



Psychological Traits of Leaders

In the World of Start-ups

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ABSTRACT

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This paper attempts to examine leadership habits, styles and traits by conducting research and through academics that are present online and in books. The thesis aims to answer the research question of if psychological traits are present in leaders and if or how can they be enhanced. This is done by extensively going through and studying the habits and traits that prove favorable for a leadership position. Moreover, by conducting interviews and seeing a pattern of these traits and what goes on within the mind of a leader in terms of their beliefs, values and vision.

The five extensive interviews conducted provide an insightful overview of how leaders are practicing their traits and beliefs on a daily basis in real life. Moreover, the solution to the research question is provided by the Big Five personality trait and understanding how these are linked with cognitive psychology. Furthermore, the habits of leaders and the pattern of their belief system and working strongly by the moral value seems to be a norm and compliments the solution, efficiently. Lastly, leaders would need to understand their mindset and the psychology of their traits to better capitalize on strengths and minimize the effects of weaknesses.

Key words: leadership traits, cognitive psychology, beliefs, values, the Big Five, better leaders

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The idea for this thesis originated during the summer of 2018 when faced with a challenging yet interesting experience of an internship in a business that was in startup stages even though it had previously operated as a functional and successful business. However, due to some mismanagement issues and overall lack of leadership with the vision being poorly laid out, accounting for a drastic loss and placing the company back to the early stages of startup.

Due to privacy reasons the company's name will not be mentioned, however, this experience developed a thought and hunger for the differences between different leaders. Mainly accounting for how different mindsets could result in being the right fit for a leadership role, moreover, what drives such leaders and/or grants them the sense of purpose. As it took place in Estonia, it was hard for me to wrap my head around the fact that even though this was the hub for very successful startups why was it so tough for this business to take off from a place they had been familiar with in the past.

Moreover, this raised the question if the current management was fit to lead, the current leader's vision was in perfect synchronization and harmonized with the whole team. It also raised several other questions, such as, are some people born to lead, could leadership qualities be enhanced through personality traits and what sort of mindset should one adopt if he/she is to lead. This thesis aims to answer a few of these questions and in doing so it would also suffice its purpose of helping startups recruiting the right 'fit' leaders, to lead and influence in exceptional ways.

1.2 Purpose and aim of the research

This thesis serves the purpose of understanding how different leaders operate, their mindsets, their psychological traits if any, and their personality traits and how all of these interlink together. Furthermore, we will go through different leadership styles and the benefits of practicing and implementing those styles. This

will be made possible by academic research, interviewing different leaders and analyzing the habits of such leaders with a careful nonbiased approach.

Moreover, the study will deeply examine the personality traits of leaders and how these could help enhance the psychological traits. Whilst, understanding that these work in perfect harmony even though it may not be clearly visible. This research also hopes to understand and explore techniques to further assist leaders with discovering their own psychological traits and working on them to become better leaders.

Although, the research is mainly based on how to help start-ups recruit the right leaders and why it is crucial for them to do so. The research is not limited to start-ups and could act as a potential blueprint for businesses and individual leaders that are actively finding ways to polish their skills in this field.

The main objective of the thesis is study successful leadership habits, mindsets and in doing so inaugurating a pattern of personality and psychological traits. Therefore, better explaining those traits and their importance within a successful leader's lifestyle and how they can help improve a leader's success and introduce a more refined leader-ship style, benefitting both themselves and the company.

2 Literature

2.1 Leadership & Its Importance

Leadership is a natural way of existing for humans and animals, some of us tend to look upon others for direction and guidance, this is embedded in our biology. We have evolved in more ways than one and surely enough our leadership qualities and ways have evolved as well. Survival is crucial for all species and in doing so, most find leaders to guide them through and lay down a vision for the rest, even if it is as simple as security and overall survival of the pack.

Firstly, we will look at the role of leadership and what does it mean to be a leader or a successful leader, followed by the importance of it and how it all comes along. Furthermore, we will discuss some leadership habits that benefit multiple parties, the company, the followers, and the leader themselves. This process will help us explore the dynamic role of a leader and what duties one should perform in order to be a successful leader whilst looking at their thought process simultaneously.

In essence, a leader may be described as someone who influences others to follow them, not because of their power or authority but because of their beliefs and most importantly their vision. A leader may also be defined as someone who lays out a vision and helps process that vision into reality by performing his duties and leading as an example. As mentioned earlier, some of us might find ourselves lost in the mist, without a sense of direction or purpose, a leader is needed to act as a guiding source for many. (Kruse, 2013)

A leader's duties consist of the following; however, they are not limited to these but these combined act as the fundamental duties of a leader. Inaugurating something requires an action plan, a thorough mindset, tactical strategies and more. Part of being a leader means initiating actions, that might require a lot of resources and involve complex technicalities but performing it in a swift and smooth manner. Starting a project, taking on a new kind of job, expanding into unknown territories, a leader must know how to tackle these with an action plan along with onboarding the team with the given circumstance and making sure they everything is performed in a calm and collected way.

The actions being performed must be in harmony with the vision for this to happen, communication is a vital organ for success. As the importance of communication will be discussed later, it is a duty of a leader to keep the communication following from top to bottom and vice versa or in any way they may see fit for effective communication to take place within the organization and outside. Communicating the plan effectively and keeping everyone onboard, whilst making sure the action is being taken in the right way and order, adds to what makes a leader.

Pure management of a team or a group of subordinates does not make one a leader. Leadership demands constant motivation for the team, which might include financial and fringe benefits. However, it is not limited to just money, sometimes motivation may take the form of mentoring, coaching, and figuring out what might drive an individual to perform in an outstanding way. What would make them want to put 100% each time they are asked to do something, this usually happens naturally or in a balanced sync when the individual's drive interlinks with the leader's vision and understanding what part is theirs to perform and how the affects contribute to it. (Kruse, 2013)

One of the most important tasks a leader may need to perform daily is creating confidence within the team and believing in the performance of the team and their deliverance. Although a leader is also a supervisor but at times guidance plays a long way and would help the team believe in themselves which is important for the long run. Believing in your team and trust both go hand-in-hand and trust is created by listening to your teams wishes and complaints and fulfilling and acting on them when necessary. This in turn creates more confidence and each individual feels as if they 'belong' in the organization and are more cautious and motivated for their next task.

Just like a conductor of an orchestra, needs to bring justice to music by playing a melody with the help of the orchestra/band and making sure the tunes are performed in a perfect harmony and each little or high note is perfectly executed. Similarly, a leader is required to co-ordinate all the members of the team and

other teams in order to execute the mission in the most efficient way so that it perfectly coincides with the vision. Hence, taking the team and the organization one step closer to their vision. This would require constant communication and a channel of ongoing flow of information, with the appropriate allocation of resources and accordingly scheduling and budgeting the tasks whenever needed. When things do not work out as planned an uncertainty plan should also be drafted by the leader, this should be implemented whenever uncalculated situations take control. Calmly operating the team under unprecedented and challenging times is the art of leadership and being able to balance out the situation and efficiently run the given projects is something worthy of appreciation. (Kruse, 2013)

Finally, the leader must be responsible of empowering their respective teams and bringing out the absolute best within each member to maximize efficiency and give their team a sense of accomplishment and show them the level of quality they can reach with such efforts. This might require pulling the team out of their comfort zones, only to realize the level of achievement with such an approach. Although the importance of a leader should be self-explanatory with the aforementioned duties and how on paper these may look like simple tasks but require a set number of skills, patience and not to mention, the continuous willingness to improve the team and themselves. The knowledge and wisdom a successful leader possess is extremely valuable and an indispensable asset for the organization. Being able to successfully operate their department or given team and bringing the best out of them whilst inspiring others to do the same. One of the ways this could be achieved is by focusing on leadership habits, such as, introducing effective communication strategies, adapting to change, coaching peers and so on.

