

An Examination of the Impact of Personality on Implicit Leadership Theory

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Abstract

Leadership research and literature has experienced a renewed interest in the domain of leadership traits, as it currently focuses more on the perceptual processes that support leadership than on universal leadership traits that are considered to be effective in all situations (Epitropaki, 2004). This has led to a development of implicit leadership theory, which explains that there is a conceptual structure that defines leadership in the minds of people (Wenquan, 2000; Javidan, Dorfman, De Luque, & House, 2006). Theoretical research in the social-cognitive arena of leadership studies suggests that follower personality traits should affect their social perceptions that are used in the creation of implicit leadership prototypes (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). This quantitative study examines the relationship between follower Big-Five personality traits and implicit leadership theory dimensions. The results of the study indicate that the Big Five personality traits of sensitivity and conscientiousness have the strongest positive relationships with the implicit leadership dimensions of agreeableness and dedication, respectively.

An Examination of the Impact of Personality on Implicit Leadership

A significant portion of leadership research has focused on the role of followers' perceptions, expectations, and conceptual prototypes on leadership (Epitropaki, 2004). Within this arena of study, researchers have attempted to identify and describe leadership from various perspectives that have focused on traits, behaviors, and situations (Kenney, 1994). As leadership research has experienced a resurgence of interest in the domain of leadership traits, it is now focusing more on the way that followers view leader behavior than on universal leadership traits that were once considered to be effective in all situations (Epitropaki, 2004).

A cognitive-attribution approach has emerged that suggests that the followers' perception of a leader can actually determine the leader's success or failure (Kenney, 1994). Simply stated, successful leadership is in the eyes of the beholder, making a leader's success or failure dependent upon the leader's ability to influence the follower to act in accordance with the leader. Therefore, without follower responsiveness, there is no real power in leadership (Keller, 1999). Implicit leadership theory, an approach that states that there is a conceptual structure that defines leadership in the minds of people, has gained interest because of its focus on the follower group and its attempt to understand the factors regarding follower responsiveness to leaders (Wenquan, 2000).

Theoretical research in the social-cognitive arena of leadership studies suggests that follower personality traits should affect the social perceptions that are used by individuals to create their own implicit leadership theories and prototypes (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between follower personality types and implicit leadership theories and find which follower personality type has the greatest influence on implicit leadership theories.

Implicit Leadership Theory

Implicit leadership theories can offer important insights in organizations, especially in the sense-making process of understanding how employees interpret and react to leadership (Epitropaki, 2004). Leader judgments are typically based on categories found in the minds of followers, making the perceptions of the follower very important (Hall & Lord, 1995). People often use this relatively programmed and automatic categorization process as a basis from which social interactions take place (Engle & Lord, 1997; Epitropaki, 2005). These categorization processes, also known as implicit leadership theories, are used in dyadic relationships to categorize dyadic partners based upon their general impressions instead of upon past behaviors and interactions (Engle & Lord, 1997; Epitropaki, 2004).

Therefore, implicit leadership theories are basically stored in one's memory and are activated when one enters into a leader-follower relationship (Epitropaki, 2004). Implicit leadership theories are very important because they are the standards that followers use to calculate their impressions of leaders (Epitropaki, 2005). During this calculation, followers engage in the mental exercise of matching their personal implicit leadership theory to the actual leader, and the discrepancies in that exercise affect their overall impression of the leader (Epitropaki, 2005). This means that one's initial observation about another person can have a great impact on the future of the leader-follower relationship and can either lay the groundwork for a successful dyadic relationship that will develop with time or become a point of contention from the very beginning (Kenney, 1994).

Subsequently, leaders are categorized on the perceived match in the mind of the follower based upon their behavior and character and the preexisting prototypic attributes of a leader (Epitropaki, 2004). Therefore, a potential leader's opportunity to become and remain a leader does not depend solely on their behavior but also on the way in which the followers process their behavior through their personal, implicit leadership prototype (Felfe, 2007).

