

銘傳大學 97 學年度研究所博士班招生考試

管理研究所博士班

管理文獻評論試題(第一節)

(第 頁共 9 頁)(限用答案本作答)

可使用計算機 不可使用計算機

請閱讀所附論文後回答以下問題：

- P1
1. 依據所附論文之內容，請提出本論文研究觀念性架構圖(Conceptual Framework)，您所提出之觀念性架構圖必須對應到本論文所提出之三個 Propositions。(本題占 25 分)
 2. 依據該論文之三個 Propositions 說明其所涉及的構念(Construct)、操作性定義(Operational Definition)、變數(Variable)分別為何？(本題占 25 分)
 3. 就該論文中之研究方法，說明該論文如何驗證每一個 Proposition？(本題占 25 分)
 4. 試說明您的專長為何？再就您目前之專長，提出一個管理問題，並提出如何對該管理問題進行研究？又您擬到本校博士班進修與您目前工作有何關聯性？(本題占 25 分)

作答注意事項：

1. 把握時間，可擇重點論述。眾所周知之常識無須浪費筆墨及時間。
2. 評分重心在於創意、思考方式、邏輯。
3. 盡量使用圖、表、數式之陳述方式。

本試題兩面印刷



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Assessing leader behaviors in project managers

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research was to explore the leadership style of graduate project management students vs other MBA students.

Design/methodology/approach – Graduate project management and MBA students attending a regional comprehensive university in USA returned surveys that assess their leadership style emphasis of concern for task or concern for people.

Findings – Project management students rate themselves significantly higher on the concern for people leadership style and were found to have a balance between the concern for task and concern for people leadership style vs MBA students.

Practical implications – Individuals exhibiting a concern for people leadership style and those with a balance between concern for task and concern for people leadership styles are good candidates for project management positions as well as training/education in project management.

Originality/value – The paper shows that the selection and training of project managers based on behavioral tendencies can relate to project success.

Keywords Project management, Leadership, Behaviour

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As the art and practice of project management processes became more clearly defined in the 1980s project management research began to focus more on the soft skills of project management, team building, motivation, and leadership. Still in its infancy, research and literature in the soft skills areas of project management (Thamhain, 2004) is still scarce, particularly in the leadership area.

At the same time, MBA schools have come under increasing pressure to integrate their soft skills courses with their analytical courses (Mintzberg, 2004). This integration is happening because MBA students are increasingly finding that their MBA analytical skills are not useful in their first management assignments and that soft skills (team management, negotiating, and leadership) would be more valuable to them (Mintzberg, 2004; Hill, 1992).

The use of leadership skills and the difference in how they are used by project managers and other managers adds to our understanding of leadership. Using the behavioral leadership theory which assesses leaders on two major parameters, "concern for task" and "concern for people" (Stogdill 1974), this paper explores the premise that project managers should show a more balanced approach to "concern for



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task” and “concern for people” than other managers. The paper achieves this by comparing the “concern for task” and “concern for people” characteristics of a sample of graduate project management students and MBA students using the leader behavior description questionnaire (LBDQ) methodology (Stogdill, 1974).

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The behavioral theory of leadership

The behavioral theory of leadership posits that successful leaders use multiple rather than one leadership style to bring about desired results from followers in a given situation. Consequently this leadership theory focuses on what leaders do and how they do it rather than on leader traits (Turner and Muller, 2005; Verma, 1996). The idea of using leader behaviors as antecedents to predict outcomes of leadership such as perceptions of leader performance spawned a research stream that continues to this day. According to the conceptualization of leader behavior styles, as identified by Stogdill (1974), behavioral leadership theory assesses leaders on two major parameters, concern for task and concern for people. According to this theory, a focal leader's behavior can be placed on a one-dimensional continuum (Stogdill, 1974). The most salient contribution made by the development of behavioral leadership theories was the notion that leaders could be made and that leadership was a skill that could be developed, whereas earlier trait theories (c.f. Stogdill, 1974; McLean and Weitzel, 1991) posited that leaders were born. This new paradigm represented a significant step forward in leadership theory.

