

# Relationship between Personality Traits and Performance among School Principals

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## Abstract

This research seeks to explore the relationship between personality traits and performance among school principals. The main objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between principals' personality traits such as introversion, extroversion neuroticism and emotional stability between several performance dimensions. A descriptive correlation research method was employed a sample size of 50 principals and 176 teachers in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools were selected from the total population of principals and teachers in the academic year of 2008-2009 through the stratified sampling method. The Eysenck questionnaire used to assess principal's personality. Weiss K performance evolution questionnaire used to assess principals' performance. Reliability of the questionnaires determined 0.81 and 0.98 respectively. Data analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression, one way- analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Tukey test. Results showed that there is a positive relationship between principal's personality characteristics of introversion and extroversion and performance dimensions, and 35% of score variance in leadership, human relationships and organizational dimensions was explainable by extroversion and introversion scores. Also there is a negative relationship between neuroticism and emotional stability and performance dimensions, and 40% of scores variance in professional and educational dimensions was explainable by neuroticism and emotional stability of principals.

**Keywords:** Personal characteristics, Administration's performance, School principal

## 1. Introduction

Development of all mankind societies has caused critical a complex problems for them in the current world these days. Management – the necessity to continue social life is regarded as an important factor to lead social

organizations which are in need of qualitative development and special controls. Considering the structure and in order to achieve its planned objective, each social organization needs to have a manager with special personality characteristics, performance and duties all of which help principals to have determinant roles in effectiveness of their schools. As Moran and Garies (2004) stated: a decisive factor to have a good school is to have experienced principals. They shoulder the burden of managing educational centers and are considered as coordinators to select, equip and manage human resources all of whom should be experienced enough and have special abilities to teach and leave them with. Like all human resources of an organization, principals have variety of complex duties, one of which is to help reach a high-level performance using all available organization's equipment including human resources and facilities. Their performances have a close relationship with achieving objective. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate their performance continuously every year; it would require learning about their performance quality. On the other hand, study of human resources of an organization clarifies that all of them have some special characteristics which are different from those of their colleagues.

Principals have different interests, abilities and special personality characteristics, it is clear that the later are can affect their performance directly. As Gurr et al. (2005) said: most of principals' personality characteristics enhance the students' efficiency. Personality is among important factors that influences their performance and behavior. On the other hand, they play crucial roles in controlling schools and achieving their objectives. But it is significant to know how their personality characteristics related to their behavior and to what extent do the former ones form the later? Many researches have been conducted to study principals' personality characteristics and how they use their innate abilities? In addition, their great personality charisma is worth considering and they don't have clear controls real educational performance.

Peterson (1998) has conducted a research to study principals' performance and its aspects based on five different managerial, educational, human relationships, professional and administrative aspects presented by Weiss, K. then he studied and explained principals' personalities using Eysenck model in different aspects (introversion/extroversion) and neurotic (neuroticism/emotional stability) and at last he studied their relationship together. The importance and necessity of studying the relationship between principals personality characteristics and their performance in elementary, junior high and high schools come from the importance of educational management, their roles in pedagogical principles, their managerial, educational, human relationship, professional, administrative and personal differences in objectives realization. In fact, they are those responsible who try to coordinate and facilitate the realization of some of students, teachers and parents' needs. Therefore his success is connected to other peoples' cooperation in pedagogical processes and the use of its different potentialities. So success of an organization in achieving its goals and performing the responsibilities greatly depends on its principals' performance. The more successful principals are in doing their duties, the more the organization achieves goals. But what kind of principals can be successful is an important case to consider. On the other hand, like all other people, principals have different needs, talents, motives, desires, inclinations, and personality characteristics all of which can affect their performances. Therefore, some features like friendliness, self-confidence, willfulness, intelligence and ability to manage, discernment, etc can help predicting people's success (Vatur, 2001).

Considering above mentioned points, in this research, the researcher tries to study schools principals' performance in managerial, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative aspects conducting a survey of teachers of three levels such as elementary, junior high and high schools. All of whom are colleagues and know about each others' performances and duties. Then he examines their personality characteristics including introversion, extroversion, neuroticism and emotional stability. Finally, he finds the possible relationships and performances. Furthermore, results of the study shall be used to choose efficient principals to improve quality of education and prevent from lowering of higher education standards. In addition, they can help to set plans of pedagogical management in higher levels, principals on – duty plans, to improve their weak points in managerial educational, human relationships, professional and administrative aspects, to improve knowledge level, skills and principals professional competence.

