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Core personality traits of managers

John W. Lounsbury Eric D. Sundstrom Lucy W. Gibson James M. Loveland Adam W. Drost

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Running head: MANAGER PERSONALITY

Core Personality Traits of Managers

Managers are critical to the success of today's firms (Colley *et al.*, 2007). Yet, nearly 40 years after Mintzberg (1975) noted, "No job is more vital to our society than that of manager" (p. 61) few studies have investigated the distinctive personality traits of managers. This paucity of research is surprising in three ways. First, managers represent an estimated 10% of U.S. working adults (O*NET, 2014). Second, the manager's role is well explicated, including essential skills (Kouzes and Posner, 2007); leadership styles (Oshagbemi and Ocholi, 2006); tasks (Colley *et al.*, 2007); job functions (Lussier and Achua, 2004); and competencies (Tornow and Pinto, 1976). Third, empirical studies have found personality traits related to criteria of work success across occupations, summarized in meta-analyses of job performance (Salgado, 1997); financial success and career satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 1999); and job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002).

Despite the prevalence and importance of managers, the clarity of their role, and evidence relating personality traits to workplace success, the question of what personality traits differentiate managers from non-managers remains largely unaddressed in published, empirical research. Accordingly, the present study addresses the knowledge gap concerning personality traits of managers. Specifically, we compared managers and non-managers on key traits important to managers' performance and related to their career satisfaction. We first describe the theoretical framework for our study. Next, we draw on theory and research concerning managerial competencies to derive hypotheses about specific traits differentiating managers from non-managers, which also correlate with managers' career satisfaction.

Two theories describe dynamics consistent with distinctive personality profiles of occupational groups. First, in the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework (Schneider *et al.*, 1995) individuals are attracted to jobs and occupations they see as fitting their personalities; organizations select individuals into jobs for whom they see a good fit; and attrition accompanies

poor fit. Consistent with the ASA framework, two empirical studies (Satterwhite *et al.*, 2009; Schneider *et al.*, 1998) found convergence of personality in occupational groups. Second, consistent with evidence of personality differences by occupation, Holland's (1996) vocational theory posited that individual career success and satisfaction depend on the fit of "personality type" and work environment.

Neither Holland's theory nor the ASA framework specifies particular traits of occupational groups, leaving open the question of how to identify traits that differentiate managers.

Fortunately an extensive literature on competency modeling (Stevens, 2013) offers a theoretical and empirical foundation for identifying key personality traits of managers, based on a deductive, construct-based approach of matching content of competencies with corresponding content of defined, individual traits (Barrick, *et al.*, 2003). Because successful performance requires job-related competencies, and traits with overlapping content can be expected to foster corresponding competencies, the particular traits critical to person-occupation fit depend on the overlap of competencies with personality traits. This premise has guided recent studies of personality traits of occupational groups (e.g., Lounsbury *et al.*, 2014; Williamson, *et al.*, 2013).

Personality Traits

Much empirical research linking personality with work success has relied on the "five factor model" (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Comprised of broad, multi-faceted personality traits – Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability (originally described as its opposite, "Neuroticism"), Extraversion, and Openness – this "Big Five" model has been validated in many settings, and has well established construct content (De Raad, 2000). Meta-analyses found Big Five traits related across occupations to job performance (Salgado, 1997), job satisfaction (Judge, Heller and Mount, 2002), career satisfaction, and financial success (Judge *et al.*, 1999).

Some researchers have contended that Big Five traits are too inclusive to fully reflect important nuances in relationships of personality and performance (e.g., Paunonen and Ashton, 2001). Indeed, each Big Five trait is comprised of five or six narrower traits. For example, assertiveness is one of six facets of extraversion (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Lounsbury *et al.* (2003) found narrow traits Assertiveness, Customer Service Orientation, Optimism, and Work Drive correlated with career satisfaction in a variety of occupations, accounting for variance beyond the Big Five traits.

Managerial Competencies

Managerial competences have been studied since the 1920s (Bloomfield, 1928), and systematic empirical research began addressing them in the 1970s (Kamel and Egan, 1976). Tett *et al.* (2000) developed a comprehensive taxonomy of managerial competencies. They drew content from 12 prior, published taxonomies, including Tornow and Pinto (1976), and three taxonomies from private consulting firms, for a "hyperdimensional" taxonomy of 53 managerial competencies representing 13 "traditional functions." Examples of the competencies included "strategic planning" and "motivating by persuasion." One purpose of the taxonomy was to provide a foundation for identifying personality predictors of managerial performance, facilitated by naming specific competencies with content highly similar to narrow personality traits, like "assertiveness" and "orderliness" (Tett *et al.* 2000).