Development of Personal Implicit Leadership Theories

Children between the ages of five and six years old begin to develop their personal implicit leadership theories as they begin to understand what good leadership looks like (Marnburg, 2007). This initial implicit leadership theory continues to develop through life and one's experiences with friends, teachers, and parents (Marnburg, 2007). Throughout life, implicit leadership theories are further developed and modified through various leader-follower relationships (Epitropaki, 2004).

People tend to characterize leaders who are similar to themselves as ideal (Keller, 1999). People become leaders in the minds of others when they exhibit potential leadership behaviors or characteristics that touch upon the follower group's ideal of how a leader should act and operate. If a person continues to demonstrate distinguishable behaviors that are consistent with the group's implicit leadership theory, leadership will then be recognized in that person (Kenney, 1994). For example, if a group of people expects leaders to be more charismatic than other group members, then the person who conforms most to this, as well as other expectations, will tend to be thought of as the leader. Within a group, several expectations may exist, and the person who meets the most of these expectations will often be considered the leader (Kenney, 1994).

Implicit Leadership Prototypes

The emphasis on leadership prototypes that result from implicit leadership theories is consistent with trait research in leadership, which has regularly identified multiple traits as being connected to leadership perceptions or the development of a person as a leader in social situations (Shondrick, Dinh, & Lord, 2010). Followers do not often have identical leader prototypes in mind, but there is likely some agreement amongst prototypes of members in an organization (Hall & Lord, 1995). This means that leaders do not have to fit every one of the categories perfectly to be considered a leader, as the categories in the prototypes do not need to be completely filled (Hall & Lord, 1995).

Previous studies have found that people use categories developed through implicit leadership theories to differentiate between those in the group who are leaders and those who are non-leaders (Kenney, 1994). It is important for leaders to understand that followers are not judging them according to a certain pre-determined, universal standard, but rather according to their own personal implicit leadership theory (Engle & Lord, 1997). Once a follower has labeled a leader, it is very difficult to change the initial impression that became the foundation from which a successful leader-follower relationship may develop (Engle & Lord, 1997). Therefore, the first impression that dyads have of each other is very important and will have a lasting impact.

This is crucial for leaders to understand because the manner in which leaders are perceived by followers influences the amount of power or discretion that the followers give to the leader (Epitropaki, 2005). The information within these prototypes is often abstract and simply represents a wide range of potential characteristics that are also found in many other things in life such as animals, cars, emotions, and people (Brunette, 2010; Shondrick et al., 2010). This information is unconsciously formulated into leadership prototypes that help set expectations in the minds of followers as to what leaders should look like and how the follower should respond to leaders (Shondrick et al, 2010).

These mental prototypes enable people to quickly process information in the leader-follower relationship, freeing up the critical thinking facilities within the mind to focus and work on other problem solving issues within the team (Shondrick et al., 2010). Implicit leadership theories are used by followers to find meaning in the actions and behavior of the leader (Engle & Lord, 1997). Unfortunately for leaders, there is the possibility that the meaning that followers obtain as the leader's behavior is processed through their implicit leadership theory may be completely different than the desired meaning that the leader would like to communicate. Therefore, the perception that the follower has of the leader's action is more important than the actual action of the leader and greatly affects leader-follower relationships (Engle & Lord, 1997).

In light of implicit leadership theory and specifically the importance of the perceptions of followers, it is crucial for leaders to know what characteristics and type of leadership is expected by the follower group so that they are able to lead with legitimacy and establish trust (Kenney, 1994). In leadership, follower perception is reality. One of the challenges that leaders must overcome stems from the reality that followers categorize leaders by using their idealistic implicit leadership theories that cannot be fully met in reality (Kenney, 1994). Although it is unrealistic to believe that a leader can fully meet all of the implicit leadership theories held by a single follower or a follower group, leaders can improve their success by examining the implicit leadership theories held by their followers and adapting their leadership style and behaviors when possible to meet those theories.