Project management and leadership

Results from extant studies provide compelling evidence that a manager's leadership style is one key to successful performance of an organization in carrying out its mission (e.g. Zhu *et al.*, 2005). Given the role of project management in the success of an organization, it is therefore most surprising that the literature says little in terms of recognizing and analyzing the leadership style of project managers. Attempts to capture the leadership element of project managers by the works of Batten (1991) as well as that of McLean and Weitzel (1991) have led to the concept proposed by Verma (1996, p. 219) that “Project leadership is the ability to get things done well through others”. Verma goes on to define a set of requirements defining what a good project leader should do and in the process, raises the question of what is the difference, if any, between project management and project leadership.

Generally, there is agreement with the general management theorists that although some managers are leaders and some leaders are managers, leading and managing are not identical activities (Zalesnik, 1977). Norrie and Walker (2004, p. 48) attempt to define this difference in the project management context by calling the management of a project as “the day-to-day operations of a project plan in pursuit of an agreed set of outcomes – on-time and within budget” while project leadership is “the higher pursuit of the project team's creating purposeful, strategic action that will augment the organization's business strategy and achieve results within the norms and values of the organization”.

The articulation of a vision as an essential part of leadership has been suggested by several authors (Covey, 1991; Fisher, 1993; McLean and Weitzel, 1991). Norrie and Walker (2004, p. 47) defined this aspect of leadership for project managers by suggesting that “a leader's vision helps articulate the project's objectives, goals, and products”.

The notion that different patterns of leadership behavior are exhibited by project managers is relevant to the search for optimal leadership within the project management field. Behavioral differences that are exhibited as a result of personality differences can impact project outcomes (Aronson *et al.*, 2006). In addition, it has been suggested that different leadership styles should be used throughout the project lifecycle (Frame, 1987; Turner, 1999; Verma and Wideman, 1994). A project life cycle is marked by planning-related phases culminating at the point where the products of the project management efforts are realized (Verma and Wideman, 1994). The planning phases are marked by conceptual issues such as needs analysis, feasibility studies, and generation of alternative solutions to the problems/opportunities targeted by a given project. The Norrie and Walker (2004) concept of a leader is most relevant to these planning-related phases of a project. In contrast, the execution stages of a project are related to classical management roles such as organizing, staffing, and matching individuals with roles.

Pinto *et al.* (1998, p. 26) suggest that "... any individual can begin to improve her leadership by taking the following action...", learn about team members (concern for people) and learn about the project (concern for task). Some studies (Makilouko, 2004) have shown project managers were more people-focused, while other studies (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2003) that it was significantly less so. The present study builds on these works and attempts to further clarify the question of whether individuals attracted to project management are more people-focused and balanced between concern for people and concern for task than are individuals attracted to other management fields.

Given the above arguments and given the exploratory nature of this research, we assert the following propositions:

- P1. The concern for task leadership style in project management students will not differ from concern for task in general MBA students.
- P2. The concern for people leadership style will be higher in project management students when compared to general MBA students.
- P3. Project management students will possess a better balance between concern for task and concern for people in comparison to MBA students.

Methods

A conceptual model is developed to test whether the leadership style of project management students differs from other management students. The leadership measure used is the LBDQ self-report instrument, which identifies two aspects of leadership; concern for task and concern for people (Stogdill, 1974). This particular instrument was used to coincide with an ongoing effort by the school of business to assess these leadership styles in students and to be consistent with previous collections for comparative purposes. Examples of survey items include: "I would encourage overtime work", "I would settle conflicts when they occur in the group", "I would allow the group a high degree of initiative", and "I would act without consulting the group". Subjects rated survey items on a scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) with 2 through 4 representing intermediate responses. As per the instructions to calculate the construct scale scores for subjects (Verma, 1996), we found that a score of zero for both constructs was possible. On inspection of the data, a significant number of subjects were found to have a score of zero for either concern for task, concern for people, or both. As such, the frequencies were skewed so as to significantly change the within cell variances and consequently the estimate for population error in subsequent analyses.