Many managerial competencies in the Tett *et al.* taxonomy correspond with broader, so-called "great eight" workplace competencies identified by Bartram (2005), who conducted a meta-analysis of 29 empirical studies in which supervisory and managerial positions predominated, relating supervisor ratings of performance on each of the "great eight" workplace competencies to the Big Five personality traits. All Big Five traits were significantly correlated with mean ratings of one or more workplace competencies on the job.

Core Personality Traits of Managers

To develop directional hypotheses about the core personality traits of managers, we focus first on Big Five traits and their meta-analytic linkages with workplace competencies (Bartram, 2005). Where applicable we mapped traits to corresponding, specific managerial competencies from Tett *et al.* (2000). We also relied on empirical research finding differences between managers and non-managers (Ones and Dilchert, 2009) and research linking narrow personality traits to managerial competencies and career satisfaction (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2003). We based our directional hypotheses on well-defined personality traits and their overlap with job attributes indicated by managerial competency models, job analytic models, prior research on personality and managerial performance, and relevant O*NET (2014) summaries.

For each of nine hypotheses presented below, we provide a brief rationale.

Agreeableness. Compilations of managerial competencies, including Tett, *et al.* (2000), include activities related to teams, cooperation, and teamwork as critical for managers, along with the corresponding personality trait, Agreeableness (Bartram, 2005). Increasing reliance on teams (Landy and Conte, 2013) calls for managers with personalities compatible with teamwork.

Hypothesis 1: Managers score higher than non-managers on Agreeableness.

Conscientiousness. Most compendia of key managerial functions include one or more activities pertaining to Conscientiousness, usually involving organization, dependability, orderliness, and rule-adherence. Tett *et al.* (2000) included orderliness, rule orientation, timeliness, and dependability among managerial competencies. Bartram (2005) found workplace competency "organizing and executing" associated with Conscientiousness. Cattell *et al.* (1970) found that managers above average on the 16 PF trait corresponding with Conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 2: Managers score higher than non-managers on Conscientiousness.

Emotional stability. Ones and Dilchert (2009) found emotional stability most elevated of the Big Five traits in personality profiles of managers, significantly higher than in supervisors or front-line employees. Managerial positions carry stressors from multiple sources, including role overload, role conflict, work-nonwork conflict, and others (Clegg, 2012). O*NET (2014) listed stress tolerance as a core attribute of managers. Bartram (2005) found Emotional Stability correlated with the "great eight" competency, "adapting and coping."

Hypothesis 3: Managers score higher than non-managers on Emotional Stability.

Extraversion. A central activity for all managers – communication (Tett *et al.* 2000) – includes interactions with, and listening to subordinates, peers, managers, executives, customers, and vendors. Mintzberg (1975) estimated that managers spend two-thirds to three-fourths of their time in oral communication. Bartram (2005) listed interacting with, presenting to, and persuading others as a “great eight” competency, empirically associated with Extraversion.

Hypothesis 4: Managers score higher than non-managers on Extraversion.

Openness (to new experience). Managers across a variety of occupations had significantly higher scores on openness than front-line employees, and the elevation of openness in managers' profile for Big Five traits was second only to Emotional Stability (Ones and Dilchert, 2009). Bartram's (2005) meta-analysis of supervisor-rated, general workplace competencies found openness correlated with "creating and conceptualizing" and "analyzing and interpreting." These competencies map to managerial competencies "seeking input, creative thinking, cultural appreciation" (Tett *et al.*, 2000).

Hypothesis 5: Managers score higher than non-managers on Openness.

Assertiveness. One narrow personality trait – assertiveness – is important to managerial effectiveness (Ames and Flynn, 2007), also a foundational attribute of managerial style (Keeffe

et al., 2008), and was named explicitly as one of the managerial competencies in the Tett *et al.* (2000) taxonomy.

Hypothesis 6: Managers score higher than non-managers on Assertiveness.

Customer service orientation. Focus on the customer and service delivery correspond with another core competency of managers (e.g., Tett *et al.*, 2000). Managers play a key role in building customer loyalty and maintaining customer satisfaction, whether the focus is on internal or external customers (Varey and Lewis, 2009). Managers can help organizations build beneficial relationships with customers by assuring delivery of products and services that meet ever-rising standards of quality (Hind *et al.*, 2009).

Hypothesis 7: Managers score above non-managers on Customer Service Orientation.