Research on Implicit Leadership Theories

Implicit leadership theories provide leadership relationships stability and predictability as they simplify the information-processing demands that social interactions require (Engle & Lord, 1997). Although leadership research in the past has focused more on the characteristics of the leader than the follower, the importance of follower perception of leaders has led to more attention given to follower social and cognitive processes (Hall & Lord, 1995). These social and cognitive processes occur very quickly and set the foundation for further cognitive processing that occurs within the leader-follower relationship (Hall & Lord, 1995). Because implicit leadership theories vary across perceivers, one way to achieve a better understanding of the variances in leadership perceptions is through an analysis of individuals' self-identities (MacDonald, Sulsky, & Brown, 2008). "At the individual level, affective responses to a leader may vary depending upon follower characteristics" (Hall & Lord, 1995, p. 267). Hall and Lord (1995) explain that shared characteristics between follower and leaders may lead to common liking because people tend to characterize a leader who is similar to themselves as ideal (Keller, 1999).

Research on personality similarities and attraction suggests that people tend to prefer others who are similar to themselves (Duck, 1975; Urberg, Degirmencioglu, & Tolson, 2009; Linden-Andersen, Markiewicz, & Doyle, 2009). Therefore, the personality type of a follower should have a significant effect on the implicit leadership theory that the follower holds (Lord et al., 1986) because people should be attracted to leaders who are similar to themselves. This is important to understand because if implicit leadership theories are met by a leader, that leader is usually considered a good leader, resulting in productive leader-follower relationships (Marnburg, 2007). Previous studies have also shown that employees' implicit leadership theories have indirect effects on their attitude and well-being (Epitropaki, 2005), increasing the need for organizations to ensure that leaders are cognizant of and attempting to fulfill follower implicit leadership theories. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how personality affects implicit leadership theories.

In this study, implicit leadership theory is examined by utilizing the eight dimensions of implicit leadership theory that were identified by Offermann et al. (1994) as: (a) sensitivity, (b) dedication, (c) charisma, (d) attractiveness, (e) intelligence, (f) strength, (g) tyranny, and (h) masculinity. The cognitive structures that are used in the formation of implicit leadership theories are very stable and do not normally change very quickly in the minds of followers (Epitropaki, 2005). Therefore, these eight dimensions may be viewed as relatively stable and are appropriate for this study as potential relationships between these dimensions of implicit leadership theory and personality types are explored.

Big Five Personality

Personality is the emotional, relational, pragmatic, attitudinal, and motivational style that helps to explain one's behavior in different circumstances (McCrae & Costa, 1989). The Big Five personality model, also known as the five factor model, is a conceptualization of personality that has been widely accepted as the gold standard in research and psychological assessment all over the world (Ahmad, 2010).

The basic five traits dimensions have been labeled as: (a) extraversion, (b) agreeableness, (c) conscientiousness, (d) neuroticism, and (e) openness to experience (RaduanChe, Ramalu, Uli, & Kumar, 2010). These dimensions have been satisfactorily accepted for describing key features of personality and have been found to affect behavior patterns in many different life domains (Ahmad, 2010). These five personality traits are used in the study to examine how differences in follower personality affect implicit leadership theories. Research on personalities and attraction has shown that people prefer people who are similar to themselves (Duck, 1975; Urberg et al., 2009; Linden-Andersen, et al., 2009). Therefore, the following Big Five personality traits are examined by using this personality attraction theory to hypothesize how the various Big Five personality traits relate to eight different implicit leadership theory dimensions (Offermann et al., 1994).

Extraversion

Extraverted individuals will prefer people who are like them and are active, assertive, animated, and outgoing (Ahmad, 2010). Their leadership prototypes will include people who are very sociable and enjoy being a part of groups and gatherings (RaduanChe et al., 2010). Leaders will be expected to be very self-confident, dominant, show positive emotions, and have a greater need for stimulation in life (Bakker et al., 2006). Extraverts have also been identified as the personality group that is the most content and happy in life (Barnett, 2006). Therefore, in the present study, the following is predicted:

H1: Extraversion will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of charisma and strength.

The follower personality trait of extraversion is hypothesized to affect the implicit leadership theory dimension of charisma because charisma describes the prototypical leader as energetic, charismatic, inspiring, enthusiastic, and dynamic (Offermann et al., 1994). The implicit leadership theory dimension of charisma has many similarities to the personality trait of extraversion. The implicit leadership theory dimension of strength values leaders who are strong and bold (Offermann et al., 1994) and its shared similarities with extraversion serve as the basis for the hypothesized relationship.

