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Tamer F. Elewa and Nadia Albalooshi



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## Research Article

### THE EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP-FOLLOWERSHIP PERSONALITY SIMILARITIES ON JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE

**Tamer F. Elewa and Nadia Albalooshi**

British University in Dubai Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to add a significant contribution to the established studies on personality implications in business environment. It basically proves that performance appraisal rating and employee satisfaction is affected by both employee and manager personality similarity or difference despite of the various errors and biases that exist in this performance appraisal process. A mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative data analysis addressing 2 government organizations has been followed aiming to explore whether personality similarity had a direct relationship with job performance and satisfaction. The results obtained from 71 participants revealed that when rater's and ratee's personalities are similar, the ratee tend to perform higher and receive a higher rating in performance appraisal, and vice versa. It was also found that personality similarity can affect employee satisfaction about his manager. When rater's and ratee's personalities are similar, the ratee tend to be satisfied about the rater, and vice versa. The paper concludes with a highlight on the role of personality similarities in affecting the performance appraisal process as well as job satisfaction surveys, leading to a possible subjective rating than objective one in both processes.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Leadership personality and decision making

Research studies have been conducted to explain the impact of personality on various business dimensions. For this paper, certain areas in business were investigated to understand how different personalities' interactions in the work place affected decision making in terms of employee satisfaction and performance management.

Several earlier studies were done to analyze the potential fit in teams for different personality types, according to the MBTI personality typology theory (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) (Cohen, *et al.*, 2013) (Erez, *et al.*, 2015). Other studies attempted to find out if there is a relationship between being promoted to managerial levels and the personality (Crump, *et al.*, 2007). It was also attempted to find out the factors that can affect appraisal rating for both sides; the rater's and the ratee's personality (Bourdage, *et al.*, 2010) (Tyler, *et al.*, 2009), as well as the similarity of personality effect on rating decisions (Antonioni & Park, 2001). Further, it was even studied how implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) system is related to the managers' personalities in that company (Yen, *et al.*, 2002).

Personalities of the managers were tested in multiple previous studies in order to explain various leadership practices in

organizations. For example, it was found that only one out of three attempts to applying Total Quality Management succeeded, and the main reason was the support of the top management (Yen, *et al.*, 2002). This issue was brought earlier by Krumwiede *et al.* (1998), who introduced a way for assessing top management personality using MBTI, aiming to understand the implementation of the change in personality over TQM. Yen (2002) has developed a research study to identify how top management personality, leadership style, and culture can affect implementing TQM in two distinct countries, USA and Taiwan (2002), using MBTI as a tool to detect whether the independent factor of personality typology will affect TQM implementation. It was found that one of the main deficiency causes for TQM implementation was due to top management personalities, which 67% of them were found to be ISTJ and ESTJ (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1992).

Based on the established literature, managers who were iNtuitives were expected in the Yen's hypothesis to be long term oriented, and therefore, to be able to see possibilities and look for innovation, which very much matches the vision for applying TQM; while "Sensing" managers were expected to be more towards the past and "current situation" oriented, looking for factual performance with no room for innovation, and thus were expected to hinder applying TQM. Based on an earlier study conducted by Bushe (1988), it was suggested that "Extroverted" individuals' preference is related to the success

\*Corresponding author: **Tamer F. Elewa**

British University in Dubai Dubai, United Arab Emirates

of TQM implementation, because managers who are Extroverted demonstrate better leadership qualities, and are able to effectively communicate their vision to the company; unlike Introverted managers who are more reflective and talk less, therefore, are less likely to communicate with others (2002, p 240). The study concluded that top managers with N and E preference scored higher in Deming TQM principles, and proved to be more active in implementing it (2002, p 342).

Further attempts have been made by several researchers to find the relationship between personality types and the chance of being promoted to managerial level using both MBTI and "The Big Five" assessment. Extraversion was discovered to be positively related with salary increases, job level, promotions in general and negatively related with success in service jobs (Crump, *et al.*, 2007, p. 273). It was also found that Conscientiousness, Extroversion, and iNtuitio were positively correlated with promotions and attaining managerial posts, while Neuroticism was negatively related with promotions and career progress (p 274).