Optimism. Regularly identified as a key trait for managers, optimism may incline managers to look on the upside of situations, persist under adversity (Seligman, 1991), and induce similar inclinations in subordinates (Goleman *et al.*, 2002). Optimism may also help managers reframe negative situations and envision positive pathways to success in difficult circumstances which they can communicate to subordinates (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Indeed, Greenberg and Arakawa (2006) found that managerial optimism was related to higher levels of group performance and subordinate engagement.

Hypothesis 8: Managers score higher than non-managers on Optimism.

Work drive. Among competencies identified for managerial roles, "achievement orientation" demonstrates willingness to take on challenging goals and tasks (O*NET, 2014). In Holland's (1985) typology many management occupations are classified "Enterprising" and "Conventional" types, which correspond with the personal traits ambition and persistence. Both align with the narrow trait Work Drive, consistent with long hours and extra effort required in

many manager jobs (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2003). Also, Ruderman and Ohlott (1994) found “work ethic” an important factor in managerial promotions.

Hypothesis 9: Managers score higher than non-managers on Work Drive.

Distinctive personality profile for managers. Based on the separate hypotheses for nine traits, we expected managers to have an elevated personality profile across all nine traits.

Hypothesis 10: For Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness, Assertiveness, Customer Service Orientation, Optimism, and Work Drive, the profile of managers is significantly higher than that of non-managers.

Career satisfaction and personality. Career satisfaction summarizes subjective attitudes about a lifetime of work, estimated at about 100,000 hours for a typical employee (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2008). Based on Holland's (1996) theory, we expected the traits in all nine directional hypotheses to be positively related to career satisfaction for managers, on the premise that those whose personalities are more aligned with their roles experience greater satisfaction. Prior research found key personality traits of executives positively related to their career success (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001). Research on career satisfaction found these same traits associated with career satisfaction across occupations (Lounsbury *et al.* 2003).

Hypothesis 11: Among managers, career satisfaction correlates positively with scores on Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness, Assertiveness, Customer Service Orientation, Optimism, and Work Drive.

Method

Overview

Data came from an archival database provided by a career transition services firm offering online, personality-based career assessments to companies for employee career development, succession planning, leadership development, mentoring, and outplacement.

Participants

The database included 9,138 managers, of whom 66% were male. Distribution by age group was: under 30–3%; 30-39–21%; 40-49–42%; 50 and over–34%. Race / ethnic data were not available. Industry sectors included: manufacturing–11%; telecommunications–10%; technology services–8%; retail–7%; financial services–5%; professional services–5%; printing–3%; communications–3%; health care–3%; consumer products–4%; science and technology–2%; oil and gas–2%; non-profit / charity–2%; transportation–2%; entertainment–2%; airlines–2%; automotive–1%; education–1%; and other–27%.

For the 76,577 individuals in all other occupations besides manager, 51% were male and 49% were female. Distribution by age group was: under 30–9%; 30-39–27%; 40-49–35%; 50 and over–29%. Occupations: information technology and computer-related–18%; accounting–10%; sales–9%; engineering–7%; human resources–6%; marketing–6%; office 5%; consulting–5%; customer service–4%; manufacturing–4%; operations–3%; teaching and education-related–2%; attorney and law–1%; transportation–1%; quality control–1%; self-employed–1%; health care–1%; finance–1%; and other occupations–14%.

Personality Measures

The personality measure, the *Personal Style Inventory (PSI)*, is a work-based personality assessment with extensive evidence of criterion-related and construct validity from a variety of settings (Lounsbury and Gibson, 2014). All PSI items have five-point response scales with bipolar, verbal anchors and numbered response choices 1 through 5, as in the following example.

When the future is uncertain, I tend to anticipate positive outcomes.	— — — — — 1 2 3 4 5	When the future is uncertain, I tend to anticipate problems.
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Brief descriptions of the measures of Big Five and narrow traits are presented below with the numbers of items, sample item, and Coefficient alpha for the population in the present study.

Agreeableness – propensity for working as part of a team and functioning cooperatively on group efforts at work (6 items; coefficient alpha = .83). Sample item—"Collaborating with another person on a project at work is usually more enjoyable than doing it by myself."

Conscientiousness – dependability, reliability, trustworthiness, and preference for adhering to company norms, rules, and values (8 items; coefficient alpha=.74). Sample item—"It is never a good idea to break a company rule or policy."

Emotional Stability – overall adjustment and emotional resilience when faced with job stress and pressure (6 items; Coefficient alpha=.81). Sample item—"My mood does not go up and down more than most people I know."

Extraversion – tendency to be sociable, outgoing, gregarious, expressive, and warm-hearted (7 items; coefficient alpha=.83). Sample item –"I am warm and friendly around people I don't know well."

Openness – receptivity and openness to change, innovation, novel experience, and learning (9 items; coefficient alpha=.78). Sample item –"I would prefer to work in an innovative company where there is a lot of change."

