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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Integrating ESG Considerations into Leadership Development: The Role of Personality Traits in Enhancing Leadership Effectiveness Using the FIKR (Facet, Insight, Knowledge, and Resilience) Assessment Tool

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study examines how personality traits measured by the FIKR (facet, insight, knowledge and resilience) assessment tool impact leadership effectiveness. The primary objective is to identify key traits that significantly contribute to effective leadership, providing practical insights for enhancing leadership development programs with a focus on Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations. With a sample of 409 individuals using the FIKR personality assessment tool, we employed multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis to identify significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. Emotional stability, extroversion, achievement orientation, supportiveness, analytical thinking, intellectual capability, autonomy, and control emerged as significant positive predictors of leadership scores, explaining a substantial proportion of variance. These findings emphasize the importance of specific personality traits in effective ESG leadership and suggest practical implications for ESG leadership development programs. The study contributes to the understanding of ESG leadership dynamics and provides a foundation for future research.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a multifaceted construct that has been extensively studied across various disciplines. The effectiveness of a leader isoften influenced by a combination of personality traits and situational factors. Previous research has demonstrated that certain personality traits are consistently associated with leadership effectiveness (Andersen, 2006; Kurtulmuş et al., 2019; Özbağ, 2016; Antonakis, 2011; Stanca, 2021).

Emotional stability, which encompasses the ability to remain calm and composed under stress, is crucial for leaders who must navigate complex and high-pressure situations (Judge et al., 2002). Similarly, extroversion, characterized by sociability and assertiveness, facilitates social interactions and influence, essential components of leadership (Judge et al., 2002; Fiedler, 1981).

Analytical thinking and intellectual capability are also critical for leadership effectiveness. Leaders with high analytical skills can evaluate information, identify patterns, and solve complex problems, which are essential for strategic decision-making (Judge et al., 2002). Intellectual capability further enhances a leader's ability to process information quickly and adapt to changing circumstances (Antonakis, 2011).

Autonomy and achievement orientation are additional traits that significantly impact leadership. Autonomy, or the ability to self-regulate and make independent decisions, enables leaders to navigate organizational complexities effectively (Antonakis, 2011). Achievement orientation drives leaders to

set and accomplish challenging objectives, fostering both personal and organizational success (Antonakis, 2011; Fiedler, 1981).

The trait approach to leadership has been a subject of extensive research, with researchers attempting to identify the personal, psychological, and physical traits that distinguish effective leaders from their followers (Stanca, 2021). While the trait approach has been criticized for its limitations, recent studies have suggested that individual differences can still predict leader effectiveness (Baczyńska & Rowiński, 2015). Top and middle level managers have been found to differ in terms of analytical mental ability, emotional intelligence, and personality, highlighting the importance of considering trait profiles in leadership roles.

Despite the extensive research on personality traits and leadership, there remains a need to explore how these traits collectively influence leadership effectiveness. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationships between leadership scores and various demographic and personality traits in a comprehensive manner. By doing so, we hope to provide a more nuanced understanding of the key traits that contribute to effective leadership.

2. METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of 409 individuals, with 121 males and 288 females selected to ensure a diverse representation, provided by Humanology Sdn Bhd. Data were collected using a comprehensive the FIKR (facet, insight, knowledge and resilience) personality assessment tool, by Humanology Sdn Bhd. The samples were drawn from the complete set of 460 participants in the original study, selected by random location sampling to provide a sample representative of marital status (Married= 35.21%, Single= 63.08%, Divorced= 0.98; and Widow= 0.73%), and religions (Muslim= 87.04%; Buddhist= 0.98%; Christian= 5.13%; and Hindu= 6.85%) age. The age range was 20 to 53, with females (70.4%) and males (29.6%), and 21 to 36 age with 84.6%.

Each participant provided a full set of item responses on a 200-item. This version of the questionaires uses relatively simple language and is intended for use in a wide range of occupational groups. The questionnaire is quantitative type (dichotomous survey scale) with Yes (1) or No (0) surveys. This allows the respondents to provide quick and straightforward answers by choosing between the two options only. Multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis were performed using the NCSS package (NCSS, 2024). Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between leadership scores (dependent variable) and the various personality traits and demographic variables (independent variables). Correlation analysis was used to explore the strength and direction of the relationships between leadership scores and the twenty assessed personality traits.