2.2 Leader's habits

2.2.1 Coaching

Amongst one of the very common habits or key traits of successful leaders is the art of coaching your subordinates rather than dictating. A lot of employees feel too restricted if their leader is too controlling of a project and/or tries to control the

outcome of the project. This in turn does not only stunt efficiency but also leaves no room for creativity, hence, breaking the nature workflow and rather creating constraints instead. Furthermore, employees/subordinates get extremely paranoid about their performance and even though the expectations might be clear, however, freedom of performing a job in one's own style is vital for overall growth. ("Benefits of Coaching", 2020)

A successful leader takes it upon themselves to account for the performance of their subordinates. However, how accurate of an approach this is might be arguable, but it promotes leaders to motivate their employees through coaching. Sometimes, telling your subordinates is not enough coaching them through it to ensure they understand their tasks well and the overall picture of how this particular task fits in, to contribute to the given project/assignment might change their approach and motivation to the task at hand.

Furthermore, coaching not only motivates your team members, it makes them feel more as a part of the organization and how their contributions are bringing about a change and taking the company/organization one step further to their vision. This is crucial for a company if they intend to succeed, as a team on autopilot with unimaginable possibilities all being set back, due to lack of coaching skills and laying out the vision. Moreover, practicing proper coaching for team members not only makes them motivated but also increases the motivation of the team leader, witnessing the appreciation the team shows for their constant coaching support. ("Benefits of Coaching", 2020)

Coaching assists in many ways when it comes to employee's personal development. In the near future, employees become more self-reliant, with proper coaching and support. Although, it does come with the price of constant support and attention, however, it is worth the investment. Employees or team members become aware of what exactly is expected of them, the freedom of work they have along with the trust and support of their leaders, they surely tend to impress with their performance. (Ellen, 2014)

Although, we will get into this habit of a successful leader later but coaching also improves the overall communication within the teams and between the employees and their managers. This is a great way to exterminate the gap between the hierarchy within a company in terms of communication and improve overall flow of information, thus, resulting in more motivated, well-informed employees.

Coaching also brings about a better sense of ownership within the employees and they take on responsibilities with an efficient approach. This would also mean, employees become more self-aware which only adds to the benefits of practicing it within companies. Coaching not only helps employees but in turn helps companies as well. While, it polishes and helps focus employees on the skills they excel and are exceptionally good at. It creates better and more opportunities for companies, it promotes efficiency and more employees working on tasks they excel at, rather than doing it because it was on their contract. (Ellen, 2014)

This will help companies create a new atmosphere, even a newer and better management that would promote creativity and flow of knowledge throughout the company. The overall productivity would surely increase as more employees are engaged with jobs/tasks that they enjoy performing and are good at. Promoting an overall motivation within the company and inevitably increasing collaboration between different teams and departments, hence, increasing levels of efficiency. (Ellen, 2014)

2.2.2 Effective communicator & Adaptability

The importance of communication in an organization is crucial for survival and outperforming their competitors in each given market. The fundamentals of communication describe it as a two-way road, a user sends information and the other party understands and responds accordingly. For a leader to be successful, the communication within the team and outside, should be catered according to the need. As a result, the leader must adapt different communication styles for different situations and/or while approach different groups/teams within or outside the organization.

Moreover, a more diverse team might require different communication styles within the team and a leader must ensure the team can understand and effectively communicate amongst their peers, without any communication barriers. A significant element in the art of communication is often ignored at times, which evidently counts for a successful conversation or exchange of information. Listening, is often taken for granted and mostly ignored, leaders and other individuals usually listen to answer, rather than actually listening to the information being passed on. Sometimes, leaders are so focused on proving or conveying a point that the troubles or the concerns of their team are often misheard due to this flaw in their communicating technique. (Sherman, 2019)

Listening to the information being conveyed is as vital as having a sender and a receiver in a given conversation. Most of the conflicts and misunderstandings happen due to the fact, the parties might feel unheard and/or the way they communicated the issue was not interpreted the same way, in terms of seriousness and importance. Therefore, misunderstanding occur when the person does not understand the pattern of communication with a given individual, which includes a number of factors such as listening, language, tone etc. Sometimes, confusions occur due to the usage of long difficult words which may not be understood by everyone in the same manner. Hence, using precise and simple language seems to be the most efficient, usually. (Sherman, 2019)

It is vital for a leader to find a perfect balance of efficient communication strategies within the organization and in between different teams whilst ensuring thorough communication within the team as well. The overall productivity could increase, and management can save a lot of time and efforts as well as money, when communication is flowing throughout the organization in a smooth manner. This invites room for collaborative work, brainstorming with different departments and facilitating interests, resources, and time with different departments to ensure innovative progress of solutions for end customers. Good communication skills from the leader, practiced within the team as well as the organization as a whole, could initiate better overall team building and would mean more employees work together for the vision of the organization/company. (Bosworth, n.d.)

Furthermore, as important as it is to keep a smooth channel of information and communication flow within the organization, it is equally important to practice the same flow with other stakeholders, such as distributors, that operate outside the organization. This helps a company to better understand the needs of your distributors (and vice versa) and helps you negotiate with them on a closer level. Moreover, improving communications with the end customer can help you understand what exactly a customer wants and in turn, allocate sufficient resources and time to meet the standards. (Bosworth, n.d.)

However, all of this comes along perfectly with the help of a few successful leaders, and leaders who tend to inspire and thrive for the “WHY” in a company. Such leaders are willing to spend time perfecting or finding a balance between different communication strategies to ensure innovative ideas and creativity is inspired and looked upon, whilst keeping misunderstandings and conflicts at bay.

Another fine quality of leaders that influence others, is adaptability and flexibility, not just in fast-paced environment but when things do not turn favourable as well. Adapting to situations would require leaders to bring out the absolute best from their respective team, in given circumstances. Different projects and different situations may dictate the flow of work, but it is the leader’s mission to ensure the quality of work being delivered and the changes have minimal side effects for the team. (Prossack, 2018)

Sometimes, deadlines might be pushed to an earlier date and in these situations, adapting quickly and efficiently works wonderfully for a team as well as the company. A smooth transition would obviously require great communication techniques and the leader would have to ensure enough resources are allocated to the team members and at their disposal when necessary. Furthermore, the leader would have to bring out the best from the team and would have to ensure each individual is motivated towards the goal. This is easier to apply when the leader is committed to the vision and would act as an example for the team in terms of commitment.