Assertiveness – disposition to speak up on matters of importance, express ideas and opinions confidently, defend personal beliefs, seize the initiative, and exert influence in a forthright, but non-aggressive way (8 items; coefficient alpha = .83). Sample item –"I like to take the lead in group activities in which there is no assigned leader."

Customer service orientation – striving to provide responsive, personalized, quality service; putting the customer first; and trying to make the customer satisfied, even if it means

going beyond the job description or normal policy (7 items; coefficient alpha = .69). Sample item –"I always try to meet the needs of the customer, even if it means I have to go home later."

Optimism – having an upbeat, hopeful outlook concerning situations, people, prospects, and the future, even in times of difficulty and adversity; a tendency to minimize problems and persist despite setbacks (8 items; coefficient alpha = .85). Sample item —“When the future is uncertain, I tend to anticipate positive outcomes.”

Work Drive – disposition to work for long hours (including overtime) and an irregular schedule; investing high levels of time and energy into job and career. Sample item –"Those who know me well would say I work too hard and need to slow down."

Career Satisfaction

A five-item scale was used to measure career satisfaction (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2008) with items tapping satisfaction with career progress and trajectory, career advancement, future career prospects, and career as a whole. Career satisfaction items were framed on a five-point response scale with verbally opposing anchors at each end (e.g., “I am very satisfied with the way my career has progressed so far” versus “I am very dissatisfied with the way my career has progressed so far”). Coefficient alpha for the career satisfaction scale was .82. This measure was added to the inventory after data-collection began for the personality traits; the number of individuals for statistics involving managers’ career satisfaction was smaller ($n=1,735$) than for managers with just personality traits measured ($n=9,138$).

Results

We used a *chi square* test to compare managers with non-managers on gender and age. The tests revealed that managers differed significantly from non-managers on both gender (χ^2 (1 df)=695.91, $p<.01$) – more managers were male – and age (χ^2 (3 df)=30,961.73, $p<.01$) –

managers were older. Accordingly, we used analysis of covariance to statistically control for these factors.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, analysis of covariance F tests comparing managers and non-managers on the Big Five and narrow personality traits – with scores adjusted for two covariates, age and gender – and Cohen's d statistic. Managers scored significantly higher than non-managers on all Big Five traits – Agreeableness; Conscientiousness; Emotional Stability; Extraversion; and Openness – and narrow traits – Assertiveness; Customer Service Orientation; Optimism; and Work Drive.

To simultaneously test multivariate differences between managers and non-managers adjusted for gender and age, we used profile analysis (PA; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012) with MANOVA. The major question addressed by PA is whether managers and non-managers have different profiles on the nine personality traits referenced in corresponding hypotheses. PA requires that all measures have a common metric; therefore, all scores were converted to normal curve equivalent scores (mean=50; SD=21.06).

For the PA we performed three tests, treating gender and age as covariates: 1) a between-groups test for significant, overall differences in level of the profiles across nine traits between managers and non-manager; 2) a flatness test of whether the profiles exhibited within-group, trait-to-trait differences; and 3) a parallelism test to assess whether the profiles (across traits) of managers and non-managers were parallel.

All three PA tests yielded significant results. First, the MANOVA test for between-groups differences, using Wilk's criterion, indicated a significant difference between managers and non-managers ($F(1, 81922)=1708.81, p<.001$). Second, the profiles were non-flat ($F(8, 81922)=272.33, p<.001$). Third, the profiles were non-parallel ($F(8, 81922)=135.45 p<.001$), indicating

significant trait-to-trait variation across the profiles in differences between managers and non-managers. The profiles are displayed in Figure 1, showing group means for nine traits using normal curve equivalent scores (Mean=50; SD=21.38).

(Insert Figure 1 and Table 2 about here)

Table 2 presents intercorrelations of study the variables for managers and non-managers. As predicted, it shows all nine traits included in the first nine hypotheses significantly and positively correlated with managers' career satisfaction. Correlations were highest for Optimism ($r=.38$) and Emotional Stability ($r=.35$), moderate for Work Drive, Openness, Conscientiousness, and Assertiveness ($r=.15$ to $r=.19$), and lowest for Customer Service Orientation ($r=.09$).

Discussion

Results demonstrated a distinctive personality profile for managers that differentiated them from non-managers. The present findings align with workplace competencies found to be related to the Big Five personality traits (Bartram, 2005), the comprehensive taxonomy of managerial competencies by Tett *et al.* (2000), and with Holland's (1996) vocational theory and the ASA framework (Schneider *et al.*, 1995). All nine traits in the profile correlated significantly with career satisfaction, consistent with the importance of these traits for person-career fit, and with the correlations found with career satisfaction for all occupations in earlier research on the same traits using the same measures (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2003). Before elaborating practical and theoretical implications, we discuss the results separately for each of the nine traits.