Being successful at work has been debated to link to the successful development of co-workers' relationships (Erez, *et al.*, 2015, p. 1763), and for that, research has found that "Agreeableness" and "Extraversion" were the most important personality traits in interpersonal relationships at work. On the other hand, it was found that introverts were able to assess and identify Extraverts' as well as other personality traits more accurately than Extraverts did (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995).

In terms of positive performance evaluation, Murphy (2008), claimed that "performance ratings are widely viewed as poor measures of job performance" (Sutton, *et al.*, 2013, p. 148). This claim was mainly due to the weakness of rater's ability to measure the performance of the employees under evaluation. It was suggested to train appraisers and to re-design the evaluation criteria and scales (Sutton, *et al.*, 2013, p. 409).

One of the challenges in performance appraisals is that evaluators vary in their ratings of the same situation, which was found to be due to the following elements: (Wherry and Bartlett 1982, Rotundo and Sackett 2002)

- Their wavering performance behavior observation.
- Their dissimilarity in recalling ability for the behaviors.
- Their difference interpretation of the observed behavior.
- Their difference in their belief of what behavior is most crucial to the job

According to Uggerslev & Sulsky (2008), the last factor mentioned above is the most significant factor that leads to evaluation errors.

A study developed to test how the personality of the rater affects his/her tendency to rate the performance of the ratee using situations of hypothetical professors' profiles to ask university students to rate them after answering personality assessment (Bourdage, *et al.*, 2010). It was found earlier that Openness to experience and Honesty-Humility dimensions in HEXACO model are the most significant ones that can

determine one's judgment for a friend or a mate (Bourdage, *et al.*, 2010, p. 469).

Another study attempted to test how ratee's personality can affect the rater's decision using "liking" as a measurement, which was described as "the degree of interpersonal attraction in a relationship" (2013, p 411). Liking, as a subject of analysis in performance rating, was actually discussed earlier in various studies, as it was argued that liking leads to performance rating bias either intentionally by "distorting" the results, or unintentionally by perception noise, which leads to error, according to Cardy & Dobbins (1986). Moreover, it was found that raters tend to recall negative performance experience when rating someone who they dislike, while when rating a liked person, they tend to recall positive performance experience (Sutton, *et al.*, 2013, p. 412).

Furthermore, similarity between the rater and ratee in Conscientiousness trait is highly related to performance rating results (Antonioni & Park, 2001); they rate their interpersonal communication higher when they were similar in high Conscientiousness, but the result varied when they both were low in this trait. In their study raters were asked to choose who to rate, which differentiated the situation from the real performance appraisal, where supervisors rate their subordinates; and it is expected that peer rating is significantly different than supervisors'. Moreover, it is expected that people tend to choose being with/rating people with whom they share certain characteristics, values, or at least who have certain intentions with; a factor which might weakened the results of the study. Furthermore, data was collected from the participants in different times not at once, which shrunk the consistency and accuracy of their responses.

To summarize, personality relationship with recruitment, promotion to managerial levels, as well as performance rating is not a new subject in the scientific research field. As demonstrated, certain studies used hypothetical and experimental tools to find the implications of the personality traits for raters and ratees and the literature concludes the following:

1. The number of NTs are more than SFs among project managers, however, NFs report better success in projects than NTs.
2. Conscientiousness, Extroversion, and iNtuitio found to be positively correlated with promotions and attaining managerial posts, while Neuroticism was negatively related with promotions and career progress.
3. Top managers with iNtuitio and Extraversion preference scored higher in Deming TQM principles, and proved to be more active in implementing it.
4. Introverts are more sensitive to interpersonal attitudes, and they allocated negative scores as well as less rewards in rating the Extraverted Disagreeable ratees.
5. Highly Conscientious raters allocate lower rate in the performance evaluations than the low Conscientious scorers, and they prove to be the most accurate raters.
6. Highly Open raters weighted openness behaviors higher than the others.
7. Performance appraisal is strongly related to rater's liking regardless of job complexity of the ratee.

