

The Study on Relationship between the Traits of Leaders and the Performance of the Leaders under Different Organizational Cultures¹

ETUDE DE LA RELATION ENTRE LES TRAITS DE LEADERS ET LEUR PERFORMANCE SOUS DE DIFFERENTES CULTURES ORGANISATIONNELLES

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Abstract: Regarded leader's traits as independent variables, performance as dependent variables, organizational culture as control variables, this paper found that under the innovation-orientation culture, the tuition type of perception type, risk-taking, and artistic subscale significantly and positively correlated with performance. Under the support-orientation culture, the affiliation motive and the ability of understanding diction have a significantly positive correlation with performance. Under rule-orientation culture, the power motive, the conventional subscale, and the ability of analyzing datum have a significantly positive correlation with performance. Thus, the hypothesis of the leader's trait theories based on context proposed in this paper is validated.

Key words: traits, organizational culture, leadership

Résumé: En considérant les traits de leaders comme variables indépendantes, la performance comme variable dépendante, la culture organisationnelle comme variable de contrôle, l'article présent trouve que, sous la culture d'innovation-orientation, le type de frais scolaires du type de perception, le risque-recette et le subscale artistique se rapportent significativement et catégoriquement à la performance. Sous la culture de support-orientation, le motif d'affiliation et l'aptitude de compréhension du langage a une corrélation évidente avec la performance. Sous la culture de règle-orientation, la force motrice, le subscale conventionnel et la capacité d'analyse des données a un lien effectif avec la performance. Ce faisant, les hypothèses des théories de traits de leaders basées sur le contexte dans l'article s'avèrent fondées.

Mots-Clés: traits, culture organisationnelle, direction

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic world, leaders play an important role in every organization. Leaders are needed to challenge themselves, to create visions of the future, and to inspire their followers to achieve the visions.

There has been extensive research examining the issues of leadership. Since the 1930s, leadership theory has been the focus in the fields of psychology and

management science. Researchers have focused not only on the difference between leaders and no leaders, but also on the difference between leadership and management, on the relationship between leaders and general managers, and especially on the issue of leaders themselves and the effectiveness of leadership. In the earlier studies of trait, Gibb (1947), Jenkins (1947), and Stogdill^a (1948) etc. recognized several characteristics that were associated with leader's performance. The studies of traits identified a large number of personal

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characteristics such as gender, height, physical energy and appearance as well as psychological traits and motives such as authoritarianism, intelligence, need for achievement, and need for power. As these studies were intended to identify a set of traits that would always differentiate leaders from followers and effective from ineffective leaders, the search failed.

Behavior theories describe the behavior of individuals in position of authority, and relating these descriptions to various criteria of leader effectiveness. There are three influential studies from various groups of investigators, including Robert Bales and his associates at Harvard (Bales, 1954), members of the Ohio State Leadership Center (Stogdill^b & Coons, 1957), and members of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan (Kahn & Katz, 1953; Likert, 1961; Mann, 1965). The behavioral theories succeed in identifying consistent relationships between leadership behavior and group performance. But the discusses on behavioral theories still lack of considering situational factors.

Now, researchers mainly studied the effectiveness of leadership according to the contingency idea. By considering both of the leader's behavior and context, they researched how leaders should do in order to obtain good performance under a certain context. For example, Fiedler has identified three contingency dimensions that, he argues, define the key situational factors that determine leadership effectiveness. These are leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Cognitive resource theory (CRT) is a person-by-situation interaction theory in experienced by leaders and followers (Fiedler, 1995). Path-goal theory proposes two classes of situational variables: environmental contingency factors (task structure, the formal authority system, and the work group), subordinate contingency factors (locus of control, experience, and perceived ability). Seeing the studies of contingency theories, it is not difficult to us to find that the focus mainly on the relationship between the behaviors and the contexts. Apart from the study of CRT of Fiedler, there is no literature about the study of the relationship between the context and the traits, which made the research of leadership issues lack of comprehensive. Based on the reviews on the literature of leadership issues, the hypothesis is proposed that different context needs the leaders with different traits.