3. RESULTS

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between leadership scores and 4 demographic and 20 personality traits. A comprehensive multiple regression analysis (Table 1) revealed that several personality traits significantly predict leadership scores. Specifically, emotional stability (b = 0.100), extroversion (b = 0.101), achievement orientation (b = 0.150), supportiveness (b = 0.150), analytical thinking (b = 0.102), intellectual capability (b = 0.050), autonomy (b = 0.200), and control (b = 0.150) were identified as significant positive predictors of leadership. These traits collectively explained a substantial proportion of variance in leadership scores, as indicated by the exceptionally high adjusted R^2 value of 0.9995.

Table 1: Multiple regression analysis on the Leadership Score as dependent variable and other independent variables (4 demographics variables and 20 personality traits).

Leadership score	β
Intercept	0.032
Age	0.000
Marital	0.000
Religion	0.002
Gender	-0.002
Endurance	0.000
Variety	0.000

Aggressive	-0.001
Self_criticism	0.000
Intuition	0.000
Dependent	0.002
Nuturance	-0.001
Emotional	0.100
Extrovert	0.101
Achievement	0.150
Support	0.150
Analytical	0.102
Perceiver	-0.002
Structure	-0.001
Intellectual	0.050
Self_concept	-0.001
Autonomy	0.200
Introvert	0.001
Control	0.150
Lie_Scale	0.001
R^2	0.9995

Note: Values in blue are significant predictors at $P < 0.05$

In parallel, the correlation analysis (Table 2) provided additional insights into the strength and direction of the relationships between leadership scores and the twenty assessed personality traits. The strongest positive correlations were observed for control ($r = 0.75$), analytical thinking ($r = 0.64$), intellectual capability ($r = 0.64$), and achievement orientation ($r = 0.57$). These correlations suggest that individuals who exhibit high levels of these traits are more likely to possess effective leadership qualities. Extroversion ($r = 0.54$), supportiveness ($r = 0.55$), and autonomy ($r = 0.57$) also showed substantial positive correlations with leadership scores, further underscoring their importance in leadership dynamics.

Table 2: Correlation coefficients and their bar charts of absolute correlations between the all the 20 personality traits based on the present study. N= 409.

Variables	Leadership score	
Endurance	0.40	|||||||||
Variety	0.46	|||||||||||
Aggressive	0.56	|||||||||||||
Self-criticism	0.17	||||
Intuition	0.50	|||||||||||
Dependent	0.26	||||||
Nurturance	0.32	|||||||
Emotional	0.29	||||||
Extrovert	0.54	|||||||||||
Achievement	0.57	|||||||||||
Support	0.55	|||||||||||
Analytical	0.64	|||||||||||||
Perceiver	0.33	|||||||

Structure	0.33	|||||||
Intellectual	0.64	|||||||||||||
Self-concept	0.36	|||||||||
Autonomy	0.57	|||||||||||
Introvert	0.05		
Control	0.75	||||||||||||||||
Lie scale	0.30	||||||
Age	-0.02		
Marital	0.02		
Religion	-0.11	|||
Gender	0.02		
Leadership score	1.00	

Note: Low scale= 1-3 bars; Medium scale= 4-7 bars; High scale: ≥ 8 bars.

Contrarily, traits such as introversion ($r = 0.05$) and self-criticism ($r = 0.17$) displayed weak correlations with leadership scores, indicating a lesser impact on leadership potential. This finding suggests that while some personality traits are crucial for effective leadership, others may play a minimal role or even hinder leadership effectiveness. Additionally, demographic variables such as age, marital status, and gender did not exhibit significant predictive power, highlighting the predominant influence of personality traits over demographic factors in determining leadership capabilities.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Role of Emotional Stability and Extroversion in Leadership

Emotional stability and extroversion have consistently emerged as significant predictors of leadership effectiveness, as demonstrated by a substantial body of research (Hicks & Dess, 2008; Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; George, 2000). Emotional stability, characterized by the ability to remain calm and composed under stress, is a crucial trait for leaders who must navigate complex and high-pressure situations. Leaders with high emotional stability are better equipped to manage their emotions, make rational decisions, and maintain team morale (Vivian & Yi, 2012).