Managers scored higher than non-managers on Extraversion, which correlated positively with career satisfaction. These results are consistent with the importance for managers of interpersonal skills (Bass and Bass, 2008), and related competencies such as interacting and presenting (Bartram, 2005), and persuading employees to accomplish desired goals via managerial competencies such as "motivating by persuasion" and "motivating by authority" (Tett

et al., 2000). Since personality traits are relatively stable among adults (Costa and McCrae, 1992), differences between managers and non-managers on extraversion likely reflect selective recruitment and hiring by the organization and self-selection by the individual, as envisioned in the ASA model (Schneider *et al.*, 1995). Extraverts may gravitate to managerial jobs. As to why extraversion correlated with career satisfaction, one possibility is that extraverted managers may be more effective at job functions requiring direct, face-to-face interaction, such as meetings and presentations, which in turn may bring rewards and recognition from superiors and eventually career satisfaction. Extraverts may also develop more extensive social networks of friendships and acquaintanceships on the job, bringing greater intrinsic motivation and satisfaction.

That managers scored higher on Assertiveness than non-managers is consistent with studies on the importance for managers of the narrow personality trait (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988) and of the managerial competency with the same name (Tett *et al.* 2000). Assertiveness as a trait can facilitate such managerial functions as taking initiative, assigning responsibilities, persuading, directing, enforcing discipline, and resolving conflict (Higgins *et al.*, 2002). This result may reflect the attraction of more assertive individuals to managerial jobs, the selective recruitment of managers for this trait, and, perhaps, selective attrition for managers who were less assertive. On the other hand, Assertiveness displayed a relatively low correlation with managerial career satisfaction, which may reflect that many of the factors which underlie work satisfaction—such as job security, pay and benefits, relationships with supervisors and coworkers, and the nature of the work itself—are not directly influenced by assertiveness.

As predicted, managers scored significantly higher than non-managers on Conscientiousness, but the difference was relatively small, as was the magnitude of the correlation between Conscientiousness and career satisfaction. It is difficult to imagine organizational settings where managers are not required to be conscientious, since they direct,

schedule, and coordinate the activities of different employees as well as document goal attainment, and implement organizational policies, objectives, and procedures. The modest correlation of Conscientiousness with career satisfaction may reflect the countervailing demands of managers to be orderly, dutiful, quality-minded organizational citizens who attend to details and adhere to rules and policies while also being flexible, adaptable problem-solvers who can improvise and react quickly to unanticipated outcomes. The role of managers may be changing from duties requiring high levels of conscientiousness (Bass and Bass 2008) to requiring the opposite traits of flexibility and creativity. Clegg (2012) contended that creative thinking and problem-solving by managers have become essential in today's workplaces.

As hypothesized, managers scored higher on Emotional Stability than non-managers, and this trait correlated with career satisfaction. These results accord with studies that identified resilience, stress-management, and calmness as key managerial competences (Tett *et al.*, 2000). Meta-analysis (Salgado, 1997) found emotional stability related to job performance for managers. Emotional stability appears to be a core personality trait for managers.

Another managerial trait consistent with Holland's theory in having higher mean scores than other occupations and correlation with career satisfaction is Agreeableness. This trait may help in facilitating teamwork, which has gained importance, as an estimated 90% of employees work in a team at least part of the workday (Harrison *et al.*, 2003). Then, too, managers are becoming responsible for guiding the work of a variety of types of teams beyond the traditional work team, such as semi-autonomous groups, employee involvement teams, self-designing teams, cross-functional teams, project teams, and virtual teams (Williamson *et al.*, 2013). However, Agreeableness was only modestly related to managers' career satisfaction, possibly reflecting limited relevance to key factors involved in career success, such as earnings and job progression (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001).

Also confirmed in the present study was the hypothesis that Optimism would be higher for managers and would correlate with career satisfaction. This result is consistent with suggestions that managers benefit from optimism (Seligman, 1991), and may reflect the general importance of Optimism, which research has found among the strongest personality trait predictors of job- and life satisfaction for a wide range of occupations (Lounsbury *et al.*, 2003). Optimism may be especially important for managers in generating employee enthusiasm for work goals and developing positive work group morale. The importance of optimism for managers can also be seen in that it had the highest correlation with career satisfaction in the present study.

