

Leaders' Personality and Its Impact on the Subordinates' Expectations of Leadership

Tiina M. Hautala

University of Vaasa
Vaasa, Finland

Leaders' impact on subordinates is an area that is usually studied by concentrating on organizational outcomes. When trying to enhance leadership skills and leader-subordinate interaction it is crucial to understand the impact of leaders. The personality of leaders has been widely studied, but the impact of leaders' personality on subordinates is still an area that merits further research. The purpose of this study is to concentrate on the MBTI-type of leaders and its impact on subordinates' expectations of their leaders. Subordinates' ratings indicated for example "Encouraging" was expected more by subordinates of introverted and judging leaders than by subordinates of extraverted and perceiving leaders.

According to Deluga (1995), of particular importance to the practising manager is the relationship between leadership style and employee influencing behaviour. It has been noted, for example by Avolio and Howell (1992) that the personality of both leader and subordinate, as well as the level of congruence between a leader's and subordinate's personality, may moderate the satisfaction of the subordinate with the leader, as well as the performance of the leader's work unit.

The leader-subordinate relationship has been studied by many researchers (e.g., Avolio & Howell, 1992; Phillips & Bedeian, 1994), and there are studies in the literature about a leader's effect on subordinates' behaviour (Elangovan & Xie, 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996). Also the personality and its effects on work situations (e.g., Gardner & Martinko, 1990; Short & Grasha, 1995; Tsuzuki & Tamao, 1998; Wofford, Whittington & Goodwin, 2001) and similarity effects of personality (Strauss, Barrick & Connerley, 2001) have been studied. However, the deeper impact of leaders' effect on subordinates is still lacking in research. Typically the impact of leaders on subordinates has been measured by performance outcomes (Adeymi-Bello, 2003; Clover, 1990; Masi & Cooke, 2000), job satisfaction (Medley & Laroche, 1995), and motivation (Masi & Cooke, 2000). A few studies have also concentrated on subordinate commitment (Humphreys, Weyant & Sprague, 2003). Relatively few studies have concentrated on leaders' personality and its impact on subordinates' expectations and wishes with regard to leadership behaviour.

Earlier studies

Only a few studies have made of subordinates' needs and expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 1988). For example, when

looking at subordinates' needs the majority of subordinates want leaders who are honest, competent, forward-looking, and inspiring (Kouzes & Posner, 1988). Swanson and O'Saben (1993) studied differences in supervisory needs and expectations by examining trainee experience, cognitive style, and programme membership. Participants were students in three programmes: counseling psychology, clinical psychology and counselor education. Trainees' cognitive style had effects as follows: People with perceiving and thinking preferences expressed a greater need for supervisors who were willing to struggle and argue with them, as well as being willing to confront them concerning more personal aspects of the trainee's behaviour. Trainees preferring the intuitive preference expressed a greater need for gentle confrontation and direct supervision of therapy sessions, and a lesser need for supervision that provided tangible intervention in crises and excluded personal issues. Introverted trainees expressed a greater need for gentle confrontation and a lesser need for direct supervision of sessions.

In contrast, Ehrhart and Klein (2001) found that if the participants could choose from among the three different kinds of leader (i.e., charismatic, relationship-oriented or task-oriented), half of the respondents would choose a relationship-oriented leader, 30% a charismatic, and 20% a task-oriented.

Method

Participants. The data were obtained from 288 subordinates and from their 20 leaders in a Finnish diesel-engine manufacturing company during the years 2000-2001.

Leaders. The mean age of the leaders was 40 years. In terms of educational level, most of them had graduated from college (45%) and

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secondly from vocational school (40%). They comprised equal numbers of engineers (35%) and technicians (35%). Leaders were categorised as foremen of divisions who were engaged in daily interactions with their subordinates. Each leader had 10 to 30 subordinates.

Subordinates. The subordinates' mean age was 39. Almost all of them were male (99%). Vocational school was the educational level of most of them (76%). Most of them were fitters (41 %) or machinists (23%).

