THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY FACTORS ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLE OF POLITICAL SKILL

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Several articles have resolved that a leader's individual personality plays a role in determining his or her leadership style. This review addresses this verdict by providing a theoretical examination of the relationship between the "Big Five" and transformational leadership (TFL), introducing political skill as a potential moderator. It investigates the dimensions of the Big Five as independent variables and explores how these intrinsic qualities correlate with transformational leadership. It also defends its proposal of political skill as a moderator of the Big Five-TFL relationship. Propositions concerning direct relationships and interactions are provided, as well as a conceptual model, implications, and suggestions for future research.

*I*ndividuals' personalities can be observed through their attitudes and behaviors and can reflect the lasting qualities that they possess. A pattern evolves over time, and the traits solidify and become engrained in them to embody their personality. However, personality is not simply a means of differentiating one individual from another. It is an important construct because it affects other crucial concepts in the fields of organizational studies and human resource development. For example, studies have explored the relationship between personality and job performance criteria such as job proficiency and training proficiency (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Driskell, Hogan, Salas, & Hoskin, 1994); the relationship between personality, stress, and coping (Bolger, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1986); as well as the relationship between personality and citizenship behavior/contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, & Judge, 2007).

Another essential concept that personality is suggested to influence is leadership. In fact, numerous studies have been performed globally in an attempt to show a relationship between personality and leadership (Cilliers, van Deventer, & van Eeden, 2008; Kok-Yee, Soon, & Kim-Yin, 2008; Quigley, 2008). In addition, there is empirical and theoretical reason to believe that this personality-leadership relationship would be moderated by political skill. As regards leadership in Australia, Tiernan (2006) stated that former Prime Minister John Howard's PMO (prime minister's office) was a reflection of his experience, political skills, and personality, in addition to the advisory structure of the office. As regards leadership in the United States, Pearson (2006) reiterated that leadership *requires* political skills and *depends on* personality, political skills, time, place, and circumstance.

The purpose of this review is to examine the correlation between personality and transformational leadership (TFL), as well as to explore the moderating effects of political skill. TFL is viewed as an essential leadership style that has a positive and extensive influence in a number of countries, sectors, and occupational fields (Bass & Riggio, 2006a). Studies have shown that transformational leadership increases employee and organizational performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006b; Boerner, Eisenbeiss, & Griesser, 2007; Garcia-Morales, Matias-Reche, & Hurtado-Torres, 2008; Whittington & Goodwin, 2001); increases employee commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction; reduces social loafing; and lessens stress in the workplace (Bass & Riggio, 2006b). In addition, research has also been conducted regarding the positive correlations between transformational leadership and employee motivation (Adebayo, 2005; Bono & Judge, 2003; Masi & Cooke, 2000; Webb, 2007) and between transformational leadership and creativity (Jung, 2000/2001; Shin & Zhou, 2003; Sosik, Kahai, & Avolio, 1998).

Since TFL has such a powerful, practical, and beneficial impact in organizational development, it would be useful to investigate its antecedents, explore the moderating effects of other constructs, and thus determine the qualities and/or skills that transformational leaders possess. Therefore, this paper will venture to examine personality dimensions according to the five factor model of personality (hereafter also referred to as the Big Five), reflecting on their influence upon leadership style with an emphasis on transformational leadership and its components. It will also explore political skill as a moderator. Propositions and a conceptual model will be provided, as well as implications and new outlooks for future research and practice related to personality, political skill, and leadership. As a result, a greater understanding of the importance and intricacy of personality and political skill and the roles they play in influencing leadership style and ability in the workplace will be achieved. These are significant steps because leadership style and ability can positively or adversely affect leadership effectiveness in an organizational setting.