## **2. Research Hypotheses**

H1. There is a relationship between principals' personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion) and their leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative performances.

H2. There is a relationship between principals' personality characteristics (neuroticism and emotional stability) and their managerial, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative performances.

### 3. Literature Review

Conducting a research titled “a study of determinant factors in non-employment of the students majored in pedagogical management to manage schools”, Babazade (2004) found that there is a meaningful relationship between the performance of those who majored in pedagogical management and those of other majors; but there is not a relationship. Khakpour (2004) examined “relationship between junior high schools principals’ personality characteristics and their performance”. The results showed that there is a meaningful relationship between principals’ personality characteristics, extroversion and their emotional stability and their performance and last two mentioned characteristics can help to predict the performance. Nazem (2005) also conducted a research on “a prediction of effective management through an organization’s atmosphere and principals’ personality characteristics.” He found that the relationship exists between personality characteristics and effective management. In an M.A. thesis on “the relationship between personality characteristics and job satisfaction”, Nazarpour-e Samsami (2006) found no meaningful relationship between demographic cases and personality characteristics according to the degrees, age groups and sex in junior high and high schools. Moreover, men are more neurotic than women.

Halden (1995) did a research on 144 principals and 140 employees of an organization. The results of which showed that personality characteristics such as compatibility and extroversion are among organizations’ effectiveness predicting factors. Collins (2000) in an article considers modesty, humility and shyness as successful leaders’ personality characteristics based on Freuds’ teaching, mccaby (2000) stated that all successful leaders loved their jobs. They predict future plans using strong power, views and their honorable personalities. They have all strength to achieve their objectives. Kraws (2002) carried out a research on personality and performance. At last he found a meaningful relationship between principals personality characteristics and their general performance in having relationship with teachers, creativity and control, but there is no meaning in supervising, guiding, and personality factors. By the way, variables related to teachers like the school they are teaching at, and background have no effects on their performance. Findings of a research by Moran and Garies (2004) on “principals’ realization of effectiveness in the U.S.” showed that good schools have good principals without whom the school can’t develop. In addition, doing a research in Australia on “the management of a successful manger”, Gurr and Mulford (2005) found that considerable numbers of characteristics can be used to interpret the complexity of principals works the result of which is students’ progress.

### 4. Methodology

The current study is a descriptive correlation research. It is called descriptive, because the researcher tries to present an objective and disciplined description of a topic or a situation. It is a correlation one too because the objectives are to study relationship among research variables. The research doesn’t necessarily determine cause and effect relationships but also it tries to find the relative positive or negative relations of different variables. Therefore the current research is correlation too; the statistical group of the research is all elementary, junior high and high schools’ principals. According to all available statistics, 323 teachers and 57 principals took in the research among which 176 teachers and 50 principals were chosen using stratified sampling method. Since there are three levels in the study (elementary, junior high and high schools), so stratified random method used.

In order to conduct the research, two kinds of questionnaires were used: standardized questionnaire of Eysenck (1981, E.P.Q) having 57 items which is used to study principals’ personality characteristics. In order to assess their performance, Weiss, K questionnaire were used. It has 71 multiple choice questions all of which are similar to those of questionnaire, it is studied by both supervisor and advisor professors and conformed with Iranian culture to measure validity of the questionnaires of the research. Chronbach’s alpha coefficient is used, the coefficients of both questionnaires are 0.98 and 0.81 respectively, and it shows that they are chosen correctly. The analysis of the research data is done using SPSS software version No.16 in descriptive and inferential statistics levels.

### 5. Results and Analysis

Regarding the above table 1, it is shown that k-SZ for the five dimensions of principals’ performance in the level of  $P < 0.05$  is not meaningful, and so the score distribution of principals’ performance dimension is following the normal distribution.

**H1. There is a relationship between principals’ personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion) and their leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative performances.**

Regarding the above table 2, correlation coefficient between introversion / extroversion) scores and their performance dimensions (leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative) was meaningful ( $P < 0.01$ ) and it was meaningful for human relationship in the level of ( $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore there is a positive relationship between introversion and extroversion scores and their performance. It means by increasing principals' introversion and extroversion scores the level of their performance will be increased. In the other word extroversion principals' performance is better than introversion principals' performance.

Regarding the above table 3, the findings are meaningful ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore there is a meaningful difference between performance dimension of introversion and extroversion principals. In the other word performance dimensions of extroversion principals were better than introversion principals.

