self-interest. Transformational leaders tend to increase motivation, team's performance, inspire followers and make them put extra efforts to excel performance by understanding their weaknesses and strengths. It is further characterized into four components:

Idealized Influence: Leader act as a role model and has a sense of purpose. He gives empowerment to followers and guide towards values and beliefs.

Inspirational Motivation: Leader have clear vision and motivate followers to be confident towards attaining future goals and find meaning in performing current task.

Intellectual Stimulation: Leader has the ability to challenge current situation and encourages creative thinking.

Individual Consideration: Able to think about all individuals following them for guidance (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013).

Leadership style can have positive as well as negative impact on a company. The factors that impact leadership has been widely studied over the period of time. Studies have concluded that the leadership style can be influenced by personal as well as environmental factors. Among the personal factors, the

personality traits of a person play a major role (Dotlich & Cairo, 2003). According to the trait theories, the aspects of personality play a vital role in an individual's behavior (Costa & McCrae, 1992)

Personality traits refer to the characteristics that are permanent and reflected in particular patterns of behaviors under different circumstances (Schults, 2005). The personality traits are important predictor of successful leadership (Conway, 2000). The studies have reported that there are some specific personality traits that are strong predictor of transformational leadership style (Conway, 2000; Ross & Offerman, 1997).

HEXACO personality mode: Big Five Personality model is considered to be most well-known and commonly considered model, nevertheless; researches have demonstrated it as rough and hardened model for assessing identity of a person. For getting satisfactory information for personality characteristics, more investigations are expected to consider the personality behaviors and their effecting variable than what are exhibited in five factor model (FFM) (Bono & Judge, 2004). Most examinations demonstrate relationship of FFM with transformational personality as weaker and suggests further investigation. Bono and Judge declared that big five isn't the most ideal route for associating personality abilities with transformational and value-based conduct. (Bono & Judge, 2004). Considering this uncertainty and urge of updated and reasonable model, a six variable structure was presented, known as "HEXACO Model". Structure of the model is illustrated through the name "HEXACO" reflecting as Honesty humility (H), Emotionality (E), Extraversion(X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C) and Openness to Experience (O). (Ashton & Lee, 2008). Theoretical framework of HEXACO model is mainly distributed based on two concepts; Altruism and Engagement (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Engagement comprises of Extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience; whereas, altruism includes honesty – humility, agreeableness and emotionality.

Engagement is related to human behavior within social event, task related actions and idea related activities. Where, *Extraversion* is defined as being social, talkative and cheerful instead of being shy, passive and quiet. It is characterized as expressiveness, social boldness, sociability and liveliness. An Extravert person generally tends to possess dramatic interpersonal style of talking and depicts excitement in communicating. Factor of engagement in Extraversion is either motivating others to get engaged socially or be an attractive partner for social interaction (Ashton & Lee, 2007). Extraverts tend to be bold enough to speak with stranger or group of huge audience. *Conscientiousness*, the second

element of engagement is defined to be hardworking, organized and thorough. It is conceptualized as person being prearranged, careful, perfectionist and prudent (Lee & Michael, 2004). Conscientious people are organized and prefer being structured and tidy. They tend to be extremely professional, never accept space for mistakes, check carefully for potential improvements and are strong on work ethics. *Openness to experience*, the third engagement trait, exhibits skill of being imaginative, creative, intellectually curious and eccentric. This dimension is conceptualized to have aspects including; aesthetic appreciation, inquisitiveness, creativity and unconventionality. They enjoy nature, are curious to know about it and appreciate all sorts of art. They generally tend to find creative and unusual solutions to problems or situations, which may seem to be strange to others. (Lee & Michael, 2004).

The second part of HEXACO model, the *Altruism* is willingness to help others selflessly and hesitant to harm others. *Honesty-humility* is the most important characteristic of Altruism which differentiates it from FFM. It demonstrates person to be honest, fair, and sincere, avoid greediness and be modest. (Lee & Michael, 2004). High honesty and humility bring a sincere relationship and guarantee avoidance of fraud and corruption. Honesty brings less interest in spending lavish life, undue wealth and high status quo, therefore social status and monetary benefits does not attract these employees.