Five Factor Model of Personality

Colquitt, LePine, and Noe (2000) defined personality as relatively stable characteristics of individuals (other than ability) that influence their cognition and behavior. Ones, Viswesvaran, and Dilchert (2005) described personality traits as enduring dispositions and tendencies of individuals to behave in certain ways. Therefore, an individual's personality forms part of his/her identity, consistently distinguishing him/her from others, and is reflected in his/her propensity to think, feel, and act in certain ways. The widely accepted Five Factor Model of Personality (FFM) began with a lexical hypothesis (Mayer, 2003; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Dilchert, 2005) and refers to personality elements that have been discerned through empirical

research. Also labeled "The Big Five," the model consists of five dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion/introversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism/emotional stability (OCEAN). These personality domains involve a cluster of other associated characteristics, facets, and/or preferences (Chih-Chien & Yann-Jy, 2007; Graziano, Bruce, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007; Mayer, 2003), as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Personality Dimensions and Their Elements

Personality Dimensions	Elements
Openness to Experience	imagination, curiosity, artistic sensitivity, originality
Conscientiousness	reliability, dependability, industriousness, organization, achievement orientation
Extraversion/Introversion	friendliness, gregariousness/sociability, assertiveness, cheerfulness, excitement seeking, energy/activity level, talkativeness
Agreeableness	cooperation, cheerfulness, supportiveness, social responsiveness/harmony
Neuroticism/Emotional Stability	anxiety, depression, instability

The five factor model of personality is practical because it can be used to predict as well as clarify a number of constructs and phenomena. In fact, Ones, Viswesvaran, and Dilchert (2005) affirmed that the big five variables have sizable operational validities for predicting job performance and other criteria, including behaviors at work. Over the years, studies have utilized the Big Five to investigate the relationship between supervisors' personalities and subordinates' attitudes, including satisfaction, commitment, and turnover (Smith & Canger, 2004); to explore the correlation between personality and individual job performance (Barrick & Mount, 2005); and even to examine the connection between personality traits and physical health (Smith & Williams, 1992), which can affect performance. This review will add to the academic collection of articles on persona by focusing on the link between personality characteristics and transformational leadership, as well as the interaction between personality and political skill that influences transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Effective leadership is viewed universally as vital to organizational success, and many attempts have been made to categorize leaders according to their instinctive characteristics and varying styles. Several paradigms have emerged, including servant leadership, transactional leadership, and the laissez-faire manner. Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) refers to the ideal that the leader focuses on helping others rather than satisfying his/her own selfish needs or desires, understanding his/her role as a servant first and foremost of those he/she leads. Transactional leadership (Bass, 1985) is used to exert influence through extrinsic reward(s) and/or discipline that is reliant on the subordinate's performance and can include contingent

reward, active management by exception, and/or passive management by exception (Bass & Riggio, 2006c). Laissez-faire behavior, in actuality, is an absence of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006c).

Recognized as highest on the scale of effectiveness is transformational Leadership (TFL), which was originally articulated by Burns (1978). It can be described as leadership which transpires when the leader engages the follower, ensuring that both entities are elevated to higher planes of motivation and morality while attending to a common purpose. It has been developed to include four central components, namely Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC) (Bass & Riggio, 2006b). II is associated with admiration, respect, ethics, trust, and sharing risk. IM is connected to passion, team spirit, and a shared vision. IS incorporates the prompting of originality and innovation, and IC includes responsiveness to the follower's needs for growth and development (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006c). The components and their elements can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2
TFL Components and Their Elements

TFL Components	Elements
Idealized Influence (II)	being a role model that is highly regarded, valued, trusted, and deserving of emulation
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	encouraging enthusiasm in others through challenge and instilling a sense of significance while promoting cohesion, harmony, and confidence
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	kindling creativity and inventiveness by encouraging novel ideas, questioning, and thinking outside the box
Individualized Consideration (IC)	paying particular attention to the individual needs of each follower

Political Skill

Individuals that possess political skill have the ability to read others and suitably adjust their behavior in accordance with the situation to achieve favorable outcomes. It is defined as an interpersonal style construct that combines social astuteness with the ability to relate well, and otherwise demonstrate situationally appropriate behavior in a disarmingly charming and engaging manner that inspires confidence, trust, sincerity, and genuineness (Ferris, Perrewe, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000). According to Ferris, Treadway, Perrewe, Brouer, Douglas, and Lux (2007), it is the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives. The authors characterized it as a ''comprehensive pattern of social competencies, with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations'' (Ferris et al.).

Therefore, political skill is a multi-dimensional construct that involves perspicacity, the art of persuasion, the knack of forming the right connections, and the seeming embodiment of authenticity. Ferris et al. (2007) explained the dimensions, namely social astuteness,

interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. The dimensions and their elements can be viewed in Table 3.