Among recent studies of leadership theories, leaders' traits and context are combined. The Value Based Leadership Theory is one of these. The Value Based Leadership Theory is the extension of the

charismatic leadership theories put forward in 1976. The value based leadership theory regards leader motive profile (LMP) and confidence and conviction as the predictors of the charismatic leaders' behaviors. In addition, the theory specifies many context factors, which help to facilitate the enactment of leader dispositions, and emergence and effectiveness of value based leadership. In a word, the value based leadership theory researches the relationship between the context and the emergence and the effectiveness of the charismatic leaders' behaviors. For example, Pillai and Meindl and House found that the crisis facilitated the emergence of charismatic leadership (Pillai & Meindl, 1991). The studies by Waldman and Ramirez and House have shown that when under the uncertain conditions the charismatic leadership is the most effective (Waldman & Ramirez, 1996). House et al. (1996) found that charismatic leaderships more effective for CEOs in entrepreneurial firms than chief executives of divisions of large industrial or commercial organizations.

Robert points out in his study : the dominant portion of leadership theories and researches is primarily concerned with relationships between leaders and their immediate followers or with supervisory behaviors. Researchers believed that leader-follower relationships exist. But the environmental context in which leadership is enacted has been almost completely ignored (Robert J. House, 1997).

In a word, the studies of the leadership theories almost focus on the relationship between the context and leader behavior and on the leader traits. And researchers seldom investigate the relationship between the context and the leader traits.

Proposition: *The different context needs the leaders with different traits.*

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Framework

The research framework of this study is shown in Figure1.

In the study, the traits of leaders are regarded as independent variables, and the performance as dependent variables, the organizational culture as the control variables. By the means of multiple regressions, the relationship between the traits and the performance under different organizational culture is studied.

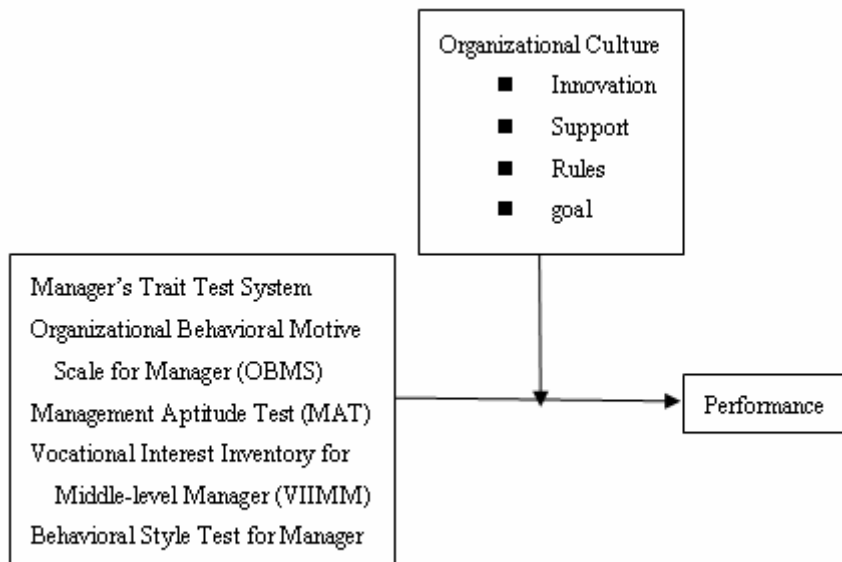


Figure 1 Research Framework

2.2 Sample

This paper is orientated to study the activities of middle-level managers. Because the activities of middle-level managers are more of leadership process than the ones of primary-level managers. On the other hand, the number of high-level managers of each firm is not enough to form effective sample.

Finally, a sample of 130 middle-level managers from four firms are identified, namely XYHH; XAKY; BJCL; SCCH. Among these, XYHH and XAKY are joint-venture enterprises, and the later two are state-owned enterprises.

2.3 Measurement

2.3.1 Measurement of traits

There are many instrument assessing leader's trait, such as SCII (Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory) and KVPR (Kuder Vocational Preference Record) and so on. The trait criterion adopted in this paper is based on the measurement criterion of managers' traits developed by the research group organized by Personnel Test Center of China National Personnel Department. In this assessing system, there are four categories: Behavioral Organizational Motive Scale for Manager (OBMS), Behavioral Style Test for Manager (BSTM), Vocational Interest Inventory of Middle-level Manager (VIIMM), and Management Aptitude Test (MAT).

Organizational Behavior Motive Scale for Manager (OBMS). OBMS was invented by combining the testing theories, motivation theories, organizational behavioral theories and affluent researches for the manager's motivational trait. It was composed of five subscales: Power motivation, Avoiding failure, Striving for success, Risk decision, and Affiliation motivation.

