

Personality & Military Leadership

Prepared for: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute

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Introduction

Many accounts of exemplary leadership are depicted in history. One particular leader, Sir Ernest Shackleton, was the expedition leader of the ill-fated ship *The Endurance*. Only months after the *Endurance* set sail for Antarctica, it was crushed by an enormous ice flow leaving its crew in a desperate position. Shackleton, acting as the ship's leader, succeeded in leading all eighty of his men to safety after being marooned in a perilous environment for over two years. Not only were his men alive after their ordeal, they were incredibly optimistic and full of admiration for their leader (Shackleton, 1920).

What made Ernest Shackleton such an exceptional leader? Was he born with effective leadership qualities or did the elements of the situation bring out the necessary leadership skills that were paramount to the survival of his men? Would others have been able to conquer the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that he and his men did? Additionally, what effectual qualities of leadership warded off attempts of mutiny and instilled motivation and morale in his followers?

These same questions can be asked of leaders in combative situations in a military context. For example, what qualities must someone possess in order to motivate a person to engage in behaviour that could possibly end in peril? How does a leader exert influence in his or her followers that would seem to go far beyond ordinary logic? Furthermore, do people differ in their proclivity to take action as a leader and does this tendency differ in threatening situations?

Researchers studying leadership behaviour have been struggling to answer questions of this nature for decades. Leaders in the Canadian Forces will face many physical and mental challenges in the future and the role of their personal characteristics may aid in their success (Defence Strategy, 2020). Examining potential answers to these questions may promote the selection and development of effective military leaders who will be able to rise

to these challenges. The purpose of this paper is to present a review of the research examining the various qualities and characteristics of leaders that may influence leadership behaviour in a military context. In general, the main goal of this paper is to increase our understanding of how the various personality traits of leaders may predict the utilization of effective leadership behaviour. Recent evidence suggests that organizations may benefit from selecting leaders on the basis of their personality traits (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2000).

The present review of personality and effective military leadership will be divided into three sections. The first section offers an overview of important issues that have been addressed in the literature pertaining to personality. Section two includes a discussion regarding the literature that examines personality in relation to effective leadership behaviour and conceptually links the Five Factor Model of personality to transformational leadership. Lastly, suggestions for future research and recommendations for the potential use and study of personality in the Canadian Forces will be discussed. An integrative review of the literature addressing potential personality characteristics as related to superior leadership performance can subsequently have many implications for the selection of military leaders.

Section 1: Overview of Personality

What is Personality?

How do we define personality? Although many competing definitions of personality have been offered there is little consensus regarding the answer to this question (Burger, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Hogan, 1991). For instance, personality has been defined as a set of factors within an individual explaining their behaviour (e.g., temperaments and genetically controlled dispositions) and an individual's distinctive interpersonal characteristics that tend to remain consistent across situations and contexts (Burger, 1997; Johnson, 1999).

Personality has also been referred to as a person's social reputation and his or her inner nature (Hogan, 1991) that may impact on their responses to a wide variety of environmental

circumstances (Wortman & Loftus, 1991). Additionally, personality has been used interchangeably with other concepts such as traits, states, needs, motives, goals, attitudes, interests, determining tendencies, and generalized dispositions of the individual (Milgram, 1991). There are many common components among the various definitions of personality. Many researchers agree that personality has a trait component and that these traits are “fairly stable” or consistent. Furthermore, these definitions suggest that an individual’s personality can largely be defined by others’ perceptions.

The last decade of research has generated a great deal of attention toward the role that personality plays in organizations. Empirical evidence concerning personality traits has led to the belief that the traits that make up the human personality are organized around five basic dimensions, referred to as the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hogan, 1996; Tett, Rothstein & Jackson, 1991). The FFM of personality has been a widely accepted framework for predicting a variety of organizational behaviours (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991).

The Five-Factor Model of Personality

The FFM of personality is a universal template that can be used for understanding the structure of personality (Goldberg, 1993). Meta-analytic techniques have led to the development of the five-factor taxonomy of personality that includes: neuroticism (i.e., emotional stability), extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991). Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative affect, such as anxiety, depression, and hostility. Extraversion refers to the quantity and intensity of interpersonal interactions. Proactive seeking and the appreciation of new experiences are characteristic of the openness to experience dimension. Agreeableness refers to the quality of one’s interpersonal interactions along a continuum from compassion to antagonism. Lastly, conscientiousness refers to the amount of persistence, organization, and

motivation in goal directed behaviours (Piedmont & Weinstein, 1994; Costa & McCrae, 1992). A number of meta-analyses have supported this structure of personality (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hough et al., 1990; Salgado, 1997; Tett et al., 1991). Table 1 presents an outline of the facets comprising the FFM.

Table 1

Domains and Facets of the Five-Factor Model of Personality

<u>Factor One: Agreeableness</u>	
Trust:	Believe others honest, well intentioned.
Straightforwardness:	Frank, sincere and ingenious
Altruism:	Genuine concern for others, considerate, helpful
Compliance:	Control of aggression, forgiving
Modesty:	Humble, self-effacing
Tender-Mindedness:	Sympathetic
<u>Factor Two: Neuroticism</u>	
Anxiety:	Apprehensive, fearful, prone to worry
Angry Hostility:	Angry, frustrated
Depression:	Feelings of guilt and sadness
Self-Consciousness:	Uneasy around others, sensitive to ridicule
Impulsiveness:	Inability to control cravings and urges
Vulnerability:	Inability to cope with stress, dependent, panicky
<u>Factor Three: Extraversion</u>	
Warmth:	Affectionate, friendly, ability to form close attachments
Gregariousness:	Enjoys company of others, enjoy social situations
Assertiveness:	Dominant, forceful, socially ascendant
Activity:	Rapid tempo, vigorous movement
Excitement Seeking:	Craves excitement and stimulation, likes noisy environments
Positive Emotions:	Laugh easily, cheerful, optimistic
<u>Factor Four: Conscientiousness</u>	
Competence:	Capable, well prepared, sensible
Order:	Neat, tidy, well organized
Dutifulness:	Adhere strictly to ethical principles
Achievement Striving:	High aspirations, diligent, sense of direction
Self-Discipline:	Motivated
Deliberation:	Thinks carefully before acting, deliberate, cautious
<u>Factor Five: Openness to Experience</u>	
Fantasy:	Vivid imagination, active fantasy life, daydreamer
Aesthetics:	Deep appreciation for art and beauty, moved by poetry, music
Feelings:	Experiences deeper, more differentiated emotional states
Actions:	Prefer novelty and variety to familiarity and routine
Ideas:	Intellectually curious, enjoys philosophical arguments
Values:	Readiness to reexamine social, political, and religious values