Agreeableness

Agreeable people will prefer people who are like them and are characterized as altruistic, nurturing, and caring individuals who are soft-hearted (Barnett, 2006). Leaders who are ruthless, self-centered, or hostile would not be considered to be good leaders to them (Bakker et al., 2006). Agreeable people look for leaders who are self-controlled and exhibit little aggression (RaduanChe et al., 2006). Therefore, in the present study, the following is predicted:

H2: Agreeableness will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimension of sensitivity.

The implicit leadership theory dimension of sensitivity describes the prototypical leader as sympathetic, sensitive, compassionate, understanding, sincere, warm, forgiving, and merciful (Offermann et al., 1994), which is very similar to the follower personality trait of agreeableness, providing the basis for the hypothesized relationship.

Conscientiousness

The conscientious personality prefers leaders who are like them and are very responsible, hardworking, and organized (RaduanChe et al., 2006). They view leaders as people who are persistent in their motivation and thoroughness which helps to facilitate goal-directed behavior (Ahmad, 2010). Conscientious individuals admire leaders who are very good with problem-solving and, because of their persistence, are also able to personally accomplish many things (Bakker et al., 2006). Therefore, in the present study, the following is predicted:

H3: Conscientiousness will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimension of dedication.

The implicit leadership theory dimension of dedication values leaders who are dedicated, motivated, hardworking, and goal-oriented (Offermann et al., 1994). This dimension closely resembles the personality type of conscientiousness and is the basis for this hypothesized relationship.

Neuroticism

Neurotic individuals will not be afraid of leaders who have high levels of anxiety, antagonism, irritability, and nervousness because they experience the same feelings (Ahmad, 2010). Because of these frequent feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and disgust (RaduanChe et al., 2010), they have high expectations for leaders and evaluate their results harshly (Bakker et al., 2005). Therefore, in the present study, the following is predicted:

H4: Neuroticism will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of tyranny and masculinity.

The implicit leadership theory dimension of tyranny appreciates leaders who are domineering, pushy, dominant, manipulative, power-hungry, conceited, loud, selfish, obnoxious, and demanding (Offermann et al., 1994). Again, the similarities between the definitions of the two variables are the basis for the hypothesized relationship. The implicit leadership theory dimension of masculinity refers to leaders who are both male and masculine (Offermann et al., 1994). Because the neurotic individual often has a poor self-image and feelings of inferiority (RaduanChe et al., 2010), it is hypothesized that they will have a preference to the implicit leadership dimension of masculinity.

Openness to Experience

Individuals who are open to experience prefer leaders who are curious and appreciate change (Ahmad, 2010). They believe that leaders should be willing to try new ideas and tolerate ambiguity and dissonance well (RaduanChe et al., 2010). Individuals who have openness to experience expect leaders to take an intellectually curious approach when they deal with stressful situations (RaduanChe et al., 2010). Leaders should be imaginative, artistic, and prefer a variety of different things over a routine (Barnett, 2006). Therefore, in the present study, the following is predicted:

H5: Openness to experience will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of attractiveness and intelligence.

The implicit leadership theory dimension of attractiveness appreciates leaders who are well-groomed, attractive, well-dressed, and classy (Offermann et al., 1994). The shared similarities with the personality dimension of openness to experiences serves as the basis for the hypothesized relationship. The implicit leadership theory dimension of intelligence describes the ideal leader as one who is intellectual, educated, intelligent, wise, knowledgeable, and clever (Offermann et al., 1994). The similarities between the two variables serve as the reasoning for the hypothesized relationship.

Methodology

Many of the previous studies on implicit leadership theory have not been done within a single organizational context (Epitropaki, 2005). In this study, the sample group is comprised of international workers from the Christian & Missionary Alliance, a group that sends workers around the world for relief and development, business development, and church development.