Behavioral Style Test for Manager (BSTM). It is designed to investigate the manager's personality

factors and behavioral style. The test consists of five subscales, which are assumed to assess general psychological preference, perception type, thinking type, action type, and emotional stability. All these scales are described as two poles such as Introversion-extroversion; Sense-intuition; Thinking-feeling; Judging-perception, and Stability-instability of emotion respectively.

Vocational Interest Inventory for Middle-level Manager (VIIMM). VIIMM was developed based on the combinations of J.L.Holland's Vocational-Personality types, the value of the foreign interest scales and the Chinese culture. VIIMM was composed of 6 subscales: Artistic aptitude; Conventional aptitude; Operating aptitude; Investigating aptitude; Mechanical aptitude and Social aptitude.

Management Aptitude Test (MAT). Management aptitude was defined as a kind of mental trait which cover wide range of activity, which is a stable potential ability less influenced by instructions. MAT based on many studies of vocational ability test, such as DAT; GATB; CAPS. MAT consists of five subscales: Understanding diction, Judging and deducing, Quantitative relations, analyzing information and tactics of thought.

2.3.2 Measurement of Organizational Culture.

Researchers have classified organizational culture from various views, such as the force of organizational culture, the adaptability of organizational culture, stratagem and so on. Among these classification methods, The model developed by Focus Study Group is much famous, which was based on the Quinn's Competing Values Model of Organizational Culture (CVM) and the De Witte and De Cock's research on organizational climate. Based on the classification criterion, the questionnaire assessing organizational culture is developed, which classified organizational culture into four types: support, innovation, rule and goal.

In the process of data collection, the sample is decided using the random sampling method in the high-level managers, middle-level managers and works individually. Two or three people of each hierarchy in a firm are selected to complete the questionnaire. At last, more than eighty percent of administrated questionnaires were returned.

2.3.3 Measurement of Leader's performance

This study is aimed to investigate the effective leaders' traits under a certain context. So the Effectiveness of leadership must be measured. There are four common methods to appraising performance: alternation ranking method, paired comparison method, rating scale method and forced distribution method. Rating scale method is the simplest and most popular method for appraising performance. In this method, estimator rates each ratees by circling or checking the score that best describes his or her performance. Forced distribution method is similar to grading on a curve. With this method, predetermined percentages of ratees are place in performance. Alternation ranking method means that department executive or some people familiar with stuff rank employee' performance from best to worst. Paired comparison method means that every employee is paired with and compared to every other employee. Alternation ranking method and paired comparison method will increase the estimator's workload. So when the number of leaders estimated is high, rating scale method and forced distribution method will be adapted. Forced distribution method is used in this study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the measurement above, regarding organizational culture as control variable, performance as dependent variable, leader's traits as independent variables, the relationships between performance and leader's traits under different organizational cultures are investigated by the means of the multiple regressions.

3.1 Innovation Culture.

Under innovation culture, T value of every trait and the regression equation is shown in Table 1.

The T-value reveals the statistically significant relationships between the performance and the three traits: risk-taking; artistic; sensing-intuition manner. Among of these, the regression coefficient of the trait for sensing-intuition is negative. Since there are two extremes value of the trait, high value means sensing type, and low value means intuition type. The result indicates that the more leaning to intuition type leaders are, the better their performance is. Furthermore, the regression coefficient of the two items of traits, risk-taking and artistic is positive. This suggests that

the more forceful risk-taking and artistic are, the better the performance is.

Since the leaders being of intuition manner of receiving information, are of some characteristic, such as broad vision, deducibility, abstract, orientation to future. When facing new things, they can accept the things more quickly and can understand them. They can also reduce the time on thinking proceeding in the process of complex leadership activity. They intuitively make a judgment or a decision quickly, and make a prediction of a decision or of the development of something. They are good at discovering new opportunities, and make great effort to create new opportunities. They always cannot bear stable conditions. All of these are adapt to the innovation culture, which emphasizes to collect and explain information, and to transfer the information into response behavior, and to keep an open manner on motivation. Thus, innovation culture is favorable to the leaders' advantage of intuition. So under this kind of culture, leaders with intuition manner are apt to make high performance.

People with artistic tendency on professional interest are of creativity, and are willing to deal with conception rather than affairs, and are relatively open and self-help. Innovation culture is the type of organizational condition emphasizing creativity. People all give high evaluation on innovational, creative, and risk behaviors. Therefore, leaders' creative activities are inspired greatly. So under innovation culture, leaders with artistic tendency are apt to make high performance.