Although not without criticism, the FFM of personality has become a widely accepted model for the assessment of personality across a broad domain of fields for a number of reasons. First, it has served a useful purpose in the classification of personality measures which has resulted in less terminological confusion (Hogan, Hogan, & Roberts, 1996). Second, the model is robust across cultures and measures thereby making the fairness of the test less questionable (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Lastly, meta-analytic results have supported the validity of the FFM as a predictor of job performance and training criteria (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996).

Criterion-Related Validity

An overwhelming amount of evidence has been found linking personality to various organizational outcomes with the majority of this research focusing on the criterion-related validity of personality (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Cortina, Goldstein, Payne, Davison, & Gilliland, 2000). Earlier research focusing on the FFM attempted to organize personality-related information into the Big Five dimensions to aid in the prediction of job and training performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Day & Silverman, 1989; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990). One goal of this research was to eliminate some of the scepticism that was associated with early research conclusions that were drawn from linking personality measures to various outcomes in the workplace (e.g. Guion & Gottier, 1965). However, with a new organizing framework such as the FFM to guide personality research, meta-analytic results emerged to provide evidence that conclusions regarding the predictive ability of personality dimensions were premature.

Using meta-analytic methods, researchers have been able to explore the validity of personality measures as predictors of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hough, 1992; Hough, et al., 1990). There have been a number of meta-analyses addressing the FFM of personality as a predictor of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hough et al., 1990;

Salgado, 1997; Tett et al., 1991). Barrick and Mount (1991) conducted a meta-analysis based on 35 years of personality research to examine the relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and the job performance criteria of job proficiency, training proficiency, and personnel data for five different occupations. Results of this study revealed that Conscientiousness emerged as a valid predictor across occupational groups, and extraversion predicted job performance among managers and sales representatives.

In a related study, Tett et al. (1991) clustered scales from different personality inventories into five major personality constructs similar to the FFM, and found a similar relationship between these personality constructs and performance. Tett et al. (1991) concluded that personality measures are an invaluable tool in the selection process. The two aforementioned meta-analytic studies marked the beginning of a new way of thinking about the use of personality measures for selection and thus created renewed optimism among personnel selection researchers regarding their use (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Behling, 1998; Goldberg, 1993; Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996). Additional meta-analyses have been performed, including those by Hough et al. (1990) and Tett, Jackson, Rothstein, and Reddon (1994).

Personality has been found to predict other job-related criteria including career success (e.g. Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999), job satisfaction (e.g., Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Miller, Griffin, & Hart, 1999), and organizational turnover (Jenkins, 1993). Research also suggests that some personality characteristics may predict job performance after statistically controlling for the influence of general cognitive ability (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996; Tett et al., 1994). In addition to examining the criterion-related validity of the FFM, researchers have also examined the personality profiles of individuals in various careers.

Personality Profiles

Research on personality profiles has focused on the notion that those individuals with certain personality profiles may perform better in specific careers. For example, student nurses that are more successful during training have specific personality profiles (Bruhn, Bunce, & Greacer, 1978). Business students who reach general management positions earlier in their careers tend to be more socially extraverted and to desire higher levels of independence and autonomy (Harrell & Harrell, 1973). Furthermore, individuals that embark upon various military careers such as pilots, military soldiers, submarine personnel, navy divers, and naval officers have personality profiles that distinguish them from the general population (e.g., Bartram, 1995; Bartram & Dale, 1986; Beckman, Lall, & Johnson, 1996; Moes, Lall, & Johnson, 1996). For example, Bartram and Dale concluded that those individuals who were more successful in pilot training were more extraverted than those who were less successful. These findings were confirmed in a more recent study by Bartram (1995), which demonstrated that those that are in flight school are more emotionally stable and extraverted than the general population. Findings such as these can have many implications for the subsequent selection of individuals into various careers that are of a military nature. These findings further suggest that the prediction of success in various occupations might be enhanced through the use of personality measures.

Assessment of Personality Factors

Hogan et al. (1996) suggested that personality measures should predict specific job behaviours. The most common method of assessing personality is through the use of self-report methods. Several assessment tools are available to measure the FFM of personality, including The Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and The NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO FFI). There are a number of other measures available to assess the FFM.

However, the present discussion of the assessment of personality will focus on the pertinent issues regarding the use of self-report measures of personality.

A major concern associated with the use of self-report methods of personality is the potential for response distortions typically referred to as faking or social desirability (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1996; Hogan et al., 1996; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Reiss, 1996). Some authors contend that these distortions have the potential of compromising self-report methods of personality and must be considered seriously (e.g., Christiansen, Goffin, Johnston, & Rothstein, 1994; Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999). However, empirical evidence has shown that the criterion-related validity of personality measures is not affected by distortions such as these (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Hough, 1998; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990). That is, the correlations between the FFM and job performance do not tend to be attenuated by social desirability effects (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Christiansen et al., 1994). Interestingly, the tendency to engage in social desirability has been found to be associated with emotional stability and conscientiousness (Ones et al., 1996). Many organizations use self-report measures of personality to predict job performance as a result of the criterion-related evidence to support their use. However, some researchers argue that measures of the FFM tend to reduce the power of specific personality traits in predicting specific job performance criteria (e.g., Schneider, Hough, & Dunnette, 1996).

