

Research Article

DOI 10.33897/fujp.v5i2.96

## Big Five Personality Traits on Project Success in Marketing-Oriented Organizations: Moderation of Leader Member Exchange

Numair Ahmed Sulehri <sup>1</sup>, Ahsan Awais <sup>2</sup>, Imran Bashir Dar <sup>3</sup>, Ali Uzair <sup>4</sup>

- 1.COMSATS University Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 2.Foundation University Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 3.International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 4.University of Balochistan, Paksistan.

For Correspondence: Numair Ahmed Sulehri. Email:Sulehri39@gmail.com

### Abstract

**Objectives.** The relational interconnectivity of leaders and organizational members in the context of personality traits is in limelight due to market pressing need of antecedents' investigation for project success. This study is about portrayal of big-five personality traits impact on project success in marketing-oriented organizations. In addition, this study is also aimed to explore if leader member exchange plays a role in moderating the relationship between the big five personality traits and project success. Two traits agreeableness and conscientiousness were the focus as per theoretical paradigm.

**Method.** For this purpose, the questionnaire was filled by different public and private organizations. The sample size was 153 respondents (both male and female), collected through convenience sampling due to scattered nature of sample.

**Results.** The study uses a co-relation and regression analysis technique to test the measurement of model. It was found that agreeableness has a significant effect on project success, whereas conscientiousness lacks significant relationship along with absence of moderating relationship.

**Implications.** The managerial implication is marked by the spearhead focus on agreeableness and conscientiousness traits in terms of humanistic capacity building that could install the triggers for project success in marketing-oriented organizations.

**Keywords.** *Agreeableness, conscientiousness, leader member exchange, project success.*



## Introduction

In recent research the exchange of influence between the leader and the internal customer (employee) is focused through the lens of marketing (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000; Zhao, Liu, Li, & Yu, 2019). Leader member exchange is the leader's relationship with every member of their team. It is usually believed that leaders have a deep imprint on the organization they lead (Smith & Canger, 2004). A significant element in building a strong communication between the leaders and the members is having a solid interpersonal trust between them that goes beyond the official employment contract (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).

This influence impact the individual personality of the employees and make an adjustment in the organizational work settings (Friend, Johnson, Luthans, & Sohi, 2016). The leadership behavior of the managers also influences the training cycles and motivational psychology of the employees. Therefore, the personality of the leader and employee affect the job performance (Blickle et.al, 2007). The specific link of this affect, according to the leader influence, molds the employee personality (Goldberg, 1990). Past empirical studies have debated about the understanding of the aspects of human personality in leader member exchange and its effectiveness. Particularly, the LMX relationship has provided the theoretical foundation for examining the marketing employee's relationships and expand their connection beyond job description (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000). In this context of the most influential big five traits is missing in explanation of organization success with leader member exchange. In this study, the two big five traits (Goldberg, 1990) are utilized to explain the influence in the project success.

Personal characteristics and manners are build trust between managers and subordinate, when quality of leader member exchange is experienced in the organization (Bauer & Green, 1996). Personal similarity between leader and member measured in terms of positive developmental processes, which in turn is related to leader member exchange (Smith & Canger, 2004). In addition to the impacts that leaders may have on the adequacy of groups, leaders might influence emotions and behavior of the group members.

In the light of the past studies, although much has been researched on leader's and subordinates' dyads, the most affective big five personality traits needs to be examined in lieu to project success (Bauer & Green, 1996) from marketing point of view.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to study the impact of two major personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) on project success with moderation of leader member exchange.

This study would help in designing the marketing programs in the context of resilient and harmonized human relationships for better project based organizational working.

## Literature Review

Empirical studies have given the evidence about the basic personality traits as interpreters of human actions (Wiggins 1996). Costa and McCrae (1985), Saucier (1994) and Goldberg (1992) supported the presence of basic dimensions of personality in humans as five. These traits, namely "conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience" foresee work attitudes and behaviors (Witt, Barrick, Burke & Mount, 2002).

Conscientiousness and agreeableness have been suggested the most reliable FFM predictors of performance by meta-analytic studies (e.g., Barrick et al., in press; Salgado, 1997). As in projects we need more and more of collaboration and co-operation with others so (Barrick & Mount, 1991), agreeableness is a valid predictor in those occupations where frequent interaction and co-operation with others is estimated to be more in job performance (Mount et al. 1998). Studies have shown that out of the five dimensions, agreeableness was the best predictor of performance in jobs requiring teamwork. Conscientiousness is a valid interpreter for all employee groups and all job-related measure in the past empirical study (Barrick & Mount, 1993).