Questionnaires. Subordinates filled out a questionnaire that contained five sets of expectations. Each group of expectations had four different positive characteristics that were selected based on earlier research on cognitive styles (Hautala, 2000) and the theory of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers et al., 1998). Respondents were asked to think what kind of leadership behaviour they are expecting from their leader. Subordinates rated the characteristics in each group from the most wanted behaviour (1) to the least wanted behaviour (4). For example, in the Group 1 (see below), the characteristic "Clearly Set Goals" represents the most desired behaviour from the leader, with "Visions" the next most wanted, etc. In Table 1 all the characteristics of the questionnaire are represented.

Example Group 1's rating from the questionnaire:

- Clearly Set Goals 1
- Freedom 3
- Visions 2
- Continuous Directing 4

The characteristics were not defined to respondents, so they were selecting the order only on the basis of the impression of the given word or sentence.

The Finnish research version Form F of the MBTI was administered. The construct validity and reliability of this form have been shown during a validation process lasting several years (see Järnlström, 2000).

Procedure

The forced ranking format was used because all characteristics were positive. The answers were recoded in SPSS so that the most valued numbers, 1 and 2, were recoded as number 1 and the least valued numbers, 3 and 4, were recoded as number 0. In other words, respondents chose two of four characteristics they would like to have from their leaders. The data were then analyzed with the Mann-Whitney test, which is the non-parametrical test. The test compared two preferences at time in relation to the expectations to leadership. Mann-Whitney

test is used instead of a t-test and when the distribution of the data is non-normal (Norusis, 1994).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Questionnaire.

<p>Group 1</p> <p>Clearly Set Goals Freedom and Independence Visions Continuous Directing</p>	<p>Group 4</p> <p>Giving Trust Support and Directing Consistency Responsibility</p>
<p>Group 2</p> <p>Clearly Defined Work Areas and Instructions Positive and Negative Feedback Encouraging Justice</p>	<p>Group 5</p> <p>Empathy, Humanity Vocational Skills Resoluteness Giving Information</p>
<p>Group 3</p> <p>Honesty Equitableness Listening and Conversations Equality, Friendship</p>	

Results

Leaders' personality preferences are seen in Table 2, as well as subordinates' number per leaders' personality type. Most of the twenty leaders were having extraverted (85%), sensing (70%), thinking (75%) and judging (85%) preferences. In Table 3, the significant differences are represented and they are reported in the text below in Table 2.

In Group 1, significant differences appeared in the cases of subordinates with extraverted-introverted and thinking-feeling leaders. Subordinates of extraverted leaders wanted more "Clearly Set Goals" than subordinates of introverted leaders ($Z=-2.805, p<.01$), as well as subordinates of feeling leaders versus thinking leaders ($Z=-2.349, p<.05$). In terms of "Visions", subordinates of thinking types regarded these as more important than subordinates of feeling types ($Z=-2,868, p<.01$).

In Group 2, significant differences occurred in three characteristics. In "Clearly Defined Work Areas and Instructions", subordinates of extraverted leaders wanted more of this kind of behaviour than introverted leaders' subordinates ($Z=-1.980, p<.05$). Subordinates of introverted leaders regarded "Encouraging" as more important than subordinates of extraverted leaders ($Z=-2,470, p<.05$), as well as subordi-

nates of judging leaders compared to perceiving leaders ($Z=-1.968$, $p<.05$). In terms of "Justice", the thinking leaders' subordinates were regarded this kind of behaviour as more important than did those subordinates of the feeling types ($Z=-2.063$, $p<.05$).

Table 2. Type Distribution of Leaders by Preference and Subordinates by Leader's Preference

	Leaders		Subordinates	
Extravert	n = 17	(85%) ->	n = 233	
Introvert	n = 3	(15%) ->	n = 55	
Sensing	n = 14	(70%) ->	n = 180	
Intuition	n = 6	(30%) ->	n = 108	
Thinking	n = 15	(75%) ->	n = 231	
Feeling	n = 5	(25%) ->	n = 57	
Judging	n = 17	(85%) ->	n = 247	
Perceiving	n = 3	(15%) ->	n = 41	

Note: N = 20 leaders and 288 subordinates.