Breadth of Personality Measurement

One important issue in the literature is the breadth of personality measurement (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996). This entails the choice of narrow or broader personality measurement that researchers may use. Certain personality factors may be relevant in the prediction of various performance outcomes both at a facet level and at a broader level of prediction. This raises the question of whether broadly defined traits of personality are better predictors of

behaviour than narrowly defined personality traits (Black, 2000). Some researchers argue that more information can be gained through the use of multiple unidimensional predictors (Paunonen, 1998; Paunonen, Rothstein & Jackson, 1997; Black, 2000) while others favour broader personality variables in the prediction of job performance (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996).

The use of broad personality measures has been advocated by a number of researchers. For instance, Ones and Viswesvaran, (1996) provide evidence that broader personality traits will yield higher predictive validity than narrow traits for selection purposes and offer more explanation for prediction. Judge and Bono (2000) also support the view that specific facets of the FFM do not predict performance as well as the broad dimensions.

Although the literature supports the use of broad personality measurement, empirical evidence also suggests that broad personality traits are not necessarily better than narrow traits in the prediction of performance (Tett, et al., 1994). In fact, many researchers claim that there is substantial information to be gained from using all levels of personality measurement as opposed to concentrating on measurement from the broad level. For example, Ashton, Jackson, Paunonen, Helmes, and Rothstein (1995) have concluded that the facets of conscientiousness have higher validity coefficients compared to the validity coefficients obtained for the general domain of conscientiousness, thus advocating the use of more narrow traits. Similarly, Ashton (1998) reported that risk taking and responsibility, which are narrow facets of the Big Five dimensions, have higher validity coefficients than the broad facets. Paunonen (1998) also concludes that the use of narrow measures of personality may provide useful information that would remain hidden if researchers chose to use a broader level of measurement. Furthermore, Paunonen et. al. (1998) have contended that the use of broad over narrow measures will have negative practical implications in the workplace. Specifically, they note that using broad personality measures will “lead to greater mis-identification of

good versus poor workers and to less understanding of the personality-based causes of individual differences in work behaviour” (p. 390).

Arguably, this issue will remain a subject of considerable debate until more evidence to support either claim is offered. Until then, researchers should carefully consider their choice of measurement on the basis of the criterion that they are trying to predict or explain as well as the question that they are seeking to address (Hogan & Roberts, 1996; Schneider, Hough & Dunnette, 1996). Additionally, the choice of measurement should be dictated by whether or not the operational definition of the predictor can be described in sufficient enough detail for it to have empirical meaning (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996). As a result of the notion that there has been little resolution to this debate and the assertion that the use of measures of the FFM are more practical in organizations, this paper will utilize the FFM of personality in order to further understand effective leadership behaviours in a military context.

Section 2: Personality & Effective Leadership Behaviours

Leadership

Organizations are undergoing rapid changes including an aging work force, flattening of hierarchies, and a lessened supply of qualified workers (Dunnette & Hough, 1991). The Canadian Forces will experience the effects of many of these organizational changes. In turn, the importance of military leader effectiveness will be more pronounced (Defence Strategy, 2020).

Scholars of leadership have been fascinated with the topic of leader greatness, and many researchers have purported that personality can be used to predict what makes a leader “great”. In fact, a number of theoretical explanations of leadership that utilize a personality component have been proposed in the leadership literature. These include the trait theory of

leadership (e.g., Bryman, 1992), contingency theory of leadership (e.g. Fiedler & Garcia, 1987), and transformational leadership theory (e.g. Bass, 1985; Bass, 1998).

Trait Theory

The trait model assumes that there are personality characteristics that predispose particular individuals to emerge as leaders (Branstatter & Farthofer, 1997; Northouse, 1997). Traits are typically referred to as specific aspects of personality that are used to categorize individuals and many authors have stressed the importance of utilizing personality traits to aid in the identification of leaders (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). One of the first attempts to make sense of the literature regarding individual traits as predictors of leader emergence was by Stogill (1948). Stogill (1948) reviewed over 124 trait studies conducted between the years of 1904 and 1947 and concluded that leaders could be differentiated from non-leaders on the basis of higher intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self confidence and sociability. However, Stogill also concluded that traits were not the sole determinants of leadership and that situational factors played a bigger role in predicting leadership outcomes.

As well, Mann (1959) has suggested that personality could be considered a determinant of effective leadership but was tentative in his conclusions by drawing attention to the weak correlations his results revealed. Specifically, he claimed that effective leaders had the following traits: intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion and conservatism, but that these traits accounted for only a minor proportion of variance in leadership behaviour. However, Lord et al. (1986) provided evidence that the conclusions proposed by Mann (1959) and Stogill (1948) were based on perceptions of leadership and not on objective measures of leader effectiveness. Moreover, it is unlikely that the findings proposed by Mann (1959) and Stogill (1948) would be generalizable to adult leaders because they were based on the behaviours of children (Kickul & Neuman, 1999).

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory offers an explanation of leadership that involves an interaction between the personal characteristics of the leader and the situation in which the leadership takes place (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). A mediating factor that determines the effectiveness of the leader is the degree of control that the leader has over a given situation. According to Fiedler and Garcia (1984), control of the situation is contingent upon three factors: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. The ultimate goal of contingency theory is to match a leader to a situation (Northouse, 1997). However, doubts on the plausibility of this model have emerged in the literature (Graen, Orris, & Alvares, 1971). In particular, contingency theory has not been positively received because of its impracticality in applied settings and the difficulty in replicating experiments based on its assumptions (Korman, 1973). Furthermore, the validity of contingency theory remains a source of dispute (Peters, Hartke, & Polemann, 1985).