Table 3
Political Skill Dimensions and Their Elements

Political Skill Dimensions	Elements
Social Astuteness	the ability to incisively observe others, understand social interactions, and accurately interpret behavior
Interpersonal Influence	the ability to adapt and calibrate behavior to elicit desired responses from others
Networking Ability	the ability to identify and develop diverse contacts and networks of people
Apparent Sincerity	the ability to appear to others as having high levels of integrity, and as being sincere and genuine

Social Exchange Theory: The Foundation

The propositions for this review are based on Social Exchange Theory, which refers to reciprocal relationships in the workplace. Bowler and Brass (2006) suggested that friendship ties lead to reciprocity and social exchange and facilitate the allowance of short-term inequity necessary for social exchange to occur. Friendship ties reflect connections due to strong relationships, and the Big Five dimensions of personality all have the ability to affect relationships and the quality of exchange experienced in those relationships. Friendliness is included in the agreeableness dimension, so agreeable individuals are more likely to form friendships easily and thus benefit from a high quality of social exchange as a result. However, extraverted, emotionally stable individuals who are open to building and maintaining relationships with others would also find it easier to keep relationships. In addition, conscientious individuals who recognize relationships as essential to achieving certain goals would be committed to relationship preservation.

Transformational leadership embraces engagement, which is more effortless when strong relationships are present; thus, all the components of TFL would be more readily practiced if the leader-follower relationship or leader-member exchange (LMX) was of a high quality. Political skill is in part a social construct, and politically skilled individuals have the capacity to be observant and read social cues in order to adjust behavior and influence others. They also possess the ability to network effectively and convince others of their sincerity. All these skills are useful in nurturing powerful exchange relationships.

People are inclined to reciprocate high quality relationships. For example, Cardona, Lawrence, and Bentler (2004) mentioned the tendency of individuals to reciprocate high quality relationships by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Thus, since the Big Five, political skill, and a transformational style of leadership should assist in relationship

building and maintenance in the workplace, employees should be induced to reciprocate with heightened performance, commitment, loyalty, satisfaction, motivation, creativity, and other outcomes shown to be influenced by these three constructs. Therefore, social exchange theory is a rational and sound foundation for the propositions in this paper.

Personality, Political Skill, and TFL: Tying the Three Together

Human beings possess intrinsic qualities and preferences that make them individuals. These distinct qualities determine their perceptions of various situations and behaviors under varying conditions and differentiate some people's responses from others. Therefore, if innate characteristics that establish individuality generally lead people to behave in certain ways, it is reasonable to surmise that these characteristics specifically guide them to also approach leadership in certain ways.

Personality is an individual difference that should not be overlooked. Several studies have been conducted in an attempt to link personality with leadership styles, including scrutiny of prominent foreign political figures like Indira Gandhi (Steinberg, 2005) and examination of renowned American leaders including but not limited to Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, and Richard Nixon (Goethals, 2005). These studies and others have considered the influence of personality patterns on approaches to leadership, and the relationships and connotations have been quite interesting. The following sections pertain to individual personality dimensions according to the Five Factor Model and how they are related to transformational leadership components. The moderating role of political skill is also discussed.

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience can be likened to openness to change. Leaders are expected to be more willing to consider and/or accept divergent thinking and take the risks, which relates to being open to experience or change. One study found that more open leaders were more likely to listen to opinions presented by their followers, thus giving them more "voice" (Detert & Burris, 2007). It may be assumed that such openness also leads to intellectual stimulation since individuals would be encouraged to share their thoughts even if they challenged the status quo. Interestingly, a study conducted by Hetland and Sandal (2003) confirmed that openness to change was significantly correlated to TFL when rated by superiors, although it showed no considerable relationship when observed through subordinates. This remarkable result accurately suggests the essential nature of context when determining these relationships.

According to Judge and Bono (2000), the correlation between openness to experience and TFL does exist. In fact, the study produced a correlation that was quite significant. This is understandable, considering that leaders that are open to experience should be more creative and inventive and thus more visionary in nature and willing to embrace change. Having a vision and being able to stimulate followers to pursue that vision, accepting and taking full advantage of change when it arises, is extremely important for a transformational leader.