Sample Group and Setting

The participants for the study are international workers with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, a large organization that currently has workers in 64 different countries. Two hundred and eighty international worker units (couples might share the same email) were randomly selected and received an invitation through an email to complete a survey online. One hundred and sixty-seven completed surveys were obtained, and there were 46 responses from international workers serving on the continent of Africa (27.5%), 45 from Europe (26.9%), 38 from South America (22.8%), 36 from Asia (21.6%), and two from North America (1.2%). Forty-six percent of the respondents were female, 56% male.

The age of the participants differed as 16.2% were between 20-35 years old, 41.9% were between 36-50 years old, and 41.9% were older than 51. The years of service for the international workers in the study varied as 35.9% had served between 0-10 years, 24.6% between 11-20 years, 24% between 21-30 years, and 15.6% had served more than 31 years. The level of leadership that the participants had on the field differed as 52.7% held no official leadership position, 34.1% served on a leadership team, and 13.2% served as a field director who leads a work in a specific country or region. The participants were assured that their survey results would be kept anonymous and confidential.

Measures

Two measures were used in the survey to measure the independent variables for personality and the dependent variables for implicit leadership theory prototypes, both of which have been tested and found to be reliable in earlier studies. The two following scales were accompanied in the questionnaire by additional questions about gender, age, continent of service, years of service, and level of leadership as those variables serve as the control variables in the study. These control variables were chosen to help ensure that the study focuses on the actual hypothesized relationships.

Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann's (2003) Very Brief Measure of the Big-Five Personalities

Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann's (2003) research produced a ten-question scale for researchers to use when time is limited to perform a measure on the Big-Five personality dimensions. The survey asks the participants to rate the extent to which the different traits apply to them, even if one trait applies stronger than the other (Gosling et al., 2003). This scale utilizes a 7 point Likert-type scale with 1 = disagree strongly and 7 = agree strongly.

Each of the Big-Five personalities is targeted in two questions, resulting in an even distribution of the number of questions that correlate to each personality type. Although the 10-item scale is somewhat inferior to the longer multi-item instruments, the instrument has reached adequate levels of reliability (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). The test-retest reliability of the Very Brief Measure (VBM) was acceptable (mean $r = .68$), but lower than the test-retest reliability of John and Srivastava's (1999) Big-Five Inventory (BFI) (mean $r = .80$).

Offermann, Kennedy & Writz's (1994) Scale of Implicit Leadership Theories

Offermann et al.'s (1994) research produced a list of 41 characteristics to describe prototypical models of leadership. These characteristics were narrowed down to eight main dimensions of leadership: (a) sensitivity, (b) dedication, (c) charisma, (d) attractiveness, (e) intelligence, (f) strength, (g) tyranny, and (h) masculinity. It is important to note that the dimensions created by Offermann et al. include some undesirable characteristics of leadership as well (Keller, 1999). The survey asks the participants to rate how characteristic they feel that each of the 41 given personality traits are important for leaders. This scale utilizes a 10 point Likert-type scale with 1 = "Not at All Characteristic" and 10 = "Extremely Characteristic" to rate their perceptions (Offermann et al., 1994).

Method of Analysis

The hypotheses were tested through a regression analysis performed with SPSS software. Each hypothesis focuses on a potential relationship between one or two of the dimensions of implicit leadership theory and one of the Big-Five personality types.

Results

The relationships between the Big Five personalities and the eight implicit leadership theory dimensions were examined in terms of predicted relationships as the hypotheses were tested. For all of the following regression analyses that were used to test the hypotheses through the use of SPSS linear regression, control variables (gender, age, years of service, level of leadership) were entered first followed by the five independent variables from the Big Five personality list. The implicit leadership prototype was entered as the dependent variable.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis states that extraversion will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of charisma and strength. In the first regression analysis used to test this hypothesis, charisma was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was not significant ($F(10,156) = 1.11, p = .36$). There were no coefficients that were significantly different from 0 in the regression.