Transformational Leadership Theory

A more widely accepted conceptualization of leadership is the theory of transformational leadership (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000; Judge & Bono, 2000). Following the classic works of Burns (1978) and House (1976), transformational leadership has emerged as an imperative approach to the understanding of leadership. Research suggests that the behaviours associated with transformational leadership are effective in both private and public organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1994; House, 1995). For instance, transformational leaders have a solid understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, are able to create trust among followers and influence the social environment in organizational settings (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). As Conger (1999) points out, the essence of the model of transformational leadership is the notion that transformational leaders motivate their followers to commit to and realize performance outcomes that exceed their expectations. Research suggests that

transformational leaders promote higher levels of performance among followers (Hater & Bass, 1988; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). In fact, researchers suggest that followers typically describe transformational leaders as “ideal” leaders (Bass, 1990).

According to the theory developed by Bass (1985), the four components of transformational leadership are characterized as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Factor analytic studies of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), designed to assess Bass’s theory of transformational leadership, have provided support for these four components of transformational leadership. In addition to a transformational leadership factor, factor analytic studies of the MLQ have revealed a transactional leadership factor and a laissez-faire leadership factor (Bass, 1990). The following is a brief discussion of the factors comprising transformational and transactional leadership, and an overview of the laissez-faire leadership dimension.

Charismatic leadership and *idealized influence* have often been used interchangeably (Northouse, 1997). A leader who exhibits idealized influence or charisma instills admiration, trust and respect in their followers and sets high ethical standards through their outstanding accomplishments (Bass, 1985; Kane & Tremble, 2000). Charismatic leaders are viewed as being outgoing, sociable, insightful, and inspiring (Atwater, Penn & Rucker, 1993).

Inspirational motivation involves inspiring followers to work towards a common goal and organizational vision (Bass, 1985). Leaders engaging in inspirational motivation encourage their followers to work together as a team and to commit to the organization’s goals with enthusiasm and optimism (Popper, Mayseless, & Castelnovo, 2000). Leaders who engage in inspirational motivation also tend to set high expectations for followers’

performance and to display confidence and energy when communicating the organizational mission to their followers (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990).

Leaders who engage in *intellectual stimulation* challenge their followers by redirecting their attention to new ways of thinking (Bass, 1985). Leaders engaging in intellectual stimulation question their followers in an effort to stimulate innovative thought and problem solving (Bass, 1985). Leaders who engage in intellectual stimulation tend to challenge, support and foster the development of creative thinking among their followers (Bass, 1985).

Leaders who engage in *individualized consideration* are consistent in their approach in terms of how they interact with followers (Bass, 1985). They treat subordinates as individuals and express genuine concern and respect for followers' welfare (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990). They act as both mentor and coach to guide their followers on a path to reach their fullest potential and are a constant source of support (Bass, 1985).

Encompassed within the model of transformational leadership is transactional leadership, which focuses on another primary set of behaviors that influence subordinates (Kane & Tremble, 2000). Unlike transformational leaders, transactional leaders engage in behaviours to improve their own status and tend to use their followers for their own advancement (Northouse, 1997; Bass & Avolio, 1994). There has been a general consensus that transactional leadership is less effective than transformational leadership (Den Hartog et al., 1997).

There are two transactional factors: contingent reward and management-by-exception. A leader engages in contingent reward when he /she rewards followers for acceptable behaviours and penalizes followers for unacceptable behaviours (Bass, 1990). This type of leadership is contingent upon an exchange of rewards between a leader and his / her followers (Bass, 1990). Management-by-exception leadership refers to leadership that occurs

only when there is a problem to be solved (Bass, 1985). Characteristics of leaders who typically engage in management-by-exception include accepting traditional methods of work and not encouraging followers to engage in innovative thought and problem solving (Bass, 1985). Laissez-faire is a term used to describe non-leadership that occurs when individuals choose to avoid and ignore leadership duties (Bass, 1985).

Importance of Transformational Leadership

In the last ten years of research, transformational leadership has generated the most interest of all other leadership models combined (Bass, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1994; Judge & Bono, 2000). As a result of this increasing research attention, knowledge about this form of leadership has intensified (Conger, 1999).

The decreased focus on other models, and an increased focus on transformational leadership, has resulted for a number of reasons. First, many other models of leadership did not adequately address significant organizational leadership issues of the 80's (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). Secondly, transformational leadership has been linked to many positive outcomes that may impact organizational effectiveness such as enhanced job satisfaction, increased commitment, and decreased stress levels among followers (Kane & Tremble, 2000; Northouse, 1997; Roush & Atwater, 1992; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Third, transformational leadership impacts productivity levels and influences the culture of organizations by engaging followers to work towards common goals within the organization. (Behling & Mcfillen, 1996; Kickul & Neuman, 2000). Finally, transformational leadership is purported to be a behavioral theory that assumes that transformational behaviors can be learned (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994) which would be beneficial in applied settings such as the military.

Personality & Effective Leadership Behaviors

Characteristics of Leaders

Meta-analytic methods have been employed to examine the empirical literature that pertains to the characteristics of effective leaders (e.g., Lord, et al., 1986). There remains dissent as to what traits may predict effective leadership behaviors. Some researchers maintain that exemplary leaders are dominant and achievement oriented (Nicholas & Penwall, 1995) as well as ambitious, respected, and trusted by subordinates (Atwater Roush, & Fischthal, 1995). Others researchers conclude that effective leaders score high on inhibition of power needs and low on machiavellianism, narcissism, and authoritarianism (House & Howell, 1992). Moreover, Johnson (1999) states that leaders who are most successful in their military careers are ambitious and prudent. Other traits that have commonly been used to label effective leaders include masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion, conservatism, tenacity and initiative (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). The lack of agreement among researchers on the personality traits that make leaders “effective” has contributed to the interest in furthering our understanding of the traits that may be used to predict successful leadership. One avenue of research involves examining how the personality traits of leaders influence followers’ perceptions of leadership.