**Agreeableness and project success.** This dynamic is defined as "a person who is high on agreeableness can be labeled as compassionate, caring, generous, honest, and cooperative and anxious to support others" (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1992; Costa & McCrae, 2008). A few people have a feeling that agreeableness concerns a man's intentions in keeping up sound relations with others and permits people to constrain the adverse impacts of interpersonal clash and help them to coexist with others (Blickle et al. 2008). An organized review by Mount, Barrick, and Stewart (1998) reported good relationship between agreeableness and performance (Barrick, Stewart & Piotrowski, 2002).

Agreeable individual is described as gentle and confident to others. This indicates that individuals who have a greater percentage of agreeableness to treat their workers in a just and respectful manner and are not offensive to them.

**H1:** *Agreeableness is positively and significantly related to project success.*

**Conscientiousness and Project success.** Conscientiousness has two important components that are being vigilant while doing any work. Secondly being organized as opposed to easy going and disorderly (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Mount & Barrick, 1995). Individuals having conscientiousness in them are very careful and take their time to do the right thing (Moon, 2001). They do not fear challenges instead they saddle up and plan to complete the given task at hand. They are achievement oriented, focused and are hardworking (Witt et al., 2002). However, due to their achievement-oriented nature they tend to negate teamwork and power sharing, if it is a hindrance in their goal. Due to which achievement motivated leaders may try to keep power in their hands rather than maximizing collective efforts.

**H2:** *Conscientiousness is positively and significantly related to project success.*

### **Leader-Member Exchange and Project success**

Dubrin (2004) depicted that leadership is the achievement of goals through communication towards others. Lapiere and Hackett (2007) projected that LMX theory explains that bosses discriminate among their subordinates for the amount of support, independence, and career-growth within their powers. Frequently, LMX happens between at least two persons: leader and subordinate (Lapiere & Hackett, 2007) in the marketing departments. LMX is experienced at higher levels of job satisfaction, because employees receive special treatments as compared to their colleagues in low LMX relationships (Elanain, Badri & Ajmal, 2015). Henderson's (2008) studied a positive effect of communication between leader and workers, which results in team productivity and project success. When employee believes that leader is acting in their best interest, their performance and loyalty tends to increase. This results in effective and high quality LMX (Erdogan et al., 2006).

More the leader is concerned to develop a relationship with followers, more the workers will be concerned with the project.

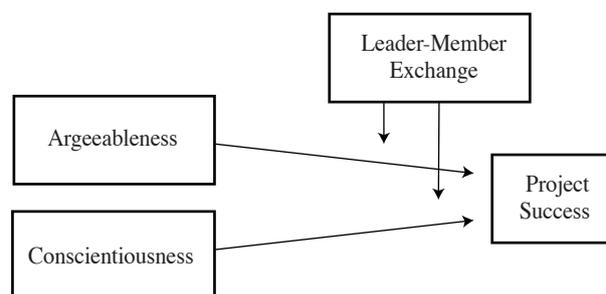
**H3:** *Leader member exchange is positively and significantly related to project success.*

**Moderating Role of Leader-Member Exchange.** Past empirical study has reported significant relationship between the Big Five traits and leader effectiveness" (Hartog & Hoogh, 2011). Social exchange theory also suggests that employees with effective LMX is likely to be more competent and effective workers (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997; Lapiere & Hackett, 2007). Additionally, the point when agents know they are doing good work, their sentiment of self-esteem and achievement is going to increase, thereby improving their employment fulfillment (Phillips & Bedian, 1994). Careful workers encourage most effective LMX contacts than other colleagues, this gives them privileged conduct, resulting in higher job satisfaction (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Agreeableness leaders divide their work and create a task force to work efficiently. They are not hesitant to do their assigned task and are co-operative to their leader which strengthens their relationship (Nahrgang, Morgeson & Ilies, 2009) which lead to satisfied performance in job.

**H4:** *LMX moderates the between agreeableness and project success for marketing-oriented organizations*

**H5:** *LMX moderates the between conscientiousness and project success marketing-oriented organizations*

### **Theoretical Framework**



### **Method**

For the current study, primary survey method with a structured questionnaire is used.