Agreeableness is defined based on the personality structure, which includes tolerance, good nature and corporation with others. This dimension of personality shows forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility and patience (Lee & Michael, 2004). High score in agreeableness shows flexibility, willingness to accommodate other suggestions very easily and ability to trust others again to re-establish any relationship after getting badly treated. They hardly get angry and do not judge others harshly.

Emotionality, the other characteristics of altruism is based on anxiety, fearfulness, sentimentality, and dependence (Lee & Michael, 2004). Emotional people are sensitive towards physical pain; therefore, they generally avoid physical harm. Being high in emotionality, an individual tends to get easily stressed out for little problems and would search for emotional support and comfort to get encouragement. Similarly, a person possessing high emotionality will generate strong emotional attachment and will show empathetic feelings for others. (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Emotionality, honesty and agreeableness are factors which connect to the concept of altruistic / antagonistic behavior, as these three variables can reciprocate the behavior at the peak (Lee & Michael, 2004).

While exerting high level of agreeableness, person will cooperate even if individual gets exploited by other; similarly, at high level of honesty, cooperation will be shown even after being oppressed.

The corporate work environment demands a leader, who can work along with team, identify their needs for change and guide by inspiring them. Expectations from a leader have changed over the past few years, which is observed generally. In recent times, with the increased understanding of transformational leadership style, subordinates rely on their supervisor for development and growth related guidance as well as emotional and mental support (Aydogmus, et al., 2017). Transformational leaders focus more on development of their subordinates, hence fulfills the need of current leadership demand. (Baker, 2014). Transformational leadership style is getting much importance and becoming the focus of many researches and organizations because of its relationship with team building and organizational performance (Baker, 2014). These demanded characteristics of a leader are connected to the personality, attitude and behavior with others (Ghazal et al., 2016).

There is limited literature available about the relationship between personality traits and transformational leadership style. A study of leader's personality and psychological empowerment explained the link between personality traits and leadership in an organizational success. Findings showed personality as a positive moderator between transformational leadership and job satisfaction of followers (Aydogmus et al., 2017). Previously a study was conducted on five factor personality model and transformational leadership. Findings revealed that agreeableness and Extraversion demonstrates a strong relationship with transformational leadership. Bono and Judge directed a meta-examination in 2004 on Big Five personality model and leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004). De Vries (2008) studied the association of leadership with the dimensions of HEXACO model of personality. A positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and all dimensions of HEXACO model of personality except emotionality (De Vries, 2008). Ashton and Lee (2008) conducted a study to explore the role of honesty and modesty in the development of leadership style. It was concluded that honesty has a positive association with leadership style.It can be concluded from all the above researches that specific personality traits anticipate transformational leadership in the light of the administration aptitudes (Allen & Meyer, 2010).

Literature also proposed that the five major personality attributes can help the organizations to pick their transformational leaders who can give advantage

to the organizations (Bono & Judge, 2004). Thus, the aim of this study is to connect traits of personality (engagement and altruism) with transformational leadership behavior to evaluate its existing relationship which would help the organizational management to develop insight on the importance of personality traits and will be able to understand which traits of individual leads to good performance resulting in growth and development of organizations. Further the organizations can assess personality traits during the recruitment process to select the individuals that best fit for successful leadership.

This study inquires that which of the HEXACO personality traits can predict or indicate existence of transformational leadership behavior. Main focus was to evaluate two broader themes of HEXACO personality traits: including engagement and altruism which is to be tested with four components of transformational leadership behavior (4I's), proposed by Bass in 1985. Based on these variables, this study will assess for these two hypotheses:

H1: There exists a relationship between engagement domain (according to HEXACO Model) and transformational leadership behavior.

H2**:** There exists a relationship between altruism domain (according to HEXACO Model) and transformational leadership behavior.

METHOD

Participants

The convenience sampling was used in this study. It included 213 leaders (164 males and 49 females) ranging from supervisor to CEO working in different organizations in Karachi, Pakistan, having experience of at-least two years.

Measures

Demographics Sheet:

The demographics form includes age, gender, marital status, salary range, qualification, working industry, and years of total experience.