Perceptions of Leadership

In addition to linking individual characteristics to various leadership outcomes, a parallel development has focused on followers’ perceptions of leaders. Research has shown that certain characteristics and behaviors that a leader displays have a tendency to influence leader perceptions by his/her followers (Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991). Leaders that are perceived as having the most influence in a group setting are often differentiated from others in the group on the basis of personal characteristics (Atwater, Penn & Rucker, 1991). The

behaviors or personality traits that are emulated by leaders can influence followers both positively and negatively (Vogelaar & Kuipers, 1997).

Followers differentiate leaders from non-leaders with such identities as pro-social assertiveness, creativity and innovation, risk seeking propensity, self confidence, social sensitivity and sensitivity to follower needs (House & Howell, 1992). Leaders who display personality traits such as masculinity-femininity have also been found to be important in forming leader perceptions (Lord, et al., 1986). Leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours are often viewed as an ideal leader by their followers (Bass, 1985). Moreover, the majority of previous studies have shown that leaders who display transformational or transactional contingent reward leadership have more of an influence on follower outcomes than leaders who possess other leadership styles.

The relationship between leaders and followers are not only impacted by personality traits of the leaders but also by a number of other variables such as the followers perceptions of what an ideal leader should be (Conger & Kanungo, 1994) and the perceived intelligence of the leader (Allinson, Armstrong, & Hayes, 2001). For instance, if there is a large discrepancy between an individual's conceptualization of an effective leader and the actual leadership situation, then the leadership will be viewed in a negative manner. If however, an individual's perception of leadership is congruent with the actual leadership then the leadership will be viewed positively. Moreover, leaders who are higher in intellect are often viewed as being better leaders (Connelly, Gilbert, Zaccaro, Threlfall, Marks & Mumford, 2000). Although it is not clear whether personality traits impact on the performance of leaders, there is some agreement that leader personality traits tend to influence followers' perceptions of leadership (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984; Lord, et.al, 1986) and the performance and behavior of followers (Vogelaar & Kuipers, 1997). Some of this research involves examining the personality traits of leaders and followers in group or team settings.

Personality and Group/Team Processes

Various studies have also been designed to address how team member personality characteristics relate to both group processes and outcomes in work teams (e.g. Barry & Stewart, 1997; Bouchard, 1969; George, 1990). It has been proposed that individual characteristics are responsible for the overall tone of how a group interacts and operates (George, 1990); the group's performance in problem-solving situations (Bouchard, 1969); and the overall performance of the group in various situations (e.g., LePine, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, & Hedlund, 1997). An understanding of the personality characteristics that may enhance or attenuate the quality of group outcomes will inevitably increase our understanding of leadership roles within those groups.

Certain individuals in a group possess characteristics and exhibit behaviours that are commonly perceived by other group members as being indicative of effective leadership (Zaccaro et al., 1991). For instance, extraverts are often perceived as having more of an influence on group outcomes than introverted individuals (Barry & Stewart, 1997). As well, individuals that display the characteristic Openness to Experience are often viewed as leaders in group settings. One could argue that those groups whose members possess certain personality characteristics may outperform those groups whose members do not possess specific personality characteristics. Although support for the use of personality measures to predict various group outcomes is rising, it has been slow to accumulate for a number of reasons. For instance, it is extremely difficult to obtain group samples that are large enough and most studies relating to teams and groups are conducted in field settings so the generalizability of the findings is questionable (Kickul & Neuman, 2000). Although there remains difficulty in studying team leadership, one area of research that has begun to develop is the role of personality traits in the prediction of transformational leadership behaviours.

The Five-Factor Model and Transformational Leadership

The greatest amount of literature associated with transformational leadership has focused on the areas of leader behaviour and follower effects. Although there are many expectations for personality to predict various aspects of transformational leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000) empirical findings have not added to our knowledge of exactly which traits should have the most meaning in this prediction. In fact, there is still little consensus as to which individual attributes are associated with effective leadership (Taggar, Hackett, & Saha, 1999). This is largely due to the inconsistency in research designs and the incomparability of findings, which tend to use many different methods to assess personality.

Using the transformational theory of leadership, the FFM of personality may be beneficial in classifying the traits that are deemed necessary for effectively predicting transformational leadership behaviours. Based on the findings from the literature pertaining to personality and leadership, there are reasons to expect that measures of the FFM should be related to transformational leadership behaviours. In this paper, a theoretical link will be made between the FFM of personality and elements of effective leadership according to the theory of transformational leadership. The FFM of personality may be beneficial in enhancing the prediction of transformational leadership behaviours in a military context.

Neuroticism and Transformational Leadership

There is reason to expect that *neuroticism*, often characterized by feelings of sadness and apprehension (Costa & McCrae, 1987) should be negatively related to effective transformational leadership behaviors. Neuroticism lends itself to feelings of anxiousness and sensitivity to ridicule and is contrasted with emotional stability which is a generalizable predictor of overall work performance (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). Thoms, Moore, and Scott (1996) found that emotional stability was positively correlated with individual attitudes toward participation in self-managed work teams. That is, individuals who are more

emotionally stable tend to display a more positive attitude toward participating in self-managed work groups than those individuals who are less emotionally stable. To further support this notion, Hogan et al. (1994) suggested that neurotic behaviors are negatively associated with team leadership.