Extroversion, associated with sociability, assertiveness, and high levels of activity, also significantly correlates with leadership effectiveness. Extroverted individuals are more likely to engage in social interactions, build networks, and influence others, all of which are critical leadership functions; Webb, 2011). Our findings align with this perspective, highlighting emotional stability and extroversion as fundamental components of effective leadership.

The positive correlation between extroversion and leadership suggests that extroverted individuals are more likely to emerge as leaders in various settings. This finding is consistent with research indicating that extroverted individuals are often perceived as more charismatic and influential, qualities that are highly valued in leadership roles (Webb, 2011) (Vivian & Yi, 2012). Thus, fostering extroverted traits in leadership development programs could enhance individuals' leadership potential.

Furthermore, the interplay between emotional stability and extroversion may amplify leadership effectiveness. Leaders who combine these traits can manage stress effectively while engaging and motivating their teams. This combination is particularly beneficial in dynamic and challenging environments, where leaders must navigate complexity and inspire their followers (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Vivian & Yi, 2012).

4.2 Analytical Thinking and Intellectual Capability in Leadership

The Importance of cognitive skills in effective leadership have been well discussed in the literature. The study's findings highlight the crucial role of analytical thinking and intellectual capability as strong predictors of leadership scores, underscoring the critical nature of cognitive skills for effective leadership (Ridwansyah et al., 2023; Kuhn & Weinberger, 2005; Capozzoli, 1995; Tong et al., 2019; McKee & Bhaduri, 2013).

Analytical thinking, which involves the ability to critically evaluate information, identify patterns, and solve complex problems, is essential for leaders to make informed decisions and guide their teams through intricate challenges (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; Fiedler, 1995). Consistent with Fiedler's cognitive resource theory, leaders with strong analytical skills are better equipped to navigate dynamic environments and address contemporary issues effectively (Fiedler, 1995).

Furthermore, intellectual capability, closely related to analytical thinking, also demonstrated a strong positive correlation with leadership scores. Leaders with high intellectual capability can process information quickly, think strategically, and adapt to changing circumstances, which are crucial for strategic leadership and the development and implementation of innovative solutions (Ridwansyah et al., 2023; Fiedler, 1995; McKee & Bhaduri, 2013).

The combined impact of analytical thinking and intellectual capability suggests that cognitive skills are critical for leadership success. Leaders who possess the ability to analyze complex situations and devise strategic responses are more likely to thrive in dynamic environments (Ridwansyah et al., 2023; Fiedler, 1995).

This insight has practical implications for leadership development programs, which should emphasize the enhancement of cognitive skills through training and experiential learning (Ridwansyah et al., 2023; McKee & Bhaduri, 2013). By fostering analytical and intellectual capabilities, organizations can prepare leaders to tackle contemporary challenges effectively (Ridwansyah et al., 2023; Fiedler, 1995).

Moreover, the significant correlation between these cognitive traits and leadership scores underscores the value of selecting and promoting individuals with strong cognitive abilities into leadership roles. Organizations should incorporate cognitive assessments in their selection and promotion processes to identify and nurture individuals with the necessary cognitive skills to lead effectively.

4.3. Autonomy, Achievement Orientation, and Control in Leadership

There are many roles of autonomy, achievement orientation, and control in influencing effective leadership. The ability to self-regulate and make independent decisions, known as autonomy, is a crucial trait for leaders navigating complex organizational environments (McDaniel & Dibella-McCarthy, 2012). Leaders with high autonomy are driven to achieve goals and perform tasks independently, which aligns with McClelland's theory of achievement motivation. Our study demonstrates that autonomy (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005; Kurtulmuş et al., 2019; Yukl & Fleet, 1982).