The narrow trait Work Drive was higher for managers and positively related with their career satisfaction, consistent with the importance of work ethic for management jobs. Workforce statistics for the U.S. indicate that average number of hours worked per week is higher for management than most other occupations (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000).

Managers scored higher than non-managers on Customer Service Orientation, though its correlation with career satisfaction was relatively low. That managers would be differentiated by higher levels of Customer Service Orientation is consistent with taxonomies of managerial competences (e.g, Tornow and Pinto, 1976) and may reflect increasing prominence of two related managerial functions: 1) need to coordinate, facilitate, and motivate the work of direct service providers; and 2) growing emphasis on internal customers (Martina *et al.*, 2012). The diminutive correlation of Customer Service Orientation with career satisfaction may reflect a relative lack of direct, personal involvement by managers in service delivery.

Managers had significantly higher mean scores on Openness than non-managers, as predicted, though the corresponding correlation with career satisfaction was low. The higher Openness score of managers may reflect the need for continual acquisition of new KSAs

required to optimize company competitiveness in a turbulent marketplace, and by organizational changes such as new leadership, mergers, automation, and downsizing (Landy and Conte, 2013).

Overall, the results supported our hypotheses and both the ASA framework (Schneider *et al.*, 1995) and Holland's (1996) vocational theory. We found five traits—Assertiveness, Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, and Work Drive—that significantly differentiated managers. These may be seen as core managerial traits with adaptive value for effectiveness in the role. For example, managers who are more assertive may be effective in motivating subordinates to work hard and achieve organizational goals. Similarly, more emotionally stable managers may rely on their composure and resilience to successfully cope with work stress.

In contrast to the long-noted complexity of the managerial role (e.g., Mintzberg, 1975) and managerial taxonomies – as in the 53 competencies identified by Tett *et al.* (2000) – the present study emphasizes the importance for managers of nine personality traits. These traits can be useful reducing the dimensionality of managerial attributes, their fit with managerial roles, and their alignment with specific managerial competencies. Having a reference personality profile for managers may make it more feasible to incorporate personal traits in individual development and career plans following competency-based decisions concerning selection and placement.

Practical Implications

Some managerial traits identified in the present study have been validated against managerial job performance, notably Emotional Stability and Extraversion (Salgado, 1997). In turn these traits have been found correlated with broad workplace competencies – "adapting and coping" and "interacting with, presenting to, and persuading others," respectively (Bartram, 2005), and with managerial competencies "resilience" and "stress management" and many involving communication (Tett *et al.*, 2000). This finding is consistent with earlier research that

found emotional stability most elevated of the big five traits in personality profiles of managers (Ones and Dilchert, 2009), and with empirical studies that found Emotional Stability positively correlated with measures of career success across occupations (Judge and Hurst, 2008; Judge, Simon, Hurst, and Kelly, 2014).

In view of the obvious relevance of these traits to person-career fit for prospective managers, the core traits of managers identified in the present study can be especially useful during talent identification and recruitment of applicants for manager roles. These traits can be particularly useful for identifying prospective managers within the organization from individuals in non-management roles. For example, an internal search for managerial talent among individuals in technical jobs might logically begin with emotionally stable extraverts. At this stage, however, the main, practical uses of personality traits ideally involve development more than selection.

For instance, an internal search for managerial talent could turn up an introvert with a competency profile suitable for recruiting into a manager role or promotion to higher management ranks – despite the relatively low likelihood that an introvert would express interest in management, and would probably need to develop new competencies relatively difficult for an introvert to master. Before recruiting an introvert for a management role, however, those responsible for staffing decisions would ideally open a dialogue with the individual and his or her immediate supervisor about prospective person-job fit and implications for individual training and development. For an introvert the dialogue might focus on competencies related to networking, leading group meetings, and other managerial competencies enabled by extraversion – and eventual prospects for developmental plans incorporating appropriate assessment, feedback, coaching, mentoring, training, leadership development, developmental assignments and other personality-tailored initiatives.

Similarly, following decisions about selection and placement, personality traits might inform individual development and career planning. For example, newly hired managers with lower extraversion scores could be offered training and coaching designed to build their communication skills or compensate for related deficits. Introverted managers could focus on communication one-on-one and delegation of some communication tasks to more extraverted assistants. Assessing levels of assertiveness among managers may be useful in succession planning and identifying training and development needs. The trait profile in the present study could aid recruiters, pre-employment assessors, and career planners.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We were unable to ascertain what tasks the managers in our population performed. Knowing this could provide unique insights into the influence of personality on career satisfaction, and clarify which management tasks each individual's personality may facilitate or impede.