Therefore, subjects with a score of zero for both constructs (28 subjects or about 16 per cent of participants) under study were eliminated from the analyses. To operationalize a balance of leadership style construct and to test *P3*, a difference score was calculated by subtracting each subject's concern for people scale score from his/her concern for task score.

The respondents in this study were 151 graduate project management and MBA students attending a regional, comprehensive, mid-sized university in USA. Graduate project management students were used in this study with an assumption that they are a close approximation to new project managers in the work force. In this study, 93 of these subjects were graduate project management majors while 58 of the subjects were MBA students; 27 per cent of the subjects were female. ANOVA was used to analyze differences between project management and management students.

Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for the constructs in this study are presented in Table I. In support of *P1*, concern for task was not found to significantly differ between project management and MBA students ($F = 1.23, p = 0.27$) and concern for people was found to be significantly higher in project management students in comparison to MBA students ($F = 5.78, p < 0.05$) supporting *P2*. To assess the merit of *P3*, a comparison of the difference scores (concern for task minus concern for people) revealed that project management students have a significantly lower difference score than do MBA students ($F = 5.00, p < 0.05$) indicating a better balance of the two leadership styles, in support of the *P3*.

Limitations

Two limitations were identified by the current authors in this study. First, the sample consisted of students from one university only. Few of the MBA students have held professional positions prior to completion of the research questionnaire and as such, their self-assessment of leader behaviors may be more of a projection of future managerial behaviors rather than a reflection of present behaviors. As such, there may be an added element of subject bias when projecting behaviors as compared to the project management students who currently were employed in project management roles. A more diverse sample is called for in subsequent research to generalize to the population of graduate project management and other management students and the sampling would ideally include subjects who are currently in managerial roles. Second, it has been found in previous research that gender plays a role in leadership (Eagly and Carli, 2003; Vecchio, 2002). Although the current authors found no significant differences by gender ($F = 0.06, p = 0.81$), more research on this matter is called for given findings of previous research.

Variable	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Concern for task	151	10.93	3.46	(0.67)	-	-
Concern for people	151	9.35	2.43	-0.06	(0.64)	-
Task-people	151	1.58	4.34	0.83*	-0.61*	- ^b

Notes: * $p < 0.01$; ^aCronbach alpha shown along the diagonal; ^bTask-people was a difference score construct

Table I.
Means, standard deviations, and correlations

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Implications

The results of this study suggest that individuals attracted to project management have a higher concern for people leadership style than individuals attracted to other management areas and that those interested in project management have a balance between concern for people and concern for task leadership styles. These results have several implications.

Prior to discussing specific implications, it is necessary to briefly outline the context in which the project manager operates. Typically, the team project manager reports to a line manager as well as serving as a leader of project team members from diverse locations on the organizational hierarchy. The team project member may experience role conflict by playing a dual role of subordinate to both a line manager and a project manager. When the individual knows that his or her performance is measured by the line manager, the project manager's needs may be neglected. As such, project managers in this organizational structure may find it difficult to exert influence over the team members. This scenario requires extraordinary interpersonal orientation and interpersonal skills for a project manager to be successful.

In addition to the challenges that project managers face to overcome these role conflicts, still more challenges are presented due to the diversity associated with the project management function. All projects using teams of specialists are usually comprised of functional specialists often resulting in the combination of different disciplines in the one team. For example, design and production of a new aircraft may require aeronautic and avionic specialists, jet engine specialists, metallurgists, human design specialists, test pilots, etc. in order to produce a satisfactory product. Managing people from these different specialties and professions requires superior interpersonal skills. Consequently, the project management literature is consistently emphasizing the need for project managers to inspire and empower followers (Prabhakar, 2005). It has also been suggested and confirmed that project managers should switch between project leadership and project management styles during the project lifecycle (Regimbald and Nault, 2002; Prabhakar, 2005; Verma and Wideman, 1994).