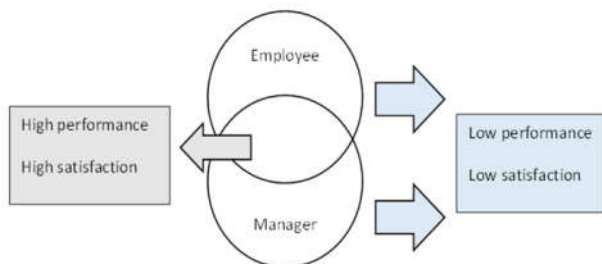
8. Highly Conscientious raters tend to evaluate the highly conscientious ratee as a high performer.
9. Raters who combine both Agreeableness and Conscientiousness traits in their personalities tend to rate the most inaccurate and the most lenient ratings.

Having mentioned the above, only one study has used real organizational set up in its methodology, and the rest used either hypothetical, experimental, or meta-analysis routes to conclude the previous findings. Therefore, this research paper attempts to be the only research, as known so far at least in the United Arab Emirates, which sheds the light on performance appraisal relationship with the personality of both the rater and the ratee using MBTI test, and analyzing a real case in business environment, rather than experiments, to investigate the hypothesis stated below in the methodology section.

## METHODOLOGY

This exploratory research was based on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Previous literature directed the formulation of this research hypothesis. Moreover, in order to measure and test the relationship between the three variables mentioned in the hypothesis it was decided to develop a short questionnaire directly tackling the variables in a convenient way that ensures anonymity for the participants to ensure avoiding the pressure of being honest in their answers, especially that some questions were sensitive, such as “satisfaction about direct managers”.

The below model demonstrates the hypothesis developed for the study aligned and extracted from the literature reviewed:



**Hypothesis (1):** when rater’s and ratee’s personalities are similar, the ratee tend to perform higher and receive a higher rating in performance appraisal, and vice versa.

**Hypothesis (2):** when rater’s and ratee’s personalities are similar, the ratee tend to be satisfied the rater, and vice versa.

**H0:** High performance appraisal rating exists when manager and employee personality similarity is  $\geq 50\%$ .

**H1:** High performance appraisal rating is not related to manager and employee personality similarity.

**H0:** High satisfaction about manager exists when manager and employee personality similarity is  $\geq 50\%$ .

**H1:** High satisfaction about manager is not related to manager and employee personality similarity.

It was first decided to use random snowball sampling. The questionnaire was sent out through an email to 3 government organizations. The unit of analysis was decided to be participants’ appraisal rating in 2015 (employees only) which is supposed to reflect the employees’ work performance. The rating scale in government organizations ranges from 1 (for the

lowest) to 4 (for the highest). The organization follows Human Resources rule of quota assigned to each rating as following: 5% for substantially exceeding expectation (4), 15% for exceeding expectations (3), 75% for meeting expectations, and 5% for below expectations (1).

## RESULTS

The overall responses received was as following; 21 responses from managers, from which only 13 were meeting the criteria to be considered, and 69 responses from employees, from which only 58 were complete.

ESFJs constituted the biggest portion of the sample, which is 28%, followed by ESTJs, which constituted 11% of the sample. Moreover, extroverted employees constituted the majority of the sample (81.1%). Perceivers constituted only 8.6% of the sample, as the majority of participants were Judgers (91.9%), as shown in table 1.

**Table 1** Results of employees’ personalities in the sample

Similarity percentage	Frequency	Percent
ENFJ	3	5.2
ENFP	1	1.7
ESFJ	28	48.3
ESFP	3	5.2
ESTJ	11	19.0
ESTP	1	1.7
INFJ	3	5.2
ISFJ	5	8.6
ISTJ	3	5.2
Total	58	100.0

Manager-employee who were found to be exactly similar in their personalities, consisted 19% of the sample, while personality similarity in 3 letters was found to consist 31% of the sample. Moreover, similar in 2 letters consisted 41.4% of the sample; and similar only in one letter was found to be only 8.6%, as demonstrated in table 2.

**Table 2** Results of personality similarity found in the sample

Similarity percentage	Frequency	Percent
25%	5	8.6
50%	24	41.4
75%	18	31.0
100%	11	19.0
Total	58	100.0

The majority of the participants were found to be exceeding expectation, which consisted 74.1% of the sample; and substantially exceeding expectations, which consists 10.3% of the sample, as shown in table 3.