Neuroticism is characterized by individuals who are unable to cope with stressful situations (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Dobson (2000) found strong support for the proposition that neuroticism is associated with lower performance on numerical reasoning tests in stressful situations. Transformational leaders encourage their followers to re-evaluate how they approach problem-solving situations. Moreover, transformational leaders do not allow the stress of a situation to alter their leadership performance (Bass, 1985).

Highly neurotic individuals communicate in negative affective tones (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and are especially affected by negative life events such as war (Suls, Green & Hills, 1998). It has been suggested that individuals high on neuroticism may not be effective in situations requiring the use of weapons (Dobson, 2000). Neurotic individuals also lack self-confidence (Costa & McCrae, 1992). However, transformational leadership theory indicates that effective leaders would not display feelings of negativity and lack of self-confidence. It is characteristic of transformational leaders to display enthusiasm and optimism in order to motivate and inspire their followers (Bass, 1985). Furthermore, transformational leaders encourage high expectations for performance and they communicate these expectations with confidence and energy (Bass, 1985). Emotional competence is an important facet of the transformational leader (Popper, Mayseless, & Castelnovo, 2000).

Extraversion and Transformational Leadership

Extraverts are affectionate, friendly and have the ability to form close attachments (McCrae & Costa, 1989). Characteristics of extraverts also include optimism, assertiveness and the interpersonal traits related to the quality of social interactions (Costa, McCrae, &

Holland, 1984). Research suggests that extraversion correlates with individual performance in jobs that involve social interaction (Barrick & Mount, 1993, Barrick & Mount, 1991) and is an important factor in leadership ratings. Additionally, extraversion has been linked to the feasibility of a team through social cohesion (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert & Mount, 1998). Social confidence may be of importance in contexts that require high amounts of social interaction (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994) including those situations requiring enhanced leadership. For instance, McCaulley (1990) contends that extraverts are both socially confident and communication oriented. As a result of their enhanced social skills, extraverts possess a heightened ability to lead others (McCaulley, 1990).

Extraverts are more likely to actively engage others in conversation, lead discussions and exhibit leader behaviour (Littlepage, Schmidt, Whisler & Frost, 1995). Extraverted individuals are also perceived by others as having a greater effect on group outcomes than introverted individuals and also tend to be viewed as leaders (Barry & Stewart, 1997). Transformational leaders listen, communicate, and act as mentors in order to develop their followers' full potential (Bass, 1985). In fact, the main premise of transformational leadership is actively engaging followers in an effort to create meaningful connections (Northouse, 1997). These behaviours rely on the verbal and nonverbal communication skills of the leader (Shamir, Zaccay, & Popper, 1998). Transformational leaders communicate in a manner that encourages followers to excel beyond ordinary performance levels and to exert greater effort (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Openness to Experience and Transformational Leadership

Individuals who display *openness to experience* have a vivid imagination, have a preference for variety as opposed to novel routines, appreciate art and beauty and are intellectually curious and broad minded. Those individuals who are open to new experiences entertain new and unique approaches to problem-solving situations and enjoy exploring new

ways of accomplishing tasks (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Kickul and Neuman (2000) demonstrated that those individuals who are more open to new experiences are distinguishable from followers in a group setting. That is, individuals high in the characteristic of openness to experience were viewed as leaders in a simulated group environment.

Openness to experience is significantly correlated with general intelligence (McCrae & Costa, 1992). Those who score high on openness to experience are likely to be more open to new ideas and learning experiences (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Those that are more open to new experiences are also better at problem solving. Advanced problem-solving skills would be an advantageous quality in positions that require quick decision-making, such as military combat (Barrick, Mount, & Stewart, 1998). Transformational leaders that engage in intellectual stimulation encourage their followers to critically examine their thought processes and to explore other avenues of problem-solving (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders support followers' approaches to completion of tasks and aid in the development of their problem-solving capabilities (Bass, 1985). Moreover, the ability to question old assumptions is a change agent which individuals that are open to new experiences have a strong desire for (McCrae, 1996). Transformational leaders work at changing the values of individuals in an effort to raise moral standards (Northouse, 1997).

Those that are high in openness to experience are non-judgmental in dealing with others (Costa & McCrae, 1988) and this is also a characteristic of transformational leaders. That is, transformational leaders avoid passing judgment on their followers and instead encourage them to hold high expectations of themselves through inspirational motivation (Bass, 1985). Moreover, transformational leaders do not deal with their subordinates in a derogatory manner and treat them as individuals while fostering a supportive climate (Bass, 1985).

Agreeableness and Transformational Leadership

Recent research suggests that *agreeableness* should be related to effective transformational leadership behaviours (Judge & Bono, 2000). Individuals who score highly on agreeableness factors are typically characterized as being sympathetic to the needs of others, trusting, helpful, and are considered to be very caring (Costa & McCrae, 1988). These characteristics are also consistent with the transformational leader in that transformational leaders are both trusting and helpful and possess the ability to gain the respect of their followers (Bass, 1985). Moreover, transformational leaders that display idealized influence or charisma express genuine concern for others (Judge & Bono, 2000).

Agreeable individuals are eager, believing and fundamentally altruistic (Costa & McCrae, 1988). Transformational leaders often succeed in motivating followers to act for others before themselves suggesting that they are themselves altruistic (Kuhnert, 1994). That is, transformational leaders put the needs of their followers before themselves (Bass, 1985). Furthermore, transformational leaders guide their followers toward common goals and interests and inspire them to move beyond their own self-interests (Bass, 1985). Moreover, leaders who engage in inspirational motivation are eager and enthusiastic to motivate their follower's towards the accomplishment of common goals (Bass, 1985).

Agreeableness has been positively linked to contextual performance, which involves engaging in behaviors that include fostering positive work relationships and interacting with subordinates (Gellatly & Irving, 2001). Transformational leaders pay attention to the developmental needs of their followers by listening, communicating, mentoring and treating their followers as individual persons by engaging in individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Thus, transformational leaders interact with subordinates to determine their developmental needs (Bass, 1985). Agreeable individuals tend to get along well with others and to express concern for others' well being.