On the other hand, when things are not so favourable for the team or the company, the leader is supposed to communicate it with the team without creating a

panic or chaotic situation. In terms of uncalculated risks, such as natural disasters, inflation and so on, the leader should cater hope and create opportunities out of mishaps. Even though things might not be favourable a leader must make sure the entire team believes in the vision and the daily tasks and/or projects are a built up to that, rather than just any job. (Prossack, 2020)

2.2.3 Authenticity & Courage

A leader that wishes to influence people and be infectious of their vision should be authentic when it comes to team and overall matters as well. Authenticity is a trait or a habit that a leader could either be born with or can learn during their lifetime. This would require them to encourage and promote transparency within the team and the organization if possible. However, staying honest to yourself and your employees must be the top priority. (Bradberry, 2015)

This in turn, makes leaders humbler, which is another great trait of successful leaders across the globe. Being authentic would require a leader to correspond their actions according to their words and live by them. Transparency and authenticity might not get you a lot of followers but surely would get you the right followers, who would believe in your vision and would have similar moral values and beliefs. Although, honesty is related to authenticity however, it is not the same you may be honest about your views and things in general but acting upon your words and living by them, is what makes a leader authentic. Leaders earn a lot of respect from their teammates and people who they deal with due to this habit. (Bradberry, 2015)

Authenticity in leaders also brings out other values and set of skills which are highly effective in running and maintaining a team and being an exemplary leader. One of these traits may be sharing credits, as an authentic and honest leader, one is highly aware of the quality of deliverance their team is capable of and the innovation that their team can bring to the table. Keeping in mind, that the team is constantly learning and gaining experience from the leader, different projects, colleagues, hence, the credit should be given when due. An honest leader would

share the credit with their team as they understand the importance of each member and without the leader's followers, the accomplishments might not exist. (Tredgold, 2017)

Authentic leaders are very genuine in their nature of work and dealings, they live by honest methods and believe in ethical foundations and values that help create a dynamic and successful team. Therefore, their relationship with the team is honest and they do not wear "masks" to cover their true selves, this helps create a purer bond in the team and alongside follows trust. Being trustworthy is very important when it comes to a leader, for example, your customers will never buy anything if they do not trust your product or the integrity of it. Similarly, it is very important to gain trust of your team members in order to ease the workflow and create a more pampering workplace to facilitate your teams' requests. Hence, this increases the efficiency within the team as well as the organization, indefinitely. (Kruse, 2013)¹

Leaders that preach authenticity have known to follow their hearts, this does not mean that their decisions are uncalculated or impulsive, rather what they do or take on is what they believe in. Therefore, in doing so, they follow their hearts which makes them more empathetic and with their emotions invested in such a project or task they deliver in an exemplary way. Expressing emotions or revealing them might be seen as a sign of vulnerability, however, authentic leaders tend to see this a sign of strength and in doing so they are not afraid to connect better with their team. Leading with their hearts also helps them focus on the bigger picture and keeps them motivated towards the vision/long-term goals. (Kruse, 2013)¹

Courage is usually the first step you need, when you take on something completely new, unknown grounds, something that would require bravery. This would include numerous decisions, such as taking on a difficult and crazy project, trying out an innovative and almost crazy idea, taking tough decisions that would need execution for the survival of the company. The idea is courage is needed when things are not so easy, when the stakes are high, and the risk of uncertainty is almost unfathomable that people would scare away easily or scatter, hence, requiring leadership and direction. Courage is associated with lunging into the pit

that you are not familiar with yet keeping yourself calm and collected in that situation so that you can tackle challenges and obstacles with rational and relevant decisions/actions.

Courage is a skill or habit that you feel inside your heart, this is not something you acquire over time. However, it can be worked on by being more adventurous taking on newer challenges heads on and by working outside of your comfort zone. True courage is experienced when bravery and boldness is witnessed in times when things are tough and not going their way. Companies highly value this skill/habit as it encourages leaders to be brave and courageous people are not afraid of jumping into something they are not fully equipped for. Nonetheless, despite not being fully prepared, they tend to come up with solutions rather quickly in a calm, collected and calculated way.

Risks are something a company takes on a daily basis and to ensure these while making teams comfortable in their workspace, a courageous leader is needed to guide them through what may seem as the scary unknown. However, courageous leaders as much of an asset as they are, they could potentially stand up against the company if what is right or what they believe in is questioned. Due to their charismatic personalities, gaining a group of followers would not be difficult. When trying out something crazy and almost revolutionarily innovative, you must have a courageous leader to take the first step in setting the pace and giving directions. In other terms, doing what leaders are supposed to, for that revolutionary innovation to succeed, a brave leader is needed to forth with the tough decisions, this not only helps improve the company and the team but shapes the world towards more advanced solutions and technologies.

2.3 Leadership styles

As important as it is to have a leader to help restore order in a chaotic environment it is equally important to understand the different styles in which leaders operate. These leadership styles may look the same but are very different from each other and allow leaders to operate differently as per the situation. Leadership styles help leaders themselves, to get familiar with different styles and leverage them accordingly to and when the need occurs.

Furthermore, some of these styles may fall under extreme ends, such as being dictatorship-like ruling to almost no inclusion/attachment to the team and the affairs whatsoever. However, improving and changing your current style or using a combination of styles may provide a better overall experience of managing a team rather than sticking to a single style strictly.

Some of the very common leadership styles are as follows:

Autocratic Leadership

This leadership style consists leader to pass down orders with negligible input from their subordinates or the people who report to them directly. This type of leadership may be useful when authority is required and when it is a one-time job. It is also effective, when there is no experience within the team whatsoever and the leader is the most experienced one. Furthermore, it may also be used when there is only one efficient way of doing a certain project, and/or when time is a commodity. (Martinuzzi, 2019)

This leadership style can be witnessed in the corporate world where traditions and culture are respected more than new and efficient ways or may be considered as blasphemy. Most if not all the command and control power is given to the leader, which makes listening to other people very difficult. Innovation, feedback, and other valuable suggestions may be ignored as the style does not promote them entirely and focuses more on results. This style although is useful where employees need plenty of supervision and experience and knowledge is scarce within the team. (10 Common Leadership Styles, 2020)

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez Faire is a French term that roughly translates as “letting go” which defines this style in a nutshell. This usually means leaders will have almost no authority over their team members and entrust them with the tasks they are assigned. As the style does not promote leader’s involvement within the team this could raise a lot of opportunities for the team. (Becker, 2020)

However, with the total sense of unenrolment of the leader this collides with the fundamental duties of a leader. The team that has been given the opportunity may outperform but without the leader directing their efforts for the goal, the team might drift in other directions and might entirely be disoriented from the goal. On the other hand, this style would work with teammates who are highly motivated and completely understand the goal and their role within the team leading to it. Nonetheless, it could create a chaotic environment if amateur workers are left to figure out the direction of the goal themselves without proper supervision. (Martinuzzi, 2019)

Democratic Leadership

This leadership style may be the most common and practiced in almost all sorts of businesses regardless of the type and the size. As the given name of this style, the nature in which one leader may operate is democratic. The team would be asked about their input towards a decision-making process; however, it may be the leader’s word that sticks out in the end. The difference is outshined on the fact that the teammates are asked for their inputs and suggestions and if the majority agrees, whilst it is grounded by facts, the decision could be taken forward. (Becker, 2020)

Democratic leadership style empowers the opportunity employees are granted, furthermore, strengthening the trust and collaborative working techniques within the team. This type of leadership enhances the responsibility perk within the employees because each employee or teammate has an equal say in the decisions being made, they learn to practice that responsibility wisely. Which is important for the overall growth of the team and the individual as well. This could also prove

as a head start for employees to take risks and understand what they could achieve by doing so in a responsible manner. (Becker, 2020)

The aforementioned leadership styles are not the only ones as the list includes variety of them and some lists may be longer than others, but these seem to be the most commonly used and/or the most popular within the lists. Leadership itself is an art of configuring different elements in a team, understanding them and finally, implementing ways that would ensure a smooth flow between each element. The leadership styles help us familiarize with each style in depth and the way each of them operates in a given situation. This helps leaders segregate and delegate tasks and responsibilities according to the need. Furthermore, based on the quality of the team and their skills, the level of involvement and supervision is determined. Implementing these leadership styles by carefully studying your team's strengths and weaknesses, the way the information flows and the experience onboard, could help determine the best leadership style for your team.