## Participant

The sample includes the employees of project based organizations (both public and private sectors), with separate marketing department in Pakistan. Because of non-availability of a prior list of employees and scattered nature of sample convenient sampling technique is used as sampling design. The data collected was analyzed for errors and unmarked responses. The data was cleaned for errors and prepared for analysis.

For data was collected form employees working in the organizations based in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. For this purpose, 220 questionnaires were distributed, and 153 responses are included in the final analysis. Response rate was 75.5 %, and a sufficient sample size was gathered for examination of results. The data collection period was five weeks.

## Measures

The survey tool is adapted from different earlier studies. The questionnaire response was evaluated using the Likert scale, anchors on the scale are extend from 1 to 5 (1 = Highly Disagree and 5 = Highly Agree). The questionnaire distributed was in English language, as this language use in office work and majority of the job holder know this language well. Thus, translation of the questionnaire in another language was not needed. The detail of individual scale is mentioned separately in the following paragraphs.

**Big Five Personality Traits.** to measure the Agreeableness and Conscientiousness 18 items scale by (Kacmar et al., 2003) is used. Reliability reported through the Cronbach's Alpha for agreeableness scale is .637 and for conscientiousness was .651, thus all the primary constructs displayed sufficient reliability.

**Table 1:**

*Descriptive Analysis & Correlation*

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
<b>Agreeableness</b>	3.4205	.52115	-			
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	3.3246	.57573	.452**	-		
<b>Leader-Member Exchange</b>	3.5042	.59965	.362**	.351**	-	
<b>Project Success</b>	3.7651	.62387	.499**	.291**	.337**	-

Note. \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A sample question for Agreeableness is “*to find fault with others*”. A sample question for Conscientiousness is “*does a thorough job*”. This scale is widely used in ongoing research (Teh, Kalidas, & Zeeshan, 2014).

**Leader-Member Exchange.** to gather data on the Leader-Member Exchange 7 items scale by (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989) is used. Reliability reported through Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .741. A sample question is “*Do you know where you stand with your leader? Do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?*”. The same scale is also used in research on organizational identification (Zhao et al., 2019).

**Project Success.** is measured with 10 items scale by Muller and Turner (2010). Reliability reported through the Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .875. A sample question is “*End-user satisfaction with the project's product or service*”.

## Controlled variable

Age gender and education were used as demographics that can have an impact on relationship between variables. Therefore, they were studied as control variable to identify the impact. One-way analysis was used that revealed that none of the demographic s significant. Significance of gender with respect to dependent variable project success = .173 > 0.05, significance of age = .389 > 0.05 and significance of education = .384 > 0.05 means no impact. Therefore, we don't need to control the demographics.

The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 23 statistical package according to the moderation analysis guideline in the literature (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). The results are reported accordingly in this study.

Above table indicates that the Project Success has significant relation with Agreeableness ( $r = .499, p >= 0.01$ ), indicating good statistical power. Conscientiousness, and Leader-Member Exchange also have good statistical correlation ( $r = .362, p > = 0.01$ ). For Agreeableness and conscientiousness the value of  $r$  is .452 ( $p > = 0.01$ ). Furthermore, for conscientiousness to project success the correlation value is 0.291 ( $p = 0.01$ ), and lastly, the correlation value for Leader- Member Exchange to project success is 0.337 ( $p = 0.01$ ). Therefore, the study variables displayed good relationship according to the statistical criteria. Hence it is concluded that the variables of this study are having good correlation with each other.

**Table 2:**  
*Moderating Regression Analysis (N=153)*

Predictor	Project Success		
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
<b>Main Effect: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness</b>			
<b>Step II:</b>			
Agreeableness (IV)	.501***		
Conscientiousness (IV)	.045		
Leader Member Exchange (Mod)	.178**	.279	.279***
<b>Step III :</b>			
Leader Member Exchange x Conscientiousness	-.176		
Leader Member Exchange x Agreeableness	-.012	.310	.031**

Note: \*\*\*  $p \leq .000$ .