Empirical evidence has recently surfaced that supports the notion that agreeableness is related to effective transformational leadership behaviours. Judge and Bono (2000) were the first to conceptually link components of transformational leadership with the FFM of personality. Subordinates were asked to rate the personality characteristics of their superiors using the NEO-PI-R and leadership behaviours of their superiors using the MLQ. Moreover, subordinates were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the leadership of their superiors using three items pertaining to leadership from the Job Diagnostic Survey. The findings demonstrated that Agreeableness was the strongest and most consistent predictor of transformational leadership behaviours. Specifically, their results indicated that agreeableness was related to the four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. These authors concluded that subordinate ratings of transformational leadership are related to Agreeableness and that the nature of this relationship should be explored using other sources of ratings.

Conscientiousness and Transformational Leadership

Conscientious individuals are often defined as being well organized and motivated (Costa & McCrae, 1992), responsible, reliable, dependable, persistent and achievement oriented (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Recent meta-analytic reviews have confirmed that conscientiousness is a valid predictor across performance measures in all occupations studied (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). Individuals that score high on conscientiousness also exhibit superior performance in areas of work that involve personal interaction (Barrick & Mount, 1998). According to Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), a leader must possess the traits of achievement, tenacity, and initiative in order to be effective and to have an influence on his/her group or organization. Hollenbeck, LePine, and Ilgen, (1996) have noted that being unreliable can create a lack of trust that destroys cooperation. Furthermore, team decision

accuracy, an important component of being a leader, is also contingent on leader conscientiousness (Lepine et al. 1997). These findings suggest that being conscientious should be influential in the leadership process.

Conscientiousness has been found to be important to several components of leadership including goal setting, motivating others, and task orientation (Taggar, Hackett, & Saha, 1999). Highly conscientious individuals are more likely to set and achieve goals, which may have a positive and effective influence on their performance (Barrick, Mount & Strauss, 1993). This influence is created by the investment of effort that is triggered by the setting of goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). Transformational leaders set challenging goals for their followers, motivate them to work towards these goals, and monitor their performance on the way to goal achievement (Bass, 1985). In a study by McHenry, Hough, Toquam, Hanson, and Ashworth (1990), personality traits such as conscientiousness were the best predictors of giving extra effort, supporting peers and exhibiting personal discipline.

Conscientious individuals are likely to exert more effort on tasks and possess higher levels of organizational skills (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). These are skills that would be beneficial to possess in highly taxing situations such as those that one might experience in combat or in basic training camps. Transformational leaders are extremely efficient in carrying out required tasks and setting high standards for themselves and others around them (Bass, 1985).

Despite the significant findings relating Conscientiousness and various organizational outcomes, there have been conflicting findings concerning the relationship between conscientiousness and leader performance. Although conscientiousness would seemingly be conceptually relevant to the prediction of transformational leadership, empirical evidence is not supportive of this notion (e.g. House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991). For instance, Barry and Stewart (1997) found that conscientiousness was unrelated to processes and outcomes at

either the individual or the group level. Similarly, Judge and Bono (2000) linked the FFM of personality to transformational leadership and also reached similar conclusions concerning conscientiousness. Thus, although conscientiousness consistently appears to be a significant predictor of various organizational outcomes (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick & Mount, 2001), its adequacy in predicting transformational leadership behaviours remains in question. It should be noted that the majority of studies finding no support for the use of Conscientiousness as a predictor of transformational leadership were not selection studies and as such may not have meaning in applied settings.

Section Three: Future Research Initiatives and Recommendations

The purpose of this paper was to (1) present an overview of relevant and important issues in the personality literature and, (2) relate personality to military leadership. There is an increasing interest in the study of personality as a tool that can be used to select employees. However, with each new research initiative concerning personality, new questions will continue to arise pertaining to the use of personality measurement in applied settings. There are many areas of research that can be embarked upon that will aid in our understanding of the role of personality variables in applied settings such as the military.

Future Research Initiatives

Further exploration of the potential impact of personality variables on leadership performance is needed. However, in order to have a clearer understanding of the relationship between personality and leadership, researchers with this interest need to move beyond bivariate relationships. For instance, frequently discussed moderators of the personality- leadership relationship are the motivation and cognitive ability of the leader (Miner, 1993). In addition, the values of leaders may also have an impact on findings concerning this relationship. Leaders cognitive ability, motivation and personality have aided in the

prediction of different types of leader performance in the past, which may be critical to a leader's success (Connelly et al., 2000).

Recently, Chan and Drasgow (2001) proposed a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between individual differences and leadership behaviours. Encompassed within the model, which they called Motivation to Lead (MTL), were values, motivation, cognitive ability, leadership self-efficacy, and personality, among others. Results indicated that MTL provided incremental validity in the prediction of two behavioural measures of leadership potential. If we have a clearer understanding of the intervening variables associated with the prediction of effective leadership behaviours, the bivariate correlations between personality and leadership behaviours may emerge more strongly. Subsequently, this will enhance our ability to devise more complex multivariate models of leadership prediction.

For the sake of understanding the potential impact of personality measures on leadership performance, it would also be interesting to explore alternative measurement methods of personality designed to assess the FFM. For example, there could be other means of assessing the Big Five factors such as through the use of structured interviews that are behaviourally based. It has been demonstrated that behaviourally based interviews are valid predictors of job related performance (Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). Researchers should initiate the development of this type of interview to assess the FFM in relation to the performance of effective leaders in the military. Researchers have shown that interviews that are behaviourally based and constructed based on the content of the position they are trying to predict are more valid (McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt & Maurer, 1994; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). Furthermore, the use of an interview to measure the FFM of personality may reduce or eliminate problems associated with issues of social desirability and breadth of measurement.