Unexpectedly, some studies find no direct relationship between openness to experience and TFL except when a mediator is involved. This was the case with a study by De Hoogh, Den Hartog, and Koopman (2005), where a perceived dynamic work environment acted as a mediating variable. According to the study, there was only a significant correlation when the work environment lacked stability.

Political skill is a potential moderator of the Big Five-TFL relationship due to the possible interaction with the openness dimension. Ferris et al. (2007) mentioned the political skill dimension of interpersonal influence, which reflects the individual's convincing style and captures the individual's flexibility by which he/she is sufficiently open to adapt his/her personal style and behavior to achieve goals. Such a leader would be more likely to be transformational as he/she would be more likely to be considered a role model and thus impact the follower through idealized influence. He/she would also be more likely to stimulate followers intellectually and to demonstrate individualized consideration due to his/her readiness to adapt. Therefore, political skill, as a moderator, would strengthen the openness-TFL relationship through the interpersonal influence dimension, which includes openness. The following propositions reflect the associations put forward among openness to experience, political skill, and TFL:

Proposition 1A: Openness to experience is positively related to TFL.

Proposition 1B: Political skill moderates the relationship between openness to experience and TFL such that the relationship is stronger for individuals who possess high levels of political skill than it is for individuals who possess low levels of political skill.

Conscientiousness

While conscientiousness is the personality trait most researched and most consistent in predicting other concepts like performance or organizational citizenship behavior (Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001), it has been less considered for research concerning transformational leadership and even less found to impact transformational leadership. It can be argued that conscientiousness should be a predictor of TFL because transformational leaders should be industrious and achievement oriented. It can be disputed that leaders must first set an example in order to be positive, influential, inspirational role models that motivate and stimulate their followers to perform to a high standard and exceed expectations. Surprisingly, neither Judge and Bono (2000) nor Lim and Ployhart (2004) found conscientiousness to display any significant correlation with TFL.

Since conscientiousness is associated with the desire and drive for achievement, it is expected that conscientious individuals would be open and willing to make necessary changes to accomplish goals; this flexibility would be an asset to a transformational leader. This readiness to adjust, different from reflecting conscientiousness and openness to experience, as well as the political skill dimension of interpersonal influence, also mirrors self-monitoring. Ferris et al. (2007) mentioned the perceptiveness theme, which alludes to an individual's ability to monitor and regulate his/her behavior based on social cues. The social astuteness dimension of political skill allows the leader to be more perceptive, paying close attention to his/her environment, and to monitor and adapt his/her behavior in order to project the appropriate social image and reap the desired reward(s). Ferris et al. explained that politically skilled individuals keep a healthy gauge on their accountability to both self and others, suggesting that they are conscientious. Results from a study conducted by Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, and Frink (2005) also showed that there is a significant relationship between the social astuteness dimension of political skill and conscientiousness.

It is also reasonable to purport that conscientious leaders would be willing to go the extra mile to network and build relationships with followers and other key persons to fulfill objectives. These actions also reflect the political skill dimension of networking ability and would assist the transformational leader as he/she attempts to engage his/her followers. Thus, this paper proposes political skill as a moderator that would strengthen the conscientiousness-TFL relationship. The following propositions reflect the suggested associations among conscientiousness, political skill, and TFL:

Proposition 2A: Conscientiousness is positively related to TFL.

Proposition 2B: Political skill moderates the relationship between conscientiousness and TFL such that the relationship is stronger for individuals who possess high levels of political skill than it is for individuals who possess low levels of political skill.

Extraversion/Introversion

Engagement is essential in all the components of TFL, and Rubin, Munz, and Bommer (2005) noted both agreeableness and extraversion as key traits enabling the mutual engagement of leaders and followers. However, extraversion, which is usually associated with assertiveness and gregariousness, surprisingly did not predict TFL in their study.

Also, according to the study by De Hoogh, Den Hartog, and Koopman (2005), there was no relationship between extraversion and TFL regardless of the work environment, which theoretically should play a role in determining whether leaders are open with employees and communicate with them on a regular basis. However, a significant positive correlation was found between extraversion of followers and their perception of transformational behavior from their leaders (Felfe & Schyns, 2006). It was explained that the followers' outgoing nature motivated them to seek interaction and interpersonal relations with their leaders, and thus they perceived more TFL.