HEXACO – 60 items scale (Ashton & Lee, 2009):

The HEXACO 60 item scale measures facets of personality traits. The questionnaire comprises of 60 items. It has 5 point Likert scale ranging from

'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The cronbach's alpha (α)value for honesty-humility is 0.76, emotionality is 0.80, extraversion is 0.80, agreeableness is 0.77, conscientiousness is 0.76 and openness to experience is 0.78 (Ashton & Lee, 2009).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-6s) (Bass & Avolio, 1992):

This scale includes 21-item in order to measure leadership styles (transformational, transactional and Laissez Faire). It has 4 point Likert scale ranges from 'not at all' (0) to 'frequently, if not always' (4). The cronbach's alpha value for transformational leadership is 0.93, transactional leadership is 0.78 and Laissez Faire is 0.60 (Bass & Avolio, 1992).

Procedure

Participants were approached on personal references to know their willingness to be the part of the study. Followed by appointment time and settings for data collection were set as per their convenience. The purpose of the study was introduced to participants. After signing the informed consent, participants filled the given questionnaires. Data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 22.0).

Ethical considerations were taken by the researchers and to follow the APA guideline the organizations were contacted and informed about the study. The authorities of the organizations were asked about their willingness for their volunteer participation in the study. After the verbal consent, an official permission letter was given to organizations in which the purpose of study was described. The consent form was given to participants who were willing to be a part of study. The participants were briefed about confidentiality of the identity and personal information. The participants were allowed to withdraw at any time from the study.

RESULTS

This study presents the results of statistical analysis of the research data. The   Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22.0) and a significance level of .05 was used for all the analyses.

By employing correlation it is found that all traits of HEXACO personality except emotionality (r= .01, p>.05) are found to be statistically significant to transformational leadership [Honesty (r=.26, p<.05), Emotionality (r=.01, p>.05), Extraversion (r=.42, p<.05), Agreeableness (r=.22, p<.05), Conscientiousness (r=.31, p<.05) and Openness to experience (r=.31, p<.05)]. Extraversion is proved to have the strongest correlation with transformational leadership (Table 4).

The regression analyses showed that the extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience have great impact on transformational leadership style. On the contrary to these three, agreeableness, honesty and emotionality have almost negligible impact on transformational leadership (Table 5).

Furthermore, the findings of study showed significant positive correlation between engagement and transformational leadership style (r=.43, p<.05) as well as significant positive correlation between altruism and transformational leadership style (r=.183, p<.05) (Table 6 and 7).

The correlation between engagement and all components of transformational leadership found to be statistically significant. The significant correlation was found between altruism and components of transformational leadership except intellectual stimulation (Table 8).

Table 1
Frequency table for demographic information N=213

Variables			*f*	**%**
Age (Years)	18 to 30		79	37.0
	31 to 36		72	33.8
	37 to 42		34	16.0
	43 to 48		11	5.2
	49 to 54		10	4.7
	55 to 65		7	3.3
Gender	Female		49	23.0
	Male		164	77.0
Marital Status	Single		81	38.0

	Divorced	2	0.9
	Married	129	60.6
	Widow	1	0.5
Qualification	Intermediate	3	1.4
	Graduate	48	22.5
	Masters	145	68.1
	Others	17	8.0
Industry	Financial	45	21.11
	Manufacturing	5	2.34
	Pharmaceutical	11	5.21
	Shipping	2	0.93
	IT and Telecommunication	54	25.35
	Automobile	1	0.46
	Health Care	38	17.84
	Media	4	1.87
	FMCG	11	5.16
	Airline	2	0.93
	Oil & Gas	5	2.34
	Textile	7	3.28
	Others	28	13.4
Salary	15,000 to 30,000	21	9.9
	30,001 to 50,000	35	16.4
	50,001 to 75,000	43	20.2
	75,001 to 110,000	38	17.8
	110,001 to 150,000	28	13.1
	150,001 >	48	22.5
Years of Experience	2 to 3 years	24	11.3
	4 to 6 Years	52	24.4
	7 to 10 Years	52	24.4
	11 to 15 Years	45	21.1
	16 years >	40	18.8

Table 2
Reliability of HEXACO Scale (N=213)

No of Items	α
60	.75

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha of the data gathered through HEXACO scale is .756

Table 3
Reliability of MLQ Scale (N=213)

