

Motivation to Lead, personality and their impact on leadership aptitudes

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Research question: Different personality factors, especially conscientiousness and emotional stability, have been found to be valid predictors of job performance and leadership behavior (Barrick & Mount, 2009; Judge, Bono, Ilies & Gerhardt, 2002). Researchers assume that proximal motives mediate between these distal traits and organizational behavior (Barrick & Mount, 2005). Motivation to Lead (MtL) has shown to be a valid mediator of the relationship between personality and leadership (Stiehl, Gatzka, Elprana & Felfe, 2015). For enhancement of validity a work specific measurement of personality factors is recommended (Lievens, De Corte & Schollaert, 2008). To measure facets of conscientiousness and emotional stability an occupational scale was developed (ABGS; Moldzio, Peiffer, Gergovska, Reiner & Felfe, in press). This study shows how MtL links the facets of occupational conscientiousness and emotional stability with leadership aptitudes.

Design: Occupational personality traits and motivation to lead were collected via questionnaires in the context of assessment and development centers (N = 250). Leadership criteria were obtained from independent observer evaluation.

Results: MtL and personality predict leadership potential. As expected MtL mediated the relationship between facets of conscientiousness and emotional stability and leadership potential. The facets of occupational emotional stability show incremental validity over the global big 5 factor.

Limitations: Due to the cross sectional design reversed causality cannot be ruled out with regard to personality and motives. Methodical effects may have biased the relationships because we used mainly self-descriptions and the predictor and mediator variables were collected from the same source. Generalization is limited to manager applicants at the beginning of their leadership careers.

Relevance and implications: The study shows new insights in the structure of conscientiousness and emotional stability and illustrates the benefits of narrower occupational facets. MtL has an important role linking personality and leadership and enhances the validity

of the prediction of organizational criteria. Future studies should expand the research of the facets of the Big 5, especially agreeableness, in the context of MtL and leadership aptitudes.

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