Since personality traits are quite stable for adults (Costa and McCrae, 1992), an important question for future research is whether career-related factors such as pay, rank, task variety, autonomy, and job progression demonstrate incremental validity above and beyond that explained by personality traits in accounting for variance in managerial career satisfaction.

A limitation of our study, the lack of data on certain work variables – such as job experience, span of control, years in rank, and others – may be addressed in later studies of manager personality. Future research might also address interactions between personality traits and management training and development programs (Hesketh and Robertson, 1993), which represents a general trend toward individuating training to trainees' personal attributes (McEnrue *et al.*, 2009). Later research could also investigate other narrow personality traits, such as achievement motivation, locus of control, need for autonomy, and aggression. Finally, in an era

of scarce resources, a larger question for investigation is how to allocate resources for recruitment and selection of managerial candidates based on personality, versus training and development toward overcoming personality-related deficits.

Conclusions

Toward filling the knowledge gap concerning personality traits of managers the present, empirical study found a profile of core traits distinguishing managers from those in other occupations. Managers displayed (in decreasing order of magnitude of mean differences) higher: assertiveness, work-drive, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability, optimism, customer-service orientation, and conscientiousness. All of these traits correlated positively and significantly with managers' career satisfaction. This personality profile, if replicated, raises questions for future research and carries practical implications for staffing, training, development, management, and work design for managers.

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Author Biographies

John W. Lounsbury, Ph.D. (Michigan State University) is Professor of Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Vice President, eCareerfit.com, and President of Resource Associates, Inc. He has written numerous articles on personality traits, career development, scale validation, life and career satisfaction, and work-nonwork relationships. He is the corresponding author and can be contacted at jlounsbu@utk.edu

Eric Sundstrom, Ph. D. (University of Utah) is Professor of Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and evaluator for the Industry / University Cooperative Research Centers Program for the National Science Foundation. His research and publications have focused on physical working environments, work teams, personality, and organizational effectiveness. Contact--esundstr@utk.edu

Lucy W. Gibson, Ph. D. (University of Tennessee), is Executive Vice President of Resource Associates, Inc. Dr. Gibson is a Licensed Industrial/Organizational Psychologist who has over 30 years of experience working as an I/O psychologist. Her research interests include normal personality measurement and validation, youth leadership, lifespan psychology, and non cognitive predictors of performance. Contact-- lucygibson@resourceassociates.com

James Loveland, Ph. D. (University of Tennessee and Arizona State University). is an Assistant Professor of Marketing, Xavier University. His areas of interest are consumer decision making, career development, and B2B strategy, and has taught many different courses ranging from advanced statistics to consumer behavior. He has also worked as Research Director for a legal consulting firm, as a selection consultant, and as a project leader for a national testing company. Contact-- jlovelan2phd@gmail.com

Adam W. Drost, MBA (University of Illinois) is President of eCareerFit.Com (eCF). He has worked for over 30 years in business and industry, including human resource outsourcing, marketing, staffing, and executive leadership. His research interests include Big Five and narrow personality traits, job and career assessment, and person-environment fit in diverse occupations. Contact-- adrost@ecareerfit.com