Regarding the above table 4, from introversion / extroversion and neuroticism/emotional stability, there is a positive relationship between introversion / extroversion variables and principals' leadership performance. Base on coefficient of determination 0.13 from the variance of principals' performance scores in leadership dimension arising from introversion / extroversion scores.

Regarding the above table 5, from introversion / extroversion and neuroticism /emotional stability, there is a positive relationship between introversion / extroversion variables and principals' human relationship performance. Base on coefficient of determination 0.08 from the variance of principals' human relationship performance scores can be explained by their introversion / extroversion scores.

Regarding the above table 6, from introversion/extroversion and neuroticism/emotional stability, there is a positive relationship between introversion/extroversion variables and principals' administrative performance. Base on coefficient of determination 0.14 from the variance of principals' administrative performance scores can be explained by their introversion/extroversion scores.

## **H2. There is a relationship between principals' personality characteristics (neuroticism / emotional stability) and their leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative performances.**

Regarding the above table 7, correlation coefficient between neuroticism / emotional stability scores and their performance dimensions (leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative) was meaningful ( $P < 0.01$ ) and it was meaningful for human relationship in the level of ( $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore there is a negative relationship between neuroticism / emotional stability scores and their performance. In the other word principals with a high emotional stability scores had better performance in above dimensions, than neurotic principals.

Regarding the above table 8, observed t has been meaningful ( $p < 0.01$ ), therefore there is a meaningful difference between performance dimensions according to neuroticism / emotional stability scores. In the other word performance dimensions of principals with emotional stability in the five dimensions (leadership, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative) were better than neurotic principals.

Regarding the above table 9, from introversion / extroversion and neuroticism/emotional stability, there is a positive relationship between neuroticism/emotional stability variables and principals' professional performance. Base on coefficient of determination 0.23 from the variance of principals' professional performance scores can be explained by their neuroticism/emotional stability scores.

Regarding the above table 10, from introversion / extroversion and neuroticism /emotional stability, there is a positive relationship between neuroticism /emotional stability variables and principals' educational performance. Based on coefficient of determination 0.17 from the variance of principals' educational performance scores can be explained by their neuroticism/emotional stability scores.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusion**

According to the obtained results of the first question, the correlation coefficient between personality characteristics (introversion/ extroversion) and performance aspect (managerial, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative), it can be said that, there is a direct relationship between principals personal characteristics and their performance. It means the performances of extroverted ones are better than those of introverted principals. Considering the obtained of multiple regressions about personality characteristics and their performance aspects, principals' extroversion and introversion scores can be explained using variance of their performance scores. In general it can be said that the results of the question number one are exactly similar to those ones found by Khakpoor, Nazem, Kraus, Moran and Garies Gurr et al, Because all of them reached to the point that there is a meaningful relationship between introverted and extroverted principals and their ways of managing and

considerable number of characteristics can help students progress. An introverted principal has the lowest and the highest degrees of performances in management and educational aspects, while extroverted ones have the lowest and the highest degrees of performance in management and administrative ones. According to all related conducted researches, it can be inferred that almost half of principals (58%) were extroverted; it means they have high degrees of persistence and inflexibility, but they are not sociable enough. Regarding managerial aspect, they insist on teachers team work and cooperation in educational one, they actively try to develop lesson plans; in human relationship, principals are going to have friendly relationship with parent teacher association's members; about their profession, they observe punctuality and being on time and at last they are responsible about all charges, profit and loss of school; all of which will improve their performance.

According to the results of the second question about correlation coefficient between principals personality characteristics (neuroticism/ emotional stability) and aspects of their performance (managerial, educational, human relationship, professional and administrative), it can be interpreted that there is a negative relationship between them. It means the principals with emotional stability have better performance than neurotic ones ,it can be said that the obtained results of question number two are similar to those of Khakpour, Nazem, Hogan and Holland, Kraus, Moran and Garries and Guarr et al. Because they all have found a relationship between emotional stability, personality characteristics and job performance. According to which the latter one can be predicted; and there is a meaningful relationship between principals' personality characteristics and effective management. Principals having emotional stability have the highest and the lowest degrees of performance in administrative and managerial aspects. While neurotic one have the highest and the lowest ones in educational and managerial ones respectively. Regarding the conducted researches about principals' personality characteristics in both aspects (neuroticism/emotional stability), it can be inferred that 56% of principals have emotional stability and they are happy, relaxed, healthy and free from any sins; while 44% of them were neurotic and have stress, fear and anxiety. In addition, stuffing teachers points of views about principal's performance, they withhold their helps from teachers; they don't observe and control classes to assess lesson plans, they don't have a good/friendly relationship with mass media; they don't take part in conference; and they don't have suitable plans for teachers, personnel and students' coming and going all of which can have negative effects on principals' performance.