Studies conducted by Judge and Bono (2000) and Lim and Ployhart (2004) did result in extraversion displaying a significant correlation with TFL. This was the expected outcome since the traits associated with extraversion seem to be attributes of transformational leaders. Extraverts are expected to be charismatic individuals who are communicative, persuasive, and able to rally others to perform. The meta-analysis by Bono and Judge (2004) later confirmed this belief by indicating extraversion to be linked to the charisma dimension of TFL.

As mentioned previously, extraverts are friendly, outgoing, and assertive. Ferris et al. (2007) stated that extraversion reflects an affability or sociability theme. Politically skilled individuals also possess these qualities. One dimension of political skill is networking ability, which allows individuals to make valuable connections that would assist in achieving goals. Ferris et al. (2007) also stated that individuals with political skill are adept at identifying and developing diverse contacts and networks of people to ensure organizational gains. The authors stated that politically skilled individuals possess networking ability in part as a result of their aptitude for easily developing friendships. Extraverted individuals would be more successful at initiating and maintaining these relationships and thus would be more likely to use relationship-building to influence and motivate their followers. Thus, it would be reasonable to suggest that

political skill as a moderator would strengthen the extraversion-TFL relationship. The following propositions reflect the associations propounded among extraversion, political skill, and TFL:

Proposition 3A: Extraversion is positively related to TFL.

Proposition 3B: Political skill moderates the relationship between extraversion and TFL such that the relationship is stronger for individuals who possess high levels of political skill than it is for individuals who possess low levels of political skill.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness is an important personality trait when considering transformational leadership because it alludes to the nurturing character of the leader, who acts to bring out the best in his or her followers and is sensitive to their needs. In fact, Hetland and Sandal (2003) found agreeableness (termed warmth) to be the strongest personality correlate of TFL in their Norwegian study. Judge and Bono (2000) also found that agreeableness displayed the strongest relationship with TFL. It was also mentioned that agreeableness was related to consideration, which is expected since agreeable individuals are compassionate and empathic. However, a bit surprising was that agreeableness was the Big Five trait most strongly related with charisma. One would expect that extraversion would be more responsible for the charismatic nature of leaders. Agreeable individuals are affectionate, generous, trusting, cooperative, and good with relationships. They are concerned with others and willing to attend to their needs. Therefore, understandably, the study conducted by Rubin, Munz, and Bommer (2005) supported agreeableness as a predictor of TFL, maintaining hypotheses that transformational leaders are more interpersonally sensitive than transactional leaders or those that rely heavily on contingent reward.

Occasionally, research is conducted on various personality characteristics that fall under the umbrella of agreeableness and can therefore be used to corroborate the relationship between agreeableness and TFL. For example, a study conducted by Hetland and Sandal (2003) confirmed that warmth was significantly linked to TFL, which is understandable since warmth is expected to impact a leader's demonstration of individualized consideration. In this same study, warmth was shown to have a significant correlation with openness to change, which was mentioned earlier as also being positively related to TFL.

Contrary to other research conducted, Lim and Ployhart's (2004) study revealed a negative relationship between agreeableness and TFL. This finding reinforces the importance of taking contextual factors into account and being wary of generalizations when conducting empirical research.

The warmth and compassion associated with agreeable individuals are also included among the assets of leaders with political skill. According to Ferris et al. (2007), the affability theme, in addition to reflecting dispositional characteristics like extraversion and positive affectivity, also represents the agreeableness construct. Affability is linked to the political skill dimensions of interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity, all of which are valuable in transformational leadership. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose that political skill would interact with agreeableness to influence TFL, and that as a moderator political skill

would strengthen the agreeableness-TFL relationship. The following propositions reflect the associations set forth among agreeableness, political skill, and TFL:

Proposition 4A: Agreeableness is positively related to TFL.

Proposition 4B: Political skill moderates the relationship between agreeableness and TFL such that the relationship is stronger for individuals who possess high levels of political skill than it is for individuals who possess low levels of political skill.