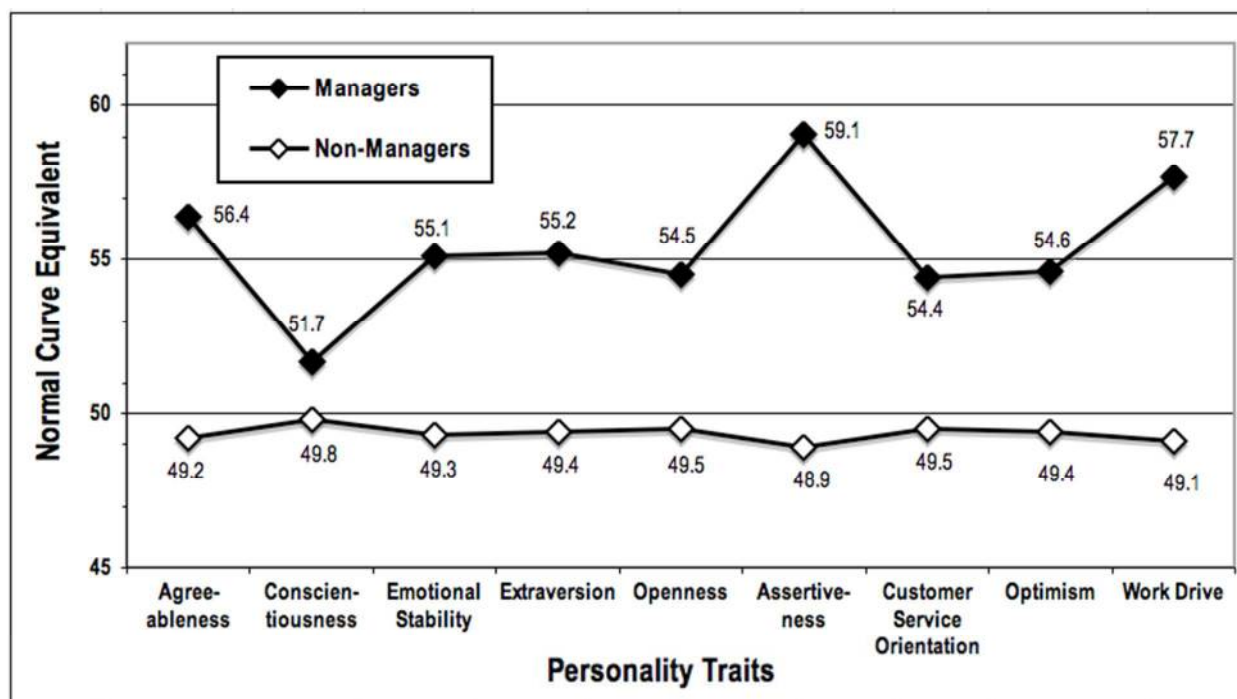


Figure 1. Normal curve equivalent profiles for managers (N=9,138) and non-managers (N=76,577) for nine, key personality traits. The managers' profile was significantly elevated in multivariate Profile Analysis, and significantly higher in univariate tests for all nine traits.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, *F* Tests, and Effect Sizes on Personality Traits for Managers and Non-Managers

Trait	Group	Mean	SD	F	<i>d</i> (effect size)
Agreeableness	Managers	3.74	.75	787.73**	.35
	Non-Managers	3.47	.79		
Conscientiousness	Managers	3.40	.70	91.35**	.08
	Non-Managers	3.34	.73		
Emotional Stability	Managers	3.60	.67	456.20**	.28
	Non-Managers	3.40	.74		
Extraversion	Managers	3.96	.71	674.80**	.27
	Non-Managers	3.76	.79		
Openness	Managers	3.89	.67	416.96**	.24
	Non-Managers	3.72	.74		
Assertiveness	Managers	3.89	.70	1689.59**	.53
	Non-Managers	3.48	.85		
Customer Service Orientation	Managers	4.35	.57	335.51**	.25
	Non-Managers	4.19	.69		
Optimism	Managers	3.98	.69	460.94**	.27
	Non-Managers	3.78	.79		
Work Drive	Managers	3.62	.74	1280.08**	.42
	Non-Managers	3.30	.78		

Note: All means and standard deviation represent raw (unadjusted for covariates) scores. For all *F* ratios age and sex were covariates and *df* = 1, 81,925. For Managers *N* = 9,138; for Non-Managers *N* = 76,577.

** $p < .01$

MANAGER PERSONALITY

Table 2

Inter-correlations of Study Variables

Variables:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1) Extraversion	--	.32	.39	.10	.34	.50	.23	.47	.35	.25	.03	.03
(2) Emotional Stability	.32	--	.23	.26	.28	.40	.18	.61	.34	.35	.05	-.09
(3) Agreeableness	.37	.24	--	.08	.33	.31	.18	.25	.36	.21	.05	-.07
(4) Conscientiousness	.06	.26	.07	--	-.03	.10	.19	.15	.19	.19	-.04	.02
(5) Openness	.34	.32	.36	.01	--	.47	.32	.32	.46	.16	-.04	-.05
(6) Assertiveness	.37	.37	.31	.04	.51	--	.37	.39	.48	.15	-.01	-.12
(7) Work Drive	.23	.19	.15	.18	.37	.43	--	.24	.35	.20	-.01	.02
(8) Optimism	.46	.61	.24	.13	.31	.36	.21	--	.30	.38	.01	.01
(9) Customer Service Orientation	.28	.34	.32	.25	.48	.36	.28	.26	--	.08	.00	.00
(10) Career Satisfaction	.26	.40	.20	.15	.21	.26	.27	.42	.21	--	-.04	-.08
(11) Age	-.04	.05	.03	-.02	-.05	-.00	.03	.04	.07	.00	--	-.09
(12) Gender (1=M; 2=F)	.03	-.08	-.08	.07	-.09	-.14	-.02	.02	-.04	-.06	-.09	--

Note: For managers, shown above the diagonal, $n=9,138$, and for non-managers, below the diagonal, $N=76,697$, except correlations involving career satisfaction, where for managers, $n=1,735$, and for non-managers, $N=13,578$. Where $|r| \geq .03$, $p < .01$.