### 7. Suggestions for Further Research

Considering the case that all four groups of principals (introversion/extroversion and neuroticism/emotional stability) have the lowest level of performance, so they are in need to use their personnel' experiences in managing schools and let them show their expectations, judgments and perceptions by which they can remove misunderstandings and grudges against each other and they can be friend together.

Since principals' efforts to improve personnel and teachers were not really successful, it can be made up having some on-duties plans about their skills and employing some more experienced teachers.

In educational aspects, teachers believed that comparing all their duties, principals have not observed classes enough; therefore we can develop the culture of class observation with on-duty plans using mass Media.

Since principals with emotional stability have higher/better performance than neurotic ones, the trait should be taken into account appointing them. Moreover they need to have some courses about mental health and different ways of excitement and feelings.

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Table 1. Kolmogrov - Smirnov test results for the five dimensions of principals' performance.

principals' performance dimensions	Abstract number	positive	negative	k-SZ	Two-tailed test
leadership	0.116	0.069	-0.116	0.817	0.517
educational	0.113	0.055	-0.113	0.798	0.548
human relationship	0.117	0.115	-0.117	0.829	0.497
professional	0.111	0.099	-0.111	0.783	0.571
administrative	0.118	0.081	-0.118	0.838	0.414

Table 2. Correlation coefficient principals' personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion) and their performances.

correlation coefficient	leadership	educational	human relationship	professional	administrative
introversion and extroversion scores	r=0.364 p=0.009 n=50	r=0.376 p=0.007 n=50	r=0.283 p=0.047 n=50	r=0.486 p=0.001 n=50	r=0.381 p=0.006 n=50

Table 3. A comparison between principals' performance dimensions according to personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion).

personality characteristics \ performance dimensions	introversion		extroversion		Independent T	p
	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S		
leadership	51.75	3.88	55.99	5.47	3.20	0.002
educational	62.67	62.67	67.52	5.63	2.49	0.016
human relationship	50.31	50.31	54.69	6.77	2.58	0.013
professional	52.94	52.94	59.50	6.223	3.86	0.001
administrative	78.61	78.61	84.33	7.10	3.42	0.001

Table 4. Multiple regression of relationship between principals' leadership performance and personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	B	beta	T	Sig.
leadership	introversion & extroversion	0.634	0.133	0.73	0.009	0.036	0.364	0.711	0.009

Table 5. Multiple regression from relationship between principals' human relationship performance and personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	B	beta	T	Sig.
human relationship	introversion & extroversion	0.283	0.08	4.172	0.047	0.346	0.283	2.042	0.045

Table 6. Multiple regression relationship between principals' administrative performance and personality characteristics (introversion / extroversion).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	B	beta	T	Sig.
administrative performance	introversion & extroversion	0.381	0.145	8.17	0.006	0.481	0.381	2.85	0.006

Table 7. Correlation coefficient principals' personality characteristics (neuroticism / emotional stability) and their performances.

correlation coefficient	leadership	educational	human relationship	professional	administrative
neuroticism & emotional stability	r= -0.35 p= 0.012 n= 50	r= -0.42 p= 0.002 n= 50	r= -0.27 p= 0.05 n= 50	r= -0.48 p= 0.001 n= 50	r= -0.38 p= 0.006 n= 50

Table 8. A comparison between principals' performance dimensions according to personality characteristics (neuroticism / emotional stability).

personality characteristics performance dimensions	emotional stability		neuroticism		t	p
	$\bar{X}$	S	$\bar{X}$	S		
leadership	55.81	5.13	51.43	3.97	3.38	0.001
educational	67.56	5.26	62.07	7.70	2.91	0.005
human relationship	54.63	6.32	49.86	5.32	2.89	0.006
professional	59.32	5.83	52.36	5.73	4.25	0.001
administrative	84.22	6.63	78.06	4.66	3.82	0.001

Table 9. Multiple regression of relationship between principals' professional performance and personality characteristics (neuroticism / emotional stability).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	B	beta	T	Sig
principals' professional performance	neuroticism & emotional stability	0.489	0.239	15.108	0	-0.767	-0.489	-3.788	0

Table 10. Multiple regression relationship between principals' educational performance and personality characteristics (neuroticism/emotional stability).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	B	beta	T	Sig.
principals' educational performance	neuroticism & emotional stability	0.422	0.178	10.40	0.002	-0.704	-0.422	-3.22	0.002