In Group 3, the "Listening and Conversations" presented one significant difference. Subordinates of feeling leaders' hoped for more of this kind of behaviour than thinking leaders' subordinates ($Z=-2.036$, $p<.05$). In Group 4, significant results did not appear, whereas in Group 5 differences were found in the "Vocational Skills" and "Giving Information" dimensions. When comparing feeling and thinking leaders' subordinates, the former placed more value on leaders' Vocational Skills than on the latter ($Z=-2.045$, $p<.05$). Subordinates of introverted leaders regarded "Giving Information" as more important than subordinates of extraverted leaders ($Z=-2.495$, $p<.05$).

Discussion

Since the questionnaire asked what kind of behaviour/characteristics respondents would like to see from their (current) leader, the results therefore reflect the behaviour of leaders that merit further attention.

Characteristics which were statistically significant due to the personality preferences were: "Clearly Set Goals", "Visions", "Clearly Defined Work Areas and Instructions" "Encouraging", "Justice", "Listening and Conversations", "Vocational Skills" and "Giving Information". In these results subordinates of logical thinking leaders were expecting "Visions", and subordinates of reserved introverted and orderly judging leaders were wishing for "Encouraging" behaviour. The answers reflect subordinates' opinions that thinking leaders should concen-

trate more on communicating visions, and introverted and judging types should further enhance their encouraging behaviour. The introverted people's tendency to speak less than those who are extraverted can be witnessed in this dimension. Introverted people have sometimes some problems in communicating things to others, since it is all in their heads. This is especially typical of introverted with thinking preference (Myers et al., 1998). It is surprising that "Listening and Conversations" are desired more by feeling types' subordinates than thinking types' subordinates. This is because feeling types are more people-oriented than thinking types and thus they are assumed to be especially concentrated on people sides on the organization (Myers et al., 1998).

Somewhat surprising was that sensing-intuition preferences had no significant differences in the "Visions" -dimension. One would have assumed that visions would be connected to intuitive people, because they like focusing on the future and future's possibilities (Myers et al., 1998). Earlier studies would have also supported intuitive people's visioning behaviour (Roush, 1992; Van Eron & Burke, 1992).

One aspect of individual consideration is described as keeping each subordinate fully informed about what is happening and why (Bass, 1985). In this study, the amount of information was more important to introverted than extraverted leaders' subordinates. This is probably due to the introverts' tendency to communicate less than extraverts (Myers et al., 1998), and thus some of their subordinates hope that the amount of information given would be greater.

Extraverted and feeling leaders' subordinates would like to have more "Clearly Set Goals" than their counterparts. "Clearly Defined Work Areas and Instructions" were also desired by extraverted leaders' subordinates more than introverted leaders' subordinates. Maybe extraverts have a tendency to talk so much that the main message is obscured whereas introverts are more accurate in their verbal communication. In Dunning, Lange and Adam's study (1990) introverted and judging types tended to communicate more effectively than extraverted and perceiving types. This supports well these results concerning preferences extraversion and introversion. Additionally, feeling leaders' "softer" impression can be appear somewhat confusing to subordinates, whereas thinking types may speak more clearly and in an outspoken way to subordinates, even if not in such a friendly way. Feeling types dislike or might even avoid situations where they need to convey unpleasant things to other people, which might create an air of uncertainty among subordinates (Myers et al., 1998).