No of Items	α
21	.88

Table 3 shows Cronbach's alpha of data gathered through MLQ scale is .889 showing

Table 4
Regression analysis of all 6 variables of HEXACO personality variables with Transformational Leadership

Model	β	Sig.
(Constant)		.85
Honesty and Humility	.10	.13
Emotionality	.06	.31
Extraversion	.29	.00
Agreeableness	.03	.57
Conscientiousness	.16	.01
Openness to Experience	.18	.00

P.<.05 a. Dependent Variable: Transformational Leadership

Table 4 shows the influential relationship value of all personality traits on transformational leadership. It has proved that Extraversion trait of personality strongly impact transformational leadership. Simultaneously, conscientiousness and openness to experience has great impact on it too. On the contrary to these three, agreeableness, honesty and emotionality has insignificant impact on transformational leadership.

Table 5

Correlation of Transformational Leadership (TL) with Engagement (N=213)

TL	r	Sig.
Engagement	.43**	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows correlation analysis of transformational leadership and engagement that indicate statistically positive relationship between both the variables (r=.436).

Table 6

Correlation of Transformational Leadership with Altruism (N=213)

TL	r	Sig.
Altruism	.18**	.008

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows correlation analysis of Personality trait Altruism and transformational leadership is showing statistically significant relationship, but it has a weaker correlation with r=.183.

Table 7

Correlation of HEXACO personality variables with Transformational Leadership (N=213)

TL	r	Sig
Honesty and Humility	.26**	.00
Emotionality	.01	.85
Extraversion	.42**	.00
Agreeableness	.22**	.00
Conscientiousness	.31**	.00
Openness to Experience	.31**	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows that all the traits of HEXACO personality (except emotionality: r=.01, p=.85) are found to be statistically significant to transformational leadership. Moreover, Extraversion is proved to have the strongest correlation with transformational leadership as, r=.42, followed with conscientiousness as r=.31, and openness to experience as r=.31.

Table 8

Correlation of Altruism (A) and Engagement (E) with Components of Transformational Leadership (N=213)

		Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individual Consideration
E	r	.28**	.37**	.38**	.42**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000
A	r	.17**	.23**	.07	.14*
	p	.010	.000	.282	.041

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 illustrates the correlation of components of Transformational leadership with engagement and altruism. All components of transformational leadership shows statistically significant relation with engagement and altruism; except for intellectual stimulation being statistically insignificant with altruism (r=.07, p>.05).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship of two major personality traits: engagement and altruism, described in HEXACO personality model with transformational leadership style. This was to understand if personality traits can evaluate the existence of transformational leadership style. The findings of the present study reflected the idea that transformational leadership styles have a positive relationship with both engagement and altruism; therefore, the suggested hypothesis is proved to be true. However, it is noticeable that Engagement domain (Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Extraversion) has more influence than altruism domain (Emotionality, Honesty

and Agreeableness). This shows that if a person has ability to engage people, be friendly, has social confidence, is detail oriented and appreciates creativity and intellect, then he may possess transformational leadership skill to a great extent (Aydogmus et al., 2017).

The relationship of dimensions of personality according to HEXACO model and transformational leadership style was examined. It is found that all the dimensions of personality in HEXACO model except emotionality have positive correlation with transformational leadership style such as Honesty, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience ,which suggests that, people adopting transformational leadership style are fearless, have less anxiety and independent. The emotionality trait reflects the presence of high level of fear, anxiety, and strong emotional bond with society and high need of emotional support or dependency; therefore, this attribute cannot be promoted within leaders of any organization. A leader has to be dependent and confident, so that he can manage team and make decisions (de Vries, 2008). Furthermore, it is found that there exists the strongest correlation between extraversion and transformational leadership. This shows that transformational leaders tend to be socially bold, extravert and lively, which are the facets of extraversion. Being socially active, bold and lively are important elements of communication, as a person who is fond of being among gatherings will ultimately communicate with people around him. The conscientiousness and Openness to experience also have significant correlation with transformation leadership style. From this, it is seen that transformational leader should be organized in his work and should pay attention to all small details, with high courage and acceptance towards exploring new experiences. In the present study emotionality found to have insignificant relationship with transformational leadership style. It is evident in literature that transformational leaders are low in emotionality (de Vries, 2008). Lastly, the present study shows Cronbach's alpha for the HEXACO scale that is .756 as well as for MLQ scale that is .889 showing high level of internal consistency of the scales.

