Personality traits in the light of the effectiveness of transformational vocational school leadership and leaders

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Abstract

The Big Five Personality Traits very well known as five-factor model (FEM), which is a taxonomy for personality traits, has a an effect on Transformational School Leadership and Leaders. Personality traits are the most powerful pylons for raising educational standards and achieving excellence based on the effectual Leadership. Openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism constitute the FEM. Transformational School Leadership model that comprises an essential element of quality assurance is based on the constructs of Setting Directions, Developing People, Redesigning the Organisations, Reliability of Administrative Leadership. Measures of Teachers' Capacities, Measures of Teachers' Motivation, Measures of Teachers' Work Setting and Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices. To test the research hypotheses, a survey was carried out on 215 Greek secondary education teachers teaching in vocational lyceums, senior high schools in Greece. Moreover, 215 Greek secondary Vocational education teachers evaluate the effect of Personality Traits and characteristics on Transformational Vocational School Leadership and Leaders.

Keywords: Personality traits, leadership, vocational, education.

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1. Theoretical framework

According to Anastasiadou and Anastasiadis (2017), leadership is a key element, a significant factor that shares and establishes the actions and practices applied in an educational organisation. Leadership sets the goals and the vision and ascertains the course and the future of the organisation, while it attends to and promotes and endorses Continuous Improvement, the formation of a Quality culture and the attainment of Business Excellence. DeLong and Fahey (2000) put emphasis on the role of a leader regarding Continuous Improvement. According to Leithwood (1992; 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; 2006), transformational leadership is the most appropriate leadership approach in primary and secondary education since its target intends for the progress of innovation, improvement and the support of teachers. Leithwood and Duke (1999b); Leithwood and Jantzi (1999a) put emphasis on the relation between transformational leadership and commitment by studying the outcomes of transformational leadership on organisational environment and state of affairs and student commitment with school. Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Fullan and Levin (2004) argued that approaches and practices with respect to the transformational leadership regard and involve the entire organisation and every individual of the personnel.

Leithwood (1992; 1994) defined transformational leadership as a form of principal leadership which makes followers be highly committed in achieving schools goals by setting direction, developing people, Redesigning the Organisations and managing the instructional program. The Leithwood model conceptualised transformational leadership into nine dimensions referring to vision creation, group goals development, the maintenance and modelling of high performance, the provision of individual support, the provision of intellectual stimuli, the establishment of a productive school culture and building structures for collaborations (Leithwood, Jantzi & Fernandez, 1994), building good relations with parents (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Hopkins and Harris (2006) summarised these dimensions in the following categories: Setting Directions, Developing People, Redesigning the Organisations and Managing the Instructional Program.

Setting Directions refers to the actions taken by the transformational leaders in order to build an ideal school vision and set up specific schools goals while simultaneously helping teachers perform their best (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999c). Developing People takes account of providing individualised support, intellectual stimulation and modelling important principles and practices. The leader activities cited above aim to establish a culture within the school that solidifies the teachers' capacity while maintaining common goals. Additionally, they furnish examples of best practices and approaches to motivate teachers (Leithwood et al., 1999c; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Redesigning the Organisation includes the dimensions for building and developing a collaborative and productive school culture, for creating, maintaining and fostering participative decision-making, for creating productive community relationships and for building good relationships with parents (Leithwood et al., 1999c; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Managing the Instructional Program amounts to the clustering of managerial best practices, including those behaviours that will establish a stable and secure organisational structure. It includes of actions and practices for leaders with respect to staffing the program and providing instructional carry to monitoring school activities and buffering the staff and colleagues from distraction to their work while seeking continuous improvement (Leithwood et al., 1999c; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In the context of transformational leadership model (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), this paper investigates the dimensions it assumes with respect to the quality in Greek Secondary Education.

2. Purpose of the study

This paper investigates the way that Personality traits' influence Transformational School Leadership in Greek Secondary Vocational Education.

3. Methods

3.1. Respondents' demographic profile

The sample comprised of 215 interviewees, of whom 137 (63.7%) were men and 78 (36.3%) were women.