Although, if and when the need occurs leadership styles can prove to outshine their benefits with proper results and even better team bonds. On the other hand, they might seem too general and may prove limiting to people who do not fit in any of the leadership styles. This does not mean they are not affective and/or efficient, but they can prove to be generic in nature and not diverse enough for everyone to relate to them. Embracing one of the leadership styles may feel too restricting in nature and using a combination of them, may create loads of confusion and the inability to operate or function properly. Hence, studying them carefully, understanding a pattern of combination that may fit could perhaps prove as a solution to the problem.

Although, the leadership styles prove to work in a lot of environments and organization throughout the world proving its capability to enhance and improve organizations. However, there is another approach which proves to be dynamic in nature and offers more diversity and variety in terms of skill management, and overall habits to work on as a leader. The approach is well equipped and familiar with the cognitive psychology of a person and how these could enhance leadership skills and promote the right kind of attitude at workplace whilst influencing others.

2.4 The Trait Theory

As we march towards the future, rapid advancements and improvements in technology are being made which is quite visible. Along with that our understanding of things is vastly improving compared to just ten years ago. Researchers are studying and examining different theories to help understand which of those are the closest to being true and the ones that are actually legit. Similarly, studies conducted to understand the well-being of humans and the way the human brain operates, thinks, and processes information, are becoming more evident.

In the midst of these advancements and studies something that is gaining an abundance of attention and is necessary to understand for us to grasp the way the brain operates is Cognitive psychology. This area of study is mainly focused on the internal mental processes that take place within our brains which help us perform daily tasks with ease. These includes decision-making tasks, memory related, problem-solving, attention and language. This area of psychological study is closely related and often mixed with the neuroscience studies of brain operations. This will be further analysed later on, however, the introduction is important to understand why the trait theory is more relevant when it comes to personal development of leaders as well as other individuals. (Cherry, 2017)

The trait theory was first proposed by a German-born psychologist named Hans Eysenck, although it was inspired by Jung's ideas and studies. Eysenck came up with two main personality traits that he suggested individuals could be on the higher or lower end of the traits, combining of four vital types of personalities. The two traits were known as extroversion and neuroticism. He also suggested ways in which the physical body would interlink with the psychological part of the brain and the thought process. Which later on, encouraged the studies in this field to be more scientific and fact based rather than just psychic knowledge. (Ackerman, 2020)

Lewis Goldberg researched and published the Big Five personality traits theory after narrowing down the sixteen factors that were suggested by Raymond Cat-

tell. The personality traits theory after being launched, started gaining the popularity it deserved and was tested all over the world, whilst gaining approval from researchers. (Ackerman, 2020)

The Big Five traits gained its popularity and attention due to the fact that it is based on logical facts that make the theory more realistic than a generic model overview. The theory did not dictate individuals for either being extroverted or not, instead it determined the level of extroversion within them and the habits or experiences one might face while being on either end. This makes the theory more relatable to people rather than picking extreme ends one could easily fit somewhere in between. Furthermore, the theory is heavily emphasized and based on the biological effects of behaviour and understanding them along with this link of psychology, the traits gain more credibility. (Ackerman, 2020)

As these traits shift based on the environment or a situation a person may be put in and might change during the course of time, we will take a deeper look into all of them individually.

OPENNESS to Experience

As the name of this trait is pretty self-explanatory, the trait suggests being open to new experience as a form of personal development and self-growth. Openness to experiences within people and/or leaders, indicates that they are curious for knowledge and new experiences. Although, it might mean going out of one's comfort zone, however, it is worthy of the experience and knowledge that would be gained during this process.

The hunger of knowledge and learning new skills is present in abundance in people whose openness is towards the higher end of the scale. This also promotes creativity and often people with more acceptance towards newer experiences also tend to have wilder imaginations. Being adventurous and trying new things is another trait of people who are situated on the higher end of the openness scale. (Ackerman, 2020)

Since, their imagination skills are impeccable they usually tend to think of the bigger picture or in other terms, think outside the box. It could also be said that they are somewhat self-motivated due to their curiosity and the crave for knowledge and exciting new experiences. People who are more open to experiences are accustomed to the fact that they are putting themselves on unknown grounds, meaning they are aware of the vulnerability these experiences may bestow upon them. However, their hunger for knowledge and trying new things overcomes the vulnerability in somewhat calculated way. (Ackerman, 2020)

Leaders who are more open to new experiences are not easily intimidated by change, instead they welcome the change and appreciate the opportunities that arise from these changes. For instance, some leaders may feel threatened of their position if a subordinate or a teammate presents an idea/plan that potentially would be better than the leader's initial idea/plan. On the other hand, leaders that are more open to experiences would encourage such ideas/plans and would promote the growth of such individual. This trait also suggests that people who are more open to experiences are in turn more courageous and would dare to step forward whenever new opportunities and experiences present themselves. As previously discussed, we know courage is a vital habit and now another factor in this trait that can be seen in people who crave knowledge and are not frightened by change.

Since, openness to experience has interlinked and even promoted some essential traits for a leader, this shows that this trait could build, courageous and intellectually capable leaders. However, although this particular trait's link with the other four traits is highly arguable and not enough evidence is present to prove their interlinkage. Furthermore, this trait has been witnessed to be extremely stable over the course of time, proving that such leaders would still crave the hunger for knowledge and trying out newer and exciting methods to grow their own personal intellectual properties as well as the teams', even after their prime years. (Ackerman, 2020)

The openness to experience and its intertwined qualities with knowledge and skills, would undeniably produce great influential leaders. Such leaders would

promote newer ideas and pamper creative thinking, hence, giving room to innovations that would surely revolutionize the industry and the market.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Conscientiousness is highly present in people who would, similar to the previous trait, be more thoughtful and actively engaged in the broader picture of things and plan accordingly. Conscientious people prefer to map-out a thorough plan that would help them capitalize the situation and structure their way towards the goal. These people are generally more aware of things and how their plan fits in, the time constraints and how to efficiently schedule their action plan in order to achieve their goals. This is not possible without them focusing on the keen details that may be overlooked by many and are usually the most important pieces of the puzzle. People that fall on the higher scale of conscientiousness are more organized and advocate and practice structure, which in turn helps them achieve goals in an extremely systematic manner. (Ackerman, 2020)

Such people are more hardworking towards their goals as they are self-motivated and understand how to tackle their problems in an organized fashion. As they are very goal-oriented, their persistence in order to achieve what they sought for is immense. It is due to that fact they tend to control their impulses and accordingly fix their etiquettes and practices, aligning them perfectly in sync with their goals. Such organized behaviour and persistence towards goals, increases their reliability which makes them trustworthy leaders. Due to their striving determination, their relationship with their team is pure and they act as a fine example for the team to follow their steps. They provide companies with detailed plans that are methodically structured with priority given to significant tasks first. (Ackerman, 2020)

Usually people tend to delay the important tasks to the very end, as they may feel quite overwhelmed by the thought of it or even the process of doing the task may confuse them, hence, procrastinating these tasks is easy. On the other hand, tremendously conscientious people focus their efforts, brain power and time to systematically organize the tasks and get hands on with the important tasks early on. They are not overwhelmed by the crucial tasks that need the energy and time

required as their plan is well thought-out and if worked on it efficiently, everything comes together beautifully.