Neuroticism/Emotional Stability

Judge and Bono (2000) hypothesized a relationship between neuroticism and TFL because of neuroticism's link to self-esteem and self-confidence. The researchers thought these traits were necessary for an individual to be able to take risks and set high standards, as well as to motivate followers to take risks and achieve those standards. However, their study did not find neuroticism to display any significant relationship with TFL. This was a bit surprising as one would anticipate a negative relationship, expecting neurotic individuals to be considerably sub-standard regarding interpersonal relationships and thus to be less likely to display the characteristics associated with TFL.

A subsequent meta-analysis by Bono and Judge (2004), however, did indicate that neuroticism was linked to TFL through the charisma dimension. They considered this dimension part of both idealized influence and inspirational motivation. Results of the investigation also established that neuroticism was negatively linked to the TFL dimensions of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Lim and Ployhart (2004) also found neuroticism to be negatively related to TFL.

Interestingly, it has been found that emotional stability among employees, or the lack thereof, influences their perception of their leader's transformational qualities. In a study conducted by Felfe and Schyns (2006), neuroticism of followers was negatively related to their perception of TFL exuded by their leaders, and the negative relationship was especially significant between neuroticism and the TFL component of idealized influence. This was attributed to the fact that neurotic followers would have lower self-esteem and higher anxiety and may experience more insecurity. Thus, they may experience avoidance or withdrawal when confronted with a transformational leader.

Emotionally stable leaders are more secure in themselves and confident in their abilities and thus lack the nervousness and vulnerability that prevent individuals from building and managing relationships through effective communication, negotiation, compromise, and conflict resolution, as well as making sound decisions and leading through engagement. As mentioned previously, political skill is also essential in relationship building. Ferris et al. (2007) stated that politically skilled individuals are often highly skilled negotiators and deal makers and are adept at conflict management. The authors also contended that individuals high in political skill would possess greater perceptions of control and interpret workplace stressors differently, resulting in less strain and anxiety. These skills would be assets to leaders as they attempt to motivate their followers and as they practice both idealized influence and individualized consideration. Thus, as a moderator, political skill would strengthen the emotional stability-TFL relationship. The

following propositions reflect the suggested associations among emotional stability, political skill, and TFL:

> Proposition 5A: Emotional stability is positively related to TFL.

> Proposition 5B: Political skill moderates the relationship between emotional stability and TFL such that the relationship is stronger for individuals who possess high levels of political skill than it is for individuals who possess low levels of political skill.

It is reasonable to propose that all the Big Five dimensions would be positively related to TFL. Openness to experience allows the leader to be more accepting of novel ideas and thus more likely to stimulate the follower intellectually. Conscientious leaders are achievement oriented and thus more likely to motivate their followers to achieve organizational goals. Extraverted and agreeable individuals are more outgoing and pleasant, respectively, and more likely to have successful interpersonal relationships. Thus, they are more likely to influence their followers and to be considerate towards them. Emotionally stable leaders would be better able to influence their followers because their stability would enable them to be better role models to followers and to thoroughly engage them in the goal fulfillment process.

Political skill would also play an important role as it moderates the Big Five-TFL relationship. Politically skilled leaders would have the capacity to ardently observe others and aptly interact with them to achieve the goals of the organization and thus to truly engage followers through a transformational style of leadership. Ferris et al. (2007) maintained that politically skilled individuals are keenly attuned to diverse social settings and have the ability to be influential, to identify with others, and to be sensitive to their needs. These "people skills" would be valuable in the practice of transformational leadership.

Political skill is also useful in emanating a sense of honesty and uprightness, which instigates trust and confidence and thus promotes the leader as a source of influence. According to Ferris et al. (2007), politically skilled individuals appear to have high levels of integrity and to be authentic, sincere, and genuine. These qualities are assets to the transformational leader as he/she practices idealized influence and inspirational motivation. Figure 1 provides a conceptual representation of the relationships shared among the Big Five, political skill, and transformational leadership.