Autonomy is a significant predictor of leadership effectiveness, supporting the notion that fostering autonomy can enhance leadership capabilities (Fürstenberg et al., 2021). Achievement orientation, characterized by a strong desire to achieve goals and a commitment to excellence, is another critical trait for leaders. Leaders with high achievement orientation are motivated to set and accomplish challenging objectives, driving both personal and organizational success. This finding is consistent with research by Locke and Latham, who emphasized the importance of goal-setting and achievement motivation in effective leadership (Lu et al., 2023).

The ability to manage one's actions and maintain focus referred to as control, also emerged as a significant predictor of leadership scores. Leaders who exhibit high levels of control can create a stable and productive work environment, fostering team cohesion and performance, as suggested by Yukl (1971)'s assertion that self-regulation is a crucial component of leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 1971; Andersen, 2006).

The interplay between autonomy, achievement orientation, and control suggests that these traits collectively contribute to leadership effectiveness. Leaders who can make independent decisions, set and achieve goals, and regulate their actions are more likely to succeed in leadership roles (Paendong et al., 2022; Pusiran & King, 2013; Sarmah et al., 2021). This insight has practical implications for organizations seeking to develop and nurture effective leaders, as it highlights the importance of cultivating these key traits in aspiring and current leaders.

4.4. The Role of Personality Traits and Cognitive Capabilities in Effective ESG Leadership Development

The findings from this study have significant practical implications for the design and implementation of effective leadership development programs. First, the consistent identification of emotional stability and extroversion as predictors of leadership effectiveness highlights the importance of integrating these traits into Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) leadership training (McDermott et al., 2011). Emotional stability, which enables leaders to remain calm under pressure and make rational decisions, should be a focal point of development programs (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). Techniques such as stress management training, mindfulness practices, and resilience-building exercises can help aspiring leaders enhance their emotional stability (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). Additionally, fostering extroverted traits through activities that encourage social interaction and network building can further strengthen ESG leadership capabilities (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023).

Secondly, the crucial role of analytical thinking and intellectual capability in ESG leadership underscores the need for cognitive skill enhancement in leadership development programs (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Leaders must be equipped to critically evaluate information, identify patterns, and solve complex problems (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Training programs should, therefore, incorporate modules on analytical thinking, problem-solving, and strategic decision-making (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Simulation exercises and real-world problem-solving scenarios can provide practical experience, allowing leaders to hone their cognitive skills in dynamic environments (Roux & Härtel, 2018). Moreover, fostering intellectual capability through continuous learning opportunities and access to advanced educational resources can prepare ESG leaders to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and drive innovation.

The interplay between autonomy, achievement orientation, and control also has profound implications for leadership development (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Programs should emphasize the cultivation of these traits, recognizing that effective leaders need the ability to make independent decisions, set and achieve goals, and regulate their actions (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Autonomy can be developed through exercises that encourage self-directed learning, decision-making, and goal-setting (Tang, 2019).

Achievement orientation can be fostered through the establishment of challenging but achievable performance goals, as well as through providing feedback and recognition for accomplishments (Tang, 2019). Control can be enhanced by training leaders to monitor and adjust their behavior in response to changing circumstances, as well as by developing their self-regulation skills (Tang, 2019).

From ESG leadership through virtual reality (Alcañíz et al., 2018) to soft skills integration (Bunker & Wakefield, 2004), the essential attributes for effective leadership development are multifaceted and encompass both personality traits and cognitive capabilities. As the workplace continues to evolve, the need for holistic, evidence-based leadership development programs that address these key elements will become increasingly crucial (Prelims, 2019; Ridwansyah et al., 2023).