Leaders with such trait can easily dominate the industry they work for and can delay gratification, which in turn helps create self-discipline. Delaying gratification helps them in staying focused on the job-at-hand and it acts as a motivation to work towards. Due to their thoroughness in the planning phase and persistence in achieving goals, teammates enjoy working with them which helps them improve themselves as well. As they are reliable, teammates also feel more comfortable presenting their ideas and discussing their matters which would increase the trust in this relationship. (Ackerman, 2020)

However, one may argue due to their thorough plans and a certain picture in which they tend to achieve goal, could make them obsessively perfectionists, which in itself acts counterproductively. This could also make them less of a team player as they might not be satisfied with anything the team delivers if it is not exactly the same way they want.

Nonetheless, as the highly conscientious people do act in a very behaved and controlled manner this is somewhat of a small risk and should not create problems if controlled properly. Some studies suggest that highly conscientious people are also related with having incredible ability to tackle new challenges that may arise unexpectedly. As they are very systematic, they tend to approach things from different angles because of that they are better prepared for hiccups along the way and are somewhat familiar with the unexpected problems that may arise. Once again, creating leaders that are impeccable assets for a company. (Ackerman, 2020)

On the other hand, the lower spectrum of conscientiousness includes people who dislike order in things and are usually not that organized. Delaying gratification is not something known or highly practiced in this group as they are directly linked with impulsive actions and acting in odd behaviour. As people on the lower scale of conscientiousness are disorganized, they also tend to be more careless about stuff and are unmindful about deadlines in general. This would definitely make them lazy and procrastinating important tasks can be seen in people with low

conscientiousness. People on the lower end lack structure and order in their matters this makes their approach towards a goal different and the persistence might be questionable. (Ackerman, 2020)

EXTRAVERSION

This trait's extreme ends of the spectrum are associated with extroversion and the other end is known as introversion. People that are at the higher end of extroversion are usually the people that get along quite well with others. These are usually the people that thrive in public events and where there is an abundance of people. They usually get along well with even strangers as they have communication perks which assist them with getting along better. Finding common grounds with other people is usually a tactic that helps them get along well and quickly. It is as if they feed off of the energy that the public provides them, and they love socializing because of that. People that are high in extroversion do not shy away from starting conversations and in doing so they enjoy the company of new people. This trait helps them make friends easily, as they genuinely enjoy meeting new people and in doing so, they tend to learn a lot about people and their different mentalities. (Cherry, 2020)

Highly extroversion in people makes them want to be the centre of attention, they usually like to "light up" a party or a social gathering. They tend to make constant efforts to engage and participate in social gathering and the culture of going up and talking to a stranger is accustomed to them. They also tend to speak a lot in front of crowds and when people gather around them, it usually gets them riled up and/or makes them excited. Sometimes in the heat of excitement these people tend to utter words without thinking about them, in other words they overshare at times. However, it may gain them the attention they crave but in certain professional situations it may backfire. Another benefit of being more extravert would include adapting to certain unfamiliar situations. Even if they are in unknown grounds, they tend to outshine by attracting people with their energy and charisma, these people are very outgoing as well. (Cherry, 2020)

Highly extraverted people may assume the same sort of extroversion or personality traits in their fellow colleagues, friends and other close people, which may

make them feel uncomfortable as the level of extravert might not be similar all the time. Moreover, extraverted people excel in jobs that requires interacting with people and engaging with them, such as, teachers, politicians, sales jobs and so on. (Cherry, 2020)

On the contrary, the other extreme end is for introverted people, they are the complete opposite of extraverted people. Huge crowds and social gatherings might feel like withdrawing energy from them, they tend to avoid being the centre of attention. Initiating conversations can prove to be a challenge for these people and usually would avoid every opportunity like that. People on the lower end tend to stay more reserved and do not thrive with energy when surrounded by other people. In some cases, they are shy and easily intimidated by large crowds, hence, they feed off of solidarity and like to be the lone wolf. Additionally, they tend to be very thoughtful of what they say and how people receive what they are saying. They outshine in environments and jobs that require few or no interaction with people, such as, programming, computer science, accountant and so on. It should be noted that people on the lower spectrum of extraversion do not despise or hate social gathering, instead they prefer isolation and thrive in such comfortable environment. (Cherry, 2020)

AGREEABLENESS

Individuals that fall on the higher end of the Agreeableness trait offer others a kind, warm gesture and being around them gives off a positive and warm vibe. They tend to be more affectionate and empathetic towards other people and their loved ones. These people take great pleasure in helping out others to grow and would always welcome an opportunity that allows them to help others. They genuinely feel obliged to care for people and make them happy along the way, in doing so they create a trustworthy bond between themselves and the people they help. Generally, they are more interested in people rather than things, materialistic stuff is not as important as making strong and impactful connections with people. Individuals that are more agreeable tend to have many close friends and enjoy improving and nurturing their relationship with their close ones and others. (Cherry, 2020)

However, it might mean that they usually tend to put others before them and would sacrifice their own interests for others. Although, this is not something that is significantly negative, but at the same time, leaves little room for their own personal development. At times, it may cost them to sacrifice their own success, learning opportunities and other opportunities, because of their habit of pleasing people and bringing constant joy into their lives. (Ackerman, 2020)

People on the other end of the Agreeableness scale, might tend to be more resentful and sarcastic in nature. Although, this may not be the case all the time but the people on lower end of this scale, definitely do not offer the same sort of care and empathy towards people. They might also come off as rude, does not mean they might be ignorant towards information but their deliverance of it might not be so welcoming. They could be perceived as manipulative in nature and would rather benefit their own needs and wants than fulfilling other people's needs. However, they might not always think about themselves but letting crucial opportunities pass by in order to please other people, may not be in their best interest. (Ackerman, 2020)

A mixed balance in this scale might offer another trait for a leader, such as providing themselves and their teams with opportunities to grow. Creating an empathetic relationship with their colleagues nurturing it with care and kindness. Furthermore, when the need arises, they are blunt enough to take forth a decision that they and their team believes in. Leaders can also practice gratitude that is another feature of this trait, which would help them become more conscious about their environment and the quality of team they have. Such a balanced trait could help leaders become less selfish and value the bond they create with their team. On top of that, they would focus on granting teammates opportunities to grow and present their skills, whilst equally focusing on their personal developments too in order to stay relevant and up to date.