Leaders leaning to risk-decision on behavioral motivation dare to undertake risk and to make decisions. Under innovational culture, most people tend to select high-risk scheme, which can reduce the factors that are considered in the process of making decision under risk. So under the innovation culture, leaders with high risk-decision are apt to make high performance.

In a word, the traits of risk-taking, artistic-tendency and intuition are suitable with the innovation culture.

In order to analyze the relative importance of the influence of each trait upon leadership performance, we calculate the R square change of the three items of the traits entering the regression equation. The result is shown in Table 2.

This result suggests that under innovation culture, the most important traits that effects leadership performance is intuition manner of receiving information, and the less important one is artistic tendency on professional interest, and the least important one is risk-taking on behavioral motivation.

Table 1: Results for leader's traits under innovation culture

Variable name and code		T-value	Sig.	β
OBMS	Power Motive (PO)	0.189	0.851	
	Tendency to avoid failure (AV)	0.022	0.982	
	Tendency to approach success (AC)	0.912	0.369	
	Risk-taking (RI)	4.754**	0.000	0.464
	Affiliation Motive (AF)	-0.585	0.563	
VIIMM	Artistic (YS)	4.620**	0.000	0.448
	Conventional (XS)	0.523	0.605	
	Enterprising (JY)	-1.570	0.127	
	Investigate (YJ)	1.150	0.259	
	Mechanical (JN)	0.728	0.473	
	Artistic (YS)	0.107	0.916	
BSTM	Thinking-feeling (FT)	-0.287	0.776	
	Extrovert-introvert (IE)	0.001	0.999	
	Sensing-intuition (NS)	-5.572**	0.000	-0.538
	Judgment-perception (PJ)	-0.737	0.467	
	Emotional stability (ES)	-1.454	0.157	
MAT	Verbal understanding (YYLJ)	1.453	0.157	
	Judgment and reasoning (PDL)	-0.524	0.605	
	Quantitative relation (SLGX)	0.405	0.688	
	Analyzing data (ZLFX)	1.098	0.281	
	Tactics of thinking (SWCL)	1.463	0.154	
Regression equation : performance=-3.721-0.538NS+0.464RI+0.448YS (R ² =0.725 , F=21.347 , **p<0.05)				

Table 2: Comparative importance under innovation culture

Interpreted Variables	ΔR^2
Risk-taking (RI)	0.155
Artistic (YS)	0.196
Sensing-intuition (NS)	0.375

3.2 Support culture

Under support culture, T value of every trait and the regression equation is shown in Table 3.

The T-value reveals the statistically significant relationships between the performance and the two items of traits: affiliation motive and the ability of verbal understanding. Among of these, the regression coefficient of the two items of traits is positive. This suggests that the more strong affiliation motive and the ability of verbal understanding are, the better the performance is.

The leaders with high affiliation motive are willing to affiliate with others, willing to participate in social activities. The support culture is just of the characteristic that emphasizes participation, cooperation, sociality, trust and group cohesion. The characteristic is in accordance with the high affiliation motive.

The leaders with stronger ability of verbal

understanding can effectively communicate with the colleague and can clearly describe the expectation of organization to the subordinates, which is just satisfied the need of the situation. Under support culture, verbal and informal communication is always adapted. Employees are encouraged to actively put forth their views on job. So under this kind of situation, leaders with stronger ability of verbal understanding are more prone to lead to timely communication and good performance.

In order to investigate the comparative importance of leader's traits on performance in support culture, R square change of the two items of traits, affiliation motive and the ability of verbal understanding, that entering the regression equation was calculated. The result was shown in Table 4.

The result of table 4 reveals that affiliation motive has more affect on performance than the ability of verbal understanding does.