Table 1: Multiple Linear Regressions for H1 with the Dependent Variable of Charisma

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	.09	-.09
Age	-.19	-.11
Years of Service	.18	.12
Continent of Service	.10	.10
Level of Leadership	.04	-.03
Extraversion		.15
Agreeableness		.05
Conscientiousness		.01
Neuroticism		.05
Openness to Experience		.07
R ²	.03	.07
R ² Change	.03	.04
df	(5,161)	(10, 156)
F	1.00	1.11

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

During the second regression analysis required for this hypothesis, strength was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was not significant (F(10,156) = 1.24, p = .27). There were no coefficients that were significantly different from 0 in the regression. Therefore, H1 is not supported.

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regressions for H1 with the Dependent Variable of Strength

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	.13	.12
Age	-.19	-.16
Years of Service	-.02	-.05
Continent of Service	.08	.08
Level of Leadership	.01	.02
Extraversion		.01
Agreeableness		.05
Conscientiousness		.01
Neuroticism		.02
Openness to Experience		.09
R ²	.06	.07
R ² Change	.06	.01
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	2.04	1.24

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis states that agreeableness will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimension of sensitivity. During this regression analysis, sensitivity was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was significant (F(10,156) = 3.31, p < .001). The coefficients for the control variable of level of leadership ($\beta = -.18$, p < .05) and the Big Five personality type of agreeableness ($\beta = .40$, p < .001) were significant. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Table 3: Multiple Linear Regressions for H2 with the Dependent Variable of Sensitivity

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	.06	.13
Age	-.09	-.03
Years of Service	.15	.06
Continent of Service	.03	.04
Level of Leadership	-.16	-.18*
Extraversion		.12
Agreeableness		.40***
Conscientiousness		.01
Neuroticism		-.07
Openness to Experience		-.00
R ²	.03	.18
R ² Change	.03	.15
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	.83	3.31***

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis states that conscientiousness will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimension of dedication. During this regression analysis, dedication was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was significant ($F(10,156) = 2.22, p < .05$). The only coefficient that was significant in the regression was the Big Five personality type of conscientiousness ($\beta = .28, p < .001$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regressions for H3 with the Dependent Variable of Dedication

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	-.04	-.02
Age	-.13	-.11
Years of Service	.08	.07
Continent of Service	.06	.06
Level of Leadership	.00	-.03
Extraversion		-.09
Agreeableness		-.03
Conscientiousness		.28***
Neuroticism		.03
Openness to Experience		.14
R ²	.02	.12
R ² Change	.02	.10
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	.51	2.21

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis states that neuroticism will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of tyranny and masculinity. During the first regression analysis required for this hypothesis, tyranny was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was significant ($F(10,156) = 3.00, p < .01$). However, the only coefficient that was significant in the regression was the Big Five personality type of agreeableness ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$).

Table 5: Multiple Linear Regressions for H4 with the Dependent Variable of Tyranny

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	-.06	-.12
Age	.02	-.02
Years of Service	.12	.09
Continent of Service	-.10	-.11
Level of Leadership	-.06	-.02
Extraversion		-.00
Agreeableness		-.38***
Conscientiousness		-.03
Neuroticism		-.01
Openness to Experience		.01
R^2	.02	.16
R^2 Change	.02	.14
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	.60	3.00

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

During the second regression analysis required for this hypothesis, masculinity was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was not significant ($F(10,156) = 1.58, p = .12$). There were no coefficients that were significantly different from 0 in the regression. Therefore, H4 is not supported.

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regressions for H4 with the Dependent Variable of Masculinity

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	.21*	.20*
Age	-.00	-.08
Years of Service	.02	.09
Continent of Service	-.01	-.01
Level of Leadership	-.05	-.04
Extraversion		-.20*
Agreeableness		.02
Conscientiousness		-.10
Neuroticism		-.11
Openness to Experience		.01
R^2	.04	.09
R^2 Change	.04	.06
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	1.2	1.58

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis states that openness to experience will have the strongest positive relationship with the implicit leadership theory dimensions of attractiveness and intelligence. During the first regression analysis required for this hypothesis, attractiveness was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was not significant ($F(10,156) = 1.30, p = .24$). There were no coefficients that were significantly different from 0 in the regression.

