

Who Should Lead: How cognitive ability and personality predict leadership.

Traditional measures of leadership explicitly ask test-takers whether they engage in successful leadership behaviors (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1995). While these tests do show some relationships with leader effectiveness (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2013), these tests are not ideal because test-takers could stretch the truth to make themselves appear to be a more qualified leader than they actually are. Because of this problem, we developed a test (Transactional/Transformational Implicit Leadership Test) designed to assess leadership style without appearing to be a measurement of leadership. For the present study, we administered our new measurement of leadership, a traditional leadership test, and multiple cognitive and personality tests to over 50 subjects. We designed the study to examine two questions 1.) how well our new test of leadership measures leadership compared to a traditional test and 2.) which type of individual difference predicts leadership style more accurately, cognitive abilities (e.g., fluid intelligence and working memory capacity) or personality traits (e.g., extroversion and conscientiousness). Measuring effective leadership is important when determining who should be in charge. The results of the present study are important for determining how leaders are chosen in an industrial and organizational context.