Table 3: Results for leader's traits under support culture

Variable name and code		T value	Sig	β
OBMS	Power Motive (PO)	-0.370	0.718	
	Tendency to avoid failure (AV)	1.097	0.294	
	Tendency to approach success (AC)	0.640	0.534	
	Risk-taking (RI)	1.216	0.247	
	Affiliation Motive (AF)	7.810**	0.000	0.650
VIIMM	Artistic (YS)	1.116	0.286	
	Conventional (XS)	0.213	0.835	
	Enterprising (JY)	0.480	0.640	
	Investigate (YJ)	0.474	0.644	
	Mechanical (JN)	0.061	0.953	
	Artistic (YS)	1.152	0.272	
BSTM	Thinking-feeling (FT)	-0.217	0.832	
	Extrovert-introvert (IE)	-0.166	0.871	
	Sensing-intuition (NS)	-0.342	0.738	
	Judgment-perception (PJ)	1.731	0.109	
	Emotional stability (ES)	0.336	0.743	
MAT	Verbal understanding (YYLJ)	5.740**	0.000	0.478
	Judgment and reasoning (PDTL)	1.374	0.195	
	Quantitative relation (SLGX)	1.289	0.222	
	Analyzing data (ZLFX)	1.012	0.332	
	Tactics of thinking (SWCL)	0.415	0.685	
Regression equation: performance=-11.730+0.650AF+0.478YYLJ (R ² =0.928, F=32.942, **p<0.05)				

Table 4: Comparative importance under support culture

Interpreted variable	ΔR^2
Affiliation motivation (AF)	0.746
Understanding diction (YYLJ)	0.182

3.2 Rule culture.

Under rule culture, T value of every trait and the regression equation is shown in Table 5.

The T-value reveals the statistically significant relationships between the performance and the three items of traits: power motive, conventional and the ability of analyzing data. The regression coefficient of the three items of traits is positive. This suggests that the stronger power motive, conventional and the ability of analyzing data are, the better the performance is.

The leaders with stronger ability of analyzing data will suffice for analyzing and finding problems from written data or existing data. So stronger ability of analyzing data can satisfied the need of rule culture that work process or management process must be scientific and logical. Thus risk-decision action is avoided, and organizational task is achieved step by step.

Rule culture emphasizes on specializing work and standardizing work. The ways of written

communication from top to bottom is always adapted in the organizations. The leaders who incline to conventional on vocational interest are of good ability of logic, and are willing to settle and arrange trifling affairs. So they always can lead high performance.

The leaders with stronger power motive try hard to attain, consolidate and use power, and try hard to influence and control others and control situations with their own thought and intention. All of these are just in accordance with the characteristic of rule orientation culture, which emphasizes on respecting authority and on obvious grade form of organization. According to LMP theory, the power motive is necessary for leaders to be effective because it induces them to engage in social influence behavior and such behavior is required for effective leadership. Further, highly power-motivated individuals obtain more satisfaction from the activity of influence and this satisfaction sustains their interest in the leadership. So the result of this study just validates the view of LMP theory.

In order to investigate the comparative importance of leader's traits on performance in rule culture, R square change of the three items of trait, power motive and conventional and the ability of analyzing data that entering the regression equation was calculated. The result was shown in Table 6.

The result of table 6 reveals that the trait playing the most important role on performance is the ability of analyzing data, and the less is conventional and the least is power motive.

Table 5: Results for leader's traits under rule culture

Variable name and code		T value	Sig	β
OBMS	Power Motive (PO)	11.625**	0.000	0.632
	Tendency to avoid failure (AV)	-0.838	0.411	
	Tendency to approach success (AC)	-1.419	0.170	
	Risk-taking (RI)	-0.935	0.360	
	Affiliation Motive (AF)	-0.071	0.944	
VIIMM	Artistic (YS)	1.660	0.111	
	Conventional (XS)	10.194**	0.000	0.549
	Enterprising (JY)	-0.059	0.954	
	Investigate (YJ)	-0.180	0.859	
	Mechanical (JN)	-1.550	0.136	
	Artistic (YS)	-0.537	0.597	
BSTM	Thinking-feeling (FT)	-0.037	0.971	
	Extrovert-introvert (IE)	-0.088	0.931	
	Sensing-intuition (NS)	0.315	0.756	
	Judgment-perception (PJ)	0.310	0.760	
	Emotional stability (ES)	-0.949	0.353	
MAT	Verbal understanding (YYLJ)	0.660	0.516	
	Judgment and reasoning (PDTL)	0.376	0.710	
	Quantitative relation (SLGX)	-0.519	0.609	
	Analyzing data (ZLFX)	8.680**	0.000	0.465
	Tactics of thinking (SWCL)	1.268	0.218	
Regression equation: performance=-15.686+0.632PO+0.549XS+0.465ZLFX ($R^2=0.937$, $F=103.918$, ** $p<0.05$)				

Table 6: Comparative importance under rule culture

Interpreted variable	ΔR^2
Power motivation (PO)	0.252
Conventional aptitude (XS)	0.283
Analyzing information (ZLFX)	0.402

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