Table 7: Multiple Linear Regressions for H5 with the Dependent Variable of Attractiveness

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	.09	.08
Age	.15	.18
Years of Service	-.01	-.03
Continent of Service	-.12	-.13
Level of Leadership	.00	.00
Extraversion		.07
Agreeableness		-.12
Conscientiousness		.03
Neuroticism		.13
Openness to Experience		-.03
R ²	.05	.08
R ² Change	.05	.03
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	1.78	1.30

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

During the second regression analysis required for this hypothesis, intelligence was entered as the dependent variable. The regression for model two was significant (F(10,156) = 1.99, p < .05). The only coefficient that was significant in the regression was age in the first model of the regression ($\beta = -.24$, p < .05). Therefore, H5 is not supported.

Table 8: Multiple Linear Regressions for H5 with the Dependent Variable of Intelligence

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Gender	-.09	-.10
Age	-.24*	-.20
Years of Service	-.00	-.03
Continent of Service	.04	.04
Level of Leadership	.06	-.05
Extraversion		.02
Agreeableness		.01
Conscientiousness		.03
Neuroticism		.01
Openness to Experience		.13
R ²	.09	.11
R ² Change	.09	.02
df	(5, 161)	(10, 156)
F	3.30	1.99

Note.*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Discussion

The primary research goal of this study was to examine which type of Big Five Personality has the strongest impact on each of the eight implicit leadership theory prototypes that were developed by Ofermann et al. (1994). All eight of the regression analyses controlled for age, gender, level of leadership, country of service, and length of service. This study had five hypotheses, one for each of the Big Five personalities and their hypothesized strongest impact with all eight implicit leadership theories.

Three of the five hypotheses were not supported in the study as the regression models for H1 (see Tables 1 and 2), H4 (see Tables 5 and 6), and H5 (see Tables 7 and 8) were not significant. Unfortunately, there is very little information to be gained from those regressions.

However, H2 and H3 were supported. The analysis for H2 represented the hypothesized relationship between the Big Five personality of agreeableness and the implicit leadership prototype of sensitivity. Results reveal that the personality of agreeableness is a strong predictor for people who desire a leader with the implicit leadership theory prototype of sensitivity ($\beta = .40$, p < .001).

This supports H2, which stated that the strongest positive relationship would be between the Big Five personality of agreeableness and the implicit leadership theory prototype of sensitivity. This result is also consistent with the pre-existing literature (RaduanChe et al., 2006; Barnett, 2006; Ofermann et al., 1994; Bakker et al., 2006). A second coefficient was also significant in this analysis, as the control variable for level of leadership ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$) had a negative relationship with the implicit leadership dimension of sensitivity. This result is concerning from an organizational perspective because it suggests that the higher the level of leadership that one possesses, the less likely it is for that person to desire a leader who exhibits the implicit leadership theory prototype of sensitivity.

The analysis for H3 represented the hypothesized relationship between the Big Five personality of conscientiousness and the implicit leadership prototype of dedication. Results reveal that the personality of conscientiousness is a strong predictor for people who desire a leader with the implicit leadership theory prototype of dedication ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$). This supports H3, which stated that the strongest positive relationship would be between the Big Five personality of conscientiousness and the implicit leadership theory prototype of dedication. This result is also consistent with the pre-existing literature (RaduanChe et al., 2006; Bakker et al., 2006; Ahmad, 2010; Ofermann et al., 1994).

An additional step in the data analysis was to compare the data to that of Ofermann et al. (1994) and Keller (1999). The implicit leadership traits were ordered from high to low based on the mean responses. The reported order of this study was dedication, sensitivity, intelligence, charisma, strength, attractiveness, masculinity, and tyranny. It is important to note that this order differs from that of both Ofermann et al. and Keller. The previous two mentioned studies had the identical reported order of dedication, intelligence, charisma, strength, sensitivity, attractiveness, tyranny, and masculinity. This indicates that there was a significant difference of order in the implicit leadership traits of the international workers and it provides further data for study.