This study was comprised on moderated model. The outcomes are mentioned in table 2. According to the results hypothesis 1 “A has positive relationship with PS” is supported at  $\beta = .501***$  and  $\Delta R^2 = .279***$  at significant level of  $p \leq .000$ . Similarly, hypothesis 2 “C is positively related to PS” is also supported as  $\beta = .045***$  and  $\Delta R^2 = .279***$  at significant level of  $p \leq .000$ . Lastly, hypothesis of moderation i.e. hypothesis 4 and hypothesis 5 which was “LMX moderate the positive relationship between agreeableness and PS, in a way that high orientation of LMX strengthen the positive relationship Between A and PS” and “LMX moderate the positive relationship between C and PS, in a way that high orientation of LMX strengthen the positive relationship Between C and PS” are not supported ( $p > 0.10$ ).

## Discussion

The results of the current analysis have displayed significant impact of Big Five Personality Trait on Project Success. Additionally, the Leader Member Exchange has not acted as mediator between independent and dependent variables. According to the outcomes of the survey our first hypothesis (H1) *Agreeableness is positively related to project success* is totally encouraged as it is also too encouraged by Barrick, Stewart and Piotrowski, (2002). Agreeableness in the individuals worked well in the occupations where frequent interaction with other individuals has been required, and in projects one need to be interact with other team members so agreeableness individuals positively affect the project success, as per suggested in the previous research like Barrick and Mount (1991).

Our second hypothesis, (H2) *Conscientiousness is positively related to project success* is rejected.

As all the previous studies were based on the individuals of European countries, but here in Pakistan the scenario is bit different. Notably, most of the individuals are not that much career oriented and organized so they are low in conscientiousness.

For the third hypothesis, (H3) *LMX is positively related to project success* is totally encouraged as it was also encouraged by Henderson's (2008) studies a positive effect of good communication of leader with workers which results in team productivity and project success. When employee believes that leader is doing in their best interest, their performance and loyalty is increased. This results in effective and high quality LMX (Erdogan et al., 2006). More the leader is concerned to develop a relationship with followers, more the workers will be concerned with the project. The moderator's relationship between independent and dependent variable has been rejected.

Our hypothesis (H4) LMX moderates the relationship between agreeableness and project success in marketing-oriented organizations and (H5) LMX moderates the relationship between conscientiousness and project success in marketing-oriented organizations is accepted. This displays that the local organizations in Pakistan also values LMX relationship (Newman, Schwarz, Cooper, & Sendjaya, 2017)

### **Implications for Leaders and Managers**

The aim of the research was to review the impact of Big Five Personality Trait on Project Success. Out of five traits two traits (Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) was chosen. Leader Member Exchange has been proposed as moderator. Conclusion of the research is that personality trait of an employee plays an important role on project success. According to this research and its outcomes, some of the recommendations are offered for managers and leaders. Managers should have the ability to assess the traits of the employees will be in a good position to understand their employees. Managers should have a better understanding of the traits and should hire those individuals who are high on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Other than this leader should have strong relationship with his employees so that it can enhance the potential of employees that leads to the success of the project.

### **Limitation and Future Research**

This analysis concluded with the measurement of the impact of big five personality traits and project success, and leader-member exchange as moderator between them. Following are some guidelines for future research. More moderators like leadership style, organizational environment, family conflicts, or work pressure along with other job modelling characteristics can be considered for further study. The sample is taken from both Private and Public sectors, having marketing department, from which the research is conducted. Taking sample separately either from private or from public may differ the outcomes. In the future the researcher may study the traits of the leaders and its impact on the project success.

### **Funding**

This study received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public or private sector.

### **Competing Interests**

The authors are well informed and declared no competing interests.

### **Ethical approval**

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee (DPEC).

### **Consent for publication**

Consent approved by the authors.

### **Availability of data and materials**

Contact corresponding author.

### **Acknowledgement**

Authors thank to all boarding institutes who consented to participate in the study.

### **References**

- Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The Big Five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1991.tb00688.x>
- Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1993). Autonomy as a moderator of the relationships between the Big Five personality dimensions and job performance. *Journal of applied Psychology, 78*(1), 111. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.1.111>.
- Barrick, M. R., Stewart, G. L., & Piotrowski, M. (2002). Personality and job performance: test of the mediating effects of motivation among sales representatives. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(1), 43. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.1.43>.
- Bauer, T. N., & Green, S. G. (1996). Development of a leader-member exchange: A longitudinal test. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*(6), 1538-1567. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257068>.
- Blickle, G., Meurs, J. A., Zettler, I., Solga, J., Noethen, D., Kramer, J., & Ferris, G. R. (2008). Personality, political skill, and job performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 72*(3), 377-387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.11.008>.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1985). The NEO personality inventory manual. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