NEUROTICISM

Individuals with higher level of neuroticism might not be considered so lucky as this is followed by their personalities being extremely emotionally instable and events or situations can easily have extensive effects on their mood. People in

this category feel more controlled by their emotions and circumstances may easily be in charge of their moods. Due to this instability in emotions they tend to experience a lot of mood swings and stress out about things uncontrollably. They usually stress out about things more than required and feel almost paralyzed with this stress unable to operate normally or even think straight. Dusting themselves off of it may prove to be very challenging and slight inconveniences may cause a spiral effect of stress combined with anxiousness. Such people tend to stay worried about situations and things in general as well as extremely self-conscious. Because of this factor they tend to get riled up and agitated about little things very quickly and insecurity can be an overwhelming feeling for these people. (Cherry, 2020)

However, individuals that score low on neuroticism scale, tend to be calmer and more collected in their thoughts as well as actions. Insignificant events or inconveniences do not cause the same effect, instead they tend to cope with stress in a very relaxed manner. As their self-esteem is not endangered these people tend to stay more confident in their matters and believe in themselves strongly. Keeping a cool mindset and being relaxed is a vital element that they practice which helps them rationalize situations and often assists in avoiding overcomplicating situations. Unlike people on the higher end of the scale, overthinking is something that is rare on the lower scale and people try to stay more in touch with reality than being overcome by assumptions and insecurities. (Cherry, 2020)

Finally, leaders can practice and groom their personalities in order to fit towards the lower end of neuroticism. This would allow them to interact with their teammates in a calmer manner and avoid them from falling into inferiority complex. Moreover, change is inevitable and no matter how calculated of a plan or approach you may set out for there are few things that cannot be always considered or calculated or be prepared for in the initial plan. Therefore, adapting to given situation and creating an opportunity out of an obstacle would require a leader to be emotionally stable and not being overwhelmed by situations that are unprecedented or unavoidable. Being self-confident and creating/investing in resources to improve one's mental health would create a more relaxed and calmer mindset for the leader to operate in. Falling into the trap of overthinking and questioning

one's ability if avoided, may provide room for a leader to thrive in their respective field.

In conclusion, we can safely assume that most of the OCEAN (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) can have immense effects on personality and if focused on correctly, could help improve a leader's weaknesses or shortcomings. The personality traits' dynamic nature offers a wide spectrum where an individual could score towards the higher or lower end and accordingly work on improving that. These traits not only help improve your personality but in some cases act as an indicator on which a person can rely as to how they should behave in public and interact accordingly. With the exception of a few traits, it would be better to find yourself or work towards getting to the higher end of the scale as it would naturally increase your charismatic skills and make you a bolder and reformed leader. Due to the variety and differences the model offers and the skillset that one could acquire, from helping others grow to leading people within a thorough and thoughtful way. It is because of its nature, that it could be applicable in most start-ups and they could leverage this model accordingly in order to train their leaders and increase their hunger for knowledge and experiences. This could all be possible by first understanding your own score on this model and slowly working your way up by practicing those skills, even if it means getting out of your comfort zone, as one thrives outside of their comfort zone.

Although, the model is very diverse and dynamic, it should still be examined with a pinch of salt. To elaborate, there are a variety of different personalities and as each person operates differently and have their specific mindsets, it is not fair to assume this would accommodate everyone. Moreover, due to the complex essence of personality and how different cultures are, on top of that within those same cultures' personalities could differ significantly, almost astonishingly. Which means although, the models' success worldwide as mentioned above might have been proven, there are always exceptions and due to the fact how each person thrives and slacks differently, there is some grey area that one should be mindful of.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research methods used in this research are qualitative in nature, with a deeper focus on the meaning or thought process of an individual rather than just analysing their answers without proper context. Qualitative research helps focusing towards a particular theory or matter by approaching it in various forms and methods to create a more solidified perception of that particular matter and the matters surrounding it. As qualitative approach aims to study people in their natural 'habitat' or environment this helps in capturing data in its purest form by asking the appropriate questions. Deeper understandings can make their foundations with researchers asking the "why" questions, which helps us better understand an individual's motives, values and beliefs and even their mindsets. Open questions are the key element when conducting a qualitative research as this offers researchers to gain sufficient or even overwhelming amount of data to articulate speculations and findings. Therefore, it may create complications whilst the analysis process, however, the sheer amount of data acts as providing new grounds rather than creating barriers. (Mcleod, 2019)

In this particular research, qualitative questionnaire was exercised while interviewing candidates, although the amount accumulated to only five interviews, due to some constraints that will be discussed later on, however, they proved to be extremely insightful due to their open-ended nature of questioning. Initially the intended way of conducting these interviews was by having 1-on-1 sessions or face-to-face meetings to capture as much data as necessary. In psychology movements, behaviour, tone of interaction, what you say is all connected to your thought process, and by conducting the above-mentioned interviews it would be possible to track every little detail and set of data. Finally, using a multivariate approach in theory to explain the findings and interesting discoveries, however, once again this was not completely possible due to the constraints that will be addressed later.

Video chat or calls were used instead to create the most natural environment or the closest environment to a face-to-face meeting and grasping as much data as possible. Additionally, having a hands-on approach and conducting this research, provided me with sufficient data and some interesting patterns, that might not

have been recorded but will be discussed later on. Therefore, adding to the benefits of such a research and conducting research yourself. Some details may get overlooked due to their significance not being scientific enough and/or there being enough proof, however, with a qualitative research you can address these findings and find possible relations with theory.

Furthermore, something that would be worthy of mention is the fact that the knowledge and the ability to work with frameworks that I gained during my degree from multiple locations, such as, Estonia, Finland, and France. These were extensive methods and skills acquired from work experiences to learning from more qualified professors' experiences. All of which accounted for the way I have analysed the data and the structure that has been followed to provide visible patterns and correspondence between data and theory. Since, the focus is primarily finding psychological traits and how these could enhance the leadership like personality that would be ideal in the business world, especially a start-up. Therefore, while researching and gathering data there was a strict focus on excluding biasness in the all methods.

This approach fits the best in such a qualitative research and offers a fundamental base to analyse data accordingly. Qualitative research tends to provide newer insights and with each gaining more information challenges a person to look at things from different angles and perspective. This allowed for a well thought out structure for the thesis and research, whilst examining different types of answers and information that are unfamiliar in an impactful way.

The most important research question that was sought to gain information was "What are the psychological traits of a successful leader and how can one enhance them?", this is important as for a leader to become better they should firstly become a better version of themselves and in turn become better leaders. As the research is heavily focused on psychology the interviewees were not presented with questions beforehand, in order to avoid them being preparing for those questions. Therefore, grasping this knowledge in its true essence and form. The interviewees were all successful leaders in their careers, in present or in the past. Additionally, all of them had worked as leaders in a start-up either during the interviews conducted or in the past or both.

This constituted for some equal/common grounds in order for them to qualify as specimens to this research. Furthermore, the questions constructed were to confirm their qualities met with their thought process. Hence, creating tricky questions and questions with deeper meaning behind them contributed to this check and allowed for a more honest session of interview. All the leaders chosen to interview in this research have been doing remarkably well in their fields as leaders and sole performance as well, most of them I have worked closely with and understand their style and the level of integrity they offer.

3.1 QUESTIONS

The questions asked in the interviews to gather and analyse information on the personality and/or psychological traits of those leaders are added in the appendices section. This section will cover how the questions were formulated and what purpose or motive do these questions serve if there is a deeper meaning with these questions and what may it be. Kindly refer to the “**Questions**”, section in the appendices in order to properly examine the questionnaire prepared for the interviews.

Firstly, the beginning question and sub question is designed to understand what experiences do these leaders value and what may be the building blocks of their leadership personalities. How did they take on challenges if faced with any and what was learnt from these experiences? Additionally, understanding if they have deeper moral values or beliefs that they stand by and will stand by even if the consequences are not so favourable. Moreover, it would also be hopeful to expect how their brain would trigger effects that would cause them to flight or fight these challenges or obstacles.