Table 9: Summary of the Descriptive Statistics for the Total of the Implicit Leadership Theory Dimensions (N = 167)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sensitivity	5.00	10.00	7.89	.962
Dedication	5.75	10.00	8.36	1.03
Tyranny	1.00	7.10	2.29	1.03
Charisma	3.60	9.80	6.81	1.08
Attractiveness	1.00	8.25	4.85	1.47
Masculinity	1.00	10.00	3.96	2.16
Intelligence	3.67	10.00	6.99	1.04
Strength	3.00	10.00	6.60	1.46

Implications

Because the perceptions that followers have of their leaders can determine the success or failure of the leader (Kenney, 1994), it is vital for researchers and leaders to understand what forms and shapes the perceptions and prototypes of leaders in the minds of people. People hold their own individual leadership theories, and this paper hypothesized that leaders can understand follower needs and follower prototypes of leadership by recognizing the personalities represented in the follower group. The relationships found between implicit leadership theories and personalities in this study can help researchers and leaders better understand some of the underpinnings of implicit leadership theory, especially as it relates to the Big Five personality types of sensitivity and conscientiousness, which strongly predict the implicit leadership theories of agreeableness and dedication, respectively. This is important because leaders may be able to use this information to lead people who have those personality types more effectively by adjusting their leadership behaviors, when possible, to meet their needs (Keller, 1999).

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is that the group of international workers is a limited sample from one organization. Second, 41.9% of the sample was over the age of 51, which is a larger percentage of the sample group than is ideal. Another limitation is the use of the Very Brief Measure of the Big-Five personalities (Gosling et al., 2003) that is proposed because the full measures were too lengthy for this study.

A fourth limitation of this research design is that it depends on self-reported questionnaires for the data. Kline, Sulsky, and Rever-Moriyama (2000) explain that self-reported questionnaires have inherent limitations and that it is more appropriate when possible to have participants in a study who are rated by their peers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study may be used to further understand implicit leadership theory as it continues to build the foundation necessary to understand its practical applications for leaders and researchers. However, with the limitations of this research design in mind, it would be valuable to have additional future research studies focus on the potential relationships between the Big Five personalities and implicit leadership prototypes by using a larger sample from a variety of organizations or institutions to make the findings more generalizable. Hopefully those studies will result in more regressions that are statistically significant because if personality is found to be a strong predictor of various implicit leadership prototypes, leaders and researchers will benefit from applying that information in both future research and real-life leadership situations.

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Appendix 1

Offermann, Kennedy, &Wirtz’s (1994) Scale of Implicit Leadership Theories

Instructions: Rate how characteristic you feel each of these traits are of a leader. Use a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 = “Not at All Characteristic” and 10 = “Extremely Characteristic” to rate your perceptions.

		Not at All Characteristic		Not Characteristic		Somewhat Characteristic		Extremely Characteristic			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[SE]											
1	Sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Sensitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Compassionate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Forgiving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[D]											
9	Dedicated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Motivated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Hard Working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Goal Oriented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[T]											
13	Domineering	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Pushy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Dominant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16	Manipulative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
17	Power Hungry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18	Conceited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
19	Loud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
20	Self-Centered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
21	Obnoxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
22	Demanding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[C]											
23	Energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
24	Charismatic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25	Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
26	Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
27	Inspiring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[A]											
28	Well-groomed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
29	Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
30	Classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
31	Well-dressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[M]											
32	Masculine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
33	Male	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[I]											
34	Intellectual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
35	Educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
36	Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
37	Wise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
38	Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
39	Clever	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
[ST]											
40	Strong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
41	Bold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix 2

Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann's (2003) Very Brief Measure of the Big-Five Personalities

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

Scale: 1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree moderately, 3 = Disagree a little, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 5 = Agree a little, 6 = Agree moderately, 7 = Agree strongly

I see myself as:

1. ____ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. ____ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. ____ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. ____ Anxious easily upset.
5. ____ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. ____ Reserved, quiet.
7. ____ Sympathetic, warm.
8. ____ Disorganized, careless.
9. ____ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. ____ Conventional, uncreative.

TIPI scale scoring ('R' denotes reverse-scored items): Extraversion: 1, 6R; Agreeableness: 2R, 7; Conscientiousness: 3, 8R; Emotional Stability: 4R, 9; Openness to Experiences: 5, 10R.