One implication is that an additional level of clarity is be gained when considering the process of selecting project managers for projects and identifying those managers most likely to succeed in project management training. Organizations spend much money in developing, training, and educating managers including those individuals who attend universities with the goal of obtaining degrees in project management. Identifying those individuals who are most likely to be successful students and later successful project managers becomes a lesson in reducing costs. As this research suggests, individuals who exhibit concern for people leadership behaviors and are balanced between concern for people and concern for task are already attracted to the project management profession making them good candidates for training.

The concept of "balance" also plays an important role. Whereas concern for people and concern for task were originally conceptualized to place individuals along a one-dimensional continuum, the idea of conceptualizing the two constructs as separate is an important consideration in choosing project managers. As this research suggests, project management students have a better balance between the two constructs in comparison to other management students. As such, concern for people may be a necessary but insufficient criterion for selecting project managers. An individual high score on concern for people but low score on concern for task may be able to motivate followers to perform but spends a disproportionate amount of time doing so. In contrast, an individual high score on concern for task but low score on concern for

people may drive the project forward without regard for followers' motivation to complete a project. Both of these situations point toward ineffective modes of project management. Project management is arguably a more complex form of management where the importance of adhering to myriad specifications and having to deal with followers from multiple backgrounds, education, and approaches amplifies the need for a manager who can balance the needs of the project with the needs of the followers. Conceptualizing the two leadership constructs in this study separately suggests that the best project managers are those who exhibit leadership behaviors from both categories simultaneously with the ability to identify which to emphasize and to subsequently use appropriate skills and interventions at the right time. By recognizing the differing nature of challenges along a project life cycle, and by responding with the appropriate leader behaviors, the project manager may optimize project success.

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Conclusions

The literature related to the intersection of the fields of leadership and project management is generally lacking and more research is needed concerning the intersection of these two domains. As this research suggests, the leadership styles of individuals attracted to project management and individuals interested in other management areas differ significantly. A logical implication associated with findings of the present study would be that effective project management represents the exercise of a form of leadership that fundamentally differs from the leadership related to organizational success or follower outcomes. It was argued in this paper that the leadership skills and behaviors that are necessary for successful project management are different from those necessary for other leadership situations. Given the nature of the experimental design, it would be an inappropriate leap to make a broad claim that the relatively higher concern for people would translate into higher levels of performance in a project manager role. It would, however, be entirely appropriate to apply person-organization fit literature (e.g. Cable and Judge, 1996; Edwards and Rothbard, 1999; Judge and Kristof-Brown, 2004; Walsh *et al.*, 2000) to leverage the results of the present study to suggest that individuals with behavior tendencies that are balanced between concern for task and concern for people would be surrounded by peers with similar behaviors in project management roles. Findings from other research suggest that this synchronous meshing of behavioral styles would be related to higher levels of employee perception of fit and, in turn, would be associated with higher levels of performance, greater satisfaction, and lower turnover rates (Borchers, 2007; Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Westerman and Cyr, 2004).

This study serves to make the case that the styles of leader behavior associated with project managers represents an under-researched element of project manager performance and organizational outcomes, and that selection and training of project managers based on behavioral tendencies of project managers can relate to project success. As such, more research on project management as a subset of management is called for to identify more specifically the unique attributes of leader behavior that relate to role performance and other effects these differences have on the project management process. Findings from the present research are consistent with Mintzberg's (2004) argument that there is a difference in the products of MBA programs as compared to the behaviors necessary for effective management of subordinates (Mintzberg, 2004).

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