Hence, crafting leadership development initiatives that cultivate emotional stability, extroversion, analytical thinking, intellectual capability, autonomy, achievement orientation, and control will be essential in producing the next generation of transformative leaders. A summary of personality traits and leadership development programs using FIKR assessment tool is presented in Figure 1.
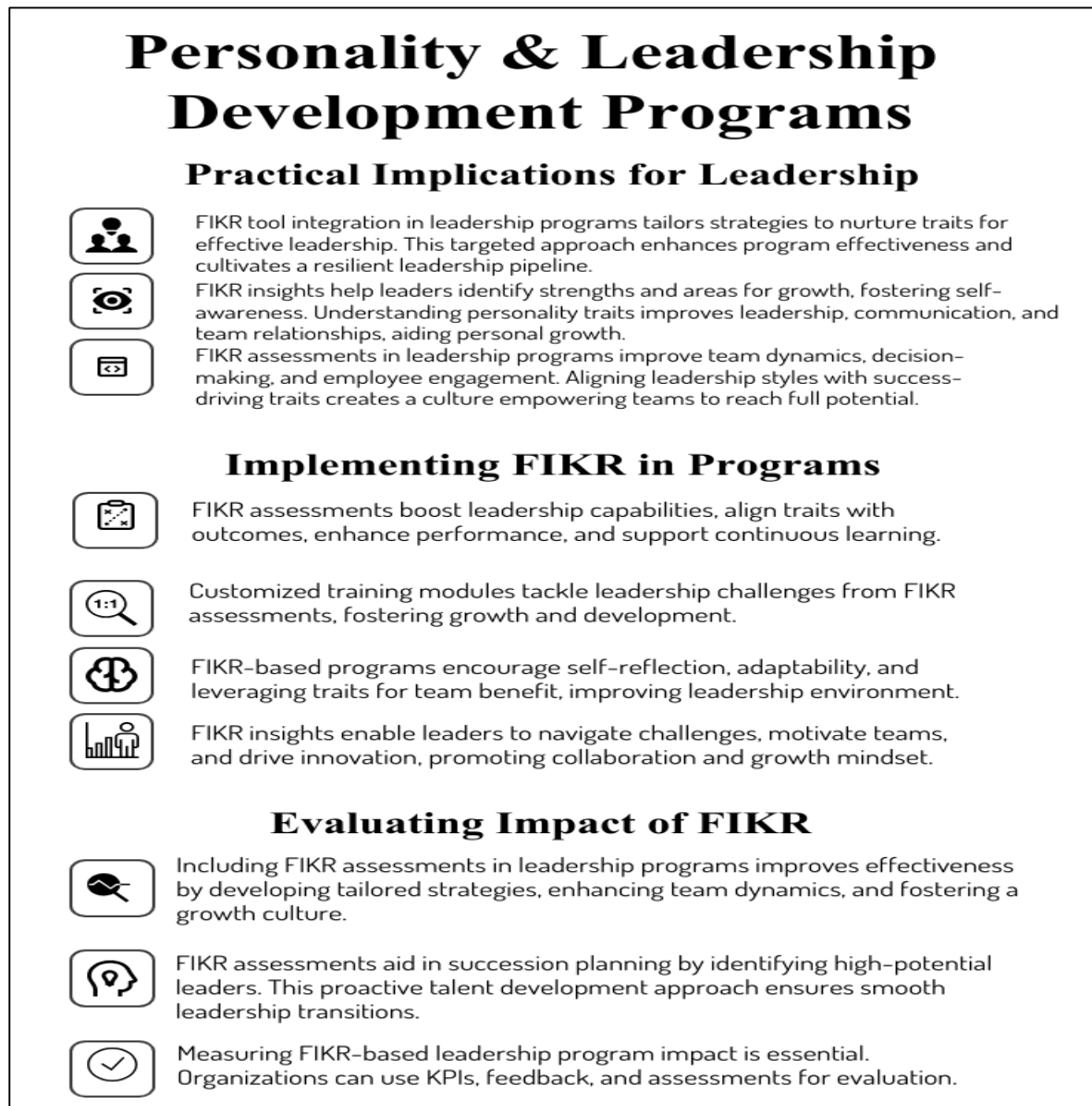
Figure 1: A summary of personality traits and leadership development programs using FIKR assessment tool.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study highlights the significant role of specific personality traits in predicting leadership effectiveness. Emotional stability, extroversion, analytical thinking, intellectual capability, autonomy, achievement orientation, and control emerged as critical predictors of leadership scores. These findings underscore the importance of fostering these traits in leadership development programs to enhance leadership effectiveness. Organizations should incorporate psychological assessments, cognitive training, and targeted development initiatives to cultivate these traits in potential leaders. Future research should explore these relationships further, considering additional variables and different contexts to enhance our understanding of leadership dynamics.

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