Demographic details of participants show that majority of the sample were of the age range from 18 to 42 and only 13.2% of the whole sample were between ages of 43 to 55 years. Slightly lesser than half of the people (37.1%) were of 18 to 30 years; second-major group was between the ages of 31 to 36, which is 33.8% and 16% of them were between 43 to 48 age group. This supports the idea shared in introduction that nowadays companies are giving leadership authorities to new generation. A major shift appears in industry which

is mainly because at an average almost 10,000 baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are retiring per day with very few of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) taking their place. Therefore, Millennial (born between 1981 and 1996) are getting chance of leadership, which according to other researches will makeup over 50% of the workforce by 2020 (Osmane & Brennan, 2018). Further analyzing the demographics, we can see that out of 213 participants, 164 (77%) were male and 49 (23%) were female. Majority of the participants, which is 129 in exact figure were married (60.6%), out of which there were 17 females and 112 males. 38 % of the participants (81) were single out of which 32 were females and 49 were males. We had two members with divorce marital status who were males and had 1 widow participating. It was shocking to see that we had some people whose qualification was less than masters that made 23.9%, from which 1.4% were intermediate and rest were graduates. 68.1% were holding master's degree (It does not mean business masters) and remaining 8% were having higher qualification or had professional certifications. Major chunk of the sample was from IT and financial industry, which is 25.4% and 21.1% respectively. 17.8% were from health care industry and rest less than 5% were from other industries. After looking at salaries, it was surprised to see that some were given responsibilities of leadership with compensation somewhat between 15,000 to 30,000 PKR. It was further found that 18 of them were less than 31 years old and 10 of them were intermediate or graduate. On the other hand, maximum participants were in the salary range of 50,001 to 75,000 (20.2%) and 150,001 and < (22.5%), which makes 44% of the participants. 17% were getting salaries between 75,001 to 110,000 and 16.4% were getting 30,001 to 50,000. As far as working experience is concern, 48.8% of the sample were having experience of 4 to 10 years, being specific 24.4% of participants had 4 to 6 years' experience and 24.4% had experience of 7 to 10 years. 21.1% had been working for 11 to 15 years and 18.8% had exposure of 16 years and <. Remaining 11.3% sample was having only 2 to 3 years of experience.

Conclusion

The findings of the study conclude that most of the transformational leaders have engagement trait stronger than of altruism. The relationship of emotionality with transformational leadership found to be insignificant. Considering the definition of emotionality in this context, it should be low because a leader should be bold, able to manage stress, and should be independent. Leaders should be low in sentimentality as emotional attachment may lead him to get distracted from the real goal. On the other hand, leaders who

are open to have new experiences, works on humanitarian grounds, are active and assertive and are goal oriented, tend to possess transformational leadership skills more. An investigation would be done to understand the difference among gender, age, and working environment in future studies.

Limitations and Recommendations

The process of conducting study had some limitations which may have been due to lack of interest of people towards research and cultural differences of where the instruments were designed and where research has been conducted. Following are identified limitations of the study. Considering the limitations faced and experience gained during the research, I would suggest following recommendations for future studies.

The present study included 213 participants, it is recommended for future studies to increase sample size for generalizability of results. This study only includes transformational leadership style. It is recommended that personality traits should be analyzed with other types of leadership as well. Many individuals refused to fill the form because of the length of the questionnaire. It is recommended for further studies to select short questionnaires with less number of items. Participants had difficulty in understanding items of questionnaires properly which may be because of the fact that these instruments were developed in western culture and there is a language barrier thus, it is recommended to use questionnaires that are Urdu translated or indigenously developed. Many windows are still unopened after the results, as it was quantitative research and I could not explore the reasons of behavior and responses in detail. Therefore, I would recommend a detailed study including qualitative research also. For gauging leadership, there were two scales; one for leaders and another for subordinates. Due to lack of time, I had chosen to work on self-assessment leadership scale only. Considering evaluation of leadership style, it would create more impact if subordinate's view will be incorporated.

Bhaidani, Ejaz and Jabbar

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