

Maria Veltmann¹ & Helle Pullmann²

¹Assessment Centre Tripod, Estonia

²Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Estonia

INTRODUCTION

The studies demonstrate that top executives have specific personality profiles (Sangster, 2011) and more complex positions require higher level of mental abilities (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004).

The goal of this study was to collect a presentable amount of data from various managerial levels to investigate whether Estonian managers' personality profiles and mental abilities levels differ from individuals representing non-managerial job positions.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

The total sample consisted of 816 Estonian-speaking individuals (45% females, 55% males) with a mean age of 36 ($SD = 11$) years, ranging from 19 to 67. The participants were divided into four groups according to their managerial level (available for 762 respondents) as follows:

- **Executives** ($n = 156$) were invited to participate from various leading private sector companies ($n = 116$) and public sector institutions ($n = 40$);
- **Managers'** ($n = 269$) group consisted of 214 middle-level and 55 first-level managers (157 derived from private and 112 from public sector);
- **Specialists** ($n = 153$) were represented by top and middle-level positions (109 from private and 44 from public sector);
- **Others** ($n = 184$) non-managerial professions were represented by students, officials, service employees and workers.

MEASURES

Personality traits

The **Manager's Personality Inventory (MPI/IK-JUHT)** developed by Tripod was used to measure five personality domains: *Emotional Stability (N)*, *General Activity (E)*, *Relationship Orientation (A)*, *Activity Orientation (C)*, and *General Responsiveness (O)*. In addition, ten more narrow personal characteristics (e.g. *Initiative*, *Leadership*, *Teamwork*, *Adaptability*) were described. All 188 items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach α) of the scales varied from .77 to .92.

Mental abilities

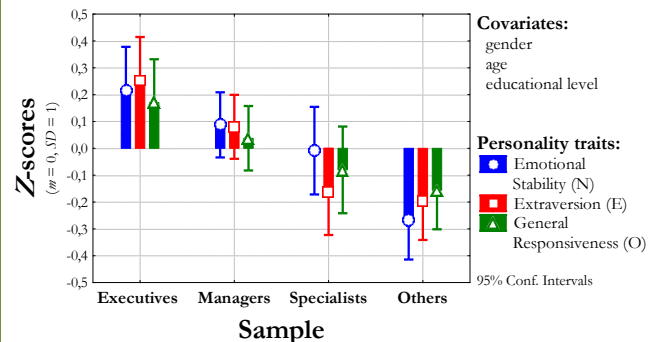
The **Manager's Mental Ability Scale (MMAS/VVS-JUHT)** developed by Tripod consisted of 48 tasks and four subscales (*Comprehension of Verbal Information*, *Comprehension of Numerical Information*, *Mathematical-Logical Thinking*, and *Spatial Thinking*). The scale had good psychometric properties and all the scores of the subscales were distributed similarly to normal curve. The internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach α) of the scales varied from .77 to .92 for the samples.

All scores were standardised ($m = 0$, $SD = 1$) across total sample for the further analyses.

REFERENCES

- Sangster, A. (2011). The personality profile of US top executives. Chapter in the *The Handbook of Research on Top Management Teams*. Ed. M. Carpenter. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Schmidt, F.L. & Hunter, J. (2004). General Mental Ability in the World of Work: Occupational Attainment and Job Performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86, 162-173.

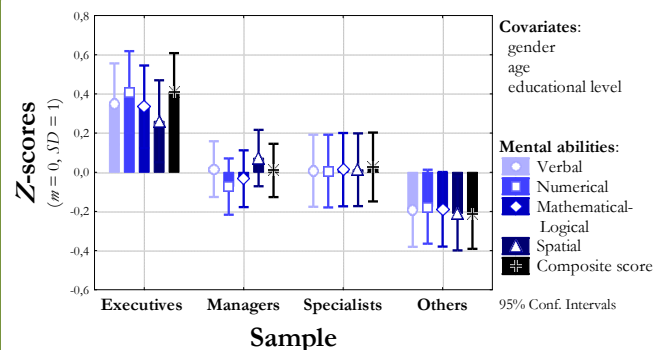
FIGURE 1. PERSONALITY TRAITS ACROSS MANAGERIAL LEVELS.



RESULTS

- (1) In line with previous studies (e.g., Sangster, 2011), the analyses revealed that Estonian executives and managers were highly more emotionally stable, extraverted and open to experience compared to non-managerial professionals (e.g., specialists, officials, workers), $F(15, 1941, 1) = 2.88$, $p < .001$. Thus, individuals are less likely or prefer not to be promoted to higher managerial positions if they have a tendency to experience negative affects and psychological distress, they are more reserved and shy with a conservative attitude. Analyses of covariance confirmed the results when age, gender and educational level were used as covariates (see *Figure 1*).
- (2) The levels of mental abilities varied significantly across managerial level groups, $F(15, 1253, 7) = 2.13$, $p < .01$. The results indicated that, in comparison to non-managerial employees, executives scored significantly ($p < .001$) higher on all cognitive abilities scales and total score. The mean level differences remained when gender, age, and educational level were taken into account (see *Figure 2*).

FIGURE 2. MENTAL ABILITIES ACROSS MANAGERIAL LEVELS.



CONCLUSION

There is strong evidence of heteromorphic nature of top executive personality and intelligence with respect to the non-managerial individuals. These findings attest to the utility of personality and intelligence tests used within the occupational community, for selection and assessment of suitability for promotion to senior managerial roles.