Secondly, the next question aims to answer if these leaders believe in having other leaders and their ‘ideal’ leaders. In doing so, they also would describe traits that they would like leaders to practice and which would help them improve their relationship with the team. It would be interesting to see how these traits and values that they mention, when put forth in the scenario-based questions that follow, align with each other and what patterns can we deduce from these.

As mentioned above, the next three questions are scenario-based and would reveal if these leaders having those values and traits that they are proud to stick with. Furthermore, these questions will exhibit if the leaders have ethical values, strong beliefs and if they are heavy practisers of team playing attribute. Potentially it could show if the leaders are more empathetic and how would they deal with these obstacles. This would also deduce if their beliefs are in accordance with their actions and they, when needed, can very well walk the talk. Another small but significant attempt that these questions aim to please, is if the team is performing well through bad means would this be justified for them. In other terms, would they let teammates get by with wrong means if that helps them meet goals and brings profit to the company.

4 FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this section, the answers will be looked at closely, the patterns that were found during analysis and interesting theories that could be discussed and worthy of mention. As mentioned earlier, the candidates that participated or volunteered are all currently working in start-ups, with the exception of Leader “C”. Kindly, refer to the “**Answers**” section in the appendices, to find the summarized version of the answers that each leader presented. However, it may be noticeable that these leaders are not named, this is due to anonymity reasons and the agreement to respect that decision. On top of that, they have a small motivation factor next to their titles, which is explained in the following paragraph.

Furthermore, with the exception of Leader C, all the other leaders are situated in the same geographic location, i.e. Estonia. Without, taking a deep look we can notice that all the other leaders have fairly similar thoughts and have somewhat strong beliefs in these values, either ethical or moral. Another factor that is worthy of mentioning is the fact that each leader was carefully asked about their motivating factor when faced with challenges. However, this question is not mentioned in the questionnaire as it was asked to each respondent according to the setting of the meeting and where it was applicable. Hence, it did not follow a procedural way of questioning, this was necessary in order to make the interviews more natural.

Nonetheless, looking at Leader A, one can easily deduce that they are highly extraverted and enjoy being around people. Even when they were asked about thinking selfishly when it came to the “bonus or incentive” question, they chose to still go out with the team. Which means, they thrive in conditions that including social gatherings and feed off of that energy. It also interesting to notice that this particular leader is very courageous as they have dealt with challenges as they were thrown at them and have found themselves revamped after those obstacles in sense of skills, knowledge and experience. The trait of agreeableness is again clearly visible, as their proud moments include their subordinates rising to their positions. Such influential leaders tend to work on their skills and grant others the chance to be courageous and to grow, hence, having a balanced level of agreeableness. They also have strong moral and ethical values that they abide by and

have a high score on the conscientiousness, as they love structure and are extremely reliable.

Secondly, interestingly enough, the Leader B is courageous in their own way as conquering something, such as, moving to a new place, trying new cultures, may seem easy but involve exponential change and will to adapt. Likewise, this leader also value transparency and would like to have that trait within the leaders they would ideally want to work with. There are a few interesting findings here, firstly, the leader is not an impulsive reactor or buyer, meaning they are more emotionally stable and likely fall under the lower spectrum of the neuroticism which makes them emotionally strong and relaxed in their tasks. Although, the leadership styles may prove to be somewhat limiting and outdated when compared to personality traits. However, in this fine example, the Leader B can definitely use a more autocratic approach when the final scenario was displayed.

Furthermore, Leader C is an extremely interesting case, their belief is strong in personal development and success, yet they believe that leaders that do not facilitate opportunities for their peers to grow, are not successful leaders. This leader's conscientiousness is a bit higher than average and they are aware of the bigger picture with focus on important tasks and perseverance. Although, they might not value ethics as much, but this could be directly related to the geographic location and the norms and culture of where they are inhabited. They may also be situated in the lower end of the Agreeableness scale, however, being blunt does not make them less caring about people.

Similarly, Leader D has high level of conscientiousness as with the 'bonus question' they chose to delay gratification and invest it in real estate or stock market. Although this suggests that they are not impulsive in behaviour, however, an interesting clash of factors takes place here. While they are not impulsive in nature, they are focused on performing their absolute best and that is their motivation. This may or may not cause self-doubt depending on how emotionally stable they are. Nonetheless, they might not be as strong of a team player as Leader A, but they still have the habit of coaching their teammates and discovering what may be the best solution for them, placing them somewhat higher on the agreeableness.

Once again, we can focus that all these successful leaders have some very strong beliefs and values that they prioritize and would at times work out of their way to achieve or ensure their sustainability. 'Leader E' strongly believes in helping out others and helping them achieve their goals as well. We can see a very high level of agreeableness, on top of that, to balance that they also believe in personal development that not only benefits them personally but the team as well. They are also not keen on instant gratification as they would invest the bonus in stocks, placing them in the higher end of the conscientious scale. To compliment that, they strongly believe in consistency and hard work with ample focus on determination. The habit of coaching can be seen in Leader E and in all the leaders making it compulsory in order to excel in the leadership position.

Consequently, we can distinguish that the OCEAN model, along with other leadership habits and traits, may prove to be a fine model for leaders in start-ups to place themselves in those scales. Evidently, it would help them focus on their shortcomings as the start-ups get old and wise, likewise, the leaders could get wiser and capitalize on their strong points whilst minimizing the side effects of their weaknesses. As it has been clearly visible, successful leaders believe in what they are doing and have strong moral values and beliefs to compliment that. Additionally, if the start-ups vision matches with their (although does not necessarily have to be the same), they would work on it with a more refined focus and the quality of deliverance would improve significantly.

Moreover, as all the questions and answers had deeper meaning to them and the leaders' behaviours are justified with a deeper meaning, such as their motivation, vision, beliefs, that keeps them focused and resilient towards goals. Similarly, our psychological traits and/or personality traits have deeper biological and/or psychological roots that upon discovery would help us leverage our traits responsibly and become better versions of ourselves, hence, better leaders.

Such a proof may exist in the biological nature around us, for instance, when two male lobsters (our ancient ancestors very long ago may have been the same) go heads on in a fierce battle to assert dominance and take territory. The victor of this battle stands tall in a more aggressive way, this helps the release of serotonin and makes them more confident. Due to this posture and the release of serotonin

the victor is most likely to win other battles and other lobsters would avoid fights. Similarly, when we stand straight with our shoulders backed up, we tend to release serotonin as well and this makes us feel more courageous and ready to get hands on with matters. It makes us more confident and ready to take on the world. (Peterson, 2018)

In conclusion, understanding our own cognitive psychological brain processing, whether it may be behaviour in certain situations or place or in general. Indefinitely, would give us a better perception of how we could in turn control and leverage our psychological traits, while slowly working on improving or minimizing their effect, if negative in nature. The idea would be to be more in control and aware of your environment and emotions, this would mean being conscious to levels that are unimaginable.

4.1 Constraints

Although, the interviews were supposed to take place in a confined space and have a face-to-face meeting, in order to examine and analyse every detail relevant to psychology. Such details may include, arriving to the meeting in a rush, being nervous, being organized with the current things in possession, the overall posture of the person and so on. However, this was not possible due to the recent outbreak or pandemic of the COVID-19 virus that has forced governments to enforce quarantine and complete lockdowns. This has definitely affected the research significantly, as in the number of interviews, the information gathered and the limited resources that were disposed due to the pandemic.