With respect to the ages of participants, 111 (51.6%) of them were below 24-year old, 52 (22.4%) of them were between 25 and 34, 25 (11.6%) of them were between 35 and 44 and 27 (12.6%) of them were between 45 and 54. With respect to their family/marital status, 167 (77.7%) were single, while 43 (20%) were married and 5 (2.3%) were separated or divorced. About 183 of 215 interviewees, or a percentage of 85.1%, stated that they live in an urban setting, while 31 (14.9%) in a rural one.

3.2. The instruments

Big-Five IPIP-50 Questionnaire is developed by Goldberg (1992) containing a total of 44 items, grouped into five subscales. The five subclasses are: (1) Extraversion (8 items); (2). Agreeability (9 items); (3). Conscientiousness (9 items); (4). Emotional stability/Neurotism (8 items) and (5) Openness (10 items).

3.3. Transformational school leadership scale

The instrument, which was employed to measure Secondary school teachers' opinions towards Transformational School Leadership, is Leithwood and Jantz' scale (2006), which consists of 57 items, referring to seven different attitude subscales, as follows:

1. Setting Directions (three items, e.g., Helped clarify the reasons for implementing the Strategy).
2. Developing People (three items, e.g., Given you individual support to help you implement the Strategy).
3. Redesigning the Organisation (three items, e.g., Encouraged collaborative work among staff).
4. Measures of Teacher Capacities (eight items, e.g., I have the knowledge and skill I need to implement the Strategy).
5. Measures of Teachers' Motivation (18 items, e.g., The aims of the Strategy are clear to me).
6. Measures of Teachers' Work Settings (12 items, e.g., My colleagues and I function as a team in implementing the Strategy).
7. Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices (10 items, e.g., I have changed my teaching of reading/mental mathematics as a result of the Strategy).

Each item of the two instruments used a seven-point Likert scale that ranged from 1—Strongly Disagree to 7—Strongly Agree. The value of Cronbach's α coefficient for this instrument in the sample of this study was 0.892.

One further question was included, which measured the existence of Transformational School Leadership in Secondary Education.

3.4. Research hypotheses

$H_{1o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Setting Directions

$H_{1o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Setting Directions

$H_{1o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Setting Directions

$H_{1o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Setting Directions

$H_{1o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Setting Directions

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research hypotheses $H_{1o}1$–$H_{1o}5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
Setting_ Direction	Pearson Correlation	0.129	−0.017	−0.036	0.085	0.265[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.058	0.800	0.601	0.215	0.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215

$H_{2o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Developing People

$H_{2o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Developing People

$H_{2o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Developing People

$H_{2o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Developing People

$H_{2o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Developing People

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research hypotheses $H_{2o}1$–$H_{2o}5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
Developing_ People	Pearson Correlation	0.081	−0.091	0.000	0.132	0.197[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.236	0.183	0.994	0.052	0.004
	N	215	215	215	215	215

$H_{3o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation

$H_{3o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation

$H_{3o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation

$H_{3o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation

$H_{3o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Research hypotheses $H_{3o}1$–$H_{3o}5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
Rederigning	Pearson Correlation	0.122	−0.025	0.000	−0.065	0.423[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.075	0.710	0.998	0.342	0.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215

$H_{4o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities

$H_{4o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities

$H_{4o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities

$H_{4o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities

$H_{4o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Research hypotheses $H_4o1–H_4o5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
M_T_ Capaciti es	Pearson Correlation	0.189^{**}	0.064	−0.105	−0.011	0.241^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.348	0.125	0.872	0.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215

H_5o1: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation

H_5o2: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation

H_5o3: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation

H_5o4: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation

H_5o5: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Research hypotheses $H_5o1–H_5o5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
M_T_ Motivat ion	Pearson Correlation	0.225^{**}	0.050	0.031	0.049	0.312^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.464	0.651	0.479	0.000
	N	215	215	215	215	215

H_6o1: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings

H_6o2: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings

H_6o3: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings

H_6o4: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings

H_6o5: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Research hypotheses $H_6o1–H_6o5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
T_W_ Settings	Pearson Correlation	0.146^{*}	0.317^{**}	0.091	−0.032	0.233^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033	0.000	0.186	0.640	0.001
	N	215	215	215	215	215