Summary and Discussion

The manuscript examines, from a theoretical perspective, the relationship between the "Big Five" dimensions (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion/introversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism/emotional stability) and transformational leadership (comprised of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), and investigates political skill (encompassing social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity) as a possible moderating variable.
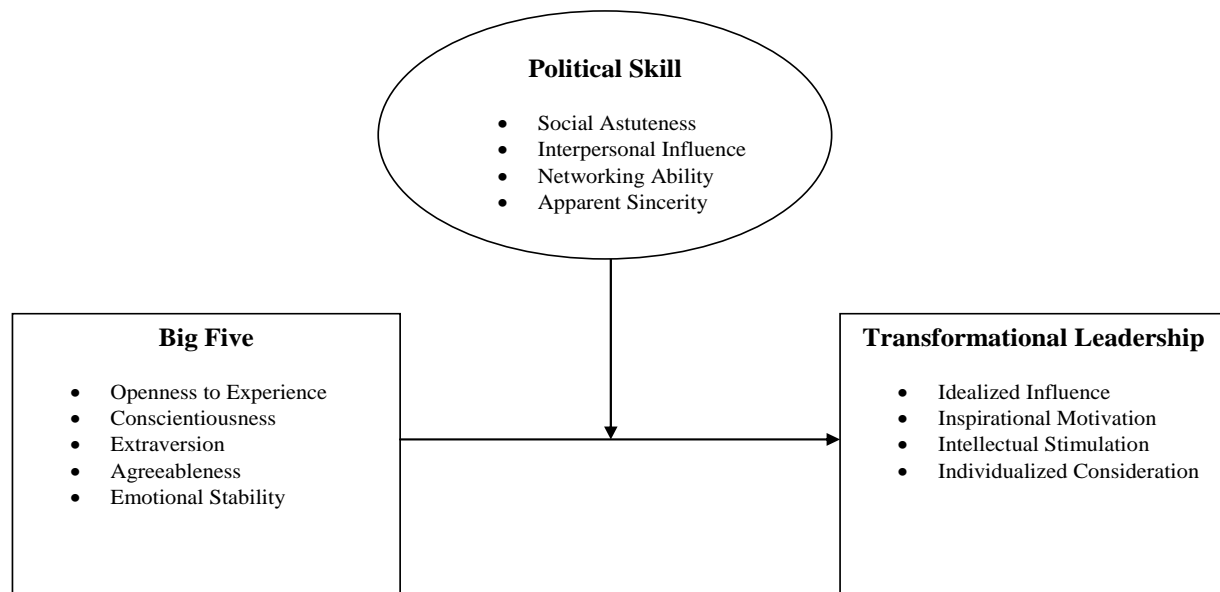
Figure 1. Conceptual model of relationships shared among the Big Five, political skill, and transformational leadership.

The quest to determine the predictors of TFL is a useful one because TFL is considered the most important and most productive of the leadership styles. According to Rubin, Munz, and Bommer (2005), it represents the most active and effective form of leadership because of the close engagement involved and the focus on motivation to perform beyond basic transactional agreements.

Analyses of the reviews and journal articles support the premise that personality influences TFL. This paper focuses on the Big Five; even though many of the personality instruments measure different personality dimensions, there are several variations that embrace fascinating similarities to the Big Five. For example, Steinberg (2005) did use an instrument that measured different personality elements (ambition, reticence, contentiousness, and dominance) from the Five Factor Model to assess and compile the personality profile of Indira Gandhi. Interestingly, the elements measured did have some corresponding attributes to the Big Five. For instance, it was mentioned that the aspects of Gandhi's dominant style usually associated with control, force, and intimidation may sometimes be linked to disagreeableness but also have a propensity to be associated with emotional stability and conscientiousness. In addition, her mild reticent pattern, although insignificant in her leadership style as compared to her other patterns, could be linked to extraversion/introversion and conscientiousness.

Although research supported the personality-TFL relationship, results vary concerning which components of the Big Five affect TFL and whether the link is positive or negative. One example is the study by Bono and Judge (2004), which found that sometimes agreeableness and openness to experience were positively linked to charisma, while at other times they were negatively linked to charisma. The inconsistency in strength and direction of relationships suggests that there may be interaction due to moderating variables that affect the relationships. Political skill literature provides empirical and theoretical reasons to consider the construct as a moderator of the Big Five-TFL relationship.

Finally, it has also been determined that there are some variables that mediate the relationship between personality and TFL—for example, the existing work environment (De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Koopman, 2005). De Hoogh et al.'s study established that four of the Big Five—agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism—were related to TFL at varying levels, depending on the stability or dynamic nature of the work environment. Further research is necessary to determine the existing relationships between personality and TFL, and many other intervening factors should be taken into account. These dynamics should be investigated to determine their influence as well.