Furthermore, having a psychology department within the university may have provided better grounds and infrastructure to base the thesis on and would have accounted for more patterns to be noticed.

4.2 Further Research

Finally, there is definitely room for more further research, as we could take for example, factors like geographic locations into considerations and try to examine

a pattern within leaders from the same locations. If patterns are found, subsequently, figuring out why this might be the case due to the differences in each person's personality and moral beliefs. This could provide solid ground for leadership enthusiasts to study, understand and even implement better leadership qualities that would help create a better and more sustainable earth.

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APPENDICES

Questions

Q1) If you have had some good/happy experiences in the past that you were proud of and/or you surprised yourself with how you got there or coped with such a situation?

- a) If you had some bad experiences in the past, however you stuck with something you believed in and were also somewhat proud of yourself for sticking by?

Q2) What qualities or traits would you want in a leader, be it in their personal lives or professional, that would make you comfortable enough to work with them or even look up to them?

Q3) There is a bonus planned for you by the management for the joined team efforts and contributions of your team, what would be your first purchase with that money?

Q4) One of your teammates has been found not following one of the values your company practices or preaches about, they have been constantly reminded through general posters and information posted on your intranet (but no one has personally informed them in a 1on1 session). One could say they are blissfully ignorant to that value, what would your approach be on this matter?

Q5) You are the head or the leader of a sales team and it has recently come to your attention (however, it is not known to anyone else) that one of your teammates or subordinate is bribing the customers to get them onboard, through various gifts and so on? Although, it is under the table and the teammates numbers are skyrocketing and it is majorly due to them that quarterly targets are met. How would you tackle such a thing?

Answers**LEADER A** – Team motivated

Q1) Had no prior leadership skills or experiences but was thrown on the deeper end to figure it by recruiting people and leading them. Two of the proudest moments were to keep on taking the challenges they threw at me heads on and adapting to them and learning from them, moreover, helping my team grow, as one of the people I recruited took my job after I left the company.

- a) Nothing in particular but have stuck to some values that teammates strongly believed in and they actually were promising, even so much so that we had to oppose management's decisions on those matters.

Q2) A honesty infused relationship which has clear indications on expectations and I am clearly told about what is expected of me, as well as being trustworthy enough for me to be clear and honest about the issues or thing I would want to share and bring up. A little bit of personal sharing would be appreciated for the whole relationship to be purer and not faked.

Q3) Is the team getting a bonus, too? If I would not have to worry about them getting it then I would like to go out for lunch or drinks as I love social interactions.

Q4) One on one sessions, trying to create a scenario-based approach and asking what they would do if such a thing happened, leading them to the given answer rather than telling them the answer.

Q5) As it is not lawful the complications that would arise are far worse than the ease and numbers at the moment, this would not only have impacts on the business level but on a personal level as well.

LEADER B – New experiences and culture

Q1) Moving to a new country and experiencing the culture as well as finally getting the job through tough methods of testing and trials, was a moment to be proud of.

- a) I would stick to Transparency even at times I had to modify aspects, but I am glad I have found my way to stick to it.

Q2) Transparency is something I value in a leader and the ability to let teammates participate within the decision-making process. Micro-management is something that should not be present in them and thorough communication, while providing constructive feedback along the way.

Q3) Depends on the amount, but I would like to buy the team drinks or distribute the amount within the team, not so much of an impulsive buyer.

Q4) Depending on the value and the effects of it, would try to approach it in legal ways if necessary but if it is within the team then try to have a 1on1 to understand their point of view. Regardless, would try to understand why they are not following it or if something in their personal life is affecting this.

Q5) I would report it to my managers or seniors, if I were in charge then I would ask the person to resign, the evil only grows from here onwards.

LEADER C – Success

Q1) I have had some very challenging competition that I had to work hard and smart against, I focused on things in a very collected manner and tackling things one at a time, in doing so I was amazed by myself and the performance.

- a) Giving is not something I do.

Q2) Should be courageous enough to try new things, lead with examples and for this to take place a sheer commitment and resilience is needed to focus and be self-motivated. Furthermore, one could be a leader for certain amount of time and

for your certain missions or goal in life, if they mentor you that is amazing. Anyone that stops others from succeeding cannot be a good leader or if he/she hogs credit.

Q3) I would investigate how it got to me and if the bonus was really meant for me.

Q4) Instructing them and understanding their motivations and perhaps training them to onboard them with the values.

Q5) If it is under the table, I will let it happen, sometimes rubbing shoulders is alright, but as long as it is under the radar I do enjoy great numbers.

LEADER D – Quality Performance

Q1) In my previous job, I had some quarterly business presentations along with my manager sharing the burden of presenting them. However, at the last moment it happened so that I was in charge of presenting it all and doing all of that in the plane with my analytic skills on boost was a thrill. I was a bit nervous or even afraid but after seeing how well I did or managed, I surely surprised myself.

- a) There was a point where we were bought off by another company and it came down to either laying off 20 people or asking them to join other positions that they were not interested in. I offered them to still join those positions even though some of them might have thought I personally wanted to get rid of them, but I stuck by what proved to be the best solution for the company. It was tough as they were more like friends, but it had to be done.

Q2) Trust is a two-way street that I would be able to trust my leader and they trust me in turn to doing it in the best way that I can in terms of deliverance. Micromanagement really diminishes my trust within such a leader, it really blocks me. I would struggle being motivated in these terms.

Q3) Depends on the amount of the bonus, but I would like to invest it in real estate or the stock market. I would not like to drink with the team with that money as the salary could be for those purposes.

Q4) I would firstly, try to understand their approach as if why they might not be following it and accordingly address it, perhaps they misinterpreted the value or whatever their stance on it may be. If they choose not to follow then I would like to discuss other options with them that they could pursue, as these values are not something to stock in the shelves and forget about them, they should be followed. Meanwhile, also seeing if the value is in accordance with the company as well and the vision or is it something random.

Q5) I would personally have zero tolerance and would probably ask them to stop right away and report the person to the legal team, as it has heavy implications and fines on the company, also they are not playing on the same equal grounds. However, if it is even legal where we might be working, I would still have trust issues and would not be comfortable working with that person.

LEADER E – Helping others out

Q1) I guess overall for me it was the process of being a team lead at first and being able to handle constructive feedback from peers whilst improving myself constantly, for me it would be the maturity, how I have matured as a person and with that the experiences and knowledge follow.

- a) The tough parts would be the constructive feedback sticking with them and almost making yourself vulnerable, although it does not turn out well all the time, but I am happy to stick with them.

Q2) The leader should definitely have the same drive, i.e. genuinely helping people out and letting them grow. The focus could also be on leading by example and working on self-development as much as possible, this goes hand-in-hand with sharing knowledge within the team. Being able to coach others and having a strong sense of values and/or principles. Although, an ample amount of consistency is needed to be motivated and working towards the desired vision. I also,

believe that everyone should work on having these qualities not so much that it would make them leaders, but it would be easier for people to get along and work them.

Q3) Investing in stock options

Q4) Understanding their take on this how they are feeling or understanding the value, not to snitch or call them out but genuinely knowing their thoughts on this. I also believe, people are not a certain way it is the behavior that causes it and behavior is affected by a lot of factors. If they do understand the value, I would then make sure to clarify and draw the line of what is acceptable.

Q5) I would walk through with them on how they ended up going through these methods to achieve the desired results and understanding what is going on that justifies their behavior. I would not want to work with such a person or a place where this is acceptable.