Table 3. Significant Relationships

	E/I leaders' subordinates		T/F leaders' subordinates		J/P leaders' subordinates	
	E	I	T	F	J	P
Group 1						
Clearly Set Goals						
Mean Rank	139.0	115.2	130.6	150.1		
Mann-Whitney		4549.5		4936.0		
Z-value		-2.805**		-2.349*		
Visions						
Mean Rank			140.0	112.9		
Mann-Whitney				4609.0		
Z-value				-2.868**		
Group 2						
Clearly Defined Work Areas and Instructions						
Mean Rank	136.8	117.2				
Mann-Whitney		4650.0				
Z-value		-1.980*				
Encouraging						
Mean Rank	128.1	153.5			136.3	113.8
Mann-Whitney		4409.5				3657.0
Z-value		-2.470*				-1.968*
Justice						
Mean Rank			136.3	120.2		
Mann-Whitney				5005.5		
Z-value				-2.063*		
Group 3						
Listening and Conversations						
Mean Rank			129.4	147.1		
Mann-Whitney				4934.5		
Z-value				-2.036*		
Group 5						
Vocational Skills						
Mean Rank			129.7	148.3		
Mann-Whitney				4923.0		
Z-value				-2.045*		
Giving Information						
Mean Rank	128.0	153.8				
Mann-Whitney		4394.5				
Z-value		-2.495 *				

Note: Significant differences. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. E = Extraversion, I = Introversion, T = Thinking, F = Feeling, J = Judging, P = Perceiving. Positive Z-value indicates that a preference of left side (E, T, or J) has the stronger value of the sentence, and negative Z-value indicates that preference at right side (I, F or P) has the stronger value.

Thinking leaders are considered objective people, and it is especially important to them that they are treated fairly and in accordance with prevailing standards (Myers, et al. 1998). In contrast, the results indicated that it is more important to thinking leaders' subordinates to have "Justice" than feeling leaders' subordinates. Maybe thinking leaders will not share the justice to others even if they would like to have it for themselves. In particular, thinking with judging -leaders express themselves in very self-assured ways even if they do not have better knowledge of things than others (Myers et al., 1998). This may be the reason why "Vocational

Skills" are seen to be weaker amongst feeling leaders than thinking leaders. It may be that feeling leaders way of perform is not so convincing than thinking leaders. Furthermore, it would have been expected that thinking leaders' subordinates would need more encouraging than feeling leaders' subordinates, because thinking types have a tendency to give more critical than rewarding feedback (Myers et al., 1998). Overall, results concerning thinking-feeling were quite surprising in these areas.

In general, the results supported earlier studies and MBTI-theory in terms of the preferences extraversion-introversion and judging-

perceiving, whereas the thinking-feeling dimension revealed somewhat surprising results.

Conclusions and Limitations

These results indicated that the subordinates' expectations of leadership varied according to the personality of the leaders. These results contribute to leaders' self-awareness and to highlight the areas where they should focus more attention in the context of their own personality. The study showed that leaders' personality has a impact on their subordinates, even when the measures of the leaders' behavioural impact have been gained in an albeit indirect way (not asking directly what the effects of the leader are). However, these results are indicative due to the limited sample size. Although the leaders representing introverted, feeling and perceiving personality preferences were only a few, the amount of followers of these leaders was still adequate. Also, it can be assumed that the personality tendencies can be seen in their leadership behaviour, as the results of this study indicate.

Usually, leaders do not recognise their impact on their subordinates. This impact affects the leadership process. It would be a potentially very significant achievement to get leaders to understand their behavioural impact as well as to understand their personality. Leaders who do not know themselves cannot begin to under-

stand or even recognise the impact of their tendencies that rooted in their personality.

In terms of suggestions for future research, it would be valuable to study the impacts attributed to leaders changing departments or divisions, i.e. the period when the impact of the new leader starts. For example, if the first leader is extraverted and the new one introverted how long would it take that for the change to be reflected in subordinates' expectations? Furthermore, the interaction of preferences would be important subject; e.g. do the introverted subordinates' expectations differ from extraverted subordinates when the leader is e.g. introverted type.

Several limitations should be mentioned to help future research in this area. The questionnaire used had a forced ranking format, which creates some limitations. The reliability cannot be tested, and the selected categories are not necessarily the best most ideal.

Additionally, it should be take into account that some respondents' answers were derived from other sources than their leaders' personality. The personal history of each subordinate can affect the answers, as well as their own personality. However, the impact of subordinate's own personality is not mutually exclusive to the impact of the leaders' impact. Despite their limitations, the results not only supported MBTI theory, but also related studies in this field.

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