H_7o1: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices

H_7o2: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices

H_7o3: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices

H_7o4: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices

H_7o5: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices

The test regarding the above hypotheses gave the results presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Research hypotheses $H_{7o}1$–$H_{7o}5$

		T_extrovestheness	T_willingness	T_Conscirntiousness	T_Nervousness	T_Openness
T_C_ Practic es	Pearson Correlation	−0.130	0.038	0.094	0.002	−0.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.058	0.578	0.169	0.979	0.605
	N	215	215	215	215	215

4. Results

An assessment of the bivariate correlations indicates that all of the correlations are or are not significant is given in Table 8.

Table 8. Hypotheses' results

Hypotheses: traits-setting directions	r	p-value	Results
$H_{1o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Setting Directions	0.129	> 0.05	reject
$H_{1o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Setting Directions	−0.017	> 0.05	reject
$H_{1o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Setting Directions	−0.036	> 0.05	reject
$H_{1o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Setting Directions	0.085	> 0.05	reject
$H_{1o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Setting Directions	0.265[**]	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Developing People	R	p-value	Results
$H_{2o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Developing People	0.081	> 0.05	reject
$H_{2o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Developing People	−0.091	> 0.05	reject
$H_{2o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Developing People	0.001	> 0.05	reject
$H_{2o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Developing People	0.132	> 0.05	reject
$H_{2o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Developing People	0.197[**]	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Redesigning the Organisation	r	p-value	Results
$H_{3o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation	0.122	> 0.05	reject
$H_{3o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation	−0.025	> 0.05	reject
$H_{3o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation	0.000	> 0.05	reject
$H_{3o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation	−0.065	> 0.05	reject
$H_{3o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Redesigning the Organisation	0.423[**]	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Measures of Teacher Capacities	R	p-value	Results
$H_{4o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities	0.189[**]	< 0.01	accept
$H_{4o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities	0.064	> 0.05	reject
$H_{4o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities	−0.105	> 0.05	reject
$H_{4o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities	−0.011	> 0.05	reject
$H_{4o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities	0.241[**]	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Measures of Teachers' Motivation	R	p-value	Results
$H_{5o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation	0.225[**]	< 0.01	accept
$H_{5o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation	0.050	> 0.05	reject
$H_{5o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation	0.031	> 0.05	reject

Hypotheses	R	p-value	Results
$H_{5o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation	0.049	> 0.05	reject
$H_{5o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Motivation	0.312**	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	R	p-value	Results
$H_{6o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	0.146*	< 0.05	accept
$H_{6o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	0.317**	< 0.01	accept
$H_{6o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	0.091	> 0.05	reject
$H_{6o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	−0.032	> 0.05	reject
$H_{6o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings	0.233**	< 0.01	accept
Hypotheses: Traits- Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	r	p-value	Results
$H_{7o}1$: Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	−0.130	> 0.05	reject
$H_{7o}2$: Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	0.038	> 0.05	reject
$H_{7o}3$: Conscientiousness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	0.094	> 0.05	reject
$H_{7o}4$: Emotional stability/Neurotism has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	0.002	> 0.05	reject
$H_{7o}5$: Openness has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices	−0.035	> 0.05	reject

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Openness has a strong effect on Setting Directions, Developing People, Redesigning the Organisation, Measures of Teacher Capacities, Measures of Teachers' Motivation, Measures of Teachers' Work Settings but Measures of Teachers' Classroom Practices.

Extraversion has a strong effect on Measures of Teacher Capacities, Measures of Teachers' Motivation and on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings. Finally, Agreeability has a strong effect on Measures of Teachers' Work Settings.

Finally, Openness plays more important role than the other four dimensions of Personality Traits regarding Transformational Leadership. But, future research may further investigate the role of Big Five Personality Traits on seven dimensions of Transformational Leadership in relation to education assessment and quality assurance rewarding in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.

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