- Costa Jr, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (2008). The Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). Sage Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200479.n9>.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Professional manual: revised NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO five-factor inventory (NEO-FFI). *Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, 61*.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (2008). *The Revised NEO personality inventory* (NEO-PI-R). The Sage Handbook of Personality Theory and Assessment: Volume 2 — Personality Measurement and Testing, 179-198. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200479.n9>.
- Dienesch, R. M., & Liden, R. C. (1986). Leader-member exchange model of leadership: A critique and further development. *Academy of Management Review, 11*(3), 618-634. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1986.4306242>.
- Flaherty, K. E., & Pappas, J. M. (2000). The role of trust in salesperson—sales manager relationships. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, 20*(4), 271–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2000.10754247>.
- Friend, S. B., Johnson, J. S., Luthans, F., & Sohi, R. S. (2016). Positive psychology in sales: Integrating psychological capital. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 24*(3), 306-327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2016.1170525>.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1990). An alternative "description of personality": The big-five factor structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*(6), 1216-1229. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.59.6.1216>.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1992). The development of markers for the big-five factor structure. *Psychological Assessment, 4*(1), 26-42. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.4.1.26>.
- Kalshoven, K., Den Hartog, D. N., & De Hoogh, A. H. (2010). Ethical leader behavior and Big Five factors of personality. *Journal of Business Ethics, 100*(2), 349-366. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0685-9>.
- Lapierre, L. M., & Hackett, R. D. (2007). Trait conscientiousness, leader-member exchange, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour: A test of an integrative model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80*(3), 539-554. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317906x154892>.
- Mohamed, J. M., Qubaisi, L. F., Elanain, H. M., Badri, M. A., & Ajmal, M. M. (2015). Leadership, culture and team communication: Analysis of project success causality - a UAE case. *International Journal of Applied Management Science, 7*(3), 223. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijams.2015.071149>.
- Müller, R., & Turner, R. (2010). Leadership competency profiles of successful project managers. *International Journal of Project Management, 28*(5), 437-448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2009.09.003>.
- Newman, A., Schwarz, G., Cooper, B., & Sendjaya, S. (2017). How servant leadership influences organizational citizenship behavior: The roles of LMX, empowerment, and proactive personality. *Journal of Business Ethics, 145*(1), 49-62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2827-6>.
- Qubaisi, J. M. M. L. F. A., Elanain, H. M. A., Badri, M. A., & Ajmal, M. M. (2015). Leadership, culture and team communication: analysis of project success causality-a UAE case. *International Journal of Applied Management Science, 7*(3), 223-243. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJAMS.2015.071149>.
- Rehman, S. U. (2020). Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Project Success. *Journal of Engineering, Project, and Production Management, 10*(2), 87-93. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jeppm-2020-0011>.
- Salgado, J. F. (1997). The five factor model of personality and job performance in the European community. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*(1), 30-43. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.1.30>.
- Shenhar, A. J., Dvir, D., Levy, O., & Maltz, A. C. (2001). Project success: A multidimensional strategic concept. *Long Range Planning, 34*(6), 699-725. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0024-6301\(01\)00097-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0024-6301(01)00097-8).

- Smith, M. A., & Canger, J. M. (2003). Effects of supervisor “Big Five” personality on subordinate attitudes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 18(4), 465-481. <https://doi.org/10.1023/b:jobu.0000028447.00089.12>.
- Sparrowe, R. T., & Liden, R. C. (1997). Process and structure in leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(2), 522-552. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1997.9707154068>.
- Susskind, A. M., Kacmar, K. M., & Borchgrevink, C. P. (2003). Customer service providers' attitudes relating to customer service and customer satisfaction in the customer-server exchange. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(1), 179-187. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.1.179>.
- Wiggins, J. S. (1996). The five-factor model of personality: Theoretical perspectives. New York: Guilford.
- Witt, L. A., Burke, L. A., Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (2002). The interactive effects of conscientiousness and agreeableness on job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 164-169. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.1.164>.
- Zhao, H., Liu, W., Li, J., & Yu, X. (2019). Leader-member exchange, organizational identification, and knowledge hiding: The moderating role of relative leader-member exchange. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(7), 834-848. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2359>.