Conclusion

In light of the research and considering the results of previous studies, it does seem sensible to conclude that distinctions in individual personalities influence leadership behaviors in general and transformational leadership in particular. However, not all personality characteristics are significant predictors of TFL. With respect to the Big Five, some forecasters (e.g., agreeableness) are usually stronger than others. Studies also suggest that one personality dimension from the Five Factor Model is not always sufficient to predict TFL. Occasionally, the combined effect of several personality traits brings about TFL, or the influence of other variables such as political skill drives or strengthens the relationship between personality and TFL. Also, caution must be taken with respect to generalizability, especially concerning contextual factors such as the origin of ratings. Some of the inconsistencies stem from leader ratings as opposed to follower ratings.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

Transformational leadership, and leadership in its entirety, is a complex construct that has neither a distinct origin or precursor, nor a lone output or end product. Many variables can influence leadership style, which in turn can impact numerous outcomes. Therefore, although personality does influence leadership, it is not the only antecedent. Greasley and Stoker (2008) maintained that leadership is not simply a product of personality but plays a part in determining the style and approach of the individual leader. Thus, in addition to conducting research on personality, there is a need to investigate other temperamental constructs (e.g., mood) and other constructs in general that affect leadership. Future research should also aim to determine the primary source for the development of transformational leaders.

Apart from political skill, other similar constructs reflecting parallels to the dimensions of social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and/or apparent sincerity (e.g., impression management and self-monitoring) should also be investigated as potential moderators of the personality-leadership relationship and more specifically the Big Five- TFL relationship. An individual may possess certain traits that should materialize into a transformational style of leadership, but this is not always the case. Interestingly, although Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was a very powerful and respected leader, she was not very transformational but rather competitive and controlling (Steinberg, 2005). Although leaders may have some personality traits associated with TFL, other qualities or certain circumstances may interact with or override these traits and cause a different leadership style to emerge. Therefore, it would be practical to conduct research on additional moderating variables that temper the influence of personality on TFL. Moreover, the individual dimensions of political skill (social astuteness, interpersonal

influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity) should be independently examined to determine their moderating effects on the relationship.

Research on this topic has revealed that many individuals have what Steinberg (2005) referred to as multi-faceted personalities. Human beings are complex individuals who have the ability to be very versatile, even with their dispositional qualities. Therefore, an individual usually does not have one personality pattern but a combination, with some elements being more prevalent than others. It has also been proposed that combinations of personality markers will be more descriptive than individual indicators, and will serve to clearly distinguish between TFL and TAL (Church & Waclawski, 1998). Thus, personality clusters should be identified and analyzed to determine relationships among personality variables and leadership behaviors and styles. It would be interesting to research which combinations work best together to develop a leader that is truly transformational in character and style.

An interesting concept referred to as emotional intelligence was broached through the research conducted. It encompasses five factors—empathetic response, mood regulation, interpersonal skill, internal motivation, and self-awareness—and in a study conducted by Barbuto and Burbach (2006), a combination of all five factors shared positive relationships with each transformational leadership component. Specifically, empathetic response shared significant variance with each subscale of TFL, especially with intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Also, interpersonal skill was positively related to individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Empathetic response could be considered as encompassing agreeableness, and interpersonal skill as embracing agreeableness and some form of extraversion. Therefore, empirical support may show some correlation. Additional research should be conducted to ascertain the specific relationship between emotional intelligence and personality and their correlation with TFL.

Quite often, research is conducted on leadership effectiveness without focus on any particular style of leadership. Since many claim TFL as the most effective leadership style, it would be interesting to find out whether variables that affect leadership effectiveness would also affect TFL. Specifically, for example, mention was made of moderating variables (e.g., work environment) that affect the relationship between personality and TFL. Mediators have also been found to affect the relationship between personality (e.g., the traits of neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness) and leadership effectiveness. These mediators include leadership self-efficacy, job demands, and job autonomy (Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008). It would be interesting to determine whether these moderating and mediating variables have the same effect on TFL.

Finally, based on this conceptual framework, a quantitative study should be conducted to test the proposed relationships herein and to determine whether findings would support the links proffered. Results could be consequential, having considerable implications for both the selection and training of organizational leaders.

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