**Table.3** Results of respondents’ appraisal rating in 2015

Performance rating	Frequency	Percent
2	9	15.5
3	43	74.1
4	6	10.3
Total	58	100.0

Moreover, it was found that 48.3% of the employees were very satisfied about their managers; 37.9% were satisfied; 8.6% chose to be neutral; and 5.2% declared that they were unsatisfied, as indicated in table 4.

**Table.4** Results of respondents' satisfaction about their managers

Satisfaction with leadership	Frequency	Percent
2	3	5.2
3	5	8.6
4	22	37.9
5	28	48.3
Total	58	100.0

In order to test the validity of null hypothesis it was necessary to conduct regression test to find out whether the hypothesis sat is valid before testing the relationship between the variables of personality similarity, performance appraisal rating, and satisfaction about manager. For the first null hypothesis H0 (1), as indicated in matrix (table 5), the P-value was found to be (0.166), which is obviously larger than (0.05). It means that the null hypothesis is valid.

**Table 5** Regression matrix: Personality similarity and performance appraisal rating

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.184323
R Square	0.033975
Adjusted R Square	0.016725
Standard Error	0.506043
Observations	58

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	2.67531	0.205541	13.01597	1.41645E-18
personality similarity	0.419391	0.29884	1.403395	0.166019841

Likewise, another regression test was conducted to test the second null hypothesis H0 (2). The P-value was found to be (0.174), which is also larger than (0.05), which means that the second null hypothesis is also valid and it has enough evidence not to be rejected. (Table 6).

**Table 6** Regression matrix: Personality similarity and satisfaction about manager

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.18067
R Square	0.032642
Adjusted R Square	0.015367
Standard Error	0.831425
Observations	58

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	3.853814	0.337702	11.41189	3.08E-16
personality similarity	0.674934	0.490992	1.374633	0.174721

Data for personality similarity, satisfaction about manager, and performance appraisal rating were analyzed through correlation test. As indicated in the below correlation matrix11, a positive weak relationship was found between performance appraisal rating and personality similarity between the manager and the employee (0.184).

**Table.7** Correlations

		personality similarity	Appraisal rating in 2015	Satisfaction about manager
personality similarity	Pearson Correlation	1	.184	.181
Appraisal rating in 2015	Pearson Correlation	.184	1	.036
Satisfaction about manager	Pearson Correlation	.181	.036	1

Similarly, a positive weak relationship was found between personality similarity and satisfaction about manager (0.18). Moreover, a positive weak relationship was found between satisfaction about manager and performance appraisal rating (0.036077051), but it is beyond the scope of this paper's hypothesis to be addressed. (Table 7)

Further analysis was conducted to analyze only the high performers (employees who received substantially exceeding expectation rating in 2015). Still a positive weak relationship was found between performance appraisal rating and personality similarity (0.1667), and a negative weak relationship was found between performance appraisal rating and satisfaction about manager (0.0588) (Table 8)

**Table.8** Correlation for filtered data (employees who were substantially exceeding expectations)

	Last appraisal rating	Satisfaction about manager	personality similarity
Last appraisal rating	1		
Satisfaction about manager	-0.058803291	1	
personality similarity	0.166746213	0.050347138	1

## CONCLUSION

This paper provided evidence that personality similarity plays a role in performance appraisal in government organizations despite the various errors and biases that exist in this annual process. It had also proved that personality similarity can affect employee satisfaction about his manager. It is true that the relationship between these variables were found to be weak in this study sample, however, with ensuring to avoid the limitations this paper faced, future research studies are recommended to test it again in different organizational set ups.

Furthermore, after knowing that personality plays a role in performance appraisal and employee satisfaction, it is highly recommended that organizations start spreading the awareness about personalities on scientific basis, such as MBTI and The Big Five to ensure a better harmonized environment. Moreover, they are also recommended to increase the awareness of managers about the commonly found biases and errors in performance appraisal ratings, which was extracted from earlier literature, in order to ensure a fairer rating.

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