

Self-Description Inventory as a Predictor of Managerial Success

Anjali Ghosh

Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta

The present study investigates whether different facets of managerial talent can be used as a predictor of managerial success in a group of 74 managers working in different public and private sector organizations. Managerial talent was measured by Self-Description Inventory of Ghiselli (1954). Indices of managerial success were career progression, salary progression, and salary gain. Multiple linear regression analysis was carried on to predict managerial success with different facets of managerial talent measured by Self-Description Inventory. The relationship was not very strong. Age emerged as the most important predictor of all the variables. The reliability of results, however, cannot be expected to be high as the sample size was small and the subjects were from different organisations belonging to both public and private sectors where organisational structure, promotion policy, scales of pay, etc. could vary widely.

The success of an organisation depends to a large extent upon its ability to identify management potential. Hence, assessment of the degree to which this aspect is present in the management personnel or their potentiality to acquire that assumes special importance.

It has been observed that some managers and executives succeed remarkably in their professional career, while others with equally high intellectual capacities or professional training fail even under similar circumstances. Now, the question is what makes a manager successful. One of the key factors for understanding managerial success is the personality traits possessed by successful

managers. According to Ghiselli (1963), intelligence, supervisory ability, initiative-ness self assurance, and perceived occupational level play a fundamental role in determining managerial success and these five traits are major facets of managerial talent.

The relationships of managerial talent, managerial values, etc. with managerial success have been observed by several investigators (Ghiselli, 1963; England & Lee, 1974; Watson & Williams, 1977). Quite a number of investigators have found the relationship between managerial effectiveness and managerial success to be very negligible (Ansari, 1981; Ghosh Dastidar, 1986).

The objective of the present investigation is to determine the contribution of different facets of managerial talent in

Reprint requests to Anjali Ghosh Psychometry Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, 203 Barrackpore Trunk Road Calcutta 700035.

predicting managerial success. Self-Description Inventory of Ghiselli was used to measure these facets. Managerial success is determined by rate of progression scores--for example, career progression, salary progression, and salary gain of managers in their career.

METHOD

Subjects The subjects were 74 managers from three different levels of management working in different industrial organisations located at the eastern and northern parts of India. The mean age for the group was 35.08 years. There were 44 managers from public sector and 30 from private sector organisations.

Instruments

Self-Description Inventory The Self-Description Inventory of Ghiselli (1954) was used for measuring managerial talent. The inventory measures 13 traits, viz. (1) supervisory ability, (2) intelligence, (3) initiative, (4) self-assurance, (5) decisiveness, (6) masculinity-femininity, (7) maturity, (8) working class affinity, (9) achievement motivation, (10) need for self actualization, (11) need for power over others, (12) need for high financial reward, and (13) need for job security. The inventory consists of 64 pairs of personality descriptive adjectives. The adjectives were so chosen that both members of each pair are similar in terms of the social desirability of the human qualities they symbolize.

The reliability coefficients for the different scales ranged from .56 to .90, whereas the range of the validity coefficients was .37 to .75.

Measure of managerial success It is rather difficult to select a universal

criterion which indicates managerial success. Sometimes company records are used for evaluating success while in some other cases one's evaluation and judgement are taken into account. There is a clear-cut indication that salary progression (Grant & Bray, 1969; England & Lee, 1974; Watson & Williams, 1977; Ansari, Baumgartel, & Sullivan, 1932) and career progression in terms of promotion (Doktar & Bass, 1974; Ansari, 1981; Ghosh Dastidar, 1986) have frequently been used as a measure of managerial success.

In the present investigation managerial success was determined in terms of three scores--career progression (CP), salary progression (SP), and salary gain (SG). The scores were computed by employing the following formulae:

$$CP = (NP/LS) \times 100$$

$$SP = (PS - FS)/LS$$

$$SG = [(PS - FS)/FS] \times 100$$

where,

NP = Number of promotions,

LS = Length of service,

PS = Present salary, and

FS = First salary in first job.

The above mentioned information was collected from the subjects concerned with the help of a Biographical Information Bank specially designed for this purpose.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As already mentioned, the objective of the study was to see whether success in managerial job can be predicted by different facets of managerial talent as measured by Self-Description Inventory of Ghiselli (1954). In order to achieve this end, a multiple regression analysis was carried out.

Table 1

Multiple correlation of three dependent variables with Self-Description Inventory (SDI)

Variables (N=74)	Multiple R
Career progression X Scales of SDI & age	.42
Salary progression X Scales of SDI & age	.63**
Salary gain X Scales of SDI & age	.59**

**p < .01

The multiple correlation of the three dependent variables -career progression, salary progression, and salary gain scores of the managers--with 13 different scales of Self-Description Inventory and age are presented in Table 1.

The multiple correlations for the two dependent variables i. e., salary progression and salary gain were found to be significant. To investigate the adequacy of the model analysis is variance was conducted and the results of ANOVA for the two dependent variables are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

The F-ratios were significant and it implies that different facets of managerial talent (e. g., supervisory ability, intelligence, etc) and age were adequate enough to predict salary progression and salary gain obtained by managers in their jobs.

It is to be noted here that when simple correlation analysis was carried out, it was observed that none of the scale scores of the Self - Description Inventory was significantly correlated

Table 2

Analysis of variance for the dependent variable-- salary progression scores

Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	1561.75	14	111.55	2.74**
Residual	2401.65	59	40.71	

**p < .01.

Table 3

Analysis of variance for the dependent variable-- Salary gain scores

Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	5405873.50	14	386133.81	2.25*
Residual	10135846.00	59	171794.00	

*p < .05

with the rate of Progressing scores. Only age was found to be significantly correlated with salary progression ($r = -.52, p < .01$) and salary gain ($r = .47, p < .01$). Therefore, it was decided to determine the relation of the scale scores of Self - Description Inventory with the three criteria indicating managerial success eliminating the effect of age. It was further decided to segregate the subjects into two groups -- (a) managers from public sector organisations and (b) managers from private sector organisations-- and then carry on the same analysis separately.

The multiple correlations for the two groups of managers with regard to three dependent variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Multiple correlations for the two groups of managers with respect to three dependent variables and independent variables of Self-Description Inventory (SDI)

Variables	Multiple r	
	Public sector manager (N=44)	Private sector manager (N=30)
Career progression X SDI	.62	.62
Salary progression X SDI	.50	.69
Salary gain X SDI	.54	.70

None of these multiple correlations were significant. It suggests (points) that none of the facets of managerial talent was adequate to predict managerial success in terms of career progression, salary progression, and salary gain scores of managers.

CONCLUSION

Summarising the results of the analysis, it can be stated that managerial success in terms of rate of progression scores of managers cannot be effectively predicted on the basis of different facets of managerial talent. Only age factor was found to be significantly correlated with rate of progression scores. It indicates that far as Indian managers are concerned, age or seniority is the main factor which is found to be significantly related to his rate of progression scores but not his ability or talent. The reliability of the results however, cannot be expected to be high as the sample size in this study was small and the subjects were from different organizations belonging to both public and private sectors where organizational structure, promotion policy, scales of pay, etc. could vary widely.

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