Since the debate regarding breadth of personality measurement has not been resolved, research aimed at exploring the use of both narrow and broad traits of personality measurement is relevant. More research using both narrow and broad personality measurement will allow researchers to observe the difference in prediction obtained from the two forms of measurement. This may prove beneficial and may offer some insight to aid in resolution of the issue. Furthermore, researchers may opt to explore the specific and narrow predictors that then may be matched to specific transformational leadership behaviours. This may prove useful for prediction purposes.

A related concept that is gaining increasing momentum in the literature is the construct of proactive personality. Individuals with proactive personalities identify opportunities, show initiative, and bring about meaningful change through perseverance (Crant, 1995). Researchers should examine the impact that proactive personality has on the identification of transformational leaders. A scale to measure proactive personalities, called the Proactive Personality Scale (PPS) has been proposed by Bateman and Crant (1993). The PPS consists of 17 items such as “if I believe in something I will make it happen”. Respondents are instructed to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with items such as this. It has been suggested that people with high agreement on this measure are more likely to perform better in jobs that involve high interaction, such as a leadership role. Moreover, proactive personality has been positively linked to supervisors’ perceptions of charismatic leadership (Crant & Bateman, 2000). This is an area of research that deserves further attention in relation to military leadership.

Another potential area of future research may be to advocate the use of measures that can identify deviant behavior. Rather than focusing on the positive personality qualities of potential soldiers in the military, for example, researchers should focus on those behaviors that cause soldiers to fail or drop out of training and seek proper ways to measure them. This

area of study may be particularly important for the selection of cadets into basic training camps. It has been suggested that people with certain personalities have difficulty prospering in the military, which makes this area of study more relevant (Magruder, 2000). Furthermore, identifying deviant behaviours may aid in the identification of those individuals who are likely to misuse force or weapons on the job (Inwald & Shusman, 1984).

Finally, the role of personality in groups must be examined in greater detail given the importance of group performance in the military. The question of whether or not group members with various personality characteristics influence group processes and outcomes must be examined in greater detail.

Recommendations

The search for better predictors of effective leadership behaviours must continue to receive high priority. The following recommendations are offered to the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI) for the selection and placement of military leaders regarding the use of personality measurement.

A FOCUS ON MULTIVARIATE MODELS

- 1) It is recommended that the CFLI move beyond the bivariate relationship between personality and transformational leadership and focus on other variables in relation to personality in the prediction of effective leadership behaviours. New models to increase our understanding of individual differences on factors such as personality and various leader behaviours are continuing to emerge in the literature. For instance, as previously stated, the MTL model proposed by Chan and Drasgow (2001) suggests a multivariate approach to the study of leadership. This model draws on various theories of leadership as opposed to just one theoretical domain to try to explain leadership behaviours. The CFLI should continue to monitor and evaluate models such as these as they arise in the literature to see if these various approaches to
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studying leadership can be empirically supported. The CFLI can then use this information to further their own interests in developing integrative models to predict leadership behaviours.

PERSONALITY MEASUREMENT

2) NARROW OR BROAD

The choice of using broad or narrow personality measurement will depend on the purpose of the personality assessment. However, the more specific facets of personality may be more useful in the selection of leaders. Aggregating the facets into one dimension has the potential of losing information because it becomes impossible to examine which of the facets are responsible for prediction if the dimension is a successful predictor. Zaccaro, Foti & Kenny (1991) suggest that lower level traits are superior to higher level ones in their ability to predict effective leadership. As well, for developmental purposes a focus on the narrower traits may be more suitable. That is, if it is the specific characteristics of military leaders that one is trying to identify then, any of the specific traits regardless of how narrow they are will offer valuable information for increasing performance. Moreover, more narrowly defined criteria may match up to more narrowly defined components of the MLQ, which is typically used to assess transformational leadership.

3) ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

It is recommended that the CFLI explore alternative ways to measure personality in relation to transformational leadership behaviours and use these measures in conjunction with the FFM of personality. For instance, the related concept of proactive personality should be researched in greater depth to determine its usefulness. Furthermore, the development of a behaviourally based interview based on the FFM of personality with questions where the content is based on

transformational leadership behaviours may be advantageous for selection purposes.

Scores on various measures could then be compared. Doing so may also serve to increase the reliability of ratings obtained from each measure.

PERSONAL AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT

- 4) It is recommended that the CFLI use personality assessments for subordinates as well as superiors. Superiors will be able to use this information in order to have a clearer picture of how others view them within the military context. Many experts believe that transformational leadership behaviours are learnable and as such can be trained. With an understanding of the personality characteristics that are responsible for effective leadership behaviours as well as how others perceive them, leaders within the military will be able to focus on areas that they need to develop. This in turn will foster the development of effective leaders within the military context.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF STUDY

- 5) In order to identify which personality characteristics may be influential in leadership prediction, it is also recommended that the CFLI conduct field studies in operational situations, which may be paramount to the process. Furthermore, simulated situations such as leaderless group discussions and action learning situations may provide even more insight into the characteristics of effective leaders. There may also be utility in testing the relationship between personality and transformational leadership in a number of different environments.

Conclusions

Given that leadership is a valued commodity within both the private and public sectors, the necessity of ensuring its effectiveness is warranted. The question of what makes a leader great will continue to intrigue researchers. However, with each research endeavor aimed at discovering the personality characteristics that influence leadership behaviours more

pieces of the puzzle are put into place. Clearly, personality assessment procedures can be used to offer invaluable information to officers and other superior ranks about their strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve their overall leadership effectiveness. Moreover, personality measurement can offer information to enhance or influence the validity of effective leadership prediction. This in turn will have many practical implications for increasing the performance of the military leader.

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